

**SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON SELECTION OF LEADERSHIP IN  
COMMERCIAL STATE CORPORATIONS IN KENYA****<sup>1</sup> Maritim Kibet Peter, <sup>2</sup> Mahuro Gerald**<sup>1</sup> Senior Management Course, Kenya School of Government<sup>2</sup> Senior Researcher, Kenya School of Government**ABSTRACT**

This study sought to assess the influence of social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. Specifically, the study focuses on classifying various information obtained from social media as fake news, propaganda, misinformation or disinformation, determining the influence of social media information sharing on selection of leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya and assessing the influence of online reputation on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The study used descriptive design. The target population was the management employees in the fourthly six (46) state corporations Kenya. The study targeted a total of 184 management employee comprising of Board Chair, Director General/CEO, HR Managers and Deputy HR Manager in the commercial state corporation. The study used census sampling technique to select a sample of 184 respondents. This study relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through use of semi structured questionnaires. The study also conducted pilot test to test the validity and the reliability of the data collection instrument. The data collection instrument generated both qualitative and quantitative data. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28). Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages were used in this study. In relation to inferential statistics, the study used correlation analysis. This was used to establish the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Data was then presented in tables, bar charts and pie charts. The study concludes that information obtained from social media has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. In addition, the study concludes that information sharing has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. Further, the study concludes that online reputation has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. Based on the findings, this study therefore recommends that the management of commercial state corporations in Kenya should implement transparent and accountable leadership selection processes. In addition, the management should clearly define selection criteria and qualifications, and ensure that appointments are made based on merit and integrity rather than influenced by propaganda or political biases.

**Key Words:** Social Media, Leadership Selection, Commercial State Corporations, Fake News, Propaganda, Misinformation, Disinformation, Information Sharing, Online Reputation

## Background of the Study

Social media has revolutionized communication, information sharing, and interpersonal connections, permeating various aspects of society, including the healthcare sector (Chou et al., 2019). Significant attention has shifted to social media influence on leadership selection in public institutions after recognizing that social media platforms can shape public perceptions and discourse, ultimately impacting the decision-making processes involved in leadership selection (Hanson & Squire, 2019). Commercial state corporations hold a pivotal role in delivering specialized services, and effective leadership is paramount for their successful operation and the provision of high-quality services (Muller et al., 2018).

Traditionally, leadership selection in public institutions relied on conventional methods such as interviews, resumes, and reference checks (Folker et al., 2020). With the advent of social media new avenues have been introduced for evaluating leadership candidates and has opened up opportunities for both positive and negative influences. The growing presence of healthcare and many other professionals on social media platforms, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and professional blogs, has provided abundant information about their expertise, professional networks, and leadership qualities (Moorhead et al., 2019). The accessibility and ease of sharing information on social media have enabled Boards and selection committees to gather additional insights into potential candidates beyond what is traditionally provided in application materials.

Furthermore, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for the dissemination of news, opinions, and feedback related to public institutions and their leaders (Chretien et al., 2019). Professionals, and the general public actively engage in online discussions and express their views regarding the performance, competence, and ethical behavior of leaders. These online conversations have the potential to influence the perception of leadership candidates and may impact the final decision-making process (Girard *et al.*, 2018). A study by Hanson and Squire (2019) found that social media discussions significantly shape public opinion on leaders.

Leadership selection refers to the process by which individuals or groups are chosen to occupy positions of leadership within an organization, community, or political system (Abrahms, Beauchamp, & Mroszczyk, 2016). It involves identifying, evaluating, and selecting individuals who possess the requisite qualities, skills, and capabilities necessary to effectively lead and guide others. Leadership selection plays a crucial role in shaping the direction, effectiveness, and success of organizations and communities. By carefully considering the qualifications, criteria, evaluation processes, and democratic principles, organizations and societies can choose leaders who have the potential to inspire, guide, and achieve desired outcomes. The process of leadership selection can vary depending on the context and the specific organization or system in question (Allcott, & Gentzkow, 2017).

