

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE RISING CASES OF FEMICIDE:
A CASE OF NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA.**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this document and the research that it describes are my original work and that they have not been presented in any other university for academic work.

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DEDICATION

This academic work is dedicated to my Mother Ms.: Rosemary Wambui and to my siblings; Beyonce Wangari and Gean Karanja. It is also a special dedication to all women who lost their lives to femicide, may their stories continue to inspire justice, awareness and change.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFOJA: Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability

COVAW: Coalition on Violence Against Women

DCI: Directorate of Criminal Investigations

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

ISS: Institute for Security Studies

KNBS: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

NACOSTI: National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SLT: Social Learning Theory

TF GBV: Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

VAW: Violence Against Women

VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls

WHO: World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Femicide, the intentional killing of women because of their gender, is a current global problem. In the recent past, femicide has become a growing concern in Nairobi County, and social media plays a vital role in both advocacy and the perpetuation of the negative portrayal of women. The purpose of this study is to establish the extent to which social media contributes to the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi. Despite government and civil society efforts, femicide still persists, driven by entrenched gender norms, online misogyny, and weak regulations of digital platforms. Therefore, the study was guided by the following research objectives: to analyze how social media perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes, to assess the role of social media advocacy in raising public awareness on the rising cases of femicide, and to identify intervention measures that can be leveraged to curb the rising cases of femicide. The theories guiding the study were Feminist Theory and Social Learning Theory. These theoretical perspectives provide a framework for understanding the social behaviors and gender disparities that lead to femicide and its representation on social media. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, whereby a convergent parallel design was employed to integrate quantitative and qualitative data, which was analyzed to yield the major findings of the study. Purposive sampling was adopted to identify participants, including social media users, police officers, and civil society organizations advocating for the rights of women subjected to gender-based violence, with a sample of 152 participants selected from law enforcement, NGOs, civil society organizations, and social media users. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect primary data, while secondary data was obtained through content analysis of information posted on social media platforms and research papers. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed, and statistical tests using SPSS were conducted to determine the correlation between variables. Descriptive analysis showed that social media has a two-fold effect; on the one hand, it makes violence against women more visible through quick information dissemination and activism, while, on the other hand, it reinforces misogynistic stereotypes that legitimize violence against women. Consequently, the study recommends stronger content moderation, comprehensive legal frameworks addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, and digital literacy. The study also recommends enhanced multi-stakeholder collaboration in safeguarding women's rights.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Femicide: Femicide according to this study Femicide, the intentional killing of women and girl due to their gender.

Gender Based Violence: In this research, GBV refers to any act of violence that is committed against a female or a various female due to their femininity, gender, sexual preferences and/or gender.

Socila media Content Dissemination: This is the process through which information, images, videos and narratives related to femicide are shared and circulated across social media platforms.

Social media: As per this study, social media refers to the online tools, which for users' creation and presentation of content and for their interaction with the content, for example, X, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

Technology facilitated Gender based Violence: This is a type of abuse that is carried out through the use of the internet and contemporary technology. It includes a variety of harmful behaviors, such as exploitation, defamation, hate speech, sexual harassment, stalking, and bullying.

Advocacy: In this study advocacy refers the to process of raising opinions on human dignity and campaigning for the realization of those rights by governments.

Misogynistic content: Refers to online messages, comments or media that express hatred, discrimination and harmful stereotypes against women and may contribute to the normalization of gender based violence.

Perception: According to the study, perception refers to attitudes, beliefs and interpretations held by social media users regarding femicide including societal responses and tendencies such as victim blaming.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study examined the contribution of social media to the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya. It aims to identify how social media contributes to the promotion of misogynistic attitudes leading to femicide, the advocacy roles played by social media against femicide, and the measures to be taken to reduce social media's negative impacts. In this context, social media, which is a tool of communication, has the potential to educate the public and change their behavior and perception toward issues like gender-based violence, but it also has the potential to reinforce stereotype and negative narratives that lead to femicide.

Therefore, this chapter contains the background to the study, highlighting the information on the relationship between social media and femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya. The statement of the problem identifies the major questions and gaps in the existing literature, and the purpose, objectives and research questions of the study are also included.

1.2 Background of the study

The use of social media has grown significantly in the recent past and has affected communication and interaction in the global society. They have provided the possibility to spread information, form groups, and promote changes in society. However, social media has also presented new challenges, which are in relation to the negative uses of the social media platform such as promotion of misogyny and gender-based violence (Dawson & Mobayed Vega, 2023). Therefore, the connection between social media and femicide, has emerged as an active line of study (Akina Mama wa Afrika, 2023; Graham & Dutton, 2019; Bhanye et al., 2023).

Femicide is a global human rights concern and one of the most extreme forms of gender-based violence affecting women across different regions of the world. According to the United Nations Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2023), approximately 85,000 women and girls were intentionally killed globally in 2022, with a significant proportion murdered by intimate partners or family members. The persistence of femicide across both developed and developing countries highlights the widespread nature of gender inequality, harmful social norms,

and weak protection systems that continue to expose women to violence (UN Women & UNODC, 2023).

Social media websites and applications such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube, among others, can be used for both positive and negative intentions. On the one hand, social media has supported social justice campaigns such as the Me Too movement in the United States and Ni Una Menos in Latin America, which have raised awareness on gender-based violence, including femicide (Carlson, 2021; Sandlots, 2013). It also enables survivors and activists to organize themselves and demand changes in policies to match the new environment. On the other hand, social media presents content that is negative and unhealthy, for example, misogynistic speech, cyberbullying, victim blaming, and so on. Such elements contribute to the desensitization of violence against women, and this has a negative impact on the real world. It is important to note that social media is both a tool for social change and a means through which harm occurs in the case of femicide (Fulu et al., 2023; Le Roux et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, the use of social media in the discussion of femicide is not without controversy. Although social media has played an educative role in enhancing people's sensitization on policy changes that will be beneficial for women, it has also played the devil's advocate by enhancing the production of toxic narratives that encourage violence against women. Vilification of women, shaming, and reinforcement of gender stereotypes are rife on social media platforms, and perpetrators can mobilize others to perpetrate further violence and cyber-attacks (Fulu et al., 2023; Bhanye et al., 2023). Therefore, social media is both a tool for advocating for the end of femicide and a place where such actions can be promoted and encouraged.

In Africa, social media has been instrumental in the discussions on gender-based violence including femicide. Through sharing experiences on social media such as twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, femicide cases are publicized, protests are organized, and advocacy for legal change is done (Ndobe, 2024). For instance, the #TotalShutDown campaign in South Africa was able to mobilize communities to call for an end to femicide and gender-based violence, thus creating a national discourse on the matter (Institute for Security Studies, 2022). In Kenya, the #EndFemicideKE social movement and hashtag campaign has played a critical role in raising public awareness and stimulating national discourse on femicide, particularly highlighting the increasing incidence of femicide cases in Nairobi County. On one hand, social media has been

very useful in creating awareness, but on the other hand, it is a source of negative content. The increase of the number of femicides can be attributed to the promotion of misogynistic discourses, cyberbullying, and victim blaming on social media. Social networks turn into a place where people who use violence against women and girls justify their actions and deny the actions of the victims (Rege et al., 2020). This is particularly typical for communities such as the “manosphere” which is an aggregate of websites and forums that propagate toxic masculinity and actively fight against feminism (BBC News, 2024). Kenya has also embraced the “manosphere” which has led to the promotion of violence against women and the fight against femicide (Fulu et al., 2023).

In Kenya, femicide has become rampant with statistics showing that 500 plus women have been killed between 2016 and 2023 (Amnesty International, 2024). Nairobi as the largest urban center of the country has also recorded many femicide incidents with many of them being reported and shared on social media platforms. These have gone further to help in raising awareness for justice and creating awareness that will compel the calls for change. Hashtags such as #EndFemicideKE and #StopKillingWomen have become popular, meaning that the cause has gained publicity and changed the perception of the society (Nendo, 2024). However, such campaigns have helped to create awareness, but at the same time, they have revealed the weaknesses of social media in bringing about policy changes.

The escalation of femicide cases reported on the social media has not been complemented by a proportional response from the authorities. The media also exaggerate femicide cases in Nairobi, which has the potential of making the public become immune to such acts, thus eradicating the stigma associated with femicide. Social media despite the advocacy for change give room for victim analysis and misogynistic attitudes, which hinders change in regard to femicide (Carlson, 2021; Fulu et al., 2023). These platforms are also used to post comments against the victims, their character, and their lifestyle and to spread prejudice against women. This only leads to increased violence against women and deepening of gender inequalities in Nairobi County.

However, social media is still an effective way of advocating as has been seen from the challenges above. The possibility to report and publicize femicide cases in real-time is beneficial in terms of enhancing the accountability of the society (Carlson, 2021; Fulu et al., 2023). But the question that arises here is, how can social media be managed in a way that its negative impacts are minimized while at the same time its positive impacts such as in fighting for change is maximized?

Therefore, social media has been found to have a complicated involvement in femicide both on the international and regional level in Africa (Fulu et al., 2023; Bhanye et al., 2023). While it has served as a means of advocacy and raising awareness, it has also led to the spread of such things as hatred against women and blame culture that promotes gender-based violence (Carlson, 2021; Fulu et al., 2023). It was therefore important to establish the connection between social media and femicide in order to design efficient ways of combating it. This research therefore concentrated on Nairobi County to establish how social media both contributes to and mitigates the increasing femicide rates.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Women should live in a society where they are protected from gender-based violence, where justice systems respond effectively, and where communities actively work to prevent femicide. In Kenya, and especially in Nairobi County, the increasing cases of femicide being reported have raised increasing concern among policy makers, civil society organizations, and citizens. Although structural aspects like patriarchy, economic inequality, and weak legal enforcement have been highly recognized as major contributors to femicide, the influence of social media on the cause of this phenomenon has not been adequately investigated. The influence of social media on femicide discourse in Nairobi County is twofold. On the one hand, it serves as an advocacy platform that helps to raise the voices of victims, unite communities, and seek justice. Social media activism through the hashtags EndFemicideKE and StopKillingWomen has helped to create awareness and mobilize people to fight femicide. Social media networks have also been helpful in creating awareness and campaigning for action on the side of authorities with regard to gender violence (Carlson, 2021).

On the same note, social media is also used in promoting violence against women as a normal thing. The circulation of violent images, sharing jokes and memes, and using victim-blaming language all play their part in making the society turn a blind eye to femicide. Although the social media coverage of femicide cases may raise awareness, it may also lead to desensitization of the audience, removal of the stigma associated with such violent acts, and even encourage emulation of such behaviors by normalizing them (Fulu et al., 2023). This dual use of social media in the fight against femicide and as a tool that promotes the same is rather confusing in the case of women in Nairobi County.

Femicide has become an increasingly prevalent issue globally, and within. Femicide in Nairobi, is usually reported through social media, despite the fact that its effects are not fully understood. Although there have been social media campaigns that have created awareness of femicide, there are limited systematic studies on how social media is contributing to the rate of femicide, the perception of the community, and the legal and policy measures towards this menace in Kenya. While some studies point towards the fact that media coverage results in raising awareness and policy formulation (Carlson, 2021) there are others who claim that portrayal of such crimes on social media leads to normalization, trivialization of violence, and weakening of the stigma around femicide (Fulu et al., 2023).

The limited body of local research examining the relationship between social media and femicide in Nairobi County constraints the development of appropriate and effective interventions and policies. There is also a lack of research done on gender-based violence in general and none that specifically addresses the digital landscape in Nairobi to understand how social media is involved in the discourse on femicide. Without understanding the relationship between social media discourse and femicide, it becomes difficult to develop effective social interventions, strengthen public awareness campaigns, and identify how digital platforms can be used to promote advocacy and prevention efforts. This study therefore, seeks to fill this gap through investigating the dual role of social media as both a risk factor and protective factor of femicide in Nairobi County with the view of giving policy implication and probable interventions towards mitigating the problem of femicide in Kenya.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The study aims to investigate the contribution of social media to the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1.5.1 General objective of the study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the contribution of social media on the rise in femicide cases in Nairobi County.

1.5.2 Specific objectives of the study

The following specific objectives guided the study:

1. To investigate the role of social media platforms in promoting harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to femicide cases in Nairobi County, Kenya.
2. To determine the role of social media's advocacy in creating public awareness on the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya.
3. To establish the interventions measures that social media can engage to curb the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.6 Research questions

The research questions that helped in determining the negative and positive impacts of social media on femicide, giving a broad perspective were:

1. What are the roles of social media platforms in promoting harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to femicide cases in Nairobi County, Kenya?
2. What is the role of social media's advocacy in creating public awareness on the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya?
3. What intervention measures could social media engage to curb the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya?

1.7 Significance of the study

This study has various implications for several reasons. First, it adds knowledge to the existing body of research on femicide and social media especially in Kenya. Thus, the study contributed to the understanding of how social media can be a tool that contributes to femicide and for which it can be a tool for change. Second, the findings will be beneficial to policymakers, activists, and law enforcement agencies since the study made specific suggestions on how to moderate the content shared on social media and how this content can be used for advocacy and prevention. Last but not the least, the study contributed to the identification of relevant strategies for discussing femicide and the dissemination of the role of social networks in combating gender-based violence.

1.8 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in Nairobi County, this is because Nairobi has been recorded to have high rates of femicide and high usage of social media. The study focused on the different ways in which femicide is discussed on Facebook, Twitter (X) and Instagram and whether the platforms promoted misogynistic content or encourage advocacy for femicide. To that end, the study was conducted on femicide-related content posted between the year 2020 to the year 2026. A mixed research approach was employed in the study as both qualitative and quantitative data was used; These include case studies, social media content analysis, media reports, interviews with key informants such as activists, policymakers, and the police in Nairobi County.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

According to Harnack and Kleppinger (2019), delimitations of a study refer to any shortcomings, constraints, or biases inherent in the research that may affect the results or lead to inaccurate or imprecise conclusions. The study focused on Nairobi County and has narrowed down the study to three social media platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which were the most common in the discussion of femicide. The research focused on femicide-related issues and advocacy campaigns on these platforms in the year 2020 to 2026. In the same regard, the study targeted specific respondents including social media users, law enforcement officers and representatives from civil society organizations working on gender based violence. These participants were considered relevant due to their direct or indirect engagement with issues related to femicide and social media. By narrowing the scope, the study ensured a focused and in-depth analysis of the contribution of social media to femicide within a specific geographical and contextual setting. This approach was useful to avoid a broad study that may lack direction, focus on major sources of femicide discourse in Nairobi.

1.10 Limitations of the study

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2012), constraints are uncontrollable circumstances that could hinder the successful completion of the study and its generalizability to other contexts. The research was also constrained by the availability of information in so far as some femicide cases were hidden or poorly reported in the media. In addition, the use of social media data also gave a certain bias or a selective view of the incidents as the content reflects selective perspectives,

exaggeration or misinformation. Reluctance of some respondents to fully participate in the study due to the sensitivity of the topic was also another limitation. Femicide and gender based violence are often considered sensitive and private, therefore there was fear, stigma and unwillingness to share information among the participants. The study was carried out in Nairobi County only and hence the results may not be generalized to other counties with different social media trends. Last but not the least, there was a complex relationship between social media and femicide since GBV is a complex phenomenon.

