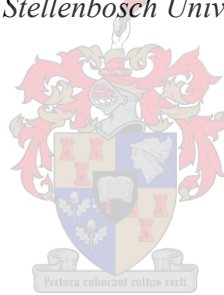


**A CASE STUDY ON HOW EMPLOYEES USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN A CONSULTING WORK
ENVIRONMENT**

by

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my best friend and incredible late mother, Boya Lillian Lupo. “La vie est une fleur dont l’amour est miel”. Merci pour ton amour inconditionnel et tes sacrifices. Tu étais le miel de ma vie et je suis éternellement reconnaissante de t’avoir eu comme Maman!

ABSTRACT

Organisations are currently performing in a highly competitive environment and are increasingly interested in adopting advance technologies for their business operations. The importance and use of social media in the workplace has greatly increased and gained a wide interest from researchers. Social media usage in the workplace cannot be ignored or mismanaged in this information age. However, despite the increase in social media usage today, there is little understanding of the tools and platforms in developing countries. There is limited research on the ways in which social media is used in consulting firms. Thus, the study critically investigates how social media is used by employees in the consulting work environment and the role it plays on employees' productivity. The purpose of this research is to establish the behavioural intent of how and why employees use social media in the work environment. The problem and gap the research aims to address is to critically investigate whether social media contributes to the productivity of employees and whether social media platforms can be used as a knowledge sharing tool in organisations. The study used a descriptive research design, the total population for this study was 153 participants. Structured questionnaires were used for the collection of relevant primary data. The findings revealed that social media usage in the workplace does not affect productivity and mostly contributes to knowledge sharing, a flow of communication and ongoing learning. The study sought to fill the existing gap in research literature with regards to the use of social media in the workplace and employee productivity. As social media cannot be disregarded during working hours, organisations can reinforce social media policies.

Key words:

Social media; Productivity; Communication; Workplace.

OPSOMMING

Organisasies tree tans in 'n uiters mededingende omgewing op en stel toenemend belang om vooraf tegnologieë vir hul sakebedrywighede aan te neem. Die belangrikheid en gebruik van sosiale media in die werkplek het aansienlik toegeneem en kan dus nie in hierdie inligtingsera geïgnoreer of wanbestuur word nie. Ondanks die toename in die gebruik van sosiale media vandag, is daar egter min begrip van die gereedskap en platforms in ontwikkelende lande. Daar is beperkte navorsing oor die maniere waarop sosiale media in konsultasiefirmas gebruik word. Die studie ondersoek dus krities hoe sosiale media deur werknemers in die konsultasiewerkomgewing gebruik word en die rol wat dit op werknemers se produktiwiteit. Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om die gedragsintensie van hoe en waarom werknemers sosiale media in die werksomgewing gebruik, vas te stel. Die probleem en gaping wat die navorsing wil aanspreek, is om krities te ondersoek of sosiale media bydra tot die produktiwiteit van werknemers en of sosiale media-platforms as 'n kennisdelingsinstrument gebruik kan word in organisasies. Die studie het 'n beskrywende navorsingsontwerp gebruik, die totale bevolking vir hierdie studie was 153 deelnemers. Gestruktureerde vraelyste is gebruik vir die versameling van relevante primêre data. Die bevindings het aan die lig gebring dat die gebruik van sosiale media in die werkplek nie produktiwiteit beïnvloed nie en meestal bydra tot kennisdeling, 'n vloeï van kommunikasie en deurlopende leer. Die studie het probeer om die bestaande leemte in navorsingsliteratuur te vul met betrekking tot die gebruik van sosiale media in die werkplek en produktiwiteit van werknemers. Aangesien sosiale media nie gedurende werksure buite rekening gelaat kan word nie, kan organisasies die beleid van sosiale media versterk.

