

Leveraging Multidimensional Communication Strategies to Enhance Research Visibility and Uptake in Advancing Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study of KCA University

Isaiah O. Were¹, Dr. Ubitrus Ojiambo², Dr. Winnie Ndeta³
St. Paul's University

Abstract

Research visibility and dissemination remain key determinants of the competitiveness, credibility and societal relevance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This paper examines the role of multidimensional communication in enhancing the dissemination and visibility of research output at KCA University, a private higher education institution in Kenya. Anchored on Stakeholder Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative data from 174 faculty, administrative, and communication staff with qualitative insights from eight key informant interviews. The findings reveal that integrating digital platforms, print media and public relations initiatives significantly improves the reach, accessibility and uptake of research outputs. While global universities leverage advanced digital ecosystems to disseminate knowledge, African universities such as KCA University employ blended approaches that creatively balance limited resources with the need for broader societal impact. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between multidimensional communication strategies and effective research dissemination ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the power of integrated communication in promoting visibility, engagement, and collaboration across diverse stakeholder groups. Digital and multimedia tools, including social media, institutional repositories, and online newsletters, were found to enhance research visibility, while public relations events such as the Annual Innovation Week and Industry Summit serve as key interfaces linking academia, policymakers, and industry actors. Traditional media, though less dominant, continue to play a vital role in reaching audiences with limited digital access, ensuring inclusivity in dissemination. However, the study identifies persistent challenges such as limited institutional capacity, resource constraints, and the absence of structured feedback mechanisms that hinder the optimization of communication initiatives. Despite these constraints, KCA University's multidimensional approach demonstrates significant potential in bridging the gap between research production and its societal application. The study contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating how strategic communication can strengthen the connection between African universities and their stakeholders, ensuring that research findings inform policy, industry practice, and community development. It recommends deliberate institutional investment in digital ecosystems, staff capacity-building, structured feedback mechanisms, and multimedia communication tools as pathways to align academic research with Kenya's National Development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Keywords: Multidimensional Communication, Research Dissemination, Higher Education, KCA University

Introduction

Dissemination of research has become an indispensable pillar of higher education institutions (Entradas & Bauer, 2022). Globally, universities are increasingly assessed not only by the quality of their teaching but also on their capacity to generate, disseminate and apply knowledge to address societal challenges (Hazelkorn & Gibson, 2018). Universities such as Harvard, Oxford, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have demonstrated that strategic communication frameworks, including digital repositories, social media campaigns, and institutional branding, can significantly enhance research visibility, attract international collaborations, and influence public policy (Pires & Pereira, 2023). Effective research communication ensures that academic knowledge transcends scholarly circles to inform policies, innovation, governance and community development. According to Altbach & Salmi (2011) the report, corporate communication is no longer peripheral but central to positioning HEIs as thought leaders in addressing global challenges, such as climate change, technological disruption, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

HEIs in Africa face unique challenges in leveraging communication to disseminate research. According to Moja & Samuel (2024a), resource constraints, limited research infrastructure, and fragmented communication frameworks hinder visibility and stakeholder engagement. Universities across the continent are adopting creative strategies such as digital platforms, research repositories, and community partnerships to amplify the relevance of their research output (Olaleye et al., 2020). Such strategies align with continental and national development goals, including Kenya's long-term development blueprint, Vision 2030, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), positioning universities as drivers of societal transformation.

Despite this global drive, many African universities struggle with limited visibility and underutilization of research outputs. Studies show that while African scholars contribute less than 2% of global research output, much of this work remains under-cited and disconnected from policymaking and industry practice (Zeufack et al., 2020). Contributing factors include resource constraints, fragmented communication frameworks, and the prioritization of academic publishing over broader dissemination (Moja & Samuel, 2024b). Unlike universities in the Global North that benefit from robust digital ecosystems and well-funded communication departments, African HEIs often rely on traditional print journals and sporadic public lectures, which limit their reach to broader audiences (Olsson & Erikson, 2020). This

gap has direct implications for the continent's development agenda, as research findings fail to inform innovation, policy, and societal transformation at scale.

