



The Influence of Social Media on Organisational Communication and Organisational Culture: A Case Study of the South African Social Security Agency in the Eastern Cape

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Declaration

I, Sabo Dlelengana, hereby confirm that this dissertation submitted for the Degree of Master's in Management Sciences in the Department of Public Relations Management at the Durban University of Technology is my original work and has not been submitted for any other degree program or examination at any other institution. I further declare that all the works cited have been indicated and acknowledged using references.

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Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has had a significant influence on how information is accessed. Social media platforms are highly accessible and scalable, making them ideal for connection and collaboration. The aim of this study was to provide the significance of the development of social media on communication in organisations, specifically the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). The main objectives of the study were to determine the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool at SASSA, identify which social media platforms were most effective in organisational communication at SASSA, and examine the relationship between social media and organisational communication and organisational culture at SASSA. Thereafter, recommendations were offered to SASSA on the adoption of social media as a communication tool.

The study adopted a quantitative research approach, which comprised of a structured questionnaire that was distributed to the research respondents. The sample size was 140, which was derived from a target population of 210 employees through a simple random sampling technique. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0 for Windows was used to analyse the data collected. The study also used descriptive statistics to analyse the responses collected from the questionnaires. The data was represented in the form of charts, graphs, and tables.

The study found that organisational communication and organisational culture are considerably affected by the rapid expansion and implementation of social media for organisational-related services and activities at SASSA. The study recommends that organisations implement and standardise social media tools, which could lead to a strategy for improved and updated organisational cultures and communication. The study concluded with directions for future research on the role of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture.

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Dedication

I dedicate all of my humble efforts to my late mother, Lumka Mtwā, whose love and precious memories I live by. A resilient and gentle soul who believed in uplifting people and striving for success and taught me to have faith in hard work and that so much could be done with so little. Mama, you are and have always been the fountain of my encouragement. May your soul continue to rest in peace Xesibe.

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“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you” (Jeremiah 29:11-12, NIV).

Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Dedication	v
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	x
Chapter One: Overview of the Study	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Context of the research	2
1.3 Problem statement	3
1.4 Aim of the study.....	5
1.5 Objectives of the study	5
1.6 Research questions.....	5
1.7 Significance of the study.....	6
1.8 Terminology.....	6
1.8.1 Social media.....	6
1.8.2 Organisational communication	6
1.8.3 Organisational culture.....	6
1.8.4 Communication	7
1.8.5 Systems theory.....	7
1.9 Scope of the study.....	7
1.10 Structures of chapters	7
1.11 Conclusion	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Social media.....	9
2.2.1 An overview of social media	9
2.2.2 The evolution of social media	11
2.2.3 Social media platforms	13
2.2.4 Social media in organisations	18
2.2.5 The challenges of social media	19
2.2.6 Social media platforms used by SASSA	20
2.2.7 Social media in South Africa.....	21

2.3	Organisational communication.....	23
2.3.1	Understanding communication and organisational communication.....	23
2.3.2	The value of communication to an organisation.....	25
2.3.3	Quality of organisational communication	27
2.3.4	Social media and Communication	27
2.3.6	Types of organisational communication.....	30
2.4	Theoretical framework	33
2.4.1	Systems theory.....	33
2.4.2	Systems theory in organisational communication	34
2.4.3	Social media strategy within organisational communication.....	36
2.5	Influence of social media on organisational communication.....	37
2.6	Social media and organisational culture	39
2.6.1	Understanding organisational culture	39
2.6.2	Cultural dimensions of Hofstede.....	42
2.7	Organisational culture and social media	45
2.8	The use of social media in Public Organisations.....	47
2.9	Understanding social media and governance	48
2.9.1	Social media governance frameworks	49
2.10	The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in the Eastern Cape	51
2.10.1	The importance of communication and culture at SASSA.....	52
2.10.2	Legislative mandate of SASSA.....	53
2.10.3	Vision, mission, and values of SASSA.....	54
2.11	Conclusion	54
	Chapter Three: Research Methodology	56
3.1	Introduction.....	56
3.2	Research methodology.....	56
3.2.1	Quantitative approach	56
3.3	Research design	57
3.4	Description of target population	59
3.5	Sampling method.....	59
3.6	Measuring instrument	61
3.6.1	Questionnaire construction and administration	62
3.6.2	Pilot testing.....	62
3.7	Data analysis.....	63
3.8	Data collection methods	64
3.9	Validity and reliability	65

3.9.1	Reliability	65
3.9.2	Validity	66
3.10	Ethical considerations	66
3.11	Anonymity and confidentiality	67
3.12	Conclusion	67
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data and Discussion of the findings		68
4.1	Introduction	68
4.2	Response rate	68
4.3	Use of inferential statistics	69
4.3.1	Descriptive statistics	69
4.4	Section A: analysis of results on the general information and demographic profile	70
4.4.1	Gender breakdown for sample respondents	70
4.4.2	Age breakdown for sample respondents	71
4.4.3	Length of service	73
4.4.4	Hours spent on social media	74
4.4.5	Home language	75
4.4.6	Social media for work-related purposes	76
4.4.7	Social media platforms used	77
4.4.8	Does your organisation use social media?	78
4.5	Analysis of Section B	78
4.5.1	Analysis of data on the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture (Section B)	79
4.6	Hypothesis testing	86
4.7	Conclusion	97
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations		98
5.1	Introduction	98
5.2	Research objectives	98
5.3	Conclusion	99
5.4	Theoretical summary of study	100
5.5	Recommendations	101
5.6	Directions for future research	103
5.7	Practical implications	103
References		104
Appendix A		115
Appendix B		116
Appendix C		121

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Timeline of social media (Source Edosomwan: 2011: 79)	12
Figure 2.2 Social media platforms (Source: Foreman 2017: 5).....	14
Figure 2.3 Social media statistics in South Africa (Source: Global Stats 2021: 1)	22
Figure 2.9 SASSA News Facebook page (Source: SASSA News).....	14
Figure 4.1 Analysis of gender breakdown (n = 140)	70
Figure 4.2 Age breakdown of respondents (n = 140).....	72
Figure 4.3 Length of service (n = 140)	73
Figure 4.4 Hours spent on social media (n = 140)	74
Figure 4.5 Home language (n = 140)	75
Figure 4.6 Social media and work-related purposes (n = 140)	76
Figure 4.7 Social media platforms used (n = 140)	77
Figure 4.8 Knowledge of social media (n = 140).....	79
Figure 4.9 Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication (n = 140).....	80
Figure 4.10 Employee behaviour (n = 140).....	81
Figure 4.11 Frequencies of the respondents pertaining to employee commitment and challenges encountered	82
Figure 4.12 Impact of social media on employee effectiveness.....	84
Figure 4.13 Usefulness of social media as a communication tool.....	85

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Features of quantitative and qualitative Research.	59
Table 4.1 Age of respondents (n = 140).....	71
Table 4.2 Length of service (n = 140).....	73
Table 4.3 Use of social media in organisation (n = 140)	78
Table 4.4 Frequency data table for social media as a communication tool at SASSA (n = 140)	87
Table 4.5 Frequency data on the relationship between knowledge of social media and employees using social media (n = 140)	89
Table 4.6 Frequency data on the role of social media on company reputation (n = 140)	90
Table 4.7 Frequency data for the relationship between social media benefits and employees using social media to encourage friends and relatives into employment opportunities	91
Table 4.8 Frequency data for the relationship between presence of social media and employees committed to innovation and development	90
Table 4.9 Frequency data for relationship between positive impact of social media on employee effectiveness and positive changes in the workplace	92
Table 4.10 Frequency data for the relationship between the negative impacts of restriction of social media sites on staff moral and employee behaviour	93
Table 4.11 Frequency data on the relationship between customer trust and the ability of social media to help the organisation communicate with its clients	93
Table 4.12 Frequency data for the relationship between the influence of social media usage on organisational performance and positive changes brought by social media ..	92

Chapter One: Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction

This study explored the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture at the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). The evolution of social media has shifted organisations from the old tradition of passive means of communication to more advanced ways of interacting with stakeholders (Lacka and Chong 2016: 1). The precipitous pace at which technology has evolved in the past years has drastically transformed how organisations perceive social media as a strategic tool for communication. Lacka and Choy (2016: 7) note that the use of digital platforms has increasingly become a preferred method of reaching stakeholders or customers. This increase has been motivated by the ability of social media networks to reach a wide audience range in real-time. Many organisations are gradually embracing social media in their stakeholder communication to improve communication between co-workers, boost morale and motivation, increase efficiency, and foster organisational culture (Elsevier 2014: 75). Social media has become a powerful communication tool for organisations. However, despite all the benefits social media holds, SASSA is still dependent on traditional media communication. This passive form of communication is attributed to SASSA's low feedback and engagement amongst the targeted audience and the public at large.

Reputational damage has always been factored as an issue of concern that can limit an organisation's ability to leverage the benefits of social media to improve stakeholder communication (van den Berg and Struwig 2020: 1). Although the government has responded to this problem by introducing policies to regulate social media usage within government departments (Government Communication Policy 2018: 1), the uptake of social media is moving at a very slow pace, specifically at SASSA. Denlay (2013: 16) asserts that the communication challenges faced by SASSA can be primarily attributed to the low budget and low priority given to the grant beneficiaries. While there has been a great interest on the impact of social media communication, there is still a void in academic research in terms of understanding the influence of social media on organisational communication and culture (Roshan *et al.* 2016: 350; Schlagwein and Hu 2017: 194). The influence of social media on organisational communication and culture

requires further research. This study sought to answer why and how social media influences organisational communication and culture.

1.2 Context of the research

This research study focused on social media and its influence on organisational communication and culture, as opposed to merely the influence of social media on organisations themselves. The popularity and economic relevance of social media have increased over recent years, enabling millions of users to share data, information, and products, and affecting the way organisations are building their businesses. In addition, Vasquez and Velez (2011: 115) state that social media is regarded as a strategic communication instrument in the corporate world, motivating new and remarkable opportunities for the organisation to involve stakeholders and employees in conversation.

The reputation, understanding, and usage of social media have improved over recent years, allowing millions of users to share products, knowledge, and information, and affecting the way organisations build relationships around connected people (Hunsinger and Sneft 2013: 16). With the rise of social media, the natural consequence is that social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn are used on a larger scale for communication. Social media has developed beyond its original purpose of connecting societies from all over the globe. Today the simplicity of networking with millions of social media users in real-time and in a cost-effective manner has given rise to the formation of highly engaging online content by users from different expert and individual backgrounds (Harper and Philo 2013: 321).

Social media is not only a means of communication between two or more people, but also an efficient way to improve processes within organisations (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010: 59). The incorporation of social media technologies in organisations requires a detailed organisational change plan and competent change management (Terbuyken 2013: 153). Social media has provided organisations with opportunities for customer relationship management, improved operations within the organisation, and innovation (Smith *et al.* 2018).

However, the extent to which the experts have to attentively measure social media in order to use them to their great efficiency needs to be examined (Berger 2013: 564). One could note the influence of social media in allowing employees to communicate whilst using social media platforms and strengthening the company's reputation and image (Julich 2012: 20). Thus, one could concentrate on the classification of social media perception and its subcategories which give the user advice on how to use social media technologies (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010: 63).

1.3 Problem statement

Globally, social media tools are bringing about a rapid change to both organisational communication and culture (Glucksman 2017: 77). These changes have shaped the use of social media in the context of organisational communication and culture. Whilst several studies (Mawela 2017; Matikiti, Mpinganjira and Roberts-Lombard 2018; van den Berg and Struwig 2016) have investigated the use of social media by organisations to strengthen their communication and brand position, there is a gap that exists in terms of organisational communication and culture (Roshan et al. 2016: 350; Schlagwein and Hu 2017: 194). Social media influences brands and organisations, therefore the messaging, content and distribution need to be managed (Nadeem 2015: 5).

In the context of communication and culture, organisations are vulnerable to reputational damages (Struwig and Van Den Berg 2016: 531). Utilising social media tools to interact with customers provides information in real-time and allows employees to access information equally as fast. This study, therefore, posits that challenges such as cyber security issues, reputation management, engaging in two-way dialogue, and some possible potential criticisms can restrict employee social media usage. More so, issues surrounding organisational culture such as conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality, language, and communication, may make employees refrain from participating in social media efforts. SASSA has a communication challenge that can be primarily attributed to the low budget and low priority given to the grant beneficiaries (Denlay 2013: 16). SASSA

still uses traditional media such as radio and newspapers whilst communicating with its targeted audience and the public at large.

This one-way communication channel is attributed to SASSA's low feedback and low participation amongst its targeted audience and the public at large. More so, the non-regulation of social media at SASSA, as well as the under-utilisation of social media, has often resulted in failure to communicate adequately between the organisation and its beneficiaries. Concerns such as fraud, fake advertising of vacancies, and the misleading announcement of grant dates for the SASSA beneficiaries have become prominent issues.

Amongst SASSA's critical challenges could be traced to inefficiency in the disbursement of social grants to deserving citizens, and related fraud and corruption (Hlwatika: 2022). Worth mentioning is, over 17 million South African citizens have social grants as their main source of livelihood; hence, missed or delayed vital information create lots of inconvenience to beneficiaries thereby making them even more vulnerable (Bakre :2020). An official communiqué by the South African government on the 4th of May, 2020 reports a series of inefficiencies and chaos amongst the SASSA's offices (SA News: 2020). These reported cases of fraud, corruption, wastefulness, inefficiencies and chaos at the SASSA office are considered to be the core reasons why many disabled grants applicants who are eligible for the social grants have been excluded (Sakala, Noyoo and Mabundza-Dlamini: 2022).

These challenges have long been identified by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and as such, the DSD have put specific mechanisms and strategies to avert them. Notwithstanding, the desired results are yet to be achieved. To further strengthen these mechanisms or strategies; effective communication through social media platforms may be considered as a whistle-blower mechanism, whilst also encouraging the public to report issues timeously through social media platforms. The lack of this has often put those perpetrating the crimes or unethical behaviour at ease.

The study, therefore, explores the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture, whilst looking at the relationship of social media on organisational communication, its impact, its benefits, social media tools, as well as the importance of social media. The study focuses on SASSA in East London, Eastern Cape. SASSA is a national agency of the government created in April 2005 to distribute social grants on behalf of the Department of Social Development (DSD).

1.4 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study was to investigate the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To analyse the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool at SASSA.
- To identify which social media platforms are more effective in organisational communication at SASSA.
- To examine the relationship between social media and organisational communication and organisational culture at the SASSA.
- To offer recommendations to SASSA on the adoption of social media as a communication tool.

1.6 Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the advantage and disadvantage of using social media as a communication platform in an organisation?
- To what extent can the use of social media improve organisational communication?

- What are the factors influencing social media usage at SASSA?
- What are the effects of social media platforms on the adoption of social media as a communication tool at SASSA?
- What are the interpersonal relationships that the use of social media platforms offers amongst the employees of SASSA?

1.7 Significance of the study

This study intends to provide a theoretical contribution to the existing academic knowledge on social media usage amongst organisational communication and organisational cultural practices. It also intends to proffer tenable and realistic recommendations that may guide SASSA towards an effective communication channel when communicating with employees, social grants beneficiaries, benefactors, and the public at large.

1.8 Terminology

1.8.1 Social media

Social media is defined as a web-based tool that allows employees to communicate messages with specific stakeholders or disseminate messages to everyone within the organisation (Mahon, Taylor and Boyantziz 2014: 130).

1.8.2 Organisational communication

Kreps (2015: 5) defines organisational communication as social collectives in which people improve ritualised forms of interaction in an attempt to manage their actions and efforts in the ongoing success of personal and group goals.

1.8.3 Organisational culture

Schein (2012: 20) defines organisational culture as the pattern of shared and reputable ideas that a group cultivates as a result of functioning together to resolve challenges.

Organisational culture consists of components of shared principles, customs, and expectations.

1.8.4 Communication

Fede (2014: 11) defines communication as a phenomenon that transpires at several interrelated levels of analysis (groups, dyadic, extra organisational, and organisational) as an important aspect of business operations. Communication focuses on the exchange of information between the internal and external environments which could be formal or informal.

1.8.5 Systems theory

Griffiths and Tabery (2014: 5) explain the systems theory as a theory of interacting processes and the effect they have on one another over time to allow the continuation of some larger whole.

1.9 Scope of the study

Social media undoubtedly plays a part in modern communication and culture as the world we live in is one of communication. The main elements of social media include internet and mobile-based platforms for information exchange, discussion, and entertainment. They integrate technology, telecommunications, and social contact and add a platform for spoken, visual, auditory, and musical communication.

This research focuses on SASSA, which belongs to the government industry and public sector. This is an in-house investigation, and it does not include other organisations in the government industry in the Eastern Cape.

1.10 Structures of chapters

Chapter 1: This chapter presents the introduction, background, and overview of the study, problem statement, objectives, and the aim of the study.

Chapter 2: This chapter gives an overview of the discussion on the literature review within the confines of the study objectives and aim.

Chapter 3: Provides an overview of the research methodology and design used in the study.

Chapter 4: Provides a discussion of data analysis and interpretation of the results.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides a conclusion and recommendations for the research conducted

1.11 Conclusion

The growth of social media platforms has made it easier for organisations to communicate with their internal and external stakeholders. This study examines the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture. Social media can serve as an important organisational communication tool (Nel and de Beer 2014: 383). Moreover, a well-executed social media plan is a prerequisite for an organisation to be operative and successful in the modern day. This study will be assessing the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture. This chapter has provided an introduction to the study and clearly outlined the aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The emergence of social media is quite a recent phenomenon and became popularised when the internet became accessible to consumers worldwide, giving rise to the so-called network society (Castells 2011: 346). The adoption of social media as a communication tool amongst organisations has grown exponentially in the last 5-10 years (Brailovskaia and Schillack 2018: 456). Social media platforms have been widely accepted in virtually every industry, region, or sector (Botezatu 2012: 33). The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the adoption of social media platforms as a communication tool amongst organisations (Abbas2019: 1683). Bergquist (2020: 15) reports that several organisations are beginning to adopt multiple social media platforms as communication tools with their respective clients and stakeholders.

Whilst the previous chapter provided the introduction, overview, and direction to this study, this chapter provides pertinent discourses in relation to platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Discussions are further narrowed to the impact of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture, whilst their pros and cons are elaborated upon. It also proffers the historical development of organisational communication and organisational culture in an effort to illustrate the dynamic nature of both communication and culture. This chapter also provides empirical studies relating to the influence of social media vis-à-vis organisational communication.

2.2 Social media

2.2.1 An overview of social media

There have been disputes over the meaning and scope of the term social media (Power and Phillips-Wren 2014: 36). Authors such as Boyd and Ellison (2015: 36) have their own definitions of social media, and these authors have presented the different reasons why organisations need to adopt social media networking sites. With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, communication on a larger scale has become more easier and more

accessible than ever before. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2013: 59), social media are interactive-mediated tools that enable the sharing of information, creation, career interests, ideas, and other forms of expression through computer-generated networks. Kaplan and Haenlein (2013: 59) also define the term social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the Web 2.0 (often referred to as the “social web”) and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Similarly, Berger (2014: 210) describes social media platforms as social networking applications and websites that allow users to participate, create and share information that is established in virtual environments such as podcasts, discussion forums, blogs, and websites.

Social media is known as a “popular and engaging communication platform” of “online technologies” which permits users to consume, produce and distribute content (Government of Western Australia 2014: 3). Rouse (2019: 1) also defines social media as a group of online communication channels devoted to content-sharing, collaboration, community-based input, and interaction. In addition, Currie (2014: 62) defines social media as different technologies, applications, and electronic tools that promote the exchange of content and interactive communication. However, Howard and Parks (2016: 362) proffered a more robust definition of social media as comprising of three parts: (a) the structure of information and tools used to disseminate and produce content; (b) the matter that takes the digital procedure of news, personal messages, cultural products, and ideas; and (c) the organisations, industries, and people that consume and produce digital information. In addition, they further stipulate that social media are often designated in literature, not by their behaviours and features, but purely by invoking detailed applications such as YouTube.

Beyond communication science, additional explanations of social media have been presented within the space of public relations. Kent (2014: 645) predominantly demarcates social media as any communication channel that permits a two-way interaction and feedback, further indicating that the new social media are distinguished by their reduced anonymity, the potential for real-time, short response times, a sense of closeness, and the ability to involve the social network whenever it is convenient for a specific member.

Walaski (2013: 40) adds that social media has become a crucial part of business processes, and that it is now used usually for building relationships with external stakeholders, sharing views, product launches, and developing customer loyalty. The unique drive of this study is to assess the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture and to provide a theoretical contribution and comprehensive yet detailed academic knowledge on social media. One can assume that it is practical to first distinguish between a social medium and a medium that assists socialness rather than defining the tool that can be used for communication. Scholars Kaplan and Haenlein (2013: 61) state that social media is a different subsection of the media tools that share a mutual set of features and behaviours, where different groups and individuals subsidise the formation of the content, they are using to deliver a basic value which is by far better than what each single site feature offers.

When formally defined, social media are forms of computer-based technologies used to facilitate communication and create online communities to share ideas (Carr and Hayes 2015: 8). Though detailed, this definition is technical and complex. A more accessible definition explains social media are internet-based channels that allow people to communicate and selectively self-present, in a real-time world with large or small audiences who develop value from user-generated content and perception of communication with others (Kapoor *et al.* 2018: 20). Social media are classified into six different types of social media: blogs and microblogs (for example, Twitter), social networking sites (for example, Facebook), collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia), virtual game worlds (for example, World of Warcraft), and content communication (for example, YouTube).

2.2.2 The evolution of social media

Communication has changed from a controlled social environment into a context where ideal conversations are continuously occurring between several people including employees, competitors, customers, and several other engrossed members (Pitt and Berthon 2015: 182). Social media has had an interesting history. Through textual analysis, the topic of social media has become popular among scholars spanning several studies including communication, sociology, business, and psychology (Mohammed 2017: 17). The evolution of social media orbits around the idea of strategy. The

development of social media has been driven by the human impulse to communicate and by advances in digital technology (Kaplan and Haelein 2013: 67)

In 1971, the digital media news site Mash-able issued a timeline, which manifested the commencement of social media as the first email (O'Dell 2013: 2). According to Merriam-Webster (2017: 401), the evolution of social media such as micro-blogging and websites for social networking have created online communities through which ideas can be shared, information, personal information, and other content such as videos. In less than a generation, social media has developed from a direct electronic exchange of information to a simulated gathering place, to a marketing platform, and a vital 21st century publicising and communication tool. As stated by Matt (2016: 22), the explosive growth of social media has taken the world and its business operations by storm over the last 12 years and revolutionised the interest in the marketing landscape. The evolution of social media has opened up two-way communication between the organisation, the brand, and its customers, which also gives companies full control over who they wish to target with their communication (Mohammed 2017: 19)

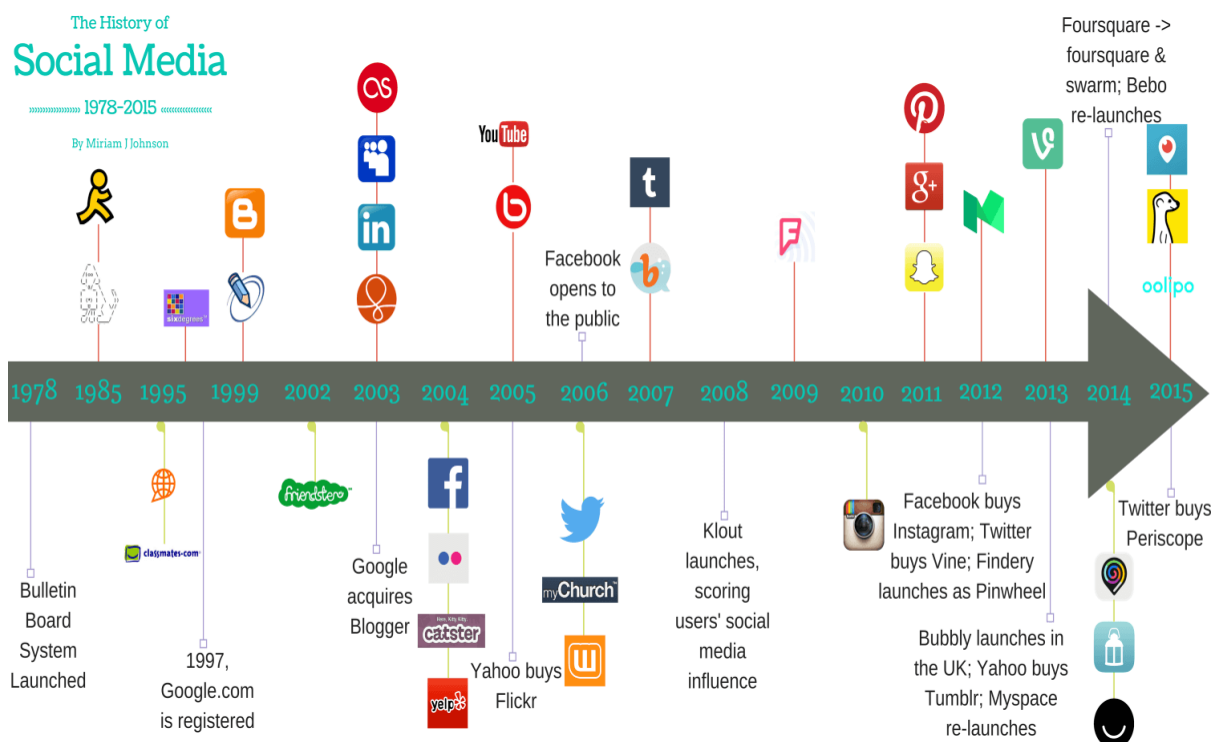


Figure 2.1 Timeline of social media (Source Edosomwan 2011: 79)

Figure 2.1 above provides a clear view of the evolution of social media and how it has changed the process of communication and culture in an organisation. According to the above diagram of the timeline of social media, the evolution of media technologies began in the year 1978 and revolutionised in the 1990's when the need for the internet enabled the growth of the introduction of online communication channels such as CompuServe, America Online, and Prodigy where users were introduced to digital communication via bulletin board messaging, email, and real-time group chats. This gave rise to the first social media sites, starting in 1977 with only a short-lived Six Degrees profile uploading service. Following this, Friend was established in 2001 as a rebuttal to this service. These elementary platforms drew millions of people and permitted fundamental online networking and email address registration. Another early form of digital social communication that got popularised was the weblogs which were launched in 1999. In 2002, LinkedIn was launched and used by people and organisations for career networking. By 2020, it had grown to 675 million users, and it is still considered the social networking site of choice used by job seekers and organisations (human resource managers) to recruit qualified candidates. According to Pew Research Centre (2017: 20), social media such as Facebook popularised in 2004, followed by Twitter in 2006. Since then, the crossover between social media and communication has revolutionised the way organisations communicate in today's world, changing from one-way communication to two-way communication allowing facilitation of communication and engagement, helping employees by being informed of the objectives of the organisation. On the other hand, employees around the world are now able to share their thoughts, ideas, and highlights from their day-to-day work experiences with others.

