

# The Use of Social Networks in Promoting Rwanda's Image: A Case of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation Rwanda and East African Community

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**Abstract:** *The Government of Rwanda is still facing the problem of negativist people who lives outside of the country using social media for smash up the image of the country. The government institution like Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and East African Community through its different Rwanda embassies as well as the Office of the Government Spokesperson (OGS) are putting much effort on showing the truth of Rwanda's image after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The general objective of this study is to examine the use of social networks in promoting Rwanda's image. This research adopted descriptive research design where descriptive statistics was applied to analyse data from questionnaires and other information of government official tweets. In line with this, the target population is 77 respondents. During this study, the researcher used the census method. This research shows that social networks have an overall correlation with Rwanda's image of 0.743 which is strong and positive. This means that approximately 74.3% variations from promotion of Rwanda's image are explained by the social networks variables at 5% level of significance. Therefore, this is a good indication of the true position of promoting Rwanda's image explained by the usage of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The rule of thumb said that, usually an R square of more than 50% is considered as better, this study show that R square is (0.743) implying that socio networks have impact on promoting the Rwanda image. The overall significance of the regression estimation model. It indicates that the model is significant in explaining the relationship between socio networks and promotion of Rwanda's image at 5% level of significance. The analysis of Variance shows that f-calculated is greater that f-critical that is 6.301>0.01. Social networking being an appropriate tool to promote country's tourism destination, improve its diplomacy, fighting the genocide ideology and attracting investment opportunities. Considering this research the social networks should be a strongest path to promote the country image.*

**Keywords:** Social media, Government Institution, Promoting Rwanda's Image

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the century, we live in, which is called the Digital age, computer and internet have gained an absolutely central importance in human life, and social media had a prominent role in promoting countries' image. Besides easy, cheap and fast access to information through computers and the Internet, the expansion of the communication network is one of the factors that lead individuals to use social media (Krishnar and Surapaneni, 2012). Today, Facebook takes the first place among the social media platforms used intensively by young people in Turkey. Facebook is a social network that allows users to connect and exchange information with both their friends and with people they meet in social media. It is established by Mark Zuckerberg, a person in Harvard University in USA, in February, 2004. Twitter is another important social networking site which is developed after Facebook, and established by Jack Dorsey in USA in March, 2006. Twitter, which is a social networking site with increasing popularity in recent years, differs from other social sites in that it allows users to express their ideas, experiences and feelings in 280 characters. This feature causes Twitter to be called as SMS (short message service) service of the Internet (Altunay, 2015).

Social media network has created a revolution in tourism industry, investment promotion and improving diplomacy all over the world (Agresta & Bough, 2010). For this reason, social media has been used to promote the tourism industry, investment, diplomacy, etc through networking sites. The introduction of internet and e-commerce has changed the

marketing trends. Today's country's image cannot depend only on using people or other means. Social media applications provide great opportunities, for countries like Rwanda to use the word-of-mouth as an effective way of promoting countries' image. A country not only provides the information but also able to receive both positive and negative feedback through social media.

Few years back, the fax was a great addition to a limited collection of communication tools. Today, technology has evolved to give us information, we have: emails, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Flickr, Myspace, WhatsApp among others. The internet has enabled a range of new platforms for personal and social interactions particularly through social media. Murugesan (2007) posits that social media includes a multitude of sources of online information that are created, circulated and used. He adds that current examples of social media platforms include social networking sites like Facebook, photo sharing sites like Flickr, video sharing sites like YouTube, business networking sites like LinkedIn, micro blogging sites like Twitter, and numerous others. Social media sites are inexpensive and, more often than not, completely free to use. Social networking sites allow users to interact, to share content, and to create content collectively (Shirky and Gauntlett, 2011).

Social media has become diplomacy's significant important tool, from being an afterthought to being the very first thought of world leaders and governments across the globe, as audience's flock to their Twitter newsfeeds for the latest news and statements. This worldwide embrace of online channels has brought with it a wave of openness and

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transparency that has never been experienced before. Social media provides a platform for unconditional communication, and has become a communicator's most powerful tool. Twitter, in particular, has become a diplomatic barometer, a tool used to analyse and forecast international relations. (Diplomacy Study, 2017).