In the Kenyan context, higher education is under growing pressure to demonstrate the real worth of its research. Universities are required to align their outputs with national development priorities, such as Kenya's Vision 2030, and global frameworks, such as the SDGs. However, weak dissemination strategies, minimal stakeholder engagement, and limited media visibility continue to undermine the translation of academic work into policy and industry practice (Namusonge & Karanja, 2021). Universities produce research on a range of areas, yet these findings often remain siloed in academic journals, inaccessible to policymakers or local communities (Ratanya & Muthee, 2018). This disconnect reduces the contribution of Kenyan universities to evidence-based decision-making and innovation. Similarly, the University of Nairobi employs partnerships with media houses and government agencies to disseminate research findings, particularly in agriculture, urban planning, and healthcare (Mpshane-Nkosi, 2023a). These efforts have not only increased the societal relevance of African research but also positioned these universities on the global academic stage.

KCA University, a leading private institution in Nairobi, provides a good case study for examining how corporate communication can enhance research visibility and uptake. The university has introduced several initiatives, such as the researcher newsletter, public lectures, digital platforms, and the Annual Innovation Week and Industry Summit. These efforts demonstrate a recognition that research must be strategically communicated to influence both academic and non-academic audiences. Additionally, KCA University's accreditation as an Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (ISERC) by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) underscores its commitment to advancing ethical and impactful research (KCAU, 2025). However, questions remain about the extent to which its multidimensional communication strategies—integrating digital, print, and public relations—are effective in broadening research dissemination and aligning with the SDGs.

KCA University has made significant strides in strengthening its research profile and visibility through the implementation of various strategic communication initiatives. Among these are The Researcher Newsletter, which serves as a platform for sharing ongoing research activities, publications, and success stories from faculty and students and public lectures. This provides opportunities for intellectual exchange and the dissemination of research findings, as well as digital platforms that facilitate online visibility, engagement, and collaboration among scholars and industry partners. In addition, the Annual Innovation Week and Industry Summit has

become a flagship event that bridges the gap between academia and industry, showcasing innovative research and encouraging the commercialization of ideas.

Despite these commendable efforts, pertinent questions remain about the overall effectiveness of the multidimensional communication strategies in achieving their intended outcomes. Specifically, it is unclear to what extent these initiatives have improved research dissemination, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and increased the uptake of research findings within and beyond the academic environment. Furthermore, there is limited evidence on whether these communication interventions are systematically aligned with KCA University's broader institutional goals, such as cultivating a culture of research excellence, promoting innovation and contributing to national development through knowledge transfer.

In this context, this study investigated the influence of multidimensional communication strategies on research output at KCA University. The study examined how the communication tools, channels, and practices adopted by KCA University shaped visibility, collaboration, and impact. It also explored the perceptions of key stakeholders, including faculty, administrators, research staff, and communication specialists, regarding the effectiveness of these strategies. The study also provides insights that can inform the creation of a more coherent, well-structured and goal-aligned communication framework that enhances research productivity, visibility and institutional reputation.

Problem Statement

The dissemination of research is increasingly becoming a critical function of higher education institutions, serving as a bridge between knowledge production and societal application (Hazelkorn & Gibson, 2019). However, despite the proliferation of knowledge in universities, research output often remains underutilized due to a weak communication framework (Teferra, 2004). Unlike universities in the Global North that benefit from robust digital ecosystems and well-funded communication departments, African HEIs, including Kenya, often rely on traditional dissemination models, which limit their reach to broader audiences (Mouton, 2010a).

Multidimensional communication offers opportunities for HEIs to improve research visibility, uptake and impact (O'Connor & Shumate, 2020). However, studies show that its adoption in the African context remains fragmented, underfunded and poorly coordinated (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024). While global universities use digital platforms to shape policy and attract global collaborations (Pires & Pereira, 2023), many African HEIs lack robust repositories and coordinated social media strategies (Ogenga, 2015). This disparity contributes to the

marginalization of African research in global knowledge networks, undermining its potential to inform innovation, governance, and sustainable development (Muriithi et al., 2016).