2.2.3 Social media platforms

Many researchers have different thoughts about the types, dynamism, or form of social media platforms; however, this study is developed around the framework of Kaplan and Haenlein (2013: 53) which put forward different aspects of social media that encourage active participation, facilitation of integration, collaboration, and interaction amongst users. With the above-mentioned statement, different social media platforms allow organisations to communicate or disseminate information about the operations of their work. These platforms are considered to be the new way of communication,

Computerised communication and digital technology that allows networking to be more efficient and faster in reaching diverse spectators simultaneously (White 2012: 45). Social media takes the form of a broad range of technologically enabled activities such as picture sharing, blogging, online gaming, online communities, streaming of information, business networks, virtual worlds, updates, and other actions that fall into this category.

Walaski (2015: 45) agrees that social media tools comprise of blogs, microblogs, and social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Several social networking sites are used in social media for social presence and media richness, most of these channels are connected to blogs, social networks, and forums (Lartif *et al.* 2019: 64). This study will focus on Facebook and Twitter, social media platforms that include virtual communities, collaborative tagging, blogs, and media files such as YouTube (Xiang and Gretzel 2016: 179) and these social media platforms are used by different people and by different organisations for their business communication purposes (Sigh and Siddiqui 2016:98).



Figure 2.2 Social media platforms (Source: Foreman (2017: 5))

Figure 2.2 above illustrates social networking sites that are used to build online communities and social relationships with people who share similar content, interest, ideas, and background. They differ in format and several features. For the purpose of this

research, only three social media networking sites are discussed, namely Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and, and their link to organisational communication and culture is discussed in the subsequent section below.

2.2.3.1 Twitter

Boyd and Ellison (2014: 28) define Twitter as a social media platform that permits individuals to share information with other social media users. The connection of Twitter users is built through the mechanism of following the users' interrelation with each other in different ways (Huberman, Romero and Wu 2016: 205; Kwak *et al.* 2018: 220). On the other hand, Hana (2015: 94) defines Twitter as a microblogging web application that allows connection between users through tweets.

Furthermore, Dickson and Holley (2015: 60) state that Twitter is a "social networking site, which lets individuals who use Twitter transmit short messages that will be visible to other users, Twitter messages are known to be short not exceeding 160-280 characters. Scott (2015: 271) states that, Twitter appears to be an excellent platform for sharing video links, blogs, and different content for the user's benefit. Moreover, Dickson and Holley (2015: 60) affirm that Twitter is a communication platform that can be used by families, co-workers, and friends to stay allied as they exchange quick messages.

In addition, Twitter is described as a tool that allows organisations to gain followers, promote sales, and build close customer relationships and is also seen as the most effective tool for communication (Macy 2015: 13). Organisations use Twitter to help them find people and have conversations around the organisations. Ideally, Twitter is used by organisations for marketing, presenting brands, and establishing the organisation's presence through the use of hashtags which help the organisation invest and engage with their customers and help manage the reputation of the organisation (Hana 2015: 112). Given the above, Del Bosque, Leif and Skarl (2012: 200) posit that Twitter has been rated as the most prevalent source of communication for organisations.

Therefore, its advantages and disadvantages to organisations in relation to communication are listed as follows:

Advantages of Twitter

- Twitter allows communication with current and potential customers because it is a public interaction (Zhu 2016: 616).
- Twitter offers organisations an operative way of interacting with their users online (Dickson and Holley 2015: 472).

Disadvantages of Twitter

- An organisation's Twitter account can have fewer followers if communication is not effective (Bradely 2015: 201).
- Tweeted information is not always precise, which can mislead the followers (Bradely 2015: 201).

Comier (2021: 5) suggests that organisations set up Twitter accounts as they are more useful when communicating with a large audience.

2.2.3.2 Facebook

In the year 2004, Mark Zuckerberg launched a social networking site named Facebook together with his college roommate, with the intention to connect students (Potgieter 2014: 13). Facebook became a public company on the 1st of February 2012, where it generated "a substantial majority" of its revenue from marketing (Fuchs 2017: 185). Ever since its launch, Facebook has developed as the most popular platform for online social networking (Poore 2013: 87; Purcell 2012: 99). As noted by Barker (2016: 179) Facebook is the most marketing-friendly online social networking site used for communication marketing purposes. Organisations that have an official Facebook page can promote their products, share their events, and information and also run competitions.

Since it is defined as a social network that allows individuals to create a network and build a profile with their connections, subscribers need to register on the website and craft a profile by adding other subscribers they know on Facebook. Through this social media, platform subscribers are also able to post information or share status updates (Wilkinson 2016: 145). Therefore, individuals can tag their friends, send messages through an inbox, as well as upload videos and pictures (Potgieter 2014: 3; Purcell 2012: 99). A Facebook account can be formed for different commitments, and it can be also used for creating

online communities, therefore, Facebook is seen as a useful social networking site for the formation and strengthening of relationships (Kibugi 2016: 115). Above all, Facebook allows employees to share information and create an online profile. More so, it enables subscribers or organisations to display all the events related to their respective activities, products, or services.

Studies on social media and communication have highlighted the advantages that Facebook has (Ruck and Welch 2012: 128). Firstly, Facebook allows individuals to stay updated about the latest changes; whilst also facilitating a staff-customer interaction online (Wilkinson 2015: 146). In addition, Facebook is a cut-rate, eye-catching tool for networking with users (Wilkinson 2016: 147). Secondly, Facebook is appropriate for creating connections and cooperation with users, letting individuals construct and sustain social capital with one another (Wilkinson 2014: 147). Thirdly, Facebook is an important tool that helps organisations and individuals to broadcast messages to enormous audiences (Escobar-Rodriguez *et al.* 2014: 137), and lastly, since Facebook is the most used social networking platform, it has an affirmative impact on users (Monge-Lozano, Escobar-Rodriguez and Carvajal-Trujillo 2014: 137).

Notwithstanding the advantages of Facebook, it is stated that there are also disadvantages that are associated with the use of Facebook in organisations.

- Public posts that are negative can be damaging to an organisation's image (Wilkinson 2016: 14).
- Facebook can be restricted owing to network and policy issues in terms of coverage (Wilkinson, 2014: 147) and;
- Inappropriate content distributed to the external stakeholders and foul language can be a disturbance by damaging the reputation of the organisation and breaking trust boundaries (Wilkinson, 2016: 470).

With the above-mentioned disadvantages, there is a need for organisations and users to be attentive to the information posted online.

2.2.3.4 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social network that is designed to process a two-way interaction between businesses and professionals. It allows interaction with friends and colleagues, however,

with a more concise and focused communication-like structure for professionals or users aiming to build their careers (Barker 2016: 187). For marketing, LinkedIn leads the generation by opening doors for networking and increasing exposure to organisations seeking attention. It helps gain a higher level of credibility for the organisation's products and services. The following are the advantages and disadvantages of LinkedIn according to Barker (2016: 189):

Advantages of LinkedIn

- Creates shareable information that benefits the audience of the organisation
- Helps introduce new products or services that an organisation has developed
- Differentiates the organisation's image from its entrants
- Helps to find job candidates who can make a significant contribution to the success of the organisation.

Disadvantages of LinkedIn

- Networking interactivity is very limited as equated to other social platforms
- Exposes the organisation to potential Spam.

2.2.4 Social media in organisations

Organisations and researchers are still in the early stages of exploring social media in the organisational context, expecting to acquire the benefits of informal cooperation amongst employees (Cartwright, Davies and Brown 2021: 120). Social media presents great opportunities for organisations to pursue vital communication, thus being certain that it is a good remarkable communication tool for the organisation (Rashedi, Makizadeh and Qourughchi 2021: 147). Furthermore, some recent studies highlight that social media can help with team performance and the understanding of conversations (Janhonen and Johanson 2018: 48). The adoption of social media in an organisation (including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) improves employee communication, shared knowledge, the working environment, empowers exposure of the organisation's wrongdoings, and builds trust, reveals customer opinions, and the development of positive changes in working environments. Overall, social media facilitates new forms of communication and the externalisation of information through open forums. Social media has the following benefits for organisations as a communication tool:

- Social media allows organisations to communicate with external entities/subscribers, whilst changing to new technologies and incorporating these technologies with customers in their day-to-day operations (Bowman *et al.* 2015: 11). It also ensures high contribution and commitment from employees, and this results in producing a positive reputation for the organisation (Kritis and Karahan 2015: 263).
- Through the use of social media, organisations can accomplish their communication strategies at a relatively lower cost, due to the affordability in terms of access to audiences, relations, and time (Kritis and Haenlein 2014: 255).
- Social media allows online communication, by avoiding the challenges of face-to-face interaction, and thus having the potential to assist organisations to reinvent their communication strategies for reaching out to their stakeholders (DeAndrea *et al.* 2016: 15).
- Organisations use end-use social media to intensify their networks with the outside world and enhance relationships with the business working environment, by encouraging constant interaction with the organisation's brand (Kritis and Karahan 2014: 263). It further helps organisations identify possible partners and strengthen relationships, and trust (Michaelidou *et al.* 2015: 1153).

The above expresses various reasons as to why organisations use social media and therefore, the perspective of social media is evident. However, the development of social media progresses into more forms. Currently, organisations are allowing for more ground-breaking and cost-effective methods of communicating. Thus, organisations are likely to dedicate more resources to social media. Organisations need to comprehend the benefits of social media and find ways in which they can use social media applications in facilitating effective communication with their clientele and stakeholders in their environment (Bowman *et al.* 2014: 2; Fodor 2014: 43; Kritis and Karahan 2015: 264; Curtis *et al.* 2013: 90).

2.2.5 The challenges of social media

Although social media serves as a platform for sharing knowledge and ideas, it has its shortcomings (Langer 2014: 17). Some organisations are still operating through one-way communication, with significant reliance on customers through social media as evident from the research conducted (Waters and Williams 2018: 385). Although social media

connects people all around the globe, it has also led to poor quality of organisational processes (Thomas and Dittman 2016: 11). Discovering the actual approach to sustaining social media is the greatest challenge when adopting social media within an organisation (Langer 2014: 68).

Creech (2016: 14) adds that information distributed through social media can be contended and misleading because the sources are not reliable and often opinions are put forward as facts. Several risks associated with the use of social media include supervisory risks, organisational risks, and security risks (Wilson 2021: 8 and Davies 2021: 129). Other risks consist of compliance, reputational and operational risk that can lead to a loss of customers, as well as adversely affecting an organisation's top line (Ernst and Young 2016: 4). According to Merrill (2015: 17), social media usage in organisations has generated a chance for misuse and sometimes employees may behave negatively in challenging situations, often without providing a clear thought of the result.

Prior research conducted on social media in a working environment has highlighted some of the adverse effects of social media, these include ethical, legal, and security implication of social media usage by employees and employers (Baker *et al.* 2015: 68; Kim 2016: 42, Kumar, Verma and Pabboju 2015: 45; Wilson 2021: 8).

Other challenges of social media usage include:

- Sharing on social media is seen as a difficult aspect to measure, as the acts of sharing go far off the organisation's site (Evans 2016: 25).
- Where there is an unquestionable level of speculation and mistrust, users become unwilling to participate on social media platforms and this leads to a resistance to segment comments, recommendations, and information with each other (Milano *et al.* 2016: 10) and;
- It can be difficult for employees to take part in social media if the organisation does not enable access for users to engage (Parra-Lopez *et al.* 2016: 643).

2.2.6 Social media platforms used by SASSA

Dowling (2016: 10) defines social media as web-based services that permit a single individual, group of people and organisations to interact, connect, and engage with one

another. SASSA uses various social media channels to communicate with beneficiaries, internal and external stakeholders, such as Facebook and Twitter.

2.2.7 Social media in South Africa

The advent of social media has become a part of everyday life and the main topic of this research study. The gradual increase of social media usage and its integration in society has continued to grow, particularly with reference to the number of users and the intensity with which current social media members use it (Worldwide Worx 2016: 6). South Africa has the highest presence of social media users on the African continent (UNICEF 2018). Social media application user downloads are the highest on all three of the foremost application stores within South Africa, presenting how genuinely entrenched mobile social media applications have become in the country (The South African Social Media Landscape 2021: 1).

According to Worldwide Worx (2015), social interaction in South Africa has overcome age barriers and the urban-rural division. According to a report published by We are Social and Marcomm News (2022), the average South African spends over eight hours a day online. Thus, the report provides an overview of the South African internet landscape. It is stated that South Africa has an overall infiltration internet rate of 54%, which symbolises over 31 million people online. For South Africa, the biggest platform used is Facebook with a rate of 53%, followed by LinkedIn at 18%, Instagram at 9%, Twitter at 4%, and Snapchat at a rate of 5% (Global overview report 2021: 8). Research conducted by Gareth (2015: 45) revealed that Facebook and Twitter had around 100,000 new users a month in 2014 in South Africa. LinkedIn and Pinterest are growing among the main social networks, with only 150,000 users in South Africa (Perrin 2015: 11).

The rise of social media growth for communication and culture has become increasingly remarkable and has revolutionised how organisations communicate with the external environment. Figure 2.3 depicts statistical figures on social media in South Africa between March of 2019 and March 2020.

Social Media Stats South Africa Mar 2019 - Mar 2020

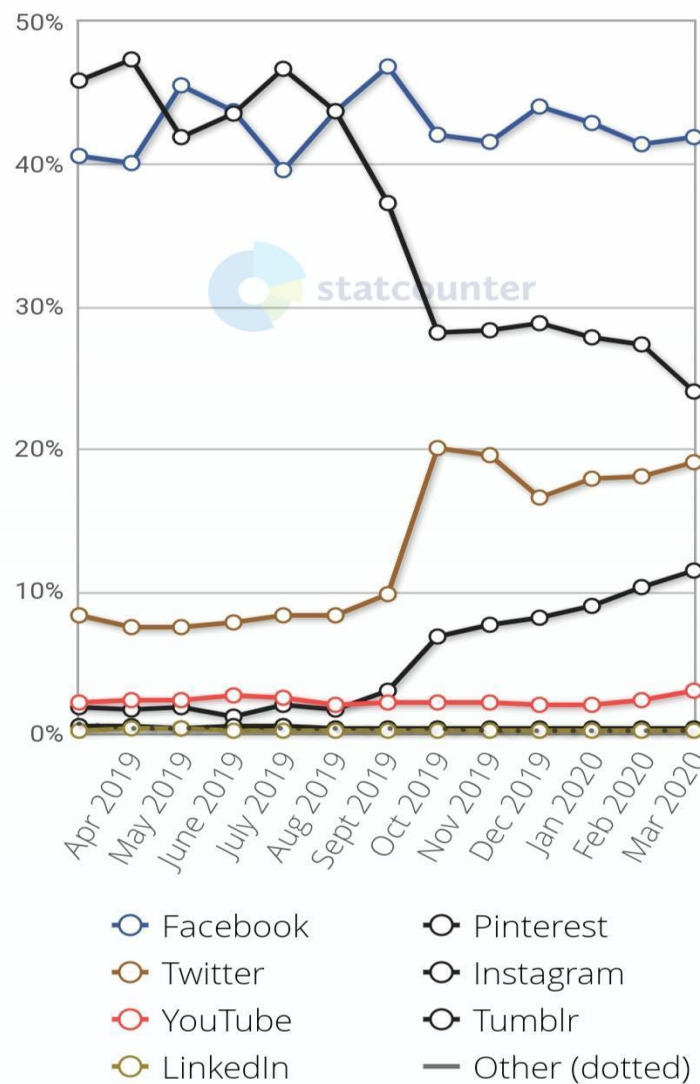


Figure 2.3 Social media statistics in South Africa (Source: Global Stats (2021: 1))

Social media has brought a huge transformation in the public space over the past year for both organisations and stakeholders through an open and public-oriented system. As can be seen in Figure 2.3, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn have been growing within the space of organisational communication and culture. According to Tajudeen, Jaafar and Ainin (2018: 5), organisations can take advantage of the growing numbers of social media users for organisational communication and culture. Through the adoption of social media, organisations may improve their interaction with users through two-way

communication, whilst improving relations with a larger number of stakeholders and new entrants. Thus, creating positive impacts on the organisation's performance (Dijck and Poell 2015: 129).

2.3 Organisational communication

2.3.1 Understanding communication and organisational communication

Individuals in an organisational setup are required to communicate with each other often and effectively. Communication is considered a broad concept and internal communication is a category of communication that pertains to understanding how employees communicate in an organisation. Communication can be described as the interaction between people (Littlejohn 2018: 90).

Conventional communication involves face-to-face interaction, but on social media, communication occurs when an individual responds to or comments on another person's status or initiates conversation with someone else (Othman, Apaudi and Noah 2016: 87). Therefore, with regards to communication, most researchers have admitted that communication involves a process of interaction between two people or more within an environment. There are many different definitions of organisational communication and authors have not agreed on a single definition. According to Richmond and McCroskey (2016: 55), communication can be referred to as a procedure by which persons inspire meaning in the minds of other individuals, through non-verbal and verbal communication in a formal context of an organisation. In addition, organisational communication refers to the ability of people to use technology and work together for the benefit of resolving difficult problems, and be inspired to work together and share comparable visions and value

According to Aleksova and Petkovski (2016: 85), organisational communication refers to the point in an organisation whereby all employees send and receive messages daily, and there is a networking connection of communication experiences that influences the organisation's operations. Organisational communication has provided the framework for researchers to observe and understand how communication affects all facets of the organisation (Wrench 2017: 56). Organisational communication is seen as an operational

tactic that incorporates various roles in embracing and developing combined relationships between employees, individuals, and organisations (Durgun 2020: 224). In addition, Pace and Faules (2014: 20) stated that it is the interpretation of a series of messages between communication units of an organisation. Similarly, Kreps (2015: 5) defines organisational communication as social collectives in which people improve ritualised forms of interaction in an attempt to manage their actions and efforts in the ongoing success of personal and group goals.

Organisations consider communication as a vital part of their daily operations because it assists in connecting a group of employees and individuals as a whole and is a means by which an organisation is both fabricated and maintained (Santra and Giri 2018: 100). Communication has become a critical part of organisations which allows employees to shape principles through their individualised insights; thereby it empowers an organisation to achieve its potential goals and also improves the identification of an organisation. Therefore, organisational communication helps in reinforcing decisions, removing challenges between different departments, and encouraging employees to work in teams (Ada *et al.* 2003).

According to Swider and Spitzer (2020: 149), the efficiency of organisational communication in various degrees of an organisation should satisfy three main objectives that is (1) The quality of the framework, significance, context, and intent of information must be fully accepted and comprehended when communicated to the employees; (2) Communication should be directed at attaining participation, guidance and encouragement amongst employees and management; (3) Effective organisational communication results in the achievement of key success factors such as employee performance, customer satisfaction, and contentment. Moreover, Argenti (2015: 441) emphasizes the main purpose of organisational communication with regards to social media usage is (1) to enhance employees to recognition of the organisation, external environment, the products, ethics, and culture of the organisation; (2) to build a sense of shared interests and understand that employees are regarded as important assets of an organisation and to prepare employees on internal changes concerning an organisation.

2.3.2 The value of communication to an organisation

In several studies reviewed, authors such as Vaughan (2018: 30) and Bisel (2015: 89) have explained how organisational effectiveness can be achieved through communication. By implication, that communication has value in stirring an organisation towards achieving its goals. However, literature also showed that the value of communication helps to develop those goals through communication with its stakeholders and the public. Tamara (2016: 5) posits that through communication organisations can connect with their stakeholders and segment different kinds of communities from stakeholder categories. Also, the evidence from the literature showed that communication develops and nurtures relationships with these preselected communities. Likewise, Zwijze-Koning and de Jong (2014: 429) highlight that, “The importance of communication for organisational productivity as well as employee well-being and motivation is undeniable”.

In addition, to clarify the significance of communication a study by Hargie (2016: 116) provided solid theory and empirical evidence of how the function should be structured to exploit this value. As identified, communication plays an imperative role in achieving the objectives of the organisation (Proctor 2015: 1). It is, therefore, evident that communication is the basic building foundation of an organisation. However, from the study by Hargie (2016: 120), it is evident that a review of research studies shows a piece of extensive evidence that effective communication has a range of considerable benefits to an organisation (Bedwell *et al.* 2017 and Clampitt 2016: 68). Research has consistently shown that effective communication has a meaningfully positive influence on an organisation. Amongst the reputable benefits that communication, the following can be noted:

Managing compliance

Organisations have regulations, policies, and rules that many adhere to (Johansson 2016: 12). The management uses organisational communication to inform and ensure that members adhere to existing rules, regulations, and policies of the company. This leads to greater levels of commitment and trust, increased employee engagement, and high levels of creativity in organisations.

Creating relations

According to Ademuiluyi, Daunda and Mamman (2019: 5), organisational communication functions as a basic component for forming social and professional relations between the employees and the management, and also customers. In more detail, effective communication in the workplace allows an organisation to clarify to their audiences what they are communicating, experiencing and what their needs are (Vangelisti 2016: 16). In other words, the act of communicating within an organisation not only helps an organisation accomplish its goals but also helps the organisation connect with external entities and form mutually beneficial relationships, reduce staff turnover, and foster better relationships in the workplace. Therefore, the value of communication at work reduces unwanted problems and endorses better performance, increases overall productivity, and builds a strong team (Johansson 2021: 156).

Facilitation of management processes

Active communication is a building block of successful organisations, In other words, communication acts as organisational blood (Neher 2021: 68). According to Balzer and Gillespie (2018: 406), the value of communication in facilitating management processes promotes motivation by informing and clarifying the employees about the task to be done, the manner they are performing the task, and how to improve their performance if it is not up to the mark. Meanwhile, Burleson (2016: 47) highlights that an active communication system in an organisation requires managerial proficiency in delivering and receiving messages.

Therefore, managers are required to discover several barriers to communication and evaluate the reasons for their existence and take pre-emptive steps to evade those barriers (Burleson 2016: 57). Thus, the primary responsibility of a manager is to develop and maintain an effective communication system in the organisation. The quality of managerial decisions is determined by how well they are communicated. Furthermore, management's judgments and strategies must be communicated to subordinates. It may be impossible to issue instructions to others without effective communication (Miller 2014: 156). Moreover, Miller (2014: 156) asserts that effective communication aids in the management's plans and policies being implemented correctly.