In leadership selection, organizations or communities often establish specific qualifications and criteria for leadership positions. These may include educational background, relevant experience, specific skills, demonstrated leadership abilities, and personal qualities such as integrity, vision, and communication skills (Juhász & Szicherle, 2017). Leadership candidates are typically evaluated and assessed based on the established criteria and qualifications. This can involve interviews, assessments, references, and a review of their track record, achievements, or past performance (Tsipursky, Votta, & Roose, 2017). This study seeks to assess the influence of social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya

## Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, the selection of leadership in commercial state corporations typically involves a combination of legal requirements, government regulations, and established procedures. The process often begins with the identification of suitable candidates through a public

advertisement or a search committee. The qualifications and requirements for leadership positions are clearly outlined in the job descriptions and advertisements. Studies have indicated the growing influence of social media in leadership selection processes.

Despite the trend toward privatization over the past 20 years, state corporations are still significant economic players (World Bank, 2018). Globally, state corporations (SC) account for 20 percent of investment, 5 percent of employment, and up to 40 percent of output in some countries (GoK, 2015). In developing countries, state corporations produce about 15 percent of regional GDP in Africa (Kikeri & Kolo 2016). In Kenya state corporations have become a strong entity and useful engines to promote development (Njiru, 2018). The State Corporations employ about 119,689 workers with an annual wage bill of over 131.2 billion but only 51% of SCs are self-sustaining (GoK, 2017).

For instance, a survey conducted by Folker et al. (2020) reported that 70% of public organizations in the United States consider social media as an important factor in the selection of leaders. Furthermore, a study by Moorhead et al. (2019) found that 45% of healthcare recruiters in the United States used social media platforms to evaluate leadership candidates. However, there is, limited research in the African context, although statistics highlight the increasing use of social media platforms. According to a study by Lalla et al. (2020), 62% of professionals in Africa actively engage in professional networking on social media platforms, such as LinkedIn and Twitter. This trend indicates the potential relevance and impact of social media in leadership selection processes within public institutions.

Various studies have been conducted on social media *visa viz* leadership selection. For instance; Szicherle (2017) researched on the political effects of migration-related fake news, disinformation and conspiracy theories in Europe. In China, Dotson (2018) established that due to its high suitability to the public relations needs of the Party, “CCP Confucianism” is likely to remain a staple of Chinese Government-sponsored propaganda in the years ahead. Pérez-Curiel et al (2021) focused on public Sphere and Misinformation in the U.S. Election. Abrahms, Beauchamp, and Mroszczyk (2016) conducted a study on propaganda and terrorist leaders. However, these studies focused on specific organizations, sectors, contexts and specific countries hence the study findings cannot be generalized to the current study.

In addition, none of these studies focused on the influence of social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to assess the influence of social media (fake news, propaganda, misinformation and disinformation) on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. This is in line with the general objective of the study which is to assess the influence of social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya.

## **Research Objectives**

### **General Objective**

The main focus of this study is to assess the influence of social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya

### **Specific Objectives**

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To classify various information obtained from social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya
- ii. To determine the influence of social media information sharing on selection of leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya
- iii. To determine the influence of social media reputation on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

#### Selective Exposure Theory

Festinger proposed the groundbreaking theory of cognitive dissonance that has become the foundation of selective exposure theory today despite the fact that Festinger was considered as an "avant-garde" psychologist when he had first proposed it in 1957. Selective Exposure Theory posits that individuals tend to seek out and consume information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, values, and opinions while avoiding or rejecting information that challenges their existing views. This theory suggests that people are more likely to engage with and share fake news when it reinforces their existing biases or confirms their preconceived notions (Tsipursky, Votta, & Roose, 2017).

According to Selective Exposure Theory, individuals seek information that provides cognitive consistency and reaffirms their worldview. When presented with fake news that aligns with their beliefs, individuals may be more inclined to accept it without critically evaluating its accuracy or credibility. They might share such information within their social networks, further amplifying its spread. This theory recognizes the role of confirmation bias, which is the tendency to favor information that supports one's existing beliefs, and the desire for cognitive consistency in shaping people's information consumption behavior. It highlights the importance of understanding individual motivations, cognitive processes, and social dynamics in the dissemination and acceptance of fake news (Juhász & Szicherle, 2017).