KCA University has introduced several initiatives, such as the Researcher Newsletter, the Annual Innovation Week and Industry Summit, and institutional repositories, in a bid to promote multidimensional communication and enhance the visibility and utilisation of research outputs. These strategies are designed to promote research dissemination, stimulate collaboration and strengthen linkages between academia, industry and the wider community. The Researcher Newsletter serves as a communication tool that highlights research achievements, publications, and innovations, while Innovation Week provides an interactive space to showcase applied research and foster partnerships for knowledge commercialisation. Institutional repositories, on the other hand, have become key in preserving and providing open access to scholarly work, thereby contributing to knowledge sharing and academic visibility (Majhi et al., 2023).

Despite these commendable efforts, the impact of such initiatives has not been systematically assessed. This gap raises concerns about the effectiveness of KCA University's corporate communication strategies in bridging the divide between research production and practical utilisation. Effective research communication is essential for translating academic findings into policy and practice, yet in many higher education institutions, dissemination efforts remain fragmented or inadequately aligned with institutional and national development priorities (Mouton, 2010b). Without clear evidence-based strategies, valuable research risks remaining confined within academic silos—accessible mainly to scholars but disconnected from policymakers, industry players, and communities that could benefit from it (Damba et al., 2024).

This situation undermines the university's contribution to Kenya's national development agenda and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which require evidence-driven innovations and multidisciplinary collaboration (Zerfass et al., 2017). As such, there is an urgent need to evaluate how existing communication initiatives influence research visibility, uptake, and impact. Doing so will enable KCA University to refine its communication framework and develop strategic interventions that effectively link research outputs to societal transformation and sustainable development.

Theoretical Review

Littlejohn & Foss (2010) describe a theory as a structured network of interconnected paradigms to establish relationships between two or more variables. This study is anchored on three theoretical perspectives that collectively provide a framework for understanding the influence

of corporate communication strategies on research output in HEIs. These theories include Stakeholder Theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT), and Institutional Theory (IT). Each theory contributes unique understandings into how universities can manage communication processes to enhance research visibility, uptake, and alignment with institutional goals.

The study is grounded in Stakeholder Theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory, and Institutional Theory, each of which provides critical insights into the role of multidimensional communication in enhancing research dissemination. Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) posits that an organisation must consider the needs of diverse stakeholders to remain effective. In HEIs, stakeholder include students, faculty, policymakers, industry and the public. From this perspective, research communication must be repackaged into formats suitable for different audiences, such as policy briefs, digital content and academic outputs for peers (Tench & Moreno, 2015; de Freitas Langrafe et al., 2020). However, while developed systems emphasise inclusive stakeholder communication, African HEIs often prioritize academic audiences at the expense of policymakers and industry, resulting in limited uptake (Namusonge and Karanja, 2021).

Diffusion of Innovation Theory, as proposed by Rogers (2003), further enriches this understanding by explaining how innovations, including communication tools such as webinars, institutional repositories, and social media, are adopted within universities. Global institutions with robust infrastructure tend to demonstrate faster adoption and greater impact (Greenhalgh et al., 2021), whereas African universities often struggle with limited infrastructure and fragmented strategies (Bolton & Nie, 2010). Institutional Theory proposed DiMaggio & Powell, (2000), demonstrates how coercive, normative and mimetic pressures shape communication practice. This duality highlights the institutional tendency to balance credibility with effectiveness, a tension evident in KCA University's adoption of both peer-reviewed journals and digital newsletters.

Collectively, these theories suggest that multidimensional communication is not merely an operational choice but is embedded within a broader framework of stakeholder expectations, innovation adoption and institutional legitimacy.

Empirical Review

Multidimensional communication in higher education institutions (HEIs) is pegged on the notion that proper dissemination requires the integration of various channels, including digital, print and public relations tools, to reach multiple stakeholder groups (O'Connor & Shumate, 2020). Unlike single-channel approaches that often privilege academic audiences, multidimensional frameworks combine traditional and new media platforms, enabling

universities to simultaneously engage policymakers, industry actors, students and the wider community.