1.11 Assumptions of the study

The research assumed that social media plays an important role in influencing femicide in Kenya. It further presumed that the effective utilization of social media platforms had the possibility to contribute positively to efforts aimed at reducing and ultimately ending femicide in the country. The study made the assumption that participants, particularly men, would be open to sharing information without prejudice. Because Nairobi had the greatest rate of social media usage in Kenya, the study also claimed that by concentrating on the city, it had a representative sample of the target audience.

1.12 Theoretical framework

In research, the theoretical framework was a crucial element as it was a part of the theoretical foundation of the study. It was useful in the formulation, implementation, and interpretation of the research since it provides a framework for establishing how the variables of interest were related. It also helped in defining research questions, hypothesis and methods of research. Feminist Theory and Social Learning Theory also help in explaining the extent of social media involvement in the rising femicide cases in Nairobi County. Feminist Theory is the main theoretical framework since it gives a first-hand view on how femicide occurs in society before looking at how social media can be both a tool to fight against femicide and a tool to promote negative beliefs towards women.

1.12.1 Feminist theory

Feminist theory is based on the premise that there was gender discrimination in the society, organizations, and cultures which contributed to the domination of women (Dawson & Mobayed Vega, 2023). Feminist theory explains that gender inequality and violence against women are rooted in patriarchal social structures, power imbalances, and societal norms that perpetuate the

oppression and marginalization of women (hooks, 2000; Lorber, 2010). This definition is reflected in Kenyan cases where women have been killed by intimate partners or male acquaintances, such as the murders of Ivy Wangechi (BBC News, 2019) and Monica Kimani (BBC News, 2018). Feminist scholars claimed that femicide was not a single event but a continuation of the culture of tolerance towards the use of violence against women. These are social norms that are ingrained in societies, and via social media, they either are reinforced or changed. Feminist scholars claimed that femicide was not a single event but a continuation of the culture of tolerance towards the use of violence against women. These are social norms that are ingrained in societies, and in contemporary society, such norms are increasingly expressed, circulated, and contested through social media, where they either are reinforced or changed.

The theory that can be associated with femicide is the feminist perspective, which is based on the idea of patriarchy, a political system where men dominate women and do not grant them equal rights. In such a system, gender-based violence including femicide was utilized as a mechanism to continue to assert dominance over women by men. In Kenya, many reported femicide cases reveal patterns of control, jealousy, and entitlement over women's bodies and choices (UNESCO, 2025). Taylor and Jasinski (2011) pointed out that patriarchal socialization process makes women to be docile and submissive while men are domineering and assertive. These gendered roles culminate into the society accepting violence against women as a way of managing them, as evidenced by public reactions that justify or downplay violence against women in high-profile Kenyan cases (The Star, 2026). Social media platforms become spaces where these patriarchal values are reproduced, justified, or challenged, thereby contributing to how femicide is understood and responded to in society. Thus, the analysis of the social media platform through the lens of the feminist theory shows how such platforms can be used to reinforce the patriarchal discourses as well as how they can be used to subvert them. Some of the common social sites in Nairobi include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram where individuals can post comments that may be bias towards women such as victim-blaming messages and misleading stereotype information, which may normalize or trivialize violence against women and indirectly contribute to rising cases of femicide, often observed in comment sections following femicide reports in Kenya (DW, 2024).

As much as the feminist theory provides a wide explanation of the causes of femicide, it has been criticized. A criticism is that it mainly presents women as victims and structures as oppressors

while sometimes limiting the role of personal choice or men in contributing to violence (Crossman, 2024). Finally, it is also criticized that postmodern feminism is deterministic, as it implies that gender-based violence is a product of a patriarchal culture without considering other factors, social, cultural, or individual (Norlock, 2019). One criticism that has been made is that while most of the information about women has been obtained from the feminist theory, there has been little consideration of how race, class, and cultural factors affect women in societies other than those of the west (Rollero, 2021). This critique is especially important in the African context as gender roles and cultural practices of the society contribute to femicide in a manner that is different from what is observed in western countries, as seen in Kenya where economic stress, urbanization and cultural expectations intersect (Fulu et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, these criticisms do not diminish the relevance of the feminist theory for the analysis of femicide due to the identification of power relations and the clarification of the structural nature of misogyny. Minimizing and explaining the violence against women can be best done by applying the feminist perspective since it seeks to explain how culture perpetuates violent norms in the society, which is especially widespread in patriarchal societies like Kenya. In Nairobi, the objectification of women is evident in social media while activism by women is also seen in the same. #EndFemicideKE campaigns have contributed significantly for increasing the awareness and activism regarding femicide and challenging for change of laws using social media as a policy advocacy tool, demonstrating the dual role of social media in both reinforcing and resisting femicide-related narratives.

This research will use the theory of Feminism to analyze the role that social media plays in either enhancing gender violence and femicide or otherwise in Nairobi. It will help in the evaluation of contents within social media, specifically, it will help establish the manner in which social media presents gender relations and whether or not it supports the normalization of femicide, thereby contributing to the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County. This research will look at how such ideologies as misogyny and victim blaming are disseminated and how these ideologies may be linked to the increased cases of femicide. But it will also examine how feminism on social media is fighting against such negative ideologies, demanding justice, and change in laws.

1.12.2 Social learning theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT) that was formulated by Albert Bandura in 1977 presupposes that learning takes place through observing, emulating, and even imitating. Bandura (1977) also pointed out that modeling does not imply that people learn behaviors directly but through observation of others, especially reference people or models as portrayed in media. Such behaviors are then stored as knowledge and can be employed to inform future behaviors. In the context of social media, these models are constantly available and repeatedly consumed. Regarding femicide, it is possible to state that the theory of social learning contributes to the understanding of violent behaviors towards women as learned from others, including in online environments where such behaviors may be encouraged, normalized, or rewarded, thus contributing to rising cases of femicide.

On a negative note, theories rationalize external factors of learning rather than paying attention to the spirit of self-direction and personal accountability implied in the concept of social learning. The opposition is that although SLT outlines how behavior can change through observation, it fails to explain the psychological processes inside a person which will make him or her violent (Lyons & Berge, 2012). However, when it comes to the femicide, SLT falls short of explaining why certain men pick up the violent scripts and fail to become killers whereas others do: mental health, personal history, emotional disposition is omitted. This is a limitation when analyzing the case of femicide in Nairobi County, where there are various individual and social factors that interplay.

A more compelling argument that can be raised against SLT is that it does not explain how some behaviors get into the culture domain and others do not. Even though Bandura theory puts emphasis on the social context, the manner in which culture or culture of women subjugation influences behaviors that individuals observe and learn within a given society is not well explicated. This is even more so true in Africa where culture has been found to shape behaviors in the context of patriarchy that cannot be explained using the Social Learning Theory (Fulu et al., 2023). This is a huge gap when examining social media content in Nairobi County where cultural norms overlap with online space.

Nevertheless, Social Learning Theory is useful for explaining the ways in which violence and misogyny can be recreated through the media and imitation of role models. This is especially true in the case of social networks where individuals are daily exposed to violent and sexually abusive

language. Bandura (1977) noted that people tend to copy behaviors of others as they are influenced by emulation and modeling where the behaviors are either rewarded or encouraged in the society. On social media platforms, engagement such as likes, shares, and comments may serve as such rewards. With regard to femicide, SLT depicts how violent media role models, which are easily accessible through the internet such as the ‘manosphere,’ contributes to the development of violent attitudes and behaviors towards women.

The case of Lawrence Warunge, a college student who is accused of killing four family members and a farmhand at their Kiambu home, serves as an example of this. Later, Warunge acknowledged to investigators that he was influenced by Jodie Comer's character, Villanelle, the psychotic killer in the British spy thriller *Killing Eve* (Paul Kurgat, 2022). He revealed that he had searched online for methods to carry out his plan and came across the series. This case illustrates the tendency of human behavior, particularly violent behavior, to be shaped by observing other people, even by means of media representation. By way of this modelling, people develop an idea of the way of doing things. This accumulated information later informs their behaviors in case of such scenarios showing how media exposure can be translated to real-life violence.

Social Learning Theory also provides a way of establishing the influence of the digital platforms in influencing the behavior of the vulnerable persons especially the youths to embrace negative perceptions from some influencers or creators on social media. The theory offers a context on how through acting as a modeling agent, social media can either encourage or discourage violence depending on the nature of the content being shared. The most popular examples of such online platforms are the “manosphere,” which is popular in Kenya, for example, where incitement to violence and hatred towards women and other vulnerable groups is allowed. This platform, which harbors misogynistic thoughts, can become a source of behaviors which lead to femicide and other forms of gender related violence (BBC News, 2024). The public square of today is social media and SMS platforms, which provide forums for candid conversation and debate. Mr. Eric Amunga concern with placing women in their proper place is what drives the masculinity coach behind manosphere, the largest social media phenomena in Kenya. Many people consider him to be the most influential member of Kenya's "manosphere," a group of internet forums where men congregate and share the conviction that feminism is to blame for a number of social problems. Mr. Amunga's "Masculinity Saturdays" have been championed by some as a platform for men to

reclaim their voices in a society perceived to favor women, particularly those characterized as promiscuous or materialistic. However, critics view Mr. Amunga and alike influencers as embodying "toxic masculinity." They argue that by legitimizing unfounded male criticisms, these figures have contributed to misogyny and created a hostile and violent environment for women in Kenya. The manosphere has helped normalize violence against women, young boys are feeding on this online diet, and may end up being more violent and misogynistic than the current men (Adrian Blomfield, 2024).

The Social Learning Theory also helps explain the process through which positive behaviors like feminist activism can be encouraged through social media. This theory can be used to understand how digital activism against femicide can counter adverse behaviors that are mimicked in cyberspace. In this sense, social media platforms can work as a platform of giving out counter narratives for changing the attitude and behavior towards women by advocating for equality and justice.

This research employed Social Learning Theory to determine the effect that social media has on the beliefs held by individuals regarding gender roles and violence against women. The theory helped to understand how the misogynistic behaviors and advocacy movements are staged in social media and how it can affect people's perception of attitudes and behaviors, thereby explaining the contribution of social media to the rising cases of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study also examined the positive digital activism like campaigns against femicide and how such a move can help in changing the negative norms displayed online.

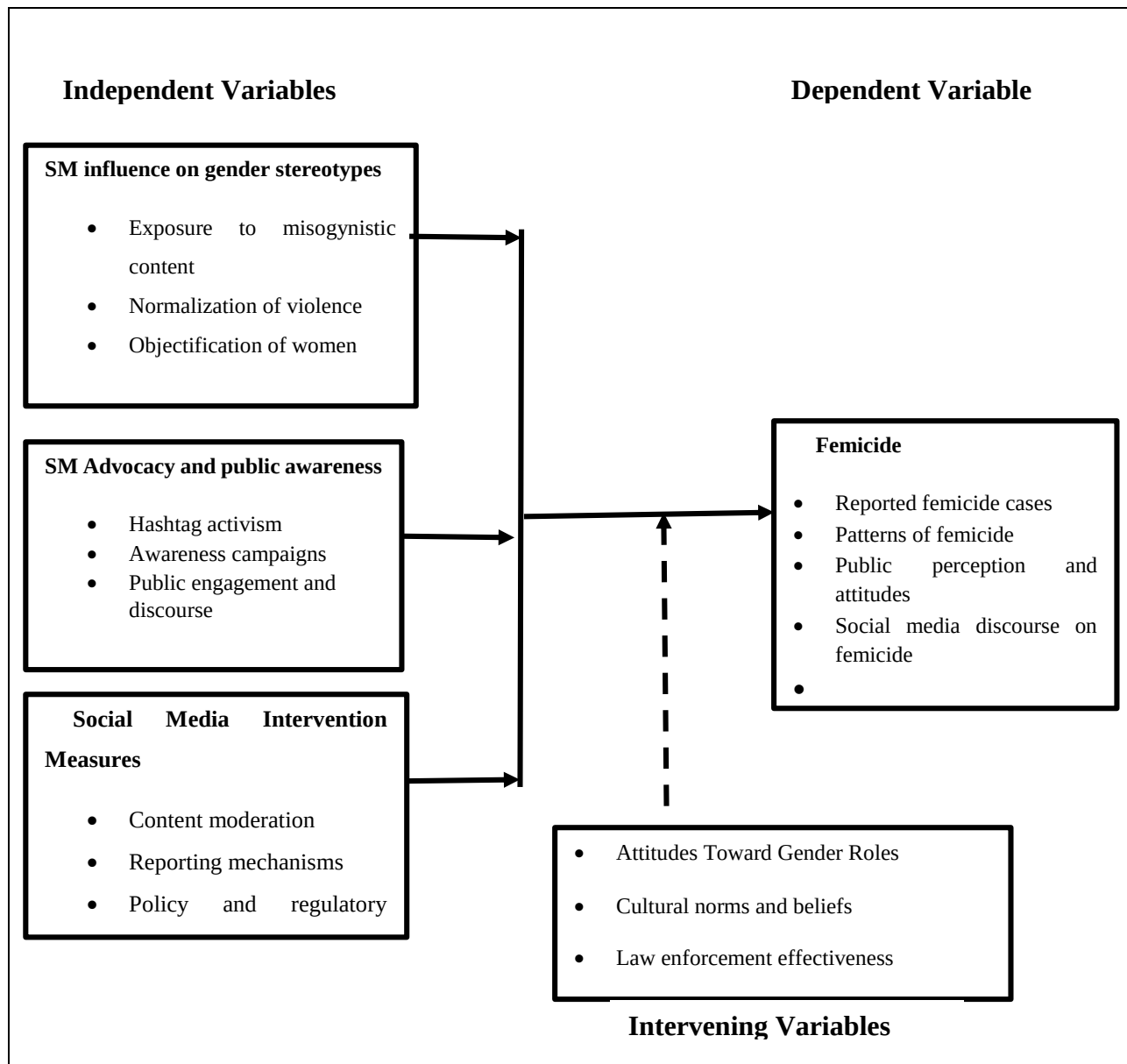
1.13 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework provides a structures representation of the relationship between key variables in the study. It investigates the connection between the rise in femicide incidents in Kenya and social media use. The study assumes that the nature of social media content, interactions, and discourse can shape public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward women, which may either contribute to or help mitigate femicide. For instance, harmful content such as misogynistic narratives, victim blaming, cyberbullying, and the normalization of violence against women may reinforce attitudes that contribute to gender-based violence. Conversely, social media can also serve as a platform for advocacy, awareness creation, public mobilization, and calls for justice, which may help reduce femicide by influencing social attitudes and policy responses.

Therefore, the conceptual framework illustrates how social media influences femicide rates through both negative and positive pathways.

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework



Source: Author (2026)

Social media influence on Gender Stereotypes: Social media platforms serve as locations where people establish and transmit gender norms reinforcing existing stereotypes about gender. User-generated content together with comments, memes and discussions, enable people to perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes which include victim-blaming and objectification of women and normalization of male dominance. The stories which people tell themselves create mental frameworks that enable them to view women as less valuable while they develop beliefs which support violence against women and lead to femicide.

Social media advocacy and public awareness: Social media enables people to organize and join international efforts which use digital platforms to fight against gender violence and femicide. The initiatives result in higher public awareness together with enhanced reporting of incidents and increased community involvement. The success of advocacy campaigns depends on how people understand and use the available information to maintain their existing behaviors and social practices.