In the context of social media information, individuals who already hold certain biases or preferences may be more likely to be exposed to and accept false or misleading information that supports their preconceived notions about leaders. Social media information that aligns with their existing biases can reinforce their beliefs and further solidify their support for a particular leader or candidate. Thus, the Selective Exposure Theory suggests that people's selective exposure to social media information can influence their perceptions of leaders, their evaluation of their qualifications and policies, and ultimately impact their decision-making during leadership selection processes such as elections or public opinion formation (Juhász & Szicherle, 2017). This theory was used in this study to assess the influence of social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya

#### Propaganda model

The propaganda model is a conceptual model in political economy advanced by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in 1988 to explain how propaganda and systemic biases function in corporate mass media (Abrahms, Beauchamp, & Mroszczyk, 2016). The model seeks to explain how populations are manipulated and how consent for economic, social, and political policies, both foreign and domestic, is "manufactured" in the public mind due to this propaganda. The theory posits that the way in which corporate media is structured (e.g. through advertising, concentration of media ownership or government sourcing) creates an inherent conflict of interest and therefore acts as propaganda for anti-democratic elements (Dotson, 2018).

The theory postulates five general classes of "filters" that determine the type of news that is presented in news media. These five classes are: ownership of the medium, the medium's funding sources, sourcing, flak, and anti-communism or "fear ideology". According to the Propaganda Model, media outlets are influenced by powerful elites, such as corporations, government entities, and other institutional actors. These elites have the ability to shape the agenda, content, and narratives presented to the public through their control over media ownership, advertising revenue, and access to sources of information (Esarey, 2021).

The theory argues that propaganda is used to manufacture consent, manipulate public opinion, and maintain the existing power structures. Media outlets may disseminate biased or distorted information that aligns with the interests of the elites, while marginalizing or ignoring alternative perspectives that challenge the status quo (Dotson, 2018).

### Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing theory, also known as SIP, is a psychological and sociological theory originally developed by Salancik and Pfeffer in 1978. This theory explores how individuals make decisions and form attitudes in a social context, often focusing on the workplace. It suggests that people rely heavily on the social information available to them in their environments, including input from colleagues and peers, to shape their attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions (Pérez-Curiel et al, 2021).

The Social Information Processing Theory suggests that individuals rely on limited cues and information when forming impressions and making judgments about others. In the context of misinformation, this theory posits that people may rely on heuristics and cognitive shortcuts to process and evaluate information, which can lead to the acceptance and propagation of false or misleading information. Online communication platforms often lack nonverbal cues such as facial expressions or tone of voice, which are important in understanding the credibility and intent behind a message. In the absence of these cues, individuals may rely more on the content of the message itself, making it easier for misinformation to be accepted at face value (Lee, Brian & Kanthawala, 2021).

When faced with a large volume of information, individuals may employ cognitive shortcuts or heuristics to process and evaluate it. These mental shortcuts can be susceptible to biases and may result in the acceptance of misinformation. For example, the availability heuristic leads people to judge the likelihood of an event based on how easily it comes to mind, which can be influenced by the frequency and memorability of false information. Individuals have a tendency to seek out information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and opinions while disregarding or discounting information that contradicts them. This bias can contribute to the acceptance and propagation of misinformation that aligns with people's existing views (Loftus, 2021).