A key thematic area in corporate communication strategies is the digital and media strategies. The rise of digital and multimedia communication has transformed the dissemination of research outputs, making them more accessible to diverse stakeholders, (Crocco et al., 2022). HEIs increasingly leverage social media, institutional websites, digital repositories, and online research platforms to enhance research visibility and impact (Cornelissen, 2023). These platforms offer a means for scholars to share their findings in real-time, facilitating broader engagement beyond academic circles (Capriotti & Zeler, 2023). However, disparities in digital adoption persist, particularly in African institutions where infrastructural challenges limit the effectiveness of digital communication strategies (Teferra, 2013).

A key and emerging area in digital communication strategies is the rise of social media as a means of communication. For many universities, social media has become an essential channel for disseminating research, leveraging platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn and ResearchGate to enhance engagement with industry stakeholders, policymakers, and the broader public. The university's growing digital presence aligns with global trends, where active social media engagement has been linked to increased research citations and uptake (Francke & Hammarfelt, 2022). Through initiatives such as faculty-led discussions, research highlights, and live-streamed academic events, Universities seek to bridge the gap between academic research and real-world application.

This idea aligns with Stakeholder Theory, which highlight the necessity of tailoring communication strategies to address the heterogeneous needs of institutional stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Langrafe et al., 2020). Studies worldwide indicate that institutions employing integrated communication frameworks enhance both the visibility and uptake of research. According to Syed Alwi et al., (2022), orchestrated internal and external communication creates consistency and trust (Pires and Pereira, 2023). On the other hand, it states that coordinated partnerships between academia and media foster greater reach.

On the contrary, Tucker et al., (2024) argue that fragmented strategies, often common in African universities, lead to duplication of effort and weak audience engagement. These findings suggest that integration is not simply about diversity of channels, but about coherence and strategic alignment across them.

The digital space has, in a big way, revolutionized how research outputs are packaged and disseminated. Studies show that social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn and ResearchGate amplify research visibility and can even influence citation rates (Syed Alwi et

al., 2022). Digital repositories and institutional websites also provide long-term accessibility, ensuring that research remains accessible over time (Cragin et al., 2010). However, Olsson and Erikson (2020) warn that without institutional coordination, these digital tools may be underutilized or misaligned with academic rigour.

In an era where information overload is the norm, the ability to communicate research effectively is more critical than ever (Brossard & Scheufele, 2013). Traditional academic publications, while essential, often fail to capture the attention of broader audiences beyond scholarly circles. Multimedia tools such as video explainers, podcasts, webinars, and infographics have revolutionised academic communication, making complex research findings more digestible for non-academic audiences (Martinez-Torres & Diaz-Fernandez, 2014). Video explainers and infographics enhance the visual appeal of research, increasing audience engagement and knowledge retention (Mulimani, 2024). Podcasts and webinars further facilitate interactive learning, allowing researchers to discuss their findings in real-time while engaging with a global audience (Mpshane-Nkosi, 2023).

However, Francke & Hammarfelt (2022) warn that without institutional coordination, these digital technologies may be underutilised or misaligned with academic rigour. This reflects issues faced by Kenyan universities, where inadequate infrastructure limits the efficiency of online dissemination (Muriithi et al., 2016).

While digital platforms offer immediacy and interactivity, traditional media remain critical in fostering stronger linkages between academia and the public. Newspapers, newsletters and press releases are often more accessible to communities with limited internet penetration. Lewis and Parker 2020 observed that research findings shared through newspapers reach broader audiences in remote areas, while Gomez and Richards (2021) note that press releases help translate complex studies into public-friendly narratives. However, concerns persist over oversimplification or misrepresentation when media frames research findings (Thompson & White, 2022). The challenge for HEIs, therefore, lies in balancing accessibility with fidelity to academic integrity.

The use of multimedia formats, such as podcasts, infographics, and video explainers, is another dimension of multidimensional communication. (Martinez-Torres & Diaz-Fernandez, 2014) Argue that these formats enhance comprehension and retention among non-specialist audiences. Similarly, Mpshane-Nkosi (2023) highlights the growing role of webinars and livestreamed academic events in democratizing access to scholarly debates. However, long-term evaluations of these tools remain limited, leaving questions about their sustained impact on policy uptake and societal change.

