

**AN EXPLORATION TOWARDS DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA  
UTILISATION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

**By**

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AN EXPLORATION TOWARDS DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA  
UTILISATION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved daughter, Anaya Chebet, you have been the inspiration behind this project.

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## ABSTRACT

Over recent decades, the internet transformed human interaction by providing a dynamic platform that enables millions to communicate and socialise globally. In this context of rapid technological advancement, social media emerged as a powerful force, revolutionising not only personal communication but also integrating into professional environments. This thesis aims to develop a framework for the adoption and utilisation of social media for internal communication within Kenyan organisations. The research explores critical areas such as social media knowledge among employees, patterns of social media use for internal communication, benefits and challenges perceived by employees regarding social media integration, and strategies to enhance its effective adoption and utilisation in organisational settings. The study employed a qualitative research approach, employing a multiple case study design. The findings revealed that while most employees are knowledgeable about social media, they tend not to use them for internal communication, preferring traditional channels such as emails, memos, and meetings. Key demographic factors such as age, gender, and education emerged as significant determinants of social media usage, with younger and more educated employees showing greater receptiveness to these platforms. However, several challenges hinder broader adoption, including resistance to technological change, data security concerns, and a lack of adequate training. To address these issues and promote wider adoption, organisations might consider implementing targeted strategies such as comprehensive training programs, developing clear social media usage policies, and enhancing technological infrastructure. The overall impact of social media on organisational communication is viewed positively, significantly enhancing information dissemination, employee engagement, and operational efficiency. The thesis presents a novel framework for social media adoption and utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations, building on insights from existing models and aligning with the Diffusion of Innovation Theory and complemented by the Uses and Gratification Theory. The framework is structured around five key phases, each corresponding to a distinct step in the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, aiming to systematically improve social media adoption in organisational settings. The thesis concludes that Kenyan organisations exhibit a strong understanding of social media as a multifaceted tool for communication, interaction, and information exchange. However, there remains some ambiguity in the classification of platforms and curiosity about evolving digital tools. Recommendations for organisations include developing clear social media policies, enhancing digital literacy, and investing in technological infrastructure to support effective social media use.

**Keywords:** Social media, Communication, Internal communication, Interpersonal communication, Employees, Diffusion of Innovations theory, Internet, Connectivity, Social media framework and Organisations.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BBS	:	Bulletin Board System
CEO	:	Chief Executive Officer
DoI	:	Diffusion of Innovations Theory
FGDs	:	Focus Group Discussions
ICT	:	Information Communication Technology
ISM	:	Internal Social Media
KPLC	:	Kenya Power and Lighting Company
UGT	:	Uses and Gratifications Theory
UNISA	:	University of South Africa
SNS	:	Social Networking Sites

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# CHAPTER ONE

## OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The internet gained prominence over the years and utterly transformed humanity. It provided a one-of-a-kind platform for millions of users to communicate and socialise, allowing communication across distances without physical limitations (Parveen, 2012; Sing, et al., 2022). Technology has now become an inevitable part of human existence, especially in the 21st century. It is from this technological advanced era that social media emerged and so far, it has taken the world by storm and is burgeoning at an unbelievable pace (Treem & Leonardi, 2012: 143; Karpoor, et al., 2018). Social media has changed the world. The swift and extensive uptake of these technologies is transforming the ways we connect with partners, obtain news and mobilise for political change (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Social media gained popularity over the years, for instance, Facebook, which was developed by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg, as of the second quarter of 2023 had 3.05 billion monthly active users, (Statista 2024). Of these numbers, 2.09 billion are daily active users (Statista 2024). Also, of note is WhatsApp with over 3 billion monthly active users as of January 2024 (Statista 2024). These statistics show the penetration of social media in the global market.

A report, Digital 2024 Global Overview, by We Are Social and Meltwater reveals that the internet is now used by more than half of the world's population. The study revealed that as of January 2024, there were over 5.35 billion global internet users. The report further reveals global social media users are at 5.04 billion. The report states Africa has about 646 million internet users and social media users are at 384 million. The report reveals that the acquisition of mobile phones positively influenced the number of social media users. For instance, in Africa, most social media users access social media via mobile phones. Narrowing it down to Kenya, according to national statistics, by the beginning of 2024 internet penetration stood at 40.8 percent of the total population. This increase in the internet use is attributed to smart phone affordability and the data bundles offered by various internet service operators in the country (Digital 2024: Kenya 2024). The report further outlined that the number of estimated internet users is at 22.71 million and that Kenyan consumers acquired smartphones offering mobile phone applications which include social media. Social media users in Kenya stood at around 13.05 million by



January 2024 (Digital 2024: Kenya 2024). According to the above statistics, it is evident that quite a large proportion of the Kenyan population has access to social media. This social media growth use in the country is majorly attributed to the uptake of smartphone use. A report published in Statista predicted that the number of social networking users in the world was expected to increase up to 2.95 billion by 2020, but these figures were surpassed way before 2020. This affirms how powerful social media is and how its adoption is accelerating at unbelievable pace. According to Statista, as of January 2024, social networking users are plus minus 5.04 billion (Statista 2024).

Organisational communication through these social media platforms has become essential (Huy & Shipilov, 2012; Oksa, Kaakinen, Savela, Ellonen & Oksanen, 2023). They have a significant impact on the exchange and accessibility of information (Badea 2014; Waititu & Barker, 2023). It is impossible to avoid the dynamic process of communication, especially in organisational contexts. The routine activities of these organisations depend on communication (Oksa, et al., 2023). Rogers (2003: 5) defines communication as a process where individuals generate and exchange knowledge with one another to arrive at a shared understanding. Researchers attempted to define communication over the years. When discussing organisations, internal communication is defined as communication that occurs within them (Sarpong, 2012). No matter how big or small the organisation, efficient internal communication is essential to its operation (Harris, 2011). Carriere and Bourque (2009) state that an organisation's internal communication practice includes a range of formal and informal communication activities carried out by staff members with the aim of disseminating information to one or more audiences within the organisation.

For internal communication, organisations have long relied on traditional media such as fax machines, bulletin boards, mail, phone calls and face-to-face interactions (Ceridwyn & Hyemi, 2016). However, this is currently changing in favour of progressive technology media including social media, email and intranet (Ceridwyn & Hyemi, 2016). For example, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016, Workplace by Facebook was launched. As the pioneer Facebook is used to connect with family and friends, Workplace by Facebook is used by employees to connect, interact and share information within organisations. The invention of such platforms shows that organisations have a way of adopting social media for internal communication (Facebook 2024). How communication occurs within an organisation necessitates further investigation into this occurrence. However, acquiring applications like Workplace is not free except for non-profits and educational institution staff and therefore organisations need to set aside funds to purchase them. For example, to be able to use the premium version of Workplace, organisations need to part with \$4

per user per month (Facebook 2024). Regardless of the pricey acquisitions of some of these social media tools, it is evident that if adopted in an organisation they could aid in improving internal communication and therefore enhancing organisational performance (Facebook 2024).

An article by Goldwasser and Edwards (2014: 49) stated millennials also known as Generation Y will make up most of the workforce by the year 2025. This is the case in Kenya as the total population is placed at 18,371,526 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2023). This means the millennials and Gen Z's make up most of the workforce in Kenya. Millennials and Gen Z were born into technology and therefore they expect to utilise the same in their workplace. A report by PWC (2013) stated that millennials expect a workplace which includes a technology ecosystem such as social networking, instant messaging, video, blogs and wikis which are all forms of social media. Therefore, organisations ready to incorporate new technology such as social media into their day-to-day internal communication activities, have a stronger chance to attract and sustain millennials. This adoption of social media ultimately leads to improved productivity in the organisations (PWC 2013).

In view of the above, it is evident that new technology such as social media is now offering organisations a chance to find different channels of communicating internally with their employees. Internal communication is a vital tool for knowledge exchange, networking, building interpersonal relationships and collaboration among employees and managers in an organisational setting (Naslund, 2010; Isaacson and Peacey, 2012; Waititu & Barker, 2023). It is therefore imperative for managers and employees to be knowledgeable of the correct channels to use to enhance effective internal communication in the workplace. Since communication is a two-way process, managers should strive to use channels that allows for feedback from their subordinates (Emerald, 2022).

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The changes in communication practices of 21<sup>st</sup> century organisations is revolutionary. Organisations are now spending a fortune to improve both internal and external communication practices in a bid to enhance organisational performance and to stay at par with the ever-changing technological sphere (Men, et al., 2020). It is evident that communication is an inevitable part of organisational life and is the foundation to the functioning of organisations (Tariszka-Semegine, 2012). Internal communication occurs within an organisation, and it can alternatively be labelled as employee communication (Berger, 2008; Smidts, Van Riel & Pruyn, 2001: 1051), organisational communications (Berger, 2008), staff

communication (Stone, 1995: 115) or internal communications (Cornelissen, 2004: 189; Kalla, 2005: 302). It encompasses various methods, such as internal newsletters and intranet an organisation employs to communicate with its employees (Cornelissen, 2004: 189). Effective internal communication is crucial for the success of an organisation and is essential for daily operations (Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Robson & Tourish, 2005; Zaumane & Leščevica, 2021). This is because employees are a vital shareholder group in the survival of organisations (Cornelissen, 2008). Internal communication often encompasses both formal and informal communication known as grapevine (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Berger (2008) points out that internal communication is important to ensure an organisation works properly and is used to inform employees on all aspects of organisational life. It is viewed as one of the most significant activities within an organisation. This allows employees to coordinate activities to reach objectives, thereby enhancing their decision-making, socialisation and change-management processes (Berger, 2008). Research indicates that ‘open and transparent’ organisations share information widely, gain employees’ trust and therefore have a more engaged and productive workforce (Berggren & Bernshteyn, 2007). Organisations realised that their internal public, who are employees, are as important to them as the external public, who are customers and stakeholders (Gabcanova, 2011). Such open communication leads to stronger relationships within the organisation.

Effective internal communication has similarly been linked to improved employee performance and job satisfaction (White, Vanc & Stafford, 2012; Nguyen & Ha, 2023). When employees are well informed internally, they can be remarkable ambassadors for the organisation. For example, Coca-Cola Company offers training to their employees through a program called Coca-Cola Ambassador to help them improve their communication with external and internal stakeholders regarding concerns in their business (Iliff, 2016). However, if employees are misinformed, they can be the loudest critics of an organisation (White, Vanc & Stafford, 2012; Nguyen & Ha, 2023). Research studies indicate the importance of well-informed employees and confirms that informed employees are more satisfied with their jobs and perform better (Bartoo & Sias, 2004; Gara & La Porte, 2020).

Existing research on internal communication has always been on the traditional communication channels used before the digital communications era (Lipiainen, Karjaluo & Nevalainen, 2014). This shifted to accommodate the ever-changing sphere of this new technological progressive era. In the past, organisations utilised social media channels mostly for external communication (Lipiainen, Karjaluo & Nevalainen, 2014; Oksa, et al., 2023) but this is now changing to accommodate internal

communication (Huy & Shipilov, 2012; Oksa, et al., 2023). Communication channels are employed to disseminate information from management to employees and vice versa and are therefore the vehicles for internal communication within organisations (Berger, 2008). As a result, organisations had to invest in technology platforms to aid in employee communication.

Social media in Kenya is growing at an incredible pace and has penetrated the lives of both individuals and organisations. According to a study conducted by We Are Social and Meltwater, their findings indicate that 13.05 million Kenyans are active social media users (Digital in 2024: Kenya). The majority of these 13.05 million access social media via their mobile phones. These numbers indicate how social media has penetrated the Kenyan market. Social media has become more accessible to the population using smartphones. Because of these numbers, the majority Kenyan organisations adopted the use of social media mostly to aid in external communication to prospective clients, customers, suppliers and stakeholders. It is because of this that most studies on social media use in Kenyan organisations are linked to external communication (Muteru, 2014; Okinda, 2014; Ogaro, 2014; Wamuyu, 2022).

In this technologically advanced era, it is therefore the prerogative of organisations to discover ways to integrate social media into their internal communication. According to Wright (2008) people's need for similar features inside the organisation will increase as they see the advantages of social media outside thereof. (Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield, 2013; Zaumane & Leščevica, 2021) affirm this by stating that social media adoption is slowly gaining momentum in organisations as communication tools among employees. Social media in Kenya is increasingly being used as a powerful tool for internal communication within organisations (Wamuyu, 2022). Recent studies show that social media provides a platform for employees to share information, collaborate on projects, and stay connected with their colleagues in real-time (Wamuyu, 2022). However, despite the potential benefits of social media for internal communication, many Kenyan organisations have been slow to adopt and utilise these platforms effectively. This is due to a lack of understanding of how social media can be integrated into their existing communication strategies, as well as concerns about security and privacy. Hence this study will shed light on the adoption and utilisation of social media as internal communication tools in the selected Kenyan organisations.

### **1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

In September 2015, The United Nations came up with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals which countries adopted that will transform the world by the year 2030. Goal number 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals states: “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation”. Information and Communication Technology is an innovation that has rapidly improved which culminated in the rise of the social media era. The rationale for this study originates from the fact that the Kenyan government acknowledges that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a key enabler in the achievement of Vision 2030 goals (2016 ICT Public Sector and Enterprise survey). This is because ICT plays an important role as an innovative economic sector and an enabler to other sectors as well. However, there is still a huge gap that exists in the access and usage of ICTs in public institutions and enterprises (2016 ICT Public Sector and Enterprise survey). Since social media are part of ICT, studies into their organisational adoption and implementation to improve productivity are vital (Tajpour, Hosseini, Mohammadi & Bahman-Zangi, 2022).

Furthermore, a literature review showed that there is indeed a gap in the research of social media uses as internal communication tools in Kenyan organisations. This contrasts with the growing research that seems to stipulate the importance of adopting social media for internal communication within organisations (Huy & Shipilov, 2012; Quirke, 2000; Waititu, 2015; Welch & Jackson, 2007; Oksa, et al., 2023; Waititu & Barker, 2023). Mbatha (2011: 146) points out that something can be an innovation in one area and already accepted elsewhere, thus the need for this research in the Kenyan context. It is evident that effective internal communication plays a pivotal role in the successful functioning of organisations (Robson & Tourish, 2005). Internal communication is the main tool that leads to job satisfaction, motivation, innovation and job performance (Bartoo & Sias, 2004). Effective internal communication not only enhances an organisation’s performance but also significantly influences its corporate reputation and credibility. This is due to employees being perceived as reliable sources by external stakeholders. (Dawkins, 2004). Well-informed employees promote and market the organisation’s brand. Therefore, the motivation behind this study emanates from the recognition of the critical role that social media plays in facilitating internal communication within organisations. By utilising social media platforms, organisations can streamline communication processes, enhance collaboration, and create a more cohesive and connected work environment. The potential of social media to enhance employee engagement and facilitate knowledge sharing is immense, and yet many Kenyan organisations are failing to fully leverage these benefits.

## 1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

For internal communication to be effective, organisations need to review the tools and channels which convey information. Online channels for internal communication are slowly gaining momentum in organisations (Waititu, 2015; Wamuyu, 2022). Social media are forms of online communication platforms being adopted for internal communication in organisations. In contrast, not all organisations are ready to incorporate social media for their internal communication (Huy & Shipilov, 2012). Organisations shy away from the use of social media for internal communication due to security threats, potential loss of confidential or sensitive information, distracting employees from their daily tasks, unreliability of user generated content, wasting company resources that is internet bandwidth and damaged organisational reputation (Van Zyl, 2009; Laradi, et al., 2023). Nevertheless, research shows the benefits of incorporating social media in organisational functions outweigh the negative risks. Such benefits include the chance to gain understanding and response from employees (Goldwasser & Edwards, 2014).

According to Huy and Shipilov (2012: 74), for internal social media initiatives to be effective, organisations need to be considerate towards the emotional capital of employees. This is a new perspective of ensuring that employee well-being in the organisation is emphasised. They describe emotional capital as the collective feelings of goodwill towards a company and its operations. This suggest that emotionally satisfied employees will be open to adopt new internal communication channels such as social media if they feel adopting it will be of use to them and the organisation. The study further found that by using social media, organisations could boost positive feelings of truthfulness, pride, attachment and fun among employees (Huy & Shipilov, 2012: 73).

Evidently, social media adoption can lead to effective internal communication within organisations. The study was therefore significant because Kenya, as in many countries, organisations are increasingly recognising the need to adopt and utilise social media as a tool for internal communication. However, many organisations still struggle to implement effective social media strategies for internal communication. Therefore, a novel framework for social media adoption and utilisation is significant in the following ways; First, the Framework: This study is significant because it will develop a novel framework for social media adoption and utilisation. Such a framework would provide organisations with a structured approach to implementing social media strategies that are tailored to their specific

needs and objectives. This, in turn, would help organisations increase employee engagement, enhance collaboration, and improve overall communication within the organisation.

Second, for organisations: the benefits of implementing a novel framework for social media adoption and utilisation are numerous. Improved internal communication can lead to increased employee productivity, higher levels of employee satisfaction, and better overall organisational performance. By effectively utilising social media, organisations can create a more transparent and inclusive work environment that fosters collaboration and innovation.

Third, for policymakers: a novel framework for social media adoption and utilisation in Kenyan organisations can help guide policy decisions related to social media use within the workplace. Policymakers can work with organisations to develop guidelines and best practices for social media use that promote responsible and effective communication while also ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Fourth, for employees: they also stand to benefit from the implementation of a novel framework for social media adoption and utilisation. Improved internal communication can lead to better information sharing, increased transparency, and a greater sense of belonging within the organisation. Employees can also use social media platforms to connect with colleagues, share ideas, and collaborate on projects more effectively.

Lastly, for stakeholders: such as customers, suppliers, and the community at large can also benefit from improved internal communication within organisations. By leveraging social media as a communication tool, organisations can provide stakeholders with timely updates, relevant information, and opportunities for engagement. This can help build trust and credibility with stakeholders while also enhancing the organisation's reputation in the marketplace.

## **1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The most crucial component of any organisation is effective internal communication. It is crucial to remember that without an efficient internal communication policy, no organisation can perform well (Njomo, 2013). Most managers and employees lack communication skills which are vital to having effective internal communication within organisations (Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020). Managers need to be knowledgeable regarding sending information to their subordinates and use the correct channels in doing so. Employees need to be given utmost priority as an important internal public of the organisations they work in (Gabcanova, 2011; Chen, et al., 2022). Sir Richard Charles Nicholas Branson of the Virgin

Group once said that “clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients”.

Staff discontent, a drop in productivity, absenteeism and staff turnover are all consequences of ineffective internal communication in organisations (Lewis, 2007). Many Kenyan organisations attribute poor internal communication to inefficient communication channels, since many find it challenging to effectively interact with their workforce (Njomo, 2013; Mutisya, 2016; Wamuyu, 2022). Due to employee disengagement brought on by these difficulties resulting in ineptitude and low production, these organisations are seriously endangered (Mutisya, 2016). Men, O'Neil and Ewing (2020) also note that peer-to-peer email exchanges, which can occasionally obstruct information flow, constitute the foundation of present internal communication in organisations, which is currently subpar. Kenyan organisations must investigate alternative internal communication channels offering better internal communication methods to overcome the issues.

Communication channels such as social media adapted to the current environment and found a position in the workplace (Waititu & Barker, 2023). As a result, social media platforms can be used for internal communication and businesses should use them to increase the effectiveness of their communications (Badea, 2014; Men, et al., 2020; Oksa, et al., 2023). Organisations can improve work performance, colleague relationships, knowledge sharing, employee engagement and job satisfaction by incorporating social media into internal communications (Banghart, et al., 2018; Emerald, 2022; Waititu & Barker, 2023).

In view of the above reviewed literature, it is sufficing to note that many international organisations started utilising social media to interact with their employees and to build positive feelings among employees (Huy & Shipilov, 2012; Nguyen & Ha, 2023). However, despite this social media's growing popularity, studies exploring utilising social media for internal communications are limited, especially in the Kenyan context. This study therefore explored the adoption and utilisation of social media as internal communication tools in selected Kenyan organisations by conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions.

There is a significant gap in internal communication strategy efficiency within Kenyan organisations. Despite the crucial role of effective internal communication in organisational performance, many organisations lack mechanisms for internal communication, especially leveraging on technological



efficiency, social media platforms could enhance communication strategies within organisations. The reliance on outdated and inefficient communication channels could result in reduced employee engagement and productivity (Mutisya, 2016; Banghart, et al., 2018). Additionally, although modern organisations are increasingly adopting social media as an essential communication tool in the workplace by enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction and performance (Nguyen & Ha, 2023), the use of these platforms for internal communication in the Kenyan context is still underexplored. This study aims to fill this research gap by exploring how social media platforms can be strategically employed to improve internal communication frameworks in selected Kenyan organisations. Additionally, to bridge the gap identified, there is a need for a new framework that leverages social media platforms to enhance internal communication within organisations.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study was to explore the role of social media as a tool for internal communication within selected Kenyan organisations. Recognising the importance of effective internal communication for smooth operations, employee engagement, and overall productivity, the study aimed to investigate how Kenyan organisations were adopting and utilising social media for this purpose. Despite the global rise of social media platforms in organisational functions, their use for internal communication has remained underexplored, particularly in the Kenyan context. This research sought to address this gap by examining the adoption and usage patterns of social media in these organisations.

The study assessed the knowledge and utilisation of social media by employees in their everyday work communication and explored their perceptions on social media adoption for internal communication, and the benefits and challenges of integrating these platforms. Essentially, the study examined whether the adoption of social media improved internal communication by enhancing employee engagement, facilitating smoother information flow, and enhancing a sense of organisational cohesion. The existing literature indicated both potential benefits and risks associated with social media use in organisations, including increased communication efficiency and better knowledge sharing, alongside concerns about security, distractions, and the unreliability of user-generated content (Ahmad et al., 2019; Boguea & Brito, 2018).

By situating the study within the field of communication studies and focusing on the Kenyan context, where research on internal social media use is limited, the study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature. It examined how social media platforms were being adopted for internal communication and

provided an in-depth understanding of their effectiveness in organisational settings. The research not only identified the extent of social media adoption but also proposed a strategic framework for organisations to optimise these platforms for internal communication purposes. This framework offers insights into improving communication flows, enhancing employee engagement, and enhancing organisational productivity through digital tools. The findings make a significant contribution to the broader discourse on digital communication within organisations, particularly within the communication studies field, by offering practical recommendations that align with global trends in organisational communication strategies.

## **1.7 RATIONALE**

The rationale for this study lies in the pressing need for a structured framework that guides Kenyan organisations in adopting and utilising social media for internal communication. As organisations in Kenya continue to navigate a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the potential of social media as a tool for fostering internal communication, collaboration, and engagement remains largely untapped. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by developing a framework that provides Kenyan organisations with a clear, strategic roadmap for adopting social media as a core component of their internal communication strategies.

The framework developed in this study will encompass best practices, guidelines, and tailored strategies for effective social media use within organisational contexts. Currently, various challenges and barriers hinder the successful integration of social media for internal purposes within Kenyan organisations, including concerns around data privacy, technology access, and aligning social media use with organisational culture and goals. This study aims to address these challenges, leveraging research and innovative approaches to equip organisations with tools that facilitate a smooth and impactful integration of social media into their internal communication practices.

Furthermore, by providing a comprehensive, context-sensitive framework, this study aims to empower Kenyan organisations to embrace digital transformation fully. The framework will not only promote the technical adoption of social media but also encourage cultural and procedural shifts that allow organisations to utilise the full potential of social media for internal communication. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more connected, engaged, and productive workforce, where effective internal communication promotes stronger collaboration, increased transparency, and a sense of community within the organisation. This study, therefore, intends to contribute to the long-term growth and

sustainability of Kenyan organisations by equipping them to meet the demands of a digitally-driven work environment.

## **1.8 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to develop a framework to aid in the adoption and utilisation of social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

## **1.9 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study explored the adoption of social media for internal communication in selected Kenyan organisations. To achieve this, the following objectives guided the study:

1. To determine the knowledge of social media among employees in Kenyan organisations.
2. To assess employee utilisation of social media channels for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.
3. To understand employee perceptions of the benefits and challenges of social media adoption for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.
4. To explore the strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption and use for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

## **1.10 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions which were derived from the above objectives are:

1. What is the knowledge level of social media among employees in Kenyan organisations?
2. How do employees utilise social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations?
3. What are the perceptions of employees on the benefits and challenges of adopting social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations?

4. What strategies can be implemented to address barriers to social media adoption and use for internal communication in Kenyan organisations?

## **1.11 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.11.1 Social media**

Social media are internet-based applications developed on Web 2.0 principles, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

### **1.11.2 Communication**

This refers to the process of passing information from one entity to another with the aim of mutual understanding

### **1.11.3 Internal communication**

Internal communication refers to all methods used by a firm to communicate with its employees (Cornelissen, 2004: 189).

### **1.11.4 The Internet**

The oxford dictionary describes the Internet as “a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardised communication protocols”.

## **1.12 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

### **Chapter 1: Overview of the study**

This first chapter provides foundational context for the study, including the background information, aim and purpose of the study. It outlines the objectives and research questions that guided the study process and provides a preliminary discussion of the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

## **Chapter 2: Social media use in organisations**

This chapter provides a systematic examination of the social media types and use within organisational settings. It describes the evolution, definitional boundaries and attributes of social media platforms. The discourse then narrows down to social media use in organisational internal communication, with a specific focus on Kenyan organisations.

## **Chapter 3: The evolution of internal communication and the benefits and challenges of social media use in internal communication in organisations**

Chapter three synthesises existing scholarly works regarding internal communication mechanisms within organisations. It articulates the benefits derived from the utilisation of social media for internal communication and provides an extensive review of literature to substantiate these benefits. Furthermore, it identifies and elaborates on the potential challenges and risks associated with social media use as internal communication tools in organisations.

## **Chapter 4: Theoretical framework**

In this chapter the theoretical underpinnings of the study are expounded upon, specifically focussing on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI).

## **Chapter 5: Research methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodological approach, and the specific research methods adopted for the study.

## **Chapter 6: Data presentation and analysis**

The sixth chapter details the data collated from empirical research. It extends beyond data presentation to conduct a qualitative thematic analysis following the procedural guidelines established by Braun and Clarke (2006).

### **Chapter 7: Discussion of findings**

This chapter provides an interpretive analysis of the findings derived from the research, situating them within the broader context of the study objectives.

### **Chapter 8: Proposed framework for social media adoption and utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations**

Chapter eight presents a proposed framework designed to facilitate the adoption and effective utilisation of social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

### **Chapter 9: Summary, conclusions and recommendations**

The final chapter synthesises the study findings, drawing conclusive insights and proposing actionable recommendations based on the research outcomes.

## **1.13 SUMMARY**

The primary objective of this research was to explore the use of social media as a medium for internal communication within selected organisations in Kenya and to formulate a framework to facilitate its adoption. This chapter introduced the research study. It lends a succinct exposition on the background concerning the adoption of social media for internal organisational communication. The research problem spotlights the significance to explore the integration of social media as tools for internal communication within organisations, given their global widespread adoption. The selection of Kenya as the focal point for this study was predicated on its rapid progression in the sphere of technological innovation. The chapter elucidates the purpose, objectives and research questions that guided the research study. Subsequent chapters will lay out the conceptualisation and evolution of social media, providing insights into its domain within the Kenyan context. Additionally, examination of the existing

scholarly literature on the utilisation of social media within organisational settings will be conducted. The ensuing chapter will further expand on the application and use of social media in organisations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN ORGANISATIONS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter introduced the study with a detailed introduction and background information exploring the concept of social media and internal communication in organisations. This chapter explores social media use in organisations and the researcher made use of primary and secondary literature sources to achieve this. A thorough literature review is of utmost importance in research as it lays the foundation of the research study. Various scholars have defined what an effective literature review should achieve (Webster & Watson, 2002; Hart, 2018). According to Webster and Watson (2002: 13) an effective literature review is one that “creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge”. They go further to add that “it facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed”. Therefore, the sections below will delve into the literature pertaining to social media use in organisations. The section below will explore the evolution of the web.

#### **2.2 EVOLUTION OF THE WEB**

The World Wide Web developed over the years to become the phenomenon that it is today, and it became the largest information platform worldwide (Weber & Rech, 2010; Choudhury, 2014). Kenekayoro (2011: 113) describes the web as a system of intertwined documents that are available through the internet. The World Wide Web came into existence in 1989 when Tim Berners-Lee, who published his ideas that allowed hypertext documents to be stored, retrieved and viewed (Cardiff, 2009; Weber & Rech, 2010). Tim Berners-Lee created the World Wide Web when he was working at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) in Switzerland to aid in effective communication among physicists working in different countries (Cardiff, 2009). The Web transitioned from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and finally to Web 3.0 which will be discussed next.

##### **2.2.1 Web 1.0**

Web 1.0 came into existence between the years 1990 - 2000. It was the first generation of web-based service which had limited interactivity between the websites and web users. Web 1.0 websites were

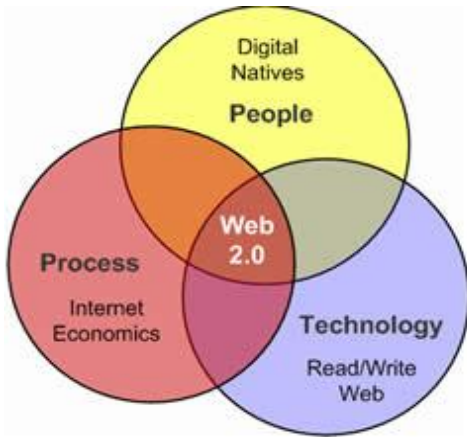


static, and this limited interactivity. Weber and Rech (2010: 15) describe these services as presentation-focused content viewing platforms that rely on technologies supporting static web pages, primarily hard-coded HTML, with minimal interactivity, used to display information. Some examples were AltaVista, Aliweb, Yahoo and Netscape (Weber & Rech, 2010).

### **2.2.2 Web 2.0**

Web 2.0 came into existence between the years 2000 - 2010. They were second generation internet-based services which allowed users to generate contents of websites (O' Reilly, 2005; Choudhury, 2014). O'Reilly (2005: 17) defined Web 2.0 applications leveraged the network as a platform, integrating all connected devices. These applications offered software as a continuously updating service that enhanced with use, aggregate and reconfigure data from multiple sources, including individual users, and made their own data and services available for remixing by others. They generated network effects through a participatory architecture and went beyond the Web 1.0-page metaphor to provide rich user experiences. This definition by O'Reilly (2005) explained the Web 2.0 as being majorly used for interactive content sharing and the delivery of online services. Web 2.0 essentially represented a social web, which Weber and Rech (2010: 16) described as user-oriented services built on technologies that support dynamic micro pages. These services utilised collective intelligence and facilitated content sharing (uploading, editing and downloading), social networking (managing personal data) and static mashup services.

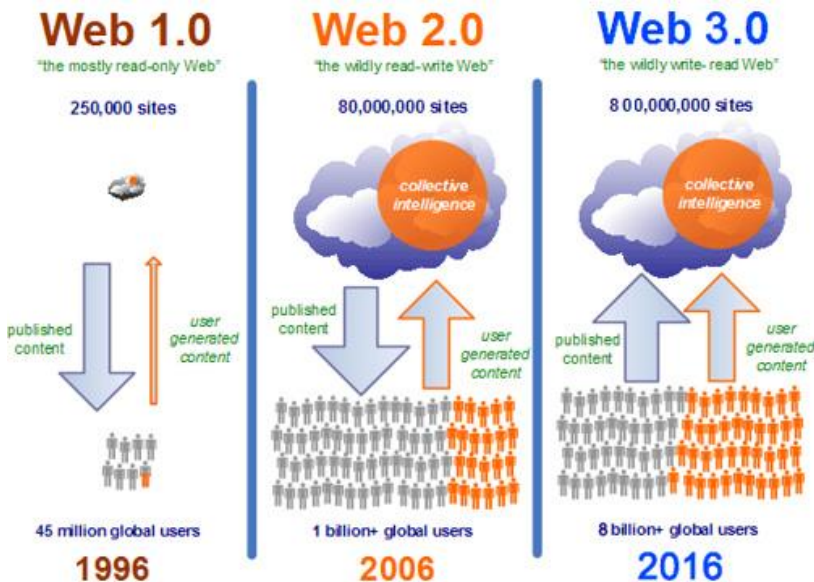
This phase of the Web was also characterised by the invention of social networking sites and terms such as blogs and social media gained motion. Examples of these are Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Digg, Del.icio.us, LinkedIn or Myspace, Wikis and blogs (Weber & Rech, 2010). Kamel Boulos and Wheeler (2007: 2) emphasised that Web 2.0 is often referred to as the 'Social Web' because, unlike Web 1.0, it allowed users to generate and publish content more easily. This platform leveraged the collective intelligence of its users, promoting a more democratic utilisation. The figure below demonstrates the composition of Web 2.0.



**Figure 1: Composition of Web 2.0**

### 2.2.3 Web 3.0

The term Web 3.0 originated during 2006 from an article by John Markoff in the New York Times. (Markoff, 2006). Though the term Web 3.0 caused a lot of debate, it is certainly a third-generation internet-based service that comprises of the intelligent web. According to Kenekayoro (2011), he described Web 3.0 as a semantic web. Weber and Rech (2010) predicted that Web 3.0 will consist of content-focused, semantic and context-aware services built on technologies that enhance websites semantically and potentially support portable IDs, utilising the Web as both a database and an operating system. Examples of these are Eurekster, AskWiki, Twine or Freebase (Weber & Rech, 2010).



**Figure 2: Comparison between Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0**

## 2.2.4 Differences between Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0

The evolution of the Web from 1.0 to 3.0 saw many significant changes which brought about differences that are highlighted in the table below.

	<b>WEB 1.0</b>	<b>WEB 2.0</b>	<b>WEB 3.0</b>
<b>Communication</b>	Broadcast	Interactive	Engaged/ Invested
<b>Information</b>	Static/ Read-only	Dynamic	Portable & Personal
<b>Focus</b>	Organisation	Community	Individual
<b>Personal</b>	Home Pages	Blogs/ Wikis	Livestreams
<b>Content</b>	Ownership	Sharing	Curation
<b>Interaction</b>	Web Forms	Web Applications	Smart Applications
<b>Search</b>	Directories	Keywords/ Tags	Context/ Relevance
<b>Metrics</b>	Page Views	Cost Per Click	User Engagement
<b>Advertising</b>	Banners	Interactive	Behavioural
<b>Research</b>	Britannica Online	Wikipedia	The Semantic Web
<b>Technologies</b>	HTML/ FTP	Flash/ Java/ XML	RDF/ RDFS/ OWL

**Table 1: Differences between Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0**

## 2.3 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Cohen (2012), the definition of social media evolved as its applications developed, largely because it was part of the constantly changing technological landscape. Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014) describe social media as a modern term encompassing everything related to the internet and the interaction of technology, visuals and audio. Many scholars coined different definitions for the term social media (Drury, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Yanacopulos, 2016). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines social media as a range of electronic communication tools, such as social networking and microblogging sites, which enable users to create online communities and share information, ideas, personal messages and multimedia content. The Oxford dictionary characterises social media as platforms and applications that facilitate content creation, sharing and social networking. In general,

these two definitions point out social media as being applications allowing users to create and share content.

Drury (2008) defines social media as online tools used to share various types of content such as videos, photos, texts, ideas, insights, humour, opinions, gossip and news. This definition is similar to Yanacopulos's (2016: 134) who describes social media as digital platforms including texts, photos, messages, videos, blogs, tweets and others. These definitions portray social media as interactive media that enable sharing of information and that lead to fostering conversations between users (Yanacopulos, 2016: 134).

However, one of the majorly used definitions of social media is the one by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61), who defined social media as internet-based applications developed on Web 2.0 principles, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This definition will be adopted for this study which encompasses two important aspects of social media that is the Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) describe Web 2.0 as a new way in which software developers and end-users utilised the World Wide Web. They explained Web 2.0 as a novel approach where software developers and users interact with the World Wide Web (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61). User Generated Content refers to the various types of publicly accessible media created by end-users, as described by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), and it illustrates how people use social media.

## **2.4 HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Understanding the origins of social media is essential to comprehend the concept itself. Social media's evolution is closely tied to the advent of the Internet. The Oxford Dictionary defines the Internet as a global computer network composed of interconnected networks with standardised communication protocols, providing various information and communication services. When the Internet first started, it was merely a massive Bulletin Board System (BBS) that allowed users communicate with one another via messages, data, software and news claimed Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 60). Although the concept of social media is not new, it was first proposed a few years ago. Usenet was an online discussion system allowing users to post messages for public viewing, developed in 1979 by Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis of Duke University (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Naik (2015), Usenet was the first real attempt at social networking.

Fast forward to 1997, this was when Six Degrees was invented (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The application was named after the six degrees of separation theory. It allowed registered users to create profiles and send friend requests to other users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Unregistered users could also confirm the friend request thus enhancing their connections. In the year 1998 Bruce and Susan Abelson started an “Open Diary” which was a site that brought online diary writers on one platform (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The founding of Open Diary was regarded as the first true effort in social networking (Naik, 2015).

However, social media predominantly gained its popularity in the 21st century when many of the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) sprung up (Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson & Seymour, 2011). This accelerating growth was fuelled by high-speed Internet (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 60). Among the earliest SNSs are Myspace which was created in 2003 and Facebook which was launched on February 4, 2004. MySpace has its head office in Beverly Hills California and has approximately 43.2 million monthly users (Edosomwan, et al., 2011). Myspace offers users the ability to personalise their profiles to provide extensive details about themselves and their interests (Edosomwan, et al., 2011). Even though Myspace is quite popular, it was overtaken by Facebook in 2008. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg and some of his friends when he was a student at Harvard University and initially it was restricted to Harvard students only. Facebook then spread to other colleges and then to high school students, professionals within corporate networks and finally to everyone (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Facebook now has over 1.94 billion global monthly active users of which 1.28 billion are daily active users (Facebook 2017).

YouTube was established in 2005 as an online video community where millions can share, watch and discover original video content (YouTube 2017). According to Edosomwan, et al. (2011), YouTube's headquarters are in San Bruno, California and the platform utilises Adobe Flash Video technology to showcase a wide range of user-generated videos. Twitter, a microblogging service, was launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams. Recently, it was rebranded as X following a change in ownership. Twitter enables users to post messages, known as tweets, which are limited to 280 characters. While non-users can view these tweets, they do not have the ability to comment on or retweet them. The following are some of the variables that have impacted the rapid adoption of social media: 1) Technological factors: enhanced software, more functional computers and mobile phones; 2) economic factors: reduced costs for computers, mobile phones and software; increasing commercial

interest in social media sites; and 3) social factors as the quick uptake of social media by younger age groups (Dewing, 2010: 2).



		Social presence/Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., Warcraft)

**Table 2: Classification of social media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure (Adapted from Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62)**

Both Mayfield (2008) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified social media in different categories which will be discussed below.

### 2.5.1 Blogs

These are online journals whose date-stamped entries are shown in reverse chronological order (Mayfield, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Chan-Olmsted, Cho & Lee, 2013). The blogs combine text and graphics with links to other websites and content is generated by both professionals and amateurs (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013: 152). Mayfield (2008: 17) classifies blogs in 5 categories; Personal blogs, Political blogs, Business blogs, ‘Almost media’ blogs and Mainstream media blogs. These blogs are generally distinguished in terms of the content displayed in them. One of the most popular blogs is Huffington Post which is also referred to as HuffPost or HuffPo. The Huffington Post was founded on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2005 by Andrew Breitbart, Arriana Huffington, Kenneth Lerer and Jonah Peretti. As of August 2017, it had 191.13 million visits. Nardi, Schiano and Gumbrecht (2004) note that people blog because of five reasons. These include informing others about activities and locations, sharing opinions to influence others, seeking others' opinions and feedback, thinking through writing and releasing



emotional tension. In a similar way, business and corporate blogs can be used to communicate to both customers and employees on various aspects of the organisation.

### **2.5.2 Micro-blogs**

These offer both social networking and bite-sized blogging, with limited content in forms of updates distributed online through mobile phones (Mayfield, 2008). Netzley and Rath (2012) define micro-blogs as internet platforms that are used for posting short messages and sharing hyperlinks or images. They further point out that micro-blogs are often seen as text messaging over the internet. Microblogs enable users to share concise posts limited to 280 characters. The most prominent example of a microblog is Twitter, which has recently been rebranded as X and has a global user base of 328 million (Fiegerman, 2017). Other examples of micro-blogs include Tumblr, Yammer and Jaiku. According to Waititu (2015: 32), the use of micro-blogs within organisations can lead to better employee relations and eventually fostering “a feeling of coherence and pride about the organisation among employees”. A study conducted by Zhang, Qu, Cody and Wu (2010) in a large organisation also established that a major benefit of using the company’s micro-blog is that employees can know what others are working on at a particular time. However, it was observed that staff members have security concerns while discussing sensitive information and have trouble identifying communication threads.

### **2.5.3 Social network sites**

Social networking sites (SNSs) are online platforms that allow users to perform several functions, as outlined by Boyd and Ellison (2007: 211): 1) create a semi-public or public profile within a defined system, 2) compile a list of other users with whom they are connected, and 3) view and navigate their connection lists, as well as those made by other users in the system. Mayfield (2008) notes that SNSs enable users to create personal websites to interact with friends and share communication and content. According to Kamel Boulos and Wheeler (2007: 11), SNSs also allow users to create profiles, update address books and establish connections with people through mutual friends or acquaintances. SNSs include, among others, Google +, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumblr, YouTube and Twitter. SNSs can be used within organisations to share official and social information among employees as well as channels for managerial communication (Waititu, 2015).

#### **2.5.4 Wikis**

Wikis are online publications that let users edit or add content, serving as a kind of collective database or document (Boulos & Wheeler, 2007; Mayfield, 2008). They are frequently developed jointly by a group of users, allowing anyone to add or modify content on any number of interconnected webpages. According to Netzley and Rath (2012), they are constructed to be as flexible as possible, enabling the user to organise and utilise the website however they see fit. Wikis require communal collaboration and since they allow users to easily create and modify information, at times they cannot be trusted to contain accurate information (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2013). Nonetheless, Kamel Boulos and Wheeler (2007: 5) posit that wikis are a notable tool for knowledge sharing. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), they classify wikis under collaborative projects. An example of wikis is Wikipedia, which is an online encyclopaedia developed in 2001 (Mayfield, 2008: 19). As of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Wikipedia had approximately 5, 465,673 articles in its English version with over 31 million members also known as ‘Wikipedians’ (Wikipedia). Wikis are important tools that can be applied within organisations to enhance collaboration among employees on new projects (Waititu, 2015).

#### **2.5.5 Forums**

Forums are said to have been in existence before the term social media came to be known as such (Mayfield, 2008; Chan-Olmsted et al., 2013). Forums are avenues for online discussion on specific interests and topics. The discussions in forums are called threads and they run concurrently (Mayfield, 2008: 23). Mayfield (2008: 23) posits that these sites are moderated by an administrator who removes inappropriate posts or spam, but they are not allowed to lead or guide the discussion. Forums and blogs are comparable in content, but the main difference is that blogs have a clear proprietor, whereas a forum’s threads are started by its members (Mayfield, 2008: 23). Employees in organisations can use forums to share information on specific topics amongst each other and with management.

