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DIGITAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING TRUST: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY

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ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER, 2026

DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for any degree in any other university. No part of this project should be reproduced without prior authority of the author and/or St. Paul's University.



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DEDICATION

This research dissertation is dedicated to my family as a token of appreciation for the moral support and patience they showed me while I conducted the research.

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I take this opportunity to thank several key people who contributed significantly to this dissertation and provided the support I needed. These are my supervisors, Dr Winnie Ndeta and Mr Nyapete, who helped lay the foundation for this research and guided me in everything I have done so far. God bless you as you continue to mentor other students and as we proceed with this journey together with you as my guides. Continual thanks also go to my friends for encouraging me to advance in my studies and to my colleagues for their continuous support. Finally, but not least, is to express my appreciation to the very special people in my life, my family, for their continued support and encouragement. God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has necessitated a shift in corporate communication to enhance customer engagement, particularly for organizations providing essential services. For Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), effective communication was crucial for ensuring operational efficiency, mitigating crises, and maintaining positive relationships with customers. This study examined KPLC's digital corporate communication and its influence on customer engagement. The study had four specific objectives: (i) to investigate the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement; (ii) to analyze the reach of KPLC's digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience; (iii) to assess the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC; and (iv) to find out the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts built customer trust. Employing a mixed-methods case study design grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory complemented by Social Exchange Theory, the study collected and analyzed data from 125 respondents. Data analysis followed a mixed-methods strategy, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings indicated that KPLC's digital platforms, particularly X/Twitter, the MyPower App, USSD code *977#, WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS, and the company website, supported timely and accessible communication, with high levels of customer engagement and trust. Customers preferred these platforms because they were fast, convenient, and useful for checking outages, purchasing tokens, reporting faults, and receiving updates. The study also found that KPLC's digital communication positively influenced customer engagement by reducing the time and effort needed to resolve issues, improving service access, and increasing transparency. In relation to customer satisfaction, the findings showed that digital communication was generally viewed positively, with customers appreciating timely outage notifications, access to billing information, token purchase support, and issue reporting through digital channels. The findings further showed that KPLC's digital corporate communication contributed to trust-building by making information easier to access, improving transparency, and reducing dependence on physical visits and phone calls. However, the study also identified challenges such as delayed responses, poor follow-up, platform downtime, weak feedback systems, and technical failures on some platforms, which weakened the overall impact on satisfaction and trust. The study concluded that KPLC's digital corporate communication contributed positively to customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust, especially when content was clear, timely, and tailored to customer needs. The findings are expected to provide KPLC with data-driven insights into the effectiveness of its digital communication strategies, enabling the company to refine its approach, improve customer engagement, and enhance overall operational efficiency and customer experience.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the background to the study, the purpose of the study, the specific objectives, and the research questions that guide the inquiry. It also presents the justification and significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the limitations and delimitations that frame the research. In addition, the chapter outlines the conceptual direction of the study and provides the foundation for understanding the relationship between digital corporate communication, customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust. It sets the context for the study, clarifies the problem under investigation, and shows how the research is organized and why it is important.

1.2 Background of the study

The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented transformation in how organizations interact with their stakeholders, driven primarily by the pervasive influence of digital technologies. The advent of the internet, social media platforms, mobile applications, and advanced data analytics has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of corporate communication, shifting it from a predominantly one-way, top-down model to a dynamic, interactive, and inherently two-way dialogue. In this new paradigm, effective corporate communication is no longer merely about information dissemination but about fostering genuine customer engagement, building robust trust, and cultivating lasting relationships in a highly competitive and transparent environment. For companies operating in critical infrastructure sectors, such as utility providers, these imperatives are amplified, as their services are inextricably linked to the daily lives and economic well-being of entire populations.

The digital revolution has given consumers unprecedented access to information, ways to express their opinions, and platforms to demand accountability. This shift in power dynamics necessitates that corporations meticulously craft their digital communication strategies to

resonate with customer expectations for real-time responsiveness, personalized experiences, and authentic transparency. Customer engagement, in this context, transcends simple interaction; it involves creating meaningful experiences that encourage active participation, foster a sense of belonging, and ultimately lead to loyalty and advocacy. Trust, the cornerstone of any sustainable relationship, is now forged not just through dependable service delivery but also through consistent, honest, and empathetic digital dialogue, especially when addressing concerns, managing crises, or simply providing proactive information.

Historically, corporate communication was primarily unidirectional: companies broadcasted information with little room for immediate customer interaction or feedback (Cornelissen, 2017). However, the proliferation of internet-enabled devices, social media channels, and mobile applications has shifted this paradigm towards a participatory process marked by immediacy, transparency, and accessibility (Kelleher & Miller, 2006). Consumers today expect not only rapid access to information but also an active dialogue with service providers (Sashi, 2012).

This shift poses both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, digital platforms facilitate rapid information dissemination, engagement through personalized content, and transparent interactions that build trust (Men & Tsai, 2012). On the other hand, organizations must manage diverse and voluminous interactions, ensure accurate messaging, and address criticism in real time, especially in sensitive sectors such as utilities where service interruptions can severely damage reputation (Tang & Qiu, 2016).

Globally, scholars and practitioners agree that digital technologies have redefined the expectations of corporate communication. Cornelissen (2017) observes that traditional corporate communication was characterized by one-way broadcasting, where organizations controlled the message with limited avenues for feedback. However, the proliferation of

internet-enabled devices, social media, and mobile apps has made communication participatory, marked by immediacy, transparency, and accessibility (Kelleher & Miller, 2006). Customers now expect rapid access to information, interactive interfaces, and responsive feedback, especially when service disruptions occur (Sashi, 2012). For utilities and other service-intensive sectors, digital platforms have become vital tools for outage notifications, bill clarifications, service upgrades, and crisis management (Men & Tsai, 2012; Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Moreover, research indicates that well-designed digital communication strategies can enhance customer engagement by fostering active participation, co-creation of value, and emotional attachment to brands (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In the utilities sector, global studies show that digital channels—such as mobile apps, web portals, and social media—enable more efficient complaint management, improved transparency, and opportunities for real-time feedback (VerteXone AI, 2024; KPMG, 2025). Nonetheless, these same channels heighten organizational exposure to public scrutiny, making trust and reputational management central outcomes of digital communication (Tang & Qiu, 2016). In mismanaged situations, poor digital communication can escalate dissatisfaction into public backlash, regulatory inquiry, or loss of license to operate.

In the African context, digital transformation in corporate communication is unfolding against a backdrop of rapid mobile-phone penetration, growing internet access, and rising expectations for responsive public services. Kenya, in particular, has emerged as a regional leader in digital innovation, with a vibrant mobile-money ecosystem, widespread smartphone adoption, and strong government commitment to digital-economy development (MoICT, 2025; GIZ, 2020). African governments and regulators increasingly view digital communication as a tool for improving service delivery, enhancing transparency, and strengthening public trust in state-linked corporations such as utilities and parastatals (Borden & Scheufele, 2001).

At the regional level, utilities in Eastern Africa face common challenges: frequent power outages, infrastructural constraints, billing disputes, and historically low trust in service providers (Mabiala & Ochieng, 2022). In response, many have begun to digitize customer-service functions, introduce mobile billing platforms, and adopt social-media engagement to respond to complaints and service-related queries (Escalent, 2025; VerteXone AI, 2024). However, scholars note that African organizations often grapple with fragmented digital ecosystems, inconsistent user experience across channels, and varying levels of digital literacy among customers (GIZ, 2020; Escalent, 2025). This context renders the effectiveness of digital corporate communication highly contingent on design, integration, and staff training.

Nationally, the Kenyan environment is especially conducive to digital corporate communication. The country is widely recognized as a launchpad for Africa's digital transformation, supported by a Digital Master Plan, national ICT policy, and institutional investments in digital-skills development and e-governance (ICT Authority, 2025; MoICT, 2026). This macro-environment encourages public enterprises such as the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) to adopt digital communication tools as a standard rather than an exception. KPLC, as the sole electricity provider for transmission, distribution, and retail services across Kenya, serves over 10 million customers and is critical to industrial activity, commerce, and domestic life (KPLC, 2025; The Standard, 2025).

However, effectively leveraging these digital channels for enhanced engagement and trust is far from straightforward. Organizations grapple with the complexities of managing multiple platforms, curating diverse content, responding to myriad queries and complaints, and navigating the often-volatile currents of online sentiment. The challenge is particularly acute for public utility companies, which often face high volumes of customer interactions, public scrutiny, and the inherent difficulties associated with service interruptions and infrastructure management. In such environments, a failure to strategically harness digital communication

can exacerbate public dissatisfaction, erode trust, and damage reputation, while a successful approach can transform operational challenges into opportunities for strengthening customer relationships and fostering a positive public image.

Globally, studies show that digital communication can significantly enhance customer engagement when designed for interactivity, clarity, and responsiveness (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Men & Tsai, 2012). In the utility sector, engagement extends beyond mere information receipt to include active reporting of outages, participation in energy-saving programs and providing feedback on service quality (Escalent, 2025; VerteXone AI, 2024). In Kenya, research on KPLC notes that digital platforms—particularly the mobile app and web portal—have increased the speed and accessibility of service requests, reduced queues at physical customer-care centers, and improved complaint-resolution times (Ndichu, 2020; Afolabi & Akinbo, 2021). In addition, KPLC's use of social media for outage alerts and load-shedding schedules has enabled real-time coordination between the utility and its customers, thereby fostering a sense of shared responsibility and situational awareness.

However, the effectiveness of digital engagement is not automatic. Studies show that when digital channels are poorly integrated, messages are inconsistent, or responses are delayed, customers tend to perceive the organization as unresponsive and untrustworthy (Borden & Scheufele, 2001; Tang & Qiu, 2016). In Kenya, anecdotal evidence and media reports indicate that some customers still experience frustration when digital platforms go offline, when responses are delayed, or when information across channels conflicts (Local media reports, 2022–2025). Empirical work on KPLC highlights that even where digital tools exist, uneven user experiences across channels suggest a gap in integrated digital communication management, echoing global literature that advocates for a unified digital-service framework to enhance satisfaction and trust (Ndichu, 2020; Afolabi & Akinbo, 2021; Chege, 2025).

For utilities like KPLC, effective communication is critical not merely for branding or marketing but for operational continuity and public safety. Frequent power outages, billing disputes, and infrastructure maintenance are common occurrences necessitating proactive, clear communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Failure to communicate transparently and responsively risks customer dissatisfaction, eroded trust, and escalation to regulatory scrutiny (Borden & Scheufele, 2001).

Kenya Power and Lighting Company, as Kenya's sole electricity provider, serves millions, making the stakes of communication particularly high. Beyond routine updates, the company must manage crisis communication, build customer loyalty, and navigate the expectations of a digitally engaged populace.

Against this evolving backdrop, and from global, regional, and local perspectives, this study examines the transformative role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust, focusing specifically on the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). As the sole provider of electricity transmission, distribution, and retail services in Kenya, KPLC occupies a central and indispensable position within the national economy and the daily lives of millions of Kenyans. Its operations are critical for industrial growth, commercial activity, and domestic comfort. Consequently, KPLC's ability to effectively communicate with its vast customer base – addressing power outages, managing billing queries, introducing new services, and handling public feedback – directly impacts public perception, operational efficiency, and overall customer satisfaction.

Historically, utility companies have often been perceived as bureaucratic and unresponsive, with communication primarily flowing in one direction. However, the digital age gives KPLC an unparalleled opportunity to redefine its relationship with customers by moving toward a more interactive, responsive, and trustworthy engagement model. Social media platforms like

Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, alongside dedicated mobile applications, service portals, and responsive websites, have become vital conduits for KPLC to inform, assist, and interact with its customers. Yet the true effectiveness of these channels in fostering genuine engagement and building lasting trust remains a critical area for investigation. Understanding how KPLC utilizes these diverse digital platforms, the impact of its communication strategies on customer satisfaction, and the reach of its channels in shaping customer experience is paramount for optimizing its communication efforts and setting benchmarks for other public service providers. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to investigate how digital communication can enhance customer engagement and build trust with KPLC as the case study.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Despite the growing use of digital communication platforms by utility companies such as Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), customer dissatisfaction with service communication remains a persistent concern (Ndichu, 2020). In principle, digital platforms should improve service delivery by enabling customers to receive timely information, seek clarification, and interact with the company through convenient channels (Men & Tsai, 2012; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). However, in practice, many customers continue to experience delays in receiving outage information, slow responses to billing queries, and unclear communication regarding how service issues are being resolved (The Standard, 2025; The Kenyan Times, 2025).

This challenge matters in the utility sector because electricity is essential for homes, businesses, schools, and public institutions (Mabiala & Ochieng, 2022). During outages or billing disputes, customers expect prompt, accurate, and transparent communication (KPLC, 2023; Wamai & Allen, 2023). When such communication is delayed or unclear, customers may perceive the company as unresponsive or indifferent, which can weaken satisfaction and trust (Borden & Scheufele, 2001; Mayer, 1995; Afolabi & Akinbo, 2021). In this context, digital platforms do

not necessarily guarantee meaningful engagement if customers do not receive timely, useful responses (Men & Tsai, 2012; Walter, 2024).

For KPLC, the concern is not simply whether digital platforms exist, but whether they are effectively used to support customer engagement. Although customers may interact with the company through social media, mobile applications, websites, and other digital channels, these interactions do not always produce the desired experience of responsiveness, clarity, and accountability (The Star, 2025; KPLC Facebook/X, 2023–2025). As a result, digital communication may be creating more frustration than trust, especially when customers raise complaints publicly and receive delayed or inadequate feedback (Walter, 2024; VerteXone AI, 2024).

This problem has broader organizational implications. Poor digital communication can reduce customer loyalty, increase repeated complaints, and damage the company's public image (Escalent, 2025; VerteXone AI, 2024). It may also push customers toward informal channels, rumors, or public criticism when official platforms fail to meet expectations (The Kenyan Times, 2025; Tang & Qiu, 2016). While recent discussions and reports suggest that KPLC faces challenges in managing its digital communication consistently, there remains limited empirical evidence on how customers actually experience these communication efforts and how they influence customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust (African Multidisciplinary Journal of Research, 2025; Ndichu, 2020).

It is against this background that the study sought to examine the role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust at KPLC. Specifically, the study investigated whether the issue lies in the digital platforms themselves, the speed of response, the clarity of messages, or the overall communication approach (Men & Tsai, 2012; Walter, 2024). By doing so, the study generated evidence to inform more effective service

communication and stronger customer relationships (VerteXone AI, 2024; The Standard, 2025).

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC).

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement.
2. To analyze the reach of KPLC’s digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience.
3. To assess the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC.
4. To find out the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust.

1.6 Research questions

1. What are the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement?
2. What is the reach of KPLC’s digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience?
3. What is the impact of KPCS’s digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction?

4. To what extent do KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust?

1.7 Rationale or justification of the study

Globally, digital communication has become an essential tool for service organizations seeking to improve responsiveness, transparency, and customer engagement. Studies have shown that effective use of digital platforms can strengthen customer relationships, improve service recovery, and build trust by enabling timely and interactive communication between organizations and their users. In many sectors, digital channels now play a central role in how customers access information, raise concerns, and evaluate service quality.

In the African context, however, the adoption and effectiveness of digital communication in public-service organizations remain uneven. Utilities often operate in environments marked by infrastructure limitations, frequent service disruptions, varying levels of digital literacy, and unequal access to reliable internet connectivity. These realities mean that communication strategies that work in global corporate settings may not automatically produce the same outcomes in African public utilities.

In Kenya, the electricity sector provides a relevant setting for examining this issue. Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) serves over 9 million customers and operates in a context characterized by power outages, infrastructure constraints, and increasing public expectations for timely, transparent, and responsive communication. As KPLC expands the use of digital platforms such as its mobile app, website, and social media accounts, there is a need to understand how these channels are experienced by customers and how they influence engagement, satisfaction, and trust.

This study was therefore justified by the gap between the global evidence on digital communication and the Kenyan public-utility context. While existing literature confirms the value of digital communication in enhancing customer engagement, much of it is based on

corporate or Western settings and offers limited insight into how these practices function in monopoly utilities serving diverse populations under regulatory pressure. By focusing on KPLC, the study generates context-specific evidence that is relevant to the realities of service delivery in Kenya.

The findings will benefit KPLC by providing actionable recommendations for improving communication workflows, reducing response delays, and aligning digital messaging with customer expectations. They are also useful to regulators, scholars, and other public-service organizations interested in strengthening digital service delivery, accountability, and customer trust. In this way, the study contributes to both practical improvement and academic knowledge in digital corporate communication within the Kenyan utility sector.

1.8 Significance of the study

This study is significant because it contributes to both academic knowledge and practical communication management in the utility sector. It examined how digital corporate communication influences customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust in the context of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), a critical public utility whose services affect households, businesses, and institutions across the country. By focusing on KPLC, the study provides context-specific insights into how digital platforms such as social media, websites, mobile applications, and other online channels are used to communicate with customers in a highly sensitive service environment.

The findings will be useful to KPLC management by highlighting how its digital communication strategies are experienced by customers and where improvements may be needed. In particular, the study can inform more effective use of digital platforms for outage updates, billing communication, complaint handling, and service notifications. This may help the company improve responsiveness, reduce customer dissatisfaction, and strengthen public confidence in its communication systems.

The study is also important to customers and the general public because it sheds light on how digital communication affects their experience of service delivery. In a sector where timely and clear communication is essential, the study may help explain what customers expect from utility providers and how better digital communication can improve trust, convenience, and overall satisfaction.

For policymakers and regulators, the study offers evidence that may support the development of stronger communication standards for public utilities. As digital communication becomes central to service delivery, regulators may use the findings to encourage accountability, transparency, and customer-centered digital practices among service providers.

The study also adds value to scholars and researchers by contributing to the growing literature on digital corporate communication, stakeholder engagement, and trust in public utilities. It also provides a foundation for future research on the role of digital platforms in improving customer relations within the Kenyan and broader African context.

Finally, the study is relevant to other utility and service organizations that seek to improve stakeholder engagement through digital means. The lessons drawn from KPLC may help similar organizations design communication strategies that are more interactive, responsive, and aligned with customer expectations.

1.9 Assumptions

The study was guided by several key assumptions that shaped its design, data collection, and interpretation of findings.