Social media intervention measures: Intervention measures refer to planned activities which social media platforms use to decrease harmful online material creating secure spaces for users. The system operates through content moderation and reporting systems together with platform regulations and targeted campaigns which address Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV). The interventions should work to stop harmful stories while they decrease the power of social media to create attitudes which lead to femicide.

Intervening variables: Intervening variables explain how social media platforms affect femicide rates because they connect with societal views on gender roles and cultural customs and existing legal and policy systems and digital literacy levels. The specific conditions which exist at a particular moment will determine how individuals process and respond to social media content which will lead to either increased or decreased influence on femicide.

1.13.1 Indicators of Femicide Prevalence

Femicide exists as a dependent variable which researchers need to assess through specific indicators that demonstrate its scope and characteristics.

Reported Femicide Cases: The number of documented femicide incidents within Nairobi County, indicating trends and frequency over time. The characteristics of femicide cases include details about victim relationships with perpetrators and motive explanations together with information about the circumstances which preceded the incidents.

Public Perception and Attitudes: Societal beliefs and reactions toward femicide, including levels of normalization, victim-blaming, or condemnation of violence against women. Social media platforms use their online discussions to create a specific character and tone which people use to discuss femicide while they disseminate dangerous stereotypes together with advocacy stories and community participation.

Social media discourse on femicide: The power of social media to spread harmful gender stereotypes and create advocacy campaigns and develop intervention measures leads to an increase in femicide incidents. Advocacy and intervention measures provide ways to fight against harmful stereotypes which lead to violence joining forces with harmful stereotypes. The conceptual framework demonstrates how social media acts as a dual force which both fuels femicide in Nairobi County while serving as a platform for fighting against the crime.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the latest scholarly studies of the relationship between social media and femicide. It offers both theoretical and empirical viewpoints on the main study variables.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Promotion of Harmful Gender Stereotypes

The influence of social media in the perception of gender is well-reported, especially in supporting negative stereotypes that can lead to femicide. The social media platform can spread content, including misogynistic stories, attitudes of victim-blaming, and sensationalization of reporting, and can normalize violence against women (Matos and Goncalves, 2021).

Freeland, Baroni, and Jogie (2025) carried out a comparative qualitative study on 200 Italian and UK media articles to evaluate the framing of femicide in the United Kingdom. They discovered that UK media tended to present femicide as an isolated event, but not as an endemic gender violence, with the help of archival sampling and discourse analysis. The social media reinforced these frames by quickly spreading them thus making femicide seem insignificant regarding its systemic nature. The disconnect is that no empirical research exists to relate these practices of framing to behavioral consequences in Nairobi, where such trivialization could worsen violence (Freeland et al., 2025).

Nahdliyah and Robot (2024) analyzed the coverage of femicide in Indonesia by critical discourse analysis of 159 cases published in internet news and social media. Their qualitative design was based on discourse analysis to identify how patriarchal storytelling and honor-founded discourses were reproduced on the Internet, which could easily justify femicide. The results highlighted the importance of social media in supporting destructive cultural discourses. The gap in knowledge is the absence of comparative evidence of how these discourses are converted into the increase in cases of femicide in African contexts, and specifically Nairobi, where patriarchal discourse intersects with digital dissemination.

In Kenya, social media is now part of the fabric of society with the ability to interact with friends, families, and also share news through such social networks as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Kenya's social media usage had grown to 10,500,000 in 2023, as estimated by the Kenya Communications Authority (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023). These platforms not only help people to communicate with friends and relatives but also became major source of information, which sometimes replaces traditional media. But with the said advantages, social media also has its disadvantages. The problem of fake/reliable false information has become a pressing issue as it weakens the credibility and sometimes disseminates dangerous narratives like those that endorse violence against women. According to the United Nations Population Fund (2024), Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV) can be described as behaviors that may lead to physical violence or are physically violent and involves online exploitation, harassment, or defamation. These are issues that are compounded by the Kenyan society, which has become a breeding ground for online misogyny. The increase on radicalization of women on social media has influenced the acceptance of gender-based violence against women and may even go unnoticed (TF GBV). Sitati (2024) conducted a qualitative study analyzing 50 case studies and social media narratives on femicide. Using content analysis of Facebook and Twitter posts, the study revealed that social media perpetuates victim-blaming narratives, reinforcing patriarchal structures and escalating femicide cases. The knowledge gap is the absence of empirical studies focusing specifically on Nairobi County, where localized cultural, institutional, and systemic factors intersect with social media dissemination to exacerbate femicide.

In the Kenyan context, Sitati (2024), conducted a qualitative content analysis of 50 femicide-related cases and found that social media platforms often reinforce victim-blaming and patriarchal norms. Heise (1998) found that people with high levels of gender-role stereotyping are likely to involve in marital violence since these beliefs are supported by the media. These portrayals, especially those that portray women as deserving of the violence or that encourage violence against them, are very influential in maintaining these norms. Women who are dressing 'promiscuously' or who involve themselves in affairs contrary to cultural norms are most often held responsible for the violence that is perpetrated against them (Viki & Abrams, 2002). This victim-blaming approach is seen on social media because it provides a platform for the reinforcement of negative and stereotypical attitudes towards women's conduct. Thus, male viewers being exposed to

sexually violent material may become more accepting of violence in general and more inclined to believe in myths about rape (Huesmann, 2002).

Research conducted by the Institute for Security Studies shows that cyber- harassment, which is also referred to as negative attitudes towards women, has increased with the expansion of social media, thus contributing to the rise of gender-based violence (2022). This includes stalking, hacking, and cyberbullying and many women have been on the receiving end in Kenya (Owusu-Sarpong, 2020). The social networks originally created for interaction and sharing have also become a means of harassment for women. They use such platforms to fake their identities, gain the trust of the targeted users and lead them to dangerous situations. Once the trust is developed, arraignments of physical meetings are made where women are at high risks of being subjected to violence, including murder. Rita Waeni is a recent real-life example of how social interaction can lead to death through an online interaction. It is alleged that the killer of the 23-year-old lady, Waeni, communicated with her on Instagram and lured her into a short-term let house, where she was killed. This case provides an insight of how social media platforms can be utilized to perpetrate and abuse women.

Equally important, Gathara (2019) has established social media as a tool used in the commission and justification of violence against women in Kenya. It is worth noting that most of the male and female interactions on these platforms are characterized by victim blaming and condemnation especially when there is violence. This not only diverts the focus away from the actual problem, which is the use of social media platforms by predators to lure women into posting indecent pictures of themselves but also contributes to the society's promotion of such regressive attitudes towards women. The anonymity of the internet coupled with cultural beliefs that still frown upon women makes it almost impossible to safeguard the female gender in the social media. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media is valuable in the prevention of femicide, although it also plays a part in the rise of femicide cases.

2.2.2 Social Media's Advocacy Against Femicide

Social media has remained a significant means of advocacy that enables support raising of awareness, mobilization of people, and even influencing the policy change on social issues such as femicide. The World Health Organization (2006), stated that effective advocacy involves the need for special interest groups to engage in advocacy campaigns to disseminate common

messages and call for collective action. Twitter, Facebook or even Instagram has made it possible for such collective mobilization at global level especially in responding to Gender Based Violence. This is because social media advocacy has helped to bring into the limelight those advocating for femicide, which is a vice that continues to claim women and girls' lives.

Modern techniques of advocacy such as electronic, online and cyber advocacy started in the late 1990s (Bennet & Fielding, 1999). The last few years have witnessed an increase in global campaigns against femicide, social networks being actively involved in the organization of actions and appealing for justice to the victims. The #NiUnaMenos campaign, which originated in Argentina in 2015, is another example of an effective campaign that raised the topic of femicide in Latin America. The Argentine women protested against femicides and other political and social injustices after a spate of brutal killings. It mobilized protest marches, activism, and online campaigns for supporters, survivors, and public to join and urge the government to act. Femicide was described by activists as a product of vigorous 'machismo' culture in Argentina and denied by authorities as 'crimes of passion' that do not deserve public attention and concern. Some of the demands made by the campaign included; the government's requirement to address the violence cause, training for the officials, increased funding on women shelters and sex education in school (Carnegie Endowment, 2024).

The #NiUnaMenos movement was highly effective in achieving several laws; such as the national register of femicide cases and the Ley Micaela in 2018. This law ensures that all government employees undergo gender training and violence against women in memory of Micaela García, a member of the movement that was brutally murdered in 2017. The law is a positive change that seeks to bring gender-sensitive policies into law and respond to femicide in Argentina. Likewise, in South Africa, #TheTotalShutdown increased political changes after an increase in femicide cases. This has involved meetings with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa leading to a comprehensive government plan to combat GBV and the new legislation protecting women (Carnegie Endowment, 2024). These examples from Argentina and South Africa can be an example of how society and social networks can unite in the fight against femicide and demand legal changes. Social media has been used beneficially in rallying people for protests, creating awareness, and mobilizing the community to demand for legal changes towards eradicating

femicide. Such global movements have shown how social justice advocacy applies pressure to the pulse of society and can force changes in governments.

In a similar way, social media advocacy for femicide has also been prominent in Kenya. Kenyan feminists have employed social media particularly twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to fight for justice and to increase awareness of the increasing femicide cases in the country. The #EndFemicideKE and #StopKillingWomen movements have been heightened and Kenyan women have been holding online protests, vigils, and demonstrations to push for reform in the laws and accountability of the government. These campaigns have created platforms for discussion, which has changed the perception of gender and other related biases that lead to violence against women. These platforms have brought into being a platform whereby activists will help survivors tell their stories in the fight against femicide and this leads to more people coming forward and participating in the activities that aim at addressing the issue of femicide (Nendo, 2024).

In Asia, a more direct engagement with femicide awareness is evident in an Indonesian qualitative study that examined public responses to femicide-related content on YouTube. Using a qualitative content analysis design, Hafsha, (2025) analyzed user comments drawn from femicide awareness videos to assess levels of understanding, urgency perception, and narrative framing. Data were made in a systematic fashion by extracting YouTube comments and analyzing them thematically to find prevailing sentiments in the population. The results showed that although there were viewers who were more aware and recognized femicide as a great social problem, there were those who showed confusion, denial, or trivialization of the phenomenon. This two-sidedness revealed the paradoxical nature of social media as both as an educational resource and a misinformation source. Nevertheless, the fact that the study incorporated only qualitative information meant that it could not quantify the change in awareness or evaluate the effectiveness of planned advocacy measures in the long term.

Booker et al., (2025) conducted an interesting mixed-methods study that was carried out in East Africa and involved more than 1,200 digital news stories and interviews with journalists to investigate the representation of femicide in media discourse. Framing was evaluated using quantitative content analysis and editorial decision-making using qualitative interviews. The researchers determined that coverage was highly episodic, addressing individual incidents and not systemic factors, and seldom had a focus on perpetrator responsibility. Even though the research

recognized the role of digital platforms in increasing the spread of such stories, it never separated social media advocacy campaigns as a unit of analysis and evaluated the outcomes of public awareness.

In Kenya, there is empirical study that directly looks at social media advocacy and gender-based violence, and it offers the most contextually relevant basis. The study by Murage (2022) is a qualitative research on Nairobi County where in-depth interviews were conducted with women who are interested in GBV advocacy on social media platforms. The study under discussion was conducted with the help of the Dragonfly Effect Model using thematic analysis to explore the role of platforms like Facebook and Twitter in advocacy through networking, information sharing, supporting survivors, and mobilizing quickly. The results showed that social media is a valuable tool to increase the visibility, access to and engagement in GBV advocacy, which allows creating awareness in real-time and taking action in the collective. Nevertheless, the research was generalized on gender-based violence and failed to separate the male gender as a specific type of violence and also failed to empirically determine the level of awareness or trend among people concerning the increasing number of femicide cases. This constraint demonstrates the empirical gap in which a targeted study on the role that social media advocacy plays in increasing awareness among the population on the trend of femicide in the Nairobi County is required.

But the success of social media advocacy in Kenya is a definite sign that digital media has enhanced the ability to transform society. Nevertheless, the Kenyan government has not been responsive to these appeals on femicide sufficiently. Although there have been efforts towards the protection of women through the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) and the Ministry of Interior, there are challenges that still exist in the protection of women through the implementation of legal provisions. By bringing the cases of femicide to the public domain and demanding justice, social networks put the public and policymakers in front of systemic problems that need to be addressed.

The case of Argentina, South Africa, and Kenya brings out how social media is highly useful in advocating for the eradication of femicide and the need for structural change. The use of social media advocacy has been effective in creating awareness, fighting for change of injurious gender culture, and influencing changes in laws. However, a serious and active legal basis, enforcement, and social change must back these digital efforts. The two movements, #NiUnaMenos and

#TheTotalShutdown, demonstrate that major demonstrations and social media activism can create pressure and force political action, but femicide can only be combatted through policy reforms. However, while these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of social media activism in other contexts, there is limited understanding of how social media influences femicide in the Kenyan context, particularly in Nairobi County, where it may serve both as a platform for advocacy and as a space that may perpetuate harmful narratives related to gender-based violence.

2.2.3 Intervention Measures for curbing Femicide through Social Media

Social media has been closely associated with the increase in gender-based violence, especially femicide. There are different measures being proposed internationally to counter the negative effects of these spaces while maintaining them as places for social justice and not for more violence against women. Based on the aforementioned findings, one of the ways in which the influence of social media in femicide can be reduced is through proper regulation and implementing policies. As stated by the United Nations (2021), appropriate regulation of social media is needed to address violence and misogyny online. They include moderating and preventing the promotion of toxic content, including that which degrades women through ‘therapeutic’, ‘boys will be boys’, and ‘misogyny’. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter still have work to do to ensure the modification policy that deals with the removal of content that is toxic and or abuse flags. However, they are still a subject of controversy because they are often used to spread negative attitudes toward women (Fink et al., 2020). Thus, it is important to have and implement strong and diverse policies that help to put pressure on platforms and force them to remove dangerous content and punish those who post it, especially if it targets women.

Bani Domi (2025) conducted a study examining the role of social media-based awareness interventions in preventing violence against women in Jordan. The survey research design used in the study sampled 384 social media users which were administered data through structured questionnaires that measured exposure to advocacy messages, awareness levels and attitudes towards violence prevention. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The results showed that specific social media campaigns to raise awareness about violence against women had a great impact on improving the community awareness about violence and encouraging them to discuss prevention methods and know where to find support. The study has concluded that social media can be a useful preventive intervention in cases when the messages

are regularly used and cultural contextualized. Nevertheless, the research was general on violence against women and failed to isolate femicide as an extreme form of violence against women, and did not look at intervention effectiveness in urban African settings. This leaves a knowledge gap in terms of how to design and test femicide-specific social media interventions in Nairobi County where the cases of femicide are on the increase.

(Kearns et al., 2023) discussed the impacts of social media campaigns as intervention measures in minimizing the risk of domestic abuse in the United Kingdom. The study employed a randomized controlled trial design, whereby it undertook Facebook-based intervention campaigns in two police jurisdictions, and administrative data and platform analytics were used as data collection tools. Difference-in-differences models were used to analyze quantitative data in comparing results between treatment and control groups. The results indicated that the social media interventions effectively boosted the interest and awareness of the general population towards the message about domestic abuse, especially among the younger users but had little impact on their reporting behavior. Although the research reveals how social media can be an effective awareness intervention, it does not discuss how such awareness can be used to save lives of women who are vulnerable to deadly violence, but rather how the awareness created online can be translated into life-saving measures. Such gap demonstrates the necessity of research based in Nairobi that would connect interventions of social media with the results of femicide awareness and prevention.