#### **2.5.6 Content communities**

These are online communities which compose, organise and share specific content (Mayfield, 2008). Examples of content communities are YouTube, del.icio.us and Flickr. Mayfield (2008) posits that YouTube was formed around videos, del.icio.us around bookmarked links and Flickr around photos. YouTube, which was created in 2005, is viewed as one of the most successful types of content

communities. It is a video sharing platform which features a variety of user-generated and corporate media content which includes music videos, advertising videos, video blogs also known as vlogs, gaming videos and educational content videos (Statista, 2024).

### **2.5.7 Podcasts**

Podcasts refer to audio and video files offered by services like Apple and iTunes only through subscription (Mayfield, 2008). The term 'vodcast' can be specifically used to describe the video services (Mayfield, 2008: 21). Netzley and Rath (2012) state that podcasts are often described as radio for the internet because they are typically audio files containing both verbal and musical content. According to Chan-Olmsted et al. (2013) podcasts, though a form of social media, have a limitation as they mostly offer one-way content distribution thus limiting interactions. The point of social media's success is the two-way interactions between users; therefore, podcasts fail on this front. However, managers can still employ both podcasts and vodcasts to circulate organisational information to employees (Waititu, 2015).

### **2.5.8 Virtual social worlds**

These refer to virtual worlds allowing users referred to as inhabitants or residents to live a virtual life which is like their real life (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009; Haenlein & Kaplan, 2009). The residents appear in avatar form and interact with each other in a three-dimensional virtual environment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). An example of Virtual social worlds is the Second Life application. The study will however not dwell into this type of social media as it is not seen to be involved in internal organisational communication.

### **2.5.9 Virtual game worlds**

Virtual game worlds enforce strict guidelines on user behaviour within the context of an online role-playing game with numerous participants (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 64). Unlike virtual social worlds, which lack interaction rules, virtual game worlds are bound by stringent regulations. World of Warcraft is an example of this type of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This study will not explore virtual game worlds, as they are not relevant to the use of social media in internal organisational communication.

## 2.5.10 Instant messaging

Instant messaging refers to online services allowing users to send and receive text messages, images, video and audio in real time via computer and mobile devices (Church & De Oliveira, 2013; Pielot, De Oliveira, Kwak & Oliver, 2014). Most common instant messaging applications include WhatsApp messenger, WeChat, Viber, Line, Telegram messenger and IMO. Instant messaging applications gained popularity and an example is WhatsApp messenger which has over 2 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2024). Employees in organisations can use instant messaging to share information in a faster and less costly manner (Waititu, 2015).



Figure 4: Forms of social media Adapted from Mauricio (2011)

## 2.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Chan-Olmsted et al (2013: 154) state that social media is a general term that covers a vast number of online platforms possessing a range of characteristics, modes of communication and sociability functions. There are various characteristics of social media. These characteristics helps one to grasp the fundamental operating features of most social media.

### **2.6.1 Participation**

Participation is viewed as one of the most unique characteristics of social media as it allows for the interactive nature of individuals using these new media (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2013). The participatory nature of social media offers individuals an opportunity to engage in two-way interactions and it distorts the line between media and audience (Mayfield, 2008). The line between media and audience is blurred because users are continuously involved in the contribution process of sharing news and giving feedback. Ross, Orr, Sisic, Arseneault, Simmering and Orr (2009) point out that although the degree of participation among social media tools may differ, many organisations are adopting them to foster participation among employees.

According to Chan-Olmsted et al (2013: 154), participation is viewed as a crucial element of interactivity. There are two types of participation when it comes to social media; friendship-driven participation and interest-driven participation (Ito, Baumer, Bittanti, Boyd, Cody, Herr-Stephenson, Horst, Lange, Mahendran, Martinez, Pascoe, Perkel, Robinson, Sims & Tripp, 2010: 15). Friendship-driven participation refers to the main ordinary practices of youth as they go about their everyday negotiations with peers and friends while in interest-driven participation is based on common interests and the specialised activities, interest, vocation and marginalised identities come first (Ito, et al., 2010: 16).

### **2.6.2 Connectedness**

Connectedness involves continuous connection and the relationships among people, resources and lifestyles. Mayfield (2008: 5) highlights that the success of most types of social media depends on this connectedness, utilising links to other sites, resources and individuals. This indicates that the internet intensified the connectivity of users across most social media platforms by using the fundamental networking systems (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013: 156). Traditional media has always been seen as superior to new media as they foster healthier social relations because of the physical presence of communicators (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). However, this is beginning to change in the era of computer mediated technologies such as Skype which allow for face-to-face communication therefore still maintaining interpersonal relations (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). Organisations can now conduct virtual meetings, interviews and workshop sessions because of internet connectivity. This is mostly true for organisations that operate in different geographical locations.

### **2.6.3 Conversation**

Traditional media, such as televisions, radios, newspaper and magazines rely on a one-way distribution of content whereas social media enables two-way conversations (Mayfield, 2008; Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). Conversation is a key component of social media as it is deeply rooted in the Web 2.0 also known as the Social Web (Boulos & Wheeler, 2007; Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). This is because conversation improves interactivity which the various forms of social media offer. However, the degree of conversation differs across the various forms of social media (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). As social media offers a two-way conversation, employees in an organisation can share information and receive feedback from their colleagues. This can lead to prompt completion of tasks that can better enhance organisational performance (Huy & Shipilov, 2012).

### **2.6.4 Openness**

Most social media have few barriers thus promoting reachable content (Mayfield, 2008; Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). These few barriers promote openness and engagement as these services are open to feedback and participation (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2003). According to Mayfield (2008) openness encourages voting, comments and the sharing of information. Chan-Olmsted, et al. (2013: 157) further state that the degree of openness differs from one social medium to the next. They provide an example of forums and online message boards set around specific communities who share common interests to be less open than micro-blogging applications such as Twitter which generally allows anyone to sign up on their platform.

In an organisation setting, the open nature of social media encourages sharing of content without limitation thus enhancing organisational performance, job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, collaboration, decision making and relationship building (Naslund, 2010; Huy & Shipilov, 2012; Naik, 2015). This is echoed by Rogers (1987: 53) who said “one of the most important variables in the organisational communication literature is openness. It is seen to be the most vital element of an effective organisation” (Rogers, 1987: 53). According to Chan-Olmsted, et al. (2013: 157), the perceived ease with which users can post, share and receive content, information and opinions on social media platforms can be used to define the essence of openness, whether through technological or cultural means.

### **2.6.5 Community**

Social media allows for speedy community formations by people and organisations who share common interests and hobbies (Mayfield, 2008). These communities are therefore able to communicate effectively because of their shared commonality (Chan-Olmsted, et al., 2013). Social media thrives on community formations as this is leading to the growing number of users across the platforms. Due to the communities being built along shared interests and hobbies, users can always connect with old contacts or discover new friends across the platforms. This social media characteristic is important in organisations as employees can share their interests and hobbies with one another to encourage relationship building, stronger peer interactions and work relations. According to Herlle and Astray-Caneda (2012: 72), social media should be used by organisations as a working tool enabling staff members to communicate with one another regarding shared interests, rules, services and goods.

### **2.6.6 Instant Communication**

Social media facilitates instantaneous communication, allowing users to exchange messages, share information, and respond in real time. This feature is crucial for dynamic customer service, crisis communication, and real-time engagement in both personal and professional contexts. According to Leonardi, et al. (2013), instant communication via social media significantly impacts organisational transparency and swiftness, enabling faster decision-making and collaborative problem-solving (Leonardi, et al., 2013). Additionally, instant messaging on platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter has transformed organisational communication, especially during crises.

### **2.6.7 Global Reach**

Social media's ability to transcend geographical boundaries enables users to interact globally, providing organisations with expanded audience access. Leonardi et al. (2013) emphasise that social media has allowed companies to reach global markets, allowing for cross-cultural engagement and international brand building. Furthermore, global reach has also been shown to enhance knowledge sharing and social cohesion across distances, thus making it a powerful tool for multinational companies and NGOs.

### **2.6.8 User-Generated Content (UGC)**

User-generated content refers to media produced by individual users rather than organisations. As a cornerstone of social media, UGC fosters engagement and community while building brand credibility. UGC adds authenticity to brands, as content created by users is often perceived as more trustworthy compared to corporate messages (Haenlein, & Kaplan, 2019). UGC plays a role in shaping public opinion, making it influential in fields such as marketing and political communication.

### **2.6.9 Multimedia Sharing**

Social media platforms support the sharing of diverse multimedia, including images, videos, and live streams. This functionality makes social media versatile for storytelling and visual engagement. For example, Haenlein, and Kaplan (2019) report that multimedia elements significantly increase user engagement, especially videos, which tend to garner more interactions than text-based posts alone. The ability to share multimedia also allows for better message retention and impact, enhancing the effectiveness of marketing and educational content.

### **2.6.10 Personalisation**

Through algorithms, social media platforms personalise content based on user behavior, interests, and interactions. Personalisation improves user engagement and retention by curating content that aligns with individual preferences, creating a customised user experience (Haenlein, & Kaplan, 2019). This characteristic is highly valued in marketing, as it increases the likelihood of audience conversion and loyalty.

### **2.6.11 Virality**

Virality, the rapid and wide dissemination of content, is a defining feature of social media. It allows content to reach extensive audiences in a short period, often leveraging network effects and emotional resonance. According to Berger and Milkman (2023), content that triggers high-arousal emotions, such as awe or anger, is more likely to go viral, highlighting the role of emotions in virality.

### **2.6.12 Real-Time Updates**

Social media's capability for real-time updates ensures that users receive the latest news, trends, and announcements, making it invaluable for live reporting and event coverage. Kim and Park (2022) note that real-time updates allow organisations to maintain relevance and respond to breaking news, making



social media indispensable for PR and news outlets. They also emphasise that real-time updates help keep users engaged, as they can stay informed about ongoing events as they unfold (Kim & Park, 2022).

### **2.6.13 Analytics and Insights**

Social media platforms provide in-depth analytics, offering insights into audience behavior, demographics, and engagement metrics. These analytics enable businesses to measure content performance and adapt strategies accordingly (Zachlod, Samuel, Ochsner & Werthmuller, 2022).

These characteristics demonstrate how social media has transformed communication, providing individuals and organisations with unique opportunities to engage, inform, and connect with audiences globally. This has had profound effects on business, marketing, journalism, and everyday social interactions, with each feature shaping the way content is consumed and shared.

## **2.7 SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN ORGANISATIONS**

Social media penetrated the workplace and managers in organisations are now hoping they will assist to improve important organisational processes (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Social media can be used both externally and internally within organisations (Kietzmann, et al., 2011; Waititu, 2015; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). However, most organisations prefer utilising social media externally to communicate with clients, customers and stakeholders rather than internally to communicate with their employees (Naik, 2015). According to Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014: 134) adopting social media in organisations supports a new method of communication among colleagues and with customers. The following sections will explore the external and internal uses of social media by organisations.

### **2.7.1 External uses of social media in organisations**

Organisations are now using social media externally to achieve their goals and objectives as well as marketing their brand. The first external use of social media in organisations is to advertise and marketing. Advertising is an important aspect when it comes to marketing products and services to consumers. For organisations to be successful they must be profitable and therefore many companies employ social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to launch online campaigns targeted to their specific audiences (Naik, 2015). Jothi, Neelamar, and Prasad (2011: 235) identified several key advantages of advertising including: increasing the popularity of a brand, idea or service among the

target group; informing the target audience regarding the brand or service market presence; encouraging healthy market competition; offering social benefits for the brand and encouraging audience interaction and engagement with the brand. With the advent of social media, organisational advertising has seen a paramount shift from traditional media to new media (Naik, 2015). Organisations are opening Facebook pages, Twitter handles and YouTube accounts. For example, with the Facebook numbers at about 1.94 billion global monthly active users of which 1.28 billion are daily active users (Facebook, 2017), organisations can now advertise their products and services to a wider population no matter their geographical proximity to their target audiences. This approach is less costly compared to the millions of dollars organisations had to part with to advertise on traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers (Naik, 2015).

The second use is for recruitment, which is a critical component in organisational success (Breugh, 1992). As the internet has penetrated the workplace and affects how business is conducted in the world today, it also started to influence the recruiting and hiring processes of organisations (Joos, 2008: 51). Since millennials make up most of the workforce in this age, organisations are now turning to social media to conduct recruiting and hiring processes. Joos (2008: 58) supports this by noting that college recruitment, especially among millennials, is a rapidly expanding field for social media. This is due to millennials' positive response to social media environments, having grown up with technology (Joos, 2008: 58).

The third external social media use by organisations is for public relations. Public Relations is the managerial role which creates and nurtures relationships of mutual benefit between an organisation and the people it serves, as these relationships determine the success or failure of the organisation. It plays an integral role to ensure organisations meet their overall aims and objectives (Gqamane, 2010: 1). According to Facebook (2008), organisations were first allowed to register on the platform in April 2006 which brought on board over 4 000 organisations in two weeks. Organisations are now using social media to cultivate their relationship with the public through virtual strategies which include disclosure, usefulness and increased interactivity (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009). Social media further offers organisations many tools to inform and communicate to the public therefore cultivating relationships with their target consumers and improving their brand (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Wang, 2014).

Lastly, the fourth external social media use by organisations is to communicate with their clients, customers and other external stakeholders. The speed of proliferation of social media and online

communities are developing are leading to significant changes in the communication processes between customers and enterprises (Chou 2014). Traditionally organisations would provide customers with product and service-related information through channels such as television, radio and newspapers which only provided for one-way communication (Naik, 2015). This shifted to organisational websites when the internet gained momentum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though organisational websites are seen to reach a larger target audience, the flow of information is still one way. Social media changed all this as the platforms allow for two-way communication and therefore organisations receive feedback from customers on products and services rendered to them. Chou (2014) posits that the two-way communication enables organisations to respond to customers' needs effectively therefore enhancing healthy relations through customer satisfaction. Since social media thrives in connectivity, loyal customers are now able to promote the products and services offered by the organisations to their network of friends and building the brand (Chou, 2014).

### **2.7.2 Internal uses of social media in organisations**

The internal use of social media in organisations has over the years garnered significant academic attention, particularly concerning its role in enhancing communication, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and employee engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; 2020). Social media are used internally in organisations in several ways.

#### **1. Internal communication and collaboration**

By encouraging direct, honest, and casual interactions amongst various levels of the hierarchy, social media platforms can be used within organisations to improve internal communication. According to Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield (2013), enterprise social media facilitates communication and collaboration among staff members across organisational borders, which helps to reduce hierarchies and enhance information accessibility. Koch, Gonzalez, and Leidner (2012) further point out that social media facilitates teamwork by enabling workers to collaborate on projects, give feedback, and communicate updates fast. Internal systems such as Yammer, Microsoft Teams, and Slack are used by many multinational corporations to streamline project management, teamwork, and communication.

#### **2. Knowledge sharing and organisational learning**

Social media platforms facilitate knowledge sharing and organisational learning by enabling the exchange of knowledge. Employees use social media platforms to share best practices, disseminate organisational knowledge, and contribute to collective problem-solving, thus supporting innovation and

continuous learning. Razmerita, Kirchner, and Nielsen (2016) found that internal social media platforms contribute to knowledge management by enhancing personal and collective knowledge processes, improving knowledge dissemination across departments. Treem and Leonardi (2012) further highlight that social media platforms increase the visibility of knowledge across the organisation, enabling employees to identify experts and tap into previously inaccessible organisational resources. Organisations such as International Business Machines (IBM), use internal social platforms to create knowledge repositories where employees can share expertise, collaborate on solutions, and maintain a record of discussions that can be referenced later.

### 3. Employee engagement and empowerment

Organisations also employ the use of social media internally to enhance employee engagement by creating an environment where employees feel connected to their organisation and empowered to voice their opinions. By doing this, internal social media promotes a sense of community and belonging, allowing employees to share their experiences, contribute ideas, and engage in discussions that shape organisational culture. Social media engagement within organisations leads to higher job satisfaction and employee retention, as it promotes openness and inclusivity in decision-making processes (Li, Mo, & Li, 2019). Rode (2016) further discusses how internal social media can be used to recognise and reward employee achievements, which in turn increases motivation and loyalty.

### 4. Cultural change and organisational transparency

Some organisations use social media to drive cultural change within organisations by promoting transparency, openness, and real-time feedback, encouraging a more democratic workplace. Social media can be used to encourage open dialogue between employees and leadership, breaking down traditional barriers to communication and allowing for greater transparency in decision-making. According to Leonardi (2014), he argues that internal social media creates an ambient awareness of organisational activities, helping employees stay informed and feel included in the larger strategic goals of the company.

### 5. Crisis management and rapid information dissemination

Social media are also used for internal crisis communication, enabling organisations to rapidly disseminate critical information and coordinate responses to emerging issues. This is because during crises, internal social media platforms serve as vital tools for ensuring all employees receive real-time updates, helping to coordinate responses and mitigate risks. Coombs (2014) emphasises the importance

of using internal social media for quick communication during crises, helping organisations manage the flow of information and avoid confusion.

#### 6. Advancing innovation through idea sharing

Internal social media platforms in organisations encourage employees to share innovative ideas, which can lead to the development of new products, services, or process improvements. Social media have been found to create a platform where employees from different departments and locations can collaborate on new ideas, driving innovation within the organisation. According to Majchrzak et al. (2013) they note how social media facilitates open innovation by creating a space where employees can contribute ideas, participate in discussions, and collectively solve problems.

#### 7. Building employee networks and relationships

Lastly, social media platforms support networking within organisations, helping employees build professional relationships and connect with colleagues across departments and regions. These platforms facilitate the development of professional networks that strengthen collaboration, support career development, and build organisational cohesion. Ellison, Gibbs, and Weber (2015) further state that internal social media helps employees build relational ties within their organisation, enhancing a sense of community and promoting informal interactions that support career growth.

### **2.7.3 Social media use in African organisations**

In the mid-1990s, the advent of mobile phone technology started its rapid proliferation across developed countries, with Africa rarely being considered a significant market contender. However, as noted by Essoungou (2010), contemporary metrics depict a contrasting picture: Africa now boasts more than 500 million mobile phone subscribers, exceeding those in North America. This surge in connectivity catalysed the expansion of the African internet market at an unprecedented pace.

Essoungou (2010) asserts that the trajectory of mobile phone and internet adoption in Africa were marked not only by its rapidity but also by a remarkable degree of innovation. The continent has extensively embraced these technologies, setting the stage for a digital revolution that has permeated various aspects of daily life, including the use of social media. Indeed, the increasing internet penetration rates have been a driving force behind the widespread adoption of social media platforms across the continent.

The corporate sector in Africa has been quick to capitalise on this digital tide, integrating social media into their communication strategies primarily for external outreach. Social media platforms have become

instrumental in advertising, marketing and sales purposes, allowing organisations to extend their reach and engage with customers on a global scale. Moreover, many African organisations have adopted social media tools in their public relations campaigns, leveraging social media platforms vast networking capabilities to enhance their corporate image.

Evidently, there has been a noticeable transition in how organisations within Africa communicate, with social media now occupying a central role largely in their external and to some extent internal communication undertakings. These developments suggest a dynamic and evolving communication landscape within the African corporate domain, reflective of broader global trends in digital communication.

#### **2.7.4 Social media use in Kenyan organisations**

The Digital in 2024 Global Overview report places Kenya amongst the leading countries when it comes to social media usage in Africa. According to Muli (2016) Kenya has made great progress as an ICT hub in the continent and with social media. This position was confirmed by the visit of Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook picked two African countries, Kenya and Nigeria, as part of his itinerary. Muli (2016) explains that Kenyans' enthusiasm for social media has transformed their communication, business practices, governance and lifestyles. The leading social media platforms in Kenya include Facebook, with over 5 million active users; Twitter, with approximately 1.7 million users; Instagram, with 2 million users; LinkedIn, with about 1.3 million users and Snapchat, which is estimated to have around 500 000 members (Muli, 2016). Muli (2016) posits that these numbers were the driving force for Mark Zuckerberg's visit to leverage the opportunities in Kenya and Africa for business expansion and improving lives.

According to a worldwide poll conducted by Jana Mobile, another social media platform which gained popularity in Kenya is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is subscribed to by 49% of mobile users in Kenya and is used as their key messaging tool (Adika, 2014; Wamuyu, 2022). The poll was conducted in nine countries including Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya. The use of WhatsApp gained momentum in Kenya and has made sharing of information easier and instant. In view of the above, it is evident that social media changed the life of both individuals and corporations (Hennig - Thureau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy & Skiera, 2010) and Kenyan organisations are no exception. Badea (2014: 70) posits that although new media such as social media are still viewed with scepticism when it comes to organisational communication, it can be used to "influence both the traditional media and the behaviour of media users". Research showed that

social media hasn't necessarily replaced face to face communication or interaction; rather, it provides new avenues of relationship building and enhance social connections through information sharing (Badea, 2014). Healthy interpersonal relationships among employees can then lead to longer lasting organisational performance.

In the case of Kenya, a few organisations adopted social media in external communication with their clients, customers and shareholders (Ogaro, 2014; Malinga, 2017). Some of the top Kenyan organisations with online presence on social media are Kenya Commercial Bank Limited, Safaricom Limited, Airtel Kenya, Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), GOtv Kenya and Equity Bank among others. A report by Socialbakers, a Czech-based firm, names Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, KPLC and GOtv as the top 4 companies who use social media platforms to engage their customers. These mentioned organisations use social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to reach out to their target market by sending product and service information and receiving feedback which they eventually use to improve customers' experience. For example, Safaricom Limited, a mobile network service provider in Kenya, uses social media to offer their customer services and information on their products (Kipkemboi, 2013). These same channels are available for customers to send feedback to the organisation, thus enhancing the brand. A study conducted by Ogaro (2014) reported that Safaricom Limited uses mainly Facebook and Twitter for external communication, but no mention is made on the organisation using any social media channels for internal communication.

Another example is Kenya Commercial Bank Limited which uses social media platforms for communication with their customers and stakeholders (Ibrahim, 2016). Customers have avenues of sending feedback to the bank on how to improve their banking services and products. However, no study was found into the use of social media in internal communication within the bank. KPLC being the biggest power providing company in Kenya, also uses social media to share information with its customers and to receive feedback on their various products and services. A study conducted by Waititu (2015) reported that employees of Kenya power attest to using social media tools to communicate, specifically Facebook. This was one study that exhibited an organisation using social media for internal communication. However, there still needs to be a thorough exploration into the other Kenyan organisations who have not yet adopted the use of social media for internal communication. This is echoed by the 2016 ICT Public Sector and Enterprise surveys in Kenya, which found that there still exists a huge gap on access and usage of ICTs in both enterprises and public institutions. This huge gap is what calls for further research into the access and usage of ICT in Kenyan organisations, especially social media. This study

will therefore aim to explore whether Kenyan organisations are willing to adopt social media, a form of ICT, to aid in internal communication.

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter provided a systematic exploration of the web's evolution to its current state. An extensive review of scholarly literature was undertaken to define social media and trace its historical development. An analysis of various social media types was conducted, elucidating the shared attributes across numerous social media platforms. Additionally, this chapter synthesises evidence on the use of social media within organisational contexts, with a particular emphasis on the landscape of social media usage in Kenyan organisations. There are numerous other social media platforms available globally, however, the selected social media platforms including Myspace, Facebook, YouTube, X, WhatsApp and LinkedIn were the focus in this chapter due to their significant relevance within the Kenyan context, both historically and in current use. These platforms are among the most popular and widely adopted in Kenya, influencing social, professional, and organisational communication practices. For instance, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp remain primary channels for personal and professional networking, content sharing, and information dissemination, while LinkedIn is essential for professional growth and recruitment. Myspace, although less active now, represents early social media adoption patterns, providing historical context to social media evolution in Kenya. Including only these platforms allowed for a focused historical and current social media analysis that reflects the platforms most impactful in the Kenyan organisational landscape. The subsequent chapter will explore the benefits and challenges associated with the use of social media for internal organisational communication, drawing on empirical and theoretical research to provide a comprehensive analysis.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter observed the Web's evolution to what it is today. The literature points out the proliferated pace at which the web is developing. This is evident from the high number of users who are joining the different social media platforms every single day. The definition and history of social media were presented which highlighted social media's evolution to what it is at present. The literature clearly points out that social media has evolved at an incredible pace and continues to do so. The chapter further presented the various types and characteristics of social media. Social media users choose which platforms to subscribe to depending on the specific characteristics they are looking for.

Lastly, the chapter explored the use of social media in organisations. The literature clearly points out that many organisations adopted social media use for their external communication, but this is not the case with internal communication. In the developed world, however, many organisations have started adopting the use of social media for internal communication. This is not the case in many developing nations. This is the reason why the study focuses on discovering whether organisations in one developing nation, Kenya, are willing to adopt and utilise social media for their internal communication. This current chapter will focus on the benefits and challenges of social media use in organisation's internal communication. Firstly, a thorough literature review of the concept of internal communication in organisations will be given.

#### **3.2 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS**

Literature indicates that to ensure an open systems approach in organisations, internal communications should be able to respect employees and provide opportunities for the exchange of honest feedback. In addition, it should be able to recognise and encourage employees all the while maintaining employee wellbeing and safety (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth 2006; Seitel, 2007). According to Bertelsen

and Nerman (2001: 31-32), internal communication in an organisation includes administrative communication, business communication and social communication. Communication is often labelled as the "life blood of the organisation", the "glue" that binds all together, the "force that pervades the organisation" or even better "the organisation embalming fluid" (Goldhaber, 1993; Katz & Kahn, 1972; Kreps, 1990). The absence of internal communication definitions is highlighted in the literature on organisational communication, according to Castillo and Sanchez-Perez (2013). They claim that the concept of internal communication was approached from a "exchange" perspective in the majority of definitions. They further state that definitions using a "relational" approach have recently been developed by researchers due to the complexity of internal communication dynamics.

Over the years other scholars also coined different definitions for the term internal communication (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985; Bevan & Bailey, 1991; Dolphin, 2005; Kalla, 2005; Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020). Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985) define internal communication as the practice of recognising, building and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship between an organisation and its employees, who are the individuals who play a crucial role in determining its success or failure. Bevan and Bailey (1991) provided an alternative definition, characterising internal communication as an organisational process involving knowledge sharing, commitment-building and change management. According to Kalla (2005: 304), one of the most modern definitions of internal communication defines it as the official and informal communication that occurs within an organisation at all levels. Dolphin (2005) also describes internal communication as the communication happening between the leaders of an organisation which is management and one of its main stakeholders who are its employees. The above definitions point out internal communication being the communication that takes place within an organisation and in various levels of the organisation.

The role of internal communication has evolved considerably over the years (Baines, Egan & Jefkins, 2004). Hargie and Tourish (2009: 419) argue that internal communication is becoming more widely acknowledged as a key factor in organisational success and as an important subject for further research. Tariszka-Semegine (2012: 86) further states that one of the main factors enhancing the motivation and performance of staff is internal communication. In addition, she states that internal communication plays a fundamental role in enhancing the competitiveness of the organisation.

Harris and Nelson (2007) purport that in this modern-day communication is one of the most dominant and important activities in organisations. This is because relationships thrive because of communication,

and it is evident that individuals and groups' ability to work together effectively is essential for the survival and operation of organisations. (Rajhans, 2012: 82). Jones, Watson, Gardner and Gallois (2004) emphasise that organisational capabilities are built and improved through social and communicative processes. Rajhans (2012: 82) highlights that communication is essential for individuals and groups to coordinate activities and achieve their objectives. It plays a crucial role in socialisation, problem-solving, decision-making and change management (Berger, 2008; Rajhans, 2012). Additionally, Rajhans (2012) notes that internal communication offers employees vital information regarding their roles, the organisation, their environment and each other. Similarly, Berger (2008) points out that internal communication is important to ensure that an organisation works efficiently and informs employees on all aspects of organisational life.

Welch (2015: 390) explains that internal communication within organisations ranges from informal conversations among colleagues to official corporate messages from senior executives to all employees. This highlights the importance of internal communication in the effective operation of organisations. As a result, it is essential for organisations to identify more engaging channels to communicate with their employees.

### **3.2.1 History of internal communication in organisations**

Internal communication changed over the years thus culminating in different eras trying to satisfy a different life element in organisations. These eras have been documented by various scholars. For example, Dover's (1964) eras include: entertaining employees (1940s), informing employees (1950s), persuading employees (1960s) and finally it culminated to the era of open communication between employees and management (1980s to date). However, the noteworthy era is the one pointed out by Grunig and Hunt (1984) who saw the 70s and 80s as the era of symmetrical internal communication that "started communication with the staff". Other scholars, Yaxley and Ruck (2015) purport that there are four historic approaches in internal communication which are outlined below:

- Paternalism which occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this era there was the establishment of the employee publication. Businesses that were leading in this practice were worried about the well-being of their workers. Concern for workers' wellbeing was seen as a means of reducing industrial discontent and organised labour.

- Presentation occurred in the 1940s. This was the era where an internal journalist was compensated to pen stories that would interest employees. The industrial editor was supposed to be credible, professional and independent of management interference when writing stories.
- Persuasion occurred in the 1980s. During a time of economic turmoil this era was marked by a focus on internal communication and arguing change for employees. The message now shifted to what's in it for the employees which publicised an era of influencing staff. Internal communication revolved to planned communication that was now closely aligned with management.
- Participation is what transpired in internal communication during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This period examines attention in the terms interaction and dialogue with staff members considering a number of variables such as engagement shortage, shifting work procedures and revolutionary communication technologies.

Yaxley and Ruck (2015) contend that although the four strategies mentioned above are associated with distinct historical periods, they are not confined to these eras. These strategies intersect and evolve in various ways. Instead of viewing the history of internal communications as a linear progression, Yaxley and Ruck propose a model that highlights recurring themes and patterns over time (Yaxley & Ruck, 2015: 11). The three recurrent trends that are associated with these eras are:

- Propaganda involves the unidirectional transmission of information from management to employees. This approach to internal communication prioritises messages controlled by management over other content, promoting a positive organisational image at the expense of more reliable information and two-way dialogue.
- Employee's voice which described the chance for workers to be heard. When employees could publish their own publications in the very early days of internal communication practices, voice was clearly present. However, in recent times, the voice of the employee has been suppressed in organisations. Organisations can harness the employee voice by the availability of tools such as social media where they can write their own blogs and tweets instead of relying on old methods such as conducting staff surveys.

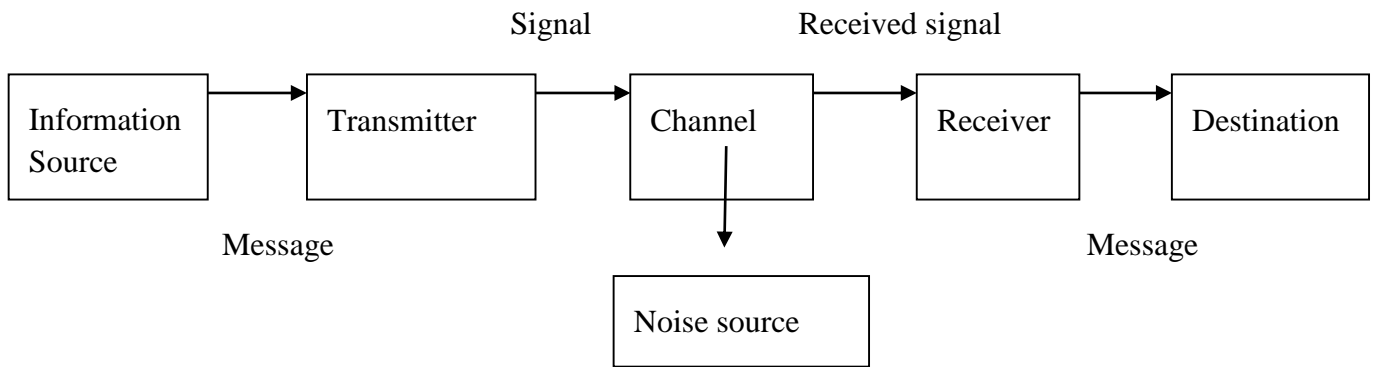
- Professionalism describes the rising level of expertise in internal communication within businesses. The utilisation of industrial editors to obtain management support in the 1980s and internal communication as a strategic practice supported by a qualification are clear examples of this. However, organisations run the danger of losing employee voice when searching for strategic management status.

Putnam, Philips and Chapman (1996) carried out another notable study on the history and development of internal communication. According to their findings, early research in this field emanated from diverse interests in industrial and business communication between the 1920s and 1950s, followed by the human relations movement from the 1950s to the mid-1970s (Kim, 2005).

The early writings of Dale Carnegie also shed light on a noteworthy history of internal communication, emphasising the importance of top management persuasion techniques, accurate and readable reports and the efficacy of various communication channels (Putnam & Cheney, 1985; Redding, 1985). This perspective changed in the early 1960s and 1970s to focus on the messages analysis that were transmitted through organisations and how communication environments affected how effective and sufficient these transmissions were.

Redding and Tompkins (1988) state that there were two primary areas of focus during this time: the abilities that improved a person's communication success in the workplace and the elements that defined effective communication across the system. Putnam, et al. (1996) further explain that during this period, referred to as the modernist orientation, research on internal communication encompassed sociological investigations into communication networks, work group coordination and the implementation of new communication technologies. Additionally, psychological studies focused on information processing, superior-subordinate interactions and the communication climate.

The field of internal communication research underwent a shift in the early 1980s when academics began questioning the early research traditions in the field, specifically the modernist work's portrayal of organisational reality and the lack of theoretical frameworks (Putnam & Cheney, 1985; Redding & Tompkins, 1988). For instance, Putnam and Cheney (1985) criticised these early studies by questioning the portrayal of communication as a one-way process when it was now understood to be a two-way exchange.



**Figure 5: The Shannon and Weaver linear model of communication**

Putnam, et al. (1996) began focusing their research on various topics, such as how events within organisations are interpreted, the use of strategic ambiguity, the role of language symbols and organisational culture, organisational identification and subtle control, communication rules and scripts, corporate public discourse and the use of distorted communication for exercising power and control. Over time, our comprehension of internal communication within organisations has steadily increased.

The table below explains the evolution of employee communication which is will onwards be referred to as internal communication.

## **THE EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION**

### **Stage One (pre-1960s)**

- Predecessor- industrial relations.
- Goal- improve morale.
- Emphasis- individuals.
- Orientation- camaraderie.
- Attitude- warm, personal.
- Focus- people.

### **Stage Two (mid-1960s-1980s)**

- Predecessor- journalism.
- Goal-deliver news.
- Emphasis- facts.
- Orientation- reporting.
- Attitude- cool, sceptical.
- Focus-events.

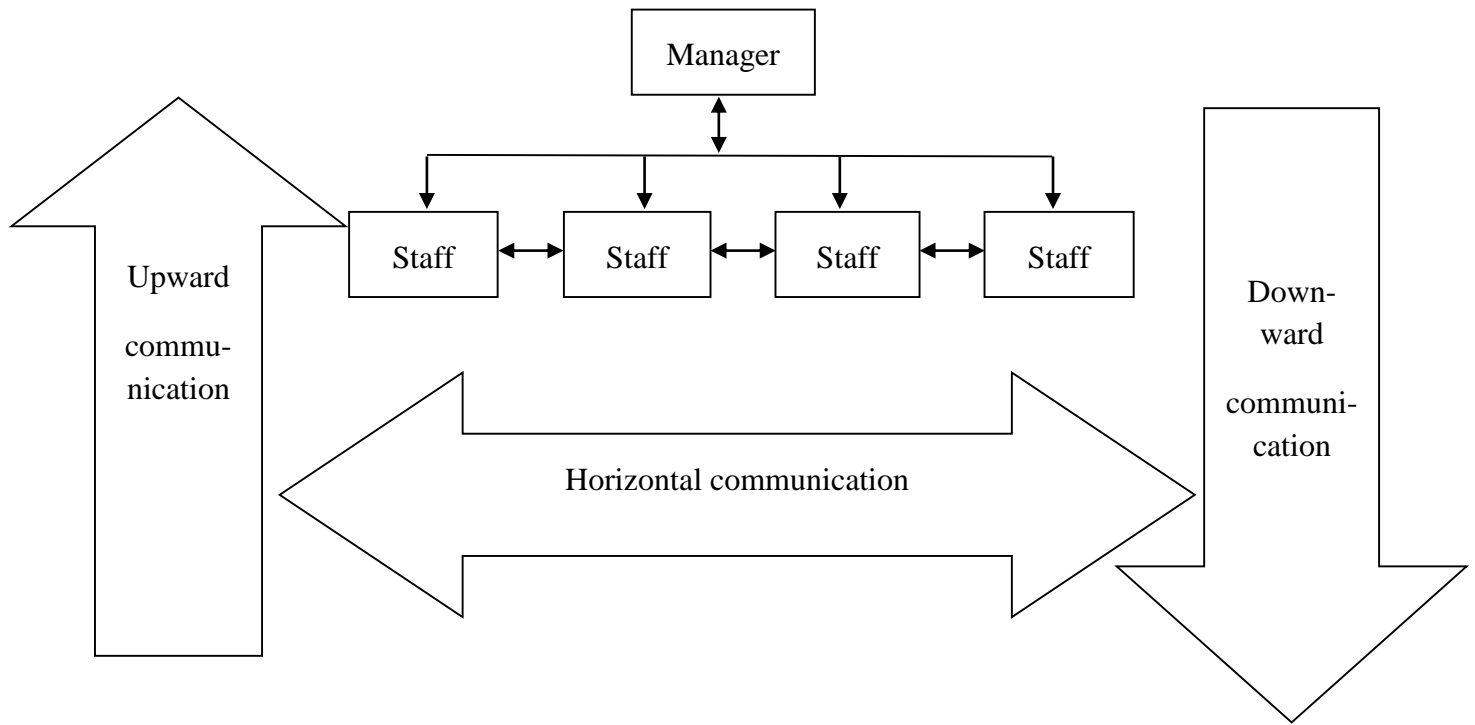
### **Stage Three (late 1980s-now)**

- Predecessor- marketing.
- Goal-implement strategy.
- Emphasis- organisation.
- Orientation- aid to management.
- Attitude- business oriented.
- Focus- strategic objectives.

**Table 3: The evolution of employee communication (internal communication)**

### **3.2.2 Flow of internal communication in organisations**

Lunenburg (2010) states that there are three distinct directions in which internal communication flows in an organisation: downward, upward, and horizontal. Below is a diagram that shows the flow of internal communication in an organisation.



**Figure 6: Downward, upward and horizontal communication (Lunenburg 2010)**

### 3.2.2.1 Downward communication

Lunenburg (2010) posits that traditional methods of communication in organisations favoured the downward communication approach. In this type of communication flow, information is passed through speeches, bulletins, manuals and policy handbooks from top managers to the staff at the lower levels. Tubbs and Moss (2008: 478) purport that downward communication is started by the organisation's senior management and moves down the command structure. Downward communication is utilised to deliver instructions, assign tasks and responsibilities, offer guidance and directions to employees, inform them about job procedures and organisational policies, pinpoint workplace issues that require attention and provide feedback on their past performance (Greenberg & Baron, 2008: 350; Robbins, Judge & Campbell, 2010: 291). Canary (2011) outlines five primary purposes of downward communication within organisations:

1. Placing strategies, goals and objectives into practice. Staff members can learn what is expected of them at work when management shares new strategies and goals with them (Lunenburg, 2010).



2. Job directives and justification. These refer to instructions given by management to staff members on how to carry out specific tasks in the organisation. Lunenburg (2010) states that individual and departmental objectives need to be in line with organisation-wide goals. Staff members should not be left out of the bigger picture (Lunenburg, 2010: 3).
3. Methods and techniques. To standardise organisational practices relates to messages outlining an organisation's policies, rules, laws, benefits and structural arrangements (Lunenburg, 2010). Such information is mostly passed onto staff members through policy manuals, organisation handbooks and word of mouth through everyday interactions in the organisation.
4. Feedback on performance. According to Lunenburg (2010: 3), departments and staff are educated about their output in comparison to the objectives and performance requirements through several documents, including personal assessments and departmental advancement reports.
5. Socialisation. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008), socialisation is an attempt made by organisations to obtain dedication, a feeling of community and a shared sense of purpose among employees.

The downward communication flow within an organisation serves as a channel for distributing directives, instructions and information to its members. However, a significant amount of information can be lost as it passes from one person to another (Lunenburg, 2010). Additionally, Tourish (2010) states that if a message is sent far down the formal organisational structure from its sender to the final recipient, it may become distorted in transit. According to Greenberg and Baron (2008: 350-351), researchers determined six important subjects that staff members would like to hear from higher-up. These are:

1. What precisely is the scope of my work?
2. How am I faring?
3. Does anybody think highly of me?
4. How are we doing as a work unit?
5. In what direction is the company going?
6. How can I assist the business in achieving its goals?

Robbins, et al. (2010: 291) point out that previous research showed the importance of explaining the reasons behind decisions made by a manager when communicating to his or her subordinates. This way subordinates do not feel their opinions does not matter. Dvorak (2007) state that when employees feel like they are part of decision making in the organisation, they will be more likely to accept changes in the organisation.

### 3.2.2.2 *Upward communication*

The performance of an organisation relies on upward communication as much as downward communication (Muhamedi & Arrifin, 2017). Furthermore, Lunenburg (2010) states that behaviourists placed great importance on the establishment of upward communication flow. According to Muhamedi and Arrifin (2017), upward communication generally refers to communication that moves from staff at lower levels in the organisation to superiors who are at higher levels in the organisation. Muhamedi and Arrifin (2017: 31) further points out that upward communication is useful in organisations as it is necessary to satisfy employees' personality needs and determine whether workers comprehended information conveyed downward.

Canary (2011: 22) mentions five categories of information communicated upward in an organisation:

1. Difficulties and exceptions. Lunenburg (2010) points out that these kinds of messages illustrate severe glitches and exceptions in routine performance to notify leaders of any difficulties within the organisation.
2. Proposals for improvement. These messages carry ideas from staff members to management to aid improvement of task-related procedures thereby increasing their effectiveness (Lunenburg, 2010).
3. Assessment reports. These messages include daily, weekly or monthly reports updating management on the performance of employees and departments (Lunenburg, 2010).
4. Grievances and disputes. Lunenburg (2010) points out that these messages include employee grievances and conflicts passed through to management for resolution. He further points out that if an organisation has an open policy for dealing with such complaints, its members will be open to expressing their emotional state.

5. Financial and book-keeping information. These communications are concerned with financial issues and other matters of interest to the organisation management (Lunenburg, 2010).

Considering the above information, it is evident that organisations should provide for both upward and downward communication flows. However, this is not always the case and downward communication is more common in organisations than upward communication. Cheney (2011) points out that there are barriers to effective upward communication in an organisation, which are:

1. When employees report issues or provide information, management may choose not to act. Inaction in the face of such staff member input will ultimately lead to a breakdown in communication between the two sides.
2. Organisation management can be defensive about flawed staff member actions. When staff members perceive defensiveness on management's side, they can withhold important information.
3. Organisation management's attitude plays a crucial role in the upward communication flow. If management shows concern and listen to staff members' grievances, there will be improvement in the upward communication flow in the organisation.
4. Physical barriers in organisations such as separate offices can also hinder upward communication flow. Modern organisations should adopt open plan offices which allow both management and employees to share office space therefore enhancing upward communication.
5. Time delays between when upward communication was initiated by staff members and when action is taken by management can inhibit upward communication.