Sleutelwoorde:

Sosiale media; Produktiwiteit; Kommunikasie; Werksplek; Kennisbestuur

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ESM	Enterprise Social Media
ESN	Enterprise Social Networking
KE	Knowledge Ecosystem
KIF	Knowledge-intensive Firms
KM	Knowledge Management
KW	Knowledge Worker
PKM	Personal Knowledge Management
SM	Social Media
SNS	Social Networking Site
WA	WhatsApp

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Internet, social media, mobile apps and other digital communications technologies have become part of everyday life for billions of people around the world (Dwivedi et al., 2021). According to Cliffe et al., (2017) in 2017 an estimated 1.94 billion active users reportedly spent an average of 35 minutes a day on Facebook, meanwhile, Twitter had 100 million active users who spent on average 17 minutes per day on the platform. In 2019, there were 2.95 billion people who were active social media users worldwide (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Pinterest had 150 million active users who reportedly spent 28 minutes on average, per day and LinkedIn had 500 million users who spent 17 minutes per day browsing their LinkedIn news feed (Cliffe et al., 2017). Additionally, Marentek et al., (2021) found that social media has become a platform that enables various knowledge management both at the personal and organisational levels. Research suggests that social media can help individuals gather resources such as information and connections that can help with productivity (Hanna et al., 2011). There is an increase in the use of social media by knowledge workers, its impact on productivity is still unexplored in the workplace (Babu et al., 2020), research conducted by (Priyadarshini et al., 2020) was to gain insights on the experience of employees using social media as well as the consequences attached to the usage.

Priyadarshini et al. (2020) conducted research to gain insights on the experience of employees using social media as well as the consequences attached to the usage. The use of social media at work enhances employees' ability as they gain more knowledge and increase their work-related capabilities. The advantage of social media use at work is that it reduces stress as employees are kept well informed continuously even about certain important life developments at the home front (Babu et al., 2020). Consequently, (S. Y. Lee & Lee, 2020) conducted a study on ways for firms to implement policies regarding employees' social media use, and if it enhances job performance, firms may consider establishing policies that encourage it.

According to Alberghini et al. (2014) it is important for organisations to evaluate the

participation and usage of social media by their employees. Despite the rise of social media usage, its exact impact on organisations remains debatable (X. Chen et al., 2022). According to Wahlroos (2010), several firms such as SAP, IBM, Deloitte, and KPMG have started using social media with Web 2.0 in their respective firms. These large companies namely Microsoft, Google and IBM are investing large resources in developing and implementing social media to enhance employees' collaboration with the expectation of improving their job performance (X. Chen et al., 2022).

This has progressed from almost a decade ago when social media was only allowed and tolerated in public (Alsaif, 2016). Enterprise Social Media (ESM) is the use of social networks in organisations that enable work-related collaboration and allows formation of online communities (Högberg, 2018). Internal social media applications, such as Yammer, IBM Connections, Chatter and Jive are owned and managed by organisations and are implemented by corporate platforms and are restricted to internal use by employees ((X. Chen & Wei, 2020), (X. Chen et al., 2022)). Enterprise Social Media (ESM) is described as internet-based platforms that enable communication within companies, as well as between companies and their external stakeholders. ESM is the use of social networks in organisations that enable work-related collaboration and allows formation of online communities (Högberg, 2018). It permits employees to post, edit, and arrange text documents and view messages communicated by everyone in the company such as Microsoft Teams. This allows for sharing work information, gathering information on how to perform a task, or communicating with individuals for interpersonal reasons (Zande, 2013).

Today, social media use in organisations is mainly to give out information and make announcements (Hallikainen, 2015) which allows organisations to interact with their clients and potential customers over the world wide web (Hallikainen, 2015). Aljaaidi (2020) argues that as social networking sites' usage has become more widespread, companies have started considering and understanding the impact that the use of social networking websites can have on the image and the working of an organisation. It is known that the internal use of social media helps employees fulfill their knowledge tasks to meet their objectives through informal interactions (Alberghini et al., 2014).