Comparative studies further illustrate how context shapes effectiveness. In high-income contexts, integrated digital branding strategies are linked with higher research funding and stronger institutional reputation (Langrafe et al., 2020). By contrast, African HEIs, while innovative in leveraging community partnerships and social media, often struggle with sustainability due to resource constraints (Teferra, 2013b). For example, while Harvard and MIT have institutionalised open-access policies, many African universities lack robust repositories and effective metadata management, which limits discoverability (Björk et al., 2014).

Evaluating a university's digital branding and online presence is essential to understanding its impact on research visibility. Digital branding entails crafting a robust institutional identity that conveys the university's research priorities, strengths, and contributions to societal development (Capriotti & Zeler, 2023). Studies show that institutions with a cohesive digital branding strategy attract more research funding and collaborations (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

At KCA University, the application of multidimensional communication is visible in initiatives such as *The Researcher Newsletter*, digital platforms, and the Annual Innovation Week and Industry Summit. These initiatives reflect an effort to integrate traditional print tools, digital platforms, and stakeholder-focused events into a unified communication strategy (KCAU, 2025). However, as Brooks and Williams (2020) emphasise, feedback loops are critical for refining such strategies. Without mechanisms to capture how stakeholders perceive and apply research, communication risks being performative rather than impactful.

In synthesis, the literature emphasises that multidimensional communication is indispensable for enhancing research dissemination in HEIs. While digital tools expand reach, traditional media maintain inclusivity, and multimedia enhances engagement, effectiveness ultimately depends on strategic integration, contextual adaptation, and ongoing stakeholder feedback. The gaps identified, particularly in sustaining digital infrastructures, balancing accessibility with academic rigour, and embedding feedback loops, present critical areas for KCA University and similar institutions to strengthen their corporate communication practices.

Research Objective

The research objective was to analyze the role of multidimensional communication in enhancing the dissemination of research output at KCA University.

Research Methodology

This study adopted mixed- methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the role of multidimensional communication in enhancing the dissemination of research outputs at KCA University. According to Creswell & Clark, (2017b)

mixed methods research, it is specifically helpful in educational contexts because it combines the breadth of quantitative data with the depth of qualitative insights, allowing for triangulation and validation of findings. The target population consists of 204 individuals, including faculty members, administrative staff and corporate communication officers, all directly involved in research production and dissemination. A census approach was employed to maximise representativeness. The use of a census was deemed appropriate due to the small and manageable size of the target population, which aligns with the study's aims of obtaining comprehensive insights. According to Killick et al., (2016) the census method is particularly suitable for small populations, as it ensures thorough data collection and eliminates sampling error. This method enhances the accuracy, reliability and generalizability of the study findings.

Table 1: Estimated Targeted Population for the Study

Category	Estimated Population
Full-time Teaching and research faculty	125
Research Staff	16
Selected Administrative staff	58
Corporate Affairs & Communication Staff	5
Total	204

Source: Researcher, 2025

Qualitative data was collected using structured questionnaires focusing on the use of digital platforms, print media and public relations tools. In contrast, qualitative insights were obtained from 8 in-depth semi-structured interviews with university leaders and communication staff. According to Johnson (2002) In-depth interviews are ideal when the number of respondents is small to achieve an objective.

To ensure rigour, the research instruments were piloted with Content Validity Index (CVI) confirming construct validity (Polit & Beck, 2012), and Cronbach's alpha establishing internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Data collection followed ethical approval by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and St. Paul's Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (ISERC) in line with international research ethics guidelines (Resnik, 2018). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS, including regression analysis to determine the relationship between multidimensional communication strategies and research output at KCA University. Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data to capture emerging perspectives on communication practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Triangulation of methods enhanced credibility and minimized bias (Denzin, 2012), while confidentiality and voluntary participation were observed throughout the study.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics revealed that KCA University widely adopted multidimensional communication strategies, though their effectiveness varied across channels. Table 1 summarizes the main scores for the three dimensions measured, that is, digital and multimedia platforms, traditional and print media, and public relations strategies

Table 2: Effectiveness of Multidimensional Communication Strategies in Disseminating Research output (N=174)

Communication Strategy	Mean (M)	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Digital and Multimedia Platforms	4.18	0.74	Highly effective
Traditional and Print Media	3.62	0.81	Moderately effective
Public Relations	4.01	0.69	Highly effective

Source: Researcher, 2025

Scale: 1= Very low, 5= Very high

Regression analysis is a statistical method used to investigate the strength and magnitude of the relationship between variables. According to Young (2014), regression analysis clarifies the statistical association between variables, enhancing the study's ability to draw significant conclusions and recommendations. Regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between multidimensional communication strategies and dissemination of research output ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$). This suggest that the integration of multiple communication channels strongly enhances research visibility and accessibility at KCA University.

