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The effective use of social media platforms by the basic education department.

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**THE EFFECTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY THE
BASIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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in the

Tshwane School for Business and Society

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May 2021

DECLARATION

I, Luvuyo Moses Cebo (Mr), hereby affirm that this research was carried out in agreement with the Rules and Guidelines of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). I, therefore, confirm under oath that this research is original, excluding indications by special reference in the text, and by no means has this research been submitted to any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. M. Cebo', is written over a horizontal line.

Luvuyo Moses Cebo

06 May 2021

Date

ABSTRACT

Social Media is an effective engine for communication in operating business functions for all organisations. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of awareness and information sharing that online communication affords the Department of Basic Education. It aimed to determine the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education employees, the public and educators to communicate issues pertaining to education.

The Department of Education makes use of Basic Education via different social media platforms, a few to mention are Facebook, Twitter, Thutong and email for communication purposes. These are available on the education website www.education.gov.za

The researcher used a quantitative approach to collect empirical data from the Department of Basic Education in South Africa through a survey questionnaire that was forwarded to the Department of Education employees. Data analysis was done with the use of the Statistical Package for Statistic Systems program.

The results are revealed with use of pie charts and bar graphs. The descriptive and relationship analyses are shown in this study and the recommendations and conclusions are tabled.

Findings in this study show that some social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube exist in the Department of Basic Education, however, the officials are blocked from using these social media platforms. The officials cite that permission is granted to senior officials, starting from level 13 ; this refers to the Director, Chief Director, the Deputy Director-General, Director-General, the Deputy Minister and Minister. These are the officials that use social media platforms to communicate with the public. The Department of Basic Education officials consists of specialists that are meant to communicate with learners irrespective of their background or wherever the learners reside, especially with today's presence of innovative technology as a rapid means of communication. Learners are supposed to consult with specialists through various communication channels.

Keywords: *social media, basic education, social media usage*

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASIDI	Acceleration Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ECDOE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
EIG	Education Infrastructure Grant
IA	Implementing Agent
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SASL	South African Sign Language
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TTF	Task Technology Fit
USAO	Universal Services and access Obligation
TV	Television

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 Introduction to the study.....	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Aim and objectives of the study	2
1.3.1 Primary objective.....	2
1.3.2 Secondary objectives.....	3
1.4 Key research question for the study	3
1.4.1 Sub-research questions	3
1.4.2 Hypothesis	3
1.5 Rationale of the research	3
1.6 Limitations	4
1.7 Delimitation.....	4
1.8 Clarification of key concepts.....	4
1.9 Outline of the study	5
CHAPTER 2	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Social media	8
2.3 Social media in education.....	9
2.4 Personal use of social media	9
2.5 Instructional use of social media.....	9
2.6 Policies on the use of social media.....	9
2.7 Use of social media by secondary school educators	10
2.8 Examples of social media platforms.....	10
2.8.1 Facebook	10
2.8.2 Twitter	12
2.8.3 WhatsApp.....	12
2.8.4 YouTube.....	13
2.9 Social media usage	13
2.10 Huffman’s (2012) Simple Model.....	15
2.11 Mechanisms for regulating online behaviour.....	18
2.12 Impact and use of social media.....	19

2.13	Innovation and awareness dilemmas in social media.....	20
2.14	Use of web-blogs as a social media platform.....	21
2.15	Social networking sites	22
2.16	District schools	23
2.17	Basic education delivery through use of online platforms	25
2.18	Conclusion	26
CHAPTER 3		27
3.1	Introduction.....	27
3.2	The Task Technology Fit Model.....	28
3.2.1	Task Technology Fit (TTF).....	28
3.2.2	Task characteristics	29
3.2.3	Technology characteristics	29
3.2.4	Utilisation	30
3.2.5	Performance	30
3.3	Research Model for the study.....	30
3.4	Utilisation and satisfaction.....	31
3.5	Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 4		32
4.1	Introduction.....	32
4.2	Research approach.....	33
4.3	Research design	34
4.4	Data collection instruments.....	35
4.4.1	Structured questionnaire	35
4.4.1.1	Development of the questionnaire	35
4.4.1.2	Piloting of the questionnaire.....	36
4.4.1.3	Distribution of the questionnaire	37
4.5	Population and sampling	37
4.6	Data management.....	38
4.7	Data analysis	38
4.7.1	Software package used	38
4.7.2	Techniques used	38
4.7.3	Descriptive statistics.....	39
4.7.4	Chi-square test.....	39
4.8	Reliability and validity.....	39
4.8.1	Reliability	39
4.8.2	Validity	40
4.8.2.1	Content validity	40
4.8.2.2	Criterion validity	41

4.9	Ethical considerations	41
4.9.1	Informed consent	41
4.9.2	Anonymity	42
4.9.3	Confidentiality	42
4.10	Conclusion	42
CHAPTER 5		43
5.1	Introduction	43
5.2	Profiles of respondents	44
5.2.1	Gender	45
5.2.2	Age	45
5.2.3	Number of years in the Department of Basic Education	46
5.3	Telecommunication infrastructure used at the Department of Basic Education	47
5.4	Impact of communication and information	47
5.4.1	Channels of communication to receive messages on educational activities	47
5.4.2	Communication channels provide feedback.....	48
5.4.3	Communication of the Department of Basic Education with public	49
5.4.4	Reasons for communication with the Department of Basic Education.....	49
5.4.5	Suitability of communication channels	51
5.5	Understanding of the needs for communication	52
5.5.1	Clarity of communication	52
5.5.2	Justification for why communication was regarded as understandable and clear.....	52
5.5.3	Messages and services to the public	54
5.5.4	Supporting reasons for whether messages were clear	54
5.6	Participation in social media platforms.....	56
5.6.1	Respondents' participation in social media platforms	56
5.6.2	Supporting reasons of participation on social media	57
5.6.3	Number of years using social media platforms.....	58
5.6.4	Messages on the Department of Basic Education website.....	59
5.6.5	Target audience for social media platforms	60
5.6.6	Social media platforms used by respondents.....	60
5.6.7	Frequency of posting messages.....	61
5.6.8	Perceptions about participation in social media platforms	61
5.6.9	Searches on social media platforms	62
5.6.10	Personal opinion of social media platforms	63
5.7	Strategies for the effective of social media platforms	64
5.7.1	Communicate in Braille and Sign Language	64
5.7.2	Investment in telecommunications infrastructure	64
5.8	Recommendations from respondents.....	65

5.9	Descriptive analysis.....	69
5.9.1	Age distribution.....	69
5.9.2	Years in the Department of Basic Education.....	70
5.10	Discussion of results.....	70
5.10.1	Descriptive Analysis	72
5.10.2	Analysis of correlation.....	72
5.11	Chapter conclusion.....	73
CHAPTER 6		74
6	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	74
6.1	Introduction.....	74
6.2	Reflection on findings through sub-question question and drawing conclusion.....	75
6.2.1	Sub-question 1: What is the frequency of use of social media platforms by Basic Education employees.....	76
6.2.2	Sub-question 2: What is the level of implementation of social media platforms in Education?	76
6.2.3	Sub-question 3: Is the DBE aware of the use of social media platforms?.....	77
6.2.4	Sub-question 4: What are the strategies being used to utilise social media platforms	77
6.2.5	Answering main research question:	77
6.3	Recommendations	78
6.4	Suggestions for future research	78
6.5	Conclusion	78
REFERENCES		79
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		95
ANNEXURE A: LETTER PERMITTED TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DBE		96
ANNEXURE B : ETHICS LETTER FROM TUT.....		97
ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT		98
ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE STUDY		99

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Structure of the dissertation and outline of Chapter 1 (Source: Author)	5
Figure 2: Structure of Chapter 2 (Source: Author)	8
Figure 3: The Simple Model (Source: Huffman, 2012: 645-677)	15
Figure 4: Structure of Chapter 3 (Source: Author)	27
Figure 5: Task Technology Fit (Source: Goodhue & Thompson, 1995).....	29
Figure 6: Structure of Chapter 4 (Source: Author)	33
Figure 7: Structure of Chapter 5 (Source: Author)	44
Figure 8: Gender	45
Figure 9: Age group of the respondents	46
Figure 10: Number of years respondents have been employed by the Department of Basic Education	46
Figure 11: Telecommunications infrastructure used at the DBE	47
Figure 12: Channels of communication to receive messages in education	48
Figure 13: Communication channel providing feedback	48
Figure 14: Communication of the Department of Basic Education with the public	49
Figure 15: Reasons for communication selection	51
Figure 16: Appropriateness of DBE communication channels	51
Figure 17: Clarity of communication	52
Figure 18: Factors accounting for clarity of communication	54
Figure 19: Degree of empowering of messages	54
Figure 21: Participation on social media.....	57
Figure 22: Number of years using social media platforms	59
Figure 23: Messages posted on DBE website	59
Figure 24: Audience intended with social media.....	60
Figure 25: Social media platforms used by DBE.....	60
Figure 26: Frequency of posting messages	61
Figure 27: Participation on social media more often.....	62
Figure 28: Searches on social media	62
Figure 29: Communication in Braille and South African Sign Language	64
Figure 30: Investment in telecommunications infrastructure	65
Figure 31: Recommendations made by respondents to the Department of Basic Education to improve its communication with staff and the public.....	69
Figure 32: Structure of Chapter 6 (Source: Author).....	74
Figure 33: Reflection on findings through sub-questions (Source: Author)	75
Figure 34: Links between sub-questions, literature and findings.....	76

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Dimensions of the questionnaire	35
Table 2: Number of questionnaires distributed and returned (Source: Author)	37
Table 4: Support reasons for why messages were clear.....	56
Table 7: Reasons for participation on social media	58
Table 7: Usefulness of social media platforms	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 8: Distribution table on the age of respondents.....	70
Table 10: Descriptive analysis	72

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction to the study

The aim of this study was to investigate the utilisation of social media platforms, namely, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). These social media platforms are important for communication, information dissemination and are used for sharing information among people in the communities and worldwide. The use of internet is developing at a rapid pace. According to Robinson, Cox, Bailey, Hetrick, Rodrigues, Fisher and Herrman (2016:103-211), internet user numbers increased by more than 30 million between 1995 and 2014. These scholars further state that users often rely on social media networks for information. Internet has become a common social media device for -youth and grown people (2016:103-211). The usage of social media is increasing among universities because students often have a quick understanding of the new technologies (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro & Solnet, 2013:17-42).

World-wide, people are quickly incorporating virtual forms of communication in their daily lives (Diehl & Prins, 2008:101-118). Social network users are steadily logging online to communicate and interact with other users. The expediency of the network is technology mediated, unlike the social communities found in the physical world who require face to face contact (Hamat, Embi & Hassan, 2012:56-66). Haythornthwaite and Kendall (2010:5) state that digital social networking sites are operating and confined within the internet and play a significant role in society. The growth of online networks is changing interpersonal relationships as well as the landscape of social communities, from the physical to the digital realm, while developing divergent views in cultivating and preserving online social connections (Collin, Rahilly, Richardson & Third, 2011). In view of the use of social media platforms, as well as linking to innovative technology of today, organisations should fully implement social media platforms to create an effective world of communication for themselves (Leung, Law, Van Hoof & Buhalis, 2013:3-22). The DBE offers hope to children of developing nations, such as South Africa. For example, ... The country requires role models that should be nurtured by basic education in order for them to contribute to South Africa's economy. South Africa's economy cannot grow rapidly without learners of South Africa acquiring good guidance in their learning endeavours from experts in the Department of Basic Education.

1.2 Problem statement

Social media acceptance is a vigorous process and not many organisations are bold enough to embrace it. According to researchers like Luo and Jiang (2012:66-67), only a few professionals and industries or brands succeed, and many do not because of lack of knowledge in social media usage and the unavailability of social media champions. The Department of Education has many platforms that are used for communicating activities related to this sphere. These platforms are for communicating with people in South Africa, whether the person is in a remote area of the country or resides in an urban area. However, it is questioned whether communication reaches everyone everywhere in the country. There have been reports of a lack of resources in some schools (News24, 2014). According to Education White Paper 7, E-education involves the application of information technology communication (ICT) to speed up the achievement of national education goals (Department of Education, 2004). This involves connecting learners and teachers with each other and to professional support services (Department of Basic Education, 2015, 49). The aim is also to obtain quality information, share ideas and inspire via an effective combination of learning and technology channels in support of educational reform (Department of Basic Education, 2015:49).

Several studies have been carried out on the DBE employees in South Africa for example (de Villiers, Steyn, Draper, Hill, Dalais, Fourie, Lombard, Barkhuizen & Lambert, 2015; Leung *et al.*, 2013). However, no research has as yet been conducted on the effective use of social media platforms. This lack of research motivated the researcher to undertake this study to fill the gap in this field of knowledge and to provide vivid information about the effective usage of social media by DBE employees.

This research paper intends to examine whether the social media platforms used by the DBE are effective to communicate general with the public.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education. To achieve this, the following specific objectives were pursued:

1.3.1 Primary objective

To determine the level of awareness and information sharing that online media affords the Department of Basic Education.

To investigate the importance of the Department of Basic Education's online presence for the public.

1.3.2 Secondary objectives

To identify social media platforms used by the employees of the Department of Basic Education, the public and educators to communicate issues pertaining to basic education.

To examine the frequency of use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education to communicate with the public.

To examine the level of adaptation of social media platforms by the employees of the Department of Basic Education.

1.4 Key research question for the study

The primary research question is: *What is the actual effect of social media platforms used by the Department of Basic Education to communicate with the public on activities related to education?*

1.4.1 Sub-research questions

- What is the frequency of use of social media platforms by Basic Education employees?
- What is the level of implementation of social media platforms in Education?
- Is the DBE aware of the use of social media platforms?
- What are the strategies being used to utilise social media platforms?

1.4.2 Hypothesis

This study sought to test the strength of the following hypothesis:

- **H1:** Characteristics technology is positively affecting the effectiveness of social media.
- **H2:** Characteristics ... technology is positively affecting the use of social media.
- **H3:** Task technology fit will positively affect awareness on social media.

1.5 Rationale of the research

This research study sought to determine the effectiveness of the usage of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education to communicate with the public. This was done by studying how effective the Department of Basic Education used social media platforms to communicate with the public. The researcher also sought to detect whether the social media platforms used by the Department of Basic Education were relevant and effective for conveying messages and activities related to the sector. The context that lead to conduct of this study was the fact that technology is used in all aspects and contexts of business today, therefore, it was expected that the public sector and government should also be utilising social media to engage with the public. (Yakobi, 2016:9) states that social media has

become essential in creating, disseminating, sharing and exchanging information; it is about how people interact in virtual communities or organisations. It is research on social media that was studied in relevant literature that has motivated and persuaded the researcher to carry out a study on effectiveness of the use of social media within the basic education sector.

Upon review of literature relevant to this study, it was found that no study or literature made reference to the use of social media platforms within the basic education sector. Numerous studies have been conducted on the usage of social media in higher education (Kumar & Nanda, 2019:97:108). Based on this, the researcher was encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education to communicate matters related to basic education.

1.6 Limitations

The study focused on a sample of the employees of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa. A sample consisted of 200 officials. Although due to time and cost constraints the study could only cover officials from the Department of Basic Education, it provided important understanding regarding the purpose of the study. However, the study provides a good understanding of the effectiveness of the use of social media platforms within the basic education sector.

1.7 Delimitation

The participants in the current study are those employed in the Department of Basic Education, South Africa. The study focused on the officials that were directly involved in the use of social media platforms as a primary aspect of their work. The questionnaire, used a method of data collection in this study, was distributed only to these officials.

1.8 Clarification of key concepts

This section provides definitions of the concepts that are used in this study. The concepts and definitions are provided below:

- **Social media** is defined as an internet-based application and includes Facebook and Twitter that host interactive dialogues among users (Rodesiler, 2017:293-300).
- **Basic** can be defined as the minimum necessary to guarantee that all citizens or users receive the minimum standard of provision (Meadowcroft, 2015:152-168)
- **Education:** is defined as the process of transmission of knowledge and culture of a society from one generation to the next (Mustafa, 2003: 151-159).
- **Social media usage:** The rapid development of the internet has introduced social network sites that found themselves among the most used internet applications in a short period of time.

People have rapidly adopted social networks by getting individuals together in diverse ways such as online organising, collaboration and communication.

1.9 Outline of the study

Below is the overview of the chapters of the dissertation. Figure 1 below shows the structure of this study.

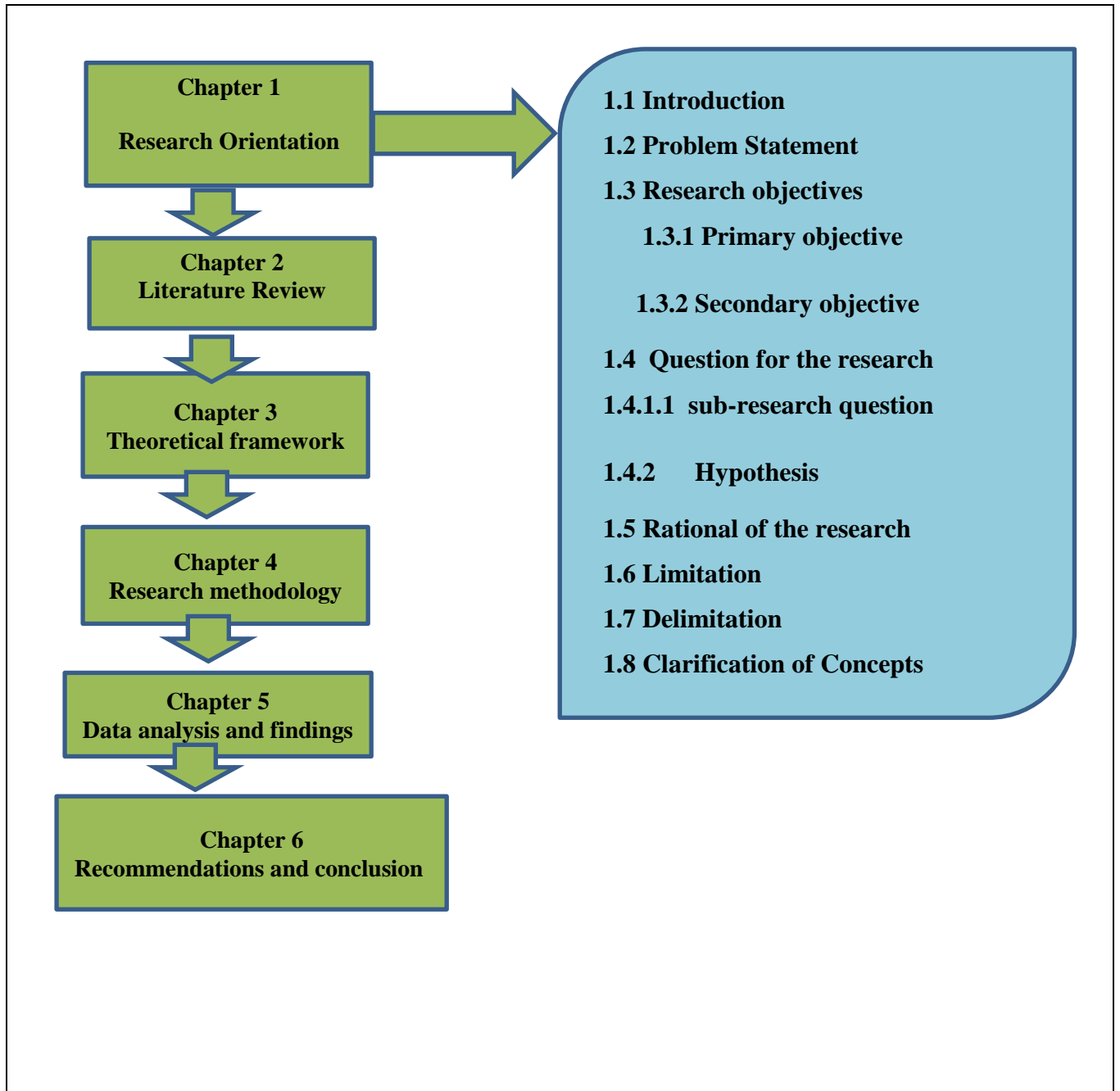


Figure 1: Structure of the dissertation and outline of Chapter 1 (Source: Author)

Chapter 1 introduces the study, research question, objectives, motivation for the relevant and importance of the study. In addition, the chapter also present the background of the study.

Chapter 2 presents the review of literature and deconstruction of concepts relevant to the focus and aim of the study, with a view of locating the study and providing theoretical foundations of the study.

Chapter 3 presents methodological and design consideration made by the researcher for the conduct of the study. This chapter includes research methodology, design, the research tools, limitations and ethical issues relating to the study.

Chapter 4 presents a theoretical framework used to analyse, interpret and understand the results of the study.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis, discussion and interpretation of the data analysed. In order to do this, the chapter provides a sense of what the key results are and what they mean for the effective use of social media platforms within the basic education sector.

Chapter 6: presents concluding remarks, recommendations and ideas for further research regarding the effective usage of social media platforms within the Department of Basic Education.

10. Chapter conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the orientation of the research. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the problem statement, purpose of the study and presented the key research questions of the study. The delimitation of the study was also presented. The researcher argued that there is limited use and implementation of social media platforms within the public sector.

In the next chapter, the researcher presents a review of the literature on the use of social media platforms within different contexts and education, in particular.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the researcher begins with a discussion of social media platforms, followed by a review of how the authors view the use of social media platforms in the working environment. The researcher ends the chapter with discussion of the role that the social media platforms play in the working environment.

This study examines the effectiveness of the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education, South Africa. The review of literature in this study particularly seeks to survey previous works done by other researchers regarding the use of social media within education. In doing this, the researcher sought to understand the effective use of social media platforms in enhancing efficiency within working environments and raising awareness on the significance of the use of social media platforms. In addition, the researcher sought to survey and review views and thoughts regarding the use of social media academic scholarship.

Social media platforms are tools that facilitate interaction to make collaboration and other forms of interaction possible among users (Chen & Bryer, 2012:87-104). The concept of technologies includes blogs, wikis, media, including audio photos, videos and text, sharing tools and networking platforms, for example, Facebook and visual words (Yadav, 2016:51). These technologies allow user-generated content by making it feasible for users to create, circulate, share and comment on various types of content (Leonardi & Vaast, 2017:150-158). The disposition of social media affords a context for the interaction of people with a meaningful task, assisting central ideas of engagement theory (Caron & Light, 2016:25-40).

The layout of this chapter in the context of the dissertation is shown in Figure 2 below.

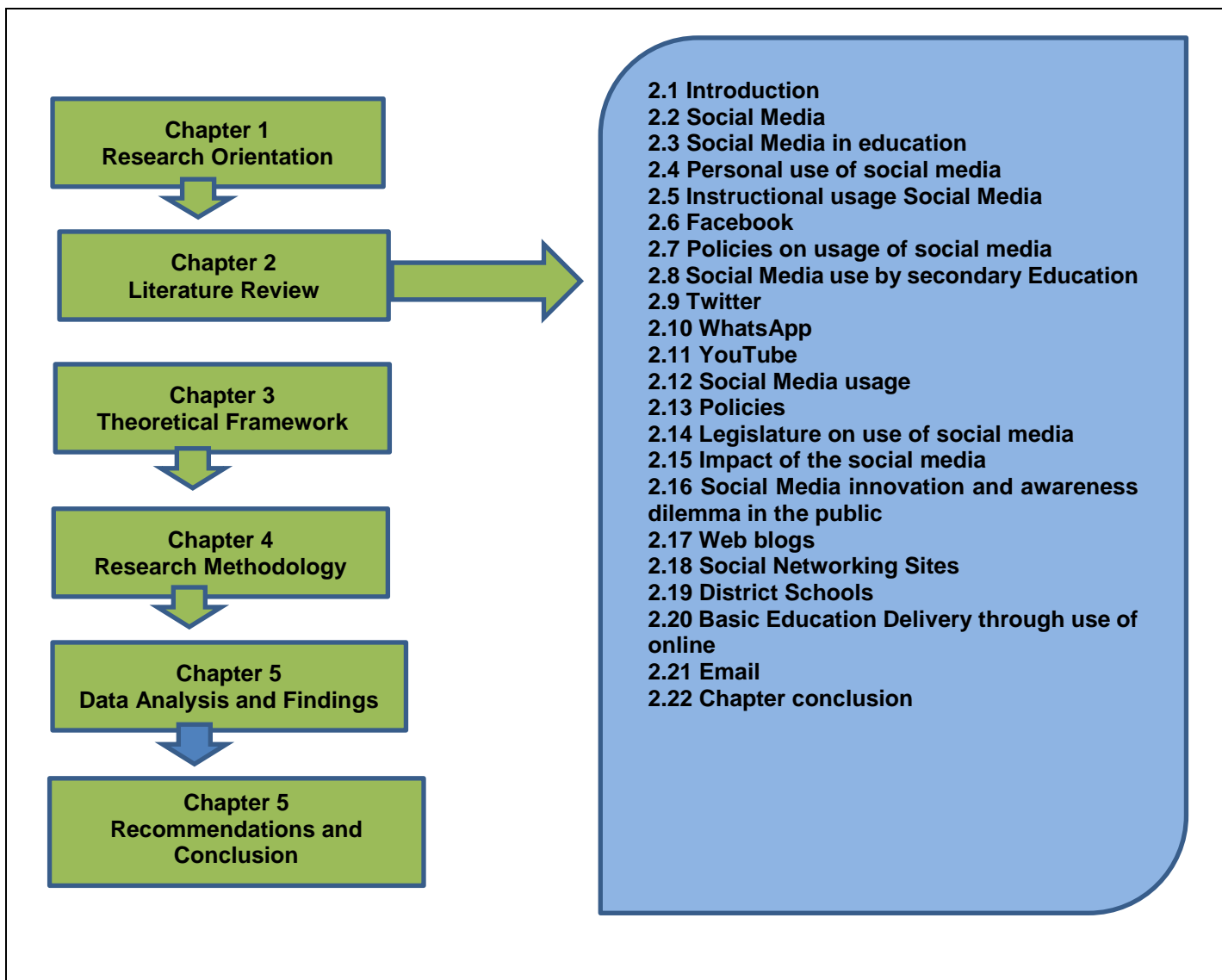


Figure 2: Structure of Chapter 2 (Source: Author)

Figure 2 provides an overview of the aspects of the literature review chapter. The section below provides a discussion of these aspects and links them to the focus, aim and research questions of the study.