Keyton (2011) lists approaches of improving the efficacy of upward communication in an organisation as follows:

1. The open-door policy which means management's door is always open to employees to air out their grievances (Lunenburg, 2010). In most organisations this policy is rarely used and as such it shuts down the ideas and thoughts of most staff members. Management should introduce an open-

door policy, encouraging staff members to share their thoughts and ideas on various tasks and assignments carried out in the organisation.

2. Counselling, attitude questionnaires and interviews during staff exit. Organisational management can greatly improve upward communication by organising private counselling sessions, periodically conducting attitude surveys and conducting exit interviews with departing employees (Lunenburg, 2010). The insights gained from these activities can be crucial for enhancing future interactions with staff and employee retention.
3. Participative techniques. Lunenburg (2010) notes that group decision making in organisations can create a lot of upward communication.
4. The ombudsperson. The Oxford dictionary defines an Ombudsperson as an officer chosen to investigate grievances made against a business or organisation, particularly a public authority. Lunenburg (2010) purports that if instituting an ombudsperson is developed and maintained properly, it can be beneficial to an organisation where other avenues have failed.
5. The union contract. Unions are a necessary part of organisational structure and as such their main objective is to convey to management the thoughts and demands of staff members.
6. The grapevine. Grapevine in organisations is often viewed negatively but it might be useful in some scenarios. Organisational leaders should always pay attention to the grapevine in the organisation since it is an inevitable occurrence among staff members. Staff members use the grapevine as a means of emotional release and therefore this avenue can provide organisational management with important information regarding the attitudes and feelings of their staff (Lunenburg, 2010).

In summary, upward communication in an organisation is valuable to create feedback channels from lower-level staff to management. Managers depend on this communication flow to gather suggestions for new ideas and identify areas needing improvement within the organisation (Greenberg & Baron, 2008: 351; Robbins, et al., 2010: 291). Even though there can be some barriers preventing a healthy return flow, necessary measures can be put in place by organisations to promote improved staff-manage-

ment communications (Lunenburg, 2010). However, upward communication can sometimes be unreliable as subordinates will mostly send positive messages and information to avoid rebuke or punishment from managers (Tubbs & Moss, 2008: 485). This can hinder various tasks and projects' output in the organisation. Tubbs and Moss (2008: 487) note that managers can encourage effective upward communication by rewarding subordinates and be more accommodating of their feedback whether positive or negative. In addition, they can share their own feelings, perspectives and shortfalls with their subordinates, thereby encouraging them to do the same (Tubbs & Moss, 2008: 487).

### 3.2.2.3 *Horizontal communication*

In an organisation, upward and downward communication flows generally follow the formal hierarchical setup (Lunenburg, 2010). However, horizontal communication becomes necessary due to the increasing size and complexity of organisations, which creates a higher demand for lateral or diagonal communication across the formal chain of command (Lunenburg, 2010). According to Greenberg and Baron (2008: 353), today most organisations embrace horizontal communication as they are doing away with organisational hierarchy and initiating teamwork. Lunenburg (2010) further posits that information passed horizontally in organisations is useful in coordination, tying together activities within or across various departments. According to Canary (2011), horizontal communication falls into one of these three categories:

1. Intradepartmental problem solving. These messages are exchanged between staff working in the same department in an organisation. This is mostly concerned with the achievement of tasks (Muhamedi & Arrifin, 2017).
2. Interdepartmental coordination. Interdepartmental messages facilitate the completion of collaborative tasks (Muhamedi & Arrifin, 2017).
3. Staff advice to line departments. These messages are conveyed from organisation specialists to managers on the ground who are seeking support in particular areas, such as information technology and finance (Muhamedi & Arrifin, 2017).

According to Schein (1997) there are four ways in which barriers to horizontal communication can be reduced:

1. Place emphasis on the overall effectiveness of the organisation and the significance of the roles that various departments play in enhancing this overall effectiveness.
2. Encourage strong group engagement and regular communication so that groups can improve intergroup cooperation and support one another.
3. Use regular member rotation among departments or groups to foster empathy and understanding of one another's mistakes.
4. Steer clear of any win-lose scenario to lessen incentive rivalry and ensure that knowledge and resources are distributed honestly and equally.

In view of the above, it is evident that horizontal communication flow is significant in organisations as it permits diagonal flow of messages which supports interdepartmental work without having to follow strict upward and downward channels of communication (Muhamedi & Arrifin, 2017).

### **3.2.3 Benefits of effective internal communication in organisations**

Center, Jackson, Smith and Stansberry (2008) posit that there are a clear set of rules an organisation can employ during internal communication to enhance employee relations:

1. Communicate with employees first
2. Share both positive and negative news simultaneously
3. Ensure timely communication
4. Provide information on topics important to employees
5. Use media that employees trust

Effective communication at all levels of an organisation positively impacts on organisational success and employee relations (Proctor, 2014). Other studies indicate that good internal communication enhances corporate status and integrity. This is because employees are often seen as reliable sources of information by external investors (Dawkins, 2004; Hannegan, 2004). Argenti (2003: 129) further states goals for effective internal communication in order of their importance, which are:

1. To raise spirits and cultivate goodwill among staff members and management
2. To notify staff members regarding internal developments such staff promotions or reorganisations
3. To improve staff knowledge of the business, its offerings, organisational ethics, culture and external environment
4. To influence staff members' behaviour to become more entrepreneurial, quality-focused and productive.

Kolla (2005) additionally lists the vital roles of effective internal communication within an organisation as:

1. Supporting major change programmes
2. Raising awareness of the organisation's priorities
3. Communicating information from top management
4. Raising the credibility of the top team
5. Enhancing efficiency and productivity
6. Increasing employee motivation
7. Facilitating feedback
8. Enhancing managers' communication skills

Boyett and Boyett (1988) point out that employees can achieve as much as a 20-50% increase in individual performance by enhancing the quality, sufficiency and timeliness of the information they receive about customers, the company or their own work. Gay, Mahoney and Graves (2005: 1) note that the primary factor influencing how well a corporation performs is internal communication. According to the Towers Watson Communication ROI Study Report, institutions characterised by effective communication were found to have a 47% higher total income within a 5-year period, in comparison with other institutions with ineffective communication. Furthermore, it is noted that by delivering an effective internal communication strategy, such organisations can be set apart and have a competitive advantage over other organisations with ineffective internal communication practices (Kitchen & Daily, 2002). By strategically selecting the most effective channels and messages, an organisation can not only inform

but also motivate every employee to deliver business goals effectively and efficiently. According to Watson Wyatt, superior financial performance for shareholders, consistent consumer value, employee engagement and talent retention are all made possible by efficient internal communications in businesses (Towers Watson).

Grates (2008) asserts that strong, functional organisations must have both involvement and trust, which are facilitated by strong communication. Izzo and Withers (2000) point out that organisations with dedicated and engaged workers were 50% more productive than those with disengaged workers. In addition, organisations with dedicated and engaged staff had employee retention rates that were 44% higher. This is due to motivated staff members improving company success by influencing consumer behaviour, which has a direct impact on revenue growth and profitability (Perrin, 2003). According to Gray and Laidlaw (2004), dedication, job productivity, job performance and satisfaction, as well as other noteworthy results, are all correlated with employees' level of satisfaction with communication inside their organisations. This is due to a positive communication environment and strong employee communication increase workers' sense of belonging to their companies, which in turn boosts those companies' profitability and long-term success (Smidts, Pruyn & van Riel, 2001). Other benefits of effective internal communication in organisations include;

**Improved Employee Morale:** Transparent and regular communication fosters trust and a sense of value among employees, contributing to higher morale. Karanges, Johnston and Beatson (2015) emphasise that effective internal communication positively influences employees' emotional and motivational states, as they feel more connected to organisational objectives.

**Increased Employee Engagement:** Engaged employees tend to be more committed and productive. Men and Bowen (2017) found that effective communication promotes engagement by making employees feel informed, valued, and aligned with organisational goals, which increases their willingness to contribute.

**Better Decision-Making:** When information flows freely within an organisation, it enhances decision-making. Taneja, Sewell, and Odom (2015) argue that effective communication channels enable employees to share insights and perspectives, leading to more well-rounded and informed decisions.



**Enhanced Teamwork:** Clear and accessible communication encourages collaboration across teams. According to Mishra, Boynton, and Mishra (2014), effective internal communication helps break down silos, promoting a collaborative environment that encourages teamwork and shared problem-solving.

**Faster Problem-Solving:** Effective communication speeds up information sharing, allowing employees to address issues more quickly. Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield (2013) highlight that internal communication tools enable rapid dissemination of information, which helps in timely problem-solving and reduces the risk of misunderstandings.

**Increased Innovation:** Communication platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge, encouraging innovation. Bakar, Dilbeck and McCroskey (2015) found that when employees feel safe sharing ideas without fear of judgment, creativity and innovation flourish, as employees are more likely to propose novel solutions.

**Enhanced Organisational Culture:** Internal communication shapes and reinforces organisational values and norms, supporting a positive culture. Verčič, Verčič and Sriramesh (2012) point out that strong internal communication practices help align employee behavior with the organisation's culture, leading to a unified workplace identity.

**Improved Employee Retention:** When employees feel informed and engaged, they are more likely to stay. Welch (2011) shows that good communication practices foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among employees, which positively impacts retention rates.

**Increased Productivity:** Effective communication reduces time wasted on misunderstandings and clarifies expectations. According to Ruck and Welch (2012), productivity improves when employees understand their roles, responsibilities, and organisational objectives.

**Better Customer Service:** Well-informed employees can better serve customers by quickly accessing information and resources. De Ridder (2004) suggests that internal communication contributes to customer satisfaction, as employees who feel well-supported and knowledgeable can address customer inquiries more effectively.

### **3.2.4 Steps to enhance effective internal communication in organisations**

According to an article written by Fleishman Hillard public relations and digital marketing agency, (cited in Koutoulogenis – Spatas, 2007: 25-26), there are nine steps that can be adopted to aid in effective internal communication in organisations. They are:

#### **1. Evaluating the situation**

This phase entails collection of data from sources such as interviews, research and audits which is then used to create a new strategic plan to enhance effective internal communication in the organisation.

#### **2. Working on a document that will be the centre of communication**

This document is used to report and acts as a tracking tool for prospective internal communications.

#### **3. Aligning senior management**

This phase entails the alignment of senior management which is important and a necessary step to ensure the accomplishment of the goal at hand which is improvement of internal communication in the organisation.

#### **4. Ensuring medial managers' and supervisors' commitment**

Medial manager and supervisors play an important role in an organisation and they greatly influence decision making. Ensuring that they are committed to improving internal communication will make the whole process a success.

#### **5. Discussion with employees**

Employees play a vital role in the organisation and as such, a dialogue tool is essential to occupy them. When employees feel valued in the organisation and their needs are met, they are likely to be more effective.

## 6. Making use of the correct communication channels

Communication channels play an important role in ensuring internal communication is effective. Therefore, organisations must employ the correct channels when communicating internally so that information is controlled effectively.

## 7. Results must be deliberated on and then reported

In this phase, results are deliberated on and then reported back to employees by the chief executive officer (CEO) through diagrams and figures.

## 8. Rewarding and distinguishing employees

This phase entails recognition of employees' output, which are increased sales, reduced costs, customer service as well as teamwork and employees' adaptability. Awarding employees improves their performance, which generally improves organisational success.

## 9. Being on the march

In this final phase, information is passed to employees through the communication channels to enable them to filter the cases, news and the alterations made in the organisation.

### **3.3 BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS**

The proliferation of social media technologies in organisational contexts has profound implications for communication-based processes in organisations (Van Osch, Steinfield & Balogh, 2015). Various studies showed the benefits of using social media in organisational internal communications. These are as follows:

1. Social media enables employees to engage and build relationships (Baltatzis, Ormrod & Grainger, 2008). This is because employees can use social media to interact and network with colleagues

and leadership in different departments whom they do not interact with daily. Fostering healthier employee relations culminates in a more suitable working environment.

2. Trends and analysis are further supplied to organisations via social media. Organisations can monitor employee activity, searches and interests on social media platforms, which allows them to gain insights into employee interests, engagement levels, peak work hours and productivity and the type of content and conversations that pique employees' interest. Employers can make the required adjustments to boost morale and employee satisfaction thanks to the gathering and analysis of such data.
3. According to Badea (2014), social media aids in developing, enhancing and promoting organisational culture. Through email and other forms of communication, staff members are typically reminded on a regular basis of the various initiatives and organisational culture. A social network can serve to both generate conversation regarding subjects and even promote a greater knowledge, all while serving as positive reinforcement of this information.
4. Social media is viewed to be much more effective and open compared to traditional channels of communication such as memos and email. This is because social media is readily available on computers and mobile devices thus more accessible to employees. This aids in the facilitation of information flow (Badea, 2014).
5. Social media are beneficial in promoting knowledge management, knowledge sharing and learning which is paramount in promoting the success of the organisation (Naslund, 2010; Leonardi et al., 2013).
6. Social media is effective in enhancing interactions among employees in large organisations with cross-cultural issues (Baltatzis, et al., 2008). This is because they can be more interactive and effectively encourage participation compared to standard email communications. Employees may feel more heard when their posts and comments receive active responses from colleagues across various departments.

7. Social media is cost effective. Employees already use social media in their daily lives outside the workplace, therefore no new training is required to provide skills on how to use media internally in the organisations (Adegbuyi et al., 2015).
8. Furthermore, some recent research (Janhonen and Johanson, 2011) highlights social media benefits for knowledge transformation and team performance, as well as for cooperation and communication in most businesses (Andriole, 2010; Huang, Baptista, and Galliers, 2012).

### **3.4 CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS**

Communication channels have advantages as well as disadvantages. Just as using traditional channels encounter challenges in organisational communication, social media too face similar conundrums. Wilson (2009) purports that there are five principal risks that organisations face when it comes to social networking:

1. Perceived loss in staff productivity; this is because organisations feel that employees may increase time spent on social media not necessarily doing official work business but rather personal socialisation.
2. The potential for data leaks through employee gossip in an open environment, makes many organisations reluctant to implement internal social media due to concerns about confidential information being exposed to the public.
3. Damage to a business's reputation due to the exposed nature of social media channels organisations fear damage to their reputation.
4. Scam practiced by cyber crooks - the internet wave brought about cybercrime in that some individuals are out to scam individuals and organisations off their money.
5. Open access to organisation's information is due to outdated passwords: most social media channels are accessed via passwords and as such outdated passwords can be hacked easily therefore leading to loss of organisation information.

Another challenge hindering the use of social media in internal communication is the issue of organisational culture (Badea, 2014). Organisational culture has made it difficult for some organisations to adopt social media for internal communication. This is because of resistance to change in their manner of communicating. Furthermore, lack of clear guidelines and policies on the use of social media for internal communication, employees may misuse platforms or engage in inappropriate behaviours, leading to communication breakdowns or conflicts. Treem and Leonardi (2012) suggest that the absence of well-defined social media policies can result in inconsistent communication practices, which may negatively impact the effectiveness of internal communication efforts.

The use of social media for internal communication presents several challenges. Security concerns remain a significant issue, as organisations must safeguard sensitive data shared across these platforms (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). Additionally, organisations often face a lack of full control over social media tools, which may not fully align with internal communication goals or company policies. The blurring of personal and professional boundaries is another challenge, as employees may struggle to separate work-related communication from personal interactions on social media. Information overload can also hinder effective communication, as employees find it difficult to filter out relevant information amid the sheer volume of content. A lack of training in the use of social media for professional purposes further exacerbates these challenges, as employees may not fully understand the platforms' capabilities or best practices. Compliance issues arise when organisations need to ensure that social media communication adheres to industry regulations and standards. Cultural differences can also complicate communication, as what is acceptable in one cultural context may not be in another. Additionally, resistance to change, the potential for social media to become a time-consuming distraction, and the difficulty in monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of internal communication all present ongoing barriers to successful social media adoption.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has methodically reviewed academic literature addressing the dynamics of internal communication within organisational structures. The progression of internal communication practices advanced significantly, culminating in the contemporary landscape characterised by transparent exchanges between employees and management. The significance of effective internal communication as a critical determinant of organisational achievement has been substantiated in the literature. Notably, it is emphasised that employees who are well-informed serve as potent advocates for their organisations, substantially contributing to the enhancement of corporate reputation and credibility. Furthermore, the chapter delineated both the benefits and the potential challenges associated with the adoption of social media as a medium for internal communication within organisations. The literature review suggests a prevailing consensus that the benefits of utilising social media for internal dialogue significantly surpass the associated challenges. The forthcoming chapter explores the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the theoretical frameworks selected for this investigation, which is recognised as a pivotal element within the research process (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). These frameworks serve as the foundational blueprint guiding the research inquiry from conceptualisation through to the interpretation of results (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The inclusion of theory within research is imperative; it underpins the establishment of linkages between the collected data and the subsequent analytical and interpretive processes. The objective is to comprehend, describe, predict and manipulate phenomena within analogous contexts (Mertens, 2005: 2). Eisenhart (1991: 205) defines a theoretical framework as a construct guiding research by utilising a formal theory composed of coherent explanations of certain phenomena and their interrelations.

In this study, which investigates the adoption and use of social media for internal communication within organisations, both the Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) serve as guiding theoretical lenses. The DoI theory as the core theoretical framework offers a structured approach to comprehending how social media, as an innovative communication tool, advance internal communication and is integrated within organisational contexts. Meanwhile, UGT complementarily provides insights into the motivations behind employees' adoption and use of social media platforms, explaining the gratifications they seek and the needs they fulfill in the process. Together, these theories not only explain the diffusion of social media within organisations but also addresses the specific drivers behind individual and collective adoption behaviors. The ensuing sections will expound on the implications of these theories in relation to the research objectives.

#### **4.2 DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS THEORY**

The adoption and acceptance of technology are underpinned by various theoretical frameworks that aim to elucidate the mechanisms and factors influencing this phenomenon. The study adopted the Diffusion



of Innovations theory which had its origins in 1903. Toews (2003) states that French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, who created the original S-shaped diffusion curve, was the one who initially addressed it. The adopter categories that were later included in the present theory made prominent by Everett Rogers (Rogers, 1961) were first introduced by Ryan and Gross in 1943. Katz (1957), who is credited for originating the concept of opinion leaders and followers and the ways in which the media collaborates to shape these two groups, is another important figure in DoI history.

One of the most often used theories for analysing how different information technologies are adopted and how they move throughout and between different social systems is the diffusion of innovation theory (DoI) (Rogers, 2003). Diffusion and innovation are the two ideas comprising DoI. According to the notion, an innovation is any concept, method or piece of technology that people in a certain community or social structure consider to be novel or unfamiliar (Rogers, 2003). Innovations in this study are the different types of social media. However, Mbatha (2011: 146) notes that an innovation may be new to one area despite being accepted elsewhere. Diffusion refers to how an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system (Rogers, 1961). It is crucial to recognise the process by which individuals accept or reject an innovation, as reactions can vary across different social contexts. According to Rogers (1983: 1), much attention is given to the diffusion of innovations because adopting a new idea can be challenging, even when the benefits are clear.

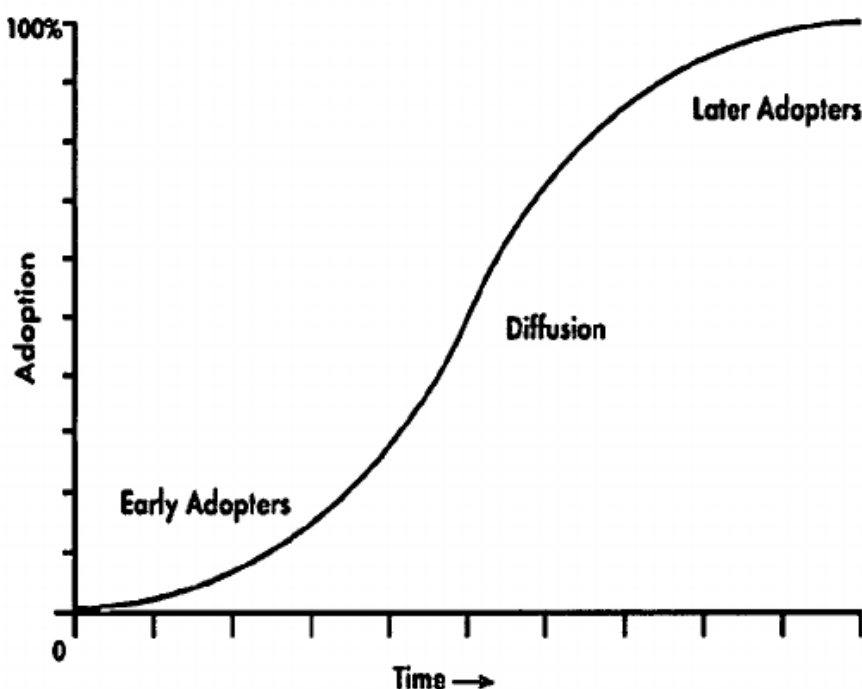


Figure 7: S-shape diffusion curve (Adopted from Rogers, 1995)

### 4.2.1 Key elements of Diffusion of Innovations Theory

According to Rogers (1983; 1995; 2003), there are four key elements that embody the Diffusion of Innovations theory. They are the attributes of innovation, communication channels, time and the social system.

#### 4.2.1.1 *The attributes of innovation*

The attributes of an innovation include five user-perceived qualities which are observability, relative advantage, compatibility, trialability and complexity. These will be discussed next.

##### a) Observability

The degree to which potential adopters may easily see the results of an innovation is known as its observability. It refers to how results of an innovation are noticeable to others, according to Rogers (2003). Observability is the ability to show prospective adopters the advantages or outcomes of utilising an innovation. Thus, observability extends beyond the utilisation of innovation by early adopters for the benefit of later adopters. Most prospective adopters need to understand the advantages of utilising and embracing innovation. The rate at which an innovation is adopted, and its observability are positively correlated. When potential adopters view the innovation's outcomes favourably, the likelihood of adoption rises.

##### b) Relative advantage

Rogers (2003: 229) defines relative advantage as the degree to which an innovation is perceived as exceeding the idea it supersedes. Sahin (2006) identifies two components of relative advantage: cost and social status incentives. He explains that while status serves as a motivator for innovators, early adopters and the early majority to embrace innovations, it holds little significance for laggards and the late majority. The prospective customer must, for instance, be able to see how invention enhances earlier models of products considering their own circumstances. Preventive and non-preventive innovations fall into two different categories. Rogers (2003: 233) describes preventive innovation as a new idea adopted to reduce the risk of an unfavourable event in the future. Sahin (2006) notes that preventive innovations often have a slow adoption rate, which makes assessing their relative benefit challenging. However, he

argues that small, rapid improvements can yield positive outcomes. Additionally, Sahin suggests that financial incentives, whether direct or indirect, can be used to encourage individuals within a social system to adopt an innovation, thereby increasing the adoption rate and enhancing the perceived relative advantage. This is because incentives play a crucial role in providing motivation and support.

#### c) Compatibility

Compatibility is the extent to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with existing norms, past experiences and the preferences of potential adopters (Rogers, 2003: 15). It speaks of the harmonious interaction an innovation possesses with people who are considering incorporating it into their life. An innovation's rate of adoption will undoubtedly rise, and hesitancy will reduce if it is thought to be compatible with what a person wants. Thus, an innovation's chances of spreading and being adopted are higher the more it can integrate with current values, experience and adopters' demands. It's critical for prospective consumers to understand that the innovation offered will fit into their lifestyle. Innovations demanding a significant shift in lifestyle or necessitate the purchase of additional products to be utilised are more likely to be unsuccessful. Sahin (2006) say that naming an invention is a crucial component of compatibility. To improve the adoption process, the name and connotation of the invention should have meaning for the prospective user (Sahin, 2006).

#### d) Trialability

This refers to how an innovation can be experienced for a limited time (Rogers 2003: 16). An invention is tested during trialability with little financial outlay and no commitment. Sahin (2006) states that there is a positive correlation between trialability and the adoption rate of an innovation, meaning that the more an innovation is tested, the faster it will be adopted. Trialability refers to how easily potential adopters can experiment with an innovative idea. Before fully committing, users prefer to test it out to understand its impact and benefits. Adopters want first-hand experience to envision how the innovation will affect their lives.

#### e) Complexity

Rogers (2003: 15) explains complexity as the extent to which a new idea is seen as being somewhat challenging to comprehend and apply. This speaks to its simplicity: a less complicated innovation has a

higher chance of being quickly adopted by end users than one that is not. Rogers (2003) suggests that complexity negatively impacts the adoption rate of an innovation. This means highly complex innovations face greater challenges in gaining acceptance. The difficulty potential users experience in integrating complex technologies into their lives hinders adoption. Easier innovations to use are more likely to be adopted, as users spend less time understanding how to use them.

#### *4.2.1.2 Communication channels*

The routes through which individuals become aware of innovations and evaluate their worth are referred to as communication channels. The communication routes are how innovation information is disseminated among individuals. Rogers (2003: 5) defines communication as the process through which individuals generate and exchange knowledge to achieve mutual understanding. This communication occurs through various channels and between different sources. In Rogers' theory, diffusion is a specific type of communication involving an innovation, two individuals or other adoption units and a communication channel. The communication channels are categorised into mass media and interpersonal.

##### a) Mass media channels

Mass media channels are all the manners of transmitting messages involving a mass medium. These include radio, television, social media and newspapers which enable a source of one or a few individuals to reach a larger audience (Rogers, 1983: 18).

##### b) Interpersonal channels

Rogers (1983: 18) states that interpersonal channels entail direct, face-to-face interactions between two or more parties. He also mentions that these channels are more successful in persuading someone to embrace a new idea, especially when the individuals involved are close peers (Sahin, 2006). In organisations, interpersonal communication is often considered more trustworthy.

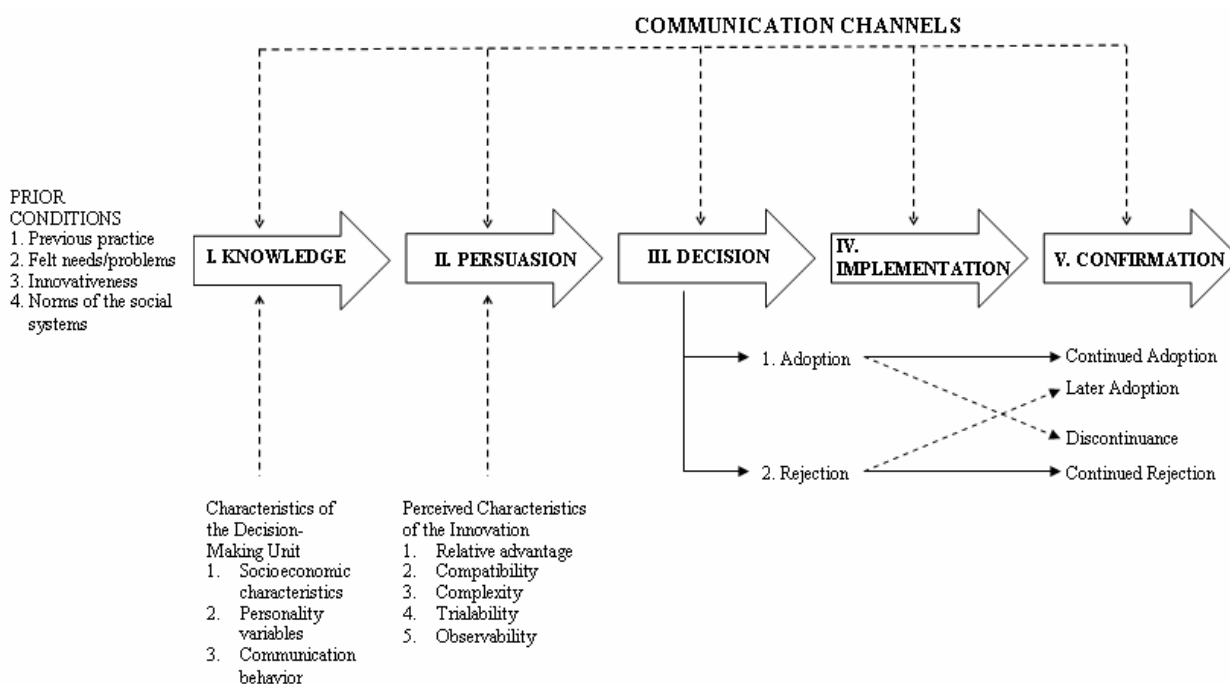
#### *4.2.1.3 Time*

Rogers (1983: 20) argues that the time dimension influences the diffusion process in three ways: (1) it tracks an individual's journey from first hearing about an innovation to deciding whether to accept or

reject it; (2) it assesses an individual or other adoption unit level of innovativeness, indicating how early or late they adopt the innovation compared to others in the system; and (3) it measures the adoption rate of the innovation within the system, typically indicated by the number of members adopting the innovation over each time period.

#### 4.2.1.3.1 The innovation-decision process

Rogers (2003: 172) describes the innovation-decision process as a sequence of information gathering and analysis where an individual seeks to reduce uncertainty about the benefits and drawbacks of an innovation. This process involves five stages: persuasion, information, decision-making, execution and confirmation (Rogers, 2003). These steps follow a chronological order, each occurring sequentially.



**Figure 8: A model of stages in the innovation-decision process (Adopted from Rogers, 2003: 170)**

##### a) The knowledge stage

Rogers (2003) explains that the innovation-decision process starts with the knowledge stage. Sahin (2006) highlights that during this stage an individual becomes aware of the innovation and seeks information about it. They ask three critical questions: what, how and why. At this point, the individual tries to understand what the innovation is, how it functions and why it works (Rogers, 2003: 21).

According to Rogers, these questions lead to three types of knowledge: (i) awareness-knowledge, (ii) how-to-knowledge, and (iii) principles-knowledge.

i. Awareness-knowledge

Rogers (1983) argues that awareness-knowledge motivates individuals to seek both procedural and foundational knowledge. He suggests that this information-seeking behaviour primarily occurs during the knowledge phase of adopting innovations but can also manifest during the persuasion and decision stages. Sahin (2006) emphasises that this awareness-knowledge signifies an existence understanding of an innovation, which in turn stimulates further exploration and adoption (Sahin, 2006).

ii. How-to-knowledge

According to Rogers (1983), this knowledge consists of information which is vital in using an innovation correctly. The innovation adopter must have an adequate understanding of the innovation quantity to adopt and how to use it correctly. Innovations that are relatively more multilayered require a greater amount of how-to-knowledge than the ones that are less multilayered. Sahin (2006) further postulates that to proliferate the adoption chance of an innovation, an individual should have an adequate level of how-to-knowledge prior to the test of the innovation.

iii. Principles-knowledge

Sahin (2006) defines this knowledge as comprising the operational principles explaining the mechanics and rationale behind how an innovation functions. Rogers (1983) suggests that while adopting an innovation can occur without this knowledge, its absence increases the risk of misuse and potential discontinuation. However, Sahin (2006) highlights that possessing comprehensive knowledge alone does not guarantee adoption; personal attributes and attitudes also significantly influence whether individuals adopt or reject innovations.

b) The persuasion stage

At this point in the innovation-decision process, a person develops a favourable or negative attitude toward innovation (Rogers, 2003). He further purports that adoption or rejection of an innovation is not

always the direct or indirect result of the creation of a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward it. This is a result of people changing their perspectives after learning about the innovation. During this phase, a person could ask for confirmation from peers to lessen uncertainty regarding the innovation's operation, which influences the person's opinions and convictions regarding the innovation (Sahin, 2006).

c) The decision stage

Throughout the decision-making stage, individuals have the choice to either embrace or decline an innovation. Rejecting an innovation means opting not to adopt it, whereas adoption entails fully utilising it as the preferred course of action (Rogers, 2003: 177). For an innovation to gain rapid acceptance, it must offer a trialability feature, allowing individuals to experiment with it beforehand, as most people are hesitant to adopt something new without testing it first (Rogers, 2003). Rejection, however, can occur at any phase of the innovation-decision process. Rogers (2003) further distinguishes between two types of rejection: passive rejection, where an individual never adopts the innovation and active rejection, where an individual considers adoption but ultimately decides against it.

d) The implementation stage

When a person or other decision-making unit uses an innovation, it enters the implementation stage (Rogers, 1983: 174). This can include staff members or the organisation's management. This is the phase where an invention is implemented. Reinvention is defined as the extent to which a user modifies or alters an innovation during its acceptance and implementation (Rogers, 2003: 180) and typically occurs during the implementation stage. Computers, according to Sahin (2006), are an example of an innovation that has many potential uses and prospects, rendering computer technology more malleable. This extends to social media as well.

e) The confirmation stage

In the confirmation stage, individuals seek reinforcement for their previously made decision to adopt an innovation (Sahin, 2006). Rogers (2003: 189) however suggests that this decision can be overturned if conflicting information about the innovation arises. Sahin (2006) observes that despite the presence of conflicting messages, individuals typically avoid them and instead seek supportive information validating their decision. He further emphasises that attitudes play a crucial role at this stage, influencing

whether the individual continues with adoption or decides to discontinue it based on the perceived support for the innovation and personal attitudes (Sahin, 2006).

#### 4.2.1.3.2 Innovativeness and adopter categories

Rogers (1983: 23) defines innovativeness as the extent to which an individual or another unit within a system adopts new ideas sooner than other members. Rogers (2003) categorises individuals within a social system into five groups, based on their attitudes toward innovations: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards.

##### a) Innovators

Rogers (2003) proposes that innovators possess the ability to grasp and apply technical knowledge necessary for introducing innovations from external sources into their social environment. They are the initial adopters of innovations and are open to encountering new ideas. However, given their role as early adopters, they must be prepared for potential losses and unsuccessful innovations as well as uncertainty about the innovation success. According to Sahin (2006), innovators may not always be esteemed by other members of the social system due to their influence and networks outside the system. Their daring spirit necessitates an in-depth understanding of technical complexities, which facilitates their adoption of innovations (Sahin, 2006).

##### b) Early adopters

Early adopters are perceived as well-informed about the current innovation, deeply connected to new technologies and often achieve greater economic success. Sahin (2006) notes that early adopters operate within tighter social boundaries compared to innovators. Rogers (2003) suggests that early adopters typically hold influential positions within their social circles, making them sought-after sources of advice and information regarding innovations. He further argues that their adoption of a new idea serves to validate it. As influential figures, their decision to adopt spreads through interpersonal networks within the social system, reducing uncertainty among other members (Rogers, 2003).

##### c) Early majority



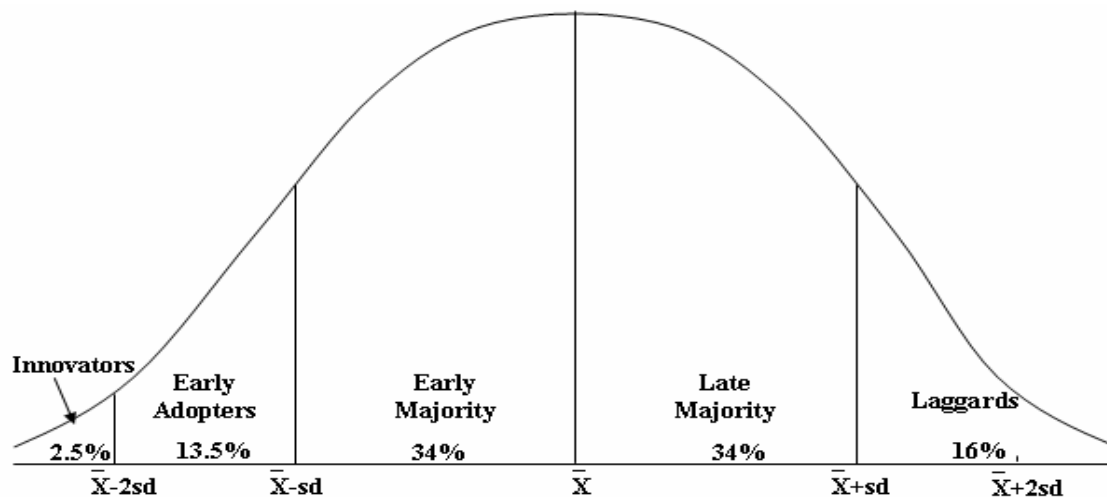
The early majority typically prefer to see evidence demonstrating a new innovation's effectiveness before committing to adoption. Rogers (2003) explains that while they maintain positive relationships within the social system, they lack the leadership roles held by early adopters. However, their interpersonal connections remain crucial in the process of innovation diffusion. Rogers also notes that the early majority tend to take their time in adopting innovations (Rogers, 2003).

d) Late majority

Typically, late majorities are wary of change and won't accept an invention until the majority inside the social system have tried it. They constitute approximately one-third of all members within the social system who delay adopting the innovation until most of their peers have done so, aligning them closely with the early majority (Rogers, 2003). He goes on to say that even though they have doubts about the innovation and its results, peer pressure and economic need can force them to adopt it and they wish to avoid falling behind. According to Rogers (2003: 284), the late majority will only feel comfortable embracing an innovation if their close peers do the same.

e) Laggards

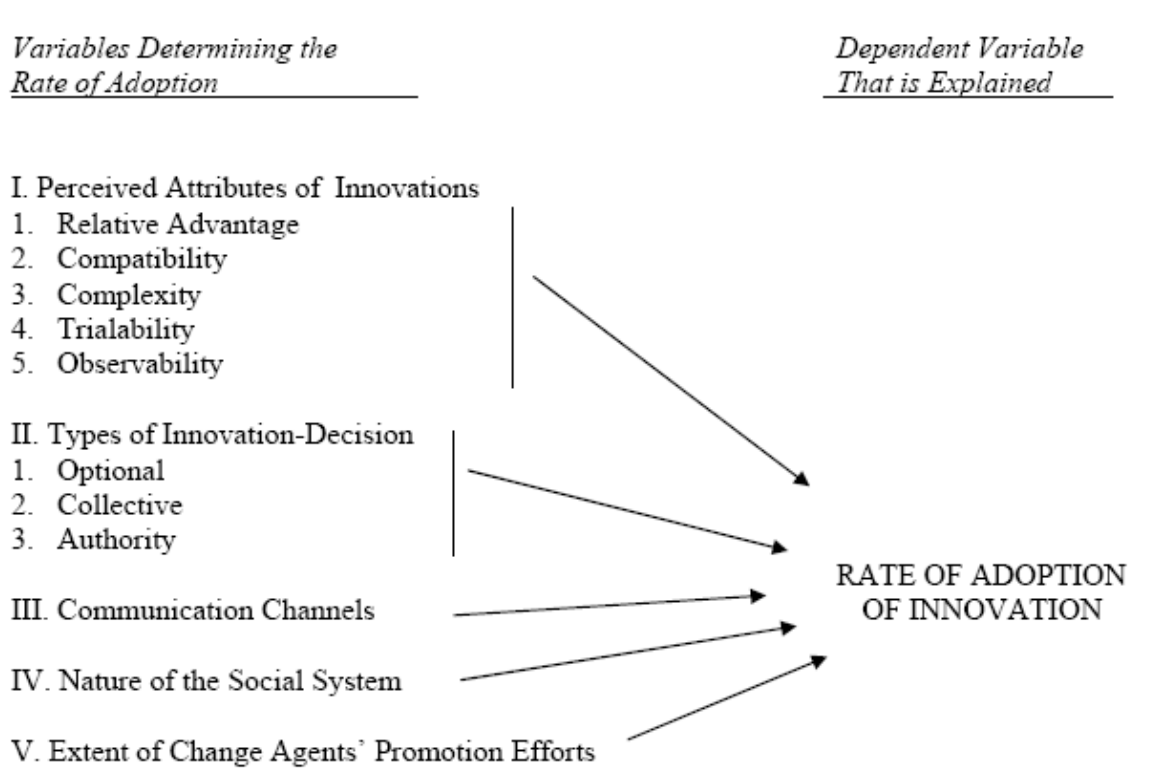
Laggards are often perceived as the most hesitant group when it comes to adopting new ideas, and they are more likely to eventually refrain from adopting innovations due to reasons such as limited resources, awareness or expertise. According to Rogers (2003), laggards exhibit greater uncertainty towards innovations and change agents compared to the late majority and they tend to hold more traditional viewpoints. Their decision-making process is heavily influenced by whether other members of the social system previously adopted the innovation successfully. Laggards are typically older or have extensive tenure within organisations, making them slower to embrace new ideas.



**Figure 9: Adopter Categorisation Based on Innovativeness (Adopted from Rogers, 2003: 281)**

4.2.1.3.3 Explaining the rate of adoption

According to Rogers (2003: 221), the rate of adoption refers to how quickly members of a social system adopt an innovation. It is quantified by the number of individuals who embrace a new idea within a given timeframe (Rogers, 1983).



**Figure 10: Variables in Determining the Adoption Rate of Innovations (Adopted from Rogers, 2003: 222)**

Rogers (2003) states that factors such as (a) the type of decision-making involved in adopting an innovation, (b) the characteristics of communication channels used at different stages of the adoption process, (c) the structure of the social system, and (d) the effectiveness of change agents' efforts in promoting the innovation all influence how quickly it is adopted.

a) The type of innovation-decision

Rogers (2003) asserted that the rate of adoption of an innovation is influenced by the type of decision-making involved. He explained that innovations requiring individual decision-making tend to be adopted more quickly compared to those adopted by organisations, where decision-making involves more individuals, thereby slowing down adoption rates (Sahin, 2006). Rogers suggests that to expedite adoption rates, altering the decision-making unit to involve fewer individuals can be an effective strategy. This is sometimes hindered by the bureaucratic nature of organisations.

b) Nature of communication channels

Rogers (2003) suggests that the communication networks utilised for disseminating an innovation can impact its rate of adoption. Rogers (1983) further elaborates that when interpersonal channels are necessary to disseminate awareness-knowledge, particularly among later adopters, this tends to aid in communication and adoption.

c) The nature of the social system

Rogers (1983) emphasises the importance of social norms within a system and the extent to which communication networks are highly interconnected.

d) The extent of change agents' promotion efforts in diffusing the innovation

Finally, according to Rogers (1983), the level of change agents' marketing efforts has an impact on how quickly innovations are adopted. However, there is typically not a direct and linear correlation between the pace of adoption and the efforts of change agents (Rogers, 1983). This is because, at some points in

an innovation's diffusion process, there is a higher return from a given quantity of change agent activity (Rogers, 1983: 234).

#### *4.2.1.5 Social system*

According to Rogers (2003: 23), a social system comprises interconnected entities collaborating to address challenges and achieve common goals. These entities can include individuals, informal groups, organisations or subsystems (Rogers, 1983). As innovations spread within social systems, their structure significantly affects this diffusion process. Structure refers to the organised arrangement of these entities within the system (Rogers, 2003: 24). Rogers further explains that the social structure of a system influences the key criterion for classifying adopters' individual innovativeness.