The use of social media and social networking has become a significant force in political organizing, social interaction, and economic development. A growing body of literature now describes the use of social media as a tool in areas such as political action, democracy promotion, promoting countries image, and public relations management (Brown et al., 2009). The use of social media specifically in the field of community and economic development has also recently begun to receive scholarly attention (Fernback et al., 2005).

The Kenyan government's recognition of the strategic role played by social media in the economy is an important aspect of the implementation of Vision 2030, the country's development blueprint. Vision 2030's key goal is that Kenya will be one of the top three investment destinations in Africa by 2030. This will be achieved by addressing three pillars – Economic, Social and Political. The political pillar envisages Kenya as an issue-based, people-centred, and accountable democratic political system (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2007). To achieve accountable democratic political system, civic participation is necessary. Kenya has a national policy framework that supports access to social networks. The 2006 National ICT policy deals with convergence, social network in health, education, e-commerce, e-governance, privacy and cybercrimes. The policy aims to use social networks for creating employment, promote state image and achieving national developmental goals. It is aligned with Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Yet this policy is silent on the role of ICT in enhancing non-institutionalized democratic participation in Kenya.

Social media involves the use of various techno-logical tools and methods for sharing and discussing information. Social media is a way to transmit or distribute information to a broad audience where users have an opportunity to create and distribute content. By comparison, social networking is the use of these tools specifically to connect and interact with others. Social networking is the act of engagement where groups of people with common interests are associated and build relationships through a shared community of interest (Stelzner, 2009; Hartshorn, 2010).

Some governments and foreign ministries still consider the professionals and cons of any social media engagement, others have gone beyond Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to reach their target audiences, even embracing new platforms such as Snapchat, WhatsApp and Telegram where communications are under the radar and almost impossible to track. Over the past years, the most popular world leaders on social media such as Pope Francis, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta and Rwanda's Paul Kagame have continued to increase their audiences and to show the image of their countries using social media platforms mainly twitter.

In Rwanda, the use of social networking sites has taken a different angle, with various government officials and institutions notably embracing the microblogging sites as new channels through which they can easily reach out to the people, especially the youth and the politician use social media to show the success of the country.

Rwanda's Minister of Foreign Affairs Louise Mushikiwabo, continue to expand her diplomatic and showing the image of her country, not only her, every day we see Rwandan diplomats sharing the success stories of their country using their main social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. In Rwanda, most of Institutions started joining Twitter in 2012. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, SoundCloud, and Podcast are important social media uses by the Government of Rwanda. The Government uses those social media for communication shift – new technologies and how people get their news, establishing its institutional presence, telling its own story, promoting country's image, correcting the negative coverage on Rwanda and engaging with opinion leaders. Today, 33 Rwanda's Foreign Mission and more than 70 Rwandan Diplomats are on Twitter. Ministers and other officials are active on social networks.

All 30 districts of Rwanda, four provinces and the City of Kigali are on five social media network: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr and YouTube. Paul Kagame's personal Twitter engagement shows that, even if you have 1.75 million Twitter followers, you can still be on top of the conversation and personally reply to comments on your Twitter feed. The former Prime Minister of Rwanda Anastase Murekezi was ranked in fifth position, occasionally holding Twitter chats with the hashtag #TalkToPMRwanda and half of the 2,219 tweets of Rwanda's Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo are also direct replies to questions from followers. Rwanda's President Paul Kagame is among the 50 most followed World Leaders according to Twiplomacy report 2017, where he is on 33<sup>rd</sup> place.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

Recent evidence in western countries, suggests that Social Media make Public Relations more effective, some institutions give much power to Social media and ignore other useful tools, they overestimate its impact thinking that it can replace some communication tools, and begin to ignore the presence of a Public Relation practitioner, apart from this, few years ago, researcher saw how social media had helped spread the Arab Spring like wild fire, sweeping three long-serving North African leaders off their feet within just a matter of months (Jan H. Kietzmann, 2011).