In a study by Hafsha (2025), the social media interventions were investigated to enhance the knowledge of people about femicide in Indonesia through the analysis of YouTube advocacy content and responses. The research design was a qualitative content analysis, which involved analyzing the viewer comments that were elicited by videos on femicide to evaluate the level of awareness, urgency, and attitudinal reactions. Thematic analysis showed that social media video can serve as an educational intervention that brings the concept of femicide to the uninformed population, thus prompting the discussion in the society. But the research also discovered that there were common false beliefs and desensitization to gendered killings in commenting sections that indicated that unstructured advocacy can strengthen the damaging narratives. The intervention impact was not quantitatively assessed, and the study failed to measure the change of behavior and awareness over time. This weakness indicates the necessity of developed and assessed social media

intervention programs specific to Nairobi County, where people have little knowledge about femicide.

The computational social science study by Wang et al. (2025), addresses the topic of social media-facilitated support interventions to victims of domestic violence. The study applied machine learning methods and qualitative thematic analysis to interpret large-scale social media disclosures to chart patterns of support-seeking and response patterns using a mixed-methods design. Thousands of publicly shared data were used to generate data, and the analysis showed that social media platforms can serve as an early-warning system and support intervention by enabling disclosure, peer support, and resource sharing. The authors determined that these digital support interventions had the potential of halting the escalation of violence through linking the victims to the networks of assistance. Nonetheless, this study focused on domestic violence in general, and failed to apply its intervention model to the prevention of femicide or high-risk situations. This gap indicates that there is a need to investigate whether or not comparable social media-based support interventions can be capitalized on to prevent femicide among the at-risk women of the Nairobi County.

In a mixed-method study on the media framing of sexual and gender-based violence and femicide in East Africa, Booker et al. (2025) studied the effects of digital media intervention. The paper examined more than 1,200 digital news stories and interviewed journalists to learn intervention stories and framing approaches. Quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis demonstrated that digital media interventions tend to concentrate on episodic events as opposed to preventive messaging, structural reasons, or perpetrator responsibility. Although the study recognized the increasing role of social media in increasing these narratives, it failed to test social media advocacy campaigns as prevention interventions and their impact on public awareness or behavior. This creates a massive gap in comprehension of how proactive, prevention-based interventions of social media could be developed and assessed in the Nairobi County.

Murage (2022) carried out a qualitative research study in Nairobi County that explored the issue of social media advocacy as a method of intervention in gender-based violence. Through in depth interviews with women who have been part of online advocacy and analysis using thematic analysis accompanied by the Dragonfly Effect Model, the researchers discovered that social media interventions lead to better visibility, faster information exchange, solidarity among the survivors

and mobilization among the population. The analysis has found that social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are affordable channels of intervention to advocate GBV. Nevertheless, the research failed to break down femicide and other types of violence and measure intervention effectiveness in terms of social awareness or prevention. This gap highlights the necessity to fill this gap with an empirical study that specifically addresses femicide-oriented social media interventions in Nairobi County.

As it was mentioned earlier, social media is widely popular in Nairobi and therefore, there is a huge need to create awareness to the people of the risks associated with digital violence. The social media education campaigns can be useful in informing the social media users on ways of identifying the undesirable posts or behaviors in the social media such as those that depict women in a very bad light and those that lead to violence. Some of the existing hashtags include #StopKillingWomen, #EndFemicideKE, among others as a way of creating awareness as well as mobilizing the public. As noted by Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in 2022, these hashtags have been quite influential in Kenya since they create awareness, let survivors and victims bring out their stories, and others demanding change. Although digital activism gives a platform to the voiceless, it must do so in such a way that does not allow for spaces to be made safe for victim-blaming and counterproductive narratives.

Therefore, to disseminate positive values in cyberspace, there are needs for making digital literacy programs for both male and female. Since the Internet is an informal communication platform with increased usage by young people, it is necessary to raise awareness of the targeted subject and the effects of online misogyny. These programs can play a significant role in reducing gender stereotyping that leads to violence against women since they encourage gender equality. The involvement of men in this regard is also very crucial. According to Sultana (2010), the culture of masculinity still prevails and dominates most of the social spheres and men take power over the physical and cyber space. Talk to men about gender equality and the negative impacts of cyber-feminine dislike will reduce the tendency of violence and enable them to use their online influence to fight rather than support such vices.

The other strategy that has been adopted is the implementation of the support systems in social media interfaces. The platforms may therefore engage organizations such as women's rights and police organizations to provide adequate support structures for women subjected to online

harassment. Online counseling services, helpline facilities and referral services to crisis centers can be of great help to the victims who are victims of online gender-based violence. This was done in various countries, for instance, the social media platform of Twitter began to include reporting systems that are connected to home-based violence helplines. These could be modified and implemented in Nairobi to help anybody who is at the risk of physical violence to be protected by offering them support before they can be harmed physically (Binns & Fenton, 2018).

In addition, it is necessary to develop algorithms of social networks that would not only identify violent messages but also determine potential threats and prevent them. The creation of AI related tools could prove useful in the identification of potential signs of abuse like use of provocative posts that could lead to violence as well as stalking behavior. In the studies conducted by the World Economic Forum (2022), it was determined that AI has the ability to transform the precautions taken by social media platforms against gender-based violence. They could also help to intervene earlier in the event of abuse to prevent tension increasing and further steps being taken. In Nairobi where social media is widely used this kind of precautionary measures could help in preventing femicide.

In the legal arena, it is possible for Kenya to legislate and enforce even more stringent laws to address TFGBV. Although there are laws that address the issue of gender-based violence, digital violence requires special legislation. These should not only include the physical violence but also include cyber bullying, cyber harassment, stalking and the dissemination of content without the consent of the one involved. The Kenya Data Protection Act (2019) calls for the enhancement of the legal frameworks on protection of women online. Furthermore, laws can require the various social media platforms to undergo safety checks, to ensure that the way they respond to the posts that are in circulation conforms to the safety standards of the rest of the world (UN Women, 2024).

Lastly, one of the most effective measures is to promote women's education via digital literacy and skills. This may encompass raising awareness on how women can protect themselves while using the internet, how to report on content that is toxic and how they can shield themselves from cyber harassment. However, with the right skills imparted to the women, social media transforms from a platform that poses a potential danger to women and girls into a platform that empowers them. In Kenya for instance where the use of the internet has rapidly grown such steps could go a long way in tackling the issue of violence against women online.

Therefore, the measures to address the role of social media in femicide in Nairobi County should include policy reform, education, technology, and laws. Although social media provides a platform to assert the rights of women and fight for them, it is not devoid of the potential to promote violence against women. Mitigating this duality therefore through comprehensive and context sensitive intervention and innovation strategies will be instrumental in making technological environments beneficial in the fight against femicide instead of being agents for the commission of such heinous acts.

2.4 Summary of Review of Literature and Research Gaps

The advancement of social media platforms in Kenya has been seen as having both positive and negative implications in relation to femicide. This literature review focused on social media and femicide, and how social media can be both beneficial in helping to create awareness and advocate against femicide, while at the same time promoting narratives that may contribute to its perpetration. One of the examined concerns is the spread of misogyny on social media, which may result in the constant desensitization to violence against women. With social media being widely used in activism, regressive masculinities are still dominant in the perception of gender-based violence, thus influencing femicide.

Internationally, movements such as #NiUnaMenos in Argentina and #TheTotalShutdown in South Africa have proved that digital activism can involve people, influence changes in legislation, and increase attention to femicide. Similarly, movements such as #EndFemicideKE in Kenya have emerged and lobbied for change. Yet, cultural norms and traditions of male dominance still persist, and policies meant to protect women do not work efficiently. These societal attitudes serve to blame women for the violence they endure and make it difficult to seek justice.

Various gaps in the literature are highlighted in the course of the literature review. One of them is the absence of studies directly linking social media influence to femicide outcomes. As much as there are awareness campaigns such as #EndFemicideKE, there is limited evidence showing the impact of such campaigns in reducing femicide or changing people's perceptions towards gender-based violence, particularly in Nairobi County. Thus, this study seeks to examine the relationship between social media and femicide, and how social media both contributes to and helps mitigate increasing femicide cases.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the methodology used in the study. It describes the research design, target population, sampling process, sample size, data collection tools, pilot study, reliability and validity of the instruments, data analysis, and issues of ethical consideration.

3.2 Research design

The study used a mixed method research design integrating qualitative, quantitative and policy analysis methodologies in an attempt to understand the part played by social media on femicide incidents in Nairobi County. The mixed methods approach was chosen because the study sought to obtain both numerical data on patterns and trends, as well as in-depth insights into perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to social media and femicide, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Within this mixed methods framework, the study employed a convergent parallel research design, whereby qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and later merged during interpretation to provide a holistic explanation of the research problem. This design allowed for the triangulation of findings, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the results. Qualitative research was used due to its capacity to provide thorough perception about social behaviors and attitudes towards femicide as illustrated on the social media. This approach is useful in establishing the factors and processes that could be missed by mere quantitative assessment (Creswell, 2014).

3.3 Research site

This study was done in Nairobi, Kenya the capital city and primary urban center of the country. The location was selected due to its high social media usage and the reported prevalence of femicide cases as compared to other locations within the country. The county is categorized by high population density, rapid urbanization and significant social-economic diversity making it ideal for examining complex social issues such as femicide. Nairobi comprises both formal and informal settlements, each with distinct social, economic and cultural dynamics that influence patterns of behavior, exposure to gender-based violence and access to digital platforms.

Nairobi county is divided into several sub-counties including Westlands, Kibra, Embakasi, Kasarani, Dagoretti, Lang'ata, Starehe among others. These areas consist of diverse neighborhoods ranging from high-income residential zones to informal settlements such as Kibra, Mathare and Mukuru Kwa Njenga. These settlements exhibit the different levels of income, education, employment and access to social services creating a heterogeneous population. The diversity therefore, enhances the different representatives of the study and allows for different perspectives. Nairobi is the leading regions in Kenya in terms of internet penetration and social media usage which is driven by the increases smartphone ownership and improved digital literacy (Odera & Matiy, 2022). The widespread use of social media has allowed for Nairobi residents to access information, interact and engage in public discourse. Stakeholders within Nairobi county have used social media to actively address gender-based-violence and femicide. They have utilized social media to report cases, mobilize communities and demand accountability. Therefore, by focusing on Nairobi, the research aims to inspect urban dynamics that lead to the relationship between social media and femicide. Collecting data from various demographics in Nairobi offered a wider empathetic of the matter.

3.4 Target population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the intended population is a group of persons or items with shared features. The target population for this study comprised key stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in issues related to femicide and social media in Nairobi County, Kenya. These included law enforcement officers, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), social media users, and family members of femicide victims. These groups were considered relevant due to their engagement with gender-based violence, digital platforms, and justice processes.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), Nairobi County is the most populous and urbanized region in Kenya, with high internet penetration and widespread use of social media platforms. This makes it a suitable context for examining the contribution of social media to the rising cases of femicide. Additionally, Nairobi hosts numerous organizations working on gender-based violence, advocacy, and human rights, providing a rich pool of respondents with relevant expertise and experience.

Law enforcement officers were included due to their role in investigating, preventing, and responding to femicide cases, as well as their insights into how social media may influence or facilitate such crimes. NGOs and CSOs, including organizations such as FIDA Kenya, Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Wangu Kanja Foundation, Usikimye, and Kenyans in Action, were selected because of their active involvement in advocacy, victim support, and policy engagement aimed at addressing gender-based violence.

Social media users formed a critical category of the target population, as they provided perspectives on online interactions, including the spread of misogynistic content, harmful gender stereotypes, and victim-blaming narratives that may contribute to the normalization of violence against women. The number of social media respondents was determined based on the anticipated reach across the researcher's various social media platforms, thereby enabling access to a broader and more diverse pool of participants. Family members of femicide victims were also included to provide firsthand insights into lived experiences, the impact of femicide, and the role social media plays in reporting, public discourse, and justice-seeking processes.

Given the diversity of stakeholders involved in femicide-related issues, the study categorized the target population into key groups to ensure representativeness and comprehensive coverage. The total target population for the study was 250 respondents drawn from the identified categories. The distribution of the target population across these groups is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Target population

Category	Target Population
Law enforcement (police)	50
Non-governmental organizations	20
Civils society organizations	30
Social media users	130
Family members of Femicide Victims	20
Total	250

3.5 Study sample

3.5.1 Sampling procedure

Sampling involves selecting individuals or groups with homogenous characteristics from the intended populace. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants who possessed relevant

knowledge, experience, or involvement in issues related to social media and femicide. This included representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), social media users, and family members of femicide victims. The purposive approach was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to intentionally select information-rich cases that could provide in-depth insights into the phenomenon under study. In addition, systematic random sampling was applied in selecting specific police stations within Nairobi County, such as Central Police Station, Kilimani Police Station, and Pangani Police Post. From these stations, individual law enforcement officers were selected using a random selection procedure to reduce selection bias and enhance representativeness within the category of law enforcement officers. The combination of these sampling techniques ensured both depth of information and a degree of randomness where applicable.

3.5.2 Sample size

The sample size for the study was determined using the Nassiuma (2000) formula, which is appropriate for finite populations and is widely used in social science research to ensure statistical adequacy. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = (N * C^2) / (C^2 + (N-1) * e^2)$$

Where:

N = Population size = 250

C = Confidence level (coefficient of variation) = 0.95

e = Margin of error = 0.05

The calculated sample size (n) is: 148

Thus, 148 individuals were used as the sample size as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Sample size

Group	Population	Sample ratio	Sample
Police service	50	n/250×154	30
NGO's	20	n/250×154	12
CSO's	30	n/250×154	18

Social media users	130	n/250×154	88
Family members of Victims	20	n/250x20	12
TOTAL	250		148

3.6 Data collection instruments

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), data collection instruments are essential in obtaining accurate and relevant data from respondents to address the research problem effectively.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

According to Kothari (2004), a questionnaire is a research instrument made up of a series of questions designed to collect information from respondents in a systematic and standardized way. Questionnaires are commonly used in research to gather large amounts of data efficiently, particularly when the researcher seeks information on attitudes, opinions, or behaviors. Questionnaires were used as the main source of gathering information in this research. This method was opted because it enabled the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative information. The questionnaire included both structured and unstructured questions so that the respondent's ideas can be fully explored while quantitative data can also be gathered simultaneously. The first part of the questionnaire concerned respondent's personal data and basic characteristics including their demographic data and social media profile. The second section focused on the way social media affects the reporting of femicide, raising awareness, and changing the perception of such cases. The third part evaluated how the femicide incidents are portrayed, and the impact they have on the audience and social media communities. The fourth and last section therefore evaluated the positive and negative aspects of using social media in cases of femicide. The questions elicited the respondent's views on the extent that social media can be used to fuel and fight violence against women.

The questionnaires were administered to social media users, law enforcement officers, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and family members of femicide victims. These groups were selected because they constitute key stakeholders with direct or indirect exposure to femicide-related issues. Representatives of the NGOs and CSOs and law enforcement officers were invited because of their professional activity

in investigating, preventing, and advocating gender-based violence and family members of victims of femicide were invited to give the first-hand accounts of lived experiences, reporting procedures, and the social impact of the incidences of femicide.