### Conceptual Framework

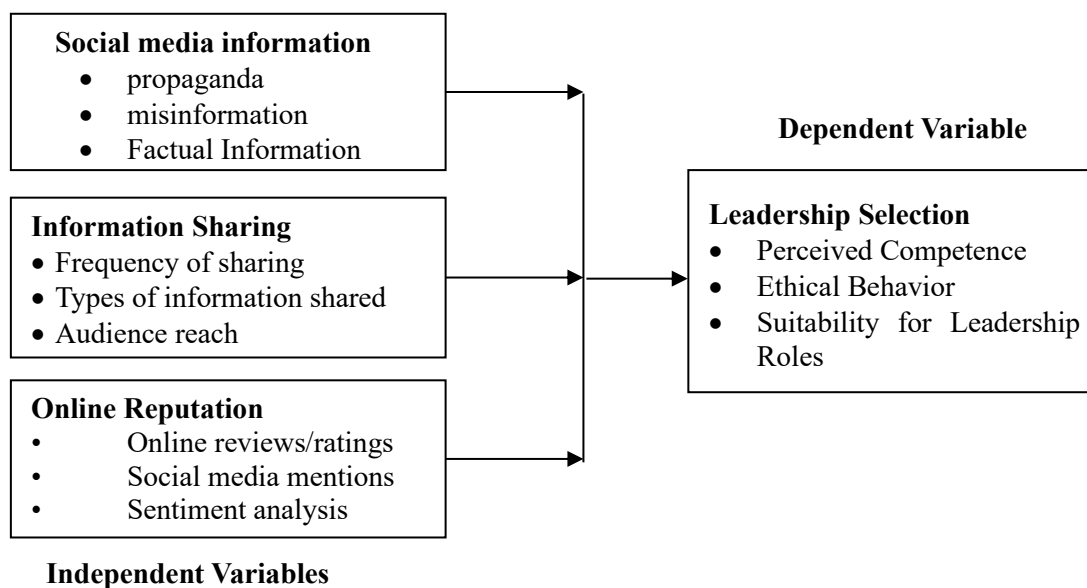


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

## **Social media information**

Social media information refers to the content, data, and insights that are shared, exchanged, and generated through social media platforms. It encompasses the wide range of textual, visual, and multimedia content posted by users, including text posts, images, videos, links, and comments (Tsipursky, Votta, & Roose, 2017). Fake news refers to false or misleading information presented as news or factual reporting. It can take various forms, including fabricated stories, manipulated images or videos, and misleading headlines. Fake news is typically spread through social media platforms, websites, or traditional media channels (Tsipursky, Votta, & Roose, 2017).

Propaganda refers to the dissemination of information, ideas, or opinions with the intention of influencing the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of a targeted audience. It is often used by governments, organizations, or individuals to shape public opinion, promote a specific agenda, or advance a particular viewpoint (Abrahms, Beauchamp, & Mroszczyk, 2016). Propaganda can be used for both positive and negative purposes. While some propaganda may aim to manipulate and deceive, others may seek to inspire and unite. Understanding the motives behind the information presented and considering multiple sources can help in discerning the intent and credibility of propaganda messages (Dotson, 2018).

Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information that is unintentionally spread, often due to a lack of knowledge, misunderstanding, or careless dissemination. It can result from errors, rumors, speculation, or misinterpretation of facts. Misinformation can be shared through various channels, including social media, word of mouth, traditional media, or online platforms. Misinformation can have significant consequences, including the distortion of public understanding, the spread of unfounded beliefs, and the potential to impact decision-making at individual and societal levels. It can contribute to confusion, mistrust, and the proliferation of myths or conspiracy theories (Pérez-Curiel *et al*, 2021).

## **Information sharing**

Information sharing refers to the act of exchanging or disseminating information between individuals, organizations, or systems. It involves the transfer of data, knowledge, ideas, or insights from one entity to another, enabling communication, collaboration, and decision-making. Information sharing can take various forms, depending on the context and purpose. It can occur through verbal communication, written documents, reports, emails, presentations, meetings, or digital platforms such as social media, websites, and online collaboration tools.

The frequency of information sharing can vary depending on the context, purpose, and the needs of individuals or organizations involved. Certain information needs to be shared promptly and in real-time to ensure effective communication and decision-making. In collaborative projects or team-based tasks, the frequency of information sharing often depends on the nature and timeline of the project. Regular updates, progress reports, and status meetings may be necessary to ensure everyone is aligned and informed about the project's progress. The frequency of information sharing can also be influenced by the availability and accessibility of the information. If information is readily available and easily accessible, it may be shared more frequently. Conversely, if obtaining or compiling the information takes time or effort, sharing may be less frequent.

## **Social Reputation**

Online reputation refers to the perception and image of an individual, organization, or brand as reflected by the information available about them on the internet. It encompasses how they are perceived, reviewed, and discussed by others in online platforms and digital channels. The internet has become a powerful platform for people to express their opinions, share experiences, and provide feedback. Platforms such as review websites, social media, and e-

commerce sites allow users to leave reviews and ratings about products, services, or experiences. Positive or negative reviews can significantly impact an individual or organization's online reputation.