#### **4.2.2 Limitations of Diffusion of Innovation theory**

Rogers (1962) mentioned a few limitations of DOI theory:

- 1) Social norms and acceptance standards within society often prioritise conformity over the adoption of innovations, even when doing so could potentially benefit community health, well-being and educational attainment.
- 2) If an individual has prior experience with an established behaviour but has not experienced negative consequences from it, they are less inclined to embrace innovation. For example, if employees in the organisations already had negative experiences with social media maybe in their personal use, they may be sceptical about adopting it for professional use.
- 3) The affordability or cost of adopting a new behaviour, such as using social media for internal communication in organisations, is significant. Applications such as Workplace by Facebook and Yammer by Microsoft which are used for internal communication in organisations are costly.
- 4) The speed at which the new behaviour can be achieved or observed is crucial; if individuals do not perceive tangible outcomes or benefits from it, they are more likely to revert to previous behaviours.

Another limitation of the theory is its assumption of a linear progression of innovation adoption. According to the theory, individuals move through distinct stages – awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption – in a sequential manner. However, in reality, the process of innovation adoption is often more complex and non-linear. People may skip stages, revisit previous stages, or even abandon the adoption process altogether. This limitation can make it challenging to accurately predict and manage the diffusion of innovations in practice (Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate & Kyriakidou, 2004).

The Diffusion of Innovation theory tends to overlook the role of social and cultural factors in shaping innovation adoption. The theory primarily focuses on individual characteristics, such as innovativeness and risk aversion, without giving sufficient attention to the influence of social networks, norms, and values. In many cases, the success or failure of an innovation is heavily dependent on the social context in which it is introduced. Ignoring these social and cultural factors can lead to limited insights into the dynamics of innovation diffusion (Greenhalgh et al., 2004).

The theory assumes that all innovations follow a uniform path of adoption, regardless of their nature or context. However, not all innovations are created equal, and different types of innovations may face unique challenges in gaining acceptance. For example, disruptive innovations that challenge established norms or practices may encounter greater resistance than incremental innovations that build upon existing technologies. By treating all innovations as equivalent, the Diffusion of Innovation theory may oversimplify the complexities of the adoption process.

The theory tends to underemphasise the role of power dynamics and inequalities in shaping innovation diffusion. Innovations are not always adopted based on their intrinsic merits; they may be promoted or hindered by powerful actors or institutions with vested interests. In cases where marginalised groups or communities are excluded from the decision-making process, the diffusion of innovations may exacerbate existing inequalities and reinforce power imbalances. By neglecting these power dynamics, the Diffusion of Innovation theory may fail to account for the uneven distribution of benefits and risks associated with innovation adoption (Fagerberg, Mowery and Nelson, 2013).

Lastly, the theory suffers from a lack of attention to the ethical implications of innovation diffusion. Innovations can have far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and the environment, yet the theory does not provide a robust framework for evaluating the ethical implications of adoption. As a result, the theory may inadvertently facilitate the uncritical promotion of innovations that harm rather than benefit society. Without a strong ethical foundation, the Diffusion of Innovation theory may fail to

address the broader impacts of innovation diffusion on social welfare and environmental sustainability (Fagerberg et al., 2013).

#### **4.2.3 Justification for adopting Diffusion of Innovations theory**

The choice of DOI for this research is predicated on the comprehensive nature of this theory in explaining the complexities associated with the adoption of new technologies. Rogers (1983) notes the inherent challenges in achieving widespread acceptance of innovations, despite clear benefits, which he attributes to the multifaceted process of diffusion within social systems. This theoretical perspective is instrumental in understanding the dynamics of technological adoption within the specified contexts of this study.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI), as posited by Rogers (2003), is deemed suitable for this study given its wide applicability in both individual and organisational contexts. According to Rogers (1995), the adoption process follows a structured five-stage model: knowledge acquisition, persuasion, decision-making, implementation and confirmation. Among these stages, persuasion is highlighted as particularly crucial as it directly influences an individual's adoption of an innovation. Rogers (1995) also identifies five key characteristics of innovations including relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability, which significantly influence their adoption rate and subsequent acceptance behaviours. Each characteristic serves as a critical determinant in how potential adopters perceive and evaluate an innovation, thereby influencing their decision to accept and utilise it. In this study, these determinants were systematically applied to investigate adoption of social media platforms as internal communication tools within Kenyan organisations. This approach facilitated a detailed analysis of the factors driving the acceptance and integration of these digital innovations in an organisational context.

Rogers (1995) explains that the DOI Theory predicts the rate of technology adoption based on technological characteristics interaction, communication channels and the structure of social systems. He categorises adopters into five groups: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards, based on their timing of adoption. This classification suggests that innovators, early adopters and the early majority tend to adopt new technologies such as social media more quickly compared to the late majority and laggards. DOI has been widely used in empirical studies to examine the adoption behaviours of individuals and organisations (Peansupap & Walker, 2005; Sarosa, 2012). Most of these

studies employed quantitative methods to track the progression through adoption phases up to acceptance, yielding statistically generalisable findings. However, this study departs from that approach by opting for qualitative research. This choice was driven by the goal of gaining an in-depth understanding of how employees in organisational settings adopt and utilise social media for internal communication. The qualitative framework facilitates a more extensive exploration of the subjective experiences and contextual dynamics influencing the integration of this innovation within the workplace.

### **4.3 USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY**

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), first conceptualised in the 1940s and further developed over the following decades, represents a shift from traditional, passive models of media consumption. Early communication models, such as the hypodermic needle theory or magic bullet theory, viewed media audiences as passive recipients of information, suggesting that media messages were directly injected into their consciousness without room for active interpretation. However, UGT challenged this notion by proposing that media consumers are active participants who select media to satisfy specific needs or gratifications (Katz et al, 1974).

UGT emphasises that people engage with media platforms intentionally, driven by distinct personal or professional motivations. These motivations can include the need for information seeking, where users turn to media to acquire knowledge or stay informed, for entertainment where media provides a source of amusement or relaxation, for social connection allowing users to build or maintain relationships through media, and personal identity development where media facilitates self-expression and helps shape users' self-concept (Bhatiasevi, 2024). In essence, individuals are not passive consumers but are selective and purposeful in their media choices, actively seeking content that aligns with their desires and goals.

The theory's adaptability across evolving media landscapes highlights its relevance in understanding modern media consumption, particularly with the advent of social media. As media options have expanded, so too have the various gratifications users seek from different platforms. Social media users, for instance, might engage with platforms not only to stay connected with others but also to shape and project their personal identities, engage in public discourse, or gain professional visibility (Zadeh et al., 2023).

#### **4.3.1 Key elements of Uses and Gratifications Theory**

According to Mehrad & Tajer (2016), there are five key elements that embody the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The core components of UGT include information seeking or awareness, social interaction, personal identity and self-expression, entertainment or recreation, and convenience. These dimensions explain why users choose certain media tools and how they derive satisfaction from their use.

#### *4.3.1.1 Information seeking*

This component refers to the desire for an individual to acquire relevant knowledge, stay informed, and reduce uncertainty. In the context of organisations, employees may use social media platforms to gather information on organisational updates, policies, or industry trends. By offering real-time access to data, social media can serve as a powerful tool for employees looking to fulfill their information needs.

#### *4.3.1.2 Social interaction*

Social media facilitates communication, allowing users to maintain relationships, collaborate, and engage with others. In an organisational setting, social interaction can take the form of team collaboration, peer-to-peer communication, or interaction with leadership. This component highlights the role of social media in enabling professional networking and building a sense of community within the organisation.

#### *4.3.1.3 Personal identity and self-expression*

This component addresses the need for users to express their opinions, share their achievements, or enhance their professional identity. Employees may use social media platforms to showcase their expertise, contribute to discussions, and establish a visible professional presence, all of which contribute to their sense of self-worth and validation.

#### *4.3.1.4 Entertainment*

Although less prominent in professional contexts, entertainment can still play a role in how social media is used within organisations. Platforms can provide a more relaxed environment for informal communication, social bonding, or even for sharing light-hearted content, contributing to a more enjoyable and engaging work culture.

#### *4.3.1.5 Convenience and efficiency*

Social media tools often offer user-friendly interfaces, speed, and flexibility, making them efficient means for internal communication. Employees might adopt social media platforms because they enable



quick, real-time communication, streamlining workflows and facilitating faster decision-making processes.

In the context of this study, UGT was adopted as a complementary theory to DoI to explore and understand the motivations behind the use of social media platforms for internal communication within Kenyan organisations. The theory is in line with the study objectives, as it provides a framework for examining employee choices and behaviors related to social media use in professional settings. The theory aided in understanding the underlying gratifications employees seek when using social media for communication, and how these motivations influence adoption and usage patterns.

The first objective on determining the knowledge of social media among employees in Kenyan organisations relates closely to the information-seeking component of UGT. Employee knowledge of social media platforms is crucial in determining their capacity to effectively use these tools. Employees who are well-versed in how social media works are more likely to use these platforms for gathering important organisational information, staying updated on events, or accessing professional knowledge. UGT helps explain that the extent of employee knowledge of social media is influenced by their need to access information, thus shaping their motivations for using these platforms within the organisation.

The social interaction and convenience components of UGT are most relevant to the objective on employee utilisation of social media channels for internal communication. Employees use social media for internal communication as it provides a convenient and effective way to collaborate and engage with colleagues, regardless of geographical or hierarchical boundaries. Social media facilitates the creation of professional networks and allows employees to communicate in real-time, improving workflow efficiency. UGT explains that employees are likely to adopt social media platforms because they meet their social interaction needs, helping them form and maintain relationships while also serving the practical function of efficient communication.

The third objective is linked to the personal identity and self-expression and convenience components of UGT. Employee perceptions of social media adoption are shaped by how well these platforms allow them to express themselves, contribute meaningfully to organisational conversations, and enhance their professional visibility. The perceived benefits, such as increased recognition or faster communication, can drive adoption, while challenges including privacy concerns or information overload may arise if the platforms do not meet employee efficiency or self-expression needs. UGT provides a lens to understand why certain employees view social media as beneficial while others may resist, based on whether the platforms meet their specific personal and professional needs.

To understand the strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption, the theory components of information-seeking, convenience, and social interaction are vital in understanding these barriers. Challenges arise when employees feel that the platforms do not adequately meet their needs for accessible information, efficient communication, or advance connections within the organisation. For instance, if employees find the platforms complex or unaligned with their work habits, the convenience factor is compromised, leading to lower adoption rates. The theory helps explain that strategies to overcome these barriers should focus on enhancing the perceived gratifications such as simplifying the platforms for greater convenience, offering training to improve information access, or enhancing a more interactive and collaborative social media environment within the organisation.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter explored the theoretical framework employed for the study, integrating two complementary theories: The Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). The DoI theory was selected due to its widespread applicability in both individual and organisational contexts, offering a framework to explore how new information technologies, such as social media platforms, are adopted within organisations. By using DoI, the study aimed to explain the patterns and processes by which employees adopt and integrate social media into their internal communication practices. In addition to DoI, the Uses and Gratifications Theory was applied to explore the underlying motivations behind employees' engagement with social media for internal communication. UGT provided insight into how employees use these platforms to fulfill specific needs, including information seeking, social interaction, personal identity expression, entertainment, and convenience. These components were directly linked to the study's objectives, offering an in-depth understanding of how and why social media is adopted, the challenges faced, and the strategies needed to enhance its use in Kenyan organisations. Together, DoI and UGT explained the diffusion of social media technologies and the personal gratifications driving their use. The subsequent chapter will expand on the research methodology employed in the study, outlining the approach taken to investigate the adoption and utilisation of social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter highlighted and discussed the theoretical framework adopted for the study. This chapter focuses on the research paradigm in which the study is situated as well as the research design and research methods used to complete this study. Many scholars provide definitions for the term research methodology. Research methodology, according to Kothari (2004), is the science of examining how research should be conducted. It covers the ethical issues associated with research as well as the theoretical framework, particular data collection and analysis procedures, and tools. Research methodology, according to Creswell (2014), is the framework that directs researchers while they carry out their investigations. It covers the entire methodology of the research process, including the choice of data collecting and analysis techniques.

A collection of procedures that researchers employ to gather, examine, and interpret data is another noteworthy definition of research methodology. It highlights how crucial it is to choose the right methodologies in order to guarantee the validity and dependability of the results (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Bryman (2016) postulates that research methodology is about the decisions that researchers make about the methodologies they employ and the reasoning behind those decisions. It offers a thorough framework for carrying out research and incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods. Finally, research methodology is defined by Flick (2018) as the methodical examination of the techniques and processes employed in research. It takes into account the philosophical foundations of research and how they influence the selection of methodologies.

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology underpinning the study. It outlines the research paradigm within which the study is situated, offering insight into the theoretical framework guiding the investigation. The research method and design employed in the study are also discussed, providing a rationale for their selection and how they align with the research objectives. Furthermore, this chapter describes the research context, detailing the setting in which the study was conducted, as well as the data collection instruments utilised. The chapter also highlights the pilot study

conducted to test and refine the data collection tools. Additionally, the data analysis methods applied in the study are explained, along with the strategies employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Finally, the ethical considerations observed throughout the research process are discussed, ensuring transparency and adherence to ethical standards.

## 5.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The term paradigm, derived from the Greek word '*paradeigma*' meaning pattern, was introduced by Thomas Kuhn in 1970 in his influential work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn used it to refer to the collective assumptions, perspectives and standards held by a community of experts regarding the nature of knowledge and reality (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019: 1). Various scholars defined the concept of research paradigm. According to Kuhn (1970), a research paradigm encompasses shared beliefs and agreements among scientists regarding how to approach and solve problems. Guba and Lincoln (1994) characterise a paradigm as a foundational framework or worldview that guides the researcher's methods and interpretations.

Babbie (2010) defines a research paradigm as the foundational model or framework for organising observations and reasoning. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) elaborate that a paradigm denotes the foundational philosophical assumptions or core beliefs that shape actions and define the researcher's worldview. Kaushik and Walsh (2019) also equate the term "worldview" with paradigm, emphasising its role as a synonym in this context (Creswell & Plano, Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Lincoln, 1990; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Worldview is defined as a method of considering and comprehending the complexity of the real world (Patton, 2002: 69). According to Chalmers (1982: 91), there are five generally acknowledged components of a paradigm. They are:

- 1) Laws and theoretical presumptions that are expressly stated.
- 2) Conventional methods for utilising the basic laws in a range of circumstances.
- 3) Instruments and instrumental methods that apply the paradigm's laws to the actual world.
- 4) Overarching metaphysical ideas that direct paradigmatic work.
- 5) Broad methodological guidelines dictating how to carry out tasks inside the paradigm.

A research paradigm consists of three dimensions, these are: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba, 1990). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) propose another additional dimension which is axiology. The study at hand therefore utilised the four dimensions. Ontology, as defined by Creswell (2014), is the

philosophical inquiry into the nature of existence and reality. It explores the fundamental belief system of researchers regarding the nature of existence and reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These philosophical assumptions regarding reality are critical in shaping how researchers interpret the data they collect. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), ontology is integral to a paradigm as it seeks to uncover the fundamental nature of the concepts that researchers investigate, thereby interpreting the underlying meaning in study data. Understanding how researchers interpret gathered information relies on a solid grasp of these philosophical presumptions about reality. To effectively address their research questions, comprehend the issue under investigation and contribute to its resolution, researchers must be able to refine their assumptions, perceptions or propositions concerning the research problem, its significance and potential methodologies (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017: 27).

The term epistemology originates from the Greek word *episteme*, which refers to knowledge. It concerns the arrival at knowledge about the truth or reality of something (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Epistemology examines the nature and types of knowledge, as well as how knowledge can be acquired and communicated to others. It focuses on understanding the forms of knowledge researchers can potentially acquire to deepen their understanding in their field of study. There are various forms of knowledge that form the epistemological foundation of research. For instance, intuitive knowledge arises when researchers rely on beliefs, faith and intuition. Authoritative knowledge involves using data from informed individuals, books or organisational leaders. Logical knowledge emphasises reasoning as the most reliable path to truth. Lastly, empirical epistemology emphasises that knowledge is derived from sensory experiences and verifiable, objective facts. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), epistemology is crucial because it helps researchers establish confidence in their data and guides them in uncovering knowledge within the social contexts they investigate.

The term methodology refers to the overall framework encompassing research design, methods, approaches and procedures utilised in an investigation (Keeves, 1997 as cited in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argue that methodology encompasses the systematic processes and rationale employed in conducting a research project to comprehend a research problem. They add that this constitutes underlying assumptions, encountered challenges and strategies implemented to mitigate them (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017: 28).

Axiology, in contrast, pertains to the ethical considerations that researchers must address when planning a research project (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This involves evaluating the ethical implications related to

all aspects of correct and incorrect conduct in research. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017: 28) emphasise that axiology determines the values assigned to various facets of the research, including participants, data and the audience to whom research findings will be communicated.

There are three paradigms popular in qualitative research: Positivist, Interpretive and Critical paradigms. In addition, these three philosophical perspectives are the common paradigms in contemporary organisational research. The study at hand will adopt the interpretive paradigm which will be discussed next.

### **5.2.1 Interpretive paradigm**

Creswell (2003: 9) asserts that the interpretive paradigm involves individuals actively making sense of their environments and experiences. This paradigm focuses on using people's interactions with the external world to understand reality. Interpretivist researchers aim to understand the realities of human experiences (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Creswell, 2014). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), the primary goal of interpretivist paradigm is to comprehend the subjective world of human experience. Linked closely with qualitative research, the interpretive paradigm was influenced by hermeneutics, which concerns the study of meaning and interpretation in historical texts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In this paradigm, the researcher's role is to understand, clarify and elucidate social realities as perceived by various participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 19). The interpretive paradigm emphasises understanding individuals and their interpretations of the world around them. Thus, a central tenet of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017: 33), the interpretive paradigm adopts a subjectivist epistemology where researchers derive meaning from their data through personal reflection and cognitive processing, shaped by their interactions with participants. In this paradigm, researchers engage in interactive processes such as mingling, conversing, questioning, listening, reading, writing and recording data alongside their subjects. Furthermore, within a relativist ontology, the interpretive paradigm acknowledges that the research setting contains multiple realities, each open to investigation, interpretation or reconstruction through interactions among researchers, participants and other stakeholders (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Adopting a naturalistic approach, researchers in this paradigm act as participant observers, gathering insights from discourses, texts, interviews and reflective sessions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Lastly, the interpretive paradigm promotes a balanced axiology, ensuring that research findings align with the values of the researcher while presenting an impartial report.

Additionally, when studying the adoption and use of social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations, the interpretive paradigm is a suitable approach to take because it is based on the idea that individuals and groups interpret the world around them and create their own understanding of it. This is particularly relevant when studying the use of social media in organisations, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of employees when using these platforms. By employing the interpretive paradigm in this study, the candidate wanted to gain insights into how employees in Kenyan organisations perceive and interact with social media for internal communication. This helped in identifying challenges or barriers that exist, as well as uncovering best practices and strategies for successful implementation. Furthermore, the interpretive paradigm allows for an in depth understanding of the social dynamics at play when using social media in the workplace.

### **5.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

Kothari (2004: 7) defines research methods as methods researchers use in performing research operations. Research methods are further defined by Bryman (2016) as the several strategies for obtaining information that can be applied to address research concerns. This covers both qualitative and quantitative approaches, each of which has a distinct function and produces a different kind of data. Creswell (2007; 2014) postulates that there are three types of research methods known as: quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods research. The study adopted a qualitative research approach which will be explained below.

#### **5.3.1 Qualitative research**

According to Creswell (2007: 4), qualitative research is a method for exploring and comprehending the significance that individuals or groups attach to a social issue or phenomenon. Williams (2007) further purports that one distinct characteristic of qualitative research is that the social occurrence is being explored from the participant's point of view. It is also less controlled in description as it formulates and builds new theories (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Furthermore, qualitative research is inductive in nature since it derives its questions from observational components, which the researcher then tries to explain (Williams, 2007). Additionally, there is a substantial association in qualitative research between the research participants and the researcher. This stands in stark contrast to quantitative research, in which the investigator is completely removed from the phenomenon under study (Williams, 2007).

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Concern for content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human experience takes its meaning from social, historical, political and cultural influences</li> <li>• Reality is socially constructed and constantly changing</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand social phenomena of multiple realities from respondents' perspectives</li> </ul>
<b>Rich narrative description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data are in the form of words</li> <li>• Subjects' experiences and perspectives</li> <li>• Detailed context-bound generalisations</li> <li>• Rich detailed description</li> <li>• In-depth</li> </ul>
<b>Sample</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small, non-random and purposeful</li> </ul>
<b>Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Natural setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes place in natural setting</li> <li>• No attempt to manipulate behaviour</li> <li>• No artificial constraints or controls</li> </ul>
<b>Human instrument</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher is the primary agent for the gathering and analysis of data</li> <li>• Studies human experiences and situations, require an instrument to capture complexity of the human experience</li> <li>• Becomes immersed in social situation</li> <li>• Relies on fieldwork methods</li> </ul>
<b>Emergent design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design emerges as the study proceeds</li> <li>• Self-questioning throughout research to think critically – reflexive acts</li> <li>• Flexible and evolving</li> <li>• Interaction and developmental</li> </ul>



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**Inductive analysis**

- Data collection and data analysis take place simultaneously
  - Holistic form of analysis
  - Identification of recurring patterns
  - Proceeds from data to hypothesis to theory
- 

**Table 4: Characteristics of qualitative research (Adapted from McMillan and Schumacher (2001))**

### **5.3.2 Rationale for qualitative research method**

Qualitative research method was considered suitable for this study as social media is viewed as a relatively new field and, as such, an in-depth exploration into it was needed. The study adopted a qualitative research method which emphasises on the understanding of behaviour from the participants' own point of view (Creswell, 2014). The researcher was able to obtain first-hand information of social media penetration in the workplace from the employees. Secondly, qualitative research was deemed appropriate for this study as it is inductive in nature as opposed to deductive. Therefore, this research method allowed the researcher to make conclusions only after observations of events and phenomena in the field which would be difficult to quantify using quantitative methods.

Thirdly, qualitative research method was considered fit for the study as it is concerned with personal valuation of attitudes, opinions and behaviour (Kothari, 2004: 5). This means the researcher does not manipulate variables but rather deals with events and processes happening during a study and lastly, qualitative research was chosen for the study as it allowed the researcher to study the research participants in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

#### *5.3.2.1 Advantages of qualitative research approach*

The application of a qualitative research approach has certain established benefits. Firstly, the qualitative research approach assesses the meanings of participants' activities and generates detailed and in-depth descriptions of their thoughts, opinions and experiences (Rahman, 2017). Secondly, the interpretive paradigm-based qualitative research approach provides a comprehensive understanding of human experience in this context (Rahman, 2017). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2002), the interdisciplinary field of qualitative research encompasses a wider range of research tools, interpretative tactics and

epistemological perspectives for understanding human experiences. Thirdly, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), direct observation, unstructured interviews and document description are the methods most frequently used in qualitative research to collect data. Therefore, researchers can interact with the participants leading to data collection that is subjective and detailed. Finally, because the design may be built and reconstructed to a higher extent, the interactive technique used in qualitative research has a flexible structure (Rahman, 2017). As a result, qualitative research methodologies can be used to analyse a problem thoroughly and suitably, giving participants the freedom to decide what is trustworthy for them (Rahman, 2017). This makes it simple to understand the topics being studied.

#### *5.3.2.2 Disadvantages of qualitative research approach*

Depending on the topic a researcher wishes to explore, different research methodologies have advantages and disadvantages. Although the qualitative research approach was thought appropriate in carrying out the current study, throughout time, several of the approach shortcomings were brought up (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Rahman, 2017). To be able to effectively record the events as they happen, a researcher must first invest a substantial amount of time and resources in the research environment (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Secondly, given the small sample sizes involved in qualitative research, generalisability is unlikely (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Thirdly, contextual awareness is occasionally overlooked in favour of a greater emphasis on meanings and experiences in qualitative research methodologies. Furthermore, while qualitative research occasionally promotes reliability, it can be challenging to avoid or identify a researcher's personal biases (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Lastly, the analyses of qualitative data need a significant amount of time (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Flick, 2018).

## **5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), is a process for selecting study participants, study sites and data gathering techniques to answer research questions. Furthermore, they assert that producing results regarded as credible is the goal of an excellent study design. According to Pandey and Panday (2021), a research design can also be defined as a plan or framework for a study serving as a guide for data collection and analysis. It is considered necessary because it leads the numerous research activities to run more smoothly, which maximises the amount of information produced with the least amount of time, money or effort (Kothari, 2004: 32). It is seen as a blueprint that enables the easy running of all research operations (Kothari, 2004).

A research design, according to Kothari (2004), consists of a plan outlining the researcher's steps, from drafting the study's goals and questions to doing the final data analysis. A research design is thought of as a workable strategy that the researcher employs to provide economical, accurate and impartial answers to inquiries. According to Kothari (2004), research ought to be conducted economically and, as such, a researcher needs to be able to determine whether the research design will be appropriate in terms of both time and money. Furthermore, Kothari (2004: 33) contends that the following elements must be present in a good research design: first, the methods for gathering data; second, the researcher's availability and expertise; third, the study goal; fourth, the nature of the study and last, the availability of time and funds for the research project. The study adopted a case study research design which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **5.4.1 Case study research design**

Creswell (2003: 15) defines a case study as an in-depth exploration of a program, an occasion, an activity, a technique or one or more individuals by a researcher. Yin (2009: 18) defines a case study as empirical research exploring a contemporary phenomenon in depth and looks at it inside its real surroundings, especially in circumstances where it is challenging to tell the difference between the phenomenon and its setting. Three types of case studies are mentioned by Yin (2018): exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies. The current investigation is classified as an exploratory case study. This is because exploratory case studies investigate any feature in the data piquing the researcher's curiosity (Zainal, 2007). Leedy and Ormrod (2001) believe that a case study should have a clear time frame. They further state that case studies attempt to learn more about a situation that is not well recognised or understood (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 149). This was the case in this study as the use of social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations was poorly understood and therefore in-depth research into it was needed.

An intensive procedure of data collection is required for a case study. This is because information is gathered from a variety of sources, including participant or direct observation, interviews, documents or records from the past, tangible objects and audio-visual resources (Yin, 2018). When conducting a case study, the researcher must engage with the study subjects in person. For this study, an exploratory case study research methodology was chosen since it provided the researcher with a chance to thoroughly examine the topic under exploration. The researcher employed this design to learn new information. A

case study enables a researcher to focus on a single program, activity or event and, as a result, collect comprehensive data thereon.

Considering the aforementioned, the researcher investigated the adoption and use of social media for internal communication in three Kenyan organisations using an interpretive, exploratory, multiple case study design. The multiple case study design was chosen because, as opposed to sample logic, it works with real-world occurrences that provide various sources of evidence through replication (Zainal, 2007). According to Yin (2009), theory rather than population-based research is the source of case study results' generalisation from either single or multiple designs. By recreating the case using pattern-matching, a technique linking different facts from the same case to a theoretical idea, the multiple case study design expands upon and supports the earlier findings (Zainal, 2007). Zainal (2007) further states that this replication helps raise the level of confidence in the robustness of the method.

#### *5.4.1.1 Advantages of case study research design*

Yin (1984) lists several benefits of employing case studies. Firstly, the data analysis is usually done in relation to how it will be used (Yin, 1984). Secondly, according to Yin (2009), case studies enable researchers to maintain an all-encompassing perspective on actual occurrences. A case study's advantage, according to Flyvbjerg (2006: 235), is that it enables focus on real-world situations and assess theories in direct relation to phenomena as they appear in real-world contexts. Lastly, the detailed qualitative narratives generated by case studies aid in both exploring or characterising the data in authentic environments and elucidating the nuances of real-life circumstances that might not be captured by survey or experimentation research (Zainal, 2007).

#### *5.4.1.2 Disadvantages of case study research design*

Notwithstanding the benefits, case studies have come under fire over time. Yin (1984) identified three drawbacks with case study research. First, he asserts that case studies are frequently thought to be unreliable. According to Yin (1984: 21), the case study researcher has far too frequently been careless and permitted ambiguous evidence or prejudiced viewpoints to affect the direction of the results and conclusions. Secondly, due to their tiny sample sizes, most case studies are not suitable for scientific generalisation. As Yin (1984) notes, some case studies only cover one topic, hence the question of how to extrapolate from a single case is frequently posed (Yin, 1984: 21). Finally, case studies are frequently

viewed as being overly drawn out, challenging to undertake and generating a significant amount of documentation (Yin, 1984). This is the situation with ethnographic and longitudinal case studies, which over extended periods of time generate enormous volumes of data. Long-term data accumulations like these could result in poor management, which would impede research.

Despite the disadvantages, it is important to note that the study at hand was cross-sectional in nature; therefore, it was not too lengthy and was easy to conduct. In addition, the data generated was not massive and hence the researcher was able to manage the data appropriately. The study was conducted rigorously, and the researcher maintained an unbiased demeanour. In conclusion, the study had an adequate sample size that was deemed fit.

## **5.5 RESEARCH AREA**

The study was conducted in three organisations; drawn from three various fields in Kenya where the use of social media was widespread. The three chosen organisations were drawn from major cities in Kenya as this meant they had access to internet infrastructure as well as computers and mobile phones.

### **5.5.1 Eligibility criteria**

A person's eligibility to participate in a research study is determined by the eligibility criteria. These criteria also outline the qualities that population members need to possess to be included in the study.

#### *5.5.1.1 Inclusion criteria*

Inclusion criteria refer to the main characteristics of the interest population. Probable research participants had to fulfil all pre-determined criteria to participate in the study. The first inclusion criterion for this study was that participants must have worked for their specific organisations for more than 1 month. This was to ascertain they were aware of and conversant with the internal communication channels used in their organisations.

#### *5.5.1.2 Exclusion criteria*

Conversely, exclusion criteria pertain to attributes that can impede data gathering, monitoring and safeguarding of study subjects. Firstly, participants with less than a month's working experience in their specific organisations were excluded as they were deemed unfit to inform the study. Secondly, participants who were absent during the actual days of the interviews, either on sick or annual leave, were excluded from the study.

### **5.5.2 Target population**

A target population, in the words of Mouton (1996), is a group of people who are information-rich and pertinent to the study. The researcher is interested in the entirety of the population or a specific segment of it (Fourie, 2009: 435). As a result, the target population in this study comprised of all the employees employed in the three Kenyan organisations chosen for the study.

### **5.5.3 Accessible population**

The accessible population, as defined by Babbie (2010), is the study population's subset of the target population. It consists of the researcher's attainable and accessible unit of analysis within the target population (Du Plooy, 2009). He further says that the components from which the sample is drawn are referred to as the available population. All employees who were at the office on the days the interviews were scheduled and who might have used social media for internal communication made up the accessible population for this study.

### **5.5.4 Sampling technique**

According to Mouton (1996: 132) sampling is the term for selection processes that entail a random selection process from a target population. Sampling is also defined as the learning method regarding a population by looking at only a portion of it (Kothari, 2004: 152). Because it gives the researcher a complete representation of the target population, sampling is an extremely important research technique (Kothari, 2004). In research, there are two kinds of sampling approaches. (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2003; Pandey & Pandey, 2021) define these as probability sampling and non-probability sampling, respectively. Non-probability sampling was employed in the study; in particular, purposive sampling, which is covered in the next section.

#### 5.5.4.1 *Non-probability sampling*

Non-probability sampling refers to that sampling process that provides no foundation for calculating the likelihood that every item in the population will be included in the sample (Kothari, 2004: 59). According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012: 92), there are four types of non-probability sampling which include convenience sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling and purposive sampling:

- a) Convenience sampling entails the researcher selecting participants available for a study. It is seen as the most inexpensive and effortless method of sampling. One of its limitations is that it does not represent the entire population (Wagner, et al., 2012: 92).
- b) To use snowball sampling, the researcher must randomly reach out to eligible participants and ask for the names of friends and family members who would also like to take part in the study. The researcher then gets in touch with these individuals and ascertains whether they meet the requirements to take part in the study based on these referrals.
- c) Using different strata (sub-groups) representative of the sample based on their population proportions allows the researcher to implement quota sampling. These groups could suggest ethnicities, age, gender and educational attainment. At this point, participants are chosen based on their ability to meet a predefined or known percentage needed for the focus group (Wagner, et al., 2012: 93).
- d) Purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling, is the process by which researchers choose participants to represent the population. To find the most potential participants, particular selection criteria are used (Wagner, et al., 2012: 93). To identify and choose the most information-rich examples and make the best use of the limited resources available, purposeful sampling is often utilised in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Finding and choosing people or groups of people who are especially skilled or experienced with a topic of interest is the process of this type of sampling (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The sampling strategy used for this study was purposeful sampling. According to Creswell (2003: 213), the concept of qualitative research is to deliberately choose subjects or locations. This allows the researcher, according to Creswell (2007: 125), to intentionally contribute to knowledge of the study's main phenomenon and research problem while choosing participants for a study. Since it depends on the researcher's judgment to

select participants who are rich in information to inform a study, this sampling strategy was selected for the study since it is the most appropriate sampling strategy in qualitative research (Neuman, 2007). The researcher was able to choose participants who could provide the most reliable information to support the study thanks to purposive sampling.

The researcher employed purposive sampling in this study, guided by specific inclusion criteria that required participants to have been employed within the organisation for a minimum duration of one month. This criterion ensured that participants possessed sufficient familiarity with the organisation's communication practices and internal dynamics, thereby providing insights on social media adoption for internal communication. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to strategically select participants with the requisite experience to contribute meaningfully to the research objectives.

### **5.5.5 Sample size**

The concept of sample size is pivotal, implying the quantum of data sources selected for analytical scrutiny within a given population. This selection process is foundational to the integrity and validity of research findings. Davis, Gallardo and Lachlan (2009) define sample size as the aggregate number of participants or observational units chosen from a broader population for the purpose of empirical investigation. The determination of an appropriate sample size is critical, especially within the qualitative research paradigm, where the emphasis is not merely on numerical representation but on the depth and richness of the data collected.

Qualitative research methodologies, as delineated by Sandelowski (1995), operate under the principle that the sample size must be adequately balanced. This balance ensures that data saturation is achievable without the sample being so extensive as to hinder thorough, case-oriented analysis. Data saturation is a critical milestone in qualitative research, denoting the point at which additional data collection ceases to yield new insights or information relevant to the research question. Sandelowski's assertion underscores the importance of a calibrated sample size that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study while remaining manageable and focused.

Expanding on this notion, Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2013) advocate for the efficacy of smaller sample sizes in qualitative research. They argue that smaller samples are conducive to achieving



data saturation, allow for an extensive analysis of the collected data, and ensure the manageability of research resources. These authors suggest that a sample size not exceeding 50 participants is generally sufficient for a single qualitative study, particularly one involving the interviewing of participants. Beyond this threshold, they caution, the logistical complexities of data collection and analysis may escalate, potentially compromising the depth and quality of the research findings.

The study sample size of 48 participants was divided to enrich the analytical breadth through two data collection methods: face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Specifically, 30 participants were engaged in face-to-face interviews, with 10 individuals from each of the three case study organisations. Additionally, 18 participants, equally distributed across the three organisations, participated in FGDs. This distribution was designed to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the research questions from multiple perspectives within each organisational context.

<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Participants per organisation</b>	<b>Total participants</b>
Face-to-Face Interviews	10	30
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	6	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>48</b>

**Table 5: Sample size distribution**

Mouton (1986) further elaborates on the qualitative research objective, which diverges significantly from the quantitative paradigm's focus on universality and generalisation. The essence of qualitative inquiry lies in its quest to understand and interpret the meanings, intentions and underlying motivations that govern human actions and interactions. Unlike quantitative research, which seeks to extrapolate findings to a broader population through statistical generalisations, qualitative research is intrinsically aimed at looking into the specificities of human experience. Therefore, the sample in qualitative research is selected not for its numerical strength but for its potential to illuminate the complexities of the phenomenon under investigation.

## **5.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data in this study was collected from primary sources. The researcher made use of two data collection tools: semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. These two data collection tools will be discussed below.

### **5.6.1 Semi-structured face-to-face interviews**

To learn more about people's perspectives, experiences, beliefs and motives regarding phenomena, researchers conduct interviews (Creswell, 2014). The purpose of interviews is to offer a deeper comprehension of social phenomena than can be obtained using quantitative techniques like questionnaires. Consequently, they are regarded as the most suitable research tool when in-depth participant insights are required or when little is known about the topic being explored.

#### *5.6.1.1 Advantages of using interviews*

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), qualitative interviews have the following advantages:

- a) Qualitative interviews empower participants by actively involving them in the research process.
- b) They permit unrestricted communication between the interviewer and the subject.
- c) They provide chances for clarification, ensuring that pertinent information is recorded.
- d) They make the most of description and exploration.
- e) Rather than using the researcher's words, they give researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts and recollections in their own words.

#### *5.6.1.2 Limitations of using interviews*

- a) Conducting interviews is often costly and time-consuming.
- b) Conducting informative interviews requires highly trained interviewers.
- c) Interviews may obtain a massive amount of information which makes transcription and data analysis difficult and time-consuming.

### **5.6.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

FGDs are widely employed in qualitative research and make use of group dynamics to generate qualitative data (Schurink & Schurink, 1998; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). These interviews are viewed to generate insights into shared experiences and social norms through group discussion.

#### *5.6.2.1 Advantages of using FGDs*

Some benefits of employing FGDs in research include the following (Schurink & Schurink, 1998: 2-5; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 110):

- a) Because participants and researchers can be in the same location at the same time, it is efficient in terms of both money and time.
- b) It enables participants to communicate with the researcher about the data and the topic of the study.
- c) It sheds light on the participants' little-known worldviews and social processes.
- d) The participants can talk to each other about the matter at hand.
- e) Participants in a focus group have the chance to gain knowledge from one another.
- f) A concept may trigger a cascade of associated ideas and thoughts in one individual.

#### *5.6.2.1 Limitations of using FGDs*

Schurink and Schurink (1998: 13) list three disadvantages of using the focus group discussions:

- a) Finding the suitable participants is challenging and may encounter resistance and transportation issues may cause a challenge.
- b) It might be necessary to reroute the participants' responses because they might not be pertinent.
- c) The interview may require more control, which would be a challenging task for the mediator. On delicate topics, respondents could be reticent, necessitating a cunning move on the part of the facilitator.

## **5.7 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study, as defined by Creswell (2014), is a preliminary small-scale investigation conducted prior to the main study, applicable to qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method research frameworks. This preliminary phase enables the refinement of research questions, identification of the most effective

methods for data collection and estimation of the necessary time and resources for the full-scale study. In this context, a pilot study was carried out within a government organisation in Kenya, under the Ministry of Information, Communication and The Digital Economy. Six participants were selected through purposive sampling, an additional method planned for use in the main study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with each participant, with each session lasting approximately 30 minutes. The feedback from these interviews indicated that participants clearly understood the questions posed, leading to no revisions in the interview schedule. Additionally, another six participants were purposively selected for a focus group discussion held in a conference room at the organisation, which lasted about one hour. The data from this discussion showed that while the participants comprehended the questions and engaged comfortably with the topic, they felt the session was overly lengthy. In response, the researcher adjusted the discussion guide by reducing the number of repetitive questions to streamline the process.

## 5.8 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is one of the most significant steps in the research process as it is accountable for making sense of the data obtained from the field (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). It is a procedure for giving the vast amount of gathered data organisation, order and meaning (De Vos, 2002: 339). There are five kinds of qualitative data analysis. These are thematic analysis, grounded theory, narrative analysis, discourse analysis and content analysis. Thematic analysis was adopted for the study at hand. Thematic analysis is seen as the foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It refers to a method of finding, evaluating and summarising trends or themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). Thematic analysis not only organises and describes data sets in rich detail; it goes further to interpret the various aspects of the research project (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a six-phase guide of conducting thematic analysis which is what the researcher used as a foundation in conducting the analysis of the study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a six-phase guide of conducting thematic analysis which is what the researcher used as a foundation in conducting the analysis of the study.

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
1. <b>Familiarising yourself with the data</b>	Transcribing interviews, reading and re-reading the transcripts, noting down initial ideas

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<b>2. Generating the codes</b>	Coding interesting features of the transcripts in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating examples for each code
<b>3. Searching for themes</b>	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential link
<b>4. Reviewing themes</b>	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
<b>5. Defining and naming themes</b>	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
<b>6. Producing the report</b>	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the analysis of the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

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**Table 6: The thematic analysis process (Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)**

*Phase one: Familiarising yourself with your data*

This stage focuses on examining the data repeatedly and making notes on preliminary concepts (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87). First, the researcher immersed herself in the data, accurately recording the participants and focus group discussions. Second, to start seeing reoccurring themes and meaning, the transcripts were read through at least twice. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), taking notes during this preliminary stage is crucial for capturing the emergent themes and patterns that the researcher discovered. This process was crucial to identify initial insights related to employees' knowledge of social media, their usage patterns for internal communication, and their perceptions of its benefits and challenges. By repeatedly reviewing the data, the researcher noted emerging themes related to social media adoption and its associated strategies, aligning them with the research objectives.

### *Phase two: Generating initial codes*

The creation of preliminary codes and data reduction are the main goals of this phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As an organisational tool, it concentrated on the formation of themes, which is the earliest and most fundamental level of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, codes were generated for specific references to social media knowledge, usage behaviors, perceived benefits and challenges. This phase reduced the data into manageable portions, enabling the researcher to start organising it in line with the study focus on internal communication through social media adoption in Kenyan organisations.

### *Phase three: Searching for themes*

Organising all the pertinent coded data extracts within the selected themes and classifying the various codes into possible themes are the tasks of this phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87). To find recurring themes, the researcher sorted and examined the codes. During this phase, the researcher organised the initial codes into potential themes, such as knowledge gaps, communication efficiency, barriers to adoption, and perceived organisational benefits. Each theme corresponded directly to the research objectives, such as exploring how social media is used or perceived by employees and identifying challenges and strategies to overcome barriers. The recurring patterns from coded data helped in classifying how social media was integrated into internal communication structures.

### *Phase four: Reviewing themes*

Themes are reviewed and refined throughout this phase. There are two levels: level 1 reviews the coded data extracts at the extract level, and level 2 reviews the complete data set. The study is then presented as a thematic map (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87). In this stage, the investigator examined the codes pertaining to every theme and ascertained whether a coherent pattern emerged (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher proceeded to the second level of analysis if a consistent pattern was seen, going through the complete data set to make sure the themes made sense considering the information gathered. The researcher first ensured that the themes accurately captured the essence of the data through a detailed analysis of the coded extracts (level 1 review). Subsequently, the entire data set was reviewed (level 2) to validate the coherence and relevance of the themes in addressing each research objective, ensuring that themes such as employee engagement, social media benefits, and barriers to adoption provided meaningful insights into the research questions.