Solving issues of the organisation

When challenges occur in an organisation, there is always a need to find the solution, before the situation sets an organisation to failure, therefore, organisations utilise communication as a method of discussing and suggesting solutions to a different problem (Haddon 2015: 126). When it comes to planning and running a value-added firm, there may be conflicts among committee members or project managers about how to tackle difficulties that emerge (Ruck 2014: 56). In today's corporations, problem-solving is a team sport. Communication holds the team together and empowers them to work as a unit.

2.3.3 Quality of organisational communication

According to Al-Hamadan, Manojlovich, and Tanima (2017: 126) communication is a crucial component of an organisation's achievement and effectiveness. It provides a space for implementing relations, gives guidelines, and negotiation amongst others. In the context of an organisation, the management facilitates organisational communication to execute the tasks of management. With its importance to the organisation, the information must be of high quality. In saying so, the quality of information defines the reputation and effects on the organisation. Therefore, the management of the organisation should always endeavour to improve the ways of sending and receiving information from the members of the organisation (Ghaith *et al.* 2018: 26). In this sense, Marques (2017: 1), emphasises the quality of information is recognised by evaluating whether the information communicated is reliable, timely, relevant, accurate, and able to reach the audience. Scott and Lewis (2017: 68) provide that organisational communication is dynamic and has dramatically changed over time.

Broadly speaking, open and consistent communication in organisations confirms that employees, from the senior level of management to the entry level of management, understand the organisation's objectives and culture, as well as how it is represented on the online platforms.

2.3.4 Social media and Communication

Social media is seen as a powerful communication tool, with extensive influence over businesses as well as remote areas, and has taken over the business sphere which

results in a long-lasting impact on how organisations and people communicate. Organisational communication occurs in different ways and with different motives, such as communicating for persuasion, suggesting, information, and encouraging. Previous research has revealed how social media has become effective as a means of organisational communication with the public and employees within the last era (Othman, Fariha, and Ngah (2016). In line with this prior statement, Huysman and Steinfield (2020: 56) have equally studied the increasing normality of social media usage which has unswervingly influenced the way people and organisations communicate, and because of this increase, it has promoted this research study to understand the changes brought by social media. Much of the research in the field of social media has relegated the effect that social media usage has on organisational communication.

Social media has continued to develop and grow over the last decade. This results in one of the shared forms of web application of communication in today's society due to the large growth of technologies in the market. This phenomenon has become universal within organisations and impacted day-to-day communication, by providing a platform through which organisational communication occurs (Singh and Siddiqui 2016:147). Beech and Chadwick (2016: 223) affirm that organisations should emphasise increasing two-way symmetrical communication strategies that include undeviating interchange with the organisations public and seeing the developing importance, benefits, and challenges of using social media.



Figure 2.4 Social media and organisational communication (Source: Riggs (2015: 26))

Figure 2.4 above describes the goals of organisational communication and social media framework. These are explained below:

Information flow and decision-making

Riggs (2015: 3) states that in a corporate environment it is necessary or rather it is a tradition that communication flows from the top to the bottom. Therefore, decisions taken by the top management should be preceded downward through the hierarchy and executed by the lower rank of management in the organisation. Proper social media tools facilitate discussions between top management and middle management where information is disseminated in a more rapid and more efficient way. Smooth distribution of information reduces the challenges of changing direction in mid-stream (Riggs 2015: 31).

Promoting internal transparency

For organisations that have several departments, transparency is regarded as the most important factor as it allows or assists employees to have knowledge about the internal operations of the organisation. The use of social media platforms creates a context and promotes internal transparency in understanding the organisational operations that result in trust, greater- satisfaction, and trustworthiness to the leadership of the organisation (Riggs 2015: 31).

Reducing communication breakdown

To avoid communication breakdown within an organisation, Riggs (2015: 33) advocates the use of social media for internal communication purposes, this enhances the clarity of information circulated on one-to-many platforms. In addition, organisations are edged to contemplate how social media can be utilized to keep information consolidated. In doing so, the correct user policy and strategy should be put into place so that there can be a reduction in the amount of information that falls.

Visualizing organisational culture

Implementing social media as a communication platform in an organisation, increases employee retention, and training costs used to train a new employee can be subsequently reduced. Social media helps strengthen a sense of belonging and increases employee engagement with regard to the organisation's mission and values. Riggs (2015: 4) adds that social media in organisational communication creates more opportunities and builds relationships with their co-workers.

Employee retention and recruitment

New talent can be brought into the organisation, and throughout the organisation employees use social media to bring on new talent through having access to a centralized and accessible platform that enables those interactions and referrals (Riggs 2015: 33).

Reducing communication noise

Some social media tools have been established, with one of the focal goals being to decrease the amount of internal email communication that clutters inboxes. Social media are initially opening up new prospects for employees to not only communicate but also obtain analytical data on where inadequacies and breakdowns might occur.

Communicating across boundaries

Organisations that have multiple offices sometimes span multiple time zones. This could be as simple as having various locations in the same city or as challenging as having locations all over the world. One of the main benefits of any web-based communication tool, social media or not, is the aptitude to successfully obliterate physical limitations (Riggs 2015: 33).

2.3.6 Types of organisational communication

Communication is an essential part of any organisation and takes place between commercial units, within markets, different groups of employees, consumers, vendors, service providers, prospective buyers and clients, salespersons and within the organisation, and with the press (Ahmad 2017: 26). Effective communication in organisations is very important because it adds value to the success of an organisation and organisational communication takes place upward, downward, and horizontally.

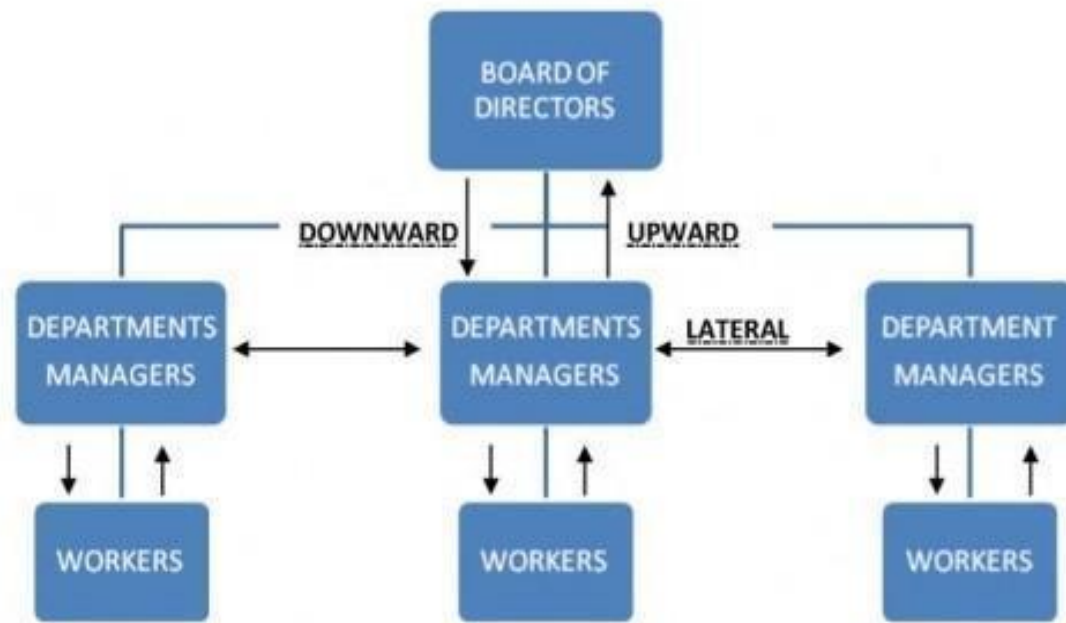


Figure 2.5 Types of organisation communication (Source: Management Study HQ (2021: 10))

It is very important to not underestimate the concept of organisational communication in a business environment. How employees communicate with each other, with managers, or with external stakeholders such as customers and partners reflects on the success of the organisation itself. As a result, it is important to be mindful of the kind of communication in which the organisation participates. Maria (2011: 482) states that organisational communication consists of four types namely Internal, External, Upward, Downward, Formal, Informal, Lateral, Interactive, Mass or Grapevine. Essentially there are two types of communication namely formal and informal communication. Formal communication refers to how the information flows via predefined, appropriate channels and routes. In formal communication a hierarchical structure and chain of command are followed, this means communication flows from top-down, typically from senior management in various departments in the organisation, and channels down to the lower level of employees (Garvey 2019: 2). In comparison, informal communication involves several dimensions, it is not bound by proper communication channels and moves freely within the organisation. Then in terms of formal communication, the direction of communication can either be upward, downward, or lateral. On the other hand, informal

communication comprises the grapevine form of communication. Garvey (2019:5) defines grapevine as the informal communicated information that is not properly sanctioned by the organisation below is a comprehensive list of formal communication

Downward communication

According to Ahmad (2017: 56), downward communication is the communication where information runs from the top organisational level to the bottom of organisational structure. This type of communication occurs when data or content flows down from the top management (superiors) to the subordinates. Downward communication consists of staff meetings, company policy statements, company newsletters, emails, instructions, orders, information memos, and face-to-face contact.

This type of communication benefits the organisation in many different ways. Through this communication, the superior provides necessary information and directives to the subordinates, helps in informing sanctioned discipline in the organisation, and offers required guidance, orders, instructions, and justifications of different complex problems to the subordinates that eventually increase the efficacy of the employees (The Business Communication 2016: 10).

Upward communication

Upward communication is the process of information flowing from the lower levels of an organisation to the upper levels. This type of communication has gradually increased and become popular in organisations as the traditional media has become less prevalent. Through upward communication, it is said that employees are able to express their ideas, feelings, and requirements (The Business Communication 2016: 10).

According to Conrad and Sollitto (2017: 46), upward communication is a very important source of communication in the top management for business decisions. One of the major advantages of upward communication is that it helps in keeping the top management informed about the changes that occur within an organisation, it is the key contributor to business practices in many organisations. Various large organisations use upward communication as a whistleblowing policy, upward communication keeps managers well informed of how their employees feel about their policies, procedures, jobs, and processes of the organisation in general. This type of communication consists of feedback

from employees thus, helping with building relationship trust and keeping the organisation updated on forthcoming new challenges (Nicotera 2020; 109).

Lateral communication

Jon (2018: 56) defines lateral communication as the exchange, distribution, and conveying of ideas, feelings between people, and information within a community, units, and departments of an organisation who are known to be at the same level as each other with the objective of organising activities to fulfil a common goal. The term can be used interchangeably with horizontal communication.

Micheal (2016: 164) states that in lateral communication information flows through the functional areas of an organisation, thus the use of lateral communication in an organisation enhances staff morale and acts as means of resolving disputes. Other research emphasised that lateral communication not only moves information from the upper management to the lower level of management in the organisation, but also is explained primarily as the amount of information distribution among employees at similar levels. This type of communication happens between co-workers, during informational presentations, shift changes, and staff meetings to keep organisational people informed of all current policies, procedures, and practices of the organisation (Spillan, Mino and Rowles 2014: 104).

2.4 Theoretical framework

This section presents the theories used in the study. Theories represent various ways in which observers see the environment. However, there are several theories in literature relating to communication. This study thus focuses only on one communication theory, the systems theory, which is discussed below.

2.4.1 Systems theory

O' Leary (2010: 45) defines the systems theory as a theory that highlights the importance of exploring the world at the level of systems consisting of co-dependent and interacting parts. Carroll and Tosi (2012: 1) explain the systems theory as an interdisciplinary study of complex systems, where cohesive groups of interrelated are cooperating with the

outside world and adjusting to it, and business organisations must respond to changes in the environments in which they operate in. These definitions summarise several key aspects of a systems view of organisations; several components such as input, processes, and outcomes as outlined by Clow (2008: 166). These key elements provide a strong insight into the design and management of an organisation in an environment. According to Ashby (1954: 249) and Wiener (1948: 350), the systems theory comes from cybernetics systems theory in mechanical engineering. It has also been noted that the most important aspect in relation to the systems theory that Clowson (2008: 166) makes, and which relates to the current study, is the idea that organisations can swiftly adopt the changes that occur within their surroundings. Among the components of interactions and emerging relationships, the systems theory is established based on the patterns and structures of relationships (Craig and Laurie 2017: 3). An argument by Bastedo (2014: 228) on systems theory suggests that an organisation should be influenced by the setting in which it exists.

Craig and Laurie (2017: 2) posit that organisational researchers eagerly embrace systems theory due to the recognition that standard models were inadequate in accounting for organisational behaviours that are complex. Likewise, systems theory tends to clarify the interdependence and dynamic relationships between the constituents of the system and organisation-environment relations. In addition, the systems theory has been influential in the research development of organisational communication and culture studies, since the 1960s. Scott and Laurie (2017: 1) affirm that systems theory has been widely used in research areas ranging from the adoption of technology use and communication design in organisational processes to professional communication and public relations. Langer (2014: 16) adds that systems theory sees the organisation as an active entity that is encompassed by different actions that occur both internally and externally. The systems theory provides a simple, but powerful way of viewing organisations.

2.4.2 Systems theory in organisational communication

Systems theory provides a way of theorising how organisations operate. Communication that takes place or interactions that happen within an organisation, establish the success and existence of an organisation (Schneider 2001: 146). The effectiveness of the

organisation's communication determines how well the organisation functions in order to achieve its objectives and as well how the organisation continues to develop.

Poole (2013: 1) states that the systems theory is intended to make a complete observation of the organisation's complexity, which includes levels of communication and interaction between employees, managers, and leaders in such an accurate way that will rationalise how components become interdependent within the organisation. The systems theory provides an important perspective on the effects that communication can have on an organisation. A presentation of the systems theory provides a background for the current study to look at how social media influences the dissemination of information in the workplace and how it affects the organisational communication that transpires within external and internal sources.

The systems theory has revealed how communication holds together each element of the organisation, both externally and internally in order to ensure goal attainment, organisational growth, and stability (Almaney 2011: 43). In explaining organisations, the open system's observation embraces two-fold communication that places emphasis on understanding the relationship between organisations and the environment as well as the process of communication through assisting the organisations to respond to the communication with the environment (Scott and Laurie 2017: 5). Therefore, under this view, communication is the fundamental element of organisation and organising amongst the employees of the organisation. In systems theory, communication is said to be a foundational force in building a collective reality and thus the system of meanings (Craig and Laurie 2017: 5).

According to Gunarante (2011: 18), systems theorist posit that organisations have communication methods that regulate the way they communicate with their stakeholders. Modaff *et al.* (2012:1) support the notion that communication helps to control the relevant information within the organisation. Therefore, Hickons (2013: 8) put it that all the organisations need to be well-versed with how the information is processed as it is an important factor in the analyses and functioning of the organisation. Almaney (2011: 42) concludes that it is not possible to have an organisation without communication and is also unimaginable to have a successful organisation without a proper plan of communication.

2.4.3 Social media strategy within organisational communication

In this section, the issue of including social media within the communication strategy is raised. Studying and examining the responses given by various consultants and specialists in the discipline of media, Bontenzatu (2016: 117) states that a proactive social media strategy is necessary for an organisation that wants to achieve a strategic goal. The initial social media strategy focuses on answering the question as to why an organisation should participate in social media and who might would find their social media pages interesting. The demand for real-time response is prevalent.

Communication specialists such as Ruck and Welch (2016: 14) state that, to be productive within an extensive organisation communication strategy, social media should be generalised. Depending on the needs and goals of an organisation's marketing and communication, an organisation may use social media at any time (Crosswell, Park, and Harrington 2021: 22). The dawn of social media has had an enormous influence on the practice of public relations, theory, advertising, and marketing disciplines (Chung *et al.* 2018: 330).

The implementation of social media in communication has generated a request for real-time and two-way communication which involves the public and the development of discussion-based information that has been published (Scott 2015: 25). The ability of social media to join people organically has become imperative to marketing, advertising, and public relations strategic communicators and therefore allows organisations to communicate with segmented audiences virtually automatically. Wright, Khanfar, Harrington, and Kizer (2018: 28) add that the rise of social media in Organisational communication has established more friendly relationships with customers. Social media has been acknowledged by many strategic communicators as a major platform that intensifies environmental monitoring, issues of management, and two-way communication (Wright and Hinson 2010: 33).

Several authors such as Badea (2016: 10), Wong and Obar, and Olusanya (2020: 341) have supported the issue of placing social media within the communication approach of an organisation. The use of social media is placed within the development of public relations. The primary aim is to convey information to be able to promote mutual understanding and communication between different stakeholders and organisations with

the new development and technical applications, new opportunities are created for public relations specialists. Thus, the frameworks of communication reach a wide range of people faster (Costea 2015: 226).

A study led by Waston in May 2013 cited by Ciochiana (2013: 20), revealed that 50% of organisations adopt social media for internal and external communication, furthermore, experts support the importance of communication platforms in the practices of formal communication with employees in an organisation. In this sense, it is important to facilitate social media in the strategic communication arrangement of organisations, where communications speak to the current and prospective customers including a wide range of diverse mass audiences such as employees, shareholders, suppliers, and channels (Costea 2015: 45). However, social media transforms communication and reshapes the old internal media communication model, the development of new media expands the speed, daily flux of communication, volume, and the connection of people and restores discussions. Ultimately, this helps in understanding the organisational objectives.

2.5 Influence of social media on organisational communication

The development of social media has influenced and facilitated open communication. It has equally redesigned the ordinary practices of organisational communication. Social media usage is a growing phenomenon and is combined with the new transformation linked with social media applications and platforms, thus changing how interaction, work, and innovations happen between people (Boyd and Ellison 2015: Damer 2015: 18; Kaplan and Haelein 2013: 56). In organisations, social media is incorporated into the communication strategy to accomplish different goals, social media is used to develop relations internally and externally. According to Badea (2015: 71), social media is the “application mechanism of public relations.” Thus, the crucial role of social media in organisations is to enable conversations and increase understanding among the organisation and its employees. Social media makes sure that information reaches all relevant parties within and outside the organisation.

Social media allows sharing, exchange of content, and creation in virtual communities, thus shaping the relationships between employees, communities, individuals, and

organisations (Colliander and Dahlen 2016: 56). The influence of social media on organisational communication changes the way relationships are with any business which has a great impact on the organisations or what an organisation has an impact on, including employees (Culnan *et al.* 2018: 77; Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden 2020: 28; Kietzmann *et al.* 2018: 36). The use of social media for internal communication within an organisation is varied. Organisational development has perceived the value of using social media as a tool for communicating new business models (Lysons, Kim and Cunningham 2014: 97). In addition, for product development, which is growing, social media is used as a tool for online collaboration by employees on work activities (Mangold and Faulds 2015: 357).

Social media allows ongoing conversations between the organisation and its audience, through the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The organisation can interact with users online by responding to comments, messages, reactions, and tweets. However, social media usage in organisations has different effects on the value of organisational data. Therefore, a well-designed and successful communication system is necessary for adopting organisational and managerial tasks, for which sharing of information is necessary within and outside the organisation.

Effective communication is the lifeblood of a successful organisation; it reinforces the organisation's vision and connects employees to business processes, advancing process improvement for increasing organisational performance. Online media can add to different organisational measurements: communication improvement processes, facilitation of data stream, promotion of qualities and consolidation of authoritative culture, incitement of innovativeness, and even of aggregate insight, under ideal conditions. An article by Davids (2018: 23) confirms the power of social media as an organisational communication tool. His article coincides with the existing research's argument that social media has a massive influence on organisational communication. Moreover, the facilitation of social media helps to overcome the traditional barriers of departments within an organisation as it allows organisations to share messages, ideas, and other important information. With the use of social media applications information is shared quicker.

2.6 Social media and organisational culture

2.6.1 Understanding organisational culture

The study acknowledges the relationship between organisational culture and social media. Therefore, a brief explanation of organisational culture follows as it is a part of the thesis that should be elaborated.

Schein (2012: 20) defines organisational culture as the pattern of shared and reputable ideas that a group cultivates as a result of functioning together to resolve challenges. Organisational culture consists of components of its shared principles, customs, and expectations. However, these components define how the members of the organisation think about, read the environmental aspects, identify, tasks, and measure challenges they face (Buelens *et al.* 2011: 425). In addition, Berger (2014: 6) adds that culture controls how the members of the organisation react to various situations, it employs its effect on the efficacy of the organisation by governing the employees' behaviour and argues that "Culture is how things are done". Meanwhile, Werner (2014: 25) puts forth that organisational culture provides the foundation for the management system of the organisation including a set of theologies, beliefs and behaviours that define and reinforce the clement. Organisational culture, on the other hand, influences involuntary and instinctive replies to ordinary corporate circumstances and conclusions; it powerfully influences performance and success. Organisational culture serves to provide employees with an identity, institute better commitment to organisational goals, also guide acceptable behaviour, create social system security with affiliated emotional security, and act as a reference point to evaluate and correct unusual behaviour (Werner 2008: 25) In addition, Antonio *et al.* (2014: 25), and Sabri *et al.* (2013: 26) agree that the effectiveness of the organisation depends on employee involvement and synergy towards achieving the objective of the organisation. Therefore, studies conducted proved that social media is regarded as a very important aspect of organisational culture (Kim and Chang 2019: 45).

A statement by Alevson (2013: 1) reveals that organisational culture is the central dimension in all phases of organisational life, even in those organisations where cultural issues receive little explicit attention, how people in a company think, feel, value, and act is guided by ideas, meanings and beliefs of a cultural (socially shared) nature. Organisational culture is one of the key areas of management and organisational studies

as well as practice. In this essence, leaders now have a distinctive chance to entrench strategic vision in business communication and build a corporate culture in ways that increase performance using social media. In saying so, organisational culture has a way of structuring and controlling information that flows from a strict chain of chain in an organisation (Webber 1992; Webber 1994, cited in Schlagwein and Prasarnphanich 2011: 4).

Meanwhile, Canfield (2012: 86) explains that the image of organisation's founders and leaders is reflected in its organisational culture. Because individual actions and communications are associated with organisational value, strong cultures help organisations work well and be successful. Culture becomes nothing more than a bureaucratic obstruction to effectiveness. Culture theorists perceive the organisation as a social entity that motivates and influences employee behaviour. Therefore, leaders are projected to categorise aspects that constitute organisational culture. Culture echoes organisational principles, proper behaviour to shape such a culture, and systems that instill these behaviours in the organisation (Werner 2014: 28).

As a result, when it comes to social media, culture is critical since it regulates how operative an organisation can be. Understanding an organisation's culture is likely the single most serious job a manager must complete to effectively implement a social media initiative. In this regard, Schlagwein (2011: 6) affirms that these definitions validate that culture is certainly the first standard of organisational functioning, although it is not tangible, it is definitely a powerful force that can either support and foster or frustrate and obstruct the change of operations in an organisation and deeply entrenched culture should be established.

2.6.1.1. Types of Organisational Culture

Triandis and Hofstede (2011: 19) assert that beliefs and norms clenched by people of a particular culture impact the behaviours of certain individuals and the organisations, as well as the perspective of such behaviour as acceptable, authentic, and effective. Cameron and Quinn (2020: 137) acknowledged four proportions of organisational culture in the competing value framework as follows:

- The hierarchy culture – hierarchical organisations share similarities, large cooperation, flexibility, and governance, as well as internal focus and integration, characterise this culture. Consistency, control, and a well-defined structure for leadership and decision-making are all important aspects of the hierarchy culture. It focuses on well-defined procedures and well-established rules and regulations that assist in keeping employees under control and responsible (Cameron and Quinn 2020: 78; Übius and Alas 2016: 56).
- The market culture – When the market/ rational culture emerged in the context of literature it was assumed that the hierarchy culture could not offer sufficient flexibility for organisations in the face of intense market competition in the late 1960s (Cameron and Quinn 2020: 136). This organisational culture seeks to reduce control, manage fees, and cultural attempts and combines the benefit of competitive value exchange with controlled structures and value streams between individuals and external stakeholders with a minimal cost (Coase 1937 cited in Schlagwein and Prasarnphanich 2014: 4). Market-type organisational culture focuses on results accomplished and can be very economical while outward-looking.
- The clan culture - In this type of organisational culture flexibility is the most favoured over control. Single individuals are inspired by a shared vision and common objectives instead of explicit policies and procedures. In an effective clan organisational culture laws and regulations occur and are often communicated completely and instilled socially (Cameron and Quinn 2020: 136). In most instances, clan organisational members act independently, and believe in close teamwork that is characterised by a strong sense of loyalty and a desire to help others.
- Adhocracy culture - The emergence of this organisation came into context when the developed world transformed from the information age to the industrial age (Cameron and Quinn 2020: 136). Most employees in this culture contribute to special committees or task forces, which become disbanded once the mission is accomplished. The most important focus is on creativity, innovation, and resource acquisition (Fairs 2016:89). Communication between employees and any level of management should be well established. Ngo and Loi (2012: 36) confirmed that organisational culture has a direct influence on human resource-related

performance. Several studies have demonstrated that social media has become significant to organisational practices including the organisational culture (Alvesson 1990; Calori and Sarnin 2017; Cawood 2012; McCarthy 1998; Schein 2010). As illustrated above, organisational culture is regarded as a very imperative contrivance that can influence many aspects of the workplace. If used correctly and with care, organisational culture becomes the most powerful and effective element in organisational success.