2.2 Social media

Social media could be described as a medium that enables individuals to exchange knowledge, associate with, relay to and organise a source, while providing guidance and direction (Kluemper, Mitra & Wang, 2016). Social media has eradicated communication obstacles and generated a decentralised announcing channel (Casero-Ripollés & Feenstra, 2012:68-74). It opens up opportunities to everyone to voice their ideas and take part in a democracy comprising individuals in a previously suppressed country (Amedie, 2015:3). According to (Elinson, 2013:715-730), social network refers to an online community that joins people with common interests, opinions, activities and experiences together by distributing their news, photos, videos and events. The notion of online communities used in social networks offer means for users to network with each other across the internet, through media such as email and instant messaging

(Assaad & Gómez, 2011:13). Some of the most common social networking sites are Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace and Video (YouTube). This kind of networking could also be explained as a collection of internet-based functions that are formed with the ideology and technological foundation of Web 2.0, which allows the design and exchange of user general content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:59-68).

2.3 Social media in education

In social media education, old-style is clearly not fulfilling requirements of digital natives. In this regard, the educational demands of digital natives' educational instructions should assess their present training strategies and social use in all areas, whether in office or at school (Assaad & Gómez, 2011). Social media allows operators to impart critical knowledge through disseminating views, sentiments, visions and knowledge (Chromey, Duchsherer, Pruett & Vareberg, 2016:1-12).

2.4 Personal use of social media

Stanfield and Beddoe (2016:284-296) have examined the professional usage of social media as a blog project for educating and establishing interpersonal skills that could be acquired utilising the medium kind of social media, since it is helpful for interacting and cooperation in a working environment. Construction ideologies of studying instructions are often mentioned during the discussion of significant social media, specifically interacting in societal labour learning as well as qualified employment (Mackay & Gillespie, 1992).

2.5 Instructional use of social media

Social media could be used for learning, teaching as well as student counselling (Mingle & Adams, 2015). There are several tools from which teachers can select and are taught, such as Facebook, Word-Press, Twitter, Padlet and Screencast. Usually, organisations own social media policies and guidelines for social media usage (Johnston, 2015:175-187). Social media offers educators, learners and managers an opportunity to join online classrooms and other platforms. However, users often require instruction and tutoring in order to understand how to reflect on learning objectives through online platforms (Liburd & Christensen, 2013:99-108). These aspects or elements have been developing gradually and users who learn how to interact on social media can to add links, photos and/or place orders using social media platforms (Kouri, Rissanen, Weber & Park, 2017:183-193).

2.6 Policies on the use of social media

Public Communication policy

Students should always stop and consider before posting, searching or doing activities online (Dotterer, Hedges & Parker, 2016). This implies that protecting oneself and others before clicking must become a habit for users of social media platforms. By middle school, students should know how to generate

safe user names; they should understand that stealing information and other people's creations is the same as stealing tangible items (Koskinen, Zimmerman, Binder, Redstrom & Wensveen, 2011). In addition, they should appreciate the difference between personal and private information. This implies that education should always look for ways to engage critical thinking around students' everyday media uses, whether through planned projects and lessons or informal engagement (Dotterer, 2015:22).

Corporate Communication policy

Mahama (2020) assert that social media adoption at the corporate level has provided different methods for helping social processes alongside the management of both processed and unprocessed information knowledge and social media systems. To make this possible, the message constructed in social media should be made attractive precise and concise to reach large online users in their numbers to gain maximum momentum.

2.7 Use of social media by secondary school educators

Teachers can model positive behaviour through Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts through promoting students' art-work, performance and videos (Lemon, 2019:81-97). Furthermore, as the education moves toward an integrated learning management system, teachers can post links, documents, assignments and communicate with students 24/7 (Schönwetter, Reynolds, Eaton & De Vries, 2010), for instance, in Burlington Public School near Boston, United States of America, instructional technology specialist Jennifer Scheffer created a help-desk with 12 high school students, the intention of which was to provide technical support, which later evolved into a forum for students to share information about developing positive online identities. This activity enabled students to interview business, education and technology leaders, including a Google employee, to learn first-hand about professional life in the online world (Berger, Olson & Beachy, 2015). Students from the help desk later launched a Twitter chart about educational topics, which aim at equipping people about social media platform ... (Friess & Lam, 2018:343-361). This means that the learners can easily communicate with the experts in the Department of Basic Education in order to obtain more related information on their studies.

2.8 Examples of social media platforms

2.8.1 Facebook

World-wide, 500 million users are active on Facebook (O'Brien & Torres, 2012). Facebook provides a virtual reality cyberspace, where users can endorse identity for friends, acquaintances and a large transient public (Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2011:5). In the context of education, Facebook is a useful social networking tool, which allows learners, parents, employees, stakeholders and the general public to network with a view to supporting educational activities. According to Stassen (Stassen, 2010:122), Facebook, as a free global social networking website, allows users to create a personal profile through

which they can link to their friends' profiles. Using Facebook, users can convey messages and exchange personal profiles to inform friends, friends of friends and public about themselves and their services (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman & Tong, 2008) . Furthermore, through Facebook, users can enrol with networks organised by a city, region, organisation and more (Borgatti & Cross, 2003). Facebook has impacted on journalism in that some media organisations have created and updated corporate profiles to market themselves and the services they provide (Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis, 2007:24-34).

Thomas and Bryer (2013:45) define the term social media as “technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration and enable deliberation across stakeholders”. Three parts of the definition deserve highlighting: social interaction, collaboration, and deliberation using specific platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Second Life, Google+ and Quora. These platforms have capacity to fulfil the deliberative and collaborative potential accentuated in the definition (Tambini, 2018). As expounded below, despite the deliberative, collaborative and otherwise interactive potential, research has shown that local governments, at least in the United States, consider these platforms as extensions of their more static, less dynamic websites, where information flows unidirectional (Tambini, 2018) . Legal and ethical concerns may be one reason for this suboptimal use of the platforms, but so might, as pointed out by Bryer (2013:45-50), organisational cultures, rules and procedures that inhibit objective application of the platforms in ways that are fully possible, given their capacities.

In view of the philosophies that currently exist in social media, media richness, self-presentation and self-disclosure have differentiated social media in groups, such as collective ventures, for example, Wikipedia (Shen & Bissell, 2013:629-651). Jain, Petty, Jaber, Tackett, Purkiss, Fitzgerald and White (2014:157-159) assert that it is unprofessional to post personal information on social media as this may jeopardise individuals' future, given the fact that some personal content may reflect poorly on individuals' professional integrity.

Sihi and Lawson (2018:38-54) maintain that social amusement and publishing are community stages that centre in obtaining and keeping affairs on social media platforms. The most broadly utilised social public space is Facebook (De Jong, 2015:211-223). The amusement activities comprise competitions, such as video sports, genuine games, or amusement setups on social media (Darley, 2002), for instance, Farmville is a famous social game, which links various users in a form of a network. Social trade exploits social media to improve online spending for customers. Other examples include online communication to assist characteristics and operation of evaluations. Social publication enables groups of users to paste and distribute content. Twitter is a micro-blog, which means that it limits the distance of the published content that is received from the societal disseminating domain (Riquelme & González-

Cantergiani, 2016:949-975). Basic education develops curriculum policy, lesson plans and learning and teaching support material for use by teachers, learners and parents to support education. To date, Facebook has become a famous platform with more than one billion followers, including those from basic education (Taylor, Lewin & Strutton, 2011).

2.8.2 Twitter

In the context of Twitter, scholars highlight that people within societies have become virtually affixed to this platform to such an extent that almost every event is shared (Forkosh-Baruch & Hershkovitz, 2012). According to Wankel (2009:3), Twitter is for faster interchanging of views, ideas and information among people. In this regard, Twitter presents opportunities for reframing communication among students, managers and individuals. Wankel (2009:3) further states that tweets are about what the person is doing and thinking in the moment, which means that the information become easily transformed to one another through pasting a message in this platform.

Twitter users write 140 character-limited messages called Tweets that can contain links to webpages or other content (Muir *et al.* 2015). Users can interact with other users by following their accounts and replying to or mentioning other users in their tweets, thereby creating a network of connections (Weng, Lim, Jiang & He, 2010:261-270). This means that Twitter functions as a practised engine that complements other methods of communication. Super-users approach the use of Twitter with purpose and are often mindful of online professionalism as well as being good twitter citizens (Bullock, 2018). Twitter is important in that it provides access and voice to users who would have otherwise been silenced (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

Ribeiro, Weigang and Li (2015:843-853) states that Twitter provides a platform with features that are useful for professional networking and its objective is to enable users to create and share ideas and information straightaway, without barriers. Twitter has 271 million active users monthly, and approximately 500 million tweets are sent on this platform each day (Ribeiro, Weigang and Li (2015:843-853). 37% of adults aged 18-29 in the United States use Twitter, and the majority of users have public accounts (Han, Compton, Jones & Cai, 2015). Users of Twitter aged 12 in American increased from 5 in 2008 to 87 percent in 2010 (Hargittai & Litt, 2011:824-842).

2.8.3 WhatsApp

WhatsApp as an enables users and societies to interconnect using instant messaging (Plana, Escofet, Figueras, Gimeno, Appel & Hopkins, 2013). WhatsApp has grown to more than 500 million users worldwide since its inception in 2009 (Dhingra & Mudgal, 2019). Ahad and Lim (2014:189-196) have reported that a significant number of undergraduates who participated in their study had used WhatsApp

engine to support their studies daily. The results of the study revealed that respondents relied significantly on WhatsApp for its capability to make information immediately available among family and friends (Ahad and Lim (2014:189-196). Thus, from the results, it could be reasoned that WhatsApp is a valuable platform for social dialogues and exchange of skills and knowledge among users.

2.8.4 YouTube

YouTube is as a platform uses flash technology, which means that it enables users to upload, view and share materials with the rest of the connected world, These materials range from music, movies and television clips to home-made amateur videos and blogs (Yang, Hsu & Tan, 2010:141-152)). Välimäki *et al.*, (2016:13-15) state that YouTube ranks third among famous websites worldwide, especially to users.

Psychologists and other social scientists have acknowledged YouTube's possibilities and capabilities as a research tool that focuses on selection of themes contained within the videos (Derry, Pea, Barron, Engle, Erickson, Goldman, Hall, Koschmann, Lemke & Sherin, 2010). Users of YouTube record a video and post it online, these videos are mostly educational and assist users to acquire information on a variety of topics and subjects (Buzetto-More, 2015). Some attention has been dedicated to the areas associated with YouTube videos and related social media, such as emotional and socio-psychological features and a user's impression of the content of the video or another users' posted comments (Mills, Botha & Campbell, 2015:397). The researchers revealed in this instance that the YouTube is a platform that contribute in making a difference since users are able to post their activities that bring change whether in the societies, region and worldwide.

According to Barn (2016:965-986), with the perceptions and increasing connections of social networking sites (SNS), platforms such as YouTube can increase participation in training sessions, especially when organisations use social networking sites for purposes of enlightening messaging. The danger exists that opportunities for augmenting education and creating involvement with engagement with the curriculum are overlooked. There is a growing body of study which has started discovering the usage of microblogging gears, while also focusing on Twitter as an engine for enhancing debates and developing informal study via experimental and action learning methods (Budden, 2016:22).

2.9 Social media usage

Social media usage frequency is often determined by the number of the users visiting a specific platform (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2013). Thoene (2012:12) states that a study regarding social media usage frequency entails measuring when a person logs into a site and how much time they devote to that particular site. Barasa (2010:146) asserts that social media is a group of internet engines that is formed

in a dialogical and technological set of Web 2.0, and which facilitates an establishment and exchange of user-generated content. This engine is made up of different internet applications such as blogs, social networking sites and platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Ellison (2007:1) defines social networks as web-based services, which enable individuals to create public or semi-public profiles within a bounded system. This system further articulates a list of other users with whom a connection is shared. Viewpoints are exchanged and navigated against a list of connections and those made by others within the system (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). The aim of social media is to foster a two-way communication, yet one may use social media as a one-way channel, passing on messages to the stakeholders without taking into account input or concerns raised by stakeholders (Graham & Avery, 2013). Fraustino, Briones and Janoske (2015:1-18) contends that organisations should be interested in what stakeholders have to say by paying attention to stakeholders' concerns, suggestions, compliments and criticism. Their argument is that this enables organisations to form mutually beneficial relationships with their stakeholders. Organisations should, therefore, endeavour to listen effectively as listening tools are similar to rear-view mirrors; the big challenge is how to be pre-emptive in listening (Baker, 2013).

Chowdhury and Odame (2014:3-24) argue that countries are experiencing increasing popularity of online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. However, new data also suggesting that organisations can increase trust and loyalty through how they deploy social media for this purpose (Chowdhury & Odame, 2014:3-24). These trends have begun to generate widespread interest in the use of Web 2.0 and media platforms in research, policy and practice. These scholars further state that social media is loosely applied to Web 2.0 tools that herald a more informal and personal approach to information-sharing with the potential to shift from a top-down and corporate-based communication process to a more individualized, participatory and democratic approach whereby the users is creator, consumer and repeat innovator of the web content (Chowdhury & Odame, 2014).

With the education sector playing such an important role in society, it is of paramount importance to improve communication channels between the sector and the public. This will benefit society as a whole. As a result, this study sought to investigate the role of social media in the basic education sector, which was viewed as a gap, especially in respect of communication of the basic education sector with the public (Waters & Ott, 2014:2-15). Thus, this study explores the effective use of the social media platforms in the basic education sector and how these were used to communicate with the public. This research study further sought to explore and introduce possible mechanisms or models that could be considered in the effective utilisation of social media platforms in education.

Instructional technology is one of many tools that educators can use to augment the presentation of content and deliver information through enhanced planning and communication (Leidner & Jarvenpaa, 1995). Technology also has the potential to enhance instruction in areas such as physical education (Gibbone, Rukavina & Silverman, 2010). The advent of technologies and evolution of digital games have assisted in forming new ways in which people are communicating, collaborating, operating and forming social constructs (Lynch *et al.* 2015; Groves, Gentile, Tapscott & Lynch, 2015:602-625).

Dohmen, Falk, Huffman and Sunde (2012:645-677) state that numerous matters often raised about education could be evaded through arrangements of technology innovations. This means that, in each instance, a suitable knowledge-planning model should be utilised. In many cases, teachers put aside essential structuring wedge and unhappily get themselves in glitches that could be avoided (Race, 2004). The simple model is to represent the best ideas and techniques to deal with planning for the use of social networking tools in an educational setting. The following model illustrates a path as well as the best ideas in dealing with planning for any activity.

2.10 Huffman's (2012) Simple Model

Figure 3 below presents Huffman's (2012:645) Simple Model. Hereafter, a brief discussion of each of the aspects of the Model is provided.

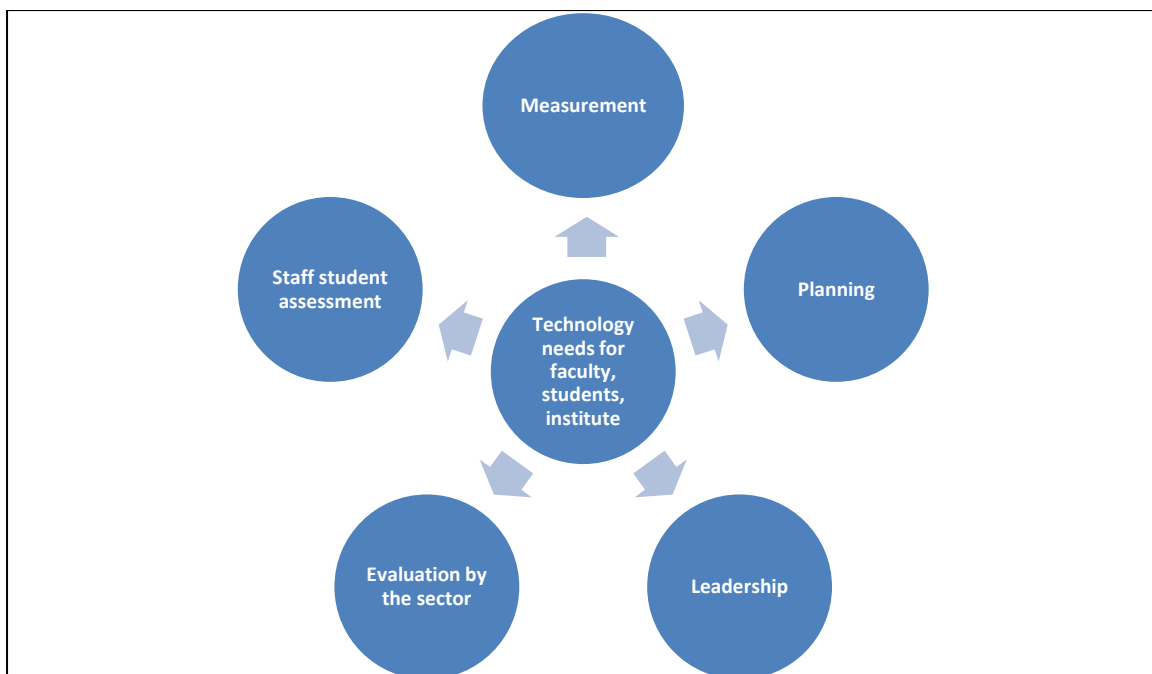


Figure 3: The Simple Model (Source: Huffman, 2012: 645-677)

a) Evaluation

According to Stavrakantonakis, Gagiou, Kasper, Toma and Thalhammer (2012:51-56), the concept of evaluation, is defined as a tool with ability to gather data and analyse in a meaningful way, to the client (illustrated by the analysis concept), features that would enable the client to reach out to the customers, (engagement), and determine the influencers (influence), as well as tools that allow different members of the enterprise to communicate with the tool (workflow management).

Analysis

The Model tool selected is able to gather data from many sources and in different forms, to establish ways of filtering the information gathered, and easily avoid duplicates of information. An example of the use of the evaluation, was that this way of examination is defined as, the completion of a single round and the commencement of another. The evaluation allows for inconsequential adjustment in the whole strategy or as an upcoming guidance, for example development. Authors for the examination further state that the goal and objective of the evaluation are to note what issues have been met and what feedback was received from parents and administrators (Picciano & Spring, 2013:79-122). The analysis is of particular importance as it encompasses method used to both filter the gathered data of unwanted information (duplicates) and to process it.

Engagement

The engagement concept refers to the ability of the tool to support reaction with social media posts. Some tools nowadays gives the integrated chances to respond to posts and follow up to inquiries, complains or questions that needs attention or has some opportunities.

Workflow management

Workflow refers to the process of assigning, tracking and responding to social media platforms usually in a team environment in order to prevent double responses and missed opportunities. It is very important for an organisation to promote team productivity through collaboration.

Technology

In this subsection, a technology feature is described as a tool that provides in order to determine the extent of the effect of social media posts. This means that the use of social media can have influence other people although the influence can be neutral, positive and negative. It is important when it has positive impact or it makes a difference in someone life or a person has been disadvantaged on something.

b) Measurement

Measurement emphasises the range of matters such as the extent of current in-house media, namely hardware and software. Measurement and curricular would be of great value if they could be centred on these spheres stating, regional and national technology standards, especially the measurement of

available new technologies. The example of measurement of standards pertains to national content standards and other accredited bodies. In this instance measurement is defined as gauging or determining what areas are concentrated on and are being met versus what is actually needed (Reiser & Dempsey, 2011:3-65).

c) Planning

Experts caution concerning the usage of social inter-networking engines to our learners or students and advise that it is safer to use a professional account. The personal account might contain information that should not be viewed by the public (Greenhow, Robelia & Hughes, 2009:246-259).

d) Leadership

The concept of opinion leadership has evolved over time, has been treated in diverse ways both theoretically and methodologically (Brüggemann & Walter, 2018:1-22). Few studies have been able to measure opinion leader's actual influence is shaping the opinions of others. The studies have often relied on survey measures that assess self-perceived level of personal influence and certain traits (Song, Cho & Kim, 2017). The two way step flow of communication assumes that the mass media indirectly influence individuals by first reaching opinion leaders, who then spread the information through their social network (Walter & Brüggemann, 2020:267-287).

e) Staff and Student Assessment

According to (Chen & Bryer, 2012:88-100) social media is a tool that could possibly connect informal learning to the formal learning environment. Social Media technologies allow students to connect to educational contexts in new and meaningful ways beyond the traditional classroom between formal and informal learning. In addition, the school leaders must know that there are ways for schools staff to appropriately use social media in and out of school. The resource provides school leaders information to assist them facilitate the proper use of social media by their staff members.

In this study of the effective use of social media platforms, the learners will be guided and provided the school leaders the confidence to move their teachers safely forwarded into the social media world where their students mostly are found or reside.

Lastly, the effective use of social media platforms will make this happen through the investigation of what social media platform is used by the Department of Basic Education.

f) Use of the Simple Model and relevance

Simple Model is used in this research as a path in evaluating the social media platforms that are utilised at the Department Basic Education. Furthermore, the model involves planning that guides any individual for him or her to be able to have successful planning to the intended activity to do.

Some evaluation questions were formulated through the use of the Simple Model in order to be able the answer the sub-question for this research. The researcher was keen to know whether the frequency use of the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by the Department of Basic Education employees are effective. The consideration of this model plays a paramount direction in this study regarding the effective use of social media platforms.

In addition, this model helps in this study the researcher to be able to make an informed decision or informed recommendations regarding the effective use of social media platforms. The Department of Basic Education is an engine that helps growing children to acquire education before they may go to the working place or further their education to Higher Institutions.

The researcher was guided by the Simple Model to formulate questions that were distributed to the participants of this study. The Simple Model was easily understood thus the researcher had considered to use this model and has noted its relevance.

2.11 Mechanisms for regulating online behaviour

Policies that regulate the use of online platforms are extremely important for the prevention of various undesirable actions, such as online bullying. For instance, there are three strategies proposed in literature for preventing, arresting and intervening against acts of online bullying. Firstly, declaring protocols for online discussions can assist in preventing instances of anti-social behaviour (Murray, 2011). These strategies are often accompanied by rules, such as face to face classroom conduct (Dutton Tillery, Varjas, Meyers & Collins, 2010). Secondly, it is important to have a constant online presence and to immediately address any behaviour that could be as associated with bullying, such as belittling statements and joke using epithets, which if unchecked can grow into more antagonistic practices (Gilchrist-Petty, 2017). The third strategy is building an environment where users (for example, students) have safe channels to report interactions that make them feel uncomfortable (Robinson *et al.*, 2016:103-211). The South African learners can also benefit to the strategies that is envisaged from the detailed information above. Learners can communicate their ideas with experts in education in any wished time....

2.12 Impact and use of social media

Social media and social networking websites have fundamentally shifted how people discover, read and share news, information and content (Morgan & Davis, 2013). The impact is global and social media technology keeps on evolving and its usage increasing. Employers seek answers to legal questions that courts and legislators regularly have not yet foreseen or addressed. This section provides a brief discussion of the legal issues that occur when the world of social media intersects employers, employees and workplace. It covers key case law and legislative advances regarding the usage of social media through the employment relationship from the use of social media during personnel recruitment, through employee expulsion for social media use, to questions regarding who maintains ownership of social media after the employment relationship has ended.

The technological landscape presents a great promise and opportunity for practitioners, even though there are also potential challenges. While social media networks provide viable leads, it also contains tons of unverified and unfounded information and, in some instances, deceptions (Danson, 2017). These challenges or falsities have a negative impact on the financial stability of companies that produce infrastructure for social media platforms (Constantinides, Henfridsson & Parker, 2018). Although the spread of social media usage may be a concern for some reporters, it has become an important tool for the communication of news and issues within record time (Guerrero & Márquez-Ramírez, 2014:293-304).

Social media potentially empowers users to vary their levels of private and public disclosure (Bilgin (2018:128-148). In this way, a particular activity on social media ought to or not to be entirely public (i.e. for any member of the site user to see) or entirely private (i.e., for only the user themselves to see). It can, however, be quasi-public or quasi-private, that is, for a restricted number of members to see, as controlled by the user (Francis, 2001). This implies that a single act of communication could be both public and private.