### *Phase five: Defining and naming themes*

This phase is focused on defining and further refining the themes that will be presented. To achieve this, the researcher focused on defining each identified theme, categorising the core of the theme and deciding what aspect of the data and research questions the theme fits under (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Here, the researcher further refined the themes by defining what each theme represented in relation to the study objectives. For instance, the theme ‘knowledge gaps’ was defined in relation to the first objective, focusing on employees' understanding of social media. ‘Utilisation patterns’ addressed the second objective, highlighting how employees use social media for internal communication. Other themes such as perceived benefits and strategies for overcoming barriers were refined in line with the third and fourth objectives, respectively.

### *Phase six: Producing the report*

This phase involves the final analysis and write-up of the report. Here the researcher writes up the report by providing adequate evidence of the themes within the data. In the final phase, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of the themes, linking them directly to the research objectives. The final report provided evidence of how social media is perceived, utilised, and its challenges addressed within Kenyan organisations. Themes such as communication efficiency and knowledge gaps were supported by direct quotes and data extracts, offering insights into the objectives related to social media adoption, employee perceptions, benefits of social media adoption and strategies for addressing barriers.

## **5.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Qualitative validity is the process by which a researcher checks for the findings' accuracy by using certain procedures (Creswell, 2014: 201). It shows that the researcher's methodology is the same for various projects and researchers. (Creswell, 2014: 201). He further states that current qualitative literature inclines to terms such as trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility instead of validity and reliability (Creswell, 2014: 201). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided four constructs to help in the achievement of trustworthiness in qualitative research. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

### **5.9.1 Credibility**

As an alternative to internal validity, credibility requires that the research participant be accurately identified and described. In research situated within the Interpretive paradigm, credibility pertains to the degree of plausibility, trustworthiness, or authenticity of the data collected and analysed (Guba, 1981). Merriam (1998) states that this criterion has to do with the researcher's capacity to investigate the following: To what extent do the results match reality as the researcher and research participants have formed it? Credibility of the study was guaranteed by giving extensive details on the participants' information. Data was gathered, examined, and all research findings, regardless of their applicability or influence on the study's result were published.

### **5.9.2 Transferability**

This is the substitute for generalisability or external validity (Guba, 1981). Transferability, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is the researcher's attempt to ensure readers are given sufficient contextual information about their research so that readers can apply the findings to their own situations. This criterion has caused debate though, because interpretivist research is thought to be context-specific in terms of study subjects and research domains. Because of this, generalisability is somewhat difficult. However, Bhattacharjee (2012: 111) asserts that for readers to freely determine whether and to what extent the reported findings are transferable to other settings, a researcher must provide a sizable description and thoroughly describe the structures, assumptions and processes revealed from the data. The study's backdrop, the chosen theoretical framework and the research methodology were all thoroughly described by the researcher. In addition, the methods used for gathering, analysing and discussing the data were thorough for the results to be used in many study settings.

### **5.9.3 Dependability**

According to Guba (1981), dependability is the opposite of reliability. According to the author, this criterion also pertains to the capacity to observe the same result or discovery in analogous situations (Guba, 1981). Interpretive researchers, according to Guba (1981), work with human behaviour, which is typically open to many interpretations of reality, hence they are unable to replicate exact results. The only conclusions the researcher can draw are those that are shaped by the meaning the researcher has



created for themselves. Only the researcher's abilities and talents to ensure the findings genuinely come from the data collected and analysed for the research will determine how reliable these conclusions and interpretations are. The researcher revisited the study participants and presented them with the identified patterns and themes derived during data analysis to verify with them whether they were compatible with what they postulated during data collection.

#### **5.9.4 Confirmability**

The idea of objectivity is expressed by confirmability (Guba, 1981). The major goal is to manage researcher bias. It is the extent to which other experts in the field can validate the conclusions of research initiatives. This criterion's primary objective is to guarantee that the data analysis findings are free from contamination of researcher's prejudices, as much as possible (Guba, 1981). To avoid bias, the issue of confirmability was observed by using solely the data supplied by the study participants. Aside from the research interviews, the researcher did not use any other data. The research report was provided to the study participants to examine the findings. They approved the interpretations derived from the research thus confirming the findings of the study.

### **5.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The ethical considerations for the study are discussed below.

#### **5.10.1 Anonymity and confidentiality**

This was upheld by not disclosing the participants' names and identity in the data collection, analysis and reporting of the study findings. Confidentiality of the interview participants was managed prudently during the interview sessions, data analysis and dissemination of the findings.

#### **5.10.2 Voluntary participation**

Participation was voluntary in nature and research participants were given the choice to participate in the study at their own free will. They were given the option of dropping out at any point of the study if they wished to.

### **5.10.3 Informed consent**

The researcher explained her study beforehand to the participants. Once this was done, the participants were obligated to sign an informed consent to ascertain that they understood what the study was about, and they are willingly taking part in it.

### **5.10.4 Ethical approval**

An ethical approval was sought and granted from the University of South Africa. Additionally, a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in Kenya whose mandate is to approve all scientific research undertaken in Kenya.

## **5.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter expounds on the methodological framework operationalised in the research. It articulates the interpretive paradigm underpinning the study approach to understanding phenomena through the subjective meanings of participants. Embracing a qualitative methodology, the study adopted a multiple-case study design to facilitate an extensive exploration of the phenomena under scrutiny. The geographic and demographic scope of the research was outlined, with a clearly defined target population from which an accessible subset was identified. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to select a cohort of 48 individuals, ensuring a rich and relevant data corpus for analysis. The utilisation of semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions as primary data collection instruments was described, including an exposition of their respective merits and constraints.

A preliminary pilot study was undertaken to validate and refine the data collection instruments, establishing their efficacy for the main study. For analysing qualitative data, thematic analysis was the chosen method, facilitated by the utilisation of ATLAS.ti software, which supported the systematic extraction of patterns, themes and categories from the empirical data. The chapter also considered the concept of trustworthiness within qualitative research, detailing the strategies implemented to ensure the rigor and reliability of the study findings. Ethical considerations observed throughout the research process were explicated, emphasising the ethical integrity maintained during the study. Following this methodological

account, the subsequent chapter will articulate the data presentation, and analytical procedures employed in the study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study sought to explore developing a framework for social media adoption and utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations. In the previous chapter, the researcher explained the research paradigm and methodologies employed to gather data from the participants from the three case study organisations by using face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research data collected from the above indicated interviews. The data presentation and analysis are based on the study objectives as presented in chapter one.

The face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were conducted at the three case study organisations between the months of March 2021 to February 2022. The study sampled 30 participants for the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and 18 participants for the three focus group discussions. All the chosen participants responded and participated positively in both the face-to-face interviews and the focus group discussions. The study findings will be presented below, as collected from each of the case studies.

In this study, data saturation was defined as the point where no new themes or insights emerged from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rahimi & Khatooni, 2024). Thirty individuals participated in semi-structured in-person interviews with the researcher; data collection stopped after the 30th interview when no new themes emerged. Additionally, 18 individuals participated in three focus groups and data collection stopped after the third focus group discussion since no new themes emerged. Continuous constructed coding and thematic analysis were conducted concurrently with data gathering. When no new codes were introduced to the analysis from the last interviews from both the individual interviews and focus group discussions, saturation was verified. This was in line with recommendations for the size of qualitative samples (Rahimi & Khatooni, 2024). Saturation made sure that there was enough data to address the study objectives and that the experiences of the participants were fully captured and understood.

## 6.2 CASE STUDY A

Case Study A describes an organisation situated in Eldoret town, Kenya, that was established and registered in 2015. This entity provides professional regulatory and compliance services to a diverse client base both within Kenya and internationally. Currently, the organisation employs over 250 staff members at its Kenyan office and operates under the leadership of a director.

### 6.2.1 Demographic profile of participants

In this section, the distribution of participants across various demographic variables including gender, age, educational level, job title, tenure within the department and departmental affiliation is analysed. The demographic profile was considered suitable for the study based on findings from the literature review, which indicated that factors such as gender, age, educational level, tenure and departmental affiliation are crucial in influencing adopting and utilising social media in organisational settings.

#### 6.2.1.1 Distribution of participants by gender

To establish the organisation's employee distribution by gender, the employees were required to indicate their gender, with a majority being female (62.5%). The results are indicated in Table 6 below.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	10	62.5%
Male	6	37.5%
Total	16	

**Table 7: Gender distribution of participants (Case Study A)**

#### 6.2.1.2 Distribution of participants by age

The age distribution of participants in the study demonstrated a concentration in the younger to middle-aged segments, with a total of 16 participants. Both the 20-30 years and 31-40 years age brackets are equally represented, each comprising 7 participants or approximately 43.75% of the total. This highlights an adequate participation from these age groups. In contrast, the 41-50 years age bracket includes only 2 participants, accounting for 12.5% of the overall sample. There were no participants from the above

50 years age bracket. The age factor needs to be considered in reference to the expected number of retirements and replacements correspondingly to maintain quality service provision by employees. The findings are shown below in Table 7.

<b>Age brackets</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>20-30 years</b>	7	43.75%
<b>31-40 years</b>	7	43.75%
<b>41-50 years</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Above 50 years</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 8: Age distribution of participants (Case Study A)**

*6.2.1.3 Distribution of participants by level of education*

The distribution of participants by level of education among the 16 individuals in the dataset showed a significant concentration in higher education levels, as shown in Table 8. The majority, with 10 participants (62.5%), held an undergraduate degree. This was followed by 4 individuals (25%) with master's degrees. There was also 1 participant (6.25%) holding a diploma and a doctorate degree. There were no participants with an A-level or certificate, each accounting for 0% of the total. This indicated a highly educated group, with a particular emphasis on undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A level</b>	0	0%
<b>Certificate</b>	0	0%
<b>Diploma</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Undergraduate degree</b>	10	62.5%
<b>Masters' degree</b>	4	25%
<b>Doctorate degree</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 9: Educational level distribution of participants (Case Study A)**

*6.2.1.4 Distribution of participants by number of years worked in the organisation*

The distribution of tenure among the 16 participants shows a heavy concentration of newer employees, shown in Table 9. Those who worked in the department for less than a year were the most represented, with 8 individuals accounting for 50% of the total. The 1-5- years group included 6 participants, making up 37.5% of the total. Only 2 participants, or 12.5%, have been in the department between 6-10 years. There were no participants with a tenure of 11 years or more, indicating a relatively recent or high turnover workforce.

<b>Number of years worked in the department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Less than a year</b>	8	50%
<b>1-5 years</b>	6	37.5%
<b>6-10 years</b>	2	12.5%
<b>11-15 years</b>	0	0%
<b>16-20 years</b>	0	0%
<b>More than 20 years</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 10: Tenure distribution within the organisation (Case Study A)**

*6.2.1.5 Distribution of participants by work department*

The analysis of participant distribution by the work department within the organisation highlighted significant disparities in engagement levels. Notably, the Customer Support department was predominantly represented, comprising 50% of the total participants with eight employees. The Administration and Communication/Public Relations departments each contributed two employees, accounting for 12.5% of the total participation. The departments of Accounting, Human Resource, Management and Marketing/Advertising were modestly represented, each with one participant, making up 6.25% of the total. In contrast, several departments including Finance, Health Services, Legal Services and Procurement showed no participation at all.

<b>Work department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Accounting</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Administration</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Communication/Public Relations</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Finance</b>	0	0%
<b>Health services</b>	0	0%
<b>Human Resource</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Legal services</b>	0	0%
<b>Management</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Marketing/Advertising</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Procurement</b>	0	0%
<b>Customer support</b>	8	50%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 11: Departmental distribution of participants (Case Study A)**

### **6.3 CASE STUDY B**

Case Study B examines a banking institution in Kenya, founded in 1984. This bank operates numerous branches across various towns within the country. The specific focus of this study was on a branch located in Nakuru city, Kenya.

#### **6.3.1 Demographic profile of participants**

The demographic profile of participants in this case study organisation is given below.

##### *6.3.1.1 Distribution of participants by gender*

The gender distribution of participants in the study showed a balanced representation, encompassing a total of 16 individuals. Females slightly outnumbered males, comprising 9 of the participants, which translated to approximately 56.3% of the total. Males made up the remaining 7 participants, accounting for about 43.7%. This distribution provided a nearly equitable gender perspective in the study, though



with a modest overrepresentation of females. Overall, there was gender balance among employees in the organisation. The policy of gender equity had been upheld in the organisation.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	9	56.3%
<b>Male</b>	7	43.7%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 12: Gender distribution of participants (Case Study B)**

### 6.3.1.2 *Distribution of participants by age*

The age distribution of participants in the study was well-spread across various age categories, involving a total of 16 individuals. Most participants fell within the 31-40 years age bracket, accounting for 37.5% of the total, with 6 individuals. Both the younger (20-30 years) and middle-aged (41-50 years) brackets were equally represented by 4 participants each, comprising 25% of the total for each group. The oldest age group, those above 50 years, included 2 participants, making up 12.5% of the total.

This pattern of age distribution indicated a moderate emphasis on mid-life adults while ensuring inclusion of both younger and older adults, though with lesser representation in the eldest bracket. This spread helped to capture a broad range of adult experiences and perspectives, although the relatively lower participation of those over 50 could suggest potential gaps in insights from this age group. The age factor needs to be considered in reference to the expected number of retirements and replacements correspondingly to maintain quality service provision by employees in the organisation.

<b>Age brackets</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>20-30 years</b>	4	25%
<b>31-40 years</b>	6	37.5%
<b>41-50 years</b>	4	25%
<b>Above 50 years</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 13: Age distribution of participants (Case Study B)**

*6.3.1.3 Distribution of participants by level of education*

The educational background of participants in the study prominently featured higher educational qualifications among a total of 16 individuals, as shown in Table 13. The data revealed that most participants, 10 in number or 62.5%, hold an undergraduate degree. This was followed by those with master's degrees, who accounted for 5 participants or 31.25% of the total. Only one participant, representing 6.25% of the sample, had completed A-levels. Notably, there were no participants who had certificates, diploma or doctorate degrees.

This distribution depicted a concentration of participants with substantial educational achievements, predominantly at the undergraduate and master's levels. The lack of participants with a certificate, diploma or doctorate degree suggests a specific focus or perhaps certain criteria in the recruitment process in the organisation.

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A level</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Certificate</b>	0	0%
<b>Diploma</b>	0	0%
<b>Undergraduate degree</b>	10	62.5%
<b>Master's degree</b>	5	31.25%
<b>Doctorate degree</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 14: Educational level distribution of participants (Case Study B)**

*6.3.1.4 Distribution of participants by number of years worked in the organisation*

The tenure of participants within their respective departments showed a predominant concentration of relatively newer employees among the 16 participants. Specifically, the largest group, comprising 62.5% of the participants, worked in their current department for 1 to 5 years. Following this, 31.25% of the

employees had a tenure of 6 to 10 years. A smaller fraction, representing 6.25% of the total, had been with their department for 11 to 15 years.

There were no participants who had been in their department for less than one year or over 15 years, with both the 16-20 years and more than 20 years categories remaining unrepresented. This distribution indicates that most of the workforce was new, with a significant focus on those who had been part of their department for a decade or less. The lack of longer tenured participants suggests either a relatively recent establishment of these departments, high turnover, or a younger workforce demographic.

<b>Number of years worked in the department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Less than a year</b>	0	0%
<b>1-5 years</b>	10	62.5%
<b>6-10 years</b>	5	31.25%
<b>11-15 years</b>	1	6.25%
<b>16-20 years</b>	0	0%
<b>More than 20 years</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 15: Tenure distribution within the organisation (Case Study B)**

#### *6.3.1.5 Distribution of participants by work department*

In examining the distribution of participants across various work departments within the organisation, notable differences were observed. The Accounting and Management departments each had minimal representation with only one participant from each, accounting for 6.25% of the total sample. Similarly, several departments including Administration, Communication/Public Relations, Finance, Human Resource, Marketing/Advertising, Procurement, and Customer Support, each contributed two participants, representing 12.5% of the overall participation for each of these categories. This distribution highlighted a broad engagement across most operational departments, albeit with significant gaps in participation in the Health Services and Legal Services departments.

<b>Work department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Accounting</b>	1	6.25%

<b>Work department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Administration</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Communication/Public Relations</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Finance</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Health services</b>	0	0%
<b>Human Resource</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Legal services</b>	0	0%
<b>Management</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Marketing/Advertising</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Procurement</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Customer support</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 16: Departmental distribution of participants (Case Study B)**

## **6.4 CASE STUDY C**

Case Study C focused on an institution of higher education that was established in 1983 and received a university charter from the Government of Kenya in March 2011. Since being chartered, it has offered a range of academic programs, including Business, Communication Studies, Information Technology, Development Studies and Counselling Psychology. The university is situated in Nairobi city, Kenya. Below, the demographic profile of the participants involved in this study is detailed.

### **6.4.1 Demographic profile of participants**

Demographic profile of participants in this case study organisation is given below.

#### *6.4.1.1 Distribution of participants by gender*

In this case study, the gender distribution among participants comprised a total of 16 individuals, with females notably outnumbering males. Females accounted for 10 participants, representing approximately 62.5% of the total, as shown in Table 16. In contrast, males constituted 6 participants, making up about 37.5% of the overall group. This predominance of female participants highlighted a gender

imbalance in the sample, which may have implications for the findings and interpretations of the study, particularly if the gender perspective is relevant to the research question.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	10	62.5%
<b>Male</b>	6	37.5%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 17: Gender distribution of participants (Case Study C)**

#### *6.4.1.2 Distribution of participants by age*

The participants' distribution across age brackets revealed a total of 16 individuals, showing a significant representation in the middle to older age ranges. Specifically, the largest age group was the 41-50 years bracket, comprising 6 participants, or 37.5% of the total. This was followed by the 31-40 years age group, which included 4 participants, accounting for 25% of the sample. Equally, the above 50 years age bracket also consisted of 4 participants, representing another 25% of the total. The youngest group, those aged 20-30 years, had the least representation with 2 participants, making up 12.5% of the overall distribution, as shown in Table 17. This age structure highlights a tendency towards middle-aged and older participants within the sample.

<b>Age brackets</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>20-30 years</b>	2	12.5%
<b>31-40 years</b>	4	25%
<b>41-50 years</b>	6	37.5%
<b>Above 50 years</b>	4	25%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 18: Age distribution of participants (Case Study C)**

#### *6.4.1.3 Distribution of participants by level of education*

The distribution of participants by educational level revealed a total of 16 individuals, predominantly holding higher educational qualifications, as shown in Table 18 below. The majority were undergraduate

degree holders, encompassing 6 participants or 37.5% of the sample. Closely followed by individuals with doctorate degrees, who accounted for 5 participants or 31.25%. Those with master's degrees represented 4 participants, making up 25% of the total. The group was rounded off by a single diploma holder, contributing 6.25% to the overall count. There were no participants who achieved A level or certificate qualifications. This configuration underlined a sample with a significant concentration of advanced educational achievements, with very limited representation from the lower academic credentials.

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A level</b>	0	0%
<b>Certificate</b>	0	0%
<b>Diploma</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Undergraduate degree</b>	6	37.5%
<b>Masters' degree</b>	4	25%
<b>Doctorate degree</b>	5	31.25%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 19: Educational level distribution of participants (Case Study C)**

#### *6.4.1.4 Distribution of participants by number of years worked in the organisation*

The distribution of participants by the number of years they worked in their respective departments varied among a total of 16 individuals, as shown in Table 19. The largest group consisted of those who had been in their department for 11-15 years, representing 37.5% of the total with 6 participants. Following this, the 1-5 years tenure group included 5 participants, accounting for 31.25% of the sample, while those with 6-10 years of experience comprised 4 participants or 25% of the total. There was a single participant who worked 16-20 years, making up 6.25% of the participants. Notably, there were no participants who had worked in their department for less than a year or more than 20 years. This tenure distribution highlights a workforce predominantly within the mid to upper range of experience, with a significant gap in representation among the very newest and most long-serving employees.

<b>Number of years worked in the department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Less than a year</b>	0	0%

<b>1-5 years</b>	5	31.25%
<b>6-10 years</b>	4	25%
<b>11-15 years</b>	6	37.5%
<b>16-20 years</b>	1	6.25%
<b>More than 20 years</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 20: Tenure distribution within the organisation (Case Study C)**

*6.4.1.5 Distribution of participants by work department*

The participant distribution across various work departments within the organisation showed a diverse level of engagement among the departments, from a total of 16 employees. Customer Support led with the highest engagement, comprising 37.5% of the total with six participants. Communication/Public Relations was also well-represented with three participants, accounting for 18.75% of the total. Human Resource had two participants, representing 12.5%. Additionally, Accounting, Administration, Finance, Management and Marketing/Advertising departments each contributed one participant, making up 6.25% of the total each. Notably, the Health Services, Legal Services and Procurement departments showed no participation.

<b>Work department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Accounting</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Administration</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Communication/Public Relations</b>	3	18.75%
<b>Finance</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Health services</b>	0	0%
<b>Human Resource</b>	2	12.5%
<b>Legal services</b>	0	0%
<b>Management</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Marketing/Advertising</b>	1	6.25%
<b>Procurement</b>	0	0%
<b>Customer support</b>	6	37.5%
<b>Total</b>	16	

**Table 21: Departmental distribution of participants (Case Study C)**

## **6.5 KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG EMPLOYEES IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

The study sought to explore the knowledge of social media among employees in the organisations. The analysis of employees' knowledge of social media in Kenyan organisations revealed several key themes. 'Understanding of social media' emerged as a primary theme, with participants offering both basic and advanced conceptualisations of social media as platforms for communication, interaction, and content sharing, while some highlighted rapid feedback and collaboration features. A significant 'knowledge gap and uncertainty' theme was also identified, where participants expressed confusion about whether certain platforms reflecting a lack of clarity. Another major theme was 'familiarity with social media platforms', where employees demonstrated widespread awareness of popular platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, but also noted newer platforms such as Zoom, which gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, 'perceptions and preferences' surfaced as a theme, with participants expressing personal preferences and concerns about specific platforms. The findings based on the highlighted themes are presented below.

### **6.5.1 Definition of social media**

The study explored how well the participants understood the term social media. Most of the participants in case study A had a good understanding of what social media was. Participant IA01 stated:

*"I believe these are online platforms that allow sharing of various content, for example pictures and videos".*

Participant IA02 brought in the aspect of social media not being confined by geographical location, mentioning that:

*"I think social media is whereby platforms i.e., Twitter, facilitate the exchange of news, information videos, pictures etc. with other people from all over the world without the constraint of geographical location".*



Participant IA07 further explained social media being interactive platforms by mentioning:

*“I think these are online interactive applications that are used by individuals for different purposes. People can share different things online using these platforms”.*

Another interesting definition that emanated from the FGDs by participant FAC was the issue of social media offering avenues for quick communication. The participant noted:

*“In my own opinion I view social media as online tools that enable quick communication. By quick communication I mean that I can hope for faster feedback from the person I am communicating with. Yeah, that’s my definition”.*

Participant FAA further viewed social media as media mostly used by millennials and noted the following:

*“I would define social media as a collection of online tools that people, especially millennials use for constant communication with their peers”.*

In case study B, most of the participants had a good understanding of what social media was. Participant IB11 described social media as follows:

*“These are websites and applications that focus on communication, interaction and content sharing”.*

Participant IB12 felt that social media were online platforms that link people together socially.

A similar definition was given by participant IB14, noting the following:

*“Social media, to me, are online or internet social platforms where people get to interact with each other”.*

Participant IB17 noted that social media are online tools of communication that are part of the new age media. This was the same definition given by participant IB18 who stated:

*“I can define social media as online tools of communication which are part of new media”.*

Findings from the FGDs also indicated that most of the participants had an understanding what social media was. Participant FBH defined social media as follows:

*“To me, social media are online technological platforms that are used for communication”.*

The same definition was given by participant FBI who stated the following:

*“Okay, according to me, social media are technological tools of communication that provide quick feedback”.*

Participant FBJ’s definition touched on the issue of collaboration and mentioned the following:

*“I can say that these are online collaborating tools of communication that offer customers a quicker way of interaction”.*

From the findings in case study C, most of the participants had a good understanding of what social media was. For instance, participant IC21 defined social media as follows:

*“I see social media as online tools for social interactions”.*

A similar definition was given by participant IC28 who noted that:

*“I believe these are basically online applications that allow for social interaction in the modern-day era”.*

This was also reiterated by participant IC28 who described social media as online applications that people use to communicate and socialise.

Other participants noted that social media are online tools of communication. For example, participant IC22 stated:

*“Social media are the latest tools of online communication”.*

Some participants also felt that social media is useful for online interaction and exchange of information.

Participant IC24 noted the following:

*“Social media are platforms that allow for interaction over the internet and that allows for exchange of information via pictures, videos or texts”.*

Definitions that came up from the FGDs are additionally similar. However, participant FCM did raise the concept of creating and sharing content. This participant mentioned:

*“I could define social media as applications that enable users to create and share content”.*

A similar definition was provided by participant FCN who noted the following:

*“In my opinion, these are applications that as he said people can use to create and share content, but also people use for social networking”.*

## **6.5.2 Known social media platforms**

Social media is a new phenomenon which took the world by storm, and it is widely known, however the knowledge of some of these platforms varies among individuals. The study sought to explore the participants' knowledge on the various forms of social media platforms. The majority participants in case study A mentioned that they were aware of various platforms of social media. Participant IA02 mentioned that he was aware of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Slack, Twitter, TikTok and Instagram.

Participant IA04 wasn't sure of whether some applications were even social media, she mentioned:

*“I know of many like WhatsApp, slack, twitter, Facebook and Instagram, is YouTube also social media? I don't know”.*

Participant IA06 mentioned knowing Facebook, twitter, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat.

Findings from the FGDs also indicated the participants' knowledge of some of the social media platforms. However, it was evident that some participants were questioning whether some platforms were categorised as social media as well. For example, participant FAA stated:

*“Mmmmm they are so many maybe things like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, I don't know whether WhatsApp is viewed as social media but that too”.*

Participant FAC noted the following:

*“I can mention Facebook as well, Slack, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube. I am hoping that is social media as well because these platforms get confusing”.*

The findings indicate that majority of the participants in case study B were aware of existing social media platforms for example, participant IB13 mentioned knowing platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. These same platforms were mentioned by participants from the FGDs. For instance, participant FBH mentioned:

*“I am also aware of Facebook like my colleague mentioned, Instagram, WhatsApp, Zoom and Microsoft Teams”.*

The same platforms were mentioned by participant FBJ who noted the following:

*“I know quite a few, Facebook, Instagram WhatsApp, Zoom like was mentioned, Teams, YouTube and many more.”*

Findings further indicate that most of the participants in case study C knew various forms of social media available, these ranged from Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Microsoft teams, Zoom, YouTube and WhatsApp. For instance, participant IC22 noted:

*“I know of WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and things like Zoom and Microsoft teams”.*

Participant IC24 mentioned knowing of WhatsApp, Microsoft teams and Zoom.

Participant IC25 further mentioned some concerns about some platforms:

*“I know of Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. I do not like twitter though, especially KOT, they are a ruthless bunch of keyboard warriors who sometimes cause havoc in the social media space”.*

In addition, findings from the FGDs indicate that most of the participants were aware of most social media platforms in existence. Participant FCM stated:

*“I know about a few, for example, I know Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. I also came to know of Microsoft teams and Zoom which I had no idea of before the pandemic”.*

Participant FCN also pointed out knowing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp.

## **6.6 EMPLOYEE UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

The study further explored the social media channels used for internal communication by the employees in the organisations. Thematic analysis of employee utilisation of social media channels for internal communication in Kenyan organisations identified several key themes that illustrate diverse usage patterns, preferences, and perceived impacts on productivity. ‘Social media platforms utilised’ emerged as a theme, revealing reliance on specific platforms such as Slack and WhatsApp for peer communication, while many departments continued to favour traditional channels such as email and phone calls. Under the theme on ‘purpose of social media usage’, participants highlighted information sharing and meeting facilitation as primary uses, although hierarchical communication remained limited. ‘Frequency and extent of use’ was an addition theme that pointed to underutilisation, with barriers such as network restrictions and senior staff preference for traditional methods impeding broader adoption. Preferences centered on ‘privacy, cost-efficiency, and user-friendliness’, with participants favouring platforms that balance these factors. Lastly, ‘social media influence on productivity’ brought mixed views indicating that while some found it improved communication efficiency and feedback speed, others noted potential distractions from personal use. The findings are presented below.

### **6.6.1 Social media being utilised in the organisations**

The findings in case study A indicated that most of the participants only make use of one form of social media, Slack. Participant IA03 stated the following:

*“I can say only Slack”.*

However, it was evident that even though Slack was used by most of the participants, there are other participants in some departments who did not use the platform and rather relied on traditional channels of communication. For instance, participant IA06 mentioned:

*“I mostly use traditional channels of communication”.*

Findings indicate that in case study B, the only social media platform used by some of the employees was WhatsApp. Participant IB12 mentioned the following:

*“I can say we do use WhatsApp sometimes internally”.*

This was reiterated by the majority participants, but the minority mentioned that they do not really use social media for internal communication. For example, participant IB 17 noted:

*“Honestly, none at the moment”.*

The findings from case study C indicated that the participants had conflicting views on this aspect. While a few participants felt they utilised applications like WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook, others, who were the majority, felt that they rarely used the mentioned platforms, and instead, relied on traditional channels of communication. For instance, participant IC21 mentioned the following:

*“We rarely use these platforms for internal communication...”.*

Participant IC22 felt the same way and stated:

*“We try and use some like WhatsApp, but mostly we rely on the traditional channels of communication like written stuff, emails and the likes”.*

Participant IC29 echoed the same sentiments by noting:

*“I can speak for my department; we really don’t use them. We still rely on emails and calls. Oh and meetings”.*

Participant IC28 noted that in their department they mostly use WhatsApp. These same sentiments were held by participant IC30 who noted:

*“Maybe I can say WhatsApp, not many really”.*

### **6.6.2 How social media is being utilised in the organisations**

The findings from case study A indicate that the majority the participants used slack for various reasons such as sharing information, conducting meetings and general communication with colleagues. Participant IA01 noted:

*“I have used social media to share memos and conduct meetings. It is easier and faster using social media than traditional communication channels”.*

Participant IA03 mentioned the following:

*“Due to Covid-19, in our organisation we sometimes work from home, so we use the said social media platforms to communicate within our company to accomplish our daily work hence with the social media platforms its making working from home not any different with working from the office”.*

However, some participants mentioned still relying on traditional channels of communication most of the time. For instance, participant IA06 said:

*“No. For me, I tend to mostly communicate internally via email with my colleagues and supervisors”.*

Findings from case study B indicate that the majority participants used WhatsApp to share information with colleagues and immediate supervisors. Participant IB11 mentioned the following:

*“I have used WhatsApp to share a memo in the bank”.*

Another participant, IB14, noted:

*“I have used WhatsApp for security notifications and tracking of various supply chain materials”.*

Other participants also mentioned using WhatsApp to communicate with both colleagues and supervisors, but not their management. For example, participant IB19 pointed out:

*“I have used WhatsApp in communication with my colleagues and sometimes, my immediate supervisor as well. Rarely with top management.”*

Findings from case study C indicate that most of the participants noted that they stuck to traditional channels of communication, especially when communicating within the organisation. For instance, participant IC21 mentioned:

*“As I mentioned, we rarely use them we often stick to emails, phone calls or normal text messages...”*

The same view was held by participant IC27 who noted:

*“As a department, we don’t use them as much as we rely on other channels of communication”.*

This was reiterated by participant IC29:

*“I can speak for my department; we really don’t use them. We still rely on emails and calls. Oh, and meetings”.*

However, a few participants did mention using applications like WhatsApp to share ideas and opportunities. Participant IC23 mentioned the following:

*“So, in our department, we mostly have used WhatsApp for communication within the department for sharing ideas, opportunities, agreeing on meeting dates and to do lists”.*

Participant IC24 also mentioned the following:



*“We use them for our departmental meetings, also for sharing information and getting feedback”.*

### **6.6.3 Social media use on a day-to-day basis in the organisations**

When asked whether social media is used daily in the organisation, many of the participants in case study A felt that there was still room for improvement, and that they could use them more. Participant IA06 lamented:

*“No. I say this because most of the social media tools are blocked by the network administrator as it affects productivity for example YouTube, Facebook, Twitter & Instagram. Because of this we can't rely on most of them”.*

Participant IA08 also felt the same way and mentioned the following:

*“No, the organisation can definitely invest in more social media platforms like Workplace”.*

Participant IA09 further insinuated:

*“No because most employees still prefer traditional channels of communication”.*

The same findings emerged from the FGDs as most of the participants felt that they do not use social media as often. For instance, participant FAC stated:

*“In my department we are always in the office so not as often we stick to emails and phone calls”.*

The majority participants in case study B felt that social media is not being utilised enough daily in the bank. For instance, participant IB16 stated:

*“Not really, they could be used more. For example, the only one we use is WhatsApp even though there are many more which can be beneficial in internal communication in the bank”.*

Participant IB17 further noted:

*“Not really, more can be done. Especially for us who are mostly working in the field”.*

Some participants felt that the social media channels weren't being used enough because some employees still preferred the traditional channels of communication. Participant IB19 said the following:

*“No, I do not think so, people still prefer the traditional channels of communication that we normally use like emails”.*

Findings from the FGDs also indicate that most of the participants felt that social media weren't being used enough in the bank. Participant FBG pointed out:

*“I don't know about my colleagues, but I do not feel like we use social media often especially for internal communication”.*

Participant FBH also felt that social media weren't used enough for communication internally, maybe externally.

Participant FBK further mentioned that in their department, they used WhatsApp to communicate amongst themselves but not always professionally.

However, there are other participants who felt that they are being used enough, especially in the supply chain department. Participant IB14 noted the following:

*“Yes, they are as we have a communications team in charge of our social media platforms and WhatsApp is used frequently for supply chain coordination”.*

Findings from case study C indicate that most of the participants felt that social media was not being utilised daily in the organisation. For instance, participant IC21 noted:

*“As I said earlier, we really don't use them as much, so I can say no to that question, they aren't used enough on a daily basis for our internal communication”.*

Participant IC23 also noted:

*“Not really, but at least we are trying as a department, other departments, not so much”.*

Same sentiments were held by participant IC24, stating the following:

*“For me, I think we are trying but not as much as it is supposed to be because not everyone is a fan of social media. There is still a gap like our seniors are not so much into social media they prefer face to face meetings and paper documentation”.*

Participant IC28 further mentioned:

*“I would say maybe not. We tend to still rely majorly on the old channels of communication that we are used to. Even the WhatsApp we just started using it recently, so maybe in a few years with the right support we can adopt many of them and use them adequately”.*

Participant IC22 had conflicting views, she mentioned:

*“I will say yes and no. Due to Covid-19 we have introduced things like zoom and teams for online classes. But it’s not like we use them enough or all the time. Most staff still rely on written forms of communication like memos, emails, phone calls and the like. We are still not 100 percent there in terms of social media adoption and their use”.*

Findings from the FGDs were similar, however participant FCM, from the communication department, noted the following:

*“Okay since I work in the communication department, we do try and use some of them like WhatsApp to communicate internally and sometimes Facebook to communicate to our students”.*

The same views were held by participant FCR who stated the following:

*“I am also in a department where we try and communicate using some of the social media that were mentioned but not always”.*

#### **6.6.4 Reasons one social media platform is preferred to another in the organisations**

The findings from case study A indicate that some of the participants indicated using only slack for internal communication hence all the responses targeted that. Participant IA04 noted:

*“I think it's all about flexibility, privacy and being in control of my slack. Slack is somehow private. I can delete conversations, make an edit to a text. I can know when someone is online/offline. I can choose to indicate myself offline if I don't want anyone to reach out and expect feedback. I can also use slack in my phone”.*

Participant IA05 also mentioned the following:

*“Slack is preferred due to its numerous features. You can call using slack. Slack also allows you to share your screen when making a presentation. It can accommodate a huge number of people compared to other communication channels. You can send both private and public messages”.*

Some participants also felt that the said social media platform, slack, offered integration with other platforms, which was a crucial advantage for them. For instance, participant IA07 noted:

*“For us, slack is more preferred since it's easily integrated with Google accounts meaning I can access all my other accounts with one password. It also has great features such as video calls, private channels for teams privately, personal status when one is on leave etc.”.*

Slack also came out as a platform that the participants felt was easy to use. For example, participant PA10 stated the following:

*“Easy accessibility, user friendliness and universal acceptance come to the top of my mind”.*

Findings from case study B revealed that there are various reasons why one social media platform is preferred to another in the organisation. Since most of the participants mentioned using only WhatsApp to internally communicate in their organisation, they leaned towards the same platform in their answers. The following reasons were mentioned: privacy, reliability, convenience, flexibility, user friendliness and affordability.

On the issue of privacy, participant IB11 stated:

*“I think we do prefer some of the social media because of their privacy and reliability”.*

On affordability, privacy and user friendliness, participant IB 19 stated:

*“I can't really compare because we do not use many here, but maybe I can say user friendliness, affordability and privacy. Other social media can leak crucial client information, so the ones which offer better security and confidentiality as well”.*

Participant IB18 had the same sentiments and mentioned the following:

*“I can point out to their affordability, for example WhatsApp does not require much internet bundles. And maybe user friendly, and maybe privacy”.*

The same also applied to participant IB20 who noted:

*“It depends whether it is easy to use, or how affordable it is, how much does it offer in terms of privacy and security. Is it confidential, is information safe on the platforms, such things”.*

On convenience, participant IB13 stated that:

*“Convenience by individual users as far as the use of gadgets for instance, mobile phones which are also easy to register and access information”.*

In addition, the researcher sought to explore reasons one social media platform was preferred to another in case study C. Majority of the participants answered the question even though they felt that they did not fully utilise social media for internal communication. Some reasons that arose from the findings were ease of use, cost or affordability and less bandwidth used to operate some of the platforms, for example, participant IC22 mentioned:

*“These social media are easy to use, and the issue of bandwidth comes into play. Like I can say something like WhatsApp won't consume as much data as let's say YouTube”.*

Participant IC25 also stated the following:

*“For WhatsApp, I can say it is easy to use, most people or staff can easily use it, again it is cheap, mostly we use Wi-Fi and if the Wi-Fi isn’t strong and you shift to your internet bundles, it is still not as expensive. It is also quite fast, and you get your feedback instantly if someone is online”.*

Participant IC30 further noted:

*“We prefer WhatsApp because it is easy to use, and also affordable because it does not need much internet bundles”.*

However, some participants felt they could not even answer the question because, according to them, they did not use them. For instance, participant IC27 said:

*“I can’t really answer this one because as I said we don’t use them much in our department”.*

The same views were held by participant IC29 who noted:

*“I can’t really say because we don’t use them in our department”.*

### **6.6.5 Social media influence on work productivity in the organisations**

Most of the participants in case study A felt that there is a connection between social media use and work productivity. They felt that social media influences work productivity positively. For example, participant IA04 noted the following:

*“Yes. I believe it influences work productivity positively. If I want to ask someone a question for clarity. It is easier chatting with them than writing an email. Having quick calls to clarify something saves a lot of time and emotions involved. A bonus further helps to appreciate colleagues when they do something good. Appreciation improves morale and good relationships”.*

Participant IA05 also mentioned:

*“Yes, it does, this is because whenever you encounter a problem during working hours you can always post it on the slack channel, and you get help immediately thus improving your work output”.*

However, some participants felt that social media impacts work productivity negatively. Participant IA06 stated:

*“It does, but in a negative manner because most of the social media applications for example YouTube, Facebook and twitter, employees end up spending a lot of time on social media, getting distracted and in turn hinders productivity”.*

Findings indicated the majority participants in case study B felt social media could influence work productivity positively. A few of the participants mentioned that social media would enable them to access information faster and get quick feedback from their colleagues.

Participant IB16 mentioned the following:

*“WhatsApp has made our work easier for instance when you want to communicate something really fast, and you are not at your work desk. So yes, it has affected work productivity positively”.*

Participant IB18 felt the same way and stated:

*“Since we only use WhatsApp, I can say we communicate faster, get quick feedback and this improves how we work”.*

Participant IB19 felt that the platform WhatsApp offered avenues of sharing work details, even after work hours, that had immediate deadlines such as reports and thus improved productivity.

However, some participants felt that social media, if not governed by policies and structures can lead to unproductivity. For example, participant IB15 mentioned that employees can use social media unproductively during work hours for personal reasons and not official work.

Findings from case study C indicated that the participants were divided as to whether social media influenced their work productivity. Some participants felt that they do, for example, participant IC22 noted the following:

*“Yes, it does, because it reduces face-to-face interactions and thus saves time, therefore influence work productivity positively”.*

Participant IC24 also mentioned the following:

*“Yes, it does, it helps in a great way because you do not have to meet in person to share information and especially the working at home culture that was brought about by the covid-19 pandemic”.*

A few participants didn't feel that social media influences their work productivity. For instance, participant IC26 noted:

*“I don't think it does...”.*

Participant IC27 felt the same way and said the following:

*“I would not say it does because we have always communicated using the other channels, so we haven't seen a reason to switch”.*

A few participants were conflicted on the issue. For instance, IC21 noted:

*“For the times we've used them I find them influencing productivity positively, as I can get instant feedback from my colleagues, but sometimes, I have to admit some of us use them for personal issues like connecting with friends and family, so that can influence work productivity negatively”.*

Similarly, participant IC23 mentioned:

*“Obviously it does but not to a huge extent, to a very small extent. For me, since I am in communications it does influence my work productivity but if I were in another department I don't think it would have a huge impact on my work productivity”.*



Participant IC30 had conflicting views and stated:

*“As I said earlier, as a department, we mostly use WhatsApp and not many others. So, for WhatsApp, I do think it helps us communicate faster and receive immediate feedback making the communication easier but sometimes people tend to use the group chat for other unofficial conversations which may not be really productive if you know what I mean”.*

#### **6.6.6 Other channels of communication utilised in the organisations**

The researcher further explored whether the participants utilised any other channels of communication apart from social media in their workplace. The findings from case study A indicated that most of the participants still majorly relied on traditional channels of communication. Participant IA01 mentioned:

*“I believe we use emails most”.*

This was the same with participant IA02 who mentioned emails as well. Another channel of communication mentioned was internal memos. Participant IA10 stated:

*“I can say we mostly use internal memos and emails”.*

In addition, some participants mentioned the use of internal memos.

The findings from case study B indicated that indeed most of the participants still majorly relied on traditional channels of communication. These included emails, memos, telephone calls, text messages, official memos and physical meetings.

Participant IB15 stated:

*“We mostly use email and other things like memos and physical meetings”.*

Participant IB16 also mentioned the following:

*“Emails, memos and physical meetings. And sometimes we use normal mobile texts or phone calls”.*

Participant IB18 further noted:

*“Oh okay, sometimes we use emails, and traditional ones like memos, physical meetings, phone calls and normal mobile texts”.*

Findings from case study C indicated that most of the participants still heavily relied on traditional channels of communication, especially for internal communication. The channels that were mentioned included emails, phone calls, mobile texts, face-to-face meetings and internal memos.