The Rwanda Media Barometer says that the proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs), has contributed to progress in governance, health, and education, agriculture, and finance sectors. To this, I argue that increase of internet penetration has contributed a lot to the use of social media in the country as well as in the government's institutions. But the Government of Rwanda is still facing the problem of negativist peoples who lives outside of the country and use social media for smash up the Rwandan image. The government institution like Ministry of Foreign

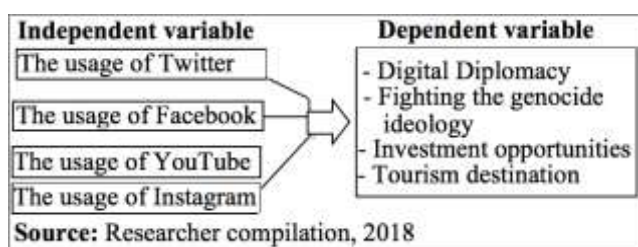
Affairs, cooperation and East African community through its different embassies as well as the Office of the Government Spokesperson are putting much effort on correcting this by showing the truth of Rwanda's image after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi.

In this research, researcher wants to find out the impact of social networks in promoting Rwanda's image. This research was conducted in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and East African Community as a case study of government institution that use social media, in their daily communication activities.

**1.3. Specific objectives**

- 1) To analyse the impact of Twitter on promoting Rwanda's image.
- 2) To analyse the role of Facebook on promoting Rwanda's image.
- 3) To analyse the use of using YouTube on promoting Rwanda's image.
- 4) To analyse the use of using Instagram on promoting Rwanda's image.

**2. Conceptual Framework**



**3. Research Design**

**3.1 Target Population, Sampling Technique and Data Collection Techniques:**

Target population is the group about which the researcher would like to make statements based on the conditions and concerns under the study (Henry, 2008). In line with this, the target population is 77 respondents. During this study, the research used the census method. Since the study was used a census, there is no need for sampling technique since the entire population was participated in the study. In this study, data was collected through self-administered questionnaires.

**4. Research Findings and Discussions**

**Table 4.1:** Appreciation of respondents to the role of Twitter on promoting Rwanda's image

| Statements  | SA            | A           | UN | D | SD |
|---|---------------|-------------|----|---|----|
| 1. Government officials use their twitter accounts on promoting Rwanda's investment opportunity.                                  | 69<br>(89.6%) | 8<br>(0.4%) | -  | - | -  |
| 2. Twitter is a best social network to respond the negativist and genocide denials who always criticise the government of Rwanda. | 72<br>(93.5%) | 5<br>(6.5%) | -  | - | -  |

|   |               |               |   |              |   |
|---|---------------|---------------|---|--------------|---|
| 3. The majority of Rwandan diplomats uses their twitter accounts for Diplomacy issues.                            | 15<br>(19.5%) | 54<br>(70.1%) | - | 8<br>(10.4%) | - |
| 4. Most of time the Rwandagovernment officials like to use twitters account for advertising the tourism industry. | 68<br>(88.3%) | 9<br>(11.7%)  | - | -            | - |

Source: Primary data, 2018

A few years after its creation in 2006, Twitter as a Social Media platform had already attracted the attention of many in Rwanda. At the very beginning, a few top government officials embraced the platform and many others, especially the youth, followed suit.

Three years after its inception, Twitter saw the country's most prominent figure join. This was President Paul Kagame who joined as @PaulKagame in May 2009. A few months later, in October 2009, the Government of Rwanda signed up with its official account @RwandaGov and Two years after @PaulKagame and @RwandaGov, in 2011, the Office of the President and Foreign Affairs Minister Louise Mushikiwabo also joined as @UrugwiroVillage and @LMushikiwabo respectively.

The above Table 4.1 show the perception of respondents on Twitter promotes the image of Rwanda. Government officials uses their twitter account on promoting Rwanda investment opportunity, 89.6% of the respondents were strongly agree on that statement and 10.4% are agreed. All respondents agreed are strongly agree & agreed on the impact of Twitter on responding the negativist peoples who criticise the government of Rwanda and 89.6% the use Twitter account for the diplomatic issues.