Many organisations have stayed away from using social media internally because they have not yet seen the benefits of using social media in the organisation. According to Razmerita et al., (2016), using social media in organisations has enabled external and

internal knowledge-sharing with customers, suppliers, and partners. It appears that many researchers have shied away from this topic due to the ethical challenges that social media brings, namely: defamation, cyber-bullying, freedom of speech, and the invasion of privacy (Cavico et al., 2013). Nonetheless, it was inevitable, with the popularity and widespread use of social media, both by individuals and business entities, that conflicts would arise (Cavico et al., 2013). According to Cliffe et al., (2017) research on the use of social media in the workplace is growing internationally as well as locally.

The main objective of this research is to investigate whether an individual's profile activity can determine their work performance and a possible link between the use of social media and the type of social media platform that is commonly used in an organisation. This will be achieved by gathering data through an electronic survey. Furthermore, this study will make effort to give an overview of how social media improves overall communication within an organisation. Undoubtedly, social media is now a valuable tool that enables employees to have current and readily available information (Hruska & Maresova, 2020). According to Yeshambel et al., (2016), it has quickly become a habit for employees to use social media both internally and externally to achieve an organisation's goals. This study will investigate the patterns of social media use in a consulting firm to analyse which social media platform is mostly used during working hours. In addition, the contribution of the social media platform to the employees' productivity will be investigated. According to a survey conducted in the United States of America (USA), 1 400 college students specifically stated that if they came across a company that banned social media use in-house, they would not accept the job or would accept the job and find a way to change the company policies towards social media (Francois et al., 2013). Other researchers like Gholami-Kordkheili et al., (2013) who have studied the use of social media in a particular domain or field in the workplace (corporate, public health, academia, or the health care sector) found that it is important to stress the necessity of a social media policy by creating the separation between professional and personal use.

Cilliers et al., (2017) have pointed out that in academia, social media is traditionally known to facilitate communication and collaboration between students to improve teaching and learning; but now that businesses serve a global market by using the internet as the most important source of information in the new millennium, some new challenges have arisen.

One of these challenges is the way employees use social media networking sites in their organisations (Cilliers et al., 2017). Consequently, there is a need to understand the behavioural intention of the use of social media in the workplace (Cilliers et al., 2017). In a way internal KM applications of social media are close to some of the principles of KM which include the unrestricted sharing of knowledge, information and data (Alberghini et al., 2014). Research conducted by Hemsley & Mason (2013) stated that social media has created an evolving complex knowledge ecosystem by providing speed, reach and dynamic connectivity across platforms.

There is a need to understand and investigate how employees use social media in the workplace and the behavioural connotations and intentions for its workplace use (Cliffe et al., 2017). In South Africa, Cilliers et al., (2017) identified nearly 30 million active users with access to social media networks through their mobile phones. These networks include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn which are used for market research, marketing, and customer service as an integral part of their business (Cliffe et al., 2017). Moyo (2018) discusses that the increased popularity of social media has completely changed the way many businesses and people communicate. Additionally, Polańska (2014) pointed that social media has helped companies to reach new customers by enabling the use of web-based training, team-based projects, distribution of updates for employees to search and verify information during recruitments. However, while social media has fully changed the way businesses manage their strategies to properly address the competitive external environment, impact, and demands; it has also introduced several Information Technology (IT) risks at strategic and operational levels (Gerber, 2016). A study by Min (2017) states that the support of mobile devices and Social Networking Sites (SNS) use has no time and no space limitations thus making it incredibly difficult to manage employees.

Many theoretical and empirical researchers have shown positive correlation between organisational efficiency and social media usage by employees (e.g. (McAfee, 2006), (Van Zyl, 2009), (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014), (Babu et al., 2020), (Aguenza & Som, 2012)). On the other hand, several theories and studies have showed the negative association between the usage of social media in the workplace on employee productivity (e.g. (Munene & Nyaribo, 2013), (Francois et al., 2013), (Razmerita et al., 2014), (Razmerita et al., 2016), (Wushe & Shenje, 2019), (X. Chen & Wei, 2020)). To the researcher's

knowledge, an empirical study investigating the association of social media usage in the workplace with employee productivity in South Africa does not exist. Therefore, this study is motivated to investigate the way in which social media is used in consulting firms by employees on their productivity.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1. The research topic

Social media is currently being used in the workplace to communicate, share resources, schedule meetings, and promote the organisation to its external environment. However, while this may have numerous advantages, social media can also be detrimental to the image of an organisation and may contribute to the productivity of the employees (Smith, 2017). According to Mulauzi (2018), there is little knowledge on how social media is used by employers and employees.