Modern ways of communication have evolved considerably from the times of the drafting of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Almog & Perry-Hazan, 2012:486-500). For instance, to date, technological advancements include cellular phones, telephones, email, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and many others. These developments have made communication with the world easier. For instance, social media provides a variety of services and opportunities where citizens can communicate easily with the world to show their support for people, causes and interests, without having to be physically with the people with whom they are communicating (Hansen, Shneiderman & Smith, 2010).

In some institutions and countries, old-style media, particularly television, is broadly regulated by their owner or organisation (Lewis, Rodgers & Woolcock, 2014) . For instance, the majority of Chinese

people have changed to accessible services for bulletins and data (Wu & Zhang, 2010). Access to the Internet has significantly contributed to the general broadening of knowledge (Baker & Lewis, 2013:223-235). Social media has created a moderately liberal universe enabling citizens of strictly regulated countries, such as China and Iran, to participate in online communities (Golder, 2017). There is evidence to suggest that new ways of access to media have expanded sovereignty of information in, for instance, China (Deibert, Palfrey, Rohozinski & Zittrain, 2011; Esarey & Xiao, 2011). Many media experts contend that the Internet has contributed tremendously to reforming information access (Rubin, 2017). For instance, a lecturer who was one of China's top hundred community scholars stated that literature had become less censored when forwarded online (Han, 2018). He argued that, while previously edits may have removed up to a third of the viewpoints that he published in the old press, he could now publish without restrictions online (Han, 2018). This kind of information sharing through online platforms has transformed the landscape of knowledge (Han, 2018). To date, there are many instances of Internet-driven literature, whereby exchange of information has become an issue of significant interest (Emeka & Nyeche, 2016). The advantage of social media platforms, for instance, Twitter, is that more than 320 million operators generate more than 500 million Tweets monthly (Afolabi, Ezenwoke & Ayo, 2017). For instance, the readily availability and access to information sharing capabilities provided by Twitter has created a communication platform that is utilised world-wide (Fahy & Jobber, 2015:1-41).

The *Social Media in Higher Education Report* published on Google website, in 2018 states that literature reveals that social media and Web 2.0 technologies are now unequivocally essential considerations in every facet of post-secondary education, whether in organisational and administrative conduct of the institution, or in classrooms, labs, creative arts spaces or extracurricular student life and campus culture. The rapidly evolving research on social media usage in higher education has resulted in implications for the future of social media usage by students, staff, faculty and administrators (Von Muhlen & Ohno-Machado, 2012). This means that the access is expanding and the communities are benefits in the increase of social media platforms.

2.13 Innovation and awareness dilemmas in social media

The use of social media by organisations is often accompanied by opportunities to transform the online connections between government and its investors (Kaushik, Chowdhury, Hambly Odame & van Paassen, 2018:331-353). Literature on social media contend that it has a democratising effect and enables people who were not part of the policy making to be heard (O'Faircheallaigh, 2010; Von Muhlen & Ohno-Machado, 2012). In addition, social media may be prejudiced and could be abused to garner public opinion and support (Salter, 2016). Governments globally are faced with a dilemma of introducing innovations in their digital interactions through social media outlets within existing hierarchical settings (Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014). Current methods of innovating in government is

largely led by policy makers, presidential mandates or vendors hired to advance the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery mechanisms (Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014) . Especially, when it comes to e-Government service delivery and communication, innovative practices are usually determined by external vendors who are reproducing specific services across many different departments and agencies and are only gradually adapting to the local requirements (Kamarck, 2004).

The innovation dilemma is not unique to the use of social media; cases of ICT adaptation practices have been recognised in the past. Every step or impassiveness is immediately noticed by the public and reproduced through each social networking site. For example, the openness and the fast pace of interactions on social platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, are confronting the existing responsiveness paradigm in government (Omar, Stockdale & Scheepers, 2014). As an example, requests for records in line with the South African Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) must be responded to within 10 days (Roblek, Mesko, Dimovski & Peterlin, 2019). The steps of connections on social networking sites take place in real time, allowing small areas of access to contribute to the processes of government (Lange, 2007) .In terms of the literature on open innovation, improvements in government are internally directed (Feller, Finnegan & Nilsson, 2011). That is, these innovations permit increased alterations to the status quo, without radically altering existing communication paradigms. Instead, governments' internal logic is remains untouched and innovation rarely emerges from the innovations.

Mandviwalla, Schuff, Chacko and Miller (2013:51-58) have argued that the platform also empowers users by pushing simple site analytics to each member. For example, a student who had an appointment for a job interview with a specific company noticed that there was traffic from the employer's network on a post about the internship. The student gathered extra material and focused on his interview for the internship. The employer was so impressed that the student was immediately offered the job (Matamande, Nyikahadzoi & Taderera, 2013:16-49). The check points, interactivity, internal and external visibility and flat and open structure, revolutionise professional development from a series of discrete and disconnected events into a continuous process (Jaskiewicz, 2013). Students soon become aware that their e-portfolio is their always-on'' professional identity (Mandviwalla & Schuff, 2014). For example, students are expected to identify job interests listed in various search engines. For many, this is the first time that they must consider career goals with a view to establishing their e-portfolios, and this is how they notice that they do not have sufficient content.

2.14 Use of web-blogs as a social media platform

Web blogs can be defined as an accessible log entrance, where users paste and keep online content (Turner, 2010). In a web blog, readers can make comments to which authors may then respond, leading to a reciprocal read and reply association (Nardi, Schiano & Gumbrecht, 2004) . Blogging is often used by physicians to disseminate views, evidence and other health-related information. Distinguishing from

academic views and medical blogs is often a complicated exercise for some blog users to as these are often utilised as diaries than avenues for medical training (Lovink, 2013). Notwithstanding these limitations, blogs can, as education engines, provide access to information required (Pander, Pinilla, Dimitriadis & Fischer, 2014:18-37). Users in, for instance, medical schools often utilise blogging to develop standardised tests, provide guidance on clinical rotations and social support (Spallek, Turner, Donate-Bartfield, Chambers, McAndrew, Zarkowski & Karimbux, 2015).

Some institutions have used blogging to keep users informed (Bogoch & Holzman-Gazit, 2011:423-445). Examples in literature on blogging reveals that blogging has long history in medical training (Lowrey, 2006). The usage of blogs to endorse and facilitate journal clubs remains effective paths to including health-care services and providing technology equipment, which enables access to evidence-based medicine in a user-friendly search format (Genes & Parekh, 2010:504-505). Web blogs comprise hyperlinks for specific contexts, which enable users to retrieve information easily. Web blogs also enable users to create business opportunities in an individually personal manner (Razmerita, Kirchner & Sudzina, 2009) Furthermore, blogging may be utilised for monitoring of activities (Goh & Huang, 2009). This benefit renders blogs as a tool for teaching exercises to patients without having to do hospital rounds (Department of Health, 2015). This means that Blogging can be used to achieve communication as part of other social media platforms.

2.15 Social networking sites

Social networking sites provide corporations with platforms that enable operators to interact with different groups to create social relations for segment information and knowledge relevant to individual experiences in real time (Assaad & Gómez, 2011). Social networking sites may, however, compromise representation of user profile information, such as a users' details and tie it to different kinds of social networking sites (Alassiri, Muda, Ghazali & Ahamefula, 2014:57). Social networking sites are web-based communication platforms that provide users with interactive features that enable them to access services such as e-mail, instant messaging, offline messages and posting of images (Alassiri *et al.*, 2014). Interaction provided by social networking sites is often restricted to registered members, that is, in a broader sense, it could be considered as a community-centred interactive service (Malinen, 2016). Social networking sites also enable users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events and matters of interest with members in their networks (Alassiri *et al.*, 2014:47). This means that the social media is an engine for conveying information worldwide.

Social networking sites potentially improves functionalities regarding how users maintain their social networks (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Social networking enables users to complete functions such as tracking friends and creating personal profile pages (Park, 2014:462-475). Usually, email accounts have an application that enables users to see when their friends are online and send them messages

(Baruah, 2012:1-10). These services include, for example, Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, LinkedIn, Google and many other social networking sites. Users are also allowed to share pictures, word documents and excel sheets through their email account as with any other media technology. Social networking sites emphasise the need for relationships and therefore the basic notions of communities will continue to be investigated by technologies. This implies that users may gain control of their own relationship management (Chiu, Cheung & Lee, 2008:67). The full shift of the sociable function of Facebook networking sites could effectively improve efficiency to the function of the Basic Education office (Alassiri *et al.*, 2014:41-60).

2.16 District schools

Using the case of the United States of America, Gordon (2012:59) states that currently, it is unusual for schools not to have a system or strategy in place for improving the utilisation of technology for learning and teaching. However, in most instances, there are some challenges regarding the use of technology by a significant number of parents, students and teachers. However, in South Africa, there are now emerging examples of as more and more education districts are beginning to realise that in an era of constrained budgets, communicating in a clear and engaging way with their stakeholders about their vision and performance is key to enlisting public support for their programmes (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017:11). For instance, face to face communication still has a role, but technology has potential to provide a more effective vehicle for reaching out to key stakeholders of government departments (Birtchnell, Urry, Cook & Curry, 2013:28). Supporting these observation, Hopkins and Moore (2010:940-946) argued that, instead of hard copies of reports, more schools are moving towards multimedia platforms to make lessons interactive and more engaging. In these instances, the use of technological solutions for educational interventions, such as one-to-one tutoring and audio-visual platforms, has improved student participation. Initiatives such as these have assisted to encourage teachers to use technology to support teaching and learning in their classrooms (Hopkins *et al.*, 2010:20).

Workload and structured and standardised curriculum seems to be one of the biggest constraints for Web 2.0 adoption (Georgakainas & Zaharias, 2016:90-102). Literature has proposed the need for adjusting and restricting standardised curricula in order to lessen teachers' workloads, where technology specialists are deployed to provide teachers with the use of technological solutions to prepare learning and teaching activities. It is not easy for anyone to observe the outcomes of use because every application and context is different and the students as users are different. However, in the study of Egenfeldt-Nielsen (2010:65) reports that results can be measured using games-based learning modalities. In addition, in a study conducted by Teo (2011:2432), a significant correlation between subjective norms and perceived usefulness was confirmed. In another study, Motaghian, Hassanzadeh and Moghadam (2013:158-167) found that subjective norms improved instructors' perceived usefulness

of a web-based learning system. In other words, the results of the study suggest that if key stakeholders (e.g. students, fellow instructors and school authorities) champion the instructors' use of web-based learning systems, instructors may perceive such systems as useful.

Bon, Bathon and Balzano (2013:194) state that Federal and State laws, as well as school policies, are developed with a purpose of promoting professionalism among school employees and shield children and students from undesirable conduct. This holds employees responsible for their use and conduct while using Internet services, online technologies, social media networks and cellular phone communications belonging to companies. At the federal level, Congress approved the Protection of Children from Sexual Predators Act (1998) for defending minors who may be targeted by paedophiles using Internet (Dizon, Graham, Thompson, Johnson, Johnston, Fisch & Miller, 2012:114-124). In 2006, Congress reinforced this law to strengthen sentencing guidelines and promote child safety in the Internet (Ramirez, 2014:123).

Carroll (2014) has reported that education districts are utilising social media platforms to interconnect with their stakeholders. In doing this, education districts have set up vast, interactive online communities by linking their social media platforms, enhancing their ability to provide information, to receive feedback and communicate with their stakeholders. Stakeholders often benefit from social media platforms that are user-friendly, as they do not have to click through dozens of pages to find the information that they are looking for (Abbas, Aman, Nurunnabi & Bano, 2019:2-23). A good example will be the Board of Education of the Community Unit School District 308 in Oswego, Illinois, approved phase one of a communication plan that contained district commitment to open, honest and ongoing communication with their stakeholders. District 308 consists of 22 schools that serve almost 18,000 students, making it the eighth biggest region in Illinois (Carroll, 2014). School District 308 serves Oswego and parts of Uroa, Joliet, Montgomery, Plainfield and Yorkville, an estimated population of 75,151.

The district referred to above relies on support from the community in maintaining a high level of education. In this district, officials understand that maintaining open channels of communication with stakeholders is essential for building relationships (Carroll, 2014). These relationships are the foundation for a strong education system. District 308's communication plan includes tracking data on media coverage, social media engagement, email, surveys and website usage. The district's director of communications and public relations tracks electronic and web mediums in order to understand usage patterns, interaction and sentiment toward the district, while creating benchmarks, including stories that news outlets publish about district schools and their activities (Carroll, 2014).

In South Africa, Gauteng and Western Cape Departments of Education uses online platforms for management functions in schools (Bush & Glover, 2016). For instance, Gauteng Department of Education uses technology to administer applications for admission to its schools. The purpose of this study was to assess the effective use of social media platforms in basic education. Respondents in the study were teachers and officials. The study focused on the route of social media platforms that were used by basic education to communicate with the public. The study was prompted by a gap in the literature about the use of social media in the context of basic education. For instance, during the review of literature, it was discovered that literature covered mostly what was happening in higher education. The argument made in this study is that it is important for communication via social media platforms to be deployed from basic to higher education to provide the public with a more complete picture of education in the country.

2.17 Basic education delivery through use of online platforms

The Department of Basic Education communicates its deliverables with Provincial Departments of Education through emails and websites entries. The sector uses Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. These are networking sites that are used in messaging or informing the public of the activities that are currently happening within the education space in South Africa. The Department of Basic Education communicates matters about what is happening education, such as building of the schools, irrespective of where areas are geographically. Reports of the Department of Basic Education are uploaded onto their website. Learners and teachers can access question papers and memoranda from the website at any desired time (Department of Basic Education Annual Report, 2017:10).

Email is a vital aspect of the communication structure within organisations (Michalski, Palus & Kazienko, 2011). However, few research studies have been undertaken to establish the costs and benefits thereof as an effective communication method compared to other methods. Communication can be effected in different forms, but the common underlying motive of communication is to advance working practices and expand productivity (Jackson, Dawson & Wilson, 1999:167).

Striving for a more technologically friendly and ‘paperless office’, the focus must on peoples’ productivity, which implies the efficient use of their time (Jackson *et al*, 1999:170). Companies striving for better and more efficient communication processes often invest in email to lower communication costs and boost employee productivity (Jackson *et al*, 1999:170). Email has the potential to cut down on paper use and telephone bills (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). Email is often appealing because it has become universal, is incredibly cheap, can be personalised and can target groups, companies or regions through mass marketing often with very little effort (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). Email serves as a versatile communication tool capable of conveying a message anywhere in the world within seconds (Bowden, 2015).

2.18 Conclusion

In this chapter, it was argued that information that has influence must be publicly available so that any matter that requires urgent attention may be resolved as soon as possible. The chapter also presented an analysis and discussion of the use of different online platforms in a variety of contexts. This included education, and for a variety of reasons, including communication with the public on key issues. The intention was to review literature relating to the use of social media platforms in education, with a view to providing a theoretical foundation of the study. Discussions in this chapter revealed that some companies use social media platforms to share information with their stakeholders and general public. However, it was reported that information that is placed in the public space must first be approved for use in the public domain, as a mechanism for ensuring that the sector does not disseminate information that is not supposed to be shared or share information that could have a negative impact on the integrity of the organisation. It was also argued that social media platforms are important for communication as they play a crucial role in disseminating public information.

Several scholars have argued that the use of social media improves information sharing, which can be cost effective. This chapter further argued that today's communication methods assist to ensure that information reaches a wide range number of people. It was also argued that traditional methods are slowly overtaken by online communication platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, through which the public can provide inputs regarding a variety of issues of public concern.

The next chapter presents and discusses a theoretical framework through which the discussions and results of the study must be understood.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The purpose of the study was to assess the effective usage of social media platforms within the Department of Basic Education. The study used the Task Technology Fit Model as a theoretical framework. The theoretical framework is used to deconstruct and rebuild networks of ideas with a view to examining the results of the study. In this chapter, different models were discussed regarding the use of social media platforms in the working environment. The chapter concludes with providing a summary of the key issues that emerged in the discussions.

The layout of the theoretical framework in this dissertation shown in figure 3 below:

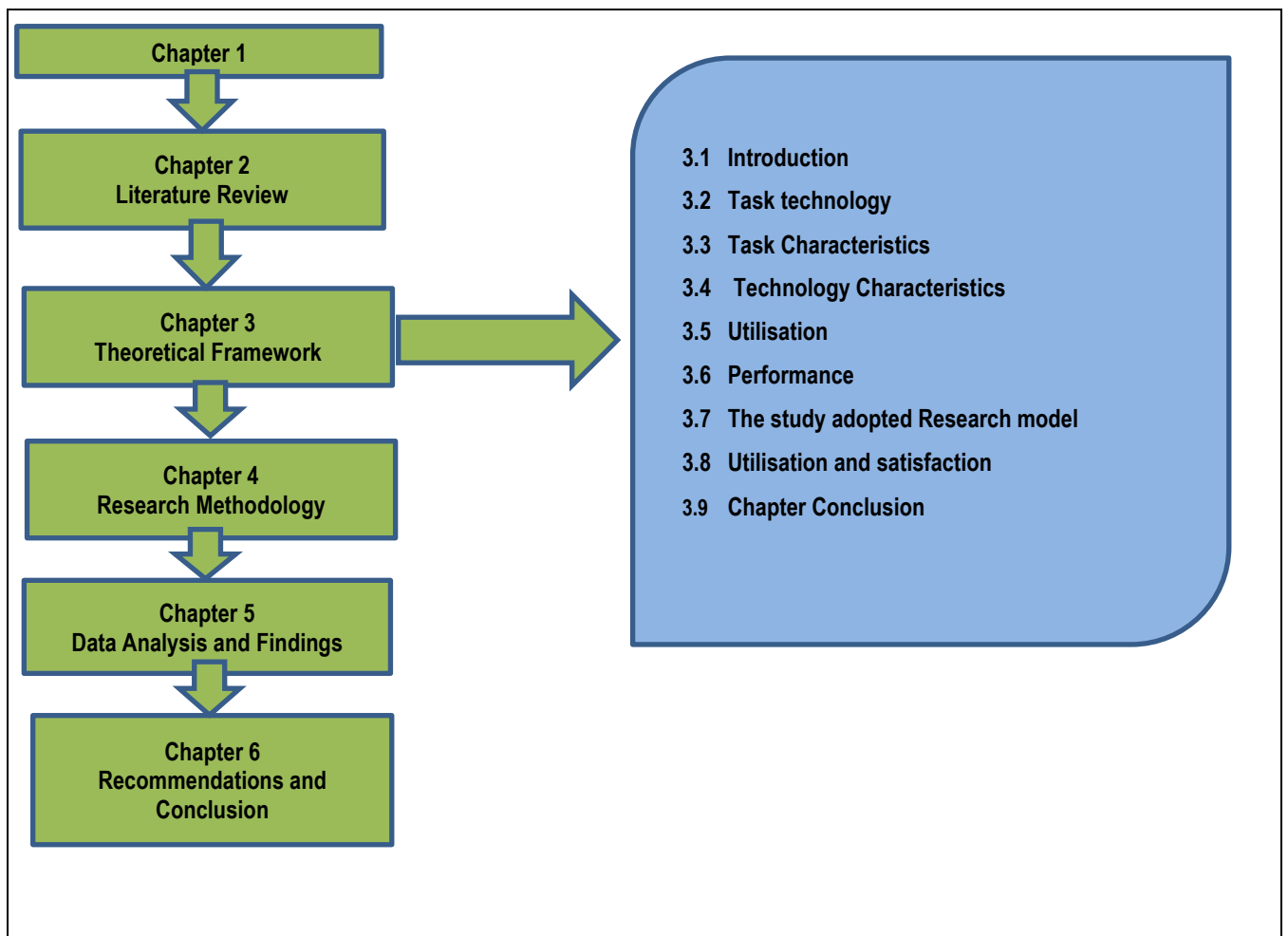


Figure 4: Structure of Chapter 3 (Source: Author)

Figure 4 above shows the model that this research study followed. The following sections discusses the different aspects of the Task Technology Fit Model.

3.2 The Task Technology Fit Model

3.2.1 Task Technology Fit (TTF)

The purpose of this study was to determine the effective use of social media platforms within basic education. In respect of this research study, the TTF theory was used to provide a theoretical basis or a centre for understanding the discussions and results of the study. According to Osang (2015:232), Task Fit refers to the level at which technology assists a person to complete the assigned work effectively. It is regarded as high level when the functionality of the technology and the user's requirements are comparable. The TTF is shown as lower if the functionality of the technology is less adequate in meeting the needs of users, especially if the demands of a task are amplified (Osang, 2015:232). Goodhue and Thompson (1995:213-236) have noted that the accomplishment of a task is related to an individual's performance. That is, a higher level of performance could improve effectiveness and efficiency, which, in turn, can lead to higher quality output. TTF also potentially increases the opportunities created by utilising technology.

User performance has been discussed and proposed by Goodhue and Thompson (1995:215-236), who contends that technology could be used to monitor the operator's performance. The degree of TTF is based on system evaluation performed by users of a specific technology. These evaluations can gauge the user's perception of the characteristics of a specific technology Goodhue and Thompson (1995:215-236). These evaluations are normally rated on a continuing scale from positive to negative ratings. A positive rating of a technology from a user often indicates that the technology may be improving the user's performance, while a negative rating may suggest that the technology is hindering the user's performance (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995).

According to Lai (2017:21-38), TTF emphasises individual impact. Individual impact relates to improved efficiency, effectiveness and high quality. Goodhue and Thompson (1995:238) assume that the good fit between task and technology increases the likelihood of utilisation and performance impact, where the technology meets the needs of users more closely.

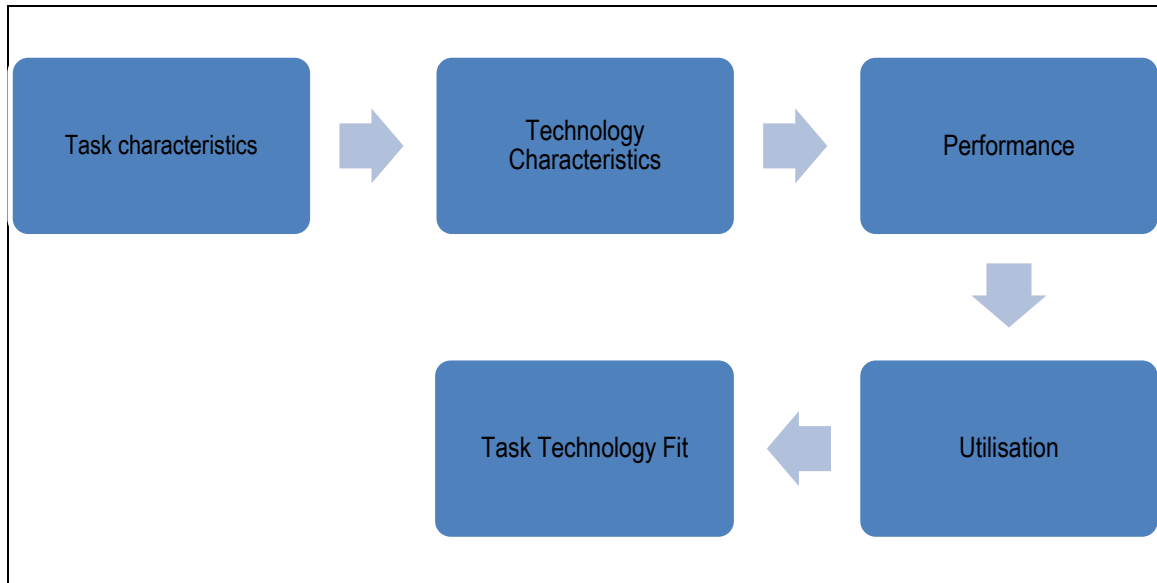


Figure 5: Task Technology Fit (Source: Goodhue & Thompson, 1995)

3.2.2 Task characteristics

The use of meaningful, characterised technology is consistent with prior applications of the theory of TTF, as Goodhue and Thompson (1995:228) have utilised functionality as the major proxy for technology as a concept; whereas Cooper and Zmud (1990:123-139) have documented various functionalities among two systems. Dishaw and Strong (1998:109) considered a functional vision of technology, asserting that “software will be used if the functions available to the user and support the activities of the user”. Zigurs and Buckland (1998:313-334) utilised functionality to describe Group Support Systems (GSS) technology “as a set of communication, structuring, and information processing tools that are designed to work together to support the accomplishment of group tasks”. Malhotra and Majchrzak (2004:6-42) isolated various kinds of support provided by information technologies for disseminated groups, namely, task coordination, external connectivity, and interactivity.

3.2.3 Technology characteristics

Technology characteristics are used to measure social media by applying a scoring approach, which encompasses assessments created by extension (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang & Johnson, 2014). The practice of a scoring could be necessary because quantitative assessment social media of the profitability and risk characteristics for each technology would have involved considerable costs for data collection and farm-modelling. However, though scoring approaches are less costly, they have some limitations. One limitation is the loss of information due to the usage of scores, instead of a continuous measure, which may result in a poorer explanatory power of the models estimated (Brazier, Roberts & Deverill, 2002). The loss of information may be caused by a large range of the scale, mostly considered for scoring. In addition, the usefulness of such an approach depends, to a large extent, on the quality of information

provided by the experts (Verburg, Neumann & Nol, 2011). The purpose of this study was to determine whether the character of the technology is used to influence social media platforms at Department of Basic Education. There is an assumption that a good assessment of social media technology characteristics can be provided since they are associated with the new technology as well as the traditional technologies (Batz, Peters & Janssen, 1999:121-130).