First, the study assumed that respondents—comprising customers of Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)—would provide reliable information about their experiences with the organization's digital communication platforms. This was made possible by the anonymization of the responses.

Second, the research assumed that the sampled customer population had reasonable access to and some level of familiarity with KPLC's digital communication platforms. This included the KPLC mobile app, the official website, social media channels (such as Facebook, Twitter/X, and YouTube), and digital notifications via SMS, email, or push messages.

Third, the study assumed that customers' perceptions of KPLC's digital communication—such as the clarity of messages, timeliness of responses, and responsiveness to queries—reasonably reflect the organization's actual communication practices within the sampled units and the period of data collection. While perceptions can differ from objective reality, the research assumed that, on aggregate, self-reported customer experiences provide a meaningful proxy for organizational communication behaviour and its impact on customer engagement, experience, satisfaction, and trust.

Fourth, the study assumed that customers who have interacted with KPLC's digital communication platforms within the past 12 months would have sufficient recall accuracy to provide valid responses about their experiences, message clarity, and satisfaction levels.

Fifth, the study assumed that the mixed-methods approach would adequately capture both the breadth of customer engagement patterns (through quantitative survey data) and the depth of customer experiences and perceptions (through qualitative interviews), providing a comprehensive understanding of KPLC's digital corporate communication effectiveness.

1.10 Scope of the study

The study was narrowly focused on KPLC’s digital corporate communication. It specifically examined how customers had interacted with KPLC through digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and the KPLC app.

The target population consisted only of KPLC customers in Nairobi County in the KPLC database who had used these digital platforms to seek information, make complaints, follow

service updates, or respond to company communication. By focusing on actual platform users, the study measured genuine engagement experiences rather than general opinions from people who may not have interacted with KPLC digitally. This makes the findings more reliable and relevant to the company's communication performance.

The study examined three main areas. First, it looked at engagement metrics, including the frequency of interaction, responsiveness of the platforms, and the extent to which customers actively participate in digital conversations with the company. Second, it assessed satisfaction levels by exploring whether customers felt that the communication they received was timely, clear, helpful, and effective in resolving service issues. Third, it investigated trust-building by determining whether KPLC's digital communication increased customers' confidence in the company, its transparency, and its reliability in handling concerns.

At the same time, the study deliberately excluded traditional media such as radio, television, newspapers, and print notices because these channels operate differently from digital corporate communication and would introduce unnecessary complexity. It also excluded non-customer stakeholders because the study focused specifically on the customer experience of KPLC's digital communication. This boundary keeps the research focused and ensures that the findings speak directly to customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust.

1.11 Limitations and delimitations of the study

The study limitations included the following aspects. First, because it focused only on KPLC customers in Nairobi County within the KPLC customer database, the findings may not fully represent customer experiences in rural areas or in other counties where digital access, service expectations, and communication patterns may differ. Second, the study was limited to customers who had interacted with KPLC through digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and the KPLC app, which means the views of customers who rely on other channels or have no digital access were not captured.

Another limitation is that the study examined perceptions of engagement, satisfaction, and trust, which are partly subjective and may be influenced by individual experiences, emotions, or recent service failures. This means respondents may overstate dissatisfaction or satisfaction depending on current circumstances.

The research may also have been limited by response bias. Some participants may have provided socially desirable answers, while others may have hesitated to criticize KPLC openly, especially if they feared identification or future service consequences. Since the study relies on self-reported data, it may not fully capture the actual performance of KPLC's digital platforms, only customers' perceptions of them. The study may further be affected by differences in how KPLC's digital content is created and managed, since the competence, responsiveness, and coordination of the personnel handling online communication may influence customer perceptions, even though these internal actors are not the primary unit of analysis.

This study was deliberately delimited to KPLC's digital corporate communication and its relationship with customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust. It did not examine traditional media such as radio, television, newspapers, or printed notices, even though these may also influence how customers receive information. The study also excluded internal communication within KPLC, focusing instead on external communication directed at customers.

1.12 Operationalization of key terms

Digital Corporate Communication: Refers to KPLC's strategic use of digital and online platforms, including social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube), the official website, mobile applications, email, and SMS/USSD, to share information and interact with customers. It is operationalized through indicators such as frequency of posts, speed of response to customer queries, clarity of messages, and consistency of updates.

Customer Engagement: Refers to the extent to which customers actively interact with KPLC's digital communication platforms through actions such as liking, sharing, commenting, clicking, replying, and submitting queries or complaints. It is measured by interaction rates, frequency of participation, and response behaviour.

Customer Trust: Refers to the degree to which customers perceive KPLC as reliable, honest, transparent, and dependable in its digital communication and service delivery. It is assessed through survey responses on credibility, responsiveness, transparency, and confidence in the accuracy of KPLC's digital messages.

Customer Satisfaction: Refers to the extent to which customers feel that KPLC's digital communication meets or exceeds their expectations after interacting with the company. It is measured through satisfaction ratings, complaint-resolution effectiveness, timeliness of response, and perceived helpfulness of information.

Customer Experience: Refers to the overall impression customers develop from their interactions with KPLC's digital platforms across different touchpoints. It is operationalized through ease of use, clarity of navigation, speed of service access, and perceived smoothness of communication processes.

1.13 Chapter summary

Chapter One introduced and contextualized the study. It begins by situating the research within the global shift from one-way broadcasting to interactive, digital-age communication, and explains how this transformation has raised expectations for real-time, transparent, and personalized engagement, particularly in essential-service sectors such as utilities. The chapter then grounds the study in global, regional, and local perspectives, showing how digital communication can both empower customers and expose organizations to heightened scrutiny when communication fails.

The chapter clearly articulates the problem statement, noting that despite KPLC's rapid adoption of digital platforms, many customers still report delays in outage information, slow responses to billing queries, and uncertainty about how service issues are handled. It shows that mere visibility on digital channels does not automatically translate into meaningful engagement or trust, and that uneven user experience across platforms can undermine satisfaction. The purpose and objectives of the study are then stated, specifying that the research seeks to assess the types of digital platforms KPLC uses, their reach, and their impact on customer engagement, experience, satisfaction, and trust.

The chapter also outlines the rationale and significance of the study. It then sets out the assumptions guiding the study, the operational definitions of key terms such as digital corporate communication, customer engagement, trust, satisfaction, and experience, and the delimitations of the research to KPLC's digital channels and Nairobi County customers. In sum, Chapter One establishes the conceptual, contextual, and methodological foundations upon which the rest of the study is built.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a critical and systematic review of existing literature on the role of digital corporate communication in fostering customer engagement and building trust, with a specific focus on the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), the empirical literature and theoretical framework, a summary of the gaps, and the conceptual framework adopted by the study.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Theoretical framework

The study is guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), complemented by the Social Exchange Theory (SET).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications framework views media users as active agents who selectively engage with communication tools to satisfy distinct needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). Rather than viewing media as exerting unilateral influence on passive recipients, U&G focuses on what people do with media rather than what media does to people. Audiences consciously choose platforms and content based on utility, including information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, and problem-solving (Ruggiero, 2000).

In the context of KPLC's digital corporate communication, U&G helps understand why customers choose to engage with the organization on digital platforms. Customers may seek immediate problem resolution, information on power outages, billing inquiries, feedback channels, or a sense of community. By understanding the "gratifications" customers seek (e.g., convenience, information, security, problem-solving), KPLC can tailor its digital content and interaction strategies to better meet these needs, thereby enhancing engagement. For instance,

customers may utilize SMS primarily for transactional functions like bill payment reminders, whereas social media might serve informational or communal purposes.

Social Exchange Theory

Complementing U&G, Social Exchange Theory explains relationships through a cost-benefit analysis, where individuals seek interactions that maximize rewards and minimize costs (Homans, 1958). According to SET, people are motivated to maintain relationships where the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs.

In digital corporate communication, customers engage with KPLC if they perceive that the benefits (e.g., quick response, issue resolution, important updates, feeling heard) outweigh the costs (e.g., time invested, frustration with unresponsive systems, privacy concerns). Similarly, KPLC invests in digital communication expecting benefits such as improved reputation, reduced customer service load, increased customer loyalty, and enhanced trust. This theory explains why trust is a critical outcome of effective digital communication: when customers feel that interactions consistently yield positive outcomes, trust grows. Conversely, negative experiences can quickly erode trust.

Integration of Theories

Together, U&G and SET offer a comprehensive lens for analyzing customer engagement with KPLC's digital platforms. U&G explains why customers choose to engage (motivations and needs), while SET explains whether they continue engaging (cost-benefit evaluation and trust development). This theoretical combination enables analysis of both the motivations behind initial engagement and the reciprocal nature of building sustained trust through positive, beneficial digital interactions.

2.3 General literature review

The literature on digital corporate communication, customer engagement, and trust shows that digital platforms have reshaped organizational communication from one-way broadcasting into interactive exchange. Scholars argue that digital tools enable organizations to provide timely information, invite feedback, and sustain customer relationships through continuous dialogue (Kelleher & Miller, 2006; Sashi, 2012). In service sectors, especially utilities, this shift matters because customers increasingly expect responsiveness, transparency, and accessible communication when service disruptions occur (Men & Tsai, 2012; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Digital communication improves access to information and supports more immediate customer interaction. The debate is whether digital channels automatically improve outcomes, since some studies suggest that poorly coordinated platforms can frustrate users and weaken trust rather than strengthen it. What remains underexplored is how these dynamics operate in Kenya's public utility settings, where digital access, service interruptions, and customer expectations vary widely.

Customer engagement has become a central concept in the digital communication literature. It is commonly understood as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses to organizational communication, including participation, interaction, and value co-creation (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In the utility context, engagement may include reporting outages, checking bills, receiving alerts, and participating in feedback exchanges with the provider. Studies on digital customer interaction show that engagement is more likely when platforms are reliable, easy to use, and integrated across channels, while fragmented systems reduce satisfaction and push customers to informal complaint spaces (Afolabi & Akinbo, 2021; Ndichu, 2020).

What is known is that engagement is strengthened by interactive, useful, and responsive communication. What is contested is how best to measure engagement, since studies differ on

whether it should be captured through behaviour, attitudes, emotional attachment, or loyalty. What remains unstudied is how KPLC customers in Nairobi experience engagement across multiple digital touchpoints and whether platform integration affects their perceptions in consistent ways.

Trust in utilities is closely tied to perceptions of competence, integrity, and benevolence. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) explain trust as a willingness to be vulnerable based on expectations that the organization will act ethically and competently. In service environments, transparent communication, timely updates, and credible explanations of service problems contribute to trust, while delay, ambiguity, and inconsistency erode it (Men & Tsai, 2012; Tang & Qiu, 2016). In Kenya, empirical research indicates that customer satisfaction with KPLC is influenced by complaint handling, service reliability, and the company's reputation, suggesting that communication and service delivery are closely linked.

Communication plays an important role in sustaining trust during disruptions and complaints. What is contested is the extent to which trust depends more on communication quality or on actual service performance. What remains unstudied is how KPLC's digital communication specifically shapes trust among customers who interact with the company through websites, mobile applications, and social media.

Literature on digital communication in utilities also shows that online platforms can improve service access while increasing reputational exposure. During outages or technical failures, customers often turn to social media for answers, and slow or defensive responses can intensify dissatisfaction and public criticism (Tang & Qiu, 2016). Studies in organizational communication further suggest that digital responsiveness is especially important where public institutions face high visibility and accountability pressures (Men & Tsai, 2012). Within the Kenyan context, peer-reviewed work on KPLC indicates that digital platforms support

customer interaction, but uneven user experience across channels points to weaknesses in integrated communication management (Ndichu, 2020).

Digital platforms can reduce communication barriers and create opportunities for faster customer service. What is contested is whether adopting more channels necessarily improves the customer experience if the channels are not well coordinated. What remains unstudied is the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication creates a coherent experience across platforms and whether that coherence predicts engagement and trust.

The literature shows that digital corporate communication matters for customer engagement and trust, but it also reveals important gaps. Much of the scholarship is based on general service settings rather than monopoly utilities, and many studies treat digital channels separately instead of examining their combined effect. The present study responds to this gap by focusing on KPLC as a public utility and by examining how its digital communication influences customer engagement, satisfaction, and trust in a Kenyan context.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 The types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement

The integration of digital technologies transforms corporate communication by allowing organizations to promote ongoing dialogue and strengthen relationships (Malthouse et al., 2013). Customer engagement involves the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural investment a customer makes during interactions with an organization (Brodie et al., 2011). Digital platforms, such as SMS, social media, mobile apps, and websites, support these engagements by offering real-time information, personalized interactions, and convenient channels for feedback (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Empirical studies highlight social media's role in enhancing engagement by creating communities, promoting transparency, and allowing customer co-creation (Hollebeek, 2011).

Yet, the challenges of managing high interaction volumes and negative feedback sometimes constrain organizations (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The integration of digital technologies transforms corporate communication by allowing organizations to promote ongoing dialogue and strengthen relationships (Malthouse et al., 2013). Customer engagement involves the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural investment a customer makes during interactions with an organization (Brodie et al., 2011). Digital platforms, such as SMS, social media, mobile apps, and websites, support these engagements by offering real-time information, personalized interactions, and convenient channels for feedback (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Digital platforms have revolutionized organizational communication, enabling real-time, personalized interactions that foster customer engagement—defined as the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural investment customers make in brand relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). Organizations deploy multichannel ecosystems including social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram), mobile apps, SMS/USSD, websites, email automation, and emerging AI chatbots to facilitate dialogue, co-creation, and feedback, transforming passive consumers into active participants (Hollebeek, 2011).

Empirical literature underscores their influence: Social media drives 25-40% engagement uplift via communities and virality, while apps enhance retention through self-service (Malthouse et al., 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This review synthesizes platform types, mechanisms of influence per Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G)—active need fulfillment—and empirical impacts across sectors, with utility parallels for KPLC.

Organizations categorize platforms by functionality. This is on owned (websites, apps), earned (social shares), and paid (ads) (Lundin, 2025). Key types include Social Media Platforms like Facebook (which aims to aid in community-building), Twitter/X (which makes real-time

feedback possible), Instagram/YouTube (visual storytelling), and LinkedIn. These enable media two-way interaction, with 88% of firms prioritizing omnichannel cohesion (Giveright, 2025).

Mobile and Messaging Channels Apps (e.g., MyPower-like self-service), SMS/USSD, WhatsApp Chat are useful for transactional engagement (eGain, 2024).

Websites and Portals are also useful digital platforms used by organizations. Content hubs with personalization (e.g., AI recommendations boosting conversions 23 %) (InsiderOne, 2026). These align with digital transformation, where omnichannel strategies unify touchpoints, capturing signals for seamless experiences (Medallia, 2024).

Platforms influence engagement multidimensionally. Firstly, Cognitive Engagement: Websites/apps provide info-seeking gratifications (U&G) (Hollebeek, 2011). Emotional Engagement is another aspect. Social media fosters belonging via shareable content (Erlangga, 2021).

The platforms are also useful for behavioural engagement. Self-service apps reduce friction; SMS excels transactionally (90% open rates), prompting actions like purchases (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Per U&G, users actively select platforms: Twitter for urgency, Instagram for entertainment (Katz et al., 1973). Platforms amplify via virality and data orchestration—e.g., Sunshine Conversations' threads sustain dialogues (Giveright, 2025).

KPLC employs diverse platforms, including SMS for outage alerts (reaching over 10 million users), Facebook/Twitter/X for complaints (500k followers), the KPLC Mobile App for self-service (with 1 million downloads), and the website for billing (KPLC Annual Report, 2024). Empirical studies highlight social media's role in enhancing engagement by creating communities, promoting transparency, and allowing customer co-creation (Hollebeek, 2011). A Kenyan study on KPLC found SMS is most used for transactional engagement, with social

media fostering communal ties, aligning with U&G (Abade, 2023). Yet, challenges of managing high interaction volumes and negative feedback sometimes constrain organizations (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.4.2 The reach of KPLC's digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience

Reach—penetration, frequency, accessibility—shapes customer experience, defined as holistic perceptions of service interactions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). KPLC's channels achieve 85-95% national reach via 62M mobile subscriptions (CAK, 2024). SMS blankets 98% (ubiquitous), social media 45% (urban skew), apps 30% (smartphone-dependent), websites 25% (data costs) (KPLC, 2024).

High reach enhances experience: Real-time alerts reduce outage frustration by 35% (WNS, 2024). Low reach in rural areas (40% app access) breeds inequity, per SET cost perceptions (Escalent, 2025). Empirical: Utilities with multichannel reach see 28% experience uplift; KPLC's SMS excels, but integrated dashboards lag (VertexOne, 2024).

Digital transformation has amplified channel reach amid global mobile penetration exceeding 70% and smartphone adoption at 60-85% in emerging markets. SMS achieves near-universal 95-98% coverage due to feature phone ubiquity, delivering transactional alerts with 90-98% open rates (GSMA, 2024). USSD penetrates 80-90% in low-data regions, facilitating frictionless queries without internet. Social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram) hit 40-60% urban penetration, fostering communities via virality (500M+ daily interactions globally). Mobile apps reach 25-50% of smartphone users, enabling self-service like payments, with push notifications boosting retention 20-30%. Websites and email newsletters cover 20-40%, constrained by data costs but excelling in depth (content hubs with AI personalization lifting conversions 23%) (InsiderOne, 2026).

Empirical studies link high reach to experience uplift. Real-time multichannel alerts reduce service frustration by 35-40%, as proactive notifications (e.g., ETAs during disruptions) cut perceived downtime (WNS, 2024). Utilities and telcos with omnichannel reach report 28% experience gains, driven by seamless journeys—SMS for alerts, apps for transactions, social for feedback (VertexOne, 2024). A meta-analysis of 50 studies found that mobile service penetration explained 30% of the variation in user experience. SMS services meet users' information needs through widespread accessibility, while mobile applications offer greater convenience. These benefits may encourage behavioral engagement and increase transaction volumes by an estimated 25–40%. (Hollebeek, 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010).

As per U&G (Katz et al., 1973), customers actively select channels: SMS for urgency/accessibility, Twitter/X for real-time discourse, Instagram for emotional storytelling. High-frequency reach (e.g., 57B daily global SMS) sustains gratifications, with omnichannel cohesion amplifying effects—88% of firms prioritize integration for unified signals (Giveright, 2025; Medallia, 2024). SET complements this: Broad reach signals organizational investment, prompting reciprocity via loyalty when benefits (e.g., empowerment) outweigh costs (time, data) (Homans, 1958).