1.2.2. The main research question and sub-questions

This thesis is a case study that is aimed at investigating how social media is used in consulting firm in the South African workplace. The purpose of this study is to identify and investigate employees' main intention to use social media during working hours in a consulting firm in South Africa. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate which type of social media platform is commonly used in the workplace and if social media usage in the workplace affects productivity. The first and second question will be the basis of the research and the final question will summarise the entire research. Finally, the study will look at which social media platforms are used by individuals to communicate and share information.

A comprehensive analysis will require the different sub-components of the research topics. These include:

- What is the most commonly used social media platform used by employees in organisations?
- Does using social media during working hours affect productivity?

- What is the impact of using social media for employees in the workplace?

1.2.3. Deficiencies in the evidence

According to Chinyamurindi & Louw (2010), although there is great awareness of the use of social media in South African higher institutions to facilitate communication, there is little research and information available on how employees decide to use social media to perform their work tasks in business. This, therefore, calls for more research on technology and social media in South Africa.

Min (2017), also states that research has not been designed to investigate the effect of SNS use on performance during the completion of a task and therefore this limits our understanding of how employees are distracted by SNS while simultaneously completing work objectives.

1.2.4. Audience

This study will benefit consulting firms and business organisations that wish to create and revise their workplace social media platforms and policies.

1.2.5. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this quantitative research is to investigate the use of social media amongst employees and how it impacts on productivity in the workplace. This is a case study, focusing on consulting firms in South Africa.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

Based on the deficiencies in evidence, the key objectives of this study are:

- To identify which social media platforms are commonly used in the workplace.
- To identify how social media is used in the workplace by employees.

- To investigate how social media usage in the workplace affects employees' productivity.
- To gain better insights on the use of social media in the workplace that can inform social media policies in the workplace.

1.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of this thesis is primarily based on a literature review thereafter followed by the collection of data through surveys, then the data analysis and results and findings of the research.

There are five core concepts for this research which will be investigated as follows:

- social media;
- enterprise social media in the workplace;
- the most common social media platform used in organisations; and
- the impact of social media on productivity in the workplace.

Each concept will be addressed in the literature review and an adaptation will be formulated. It is hoped that these core concepts will lead to a better understanding of the research question.

The data for this research will be collected by sending electronic surveys to employees as a methodological tool to investigate how employees use social media in the workplace.

1.5. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the background, the research problem, and objectives, as well as outlining the research questions and the design of the study.

In Chapter 2, an overview of the literature reviewed is provided from a selection of journals, conferences, and theses. The objective is to clarify the definition of social media; the different social media platforms that employees use to communicate; and finally, to make

the link between employees' usage of social media in the workplace and how social media affects productivity. The benefits and limitations of the use of social media in the workplace are also further discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 3, the research methods are clearly defined and established. This will explain how data will be acquired to achieve and the data analysis techniques used. The research questions and objectives of the study through the electronic survey shared with the participants will also be discussed.

In Chapter 4, an analysis of the data is conducted, and the reporting of the findings and results will be done. This will inform the answers to the research question and sub-questions provided in Chapter 1.

Lastly, Chapter 5 provides the summary of conclusions for this study, the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research within this field. Chapter 5 discusses how this research adds to the existing body of knowledge regarding the use of social media in the workplace by employees and how this can inform policies in businesses to ensure overall productivity and maximal performance. The aim of this study, is therefore not to provide a definitive answer, but rather, provide probable solutions that can be incorporated in the workplace.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on social media and employee productivity. The literature review starts by discussing the conceptualisation of social media, the foundation of web 2.0 and enterprise social networking. The chapter then presents the discussion of the usage of social media and employee productivity. It lastly presents a discussion on the impact of social media policies in organisations.