President @PaulKagame is the 36<sup>th</sup> most followed leader in the world coming before the French, Russian and Turkish Presidencies as well as the Spanish Prime Minister. 83% of African leaders are on Twitter and President @PaulKagame is the second most followed behind Kenyan President @UhuruKenyatta who has 1.8M followers. (Twiplomacy report, 2017)

At the beginning, Rwandans were not conversant with the modern ways of communicating. Social Network being one of them, many were still reluctant to join in and make their voices heard. This resulted into the Rwandan story being told by mainly ill intended westerners whose aim was to tarnish the image of the country and attack the legitimacy of its leadership. They fed their followers with 'alternative truths' in forms of inaccurate news about where Rwanda is now, its leadership, and its past. Theirs was a single source; Human Right Watch reports and other biased reports. These, crafted and shaped in a way that is meant to fit the authors' hidden agenda, were full of lies, unfounded allegations and erroneous facts. These were recycled on Twitter and shared with the wider tweetsphere. They were also the basis to judge the country's leadership as proven in PresidentKagame's Twitter row with UK journalist Ian Birrell: In May 2011, President Kagame was involved in Twitter row over media freedom with UK Journalist Ian Birrell. The latter had tweeted that President Kagame is



“despotic” and “deluded” for saying the media, UN and human rights groups had no right to criticise him. The journalist was referring to a statement that the President had made earlier in an interview with the UK Financial Times newspaper.

Birrell's tweet drew the President's attention. He rebuked it and emphasised that the journalist had no moral authority to abuse and judge the Rwandan people. Minister Louise Mushikiwabo of Foreign Affairs was also drawn in the debate and highlighted that the journalist has no moral right to criticise a leader who saved lives.

**In 2013;** This was an era of overly negative tweets. Accusations that Rwanda was supporting eastern DRC based rebel group M23 had just gained momentum, and was a hot topic on Twitter. Hostile tweeters and self-appointed Great Lakes region experts had just gotten a hot sauce. Rwandans and Friends of Rwanda fought back, providing facts and quoting the official line. Facts, figures and interviews with high-ranking government officials in different media outlets served as sources of engagement outlines for those who were willing to defend the country. This was the time when Rwanda started to claim its voice on Twitter. Young people had joined the platform. Although it was obvious that their prime interest was in entertainment, it didn't prevent a big number of them to partake in the fight for truth to prove wrong those who were tarnishing the image of Rwanda.

**In May 2013,** the focus had already shifted to the United Kingdom's arrest of Genocide Suspects. The shift was sustained till the naming of baby gorillas in June. The accusations resurfaced in July when AP and BBC tweeted that Rwanda was accused of recruiting for the then east DRC based mutiny. The tweets were retweeted enormously and picked by various media houses affecting once again the image of the country and its diplomatic relations with Western countries. Seven months later, in November, the US announced that it was considering easing sanctions on Rwanda as it had seen proof that the country was no longer backing the eastern Congo mutiny. The announcement was tweeted by Al Jazeera English (@AJEN) and retweeted massively by well-intended tweeters from Rwanda and their friends across the globe. The US position caused an evident shift in the views of those who were willing to follow in their political ally's footsteps.

**In 2014,** was Rwanda's year on Twitter. Rwandans started to own up the Social Media space, especially on Twitter. As Rwanda marked 20 years after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, campaigns like #Kwibuka20 and #Kwibohora20 reached as widely as 6 Billion (Tweet Reach Exposure) for the former, and the latter reached millions of Tweepers. Rwandans at home and abroad and their friends used the platform to show to the world that Rwanda is alive and doing well, 20 years after it was judged to be a 'failed state'.

In April 2014, Rwanda marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. Using #Kwibuka20, hundreds of thousands of Rwandans and their friends tweeted messages of remembrance, unity, reconciliation and nation rebuilding. Tweepers highlighted the resilience of the

Rwandan people who choose to not be held by history and joined hands towards moving the country forward.

Among local tweeters, a special emphasis was put on the three choices that Rwandans made in the aftermath of the Genocide: Staying Together, Being Accountable and Thinking Big. The choices were outlined and thoroughly explained in the President's address on the occasion. **New York Times** tweeted portraits of reconciliation narrating the story of forgiveness in the wake of a national tragedy. The story showcases photos of survivors together with genocide perpetrators whom they have forgiven. It was tweeted to its then more than 12 Million followers and retweeted hundreds of times.

In 'African Voices', CNN published images of the new Rwanda. The photos attracted multiple retweets as they portrayed the lives of young Rwandans 20 years after the Genocide. Other highly regarded media outlets worldwide also shared various #Kwibuka20 related content on their Twitter accounts attracting retweets from Rwandans and their friends across the globe. In July 2014, National Geography ran stories on Mountain Gorillas and the Gorilla Naming ceremony. The stories gained momentum on Twitter as the channel's account tweeted them several times to their then, 7 Million followers. Attracting numerous retweets from Rwandans and Environment Conservationists, the stories trended for a couple of weeks.