Online reviews and ratings refer to user-generated feedback and evaluations of products, services, or experiences that are shared on various online platforms. These reviews and ratings can significantly impact the reputation, credibility, and consumer perception of businesses and individuals. Online reviews and ratings have gained immense importance in consumer decision-making. Many people rely on reviews to assess the quality, reliability, and value of a product or service before making a purchase. Positive reviews can build trust and attract new customers, while negative reviews can deter potential buyers.

### **Reviewed literature**

Although various studies have been conducted across the world on social media on leadership selection, these studies focused on specific organizations, sectors, contexts and specific countries hence the study findings cannot be generalized to the current study. For instance; Juhász and Szicherle (2017) researched on the political effects of migration-related fake news, disinformation and conspiracy theories in Europe. The most common explanation claims that the increasing influence of fake news can be traced back primarily to technological developments. According to this, there have always been fake news, but today they have a larger role because the internet and especially social media create bubbles for world views in which not even the most primitive lies and conspiracy theories are debunked due to a lack of critical voices. This study analysed the public discourse about international migration. This is a globally relevant topic, the discussion of which is characterised by the use of fake news, disinformation and conspiracy theories all over the world. International migration has also been the favoured topic of populist political forces, and this has become even more characteristic of them in the wake of the 2015 migration crisis. Nevertheless, this study failed to show how propaganda, information sharing and online information influence leadership selection hence the study findings cannot be generalized to the current study.

In China, Dotson (2018) established that due to its high suitability to the public relations needs of the Party, “CCP Confucianism” is likely to remain a staple of Chinese Government-sponsored propaganda in the years ahead. It remains to be seen, however, how much influence this emerging state-sponsored philosophy will actually have – either in terms of reassuring foreign audiences, or of convincing China’s own citizens of the government’s commitment to public welfare and social justice. However, this study was conducted in China hence the study findings cannot be generalized to the current study

Pérez-Curiel *et al* (2021) focused on online reputation in the U.S. Election. Results showed the change of position of the electorate, especially Republicans, in the face of the policy of delegitimization of the process and Trump’s populist messages on Twitter. Conclusions pointed in two directions: society has decided not to trust Trump, while at the same time showing distrust about the correct management of the electoral ballot. However, this study only focused on online reputation and failed to show how social media information and information sharing influence leadership selection hence the study findings cannot be generalized to the current study.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study will use descriptive research design which according to Creswell and Clark (2017), it is concerned with ‘what, how and who’ which is the research question of this study.

The target population was the management employees in the forty six (46) state corporations Kenya. The study targeted Board Chair, Director General/CEO, HR Managers and Deputy HR Manager in the commercial state corporations.

**Table 3. 1: Target Population**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Target Population</b>
Board Chair	46
Director General/CEO	46
HR Managers	46
Deputy HR Manager	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>

Census was applied in selecting the sample for this study. Respondents were given a structured questionnaire, which was chosen since it provides a more thorough picture than any other research instrument. The questionnaire is developed in a systematic manner in accordance with the study objectives.

The pretesting sample was made of 18 respondents, representing 10% of the sample size. The results from the pilot test were not used in the main study. In addition, the respondents used in the pilot test were excluded from the final study. Quantitative and qualitative data was generated from the closed-ended and open-ended questions, respectively. Qualitative data was analysed on thematic basis and the findings provided in a narrative form.

Inferential and descriptive statistics were employed for analysis of quantitative data with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28). Inferential data analysis was conducted by use of Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **Descriptive statistics**

#### **Leadership Selection in Commercial State Corporations**

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the selection of leaders in their organization is based on merit, competence, and qualifications to ensure effective and efficient governance. This is supported by a mean of 3.968 (std. dv = 0.905). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.859 (std. dv = 0.885), the respondents agreed that transparency and accountability are essential principles that guide the leadership selection process in their organization. Further, the respondents agreed that the selection of leaders in their organization is free from political interference and nepotism, promoting fair competition and equal opportunities. This is shown by a mean of 3.800 (std. dv = 0.605).