2.2. THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Today, the vast information that is created daily from social media platforms needs to be leveraged by organisations. For more than a decade SNS have witnessed a sporadic increase in number and popularity (Can & Kaya, 2016). Both decision-makers and consultants ought to identify, investigate and manipulate the information's value; however, to date, there has been little research conducted on this use of social media in the business context (Emamjome et al., 2014).

Nonetheless, according to Hanna et al., (2011) social media technologies have spurred the rapid pace of becoming interactive with other individuals. This research, therefore, investigates how employees use social media in the workplace by providing results gathered from employees from the consulting industry. Currently, social media is perceived as being a distraction in the workplace; however, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature on seeing the potential social media can bring to an organisation by showing employees how they can use social media in the organisation. It is the attempt of this study to provide a positive outlook for organisations on how employees can use social media for the benefit of the company. The research will give a working definition of social media. It will allow organisations to see the correlation between work performance, productivity, and the on-going use of social media in a work environment.

Firstly, the literature review will give a working definition of social media. It will assist

organisations to see the correlation between work performance, productivity, and the on-going use of social media in a work environment. Secondly, by employing a quantitative approach, the research will show how much time employees spend on social media whether in a work environment or for leisure. Thirdly, producing factual evidence of the implication of knowledge management with social media in a work environment may help to create a framework that will potentially be used as a guide for organisations to use when contemplating merging social media and knowledge management together to create an effective collaborative on-line tool.

It can be understood that social media is an Internet-based service that includes, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp, that allows individuals to share, create or view user-generated content. It is a multitude of content, that includes videos, photographs, speech or sound and is transmitted and is accessed via the Internet (Nduhura & Prieler, 2017). The building blocks of social media are further discussed in the Web 2.0 section below.

2.2.1. Web 2.0

Before the Internet emerged to facilitate communication 20 years ago, messages were previously transferred through one-way media whereby communication was aimed at targeting the masses (Mohammed, 2011). The web is an internet-based framework that enables information browsing, it primarily uses the internet to connect to a computer network consisting of a collection of websites (Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002) (Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, 2022). Web 2.0 was first used in the 2000s to describe the way in which the internet was being used which allowed more collaborative surfing as well as the development and editing of online content (Gruzd et al., 2011). The term Web 2.0 was first coined by Tim O'Reilly and was commonly used at the company O'Reilly Media Inc (Snee, 2009).

Examining some scholarly research on Web 2.0, it is closely related to Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. According to (Almeida, 2012) the introduction of Web 2.0 is a platform, many organisations are looking forward to tackling Web 2.0 internally and are

willing to try out tools and deploy them on a trial basis. The term Web 2.0 is a buzzword that has gained popularity because it has captured the second generation of the web (Schneiganz, 2013). The characteristics of Web 2.0 are discussed as follows:

One of the defining terms of Web 2.0 is defined by Tim O'Reilly in 2007 (Anderson et al., 2007) as "the use of web pages as a two-way form of communicating between users which gives them the chance to create and share content in the form of photos, videos and links." O'Reilly (2005) further visualises Web 2.0 as a group of principles that are joined together as a truthful solar system that showcase principal sites varying from a distance. According to Dooley et al. (2012) Web 2.0 is a network that is displayed as a platform that connects all devices. Web 2.0 is interesting because it makes up that platform: conveying a software that continually updates a service that gets better every time and that allows more individuals to engage with it, engrossing and changing data from various sources. The service involves all the individual users, and also provides data that can be switched around by others and going beyond Web 1.0 to create a unique user experience. Web 2.0 is a series of technologies that allows the user to add their content to become part of the global network (Pal, 2015).