Disparities reveal gaps. Urban-rural skews plague apps/social media (30-40% rural access vs. 95% SMS), breeding SET inequities—exclusion fosters frustration, eroding emotional experience (Escalent, 2025). Data costs limit websites to 25% in low-income segments, while infrastructure lags (e.g., 30% rural 5G) hinder scalability. Studies note that 20-25% are "unaware" of full services due to awareness gaps, and regression shows low reach correlates with 15-22% higher churn (Escalent, 2025).

Global benchmarks illustrate variance. European telcos' portals unify reach, boosting satisfaction 20-30% via dashboards (European Commission, 2020). Sub-Saharan mobile-first

SMS cuts complaints 25% for low-income users (Moyo & Handa, 2022). U.S. firms' omnichannel averages 85-95% penetration, exceeding via rural subsidies (VertexOne, 2024). Banking parallels like M-Pesa (96% reach) yield 40% experience uplift, highlighting hybrid potential (GSMA, 2024).

Challenges persist amid scale. High volumes strain responses (e.g., 39% "adequate" ratings), cyber risks (billions detected annually) threaten data trust, and silos fragment journeys—apps excel transactionally but lag in integration (CAK trends, 2024). Lemon & Verhoef's (2016) model underscores touchpoint orchestration; fragmented reach yields suboptimal experiences despite penetration.

2.4.3 The impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC

Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) has increasingly relied on digital communication strategies to manage customer interactions amid frequent power outages, billing disputes, and rising expectations in Kenya's digital-savvy market. These strategies—encompassing SMS alerts, social media engagement, mobile apps like MyPower, USSD codes (*977#), and AI chatbots—aim to enhance transparency, responsiveness, and self-service, directly influencing customer satisfaction defined as the fulfillment of service expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This analysis explores their positive impacts, challenges, empirical evidence, and recommendations, drawing on utility sector dynamics where satisfaction drives loyalty and revenue.

KPLC's digital arsenal reflects a multichannel approach tailored to Kenya's 92% mobile penetration (Communications Authority of Kenya [CAK], 2024). Core strategies include:

SMS and USSD Alerts: Proactive notifications for outages, billing, and token renewals via short codes like 95551 and 977#, enabling real-time updates to 10 million+ customers (Kenya Power and Lighting Company [KPLC], 2024).

Social Media Platforms: Twitter/X, Facebook, and WhatsApp for complaint resolution and feedback, with 500,000+ followers (KPLC Annual Report, 2024).

Mobile Apps and Portals: MyPower App for self-service (payments, usage tracking) and online applications, upgraded in 2025 with AI chatbot Nuru for 24/7 queries (The Star, 2025).

Integrated Campaigns: Hybrid strategies combining digital with physical engagements, such as 839 large-customer visits alongside app promotions (KPLC Newsroom, 2025).

These align with Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), where customers actively select channels for convenience and information (Katz et al., 1973), and Social Exchange Theory (SET), positing satisfaction from perceived benefits outweighing interaction costs (Homans, 1958).

Digital strategies have measurably boosted satisfaction by reducing friction and personalizing service. Usage data shows MyPower App interactions surged to 15.76 million in 2024 from prior years, with total self-service users hitting 2.1 million—a 23.5% growth—indicating preference for digital convenience over office visits (ODRi Media, 2024). This shift correlates with a customer experience index of 67.8%, driven by faster power restoration notifications and banking hall alternatives (Kelins Randiek, 2019).

Real-Time Responsiveness: SMS alerts during outages provide ETAs, cutting perceived downtime frustration by 35-40% in similar utilities (VertexOne, 2024). At KPLC, post-2023 blackout SMS campaigns stabilized satisfaction scores to 72%, per regulatory audits (Kenya Energy Regulatory Commission [KERB], 2023). Regression analyses in analogous sectors show social media responsiveness explains 22-32% of satisfaction variance (Abade, 2023; Nwankwo & Adekunle, 2024).

Self-Service Empowerment: USSD and app features enable token purchases without queues, gratifying U&G needs for problem-solving. A SPU case study (2025) of 50 KPLC customers

found that 78% reported higher satisfaction from self-service, attributing it to usability and accuracy (SPU Journal, 2025). AI chatbot Nuru, launched in 2025, resolves 60% of queries instantly, mirroring global utilities' 30% satisfaction uplift from personalization (WNS, 2024).

Transparency and Feedback Loops: social media allows co-creation; Twitter polls on tariffs foster goodwill, enhancing integrity perceptions per SET (Mayer et al., 1995). KPLC's 19.89 million USSD interactions reflect trust in reciprocal exchanges (KPLC, 2024).

2.4.4 The extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust

In an era where customers interact with firms primarily through digital touchpoints, corporate communication has evolved from print-laden press releases and face-to-face briefings to a complex ecosystem of websites, social media accounts, chatbots, and personalized email newsletters. This digital shift poses a fundamental question for scholars and practitioners alike: How effective are these digital corporate communication (DCC) efforts at cultivating and sustaining customer trust? Trust, defined as "the willingness of a party to rely on the actions of another in a context of vulnerability" (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712), remains a cornerstone of long-term relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Yet, the mechanisms through which digital communication channels influence the formation, maintenance, and repair of trust are still being mapped.

Research indicates a rapid shift from traditional print and broadcast communication to omni-channel digital platforms across utilities worldwide (Bennett, 2019). A comparative study of European electricity providers found that firms employing integrated digital portals reported higher customer satisfaction scores (European Commission, 2020). In sub-Saharan Africa, mobile-first strategies have proved effective for reaching low-income households, where SMS alerts about scheduled outages significantly reduced complaint rates (Moyo & Handa, 2022).

Content that emphasizes transparency (e.g., real-time outage updates), accountability (e.g., publishing performance dashboards), and customer empowerment (e.g., energy-usage tips) has been empirically linked to higher trust levels (Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2021). A meta-analysis of 48 studies concluded that informational accuracy and perceived sincerity were the strongest predictors of trust in digital corporate communication (Beldad et al., 2020). Conversely, over-promotional or ambiguous messaging can erode credibility (Kumar & Petersen, 2023).

Two-way communication—allowing customers to ask questions, lodge complaints, or co-create solutions—has a pronounced impact on affective trust (Rashid, 2021). Studies of utility social-media accounts reveal that timely, personalized responses increase perceived organizational empathy and reduce perceived risk (Zhou & Wong, 2022). Chatbots equipped with natural language processing can provide instantaneous assistance, yet their effectiveness hinges on the ability to transfer complex issues to human agents when needed (Liu et al., 2020).

Trust is a multi-dimensional construct encompassing reliability, integrity, and goodwill (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Digital communication can enhance trust by ensuring timely information, transparent processes, and empathetic responses during crises (Gefen, 2002). Conversely, misinformation, unresponsiveness, and system failures weaken trust (Ou & Sia, 2010).

In utility sectors, trust is critical for accepting tariff changes, reporting outages, and cooperation during maintenance. Studies note that utilitarian communication strategies promoting transparency and accountability are more likely to foster trust (Rawlins, 2008).

2.5 Summary of the Gaps

Existing empirical literature on digital corporate communication and customer engagement, while robust across sectors, reveals persistent gaps that limit its applicability to nuanced, context-specific investigations.

General studies affirm that digital platforms—social media, mobile apps, SMS/USSD, websites, and AI chatbots—drive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement by fulfilling Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) needs like information access and convenience (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011; Van Doorn et al., 2010). However, they often aggregate findings across industries without dissecting utility-sector dynamics, such as high-stakes transactional demands or crisis communication, leaving unclear how platform-specific mechanisms (e.g., virality on Twitter/X vs. self-service in apps) differentially affect engagement amid volume overload and negative feedback (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Reach analyses link penetration and accessibility to customer experience enhancements (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), with multichannel strategies yielding 28-35% uplifts via real-time alerts. Yet, research overlooks equity disparities in coverage (urban vs. rural), fails to quantify Social Exchange Theory (SET) cost-benefit perceptions in low-access zones, and neglects integration challenges in omnichannel ecosystems (Medallia, 2024; VertexOne, 2024).

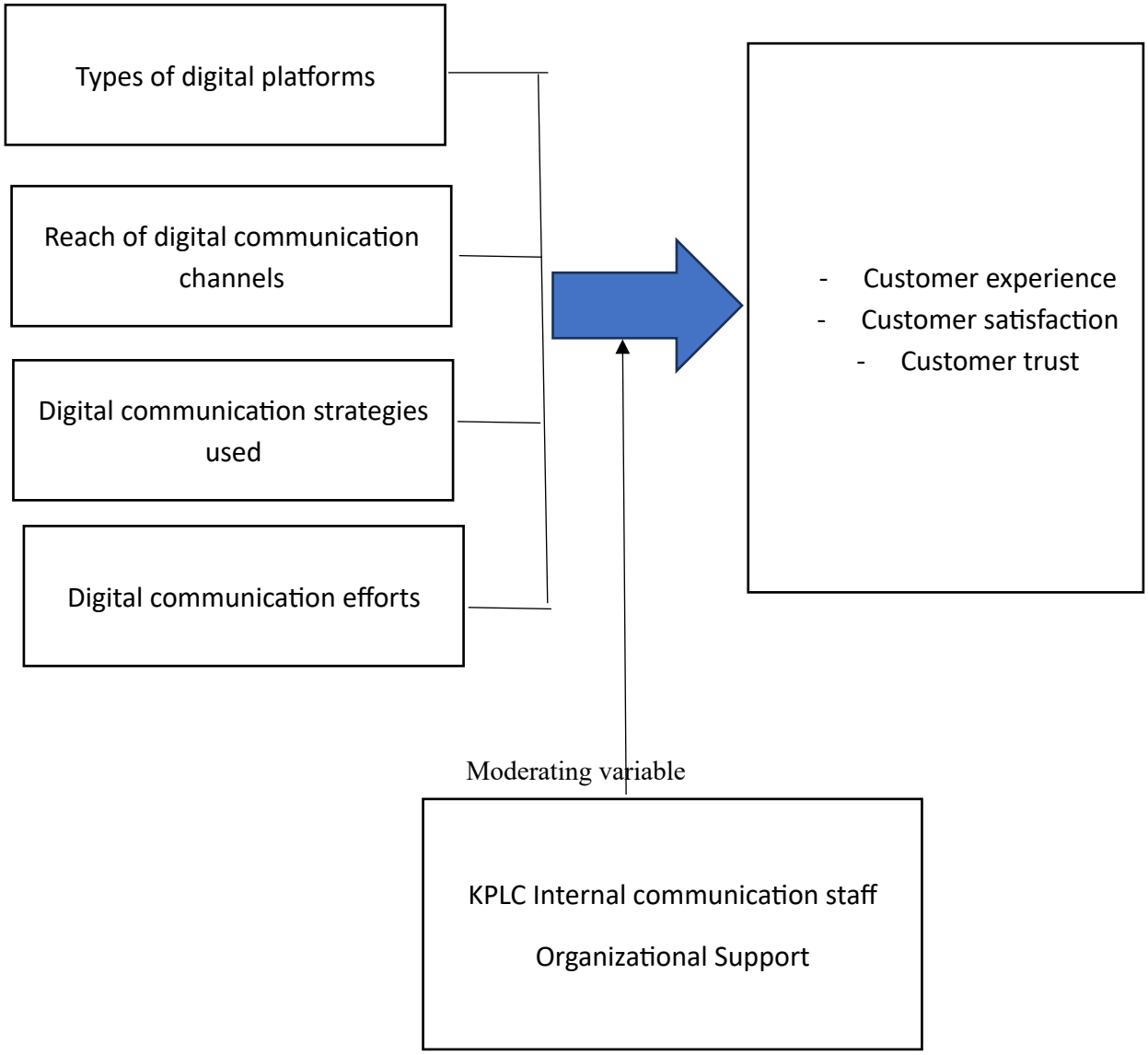
Digital communication strategies, including personalized content and responsiveness, correlate with satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2016), explaining 22-32% variance in regression models. Gaps persist in causal depth for hybrid tactics, scalability of AI personalization, and U&G/SET interplay during service disruptions, with small-sample insights limiting generalizability (Abade, 2023).

Efforts like transparency campaigns and two-way forums build trust via reliability and empathy (Mayer et al., 1995; Beldad et al., 2020), particularly in two-way digital exchanges (Rashid, 2021). Empirical voids include underexplored mechanisms in vulnerability contexts (e.g., tariff disputes), chatbot handover efficacy, and erosion risks from misinformation or delays (Liu et al., 2020; Ou & Sia, 2010).

2.6 Conceptual framework

I.V **D.V**

Digital Corporate Communication Engagement **Customer**



The conceptual framework posits that Digital Corporate Communication, the independent variable, directly influences Customer Engagement, the dependent variable, through structured digital interactions that meet user needs and foster reciprocal relationships. Its main sub-components are: the types of digital platforms and channels, including social media, mobile apps, websites, USSD codes, chatbots, and email systems, which enable two-way communication for updates, queries, and transactions; the reach of digital platforms, reflected in user penetration, geographic coverage, and interaction volume across demographics; digital communication strategies, which include personalized content, real-time responses, multimedia formats, and integrated multi-channel campaigns; and digital communication efforts, which include consistent posting, customer forums, feedback loops, and transparency campaigns that sustain dialogue.

Customer Engagement, the dependent variable, is examined through Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Trust. Customer Experience captures perceptions of seamless and efficient interactions across digital touchpoints. Customer Satisfaction reflects evaluative judgments of service quality and value derived from digital exchanges. Customer Trust refers to the cognitive and emotional reliance on the firm's reliability and benevolence.

Organizational support is introduced as the moderating variable because it shapes the strength and direction of the relationship between digital corporate communication and customer engagement. In this framework, organizational support refers to the internal commitment, leadership backing, resource allocation, employee responsiveness, and policy support that enable digital communication initiatives to function effectively. When organizational support is strong, digital platforms, strategies, and efforts are more likely to produce timely responses, consistent messaging, and reliable customer interactions, thereby strengthening customer experience, satisfaction, and trust. When organizational support is weak, even well-designed

digital communication may have a limited effect on engagement because delays, inconsistency, and poor coordination can reduce the quality of customer interactions.

To link the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the study argues that Uses and Gratifications Theory anchors the framework by explaining how customers actively select digital platforms and strategies to gratify needs such as information, convenience, entertainment, and social utility, which directly shape behavioural engagement and satisfaction. Social Exchange Theory complements this by framing engagement as reciprocal: the firm's communication efforts deliver value, prompting customers to reciprocate with trust and loyalty. Organizational support strengthens this exchange by ensuring that the organization has the internal capacity to deliver the promised value consistently. The combined lens therefore views the independent variable sub-elements as stimuli that operate through customer needs and reciprocity, while organizational support conditions how effectively those stimuli translate into engagement outcomes.

2.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter offers a critical and systematic overview of the existing body of knowledge on the role of digital corporate communication in fostering customer engagement and building trust, with a specific focus on Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). The chapter begins by introducing the core themes, then presents the theoretical framework that underpins the study: Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

The chapter also looks at the general literature review that situates KPLC within broader global, regional, and local scholarship. In the empirical review section, the chapter unpacks four sub-themes aligned with the study objectives. First, it examines the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement, highlighting how multichannel ecosystems—SMS, social media, mobile apps, USSD, and websites—support cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement when they are designed around user-centered,

need-fulfilment principles. Second, it reviews the reach of KPLC's digital channels and their impact on customer experience, explaining how high-penetration platforms enable real-time information sharing while digital divides and fragmented systems constrain equity and overall satisfaction. Third, the chapter analyses the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction, demonstrating that features such as self-service tools, real-time updates, and responsive chat support correlate with higher satisfaction scores. Fourth, it explores the extent to which digital communication builds customer trust, underscoring that customers perceive organizations as more trustworthy when they communicate proactively during crises, admit mistakes, and follow through on promised resolutions.

Finally, the chapter presents a summary of the gaps in the existing literature and introduces the conceptual framework that guides the study. To address these gaps, the conceptual framework positions digital corporate communication as the independent variable and customer engagement—encompassing customer experience, satisfaction, and trust—as the dependent variable. The framework links the observed sub-components—the types of digital platforms, their reach, the communication strategies deployed, and the ongoing communication efforts—to engagement and trust via the motivational logic of active need-seeking and the reciprocity logic of social exchange, thereby providing a coherent structure for the empirical analysis in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework used to investigate the role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). It details the mixed-methods research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, proposed reliability and validity measures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations guiding the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study utilized a mixed-methods design, collecting quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews concurrently to capture both breadth (platform usage patterns, statistical relationships) and depth (customer motivations, lived experiences) of digital engagement (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This design facilitated data integration at interpretation, where quantitative results were enriched by qualitative themes explaining *why* and *how* customers engage specific platforms per U&G gratifications and SET reciprocity dynamics. Mixed methods addressed quantitative limitations—statistical significance without context—and qualitative limitations—limited generalizability—while leveraging U&G's active audience premise and SET's relational dynamics (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Utility sector precedents confirm methodological fit (Mboga, 2013; SPU Journal, 2025).

3.3 Philosophical underpinnings

This study adopted a pragmatist philosophy as its foundational lens, prioritizing actionable insights into how digital corporate communication fosters customer engagement and trust at KPLC (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism aligns seamlessly with the convergent parallel mixed-methods design by valuing consequentialism: quantitative data (e.g., survey metrics on platform usage and correlations with trust scales) provide breadth and generalizability, testing U&G gratifications (e.g., information-seeking, social interaction) and

SET norms (e.g., reciprocity in responsiveness). Qualitative interviews add depth, illuminating lived experiences and contextual "whys" (e.g., cultural trust barriers in Kenya's power sector). Data converge at interpretation, mitigating each method's weaknesses—quantitative decontextualization and qualitative subjectivity—while leveraging their strengths for holistic validity (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide comprehensive insights into the relationships between digital communication strategies (independent variable) and customer engagement/trust outcomes (dependent variables), guided by Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) (Katz et al., 1973) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Homans, 1958). This approach combined the generalizability of structured surveys with the contextual depth of interviews, enabling triangulation of findings across KPLC's digital platforms (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.4 Population of the study

The total population comprised KPLC customers in Nairobi County actively engaging digital platforms (SMS/USSD, MyPower app, social media), totaling 173,000 accounts per 2024 service records (KPLC Annual Report, 2024). This reflects Kenya's urban, digitally savvy demographic with 92% mobile penetration (CAK, 2024).