2.6.2 Cultural dimensions of Hofstede

In the fields of intercultural communication, cross-cultural psychology, and international management, Hofstede's (2011: 201) work-related cultural characteristics have been employed as a study paradigm for the past three decades. The book *Culture's Consequences* by Hofstede (2011: 252) probes into the field of researching multinational organisations. He came to the conclusion that “organisations are culturally bound” based on his practical data analysis.

In addition, cultural value dimensions can be thought of as a scale or a continuum, with one aspect of value on one side Hofstede identified six categories that define culture and an overview of:

1. Power distance index
2. Collectivism versus individualism
3. Uncertainty avoidance index
4. Femininity versus masculinity
5. Short-term versus long-term orientation
6. Restraint versus Indulgence

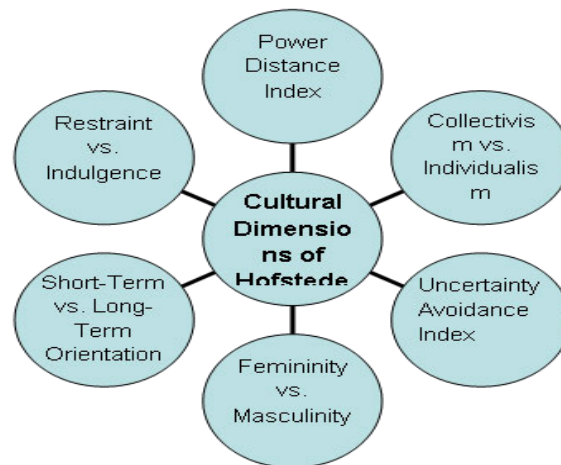


Figure 2.6 Hofstede cultural dimensions (Source: Hofstede (2011: 7))

Power distance index

The power distance index dimension examines how often inequality and power are accepted in a community. Inequality and power are assessed from the perception of the followers and are considered as the lower level. An organisational culture with a high-power distance index embraces inequity and power differences, enhances bureaucracy, and also has high regard for rank and authority. Whereas a low power distance index shows that perhaps culture endorses flat organisational structures with dominant effect responsibility, participative management style, and importance on power distribution (Hofstede 2011: 7).

Collectivism versus individualism

Individualism versus collectivism is a dimension that takes into account how societies are incorporated into groups, along with their perceived obligations and dependency on groups. Individualism implies a significant emphasis on improving and achieving personal objectives. In this category, a person's self-image is defined as "I". Meanwhile, collectivism simply means that a greater value is placed on the group's goals and well-being, and in this group; a person's self-image is defined as "We." (Hofstede *et al.* 2010: 45).

Uncertainty avoidance index

A high uncertainty avoidance index shows that you have a low tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and vulnerability. The unknown is lessened by applying these strategies, regulations, and so on. On the other hand, high tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking are clearly stated by a low uncertainty avoidance index. The unknown is more widely embraced, and rules, restrictions, and so on are permissive (Hofstede 2011: 8).

Masculinity versus femininity

The masculinity versus femininity dimension is also identified as "tough versus tender," and it takes into consideration society's selection for success, sense of entitlement towards sexual equality, behaviour, and so on. Masculinity is represented by a set of characteristics: distinct gender roles, assertiveness, and a focus on material accomplishments and wealth-building and femininity are well-defined by the following qualities: fluid gender roles, modesty, nurturing, and concern for the quality of life (Hofstede 2011: 45).

Long-term orientation versus short-term orientation

The dimension of long-term orientation versus short-term orientation perceives how people view its time frame. Hofstede (2011: 58) explains that long-term orientation focuses on the future and entails stalling short-term victory or gratification to achieve long-term success. Long-term orientation thinking lays emphasis on determination, perseverance, and long-term growth. While, short-term orientation is concerned with the near future, includes providing short-term achievement or gratification, and places a stronger emphasis on the present than the future. Short-term orientation focuses on instant feedback and adherence to tradition (Hofstede 2011: 13).

Restraint versus indulgence

The indulgence versus restraint dimension reflects a society's willingness and tendency to pacify its desires. In other words, this dimension is associated with how societies can impose direct authority over their impulses and desires. Indulgence suggests that society allows for relatively free satisfaction in the form of living life and having fun. Restraint

indicates that society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it through social norms (Hofstede *et al.* 2015: 13).

2.7 Organisational culture and social media

Today's social media tools are bringing abroad a swift change to public relations and organisational communications. These technologies have moved the emphasis of web administrations from being consumption-based to becoming collaborative and interactive, building opportunities for communication between the open public and organisations (Henderson and Bowley 2018: 450). Employees post what is trending in their office, professional obstacles, and stress all the time. Social media platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook are mostly used as news broadcasts to keep a check on competitors and industry patterns. The line between social and proficient life is virtually eradicated. Social media has changed the way employees and managers interconnect, do business, and form relationships (Henderson and Bowley 2018: 450).

Steve (2013: 3) states that when using social media for business the more open the organisational culture becomes, and therefore a company will have the freedom to implement social media. He further affirms that social media is not only useful for advertising but can be also seen as a premeditated resource and a new aspect of corporate strategy. However, an organisation that implements social media needs to flow from the top and trickle down into the organisation. In addition, Steve (2013: 226) posits that the success of an organisation is reliant on social media, hence the culture is known as the vital component when it comes to social media, and therefore it is important for organisations to embrace social media from day-to-day communication in achieving its targeted goals.

In a culture where sharing of knowledge is rewarded and appreciated, social media is known to work better (Shepherd 2015: 16). On the other aspect, social media influence strengthens the organisational culture and builds employees' commitment. Organisations are more reliant on social media than ever for the rapid and unambiguous exchange of information and are more at risk if their communication activities are unclear, slow, and filled with potential misinterpretation. As illustrated above, the evolution of social media

as a communication tool in organisations has become significant by ensuring that organisations are able to manage interactions between different professional and cultural groups to the best effect (Tynan 2015: 4).

Social media in organisational culture plays a vital role in ensuring that the organisation enjoys goodwill and public acceptance, which makes the organisation smoother and more productive. All organisations benefit from having a social media plan as well as a related crisis communication plan and issues management (Craswell and Poore 2015: 294). A study conducted by Serrat (2017: 56) states, the emergence of social media technologies influences the organisational structure, interactions among employees, processing of information, the speed of work, interactions with customers, problem-solving, networks for innovation, decision-making, information security, individual privacy, and a host of other organisational experiences. Therefore, the change and access to control of the technology are powerful communication influences in changing the way work is performed, how power is performed, and how employees within an organisation relate to each other (Zalabak 2014: 61).

Social networks are vital tools for collecting information and as well as issuing information about the business setting, they offer lots of organisations prospective communication, moreover, the practices and norms of business social networking continue to evolve (Bovee and Thill 2014: 244). The insurgence of social media usage in working environments promotes a positive impact on organisational culture (Craswell and Poore 2015: 294). On a more positive note, social media is still considered a fundamental network source for organisations that interface business performance and strategic value. Social media improves what employees do naturally in the business environment. On one hand, an effective overview of internal social media channels on an organisational level empowers employees to engage with one another.

The entire organisation thus needs to embrace social media so that it can be successful for the business. If a closed, strict cultural environment exists, allowing social media to penetrate changed aspects of a company's operations will be an intricate task (Grossmann, 2021: 338).

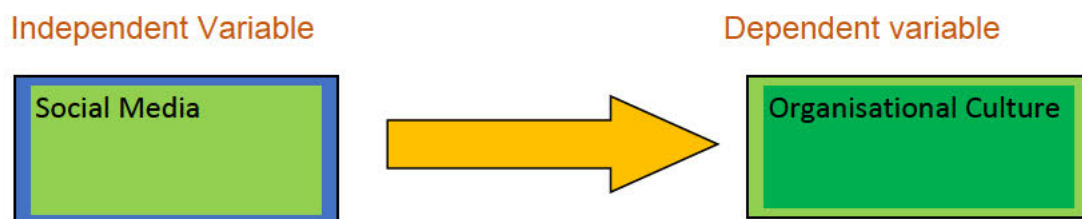


Figure 2.7 Theoretical framework of social media in organisational culture (Schein (2010: 56))

In Figure 2.7, the theoretical model of the framework of social media in organisational culture explains that since the mid-1980s, cultural investigations have placed themselves in communication studies. As per Cheney *et al.* (2016: 75), "the culture of an organisation is connected in and communicated by examples and propensities for communication". The manners by which organisations convey are inherently social, and the idea of culture is linked to the study of organisations (Smircich 2016: 26). Communication and culture shape an organisation's way of life, and an organisation's success is measured through its communication (Cheney *et al.* 2016: 56).

2.8 The use of social media in Public Organisations

The world is rapidly moving into social media, and state and public organisations cannot afford to fall unmanaged. A recent study by Pew Research Centre (2017), illustrates that more than 72% of all internet users in public organisations are participating in at least one social media networking site (State and Local Energy Report 2013: 16). The demand for real-time response is prevalent and people are laying pressure on government organisations. Social media has amplified people's expectations of reaching out to government organisations as a result of social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. According to a recent Fels Institute report, 90% of all public organisations utilise Facebook while 94% have set up Twitter accounts for smooth communication and fast feedback from their targeted audiences (State and Local Energy Report 2016: 16).

The report further stipulates that social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as many other forms of communication online platforms, are developed to facilitate online creativity interactions in both directions of the government organisations and their target audiences. However, social media online services were initially designed to improve and foster communication and interfaces between public audiences, not as a professional formal communication tool for organisation. Also, government organisations use social media to drive out information and use social media as a broadcasting tool to intensify the awareness of their programs. Therefore, State and Local Energy Report (2013: 17) concludes that it is imperative to professionalise the implementation of social media in public organisations and this can be done in three steps: (1) design a social media strategy; (2) regulate employee behaviour with the proper social media policy; and (3) plan online strategies and interactions.

2.9 Understanding social media and governance

When understanding the concept of “governance” generally it differs and is surrounded by a variety of features without any remarkable binding explanation. Generally, governance encompasses all the processes and institutional structures used to deal with interdependencies in different and mostly groups (Kooiman 2015; 256; Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden 2016: 225). In addition, governance focuses on the informal and formal structures which control the activities and working of the employees of an organisation with the involvement of the social web. Social media governance refers to the strategies, policies, guidelines, and set of rules that are created by organisations to control and guide social media internally (Brito 2016: 24). In terms of private and professional use of social media channels, social media governance is meant to be a boundary for employees. Zerfass *et al.* (2015: 103) proposed that social media governance is the informal and formal structure that governs the activities and actions of the employees in an organisation using the social web. Tech *et al.* (2015: 95) identified social media governance as comprising:

- Strategic performance pointers for measuring social media activities
- Training programmes for social media
- Tools for observing stakeholder communication

- Guidelines for social media communication on Facebook, blogs twitter, etc.

According to Donston-Miller (2015: 6), the importance of social media policy outlines why social media are used in organisations and the protection provided by a social media policy. Social media policy helps an organisation generate guidelines (Kroski 2016: 45). Tohoson and Burclaff (2013: 404), argue that social media policies pose limitations by nature, rather than encouraging involvement in the use of social media. Donston-Miller (2015: 6) asserts that policies should be prolonged to motivate and provide security to employees, to participate in social media, and also appropriately enlighten them. However, Brito (2014: 1) suggests that social media governance is designed to make employees feel inspired and empowered, because the formation of social media governance, is divergent from feeling persecuted and compelled to obey the guidance issued by an organisation, also must not be used as a mechanism of conformity. Perception of governance is placed on understanding the emphasis of social media policies. Thompson *et al.* (2016: 18) believe that the structure of social media governance is still evolving. Dand (2015: 228) states that social media policy should not be demented with social media governance.

The governance of social media is far extended and more complete than a policy. Brito (2016: 6) points out that social media policy is a constituent of social media governance, and also a central tool for controlling the risks that may be present to employees and the organisation due to the use of social media within an organisation. Unavailability of governance in employees that use social media to communicate can expose important threats to organisations which include legal actions that can lead to defamation, damaged reputation through employees responding inappropriately to the media, and issues of private information or trade secrets (Information Systems Audit Control Association, 2016: 7).

2.9.1 Social media governance frameworks

Dand (2010: 32) points out five elements of the social media governance model figure (21). The model includes scope, branding guidelines, frequency, and process for updates, branding guidelines, training, and education; approval processes, and continuity planning.

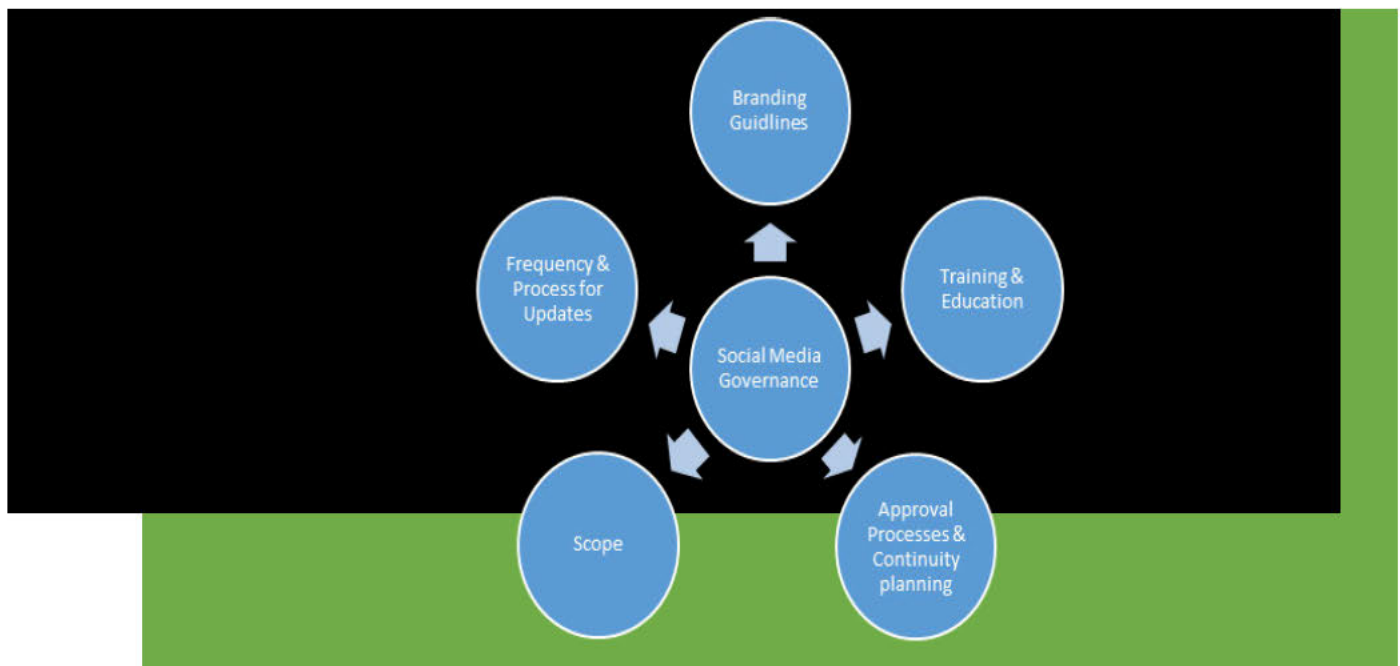


Figure 2.8 Social media governance model (Source: Dand (2010: 56))

Figure 2.8. The social media governance model from the above explains the following five elements:

Scope

Dand (2010: 53) states that anything that is not included in the scope of social media governance is as important as to what is included. Organisations affected by social media users need to adopt a compiled governance model which marks the needs of the external and internal environment and communities (Dand, 2010: 53). The perspective of social media governance has disagreed with Brito's entitlement where the governance of social media is used to control social media internally in an organisation.

Frequency and Processes for updates

The social media world is continually growing (Dand 2010: 56). Organisation should regularly evaluate the sufficiency of present governance and that can be done by involving the employees, as well as outlining the updates frequently and communicating the processes to the governance model.

Branding guidelines

Dand (2010: 30), Identifies the significance of the role social media plays as a communication channel in an organisation. In that sense, branding guidelines should be part of the application of social media tools used by the organisation (Dand, 2010: 43).

Training and education

Branding, social media training, and educational facilities are the core basics of a solidified social media model of governance for an organisation that has employees who use social media for communication purposes. Ansaldo (2012: 78) adds that when promoting accountability and empowering employees training and education should be taken into consideration as it contributes to a sound governance model.

Planning and approval of processes

The process of approving participation and involvement of employees in its social media programmes should be stipulated by the organisation's social media governance model (Dand 2010: 56). Also, engagement of employees is highly recommended for effective organisational performance and organisational behaviour. However, an organisation needs to specify the processes for getting valid permits for a formal account (Dand,2010: 56). In saying so, the transition when a new employee takes over as an administrator to any social media account should be smooth and easy for the continued functioning of the specified social media medium as required by an organisation, so that social media succession planning and continuity can be achieved.

2.10 The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in the Eastern Cape

As mentioned by Olivier *et al.* (2015: 199), social assistance was presented to South African citizens after 1910, with the overview of numerous types of annuities, specifically the social (old-age) pension, with older persons to complete a means test as a prerequisite. These grants were specifically introduced to afford a safety net for underprivileged South Africans; however, they eventually changed into an increased

system that is projected to provide government assistance to more than 4 million recipients. Following that, additional government welfare benefits were instated, such as grants for the blind in 1936, grants for people living with disabilities in 1937, pensions for war veterans in 1941, and social assistance for large low-income families in 1947 (Olivier *et al.* 2015: 8). SASSA is a national agency of government created in April 2005 in order to dispense social grants on behalf of the DSD.

The department endeavours to produce a healthier and improved life for poor and vulnerable South African citizens. SASSA is a public entity in terms of schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management. It is tasked with reducing poverty, endorsing social incorporation, and building environments for sustainable livelihoods, quality assurance, and fraud prevention and detection.

Social assistance is provided in the form of:

- A child support grant
- Older person's grant (a pension disability grant)
- War veterans grant
- Care dependency grant (for caring for a child with severe disability)
- Social relief of distress (Grant is given in form of parcels or vouchers)

2.10.1 The importance of communication and culture at SASSA

Nordby (2020: 36) states that good communication, as well as the process and manner in which information is communicated and distributed inside the organisation, is a significant element of culture.

A study conducted by Shein (2017: 186) on Organisational culture and leadership, proved that the relationship between organisational communication and organisational culture is one of the interdependence of reciprocal influence. In this respect, the culture of SASSA is being transmitted using communication and the communication is conclusively influenced by organisational culture. Within the theoretical perspectives, Peters and Waterman (2017: 56) concluded that in order to inculcate a culture that will favour performance, quality, and excellence, an organisation must be good at communication.



Figure 2.9: SASSA News Facebook page: Source (SASSA News)

Figure 2.9 SASSA News Facebook page illustrates communication sent out to beneficiaries. It also shows the interaction between the organisation and its beneficiaries at large. It is therefore evident that social media provides the ability to improve employee engagement with senior management and communication. Testimonials from previous and current workers about the organisation have been provided to show how they were viewed by their online customers. Additionally, it aids personnel in building rapport with customers.

2.10.2 Legislative mandate of SASSA

The mandate of SASSA consists of the Social Assistance Act, 2004 (Act No. 13 of 2004) and the South African Social Security Agency Act, 2004 (Act No. 9 of 2004). The Act sets a national legislative framework for providing different types of social grants, social relief of distress, the delivery of social assistance grants by a national agency, and the formation of a Social Security inspectorate for social security (SASSA 2009b). The overall aim of the mandate is to make sure the provision of the establishment of Social Security services against poverty and vulnerability within the framework of the constitution and legislation, creates terms for effective management and payment administration of government assistance.

This study sees the importance of investigating the influence of social media on organisational and culture because grant beneficiaries struggle to receive information communicated by The South African Social Security Agency. Some of the beneficiaries do not have the privilege and access to the channels of communication used by SASSA to communicate its developments. This provides a gap between SASSA employees and its beneficiaries resulting in poor communication that misleads and confuses most of the beneficiaries and the public at large. This study, therefore, investigates the influence of social media on organisational communication and culture and looks at the relationship of social media between organisational communication and culture.

2.10.3 Vision, mission, and values of SASSA

The vision of SASSA is to provide leadership in the delivery of social assistance. Its mission is to provide qualified and potential beneficiaries with high-quality, customer-focused social security services using the most relevant practices and applying the best policies, procedures, and programmes to ensure the effective and efficient administration of government assistance; “paying the right social amount, to the right person” (SASSA 2009b) and at the right place. The values of SASSA are formed by the foundation of the Batho Pele and the Constitution which are to promote equality and advocate respect for human rights, integrity, confidentiality, transparency, equitability, and fairness (SASSA 2009b).

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided a literature review on social media and explained the concept of social media, organisational communication, organisational culture, and social media platforms. It also explained in detail the theoretical framework that has been adopted by the study. It is evident that the increased use of social media and social media technologies is making an impact on organisational change and organisational culture. Some practitioners and organisations have embraced the impact of social media while others are still in the process of doing so. Also, it was found that social media offers a wide variety of opportunities through which organisations can communicate with their targeted audience. Collaboration through online platforms has made it easy to facilitate

information through social media technologies which are capable of reaching large audiences all over the world.

The next chapter will provide a brief explanation of the research methodology that will be used for this study. It will explain in detail the research design, sampling design, and data collection methods.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the methodology and structure used for this study. More specifically, the design, the participants and sampling, research instruments, ethical considerations, data collection method, data analysis, verification, sources of error, and research limitations are also explained in this chapter.

3.2 Research methodology

Howell (2013: 45) defines methodology as an overall research approach that explains how the research study will be conducted and, amongst other things, ascertains the techniques to be used. The research methodology is a process utilised to accumulate data and evidence to make different conclusions and interventions. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 2), “research is a methodical process of gathering, analysing and reading data to intensify the understanding of a phenomenon about which we are concerned”. Research methodology is a general research strategy to investigate links to the paradigms or theoretical framework, whilst research method refers to the methodical approach to explore research questions through data statistics, data analysis, or sampling techniques (Cibangu 2010: 178). To clarify further, research methodology can be regarded as a set of rules, philosophies, ideologies, and formal conditions that guide a scientific review in order to systematise and increase our understanding of a precise phenomenon (Rajkomaar 2015: 65). Thus, for this study, a quantitative approach was employed.

3.2.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative methodology relates to the numerical analysis of data collected, structured observations, statistical inference, and descriptive methods gathered through the use of surveys and questionnaires or by modifying the preceding statistical data using computational techniques (Patel 2014: 45). Quantitative research methodology is also referred to as the dominant research framework for this study.

3.3 Research design

According to Nieuwenhuis (2013: 70), the choice of a research design is channelled by the researcher's expectations, skills, and observations and it determines how data is collected. Research design is defined as a system of methods in an area of study to collect, analyse, and connect either qualitative or quantitative data in different studies or a single study (Creswell 2010: 50). In addition, Barbra (2015: 14) states that the main function of a research design is to ensure that the acquired evidence enables the researcher to successfully address the research problem as unambiguously as possible.

Therefore, a research design serves two purposes: firstly, to function as a connection between the research question and the implementation of the research (Terre-Blanche and Durrheim 2015: 86); and secondly, to present a general connection between the research question and the data collected. Moreover, it is defined as an overall plan for linking the theoretical research problem to practicable and relevant research (Kornhauser and Lazarsfeld 1995, cited in Ghauri, 2011: 47). This study adopted a quantitative research design.

Creswell (2014: 20) defines quantitative research as an important focus of conclusions about a population, through studying a representative sample of the population, where the entire group is referred to as the population. Qualitative research is explained as a research approach that involves a set of strategies, assumptions, and techniques that are used to study social, economic, and psychological processes by examining numeric patterns (Coglan and Brydon-Miller 2014: 3). According to Dellinger and Leech (2013: 311), qualitative research focuses on events that cannot be adequately explained with statistics and do not rely on using numbers or measurements. According to Scott and Diedre (2014: 8), quantitative research is a type of research that relies on a variety of statistical models, determines pieces of evidence, and shows the relationship among variables. Given (2012: 112) states that, the objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories, and hypotheses related to the study.