3.2.4 Utilisation

Studies conducted by Irefin, Abdul-Azeez and Tijani (2012:1) have found that the utilisation of appropriate information communication technology can help cut costs by improving internal processes. Ongori and Migiro (2010:19-33) have argued that information communication technology assists to increase productivity and achieve business performance. For instance, in this study, the employees of education provides information to the learners in the country, the learners have to send information through the social media networks to get a response as soon as possible.

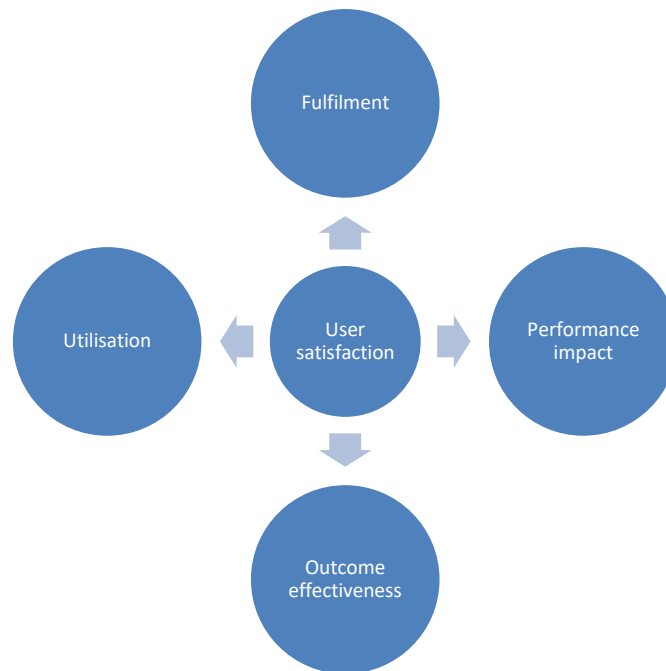
3.2.5 Performance

Mills, Botha and Campbell (2015:397) defines performance “as a deliberate and purposeful action or set of actions that an individual takes, in order to achieve a desired result or output of some kind that is of value to the individuals or to others”. Social media has enabled a shift in marketing communication strategies from one-way brand-to-customer advertising (e.g. print, radio, television, etc.) to two-way brand-to-customer-to-brand and customer-to-customer social dialogues (Mills & Plangger, 2015). There is a need to respond to these challenges in order to improve performance as well as delivery. One way to respond to the challenges, organisations use social media to endorse their products and services in order to increase their customer strengths (Aichner & Jacob, 2015:259). Performance is influenced by a strong sense of organisational identification (Grimes, 2010). Employees operating from home have a solid intelligence of structural identification in making an effort toward connecting with the organisation and remaining loyal members of the company, which would strengthen the cooperative atmosphere among colleagues and improve organisation performance (Wang, Chaudhry, Li, Cao, Guo, Vogel & Zhang, 2016:5).

3.3 Research Model for the study

The research study used Task Technology Fit. The model was suitable for this study as it focuses on the direct path and systems’ utilisation. The TTF models combines a user’s fulfilment with their actions (Yu & Yu, 2010:1003-1017). In addition, it has a link of association between fulfilment and duty act (Chen, Zhao, Zhang, Wang & Guo, 2015) This research also used other models, which guided the research on the effective usage of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education. Task Technology Fit is difficult to understand and is included in the operator’s examination as well as the Impact of Work Act (Howes, Lewis & Vera, 2009).

The following diagram shows the model utilised:



3.4 Utilisation and satisfaction

Lee, Kim and Lee (1995:189-202) established a structure utilisation, which was associated with pre-matured operators of information system fulfilment. Igbaria and Tan (1997:113-121) researched the influence of premature operators' fulfilment encompassing the optimistic and important influence on utilisation. The results of this study revealed that the end operators' satisfaction often leads to usage, instead of using inspiring satisfaction (Baroud, Ramirez-Marquez, Barker & Rocco, 2014:1317-1335).

On the model depicted in Figure 6 these hypotheses were established:

H1: characteristics technology is positively affecting the effectiveness of social media

H2: characteristics technology is positively affecting the use of social media

H3: task technology fit will positively affect awareness of social media

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the Task Technology Fit Model as the theoretical framework for understanding the discussions and results of the study. The chapter discussed the theory agreement and the pointers that were used.

In the next chapter, the research methodology and design is discussed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher builds on earlier chapters that introduced the study and lay the foundations for how discussions and results must be understood in respect of the purpose of this study. The central question of this research study was: *What is the effect of social media platforms used by the Department of Basic Education to communicate with the public on activities related to education.* This chapter presents and discusses methodological and design choices that the researcher made for responding to the key research questions of the study.

The chapter begins with a brief explanation of where the study was carried out. This is followed by a discussion of the research approach, research design and methodology used in the study. The discussion includes research instruments, population and sampling, data management and data analysis. Data collection methods and instrument are discussed and linked to the central and sub-questions of the study. The researcher concludes the chapter with a discussion of the key aspects of data analysis, how reliability and validity was ensured and what ethical issues were considered to ensure the protection and respect of the respondents for the study.

The research process followed by the researcher, as discussed in the paragraph above is shown in Figure 6 below.

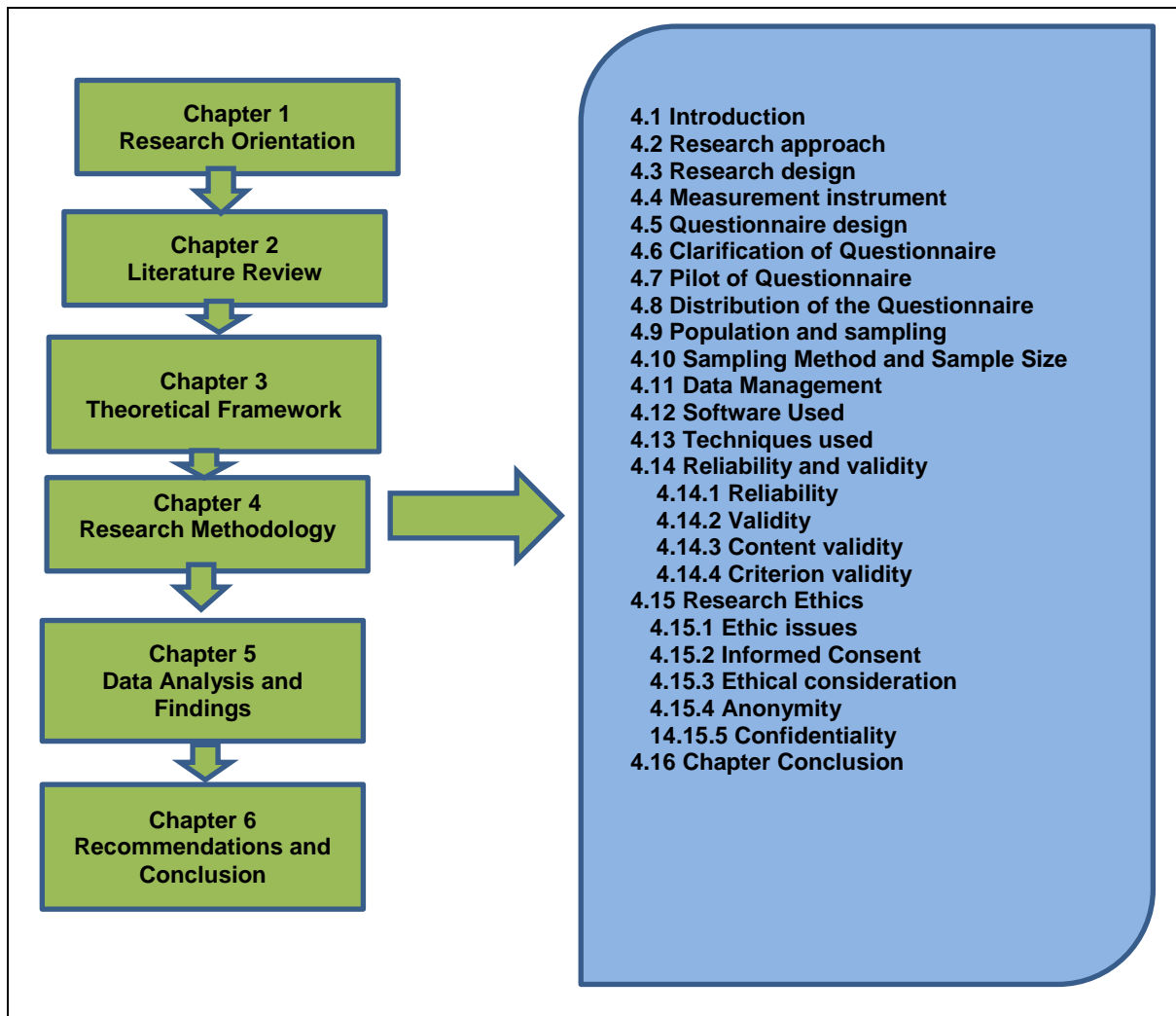


Figure 6: Structure of Chapter 4 (Source: Author)

Figure 6 presents the steps in the research process deployed in responding to the research sub-questions regarding the assessment of the effective use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education. In the section that follows, the researcher discusses the methodology and design aspects of this research study.

4.2 Research approach

There are two main research approaches in the social sciences, namely, quantitative and qualitative approaches (MacDonald, 2012). Qualitative research is a form of social action that focuses on the ways in which humans understand, interpret and make sense of their experiences of social reality (MacDonald, 2012) examples of research methods that qualitative research use are, inter alia, interviews, diaries, journaling, classroom observations and immersions, and many others (Haradhan, 2018:3). According to, the qualitative research approach is concerned with aspects of reality that are not quantifiable, with a specific focus on the participants' understandings of the dynamics of their social relations. Maxwell

(2012:18-39) further argues that qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representativity, but with the deepening of the understandings of a given research problem.

Queirós, Faria and Almeida (2017:370) states that quantitative research focuses on objectivity and is especially appropriate when there is a need for collecting quantifiable measures of variables and making inferences from a sample of a population. A quantitative approach to research often adopts structured procedures and formal instruments for data collection. That is, the data is collected both objectively and systematically. Martin and Bridgmon (2012:21-35) support the argument that the data in quantitative research can be generalised. This is largely because the samples in quantitative research are generally large and representative of the target population (Creswell, 1994).

This research used a quantitative research approach. This research approach was appropriate for this study as the study sought to utilise quantifiable data to establish correlations or relationship between specific variables (Creswell, 1994).

4.3 Research design

According to Wshyuni (2012:72) and Kasim and Wahyuni (2016:46-60), a research design is a map of how a researcher will go about responding to the key research questions of a study. For this study, the survey design was considered as relevant for a study to determine the effective use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education, for the following reasons:

- Availability of employees to complete the questionnaire: A survey was considered as the most appropriate design for reaching out and accessing a large sample of the respondents for the study; and
- Financial implications: There were lesser costs involved in distributing a questionnaire to respondents than interviewing respondents in the sample.

According to Klassen, Creswell, Clark, Smith and Meissner (2012:377-380), surveys are commonly used in research studies that have individuals as a unit of analysis. Surveys are excellent for measuring attitudes and orientations of large populations, and are appropriate for descriptive and explanatory purposes (Klassen *et al*, 2012:377-380). Mathers, Fox and Hunn (1998:6) and Céspedes, Briceño, Farkouh, Vedanthan, Baxter, Leal, Boffetta, Woodward, Hunn and Dennis (2013:27-35) state that surveys are a traditional way of conducting research and are particularly useful for non-experimental descriptive designs that seek to describe reality. For instance, the survey design may be used to establish the prevalence or incidence of a particular condition in a large population.

4.4 Data collection instruments

4.4.1 Structured questionnaire

In this study, a structured questionnaire was used to collect data on the effective utilisation of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education. The reasons for using a structured questionnaire were:

- The population was adequately literate;
- The possibility of anonymity and privacy was possible in order to encourage a high response rate on sensitive matters;
- The standardised questionnaire made the comparison of responses easier as the data was provided on the same instrument.
- The standard questionnaire made it easier for the respondents to express their views freely without fear of victimisation.

The questionnaire asked about demographics of respondents, and comprised eight (8) closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions comprised mostly statements from which respondents were requested to select one that mostly represented their views. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale. A Likert scale is a response scale used in questionnaires to obtain responses of respondents regarding their references (Pasek & Krosnick, 2010:268). The questionnaire used in this study sought information on the respondents' perceptions of the usage of social media platforms by the Department of Education. The questionnaire comprised 13 questions, whose focus was on the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education.

Table 1 presents the dimensions of the structured questionnaire used in this study:

INSTRUMENT	NUMBER OF ITEMS
Impact of communication and infrastructure	9
Understanding and awareness of social media	4
Effectiveness of social media platforms	8
Use of social media	4

Table 1: Dimensions of the questionnaire

4.4.1.1 Development of the questionnaire

A detailed literature study was performed, which led to the construction of the questionnaire and questions used to gather data. A questionnaire with four parts was constructed to gather data from the respondents. Part A of the questionnaire contained items for collecting biographical data. Part B contained items for collecting data on the impact of the communication and information. Parts C and D of the questionnaire contained items for gathering data on the respondents understanding of the

information that was being communicated through social media platforms. Part E of the questionnaire contained items used to collect data on the personal opinion of respondents regarding the use of social media platforms. Part F was used to gather data on strategies used to ensure the effective use of social media platforms. The questionnaire consisted of seven biographical information statements; as well as sections pertinent to the research problem.

4.4.1.2 Piloting of the questionnaire

In order to improve the reliability of the questionnaire as an instrument to collect data for this study, the questionnaire was piloted using five (5) employees of the Department of Basic Education, who were not part of the sample of the respondents for the study. The pilot was conducted to determine if there might be any challenges with the questionnaire when data is being collected and to ensure that whatever problems might arise were detected and rectified in time. Therefore, the purpose of the pilot was to:

- Determine if the questionnaire was easy to read and answer;
- Ensure that items in the questionnaire were clear and not ambiguous in any way;
- Determine if the respondents could provide response that are relevant to the research;
- Pre-codes were correct; and
- Ensure that the researcher had not forgotten or omitted certain key issues that were important for the study.

The researcher piloted the questions using a group of five employees from the Department of Basic Education in order to make adaptations to the items, where this was necessary. Thereafter, the five respondents in the pilot were interviewed regarding their experiences of completing the questionnaires. The following questions were used for this purpose:

- How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?
- Did you find the items in the questionnaire easy to read and answer?
- Did you find questions clear with no ambiguity?
- Will you be interested to participate in the study?
- Did you that find questions were relevant to the research?

Regarding the responses received for the above questions, it was established that there were no major issues with the questionnaire. Subsequent to the pilot study conducted with employees, the questionnaire was forwarded to a statistician who ensured that the responses to the items of the questionnaire could be analysed using statistical methods. The questionnaire was later given to a subject expert for validation before finalisation and distribution to the respondents of the study. The pilot study confirmed that the questionnaire was appropriate for conducting the study. Therefore, no

changes were made and the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who participated in the study.

4.4.1.3 Distribution of the questionnaire

Two hundred questionnaires were hand delivered to the Administrator of the Directorate: Monitoring and Evaluation at the Department of Basic Education in line with the guidelines and directions provided for conducting research in this Institution. The researcher briefed and oriented the Administrator regarding the coordination of data collection. To ensure that questions raised by the respondents were properly responded to, the questionnaire contained contact numbers, that is, the office number and cell phone number, of the researcher. Completed questionnaires were anonymously placed in a sealed research box. The respondents were advised to drop the completed questionnaire in a sealed response box that had been made available in the office of the administrator, who was co-ordinating the distribution of the questionnaire. To prevent traceability of respondents, the box was emptied daily.

Table 1 shows the number of questionnaires distributed and returned.

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES PROVIDED	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED
	200	102 (51%)
	200	102 (51%)

Table 2: Number of questionnaires distributed and returned (Source: Author)

4.5 Population and sampling

The target population for the survey comprised of the officials from the Department of Basic Education. Officials from senior and middle management and junior staff were included in the sample. This approach was relevant for the study because it enabled the researcher to stratify respondents by level of appointments. The Department of Basic Education had a staff complement of 500 employees when the research study was conducted.

According to Taherdoost (2016:20-22), sampling theory differentiates between probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability means that every item in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample and the element of the population can be established (Gregorich, 2006). Non-probability sampling takes place when the probability or chance of including each element of the population in the sample is not known (Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz, 2016:329-345). Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam (2013:330-331) assert that the choice of sampling techniques is dependent on their feasibility and sensibility for collecting the data required to respond to the research questions and address the objectives of the study. They further argue that for a population fewer than 50, it is

usually more sensible to collect data from the whole population where one is considering using probability sampling (Archarya *et al*, 2013:330-331).

For the purpose of this study, a probability sampling design as used. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 200 respondents. A total of 102 questionnaires were returned by the respondents, which represented a return rate of 51%.

4.6 Data management

The first step the researcher took after receiving the targeted number of responses was to number each of the questionnaire 1 to 102. This was done to ensure that no duplication took place and if an error occurred on capturing the data the researcher would be able to easily identify the point of error and rectify it. The second step was to create a data code on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This was done with the intent of making it easy to interpret the information or response given and the categories under which they fall. Data was captured on the Microsoft excel spreadsheet to ensure that SPSS package could be properly used to analyse the data.

4.7 Data analysis

4.7.1 Software package used

Wimmer and Dominick (2013:149) state that analysing data involves summarising collected data with the use of the questionnaire. A specific engine of software commonly known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analysis data and this was done with the help of a statistician for this study. The software generates statistically outcomes of the data gathered. Firstly, data had been captured of all the returned questionnaires on Microsoft Excel thereafter the data was imported to the Statistical Package Software for analysis.

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis had been applied to examine the association among terms and to measure outcomes of use of social media platforms to communicate with the public by the Department of Basic Education.

In determining, the statistic significant among the groups such as t-test as well as Enova had been utilised. The Statistically Packaged was used to determine if the insignificant hypothesis could be rejected or not.

4.7.2 Techniques used

The following data analysis techniques were employed.

4.7.3 Descriptive statistics

The calculations of frequencies, means and standard deviation were used to interpret the results from the study. For purpose of this study, descriptive analysis was used to describe behaviours factors in each of the areas of attention, namely: impact of communication, understanding and awareness of social media, effectiveness of social media and use of social media.

The following keys were used to interpret results in terms of mean scores: mean score of 1-2,7 were defined as short of best practice in terms of the behaviour factor concern, which therefore requires utmost urgent attention, and a mean score of 4.2 was defined as average score which needs improvement. However, a mean of 4.3 was defined as a practice that requires little improvement and mean score of 6.7 was defined as best practice that requires to be sustained. Results were also interpreted through the frequencies analysis in which the findings were reported based on percentages.

4.7.4 Chi-square test

Onchiri (2013:3) asserts that Chi-square test is a non-parametric test of significance appropriate when the data is in form of frequency counts occurring in two or more mutually exclusive categories. The Chi-square test was used to test if there is any significant different in behavioural factors that should be prioritised by organisation for the purpose of an effective use of social media on the demographic characteristics.

The interpretation was performed at $\alpha = 0.05$ and associations were considered significant if the p-value was found to be less than 0.05. The Chi-square was appropriate in establishing the significant of the relationship between categorical variables of the sample and the behavioural factor on the use of social media platforms.

4.8 Reliability and validity

In order to determine the comparative success or failure of the results of scientific research, the tasks of reliability and validity must be addressed. The reliability and validity of a research design and methodology are outlined below.

4.8.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to a measurement that provides consistent results with equal values (Mohajan, 2017:59-82). Mohajan (2017:59-82) further states that measuring instruments are free from errors only if their repeated application yields consistent results. A number of techniques for measuring reliability have been sought (see, for example, Rincent, Laloë, Nicolas, Altmann, Brunel, Revilla, Rodriguez, Moreno-Gonzalez, Melchinger and Bauer (2012:715-728)). For the purpose of this study, there was a need to utilise one of such measuring techniques to determine internal consistency. Accordingly,

internal consistency was calculated by using Cronbach's alpha, which calculates the mean of all possible integrations of split-half co-efficient resulting from different splitting of the measurement instrument (Al-Zu'bi, 2010:104). The SPSS software was used to realise this.

Panayides (2013:690) states that a value close to 0.08 and many authors accept the value of 0.06 or below. It is for this reason that the alpha co-efficient for this study shown on the table 4.2 is accepted.

4.8.2 Validity

Validity is often defined as a tool which measures what it asserts to measure validity of a research instrument assesses the extent to which the instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Mohajan, 2017:14). Bajpai and Bajpai (2014:112) assert that validity is a test of how well an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Both these schools mention that there are many measures to assess the validity of data collection engines, namely, content validity, face validity, criterion validity and construct validity. For the purpose of this study, both content validity and criterion validity of the instruments was used to evaluate if it measured what it was meant to measure.

4.8.2.1 Content validity

According to Bajpai and Bajpai (2014:112-115), content validity ensures that the measuring tool includes an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concept and the tool appears to others to be measuring what it says it does. Face validity is a form of content validity where a researcher asks questions to a few number of people to check whether the tool includes all areas, in this regard the experts of the field had to be asked to give their views on the validity of the tool (Bajpai & Bajpai, 2014:113).

Content validity was addressed through the use of an expert statistician who ensured that the content of the questionnaire was in line with the statistical method utilised. The questionnaire was also given to a subject expert for validation before it was distributed to the respondents. Consulting the subject specialist assisted in determining if the questions in the questionnaire were subject-related. Subsequent to this, the questionnaire was approved by the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Research Ethics Committee before it was distributed to research participants.

INSTRUMENT	CRONBACH'S ALPHA/EFFICIENT	NUMBER OF ITEMS/QUESTIONS PER VARIABLE
Impact of communication and information	0.08	9
Understanding & Awareness of social media	0.03	4
Effectiveness of social media platforms	0.07	8
Use of social media	0.03	4

4.8.2.2 Criterion validity

Criterion validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument is related to other instruments that measure the same variable. Bjapai1 and Bajapai2 (Bajpai & Bajpai, 2014:112-116) assert that concurrent and predictive validity are both measures of criterion validity and concurrent validity utilises existing and well accepted measures against the new measure that can be compared, whilst predictive validity measures the extent to which a tool can predict a future interest. The Chi-square tests were used to determine if there was any significant difference on the aspects that had to be prioritised for purposes of measuring the effective use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration in research refers to the respect and protection of respondents, which is based on the belief that respondents have the right to determine what is best for themselves and can make informed decision regarding their participation in a research study. Informed decision-making means that respondents should be provided with accurate, complete and understandable information that enables them to make a choice without undue influence or pressure (Hain, Diaz & Paixao, 2016:429). For this study, ethical approval or clearance was obtained from Tshwane University of Technology. The signed informed consent forms were obtained from respondents after they had given consent to participate in the study.

The ethics on this study were considered with the following components: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality as discussed below. To ensure that ethical values and principles were not compromised in this study, respondents were provided with a letter explaining the intention of the study, the name and contact details of institution, statements guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality. In order to protect the rights of participants, the following measures were undertaken:

- Permission to conduct the study was sought and granted from the Department of Basic Education. The permission granted to this effect is attached as **Annexure A**.
- The dissertation was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and regulations of Tshwane University of Technology Research Ethics Committee in order to uphold the required ethical clearance standards;
- All the employees were allowed to participate in the study.

4.9.1 Informed consent

An informed consent form was distributed to respondents after they had given their consent to participate in the study (**See attached Annexure C**). To ease their decision on whether to participate or not, the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of the research were explained to the prospective

respondents. As part of informed consent, the researcher pointed out that the research report would be compiled in such a manner as to ensure the respondents' identities remained anonymous. Respondents were also informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation if they felt the need to do so at a later stage. The participants were given an opportunity to ask questions from the researcher. In addition, an information leaflet was also provided to the respondents, which provided additional information on the study.

4.9.2 Anonymity

Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2006) state that it is common practice for researchers to change the characteristics of study participants in order to protect their identities. In the context of this study, research participants' identities were concealed using pseudonyms.

4.9.3 Confidentiality

The study considered confidentiality as several authors state that employees and independent contractors of an organisation should be entrusted with confidential information, intellectual property and trade secrets concerning the client and its customers (Kumar, 2018:239). In this study, the personal details of the respondents were treated with confidentiality in order to protect them from potential harm arising from their participation in the study.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed research methodology and design choices that were made by the researcher in undertaking the research study. This research adopted a qualitative approach. The researcher employed various mechanisms for ensuring reliability, validity and ethical consideration during the conduct of the research study.

In the next chapter, the researcher will present, discuss, analyse and interpret the results of the study.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed, analysed and justified the choice of specific methodological and design decisions for carrying out the research study. The aim of this chapter is to present, discuss, analyse and interpret the results of the study. As pointed out previously, the study sought to determine or assess the effective use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education.