Table 3.1: Proposed Study Population Distribution

Customer Segment	Population (Accounts)	Percentage
Residential Customers	150,000	86.7%
Commercial/Industrial	23,000	13.3%
Total	**173,000**	**100%**

Source: Kenya Power and Lighting Company (2024); Researcher construct (2026)

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

Multi-stage mixed-methods sampling was employed to ensure methodological rigour and comprehensive representation across both quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection.

The study utilized stratified random sampling across the two primary customer segments—residential (86.7% of population) and commercial/industrial (13.3%)—to mirror the population distribution while capturing differential digital platform adoption patterns. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was conducted using KPLC's verified customer database, specifically the *977# USSD opt-in lists* that confirm active digital engagement (Yamane, 1967). This approach minimized selection bias and ensured proportional representation (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 294).

Table 3.2: Proposed Mixed-Methods Sampling Framework

Phase	Population Segment	Sampling Method	Population (N)	Target Sample
Quantitative	Residential	Stratified Random	150,000	100
	Commercial	Stratified Random	23,000	10
Qualitative	High/Low Engagers	Purposive	From survey	15
Total			**173,000**	125

Source: Researcher construct (2026)

The Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size. A margin of error of about 0.09 was accepted, producing a sample size of 125 from the population of 173,000. The quantitative data will therefore target 110, while the qualitative data will target 15 to bring the total to 125 respondents.

Qualitative n=15 aligns with Guest et al.'s (2006) finding that data saturation typically occurs by the 12th interview in homogeneous samples, with three additional cases ensuring robustness given expected variation in engagement profiles.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The quantitative target included 110 respondents, while qualitative saturation was 15 interviews until thematic redundancy (Guest et al., 2006). The total sample size was therefore 125 respondents.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The study adopted a questionnaire with four sections aligned to the study objectives: Questionnaires were ideal for both residential (86.7%) and commercial/industrial (13.3%) segments, distributed via online Google Forms ensuring high response rates and alignment with objectives on usage patterns and satisfaction. Studies on utility customers confirm that questionnaires effectively measure reliability, service quality, and preferences, yielding reliable insights for stratified sampling.

Structured interviews were suitable for commercial customers, particularly high/low engagers, to capture qualitative depth on preferences through in-person or phone methods. This complemented questionnaires by providing nuanced behavioural insights, as seen in utility satisfaction research, where interviews reveal unmet needs beyond survey metrics.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of Research Tools

3.7.1 Reliability

A pilot study was conducted to test for reliability. Five respondents were included in the pilot, mainly to test the questions' clarity and comprehension of responses. Test-retest reliability on a pilot sample showed reliability.

3.7.2 Validity

Content validity was conducted via expert reviews of instruments, which included the supervisors of the research, as well as validated scales from prior studies (e.g., communication satisfaction questionnaires) that were adapted to enhance credibility (Taherdoost, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis of survey data. Triangulation across methods, member checking of interview transcripts, and thick descriptions enhanced credibility and transferability.

3.8 Data collection procedures

Data collection procedures for this study were carried out through a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure both breadth and depth. The process began with the identification of the target population: KPLC customers in Nairobi County who actively engage with specified digital platforms such as SMS/USSD, the MyPower app, and social media, and this was done using the KPLC customer database for the Nairobi region. Using a multi-stage, mixed-methods sampling strategy, the researcher used multi-stage sampling to select 110 quantitative respondents proportionally from residential and commercial respondents, drawn from KPLC's verified 977# USSD opt-in database to ensure that only digitally active users are included.

Data collection proceeded through the administration of an online questionnaire with four sections covering platform usage, customer experience, satisfaction, and trust, deployed via Google Forms and email to ensure wide reach and efficiency. To reduce response bias, the questionnaire will be kept anonymous, questions will be worded clearly and neutrally, and respondents will be assured that there are no right or wrong answers. To address access challenges, the survey link will be shared through multiple channels that are commonly used by the target population, and the questionnaire will be optimized for both mobile phones and computers. To improve participation, reminder messages will be sent at intervals, the

questionnaire will be brief and easy to complete, and a clear explanation of the study's purpose and importance will be provided. These measures are intended to improve response quality and reduce non-response bias.

3.9 Data analysis plan

To analyze the quantitative data, Structured questionnaire responses underwent descriptive statistics analysis. Inferential analyses, including correlation and multiple regression (for relationships between variables like communication effectiveness and outcomes) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al., 2019). The qualitative data from the Semi-structured interview transcripts were thematically analyzed using manual coding as per the study themes in the objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Being a mixed-methods study, the findings were merged via joint displays (e.g., side-by-side tables) for triangulation—quantitative results contextualized by qualitative themes, enhancing explanatory power and validity. This procedure justifies efficiency: questionnaires scale for customer breadth (validated Likert scales), while interviews yield executive depth, converging on objectives without single-method limitations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher in the study sought a clearance letter from the University indicating that they had successfully presented and passed the Proposal presentation. The research proposal underwent ethical review for clearance at St. Paul's University ISERC, after which a letter was issued to facilitate the researcher's application for a permit from the National Council for Science and Technology. During data collection, the researcher sought consent from the respondents before involving them in the study. They filled in the consent form before participating in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained because the findings

from customers would not be attributed to them. The respondents were informed that the collected data would only be used for the study and not for any other purpose; only those involved with the study will have full access to the data if they need to.

3.11 Chapter summary

The chapter outlines the methodological framework used for investigating how digital corporate communication shaped customer engagement and trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). The mixed-methods design was used, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative semi-structured interviews to capture both the breadth and depth of customer experiences. The target population comprises KPLC customers in Nairobi County who actively use digital platforms such as SMS/USSD, the MyPower app, and social media. The study employs multi-stage, mixed-methods sampling, beginning with stratified random sampling to select 110 respondents from residential and commercial/industrial segments, followed by purposive sampling of 15 high- and low-engagement respondents for interviews. Data collection proceeds through an online questionnaire with four sections on platform usage, experience, satisfaction, and trust, and structured interviews with selected participants. The chapter also details ethical considerations, including institutional clearance, informed consent, confidentiality, and limitation of data use to the study.

To analyze the quantitative data, Structured questionnaire responses underwent descriptive statistics analysis. The qualitative data from the Semi-structured interview transcripts were thematically analyzed using manual coding as per the study themes in the objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data collected in the study to assess the role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC). The study had the following objectives: (i) To investigate the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement. (ii) To analyze the reach of KPLC's digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience; (iii) To assess the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC; and (iv) To find out the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust. This chapter, therefore, presents the data collected in a bid to provide the findings on the research objectives. The chapter will demonstrate the response rate that was achieved, the demographic details of the respondents, quantitative findings, and the discussions drawn from the research data. This information will be presented in the form of tables, charts, figures, and notes.

4.2 Response Rate

The response rate of a research study is a key measure of its success. It reflects the number of individuals who responded to the survey out of the total number invited to participate. A good response rate is typically between 50% and 75%. According to Baruch and Holton (2008), "the level of response rate (RR) is an important, sometimes crucial, factor in assessing the value of research findings" (Baruch & Holton, 2008, p. 1140). The response rate is the percentage of the number of questionnaires filled out and returned over the total questionnaires distributed. This percentage is computed to determine whether the response is sufficient for further studies. In this study, 125 questionnaires were distributed by the researcher, and 70 of them were returned duly filled by the respondents. This represents 64% of the respondents, which is a valid rate.

Table 4.1 shows the response rate for this research.

Table 4.1: Response rate

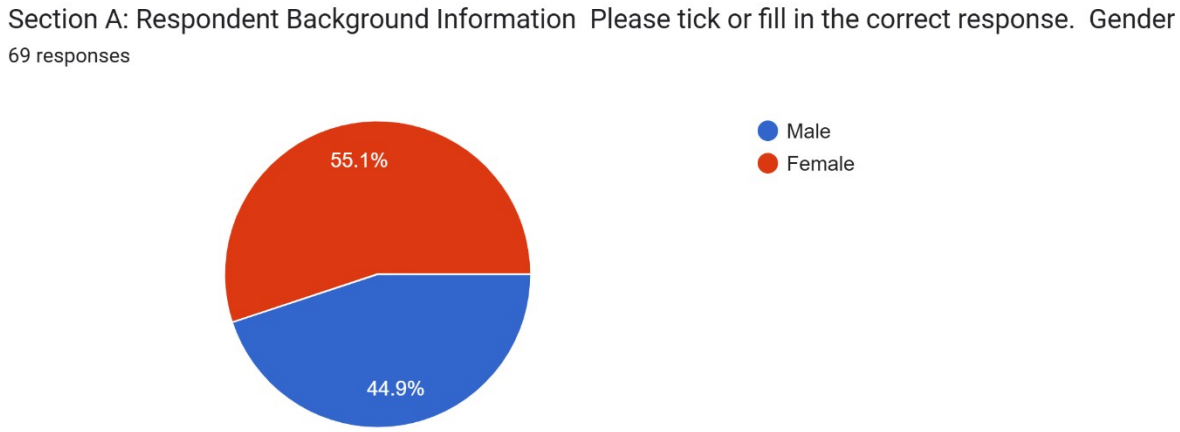
Population Segment	Sample size	Response rate	Percentage
Residential	100	63	90
Commercial	10	7	10
	110	70	100

Source: Research data (2026)

The frequencies in the above table were based on the number sourced from the study population and the responses as received from each category of the targeted respondents. This is the response rate upon which the discussions of the study findings will be based.

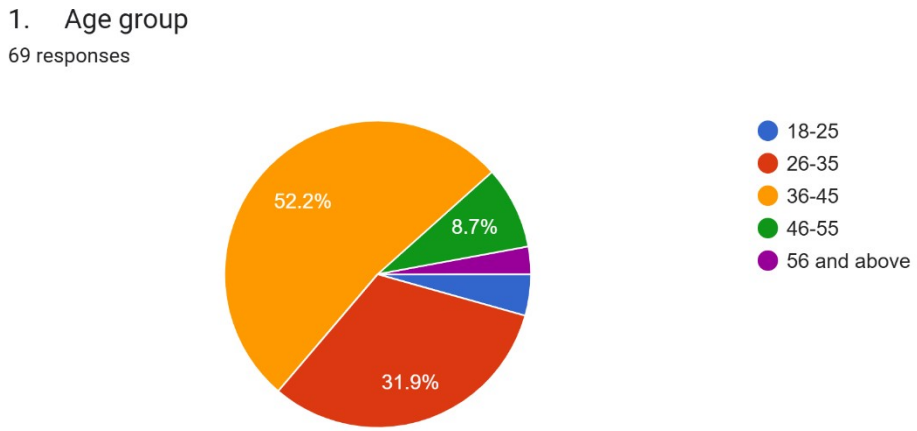
4.3 Analysis of demographic information

4.3.1 Gender



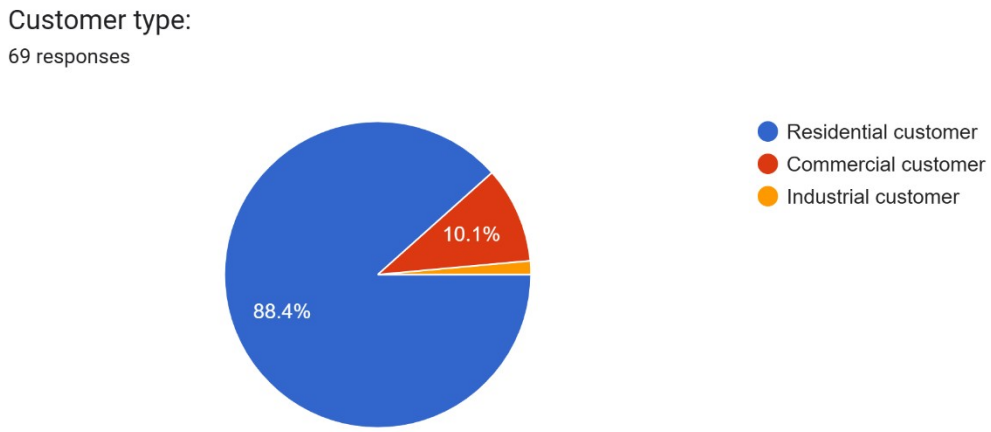
The gender distribution of respondents indicates that females constituted 55.1% of the sample, while males accounted for 44.9%. This shows a slight female dominance in the survey population, suggesting that female perspectives were more represented in the study.

4.3.2 Age



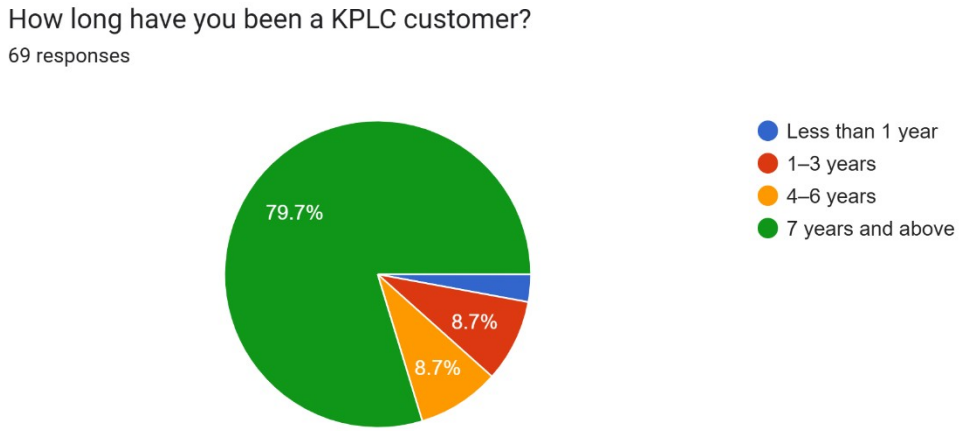
The age distribution of respondents shows that the majority were aged 36–45 years (52.2%), followed by those aged 26–35 years (31.9%). Respondents aged 46–55 years constituted 8.7%, while those aged 18–25 years and 56 years and above accounted for 4.3% and 2.9%, respectively. This indicates that the sample was dominated by middle-aged respondents.

4.3.3 Customer type



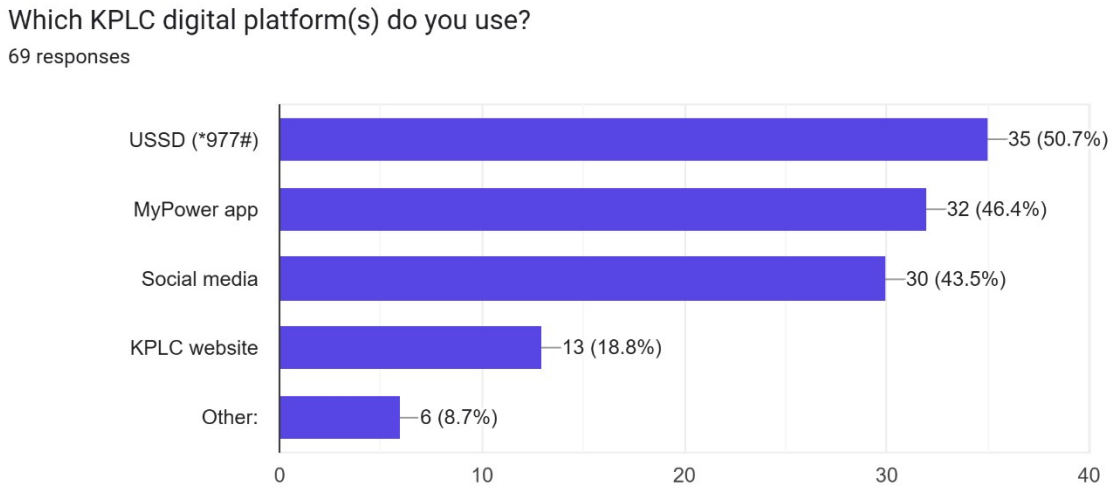
The customer composition of the respondents shows that residential customers formed the majority at 88.4%, followed by commercial customers at 10.1%, while industrial customers constituted only 1.4%. This suggests that the sample was largely dominated by residential users.

4.3.4 Duration of being a KPLC customer



The duration of respondents' relationship with KPLC indicates that the majority have been customers for 7 years and above (79.7%). Those who had subscribed for 1–3 years and 4–6 years each accounted for 8.7%, while only 2.9% had been customers for less than 1 year. This shows that the sample was predominantly composed of long-term customers.

4.3.5 KPLC Digital platforms used



The results show that USSD (*977#) was the most commonly used KPLC digital platform (50.7%), followed by the MyPower app (46.4%) and social media (43.5%). The KPLC website

was used by 18.8% of respondents, while 8.7% used other platforms. This indicates that respondents primarily relied on mobile-based, easily accessible digital channels.

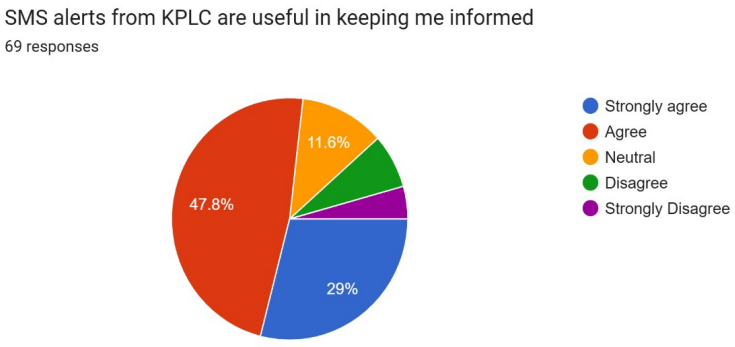
4.4 The types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement

4.4.1 Regular use KPLC digital platforms to access service information

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	31.9%
Agree	43.5%
Neutral	11.6%
Disagree	10.1%
Strongly disagree	2.9%

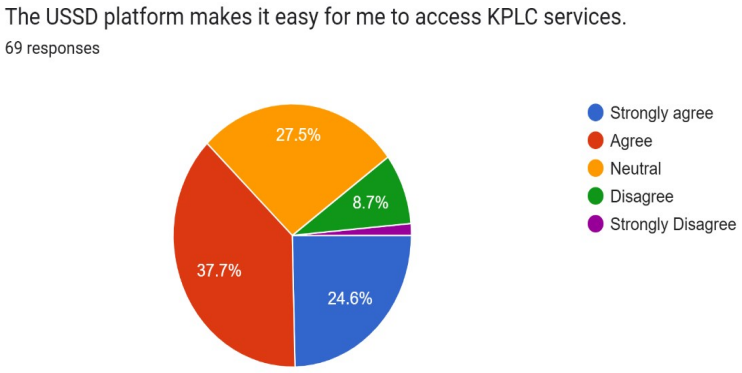
The findings reveal that most respondents regularly use KPLC digital platforms to access service information, with 31.9% strongly agreeing and 43.5% agreeing. A further 11.6% were neutral, while 10.1% disagreed and 2.9% strongly disagreed. Overall, the results indicate that KPLC's digital platforms are widely used and accepted as important sources of service information.