Participant IC27 mentioned:

*“These are like emails, we use phone calls, texts or messages, we do use physical documents, and we also meet physically from time to time if need be”.*

In addition, participant IC28 noted they use the said channels:

*“Oh yes, we still majorly use emails, sometimes physical meetings, and phone calls and messages on our mobile phones. We also still receive official information from people like management through memos”.*

Participant IC29 also stated:

*“Oh yes, we use emails, phone calls, SMS or texts, physical meetings yeah maybe those ones. Our department is still old school”.*

Finally, participant IC30 stated that:

*“We mostly use physical documents like memos, emails, phone calls, messages and sometimes physical meetings as well”.*

## **6.7 EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

The study further sought to explore employee perceptions on the benefits and challenges of social media adoption for internal communication in the organisations. The thematic analysis of employee perceptions regarding social media adoption for internal communication in Kenyan organisations revealed several key themes and subthemes, capturing both the benefits and challenges. Benefits of social media adoption emerged as a prominent theme, with subthemes encompassing participants identifying faster communication, enhanced productivity, cost-effectiveness, and improved interpersonal relationships as significant advantages. In addition, ease of use of social media and capacity for knowledge sharing were seen as key facilitators of team engagement. However, challenges of social media adoption highlighted subthemes concerning data security, privacy, and resistance to change particularly among older employees, as barriers to adoption. Technological issues, such as internet connectivity and limited access to smartphones, further hindered effective use. Lastly, while social media was viewed as a productivity tool, some participants raised concerns about its potential for distraction, especially when used for personal communication. The findings are presented below.

### **6.7.1 Benefits of social media adoption for internal communication in the organisations**

The study sought to explore employee perceptions on the benefits of social media adoption for internal communication in the organisation. Findings from case study A indicated that most of the participants felt that adopting social media for internal communication had its benefits. Some of the benefits mentioned included enhanced productivity, improved co-worker relationships, effective communication, time saving, information sharing, flexibility, improved collaboration and improved employee engagement. For example, participant IA01 mentioned the following:

*“I believe social media are more interactive and make communication much easier. We also get quick feedback”.*

This was reiterated by participant IA02:

*“I think that social media adoption allows us to share different forms of media instantly, which is crucial. Information can be disseminated instantly which ensures that everyone in the organisation is up to date”.*

Some participants felt social media is more environmentally friendly. Participant IA05 mentioned:

*“I believe the most significant benefit would be going paperless, which is good for the environment. It's also faster and efficient. It's easier to retrieve information”.*

Others felt that social media promotes healthier work culture and productivity because of its flexibility and instant nature of feedback thus promoting internal communication. In addition, some participants felt that if well utilised, social media can be very effective, save time and help them reach their work targets easily compared to other modes of communication.

Findings from the FGDs also indicate similar benefits.

Most of the participants in case study B noted that indeed social media adoption for internal communication could be advantageous to them in many ways. Some benefits from the finding were transparency, faster communication, cost effectiveness, higher work productivity, improved interpersonal relationships among colleagues, enhanced creativity and user friendliness.

Participant IB14 noted the following on the fast nature of communication using social media:

*“It is very useful especially in the current times as communication is made faster and more efficient and real time analysis on impact of communication on social media can be done”.*

The same opinions were stated by participant IB15 who mentioned:

*“I believe if we adopted more social media platforms to help us in internal communication, we would find ways of faster communication”.*

On work productivity participant IB17 noted:

*“If the management adopted social media for internal communication, I believe it would lead to more work productivity as they are faster”.*

On affordability, enhanced creativity and user friendliness, participant IB19 stated:

*“Social media has many benefits, I can point out to affordability, people can get more creative, they are easy to use as well. They improve our relationships with colleagues as they are more social”.*

Findings from the FGDs also indicate similar benefits. For instance, participant FBG noted the following on user friendliness and cost effectiveness of social media use in internal communication:

*“I can’t say much on this, because like I said earlier, we don’t use them often. But I do know they are easy to use and cost effective”.*

The same views were echoed by participant FBI who mentioned:

*“I would say when we do use WhatsApp, I find it easy to use, I can also expect prompt feedback from my manager as well. Oh, and it is very cost effective. I don’t need much internet bundles and when I am in the office, I can use the office Wi-Fi”.*

On the issue of social media aiding in fostering strong interpersonal relationships, participant FBJ stated:

*“I do know social media help in fostering good interpersonal relationships, so maybe if we do adopt them, they can help us create better working relations among us, as colleagues”.*

Many benefits were mentioned by the participants from case study C, and these included cost effectiveness, ease of use, effective communication, improved information sharing, healthier interpersonal relationships, improved employee engagement and knowledge management. The majority participants listed more than one benefit in their interviews. For instance, participant IC21 said:

*“If it were up to me, I would advocate for this because I believe social media offers a quicker way of communication, they are less costly and easy to use. I also see them as tools that can enhance knowledge sharing and interpersonal relationships among work mates”.*

Participant IC22 felt that the platforms could help in these covid-19 pandemic times. She mentioned:

*“As I said earlier, social media saves time. Health wise, because of Covid-19 I believe they can help us avoid infections because we don’t have to physically meet all the time so we can adopt platforms like zoom and teams which will enable us meet virtually”.*

Participant IC25 listed a couple of benefits which are stated below:

*“I believe they can bring about a new way of communication that is instant, therefore faster, more cost effective, better technology adoption, better knowledge and information sharing and most importantly better employee engagement at the workplace”.*

And lastly, participant IC29 noted the following benefits:

*“From a personal level, I do think social media can help in providing better and faster communication, where we can get instant feedback from colleagues, also I do believe they can better our interpersonal relationships with immediate colleagues. I do believe social media also offers room for knowledge management and it can improve our engagement at work”.*

Findings from the FGDs also indicate similar benefits, for example participant FCM mentioned the following:

*“Okay, I can say that they are a quick means of communication, and you can expect prompt feedback. So, they are reliable on that front. Again, they are cost effective since we mostly use Wi-Fi in the institution...”.*

Participant FCR mentioned the following benefits:

*“I would say that these platforms are user friendly, so most of us can easily adopt and actually make use of them in our internal communications. Furthermore, as it was mentioned they are not very costly you do not require much internet bandwidth”.*

### **6.7.2 Challenges of social media adoption for internal communication in the organisation**

The participants from case study A noted that there were indeed some challenges of social media adoption for internal communication. Some of these were preferring traditional channels of communication, difficulty of use, time disruptiveness, lack of confidentiality, data security issues and internet dependent. Participant IA01 noted the following:

*“Some social media are difficult to use. You can easily digress on others and waste official work hours”.*

The same sentiment was echoed by participant IA02 who stated:

*“The fact that some ways of communication are so set in stone that social media is seen as disruptive. This hinders the adoption of social media”.*

On being internet dependent, participant IA05 noted:

*“Most of them require internet connection, which can be costly for the organisation. Most people would require training on how to use social media”.*

On the issue of security participant IA06 stated:

*“Mostly its security of the organisations systems since this could be a channel for penetration of malware and this may compromise the organisation's data. However, there is a one-sided approach of looking at only the negative side of social media & not the positives”.*

Findings from the FGDs also indicate the same challenges.

The study findings highlighted the following as some of the challenges the study participants from case study B felt could be brought about by social media adoption in internal communication: information security, bureaucracy, age, resistance to change, internet bandwidth, privacy, network issues and lack of smartphones.

On bureaucracy, participant IB15 felt that the management did not always support the adoption of social media for internal communication, this is because of work productivity issue. In addition, participant IB19 mentioned:

*“Top of the list is our bosses, some of them feel like they hinder work productivity, they do not purchase some of these applications for us”.*

On the age challenge and resistance to change, participant IB16 stated the following:

*“Some of our older colleagues have not embraced these technologies and they make up most of our supervisors. So, you can see how that can be a challenge they need a bit more convincing. Some other staff do not just accept change”.*

The same opinion was held by Participant FBK who noted:

*“Apart from the internet or network issue, I can also say some people are not tech savvy, especially the older colleagues. They find these platforms a bit difficult to use”.*

On privacy and security issues participant IB18 pointed out:

*“I can point out to top management not wanting to change to these new media because of privacy. Confidentiality and security are also a major challenge”.*

The same views were held by Participant FBJ who said:

*“I also do not have much to say about disappointments, maybe just the issue of confidentiality or privacy of our customers’ information. As you have seen we work in this bank, and some of our clients’ information are highly confidential. So sometimes their information can be leaked in these platforms”.*

On the issue of smartphones, participant FBH noted:

*“Okay maybe one thing I can say is some people do not have access to smartphones, so using these platforms away from the office becomes a challenge. In the office we do have access to laptops and computers”.*



On network connectivity, participant FBI mentioned the following:

*“I do agree sometimes there are disappointments I encounter with the platform, number one being if you do not have access to the internet then you will not be able to use them. Again, if someone is offline, you will have to wait for them to come back online for them to receive your message. Even though internet is not expensive, sometimes it’s that time of the month and I can’t afford to buy the internet bundles to send reports, I have to wait to go into the office to use the Wi-Fi”.*

Findings from case study C included lack of clear policies, lack of smartphones, internet connectivity issues, resistance to technology adoption, confidentiality issues, difficulty in use and work unproductivity. Most of the participants listed several challenges. For instance, participant IC21 felt:

*“I would say lack of clear policies on their use from management, again not all employees have smart phones so when they are out of office, they cannot access some of the platforms. Yes, mostly that hinders their adoption. Also, future reference, I feel social media are not as permanent, so we need to complement with hand documents”.*

On the issue of connectivity, participant IC22 mentioned:

*“I can talk about our internet, which drops sometimes and messes up our communication but yeah sometimes your login you are giving a presentation, and the network just drops. I see that as a huge barrier when it comes to social media adoption because all these sites rely on the internet”.*

The same opinion was held by participant IC23 who noted:

*“Connectivity, so when you are in a place with no network then you are not able to access the platforms. Some people are not always online depending on their age and preference of communication, so you don’t get access to them”.*

On the issue of staff being resistant to change, Participant IC25 had this to say:

*“Some staff are resistant to change, especially the older generation when it comes to new technology...”*

Similar sentiments were held by participant IC28:

*“These can be personal, some of us are resistant to change...”*

On the issue of unproductivity, participant IC29 said:

*“Sometimes they can lead to unproductivity because we can be using them for personal communication and not work-related activities”.*

Similar findings came up from the FGDs. For example, participant FCM stated the following challenges:

*“Okay. As I mentioned earlier, even though they are a quick means of communication, you cannot use them when you can’t access internet. So that’s a big challenge. Another thing, even though I said they are cost effective, this is relative. I may be able to afford certain bandwidth that a colleague can’t and so on”.*

## **6.8 STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AND USE FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

The further study explored strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption and use in internal communication within Kenyan organisations. Initially, the study explored who within the organisation has the mandate to initiate the adoption and use of social media, then identified strategies for overcoming these barriers, and examined the overall impact of social media adoption on internal communication. Analysis of strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption for internal communication in Kenyan organisations revealed several key themes and subthemes, highlighting the roles, recommended strategies, and perceived impacts of social media integration. ‘Entities responsible for social media adoption’ was a primary theme, with participants emphasising the role of top management, as well as departments such as Human Resources and IT, in leading the adoption process. Strategies for overcoming barriers included subthemes on training programs to improve employee proficiency, investments in reliable internet access and devices, and the establishment of clear policies to guide appropriate social media use. Lastly, impact of social media adoption on internal communication emerged as a key area of interest, with participants citing positive outcomes such as enhanced

communication and collaboration, alongside concerns about potential distractions and work-life balance challenges. These themes highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts and strategic planning to effectively integrate social media for internal organisational communication. The findings are presented below.

### **6.8.1 Entities with mandate to initiate the adoption and use of social media in the organisation**

To identify feasible strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption and utilisation, the study first sought to explore those participants who believed had the mandate to initiate adopting and using social media within the organisation. Most of the participants in case study A felt that the top leadership of the organisation should be in the front row of the campaign. For instance, participant IA01 noted:

*“This has to come from management.”*

This was the same with participant IA02 who said:

*“The management should do so. This is because it is easier for things to be adopted if they are coming from the top than it is when they are coming from any other side”*

The same opinions were echoed by participant IA03 who said:

*“The company management, when the initiation comes from the management it’s easy for the subordinates within the organisation to follow the new regulations.”*

However, other participants felt that it should be the responsibility of everyone within the organisation to be champions in the adoption and utilisation of social media for internal communication.

The findings from case study B indicated that participants felt differently on who was supposed to initiate the adoption and utilisation of social media for internal communication. For example, participant IB11 felt that the Public Relations department was responsible to champion the process as they are the ones who handle the organisation’s social media accounts for external communication.

Participant IB13 believed the Information Communication Technology department was to be held accountable for such adoptions.

Participant IB16 pointed out the Human Resources department can facilitate how best to utilise the platforms so that work productivity does not suffer, since social media can easily be used for personal communication.

However, the majority participants did indicate that they felt management should be the ones at the forefront of the adoption as they are the ones who implement organisation policies and structures. They are to be followed by department supervisors. And lastly, employees should also be ready and willing to adopt and use the platforms. For instance, participant IB17 mentioned the following:

*“The management should be at the forefront. Followed by our immediate supervisors”.*

The same sentiments were shared by participant IB18 who noted:

*“The first people who should initiate the adoption of social media are management, then we as employees should also try and in cooperate them in our daily internal communication”.*

In addition, participant IB19 mentioned:

*“This solely lies with our top management. Everything must come from up there. Then maybe employees should also be willing to adopt and use them”.*

The findings from case study C were as follows: the majority participants had different opinions on who they felt was mandated to lead the adoption and use of social media in the organisation. Some of the entities listed were management, the employees themselves and the human resources department. For example, participant IC22 felt that it was up to the staff. She mentioned the following:

*“Personally, I can say it should be a social responsibility for all of us because this is where the technology is headed to so we should not have people to champion it should be a personal responsibility”.*

Participant IC24 also felt the same way and pointed out:

*“All of us, so we can start with our seniors that is our departmental heads and the management then it can trickle down to middle level and junior staff”.*

Others felt that this was up to the management, who would then use the Human Resources department. For example, participant IC23 noted:

*“It would have to be the management through the Human Resources department”.*

Participant IC27 also felt the same way and noted the following:

*“I will have to say management, then staff in the HR department as well. They must lead the way then we can follow”.*

And lastly some participants felt that the management should initiate the process, then the middle and lower-level employees would follow suit. Participant IC29 mentioned:

*“I do believe management should be at the fore front of the whole thing, followed by employees. Because employees have to be on board with the change for them to be adopted and actually utilised”.*

Same views were held by participant IC30 who said:

*“I will say management, then it can trickle down to departmental heads. Again, employees should also be willing to adopt these social media”.*

### **6.8.2 Strategies for addressing barriers to adoption and use of social media in the organisation**

With an understanding of the individuals responsible for social media adoption and use, the study then explored strategies to address barriers to the adoption and use of social media within the organisation. Findings from case study A showed that there were less stringent rules on use of social media, information technology training, education on use of social media channels, establishing new internal communication strategies including social media, provision of adequate internet bandwidth and provision of gadgets like smartphones.

On the issue of less stringent rules, this was mentioned by participant IA01:

*“Less stringent rules on use of social media especially barring of certain sites, training on use of some social media and budget allocation to purchase social media”.*

On the internal communication strategy participant IA03 said:

*“Establishing an internal communications strategy in collaboration with senior managers, ensuring that organisational initiatives and projects are successfully communicated to employees and stakeholders. Ensuring that messages are consistent across all channels. Responding to feedback from staff and adjusting internal communications accordingly. Planning, writing, and editing content for a variety of internal communications mediums. Ensuring that employees are not overwhelmed with irrelevant information”.*

When it comes to internet solutions, training and provision of gadgets, participant IA05 mentioned the following:

*“Providing internet solutions, training employees on the use of social media and providing them with the right gadgets if need be”.*

Participant IA07 further mentioned that leaders could be employed as adoption ambassadors. He felt that if leadership were at the forefront of adoption, junior employees would easily follow suit.

On training, participant IA09 noted:

*“I would suggest some form of Information Technology training so that every member of a company is conversant with the social media platforms used”.*

Findings from the FGDs indicate similar strategies. An additional strategy that came up was the issue of clear policies and strategies on social media use and training workshops. For instance, participant FAA said:

*“Firstly, it must start with the management. We need clear policies and structures on how to utilise these social media, especially for internal communication. I also think we need things like training workshops for people who might not have the right skills on how to adapt and utilise them”.*

Findings from case study B indicated that most of the participants felt that if certain strategies were adopted by the organisation, adoption and utilisation of social media would be easy for them. Some participants felt that if they were more encouraged to use social media, they would be more open to them. Other participants felt that the organisation could invest in tough cyber security measures to ensure that information security is guaranteed.

Participant IB15 noted the following on management easing rules on technology adoption:

*“The first barrier is management. They should loosen up and accept that technology is here, and it is here to stay. They should find ways of incorporating the platforms in internal communication”.*

The same views were held by participant IB20:

*“Management should ease up rules and restrictions on their use...”*

Some participants also felt that a higher budget could be allocated to technology purchases such as smartphones, laptops or computers and internet bandwidth to enhance the adoption and use of social media internally. For instance, participant IB17 stated:

*“Well, management can offer to purchase some of these technological things like smartphones and laptops to get us access to these platforms, and also give us better internet bandwidth even when we are in the field so that we are able to use them”.*

Participant FBI also mentioned the following:

*“I would say management should also put in place good internet infrastructure and enough bandwidth for us to be able to communicate with each other using some of the social media platforms available. We cannot be able to afford internet all month long when out of office”.*

Additionally, findings from the FGDs indicate similar strategies mentioned by the participants apart from a few. For instance, participant FBL mentioned the following on incentives being a strategy to motivate staff to use social media for internal communication:

*“What I can say is that the bank can also offer incentives for people who are utilising them, maybe this can encourage the employees who are still on the fence about adopting them to jump ship. We all know employees love good incentives”.*

Other strategies that came up were training on the use of some of the platforms, clear social media policies and activities such as team building to aid in healthier interpersonal relationships. For example, participant FBG pointed out:

*“...Also, training for the colleagues who are not familiar with some of these platforms. We can do the training in addition to events like team buildings to help improve our relations with one another”.*

Participant FBH finally mentioned:

*“In my view, we need training like my colleague mentioned, we also need clear policies from management on what to use and what to avoid, and timings of use. For example, even when we adopt and utilise these social media, we need to know how to avoid using them for personal consumption like socialising with friends during work hours”.*

Most of the participants from case study C had much to say on this. Some of the strategies that came up from the interviews included more reliable internet connectivity, purchase of smartphones, laptops or computers, staff training, IT department should not block some sites and clear policies on social media use. For example, participant IC21 had this to say on the strategies:

*“I believe we can offer data to employees or better Wi-Fi access throughout campus for easy access to the platforms. Again, we can provide employees with work smartphones that they will be able to always use and access these platforms. The institution can also try and offer training on use to those people who need it, especially, the older professors”.*

Participant IC25 said the following:

*“Most of these platforms require internet connectivity so better internet connection will be the most ideal route to follow first, then staff sensitisation on the benefits of their use, also training for the staff incapable of using the platforms and lastly, budget allocation for purchase of required gadgets”.*



Participant IC27 also commented:

*“As mentioned, we can buy gadgets for employees like work smartphones, computers to enable them to use the platforms and this can help differentiate the official ones from the personal ones, the institution can also offer events like training workshops for the staff who are not conversant with the use of these platforms. The institution also has to offer better internet connectivity around campus”.*

Lastly, participant IC30 mentioned the following:

*“I believe management can put in place training workshops for those who need to acquire these new skills and learn how to use these new media especially our older colleagues, another thing may be to put in place better internet connectivity and offer smartphones that can be used for work purposes. Not all employees can afford smartphones”.*

Similar findings came up from the FGDs. For instance, participant FCM said:

*“I believe so much can be done. Firstly, university management should ensure that there are clear policies on the use of these platforms for official communication. Secondly, there needs to be Wi-Fi access on all parts of campus for us to be able to use the said platforms. And lastly, we as employees should be open to change and try and embrace technology, especially the older generation who have always been hesitant to change, especially our older professors”.*

Participant FCO mentioned:

*“I will also reiterate on the issue of Wi-Fi accessibility in all areas of the campus. And the IT department should also try not to block some of these channels of communication. Again, if the university management can come up with training for the employees who might not be conversant with the use of some of the applications that would help”.*

### **6.8.3 Impact of social media adoption on internal communication in the organisation**

Lastly, the study sought to explore the impact of social media adoption and use on internal communication within the organisation, having identified the individuals mandated to promote its adoption and

mitigate barriers to its use. The findings from case study A indicated that the noted impacts were both positive and negative. However, most of the participants felt that social media offered positive impacts on internal communication. Some of the noted positive impacts were fast and effective communication, productive time management, knowledge management, enhanced team collaborations and more information sharing.

Starting with participant IA01 who mentioned the following:

*“I believe social media will lead to better and more efficient communication this is because they are easier to use and fast. Allow better time management when communicating, better feedback and better interaction among employees”.*

The same sentiments were echoed by participant IA02 who stated:

*“The fact that information will be shared out instantly. This will eliminate or at least, reduce the need of constantly checking your emails”.*

Participant IA04 further noted that social media would improve the way they communicate within the organisation, in that they didn't have to meet face to face for physical meetings, especially in the times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On team collaboration, participant IA05 noted:

*“Social media will encourage collaboration between various departments and make it easy to pass information between employees”.*

The same sentiments were echoed by participant IA07:

*“I believe social media will lead to better team collaborations resulting in increased work productivity”.*

Participant IA06 noted the following on the issue of information sharing and knowledge management:

*“It will enable free sharing of information & feedback as well as professional development if some of the social media tools are used for learning & development”.*

Findings from the FGDs indicate similar positive impacts.

One negative impact participant IA06 mentioned was that since most social media are also used personally, colleagues can share work when they see you online even after work hours.

Findings from case study B indicated that most of the participants felt the impact of social media on internal communication processes in the organisation would be positive. However, a few did indicate that if the adoption was not well handled, social media would impact negatively on internal communication and productivity of the organisation. For instance, participant IB15 had conflicting views, she noted:

*“It can go both ways; you know how these things go. So firstly, let me begin with some positive impacts. They can help with faster and efficient communication, less costly, environmentally friendly as well as we can do away with paper, especially on memos. Negative impacts, well, it can be difficult to regulate how staff use these platforms. They can be online doing personal activities during work hours. Another thing is the privacy and security of some of our information as we work in the banking sector.*

Participant IB18 also had conflicting views and mentioned:

*“I can point out to both, positively better working relations among colleagues, faster and more convenient communication, faster feedback, better work productivity and so on. But then again on the negative side maybe employees can use them for personal communication and waste working hours”.*

IB19 further added to the above and pointed out the following:

*“If adopted I do feel like social media can improve our working relations with our colleagues, we can be freer with each other and communicate better. I also feel like social media offers a faster way of communication so tasks can be completed faster and on time. But again, they must be monitored so that staff do not spend so much time on them doing unproductive things, like personal socialisation instead of work assigned duties”.*

Lastly, on the conflicting views, participant IB20 stated:

*“First, quicker way of communication especially feedback, then better relations among co-workers, better collaboration and teamwork, better work productivity as targets are shared faster. On the negative side is the privacy and confidentiality of client information. How sure are we these will be safe in an online environment?”*

Participants IB12, IB13 and IB14 felt that adoption and use of social media for internal communication could lead to fast, effective communication as they felt social media provide avenues for quicker feedback from fellow colleagues.

Participant IB16 believed the adoption and use of social media would lead to better relationships in the workplace. This was mentioned:

*“I believe, if given a chance social media can make our internal communication better. We can form better relationships with colleagues as we will communicate more, and work can be done faster”.*

The same views were held by participant IB17:

*“Social media can better our working relations within the bank. They create a sort of feel-good environment”.*

Most of the participants in case study C did list positive impacts, but a few also listed some negative impacts. Some positive impacts that were listed included enhanced interpersonal relationships, instant communication, enhanced work productivity, stronger employee engagement, more knowledge and information sharing and cost-effective communication. For example, participant IC21 mentioned:

*“I think they will have a great impact, positive impact as they will help us better connect with our colleagues and also offer faster means of communication and connections”.*

Participant IC23 shared the same views of effective communication and stated:

*“It would shorten the communication process. The issue of getting feedback would be shorter and faster”.*

Participant IC25 also noted on the issue of faster communication and other positive impacts as follows:

*“If we adopt social media as an institution, I believe on the positive side that it will enhance better communication, faster communication, better employee engagement, knowledge sharing it can even foster better interpersonal relationships among colleagues which is a plus”.*

Participant IC29 also added on the issue of enhanced work productivity when social media are used in the correct way. He mentioned:

*“According to me, I would say social media can better our communication and interpersonal relationships in the workplace. We can also get instant feedback because they offer faster communication, and I believe if used in the right way they can enhance work productivity”.*

Some of the negative impacts mentioned included invasion of family time for instance participant IC2 stated:

*“...The other impact that is probably negative is it would lead to less personal or family time as people tend to use social media to communicate work stuff even after official working hours are over like after 8-5pm. It will be hard to draw a line on such”.*

Participant IC24 also noted that another negative impact would be employees leaning towards the entertainment side of social media rather than using it for official purposes.

*“...On the negative side, too much use of social media may make you forget you have to work because we lean towards the fun part of it, that is the entertainment side”.*

## **6.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the analysed data on the adoption and utilisation of social media within Kenyan organisations. The analysis draws from responses of 48 participants across three distinct case studies, utilising data collected through 30 face-to-face semi-structured interviews and three focus group discus-

sions. Some of the data from these discussions are presented verbatim to retain the authenticity of participant responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data with findings showing that demographic factors such as age, gender and education level influence social media usage with younger, more educated employees demonstrating a higher responsiveness to these technologies. Participants presented a clear understanding of the potential of social media to achieve broad and rapid communication, with key platforms including WhatsApp and Slack. However, usage varied by department and was influenced by specific job functions and employee demographics. Despite recognising the numerous benefits of social media, such as increased communication speed and enhanced collaboration, several challenges hinder wider adoption. These include resistance to change, data security concerns and a lack of training, particularly impacting older employees or those less familiar with digital tools. To overcome these challenges, organisations could implement targeted interventions such as comprehensive training, clear usage policies and improved technological infrastructure. The overall impact of social media on organisational communication is seen positively, though challenges such as potential distractions and the blurring of work-life boundaries persist.

The subsequent chapter will discuss these findings in depth, relating them to the theoretical frameworks and literature reviewed. This discussion will aim to contextualise the practical implications for managers and policymakers, providing a critical examination of how current practices align with or diverge from established theories of media adoption and organisational communication. The aim is to offer actionable insights and recommendations for effectively improving social media adoption and utilisation within organisational settings, enhancing both internal communication and overall organisational performance.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter presented an extensive analysis of data, setting the stage for the ensuing discourse. This current chapter provides a detailed discussion of the empirical findings derived from the data delineated in Chapter Six. It aims to elucidate these findings within the context of the overarching aim of the research, which was to conceptualise and propose a theoretical framework to facilitate the adoption and effective utilisation of social media platforms for internal communication within organisations.

This analysis was conducted through the prism of the theoretical lenses selected for this study, namely, the Diffusion of Innovations theory complemented by the Uses and Gratification Theory. These theories provide a foundational basis for understanding how, why and at the rate new ideas and technology spread across cultures. By aligning the empirical findings with this theoretical framework, the chapter seeks to offer an in depth understanding of the mechanisms and factors that influence the adoption of social media within organisational settings.

The insights discussed are the culmination of data gathered from a series of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These discussions engaged employees at various hierarchical levels within the three case study organisations, ensuring a comprehensive perspective that encompasses diverse viewpoints and experiences. The synthesis of these empirical data with the theoretical underpinnings of the DoI and UGT theories aim to contribute to the academic discourse on digital communication strategies in organisational contexts.

#### **7.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

The preceding chapter elucidates a notable gender discrepancy among the study's participants across the trio of case study organisations, with a predominance of female participants over their male counterparts. This gender disparity is accentuated by the observation that female participants exhibited a more pronounced engagement with social media platforms in comparison to males. These observations are in

harmony with the findings of prior research, which similarly highlighted a gender-based differential in social media usage within organisational settings (Idemudia et al., 2017).

Age demographics across the case studies unveiled distinctive age groups predominating in each organisation. Case Study A was notably characterised by a younger demographic, primarily aged between 21 and 30 years, who showed a heightened proclivity towards adopting social media for internal organisational communication. Conversely, participants in Case Study B, mainly aged between 31 and 40 years, demonstrated a comparatively moderate enthusiasm towards such technological adoption. Contrastingly, most participants in Case Study C, within the 41 to 50 years age bracket, showed a marked hesitance towards the incorporation of social media for internal communication purposes. This gradation in receptiveness towards social media adoption across varying age cohorts aligns with the theoretical propositions of the Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) theory, suggesting a predisposition among younger individuals to be more willing to new technologies (Zondo & Doro, 2023; Rogers, 2014).

Regarding educational attainment, the analysis delineates those individuals possessing undergraduate degrees constituted the majority within all three organisations. This demographic trait implies that a certain echelon of academic achievement may influence perceptions and attitudes toward technology adoption, including the deployment of social media within organisational communicative frameworks. The explicit linkage between educational level and propensity towards social media usage for internal communication, however, necessitates further elucidation.

The tenure of employment within the organisations emerged as a vital variable. In Case Study A, a significant portion of participants were relatively recent additions to the workforce, having joined the organisation under less than a year. In contrast, participants in Case Study B and Case Study C had longer tenures, spanning from 1 to 5 years and 11 to 15 years, respectively. These findings intimate a correlation between employment duration and the willingness to embrace new communication technologies, with newer employees displaying an augmented openness to integrating social media into the fabric of internal communication channels. This correlation corroborates findings from a prior study (Frahm & Brown, 2007), which identified an enhanced receptivity to organisational change among employees with shorter service durations, resonating with the DoI theory's characterisation of early adopters as individuals less ingrained in conventional practices (Rogers, 2014).



Lastly, the departmental affiliation of participants revealed a significant inclination: individuals stationed within customer support and communications/public relations departments were more likely to employ social media for internal communication. This trend was notably pronounced in Case Study A and Case Study C, where the bulk of participants worked in to the customer support department, and to a lesser extent in Case Study B, where participant distribution across departments was more heterogeneous. These findings depict that the specific nature of one's departmental role may influence the likelihood of social media adoption for internal purposes, echoing the outcomes of analogous studies (Abbasi et al., 2022). Such departmental disparities in social media engagement highlight the significance of considering organisational roles and functions within the ambit of the DoI theory, which accentuates the influence of social systems on the rate of innovation adoption (Rogers, 2014).

### **7.3 KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG EMPLOYEES IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

This study objective sought to explore the knowledge of social media among employees in Kenyan organisations. The ensuing analysis of the study's findings is delineated across the following two sections.

#### **7.3.1 Definition of social media among employees in the organisations**

The conceptualisation of social media among organisational employees reveals differentiated understanding, reflective of the dynamic and evolving nature of social media technologies. This variation in definitions depicts the adaptability and fluidity of social media as a construct, which evolves in tandem with advancements in digital technologies. Cohen (2012) articulates that the social media definition is inherently mutable, mirroring the rapid evolution of technological paradigms. This observation suggests that as social media platforms diversify in functionality and application, so does the collective understanding of what constitutes social media within a professional context.

For the purposes of this study, the framework for understanding social media is anchored in the definition provided by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61), who describe social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". This delineation emphasises the interactive and

collaborative essence of social media, highlighting its roots in Web 2.0 ideologies and technologies that prioritise user engagement and content creation.

While the participants' interpretations of social media did not uniformly align with Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) definition, their conceptualisations broadly resonated with the core attributes of social media as interactive, internet-based platforms enabling user-generated content. This discrepancy between theoretical definitions and individual understandings reflects the broader discourse on social media's definition, which is characterised by a spectrum of interpretations influenced by users' experiences, technological literacy and the specific context of social media use within organisational settings.

Further research corroborates this diversity in the definition of social media among users. A study conducted by Bengtsson & Johansson (2022) also evidenced that participants harboured varied definitions of social media, pointing to a widespread phenomenon where individual experiences and perceptions shape one's understanding of digital platforms. In aligning with the perspectives of Cohen (2012) and adopting the framework of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), this study acknowledges the complexity and fluidity of defining social media in the contemporary digital landscape. Such an approach not only provides a foundational basis for examining social media use within organisations but also accommodates the diverse interpretations that emerge from the interplay between technological advancements and user engagement. The fluid understanding of social media also aligns with UGT, which posits that users actively seek media to fulfil specific needs (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023). The findings indicated that employees' interpretations of social media varied according to their needs for interactivity, collaboration, and content creation.

### **7.3.2 Social media platform awareness and diversity in organisational contexts**

The empirical results of this study highlight a widespread awareness of social media platforms among the participants yet reveal a discernible gap in their understanding of these platforms' categorisation. This gap presents a fundamental aspect of digital literacy, specifically the ability to classify and comprehend the distinctive functionalities and target audiences of various social media platforms. DoI suggests that social systems, such as organisations, can influence how widely and deeply innovations are adopted. The knowledge and recognition of these platforms were observed to differ across the three case study organisations, pointing to the influence of organisational culture and communication practices on social media literacy.

In Case Study A, participants enumerated a diverse array of platforms including WhatsApp, Facebook, Slack, Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram. This variety indicates a broad engagement with both professional and personal communication tools. Case Study B's participants similarly mentioned a mix of platforms, notably Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and YouTube, reflecting an emphasis on platforms that facilitate both social networking and professional collaboration. Participants from Case Study C identified WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and YouTube, showcasing a preference for platforms that support a blend of personal communication and professional functionality. The variance in platform awareness and utilisation across the case studies suggests organisational factors and individual preferences significantly influence social media platform engagement. This finding aligns with prior research that also documented variations in social media platform knowledge and use within different organisational contexts (Voorveld, et al., 2018).

Moreover, the lack of clarity regarding the classification of social media platforms among participants highlights a potential area for enhancing digital literacy within organisations. Understanding the unique attributes and potential applications of each platform can empower employees to leverage social media more effectively for communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Limited understanding of platform classification suggests an opportunity for organisations to support digital literacy, resonating with UGT's gratification-seeking behaviours (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023). By increasing employees' awareness of the functionalities and audiences of each platform, organisations could facilitate better usage that meets employee needs for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and efficiency.

This study's observations regarding the diversity in social media platform recognition and the ambiguity in classification resonate with findings from similar research studies. For instance, Huu (2023) also identified discrepancies in social media platform knowledge and categorisation among organisational employees, emphasising the need for targeted digital literacy initiatives. In synthesising these insights, it becomes evident that enhancing an in-depth understanding of social media platforms and their categorisations can significantly enhance organisational communication strategies. Such an understanding not only facilitates more informed platform choices but also aligns with the evolving digital landscape's demands for adaptability and proficiency.

## **7.4 EMPLOYEE UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

This objective aimed to examine the utilisation of social media channels for facilitating internal communication within organisations. The results of this examination will be elaborated upon in the subsequent discussion.

### **7.4.1 Utilisation of social media platforms within Kenyan organisations**

The evidence from this study highlights that Slack and WhatsApp are the predominant social media platforms employed for internal communication across the case study organisations. Specifically, in Case Study A, Slack emerged as the primary tool for facilitating internal dialogues. Nevertheless, the findings also revealed a notable segment of participants who abstain from utilising social media for internal communication purposes. This trend was particularly evident among employees stationed in departments that operate predominantly in-office rather than in remote working environments.

In the context of Case Study B, a fraction of the participants reported employing WhatsApp for internal communication, albeit not as a universally adopted practice within the organisation. In contrast, the narrative diverges in Case Study C, where opinions were mixed. Employees within communication and marketing departments indicated a preference for WhatsApp as a medium for colleague interaction. However, a significant proportion of the workforce across various departments expressed a reliance on more conventional communication channels, eschewing broader adoption of social media platforms for internal purposes.

Utilising social media platforms for internal communication reflected the heterogeneity of organisational communication cultures and employee preferences. It suggests an ongoing transition within organisational communication strategies, wherein traditional channels continue to hold sway, particularly in contexts less conducive to remote work or in sectors with established communication protocols. The findings align with previous research indicating a gradual, albeit uneven, shift towards integrating social media tools in organisational communication frameworks (Ten, 2017; McCosker, 2017). Such studies highlight the variable pace of adoption across different organisational settings and departments,

influenced by factors including but not limited to the nature of work, departmental functions and organisational policies on digital communication tools.

The use of Slack and WhatsApp within organisations illustrates DoI's compatibility and relative advantage attributes, as these platforms were chosen for their alignment with organisational needs for quick and effective internal communication. The limited use among employees stationed in departments reliant on in-office setups also reflects organisational culture as a factor in diffusion, since remote and collaborative functions tend to drive higher adoption. According to UGT, employees favour platforms that satisfy their needs for connectivity and immediacy, as these platforms provide a quick, user-friendly alternative to email and phone calls (Hossain, 2019). In sum, while social media platforms such as Slack and WhatsApp are gaining traction as instruments for internal communication within certain organisational segments, there remains a substantial adherence to traditional communication mechanisms. This coexistence of new and old communication paradigms conveys the complexity of digital transformation in organisational communication practices.

#### **7.4.2 Day-to-day utilisation and platform preference of social media in organisations**

The analysis across all case study organisations revealed a consensus among participants regarding the underutilisation of social media for daily internal communications. The prevailing sentiment is that their respective organisations are yet to fully integrate social media platforms into their internal communication strategies. This observation aligns with findings from existing literature, which similarly reports a gap in the comprehensive incorporation of social media within organisational communication frameworks (Ogbuji & Papazafeiropoulou, 2016).

Moreover, the study findings spotlight a discernible preference among participants for certain social media platforms over others, despite an overall infrequent use within their organisations. This preference is attributed to various factors varying slightly across the case studies. Participants from Case Study A specifically expressed a preference for Slack, citing its user-friendly interface and cost-effectiveness as primary advantages. Similarly, in Case Study B, WhatsApp was favoured for its ease of use, cost efficiency and the rapidity with which it facilitates feedback. Participants in Case Study C also highlighted these attributes: ease of use, affordability and quick feedback - as decisive factors in their preference for specific social media platforms. These preferences emphasise the importance of platform characteristics such as usability, cost and communication speed in influencing employees' choice of

social media for professional interactions. This inclination towards platforms offering a combination of these attributes suggests that the adoption and frequency of use within organisational settings could be significantly enhanced by prioritising these factors in the selection of communication tools.

The findings that participants preferred certain social media platforms for their ease of use, cost efficiency, and quick feedback align with UGT's premise that users seek media based on gratification of specific needs (Hossain, 2019). Employees in each of the three case studies highlighted usability and cost as major factors in their platform preferences, supporting DoI's relative advantage characteristic where platforms such as Slack and WhatsApp are chosen for their cost-effectiveness and communication speed. However, the underutilisation of these tools for day-to-day communication reveals DoI's trialability factor, suggesting that many organisations are still experimenting with integrating social media into everyday processes without fully committing. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on digital communication in the workplace, echoing the sentiments of prior research which identified usability, cost-effectiveness and efficiency of feedback as critical determinants of social media platform preference among employees (Nilasari et al., 2019).

#### **7.4.3 Social media influence on organisational productivity and alternative communication channels**

The evidence gathered from the participants across the three case study organisations suggests a predominant belief in the potential of social media to enhance work productivity. This perspective aligns with existing research which documented the positive impact of social media adoption on organisational efficiency and employee performance (Yeshambel, et al., 2016). Conversely, a subset of participants articulated concerns regarding the potential for social media to detract from workplace productivity if not appropriately managed. The apprehension centred around the misuse of social media platforms for personal purposes in the absence of a substantial social media policy. This viewpoint echoes findings from prior studies, which identified the necessity of clear guidelines and policies to mitigate the risks of decreased productivity due to personal use of social media at work (Ahmad, Husain & Ahmad, 2022; Jong, Chen, Ruangkanjanes & Chang, 2021).

Moreover, the study's findings reveal a persistent reliance on traditional communication channels within the organisations under investigation. Specifically, in Case Study A, the prevalent use of emails, phone calls and text messaging were noted for internal communication purposes. Similarly, participants in Case

Study B reported a continued reliance on emails and memos, while those in Case Study C highlighted the use of physical meetings, emails, phone calls, memos and text messaging as their primary communication tools. This enduring preference for conventional communication methods over social media platforms suggests a complex interrelation between established organisational communication practices and the emerging digital communication landscape. Despite the recognised potential of social media to enhance operational efficiency, the findings pinpoint a cautious approach to its adoption, emphasising the importance of balancing innovative digital tools with traditional communication mechanisms to ensure organisational coherence and productivity (Trenerry, et al., 2021). The dual perspectives on the impact of social media on productivity resonate with DoI's complexity characteristic, where the adoption and effective use of social media require navigating potential distractions. Employees recognise social media's relative advantage for productivity enhancement, echoing UGT's emphasis on fulfilling efficiency and immediacy needs (Hossain, 2019). However, the need for structured policies to mitigate misuse highlights DoI's observability factor, suggesting that productivity gains and potential risks must be visible and manageable to reinforce broader adoption.

## **7.5 EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

This objective sought to explore employee perceptions regarding the advantages and obstacles associated with adopting social media for internal communication within Kenyan organisations. The insights derived from this analysis are discussed in the following section.

### **7.5.1 Benefits of integrating social media into organisational internal communication**

The three case study organisations revealed a unanimous perception among employees regarding the potential benefits of integrating social media into internal communication strategies. These perceived advantages span a broad spectrum, underscoring the multifaceted impact of social media on organisational dynamics.

In Case Study A, participants identified a range of benefits associated with social media adoption, including enhanced productivity, strengthened co-worker relationships, more effective communication, time saving, improved information sharing, increased flexibility, improved collaboration and heightened

employee engagement. These observations suggest that social media platforms can significantly contribute to optimising operational efficiency and advancing a more cohesive and engaged workplace environment (Lam, Yeung & Cheng, 2016).

Similarly, Case Study B highlighted additional benefits such as transparency in communications, accelerated information exchange, cost-effectiveness, better work productivity, enriched interpersonal relationships among colleagues, enhanced creativity and user-friendliness of the communication tools. These findings indicate that social media can serve as a powerful catalyst to foster an open and innovative organisational culture that prioritises rapid and efficient communication (Singh & Atwal, 2019).

Furthermore, participants from Case Study C echoed the advantages of cost-effectiveness and ease of use, alongside effective communication, improved information sharing, enhanced interpersonal relationships, elevated employee engagement and effective knowledge management. These benefits portray social media's role in facilitating a more interconnected and knowledge-rich organisational environment.

These collective insights align with existing literature that highlights the diverse benefits of social media utilisation within organisational settings, including but not limited to improved communication efficiency, employee satisfaction and organisational innovation (Jong, et al., 2021; Zhang, Ma, Xu & Xu, 2019). The diverse range of perceived benefits from integrating social media such as improved productivity, stronger relationships, and efficient information exchange aligns with DoI's relative advantage characteristic. Employees see social media as offering clear advantages over traditional communication, particularly in enhancing speed and connectivity, resonating with UGT's focus on users seeking tools that fulfil their needs for efficiency and social interaction (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023). The preference for specific platforms for flexibility and user-friendliness reflects DoI's compatibility, where social media's adaptability to the employees' daily communication requirements supports easier adoption. Therefore, the consensus across the case studies reinforces the argument that social media platforms can act as leverages for organisational improvements across various dimensions, from enhancing productivity to enabling a more engaged and collaborative workforce.