Qualitative interviews support these findings. Respondents emphasized that digital platforms, particularly social media and webinars, provided immediacy and broader research opportunities. At the same time, public relations events, such as the Annual Innovation Week and Industry Summit, amplified engagement with policymakers and industry actors. However, challenges were noted in sustaining digital repositories due to limited resources and ensuring that traditional media coverage maintained scholarly accuracy.

Discussions

The findings confirm that multidimensional communication strategies are key in enhancing the dissemination of research output in HEIs. Digital platforms emerged as the most effective, consistent with Harris and Lock's (202) study, which linked social media engagement to higher

research uptake and citation. Platforms such as the institutional website, newsletter and social media were identified as key tools in expanding research reach beyond academic circles. This highlights the global trend in which digital branding and online repositories are central to institutional visibility (Leal Filho et al., 2023).

Traditional print media, while moderately effective, still contributes to outreach in audiences with limited internet penetration. This aligns with Lewis and Parker (2022), who showed that newspaper dissemination was particularly impactful in low connectivity regions. However, respondents noted that print strategies were often underfunded, supporting Fischer and Cook's (2023) observation that fragmented and poorly resourced strategies reduce overall impact in African universities.

Public Relations and stakeholder engagement events were also highlighted as highly effective. Platforms such as research symposia, policy dialogues, and innovation weeks, as well as industry summits, not only disseminate findings but also promote collaboration with industry. This supports Sharma et al., (2024) those who emphasized the role of partnerships in effective academic communication. Brook and Williams (2020) caution, however, that such events must integrate feedback mechanisms to avoid becoming one-way dissemination exercises. KCA University's efforts demonstrate promise but require structured evaluation to measure long-term influence on policy and practice.

The significant regression result ($\beta = 0.482$, $p < 0.01$) demonstrates the predictive strength of multidimensional communication in determining research dissemination effectiveness. The quantitative evidence supports O'Connor and Shumate's (2020) conceptualization of multidimensionality as a driver of organizational visibility. The findings is also validated by the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003), which posits that communication channels accelerate knowledge adoption within social systems.

However, limitations emerged. Infrastructure gaps hindered the sustainability of digital repositories, consistent with Muriithi et al., (2016)the findings. Equally, oversimplification risk in media reporting, as highlighted by Thompson and White (2022), was noted by the respondents who feared misrepresentation of research in public outlets. These challenges suggest that while multidimensional communication enhances dissemination, its effectiveness depends on striking a balance between accessibility and scholarly rigour.

The findings show that multidimensional communication is essential for research dissemination at KCA University. Digital channels and stakeholder engagement activities increase visibility and involvement, whereas traditional media promotes inclusion. However, sustainability issues, oversimplification dangers and short feedback loops suggest areas for

improvement. The findings support the concept that African higher education institutions should invest in integrated, strategically coordinated communication frameworks to maximise research impact.

Conclusion

The study aimed to analyse the role of multidimensional communication in enhancing the dissemination of research output at KCA University. The findings demonstrate that integrated communication strategies, including digital platforms, traditional print media, and public relations activities, are key to improving research visibility, accessibility, and stakeholder engagement.

Digital and multimedia platforms emerged as the most effective, particularly in extending the university's reach to both academic and non-academic audiences. Public relations events, such as innovation weeks and policy dialogues, also played a significant role in creating spaces for collaboration among researchers, industry, and policymakers. While traditional media were moderately effective, they remain essential for inclusive outreach, especially in low-connectivity contexts.