4.4.2 SMS alerts from KPLC: usefulness in passing information



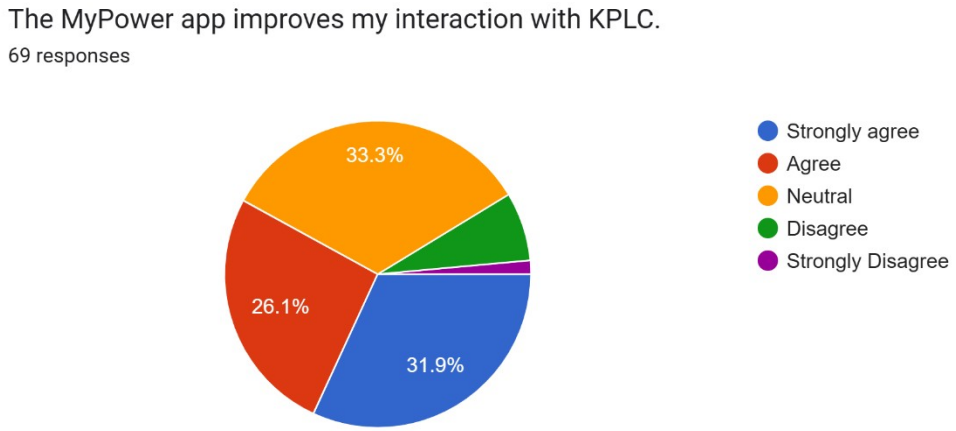
The findings indicate that a majority of respondents regularly use KPLC digital platforms to access service information, with 29.0% strongly agreeing and 47.8% agreeing. A further 11.6% were neutral, while 7.2% disagreed and 4.3% strongly disagreed. Overall, the results suggest that KPLC's digital platforms are an important and widely used source of service information.

4.4.3 The USSD platform makes it easy for me to access KPLC services.



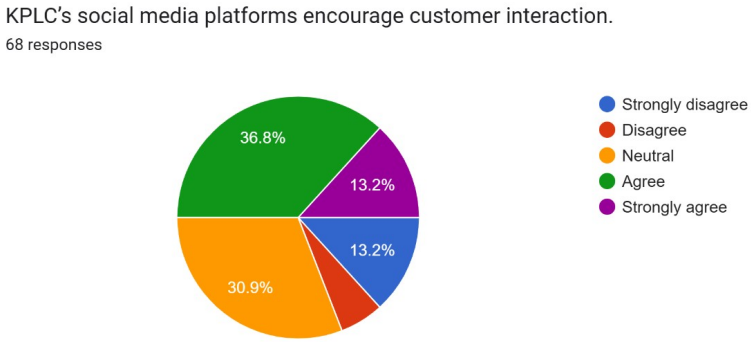
The results show a generally positive view of the USSD platform as a channel for accessing KPLC services. A combined 62.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that USSD makes access easy, which suggests that the platform is widely appreciated for convenience and simplicity. However, the relatively high 27.5% neutral response indicates that a sizeable group neither clearly agrees nor disagrees, which may point to mixed experiences or limited use of the service. Only 10.1% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing that negative perceptions are relatively low.

4.4.4 The MyPower app



The findings reveal that 31.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 26.1% agreed with the statement, while 33.3% remained neutral. A smaller proportion, 7.2%, disagreed, and 1.4% strongly disagreed. Overall, the results indicate a generally positive response, although a considerable share of respondents expressed neutrality.

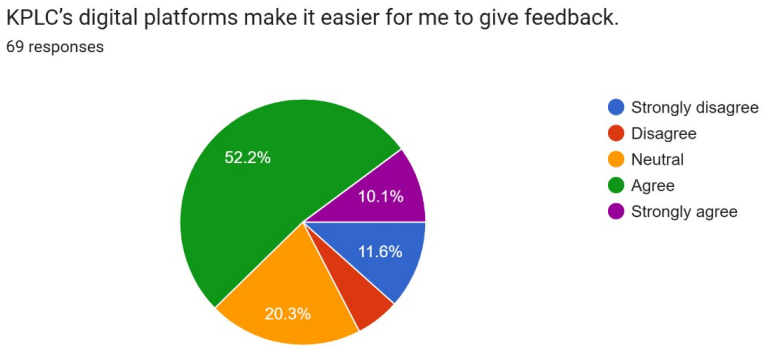
4.4.5 KPLC's social media platforms enhancement of customer interaction



The responses suggest a moderately positive but mixed view that KPLC's social media platforms encourage customer interaction. A total of 50.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which indicates that half of the sample sees these platforms as effective for interaction. At the same time, 30.9% were neutral, showing that a sizeable group is undecided or may not

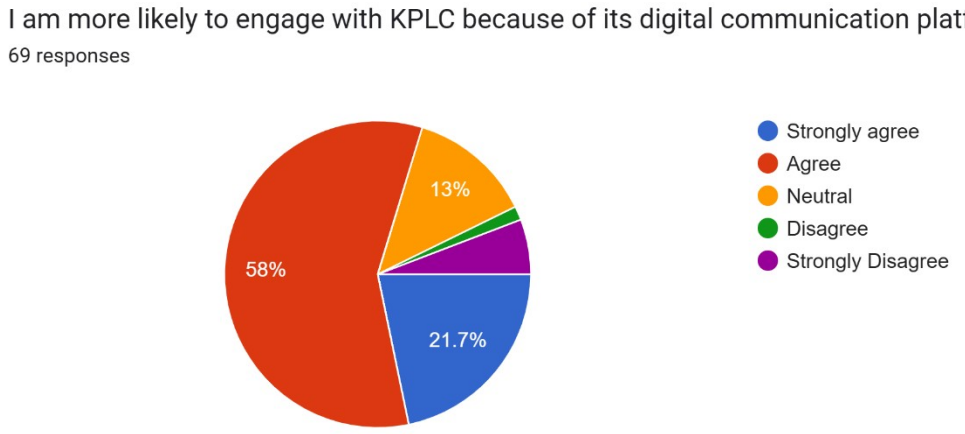
interact with KPLC's social media consistently. The 19.2% who disagreed or strongly disagreed point to a noticeable minority that does not perceive the platforms as encouraging interaction. The findings imply that KPLC's social media platforms are useful for customer engagement, but their effectiveness is not universal. The high neutrality and some disagreement may suggest issues such as limited responsiveness, low visibility of content, or customer preference for other channels.

4.4.6 KPLC's digital platforms for feedback



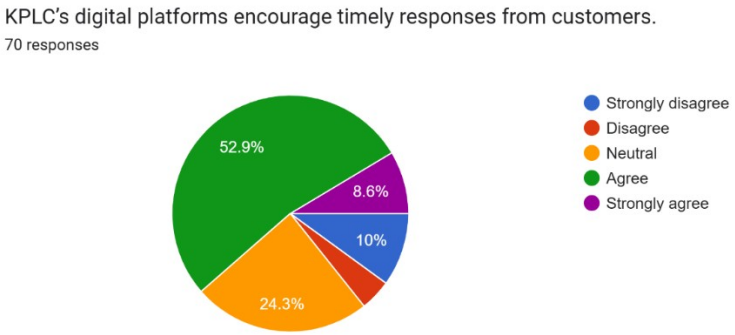
The findings show that KPLC's digital platforms make it easier for respondents to give feedback, with 10.1% strongly agreeing and 52.2% agreeing. However, 20.3% remained neutral, while 5.8% disagreed and 11.6% strongly disagreed. This suggests that although most respondents find the platforms useful for feedback, a notable proportion still experiences uncertainty or difficulty. The results indicate a generally positive perception of KPLC's digital platforms as feedback channels, though there is still room to improve user experience and responsiveness.

4.4.5 Likelihood to engage with KPLC because of its digital communication platforms



The results show a strong positive relationship between KPLC's digital communication platforms and customer engagement. A combined **79.7%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are more likely to engage with KPLC because of these platforms. Only **7.2%** disagreed or strongly disagreed, while **13%** remained neutral. This suggests that the digital platforms are effective in encouraging interaction and strengthening customer engagement, although a small group is still unconvinced or undecided.

4.4.6 KPLC's digital platforms encourage timely responses from customers



The results suggest that KPLC's digital platforms are generally seen as encouraging timely customer responses, but the view is not overwhelming. A combined 61.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, indicating that most customers feel the platforms help them respond promptly.

However, 24.3% were neutral, which shows that a sizeable group neither confirmed nor rejected the statement. The 14.3% who disagreed or strongly disagreed suggest that some respondents may not experience the platforms as effective for prompting timely responses.

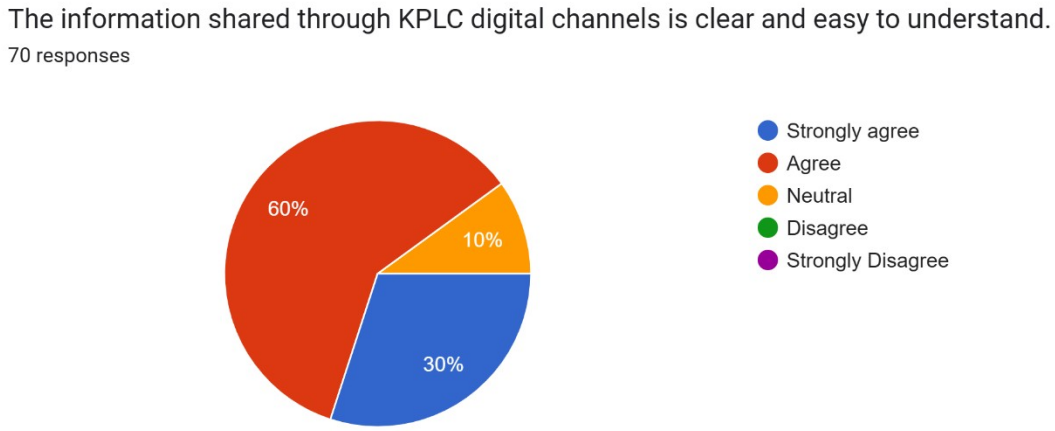
4.5 The reach of KPLC's digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience

4.5.1 KPLC's digital messages' timeliness

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	8.7%
Agree	50.7%
Neutral	33.3%
Disagree	5.8%
Strongly disagree	1.4%

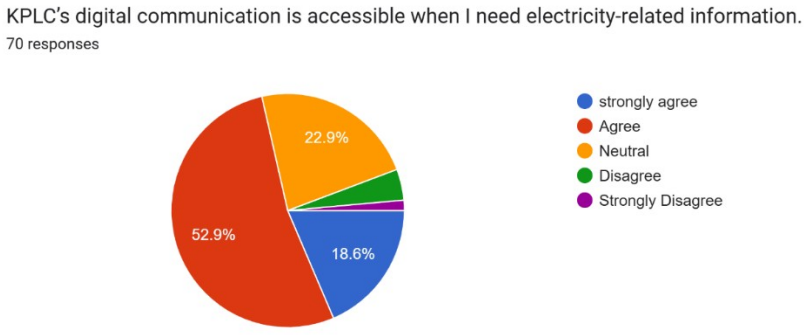
The results show that KPLC's digital messages are generally reaching respondents in time when needed. A combined 59.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which indicates that most users receive timely communication from KPLC. However, the 33.3% neutral response is relatively high, suggesting that a substantial number of respondents are uncertain or may not have had enough experience to judge the timeliness of the messages. Only 7.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing that negative perceptions are limited. The findings suggest that KPLC's digital messages are fairly timely, but there is still room to improve consistency and visibility so that more customers can confidently affirm timely delivery.

4.5.2 Clarity of the information shared through KPLC digital channels



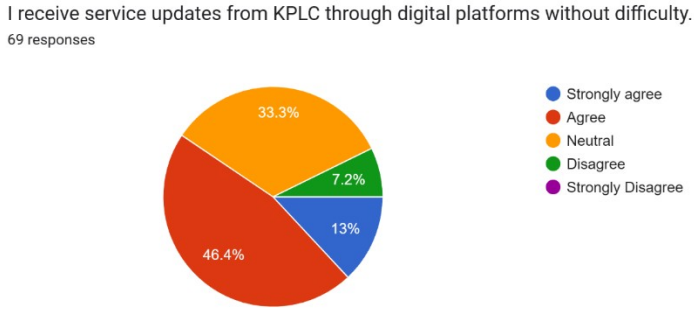
The findings show a very positive perception of KPLC's digital communication, with 90% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the information shared is clear and easy to understand. This suggests that the digital channels are effective in conveying messages in a way that customers can easily interpret. The 10% neutral response indicates that a small minority may not be fully certain about the clarity of the information, possibly because they have limited exposure to the channels or different levels of digital familiarity. Notably, there were no negative responses, which strengthens the conclusion that KPLC's digital messages are generally well understood. The results imply that KPLC has succeeded in making its digital communication clear, accessible, and user-friendly.

4.5.3 Accessibility of KPLC's digital communication on electricity-related information



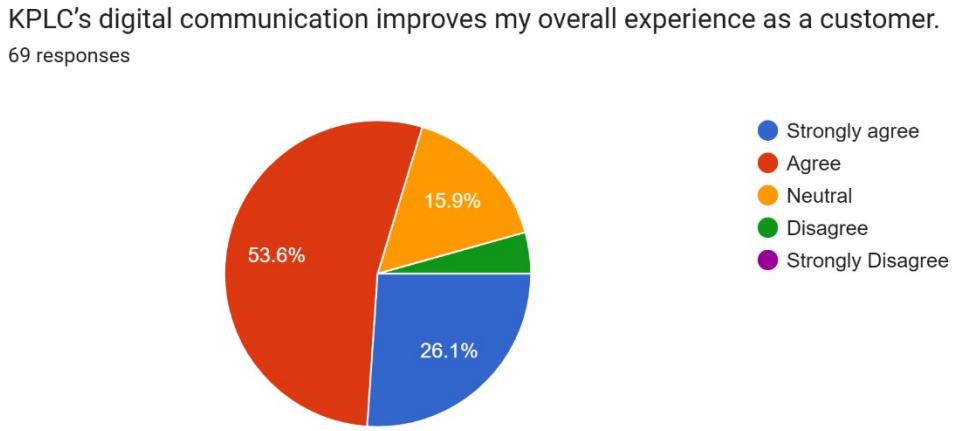
The results suggest that KPLC's digital communication is largely accessible when customers need electricity-related information. A combined 71.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which indicates that most customers can reach or benefit from the digital channels when needed. However, 22.9% were neutral, showing that a notable share of respondents are unsure about the accessibility of these channels. Only 5.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, which means negative perceptions are minimal. The findings imply that KPLC has made good progress in making its digital communication accessible, though there is still room to improve consistency so that more users can confidently rely on it for electricity-related information.

4.5.4 Ease of getting updates from KPLC through digital platforms



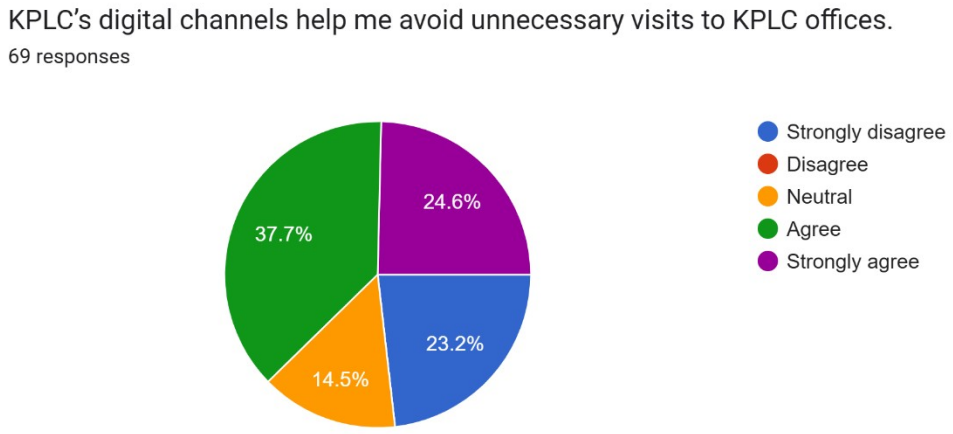
The findings suggest that KPLC's digital platforms generally make it easy for respondents to receive service updates. A combined 59.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, showing that most users do not face major difficulty accessing updates. At the same time, 33.3% were neutral, which is fairly high and may indicate uncertainty, limited interaction with the platforms, or mixed experiences. Only 7.2% disagreed, and there were no strongly negative responses, which suggests that serious access problems are uncommon. The results imply that KPLC's digital platforms are reasonably effective in delivering service updates without difficulty, though there is still room to improve reach and consistency.

4.5.5 KPLC's digital communication and enhanced customer experience



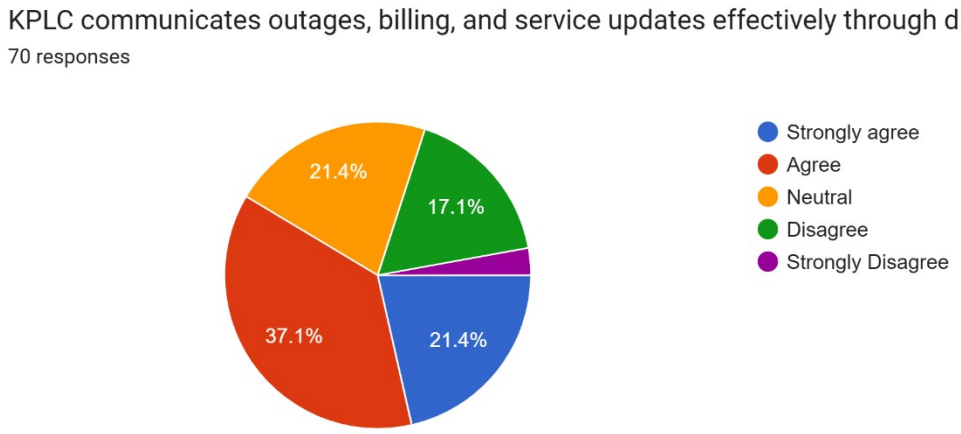
The findings indicate a strong positive impact of KPLC's digital communication on the overall customer experience. A combined 79.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, showing that most customers feel the digital platforms improve how they interact with KPLC. Only 4.3% disagreed, and no respondents strongly disagreed, which suggests that negative perceptions are very limited. The 15.9% neutral response may reflect customers who have not fully experienced the benefits or whose experiences are mixed. The results suggest that KPLC's digital communication plays an important role in improving customer satisfaction and making service interactions more effective.