As shown by a mean of 3.785 (std. dv = 0.981), the respondents agreed that the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences in the leadership selection process for commercial state corporations in Kenya enhances decision-making and fosters innovation. In addition, the respondents agreed that the involvement of relevant stakeholders, such as shareholders, employees, and the public, in the leadership selection process in commercial state corporations helps ensure a broader representation of interests. This is shown by a mean of 3.777 (std. dv = 0.878). The respondents also agreed that continuous evaluation and performance assessment is conducted to monitor the effectiveness and suitability of leaders in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.678 (std. dv = 0.897). The respondents agreed that adequate professional qualifications, expertise, and industry knowledge is prerequisites for individuals aspiring to leadership positions in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.612 (std. dv = 0.832).



**Table 1: Leadership Selection in Commercial State Corporations**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The selection of leaders in our organization is based on merit, competence, and qualifications to ensure effective and efficient governance.	3.968	0.905
Transparency and accountability are essential principles that guide the leadership selection process in our organization.	3.859	0.885
The selection of leaders in our organization is free from political interference and nepotism, promoting fair competition and equal opportunities.	3.800	0.605
The inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences in the leadership selection process for commercial state corporations in Kenya enhances decision-making and fosters innovation.	3.785	0.981
The involvement of relevant stakeholders, such as shareholders, employees, and the public, in the leadership selection process in commercial state corporations helps ensure a broader representation of interests.	3.777	0.878
Continuous evaluation and performance assessments is conducted to monitor the effectiveness and suitability of leaders in commercial state corporations	3.678	0.897
Adequate professional qualifications, expertise, and industry knowledge is prerequisites for individuals aspiring to leadership positions in commercial state corporations	3.612	0.832
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>3.798</b>	<b>0.821</b>

### **Information Obtained From Social Media**

The first specific objective of the study was to classify the influence of various information obtained from social media on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to information obtained from social media and leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that social media platforms provide a wide range of information about leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. This is supported by a mean of 3.944 (std. dv = 0.989). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.917 (std. dv = 0.805), the respondents agreed that the information shared on social media platforms can significantly impact public perceptions of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. Further, the respondents agreed that social media serves as a platform for sharing news, opinions, and discussions about leadership selection in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.855 (std. dv = 0.981). The respondents also agreed that social media platforms offer real-time updates on the qualifications and achievements of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.849 (std. dv = 0.923).

From the results, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.803 (std. dv = 0.874) that the information obtained from social media can help in evaluating the track record and experience of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. Further, as shown by a mean of 3.787 (std. dv = 0.901), the respondents agreed that social media plays a crucial role in disseminating information about the leadership selection process in commercial state corporations. The respondents also agreed that the reputation of leadership candidates on social media platforms can influence their chances of being selected in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.715 (std. dv = 0.873).

**Table 2: Information Obtained From Social Media**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Social media platforms provide a wide range of information about leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.944	0.989
The information shared on social media platforms can significantly impact public perceptions of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.917	0.805
Social media serves as a platform for sharing news, opinions, and discussions about leadership selection in commercial state corporations.	3.855	0.981
Social media platforms offer real-time updates on the qualifications and achievements of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.849	0.923
The information obtained from social media can help in evaluating the track record and experience of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.803	0.874
Social media plays a crucial role in disseminating information about the leadership selection process in commercial state corporations.	3.787	0.901
The reputation of leadership candidates on social media platforms can influence their chances of being selected in commercial state corporations.	3.715	0.873
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>3.865</b>	<b>0.922</b>

### **Social Media Information Sharing**

The second specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of social media information sharing on selection of leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to social media information sharing and selection of leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the information shared on social media about leadership candidates in commercial state corporations influences the decision-making process. This is supported by a mean of 3.967 (std. dv = 0.897). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.920 (std. dv = 0.815), the respondents agreed that social media provides access to a wide range of information about leadership candidates, including their qualifications, experience, and achievements. Further, the respondents agreed that the information shared on social media platforms influences the perception of the suitability and competence of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.888 (std. dv = 0.901). The respondents also agreed that social media facilitates transparency in the selection process of leaders in commercial state corporations by providing timely updates and insights. This is shown by a mean of 3.835 (std. dv = 0.793).