**In 2015:** was predominantly about the referendum, Burundi Crisis, the arrest of Rwanda's then Chief Spy Gen. Karezi Karake in the UK, the BBC ban, the sentencing of Kizito Mihigo & Co, as well as the reintroduction of Lions to the Akagera National Park.

A well-crafted communication strategy allowed various players to effectively explain to the external world that what was happening in Rwanda is the people's choice. Campaign like #Twahisemo successfully offered to the Twitter world a detailed account of the choices that Rwandans made in the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Different players in the public and private sectors, mostly the young generation took part in the #Twahisemo campaign on twitter, expressing their choices, thus making it reach even a bigger audience.

The reintroduction of lions in the Akagera Park was a well-received move among environment and conservation experts. The country was praised for, in addition to Gorillas, enhancing its conservation efforts and preserving its ecosystem. In July 2015, CNN tweeted a story on the reintroduction of lions in the Akagera National Park. Shared to its then, 4 Million followers, the tweet quickly rose among Twitter trends, as it was retweeted thousands of times. Picked by several other media outlets on their Twitter accounts, the story was among Twitter top trends for a couple of weeks, thus becoming one 2015 most popular tweets on Rwanda.

**In 2016:** Although 2016 began on the wrong foot, with various western countries expressing their disappointment vis-a-vis the just concluded Referendum; tweeters from around the world were quick to realise that this was the

usual ‘western powers wanting to impose their views on states/governments across Africa’.

Throughout 2016, Rwanda hosted big events, from the World Economic Forum on Africa to the 27<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit, to the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol. News about Rwanda hosting such events created a buzz on Social Networks. The Government’s strategic messaging and Social Media engagement on the various events led the path to successful online campaigns and a positive Social Media coverage.

WEF Africa marked a major milestone as Rwanda was ramping up its conference tourism strategy through the Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Events (MICE) unit. This was also among the key facts highlighted on Social Media in a campaign led by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). In July, all (African) eyes were on Rwanda as the country geared up to host the 27<sup>th</sup> Summit of the African Union. The inauguration of the Kigali Convention Centre (KCC) marked a landmark achievement both in branding the City of Kigali as a conference destination and in the lead, up to the continent’s high level gathering.

Beautiful shots of the newly inaugurated KCC were trending on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms, dominating the country’s Social Media coverage. The Centre’s spiral dome beaming with various magnificent colours signalled, in the language of multiple Social Media enthusiasts; the birth of ‘Africa’s most expensive building’.

**In 2017:** In the last three months, Rwanda has been positively covered on Social Networks. Stories on President Kagame’s multiple trips abroad were published in different media outlets worldwide. The latter also shared them on various online platforms including Twitter and Facebook. World’s renowned media outlets like CNN, Reuters, BBC, AFP, New York Times and others tweeted stories on Pope Francis’ ‘imploring God’s forgiveness’ for the Church’s roles in the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

CNN story on Rwanda being among the top best destination for 2017 early this year trended for January as it was widely shared by Rwandans on Twitter and friends of Rwanda. Various local and regional tweeters discussed the ‘surprising’ attendance of President Kagame and First Lady Jeannette Kagame at the France-Africa Summit in Bamako, Mali mid-January as a step forward in France-Rwanda relations. Late January, at the 28<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit, President Kagame presented the AU Reform Commission report. Stories on the reforms suggested emerged and trended on Social Networks. Many were criticising the Union as an ‘idle body’ whose structure needs to be overhauled.

On 20 March 2017, as President Kagame and his delegation bid farewell to Pope Francis after an official state visit and meeting at the Vatican, Twitter Timeline and Facebook Newsfeed were filled with stories (in tweets and posts) on the Pope’s imploration of ‘God’s forgiveness’ for the Church’s role in the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The Church’s move was referred to as ‘a step forward’ in the Rwanda-Vatican relations. The Pope was lauded for

acknowledging that the Church as a whole played a role in the events that culminated into the Genocide, and the Genocide itself.