3.6.2 Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted with the following groups: police officers, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), families of femicide victims, and other key informants with vast knowledge and experience in dealing with femicide and the influence of social media in either fueling or reducing the vice. To achieve this goal, the interviews was guided by questions that enabled participants to express their opinions about the role played by social media in raising awareness and reporting of femicide and participants' opinions on the efficacy of digital activism in the fight against femicide.

The interview questions consisted of questions that are primarily aimed at assessing the participants' professional practice in the field of femicide, their knowledge of social media trends in femicide, impact of online activism and challenges of dealing with femicide both online and offline. These, are more detailed interviews that helped in obtaining more detailed information on the relationship between social media and femicide, supplementing the information that was obtained from the questionnaires.

3.6.3 Pilot testing of research instruments

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a pilot study is a small-scale preliminary study conducted before the main research to test the feasibility, reliability, and effectiveness of the research instruments, procedures, and study design, it is essential for pre-testing research instruments to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability of the data collection process. A pilot study was conducted prior to the main data collection to test the validity, clarity and reliability of the research instruments. To achieve this, a sample of the target population of 10% was administered to pilot test the research instruments. The pilot study was carried out in Syokimau, Machakos County, which is not in Nairobi County. Machakos county was selected because it shares similar urban characteristics, socio-economic dynamics and patterns of social media use with Nairobi county.

Conducting the pilot study in a different county ensured that the respondents used for pilot testing were not part of the final sample, therefore preventing contamination and minimizing response

bias. This testing assisted in determining the clarity of the questionnaires and the interview guided and whether they addressed the right areas to be covered. The information gathered from the pilot test was then used to improve the tools in order to obtain the required information. The pilot testing process also helped the researcher to determine any problems and confusion with the questions and get an appropriate solution before starting the data collection process.

3.6.4 Instrument reliability

Reliability in assessment is the degree to which the research instruments provide similar results if they are used consecutively (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). To test reliability, the study used the test-retest method in which 15 social media users were given a similar survey after one week. The responses were compared to establish the reliability of the results that was obtained. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained by comparing the two sets of responses and when the coefficient of more than 0.7 is obtained then it means that the instruments are reliable. This method makes it easy to achieve a consistency and reliability of data collected from one period to another.

3.6.5 Instrument validity

Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is required to measure (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). To establish the reliability of the research instruments, the following techniques was used. Content validity was ensured through establishing a panel of experts in the domain to review the items in the questionnaire and make sure that they address the required aspects of femicide and social media. Construct validity was maintained by developing the questionnaire items from the framework of the study, thus ensuring that the instruments capture the intended constructs. Face validity was determined through a pilot survey of the instruments to used, which helped to establish that the questions are comprehensible and appropriate for the study.

3.7 Data processing and analysis

Data processing means analyzing the collected data and arranging it in a manner that can be easily understood. The quantitative data was analyzed using quantitative analysis tools for data description including frequency distributions and measures of central tendency. The results were presented in tabular and graphical forms for easy understanding. Regarding the analysis of the qualitative data, the content analysis approach was adopted so as to look for patterns of reoccurrence that correspond with the research objectives. This integration of the quantitative and

qualitative data analysis offered a broad picture on how social media influences the reporting, awareness, and perceptions of femicide in Nairobi County. SPSS software was used to analyze quantitative data while the qualitative data was analyzed manually by coding and categorizing the responses.

3.8 Legal and ethical considerations

In this study, ethical consideration was upheld so as to safeguard the participant's rights and anonymity. Permission was sought by the researcher from all the participants before carrying out the study and they were briefed on the study's objectives and their involvement. To ensure the privacy of the participants, their identities were not disclosed, data collected was stored and disposed of properly after use. The researcher also obtained research ethical review from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and a letter of introduction from Africa Nazarene University to undertake the research. The investigation incorporated random sampling and the participation of the subjects was voluntary and they were given freedom to withdraw at any time.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in line with its main objectives. The study aimed to: assess the extent to which social media is utilized in the dissemination of content promoting femicide in Nairobi County; determine the advocacy role of social media in femicide awareness and prevention; and recommend interventions that can be used on social media platforms to reduce the risk of femicide. The findings are presented using frequency and percentage tables, followed by explanations that interpret the results.

4.2 Response Rate

Response rate gives the percentage of the respondents who participated in the study relative to the number of respondents who were to respond. It helps to confirm the adequacy and reliability of the information collected in the study.

Table 4.1

Response Rate

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
Returned and complete	126	82.9
Not returned/incomplete	26	17.1
Total	152	100.0

The findings indicate that among the 152 questionnaires issued, 126 took part and sent the questionnaires back, which provided a response rate of 82.9 percent. The percentage of questionnaires that were not returned or had missing sections was only 26 (17.1). Such high rate of participation shows that there was great cooperation among respondents and creates a good basis on which conclusions can be drawn.

4.3 Demographic Information of Respondents

This section provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents who took part in the research in detail. Knowledge of the background of the participants will be crucial in putting their

views on how social media affects femicide within the Nairobi County in perspective. The demographic factors like gender, age, level of education, employment, and use of the social media give essential data regarding the interaction of different population segments with the digital platforms and their perception of gender-based violence. The characteristics also facilitate the identification of trends in exposure, interactions, and susceptibility to online materials that might either reinforce or disrupt the narratives about femicide.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The aim of this subsection was to determine the gender distribution of the respondents. An important variable in this research is gender, since femicide is also a gendered phenomenon. Knowing the gender of the sample is useful in determining whether the results represent a balanced opinion of both the male and female views on the matter.

Table 4.2:
Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	68	54.0%
Female	55	43.7%
Prefer not to say	3	2.3%
Total	126	100.0%

The results indicate that 54.0% of the respondents were male, while 43.7% were female. Only a small percentage (2.3) did not want to say what their gender was. This balance indicates a fairly equal gender balance, which is essential in a study about femicide, as it guarantees that both the male and female voices are taken into account in the interpretation of the dual role of social media in perpetrating and combating gender-based violence. The fact that the respondents, who did not want to provide any information about their gender, were included is also sensitive to gender diversity and privacy, which is topical in the context of gender identity and violence.

4.3.2 Age Bracket of the Respondents

The purpose of this subsection was to find the age distribution of the respondents. The age is an important factor in terms of the social media usage patterns, with younger populations being more likely to have a high level of digital engagement. Knowledge of age distribution of respondents

can be used to understand how they are exposed and interact with the content on internet related to femicide.

Table 4.3
Age Bracket of Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 years	6	4.8%
20–29 years	38	30.2%
30–39 years	42	33.3%
40–49 years	26	20.6%
50 years and above	14	11.1%
Total	126	100.0%

The results indicate that most of the respondents (33.3) were aged 30-39 years old, then secondly, they were aged 20-29 years (30.2). The population aged 40-49 years comprised 20.6% and the population aged 50 and above comprised 11.1% of the total population. There were only 4.8% under 20 years. This age distribution indicates that the research involved mostly adults who are in their most active working and social contribution years and are thus most likely to be active on social media and be exposed to some discussion on femicide. The high proportion of younger adults (2039 years) is consistent with the global patterns suggesting that the younger generations are the most active users of such platforms as Twitter (X), Instagram, and Tik Tok whose insights are of significant interest to the study.

4.3.3 Level of Education

This sub-section aimed at establishing the maximum level of education the respondents had. The level of education is also a sensitive factor in the perception and reaction of people to the content of social media, particularly when it comes to such complex topics like femicide and violence against women.

Table 4.4
Level of Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary education	4	3.2%
Secondary education	18	14.3%
Diploma	24	19.0%

Bachelor's degree	56	44.4%
Postgraduate degree	24	19.0%
Total	126	100.0%

The findings indicate that most of the respondents (44.4) had a bachelor degree followed by those with diploma and postgraduate degrees (19.0 and 19.0 respectively). The proportion of respondents who had secondary education was 14.3 and only 3.2% had primary education. This means that the sample was majorly made up of persons having tertiary education which implies that there was high level of literacy and critical thinking ability. This group is in a good position to respond to and interpret social media posts, so their feedback is especially useful in examining the subtle impact of digital media in creating femicide discourses.

4.3.4 Employment Status of the Respondents

The purpose of this subsection was to determine the employment statuses of the respondents. The employment can determine the mode and reason of using social media and whether or not one is exposed to content related to femicides, either professionally or as an individual who is interested.

Table 4.5

Employment Status Source

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Student	22	17.5%
Employed	64	50.8%
Self-employed	26	20.6%
Unemployed	14	11.1%
Total	126	100.0%

The results indicate that over half of the participants (50.8% of all the respondents) work as employees, with 20.6% of those as self-employed. The sample consisted of students (17.5%), and the unemployed (11.1%). This distribution indicates that most of the respondents were economically active and this could affect their access to digital devices, internet connectivity and usage of social media. The fact that the students and unemployed are included will also guarantee that the study will take into consideration the views of possibly more vulnerable groups, who may have a different experience with the content about femicides and/or witness it.

4.3.5 Frequency of Social Media Use

In this subsection, the researcher aimed at finding out the frequency of usage of social media platforms by respondents. The frequency of use is one of the indicators of exposure to harmful and advocacy-oriented content on femicide.

Table 4.6
Frequency of Social Media Use

Frequency of Use	Frequency	Percentage
Several times a day	72	57.1%
Once a day	28	22.2%
A few times a week	16	12.7%
Rarely	6	4.8%
Never	4	3.2%
Total	126	100.0%

The statistics indicate that most of the respondents (57.1%) engage in social media multiple times a day and 22.2% engage on social media at least once a day. A smaller percentage (12.7) indicated a few times a week, and only 8.0% said that they hardly ever or never used it. These results affirm that the sample is very active in social media and this is fundamental in a study that explores the digital aspects of femicide. More often, frequent users may be exposed to both advocacy campaigns and misogynistic content, thus their insights will be quite useful in understanding the dual nature of social media in reducing or increasing femicide.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis of the Study Objectives

This section gives and addresses the results of the first objective of the study which aimed at establishing the role of social media platforms in reporting, creating awareness and perception of cases of femicide in Nairobi County. The analysis revolves around how respondents agree with major statements on the role of social media in spreading content on femicide, creating and having an impact on the discourse of the people and influencing policy actions. The results are then summarized in frequency and percentage tables, and then in statistical summaries and commentary.

4.4.1 Social Media and Promotion of Harmful Gender Stereotypes Contributing to

Femicide

The initial aim of the research was to examine how social media platforms were used to propagate negative gender stereotypes that led to incidences of femicide in Nairobi County in Kenya. Descriptive results suggested that social media platforms are influential in spreading information as well as defining gender norms, attitudes, and perceptions that can normalize or legitimize violence against women. Respondents said that sites like Twitter (X), Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp contain discussions, comments, and user-generated content which tend to reaffirm and uphold gender roles within society.

The research also found out that social media content, memes, commentary, opinion posting and viral discussion have the potential to reinforce stereotypes like victim-blaming, male dominance, and normalization of power over women. Hashtags and viral stories, though potentially helpful in advocacy, were also seen to sometimes draw misogynistic commentary and polarizing discussions that perpetuate negative gender ideologies. Yet, social media is also a counter-space in which activists and organizations can contest these narratives and educate people and organizations on gender equality and awareness.

Inferential analysis revealed that social media use is strongly linked with the dissemination and exposure to gendered stories that can change people's attitudes toward femicide. In this subsection, the researcher examines the perceptions of the respondents towards the social media platforms in spreading negative gender stereotypes that perpetuate femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya. The items were scored using a five-point Likert scale starting with 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 4.7
Social Media and Promotion of Gender Stereotypes

Statement	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Social media content reflects gender stereotypes	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	10 (7.9)	48 (38.1)	62 (49.2)	4.29	0.891
Exposure to misogynistic content influences attitudes towards women	6 (4.8)	18 (14.3)	28 (22.2)	50 (39.7)	24 (19.0)	3.54	1.083

Victim blaming on S.M contribute to violence against women	4 (3.2)	10 (7.9)	20 (15.9)	56 (44.4)	36 (28.6)	3.87	1.012
S.M discussions justify or trivialize femicide cases	2 (1.6)	6 (4.8)	12 (9.5)	52 (41.3)	54 (42.9)	4.18	0.936
Online communities promote toxic masculinity and negative perceptions of women	8 (6.3)	14 (11.1)	30 (23.8)	50 (39.7)	24 (19.0)	3.55	1.096
Repeated exposure to harmful content desensitizes users to VAW	4 (3.2)	10 (7.9)	18 (14.3)	52 (41.3)	42 (33.3)	3.93	1.032
Composite Mean						3.89	

The findings show that the respondents generally concur that social media is the key contributor to gender stereotypes and the overall understanding of femicide.

The power of social media discourse makes or deemphasizes femicide (M=4.18) makes it visible as to how a femicide case is construed by society. Information that is posted on the Internet tends to put victims in a perspective that can either create sympathy or, on the contrary, strengthen victim blaming leanings. The respondents observed that comment boxes and forums often represent social prejudices which impacts on the treatment and perception of victims. On the same note, in the interview session with the police officers, majority of the respondents explained how majority of the victims are misconstrued. One of the respondents had this to say;

“the members of the community mostly blame the victims rather than the perpetrators in WhatsApp groups and other social media (Police Officer, 5).”

The results further indicate that attitudes towards women (M=3.54) are impacted by exposure to misogynistic content, and that such content promotes victim-blaming stories, which suggests that damaging cultural norms are replicated online. Such observations resonate with the Feminist theory which holds that gender inequality is a social construct and reinforced by institutions and medium of communication, such as the media.

The message about online communities encourages toxic masculinity and negative views of women, reveal that attitudes of reinforcing the idea of male dominance that produced a moderate mean (M=3.55), implies that the patriarchal values remain present online. Respondents noted that there are users who rationalize the behavior of women and as a result, the violence in intimate relationships can be normalized. In the same manner, users are desensitized to VAW (M=3.93)

when they are repeatedly exposed to harmful content, which signifies worries about toxic online subcultures that spread harmful ideology. The existence of toxic spaces (e.g. the so-called manosphere) (BBC News, 2024) makes the digital world even more complicated and solidifies the ideologies of misogyny that promote violence against women.

“Misogyny tends to silence or ridicule survivors, it reinforces stereotypes and down-plays violence that would normalize victim-blaming and de-sensitize audiences that would support harmful gender norms and blame victims or doubt their decisions. (NGO representative, 4)”

All the findings taken collectively show that social media has a multi-layered role to play in influencing gender norms within the county of Nairobi. Although it helps to reinforce the negative stereotypes of femicide, it also provides the means to fight back, build awareness and initiate positive social change.

4.4.2 Role of Social Media in Advocacy, Awareness and Public Perception

The section introduces and explains the results of the second objective of the study, which aimed to evaluate the impact of social media reporting on femicide cases on the opinion of the population, as well as the emotional and institutional responses. The discussion centered on how the respondents agrees with main statements of the emotional, cognitive and behavioral effect of digital narratives about femicide. These insights play a pivotal role in comprehending how online sites can determine societal attitudes and possibly affect justice proceedings and policy reactions.