From the results, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.813 (std. dv = 0.884) that social media enables stakeholders to share their preferences and support for specific leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. Further, as shown by a mean of 3.798 (std. dv = 0.786), the respondents agreed that the engagement and feedback received on social media platforms influence the assessment and evaluation of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. The respondents also agreed that social media information sharing contributes to a more inclusive and participatory selection process for leaders in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.788 (std. dv = 0.892).

**Table 3: Social Media Information Sharing**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The information shared on social media about leadership candidates in commercial state corporations influences the decision-making process.	3.967	0.897
Social media provides access to a wide range of information about leadership candidates, including their qualifications, experience, and achievements.	3.920	0.815
The information shared on social media platforms influences the perception of the suitability and competence of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.888	0.901
Social media facilitates transparency in the selection process of leaders in commercial state corporations by providing timely updates and insights.	3.835	0.793
Social media enables stakeholders to share their preferences and support for specific leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.813	0.884
The engagement and feedback received on social media platforms influence the assessment and evaluation of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.798	0.786
Social media information sharing contributes to a more inclusive and participatory selection process for leaders in commercial state corporations.	3.788	0.892
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>3.828</b>	<b>0.897</b>

### **Social Media Reputation**

The third specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of social media reputation on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to social media reputation and leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. A 5 point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 4.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the reputation of leadership candidates on social media platforms influences their selection as leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya. This is supported by a mean of 3.943 (std. dv = 0.986). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.926 (std. dv = 0.840), the respondents agreed that positive social media reputation enhances the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations. Further, the respondents agreed that the information shared on social media regarding the professional background and accomplishments of leadership candidates impacts their chances of being selected in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.846 (std. dv = 0.879). The respondents also agreed that social media reputation contributes to the assessment of leadership candidates' integrity and ethical standards in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.831 (std. dv = 0.904).

As shown by a mean of 3.816 (std. dv = 0.789), the respondents agreed that the level of engagement and interaction of leadership candidates on social media platforms affects their perceived accessibility and responsiveness to stakeholders in commercial state corporations. Further, the respondents agreed that negative reputation or controversies on social media can undermine the candidacy of individuals vying for leadership positions in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.796 (std. dv = 0.937). The respondents also agreed that the online presence and activity of leadership candidates on social media platforms are

considered when making decisions about their selection in commercial state corporations. This is shown by a mean of 3.689 (std. dv = 0.876).

**Table 4: Social Media Reputation**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The reputation of leadership candidates on social media platforms influences their selection as leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya.	3.943	0.986
Positive social media reputation enhances the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of leadership candidates in commercial state corporations.	3.926	0.840
The information shared on social media regarding the professional background and accomplishments of leadership candidates impacts their chances of being selected in commercial state corporations.	3.846	0.879
Social media reputation contributes to the assessment of leadership candidates' integrity and ethical standards in commercial state corporations.	3.831	0.904
The level of engagement and interaction of leadership candidates on social media platforms affects their perceived accessibility and responsiveness to stakeholders in commercial state corporations.	3.816	0.789
Negative reputation or controversies on social media can undermine the candidacy of individuals vying for leadership positions in commercial state corporations.	3.796	0.937
The online presence and activity of leadership candidates on social media platforms are considered when making decisions about their selection in commercial state corporations	3.689	0.876
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>3.788</b>	<b>0.897</b>

### Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables (Social media information, Information sharing and online reputation) and the dependent variable (leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya).

**Table 5: Correlation Coefficients**

		Leadership Selection	Social media information	Information sharing	Social media reputation
<b>Leadership Selection</b>	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	175			
Social Media Information	Pearson Correlation	.860**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	175	175		
Information sharing	Pearson Correlation	.801**	.289	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.061		
	N	175	175	175	
Social Media Reputation	Pearson Correlation	.826**	.172	.193	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.079	.084	
	N	175	175	175	175

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between social media information and leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya ( $r = 0.860$ ,  $p$  value = 0.000). The relationship was significant since the  $p$  value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Tsipursky, Votta, and Roose, (2017) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between social media information and leadership selection.