In the quantitative research method, the researcher avoids bias throughout the analysis of the results and controls alternative explanations to duplicate and generalise the findings should another researcher want to authenticate them (Creswell 2015: 4). Creswell (2010: 4) agrees that quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. Quantitative methodology emphasizes the numerical analysis of data collected, structured observations, statistical inference, and descriptive methods gathered through the use of surveys and questionnaires or by modifying the preceding statistical data using computational techniques (Patel 2014: 45). A researcher using quantitative methodology is concerned with gathering numerical data and generalising it across groups of people or clarifying a specific phenomenon.

Quantitative Research	Qualitative research
The aim is to classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed.	The aim is a complete, detailed description.
The researcher knows clearly in advance what he/she is looking for	The researcher may only know roughly in advance what he/she is looking for.
Recommended during later phases of research projects	Recommended during earlier phases of research projects.
The researcher utilises tools, such as questionnaires or equipment to assemble numerical data.	The researcher is the data gathering Instrument
Objective: seeks accurate quantity and examination of the target concepts, for example, uses survey and questionnaires	Subjective – individuals' understanding of events is vital, for example, uses respondent observation and in-depth interviews
The researcher is likely to remain quantitatively separated from the subject matter	The researcher is likely to become instinctively immersed in the subject matter.
Data is in the form of numbers and statistics.	Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects.
The study aspects are carefully planned before data is collected.	The strategy surfaces as the study unfolds
Quantitative data is more efficient, and able to test hypotheses, but may miss contextual detail.	Qualitative data is “richer”, time consuming, and less able to be generalised.

Table 3.1: Features of quantitative and qualitative Research (Adapted from: Miles and Huberman 2015: 40).

3.4 Description of target population

Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 265) define the target population as the inhabitants of a place, events, things of interest, or groups of people that the researcher wishes to investigate. The population does not refer only to people but also corporations and products (Ghauri 2011: 12). According to Mnguni (2014: 36) population refers to the total cases that conform to some designated set of specifications. On the other hand, McMillian and Schumacher (2016: 178) state that, the concept of population is a set of individuals, objects, or events that conform to a certain criterion which makes them the focus of the study.

Moreover, the population consists of all features that meet the criteria of the sample in a study (Burns and Grove, 2017: 779). A sample size of 140 SASSA employees was chosen through simple random sampling, derived from a target population of 210 employees. According to Sekeran and Bougie (2010: 296), a sample should be between 30 and 500. They further mention that such a sample size provides an accurate representative and may be used to generate adequate information when dealing with a homogeneous population. The population in this study is considered homogeneous as participants share a number of commonalities. Thus, a total sample size of 140 SASSA employees from the marketing and communications department participated in this study, based on their willingness to participate in the study. More so, these selected participants possess relevant knowledge of social media; organisational communication and organisational culture as well as a good understanding of the daily activities at the SASSA establishment where this study was conducted.

3.5 Sampling method

Sampling is defined as a process of saving money and time through examining a smaller subset of the population, rather than the whole population (Gahuri, 2011: 112). In addition, Mouton (2015: 132) defines sampling as selected elements with the purpose of determining something about the total population from which they are selected. Sampling

is further explained as a subset of a larger population group (Sekaran 2010: 266). The basic purpose of sampling is to provide an estimate of the population parameter and to test the hypothesis. In addition, Anderson (2015: 274) states that sampling includes determining a sample that is descriptive statistically of the target population. Moreover, sampling provides the researcher with an opportunity to collect data from a smaller group that can be generalised.

Representativeness and homogeneity are two aspects considered when sampling in quantitative research studies (Ross 2014: 53). Representativeness is defined as a group of a sample population that accurately reflects the characteristics of the smaller or larger population (Kumar 2014: 176). Homogeneity refers to the extent to where the samples are comparable in their characteristics. Sarantakos (2013: 168) asserts that sampling can also be constructed through self-selection or by the researcher.

Academic scholars Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2014: 132) state that there are two types of sampling, namely non-probability and probability sampling. According to Kumar (2014: 223), a systematic sample relies on the random method of sampling which applies a constant regular interval (k) in determining a sample (n) of elements from the total target population (N). In addition, Ross (2018: 6) postulates that systematic sampling is effective when the researcher aims to cover a wide area of the study. Moreover, it is a well-known technique in research because of its ease of use.

As stated by Salkind (2013: 1296) the systematic sampling method is characterised by the steps outlined below:

- The specification of the target population (N) by the researcher. For instance, for this study $N = 210$, represents the total number of employees at SASSA in the Eastern Cape.
- The researcher specifies the desired sample. For instance, according to Sekaran's computed table, a sample size (n) of 140 respondents was selected for this study (Sekaran 2013: 296).

3.6 Measuring instrument

Adedokun (2016: 57) states that measuring instruments refers to different methods that the researcher uses to obtain data from the participants. A measuring instrument provides the researcher with a reliable tool for evaluating variations. Different types of measurement instruments can be used by researchers; depending on the nature of the research that is carried out, these can include interviews, observations, focus groups, and experiments (Aina, 2013: 338). According to Schmidt and Hollensen (2015: 139), there are four techniques of gathering survey data from respondents, namely, personal, telephone, online, and postal. Posting or emailing questionnaires can go unnoticed by participants due to busy work schedules or other commitments, so for this study the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to respondents. According to Sakaran and Bougie (2016: 143), personally administering questionnaires consumes time and can be less expensive. However, the data acquired through a questionnaire is similar to that achieved through an interview, but questions are likely to have less depth (Burns and Grove 2017: 368).

For this study, the researcher constructed a structured closed-ended questionnaire as a means of data collection (observed in Appendix B) because it is less costly, easier to analyse and administer, and allows an opportunity to explain the topic to the respondent in a given period of time (Polit and Hungler 2016: 203). Questionnaires are defined as a set of written questions where a respondent records their answers (Sekaran 2014: 236). According to Libeier and Welmer (2016: 587), a questionnaire aids in collecting the data for the study, and the process is guided by the purpose of the study. Bryman and Bell (2014: 231) highlight that a questionnaire provides simplicity by allowing participants to choose from a list of possible answers. Sharma and Bansel (2014: 31) state that a questionnaire consists of a formalised set of questions used to obtain information from the sample respondents and is considered the main technique for gathering quantitative data. Brace (2015: 4) further mentions that questionnaires are suitable research instruments as they are cost-effective and serve as an easy method of collecting data from a large population.

3.6.1 Questionnaire construction and administration

Questionnaire construction is very important to achieving the results of the research study (Hardman and Hosp 2013: 35). Proper questionnaire design helps the researcher to resolve problems before the administration of the questionnaire. This means that proper questionnaire design minimises unfairness and the low response rate of the respondents.

The questionnaire for this study was comprised of two sections Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of a cover letter (Appendix A) assuring anonymity, and a consent form and was designed according to the guidelines provided by Somekh and Lewin (2013: 225) which include simplicity, clear, close-ended questions, and unambiguous language. Section A also consisted of biographical questions which focused on the respondents' gender, age, and length of service, whilst Section B contained questions related to the research question.

The 5-point Likert scale was used to allow respondents to indicate the extent to which they related to a series of statements. The options on the scale were, strongly disagree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Crano, Brewer and Lac (2015: 330) define the Likert scale as a psychometric response scale normally used in research where the respondents specify their level of agreement with a statement in five points. Crano, Brewer and Lac (2015:330) further state that the Likert scale minimises neutral responses by forcing participants to indicate the aspect they favour. Open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire as they allow participants to respond to questions in their own words and offer more detail. To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used the personal method of distributing questionnaires to respondents and collecting them after completion to ensure a high equated response rate from the participants. The questionnaire was self-administered, and participants were given enough time to complete the required information.

3.6.2 Pilot testing

According to Crano, Brewer, and Lac (2015: 225), pilot testing is a critical examination of the survey used to help determine if the survey will function properly as a valid and reliable social science research tool. Hussain (2016: 107) postulates that the pilot study makes sure that complications with the questionnaire are dealt with early to avoid restrictions in

the main study and adds that the pilot permits the researcher to assess the relevance of the research technique and its correctness.

Gray (2016: 101) affirms that questionnaire pilot testing is important because it reduces measurement error, identifies problem areas, determines whether or not respondents are interpreting questions correctly, and reduces respondent burden. Before the distribution of questionnaires, the researcher conducted pilot testing by distributing a draft of the questionnaire to ten homogenous participants who were randomly selected and did not form part of the sample respondents, so that errors could be corrected before the questionnaire was finally administered. Feedback was obtained from the selected sample and the researcher revised and modified the errors of the questions where there was some degree of uncertainty. This was excluded from the sampling structure of the study.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the breakdown of data into a more controllable pattern to understand the data better (Mouton 2015: 108). Data analysis involves the interpretation of the results of a study in a meaningful manner, where the data makes common sense (Creswell 2015: 208). In addition, DeVos *et al.* (2012: 249) state that data analysis can be done manually or by computer. There are several facets and methods of data analysis, however, for this study, the data collected was categorised in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, as well as analysed through the use of the latest version of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Langos 2014: 6). Bryman and Crammer (2015: 21) argue that when a researcher uses the SPSS analysis programme, the researcher can analyse quantitative data quickly and in many ways. In quantitative research, the data collected is illustrated through the use of tables, graphs, and pie charts. The collected data was presented in the form of pie charts, graphs, and tables. On the other hand, open-ended questions were analysed thematically to compute surfacing observations and emerging characteristics; such analysis was made by aligning the identified themes in line with the research aim and objectives. According to Creswell (2015: 56) thematic analysis is a “technique used for identifying and analysing data”. Thematic analysis is used to classify, group, and elaborate on data in great depth (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2011: 156)

3.8 Data collection methods

The questionnaire is a very popular data collection method that researchers use to collect statistics from a particular population related to a study (Sakaren and Bougie 2010: 197; McMillan and Sehumacher 2015: 104).

Questionnaires are defined as a set of written questions where a respondent records their answers (Sekaran 2010: 236). Questionnaires can be delivered in person, mailed to the respondents, or distributed by electronic means. A questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument completed by the respondent as part of a research study (Dillman 2014: 183). In research, questionnaires are used by researchers to acquire information about the perceptions and behavioural intentions of participants in the research study (Dillman 2014: 183). In quantitative research, questionnaires are mostly used as an effective way of collecting data from the respondents, and can be personally administered or emailed to the research participants

According to Aina (2016: 348), a questionnaire is the most frequently used tool for accumulating research data from the participants of a study. A questionnaire seeks the thoughts and views of individuals in a population on questions directly associated with the intentions of the research study (Aina 2016: 348). The questionnaire for this study comprised of a set of structured and unstructured questions designed by the researcher to attain data from the participants. A designed questionnaire must be consistent, and valid, so that the collected data can authenticate the research. In addition, a questionnaire is a medium of communication between the researcher and the participants of a study (Brace: 2018: 4). Furthermore, Durand and Chantler (2014: 112) posit that a questionnaire has both disadvantages and advantages, as discussed below:

Advantages of the questionnaire are the following (Dillman 2014: 187):

- It guarantees the anonymity of the participants
- The collection of large data amounts can be facilitated in a fairly short period
- It is cost-effective.
- It allows the researcher to have control over the data collection setting.

The disadvantages of a questionnaire are as follows (Dillman 2014: 188):

- The method is limited only to sophisticated respondents
- Illiterate individuals cannot easily understand the questions
- It can have unclear and misleading questions that cannot be simplified.

Moreover, according to Poola (2011: 346), the characteristics of a virtuous questionnaire consist of questions that are easily understood, questions that should not be too long, and questions that should have a precise answer. A letter of request was sent out to the participating organisation which explained the nature of this research and therefore served as a reliable source for this research study. There was also an agreement made between the researcher and SASSA, which allowed the researcher to collect data from the participating employees at the organisation.

3.9 Validity and reliability

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the stability or consistency of test scores (Clow and James 2014: 267). It refers to the degree to which scale provides consistent results. Reliability is the degree to and the extent to which the same measurement produces the exact same results on different occasions (Babbie *et al.* 2015: 16). According to Kuada (2014: 114), reliability focuses on the stability, consistency, and dependability of the instrument used for measuring. In order for the results to be reproduced, the questionnaire should not be biased or have any errors. Neuman (2013: 209) agrees that pilot testing the questionnaire and modifying the questions improves reliability in research.

For this study, reliability was achieved by reducing and removing differences in the questions asked, error limitation and consistency through pilot testing. Reliability for this study was also safeguarded by minimising sources of measurement error like data collector bias. Data collector bias was avoided through the researcher being the only person to oversee questionnaires and regulate conditions such as friendliness and support.

3.9.2 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument measured what it was intended to measure (Denscombe 2010: 298). Gray (2014: 151) highlights that there are various ways of evaluating the validity, namely, face, content, predictive, and construct validity. The questionnaire designed for the study was subjected to a validation process for face and content validity. Face and content validity have been defined as the idea that a test should appear superficially to test what it is supposed to test, and content validity is the notion that a test should sample the range of behaviour represented by the theoretical concept being tested (Durand and Chantler 2014: 112). Questions were articulated in simple language for ease of understanding and clearness. Wilson (2014: 109) further highlights that validity takes the following four aspects namely:

- The first aspect of construct validity is concerned with the standardisation of the measurement instrument, and it should validate the content covered by the instrument, how and why it functions the way it does, and the theory underlying it.
- The second aspect is content validity which refers to how accurately the measurement instrument reflects the various aspects of the particular construct of questions.
- Criterion validity is the third aspect which comprises multiple measurements and is regarded as the ultimate test to confirm if the instrument is evaluating what it is supposed to measure.
- The final aspect is face validity which refers to the extent to which a test is subjectively viewed as measuring the correct characteristic it appears to measure.

3.10 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted under strict ethical considerations. According to Ghauri (2015: 477), several ethics should be addressed while collecting data. A letter of information was sent with the questionnaire to inform the respondents about the objectives, aim, and nature of the study. Informed consent was obtained, and participation in this study was voluntary. Participants had a choice to withdraw from the study at any stage without giving further explanation or being liable to pay any costs incurred. All personal information was

kept confidential and there were no personal ramifications of any results found. Results were captured in a manner that ensured confidentiality.

3.11 Anonymity and confidentiality

Mugenda (2015: 65) defines anonymity as the process of keeping information of participants based on their cultural backgrounds, ethnic groups, names, and any other sensitive information undisclosed. Somekh and Lewin (2013: 26), add that anonymity refers to the process that offers protection of privacy. The information given to the researcher from participants was confidential. For this study, the researcher did not require the respondents to state their names; therefore, no answers could be traced to a particular respondent. For confidentiality purposes, the researcher only used the information gathered for this study.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided in detail the description of the research methodology and design employed for this study. It examined the selection of the sample respondents, and the survey method employed to personally administer the structured questionnaire. The researcher adopted a quantitative research approach which involved the collection of primary data through a closed and open-ended structured questionnaire which will be administered to respondents. In addition, the researcher adopted the systematic sampling technique in choosing the sample size. Moreover, the chapter highlighted how the researcher ensured validity and reliability, how the data was analysed, and how the ethical considerations were considered throughout the research. The analysis of data and the research results/findings will be discussed in the next chapter, Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology used in this study as well as the methods used to collect data. This chapter discusses and presents the research findings obtained from the research questionnaire responses of this study. The questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool, and it was distributed to the SASSA employees via email and also personally administered. The main aim of this study was to investigate the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture at SASSA in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. SASSA was used as the case study for the in-house investigation. SPSS version 25 was used to analyse the data gathered from the responses. Davies (2016: 118) affirms that SPSS is considered a standard analytical tool for successfully managing quantitative data. For quantitative data, the findings will be presented in the form of graphs, pie charts, tables, and other figures.

The research design implemented for this study was the quantitative research paradigm and a pre-coded structured closed-ended questionnaire was used to administer the instrument to the chosen sample respondents. An ethical clearance letter of approval was also given by the DUT Institutional Research Ethics Committee, after the initial research proposal and the questionnaire was assessed by the Ethics Panel to conduct this in-house investigation at SASSA.

4.2 Response rate

Overall, 140 questionnaires were sent out to SASSA employees in the Eastern Cape and 140 were returned, which resulted in a 100% response rate. The presence and pro-activeness of the researcher encouraged the participants to complete the questionnaires.

4.3 Use of inferential statistics

Inferential statistical analysis refers to the use of information obtained from the respondents to analyse data in order to reach conclusions that extend beyond the distribution of populations. Inferential statistical analysis is defined as the use of measurements from the sample of respondents in a research study to test the hypothesis and derive estimations about the larger population of subjects. Inferential statistics are based on probability and support the researcher in applying the research findings to a larger population. The purpose of inferential statistics is to enable generalisations, draw conclusions and make future projections. There are two types of inferential statistics, namely non-parametric tests and parametric tests.

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis is defined as a type of data analysis that helps to illustrate, describe, and review data points in a practical way such that the patterns that surface fulfil every form of the data (Hallowood, Hart and Kemp 2018: 10).

According to Hallowood, Hart and Kemp (2018: 12), it is regarded as the most essential step in statistical data analysis. It offers the researcher a conclusion on the distribution of the data collected from the respondents, identifies the similarities among research variables, and assists in detecting typing errors and outliers. In addition, descriptive analyses of the data analysed provides influential correlations and important insights that allow for consecutive information to be generated in accordance with the sample population's liking or dislike. Descriptive analyses provide a summary of the statistics and the methods using simple graphic analysis, which form the foundation of every quantitative analysis of data (Sloman 2016: 20).

Moreover, Sandra (2020: 8) states that the purpose of descriptive analysis is to highlight potential relations amongst the variables and to provide essential information on the set of data variables. For Section A of the data analyses of results, descriptive statistics comprising of bar graphs, comparative analysis tables, and pie charts were used.

4.4 Section A: analysis of results on the general information and demographic profiles

This section focuses on the analysis of the biographical data of the respondents. The statistical data is presented in the form of bar graphs, numbered frequency tables, and pie charts. Within the context of the study, relevant findings are also conceptualised. In order to strengthen the empirical component of the study, this section also emphasises the more relevant analysis which includes the use of the SPSS version 25.

4.4.1 Gender breakdown for sample respondents

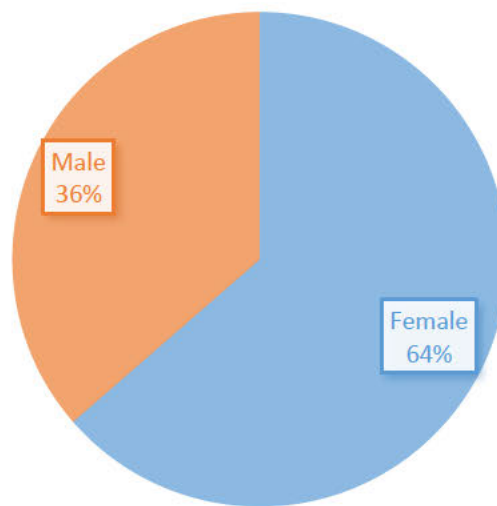


Figure 4.1 Analysis of gender breakdown (n = 140)

The gender breakdown of the respondents in Figure 4.1 shows that 36% of the total respondents were males and 64% were females. It can therefore be deduced that the SASSA organisation has more females than males. According to Bangani (2020: 171), more female roles in the government industry have emerged and commitment to gender mainstreaming has become the most effective method that governments can use to support and promote gender equality in organisations.

4.4.2 Age breakdown for sample respondents

Table 4.1 Age of respondents (n = 140)

Age		Respondent	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25	11	7.9	7.9	7.9
	26-30	29	20.7	20.7	28.6
	31-35	58	41.4	41.4	70.0
	36-40	23	16.4	16.4	86.4
	41-50	17	12.1	12.1	98.6
	51+	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1 shows the age groups of the sample respondents of the study. It can be noted that the population of workers at SASSA are relatively young, as the majority of the sample is represented in groups 35 years and below. The data above is also presented graphically in Figure 4.2 below:

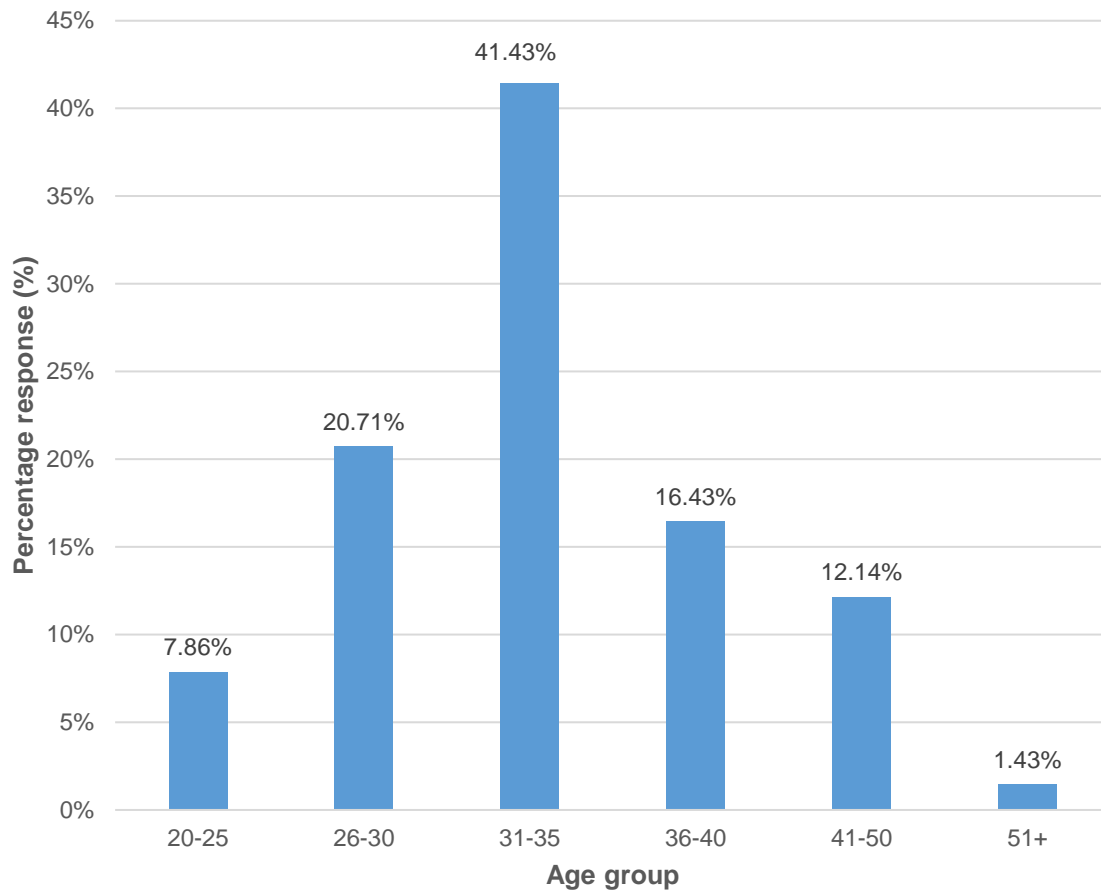


Figure 4.2 Age breakdown of respondents (n = 140)

With regards to age groups, the above Figure 4.2 shows the percentage response by the sample of respondents per age category that was indicated for the analysis. As shown by the bar graph in Figure 4.2 the majority of respondents were between 31 to 35 years of age (41.4%). Respondents between 21 to 30 years equated to 20.7% of the respondents, while 16.4 % fell into the category age of 36 to 40, whilst those aged 41 to 50 only constituted 12.1% and 20 to 25 years constituted 7.9%. A meagre 1.4% of the total sample were above 51 years of age.

4.4.3 Length of service

Table 4.2 Length of service (n = 140)

Length of service (n = 140)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-5	57	40.7	40.7	40.7
	6-10	57	40.7	40.7	81.4
	11-15	23	16.4	16.4	97.9
	16-20	3	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2 indicates the overall response rate according to the length of service with SASSA ranging from less than 1 year to longer than 20 years of service.