The researcher begins this chapter with a description and explanation of the processes followed in the interpretation of the results of the study. The chapter then presents various themes, which emerged from the analysis of the data. The intention is use the data gathered to respond to the following sub-questions of the research:

- What is the frequency of use of social media platforms by the employees of the Department of Basic Education?
- What is the level of implementation of social media platforms in basic education?
- What are the strategies that are being used to ensure adequate utilisation of social media platforms?

During the discussion, the researcher analyses and interprets the data using a theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 3, namely, (Osang (2015:232)) Task Technology Fit Model.

The chapter layout is shown in Figure 8 below.

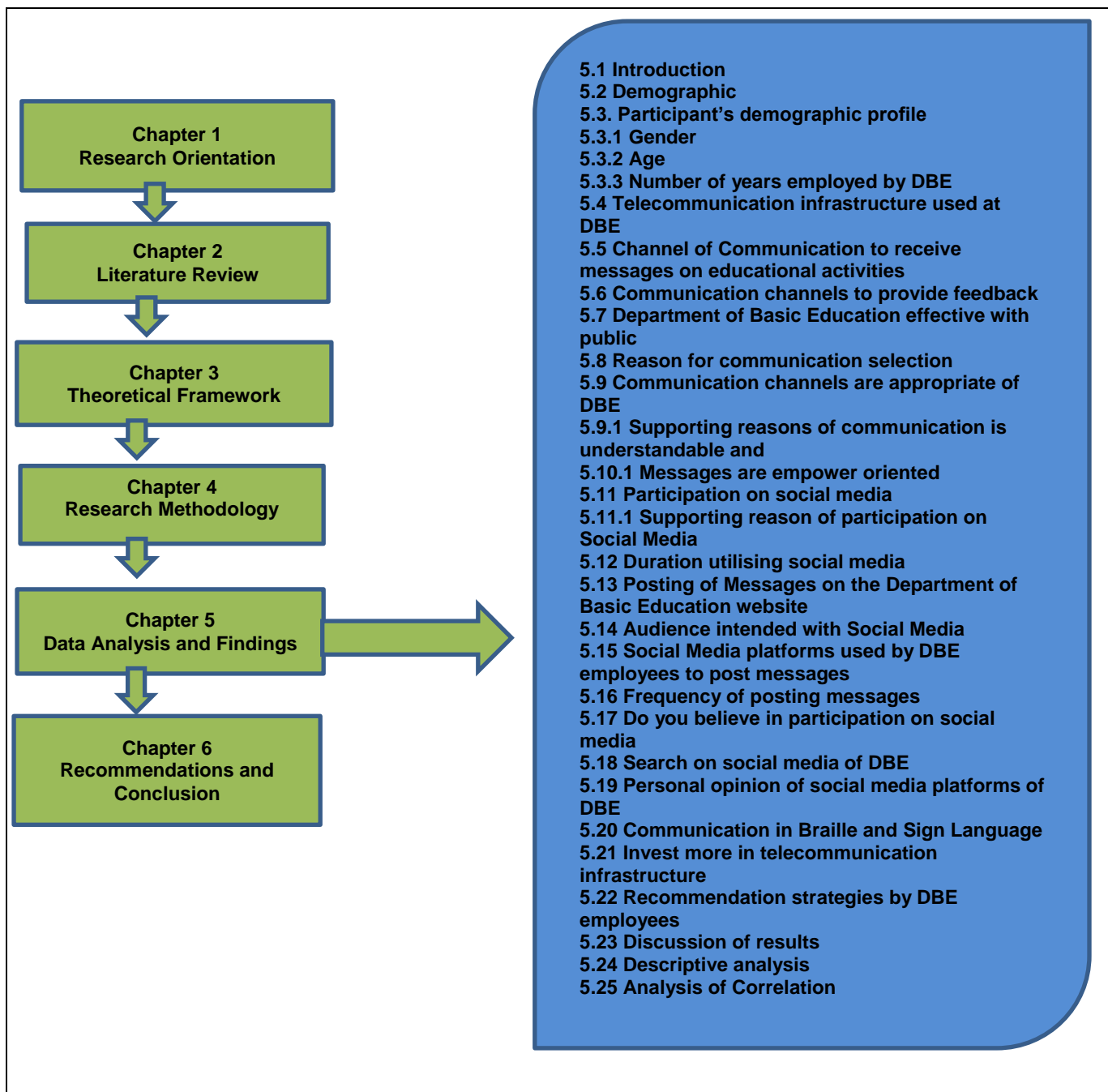


Figure 7: Structure of Chapter 5 (Source: Author)

5.2 Profiles of respondents

The profiles of the respondents who participated in this study are presented in this section. The aspects of the profiles of the respondents that are presented and discussed in this section include gender, age, years of working at the Department of Basic Education and the types telecommunication infrastructure used by the respondents. Each of these are presented and discussed below.

5.2.1 Gender

Respondents were requested to indicate their gender in the questionnaire. This was essential for ensuring that both female and male respondents were represented in the sample. Figure 8 below presents the respondents responses in respect of gender.

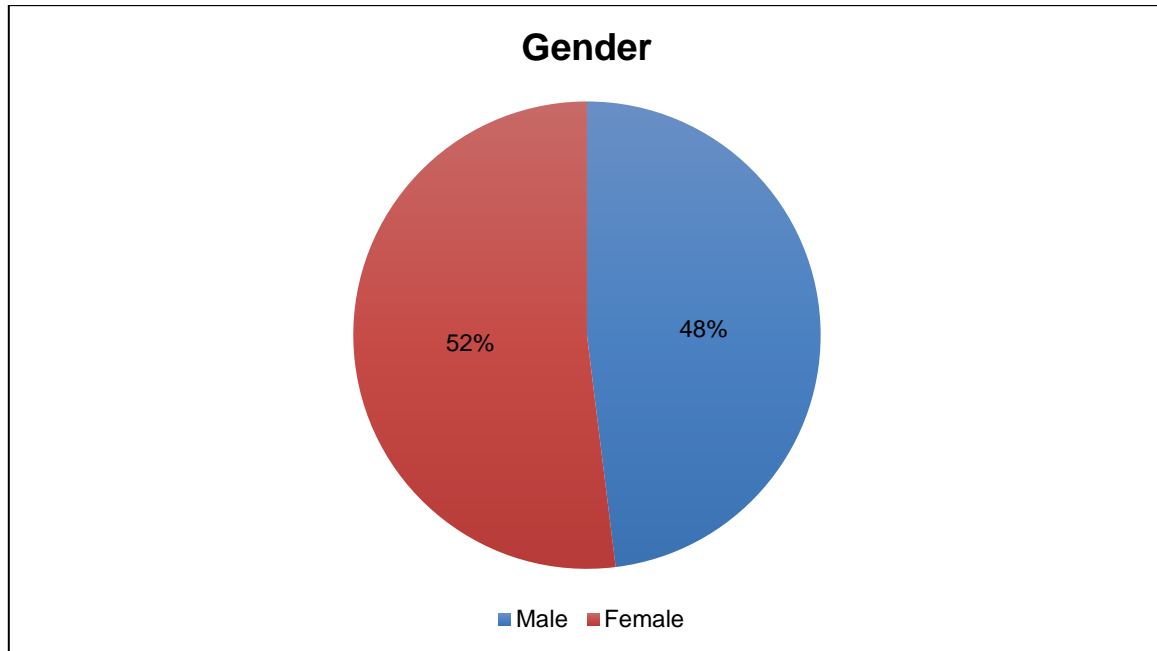


Figure 8: Gender

Figure 8 above shows that 52% of the respondents were females, while 48% were males, which means that in the sample and, possibly, the Department of Basic Education, there were more females than males.

5.2.2 Age

Participants were requested to indicate their age group. The aim of this question was to determine the age patterns of the respondents and juxtapose this with their use of social media platforms. Figure 9 below presents the number of respondents in each age category.

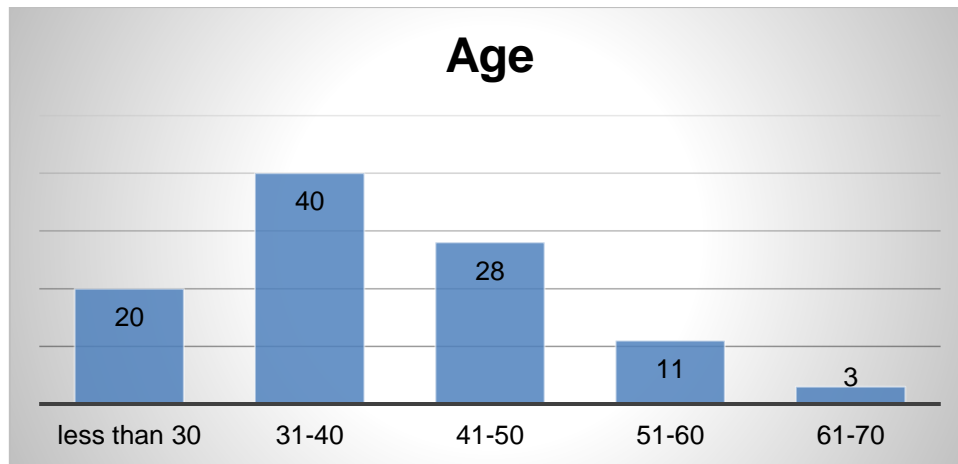


Figure 9: Age group of the respondents

In terms of Figure 9 above, the numbers of respondents for each age category were as follows: 20 respondents were less than 30 years old, 40 were between the ages of 31-40, 28 were between 41-50, 11 were between 51-60 and while 3 were between 61-70. This means that approximately 40% of the respondents were between the age of 31-40, while the least number of respondents were within the ages of 61-70. More than half the number of the respondents were 50 years old and younger.

5.2.3 Number of years in the Department of Basic Education

Respondents were requested to select the number of years they had been in the Department of Basic Education. The intention of asking this question was to determine the duration respondents had been in the Department of Basic Education. Figure 10 below presents the number of respondents for each period.

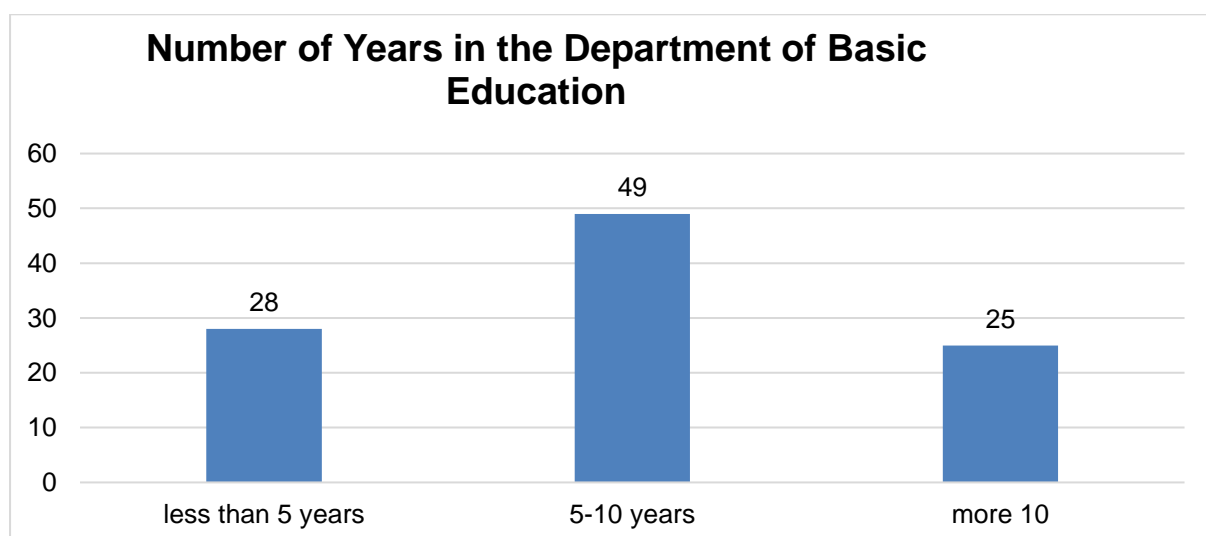


Figure 10: Number of years respondents have been employed by the Department of Basic Education
 Figure 10 above shows that the majority (i.e. 49) of the respondents had spent 5-10 years in the Department of Basic Education, followed by those who had been employed for less than 5 years (28),

while there were 25 respondents who had been employed for more than 10 years. This means that a significant number of the respondents (that is, 74 out 102) had been with the Department of Basic Education for a long period of time.

5.3 Telecommunication infrastructure used at the Department of Basic Education

Respondents were asked to indicate the telecommunication infrastructure that they used at the Department of Basic Education. The intention of the question was to determine the infrastructure used by the respondents. The results are presented in Figure 11 below.

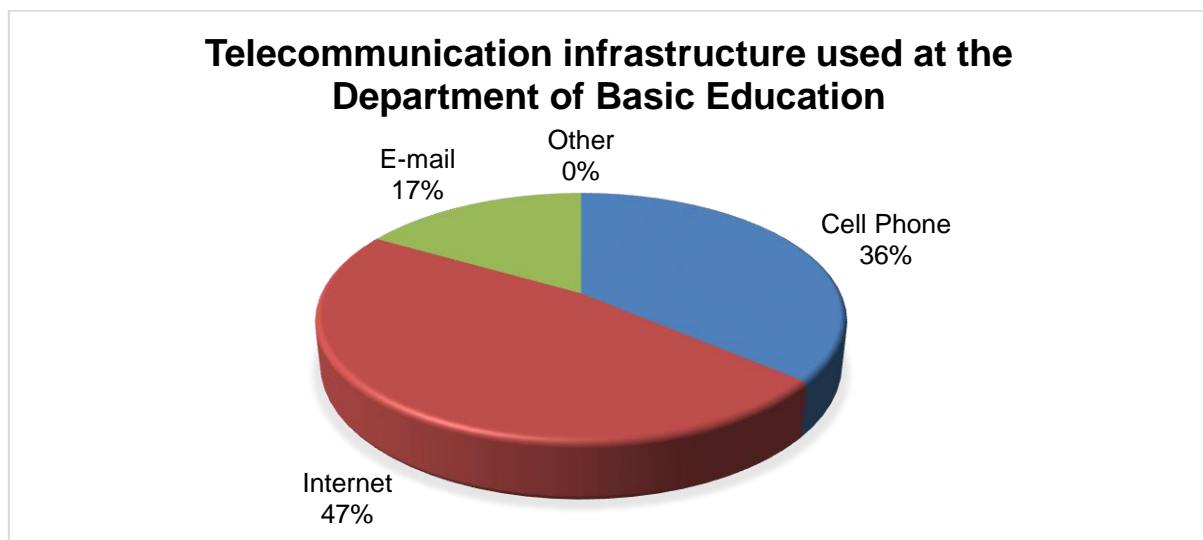


Figure 11: Telecommunications infrastructure used at the DBE

Figure 11 above shows that 17% of the respondents indicated that they used email, 36% cellphone, while 47% used the Internet. This means that a significant number (that is, 47%) of the respondents used the internet.

5.4 Impact of communication and information

5.4.1 Channels of communication to receive messages on educational activities

Respondents were asked to mention the channels of communication by which they received messages regarding activities of the Department of Basic Education. The question sought to establish how respondents received messages about basic education activities and which channels existed for this purpose.

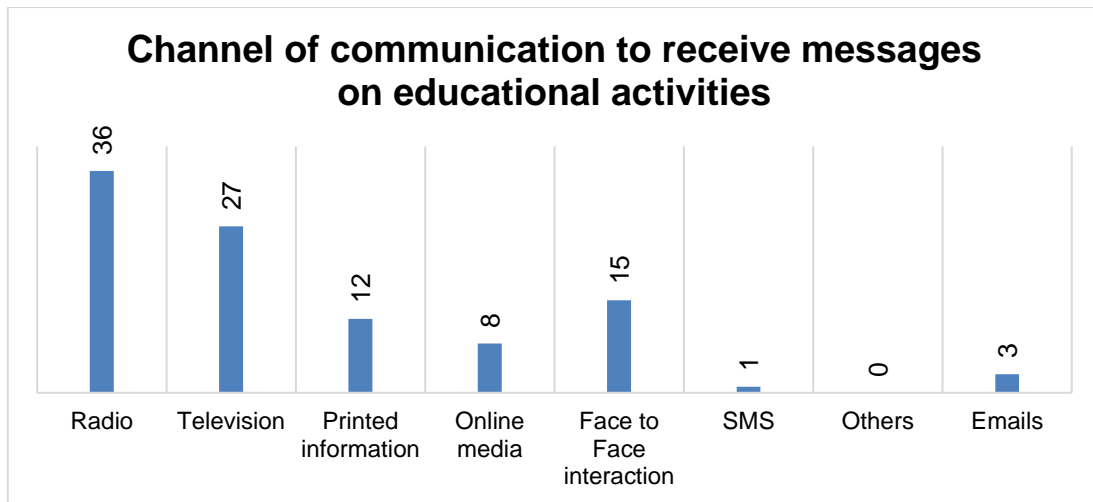


Figure 12: Channels of communication to receive messages in education

In Figure 12 above, respondents indicated that they received messages as follows: 36 respondents received messages on the radio; 27 respondents received messages on television, 12 respondents received messages on printed format, 08 respondents received messages from online media, 15 respondents received messages from face to face interactions, one (1) respondent received messages from social media platforms, while three (3) respondents received messages by email and ‘other’ (0). This indicates that a range of communication channels is available in the Department of Basic Education.

5.4.2 Communication channels provide feedback

Respondents were asked whether the available communication channels assisted them to receive feedback properly. The purpose of this question was to check whether communication channels chosen above assisted respondents to receive feedback and whether respondents could respond to the messages being communicated. The results are presented in Figure 13 below.

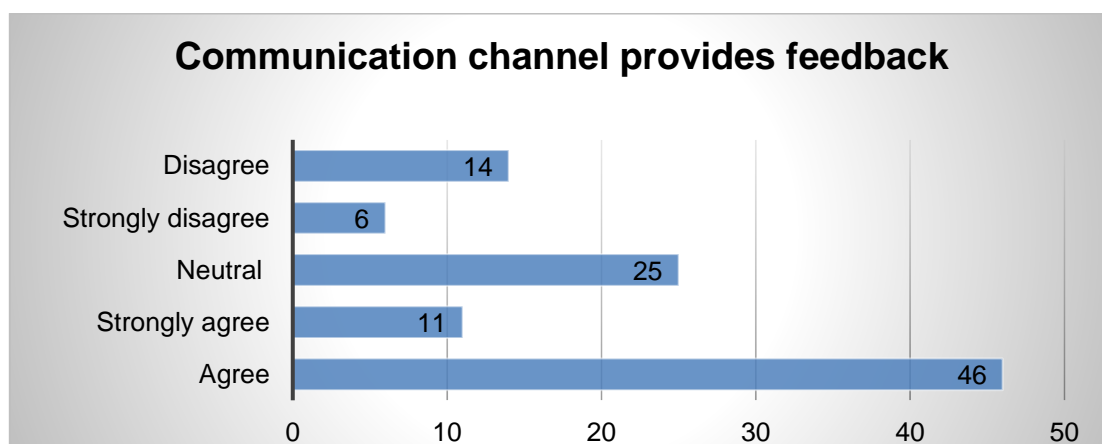


Figure 13: Communication channel providing feedback

Figure 13 above shows respondents' responses in respect of whether they were able to respond to the messages being communicated. Figure 13 shows that 46 respondents agreed that the communication channels effectively helped them to provide feedback on what had been communicated, 11 strongly agreed that the communication channels effectively helped them to provide feedback, 25 respondents provided a neutral response to the question, while six (6) respondents strongly disagreed and 14 respondents disagreed. This means that the respondents are indeed supporting the view that communication provides feedback as the higher respondents who agreed to this effect depict it.

5.4.3 Communication of the Department of Basic Education with public

Respondents were asked to state whether the Department of Basic Education communicated effectively with the public. The purpose of the question was to determine whether the Department of Basic Education communicated effectively with the public. The results are presented in Figure 14 below.

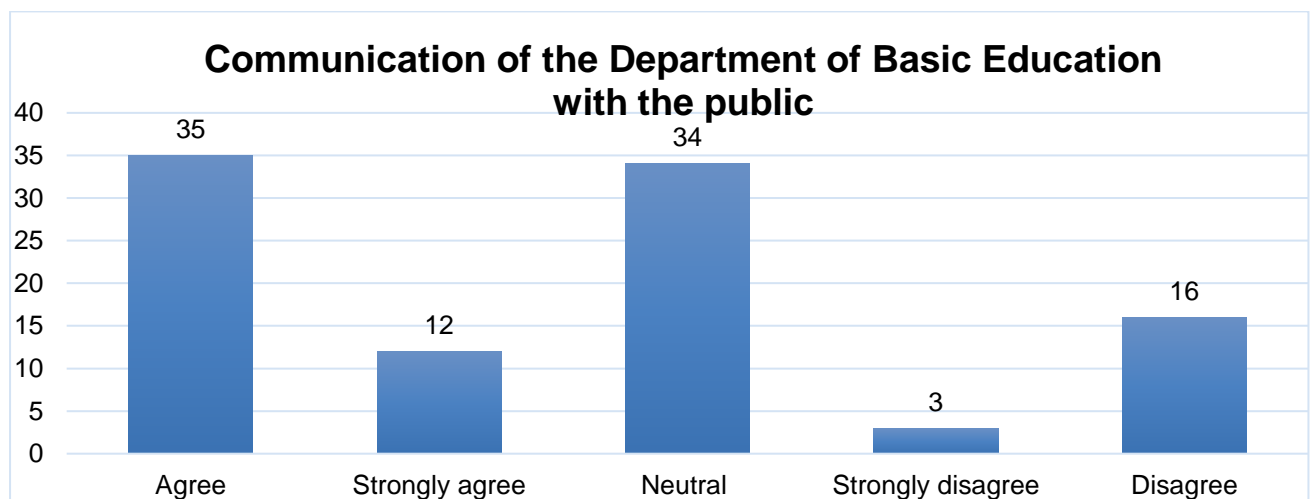


Figure 14: Communication of the Department of Basic Education with the public

Figure 14 above shows that 35 respondents agreed that the Department of Basic Education communicated effectively with public, 12 strongly agreed, 34 provided a neutral response, while three (3) respondents strongly disagreed and 16 disagreed. The results show that a significant number of respondents (that is, 47 out of 102) agreed that the Department of Basic Education regarding the effectiveness of communication by the Department with the public. Only 16 out of 102 respondents disagreed. However, a third of the respondents provided a neutral response, which may be concerning for an institution as big as the Department of Basic Education.

5.4.4 Reasons for communication with the Department of Basic Education

Respondents were requested to state the reasons for communicating with the Department of Basic Education. Table 15 below presents reasons provided by the respondents for communicating with the Department of Basic Education.

Most people use TV and Radio
Difficult to find information on the website, social media platforms only share positive news.
The public is informed on a regular basis
Some members of the public have no idea about functions of the Department
DBE communicates effectively with public via social media, radio and TV
The DBE invests time in media informing the public about different activities undertaken.
The public does not get the opportunity to respond
3 if their messages to the public is received favourably
Some programmes that portray good work or programmes such as National School Nutrition Programmes (NSNP) are not known by the public
The public could know more about DBE
Not all people have access to the communication channels
Access to social media platforms, is a challenge to DBE
The Department should invite public and meet face to face. The Department should send messages via Television and Radio
DBE can do better in communicating
Only email from Newsflash
DBE communicates through social platforms such as twitter, Facebook and internet
DBE spokes-person is always on the news media
Some of the members of public do not know much about DBE functions or activities
Members of public are aware of what is taking place at the DBE.
It is a one-way communication, there is no platform available for radio listeners to give feedback
This should be done through school communication channels
The Organisation ensures that public is aware of everything by conducting face to face interaction
Not enough educational/DBE advertisement
Received feedback from the public
For the intended users, the department is able to send messages, for instance, to provincial and district officials. For the general public, the radio and TV programmes do assist them to be aware of the departmental programmes
Some DBE sites have been blocked from use by the officials. Only senior officials are allowed access to e.g. "We transfer"
The DBE is not specifically good in communicating many success stories and the enormous progress that the DBE employees are making in many areas
Employees think that they could provide interesting analytical information to the public through forums like Twitter rather than mostly achievements or event coverage e.g. the Minister opening a school.
The general public is always informed about the policy changes, educational programmes and initiatives undertaken by the DBE.
If DBE uses Facebook or Twitter, the majority of recipients who are older are likely not to get the news. It also depends who resorts under the public as education is a societal issue.
The number of engagements is not sufficient especially those from face to face.
From personal experience as an employee in the DBE as well as from interaction with the public, members of the public do not know many things.
The communication of DBE covers all the aspects.
Hardly visit Department website.
The Department could do more in communicating with learners and district offices, the circuit and provincial staff.
The Department does not campaign towards its employees to encourage them to participate on social media platforms.
People do not know how the Department operates.
Most people call the DBE employees for information of which the public is not aware e.g. registration of students on the computer.
Used communication that are accessible to public

For information to be accessible to the public
Information is effective because the minister and MECs appear on television regularly when there are important issues.
The feedback is not structured and coordinated. It is mostly hit or miss for the targeted people; therefore, some people receive information by chance.
There must be two-way communication with the public, unfortunately feedback is limited.
The Department provides updated information and everything involved with education through radio and television to the public.
Some people in the Department do not know much about the Department of Education.
The communication provided is generally limited. The communication is also generally reactive and not proactive. The public has a negative perception and the efforts made to change this have been inefficient.
The Department of Basic Education communicates mostly with the public for the required information for improved assistance and knowledge.
Judging from the negative comments, one always hears from members of the public, the DBE's outstanding good work is not known by the public and therefore the DBE needs to communicate its work better. The website is overwhelming with information. The channel to use is social media.
The Department of Basic Education uses different social media platforms for communication

Figure 15: Reasons for communication selection

The responses in the above table suggest that respondents communicated with the Department of Basic Education for a range of reasons.