Moreover, the results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between Information sharing and leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya ( $r = 0.801$ ,  $p$  value = 0.003). The relationship was significant since the  $p$  value 0.003 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings conform to the findings of Dotson (2018) that there is a very strong relationship between Information sharing and leadership selection.

Further, the results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between social media reputation and leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya ( $r = 0.826$ ,  $p$  value = 0.002). The relationship was significant since the  $p$  value 0.002 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Pérez-Curiel *et al* (2021) that there is a very strong relationship between online reputation and leadership selection.

### Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (Social media information, Information sharing and online reputation) and the dependent variable (leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya)

**Table 6: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.931	.857	.858	.10428

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social media information, Information sharing and Social media reputation

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.857. This implied that 85.7% of the variation in the dependent variable (leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (Social media information, Information sharing and Social media reputation).

**Table 7: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	141.081	3	47.027	1109.12	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	7.254	171	.0424		
Total	148.335	174			

a. Dependent Variable: leadership selection in commercial state corporations

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social media information, Information sharing and Social media reputation

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 1109.12 while the F critical was 2.657. The  $p$  value was 0.000. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the  $p$  value 0.000 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the influence of Social media information, Information sharing and online reputation on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya.

**Table 8: Regression Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	0.239	0.061		3.918	0.000
Social media information	0.328	0.089	0.329	3.685	0.003
Information sharing	0.354	0.091	0.355	3.890	0.001
Social media reputation	0.357	0.098	0.356	3.643	0.002

a Dependent Variable: Leadership selection in commercial state corporations

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.239 + 0.328X_1 + 0.354X_2 + 0.357X_3 + \varepsilon$$

According to the results, Social media information has a positive and significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya,  $\beta_1=0.328$ ,  $p$  value= 0.003). The relationship was considered significant since the  $p$  value 0.003 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Tsipursky, Votta, and Roose, (2017) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between Social media information and leadership selection.

The results also revealed that Information sharing has a positive and significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya,  $\beta_1=0.354$ ,  $p$  value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the  $p$  value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings conform to the findings of Dotson (2018) that there is a very strong relationship between Information sharing and leadership selection.

Furthermore, the results revealed that online reputation has a positive and significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya,  $\beta_1=0.357$ ,  $p$  value= 0.002). The relationship was considered significant since the  $p$  value 0.002 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Pérez-Curiel et al (2021) that there is a very strong relationship between Social media reputation and leadership selection.

## Conclusions

The study concludes that information obtained from social media has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The study findings revealed that propaganda, misinformation and factual Information influence leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya

In addition, the study concludes that information sharing has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The study findings revealed that frequency of sharing, types of information shared and audience reach influence leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya.

Further, the study concludes that online reputation has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. The study findings revealed that online reviews/ratings, social media mentions and sentiment analysis influence leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya.

## Recommendations

The study found that information obtained from social media has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. This study therefore recommends that the management of commercial state corporations in Kenya should implement transparent and accountable leadership selection processes. In addition, the

management should clearly define selection criteria and qualifications, and ensure that appointments are made based on merit and integrity rather than influenced by propaganda or political biases.

Further, the study found that misinformation has a significant effect on leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. This study therefore recommends that the management of commercial state corporations in Kenya should provide support to initiatives combating misinformation and consider enacting regulations that address its spread. However, it is important to strike a balance between combating misinformation and safeguarding freedom of speech, avoiding potential misuse of regulations.

The study found that online reputation influences leadership selection. This study therefore recommends that the management of commercial state corporations in Kenya should consider aspects of Online reviews/ratings, social media mentions and sentiment analysis

Further, the study found that information sharing influences leadership selection. This study therefore recommends that the management of commercial state corporations in Kenya should consider aspects of frequency of sharing, types of information shared and audience reach.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

This study was limited to leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya, hence the study findings cannot be generalized to private organizations in Kenya. The study therefore suggests further studies on the influence of social media on leadership selection in private organizations in Kenya.

Further, the study found that the independent variables (social media information, information sharing and online reputation) could only explain 85.7% of leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya. This study therefore suggests further research on other factors affecting leadership selection in commercial state corporations in Kenya.

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