Being the first African Head of State to address the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) forum, President Kagame’s engagement at the policy forum provoked a buzz on Social Media with many tweeters and facebookers dubbing him ‘the highly respected African statesman’.

The aforementioned analysis shows how Rwandans, friends of Rwanda as well as renown media houses use social media to show Rwanda’s images in different angles.

**Table 4.2:** Appreciation of respondents to the role of Facebook on promoting Rwanda’s image

| Statements   | SA            | A             | UN | D | SD |
|--|---------------|---------------|----|---|----|
| 1. The government officials use their Facebook accounts on promoting the Rwanda’s investment opportunity.                | 17<br>(22.1%) | 60<br>(77.9%) | -  | - | -  |
| 2. The government officials use social Facebook for interacting with international business partners.                    | 36<br>(46.8%) | 41<br>(53.2%) | -  | - | -  |
| 3. The government officials and institutions use for responding people who criticize the government and genocide deniers | 44<br>(57.1%) | 33<br>(42.9%) | -  | - | -  |
| 4. Facebook is secure for distributing the government policy and show people the real image of Rwanda.                   | 36<br>(46.8%) | 41<br>(53.2%) | -  | - | -  |

Source: Primary data, 2018

Table 4.2 show the appreciation of respondents to the role of Facebook on promoting Rwanda’s image. Facebook is the first socio network uses by young people and elder people in the world. Even in Rwanda Facebook is the most popular social network. Currently the majority of people use Facebook for communication, getting information, marketing, and business and so on. In Rwanda, the government official uses their Facebook account on promoting the Rwanda investment opportunity, where the results show that (22.1%) respondents are strongly agreeing while 77.9% agreed that the government officials use their Facebook accounts on promoting the Rwanda’s investment opportunity. Also, government official use Facebook for interacting with international business partners in the world, where 46.8% are strongly agree and 53.2% are agreed. This means that the staff working under ministry of MINAFFET they knew the importance of using Facebook. The name of a country can be promoted or damage by the users of Facebook. The government of Rwanda have a special institution working under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Cooperation and East Africa community: The Office of the Government Spokesperson (OGS) which oversees and coordinates the effective communication of Rwanda’s story to audiences at home and abroad. In partnership with government institutions, OGS sets and implement best practice using modern communications tools. OGS builds and maintains capacity of government communication by conducting regular training and workshops across Rwanda,

including at province, district level and Embassies, with particular emphasis on the use of digital platforms. The staff from the aforementioned institution are positively use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other platforms for the interest of promoting Rwanda’s image.

Also, respondents use Facebook for responding people who criticize the Rwanda policy mainly those ones with the genocide ideology, the majority of those who criticize the Rwanda policy are live outside of a country, reason why the staff of MINAFFET, mainly the communication officers in Rwanda’s embassies use that opportunity for explaining those people, what they said is wrong and they try to tell them the true image of Rwanda by image, political will, examples, etc.

The World Economic Forum points out that if Facebook were a country, it would be substantially bigger than China. The size of Facebook’s user base translates to almost two in seven of the global population. Around 1.9 billion people use Facebook each month. The above makes Facebook an important tool for everyone who wants to reach out to different layers of the world population.

Today, Rwanda is reviewing its social media strategy (including Facebook). In March 2017, in partnership with the Facebook Public Policy Management team for Africa, the Office of the Government Spokesperson conducted advanced Facebook Management training sessions for different categories of Communications Staff across government institutions. In collaboration with Facebook Africa, the Government of Rwanda is, bit by bit, enhancing its identity and improving its authenticity on the platform. 82% of GoR Ministers on Facebook have been verified while close to 70% of GoR Key Agencies on Facebook have also received the ‘blue tick’.

President Kagame is Rwanda’s most popular Facebook figure with 726k likes. Rwanda National Police is the country’s highly liked institution on Facebook with 12.5k likes, followed by the Rwanda Development and the Ministry of Education with 8k and 7k likes respectively. Overall, Rwanda is covered positively on Facebook with videos on the President’s page and stories on the official Government’s page leading the way. Negative discussions take place mainly in private groups created by hostile facebookers the likes of David Himbara. The latter is a popular figure among hostile Facebook users who comment and share regular posts, constantly criticising various government programmes with a special focus on the person of the Head of State.