### **7.5.2 Challenges of social media adoption for internal communication in the organisations**

While the integration of social media into internal communication frameworks presents a myriad of benefits, the transition is not devoid of challenges. These obstacles were articulated by participants



across the three case study organisations, revealing a complex landscape of barriers to effective implementation.

In Case Study A, participants enumerated several challenges, including a prevailing preference for traditional communication channels, perceived complexity in usage, potential for disruption and time wastage, concerns over privacy and confidentiality, data security vulnerabilities and the requisite of consistent internet access. These challenges highlight the multifaceted nature of resistance to social media adoption, underscoring concerns about efficiency, security, and the digital divide (Hekkala, Väyrynen & Wiander, 2012).

Similarly, Case Study B highlighted additional obstacles such as information security concerns, bureaucratic inertia, demographic barriers such as age, resistance to organisational change, limitations in internet bandwidth, privacy apprehensions, network reliability issues and the lack of access to necessary technological tools such as smartphones. These findings suggest that technological, organisational and socio-demographic factors collectively contribute to the complexity of adopting social media for internal communication.

Furthermore, participants from Case Study C identified a distinct set of challenges, including the absence of clear social media usage policies, lack of smartphone accessibility, internet connectivity problems, resistance to technology adoption, confidentiality concerns, difficulties in platform navigation and perceived negative impacts on work productivity. These impediments emphasise the need for strategic planning and policy development to navigate the challenges associated with social media adoption in the workplace.

These observed challenges resonate with existing literature that acknowledges the barriers to social media adoption within organisational settings, including technological constraints, cultural resistance, security concerns and the need for policy frameworks to guide effective use (Beier & Wagner, 2016; Çaldağ & Gökalp, 2023; Banghart, Etter & Stohl, 2018). The findings from the case studies underline the necessity for a balanced approach that considers both the potential benefits and inherent challenges of social media use in internal communication. The challenges to social media adoption, such as privacy, complexity, and a preference for traditional channels, emphasise DoI's complexity attribute, where perceived difficulty in use can slow down adoption. Concerns about security and the potential for distraction illustrate DoI's trialability and observability, where employees and organisations need time

and policies to manage the risks and establish visible benefits. From a UGT perspective, these barriers also suggest that unmet needs, such as a sense of privacy and control, create resistance, particularly when traditional channels fulfil these aspects more effectively (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023).

## **7.6 STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AND USE FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

This final objective sought to explore strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption and use in internal communication within Kenyan organisations. It initially investigated who within the organisation holds the mandate to initiate the adoption and use of social media, identified strategies for overcoming these barriers and examined the overall impact of social media adoption on internal communication.

### **7.6.1 Entities with mandate to initiate the adoption and use of social media in the organisations**

The study identified the organisational entities endowed with the authority to initiate the adoption and utilisation of social media within an organisational context. The responses elicited from participants across the three case study organisations revealed divergent perspectives regarding the locus of responsibility for initiating social media adoption and addressing the barriers to its adoption.

In Case Study A, the consensus among participants depicted a shared responsibility model, advocating that both top management and the broader employee base should collaboratively champion the incorporation and active use of social media platforms. This perspective showed the importance of a unified organisational approach, emphasising the role of leadership in setting strategic directions and the participatory engagement of employees in operationalising social media use.

Contrastingly, participants from Case Study B posited a more department-specific approach, assigning primary responsibility to the Public Relations and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) departments as the overseers of social media adoption. This approach was further supported by the inclusion of the Human Resources department and broader management teams, highlighting a multi-disciplinary strategy that leverages specialised expertise and organisational leadership to guide social media initiatives.

Similarly, respondents from Case Study C identified a tripartite collaboration comprising management, Human Resources department and employees at large as crucial in driving the adoption and effective utilisation of social media. This viewpoint supports the interlinked impact of strategic leadership, human capital management and grassroots employee involvement in promoting a culture conducive to digital innovation (Kaushal, 2011).

These perspectives align with scholarly discourse on organisational change and digital transformation, which emphasises the multifaceted nature of technology adoption processes. Leadership roles, cross-departmental collaboration and employee engagement are recurrent themes in the literature, underscoring their collective significance in successful technology integration efforts (Bozkus, 2023; Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014). The varied perspectives on which organisational entities hold the mandate for social media adoption ranging from top management to specific departments illustrate DoI's social system factor. According to DoI, the social structure and established norms within an organisation heavily influence adoption. In this case, the organisational hierarchy and departmental roles shape how social media adoption is approached. Participants' support for leadership involvement and cross-department collaboration also depict UGT's emphasis on fulfilling individual and collective needs, as employees recognise that strategic leadership can guide effective, organisation-wide social media use (Hossain, 2019). The findings from this study contribute to this body of knowledge, offering insights into the organisational dynamics influencing social media adoption within diverse organisational contexts.

### **7.6.2 Strategies for addressing barriers to adoption and use of social media in the organisations**

The study elucidated strategies that could effectively mitigate barriers to adopting and utilising social media within organisations. Analysis of participant responses across the study revealed a diversity of perspectives regarding potential solutions to overcome these hurdles. Nonetheless, a set of common strategies emerged, reflecting a consensus on the approaches considered most effective in facilitating social media integration.

Key among the identified strategies was recommending the implementation of less stringent regulations governing social media use within organisational contexts. Participants advocated for a balanced approach that safeguards organisational interests while not unduly restricting employee engagement with social media platforms. Additionally, the provision of Information Technology (IT) training was

highlighted as a critical strategy. This approach aims to enhance digital literacy among employees, equipping them with the necessary skills to navigate and leverage social media tools effectively for professional purposes.

Establishing clear social media policies was also highlighted as essential. Such policies are envisioned to set forth the boundaries of appropriate social media use, ensuring employees understand both their rights and responsibilities in the digital environment. Further, introducing incentives was suggested to motivate employees towards embracing social media platforms. These incentives could range from recognition programs to tangible rewards, fostering a culture of active participation and innovation.

Improvements in infrastructure, notably improved internet connectivity and the provision of necessary technological devices such as smartphones, laptops and computers, were identified as foundational elements (Mataruka & Muzurura, 2023). These measures are anticipated to remove technical barriers to social media use, thereby enabling more seamless integration into daily work practices. These strategies align with scholarly recommendations on overcoming barriers to technology adoption within organisations. Literature suggests that addressing technological, policy-related and motivational challenges is pivotal in ensuring a conducive organisational environment for digital innovation and communication (Song, Chen & Gu, 2023; Mukhopadhyay, 2023). By implementing these strategies, organisations can navigate the complexities of social media integration, unlocking the potential for enhanced communication, collaboration and productivity. The suggested strategies, such as IT training, clear policies, and incentivising participation, are in line with DoI's complexity and trialability attributes, where reducing perceived complexity through training and establishing policies ensures gradual, supportive social media adoption. Participants emphasis on providing necessary technological infrastructure, such as better internet connectivity and devices, further aligns with DoI's observability, where visible and accessible technology facilitates trial use, helping employees see the potential benefits firsthand. From a UGT perspective, these strategies satisfy employees' needs for accessibility, clarity, and motivation, making social media a tool that is both practical and beneficial in a structured work setting (Hossain, 2019).

### **7.6.3 Impact of social media adoption on internal communication in organisations**

The study further identified the ramifications of social media adoption on internal communication within organisations, drawing attention to both its beneficial and detrimental effects as perceived by study participants. On the positive side, participants highlighted several advantageous outcomes attributable

to social media adoption. These included accelerated and more efficacious communication channels, enhanced time management capabilities, cost reductions in communication-related expenses, improved interpersonal relationships among colleagues, encouraged team collaboration, amplified information dissemination, effective knowledge management practices, elevated levels of employee engagement and an overall boost in work productivity. These findings suggest that social media platforms can serve as powerful enablers to organisational efficiency and cohesion, fostering a more dynamic and interactive internal communication environment.

On the other hand, the study identified certain negative implications associated with social media use in the workplace. Notably, participants voiced concerns over potential declines in productivity attributed to the misuse of official work hours for entertainment purposes on social media. Additionally, the challenge of regulating content and interactions on these platforms was highlighted, alongside the intrusion into personal or family time due to professional obligations extending beyond conventional work hours through social media communications. These drawbacks indicate the need for strategic oversight and policy development to mitigate the adverse impacts of social media on work-life balance and organisational productivity.

These dichotomous impacts resonate with existing literature that explores the complexities of social media adoption in organisational settings. Research showcases the necessity for a balanced approach that leverages the communicative and collaborative benefits of social media while instituting measures to curtail its potential disruptions to productivity and personal time (Munene & Nyaribo, 2013; Ayyash, 2022). The positive and negative impacts of social media adoption highlight DoI's relative advantage and compatibility factors, where social media enhances efficiency, collaboration, and cost-effectiveness but may clash with traditional productivity norms if misused. The need for oversight and policy to prevent misuse resonates with UGT's concept of goal-oriented media use, where employees require structured guidelines to leverage social media effectively while meeting productivity needs and maintaining work-life balance (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023; Hossain, 2019). The concerns about potential productivity decline and work-life boundaries reflects DoI's complexity attribute, indicating that managing social media's use requires a balanced approach to support organisational goals without detracting from employee well-being. Through such an in-depth understanding and implementation of social media policies, organisations can harness the positive attributes of these social media platforms while minimising their negative repercussions.

## 7.7 SUMMARY

This discussion chapter synthesised viewpoints from participants across three case study organisations, integrating these insights with existing literature to portray the multifaceted impacts of social media on organisational internal communication. Leveraging Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) frameworks, it highlighted the relative advantages of social media, including enhanced communication efficiency, stronger interpersonal relationships, and increased productivity. However, the chapter also detailed critical barriers to adoption noted by participants, such as the need for clear policy development, improved technological infrastructure, and the challenge of maintaining work-life balance.

Additionally, this chapter examined the varied perspectives on which organisational entities should lead the charge in social media integration, emphasising the critical roles of leadership, interdisciplinary cooperation and active employee participation. It advocates for the development of a context-specific framework to guide the adoption and effective use of social media for internal communication within Kenyan organisations. This proposed framework, which will be detailed in the subsequent chapter, outlines strategic approaches for fostering social media adoption and addresses potential challenges, recommending a holistic strategy that encompasses policy development, technological training and infrastructure enhancement.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION IN ORGANISATIONS**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter focused on discussing the analysed study findings, setting the stage for a critical evaluation of existing social media adoption frameworks within the context of organisational communication. This chapter aims to review these frameworks to extract insights and principles that could shape the development of a context-specific framework, tailored for adopting and effective use of social media for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

This chapter will further describe the proposed framework's validation, ensuring its relevance and applicability in enhancing social media adoption and utilisation specifically tailored for the internal communication of organisations operating within the Kenyan context. Recognising the distinctive challenges that Kenya faces, alongside other developing nations, such as infrastructural deficits, varying levels of literacy, governance issues and resource limitations, this study endeavours to develop a framework that not only addresses these unique obstacles, but also leverages local opportunities. The objective is to propose an approach that resonates with the specific realities of Kenyan organisations, informed by the understanding gleaned from the case studies explored. This effort acknowledges the pathway to integrating social media into the fabric of organisational communication in Kenya requires innovative thinking, sensitive to the local socio-economic and cultural landscape, aiming to offer practical, scalable solutions for enhancing internal communication and operational efficiency amidst the challenges.

#### **8.2 REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION FRAMEWORKS FOR ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

##### **8.2.1 The Social Strategy Cone**

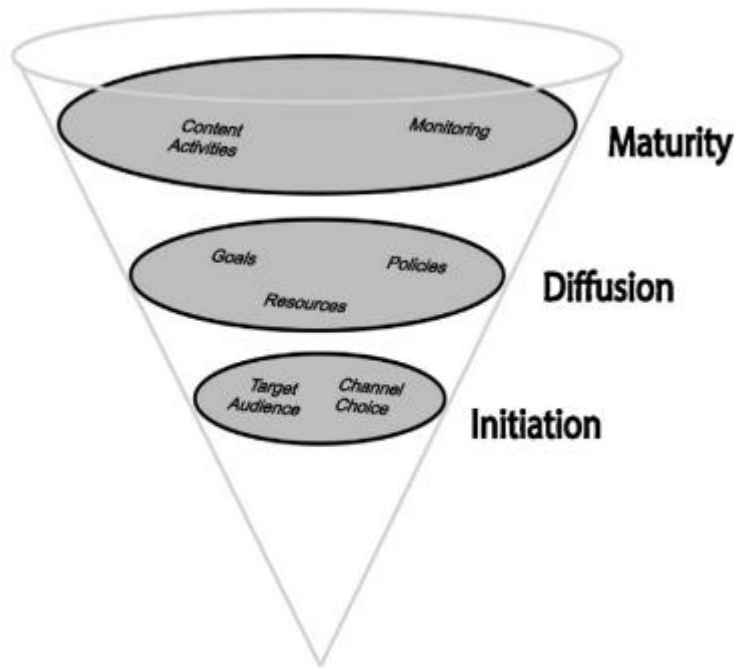
Effing and Spil (2016) present a novel framework designed to assess and guide the development of social media strategies within organisations. This framework, known as the Social Strategy Cone (Figure 12),

is underpinned by seven critical elements essential for a comprehensive approach to social media strategy. These elements were identified through a combination of systematic literature review and case study analysis, with further insights gathered from interviews across organisations at varying stages of social media strategy maturity. The elements include the identification of the target audience, choice of appropriate social media channels, establishment of clear goals, allocation of necessary resources, development of policies to guide social media use, monitoring of social media activity and the planning of content activities. These components are organised in a conical structure to represent the progression from foundational aspects of strategy, such as understanding the audience and selecting channels, to more advanced practices such as monitoring and content planning, reflecting an organisation's growth in social media strategy maturity.

The framework aligns with the principles of Diffusion of Innovation theory, illustrating how organisations adopt and integrate social media strategies over time. It depicts a journey from initial exploration and adoption to a more mature phase where social media is strategically managed and integrated into the broader organisational goals. This progression mirrors the stages of innovation diffusion, showcasing how organisations can navigate the complexities of adopting social media strategies effectively.

However, the framework is not without its limitations. It may not fully capture the dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms and trends, which can challenge the relevance of established strategies. Additionally, while it provides a structured approach to developing social media strategies, it might lack the depth required to address specific organisational needs and challenges, especially in persuading stakeholders of the value of social media adoption. The framework offers a high-level view on selecting platforms and strategic directions but may not provide detailed guidance on making informed decisions. Similarly, while it emphasises the importance of policies and resource allocation, it might fall short in offering practical insights into the formulation of policies and the development of necessary infrastructure. Finally, although monitoring and content activities are recognised as essential elements, the framework could place a greater emphasis on the importance of feedback, evaluation, and the continuous adaptation of strategies based on performance metrics and audience engagement.





**Figure 11: The Social Strategy Cone (Adapted from Effing & Spil, 2016)**

### 8.2.2 Model of social media use in Internal Communication Processes

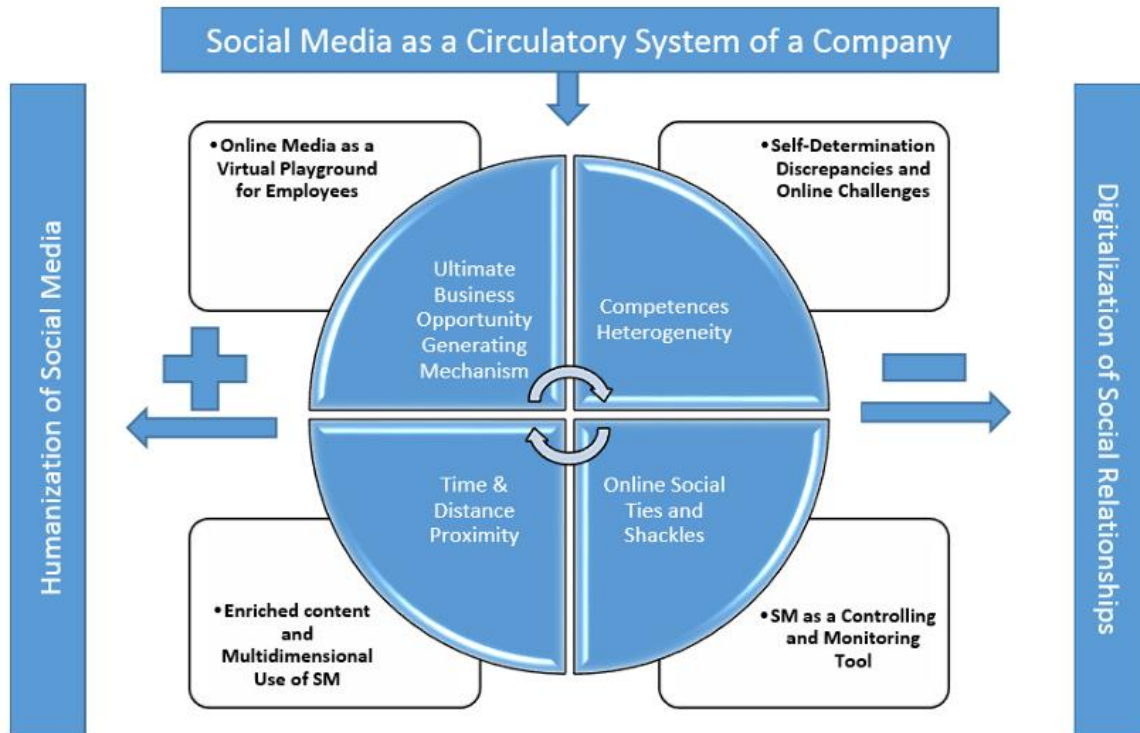
This model explores the use of social media in the context of internal communication and its subsequent effects on employees within an organisation. Drawing from grounded theory research, this model is a detailed representation of how social media acts as a transformative force in internal communication strategies, impacting various facets of organisational life and stakeholder engagement. At its core, the model is structured around intricate second-order themes and core categories, each playing a vital role in unpacking the multifaceted influence of social media (Figure 13).

The model's second-order themes, such as competence homogeneity, time and distance proximity and the creation of online social ties, depict the capabilities of social media. These themes highlight the power of social media to bridge gaps between employees, encourage a sense of community despite geographical distances and serve as a dynamic platform for content sharing and problem-solving. Moreover, themes such as social media as a controlling and monitoring tool, alongside its portrayal as a virtual playground, underline the versatility of social media platforms in professional settings - ranging from oversight mechanisms to spaces for informal employee interactions.

Central to the model are its core categories: viewing social media as the circulatory system of an organisation, the digitalisation of social relationships and the humanisation of social media. These categories conceptualise social media not only as a tool, but as an essential organisational lifeline that facilitates the seamless flow of information, digitises and enhances interpersonal connections and introduces a human element to digital interactions. This model situates social media as an indispensable component of modern internal communication strategies, capable of transforming traditional communication barriers into opportunities for engagement and innovation.

The model aligns with the principles of the Diffusion of Innovation theory, demonstrating the journey of social media from an innovative communication tool to a fundamental element within an organisation's communication ecosystem. It exemplifies how the characteristics of social media innovations such as their advantages, compatibility and observability may facilitate their adoption and integration into the fabric of corporate cultures. This alignment not only illustrates the model's theoretical relevance but also its practical relevance in guiding organisations through the processes of adopting and leveraging social media for internal communication.

One notable limitation of the model is its potential to overlook the constantly evolving landscape of digital communication. As digital platforms and technologies rapidly advance, the model in its current form may struggle to capture these dynamic shifts, potentially limiting its applicability and effectiveness in future contexts. Additionally, the model may encounter difficulties in articulating the specific needs and challenges associated with persuading organisational stakeholders of the benefits of social media adoption.



**Figure 12: Model of Social Media Use in Internal Communication Processes**  
 (Adapted from Ten, 2017)

### 8.2.3 Internal social media for organisational communication

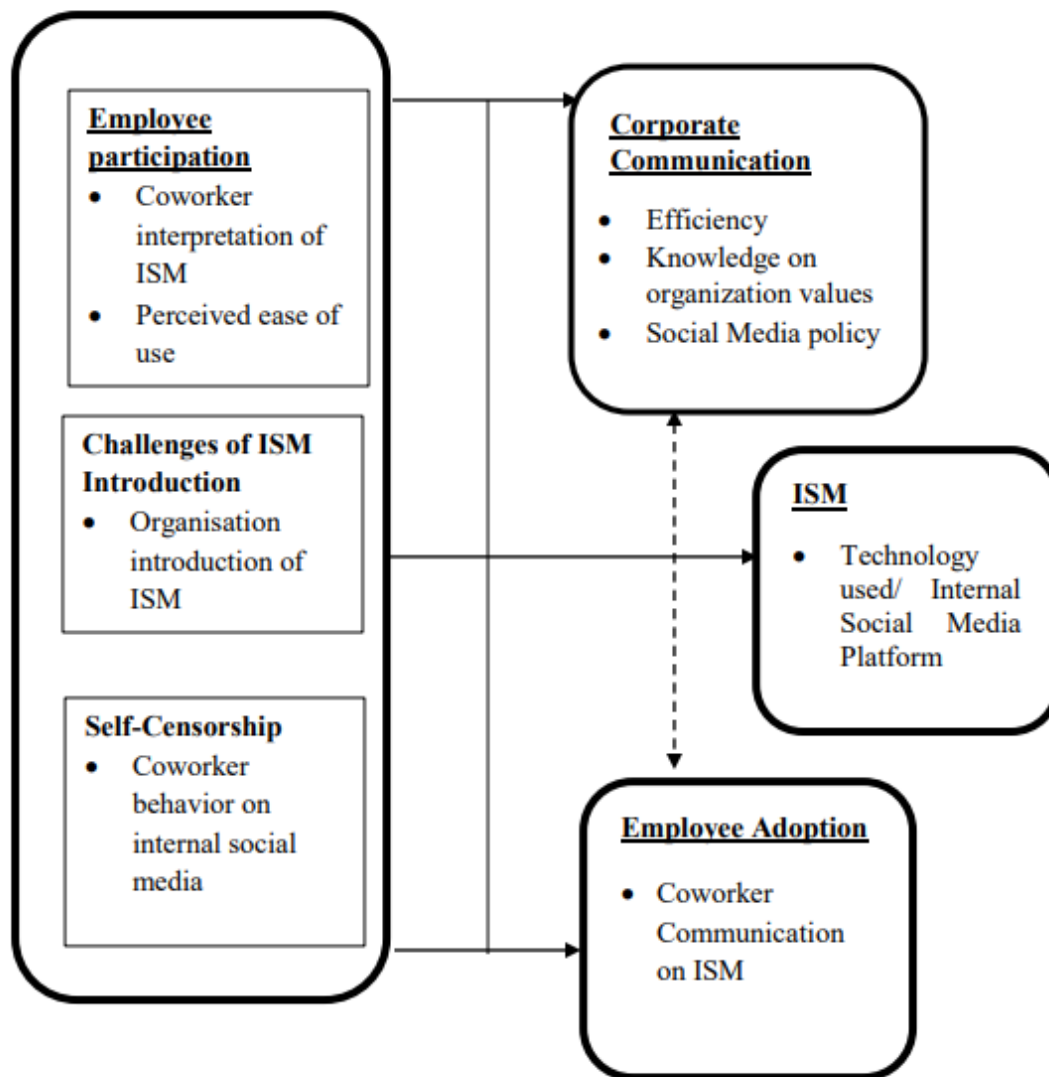
In this study on adopting and utilising internal social media within organisational communication, specifically examining the case of Facebook Workplace at KCB Group, the author explores the transformative impact of social media platforms in internal corporate dialogue. This investigation propounds a conceptual framework for integrating Internal Social Media (ISM) into an organisation's communication fabric, focusing on the central roles of employee engagement, technological underpinnings, corporate communication policies and the inherent challenges and behavioural patterns accompanying the introduction of ISM.

At the heart of this framework lies employee participation, where the success of ISM hinges on how employees perceive and engage with the platform. Their interaction is influenced by personal interpretations of ISM's purpose and the perceived ease of its use. To address the challenges of ISM introduction, the framework recognises that the organisational rollout of ISM can shape its acceptance, highlighting the need for thoughtful integration into the organisation's existing communications system. Self-censorship emerges as a critical element, acknowledging that employee behaviour on ISM is

tempered by concerns over privacy, appropriateness and potential repercussions, shaping the nature and authenticity of interactions. Alongside this, the corporate communication component of the framework seeks to ensure that the use of ISM aligns with the organisation's efficiency goals, embodies its core values and respects the boundaries set by its social media policies. In terms of technology, the framework acknowledges that the choice of technology used is vital, directly affecting the ease with which employees adopt these tools for daily communication. The end goal, as described by employee adoption, is to foster a culture where co-workers can freely and productively communicate through ISM, contributing to a more connected and informed workforce.

This framework parallels the Diffusion of Innovation theory, as it encapsulates the process through which ISM can be accepted and ingrained within the organisation culture. It postulates that the rate at which ISM is embraced can be accelerated by clear advantages over existing methods, ease of use and compatibility with current organisational values. Similarly, the framework's focus on the technological aspect of ISM reflects the importance of selecting the right tools that employees can test and learn to use without intimidation.

Some of the frameworks' limitations is that as much as it emphasises the significance of corporate communication policies, the framework may not adequately explore the processes of developing relevant policies and the necessary infrastructure to support a thriving ISM environment. Furthermore, it could place a greater emphasis on iterative feedback and ongoing evaluation to refine and adjust ISM strategies, ensuring they remain effective and relevant over time.



**Figure 13: Internal Social Media Conceptual Framework (Adapted from Murengu, 2019)**

### **8.3 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AND UTILISATION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

This chapter is dedicated to outlining the contributions of this study, specifically through the development of a structured framework designed to guide organisations in the successful adoption and utilisation of social media for internal communication. The framework serves as a roadmap, offering detailed steps for organisations to effectively integrate social media into their communication strategies. By adhering to this framework, organisations can maximise the benefits of social media, such as enhanced employee engagement, improved collaboration, and increased knowledge sharing

Leveraging insights from existing social media adoption frameworks and their alignment with the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the proposed framework offers a novel approach for improving social media adoption and use for internal communication within Kenyan organisations. It incorporates findings from case studies and aims to fill the gaps and address the limitations identified in the previously reviewed frameworks. The proposed framework for social media adoption and utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations comprises five key phases: *Comprehend*, *Characterise*, *Conceptualise*, *Mock-up* and *Evaluate*. These phases are examined within the context of real case study organisations, considering the unique insights drawn from findings from each organisation (**Figure 14**).

Importantly, this framework aligns specifically with distinct steps of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which typically unfold sequentially over time (Rogers 1983). The *Comprehend Phase* corresponds to “Knowledge”, where understanding the existing communication landscape is essential. The *Characterise Phase* mirrors “Persuasion”, as it involves articulating needs and challenges to persuade stakeholders of the social media adoption benefits. In the *Conceptualise Phase*, organisations make decisions about platforms and strategies, resembling the “Decision” stage. The *Mock-up Phase* aligns with “Implementation”, focusing on developing policies and infrastructure. Finally, the *Evaluate Phase*, alike to the “Confirmation” stage, emphasises feedback and evaluation. This framework's integration with Diffusion of Innovation Theory signifies its potential to facilitate effective social media adoption and utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

## **I. Comprehend Phase**

The framework emphasises understanding the existing landscape of social media usage within the organisation. This phase acknowledges that employees have varying familiarity levels with social media platforms, with a predominant use of WhatsApp and Slack for information sharing, meetings and communication among colleagues and supervisors. The key observation here is that social media is underutilised for day-to-day operations, despite its potential benefits such as enhancing work productivity through instant communication and quick access to information. It is crucial to recognise the existing circumstances to build a foundation for effective adoption. By thoroughly assessing an organisation's current methods of internal communication, this provides vital insights into the prevailing communication dynamics.

In the context of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI), the *Comprehend phase* corresponds to the first stage of "Knowledge." This phase encompasses understanding the current state of internal communication within the organisation, which aligns with the theory's emphasis on knowledge and awareness. Organisations seek to identify where they currently stand in terms of communication practices and recognise the existing technologies and methods being utilised. The link between this phase and the theory lies in recognising that before any innovation (in this case, adopting social media for internal communication) can diffuse throughout an organisation, there must be an understanding of the current situation. This phase acknowledges the importance of assessing the organisation's readiness and the potential adopters' awareness of the need for change. It sets the stage for subsequent phases by providing a knowledge foundation for decision-makers. For example, for commercial companies as evidenced in Case study A and B, possessing this understanding would enable them to recognise the need for enhanced communication tools to expedite decision-making and streamline collaboration. In Case study C, characterising higher education institutions, this first phase would determine where student-faculty interaction can be improved through centralised digital platforms. Understanding the landscape is the foundational step to realise the potential of social media adoption.

To enhance knowledge of social media among employees in this phase, organisations can conduct targeted training programs that focus on how specific platforms can benefit different departments. These workshops should be tailored to address the unique needs of various teams and ensure employees understand how different social media platforms can improve internal communication. In addition, creating awareness campaigns that emphasise the professional advantages of social media usage, such as increased collaboration and quicker decision-making, will help employees appreciate its relevance. Leveraging experienced employees as mentors or social media champions can also encourage a culture of peer learning, where less experienced staff learn from those more proficient with digital tools. However, organisations must address challenges such as ambiguity around platform definitions by providing clear guidelines and classifications of what constitutes a social media platform, ensuring clarity on the tools employees should focus on. Promoting continuous learning is also crucial, as social media platforms evolve rapidly, necessitating an ongoing education strategy.

## **II. Characterise Phase**

The framework identifies the benefits and challenges associated with adopting social media for internal communication. Benefits of adoption include enhanced productivity, improved co-worker relationships,

effective communication, timesaving, improved information sharing, flexibility, improved collaboration, employee engagement, transparency, cost-effectiveness and enhanced creativity. On the other hand, challenges include preferring traditional communication channels, difficulty of use, potential time wasting, privacy concerns, data security issues, dependency on the internet, bureaucratic hurdles, resistance to change, lack of smartphones among employees, unclear social media policies and resistance to technology adoption. Clearly outlining these benefits and challenges is critical for effective planning and strategy development regarding internal communication. Therefore, this phase involves convincing key decision makers of adopting social media benefits for improved internal communication. This aligns with DOI's focus on persuading potential adopters to accept the innovation. The nexus between this phase and the theory is evident in the process of identifying needs and challenges. Organisations must have a compelling case for change and demonstrate how adopting social media will address these needs and overcome challenges. The alignment of this phase with the Persuasion stage highlights the importance of convincing individuals and teams within the organisation about the benefits of social media adoption.

For commercial organisations such as Case study A and B, this phase highlights the critical need for efficient cross-functional communication and employee engagement, while recognising the challenge of overcoming resistance to new digital tools. In organisations exemplified by case study C, which is a higher education institution, the need to enhance interactive learning and streamline course materials becomes apparent, along with the challenge of ensuring data privacy during digital interactions. Identifying the benefits and challenges in adopting social media platforms for internal communication provides the roadmap to leverage the accessible platforms effectively.

In this phase, strategies to enhance the benefits of social media adoption for internal communication can be implemented by encouraging the broader adoption of various platforms across departments. Promoting tools such as Slack and WhatsApp, especially for remote teams, can enhance communication and collaboration. Integration with existing communication systems, such as email or video conferencing tools, will ensure effective transitions without redundancy. Encouraging the use of social media for collaborative tasks including brainstorming or project discussions will promote idea-sharing and enhance employee engagement. To address challenges, it is essential to tackle resistance to change through leadership reinforcement, showcasing success stories where teams have benefitted from these tools. Furthermore, offering digital etiquette training will help ensure that employees use social media



effectively and avoid distractions. Providing clear guidelines on appropriate use can help balance productivity with leisure, especially in platforms, which may otherwise cause time-wasting.

### **III. Conceptualise Phase**

This phase focuses on generating solutions and strategies to address the identified challenges and capitalise on the benefits. Strategies for adoption may include promoting flexible and user-friendly platforms, ensuring privacy, reliability and convenience, offering IT training and education on social media channels, establishing new internal communication strategies that integrate social media, providing necessary resources such as adequate internet bandwidth and gadgets, implementing clear policies on social media use and organising team-building retreats to encourage adoption. These strategies aim to create a supportive environment for successful integration of social media into internal communication.

The phase primarily involves deciding on the specific social media platforms to implement, creating policies and outlining the adoption strategy. This aligns with DOI's focus on the decision-making process that potential adopters undergo. The connection between this phase and the theory is the critical decision-making aspect. In both contexts, decision-makers must weigh the benefits, risks and costs associated with innovation adoption. They develop strategies that address these considerations and ensure a smooth adoption process. This alignment highlights the importance of strategic decision-making to facilitate social media adoption effectively. Organisations can strategise implementing unified communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams, recognising their potential to expedite decision-making and enhance collaboration. Training sessions and internal champions are considered as essential components to drive adoption. In higher education institutions depicted by Case study C, the focus shifts towards Learning Management Systems (LMS) to centralise course content and internal communication. Faculty development programs are designed to ensure educators are proficient in utilising the LMS for interactive teaching. The ideation phase is pivotal as it aligns strategies with the advantages offered by social media platforms.

To enhance the benefits of social media adoption in this phase, organisations should streamline communication flows by using social media to ensure transparency and faster decision-making processes. Encouraging interdepartmental collaboration through social platforms will promote innovation and knowledge sharing, leading to better overall communication. Highlighting successes, such as increased engagement or faster response times, will help demonstrate the tangible benefits of

social media adoption to sceptical employees. To address challenges such as privacy and security concerns, organisations may implement strong cybersecurity measures, ensuring that employees feel confident that their data, both personal and work-related, is secure. Developing clear usage policies will further mitigate concerns by setting boundaries for appropriate social media use in the workplace. Providing training on digital literacy will also ensure that employees can use the tools effectively, minimising the potential for distraction and addressing fears regarding the complexity of new platforms.

#### **IV. Mock-Up Phase**

In this phase, the framework recommends developing clear and concise policies regarding social media use that address privacy, security and appropriate use. It also suggests prototyping an internal platform that meets the organisation's specific needs for communication, collaboration and information sharing. Testing different platforms, such as Slack, WhatsApp and Teams, in small groups is recommended to assess their effectiveness, impact on productivity and user satisfaction. The *Mock-up phase* aligns with the DOI's "Implementation" stage. In this phase, organisations start putting their strategies into action by developing policies and infrastructure to support social media adoption. This corresponds to the theory's emphasis on the implementation of the innovation. The link between this phase and the theory is evident in the process of placing plans into practice. Organisations must establish the necessary policies and technology infrastructure to support adopting social media for internal communication. As adopters of an innovation must implement it effectively, organisations must ensure that their policies and infrastructure are ready for adoption.

For instance, drawn from Case study B, applicability of this phase would involve developing data security policies to safeguard sensitive information and prototyping unified communication platforms for testing. In higher education settings portrayed in Case study C, policies for faculty and student data protection are created and prototypes for LMS integration are initiated. These actions lay the foundation for successful social media adoption by ensuring that the necessary policies and technology infrastructure are in place, promoting both data security and user confidence for internal communication.

During the Mock-Up phase, organisations should ensure leadership involvement to actively champion social media adoption. This involvement will encourage employees to embrace the tools, as support by the top management has a significant influence on employee behaviour. Encouraging departmental champions who can act as advocates within teams will also enhance acceptance. By incorporating social

media into daily communication routines, organisations can ensure that it becomes an integral part of the workflow, rather than just an additional task. To address challenges, organisations can review and relax overly restrictive policies regarding social media use, as long as it does not disrupt productivity. Providing the necessary infrastructure, such as smartphones and reliable internet access, is essential to enable employees to effectively use these platforms. Offering incentives for successful adoption, such as recognition or career advancement opportunities, can motivate employees to fully engage with the tools.

## **V. Evaluate Phase**

In the final phase, the framework suggests rolling out the chosen platforms or policies in phases, starting with pilot departments or teams. Continuous monitoring and feedback collection are essential during this phase to evaluate the effectiveness of communication, productivity impact and user satisfaction. The organisation should be prepared to adjust policies and platform choices based on feedback from its employees to enhance adoption and address challenges facing internal communication. Organisations execute implementing unified communication platforms for internal communication, closely monitoring their impact on decision-making and collaboration. Feedback is actively sought to drive continuous improvement, and any resistance or challenges are addressed.

This corresponds to the DOI's focus on confirming the decision to adopt the innovation through feedback and evaluation. The link between this phase and the theory is in the confirmation process. Organisations seek confirmation that their social media adoption is effective, efficient and aligned with their goals. They do this by collecting feedback, assessing impact and adjusting as necessary. This alignment underscores the importance of ongoing evaluation and adaptation in both contexts. For example, in Case study C, higher education institutions fully integrate LMS platforms into their academic processes, tracking improvements in student-faculty communication and learning experiences. Faculty and student feedback is utilised to enhance the platform's functionality and associated policies. This iterative process of testing and refinement ensures that social media adoption for internal communication is not only effective but continually tailored to meet the evolving needs of its users.

In the final phase, organisations should continue to focus on leadership involvement, where top management regularly communicates the benefits of social media adoption and reinforces its importance in achieving organisational goals. Encouraging social media champions to share feedback and success

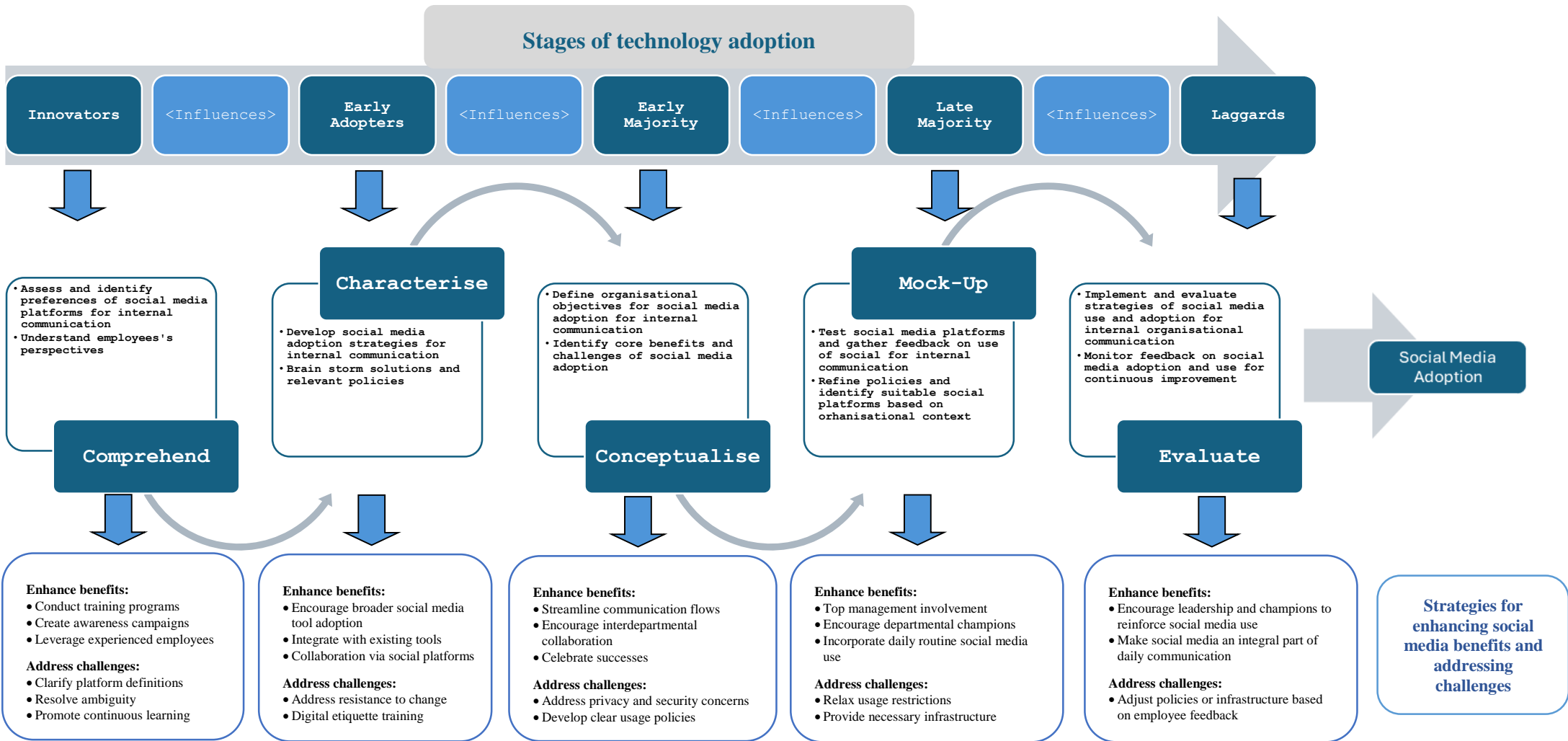
stories across departments can further encourage widespread adoption. To enhance the benefits, social media should become embedded in daily routines, making it the go-to tool for internal communication. To address challenges in this phase, organisations should provide continued training programs to ensure employees stay up-to-date with new tools and platforms. Adjustments to policies or infrastructure can be made based on feedback from employees, ensuring that the tools remain effective and accessible for all staff. As the organisation evolves, incentives for continued engagement with social media platforms can further motivate employees to remain proactive in adopting and using these tools effectively.

The interlinkage between the organisational framework for adopting social media and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory is illustrated through synchronising the framework's phases with the categories of adopters in the theory. The *Comprehend phase*, which seeks to understand employee perspectives, corresponds to the Innovators - those who are the first to embrace new ideas and can provide valuable insights due to their openness to new experiences. As the framework progresses to the *Characterise phase*, where objectives and the social media strategy are clarified, it aligns with the Early Adopters, who are influential in their networks and whose acceptance is crucial for further adoption within the organisation.

The *Conceptualise phase*, which involves identifying strategies for social media integration, coincides with the Early Majority group. These individuals adopt innovations once a fair amount of effectiveness evidence has been demonstrated by earlier adopters. Their cautious approach to adoption reflects the organisation's development and refinement of social media strategies. Subsequently, the *Mock-up phase* of the framework, where policies are tested and feedback is solicited, mirrors the Late Majority. The scepticism in this group and cautious nature makes them adopt new innovations after the average member of a social system. The iterative testing in the *Mock-up phase* is designed to address the concerns of this group and prove the viability of social media platforms within the organisation. Finally, the *Evaluate phase*, which involves broader implementation and evaluation of the strategies, is associated with Laggards, the last to adopt an innovation. At this point, the framework ensures strategies are accessible and beneficial even to the most change-resistant individuals, facilitating complete social media adoption for organisational internal communication.

In conclusion, this framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable, recognising the unique needs and challenges of each organisation. It leverages the benefits of social media while addressing potential drawbacks through strategic planning and iterative testing. The adoption process success will depend on

how well these phases are executed and how effectively the organisation responds to the evolving needs of its employees in the context of internal communication.