Table 4.8
Impact of Social Media Coverage on Public Perception

Statement	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Social media coverage influences public emotions and outrage.	2 (1.6)	6 (4.8)	10 (7.9)	52 (41.3)	56 (44.4)	4.22	0.911
Reporting style affects how victims are perceived.	4 (3.2)	10 (7.9)	18 (14.3)	50 (39.7)	44 (34.9)	3.95	1.021
Hashtags help keep femicide cases in public discourse.	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	12 (9.5)	48 (38.1)	60 (47.6)	4.26	0.873
Coverage has increased fear and insecurity among women.	6 (4.8)	12 (9.5)	20 (15.9)	52 (41.3)	36 (28.6)	3.79	1.071
Victim portrayal often leads to victim-blaming.	4 (3.2)	8 (6.3)	16 (12.7)	54 (42.9)	44 (34.9)	3.99	1.003

Public reactions influence	6 (4.8)	10 (7.9)	22 (17.5)	50 (39.7)	38 (30.2)	3.83	1.058
Composite Mean and Std Dev						4.01	0.990

The findings show that the social media reporting on femicide cases tends to be agreed upon by the respondents as having a powerful impact on the perceptions of the masses and their emotions. With the mean of 4.26, the most rated statement confirms that online discussions and hashtags like the ones used to address the topic of femicide like, #JusticeForVictims and #EndFemicideKE are key in maintaining the public discourse on the issue of femicide. This observation is consistent with Carlson (2021) and Nando (2024), who highlight the effectiveness of digital activism in making the issues of gender-based violence visible and urgent. Equally, in the interview session with the civil society organization representative, it was clear that long-lasting online advocacy has made femicide a public issue other than a personal tragedy. One respondent had this to say;

“Hashtags keep cases in the public spotlight long after mainstream media attention has faded. Moreover, online campaigns provide families of victims with a voice, ensuring that their names and stories are not forgotten” (CSO leader)

Another respondent further added that when a case goes viral, it comes under the scrutiny of the people and it requires accountability which would have not been there before. (Police Officer, 9) These stories justify the mean score ($M = 4.26$), which shows that there is a high level of agreement on the fact that social media advocacy is a key aspect in keeping the masses informed. Hashtags and online discourses can be regarded as instruments of group memory and pressure, which strengthens the involvement of the population. This fact aligns with the results of Carlson (2021), who discovered that digital advocacy could keep gender-based violence in the news even after the conventional news cycles. Likewise, Nando (2024) shows that Kenyan feminist hashtags have institutionalized discourse of femicide in the mind of people. The overlapping of qualitative and quantitative data supports the evidence that social media advocacy plays the agenda-sustaining role.

The argument that social media reporting affects society and furor had a mean of 4.22 with 85.7 percent of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. It implies that digital platforms are efficient in activating emotional responses, which may result in the collective action, protests, and justice demands. This is supported by the Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996)

that argues that emotional events (like femicide reports) will trigger a reaction that will change attitudes and behavior. Similarly, in the interview session with the NGO officials it was discovered that graphic narrations and personal testimonies are highly emotional appeals, particularly among young women. Actually, this was the opinion of one of NGO officials;

According to NGO officials, viral posts usually trigger outrage among people, which is followed by protests and demands justice and that emotions motivate people to be united, donate money, and join the marches (8).

This suggests that emotional involvement appears to be a key driver of group activity, thereby supporting advocacy outcomes. This is in line with the Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) which proposes that affect-laden events affect attitudes and behaviors. Recent research by Jackson et al. (2022) likewise demonstrates that emotionally framed digital content boosts the population involvement in social justice movements. The results therefore point to emotion as one of the important processes by which social media advocacy creates awareness.

The respondents also concurred that the perception of victims depends on the manner in which the cases of femicide are reported ($M = 3.95$). This underscores the significance of narrative framing and language employed in the posts of the social media. The sensationalist or biased news coverage may misrepresent the general knowledge and propagate negative stereotypes. Fulu et al. (2023) warn that these depictions can contribute to the patriarchal norm and redirect blame onto victims, which can be counterproductive to advocacy. In the same case, as the study was conducted in the interview session with the CSO representatives, the study came up with the statement that the majority of the respondents were concerned with the way the victims are represented online, one of the respondents said the following;

“The choice of language makes the difference between whether the populace is sympathetic or judgmental of the victim and such sensational headlines frequently overpower the structural causes of femicide (CSO, 8)”

A policeman also commented that

“Misrepresentation may greatly undermine investigations and the trust of the people since it distorts facts and derails decision making and undermines the credibility of institutions that are supposed to promote justice and accountability (Police Officer, 7).”

Such sentiments suggest that the manner in which victims are reported influences the perception of victims by the people. Narrative framing is very imperative in either strengthening advocacy or

maintaining stigma. This observation agrees with Fulu et al. (2023), who warn that selective representations of femicide may support patriarchal values and blaming victims. Also, Gill and Orgad (2022) hold the view that sensationalist digital discourses tend to depoliticize gender-based violence by concentrating on individual actions as opposed to structural inequality. The qualitative narratives thereby highlight the significance of ethical advocacy messages.

The victim-blaming statement had the mean of 3.99, with 77.8% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. That highlights a long-standing issue in the online realm, in which victims are frequently questioned about their way of life, looks, or decisions. According to the Feminist Theory (Radford and Russell, 1992), this is a demonstration of the systematic gender discrimination whereby violence against women is accepted and justified within a cultural discourse. Similarly, the interview with the Police officers reveals that the comment sections tend to place blame on victims, whose actions or morality are questioned. One of the police officers said;

Victim-blaming is typically very prevalent among the social media users at the comment section and this goes against advocacy by justifying violence.

Equally, A CSO official noted that

“victim blaming is quite common in the comment section and these stories make people not report and cooperate with investigations (CSO, 7).”

This indicates that victim-blaming is still common in social media advocacy platforms. This phenomenon is elucidated through Feminist Theory (Radford and Russell, 1992) which is based on the systemic gender inequalities that legitimize violence against women. The recent research by Powell and Henry (2023) also records the effect of online victim-blaming, which strengthens the rape culture and undermines the accountability measures. The results indicate that advocacy may be a way of increasing awareness but also reveals ingrained gender bias.

The assertion that social media coverage has escalated fear and insecurity among women had a mean score of 3.79 which corresponds to moderate agreement. The heightened awareness can be accompanied by anxiety and the feeling of vulnerability when women are constantly exposed to violent material, especially those that identify with the victims. This is aligned to the results of Bhanye et al. (2023) who observed that psychological effects of exposure to GBV digitally may

include trauma and hypervigilance. On the same note, it was also determined that during the interview session with the NGO representatives.

“Women (this is particularly true of urban populations) develop fear due to the constant exposure to femicide stories. One of the NGO official had this to say, “many women become hyper-aware of their safety, altering daily routines and that fear can discourage mobility but also increases reporting.” (NGO official, 7).”

Consequently, there are both beneficial and detrimental impacts of social media advocacy which increases awareness and increases fear and insecurity. Similar results were achieved by Bhanye et al. (2023), who discovered that digital exposure to gender-based violence might result in anxiety, trauma, and hypervigilance. Moreover, Dworkin et al. (2022) observe that secondary trauma can be caused by repeated exposure to violent content in women. These results point to the psychological expenses of awareness through advocacy.

Lastly, the argument that the general reaction of the population affects the way in which authorities react to the cases of femicide was rated with a mean of 3.83. Though the percentage of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed is 69.9, the percentage is relatively lower, which implies that institutional responsiveness is still not uniform. Although social media may put pressure on authorities to take action, inherent systemic factors like poor enforcement, inadequate resources, and political inertia may inhibit effective intervention. This is in line with the Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) which holds that media can influence the priorities of the people, but not necessarily the change of policy. Similarly, the qualitative reaction of the CSO representatives noted that the viral outrage usually brings out police statements and arrests. One of the respondents, indeed, had the following to say;

“Viral outrage can lead to the release of police statements and arrests since the pressure formed by the crowd due to the rapid spread of information on the Internet can speed up the reaction of the institution, both positively and negatively. (CSO, 4)”

On a good note, this means that viral outrage could serve as a catalyst to accountability. Once the incidents are spread all over social media, they become heavily scrutinized, the media covers them, and people demand to take action. Such pressure may push police departments to make announcements, re-open cold cases, or take direct action where an agency might have done nothing or delayed. Viral outrage, in this way, can give amplification to voices on the margins, promote transparency, and give a message to authorities that the masses are paying attention to their actions.

Nonetheless, an official of the NGO warned that there is inconsistency in follow through once the people put the attention behind. Thus, the institutional responses are shaped by the public reactions. Although social media advocacy may influence the priorities of the people, it does not promise long-lasting policy or enforcement results. This observation is consistent with Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) which argues that media shape issues that are deemed significant but may not necessarily involve how they are solved. The recent findings by Mutisya and Wamuyu (2021) reaffirm that in Kenya, digital pressure tends to lead to symbolic, but not systemic reactions. Therefore, awareness through advocacy should be supplemented with institutional reforms.

4.4.3 Intervention Measures in Addressing Femicide

This section presents and discusses findings concerning the third objective of the study that aimed to investigate the possible intervention measures of social media in addressing femicide in Nairobi County. The discussion examines how the respondents see the two-sidedness of social media as a platform to advocate and raise awareness, and as a platform that can be abused, misused, and exploited. These lessons are important in the education of digital policy, ethical reporting practices and strategic interventions to curb gender-based violence.

Table 4.9:
Opportunities of Social Media in Addressing Femicide

Statement	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Social media has helped expose otherwise unnoticed femicide cases.	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	10 (7.9)	50 (39.7)	60 (47.6)	4.28	0.880
Anonymity allows perpetrators to spread hate speech and misinformation.	4 (3.2)	6 (4.8)	14 (11.1)	52 (41.3)	50 (39.7)	4.09	0.987
Law enforcement monitors social media to investigate femicide cases.	8 (6.3)	18 (14.3)	26 (20.6)	48 (38.1)	26 (20.6)	3.53	1.108
Online activism has led to policy changes on GBV.	6 (4.8)	14 (11.1)	30 (23.8)	50 (39.7)	26 (20.6)	3.60	1.045
Some users exploit femicide cases for personal/political gain.	4 (3.2)	10 (7.9)	18 (14.3)	54 (42.9)	40 (31.7)	3.92	1.015

Need for stricter regulations on femicide reporting on social media.	2 (1.6)	6 (4.8)	16 (12.7)	50 (39.7)	52 (41.3)	4.14	0.936
Composite Mean and Std Dev						3.93	0.995

The findings reveal that the people who were interviewed have overwhelmingly acknowledged that social media has a positive potential of being used to expose the cases of femicide that would have gone unnoticed. The most rated statement having a mean of 4.28 confirms that digital platforms have been critical in enhancing the voices of the marginalized and highlighting less covered cases. This result corresponds to Graham and Dutton (2019) and Carlson (2021) who emphasize the influence of social media in the process of democratizing information and empowering grassroots advocacy. Equally, in the interview session with the CSOs, it was indicated that social media has emerged as an imperative intervention area where femicide cases, otherwise, would not have been reported. According to one of the CSOs,

“In informal settlements, families use social media as they believe that mainstream media and institutions are not addressing them and that digital platforms provide them with a direct avenue to communicate without any intermediaries.” (CSO official, 1)

On the same note, a police officer admitted that;

“some cases get our attention only after they have gone viral.” (Police officer 1)

These stories further affirm that social media has the power to reveal concealed cases of femicide and provide a voice to the oppressed. This intervention position is consistent with Graham and Dutton (2019) who claim that digital platforms make information democratic because of the high accessibility of information and the lack of structural barriers to participation. Similar ideas are expressed by Carlson (2021) who argues that social media makes grassroots advocacy possible because communities can circumvent the traditional power structures. These results indicate that the most important preventive and accountability mechanisms are visibility and voice amplification.

The second-highest rated statement (M = 4.14) however indicates a high level of agreement that tougher measures are required on the reporting of cases of femicide on the internet. This is an area

of concern with 81.0% of the respondents indicating that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that reporting on these issues is unethical, sensational, and could re-traumatize the families of the victims. This corroborates the demands by Fulu et al. (2023) to have digital governance structures that can help strike a balance between freedom of expression and protection against harm.

The message that anonymity allows the perpetrators to propagate hate speech and misinformation had a mean of 4.09 and 81.0% consent. This brings one of the main issues with digital spaces to the fore, as on one hand, anonymity helps to safeguard vulnerable users, on the other hand, it encourages malicious players. The Online Disinhibition Effect (Suler, 2004) is the explanation of anonymity that diminishes accountability and causes aggression and toxic behavior to increase. This may take the form of victim-blaming, denialism, and propagation of misogynistic beliefs in the context of femicide. Similarly, during an interview with the police officers, one of them said that he felt concerned that hate speech and victim-blaming are frequently initiated by anonymous information. The following is what she said; “

“...anonymous or pseudo accounts breeds misinformation and hate speech, which spreads faster when users feel untraceable.” (Police Officer, 9)

In the same breath, an NGO official also added that:

“anonymity protects those who engage in online abuse” (NGO, 11).

These sentiments are part of the acknowledgment that uncontrolled anonymity can facilitate malicious actions. Reduced accountability causes aggression and misogyny; this is due to the Online Disinhibition Effect (Suler, 2004). This is reflected in the debate on femicide through denial, glorification of violence, and harassing of the activists. Fulu et al. (2023) also observe that the anonymity makes it harder to hold people accountable in technology-mediated gender-based violence. These results indicate that the authentication of identity and content control are important intervention measures.

The fact that there are people who use the cases of femicide to gain personal or political advantages was moderately agreed with by the respondents ($M = 3.92$). This is an indication of an increasing worry of performative activism and opportunistic involvement where people or groups are using tragic experiences to gain attention or further other unrelated causes. Bhanye et al. (2023) warn

that this kind of exploitation may water down true advocacy and undermine people in digital campaigns. Similarly, qualitative response of the CSO representatives determined that not all the influencers respond to the cases of femicide as it is in their interest to be visible. Actually, one of the CSO officials responded;

“There are cases where advocacy is compromised by political actors in order to advance irrelevant agenda like increasing their visibility to people and this undermines the gravity of the crime. (CSO, 10)”

The average mean ($M = 3.92$) shows that the person is worried about the opportunistic engagement. Performative activism may undermine advocacy by moving away the emphasis on justice and prevention. Bhanye et al. (2023) warn that this kind of exploitation compromises the confidence of the population and diminishes the effectiveness of the campaigns. Likewise, Jackson et al. (2022) state that to maintain digital movements, authenticity is essential. These results demonstrate the necessity of ethical advocacy standards and responsibility among online actors.

The assertion that law enforcement bodies are spying on social media to track down cases of femicide got an average of 3.53 implying mixed perceptions. Although 58.7% said that they agreed or strongly agreed, 20.6% said that they were neutral and 20.6% said they disagreed. This can be indicative of the lack of transparency in police activity on the Internet or the distrust in the responsiveness of the institution. According to the Technology-Facilitated GBV Framework (TF-GBV), digital surveillance may be helpful in the investigation, though only with the active enforcement and the trust of the population. Similarly, during one of the interview sessions with the Police officers, it was also mentioned that the Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TF-GBV) Framework also underscores the increasing role played by digital tools, including online reporting systems, data analytics, CCTV, phone metadata and social media monitoring in detecting and investigating GBV. Although these types of digital surveillance can expand the power of the investigative process, it is evident that technology cannot be the only solution because the framework implies this. It relies on active implementation and long-lasting confidence of the community. One of the respondent police officers admitted that; monitoring the social media may help in giving leads but there is limited capacity (Police officer, 12).