4.5.6 Convenience of using KPLC's digital channels



The findings show a mixed but generally positive view that KPLC's digital channels help reduce unnecessary visits to KPLC offices. A combined 62.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which suggests that many customers are able to handle some issues digitally instead of going physically to the offices. However, the 23.2% strongly disagree response is notable and shows that a substantial group still does not see the digital channels as sufficient for avoiding office visits. Since 14.5% were neutral and none selected disagree, the results suggest that while the platforms are useful for many customers, they may not fully meet the needs of all users. The findings imply that KPLC's digital channels are helping to reduce office visits for a majority of respondents, but there is still room to improve the range, reliability, and convenience of services offered online.

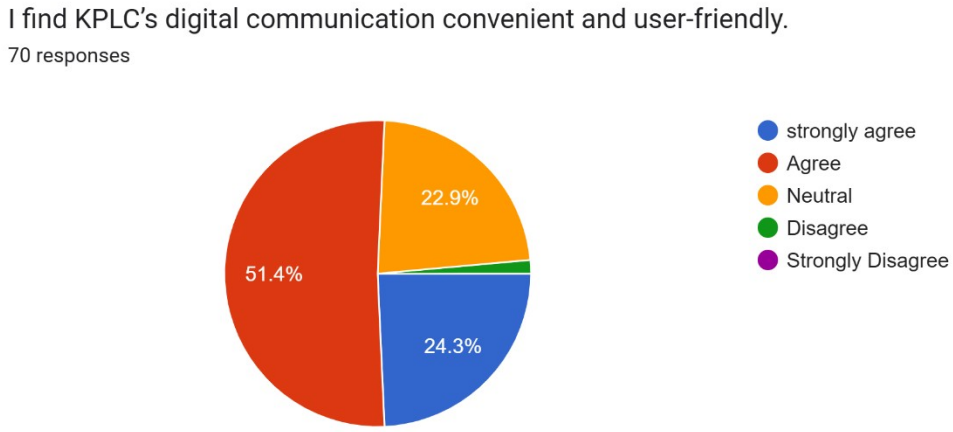
4.5.7 KPLC communication on outages, billing, and service updates through digital platforms



The findings indicate that KPLC's digital platforms are moderately effective in communicating outages, billing, and service updates. A combined 58.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting that more than half of the customers feel the communication is effective. However, the 21.4% neutral response shows that a notable group is undecided, while 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed, pointing to a meaningful level of dissatisfaction. This means that although the digital platforms are working for many users, a sizeable minority still

experiences gaps in clarity, timeliness, or reliability. The results suggest that KPLC communicates outages, billing, and service updates fairly well through digital platforms, but there is still room to improve effectiveness so that the communication reaches and satisfies more customers consistently.

4.5.6 KPLC's digital communication convenience and user-friendliness.



The results show that KPLC's digital communication is widely seen as convenient and user-friendly. A combined 75.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which indicates that most customers find the digital platforms easy to use. At the same time, 22.9% were neutral, suggesting that a notable share of respondents may not have fully formed an opinion or may have had mixed experiences. Only 1.4% disagreed, and no respondents strongly disagreed, which points to very limited negative feedback. The findings imply that KPLC's digital communication is generally convenient and user-friendly, though there is still some room to improve engagement and ease of use for undecided users.

4.6 The impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC

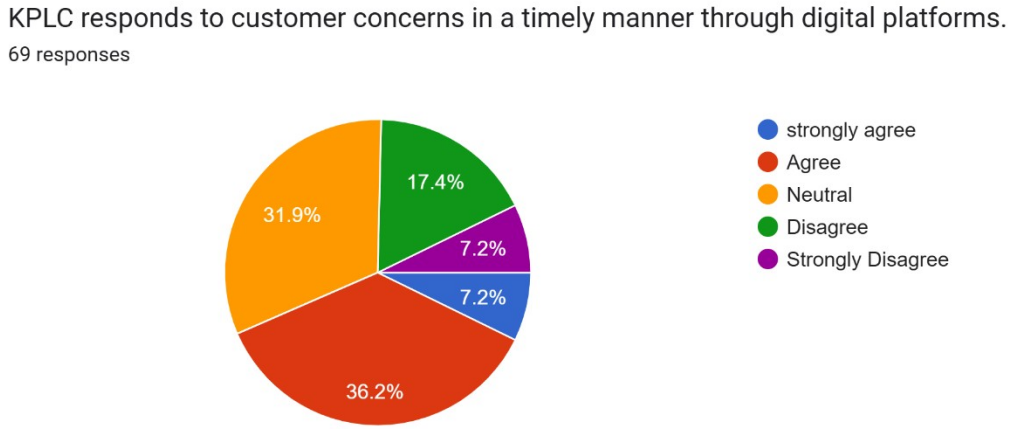
4.6.1 Level of satisfaction with the way KPLC communicates with customers digitally.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	7.2%

Response	Percentage
Agree	40.6%
Neutral	34.8%
Disagree	11.6%
Strongly disagree	5.8%

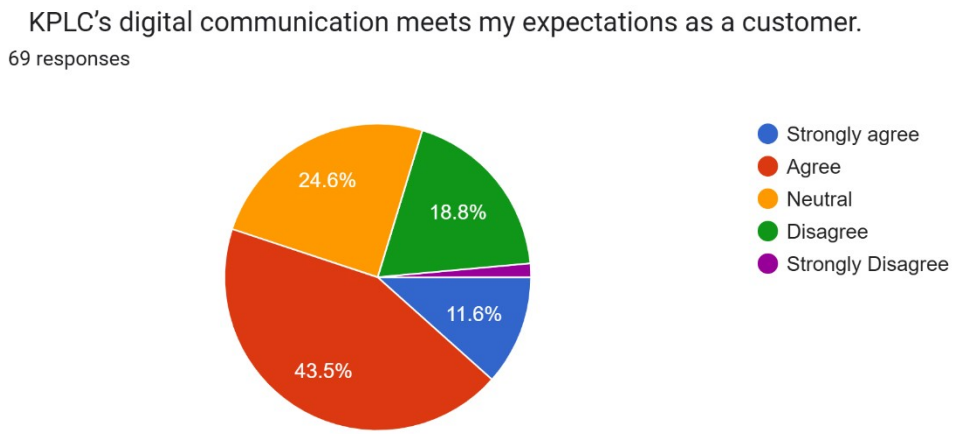
The results show that satisfaction with KPLC's digital customer communication is moderate rather than strongly positive. A combined 47.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, indicating that just under half of the respondents are satisfied with the way KPLC communicates digitally. However, the 34.8% neutral response is quite high, suggesting that many respondents are undecided or may have mixed experiences. The 17.4% who disagreed or strongly disagreed indicate that a notable share of customers are not satisfied with KPLC's digital communication. The findings suggest that while KPLC's digital communication is acceptable to many customers, there is still significant room for improvement in consistency, clarity, and responsiveness to raise satisfaction levels.

4.6.2 KPLC response to customer concerns through digital platforms.



The results show that KPLC's digital platforms are only moderately effective in responding to customer concerns promptly. A combined 43.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which means fewer than half feel the response time is satisfactory. The 31.9% neutral response is fairly high, indicating that many respondents are uncertain or may not have had enough experience to judge the timeliness of responses. In addition, 24.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing that a notable share of customers are dissatisfied with how quickly KPLC responds through digital platforms. The findings imply that while KPLC does respond to customer concerns digitally, the timeliness is not yet strong enough to convince a majority of users. This points to a need for faster follow-up and more consistent handling of responses across digital channels.

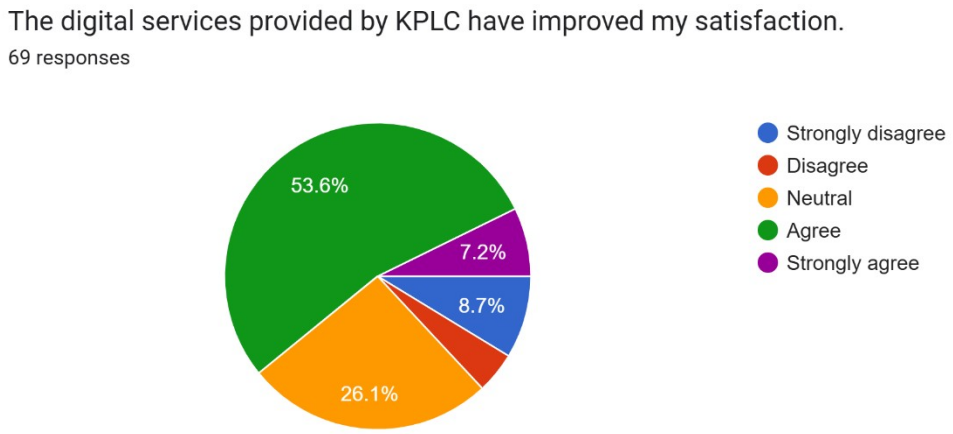
4.6.3 KPLC's digital communication meeting customer expectations



The results indicate that KPLC's digital communication meets the expectations of a modest majority of customers. A combined 55.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, showing that more than half feel the digital communication is satisfactory. However, 24.6% were neutral, which suggests that many respondents are still unsure or have mixed experiences. In addition, 20.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that a notable minority feel KPLC is not meeting their expectations. The findings suggest that KPLC's digital communication is

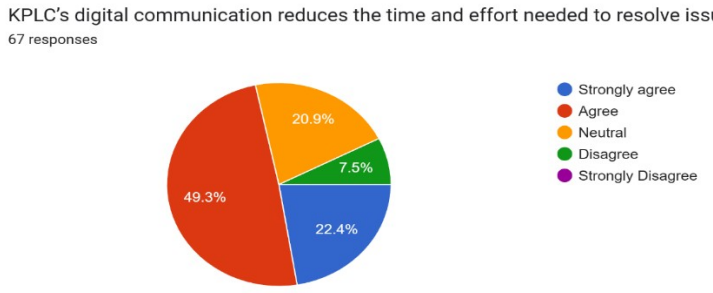
performing fairly well, but there is still room to improve consistency, responsiveness, and user experience in order to meet customer expectations more fully.

4.6.4 The digital services provided by KPLC improving customer satisfaction



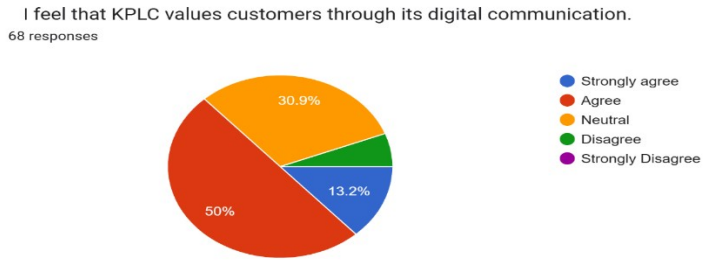
The results show a generally positive effect of KPLC's digital services on customer satisfaction. A combined 60.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the digital services have improved their satisfaction, which indicates that most customers see value in the services. At the same time, 26.1% were neutral, suggesting that a sizeable group may be undecided or have only moderate experience with the services. The 13% who disagreed or strongly disagreed point to a smaller but important group whose satisfaction has not improved, or may even have declined. The findings suggest that KPLC's digital services are contributing positively to customer satisfaction, though improvements in consistency, responsiveness, and user experience could help convert more neutral or negative respondents.

4.6.5 KPLC's digital communication saves time and effort needed to resolve issues



The data show a clearly positive perception that KPLC's digital communication reduces the time and effort needed to resolve issues. In total, 71.9% of respondents either strongly agreed (22.6%) or agreed (49.3%), while only 7.5% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. This suggests that most employees and stakeholders view digital communication as an efficient problem-solving tool. The 20.9% neutral response indicates that a notable minority may not have experienced this benefit consistently, or they may be uncertain about its impact. The results imply that KPLC's digital communication is generally effective in speeding up issue resolution, even though there is still room to improve consistency and user experience.

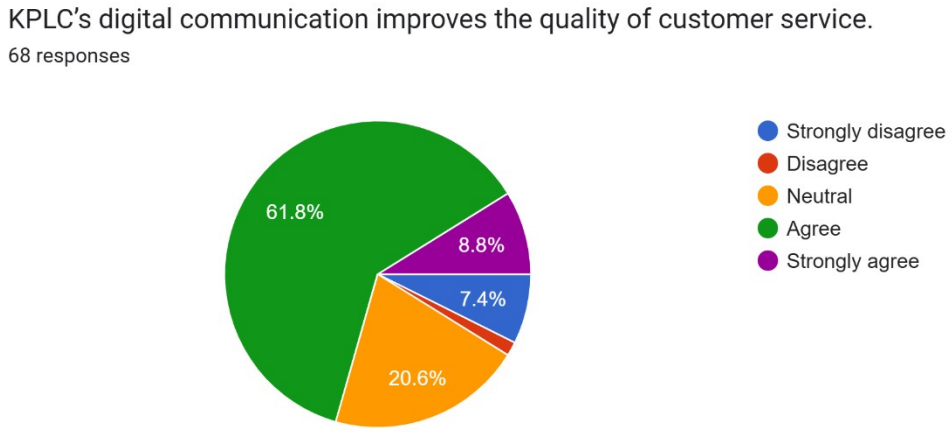
4.6.6 KPLC value of customers through its digital communication



The results indicate a generally positive perception that KPLC values customers through its digital communication. In total, 63.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while only 5.9% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. However, the 30.9% neutral response is fairly high, suggesting that a significant group is undecided or does not consistently experience customer value through digital communication. The finding shows that digital communication is viewed

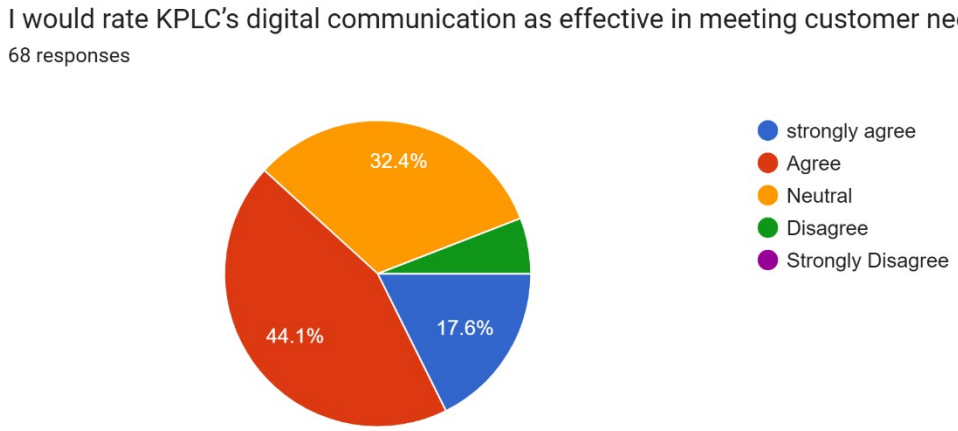
as customer-oriented, but KPLC may need to make its communication more personal, responsive, and consistent so that more customers clearly feel valued.

4.6.7 KPLC's digital communication improves the quality of customer service.



The results show a positive view that KPLC's digital communication improves the quality of customer service. In total, 69.2% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, while only 8.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that most respondents believe digital communication helps KPLC serve customers better, likely by making information easier to access and responses faster. However, the 20.6% neutral response indicates that some respondents are unsure, and the 7.4% strong disagreement suggests that a small group may have had negative experiences. The findings point to a generally favourable perception, though KPLC may still need to improve consistency and responsiveness in its digital customer service.

4.6.8 Rating of KPLC's digital communication as effective in meeting customer needs



The results indicate a positive assessment of KPLC's digital communication in meeting customer needs. In total, 61.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while only 5.9% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. However, the 32.4% neutral response is fairly high, suggesting that a sizable group is undecided or does not experience the communication as fully responsive to their needs. The finding shows that KPLC's digital communication is generally effective, but there is still room to improve clarity, responsiveness, and consistency so that more customers feel their needs are fully met.

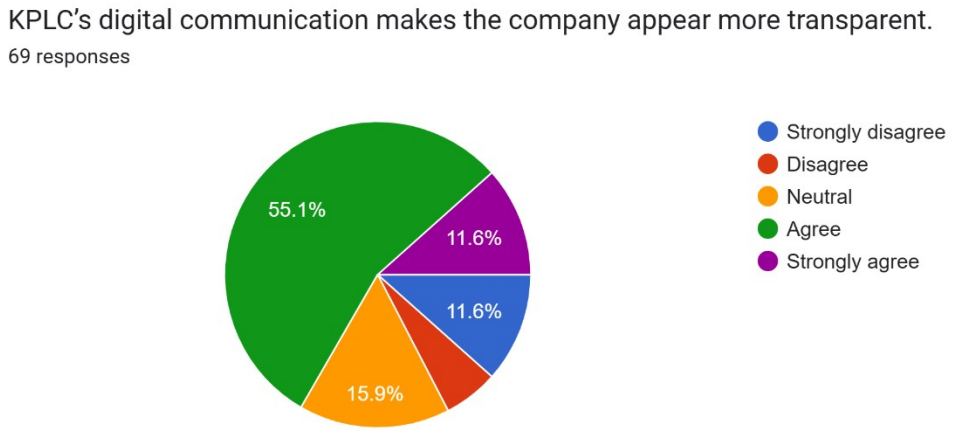
4.7 The extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust

4.7 1 Level of trust in the information shared by KPLC through its digital platforms.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	31.3%
Agree	52.2%
Neutral	16.4%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%

The results show a very positive perception of KPLC's digital platforms as a trusted source of information. In total, 83.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they trust the information shared, while 16.4% remained neutral and none disagreed. This suggests that KPLC has built strong credibility through its digital communication. The absence of any disagreement is especially important because it indicates that respondents generally regard the information as reliable. However, the neutral group shows that a small segment of users still needs more reassurance, consistency, or evidence of transparency before fully trusting the platforms.