5.4.5 Suitability of communication channels

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the communication channels utilised by the Department of Basic Education were appropriate for the information they required. Respondents responses are presented in Figure 16.

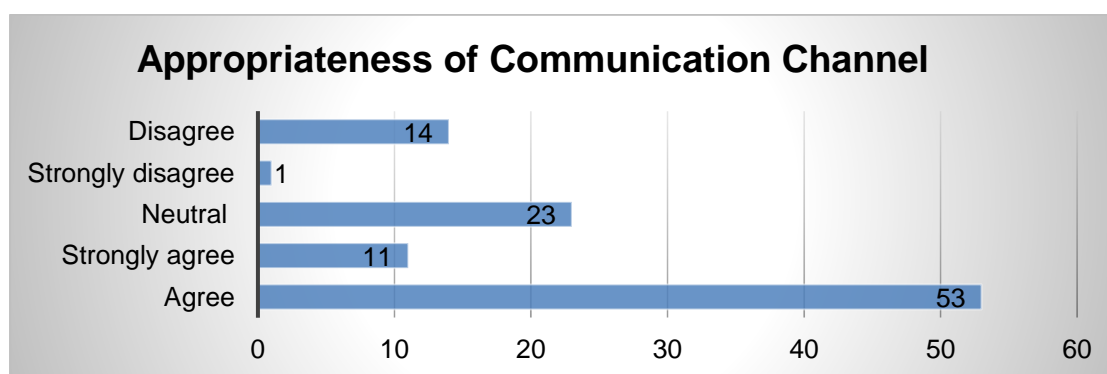


Figure 16: Appropriateness of DBE communication channels

In Figure 16 above, 53 respondents agreed that the communication channels used by the Department of Basic Education were appropriate for information required, followed by 23 respondents who provided a neutral response, 14 disagreed, while one (1) strongly disagreed. This means that there are interventions that are needed as 23 respondents do not see as an appropriate channel to convey

information thus this study come to this factor as a builder to add to the indication that the effectiveness of social media platforms can improve communication.

5.5 Understanding of the needs for communication

5.5.1 Clarity of communication

Respondents were asked to indicate whether messages communicated by Department of Basic Education were understandable and clear. The results are shown in Figure 17 below.

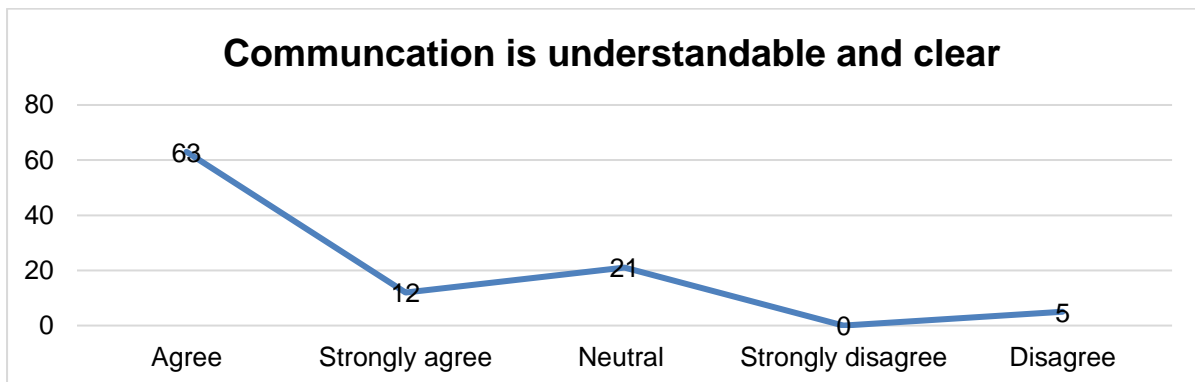


Figure 17: Clarity of communication

Figure 17 above shows that 63 participants agreed that communication by the Department Basic Education was understandable and clear, followed by 21 respondents who provided a neutral response, 12 who agreed and five (5) who disagreed while no respondents strongly agreed. The results suggest that the majority of the respondents (that is, 75 out of 102) believed that communication by the Department of Basic Education was clear and understandable.

5.5.2 Justification for why communication was regarded as understandable and clear

Respondents were requested to provide reasons to support their choices in Figure 17 above. The purpose of the question was to determine whether the respondents understood the intentions of communication by the Department of Basic Education. Table 18 below presents responses to this effect.

Check that teaching is in line with curriculum requirements, learners get remedial assistance on the system
Clearly articulated
Learners' increased pass rate
Learners can access questions from old exam papers on the website
Sometimes it is difficult to understand the message or information
The learners receive material, Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) stationery to all public schools
Learners receive material on TV channels as well as radio
In some cases, the target group receives the message but in some cases, the message does not reach the target group resulting in lack of the desired outcomes reached.
Learners receive material.

The DBE is always accessible and communication is clear and understandable, but there is room for improvement
Compliance menu requirements
ASIDI schools are reflected correctly
Messages are clear and understandable
DBE receives positive reaction from public
The Maths, Science and Technology and Enhancement Programmes' Chief directorate uses WhatsApp effectively
Only learners' pass rate communicated
Easy for learners and teachers to receive support material through DBE's website
Messages communicated by Basic Education is clear and easy to be understood by audience
Information sharing
Critical information is kept internal by various Departments
DBE uses radio, television, face to face and visits to provinces to ensure that everybody is well informed of the functions of the Department of Education
Learners receive the required material for assistance
The community is aware of services provided and where to obtain assistance
It depends on the kind of messages being disseminated but most of the messages are clear and understandable
There is too much structure. Teachers are doing more management exercises and use too many acronyms.
Reporting on trends over time is always very tricky, since this is dependent on having comparable data over time. The DBE often struggles to communicate on these trends in a way that simplifies it for the public, yet keeping true to the complexities inherent in the trends. Moreover, the DBE is also not good in communicating most statistics in a clear, simplified way.
The messages are clear because the public responds positively and are informed of occurrences. Thus, available activities and services rendered by the Department are well-known.
Sometimes, the newsletter is not clear.
Information on progress made about programs to be unfolded e.g. public comments on CAPS documents.
The DBE always comes across as not being clear about where it is and what it seeks to do and thus does not communicate clearly.
Learners receive material and the poor do not have to pay school fees
The Department could do more in communicating with learners and districts, circuits and provincial staff
Through its engagement on special issues when requested the department provides information required.
The public expects that people who are working at DBE, therefore, the DBE employees, should know everything whereas the employees are not informed of activities such as the certification unit.
All learners receive study material for free. Learners' increased pass rate
There are learning channels on TV that can improve the pass rate
What DBE does, is not necessarily or directly influencing learning, it is not a linear relationship. DBE is responsible for policy development but this generally takes long to have influence but where the DBE gets involved, direction is set and clear.
There is improvement of education from analogue to digital.
The pass rate increases every year which shows that students are understanding well.
The information is generally clear especially on social media and in terms of documents these tend to be comprehensive.
Any relevant information that needs to be communicated with the public is clear and understandable for any sort of information
The material is clear (understandable) but there is too much and it is hard to find what you need (unfocused/uncoated/information overloaded)
Changes and updates online. Registration of learners was not properly communicated of the intake of learners in public schools, especially in Gauteng schools.

Learners receive learning material
Ensure most schools receive material
Difficult to access information within departments
Learners and educators are able to access information on the Departmental website e.g. post question papers and learners' competition
The news flash emails that circulate for the whole Department inform and educate employees regarding policy, procedures, plans and achievements of the department
Learners have access to school material.
Learners receive material and the messages are clear and to the point
The pass rate is still dropping every year; if technology had been advanced, the DBE would improve because the learners know technology and education should be made fun.
Learners' increased pass rate and learning improves
Exams are conducted well

Figure 18: Factors accounting for clarity of communication

In Table 18 above, respondents provided a range of reasons to support their responses. This means that there is a range of reasons for why respondents thought communication by the Department of Basic Education was understandable and clear or not understandable and unclear.

5.5.3 Messages and services to the public

Respondents were asked to indicate if the messages of the Department of Basic Education were empowering or whether the work of the Department of Basic Education and services available to the public were communicated clearly.

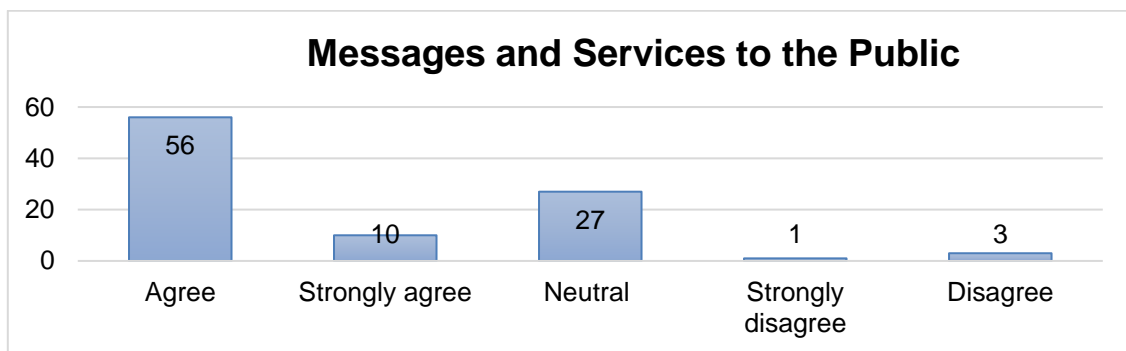


Figure 19: Degree of empowering of messages

5.5.4 Supporting reasons for whether messages were clear

Respondents were asked to justify their selection in Figure 19. This was important because it sought to determine the reasons for the responses of the respondents. The supporting reasons provided by the respondents are listed in Table 20 below.

Pass rate improves
Policy and documents are available for perusal
Pass rate increases
The majority of people get information and benefit from the DBE's programmes.
Information is easily accessible on the website, but needs more interaction with the intended customer
There is lack of access to some of the programmes i.e. learner transport
The public responds positively
The radio interviews are engaging and provide critical information
Only Grade 12 pass rate is communicated
Easy access to national documents (public and curriculum material)
Learners' pass rate, school readiness and teaching material
Learners receive material
Learning improves in their school work/results
In some instances, it is not always the case e.g. the public finds it difficult to register online for matric second chance programmes, there is no official available to assist and. public is referred to someone who is on leave.
Sometimes
The DBE is using website or oversight visits to the provinces, districts and schools
They are not communicated enough for one to acknowledge them
All mediums provide the necessary uploaded material to assist the public
The community is aware of things such as second opportunity exams and bursaries
Policy documents and other documents needed for perusal by the public are of importance
Free access to Wi-Fi
The DBE is clear in communicating opportunities such as the Second Chance programmes etc.
Template and policies are placed on the website.
Learners are the priority, all messages benefit learners.
It may be challenging to reach the public as the channels used are not free to the public.
Members of the public are informed about services rendered and how to get the services when in need e.g. reapplying for a lost matric certificate.
May not be aware of the source of the programmes communicated about.
There is a lot of work for the department on improving infrastructure such as toilets in schools.
Learner support material
The Department is using mainstream media to provide lessons for learners
Motivate learners to study

The Department ensures that every learner receives textbooks for their studies
To a certain extent many people do not really understand what the department does for those that do benefit from the knowledge they have of the department.
The messages generally provide positive updates as well as opportunities for the youth/parents on accessing services. However, the messages are overly positive without providing a balanced reflection.
The messages serve the purpose of communicating the work but they tend to be either too many with things people are not clear on (e.g. minister visits districts office, most people are not even aware there are districts or what a district office is, or that there are provincial departments, and how they relate to the minister), or, there are too few messages that showcase the key things. For example, no-one I know of outside government knows about second chance matric; ASIDI, KHA RI Gude, NSNP, read to Lead etc. These are not clearly articulated and the focus of media content, the content is confusing and too varied.
The Department runs various workshops for informing the public about their services.
Believe that most information is on line, so if one does not have the information there is a problem
Rather disseminate thought provoking information
Not as clued up in regard to making an informed decision
Learners are able to access previous question papers, information of how to prepare for examinations and how to deal with stress related to examination is available, communities are also able to access legislation related to education.
Schools should communicate information and improvements of school feeding schemes should be communicated to increase focus and commitment of learners
DBE upload of the important documents so that the public can have access.
Learners receive material through their website and it is easily accessible
Some learners or candidates are not aware that there are platforms that provide study material.

Table 3: Support reasons for why messages were clear

Table 20 above shows that respondents provided a range of reasons to justify the responses that they had provided in supporting messages that are empower-oriented in communicating the activities of the Department of Basic Education.

5.6 Participation in social media platforms

5.6.1 Respondents' participation in social media platforms

Respondents were asked whether they participated in social media platforms. The results are shown in Figure 21 below.

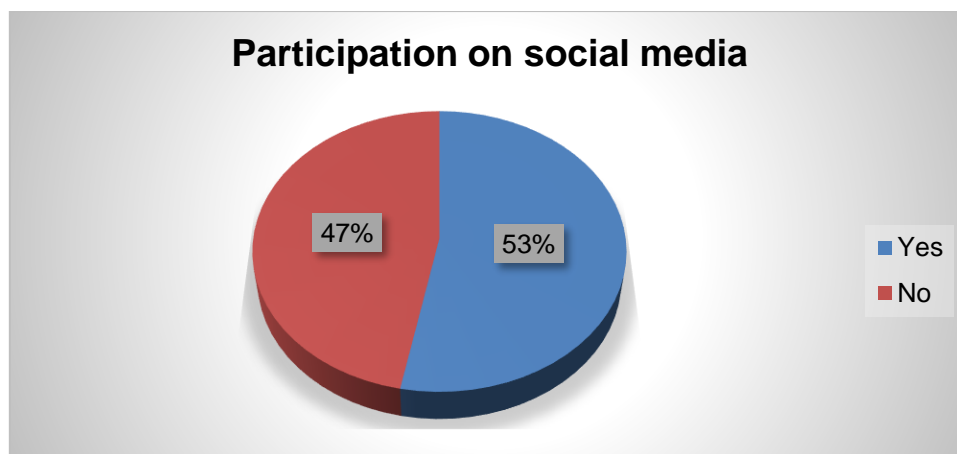


Figure 20: Participation on social media

Figure 21 above shows that the majority of respondents (that is, 53%) participated in social media platforms, while 47% did not.

5.6.2 Supporting reasons of participation on social media

Respondents were asked to provide reasons for participating in social media platforms. The purpose of the question was to determine why the respondents participated in social media platforms. The table below contains reasons for the respondents' selection.

REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA
Employees have created a chat group for helping each other during times of losing loved ones or children getting married
Sharing reports on new evaluations on Twitter and DBE website
The communication directorate is responsible to post messages, videos and pictures on social media as well as on the DBE website.
Yes, participate on social media during the history roundtable hosted by the Department of Basic Education and also during the launch of the history and during MTT report launch. During the big events
In ASIDI infrastructure, Facebook page, website, this is where brief programmes are being uploaded for public consumption
Do not have anything to post on the DBE social media
Communication unit does the posting of messages for DBE on social media. Although nothing has been requested to be posted yet.
For posting documents
Some schools are still complaining about the communication channel
Avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation
Twitter and Facebook as well as the DBE website is always updated by the officials in communication unit within the Department of Basic Education
Only post on information to know and share basis
In the circumstance that my work requires me to send information to the communications directorate for posting in the media, officials send to communication directorate for this to be done but not personally posting information on the departmental social media.

The DBE post their own research output to create awareness on useful and necessary information.
I post on the education hub for technical teachers in provinces and discuss issues related to technical education
National recruitment database
There should be individual permission for posting information online
Usually does participation with close colleagues to communicate information immediately.
People tag on activities related to me
I use social media on a personal basis not for the Department
The Moodle platform-very little information is posted probably just contact details.
The authorised employees to circulate and comment on the progress and challenges of the Department publicly are the Communication directorate.
Post on social media
Sharing information
Retweet my tweet
People tag on activities related to me
Documents are being uploaded through the communication unit inclusive of an orientation booklet for Teacher Introduction Guidelines and the Policy for Acknowledgement as well as Assessment of Teacher Qualifications for engagement in Teaching which was published by the Minister Mrs Angie Motshekga; both documents are on the internet.
I use social media on personal basic not for the Department
The Moodle platform - very little information is posted probably just contact details.
The authorised employees to circulate and comment on the progress and challenges of the Department publicly are the Communication directorate.
Post on social media
Sharing information
Retweet my tweet

Table 4: Reasons for participation on social media

Table 7 above shows that there was a wide range of reasons for why the respondents participated in social media platforms.

5.6.3 Number of years using social media platforms

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years they had been using social media platforms. This question was important in determining the experience respondents had in the use of social media. The results are shown in Figure 22 below.

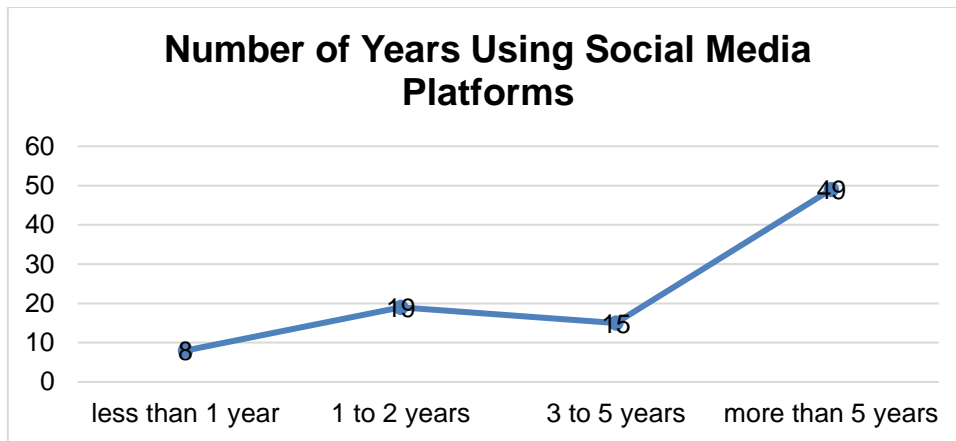


Figure 21: Number of years using social media platforms

Figure 22 above shows that 49 respondents had used social media for more than five (5) years, followed by 19 respondents who had used it for one to two years, 15 who had used it three to five years, and eight (8) had used it for less than one (1) year. This means that approximately 50% of the respondents (49 out of 102) had used social media platforms for more than half a decade. This implies a significant amount of take up and maintenance in respect of social media platforms at the Department of Basic Education.

5.6.4 Messages on the Department of Basic Education website

Participants were asked to indicate if their messages or feedback were posted on social media platforms. The results are shown in Figure 23 below.

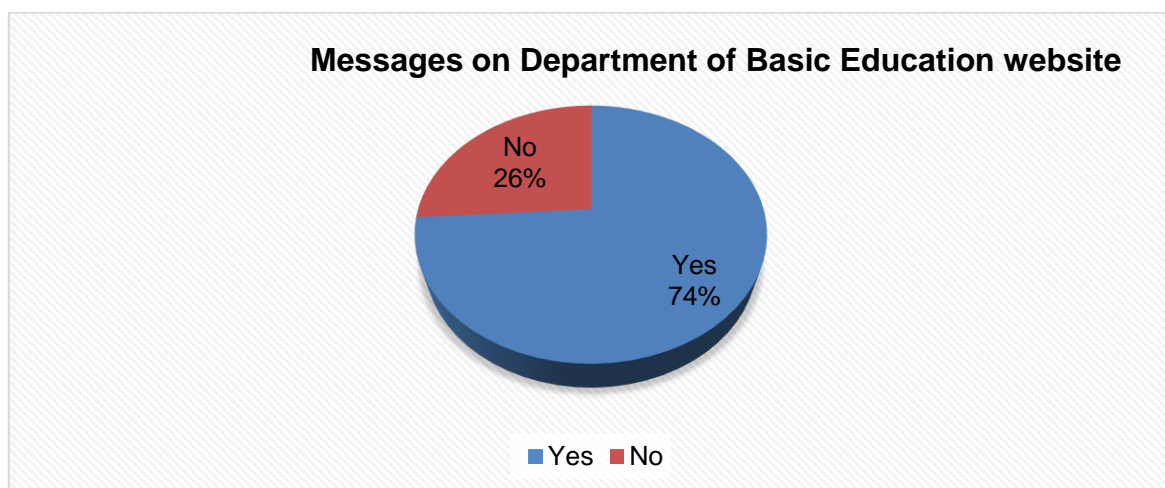


Figure 22: Messages posted on DBE website

Figure 23 above shows that messages of 74% of the respondents were posted on the website of the Department of Basic Education, while messages of 26% of the respondents were not posted.

5.6.5 Target audience for social media platforms

Participants were asked to indicate their target audience when they were participating in social media platforms. The purpose of the question was to determine the respondents' target audience when they were participating in social media platforms.

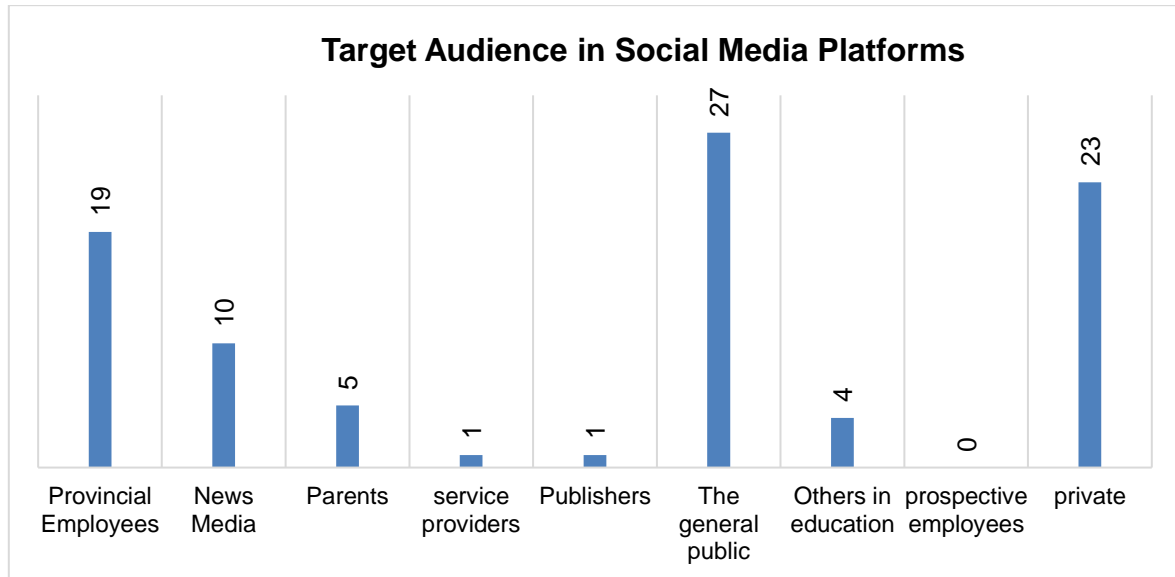


Figure 23: Audience intended with social media

Figure 24 above shows that respondents believed that messages on social media platforms targeted the general public (27), private institutions (23 and provincial employees (19).

5.6.6 Social media platforms used by respondents

Participants were asked to indicate social media platforms that they used to post messages. The results are presented in Figure 25 below.

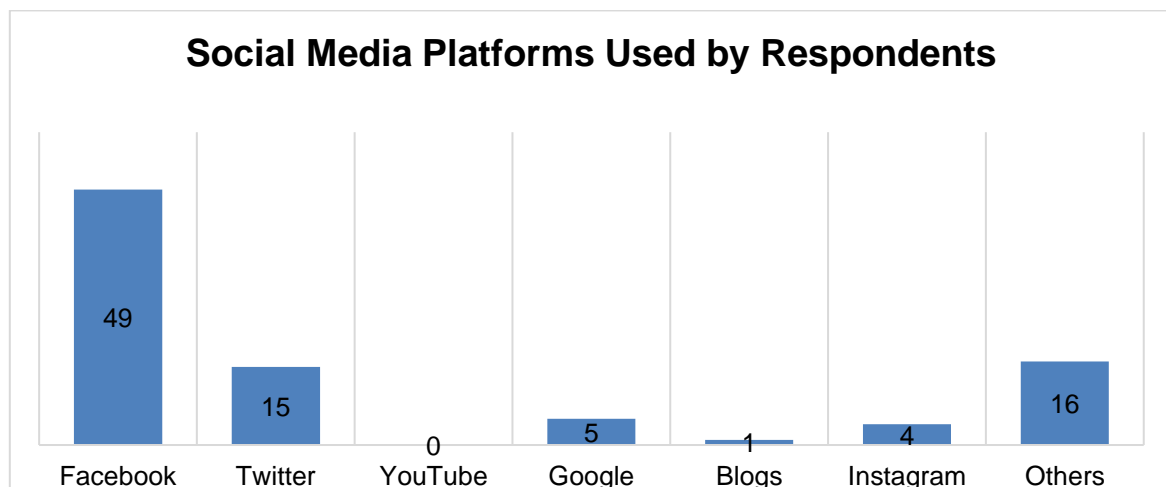


Figure 24: Social media platforms used by DBE

In Figure 18 above, 49 respondents used Facebook, followed by 16 who used other social media platforms, 15 who used Twitter, five (5) who used Google, four (4) Instagram and two (2) blogs. The results show that the majority of the respondents used Facebook.