It’s worth to note that most hostile Facebook pages/accounts have same regular followers and contributors. To counter the misleading narratives, the Government of Rwanda has now established itself as one of the leading Facebook account in telling the country’s story and engaging with the rest of the world on Rwanda-related topics.

**Table 4.3:** Appreciation of respondents to the role of YouTube onpromoting Rwanda’s image

| Statements   | SA             | A             | UN | D | SD |
|--|----------------|---------------|----|---|----|
| 1. YouTube is a best social network for showing the reality of the current Rwanda’s image after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi by posting videos. | 77<br>(100.0%) |               | -  | - | -  |
| 2. Communication officers across the government institutions watch videos on YouTube to track those who posted the bad and real image of Rwanda.       | 66<br>(85.7%)  | 11<br>(14.3%) | -  | - | -  |
| 3. Government officials   Government Institutions respond to the government critics through YouTube channel.   | 74<br>(96.1%)  | 3<br>(3.9%)   | -  | - | -  |

Source: Primary data, 2018

Currently the majority of peoples like to watch video or listening audio on YouTube. People of all age categories can watch and be updated for the new news. YouTube is a very good platform of promoting the Rwanda image after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. People from everywhere in the world can listen and view the video of politician speech from Rwanda. 100% of the respondents said that YouTube is a best social network for showing the reality of current Rwanda image after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi where everyone can watch the video on YouTube which shows the real image of Rwanda, 85.7% are strongly agree and 14.3% are agreed with this statement. Currently some genocide deniers started online radios with a purpose of damaging the real image of Rwanda but they are failing because they are also other YouTube channel created in other to show the real image of the country.

**Table 4.4:** Appreciation of respondents to the role of Instagram onpromoting Rwanda’s

| Statements  | SA            | A             | UN | D | SD |
|---|---------------|---------------|----|---|----|
| 1. The majority of government officials   Institutions use Instagram to promote the Rwanda diplomacy. | 58<br>(24.7%) | 19<br>(75.3%) | -  | - | -  |
| 2. Instagram is one of the social media uses by MINAFFET’s embassies on promoting Rwanda’s image      | 75<br>(97.4%) | 2<br>(2.6%)   | -  | - | -  |
| 3. Instagram helps government official   institutions to promote the Rwanda’s investment opposition.  | 73<br>(94.8%) | 4<br>(5.2%)   | -  | - | -  |

Source: Primary data, 2018

The above Table 4.4 shows the views of respondent on how Instagram have a big impact on promoting the image of Rwanda. The majority of government officials or institutions use Instagram to promote the Rwanda’s diplomacy, the results show that 75.3% the respondents are strongly agreeing and 24.7% are agreed. 97.4% of the respondents were strongly agreed that Instagram is one of the best social media uses by MINAFFET’s embassies on promoting Rwanda’s image.



Now that Instagram has over 300 million monthly users many brands are finding ways to interact with the Instagram community and earn personally invested customers who keep coming back for more. But it's not just the numbers you should care about. It's the people using Instagram.

**Table 4.5: Model Summary**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .437 <sup>a</sup> | .743     | .641              | 252                        |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram

Table 4.5 presents the coefficients of model fitness on how social media explains promotion of Rwanda's image. Social networks have an overall correlation with Rwanda's image of 0.743 which is strong and positive. This means that approximately 74.3% variations from promotion of Rwanda image are explained by the social networks variables at 5% level of significance. These indicate the good fit of the regression equation used. Therefore, this is a good indication of the true position of promoting Rwanda's image explained by the usage of social networks: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. The rule of thumb said that, usually an R square of more than 50% is considered as better, this study show that R square is (0.743) implying that socio networks have impact on promoting the image of Rwanda.

**Table 4.6: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df     | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |                   |
|-------|----------------|--------|-------------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression     | 27.612 | 3           | 6.401 | 6.301 | .001 <sup>a</sup> |
|       | Residual       | .752   | 154         | .010  |       |                   |
|       | Total          | 33.355 | 157         |       |       |                   |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

b. Dependent Variable: Promoting Rwanda's image

Table 4.6 shows the overall significance of the regression estimation model. It indicates that the model is significant in explaining the relationship between socio networks and promotion of Rwanda's image at 5% level of significance. Analysis of Variance shows that f-calculated is greater than f-critical that is 6.301 > 0.01. This implies that the regression equation was well specified and therefore the co-efficient of the regression shows that there is a strong relationship between socio networks and promoting Rwanda's image. The analysis of variance of the predictors of the model has a significance of 0.001.