**Figure 14: Framework for social media adoption for internal communication**

## **8.4 VALIDATION OF THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AND UTILISATION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

The process of validating proposed frameworks is crucial in qualitative research, serving as a bridge between theoretical constructs and practical application, especially in organisational settings. This study employed expert validation, a method esteemed for its direct engagement with subject matter experts to assess the framework's viability and applicability (Jones, et al., 2012). Specifically, insights were solicited from three key informants with extensive work experience within the communication and public relations departments of the organisations being studied. Through semi-structured interviews, a rich qualitative dataset was compiled, offering in-depth perspectives that complement the existing literature on organisational communication and social media utilisation.

### **8.4.1 Understanding of the proposed framework**

Experts were in consensus that the framework was intuitively understandable, a quality that is paramount for effective organisational internal communication. They commended the use of straightforward and easy to understand terminology, which aligns with recommendations in the literature for creating accessible and implementable frameworks (Heide, 2014).

Expert X appreciated the clarity and simplicity, resonating with findings by Brown (2015), who emphasises the importance of comprehensibility in facilitating organisational change.

Expert X elaborated:

*“The framework is easily understood. You did not use complex terms. It is good”.*

Expert Y's observations regarding the framework's simplicity versus the complexity often found in similar tools echo the sentiments in the literature about the need for user-friendly frameworks that enhance rather than complicate communication processes (Nguyen, 2017).

Expert Y stated the following:

*“The framework can be understood easily. Some of the frameworks we come across as communication experts, we even have a difficult time trying to share with colleagues because they have such complex terms and diagrams and arrows pointing in each direction, this one is simple, and I believe can easily be understood by all colleagues”.*

Expert Z's comments on term relatability and clarity further underscore the literature's emphasis on using common language to ensure widespread understanding and adoption within organisations (O'Reilly & Binns, 2019).

Expert Z said the following:

*“For me, this framework is quite simple and can be easily understood by my peers. You have used terms that we can all relate to and so it is quite clear”.*

#### **8.4.2 Adaptability of the proposed framework**

The feedback on the framework's adaptability and ease of adoption within organisations underscores a critical aspect of framework design: practical applicability (Taylor, 2013).

Expert Y's admiration for its straightforwardness and absence of jargon aligns with literature that highlights the barriers posed by complex jargon in organisational settings (Leitch & Davenport, 2015).

Expert Y mentioned:

*“I would say that this framework looks simple and can easily be adopted in my organisation. I love that it doesn't have a lot of jargon so can be easily understood by everyone working here”.*

Expert X's confidence in the framework's potential to facilitate social media adoption mirrors research by Zhao, et al., (2016), which indicates the importance of clear, actionable strategies in successful technology integration in organisations.



Expert X also stated the following:

*“This framework is simple and straight to the point. I honestly believe if taken seriously, it can really help in social media adoption and further utilisation for internal communication in our company”.*

Expert Z's perspective on the framework's fit for banking institutions adds a sector-specific insight, reflecting the literature's call for adaptable and versatile frameworks that can be tailored to different organisational contexts (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016).

Expert Z mentioned the following:

*“The presented framework is something we can adopt as a bank. It presents clear structures which can be followed”.*

### **8.4.3 Limitations of the proposed framework**

The discussion of limitations predominantly focused on the challenges of implementation rather than conceptual flaws, a distinction that is well-documented in the literature (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Expert X's concerns about management resistance align with studies by Bridges (2017), which discuss organisational inertia as a common obstacle to adopting new frameworks. The expert mentioned that the only limitation he saw was pushing management to adapt the framework.

Expert Y's suggestion for awareness campaigns to bolster framework adoption echoes literature on the critical role of internal marketing in change management (Kotter, 1996).

Expert Y stated:

*“According to me, I will say this framework was well constructed. It is easy to follow, and I honestly don't see any flaw maybe just a bit of awareness campaigns among employees for them to know that such a framework is available which can help us in our internal communication”*

Expert Z's advocacy for managerial support and proactive adoption strategies is supported by research emphasising the importance of leadership in the successful implementation of organisational tools (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Expert Z had the following to say:

*“In my opinion I do believe this framework you have come up with makes a lot of sense. However, there is a need to make sure it is adopted. I will have to take up the initiative and follow up with the manager to make sure it is given a chance. I see it really helping us out with our communication”.*

## **8.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter embarked on an in-depth examination of existing frameworks guiding social media adoption within the context of organisational communication. It proceeded to detail the process of developing a context-specific framework aimed at enhancing adoption and effective usage of social media tools to improve internal communication within Kenyan organisations. The chapter then methodically describes the steps undertaken to validate this newly proposed framework, ensuring its relevance and applicability in enhancing social media adoption and utilisation specifically tailored for the internal communicative needs of organisations operating within the Kenyan context. By considering insights from seasoned experts along with relevant literature, this significantly reinforces the credibility and applicability of the framework. This chapter not only underlines the relevance of the framework in both theory and practice but also illuminates the crucial dynamics between theoretical insights, expert opinion and the practical realities faced by organisations. The approach ensures that the framework is well-positioned to address the specific needs and challenges related to social media utilisation in the Kenyan organisational context. The subsequent chapter focuses on summarising the key findings of this study, drawing conclusions from the research and offering recommendations aimed at facilitating the effective implementation and adoption of the proposed framework.

## CHAPTER NINE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter examined current social media adoption frameworks, where certain deficiencies were identified. These identified gaps necessitate the formulation of a new framework, as detailed in section 8.3. This chapter aims to summarise the key findings of the study, articulate the conclusions derived from the discussion of analysed findings and outline actionable recommendations for organisations. Additionally, it will identify potential opportunities for future research, suggesting how subsequent inquiries might build upon the groundwork laid by this study and address the evolving landscape of social media utilisation for internal communication within organisational contexts.

#### 9.2 SUMMARY

The next section will offer the study summary. The summary is provided in line with the study objectives.

##### 9.2.1 Knowledge of social media among employees in Kenyan organisations

The investigation into employees' comprehension of social media within a Kenyan organisation in Case Study A showcased a broad and varied understanding of its definition and the range of platforms recognised as social media. Participants generally agreed on social media being online platforms that facilitate content sharing (such as pictures and videos) and interactive communication without geographical constraints. This understanding extends to recognising social media as a tool for rapid communication, with expectations of swift feedback and a particularly popular medium among millennials for staying connected with peers. Additionally, there was a clear awareness of several social media platforms among the participants, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Slack, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat. However, there was some ambiguity regarding the classification of certain social media platforms, with YouTube being a frequent subject of confusion. This uncertainty underlines a broader question among participants about what precisely constitutes a social media platform. Despite

these distinct differences, the fundamental acknowledgment across discussions was the significant role of social media in facilitating global, instantaneous communication and content exchange, highlighting its pervasive influence and the varied perspectives employees hold towards it.

In Case Study B, examining social media knowledge among employees revealed a sound understanding of both the concept and the variety of platforms available. Participants effectively described social media as digital environments that facilitate communication, interaction and content sharing, highlighting the role of these platforms in connecting individuals socially across the internet. This consensus underscores recognising social media's significance in contemporary digital communication and its integration into the fabric of new age media. Moreover, there was a broad awareness of several social media platforms among the study's participants, with frequent mentions of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. This indicates not only familiarity with the most popular platforms but also an understanding of the diverse purposes these platforms serve, from social interaction to professional collaboration. The inclusion of platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams alongside traditional social networks such as Facebook and Instagram suggest a social media perception as encompassing a wide range of online communication tools that provide quick feedback and facilitate collaboration.

Exploring the understanding of social media among employees in Case Study C revealed a consistent comprehension of social media's essence and its diverse platforms. Participants uniformly described social media as online tools or applications designed for social interactions, communication and the modern-day exchange of information. This understanding extends beyond mere communication, with emphasis on social media's role in content creation, sharing and social networking. These descriptions reflect an appreciation of social media as multifaceted platforms that cater for various forms of digital interaction, from personal communication to professional collaboration and content dissemination. The case study also highlighted a widespread awareness of a range of social media platforms among participants, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. This awareness indicates not only familiarity with traditional social networking sites but also understanding platforms that have gained prominence for professional use, particularly in the context of the pandemic. Notably, participants expressed opinions about the platforms, such as concerns over the dynamics of Twitter interactions, illustrating a critical engagement with social media beyond its functional use.

### **9.2.2 Employee utilisation of social media channels for internal communication in Kenyan organisations**

Exploring social media channels for internal communication in Kenyan organisations, specifically focusing on Case Study A, revealed that Slack emerged as the predominant platform employees utilised. This preference highlights Slack's suitability for various communication needs within the organisation, including information sharing, meeting conduct and general colleague interactions. Despite the widespread use of Slack, a segment of the workforce still favoured traditional communication methods, such as emails and phone calls, particularly in departments where Slack adoption was not as prevalent. Participants valued Slack for its flexibility, privacy, user control and the ability to integrate seamlessly with other platforms, for example Google accounts. Its features, such as video calls, screen sharing and the capacity to host large groups, were highlighted as reasons for its preference over other communication tools. Additionally, Slack's user-friendly interface and accessibility were noted as factors contributing to its universal acceptance within the organisation. Regarding social media's influence on work productivity, opinions were divided. While the majority viewed social media, particularly Slack, as enhancing productivity through facilitating quick communication and problem-solving, some expressed concerns about potential distractions leading to decreased productivity, especially with platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Despite the integration of social media into workplace communication, traditional channels remain prevalent. Emails and internal memos were still widely used for official communications, indicating a blended approach to internal communication that combines both modern and conventional methods.

In Case Study B, exploring social media use for internal communication within a Kenyan organisation revealed a distinctive landscape where WhatsApp stands out as the primary platform utilised by employees. Despite this focus on WhatsApp, a notable portion of the workforce either did not engage with social media for internal communication or expressed a preference for more traditional methods such as emails and face-to-face meetings. WhatsApp was primarily used for sharing memos, security notifications and facilitating communication between colleagues and immediate supervisors, although less frequently with top management. The case study demonstrated a consensus among participants that social media, particularly WhatsApp, is underutilised within the organisation. Most participants believed that incorporating a wider range of social media tools could enhance internal communication, especially for employees working in the field or those seeking more interactive and immediate communication methods. Despite recognising the potential benefits of increased social media use, such as improved

speed and efficiency of communication, concerns were raised about the balance between productivity and distraction. Some participants highlighted the risk of social media diverting attention from work tasks, identifying the need for policies to govern its use. Participants' preference for WhatsApp over other platforms was attributed to several factors, including privacy, reliability, user-friendliness and affordability. The emphasis on privacy and security reflects a broader concern with safeguarding sensitive information in professional communications. Additionally, the convenience and ease of access to WhatsApp on mobile devices were highlighted as significant advantages, facilitating timely and flexible communication among employees. While social media, particularly WhatsApp, is seen as a positive force for enhancing work productivity through faster communication and quicker feedback, the reliance on traditional communication channels remains strong. Emails, memos, telephone calls and physical meetings continue to play a crucial role in the organisation's communication strategy, suggesting a blended approach that combines the immediacy of social media with the formality and structure of traditional methods.

Findings from Case Study C portrayed a similar picture of social adoption and preference. While a fraction of employees reported using platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook for internal purposes, the significant majority expressed a reliance on traditional communication methods such as emails, calls and physical meetings. This reliance suggests a cautious approach towards integrating social media into formal communication channels, with a preference for established methods. The application of social media, where utilised, primarily supported departmental communications, sharing ideas and coordinating tasks. Despite this, the overall sentiment indicated that daily social media platforms were underutilised for internal communication. Reasons cited for this underutilisation included an adoption lack across departments, a preference for traditional communication methods by senior staff and a nascent culture of social media use within organisational communication frameworks. Participants highlighted several advantages of social media use, such as ease of use, cost-effectiveness and the ability to quickly share information and receive feedback. However, concerns about data consumption and privacy influenced the preference for certain platforms over others, with WhatsApp being notably favoured for its simplicity, affordability and low bandwidth requirements. Opinions of social media's impact on work productivity were mixed. Some employees saw potential benefits in reducing the need for face-to-face interactions, thereby saving time and possibly enhancing productivity. Others were sceptical or noted that the impact was minimal, citing a lack of significant adoption or relevance to their specific departmental needs. A few participants acknowledged that while social media could improve communication efficiency, its use for personal purposes could detract from productivity.

### **9.2.3 Employee perceptions of the benefits and challenges of social media adoption for internal communication in Kenyan organisations**

In context of Case Study, A, examining employee perceptions on adopting social media for internal communication within Kenyan organisations highlighted an optimal understanding of its benefits and challenges. Employees recognised a range of advantages associated with social media use, including enhanced productivity, improved co-worker relationships, effective and instant communication, time-saving, easy information sharing, environmental friendliness and increased flexibility and employee engagement. The interactive nature of social media platforms facilitates quicker feedback, ensuring timely dissemination of information which, in turn, keeps the entire organisation informed and up to date. Moreover, the shift towards paperless communication is seen as both an environmental benefit and a step towards operational efficiency. However, alongside these perceived benefits, employees identified significant challenges hindering the full-scale adoption of social media for internal purposes. Among these were a prevailing preference for traditional communication methods, the perceived complexity and potential distraction associated with social media platforms, concerns over privacy and confidentiality, data security issues and the reliance on internet connectivity which could incur additional costs for the organisation. Furthermore, the training need to effectively utilise social media platforms depicted a potential gap in digital literacy within the workforce.

In Case Study B, participants acknowledged several advantages of utilising social media platforms, including increased transparency, faster and more efficient communication, cost-effectiveness, improved work productivity, enhanced interpersonal relationships among colleagues, boosted creativity and the user-friendly nature of these platforms. The ability of social media to facilitate real-time communication and instant feedback was particularly valued for its impact on operational efficiency and promoting a more connected work environment. However, the study also highlighted significant challenges that could hinder the effective adoption of social media for internal communication purposes. Key concerns raised by employees included information security risks, bureaucratic resistance from management, age-related and resistance to change among older colleagues, internet bandwidth limitations, privacy issues, network reliability and the lack of access to smartphones for some employees. Bureaucratic hesitancy and the perception that social media might disrupt work productivity were seen as organisational obstacles, while age and resistance to change underscored the need for training and sensitisation to facilitate wider acceptance among staff. Privacy and security concerns, particularly in

relation to the handling of confidential client information, emerged as critical considerations, necessitating measures to protect sensitive data. Additionally, technological barriers such as internet connectivity and the availability of smartphones were identified as practical challenges that could limit the accessibility and effectiveness of social media tools for some employees, especially when attempting to engage with these platforms outside the office environment. Despite recognising the potential benefits, these challenges highlight the complexities involved in integrating social media into existing communication frameworks within organisations.

Case Study C provided insightful perspectives with employees recognising several advantages of utilising social media platforms, including their cost-effectiveness, ease of use and facilitating effective communication. These platforms were seen as instrumental in enhancing information sharing, improving interpersonal relationships, fostering stronger employee engagement and supporting knowledge management. Participants appreciated the speed and efficiency of social media, highlighting its relevance in enhancing quick feedback loops and reducing the need for physical meetings, thereby aligning with health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. The versatility and user-friendliness of these platforms were also noted, along with their potential to introduce a more dynamic and instant communication culture within the workplace. However, the transition to social media-driven internal communication is not without its hurdles. Key challenges identified by employees included the absence of clear usage policies from management, limited access to necessary technology (such as smartphones) and internet connectivity issues. Resistance to technology adoption, particularly among older employees, emerged as a significant barrier, alongside concerns about confidentiality and the potential for social media to detract from work productivity due to personal use. The impermanence of digital communication compared to traditional documentation was also mentioned, indicating a need for a hybrid approach to record-keeping and information sharing.

#### **9.2.4 Strategies for addressing barriers to social media adoption and use for internal communication in Kenyan organisations**

The study proposes a framework to enhance social media adoption and utilisation for internal communication within Kenyan organisations. However, lessons drawn from framework development and validation indicated a need to understand the people responsible for initiating social media adoption, identifying strategies to overcome barriers for use of social media and the anticipated impact of social media adoption and use for internal communication. The consensus among participants in Case Study



A highlighted the need for the proposed framework to emphasise the role of top management to lead the adoption and utilisation of social media. This leadership involvement is viewed as critical, making it easier for subordinate compliance and the overall acceptance of new communication tools within the organisation. However, some participants believed that the responsibility should be collective, encouraging every member within the organisation to champion this digital transition.

To address social media adoption barriers, participants suggested various strategies including relaxing stringent social media usage rules, providing IT training, education on the use of social media channels, establishing inclusive internal communication strategies that incorporate social media, ensuring adequate internet bandwidth and providing necessary gadgets such as smartphones. The importance of less restrictive rules, comprehensive internal communication strategies and leadership acting as adoption ambassadors were emphasised. Additionally, IT training emerged as a crucial step toward ensuring all employees are well-versed with social media platforms. The impact of social media adoption on internal communication was largely perceived as positive, with anticipated benefits such as faster and more effective communication, improved time management, enhanced knowledge management and stronger team collaboration. Participants expected that social media would facilitate instant information sharing, reduce the reliance on emails and support remote collaboration, especially significant during the COVID-19 pandemic. Introducing social media is seen as a catalyst for enabling a more dynamic and interactive communication environment, promoting efficiency and enhancing interpersonal connections across departments. However, a potential downside identified was the blurring of work-life boundaries, with the possibility of work-related communication encroaching on personal time due to the ubiquitous nature of social media.

Case Study B's exploring into the proposed framework to enhance social media utilisation for internal communication in organisations revealed multifaceted insights into potential initiators, strategies to overcome adoption barriers and the anticipated impacts of social media on internal communication. There was varied opinions on who should lead the charge towards adopting social media, with suggestions ranging from specific departments such as Public Relations and Information Communication Technology to Human Resources. Nonetheless, a prevailing sentiment among participants was that top management leadership is crucial, advocating for a top-down approach in policy formulation and implementation to encourage social media adoption for internal communication. This leadership is deemed necessary for setting the tone and direction, ensuring organisational alignment and fostering a culture that embraces communication digital tools. To address social media adoption barriers,

participants identified several strategic measures including the relaxation of stringent rules on technology use, enhancing cybersecurity measures and improving organisational support through technology investments such as purchasing smartphones and laptops and providing adequate internet bandwidth. This was a shared feeling on strategic measures similar to participants in Case Study A. Encouraging the use of social media, easing management restrictions, offering incentives for adoption, conducting targeted training, establishing clear policies and organising team-building activities were highlighted as essential strategies to foster a conducive environment for social media integration into internal communication processes. The anticipated impact of social media adoption on internal communication was predominantly viewed positively, with expectations of faster, more efficient communication, cost savings, environmental benefits and improved interpersonal relationships among colleagues. However, concerns were raised about potential drawbacks such as the challenge of regulating platform use to prevent personal distractions during work hours, privacy and data security, especially in sensitive sectors such as banking.

In Case Study C, there were diverse opinions on who should spearhead social media adoption, with suggestions ranging from individual staff members to management and the Human Resources Department. A common thread among these opinions is the call for collective responsibility, emphasising the need for management leadership and department heads to set the tone for adoption, supported by a willing and adaptive workforce at all levels. This approach suggests a top-down initiative complemented by bottom-up engagement and readiness to embrace new technologies for communication, depicting a consensus among participants on this aspect similar to Case Study B. To tackle social media adoption barriers, participants proposed several practical strategies, including enhancing internet connectivity, providing necessary technological devices such as smartphones and computers, conducting staff training, ensuring open access to social media sites by the IT department and formulating clear policies on social media use. These strategies highlight the infrastructural support importance, educational initiatives to build digital literacy and policy frameworks to guide the effective and responsible use of social media within organisational communication. The impact of social media adoption on internal communication is largely viewed positively, with anticipated benefits including improved interpersonal relationships, instant and more efficient communication, increased work productivity, healthier employee engagement and more cost-effective communication methods. These advantages point to social media's potential to revolutionise internal communication, pushing for a more connected, dynamic and responsive organisational environment. However, similarly to the other case studies, concerns were raised about possible negative impacts, such as disrupting work-life boundaries leading

to potential overreach into personal time and the distraction posed by the entertainment aspects of social media, which could detract from work focus.

### **9.3 CONCLUSION**

The study revealed a sound understanding of social media within Kenyan organisations, demonstrating that employees recognise the multifaceted nature of social media platforms as tools for communication, interaction and information exchange. There is a consensus on the definition of social media as online platforms facilitating content sharing and interactive communication without geographical constraints, extending to professional and personal spheres. The study highlighted a broad awareness and utilisation of a diverse range of platforms, from well-established social networks including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to professional collaboration tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. This broad awareness suggests a comprehensive grasp of social media's potential to enhance both internal and external communications, bridging the gap between traditional and digital communication methodologies.

Despite the general agreement on the value and functionality of social media, there exists some ambiguity regarding the classification of certain platforms and a curiosity about the evolving landscape of digital communication tools. This reflects a broader conversation about what constitutes a social media platform, highlighting the need for ongoing education and clarity in the digital era. Employees' engagement with social media goes beyond mere recognition, expressing critical opinions on platform dynamics and the implications for professionals and impact on work communication practices. The case studies showcased the integral role of social media in modern organisational communication, emphasising its effectiveness in fostering global, instantaneous interactions and its adaptability for various communication needs. The recognition of social media's importance across different levels of the organisation, coupled with a clear understanding and acceptance of a wide range of platforms, illustrates its potential to significantly enhance communication efficiency, collaboration and engagement within the Kenyan organisations. Addressing existing ambiguities and promoting digital literacy among all employees could further maximise social media's benefits for internal communication, ensuring its strategic utilisation aligns with organisational goals and culture.

Examining digital communication tool adoption within organisations reveals a clear trajectory towards embracing social media and other online platforms to enhance internal communication and operational efficiency. This shift demonstrates an evolving preference for tools that facilitate comprehensive

collaboration features, yet it also underlines a sustained commitment to traditional communication methods. Such a trend suggests the necessity for developing a communication strategy that harmoniously blends both digital and conventional means, catering to the varied preferences and functional needs across the organisation. Acknowledging social media's capacity to augment internal communication and organisational productivity is evident. However, there is a need for a balanced approach towards its full-scale integration. Organisations should attempt to navigate the advantages offered by the immediacy and easy access characteristic of social media while simultaneously addressing concerns related to privacy, data security and maintaining overall productivity. This careful consideration reveals the complex balance organisations must strike between leveraging emerging digital tools and safeguarding against potential drawbacks.

Despite the recognised benefits of adopting social media for enhanced communication, a notable reliance on established communication practices persists, indicating the importance of adopting a careful approach towards change or a perceived insufficient value in completely integrating social media into organisational communication frameworks. This study illustrates the complex dynamics at play between the push for innovation and the pull of tradition within organisational communication frameworks. Therefore, achieving digital transformation in communication within organisations calls for a strategic, inclusive approach that incorporates the traditional communication methods while exploring the potential of adopting social media advancements.

The sentiments expressed by the participants in Case Study A suggest a dichotomy in the perception of social media's role in internal communication. On the one hand, its potential to streamline communication, foster a more collaborative work culture and enhance operational efficiency is clearly acknowledged. On the other hand, apprehensions about its practical implementation, the risk to data security and the impact on productivity due to potential misuse or over-reliance on digital communication present substantial barriers to its unreserved acceptance. This complex interplay between the perceived benefits and challenges reflects the broader conversation surrounding digital transformation in organisational communication, emphasising the need for a balanced approach that leverages the advantages of social media while mitigating its drawbacks through strategic implementation and comprehensive training programs. While the adoption of social media for internal communication is viewed positively by Case Study B's employees for its potential to enhance operational efficiency, foster a more collaborative and engaging work culture and streamline information sharing, the implementation faces several hurdles.

Overcoming these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that addresses technological, organisational and human factors to fully harness the advantages of social media in enhancing internal communication within Kenyan organisations. The findings from Case Study C emphasised the dual-edged nature of social media adoption in organisational settings. While the benefits suggest a promising opportunity to revolutionise internal communication, rendering it more interactive, immediate and accessible, the challenges call for a careful, strategic approach. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policies, technological infrastructure improvements and change management strategies accommodating the diverse needs and preferences of the workforce. Ultimately, the successful integration of social media into internal communication practices hinges on balancing these innovative tools' efficiency and engagement potential with the practical considerations of security, accessibility and productivity.

In summary, the three distinct case studies underline social media's potential to transform internal communication within Kenyan organisations positively. With management's proactive role in spearheading this change, alongside strategic measures to mitigate adoption barriers, social media stands to offer a platform for more instantaneous, collaborative and engaging communication. Crucially, the proposed framework advocates for a top-down adoption approach, emphasising the role of management and department heads in spearheading this digital shift, while simultaneously recognising the collective responsibility resting on all organisational members to embrace and champion these changes. The study illustrates the potential of social media to transform internal communication within Kenyan organisations hinged on strategic leadership, supportive policies, targeted training and technological investments, alongside measures to safeguard against misuse and ensure data security. The balanced approach aims to maximise social media benefits for internal communication while addressing the challenges that could impede its effective adoption and utilisation. Achieving the benefits of social media adoption requires a concerted effort from all organisational levels, from management to individual employees, alongside strategic measures to overcome technical, educational and policy-related barriers. Ultimately, the proposed framework accentuates the importance of evaluating the impact of social media adoption on internal communication, productivity and employee engagement. This will ensure that the integration of social media platforms dovetails with organisational objectives and employee preferences. Overall, while social media platforms offer promising avenues for enhancing internal communication, successful integration requires careful management to fully leverage benefits while mitigating associated risks.

## **9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social media's effective integration into organisational communication strategies requires careful planning, thoughtful implementation and ongoing evaluation. The following recommendations are structured to guide organisations through the immediate, mid-term and long-term actions necessary to harness social media's benefits for internal communication. These recommendations aim to address the development of clear policies, leadership involvement, balanced communication strategies, security measures, digital literacy, technological infrastructure investment and the promotion of open communication cultures.

### **9.4.1 Immediate actions**

- Organisations should develop clear and comprehensive policies regarding social media use for internal communication. These policies should outline acceptable use, data security measures, content guidelines and the distinction between professional and personal use.
- Encourage management and department heads to lead by example in the adoption and use of social media for internal communication. Their active participation can signal organisational commitment to these tools and inspire wider adoption of social media for internal communication.
- Designing a balanced communication strategy that incorporates both digital and traditional methods to address diverse employee preferences.
- Prioritise security protocol enhancement for digital platforms and establish clear, communicated guidelines on their use to ensure organisational integrity and set clear expectations within the organisation.

### **9.4.2 Mid-term actions**

- Implement organisation-wide digital literacy and training programs to ensure all employees, regardless of their age or technological proficiency, are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively utilise social media platforms. This includes understanding the functionalities of various platforms and best practices for digital communication.
- Invest in the necessary technological infrastructure, such as reliable internet connectivity and access to smartphones or computers, to facilitate seamless access to social media platforms.

- Promote a culture that values open and transparent communication, encouraging the use of social media as a platform for sharing ideas, feedback and information. This involves creating an environment where employees feel comfortable and empowered to communicate through these channels.

### **9.4.3 Long-term actions**

- Recognise and leverage the diverse functionalities of different social media platforms to meet specific organisational communication needs. This might involve using platforms such as Slack or Microsoft Teams for project collaboration and WhatsApp for quick updates or announcements.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of social media on internal communication and overall organisational productivity. This should include gathering feedback from employees on the effectiveness of these tools and adjusting as necessary to improve their utilisation.
- Develop guidelines to respect employees' personal time and prevent the encroachment of work communications into non-working hours. This is crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance and ensuring that the benefits of social media use do not become a source of stress or burnout.
- Establish ongoing mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and impact of digital communication tools on organisational productivity and employee satisfaction. This is a continuous process that should adapt and evolve over time.
- Invest in long-term initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy across the organisations. This includes continuous learning opportunities and staying updated with technological advancements.

### **9.4.4 Recommendations for future research**

Future research should explore the complex relationship between organisational culture and the adoption of social media for internal communication, aiming to uncover how cultural norms and values either support or impede this digital shift. Longitudinal studies would be crucial to gauge the enduring effects of social media integration on organisational productivity, employee satisfaction and communication efficacy, providing a comprehensive view of the sustained impact over time. A comparative analysis across various sectors within Kenya would illuminate the unique challenges and opportunities that different organisational types face in leveraging social media, highlighting sector-specific adaptation strategies. Moreover, investigating the aspects of technological affordability and accessibility,

particularly in settings with limited resources, could offer valuable insights into expanding access to social media for all organisational members. The development, enactment and evaluation of clear policies on social media usage within organisations warrant thorough exploration, with a focus on developing guidelines that balance productivity enhancement, privacy protection and the maintenance of work-life harmony. Assessing the effectiveness of digital literacy and training initiatives in enhancing employee proficiency with social media for professional purposes is another vital area of inquiry, identifying best practices in training program design and implementation. Lastly, understanding the impact of social media on work-life balance is essential, as it would provide strategies to mitigate any adverse effects while maximising the benefits of enhanced communication and productivity. Together, these future research directions offer a multifaceted approach to further understand social media's role in transforming internal communication practices within the modern organisational landscape.

## **9.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Executing this study was subject to a couple of limitations that warrant acknowledgment. Initially, the temporal context of the study coincided with the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impeded the data collection process. The restrictions imposed during the pandemic necessitated the implementation of safety protocols to safeguard the health and well-being of the participants. These measures included the provision of face masks and the strict adherence to social distancing guidelines during in-person interviews, thereby introducing logistical complexities and potential limitations to participant interactions. Furthermore, financial limitations were encountered, stemming from the necessity of travel across major urban centres to conduct data collection. This logistical aspect imposed additional constraints on the research, limiting the scope of data gathering efforts and potentially influencing the diversity and representativeness of the participant sample.

Lastly, the qualitative nature of this study introduces limitations regarding the generalisability of its findings. Given the exploratory and interpretative approach inherent to qualitative research, the insights derived from this study are context-specific and may not be universally applicable to all organisations within Kenya. This qualitative inquiry characteristic, while offering an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, restricts the extent to which the findings can be extrapolated to the broader organisational landscape.



These limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation of the study's findings and suggest avenues for future research that may address these constraints. Subsequent investigations could benefit from employing mixed methods approaches to enhance the generalisability of the findings and integrating digital data collection methodologies to navigate logistical challenges posed by unforeseen global events.

## **9.6 SUMMARY**

The concluding chapter synthesises the study's insights into social media adoption within organisational contexts, addressing observed gaps through a proposed novel framework. This chapter recaps the study's significant findings, draws conclusions based on the analyses and provides actionable recommendations for both organisational application and future scholarly inquiry. The chapter summarises employees' comprehension and utilisation of social media across various Kenyan organisations, highlighting a broad recognition of social media's role in enhancing interactive communication and content sharing, despite some ambiguity around the categorisation of certain platforms. The discourse reveals a dual approach to internal communication, where traditional methods persist alongside emerging digital platforms, highlighting the need for strategic integration of social media to enhance operational efficiency and employee connectivity. The recommendations delineate immediate, mid-term and long-term strategies aimed at fostering a digital-friendly organisational culture that leverages the benefits of social media while addressing potential challenges related to privacy, security and work-life balance. The chapter culminates in suggesting opportunities for future research, emphasising exploring the impact of organisational culture on social media adoption, the sustainability of its benefits and the effectiveness of digital literacy programs, among others, to provide an in-depth understanding of the evolving role of social media in organisational internal communication.

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# APPENDICES

## I. SEMI-STRUCTURED FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<b>Company name:</b>	<b>Participant ID:</b>
<b>1. What is your gender?</b>	
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. How old are you?</b>	
20-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
>51	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. What is your highest educational qualification?</b>	
A level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Masters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doctoral	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. What is your job title?**

**5. How long have you worked in this organisation?**

Less than a year

1-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

>21

**6. Which department do you work in?**

Accounting

Administration

Communication/Public Relations

Finance

Health services

Human Resources

Legal services

Management

Marketing/Advertising

**KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

7. What is your definition of social media?
8. What types of social media are you aware of?

**UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

9. Which social media are you using for internal communication in your organisation?
10. How have you recently used social media platforms for internal communication in your current department?
11. What are the reasons one social media platform is preferred to another for internal communication in your organisation?
12. How do you seek information about use of social media for internal communication within your organisation? Please explain.
13. In your own opinion, do you think use of social media for internal communication in your organisation influences work productivity? Please explain.
14. Do you think social media platforms are being used enough on a day-to-day basis for internal communication in your company? Please explain.
15. What role do you play to facilitate utilisation of social media for internal communication in this organisation? Please explain.
16. Which other channels of communication do you utilise for internal communication?

**EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS ON THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

17. What are your perceptions on the benefits of adopting social media for internal communication in your organisation?
18. What are your perceptions on the barriers of adopting social media for internal communication in your organisation?
19. What can be done to improve adoption and use of social media for internal communication in this organisation?

**STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AND USE FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS**

20. In your own view, who do you think should initiate and facilitate adoption of social media for internal communication in this organisation? Please explain.

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 21. | Are you aware of any actions/activities that could have influenced increased adoption of social media for internal communication in this organisation? Please explain. |
| 22. | What strategies could address barriers for adoption of social media for internal communication in this organisation? Please explain.                                   |
| 23. | Have you had any personal involvement in activities to enhance adoption of social media for internal communication in this organisation? Please explain.               |
| 24. | What impact do you think adoption of social media will have on the internal communication processes in this organisation? Please explain.                              |

## II. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

1.	How can you define social media?
2.	What types of social media are you aware of?
3.	How often do you use social media for internal communication in your organisation?
4.	Tell me about positive experiences you've had when using social media for internal communication within your organisation?
5.	Tell me about disappointments you've had with using social media for internal communication within your organisation?
6.	What strategies do you think can be used to improve the adoption and use of social media for internal communication within your organisation?
7.	Is there anything else you would like to add on this topic?

### **III. CONSENT FORM**

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Date: **To be determined.**

Title: **An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.**

#### **Dear Prospective Participant**

My name is Faith Moraa Omayo and I am doing research with Blessing Thuthuka Mbatha, a professor, in the Department of Communication Science towards a Doctoral degree at the University of South Africa. We have funding from the University of South Africa for the completion of this research study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could aid organisations in improving their internal communication.

#### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

I chose you to participate in the study as I felt that you will provide the much-needed information to inform the study at hand. I obtained your contact details from the company records and as such all information you provide me with will remain confidential.

#### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves both semi-structured face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. I will audio tape the interviews to aid in transcription at a further analysis stage. The interview questions will not pose any risk to you and the whole session will not take more than an hour of your time.

## **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

## **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

This study will improve your understanding of social media and how they can be used in organisations to aid in internal communication.

## **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The only inconvenience I foresee is that the interview session might be lengthy, but I will try as much as possible to keep to under the 1-hour schedule time.

## **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or conference proceedings. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the data and as such you will remain anonymous.

Kindly bear in mind that in the case of focus group discussions, while every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

## **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHERS PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a filing cabinet in Eldoret, Kenya for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics

Review and approval if applicable. After five years, all the hard copies will be shredded, and the electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through using a relevant software programme.

#### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

Your participation is voluntary and as such, no incentives will be provided.

#### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Human Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you wish. Additionally, the researcher obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in Kenya whose mandate is to approve and authorise all scientific research done in Kenya.

#### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Faith Moraa Omayo on +254723774364 or email: [faimoraa@gmail.com](mailto:faimoraa@gmail.com). The findings are accessible for five years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Blessing Thuthuka Mbatha on +2712 429 8264 or email: [mbathbt@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mbathbt@unisa.ac.za).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Faith Moraa Omayo



**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunities to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname: .....

Participant Signature: ..... Date: .....

Researcher's Name & Surname: .....

Researcher's signature: ..... Date: .....

Faith Moraa Omayo,  
P.O. Box 7470-30100,  
Eldoret- Kenya.

The Director,  
Eldotec Kenya,  
P.O. Box 83-30100,  
Eldoret-Kenya.

Dear Sir,

I, Faith Moraa Omayo am doing research with Blessing Thuthuka Mbatha, a professor, in the Department of Communication Science towards a doctoral degree at the University of South Africa. We have funding from the University of South Africa to aid in this research study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **“An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations”**.

The aim of the study is to explore how social media can be utilised to aid in internal communication in organisations.

Your company has been selected because it has demonstrated the utilisation of social media for other organisational functions such as branding, advertising and marketing. Therefore, you are best suited to provide information on the topic at hand.

The study will entail personal interviews and focus group discussions with a selected number of your employees. The interviews will take up to an hour each.

The benefit of this study is improvement in internal communication in your organisation. The researcher does not foresee any potential risks to participating in the study.

Feedback procedure will entail delivery of the final results and a copy of the research outputs.

Yours sincerely,



Faith Moraa Omayo,  
P.O. Box 7470-30100,  
Eldoret- Kenya.

Human Resource Manager,  
Access Kenya Bank,  
P.O. Box 140-20100,  
Nairobi-Kenya.

Dear Madam,

I, Faith Moraa Omayo am doing research with Blessing Thuthuka Mbatha, a professor, in the Department of Communication Science towards a doctoral degree at the University of South Africa. We have funding from the University of South Africa to aid in this research study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **“An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations”**.

The aim of the study is to explore how social media can be utilised to aid in internal communication in organisations.

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Feedback procedure will entail delivery of the final results and a copy of the research outputs.

Yours sincerely,



Faith Moraa Omayo,  
P.O. Box 7470-30100,  
Eldoret- Kenya.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics & Research),  
Africa International University,  
P.O. Box 24686-00502,  
Nairobi-Kenya.

Dear Sir,

I, Faith Moraa Omayo am doing research with Blessing Thuthuka Mbatha, a professor, in the Department of Communication Science towards a doctoral degree at the University of South Africa. We have funding from the University of South Africa to aid in this research study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled “**An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations**”.

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Feedback procedure will entail delivery of the final results and a copy of the research outputs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'F. Omayo', enclosed in a circular scribble.

Faith Moraa Omayo.

## IV. UNISA ETHICAL CLEARANCE



### COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

17 September 2020

Dear Faith Moraa Omayo

NHREC Registration # :  
Rec-240816-052  
CREC Reference :  
55717284\_CREC\_CHS\_2020

**Decision:**  
**Ethics Approval from 15**  
**September 2020 to 31 August 2024**

**Principal Researcher(s): Faith Moraa Omayo**

**Supervisor: Dr Blessing Thuthuka Mbatha (email: mbathbt@unisa.ac.za)**

**Title: An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilisation for internal communication in Kenyan organisations.**

**Type of Research: Doctor of Philosophy in Communication**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **Low Risk application** was **reviewed** by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **August 2020** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.




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3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**31 October 2024**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **55717284\_CREC\_CHS\_2020** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours Sincerely,

Signature : 

Dr. K.J. Malesa  
CHS Ethics Chairperson  
Email: [maleskj@unisa.ac.za](mailto:maleskj@unisa.ac.za)  
Tel: (012) 429 4780


PP 


Prof K. Masemola  
Executive Dean : CHS  
E-mail: [masemk@unisa.ac.za](mailto:masemk@unisa.ac.za)  
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**V. NACOSTI RESEARCH CLEARANCE**

  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **380720** Date of Issue: **02/March/2021**


**RESEARCH LICENSE**




**This is to Certify that Miss.. Faith Moraa Omayo of University of South Africa, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi, Uasin-Gishu on the topic: AN EXPLORATION TOWARDS DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL MEDIA UTILISATION FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN KENYAN ORGANISATIONS. for the period ending : 02/March/2022.**

License No: **NACOSTI/P/21/9166**

**380720**  
Applicant Identification Number

  
Director General  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &  
INNOVATION

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## VI. ORGANISATIONAL PERMISSION LETTERS



Eldotec Consultancy Service Limited.  
P.O. Box 83, 30100  
Eldoret, Kenya

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To  
Faith Moraa Omayo  
P.O. Box 7470-30100  
Eldoret

Dear Ms. Omayo,

### REF: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

We are pleased to inform you that your request to conduct the study titled "**An Exploration Towards Developing a Framework for Social Media Utilization for Internal Communication in Kenyan Organisations**" within our organization has been reviewed and approved by the relevant committees.

Your proposal outlined a clear objective and potential benefits that align well with our current organizational goals regarding enhancing internal communication strategies. The framework you propose appears promising to improve internal communication in organizations.

Therefore, to facilitate the smooth progression of your research, please ensure compliance with the following guidelines:

1. Adhere strictly to our data protection policies ensuring that all collected data is handled confidentially and used solely for the purposes of your study.
2. A detailed report of your findings and recommendations must be submitted to our office once the research is finalized.
3. While conducting the research on our premises, kindly ensure compliance with all organizational rules and guidelines, particularly those relating to workplace conduct and use of organizational resources.

Your point of contact during the duration of this research will be Jacklyne Wamoto, at [jacklyne.w@assent.com](mailto:jacklyne.w@assent.com). They will coordinate the logistics, facilitate access to the necessary resources, and assist in integrating your activities with our ongoing operations.

We look forward to your findings and hope that the outcome of your research will contribute significantly to enhancing the efficacy of our internal communication channels.

Warm regards,

Jacklyne Wamoto

  
Snr. Manger, Business Operations  
Eldotec Consultancy Services Ltd.



Contact: 0741 693 740 | 0725 304 049



Seguton Building, Nakuru,  
P. O. Box 148 – 20100,  
Access Bank (Kenya) PLC  
Nakuru Branch, Kenya

8 March 2021

**Faith Moraa Omayo**  
**P.O. Box 7470-30100**  
**Eldoret, Kenya**

Dear Ms. Omayo,

**RE: Authorization to Proceed with Research**

We are delighted to grant you permission to conduct your proposed study, *"An Exploration Towards Developing a Framework for Social Media Utilization for Internal Communication in Kenyan Organisations,"* at our organization. After thorough review, your project has been recognized for its innovative approach and alignment with our objectives to improve internal communication processes.

Please confirm your acceptance of this authorization by signing and returning the attached copy of this letter by [due date for acceptance]. For any inquiries or further clarifications, feel free to reach out to **Mr. Terrence Elegwa** at [terrence.elegwa@accessbankplc.com](mailto:terrence.elegwa@accessbankplc.com) or **+254720404842**.

We are enthusiastic about your research and its potential to enhance our internal communication strategies. Thank you for considering our organization for your study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terrence Elegwa".

**Terrence Elegwa**  
**Branch Service Manager**  
**Access Bank Kenya – Nakuru Branch**



AFRICA  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY

*Committed to His mission  
Connected to His world*

21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

Ms. Faith Moraa Omayo  
P.O. Box 7470-30100  
Eldoret  
Kenya

Dear Ms. Omayo,

**RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH**

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022, requesting for permission to conduct research for a Doctorate degree on the topic: ***"An exploration towards developing a framework for social media utilization for internal communication in Kenyan organizations."***

Your request is hereby granted trusting that the results of the research will also benefit AIU as well. You are kindly, therefore, requested to give AIU a copy of the thesis after completion of your study.

Meanwhile, we wish you success in your studies.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Joseph Kiplang'at,  
**Deputy Vice - Chancellor Academic Affairs & Research**