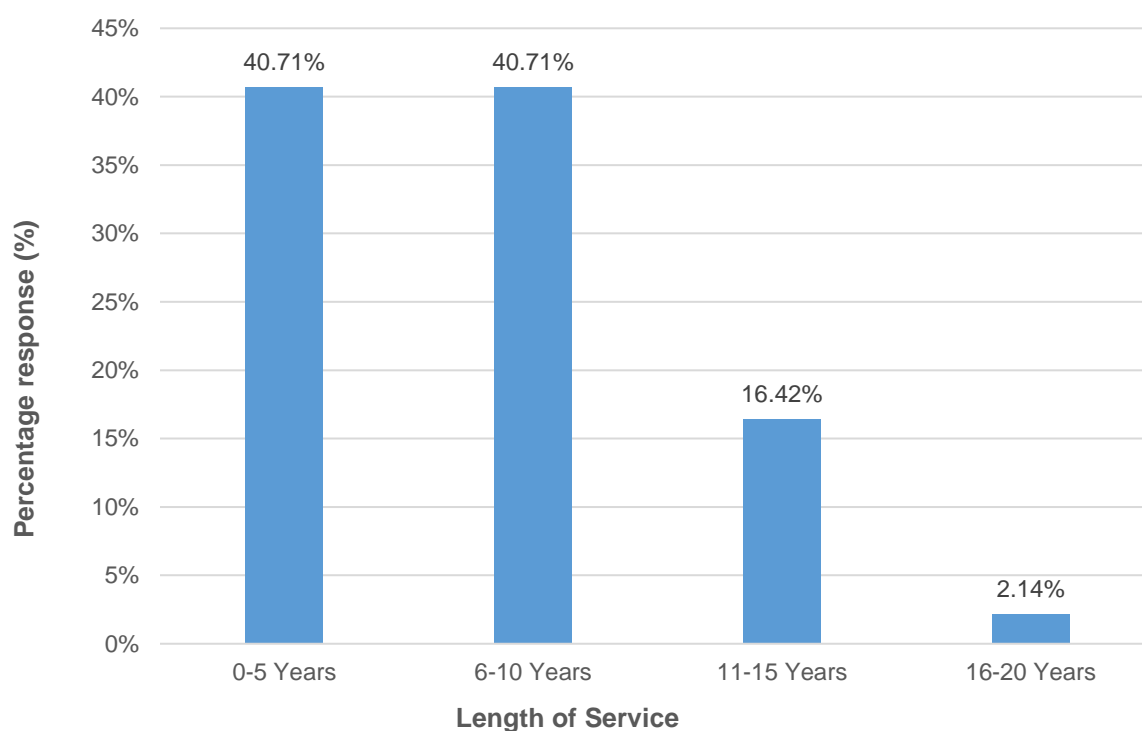


Figure 4.3 Length of service (n = 140)

The period of employment of the sample respondents is shown in Figure 4.3 above. The highest percentage reported was for those in employment from 0 to 5 years of service at 40.7%. Figure 4.3 revealed that a significant portion of the respondents, 40.7%, had more than 5 years' service at SASSA and of these respondents, 16.42% had 11 to 15 years of service. A mere 2.14 % of the respondents have worked for longer than 16 to 20 years at SASSA.

4.4.4 Hours spent on social media

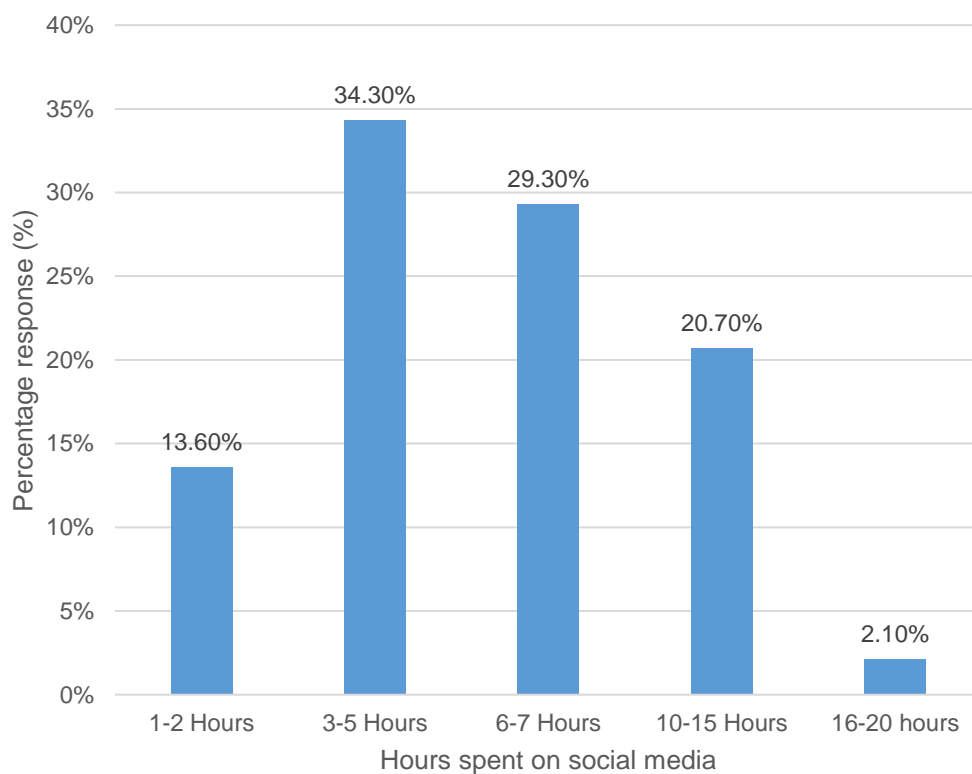


Figure 4.4 Hours spent on social media (n = 140)

As shown in Figure 4.4 above, 34.3% of the respondents spend 3 to 5 hours on social media, whereas 29.3% of them spend 6 to 7 hours each day on social media, and 20.7% specified that they spend 10 to 15 hours per day on social media. There were a few respondents who reported that they spend less time on social media, with 13.6 % stating that they spend 1 to 2 hours per day on social media and 2.1% spend 16 hours on social media per day. A study conducted by Unal (2018: 552) revealed that social media users

have increased by 2 million worldwide since January 2016. For this sample group, the majority of the respondents spend between 3 – 7 hours a day on social media.

4.4.5 Home language

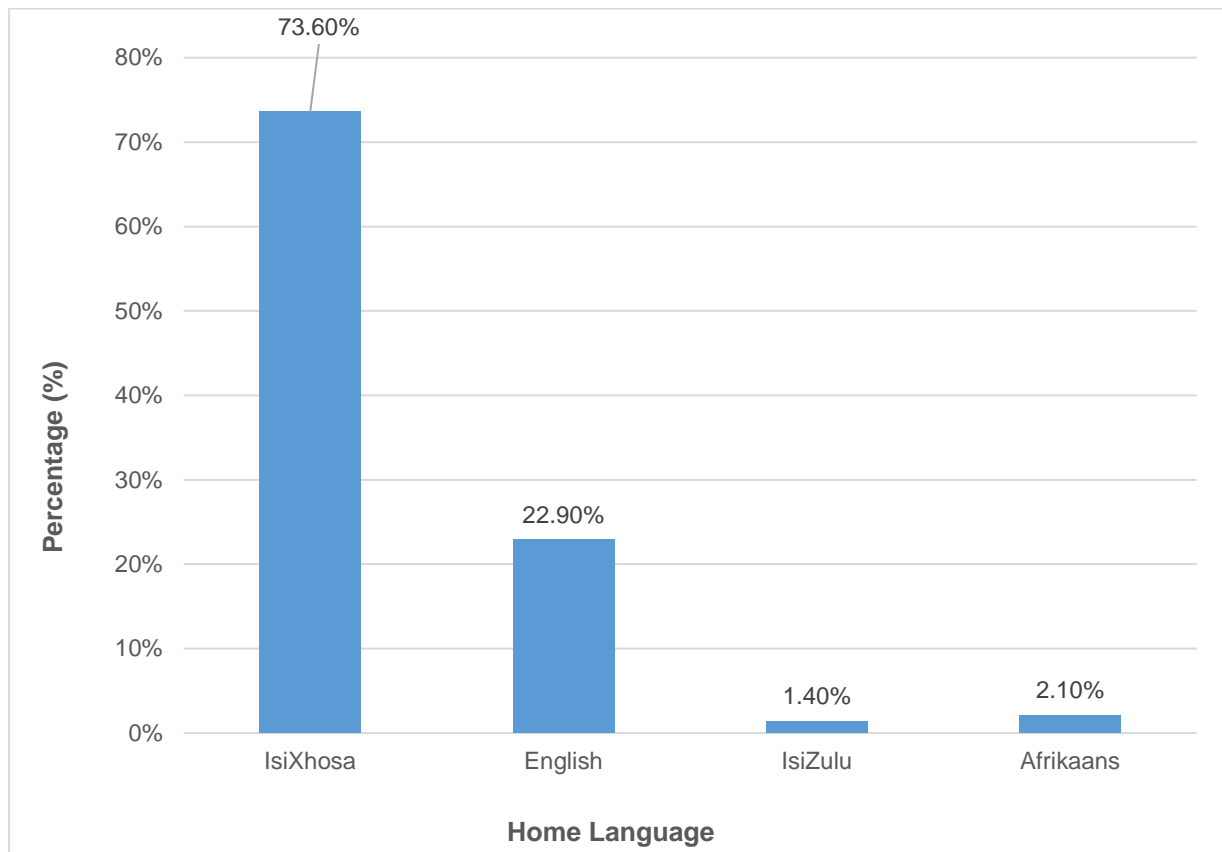


Figure 4.5 Home language (n = 140)

Figure 4.5 above revealed that the majority 73.60% of the respondents speak IsiXhosa, whilst 22.90% speak English and 1.40% speak IsiZulu and a mere 2.1% speak Afrikaans. According to the findings of a study undertaken by Ramlan, Rashid, and Samah (2018: 2), language barriers and communication style in an organisation were found to have a significant outcome on an expatriate's working performance.

4.4.6 Social media for work-related purposes

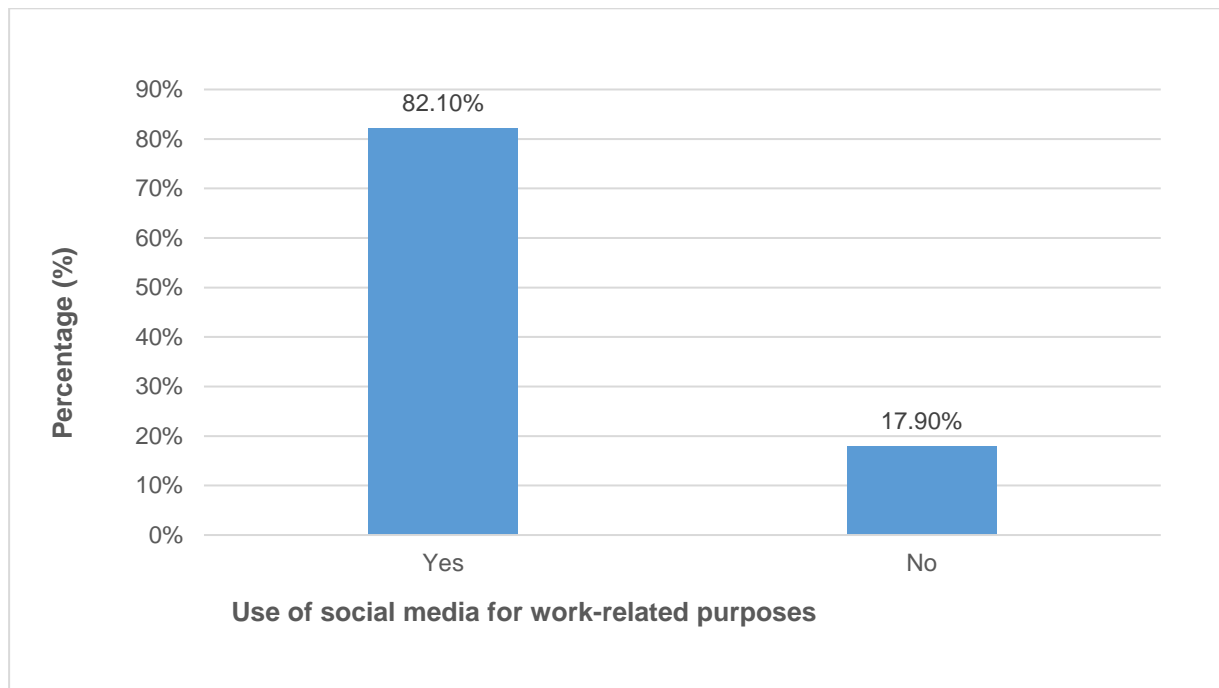


Figure 4.6 Social media for work-related purposes (n = 140)

Figure 4.6 above revealed that the majority 82 % of the respondents use social media for work-related purposes. Whilst only 17% of the respondents reported not using social media for work-related purposes. As emphasized in a study conducted by Dao (2015: 85) the use of social media in an organisation has a great influence on how ideas, concepts, and information are exchanged and obtained. Thus, social media is the most important tool for organising communication. A study undertaken by Chen, Ou, and Davison (2021: 8) on the effects of work-related and social-related use of social media on improving employee performance proposes that job performance, communication, and culture can be enhanced when using social media for work-related purposes. Moreover, the use of social media helps to maintain the steady flow of information within the workplace and opens up channels of communication with clients, co-workers, and peers (Cilliers 2016:18)

4.4.7 Social media platforms used

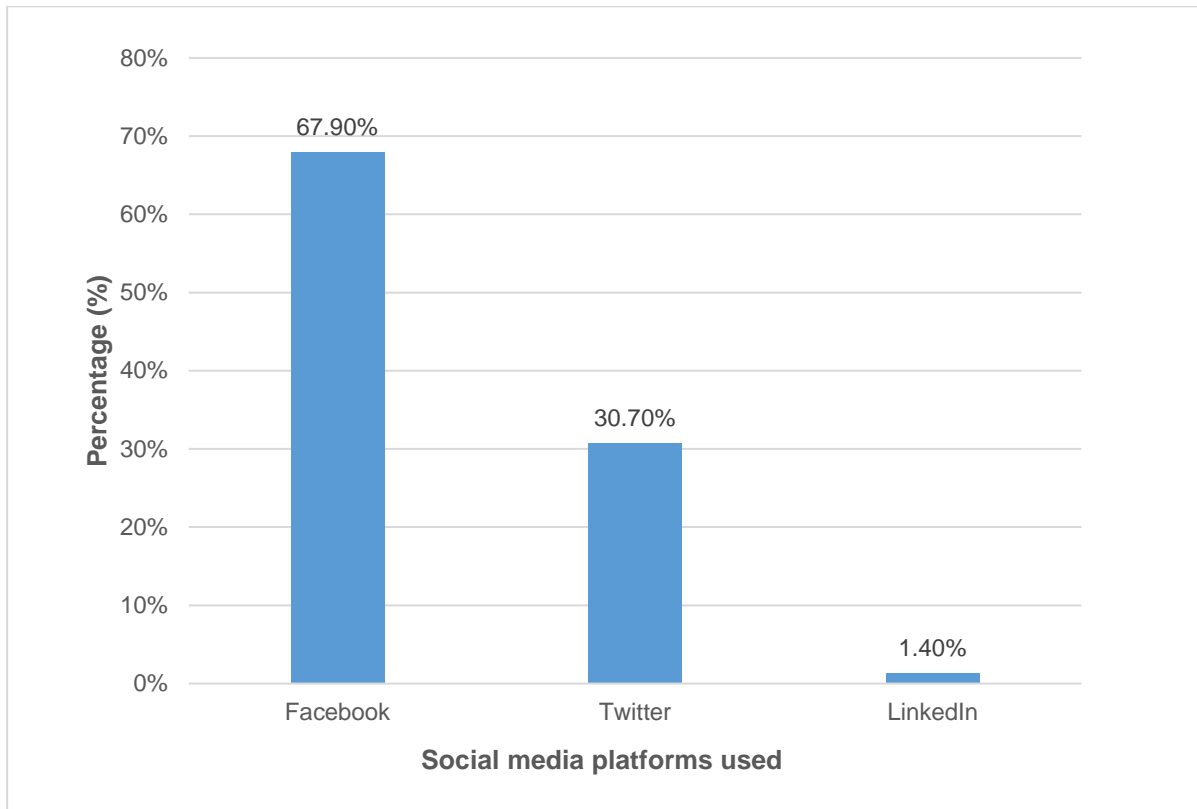


Figure 4.7 Social media platforms used (n = 140)

Figure 4.7 above illustrates that 67.9% of the respondents use Facebook, while 30.7% of the respondents reported using Twitter and only 1.4% revealed of the respondents use LinkedIn. According to White (2012: 45), these platforms are considered the new way of communication: computerised communication and digital technology that allows networking to be more efficient and rapid in reaching diverse audiences simultaneously. A study conducted by Chaenetal (2020: 114) emphasises that social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, WeChat, and LinkedIn have gradually gained the attention of organisations in enhancing communication and collaboration among employees with the expectation of improving the process of communication.

Duff, Brittany and Sela (2015: 48) also noted that social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn can allow employees to instantly see the creative work of their colleagues and can help users to brainstorm new ideas. Furthermore, Wang, Yang

and Chen (2016) found that the usage of Facebook has been credited with helping employees to be 9% more productive in the workplace.

4.4.8 Does your organisation use social media?

Table 4.3 Use of social media in organisation (n = 140)

	Usage	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Social media usage	Yes	140	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.3 reported that SASSA uses social media. Some recent studies highlight that the adoption of social media in an organisation improves employee communication, and shared knowledge and empowers exposure of the organisation. Overall, social media facilitates new forms of communication and the distribution of information through open forums (Janhonen and Johanson 2014: 48). In addition, Kritis and Karahan (2016: 81) affirm that the use of social media in organisations ensures high contributions and commitment by employees and this results in producing a positive reputation for the organisation.

4.5 Analysis of Section B

This section presents the computerised data analysis related to the research questions on the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture: a case study of SASSA in the Eastern Cape.

4.5.1. Analysis of data on the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture (Section B)

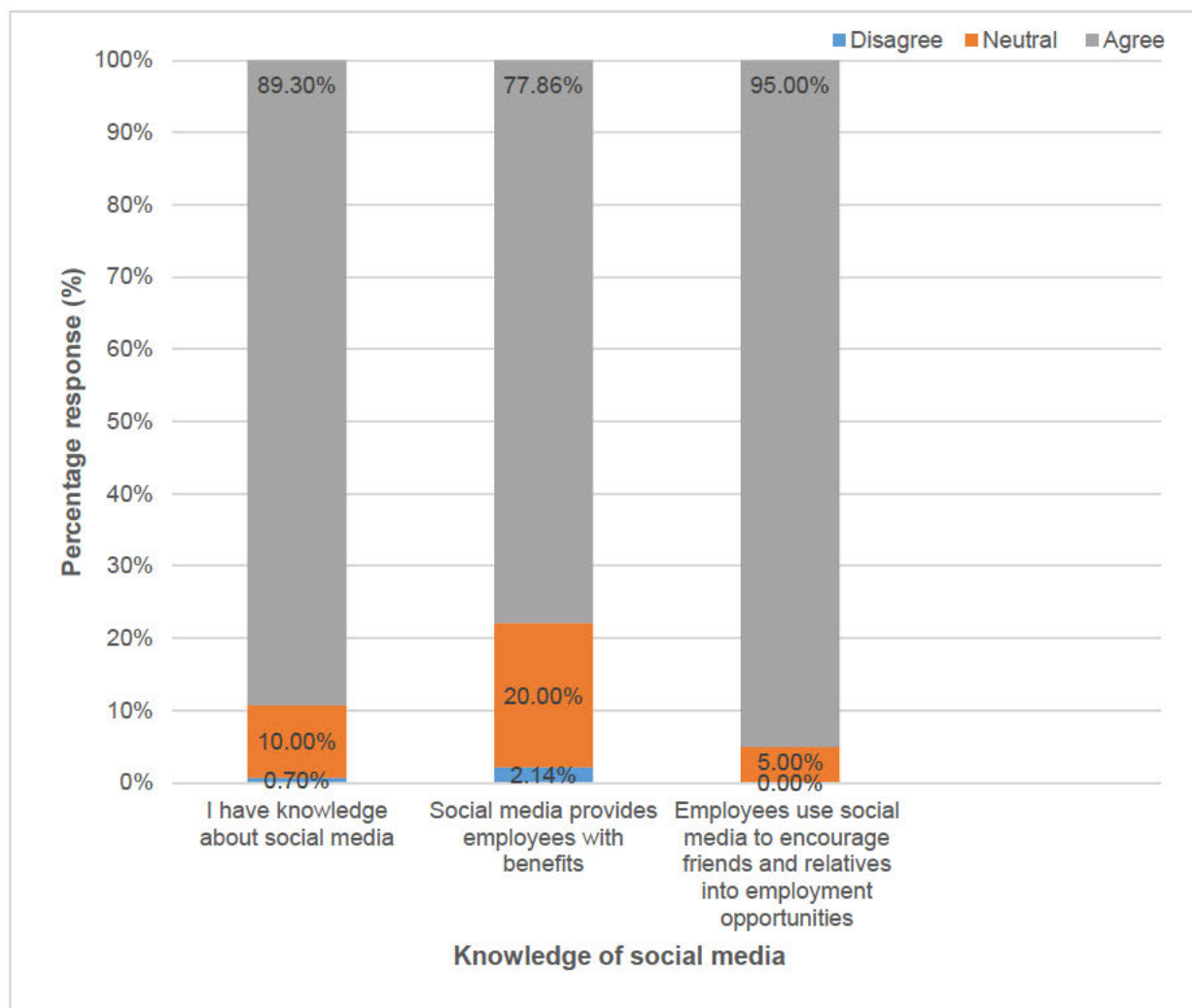


Figure 4.8 Knowledge of social media (n = 140)

Figure 4.8 revealed that nearly all respondents agreed with each of the statements in this section. Figure 4.8 further showed that 85% of the respondents indicated that they have knowledge about social media because it provides them with benefits and 77.85% revealed that social media provides them with benefits within an organisation. Whilst 95% of the respondents believed that they use social media to encourage friends and relatives to respond to employment opportunities. Social media is steadily but surely influenced by various aspects of modern society and has a profound impact on how people communicate with others (Subramanian 2017: 2).

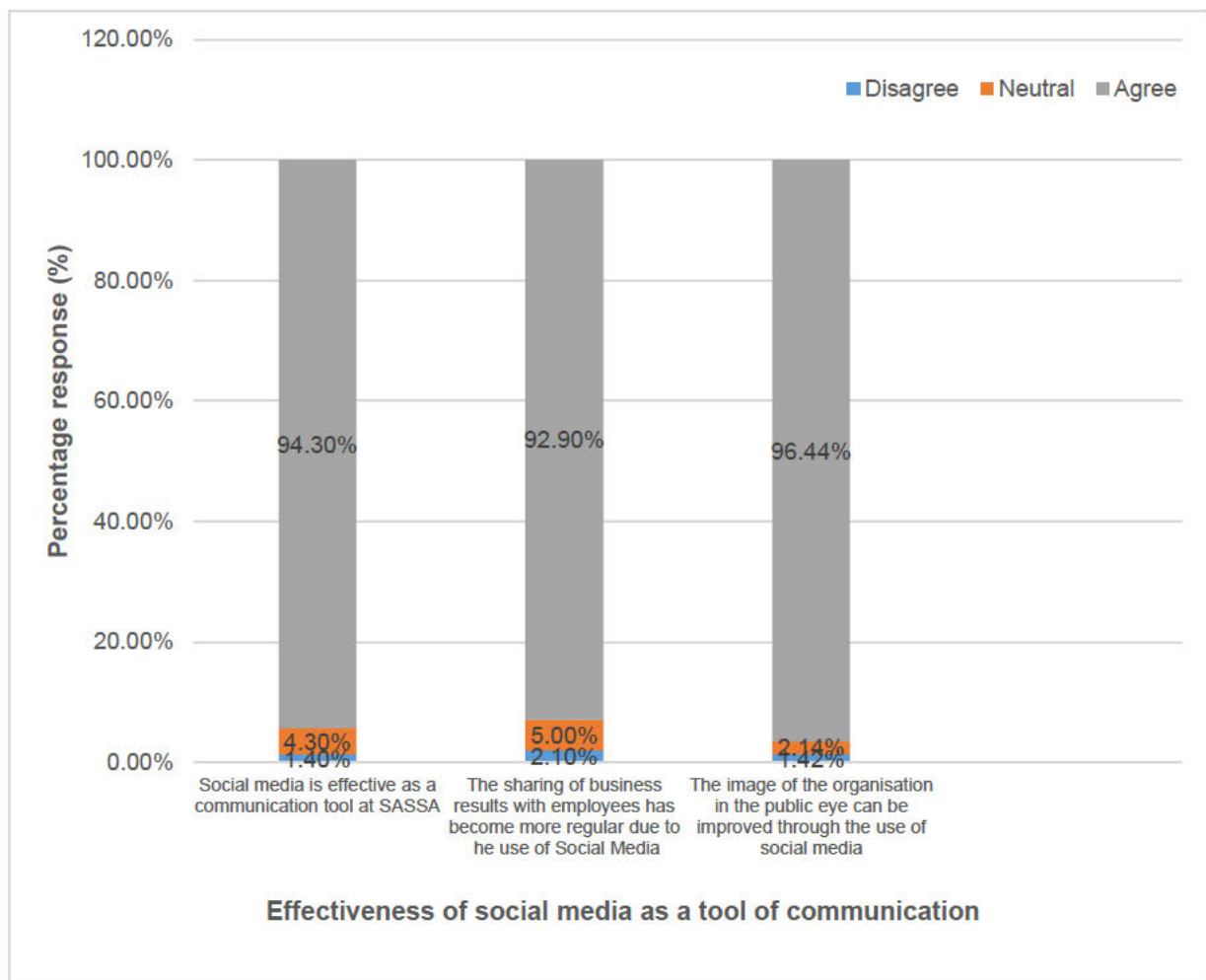


Figure 4.9 Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication (n = 140)

Figure 4.9 shows that the majority of the respondents 94% indicated that social media is effective as a communication tool, while 1.4% of the respondents disagreed with this statement and a mere 4.3% were neutral. According to Chang and Hasio (2015: 262), social media has revolutionised communication in organisations with its explosive progress and widespread application. From the frequency illustration presented in Figure 4.9, it was deduced that 92% of the respondents believed that the sharing of business results with employees has become more regular due to the use of social media and only 5% were neutral. However, relatively 2.1% disagreed with this statement. As shown in Figure 4.9 the majority 95% of the respondents agreed that the image of the organisation can be improved through the use of social media, whilst a mere 2.14% were neutral and

1.42% disagreed with this statement. Social media applications have gradually infiltrated workplaces, and organisations are strategically implementing such applications to support their employees and improve their organisational activities (Braojos *et al.* 2019: 1).