“Nevertheless, the reaction of the CSO representatives during the interview was rather skeptical as one of the representatives stated that online police activity is not always

observed and in addition, people do not trust and, therefore, share digital evidence. (CSO, 10)”

This is a sign of ambivalent attitudes towards the digital activity of law enforcement. Although, social media monitoring may contribute to the investigation, it should be effective based on institutional ability and citizen confidence. The Technology-Facilitated GBV Framework indicates that digital surveillance should be accompanied by proactive enforcement and victim-oriented strategies. In the same vein, Henry and Powell (2018) believe that the utilization of digital evidence is poor because of the ineffective institutional frameworks. These results imply that building police digital capacity is one of the main areas of intervention. On the same note, the statement that online activism has resulted in policy changes had a moderate mean of 3.60. Even though 60.3% responded with agree or strongly agree, 15.9% responded with no and 23.8% were neutral. This is a pointer to the fact that though digital campaigns have sensitized people, their implementation into official policy is unequal. According to Sandlots (2013), long-term advocacies and institutional collaborations are necessary in order to translate online momentum into legislative change. The average of 3.93 is an indication that the respondents have a general view that social media is an effective but flawed instrument in overcoming femicide. It provides transparency, mobilization and investigative opportunities, but has risks associated with misinformation, exploitation and ethical violations.

4.5 Inferential Analysis

In order to further examine the relationships involving major social media dynamics and their impact on creating awareness and response to femicide in Nairobi County, a multiple regression analysis was done. The objective was to find out the extent to which different independent variables social media exposure, advocacy engagement, the reliability of reporting and the intensity of the public discourse predict the dependent variable, which is the responsiveness of the populace to the cases of femicide.

The regression model used is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = Public responsiveness to femicide cases

X1 = Social media exposure

X2 = Advocacy engagement

X3= Reporting reliability

X4 = Public discourse intensity

ϵ = Error term

Table 4.10

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.768	0.590	0.582	0.452

Table 4.10 depicts a strong positive correlation between the independent variables and public responsiveness to the cases of femicide with the R value of 0.768. The value of R² of 0.590 implies that the overall effects of social media exposure, advocacy engagement, reporting reliability, and the strength of public discourse explain the variation in public responsiveness in about 59.0%. This implies a strong model fit and it proves that the dynamics of social media are important predictors of the response of the population to the cases of femicide.

Table 4.11

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.456	4	20.614	89.732	0.000
Residual	57.544	121	0.179		
Total	140.000	125			

Table 4.11 reveals a big F-value of 89.732 with a p-value of 0.000 that is smaller than the standard significance value of 0.05. This establishes the fact that the regression model has a significant correlation with the dependent variable. Thus, the null hypothesis about the absence of the correlation between social media dynamics and the level of public responsiveness to femicide is dismissed. The model is statistically valid and can be inferred.

Table 4.12*Coefficients of Determination*

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.102	0.184	—	—	0.000
Social Media Exposure	0.295	0.048	0.328	6.15	0.000
Advocacy Engagement	0.260	0.052	0.287	5.00	0.000
Reporting Reliability	0.340	0.060	0.372	5.67	0.002
Public Discourse Intensity	0.410	0.057	0.438	7.19	0.001

The purpose of regression analysis that was used in this study was to establish the degree to which different dimensions of social media influence the responsiveness of the people to female murder cases in Nairobi County. The four independent variables in the model were social media exposure, advocacy engagement, reporting reliability and public discourse intensity all which were found to be statistically significant. The constant of 1.102 is the minimum level of public responsiveness at which all predictors are set to zero. This would indicate that despite the lack of active social media dynamics, a minimum level of societal concern about femicide exists, which is probably motivated by the wider societal awareness and offline organizing.

One unit of social media exposure, which can be defined as the number of times and the levels to which people are exposed to the femicide-related materials online increases the public responsiveness by a unit of 0.295. It implies that the greater the exposure of people to the cases of femicide via such tools as Twitter (X), Facebook, and Instagram, the higher the chances of them to become emotionally involved, contribute to the content, and require accountability. In the same vein, one unit change in the advocacy engagement in terms of online campaigns and support of gender justice movement leads to a 0.260-unit change in responsiveness. The role of digital activism in organizing collective action and influencing the discourse on gender-based violence is emphasized.

The reporting reliability was also a stronger predictor, where an increase in unit resulted in a 0.340-unit increase in public responsiveness. It means that the society will be more willing to respond positively when reporting cases of femicide using facts and ethically. Trustful reporting leads to

minimizing misinformation, creating reliability, and making the advocacy practices based on credible evidence. Public discourse intensity was the most significant variable with one-unit change leading to a 0.410-unit change in responsiveness. This indicates how longstanding online discussions based on hashtags, comment threads, and viral posts can keep the cases of femicide visible and pressing and apply pressure on institutions to take action.

The results indicate that social media is not only passively informative but a dynamic area that influences popular attitudes and institutional responsibility. The standardized coefficients also prove the relative power of each predictor, where the intensity of public discourse is the most powerful, then the reporting reliability, social media exposure, and advocacy engagement. Such findings suggest that stakeholders such as the civil society, media practitioners, and digital regulators need to focus on ethical reporting, inclusive dialogue, and strategic content dissemination to embrace the full potential of social media in fighting femicide. In such a way, online platforms can be turned into the effective instrument of justice, policy change, and empowerment.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research findings, discussions of the findings in relation to the literature reviewed, and the theoretical framework, and the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The research aimed to examine the role of social media in increasing cases of femicide in Nairobi County based on three objectives; to establish how much social media is encouraging femicide-related information, its advocacy of femicide awareness and prevention and to suggest measures that would help reduce the adverse effects of social media. The research has taken a mixed-methods approach, which is a combination of questionnaire responses, interviews, and content analysis of social media and mainstream media.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings

The study attained a response rate of 82.9%, with 126 questionnaires returned out of the 152 that were distributed. The respondents were recruited via social media influencers, police officers, civil society organizations, journalists, and policymakers. Gender representation was relatively balanced, with 54.0% males and 46.0% females, with most respondents falling within the age bracket of 26–39 years. The majority of the respondents had bachelor's degrees and were active users of social media, with 57.1% using these platforms more than once a day. The descriptive analysis showed a high level of agreement that social media enhances awareness of femicide cases (mean = 4.29), enables quick dissemination of information (mean = 4.18), and sustains discussion of the issue through hashtags (mean = 4.26). These findings are consistent with Carlson (2021), who noted that social media serves as an effective platform for advocacy, awareness creation, and mobilization around gender-based violence issues. Similarly, Jackson et al. (2020) observed that hashtag activism helps sustain public discourse and maintain visibility of social justice concerns beyond traditional media coverage.

Nevertheless, concerns relating to misinformation (mean = 3.93), victim-blaming (mean = 3.99), and emotional distress among women (mean = 3.79) were also raised. These findings align with Bhanye et al. (2023), who found that social media can reinforce harmful gender stereotypes,

victim-blaming, and toxic narratives that normalize violence against women. Fulu et al. (2023) similarly emphasized that digital platforms may perpetuate misogynistic discourse, thereby contributing to harmful social attitudes toward women. Respondents also recognized that institutional responses are affected by public reactions on social media (mean = 3.83), although policy impacts remain inconsistent. This supports findings by Kearns et al. (2023), who observed that digital media discussions can influence public accountability and institutional responsiveness to gender-based violence cases.

Inferential analysis revealed that four social media dimensions—exposure, advocacy engagement, reporting reliability, and intensity of public discourse—had significant predictive value for public responsiveness to femicide cases. The regression model accounted for 59.0% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.590$), with the intensity of public discourse showing the strongest effect (Beta = 0.438), followed by reporting reliability, social media exposure, and advocacy engagement (Beta = 0.372, 0.328, and 0.287, respectively). A one-unit increase in the intensity of public discourse resulted in a 0.410-unit increase in responsiveness, indicating that sustained online discussions are crucial in mobilizing public concern and pressuring authorities. This finding supports existing literature indicating that repeated digital engagement strengthens awareness, advocacy participation, and institutional accountability. Credible reporting and advocacy were also shown to promote positive engagement, while frequent exposure to femicide content increased emotional awareness and visibility. These results are consistent with Social Learning Theory, which explains how repeated exposure to media content shapes attitudes and behaviors (Bandura, 1977), and Feminist Theory, which highlights the role of media in reinforcing or challenging gendered power relations (hooks, 2000).

5.2.1 Role of Social Media in promoting Harmful Gender Stereotypes Contributing to Femicide

This research shows that the role of social media in the dissemination of misogynistic content that is linked to femicide is significant and multifaceted. The overwhelming majority of respondents said that social media raise awareness about femicide cases (mean = 4.29) and allow the spread of information faster than traditional media (mean = 4.18). But with this increased visibility come the negative by-products. Another notable percentage of respondents cited misinformation (mean = 3.93), biased reporting, and victim-blaming narratives (mean = 3.99) as ubiquitous on the platforms. The qualitative interviews with the police officers and civil society groups were able to

verify that those cases that are posted online tend to create polarizing discussions, most of which perpetuate destructive gender stereotypes.

These findings show that social media is not merely an impartial transfer of information but an agentic creator and enhancer of gendered information. This phenomenon can be clarified with the help of Feminist Theory (Radford and Russell, 1992) that assumes the reproduction of patriarchal norms and cultural scripts in the daily social relations, and digital space is not an exception. The misogynistic memes, derogatory remarks, and victim-blaming discourses that were recorded during the content analysis depict the ways of how online spaces are a reflection of offline power dynamics that undermine the life of women. Regression analysis showed that social media exposure was a significant predictor of the responsiveness of the population to the cases of femicide (0.328), which suggests that the repeated exposure to the material about femicide affects the attitude of people. This is explained in terms of Social Learning Theory in which individuals internalize behaviors and attitudes because of repeated exposure. Here, repeated exposure to misogynistic material can become normalized or desensitize the viewer to violence or become less empathetic to the victim.

The results are consistent with the existing research in Kenya and the rest of the world (Fulu et al., 2023; BBC, 2024) that cautions about the emergence of online groups like the so-called manosphere that actively propagate violence against women. The digital space in Nairobi shows this tendency, as it proves that even though social media provides better visibility on femicide, it also increases the number of toxic content that can lead to its acceptance.

5.2.2 Role of Social Media in Advocacy, Awareness and Public Perception of femicide in Nairobi County, Kenya

The results indicate that social media has emerged as a key venue for digital activism and campaigns against femicide. There was strong agreement among respondents that online hashtags and campaigns keep people talking about femicide (mean = 4.26). This finding supports Carlson (2021), who emphasized the role of digital activism in amplifying marginalized voices, raising awareness, and mobilizing public action around gender-based violence. Similarly, Jackson et al. (2020) observed that hashtag activism sustains public discourse and ensures that social justice issues remain visible beyond traditional media coverage. Conversations with civil society groups such as COVAW and Usikimye further confirmed that social media has provided survivors with a platform to share their experiences, organize vigils, and pressure the government to take action.

The regression analysis also revealed that advocacy engagement is a significant predictor of public responsiveness ($\beta = 0.287$), suggesting that individuals are more likely to take action in cases of femicide where advocacy campaigns are strong, consistent, and emotionally resonant. This aligns with Kearns et al. (2023), who found that emotionally engaging digital campaigns can significantly influence public participation and responsiveness. Hashtags such as #EndFemicideKE, #StopKillingWomen, and #JusticeForRitaWaeni reinforce collective memory and ensure that femicide cases are not forgotten.

Police officers interviewed acknowledged that social media pressure sometimes hastens investigations due to resulting public outrage. Respondents also agreed that institutional behavior is influenced by social media discussions (mean = 3.83). This finding is consistent with international experiences such as #NiUnaMenos and #TheTotalShutdown, which demonstrated how digital activism can trigger public demonstrations, shape policy conversations, and influence institutional accountability. Booker et al. (2025) similarly found that digital media framing of gender-based violence in East Africa significantly influences public discourse and institutional responses. From a theoretical perspective, Feminist Theory explains that digital advocacy challenges patriarchal systems that normalize violence against women by creating spaces where survivors and advocates can contest oppressive narratives. Social Learning Theory also helps explain these findings, as repeated exposure to advocacy messages can shape attitudes, encourage imitation of collective action, and reinforce public demand for justice (Bandura, 1977).

Nevertheless, although social media activism creates awareness, respondents reported that its effect on policy change remains uneven (mean = 3.55). This finding suggests that while digital advocacy can generate short-term public attention, it does not always translate into long-term legislative or institutional reforms. This supports findings by Hafsha (2025), who noted that social media interventions can raise awareness and stimulate engagement but may face limitations in achieving sustained structural change without institutional support. The gap between online advocacy and policy reform reflects institutional inertia and limited state responsiveness, indicating that although social media advocacy is a powerful tool for mobilizing discourse, its effectiveness depends on complementary offline advocacy, legal enforcement, and broader social transformation.

5.2.3 Intervention Measures social media can engage to curb the rising cases of femicide

The results of the research point to several measures that can be applied to reverse the adverse impact of social media on the spread of misogyny and violence. Regression analysis identified public discourse intensity as the strongest predictor of public responsiveness ($\beta = 0.438$). This suggests that the greater the level of public discussion surrounding femicide, the higher the likelihood of public sensitivity and engagement with emerging cases. Sustained online discussions appear to encourage collective action, challenge harmful narratives, and place pressure on justice institutions. This finding is consistent with Jackson et al. (2020), who observed that sustained digital activism and hashtag campaigns help maintain public attention on social justice issues and encourage civic participation. Similarly, Carlson (2021) emphasized that social media discussions can amplify advocacy efforts by keeping gender-based violence issues visible in the public domain.

In the same way, reporting reliability ($\beta = 0.372$) was found to be essential in shaping public perception. Respondents indicated that accurate, credible, and timely reporting is necessary in reducing misinformation and harmful speculation surrounding femicide cases. This aligns with UN Women (2024), which highlights ethical digital communication and responsible media reporting as critical tools in combating gender-based violence and preventing harmful victim narratives. Booker et al. (2025) similarly found that the framing of gender-based violence in digital media significantly influences public understanding, institutional responses, and broader discourse surrounding violence against women.

NGO representatives and digital rights actors interviewed expressed the need for stronger content moderation on platforms such as X, Facebook, and TikTok. Respondents emphasized that where moderation is weak, misogynistic and harmful content spreads rapidly, reinforcing toxic gender norms. This finding supports Bhanye et al. (2023), who found that social media platforms can facilitate the spread of harmful gender stereotypes, online harassment, and victim-blaming narratives that normalize violence against women. Fulu et al. (2023) similarly argued that digital platforms can reproduce misogynistic discourse unless effective safeguards are implemented. The findings also highlight the importance of digital literacy initiatives, particularly among young people, to help users identify harmful content, critically assess online information, and respond safely to digital threats.