**Table 4.7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model        | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
|              | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |       |
| 1 (Constant) | 0.152                       | 0.81       |                           | 1.728  | .031  |
| Twitter      | 0.736                       | 0.054      | 0.833                     | 22.050 | .000  |
| Facebook     | 0.642                       | 0.064      | 0.052                     | 1.631  | 0.000 |
| YouTube      | 0.724                       | 0.034      | 0.014                     | 0.122  | 0.000 |
| Instagram    | 0.624                       | 0.065      | 0.23                      | 0.123  | 0.000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Promoting Rwanda's image

From table 4.7, the regression model therefore becomes:

$$Y = 0.152 + 0.736x_1 + 0.642x_2 + 0.724x_3 + 0.624x_4 + \epsilon$$

On table 4.7 the regression coefficients of the predictors (social networks) are presented. Results indicate that the tweet of the government officials or government institutions are the most significant in explaining the promotion of Rwanda's image with a significance of 0.000 which is less than a p-value of 0.05 and beta value is 0.736. The data shows that the majority of MINAFFET staff and other staff working with OGS like to use Twitter for promoting the image of Rwanda in different level, such as diplomacy, investment opportunity, diplomacy, fighting the genocide ideology and advertising the tourism destination. The second most socio network use by the MINAFFET staff is Facebook, followed by YouTube and Instagram. Those entire social networks have a positive impact in promoting Rwanda's image.

**Table 4.8: Relationship between social networks in promoting Rwanda's image**

| Promoting Rwanda's image | Social networks     |        |        |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| Promoting Rwanda's image | Pearson Correlation | 1      | .754** |
|                          | Sig. (2-tailed)     |        | .000   |
|                          | N                   | 77     | 77     |
| Social networks          | Pearson Correlation | .754** | 1      |
|                          | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000   |        |
|                          | N                   | 77     | 77     |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Pearson correlation coefficient, (r=0.754) shows that there is a positive and high correlation relationship between social networks and promoting Rwanda's image where the P-value (0.000 < 0.05). This means that social networks have a big contribution on promoting Rwanda's image.

## 5. Conclusions

The main objective of this research was to answer the question of the use of social networks in promoting Rwanda's image. It takes the seriousness in managing social media networks in order to provide optimal results particularly in promoting the country image. Social networking being an appropriate tool to promote tourist destination, diplomacy, fighting genocide ideology, and attract investment opportunities. The research has carefully gone through extensive literature review on the use of social networks in promoting Rwanda's image. It involved a questionnaire survey as an instrument for collecting the primary data. The data collected through the questionnaire was intended to answer the research questions that were drafted to address the research problem of the thesis. The results obtained through the empirical study proved the validity of the research problem and brought promising answers to the drafted research questions. Both the literature and empirical findings provided valuable insights on how social networks in promoting Rwanda's image.

Moreover, the study took into account social media information and social media word of year. The study was based on the answers of 77 selected participants. After collecting all necessary data, the multiple regression analysis was applied. This has showed researcher statistical significance of the data and has helped researcher to accept

previously stated specific objectives. The main result of the research is existence of the positive relationship between social networks and country image. This means that the use of social networks influences the promotion of country image, the bigger is the intention to visit that country, fighting genocide ideology, promoting investment opportunity and vice versa. However, our research showed that the influence of moderator variables on this relationship is significant.

## 6. Recommendations

The use of social networks in promoting Rwanda's image is very important for this time; because some negativist people who live abroad they use those social networks for destroy the country image. According to the history of social networks in the world, social networks played a big role in promoting the country Rwanda. Considering this research the social networks should be a clearest path to promote the country image. It has emerged that social networks appear to be effective in helping citizens increase their democratic participation. Facebook is popular with millions of users, and in some ways, it appears to be an ideal tool for expanding communicative spaces. The extent to which using Social networks tools can be considered to be less demanding in terms of time, commitment, risk or energy needs to be investigated.

The government can enhance digitizing of more of the government services, policy making on internet usage, regulating the costs, increasing internet connection in rural areas and provide education on how to use the internet and its benefits for promoting country image.

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