The regression analysis results confirmed a strong and significant relationship between multidimensional communication and effective research dissemination. This underscores that the strategic integration of diverse channels, rather than reliance on isolated efforts, drives greater impact. These results are consistent with prior studies that emphasise the importance of aligning institutional communication strategies with stakeholder needs (O'Connor & Shumate, 2020)

However, challenges remain. Limited resources constrain the sustainability of digital repositories, while risks of oversimplification in media reporting threaten the integrity of research findings. Furthermore, the lack of robust feedback mechanisms weakens opportunities for refining communication strategies. Addressing these gaps requires deliberate investment in digital infrastructure, capacity building for communication staff, and the development of feedback loops to evaluate stakeholder reception.

Therefore, multidimensional communication provides a robust framework for bridging the gap between research production and societal application in higher education institutions. For KCA University, strengthening integration across channels and embedding accountability mechanisms will be crucial in ensuring that research output not only achieves visibility but also informs policy, drives innovation, and fosters sustainable development.

References

- Altbach, P. G., & Salmi, J. (2011). *The road to academic excellence: The making of world-class research universities*. World Bank Publications.
- Björk, B., Laakso, M., Welling, P., & Paetau, P. (2014). Anatomy of green open access. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 65(2), 237–250. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.22963>
- Bolton, D., & Nie, R. (2010). Creating value in transnational higher education: The role of stakeholder management. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(4), 701–714. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.9.4.zqr701>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brossard, D., & Scheufele, D. A. (2013). Science, new media, and the public. *Science*, 339(6115), 40–41. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1232329>
- Capriotti, P., & Zeler, I. (2023). Analysing effective social media communication in higher education institutions. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1–13.
- Cornelissen, J. P. (2023). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice*. <https://www.torrossa.com/gs/resourceProxy?an=5730568&publisher=FZ7200>
- Cragin, M. H., Palmer, C. L., Carlson, J. R., & Witt, M. (2010). Data sharing, small science and institutional repositories. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 368(1926), 4023–4038. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2010.0165>
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage Publications.
- Crocco, E., Giacosa, E., & Culasso, F. (2022). Stakeholder engagement in higher education: State of the art and research agenda. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 71, 13457–13468.
- Damba, F. U., Mtshali, N. G., & Chimbari, M. J. (2024). Barriers and facilitators of translating doctoral research findings into policy: The case of a selected health sciences school in a South African university. *Heliyon*, 10(18). [https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440\(24\)13345-2](https://www.cell.com/heliyon/fulltext/S2405-8440(24)13345-2)
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (2000). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. In *Economics meets sociology in strategic*

management (pp. 143–166). Emerald Group Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-3322\(00\)17011-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-3322(00)17011-1)

Entradas, M., & Bauer, M. W. (2022). *Public communication of research universities*. Routledge.

Francke, H., & Hammarfelt, B. (2022). Competitive exposure and existential recognition: Visibility and legitimacy on academic social networking sites. *Research Evaluation*, 31(4), 429–437.

Hazelkorn, E., & Gibson, A. (2018). The impact and influence of rankings on the quality, performance and accountability agenda. In *Research handbook on quality, performance and accountability in higher education* (pp. 232–246). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781785369742/9781785369742.00027.xml>

Hazelkorn, E., & Gibson, A. (2019). Public goods and public policy: What is public good, and who and what decides? *Higher Education*, 78(2), 257–271. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0341-3>

Johnson, J. M. (2002). In-depth interviewing. In *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 106–124).

Killick, L., Hall, H., Duff, A. S., & Deakin, M. (2016). The census as an information source in public policy-making. *Journal of Information Science*, 42(3), 386–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551516628471>

Langrafe, T. de F., Barakat, S. R., Stocker, F., & Boaventura, J. M. G. (2020). A stakeholder theory approach to creating value in higher education institutions. *The Bottom Line*, 33(4), 297–313.

Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2010). *Theories of human communication*. Waveland Press.

Majhi, S., Sahu, L., & Behera, K. (2023). Practices for enhancing research visibility, citations and impact: Review of literature. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 75(6), 1280–1305.

Martinez-Torres, M. R., & Diaz-Fernandez, M. C. (2014). Current issues and research trends on open-source software communities. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 26(1), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537325.2013.850158>

Moja, T., & Samuel, O. (2024a). *African science granting councils: Towards sustainable development in Africa*. African Books Collective.