Moreover, respondents noted the necessity for legal reforms to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF-GBV). Although Kenya has made progress in areas such as data protection and cybercrime legislation, gaps remain in addressing online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate content, and coordinated digital harassment. These findings are supported by UN Women (2024), which notes that many legal systems remain inadequately equipped to respond to evolving forms of online gender-based violence. From a theoretical perspective, Social Learning Theory supports proactive moderation and ethical reporting, as repeated exposure to harmful online behavior may normalize violence and shape attitudes through observation and imitation (Bandura, 1977). Feminist Theory similarly reinforces the need for structural interventions, including stronger legal protections and institutional reforms, to challenge patriarchal systems that perpetuate violence against women both offline and in digital spaces (hooks, 2000).

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

The research paper finds that social media has a two-fold role to play within the discussion of femicide in Nairobi County. On the one hand, it is a potent instrument of awareness, advocacy, and mobilization that allows quick reporting and maintaining a large audience. Conversely, it promotes the propagation of disastrous narratives, such as misogyny, victim-blaming, and desensitization to violence. The results affirm that the exposure to social media, involvement in advocacies, reliability of reporting, and intensity of discourse have a strong effect on public responsiveness to femicide cases. Of these, the level of public discourse turned out the most significant indicator, highlighting the significance of continuous and inclusive online dialogue. The paper also finds that the effects of social media on policy and institutional response is disproportionate, and that conscious efforts are needed to translate digital activism into official interventions.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the positive role of social media and mitigate its risks in addressing femicide:

5.4.1 Recommendations on reducing harmful Gender Stereotypes on Social Media

In regards to the first objective, the study recommends the following; The government should establish strong legal and policy frameworks that protect women and prevent the spread of misogynistic content that could incite gender based violence or femicide. They can do this by

legalizing policies that criminalize online misogyny, hate speech, harassment and incitement to violence on social media platforms. The government should also develop and enforce ethical guidelines for reporting femicide cases on social media, including mechanisms to counter misinformation, hate speech, and victim-blaming. It should provide protection and support for victims of online abuse by establishing accessible reporting mechanisms such as hotline or rapid-response systems. The government should also enforce digital regulations through education and campaigns, this raises awareness of the consequences of misogyny and gender based violence. Education initiatives should target the youth particularly men, in order to prevent radicalization through misogynistic online content.

Law enforcement agencies should enhance their capacity to monitor social media for femicide-related content, respond to public concerns, and collaborate with digital platforms to track and investigate cases. The government should also review ‘gender desks’ at police stations, they should be trained and sensitized on how to deal with femicide, online bullying and gender based cases, how to collect evidence to avoid dismissing perpetrators due to improper provision of evidence to the judicial system.

5.4.2 Recommendations on Improving Public Awareness and Advocacy on Social Media

In regards to the second objective the study recommends the following; Civil society organizations play an important role in advocacy, awareness creation and social accountability, therefore, Civil society organizations and advocacy groups should invest in digital literacy campaigns, equipping users with skills to critically engage with femicide content and participate in constructive online activism, by doing this they can challenge misogynistic narratives and advocate for stronger policies that protect women against femicide. They can also share survivors’ stories to raise awareness and mobilize public action while minimizing the risk for traumatization. Civil society organizations also function as watchdogs, they can monitor trends in online misogyny and femicide related issues, collect data and publish reports that hold both the government and social media platforms accountable. Through research and documentation, they can contribute to evidence needed for policy reform and public accountability. Finally, they provide survivor-centered support services such as safe houses, counselling, psychosocial support for victims of online abuse and gender based violence.

5.4.3 Recommendations on Social Media Interventions to curb femicide

On the third objective, the study recommends should adopt responsible framing of femicide cases, avoiding sensationalism and promoting narratives that uphold dignity, justice, and gender equality. There is need for media sensitization and training when it comes to reporting femicide cases. How mainstream print media should address femicide in its reporting involves identifying the language of victim-blaming and using the language of responsibility or accountability in its reporting. Media reporting should ensure it avoids language that leads to the victim blaming the victim—for instance, using words “domestic dispute.” Media should avoid using language that results from searching for violence in media reporting—for instance, using the language of “tragedy.” In addition, mainstream media should ensure it avoids language that demeans victims—for instance, using language that emphasizes violence to attract attention. On the other hand, mainstream media should avoid using language that demeans victims’ identities—for instance, using language that refers victims based on their connection with the perpetrator—for instance, “a wife.” Mainstream media should not involve language that demeans victims in victims’ private lives that do not have any connection with victims’ femicide.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

Since this study focused specifically on the contribution of social media to rising cases of femicide within Nairobi County, future research can expand the scope and deepen understanding in the following areas:

- i. A study can be done on the role of algorithmic amplification specifically how platform algorithms (e.g., trending topics, recommendation systems) may promote misogynistic content and influence public attitudes toward femicide. This would assist in revealing the structural forces of content visibility and its psychological effect.
- ii. The comparative study could be carried out in several counties to investigate the differences in social media use, the rates of femicide coverage, and the effectiveness of digital advocacy. Such a study would offer some information regarding the influence of the local culture, internet access and institutional responsiveness on the discussion of femicide in various settings.

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Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Dear Respondent,

My research study is on: *investigating the contribution of social media on the rising cases of femicide: A Case of Nairobi County*. This paper aims to analyze the use of social media in reporting and influencing the perceptions of the people towards the cases of femicide. The results of this study will help in a more comprehensive comprehension of the role played by media platforms in creating awareness, social discussion, and possible interventions in the fight against gender-based violence.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary, and any information will be highly confidential. The details you pass will not be utilized in any other way. Please respond to the questions being as truthful and true as possible. No correct or incorrect answers.

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Kindly tick (✓) the appropriate box or provide written responses where necessary.

This section will aim at collecting background data on the respondents. Your answers will be used to know the diversity of the participants and the relationship between the various demographic variables and the issue being researched.

1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2. Age Bracket

- ☐ Below 20 years
- ☐ 20 – 29 years
- ☐ 30 – 39 years
- ☐ 40 – 49 years
- ☐ 50 years and above

3. Highest Level of Education

- ☐ Primary education
- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ Diploma

- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Postgraduate degree

4. Employment Status

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed

5. How frequently do you use social media?

- ☐ Several times a day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMOTION OF HARMFUL GENDER STEREOTYPES

This section seeks to understand how social media platforms contribute to the promotion of harmful gender stereotypes that may influence femicide cases. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Use a scale of 1-5:

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Social media content reflects gender stereotypes					
Exposure to misogynistic content on social media influences attitudes towards women					
Victim-blaming narratives on social media contribute to the normalization of violence against women.					
Social media discussions sometimes justify or trivialize femicide cases					
Online communities (e.g., influencers, forums) promote toxic masculinity and negative perceptions of women.					
Repeated exposure to harmful content on social media desensitizes users to violence against women.					

Which social media platform do you believe most contributes to harmful gender stereotypes?

Why?

.....

.....

In your opinion, does social media help or hinder efforts to address femicide? Please explain.

.....

.....

SECTION C: IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION

This section assesses how social media coverage of femicide cases influences public opinion and reactions. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Social media coverage influences public emotions and outrage about femicide cases.					
The way femicide cases are reported on social media affects how the victims are perceived.					
Online discussions and hashtags (e.g., #JusticeForVictims) help keep femicide cases in public discourse.					
Social media coverage of femicide has increased fear and insecurity among women.					
The portrayal of femicide victims on social media often leads to victim-blaming.					
Public reactions to femicide cases on social media influence how authorities respond to incidents.					

How do you think social media can be used to create a more responsible and balanced discussion on femicide?

.....

Have you ever participated in any social media campaign against femicide? If yes, what was the experience? If no, why?

.....

SECTION D: CHALLENGES AND INTERVENTION MEASURES IN SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADDRESSING FEMICIDE

This section examines both the challenges and possible intervention of using social media in addressing femicide. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Social media has helped to expose cases of femicide that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.					
The anonymity of social media allows perpetrators to spread hate speech and misinformation.					
Law enforcement agencies monitor social media to track and investigate femicide cases.					
Online activism through social media has led to policy changes addressing gender-based violence.					
Some social media users exploit femicide cases for personal or political gain.					
There is a need for stricter regulations on how femicide cases are reported on social media.					

What do you think are the biggest challenges in using social media to address femicide?

.....

What recommendations would you make to improve the effectiveness of social media in addressing femicide?

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix III: Interview Guide

Introduction

Good day, and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Dorin Njoki, and I am conducting a research study on "*investigating the contribution of social media on rising cases of femicide: A Case of Nairobi County.*" The research aims to comprehend the utilisation of social media in reporting, discussing and forming perception to femicide.

The information will not be shared outside of the classroom and your answers will be kept confidential. The interview will last about 30-45 minutes. You can also share your opinions freely and frankly. Do I have your consent to continue with interview?

Section A: general information.

What is your background or professional expertise, please provide a little introduction about yourself?

What is your level of awareness of incidences of femicide in the Nairobi County, especially on social media?

Why do you think there has been increased attention on the social media platforms on cases of femicide?

Section B: Social Media and Promotion of Harmful Gender Stereotypes

What is your opinion about the role of social media in bringing about cases of femicide?

What are the most popular social media channels (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) to report and discuss femicide cases?

Do you believe social media has served to raise awareness about femicide or has it been a source of misinformation?

Which are the general patterns and discourses in the discussion of femicide online?

What do you believe are the impacts of social media influence on policy and public opinion towards femicide?

Section C: Impact of Social Media on Public Perception and Action

According to your observations, how social media influences the way people feel towards victims of femicide and perpetrators?

Have you observed any tendencies in the ways various demographics (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic background) discuss femicide online?

Do you believe that social media activism (e.g., trending hashtags, petitions) has resulted in any real-life changes in femicide addressing?

How influential are the role of influencers, journalists, and activists in increasing the discussion on femicide via social media?

Do you believe that the manner in which social media covers femicide causes fear, desensitization or positive action within the population?

Section D: Challenges and ethical Concerns in Social Media Reporting

What are the ethical issues with how the issue of femicide is covered on social media?

Do you believe that social media reporting has helped to sensationalize the cases of femicide instead of dealing with the causes?

What are your opinions regarding the dissemination of graphic images and videos of femicide cases in the Internet? Does it assist or hurt awareness campaigns?

Have you observed cases of misinformation or misrepresentation of cases of femicide by social media?

So what are the steps to be taken to make sure that there is responsible reporting and discussion of femicide on social media?

Section E: Intervention Measures and Way Forward

What do you think should be done to utilize social media in the fight against femicide?

What can the government, law enforcement and civil society organizations do to use social media to prevent and respond to femicide?

Which policies or regulations are needed to regulate how the cases of femicide are reported and discussed on social media?

What is the opportunity to use digital spaces to provide safe spaces where survivors and other affected families can share their experiences?

What can social media companies (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) do to confront online harassment and victim-blaming discourses in femicide cases?

What are your last words or suggestions on how social media can be used more responsibly when it comes to the discussion of femicide?

End

Thanks to your time and helpful insights. Your contribution is highly valued and will make a great impact to this research. Should you require more explanation or have some questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Appendix IV: Research Letter



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15th April 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT: DORINE NJOKI WAMBUI

Dorine Njoki Wambui Reg. No. 110062428 is a Bonafide postgraduate student at Africa Nazarene University pursuing a master's degree in governance, Peace, and Security Studies. This program entails Coursework and Thesis. She has successfully completed her coursework and defended her thesis proposal entitled:

“Investigation the contributing of Social Media on Rising Cases of Femicide in Nairobi County ”.

Any assistance accorded to her to facilitate data collection and complete her thesis will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

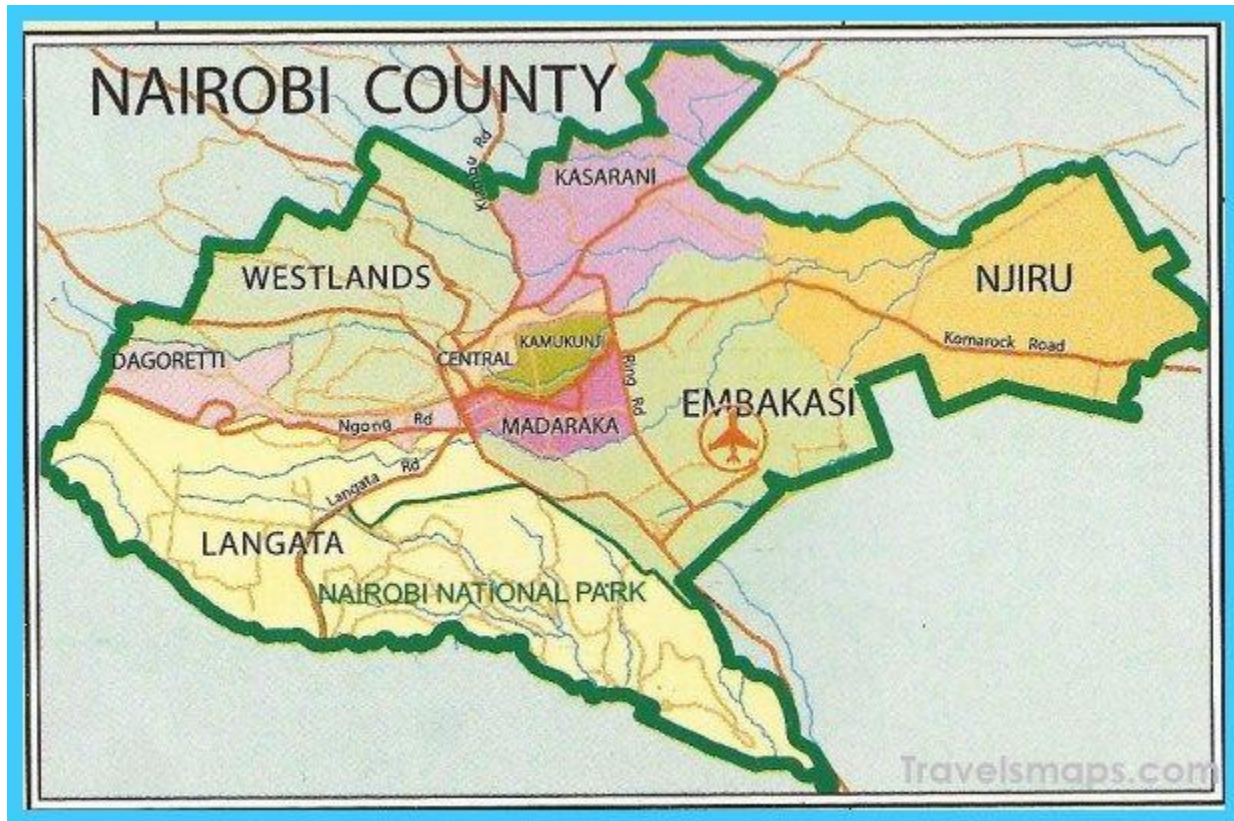
Prof. Orpha K. Ongiti
Dean, Postgraduate Studies & Director, Institute of Research

Appendix V: NACOSTI Research Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA Ref No: 824468	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION. Date of Issue: 13/May/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Miss. Dorine Njoki of Africa Nazarene 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: Investigation the contributing of Social Media on Rising Cases of Femicide in Nairobi County for the period ending : 13/May/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/4173572	
Applicant Identification Number 824468	Deputy Director NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
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See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix IV: Study Area Map.

Nairobi county.



Source: Travel maps, 2025