Open Access article distributed in terms of the
Creative Commons Attribution License
[CC BY 4.0] (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0)

ICT and economic empowerment: analysing how youth in Tanzania use social media to facilitate income-generation activities

David J. Manyerere[1]

ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has globally played a significant role in facilitating communication that assists various socio-economic undertakings. It presents an opportunity, especially to the youth in Africa, to utilise social media (SM) and contribute to attaining Sustainable Development Goals No 1 and No. 8, such as eradicating poverty and creating decent work. However, this may only happen if SM platforms are utilised appropriately. Hence, this article examined the uptake of ICT in the form of SM in facilitating Income Generating Activities (IGAs) undertaken by youth in Dar es Salaam Tanzania for self-economic empowerment. A total of 46 respondents from the region were purposively selected and interviewed. These involved youth, community residents and local government officers. Primary data were obtained through Face-to-face Key In-depth Interviews (KIIs)and secondary data from various reliable sources, including peer reviewed articles. Data were collected and analysed through a qualitative approach using NVivo software (Version 12). Findings show that youths who effectively use SM in their day-to-day IGAs strengthened their economic undertakings and hence were economically empowered. SM accelerated the spread of relevant information between the youth and their customers and amongst the youth themselves. Notwithstanding such achievements, some youths misused SM due to negative perceptions while others failed to afford to buy smartphones or pay for the internet. The article recommends that youth who can afford access to SM should be mobilised and trained to emulate successful stories to facilitate effective undertakings of their IGA hence economically empowered. The study findings are crucial for youth and youth development stakeholders to improve strategies to promote SM use for youth economic empowerment.

Key words: *economic empowerment, information and communication technology, income generation activities, social media, youth*