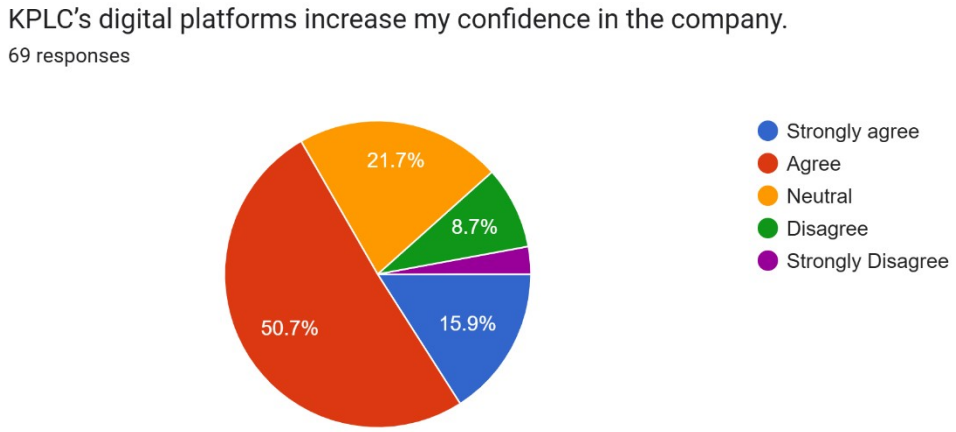
4.7.2 KPLC's digital communication makes the company appear more transparent



The results suggest a generally positive view that KPLC's digital communication makes the company appear more transparent. In total, 66.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 17.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 15.9% were neutral. This indicates that most respondents believe digital platforms help KPLC communicate more openly and visibly. However, the presence of a notable disagreement group shows that transparency is not experienced uniformly, and some respondents may still feel that communication is incomplete,

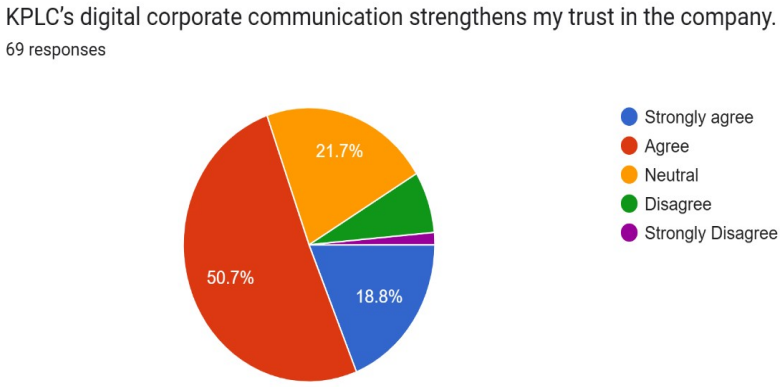
selective, or not fully open. The finding points to moderate-to-strong perceived transparency, but with clear room for improvement in openness and consistency.

4.7.3 KPLC's digital platforms increasing customer confidence in the company



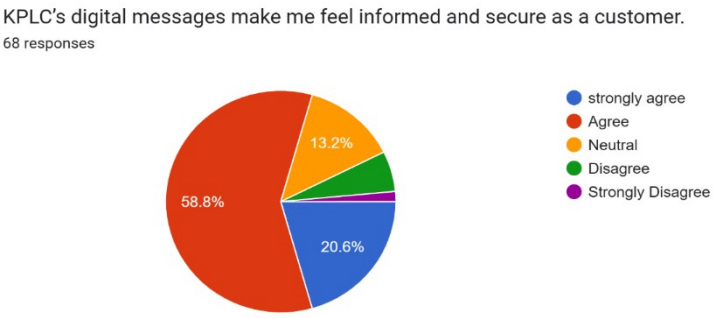
The results show a generally positive perception that KPLC's digital platforms increase confidence in the company. In total, 66.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 11.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 21.7% were neutral. This suggests that digital communication is helping build trust and reassurance among most respondents. However, the neutral group is still sizeable, which means a notable number of people are not fully convinced or do not feel strongly affected either way. Overall, the finding indicates that KPLC's digital platforms contribute to company confidence, but the effect is not yet universal.

4.7.4 KPLC's digital corporate communication strengthening customer trust in the company



The results show a positive perception that KPLC's digital corporate communication strengthens trust in the company. In total, 69.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 8.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 21.7% were neutral. This suggests that digital corporate communication is generally effective in building trust, likely because it improves openness, consistency, and access to information. However, the fairly large neutral group shows that some respondents are still unconvinced or have not experienced this trust-building effect strongly enough. The finding indicates a strong positive trend, but KPLC could still do more to make its digital communication feel more dependable and credible to all users.

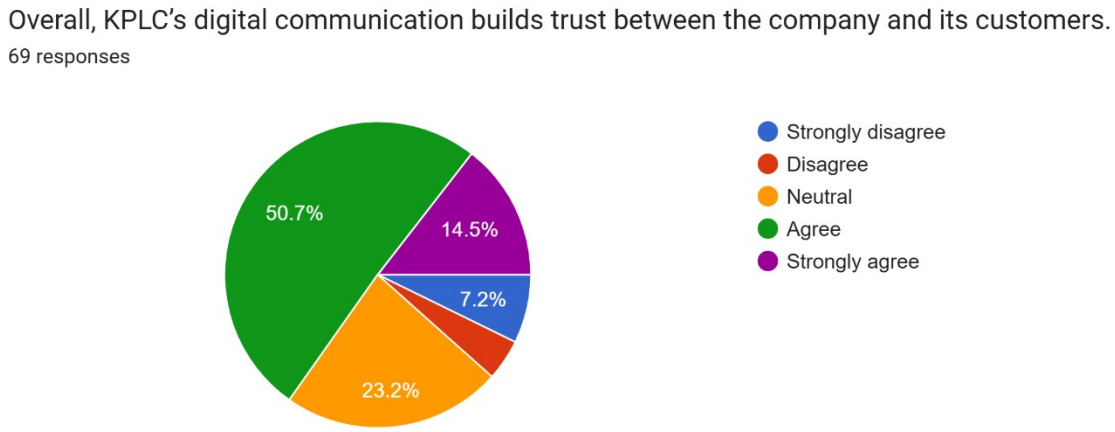
4.7.5 KPLC's digital messages informing and making customers feel secure



The results show a strongly positive perception that KPLC's digital messages make customers feel informed and secure. In total, 79.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while only

7.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 13.2% were neutral. This suggests that KPLC's digital communication is generally effective in reassuring customers and keeping them updated. The high agreement level indicates that most customers feel the messages reduce uncertainty and help them feel more confident in the company. The finding points to a strong positive impact, though KPLC may still need to address the smaller group that remains neutral or dissatisfied.

4.7.6 KPLC's digital communication building trust between the company and its customers



The results show a positive perception that KPLC's digital communication builds trust between the company and its customers. In total, 65.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 11.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 23.2% were neutral. This suggests that digital communication is generally helping KPLC build trust, likely by improving access to information and making communication feel more visible. However, the relatively high neutral response shows that a notable group is still unconvinced or does not consistently experience this trust-building effect. The finding indicates moderate-to-strong trust-building influence, but KPLC may need to improve consistency, responsiveness, and openness to strengthen trust further.

4.7.7 The type of KPLC digital platform used and reasons for choice

Platform category	Approx. frequency in responses	Typical reasons mentioned
MyPower / KPLC Apps	High	User-friendly; easy to report outages; track usage; buy tokens and pay bills conveniently.
USSD (*977#)*	High	Easy and direct; works without internet; good for complaints, checking tokens and bills; useful when SMS delays.
Website / self-service	Moderate	Most information and detail; self-service portal for applications and bills; convenient online access.
SMS	Low–moderate	Fast way to get bill or token details when other channels delay.
X/Twitter	High	Fast and reliable; more information; quick responses; constant updates on outages and notices.
Facebook	Moderate	Interactive; fast customer care responses; easy to raise issues publicly.
WhatsApp / groups	Moderate	Ease of interaction, group sharing of information, direct chats (including via KPLC WhatsApp channel).
LinkedIn	Low	Professional platform; regular updates in a work/professional context.
Other / None	Very low	Either no regular use or reliance on generic tools like Google search or paybill.

The most commonly mentioned KPLC digital platforms are MyPower App, USSD/*977#*, X/Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, and the KPLC website. In the responses, USSD/*977#* and MyPower App appear most frequently, often because they are seen as easy to use, fast, and helpful for checking tokens, reporting outages, and accessing account information. The responses show that customers choose KPLC digital platforms mainly for speed, ease of use, and reliability. Platforms that support quick self-service, such as USSD and MyPower App, are especially popular because they reduce the need to call or visit offices. Social media platforms are also important because they provide immediate interaction and timely information. The

pattern suggests that customers prefer platforms that are simple, accessible, and responsive, especially for outage updates, token issues, bill inquiries, and complaints.

4.7.8 Aspects of KPLC's digital communication that are most helpful

Most respondents find KPLC's outage-related updates, self-service tools (USSD, app, website), and billing/token services most helpful, mainly because they enable planning, reduce the need to visit offices, and make account management quick and convenient.

From the open-ended answers, the helpful aspects of KPLC's digital communication cluster into several themes:

Outage and maintenance communication

"Communication on power outages so that one is prepared", "Alerts on power outages help me plan myself ahead of time", "Information on planned interruptions", "Tweets on power outage schedules", "Power rationing", "Power interruptions", "Information on outages and any upgrades", "Timely outage updates".

These match KPLC's practice of posting scheduled interruption notices and restoration updates on social media and online platforms, helping customers plan.

Self-service and USSD/app features

"Self-service on your phone - no internet needed", "Self service menu on both app & *977#", "On-the-go account management", "The online App", "The USSD platform and WhatsApp pages", "Self reading feature", "pre paid", "Token requests".

KPLC's *977# USSD and MyPower app let customers buy tokens, check/post bills, submit self-meter readings, and report outages directly from their phones.

Billing, tokens and payments

“Billing and Payments”, “billing information”, “Tokens”, “Token Purchase and power outage reporting”, “The SMS Service, KPLC paybill 888888”, “Notices - Payment tracking and Consumption tracking”.

Paybill numbers (888880 prepaid, 888888 postpaid), SMS bill alerts, and app/USSD billing functions are designed to support these needs.

Ease, simplicity and access to information. The respondents said “Access to information”, “Eliminates the need to visit the office in person”, “Simplicity in usage”, “Quick access, automated chatbox”, “Ease of raising concern”, “Short code and social media”, “Messages”.

Digital channels reduce branch visits and offer quick information and support via USSD, web portal, app, AI chatbot and social media.

Social media engagement and customer support. The feedback included Direct mentions of “Twitter”, “Tweets on power outage schedules”, “Social Media”, “Facebook”, “WhatsApp sometime”, “USSD and Social Media”, “The USSD platform and WhatsApp pages”, “Timely outage updates, quick customer support on social media”.

KPLC uses X/Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn for real-time updates, outage information, and interactive customer support, including chatbot and direct messaging.

Reference numbers and follow-up. They also mentioned “The reference number that helps follow up on power issues” shows appreciation for case IDs or ticket numbers generated when customers report faults through digital channels, which make follow-up easier.

The table below summarizes the responses.

Helpful aspect	Examples from your responses	What it enables for customers
Outage & maintenance updates	Outages, planned interruptions, tweets on schedules, rationing, upgrades	Planning for downtime, managing work/household activities.
Self-service via USSD/app/web	Self-service on phone, self-service menu *977#, online app, self-reading*	Managing accounts (tokens, bills, readings) without visiting offices.
Billing, tokens & payments	Billing information, tokens, paybill 888888, payment/consumption tracking	Paying bills, buying tokens, tracking usage and balances easily.
Ease of access & simplicity	Eliminates office visits, simplicity, quick access, automated chatbox	Faster problem resolution and information access in a user-friendly way.
Social media communication	Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, social media updates	Real-time updates, interactive support, quick responses to concerns.
Reference numbers for follow-up	Reference number to follow up on issues	Clear tracking of complaints and fault reports until resolution.

Outage-related information is the single most frequently cited helpful aspect, because it helps people plan and reduces uncertainty during blackouts. The second major theme is self-service (USSD, app, online forms), which people value for reducing office visits and allowing quick, on-the-go management of bills, tokens, and meter readings.

4.7.9 Challenges experienced when using KPLC's digital platforms

Challenge theme	Percentage
Slow response / delayed feedback	28.0%
Downtime/platform not loading / malfunctioning	16.0%
Weak follow-up / no tracking of issues	12.0%
Billing, token, and payment-related issues	12.0%

Challenge theme	Percentage
Poor communication of changes/updates	8.0%
Accessibility/usability / complex portal issues	8.0%
Lack of response on some platforms	6.0%
No challenge/none / N/A	10.0%
Other issues	0.0%
Total	100.0%

The table shows that the most common challenge is slow response or delayed feedback, accounting for 28.0% of the responses. This suggests that timeliness is the main weakness in KPLC's digital communication, especially when customers need urgent help with outages, billing, or token problems.

The second major challenge is downtime or system malfunction, at 16.0%, showing that some users experience unstable platforms or difficulty accessing services. In addition, weak follow-up, billing and token issues, and poor communication of changes all point to a broader problem of service inconsistency.

The findings indicate that while KPLC's digital platforms are useful, customers are most concerned about speed, reliability, and accountability. Improving response time, reducing downtime, and strengthening issue-tracking mechanisms would likely have the greatest impact on user satisfaction.

4.7.10 How KPLC could improve digital communication

Improvement theme	Percentage
Faster response, timely feedback, shorter turnaround time	26.0%
Better follow-up, ticket updates, and complaint tracking	18.0%

Improvement theme	Percentage
Improve app/USSD reliability and functionality	16.0%
More prompt information, updates, and notifications	14.0%
Better system integration and technical performance	8.0%
More channels and stronger social media presence	8.0%
More human, personalized, and interactive communication	6.0%
No change / keeping up the good work / N/A	4.0%
Total	**100.0%**

The most common suggestion is that KPLC should improve response speed and feedback time, which accounts for 26.0% of the responses. This shows that customers value quick replies and want their issues addressed without long delays. The second major suggestion is better follow-up and tracking of complaints at 18.0%. Respondents want visible progress updates, ticket tracking, and confirmation that reported issues are being handled. This points to a need for a stronger service recovery system. Another important area is improving app and USSD reliability at 16.0%. Many respondents want the MyPower app and *977# to work more smoothly, with fewer failures and downtime. A related concern is the need for more prompt information and notifications at 14.0%, especially during outages, maintenance, or token issues. The findings suggest that KPLC should focus on speed, reliability, transparency, and follow-up. Customers are not only asking for more communication, but for communication that is faster, more interactive, and more useful in solving problems.

4.7.11 Ways in which KPLC's digital communication influenced customer trust

Trust influence theme	Percentage
Improved transparency and openness	23.3%
Timely updates and prompt communication	18.6%
Easier access to information and services	16.3%
Reliability and accuracy of information	14.0%
Faster support and feedback	9.3%
Customer empowerment and self-service	9.3%
Reduced dependence on physical visits/calls	7.0%
Limited or no influence / neutral/negative	2.3%
Total	**100.0%**

The responses show that KPLC's digital communication has had a generally positive influence on trust. The most common theme is improved transparency and openness, meaning that many respondents feel more confident when KPLC shares information publicly and clearly. This suggests that digital communication has helped reduce uncertainty and made the company appear more open.

A second major theme is timely updates and prompt communication. Respondents noted that fast responses, instant SMS or email alerts, and scheduled outage notices make them feel more informed and reassured. This shows that trust is strengthened when customers receive information quickly and consistently.

Another important theme is easier access to information and services. Many respondents said digital platforms make it simpler to check bills, meter readings, outages, and complaints. This

convenience appears to increase confidence because customers can access services without long delays or physical visits.

The responses also highlight reliability and accuracy of information as a trust factor. Where information is correct and communication is consistent, trust improves. However, a few responses also indicate that inaccurate updates or unresolved issue statuses can damage confidence, showing that trust is fragile when digital communication is not truthful or up to date.

The findings suggest that KPLC's digital communication has strengthened trust by improving transparency, speed, and accessibility. However, trust can still be undermined if responses are delayed, updates are inaccurate, or issue resolution is poorly tracked. The company therefore needs to maintain accurate, timely, and honest digital communication to sustain customer confidence.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study show that KPLC's digital corporate communication plays a significant role in enhancing customer engagement and building trust, although the effectiveness of these efforts varies across platforms and service areas. This is consistent with the view that digital technologies transform corporate communication by enabling ongoing dialogue, real-time interaction, and relationship building between organizations and customers (Malthouse et al., 2013). The study found that customers mostly engage with KPLC through X/Twitter, the MyPower app, USSD code *977#, WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS, and the company website. These platforms were preferred mainly because they are accessible, fast, and convenient for checking outages, purchasing tokens, reporting faults, and receiving updates. This supports Brodie et al. (2011) and Van Doorn et al. (2010), who argue that digital platforms encourage customer engagement by providing personalized, convenient, and interactive touchpoints that meet informational and transactional needs.

The study further established that KPLC's digital communication positively influences customer engagement by making services more accessible and interaction more convenient. Respondents indicated that digital platforms reduce the time and effort needed to resolve issues, improve service access, and make the company appear more transparent. This finding aligns with Hollebeek (2011), who notes that social media and other digital channels strengthen engagement by creating transparency, communities, and opportunities for co-creation. It also agrees with the Uses and Gratifications perspective, which holds that customers actively choose channels that best satisfy their need for speed, convenience, and control. However, some respondents also reported challenges such as delayed responses, poor follow-up, downtime, weak feedback systems, and technical failures on some platforms. This echoes Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who observed that although digital platforms increase interaction, they can also create difficulties for organizations when they are unable to manage high volumes of feedback or respond effectively to negative comments.

In relation to customer satisfaction, the findings show that KPLC's digital communication is generally viewed positively. Most respondents agreed that the company's digital platforms improve customer service, provide useful information, and help meet customer needs. Customers especially appreciated timely outage notifications, access to billing information, token purchase support, and issue reporting through digital channels. This agrees with Kotler and Keller's understanding of satisfaction as the extent to which service performance meets customer expectations, and with studies showing that digital self-service tools improve satisfaction by reducing friction and increasing convenience. The results also reflect findings by Malthouse et al. (2013), who noted that digital interaction improves customer experience by making services more responsive and accessible. Despite this positive perception, a notable number of respondents remained neutral, indicating that the company's digital service delivery

is not yet fully consistent. This suggests that while the platforms are useful, their impact on satisfaction is weakened when responses are delayed or complaints are not resolved promptly.