5.6.7 Frequency of posting messages

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they posted messages on social media.

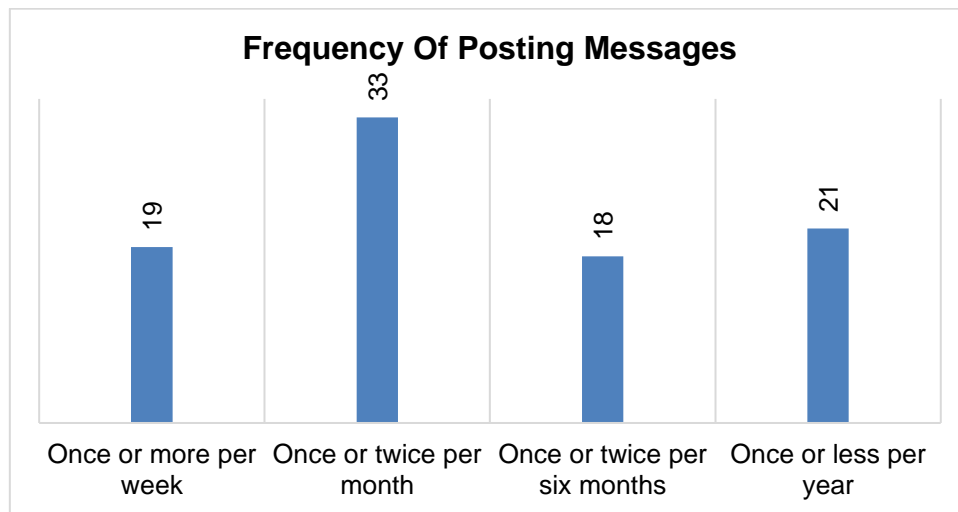


Figure 25: Frequency of posting messages

Figure 26 above shows that 19 respondents posted their messages once or more times per week, 33 once or twice per month, 18 once or twice per six months and 21 once per year. This means that the people should be encouraged to often post their daily, weekly, monthly and yearly activities so that the public will be continuously informed of what is currently happening in the education sector.

5.6.8 Perceptions about participation in social media platforms

Participants were asked to indicate their perceptions about participation in social media platforms. The responses are shown in Figure 27 below.

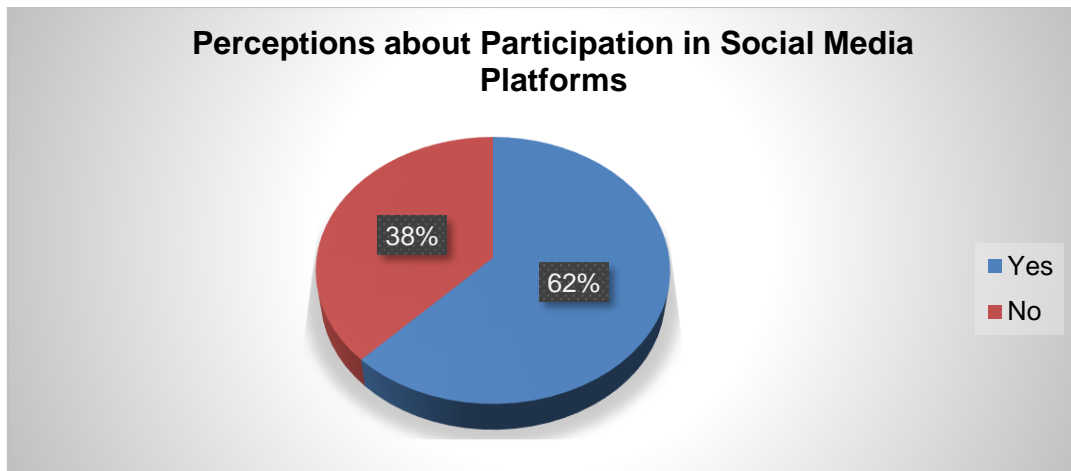


Figure 26: Participation on social media more often

Figure 27 above shows that 62% of respondents participated in social media, whereas 38% did not. This means that there are many people who participate on social media platforms as 62%, however, the recommendations that are brought by this study needs to be observed and be considered to inform and train the 38% of the people who responded by saying that they do not participate on social media platforms.

5.6.9 Searches on social media platforms

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they used social media platforms to search for information. The results are shown in Figure 28 below.

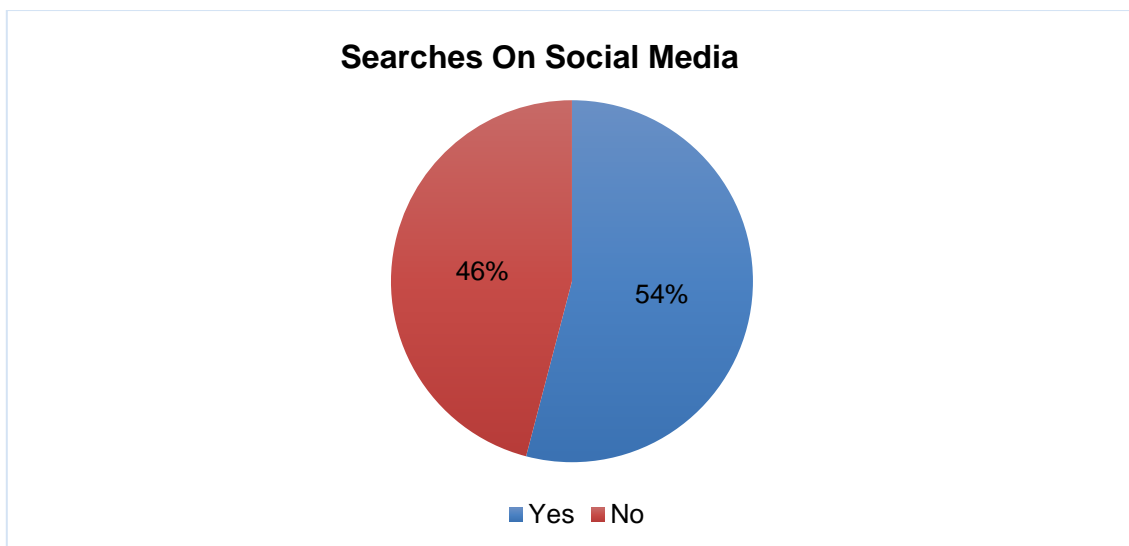


Figure 27: Searches on social media

In Figure 28 above, 54 respondents indicated that they used social media platforms to search for information, while 46% stated they did not. This means that 46% of respondents needs to be trained regarding searching of information from the internet.

5.6.10 Personal opinion of social media platforms

This shows the outcomes of opinions about usage of social media platforms in connection with the community. This question was crucial for the study to determine the value of social media as a tool for communicating messages to the public. In the Table F is used for Frequency while % refers to a percentage. Utilisation of a closed-ended questionnaire and relevant multiple answers were chosen. The following table shows a number of participants who responded in using the rating and corresponding percentage.

In your opinion, using social media	Strongly disagree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It assists members of the organisations to be informed of the institution's activities.	5	24	6	45	17
It creates a sense of urgency for province and all government departments in performing intended tasks.	2	25	12	49	10
It has a positive impact on basic education goals and objectives	2	28	7	48	11
It creates a user-friendly working environment in the Basic Education Department and also for enquiring for information.	1	41	8	39	9
It affords transparent interaction together with Heads of Provincial Departments of Education, district administration and school principals.	4	30	15	39	4
It is a good way of sharing news and information about Basic Education	2	20	1	49	25

Table 5: Usefulness of social media platforms

In the table above, 45 respondents agreed that social media assisted them to be informed of the Department of Basic Education's functions and deliverables; (25) strongly agreed that using social media was a useful tool for disseminating and updating information. 48 respondents agreed that using social media had a positive impact on goal and objectives of the Department of Basic Education, 39 respondents agreed that using social media ensured transparent interaction with the Heads of Provincial Departments of Education, districts and schools, and 49 respondents believed that social media ensured

effective dissemination of information and updates regarding the work of the Department of Basic Education. 39 believed that social media smoothed relations in the working environment.

5.7 Strategies for the effective of social media platforms

5.7.1 Communicate in Braille and Sign Language

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the Department of Basic Education should communicate in Braille and Sign Language. This question was important because it asked respondents to reflect on issues of inclusivity in the use of social media platforms. The results are shown in Figure 29 below.

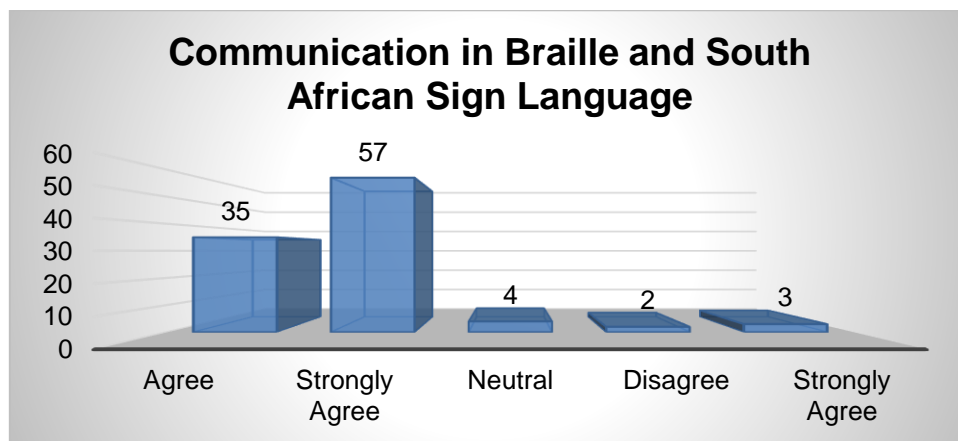


Figure 28: Communication in Braille and South African Sign Language

Figure 26 above shows that 57 respondents strongly agreed that the Department of Basic Education should communicate in Braille and Sign Language, followed by 35 respondents who agreed, four (4) who were neutral, two (2) who disagreed and three (3) who strongly disagreed. The good news is that the majority of the respondents (92 out of 102) believed that the Department of Basic Education must improve access for Blind and Deaf people on social media platforms. However, it is concerning that a few respondents did not believe that the Department of Basic Education should make participation in social media platforms inclusive.

5.7.2 Investment in telecommunications infrastructure

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the Department of Basic Education should invest more in telecommunications infrastructure. The results are shown in Figure 30 below.

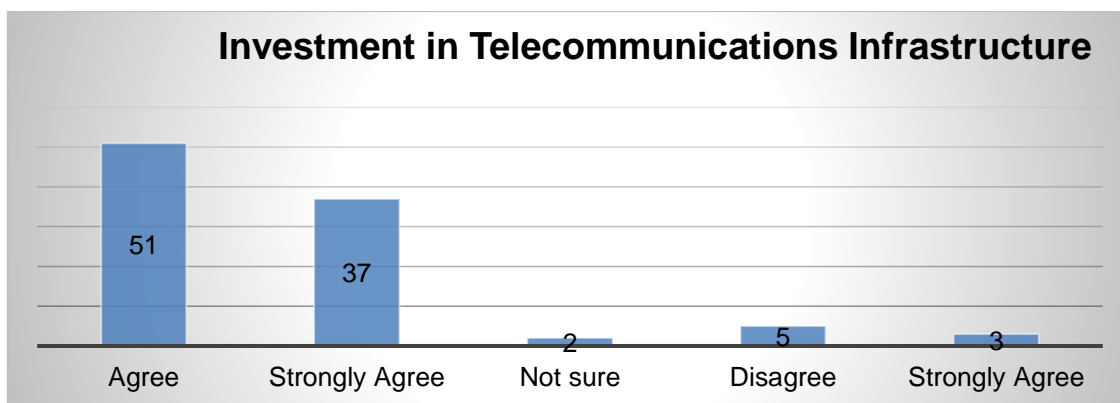


Figure 29: Investment in telecommunications infrastructure

Figure 27 above shows that 88 respondents believed that the Department of Basic Education should invest more in telecommunications infrastructure, while eight (8) did not and two (2) were unsure.

5.8 Recommendations from respondents

Respondents were requested to provide recommendations regarding what could be done by the Department of Basic Education to effectively communicate with staff and the public. The purpose of this question was to obtain respondents ideas about what the Department of Basic Education needed to do to ensure that their communication was effective. Table 31 below presents recommendations made by respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ASSIST DBE TO COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF AND PUBLIC
Presentation and exhibition because people respond effectively when they are physically involved
The Department of Basic Education should invest in making sure that all learners can access the Departmental website, in order to access and print learning material
All learners and rural schools must have unlimited access to internet. DBE staff must be encouraged to join social media. Computer literacy must form part of the curriculum starting from foundation phase. Posting messages or pictures must be regulated. DBE staff must be able to access social media at any time at the workplace.
Newsflash received daily assists a lot because it allows officials to respond immediately on the newsflash information.
The Department of Basic Education already has Facebook, Twitter, Website, intranet to communicate with staff members and the public. The DBE must find means of communication to cater for blind and deaf people.
Use of relevant media platforms to reach all stakeholders in the sector e.g. radio, TV, Facebook, internet and email.
A number of the stakeholders communicate information via social media platforms, however, because a number of employees do not have access to these social media platforms, they are unable to participate. The assumption is that people who participate in social media platforms are socialising and this assumption is erroneous as it may be assistive to some of their tasks to make use of social media platforms.

The DBE should increase access to internet by expanding the current telecommunication and infrastructure in rural areas. DBE Needs to provide more affordable services on school level where learners, teachers and immediate communities can access all education related matters cost effectively.
While it seems like the DBE is making in-roads in as far as social media is concerned, provinces and districts are lagging behind and it does not serve any purpose if it is not implemented in all respective areas. It would be great to have the public make use of the information on the DBE platform at no charge. This would need collaboration from the public sector for it to function successfully.
Personnel are needed who are dedicated to implement and manage these social media platforms such as channels, newsletters and announcements.
The public needs to know the differences between DBE and provincial departments.
The DBE employees need a good telecommunication infrastructure.
A call centre at the Department of Basic Education should be installed from where the community could get information instead of going directly to the department
DBE must mostly use TV adverts on series and sports channels which are used by most of the viewers.
If data could be made cheaper, this would increase access to social media platforms.
Proper channels of communication need to be implemented in an official way so that one can communicate with the provinces on social media as this is not an official channel. DBE needs to endorse the use of these social media programmes for communication with provinces.
DBE needs to strengthen and expand coverage of its usage of the social media. More people should be targeted in the public space to receive information from the DBE
Through normal internal communication for staff. News media and social media for the public.
Frequent staff meeting should be held; DBE should consider hosting seminars or conferences with the public maybe once a year or every two years. If possible, the DBE should put up billboards with contact details especially in the rural areas.
No access to the internet, employees are blocked to use social media platforms.
DBE should ensure that the public receive the message by using posters and pamphlets to ensure that the general public without access to computers is catered for as well. A radio station and television focusing on the Department of Education must be used to convey messages to the audience and to staff members within the Department
Exhibition stands are set up in public places e.g. shopping malls; this will assist the public to give feedback and will enable communication on a regular basis not only when schools open. Hand out flyers that are brief and straight to the point about education.
Face to face communication is the most important tool for communication
Workshops to inform DBE employees about importance of social media platforms.
The DBE must have "free rated" social media content to make it accessible to all who might not have data. Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook must categorise education content as "Free of charge"
Communication platforms are sufficient but improvements should be made for communicating with the public where an official is allowed or made aware of whether he/she can post information about some of the work done that is exciting even if it is not for the benefit of the department.
Access of free Wi-Fi to all officials not only to social medias (Senior Managers)
The need to invest in communication staff members who are proficient in statistics and who can communicate statistics to the broader public. The DBE should also invest in communication staff who can think strategically about how to communicate and frame messages so that it reaches the target audiences more effectively.
Ensure that all available social media platforms are always functional to ease communication and information sharing with all stakeholders, both internal and external to the department. Include Snapchat and WhatsApp in addition to available platforms, this could also assist in effective communication.
Officials must be informed about ways to utilise social media responsibly.

<p>Communicating with staff members depends on the issues to be addressed/ communicated. This should take place more often especially with regard to issues of developing staff members and issues that relate to productively communicating with the public. Communication, especially with learners and teachers could be improved by making it possible to provide access (connectivity) to the public.</p>
<p>The Department is already using different methods of communication with employees but should increase one-to-one communication of members of the public especially if there is new information to be disseminated.</p>
<p>Staff: should the line of work be focused to seminars on key aspects of curriculum design and policy formulation. Public: social media and dedicated radio and TV interaction with the public when new policies are introduced or when there are changes or new programmes.</p>
<p>Department should use all the media platforms available at its disposal to reach different people in various geographical locations.</p>
<p>The DBE has all the policies in guiding on social media but implementation is minimal. There is no Wi-Fi and usage of internet is minimal. The tools of trade are not provided in time e.g. no data, or cell phone are available to employees at the National Department.</p>
<p>An in-house media monitoring and analysing session should be recommended to increase colleagues' internal communication to participate and to use social media to communicate with the public. It could be used for public relations purposes and for suggestions on how to communicate on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and on how to engage with the Department.</p>
<p>The Department could do more in communicating with learners and district, circuit and provincial staff.</p>
<p>The Department of Basic Education should encourage the employees or staff to create social media group, for example a Facebook group page for staff members with regular interaction and news. Updates can be made so that the departmental staff or employees can easily access social media. DBE should open social media for staff for a limited time and also provide Wi-Fi for private access when at work for at least 30 minutes per day. In regard to the general public the Department should use mainstream channels such as TV and Radio to popularise its social media platforms and have a dedicated official that should be responsible for interaction matters about education on social media platforms.</p>
<p>Social media is the best communication tool noted at the moment to reach the youth of Republic of South Africa. The DBE needs to prioritise social Media since it will enable information to even reach disabled people.</p>
<p>When something is introduced to the public, there should be trained people to assist the public, such as registration for students online as practiced by Gauteng.</p>
<p>DBE should have a staff member who is able to create groups for each directorate which is managed by one administrator for ensuring effective communication. The DBE should encourage the public to newsletter sign up.</p>
<p>A staff suggestion box can be a good way of communication with staff members, enabling DBE to get the response via newsflash. The DBE should have a site whereby each public person would be able to access information, subsequently, the Department must have a help desk for the walk-in people or public so that disadvantaged people are able to obtain information they need.</p>
<p>The learning and use of sign language in South Africa must be compulsory in schools, if possible.</p>
<p>Not working in silos (being more open to speak about their (employees) work). Being more motivated about the work they do and able as such to engage on issues that are pertinent to education service delivery, the content of their work etc. Develop more passion about the children, learners or employees who are serving although indirectly, the future of the country (also cognisant).</p>
<p>The best way is to use the department website where employees can post all the important information about the department.</p>
<p>The Department needs younger people/employees to run the communication division of the Department. These youths have more knowledge, they are tech savvy and know what is new and effective in terms of social media. The youth is exposed mostly to the public and they understand better how to communicate with them. Putting more young people in the forefront would be beneficial in not only reaching a vast number of people but also in keeping abreast with the latest trends in</p>

communication. In terms of communicating with staff, the respondent believes what they have in place is sufficient.

A central communication service that links all DBE services. There should be synergy between the DBE work in provinces, nationally and with schools.

News TITBITs: if these can be introduced, just highlighting a) issues such as new publications etc. but providing the source of location of the entire document. (b) List of publications/ guidelines should be made available when published as a means of alerting people of latest publications (despite it being in that specific programme site).

The DBE should make WIFI connectivity free everywhere within the Sol Plaatje Campus

I would advise the following:

1. Focus on the message. Choose key initiatives and publicise only those to public. Other information can be on the side. This is particularly true of DBE's Facebook page and website. It is very hard to tell, looking at the website, where to start. Constant news is fine, but there is a need to have the core deliverables to the public upfront and centralised so they know what DBE does.

2. Decide what the DBE's core values and products are and focus on highlighting those. The public does not know what the norms and standards are, or why DBE employees pride themselves in writing them well, but they do know what a dilapidated school looks like and even if it belongs to PEDs, DBE will be blamed.

3. Focus on clarity (less is more): On social media, have "pinned" posts which showcase key initiatives; have a gallery showing recent events, distinguishing between news feed and core deliverables.

4. Posts (message posted) once a day, lessen them to at most twice a day; more often is too often (people switch off the noise) less often leaves people with a feeling that there's nothing going on, while posting two regularly each day will keep the public curious.

5. Link Twitter to Facebook so whatever is posted to Twitter goes to Facebook.6 Encourage staff to sign up on LinkedIn and make a professional image.

6. Remind staff to obtain the principle of Batho Pelo on social media and refer staff to our core policies and principles on the website.

7 Give DBE officials access to Facebook after hours so they can engage with the public through our network and respond to issues raised by the public.

8. Develop an online courtesy and Batho Pelo code of online conduct for DBE officials; decide on a policy of whether an official is representing the department or not when online. So, in his/her own right he/she assumes that they are representing the Department and therefore try to retain a professional tone with posts related to their position in the DBE. Only posts of his/her children will be perceived as being personal posts. But if a person criticises DBE he/she should generally link them to the relevant policy on the website to show them that they are mistaken.

9 Respond much faster to criticism in public on public forums and online, including showing what DBE is doing about it in a way that is professional and not in a defensive manner.

10. DBE has a page, not a group, so it is unclear how to communicate with a DBE official or to know who can be approached on the DBE page. In her/his view, an open or moderated group would be useful - possibly for staff members to communicate, as well as a public page for the public to ask for clarity/questions. However, that could create a lot of work (responding to the public) and will require a dedicated team to handle questions posed by the public.

Consistent communication would benefit the public and frequent updates are needed. Teachers should be informed of the services offered by the Department and they can assist learners with their enquiries and give advice when necessary.

The Department should allow officials to share approved information on social matters in a controlled manner.
There should be an ongoing anonymous platform where officials' and workers' opinions and concerns could be shared. A dedicated team should be employed to assess, evaluate and constantly give feedback to issues raised. If the concerns are widespread the department should put intervention measures in place. The collated information and findings should be discussed at staff meetings. The platform must result in change as there is a great need to improve open communication.
Employing more physically challenged people whose presence can only serve to effectively communicate to equally physically challenged people will reflect the department's impartiality towards everyone.
Currently the newsflash emails afford a platform to inform employees (one-way communication, the intranet affords employees to search for answers regarding the department and information pertaining to departmental policies and legislation)
DBE needs to be in all social media, especially Facebook and Twitter as it will assist the public to understand and keep in touch with what happens at the Department of Education.
DBE has been advised that it needs to be more active on Facebook and Twitter, have more # hashtags so that information circulates faster.
Facebook pages need to be managed on a daily basis to answer quickly. WhatsApp groups with HODs, MECs and other stakeholders to ensure communication is fast and easy.
Nothing beats one-to-one communication, because one can get feedback, handle objections while present and sort out issues or reach consensus while present. Some issues can be sorted out face to face; while written feedback sessions can be a good follow up. Thutong Newsletter, the Newsflash and ASIDI manager can be given immediate attention because it is work related.
If DBE can have a suggestion box on the website where the public can just leave their suggestions and opinions.
Currently social media is the most convenient method to interconnect information with internal as well as external stakeholders and it gives an assurance to the sender that he or she has been communicated with already and will be able to receive a response quickly.

Figure 30: Recommendations made by respondents to the Department of Basic Education to improve its communication with staff and the public

Table 31 above presented recommendations they believed the Department of Basic Education must consider to ensure that their communication through social media was effective.

5.9 Descriptive analysis

5.9.1 Age distribution

Table 8 below shows the age groups and number of years that for which the respondents had been in the Department of Basic Education.

AGE GROUP	FREQ	PERCENTAGE	CUM
31-40	40	39.22	39.22
41-50	28	27.45	66.67
51-60	11	10.78	77.45
61-70	3	2.94	80.39
<=30	20	19.61	100.00

Total	102	100.00	
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Table 6: Distribution table on the age of respondents

In terms of the age distribution table, K indicates that 19.61% of the respondents were below 30 years of age. The majority of the respondents (that is, 39.22%) were in the age group 31-40, whereas 27.45%, 10.78% and 2.94% were in the age groups 41-50, 51-60 and 61-70 respectively. This means that age 31-40 years have spent a lot of years in the education sector and this study advice that this age should be a focus to implement effectively social media platforms and other age group.