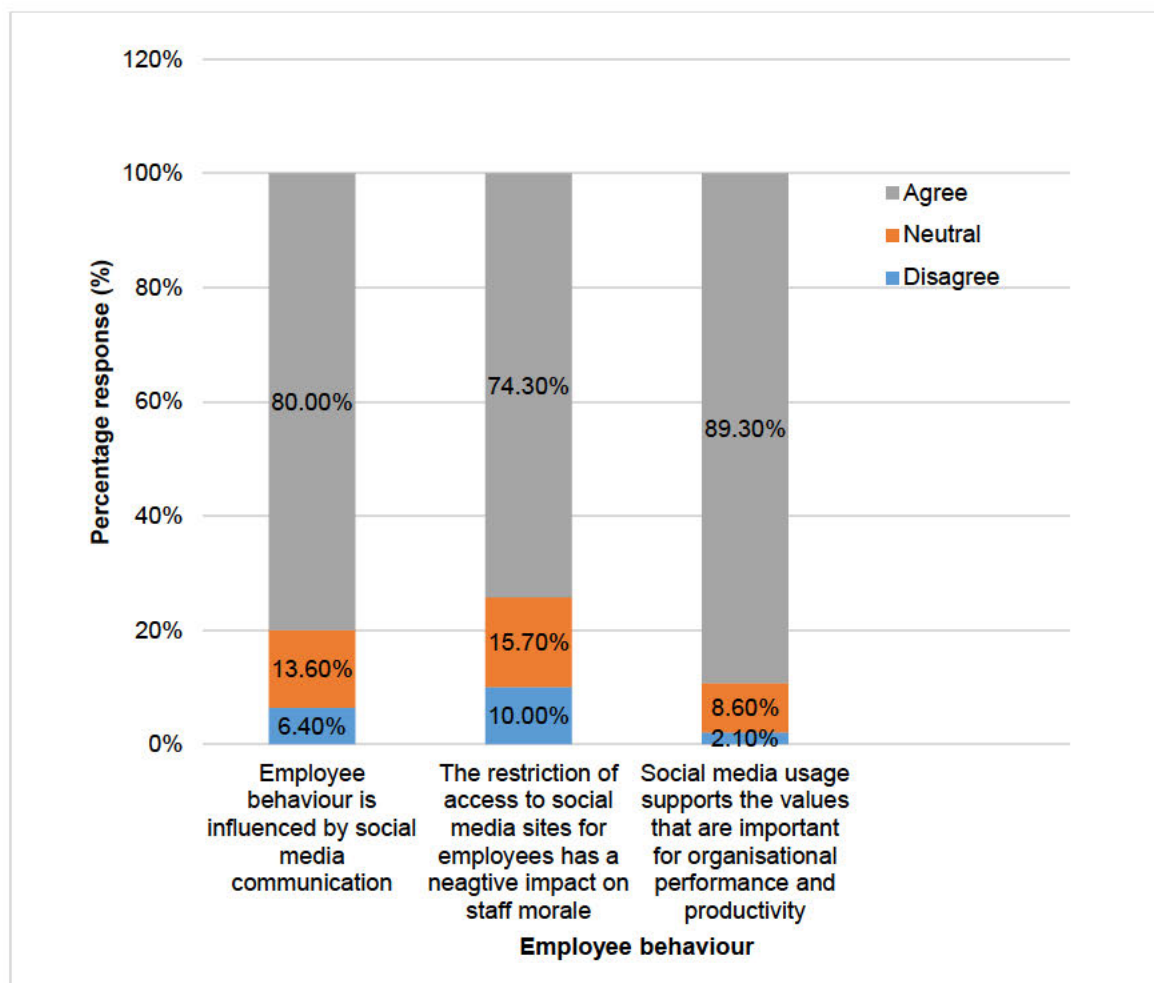


Figure 4.10 Employee behaviour and social media (n = 140)

The restriction of access to social media sites for the employee has a serious impact on employees. Although social media entails some risks, the complete restriction of it decreases staff morale and negatively affects employee interests. Figure 4.10 indicates that the majority of the respondents, 74.3%, believed that the restriction of access to social media indeed has a negative impact on staff morale, 15% were neutral to this statement and relatively 10% disagreed with the above statement. Figure 4.10 revealed

that 80% of the respondents agreed that social media communication influences the behaviour of employees, and 89.3% agreed that the use of social media supports the values that are most important for organisational performance and productivity. In today's world, the importance and development of social media has created excessive digital opportunities for employees to interact, exchange work-related information, team up, and share professional work knowledge (Hodousa and Louti 2021: 3).

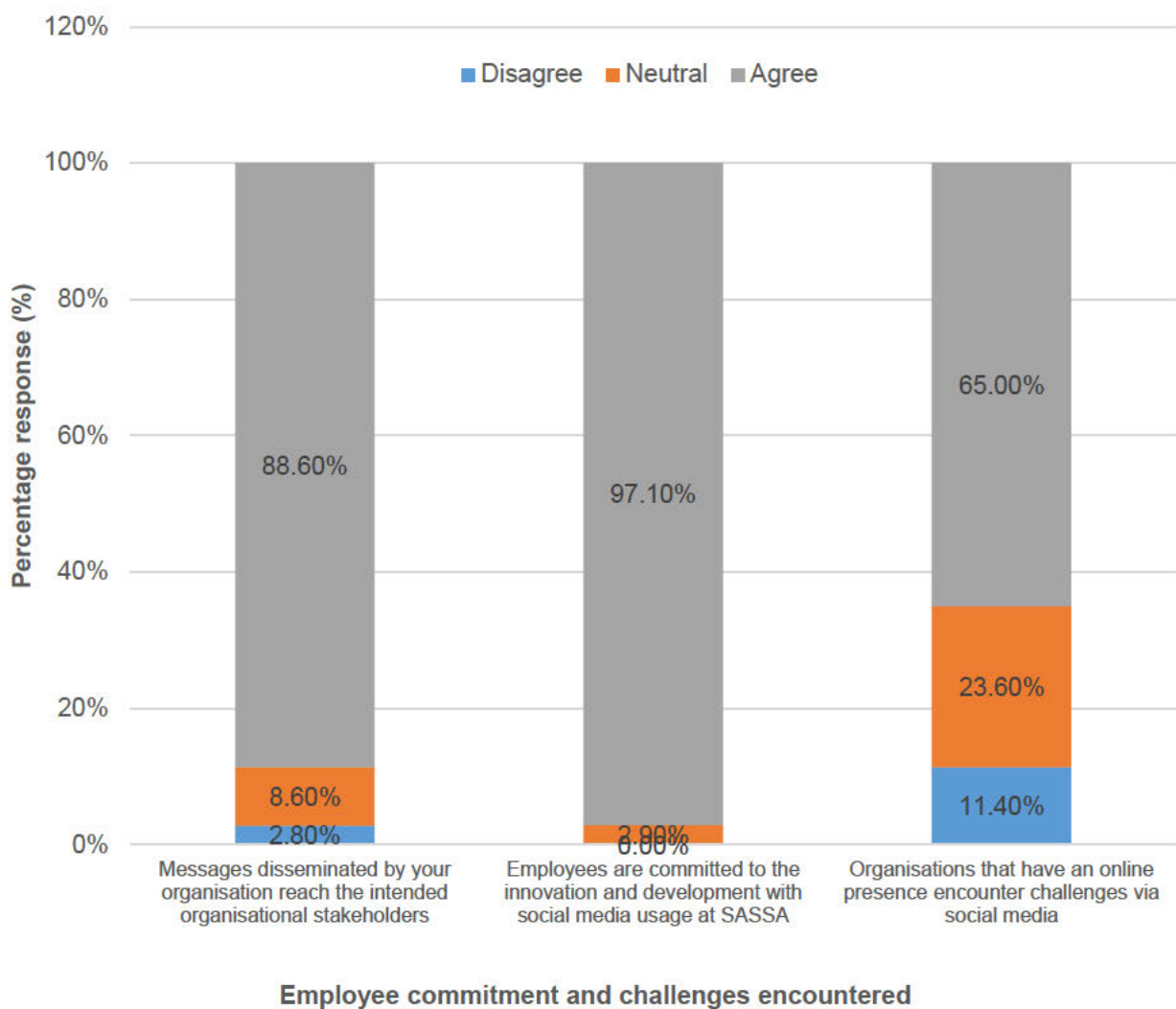


Figure 4.11 Frequencies of the respondents pertaining to employee commitment and challenges encountered.

Figure 4.11 shows that the majority of the respondents, 84%, agreed with the statement that messages disseminated by organisation reach the intended organisational stakeholders, while 8.6% of respondents were neutral and 2.8% disagreed. Furthermore, in the second bar of Figure 4.11, 97.10% of the respondents agreed to the statement that employees are committed to innovation and development with social media usage at SASSA and less than 2.9% were neutral. The third bar above illustrates that 65% of respondent agreed with the statement and 23.6% were neutral, whilst 11.4% disagreed. Empirical findings of the study conducted by Cao *et al.* (2016: 542) on exploring the influence of social media on employee work performance revealed that the use of social media can help employees build their social capital, which is represented by network relationships, a common purpose, and trust. This social capital can then help with knowledge transfer. Transfer of knowledge and a common vision have a favourable impact on job performance. Despite not directly affecting work performance, network linkages and trust are somewhat mediated through knowledge transfer. Social media's high prevalence has even penetrated the workplace, enabling corporate collaboration and knowledge transfer that was previously unachievable (McAfee 2006). Social media, as opposed to traditional face-to-face interactions, allows for unstructured social engagement across organisational, temporal, and spatial barriers. Evidence from earlier studies showed that using social media strengthens network linkages. As stated by DiMicco *et al.* (2008), employees' primary purpose for using internal social networking sites, is to "create deeper links with their weak ties and to reach out to stakeholders they do not know."

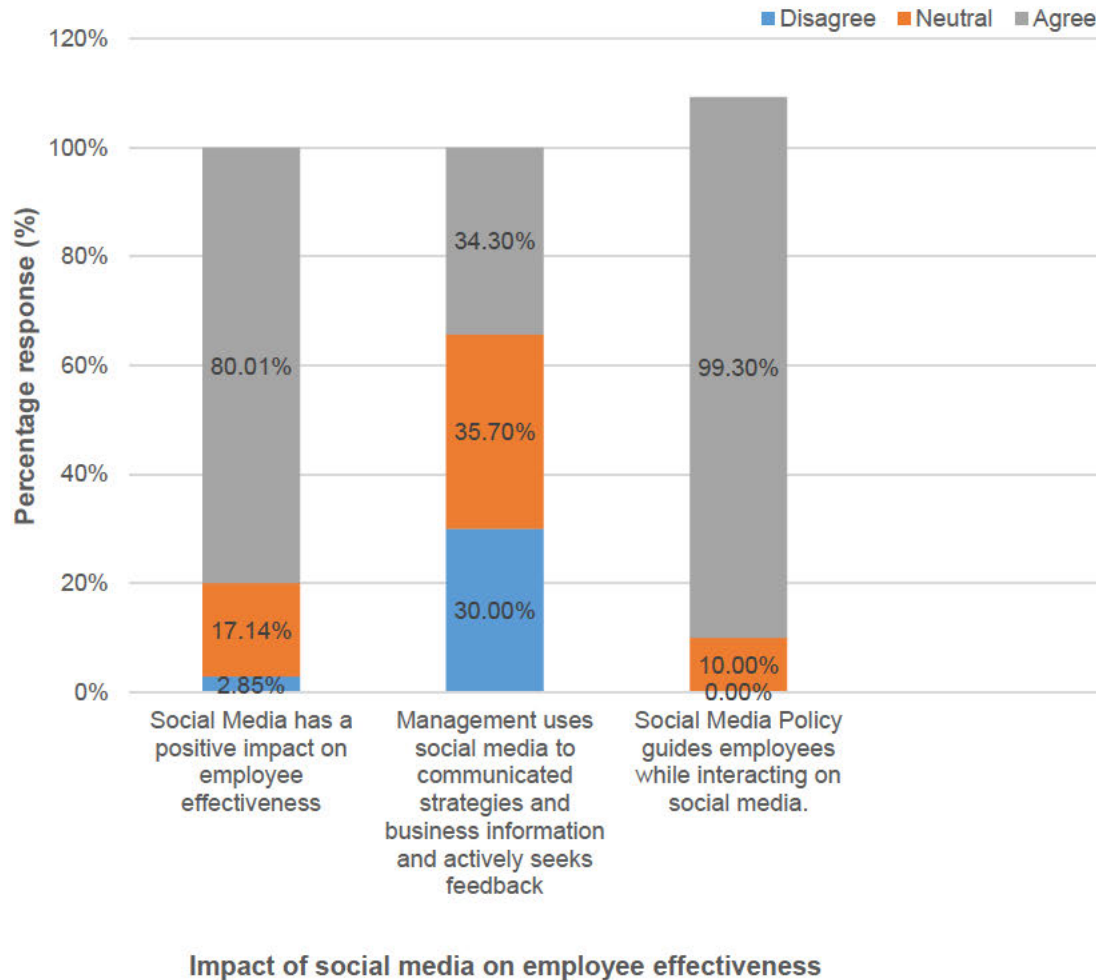


Figure 4.12 Impact of social media on employee effectiveness

Figure 4.12 presents that 80.01% of the respondents agreed with the statement that social media has a positive impact on employee effectiveness, and 17.14% of the respondents were neutral on this statement, whilst less than 2.85% disagreed with this statement. The second bar in Figure 4.12 illustrates the responses of the respondents pertaining to the management of the organisation using social media to communicate strategies and business information with employees, 34% of the respondents agreed with this statement, 35.7% were neutral and 30% disagreed. Existing literature highlights that social media must be implemented or adopted by the organisation in order to transform how people interact and connect with it. As shown in the graph, 89% of the respondents believed that social media policy guides employees when interacting on social media,

whilst a portion of 10% were neutral on this statement and none disagreed on this statement. Lang *et al.* (2020: 240) found that employees use social media for either personal or work-related purposes, and the use of social media tools promotes employee effectiveness. Previous studies have presented that the use of social media in organisations facilitates internal knowledge management, enhances employee work performance, and increases communication efficacy (Korzynski 2014: 89; Behringer *et al.* 2017: 40).

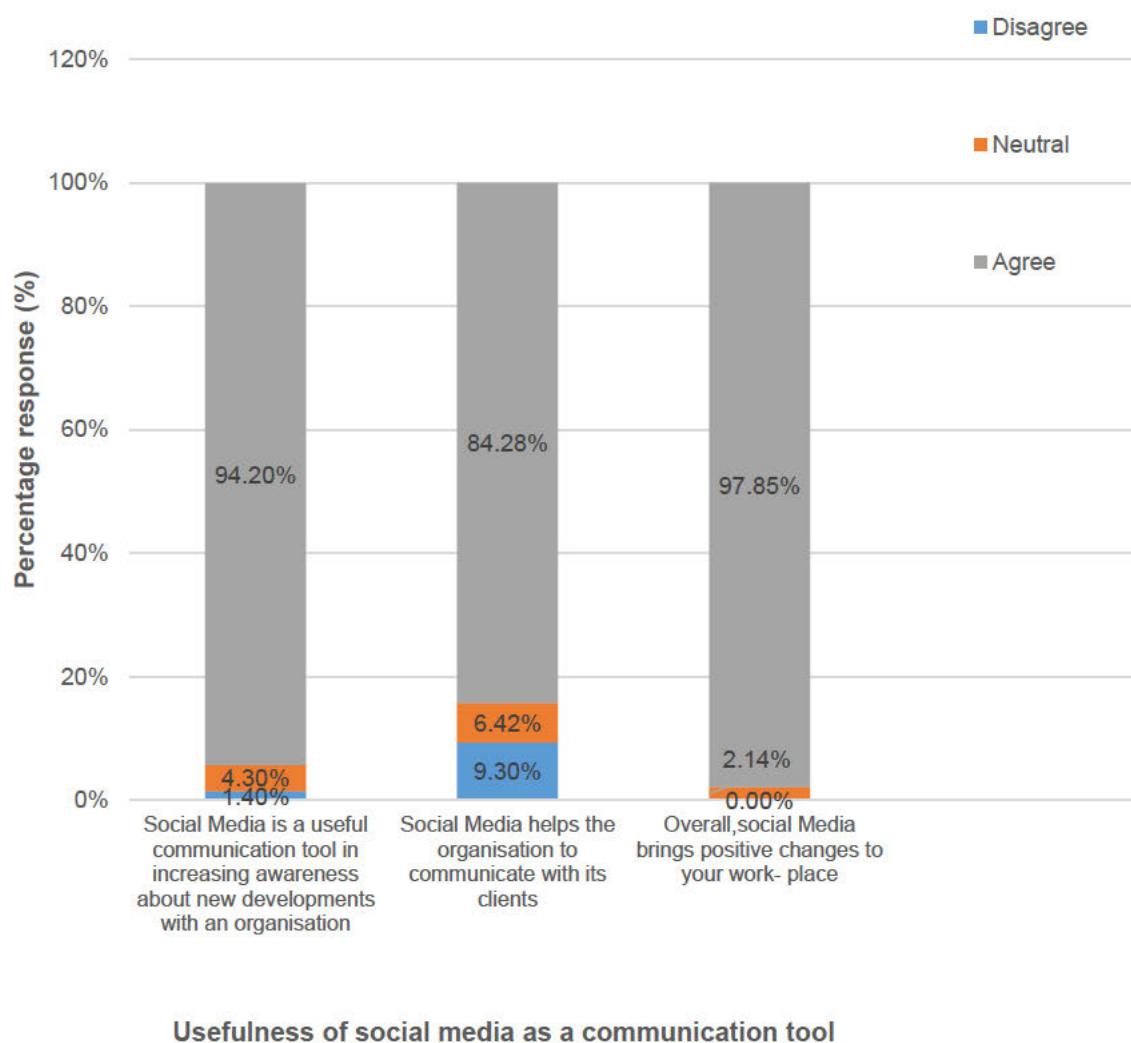


Figure 4.13 Usefulness of social media as a communication tool

Figure 4.13 shows that the majority of the respondents agreed with the three statements as illustrated in the bar graph. Figure 4.13 presents that 97.85% of the respondents agreed that social media brings positive changes to the workplace, and 2.4% were neutral on this statement. The literature reviewed highlighted the extent to which social media improves organisational communication and strengthens organisational culture (Badea, 2014: 14). A study conducted by Davis (2018: 56) confirms the power of social media as an effective organisational communication tool that offers two-way communication in an organisation.

Figure 4.13 confirms that 94% of the respondents believed that the adoption of social media is a useful communication tool in increasing awareness about new developments within an organisation, while 4.3 % were neutral about this statement and less than 4.4% disagreed.

4.6 Hypothesis testing

According to Jim (2020: 186), hypothesis testing is a process used by the researcher to assess the strong point of evidence from the sample and provide a framework for making determinations related to the population. Hartshom (2015: 228) affirms that a hypothesis is a concept developed when there is an existing theory that provides a clear and specific idea about an outcome of two or more variables. It provides a method for understanding how reliably one can extrapolate observed findings in a sample to the larger population from which the sample was drawn (Hartshom, 2015: 228).

The purpose of hypothesis testing is to provide a link between the specific research question and the underlying theory. It also helps in the analysis of data and assesses the validity and reliability of the research, whilst serving as the foundation or proof of the research.

Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one states that there is a significant relationship between statement 11 (social media being effective as a communication tool at SASSA) and statement 19

(sharing of business results with employees becomes more regular due to the use of social media in SASSA).

Table 4.4 Frequency data table for social media as a communication tool at SASSA (n = 140)

		Statement 17	Statement 19	Statement 23	Statement 27
Statement 11	Pearson Correlation	0.039	0.207*	0.340**	-0.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.650	0.014	0.000	0.830
	N	140	140	140	140

According to Table 4.4, there is a significant positive correlation relationship between social media being an effective communication tool at SASSA (statement 11) and the statement that the sharing of business results with employees has become more regular due to the use of social media in SASSA (statement 19). This means that the hypothesis has been accepted. Baruah (2015: 5) postulates that social media has a variety of avenues through which employees can communicate with the external environment. The findings of the study conducted by Jaftar, Shuang and Wasim (2019: 18) on social media usage and employee job performance demonstrated that personal and work-related use of social media could enhance employee effectiveness through knowledge exchange.

Hypothesis two

The second hypothesis suggests that there is a statistically significant correlation between the effectiveness of social media (statement 11) and social media being a useful communication tool in increasing awareness about the new developments within an organisation (statement 23). Battrawi and Mutseb (2015: 86) further highlight that social media is more than just a means of communication, with widespread influence over organisations as well as remote areas, social media has transformed communication by bringing information to people that previously could not be reached.

Hypothesis three

Hypothesis three states there is a significant relationship between statement 11 (social media is effective as a communication tool at SASSA) and statement 17 (management uses social media to communicate strategies and business information with employees and actively seeks feedback via social media).

A Pearson correlation test (Table 4.4) revealed that the p-value is 0.656 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. This result indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool (statement 11) and management using social media to communicate strategies and business information with employees and actively seeking feedback via social media (statement 17). This hypothesis is rejected. A study that was undertaken by Rasheed (2021: 5) postulates that social media can complement the organisational communication strategy which is critical for employee engagement. Furthermore, Scott (2016: 89) affirms that effective communication enables individuals and employees to coordinate activities to accomplish shared objectives and assists in decision-making, problem-solving, and change management practices. Leornadi (2014: 38) proposes that managerial communication should be repeated several times using a variety of social media tools in order to be truly operational. In conclusion, social media allows the management to provide updates on the grievances of employees and maintain innovation through the prevalence of constant advancements in social media (Cowan, Hamilton and Leader-Chive 2016: 40).

Hypothesis four

This hypothesis (four) suggests that there is a significant relationship between statement 11 (social media being an effective communication tool at SASSA) and statement 27 (messages disseminated by the organisation through social media platforms reach the intended organisational stakeholders).

Table 4.4 shows that the Pearson correlation test revealed that the p-value is 0.830 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the results show that there is no significant relationship and therefore the hypothesis test is rejected between social media as effective communication and messages disseminated by an organisation reach the intended stakeholders. Contrary to the findings of this study, Kolzow (2014: 39) established that social media has empowered organisations to not only improve their

communication skills but also to connect with people both internally and externally on a much deeper level.

Hypothesis five

Hypothesis five states that there is a significant correlation between statement 12 (I have knowledge about social media) and statement 20 (employees using social media to encourage friends and relatives).