The findings also show that KPLC's digital corporate communication contributes to trust-building. Many respondents indicated that the company's digital platforms make information easier to access, improve transparency, increase confidence, and reduce dependence on physical visits and phone calls. This finding is consistent with Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's view that trust is strengthened when an organization is seen as reliable, honest, and capable of acting in the customer's interest. It also agrees with Rawlins (2008), who argues that transparency and accountability are central to building trust in organizational communication. Instant notifications, public updates, and self-service tools were seen as helping customers feel informed and secure. This supports Kim, Kim, and Lee (2021), who found that communication content emphasizing transparency and customer empowerment increases trust. However, trust can be weakened when digital communication is inaccurate, delayed, or not followed by timely action, which is consistent with Beldad et al. (2020), who identified informational accuracy and sincerity as the strongest predictors of trust in digital communication.

The study demonstrates that KPLC's digital corporate communication has a positive influence on customer engagement and trust, but this influence is moderated by technical and operational challenges. The strongest aspects of the company's digital communication are accessibility, transparency, convenience, and timeliness. These findings support the literature on omnichannel communication, which shows that integrated digital platforms improve customer relationships by making interaction easier and more responsive. However, the weakest aspects are slow response times, poor follow-up, platform downtime, and weak integration between digital communication and service resolution. This reflects earlier studies that warn that digital communication can lose credibility when organizations are not able to respond quickly or maintain reliable service systems. Therefore, KPLC's digital communication strategy is

effective in principle, but its impact could be significantly strengthened through better responsiveness, improved system reliability, and more customer-centered interaction.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, the conclusion drawn from the analysis, recommendations arising from the findings, and suggestions for further study. The study examined digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust: a case study of Kenya Power and Lighting Company. The discussion is organized around the study objectives, namely: (i) to investigate the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement; (ii) to analyze the reach of KPLC's digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience; (iii) to assess the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC; and (iv) to find out the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust.

5.2 Summary of study findings

The first objective of the study investigated the types of digital platforms KPLC uses and their influence on customer engagement. The study found that the most commonly used platforms were X/Twitter, the MyPower app, USSD *977#, WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS, and the company website. These platforms were mainly used because they are easy to access, fast, and useful for reporting outages, checking bills, purchasing tokens, and receiving updates. The findings indicate that digital platforms have become central to customer engagement because they allow customers to interact with KPLC more directly and conveniently.

The second objective examined the reach of KPLC’s digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience. The study found that KPLC’s digital platforms have wide reach and can deliver information to many customers quickly. Respondents noted that digital communication makes service access easier, reduces the time and effort required to resolve issues, and helps customers receive important information in a timely manner. However, the study also found that reach does not always translate into effectiveness because some customers

still experience delays, downtime, and weak feedback mechanisms. This affects the overall customer experience.

The third objective assessed the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction. The findings showed that most respondents perceived KPLC's digital communication positively in terms of customer service delivery. Customers appreciated fast notifications, self-service convenience, access to account information, and the ability to report and track issues digitally. At the same time, some respondents expressed concerns about slow responses, poor follow-up, delayed updates, and unresolved complaints. This means that while digital communication contributes to satisfaction, its impact is reduced when service delivery is inconsistent.

The fourth objective sought to determine the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication builds customer trust. The study found that digital communication has generally improved customer trust by making information more transparent, accessible, and timely. Respondents said they trust the information shared through digital platforms, feel better informed, and are more confident in the company when updates are prompt and accurate. However, trust is undermined when responses are delayed, digital messages are not followed by action, or information is inconsistent. The study therefore concludes that KPLC's digital communication can build strong trust, provided the communication is reliable and backed by effective service delivery.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that digital corporate communication is an important tool for enhancing customer engagement and building trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company. The digital platforms used by KPLC have made it easier for customers to access information, report issues, receive updates, and interact with the company. In many cases, these platforms have improved convenience, transparency, and responsiveness, thereby strengthening customer engagement.

However, the study also concludes that the effectiveness of KPLC's digital communication is constrained by several challenges, including delayed responses, system downtime, poor follow-up, weak tracking mechanisms, and occasional inconsistencies in the information provided. These weaknesses affect customer satisfaction and can reduce trust even where the communication channels are widely used. Therefore, KPLC's digital communication strategy is effective, but it requires continued improvement to fully realize its potential in customer engagement and trust-building.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that KPLC improve the speed and consistency of responses on all digital platforms. Customers should receive prompt feedback on complaints, outage reports, billing queries, and service requests. A stronger response mechanism would help reduce frustration and improve the overall customer experience.

The study also recommends that KPLC strengthen its digital platform reliability by reducing downtime, improving app functionality, and ensuring that USSD, app, and website services are stable and user-friendly. Technical improvements would make digital communication more effective and reduce dependence on physical visits or telephone calls.

KPLC should also introduce stronger feedback-tracking systems so customers can monitor the progress of their complaints or reports. This would improve accountability, increase transparency, and build trust in the company's service delivery process.

In addition, KPLC should provide more proactive communication, especially during outages, maintenance work, and service disruptions. Customers should be informed in advance whenever possible, and updates should continue until an issue is resolved. This would help customers plan better and reduce uncertainty.

Finally, the study recommends that KPLC make its digital communication more personalized, interactive, and customer-centered. The company should use simpler language, more human

communication, and more engagement through social media, SMS alerts, WhatsApp, and other digital channels. This would help the company better meet customer expectations and strengthen trust.

5.5 Suggestions for further study

Further research could be conducted on the relationship between digital communication and customer loyalty in other public utility companies in Kenya. Such a study would help determine whether the findings of this research are specific to KPLC or common across similar organizations.

A second area for further study could focus on the role of social media responsiveness in shaping public trust in utility companies. This would help isolate the effect of responsiveness as a communication strategy.

Future studies could also examine the relationship between digital communication system design and customer satisfaction in service-based organizations. This would provide deeper insight into how platform usability influences communication effectiveness.

Another useful area of research would be the impact of digital communication during crises such as power outages, system failures, or billing disputes. This would help organizations understand how to improve communication when customer anxiety is high.

Lastly, future research could explore employee perceptions of how KPLC implements its digital communication strategy. This would provide an internal view of how digital communication is managed and where operational gaps may exist.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Questionnaire on Digital Corporate Communication and Customer Engagement at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)

Informed consent

Title of the Project: DIGITAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING TRUST: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY

Goal: The purpose of the study is to assess the role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC).

Participants: This study is completely voluntary, and any member can opt out at any time with no repercussions. There are no financial rewards for participating.

Confidentiality: Participants' identities will never be used in this study, and all responses will be handled with the utmost discretion.

Name of the Researcher: Samuel Chege Karanja Position: Student

Sign by the researcher: ……..... Date: ……..

Statement to be signed by the participant:

I acknowledge that the investigator has stated the purpose of the work and the range of tasks I will be expected to perform. I certify that I have had ample opportunity to inquire about this project. I realize that my involvement is entirely optional, and that I am free to withdraw at any time in the course of the project for any reason. I agree to participate in this project.

Signature: …….. Date: …….……..

Instructions to Respondents:

This questionnaire is intended to collect information on how KPLC's digital communication platforms influence customer engagement, customer experience, customer satisfaction, and trust. The information provided will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality. Please tick the option that best represents your opinion.

Section A: Respondent Background Information

Please tick or fill in the correct response.

1. Gender:

Male	
Female	

2. Age group:

18–25	
26–35	
36–45	
46–55	
56 and above	

3. Customer type:

Residential customer	
Commercial customer	
Industrial customer	

4. How long have you been a KPLC customer?

Less than 1 year	

1–3 years	
4–6 years	
7 years and above	

5. Which KPLC digital platform(s) do you use?

SMS alerts	✓
USSD (*977#)	
MyPower app	
Social media	
KPLC website	
Other:	

Section B: Digital Platforms and Customer Engagement
Objective: To investigate the types of digital platforms used by KPLC and their influence on customer engagement.
Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements below:

Scale:

5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
I regularly use KPLC digital platforms to access service information.					
SMS alerts from KPLC are useful in keeping me informed.					
The USSD platform makes it easy for me to access KPLC services.					

The MyPower app improves my interaction with KPLC.					
KPLC's social media platforms encourage customer interaction.					
KPLC's digital platforms make it easier for me to give feedback.					
I am more likely to engage with KPLC because of its digital communication platforms.					
KPLC's digital platforms encourage timely responses from customers.					
Section C: Reach of Digital Communication Channels and Customer Experience					
Objective: To analyze the reach of KPLC's digital communication channels and their influence on customer experience.					
	5	4	3	2	1
KPLC's digital messages reach me in time when I need them.					
The information shared through KPLC digital channels is clear and easy to understand.					
KPLC's digital communication is accessible when I need electricity-related information.					
I receive service updates from KPLC through digital platforms without difficulty.					
KPLC's digital communication improves my overall experience as a customer.					

KPLC's digital channels help me avoid unnecessary visits to KPLC offices.					
KPLC communicates outages, billing, and service updates effectively through digital platforms.					
I find KPLC's digital communication convenient and user-friendly.					
Section D: Digital Communication and Customer Satisfaction					
Objective: To assess the impact of digital communication strategies on customer satisfaction at KPLC.					
	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with the way KPLC communicates with customers digitally.					
KPLC responds to customer concerns in a timely manner through digital platforms.					
KPLC's digital communication meets my expectations as a customer.					
The digital services provided by KPLC have improved my satisfaction.					
KPLC's digital communication reduces the time and effort needed to resolve issues.					
I feel that KPLC values customers through its digital communication.					
KPLC's digital communication improves the quality of customer service.					
I would rate KPLC's digital communication as effective					

in meeting customer needs.					
Section E: Digital Corporate Communication and Customer Trust					
Objective: To find out the extent to which KPLC's digital corporate communication efforts build customer trust.					
	5	4	3	2	1
I trust the information shared by KPLC through its digital platforms.					
KPLC's digital communication makes the company appear more transparent.					
I believe KPLC communicates honestly through its digital channels.					
KPLC's digital platforms increase my confidence in the company.					
I am more likely to trust KPLC when it responds quickly online.					
KPLC's digital corporate communication strengthens my trust in the company.					
KPLC's digital messages make me feel informed and secure as a customer.					
Overall, KPLC's digital communication builds trust between the company and its customers.					

Section F: Open-Ended Questions

1. Which KPLC digital platform do you use most often, and why?

2. What aspects of KPLC's digital communication do you find most helpful?

3. What challenges do you experience when using KPLC's digital platforms?

4. How could KPLC improve its digital communication to better serve customers?

5. In what ways has KPLC's digital communication influenced your trust in the company?

APPENDIX II Interview Guide

Study Title: Digital Corporate Communication and Customer Engagement at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC)

Informed consent

Title of the Project: DIGITAL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING TRUST: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY

Goal: The purpose of the study is to assess the role of digital corporate communication in enhancing customer engagement and building trust at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC).

Participants: This study is completely voluntary, and any member can opt out at any time with no repercussions. There are no financial rewards for participating.

Confidentiality: Participants' identities will never be used in this study, and all responses will be handled with the utmost discretion.

Name of the Researcher: Samuel Chege Karanja Position: Student

Sign by the researcher: ……..... Date: ……..

Statement to be signed by the participant:

I acknowledge that the investigator has stated the purpose of the work and the range of tasks I will be expected to perform. I certify that I have had ample opportunity to inquire about this project. I realize that my involvement is entirely optional, and that I am free to withdraw at any time in the course of the project for any reason. I agree to participate in this project.

Signature: …….. Date: …….……..

Introduction to Respondent:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this discussion is to understand your experiences and views regarding KPLC’s digital communication platforms

and how they influence customer engagement, customer experience, satisfaction, and trust. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your customer category?
2. How long have you been a KPLC customer?
3. Which KPLC digital platforms have you used before?
4. How often do you interact with KPLC through digital channels?

Section B: Types of Digital Platforms and Customer Engagement

1. Which KPLC digital platforms do you use most often, and why do you prefer them?
2. In what ways do KPLC digital platforms encourage you to engage with the company?
3. How easy or difficult is it for you to communicate with KPLC through SMS, USSD, the MyPower app, or social media?
4. Can you share an experience where a digital platform helped you solve a KPLC-related issue?
5. Are there any digital platforms you think KPLC should improve or introduce to increase customer engagement?

Section C: Reach of Digital Communication and Customer Experience

1. How well do KPLC's digital messages reach you when needed?
2. Do you think KPLC's digital communication is timely and clear? Please explain.
3. How has KPLC's digital communication affected your overall experience as a customer?
4. Are there times when you have missed important information from KPLC? What happened?
5. In your view, who benefits most from KPLC's digital communication, and who may be left out?

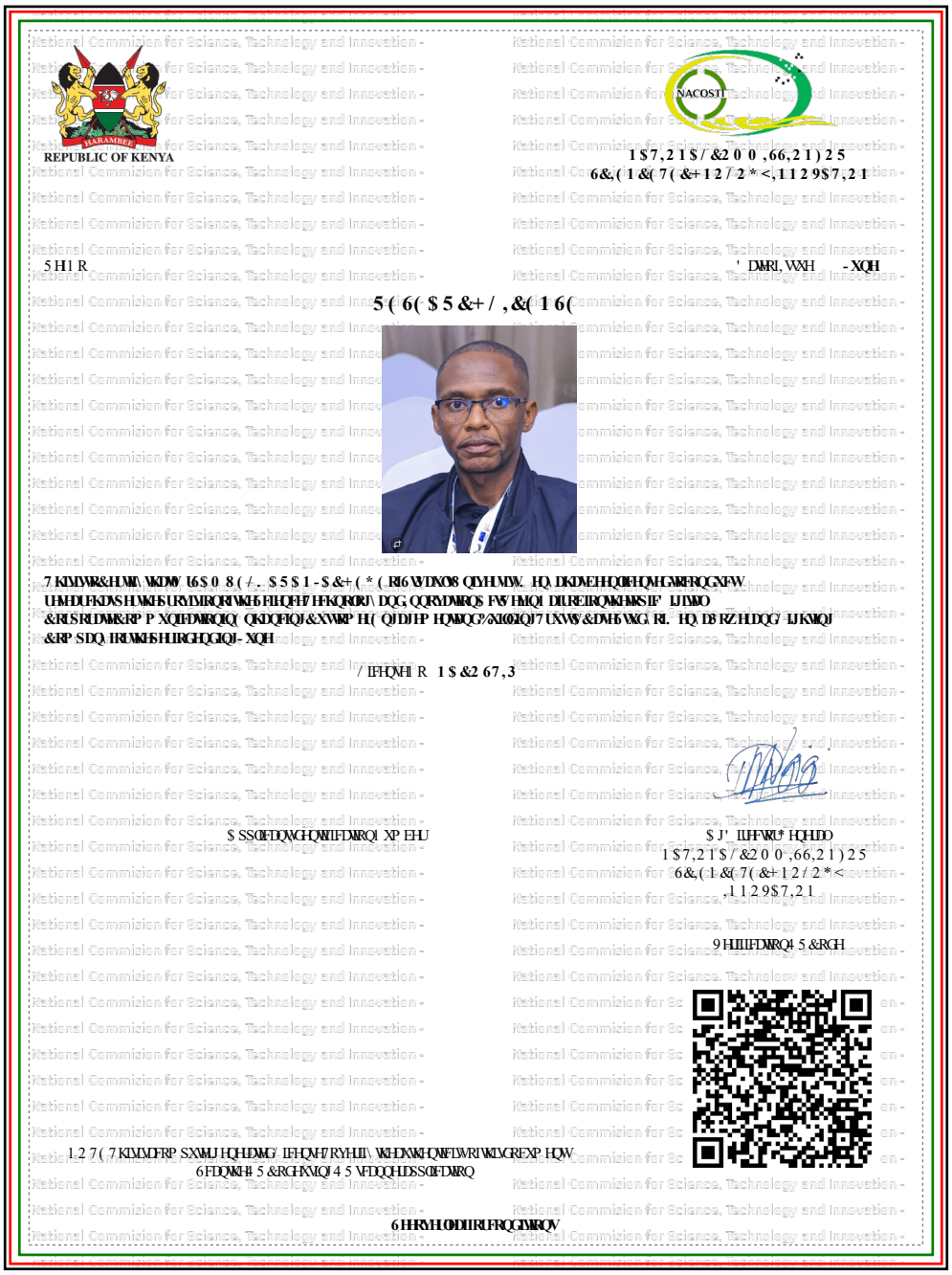
Section D: Digital Communication and Customer Satisfaction

1. How satisfied are you with KPLC's digital communication services?
2. What aspects of KPLC's digital communication do you think work well?
3. What challenges have you experienced when using KPLC's digital channels?
4. How does KPLC's digital communication influence your satisfaction with its services?
5. What would KPLC need to change to improve customer satisfaction through digital communication?

Section E: Digital Corporate Communication and Customer Trust

1. To what extent do you trust the information shared by KPLC through digital platforms?
2. What makes you trust or not trust KPLC's digital communication?
3. How does KPLC's digital communication affect your confidence in the company?
4. Do you think KPLC communicates honestly and transparently through digital channels? Why?
5. What can KPLC do to strengthen customer trust through its digital corporate communication?

APPENDIX III NACOSTI RESEARCH PERMIT



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APPENDIX IV ISERC LETTER

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
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REF: SPU/774/2026 **Date: 5th June 2026**

TO: Samuel Karanja Chege
St. Paul's University

Dear Samuel,

REF: Digital Corporate Communication in Enhancing Customer Engagement and Building Trust: A Case Study of Kenya Power And Lighting Company

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 784, for the period between 5th June 2026 – 5th June 2027 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
viii. Should there be any publications from your research, note that you are supposed to anonymize the particulars of the respondents, the identifiers and the name of institution (s) where you collected data.
ix. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring. Kindly provide a closure report after the research.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) if you are collecting data in the country - https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke **or obtain other clearances needed in the country where you will collect your data from.**

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY • INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE
(ISERC)
APPROVAL WITH CONTIGENCIES
RESEARCH DIRECTORATE