5.9.2 Years in the Department of Basic Education

The relationships for this study were tested on the number of years respondents had worked in the Department of Basic Education. The purpose in this regard is to know whether there is significance to the chosen variables.

WORKING AT DBE RANGE	NO	YES	TOTAL
5 to 10	29	18	47
Percentage	61.70%	38.30%	100%
<5 participants	7	21	18
% of participants working at DBE <5 years	25%	75%	100%
Participants working at DBE >10	10	13	23
	43.48%	56%	100%

Pearson chi2 (2) = 9.6345 Pr = 0.008

The outcome of the Chi-square test indicated that the relationship between participation in social media and tenure was significant. In particular, the results showed that a proportion of respondents who participated in social media differed significantly by tenure, such that 75% (21) of those who have worked in the organisation for less than five (5) years participated in social media, compared to 38.30% (18) and 56.52% (13) who had been in the Department of Basic Education for five (5) to 10 years and more than 10 years respectively.

5.10 Discussion of results

The respondents' ages ranged between 31-40. The results above paint a good picture regarding the utilisation of social media platforms in the Department of Basic Education. In as far as the gender of

respondents is concerned, it was important for the study to ensure that both female and male respondents were represented in the sample population. The sample had more females than males and this did not come as a surprise as it is in line with the country's demographics (Statistics South Africa, 2015). With regard to the number of years the respondents had been employed by the Department of Basic Education, the results show that majority significant number of respondents (that is, 49) had more than ten years' experience in the Department of Basic Education. The experience of the respondents suggests that the Department of Basic Education may have had officials who had knowledge of how their institution functioned, and who could contribute to the improvement of the institution.

Furthermore, based on the findings of the study, respondents had knowledge of social media platforms. This suggests that social media platforms, therefore, had a crucial role to play in the work of the Department of Basic Education. The respondents reported that they were not using social media platforms as they were often blocked from using these platforms. The access or permission of using social media platforms was granted to officials from Level 13 upwards. Therefore, the results of this study bring to the front the fact that social media have a crucial role to play in improving communication between the Department of Basic Education and its stakeholders.

Regarding the question raised in the study whether the social media platforms exist in the Department of Basic Education, respondents reported that the Department of Basic Education had accounts in several social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Thutong. The level of understanding of the use of social media platforms by respondents was however inadequate due to the fact that the respondents were not permitted access social media for communication purposes from their offices. The Department of Basic Education did not have enough officials to deal with day-to-day concerns from the public. For instance, the shortages of learning and teaching support material were not directly brought to the attention of the Department of Basic Education through social media platforms.

In conclusion, respondents believed that social media platforms were important for communicating, as they, for instance, enabled them to share information with the public. The respondents stated that the Department of Basic Education must permit and promote the usage of social media platforms so that there could be sufficient communication with learners, educators, subjects' advisors and parents. This would enable the sector to achieve their deliverables of education. According to respondents, the Department of Basic Education must expand and strengthen access to social media platforms for all officials to strengthen its communication channels with the public.

5.10.1 Descriptive Analysis

The mean as well as standard deviations are shown in Table 10 below. The descriptive measurements were used for expressing opinions of respondents in the research. A test that determined a mean as well as standard deviation was performed for the concepts of this study. The following table shows the responses regarding mean and standard deviation. The high standard deviation implies that the information was spread across a large array of values, whereas the low standard deviation shows that the information points tend to be right near to the mean.

ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Impact of communication and information	2.7	0.99
Understanding & Awareness of social media	6.7	0.8
Effectiveness of social media platforms	4.3	0.9
Use of social media	4.2	0.9

Table 7: Descriptive analysis

The variables in the table above shows the mean rate for the gathered information for the variables of this study. Pallant (2005) argues that the mean rate denotes the central rate of the existing arrays. From the table above, the four (4) constructs, namely, impact of communication and information, understanding and awareness of social media, effectiveness of social media platforms and use of social media have different averages (or mean) scores. Understanding and awareness of social media has a mean score of 6.7, followed by effectiveness of social media platforms with 4.3 and use of social media at 4.2. These outcomes essentially suggest that the effectiveness of the use of social media platforms positively impacted performance or influenced communication. Understanding and awareness of social media had the highest mean at 6.7, while the impact of communication had the lowest mean of 2.7.

The outcomes of the descriptive statistics indicate that Understanding and Awareness of social media is significant in basic education. This is supported through the indicated mean score of 6.7 as well as the standard deviation of 0.8. The mean of 6.7 according to the rating scale is 6.7. The effectiveness of social media platforms, use of social media, impact of communication and information, had a mean score that ranged between 2.7 to 4.7. The respondents did not agree to the question implied whereas others took a stand to remain neutral, while the impact of communication and information carried 2.7 percentage points of disagreement.

5.10.2 Analysis of correlation

The examination of relationships was carried out to make conclusions regarding relations and inter-craving among ideas in exploration. The exercise was carried through the examination of the importance of correlations and coefficients. Mashaba (2018) describes coefficients and correlations as a number

showing the grade level of association among the variables in the research. The arrays were between 1.00 and +1.00 inclusively. In this instance, a minus sign denotes the relativeness and a plus sign the connection of relation among variables in the research. The adverse rate signifies a contrary or destructive relativeness. In this instance, where there is no relation or correlation among variables in the research, the rate of the coefficient would be zero.

5.11 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented, discussed and interpreted the results of the study. The results of the study point to the benefits that could accrue for the Department of Basic Education through strengthening the use of social media platforms to communicate messages to the public.

In the next chapter, the researcher raises the key issues that emerged from this study, provides concluding comments and recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER 6

6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consolidate and highlight the key results of the study. This will be followed by specific recommendations, based on the results, for determining the effective use of social media platforms in the Department of Basic Education. The last section of this chapter will present key issues regarding the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education, as a way of elevating and highlighting these issues for those who are involved in the strengthening of the use of social media platforms in education. The argument put forth in this study is that social media platforms have a significant role to play in enhancing communication between the Department of Basic Education and the public

The organisation of this chapter and the dissertation is shown in Figure 32 below.

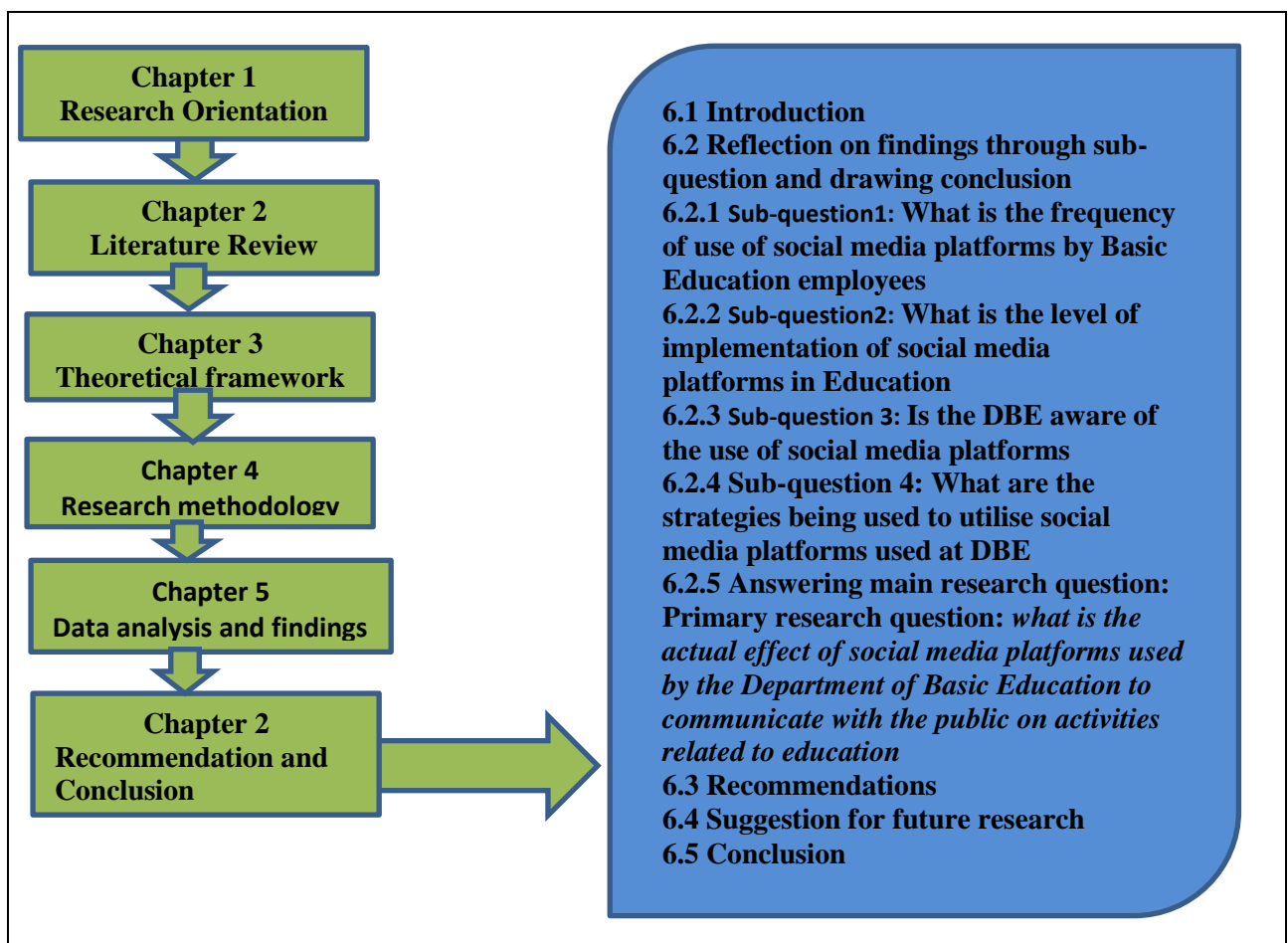


Figure 31: Structure of Chapter 6 (Source: Author)

6.2 Reflection on findings through sub-question question and drawing conclusion

The central research question and sub-question for the research are set out below. The intention here is to respond to the main research question and the sub-question as shown below.

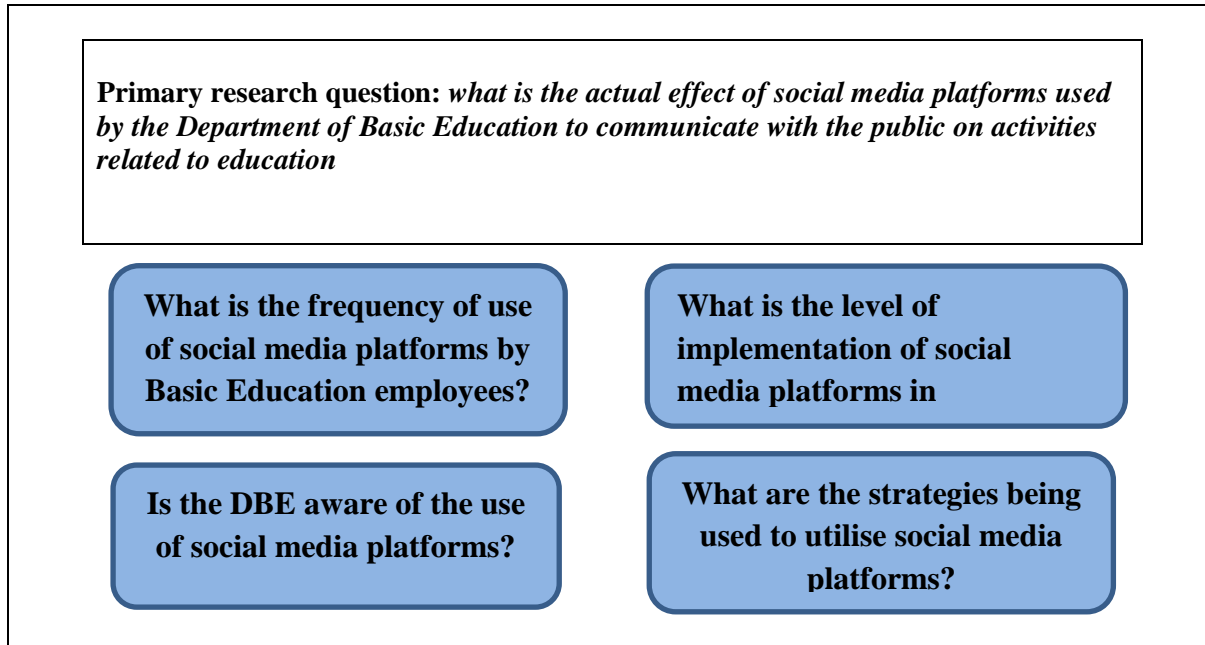


Figure 32: Reflection on findings through sub-questions (Source: Author)

The previous chapter discussed the results of the study, which sought to respond to the four sub-questions. In the table below, the researcher shows the link between the sub-question and chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5.

SUB-QUESTIONS	LITERATURE REVIEW	MAIN FINDINGS
What is the frequency of use of social media platforms by Basic Education employees?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings indicate that DBE mostly use emails and telephone to communicate • Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are used but the access is only given from Directors upward, whereas operational managers do not have access to these social media components
What is the level of implementation of social media platforms in Education?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBE implementation of social media is gradually. • There is no Wi-Fi • Few personnel responsible of the communication
Is the DBE aware of the use of social media platforms?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DBE official is aware of the social media platforms. • The department does not use one social media which in

		researcher's view, the cost of using all these three social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, has not been noted and evaluation in such a way that a decision be taken for only one social network should be considered and used.
What are the strategies being used to utilise social media platforms?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitation of users from using Facebooks, Twitter and YouTube. • Information Communication unit is the one sends or paste information for each people in education.

Figure 33: Links between sub-questions, literature and findings

Table 34 above shows that all the sub-questions were addressed in the current study. In the next section, the researcher reflects on each sub-question in terms of the results of the study as set out in Chapter 5. The key issues regarding the four sub-questions are discussed below.

6.2.1 Sub-question 1: What is the frequency of use of social media platforms by Basic Education employees

This sub-questions were used to respond to the main research question of the study, which sought to determine the effective use of social media platforms in the Department of Basic Education as a tool for communicating with the public. The respondents reported that Facebook and YouTube were the engines that may stir the operation and communication with the public, including learners. Specialists may be able to send information via Facebook or on YouTube so that their intended audience would get information anytime. In terms of the results, the most used communication is the email by the government institutions to convey information to the public. The employees cited that they are not permitted to use Facebook, YouTube for communication on the work computers.

In the next section, the researcher discusses the use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education.

6.2.2 Sub-question 2: What is the level of implementation of social media platforms in Education?

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented the findings about the frequency use of the social media platforms within the selected government institution. In this section, the researcher provides a reflection on the level of implementation of social media platforms. Findings indicates that the social media have been implemented gradually, however, the personnel to manage the communication are few.

Respondents viewed this as a challenge as they relied on the use of emails and telephones to communicate important matters and activities to the public.

6.2.3 Sub-question 3: Is the DBE aware of the use of social media platforms?

In this section, the researcher sought to determine whether the government of education officials are aware of the use of social media platforms. The study noted that the officials in the Department of Basic Education were aware of the importance of social media platforms. The challenge was that they were not permitted use of social media platforms at work.

6.2.4 Sub-question 4: What are the strategies being used to utilise social media platforms

The participants suggested that there should be increase of the access of internet to expand the current communication. There should be a call centre to avoid the cost of traveling of the public to the government office when a person needs information. The participants identified that the Department should strengthen their thinking and promote the use of tacit knowledge or intuitive memory in order for the social media platforms to be effective.

6.2.5 Answering main research question:

Primary research question: what is the actual effect of social media platforms used by the Department of Basic Education to communicate with the public on activities related to education

After answering the sub-question, the aim is now to answer the primary research question *what is the actual effect of social media platforms used by the Department of Basic Education to communicate with the public on activities related to education.*

The government department selected implemented social media platforms such as Facebooks, Twitter and YouTube for communicating government matters to the public. The researcher noted on the findings that these social media platforms are not used by all officials within the selected government department. The permission to access Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is given to Senior Managers, starting from Director level upward. The operational managers such as Chief Education Specialists, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, Administrative officers and interns, have no access on social media platforms of the government department of education. These are engine that drive the function of education department.

In fulfilling the communication, the officials use email and telephones to communicate with the public matters related to education. The researcher determined that there are few personnel to control the usage of the social media platforms in a positive manner or for the intended purpose. The officials recommended changes from the practice of limiting people in using social media platforms, there should be enough personnel to manage the use of social media platforms. There should be restrictions and

penalties against those people who might use social media platforms to things that are not related to education.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The purpose of the research study was to determine the effective use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education. The study also sought to assess awareness regarding the utilisation of social media platforms within basic education. However, respondents reported that they were blocked in using social media platforms. Permission was only granted to senior managers from level 13 and upwards. Therefore, the Department of Basic Education must consider expanding access to social media platforms to all its employees.
- In view of the high cost of social media platforms, the Department of Basic Education must put in place long-term strategies to subsidise social media platforms. That is, the Department of Basic Education should consider collaborating with the Department of Communication regarding the scope and aim of social media platforms.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

The following suggestions for further research are made based on the results of the study:

- The study should focus on the accessibility of the Department of Basic Education information through the social media platforms.
- Explore ways in which communication between the Department of Basic Education and parents could be enhanced.
- There is a need to investigate the state of connectivity in schools as a vehicle for ensuring access to social media?
- Investigation of the policies regarding the use of social media platforms.

6.5 Conclusion

The use of social media platforms in the Department of Basic Education is of the key interventions or mechanisms for communicating with the public. The results of this research confirmed that the importance of social media platforms in strengthening the efforts of the Department of Basic Education to ensure effective communication with the public. This means that although significant strides had been made in this study, there is still a long way to go regarding the effective use of social media platforms with the Department of Basic Education.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: LETTER PERMITTED TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DBE



basic education

Department
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001, Sol Plaatje House, 222 Struben Street, Pretoria, 0002, South Africa
Tel: (012) 357 3009, Fax: (012) 323 0601, www.education.gov.za

Ref no: ODG-0585/18-07/06/2018
Enquires: Ms S Mabasa
Tel: 012 357 3859
Email: Mabasa.S@dbe.gov.za

Mr L Cebo
2933 Rosslyn
PRETORIA
0182

By email: Cebo.L@dbe.gov.za

Dear Mr Cebo

RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW DBE OFFICIALS

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) received your request to distribute questionnaires to DBE officials for research purposes.

The research request is approved on condition that you, as the applicant of the research, adhere to the conditions set in the research protocol of the Department and to the ethical conduct of using research data and information.

It is emphasised that the information collected from the DBE should solely be used for the purpose of this research. The Research Co-ordination, Monitoring and Evaluation (RCME) Directorate will liaise with the relevant DBE officials for the dissemination and completion of the questionnaires.

We recommend that you submit this letter as evidence that the Department is aware of your research.

We request that you share the findings of the research with the DBE at the conclusion of your study.

Yours sincerely

MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 16/05/2018

ANNEXURE B : ETHICS LETTER FROM TUT



Faculty of Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee [FCRE-ECO]

The FMS Research Ethics Committee is a registered Institutional Review Board (IRB 00000006) with the US Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) (DHQP0001) (expires 31 Jan 2020). Also it has National White Paper on the Protection of Human Subjects for International Institutions (NPA 00011502) (expires 22 Jan 2019). In South Africa it is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-100009-21). The FCRE-ECO is a subcommittee of the TUT Research Ethics Committee.

Date: 25 June 2018

Ref #: FCREP018/FCR04/004-MS (2)
Name: Cebo, M
Student #: 2104958835

Mr M Cebo
C/o Dr A Breytenbach (D Com)
Business School
Faculty of Management Sciences

Dear Mr Cebo

Title: The effective use of social media platforms by the Department of Basic Education

Investigator: ME Muthishi

Programme: MQA

Supervisor: Dr A Breytenbach (D Com)

Co-supervisor: None

Thank you for submitting your research summary for ethics clearance.

In reviewing your application for ethics approval, all relevant documents and corrections are duly noted.

The proposed research project may now continue with the proviso that:

- 1) the researcher will conduct the study according to the procedures and methods indicated in the approved proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings and/or assurances made regarding the confidentiality of the collected data.
- 2) the researcher will act within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Type of Decision:

The Faculty of Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee reviewed the documents at its meeting on **25 May 2018**. The study is **Approved**.

Note:

The reference number (top right corner of this communiqué) should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication (e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters) with the intended research participants.



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Tshwane University
of Technology

We empower people

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF XYZ

INFORMATION LEAFLET AND INFORMED CONSENT

PROJECT TITLE: MANAGEMENT OF Q IN COMMUNITY Z

Primary investigator: Mr LM Cebo (MBA)

Study leader: Dr A Breytenbach Expert, PhD, Department of Business Administration, Tshwane University of Technology, Nelspruit

Co-study leader: Dr A Specialist, ABC Laboratories, Johannesburg

Dear Potential research participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study that forms part of my formal Masters of Business Administration (MBA) studies. This information leaflet will help you to decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part, you should fully understand what is involved. You should not agree to take part unless you are completely satisfied with all aspects of the study.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ALL ABOUT?

(Provide some background information regarding the main theme of the study and the specific problem that it will address. It needs to provide enough background information to potential research participants to enable an informed decision to take part or not. The "Background and Justification" in the proposal can provide the needed information for this section. You may also include the study objectives in this section. Do not use more than 3 paragraphs in this section, use easily understandable language and do not cite any references.)

WHAT WILL YOU BE REQUIRED TO DO IN THE STUDY?

(Fully describe in easily understandable language each of the following: 1) The procedures that will be performed on/with the research participants, 2) The time commitment it will require from the participants, including whether it involves once-off or

ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE STUDY

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the attached research questionnaire by placing an X in the appropriate box

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male	Female

2. Please indicate your age group

Less or equal to 30 years	31 - 40	41- 50	51 – 60	61-70

3. How many years have you been working at the Department of Basic Education?

less than five years	five to ten years	more than 10 years

4. Which type of equipment or tele-communication infrastructure do you use or have access to?(you may indicate more than one)

Cell phone	Internet	E-Mail

SECTION B: THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

5. From which channels of communication do you normally receive messages regarding basic education activities, functions or matters from public? (You may indicate more than one answer if applicable to you)

Radio	
Television	
Printed information material (e.g brochures, pamphlets, newsletters)	
Online media platforms (websites and social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube)	
Face to Face interaction	
SMS	
Other, please specify	

6. Do you think the channels of communication you have selected in question 5 above effectively help to provide you with a feedback opportunity (that is, are you able to respond to the message being communicated)?

This question uses a scale of 1-5. where, 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly agree.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

7. Do you think Basic Education is communicating effectively with the public?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

8. Please provide a reason for your selection above _____

9. Do you think the communication channels being utilised by Basic Education are appropriate for your information required (such as curriculum documents, learning material etc.)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

SECTION C: UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED

10. Are the Basic Education messages, that you receive, clear and understandable?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

11. Please provide a reason of your selection above (e.g learners increase pass rate, learning improves, learners receive material etc)

12. Basic Education messages are empower-oriented (they communicate the work of basic education and services available to the public)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

13. Please provide a reasons of your selection above (e.g. learners increase pass rate, learning improves, learners receives material etc.) _____

SECTION D: PARTICIPATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

14. Do you participate in social media, by participation, it means, do you ever post messages, videos, pictures etc. on a social media site? Please include a situation in which someone else in your unit at Department of Basic Education actually does the posting for you

Yes	
No	

15. How long have you been participating in social media?

For less than one year	One to two years	Three to five years	More than five years

16. Are your messages, comments, pictures, or videos ever posted on the Department of Basic Education website?

Yes	
No	

17. When you participate in social media, who are the intended audiences, please select all that are applicable.

Provincial Employees	News Media	Parents	Service providers	Publishers	The general public	Others in education	Prospective employees	Private

18. Where are your messages, comments, pictures or videos posted? Please select all that are applicable

Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Google	Blogs	Instagram	others

19. How often are your messages, comments, pictures or video posted on social media sites?

Once or more per week	
Once or twice per month	
Once or twice per six months	
Once or less per year	

20. Do you believe you should participate in social media more often?

Yes	
No	

21. Do you ever search to see what others are saying online, or in social media, about your unit at the Department of Basic Education?

Yes	
No	

SECTION E: PERSONAL OPINION IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

22. This section assesses your opinion about the use of social media platforms to communicate with the public.

In your opinion, using social media	Strongly disagree	Disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It assists employees to understand or stay in touch with what is happening inside the provinces					
It makes province and district office staff more effective in managing emergency situations					
It has a positive impact on basic education goals and objectives					
It makes the Basic Education department a more attractive place to work					
It affords more employees the chance to communicate directly with the Heads of Provincial Departments of Education,					

district administration and school principals.					
It is a good way of sharing news and information about Basic Education?					

SECTION F: STRATEGIES OF EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

23. Basic Education should start communicating in Braille and sign language (to cater for the blind and deaf people)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

24. Basic Education should invest more in tele-communication infrastructure in order to create full access.

Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

25. Please recommend what you think could assist in the Department of Basic Education communicating with staff as well as the public. _____

Your participation is highly appreciated.

Thank you