Table 4.5 Frequency data on the relationship between knowledge of social media and employees using social media (n = 140)

		Statement 20
Statement 12	Pearson Correlation	0.136
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.110
	N	140

Table 4.5 reveals that the analysis shows no significant correlation, and the hypothesis has been rejected. The p-value < 0.110 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. According to Tidinet (2014: 9) organisations used to advertise jobs on notice boards, newspapers, or walls but today recruiters are steadily using social media to recruit and find the best talent. In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Mulazuzi (2018: 9) highlight that social media is regarded as an asset in the workplace and presents employees with a great number of opportunities, the study also revealed that using social media increases employee productivity such that the sharing of knowledge between the organisation's internal and external environment becomes more effective and responsive. Sultana, Abdullah and Tabassum (2015: 56) and Tilahun (2016: 98), concluded that more and more people are using social networking sites to connect with colleagues, friends, and family as well as make collaborations. Social media has indeed gained entry and popularity in the workplace where it has not only affected employee skills, abilities, knowledge, qualification, and motivation levels but also productivity and communication (Munene 2020; 224 Tilahun 2016: 98).

Hypothesis six

The sixth hypothesis suggests that there is a significant relationship between the image of the organisation being improved in the public eye (statement 21) and social media as an essential tool in building and strengthening personal relations and enhancing positive organisational culture (statement 25).

Table 4.6 Frequency data on the role of social media on company reputation (n = 140)

		Statement 25	Statement 29
Statement 21	Pearson Correlation	0.227**	0.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007	0.378
	N	140	140

Table 4.6 revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between the statement that the image of the organisation can be improved in the public eye through the use of social media (statement 21) and social media being an essential tool for strengthening personal relations amongst co-workers and enhancing positive organisational culture (statement 25). The hypothesis is accepted because the p-value is less than 0.05. According to Felix (2016: 41), the corporate world has indeed been taken over by social media, and the influence of social media has led to the growing impact of different genres of communication, in which information is easily conveyed and interactions are quick. Davis (2018: 56) provides a validation of the power of social media as an organisational communication tool. His article agrees with the existing research argument that social media has a huge influence on organisational communication. A study led by Rashard (2014: 4) determined that social media pervades all aspects of organisational life, and thus has a significant influence on organisational culture. However, the presence of the organisation online can be maintained through the use of social media in the place of work (Aguenza, Al-Kassem and Som 2018: 46).

Hypothesis seven

This hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between the image of the organisation being improved in the public eye (statement 21) and overall social media bringing positive changes to the workplace (statement 29).

In relation to Table 4.6, the Pearson correlation test revealed an insignificant correlation between the image of the organisation being improved in the public eye (statement 21) and overall social media bringing positive changes to the workplace (statement 29). Contrary to the findings of this study, Rashard (2016: 4) stated that the increase in the usage of social media for work purposes results in positive improvements on the organisation's overall communication and culture.

Hypothesis eight

This hypothesis suggests that there is a significant correlation between statement 13 (social media providing employees with benefits) and statement 20 (employees using social media to encourage friends and relatives into employment opportunities within the organisation).

Table 4.7 Frequency data for the relationship between social media benefits and employees using social media to encourage friends and relatives into employment opportunities.

		Statement 20
Statement 13	Pearson Correlation	0.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.794
	N	140

In Table 4.7, a Pearson Correlation test revealed an insignificant correlation between social media providing employees with benefits (statement 13) and employees using social media to encourage friends and relatives into employment opportunities (statement 20). The p-value is 0.794, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 and thus produces a non-significant outcome. Eren and Vardalier (2013: 859) support this finding that the usage of social media in organisations does not have a direct effect on employees' sense of belonging. However, Sloalanova, Llorens and Ventura (2014:103)

social media has been given credit for assisting employees to become more productive, and knowledgeable, become connected to other skilled people; improve communication channels, and share skills. A report by Lombardi, 2012 stated that employment postings with the need for social media skills grew by 87% between 2011 and 2012. (Venkatraman, 2013: 174). Moreover, studies also support the extensive use of social media by the organisations for their recruitment and hiring activities (Leonardi 2017: 150).

Hypothesis nine

This hypothesis states that there is a significant correlation between statement 26 (in the presence of social media, employees feel confident about the organisation's future) and statement 28 (employees are committed to innovation and development with the use of social media at SASSA).

Table 4.8 Frequency data for the relationship between presence of social media and employees commitment to innovation and development

		Statement 28	Statement 31
Statement 26	Pearson Correlation	0.229**	-0.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.909
	N	140	140

Table 4.8 revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between the statement that in the presence of social media, employees feel confident about the organisation's future (statement 26) and that employees are committed to innovation and development with the use of social media at SASSA (statement 28). The p-value is less than 0.05, therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. In support of the findings of this study Rasheed (2021: 20) states that, to guarantee the performance of the management as well as the levels of engagement by employees, effective communication must become imperative for the organisation's success. New research suggests that a shift in organisational communication can result in employees that are more engaged. These results support the studies done by Dong (2015: 114), Nkwe and Cohen (2017: 157), and Burclaff and

Johnson (2016: 189), who noted that the use of social media across networks, allows employees to make meaningful and quick decisions and assess alternatives.

Hypothesis ten

Hypothesis ten states that there is a significant correlation between statement 26 (in the presence of social media, employees feel confident and certain about the organisation future) and statement 31 (social media policy guides employees while interacting on social),

In Table 4.8, a Pearson correlation test revealed an insignificant correlation between (in the presence of social media, employees feeling confident and certain about the organisation's future) and statement 31 (social media policy guides employees while interacting on social media). The p-value < 0.909 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. According to Government Communication (2011: 9) when it comes to the use of social media by government employees, the code of conduct for employees should be treated with respect and be used as the guiding rule. This allows government employees to act in a private capacity to promote issues of public interest and influence the opinions of their external stakeholders.

A study undertaken by Nasirudeen and Adeline (2017: 15) affirms that having a social media policy that offers rules, strategies, and expected behaviour, allows employees to feel confident in the online presence of the organisation such that their activities on social platforms promote the organisations communication and culture, drive awareness and increase loyalty. According to a social media survey report conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management in 2011, about 40% of organisations have a formal social media policy.

Hypothesis eleven

This hypothesis states that there is a significant correlation between the statement that social media has a positive impact on employee effectiveness (statement 14) and statement 29 (overall, social media brings positive changes to your workplace).

Table 4.9 Frequency data for the relationship between positive impact of social media on employee effectiveness and positive changes in the workplace

		Statement 29
Statement 14	Pearson Correlation	0.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.485
	N	140

Table 4.9, a Pearson correlation test revealed an insignificant correlation between social media having a positive impact on employee effectiveness (statement 14), and overall social media bringing positive changes to the workplace (statement 29). The p-value is 0.485 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 and thus produces a non-significant outcome. However, Cilliers (2013: 567) and Patterson (2014: 256) state that online technologies are valued in their place because of their effectiveness in refining understanding and teamwork, increasing lateral communication, and building relationships. Studies further revealed that social networking sites intensify the productivity of employees at work Dong and Wu, 2015: 127).

Hypothesis twelve

Hypothesis twelve states that there is a significant correlation between statement 15 (employee behaviour is influenced by social media communication) and statement 22 (the restriction of access to social media sites for employees has a negative impact on staff morale and organisational culture).

Table 4.10 Frequency data for the relationship between the negative impacts of restriction of social media sites on staff moral and employee behaviour

		Statement 22
Statement 15	Pearson Correlation	0.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.670
	N	140

In relation to Table 4.10, the Pearson correlation test revealed an insignificant correlation between employee behaviour is influenced by social media communication (statement 15) and the restriction of access to social media sites for employees has a negative impact on staff morale and organisational culture (statement 22). The p-value is 0.670, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 and thus produces a non-significant result. The hypothesis is rejected. Conversely, according to research done by Hung *et al.* (2015: 45) on 10 organisations in Taiwan, increased access to social media sites for employees boosts organisational culture and emboldens employees to share knowledge, indirectly increasing organisational performance.

Hypothesis thirteen

This hypothesis states that there is a significant correlation between statement 16 (social media helping the organisation to communicate with its clients) and statement 30 (loyalty, trust, and commitment are prevalent at SASSA).

Table 4.11 Frequency data on the relationship between customer trust and the ability of social media to help the organisation communicate with its clients.

		Statement 30
Statement 16	Pearson Correlation	-0.136
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.108
	N	140

The Pearson correlation test in table 4.11 revealed that the p-value is < 0.108 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. This result indicates that there is no

significant relationship between social media helping the organisation to communicate with its clients (statement 16) and loyalty, trust, and commitment being prevalent at SASSA (statement 30). The p-value is greater than 0.05, therefore the hypothesis is rejected. Contrary to the findings of this study, a study by Mzizi (2021: 26), found that the majority of organisations use social media for communication purposes and thereby significantly changing the way organisation's function and communicate. Organisations are gradually using social media as a new way of communication to reach customers more efficiently and to spread information about their operations more rapidly (Aguenza, Al-Kassem and Som 2015: 57). The success of any organisation depends on the productivity of employees.

Hypothesis fourteen

This hypothesis suggests that there is a significant correlation between statement 24 (social media usage supports the values that are important for organisational performance and products) and statement 29 (overall, social media brings positive changes to your workplace).

Table 4.12 Frequency data for the relationship between the influence of social media usage on organisational performance and positive changes brought by social media.

		Statement 29
Statement 24	Pearson Correlation	0.134
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.114
	N	140

In relation to Table 4.12, a Pearson correlation test revealed an insignificant correlation between statement 24 (social media usage supports the values that are important for organisational performance and products) and statement 29 (overall, social media brings positive changes to your workplace). The p-value is <0.114 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 and thus produces a non-significant result. According to Munene and Nyaribo (2015: 141), the success of the organisation mostly depends on employees, who are considered the most imperative assets of any organisation, because

their ability to create values enables organisations to have sustainable communication and culture, and collaborative relationships. This further supports past research results such as Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2016: 87), who noted that the various social media platforms, allow organisations in the USA to make good decisions on which platform to adopt and how they should be used. Baker *et al.* (2016: 45) discovered that using social media offers the management an opportunity to interact with their subordinates quickly. If an issue arises that requires immediate attention, managers can reach out to their employees through social media channels and gather the information they need to make an informed decision. Employees also use social media to make quick decisions, which in turn increases their productivity.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented and interpreted the analysis of the data responses of participants at SASSA and provided an in-depth discussion of the results gathered from the data captured. The results of this study are presented through descriptive analyses to clarify the importance of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture in an organisation. Fourteen hypotheses were tested using the SPSS version 25 for Windows. Furthermore, the study also used a single non-parametric test that includes Pearson's Correlation tests on the data collected to enhance the in-depth analysis of the findings and show the relationships between the variables of the questionnaire.

The next chapter will provide the conclusions and recommendations arising from the analysis of the data, as well as the directions for future research on the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture at the SASSA.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of the study, reports on the conclusions, and makes recommendations for future research. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture. SASSA in the Eastern Cape was used as a case study for this in-house investigation. It is noted that the influence of social media has a huge impact on organisational communication and culture. The conclusion is drawn in line with the study objectives and in an attempt to answer the study's research question. Only employees of SASSA in the Eastern Cape participated in this study. The study employed a quantitative research approach in nature where structured questionnaires were used as a data collection method. A pre-coded closed questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale was personally administered to the sample respondents ensuring a high response rate of the questionnaire. The collected responses were collected and compiled into a set of data analysed with SPSS Version 25 for Windows. The results of the data collected were presented in a form of pie charts, bar graphs, and tables.

The findings were discussed by the researcher using descriptive statistics and inferential methods. Thirteen hypotheses were developed and a single non-parametric was used in the testing the relationship between the variables of the research. The findings of the study were used to offer recommendations and the recommendations from the study will be made available to the department.

5.2 Research objectives

The main aim of this study was to investigate the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture.

- To identify which social media platforms are most effective in organisational communication at SASSA.
- To analyse the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool at SASSA.

- To examine the relationship between social media and organisational communication and organisational culture at the SASSA.
- To offer recommendations to SASSA on the adoption of social media as a communication tool.

Based on the analysis of this study, these objectives were achieved. The outcomes of this study support earlier findings indicating, in contrast to traditional marketing techniques, social media is an interactive process that has boosted customer satisfaction and direct connection with a business. In addition, results from this study further show that, increasing the quantity of direct communication with customers and the general public, social media has also improved the quality of responsiveness at a much faster rate. Additionally, all participants' who took part in this poll concurred that social media use in an organization is now expected rather than a choice.

5.3 Conclusion

Social media research is a topic that is persistently developing, with researchers developing new approaches and techniques to understand the way organisations use social media channels to communicate and improve organisational communication and culture (Mzizi, 2021: 128).

Furthermore, the study noted that social media has become an increasingly persuasive form of communication in today's society. Managers in organisations must continue to develop strategies and evaluate how the specific practices of these platforms have supported their organisations from within, as well as optimal engagement with their stakeholders and the public in general. The incorporation of social media in the organisation's communication strategies has a variety of effects and as such, different aspects of organisational communication have felt the impact of social media (Dewan and Ramprasad, 2014: 121). However, the inclusion of social media comes with both negative and positive impacts on the quality of organisational communication and organisational culture.

Online technologies affect every facet of organisational life. The use of social media enhances employee communication, builds trust, and enables early detection of wrongdoings of the organisation. Moreover, employees and managers learn faster and better than they would without social media communication (Ellison *et al.*, 2015: 28). The use of social media for work-related purposes provides a positive impact on the overall culture and communication of the organisation. The study concludes that communication is stimulated through social media, and internal and external communication can thus be highlighted.

5.4 Theoretical summary of study

This research is based on the systems theory. Badea (2016: 16) maintains that the systems theory speculates that an organisation is influenced by the environment in which it operates. In an ideal world, every organisation would be the reflection of the economic and social-political environment that surrounds it would also benefit from the resources that are derived from the surroundings. The effectiveness of the organisation is determined by how absorbent an organisation allows for access to the flow of information (Langer 2016: 68). The adoption of social media describes how the systems theory allows communication to flow from the organisation to the outside world and internally. Generally speaking, the function of the management of an organisation is to institute the goals of the organisation and plan the means by which the organisation will achieve those goals, control and, execute them. The existence of systems theory provides a powerful, but simple way of viewing organisations that use social media for their communication and culture-dependent purposes. Hence, when discussing the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture, the framework of the systems theory is very relevant.

Based on the analysis of this study, the following conclusions were derived from the literature and the findings of this research.

- The findings of this study also corresponded well with systems theorist Luhmann's research, which was used in Gunaratne's (2008) study. Luhmann stated that each modern organisation has a distinctive "communication medium" that affects how it engages with its surroundings.

- The current study's conclusive results showed that an organization's usage of social media as a communication tool depends on the culture and organisational structure of that organisation and its personnel.
- The results of this study also confirmed the findings from Hickson III's (1973) study, which focused mainly with the Systems Theory and how organisations use communication to change their internal structures in response to changing external demands. Together, these findings show that the Systems Theory was a suitable theoretical foundation for the current research.

5.5 Recommendations

It is vital to consider the growth and implementation of social media at SASSA because social media can help to improve the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness. The main recommendations arising from the study outcomes are:

Analyse the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool at SASSA

The researcher recommends that organisations should implement and standardise social media tools. This could lead to a strategy for improved and updated organisational cultures and communication, improve communication between employees, intensify efficiency, boost confidence and motivation, and foster a thriving organisational culture (Akkiirman and Harris 2018: 56; Bennet *et al.* 2013b).

Furthermore, Bowes (2018) believes that a communication gap can contribute to underdevelopment in the sense that people or beneficiaries cannot access the information they need to advance their livelihoods. Therefore, top management must consider the standing importance of active communication in refining and cultivating successful implementation of developmental creativities that cannot be questioned.

To examine the relationship between social media and organisational communication and organisational culture at the SASSA

The findings of the study provide a strong idea of the actual importance of social media and its benefits. Organisations are encouraged to adopt social media to benefit from increased collaboration, two-way communication, and improved relationships with their

stakeholders. Top management needs to understand the different uses of social media to improve communication between co-workers and the organisation and choose those that are suitable for their operations. Adopting social media in an organisation boosts employee communication, improves the work environment, increases knowledge exchanges, builds trust, makes people aware, enables early identification of organisational wrongdoing, finds new human resources, and facilitates an understanding of customer opinion, as well as the development of a happy work environment.

It is also recommended that in adopting the use of social media, a comprehensive governance framework should be put into place to ensure that all security concerns and cautions are taken into consideration, to ensure that the negative impacts of social media are eliminated or minimised. Several organisations have social media use policies for their employees.

To identify which social media platforms are most effective in organisational communication at SASSA.

The findings indicated that 6.9% of respondents use Facebook, while 30.7% of the respondents indicated that they use Twitter. These are regarded as better platforms because they offer simple, low-cost ways to organise members, schedule meetings, disseminate information, and gauge public opinion. Therefore, the study recommends that organisations make use of the proper social media channels so that the managers can use them to communicate with their intended public instantaneously.

To offer recommendations to SASSA on the adoption of social media as a communication tool

Many organisations have been significantly shaped by the development of technology. Management needs to perceive any kind of shift in organisational communication which makes an organisation face both challenges and prospects. They should always contemplate the advantages and disadvantages of social media since its use is likely to increase in the future.

Organisational communication has become a two-way process with the adoption of social media. People not only receive information from organisations but also have a platform

to reply and contribute. Organisations need to consider a high level of openness and curiosity to new ideas that are critical to the successful application of social media tools.

5.6 Directions for future research

This research investigated the influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture using a case study of SASSA in the Eastern Cape. A quantitative approach was employed in this research and questionnaires were used as a method of collecting data from the sample respondents. The majority of the respondents in this study had different opinions on the influence of social media on organisational communication and culture. Future research could focus on the impact of social media on employee effectiveness and performance.

Future research could be done using a qualitative research approach and mixed research approach that will allow the researcher to incorporate the use of interviews to collect data and further analyse the data using different types of hypothesis tests to validate the relationship between the research variables. Scholars could also investigate their research with other SASSA units in other provinces in South Africa to carry out a comparative analysis. Direction for future research could also use a larger sample of different organisations from other sectors of activities.

5.7 Practical implications

The result can be used by the managers to understand the different areas of organisational communication and culture that can be improved with the use of social media. Therefore, to advance to new levels of connectivity, engagement, and performance, organisations like SASSA must have an online presence. A high response rate is needed for the engaged and active style of communication found on social media. The utilisation of social media effectively improves professional knowledge, improves online communication, attracts new stakeholders and customers, and allows for organisations to gain support. It is essential to understand that communication helps to hold organisations accountable and contributes to nurturing the standing profile of the organisation.

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Appendix A

Faculty of Management Sciences

Department of Public Management and Economics

Date: 21 October 2020

RE: ASSISTANCE: QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETION

Dear Participant

I am currently a registered Masters student with the Faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am conducting a research study entitles: The influence of social media on organisational communication and organisational culture a Case Study of the South African Social Security Agency in the Eastern Cape. You have been identified as one of the respondents to partake in my study, so I kindly request your assistance in completing the attached questionnaire by completing this questionnaire.

It should take approximately 15-20 minutes of your valued time. From an ethical perspective, please be assured that all the information you provide will be strictly confidential, all responses will remain anonymous and the responses will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Should you not understand any question in this questionnaire, kindly contact me on the details provided. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

Yours truly,

Sabo Dlelengana

Student: Miss Sabo Dlelengana

Cell: 0781496573

Supervisor: Dr.R. Adebayo

Contact Details (031 373 6422

Appendix B

TOPIC: THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF SASSA IN THE EASTERN CAPE.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Instructions

- Please answer all questions.
- Please indicate your response by ticking one response only.
- Please do not leave any question/ statement blank.

1. Please indicate your gender

1.1	FEMALE	
1.2	MALE	

2. Which age category do you fall under?

2.1	20-25	
2.2	26-30	
2.3	31-35	
2.4	36-40	
2.5	41-50	
2.6	Above 51	

3. Please indicate your period/years of service at the South African Social Security Agency?

3.1	0-5	
3.2	5-10	
3.3	11-15	
3.4	16-20	
3.5	21-25	
3.6	More than 25	

4. How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

4.1	1- 2	
4.2	3- 5	
4.3	6- 7	
4.4	10-15	
4.5	16-20	

5. What is the estimated amount of data you spend on social media per month?

5.1	1 GIG	
5.2	2 GIG	
5.3	5 GIG	
5.4	10 GIG	
5.5	More than 10 GiG	

6. What is your Home Language?

6.1	IsiXhosa	
6.2	English	
6.3	IsiZulu	
6.4	Afrikaans	
6.5	Other	

7. Please indicate whether you are a permanent or contract employee at the South African Social Security Agency?

7.1	Permanent	
7.2	Contract	

8. Do you use Social Media for work-related purposes?

8.1	Yes	
8.2	No	

9. Which social media platform do you use?

9.1	Facebook	
9.2	Twitter	
9.3	Whatsapp	
9.4	LinkedIN	

10. Do you use Social Media for work-related purposes?

10.1	Yes	
10.2	No	

Section B

This section contains questions related to the research question: The influence of Social media on organisational communication and organisational culture a case study of the SASSA in the Eastern Cape.

Please tick the appropriate box

	Questions	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
11.	Social media is effective as a communication tool at SASSA					
12.	I have knowledge about social media					
13.	Social media provides employees with benefits					
14.	Social media has a positive impact on employee effectiveness					
15.	Employee behaviour is influenced by social media communication					
16.	Social media helps the organisation to communicate with its clients					
17.	Management uses Social Media to communicate strategies and business information with employees and actively seeks feedback via Social Media					
18.	Organisations that have an online presence encounter challenges via social media					
19.	The sharing of business results with employees					

	has becomes more regular due to the use of social media in SASSA					
20.	Employees use social media to encourage friends and relatives into employment opportunities with the organisation					
21.	The image of the organisation in the public eye can be improved through the use of social media					
22.	The restriction of access to social media sites for employees has a negative impact on staff morale and organisational culture					
23.	Social media is a useful communication tool in increasing awareness about new developments within an organisation					
24.	Social media usage supports the values that are important for organisational performance and productivity					
25.	Social media is an essential tool in building and strengthening personal relations amongst co-workers thus enhancing positive organisational culture					
26.	In the presence of social media, employees feel confident and certain about the organisation future					

27.	Messages disseminated by your organisation through social media platforms reach the intended organisational stakeholders					
28.	Employees are committed to innovation and development with the use of social media at SASSA.					
29.	Overall, social media brings positive changes to your work-place					
30.	Loyalty, trust, and commitment are prevalent at SASSA					
31	Social Media policy guides employees while interacting on social media					

Appendix C

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SASSA Office
Private Bag X 9001
East London
5200

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a student at the Durban University of Technology currently studying towards my Master's degree in Public relations and Communications. I am conducting research entitled: **The influence of Social Media on organisational communication and organisational culture: A case study of the South African Social Security Agency in the Eastern Cape**. To achieve the objective of my study, I am kindly requesting your permission to administer a structured questionnaire to selected employees at the South African Social Security Agency.

In addition, participation will be voluntary and no participant will be forced to be part of the research study. Therefore, the completion of the questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes. The questionnaires will be personally distributed by the researcher.

You can contact me at cyphosaboinar@gmail.com or 078 149 6573.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully
Ms, Sabo Dlelengana

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Appendix D

Request for permission to conduct research study



Ms S Dlelengana
Department of Public Relations Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology

Dear Ms Dlelengana

Re: Request for permission to conduct research study

I acknowledge receipt of your letter requesting permission to conduct research at SASSA Eastern Cape on "The influence of Social Media on organisational communication and organisational culture: A case study of the South African Social Security Agency in Eastern Cape." SASSA is a progressive Agency which promotes research that enhances knowledge and development. Please be advised that permission is granted for you to undertake this study at SASSA. Please present this letter when you access SASSA offices or engage with staff.

Of important note for you as you embark on this project is that SASSA cannot decree to its officials, customers, beneficiaries and stakeholders whether or not to participate in your research study. However, information that you will obtain from SASSA officials and beneficiaries should be treated with confidentiality whether in terms of storage of data, analysis or during publication process. It is advisable to remove identifiers such as names, vernacular terms and geographical hints when writing up your dissertation. Kindly note that the information obtained should only be used for the intended purpose of research.

Furthermore, SASSA cannot guarantee your safety as you go around its premises and does not promise you funding of your research study at any given stage.

The Communications Unit at the Regional Office will provide you with information and approved reports on your subject matter of study if requested, and if information is available. I wish to thank you for choosing SASSA to collect data for your study and will gladly appreciate to be furnished with a copy of your completed dissertation.

Kind regards,

MR Z MPETA
ACTING REGIONAL EXECUTIVE MANAGER
DATE: 21/06/2021



*paying the right social grant, to the right person,
at the right time and place. NJALO!*

South African Social Security Agency
Eastern Cape Region

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Culwyn • East London
Private Bag 29201 • Chelmsford • East London 6000
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Appendix E

Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research Study