Moja, T., & Samuel, O. (2024b). *African science granting councils: Towards sustainable development in Africa*. African Books Collective.

- Moshtari, M., & Safarpour, A. (2024). Challenges and strategies for the internationalization of higher education in low-income East African countries. *Higher Education*, 87(1), 89–109. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-00994-1>
- Mouton, J. (2010a). The state of social science in sub-Saharan Africa. *World Social Science Report: Knowledge Divides*, 63–67.
- Mouton, J. (2010b). The state of social science in sub-Saharan Africa. *World Social Science Report: Knowledge Divides*, 63–67.
- Mpshane-Nkosi, M. (2023a). *4IR and the emergence of digital foreign policy: A global comparative study* [PhD thesis, University of Johannesburg].
- Mpshane-Nkosi, M. (2023b). *4IR and the emergence of digital foreign policy: A global comparative study* [PhD thesis, University of Johannesburg].
- Mulimani, S. (2024). Social media and research visibility: Role of libraries. *Library Philosophy & Practice*.
- Muriithi, P., Horner, D., & Pemberton, L. (2016). Factors contributing to adoption and use of information and communication technologies within research collaborations in Kenya. *Information Technology for Development*, 22(sup1), 84–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.2015.1121856>
- O'Connor, A., & Shumate, M. (2020). A multidimensional network approach to strategic communication. In *Future directions of strategic communication* (pp. 71–88). Routledge.
- Ogenga, D. O. (2015). *Adoption of institutional repositories in dissemination of scholarly information in universities in Kenya with reference to United States International University Africa* [PhD thesis, University of Nairobi]. <https://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/93088>
- Olaleye, S., Ukpabi, D., & Mogaji, E. (2020). Public vs private universities in Nigeria: Market dynamics perspective. In *Understanding the higher education market in Africa* (pp. 19–36). Routledge.
- Pires, L. P., & Pereira, B. B. (2023). Are Brazilian universities greening? An analysis of their performances in an international sustainability ranking. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 27(3), 6899–6919. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-023-04172-2>
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). Wolters Kluwer. <http://repository.unimus.ac.id/id/eprint/7925>
- Ratanya, F. C., & Muthee, D. (2018). An exploratory study on access and utilization of institutional repositories among academic staff at Egerton University, Kenya. *East African Journal of Information Science*.

- Resnik, D. B. (2018). *The ethics of research with human subjects: Protecting people, advancing science, promoting trust* (Vol. 74). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68756-8>
- Sharma, V. K., Sharma, V., & Kumar, D. (2024). Customer relationship management in healthcare: Strategies for adoption in a public health system. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2024.2394485>
- Syed Alwi, S. F., Balmer, J. M., Stoian, M.-C., & Kitchen, P. J. (2022). Introducing integrated hybrid communication: The nexus linking marketing communication and corporate communication. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 25(4), 405–432.
- Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach’s alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53.
- Teferra, D. (2004). Knowledge creation and dissemination in African universities with special reference to ICT. *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century: Knowledge and Society*, 2, 376–399.
- Teferra, D. (2013a). *Funding higher education in sub-Saharan Africa*. Springer.
- Teferra, D. (2013b). *Funding higher education in sub-Saharan Africa*. Springer.
- Tucker, R. C., Robinson, S. J., Liyanage, C. L., Fernandez, P. L., Cortez, L. A., Montebon, D. R., Tantane, S., Khiewnavawongsa, S., Chaimoon, N., Weerasinghe, K. D. N., Gunawardena, K. S. L., & Dissanayake, R. (2024). Bridging academia and enterprise: A framework for collaborative success. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-024-02360-7>
- Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., & Volk, S. C. (2017). Communication evaluation and measurement: Skills, practices and utilization in European organizations. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 22(1), 2–18.
- Zeufack, A. G., Calderon, C., Kambou, G., Kubota, M., Korman, V., & Cantu Canales, M. C. (2020). *Africa’s pulse: Charting the road to recovery—An analysis of economic issues in Africa*. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1249749/africas-pulse/1809120/>