Web 2.0 tools vary from blogs, wikis, folksonomies, and social networks. Social media has become a common means of interaction in the 21st century. Furthermore, social media users belong to at least one social network. According to Beheshti-Kashi & Makki (2013) Facebook is the most successful social networking site in the world. The growth and exposure of the social networking sites are most commonly popular amongst Generation Y and Generation Z which are commonly known as 'millennials'. This group of individuals would rather communicate by use of e-mail and or texting than face-to-face interaction (Harber, 2011). Collin et al. (2011) discusses how SNS in a Web 2.0 environment has changed the processes of communication and social integration with the high increase in social media functionality. The foundations of social media are based on two aspects namely:

- 1) Web 2.0: which is described by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) as a shift from the existence and publication of content for the internet by individuals to a new environment where all

users are able to continuously initiate, edit and share content on-line in a participatory and collaborative fashion. In this regard, Facebook and Twitter will be considered a Web 2.0 thus this definition is not specific enough when it comes to the extent of the definition of social media.

2) User-generated content (UGC): as stated by (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) that social media is all the media that is created and shared by an individual online. According to Jordaan (2012) social media is a medium whereby a large vast of content is gathered and shared by the readers and end-users; it importantly deals with connecting in digital ways. Additionally, (Osatuyi, 2013) discusses social media technologies as computer-mediated communication technologies that are frequently used in joining and connecting individuals to create and disseminate UGC. Agichtein et al., (2008) describe the difference between user-generated content and traditional content as significant for knowledge-based media such as question and answering portals which is the variance in the quality of content.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Web 2.0 is an important asset because it is the start of change whereby, all interaction and communication not simply with computers and technologies but with individuals as well. Web 2.0 has facilitated the younger generation to recognise the internet as a significant technology development but has also closely been looked at as a communication media and a service delivery tool.

2.2.2. Web 2.0 Technologies

The emphasis on social media tools and technologies in today's business society and environment has gained important attention from organisations due to the increasing complexity of the global business setting which involves global co-workers, customers, and suppliers (Munene et al., 2013). Web 2.0 technologies encourage a more active and participatory role for users (Darwish et al., 2011). The Web 2.0 technologies include blogs, websites, Wikis, SNSs, social bookmarking and tagging, Really Simple Syndication (RSS), file sharing and podcasting. These technologies are important to understand for this study because Web 2.0 is the foundation for social media networking and is mostly used to describe the different spheres of technology, the attitudes that are attached to it, the growing online communities as well as the fact that it enables individuals to produce their own creative content (Kocak & Oyman, 2012). Moreover, according to Alberghini et al. (2014), Web 2.0 technologies change the way people collaborate and interact, which offers a virtual and flexible environment.

According to (Dooley et al., 2012) blogs are websites that are personalised by a blogger that allows them to enter content, images, hyperlinks, videos, or other media into an online journal or diary format. A blog allows a reader to leave comments and subscribe to a feed and is alerted once a new entry is posted. Therefore, it can be concluded that blogs are a self-publishing tool that resembles a diary or an online journal whereby a user can regularly post content (Sophia van Zyl, 2009).

According to (Anderson, Hepworth, Kelly, et al., 2007) a blogging software facilitates syndication which provides information about the blog entries such as the headline, which is therefore made available to other systems via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) in which the content is aggregated into feeds.

Wikis are websites where information is inputted, modified, and structured by interested parties (Dooley et al., 2012). The writing spaces in wikis are opted by many pages and the best known wiki is Wikipedia. The popular success of Wikipedia is the main concept of the wiki, that as a collaborative tool it promotes group work, allowing users to have access to edit, delete or change content on the wiki pages (Anderson, Hepworth, Kelly, et al., 2007).

SNSs are web-based services that enable users to create or design a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, and to decide with whom they would like to share a connection with (Abdulahi et al., 2014). What makes SNSs fascinating is the ability for users to meet strangers and make their social network visible. Popular SNS's include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

According to Sophia van Zyl (2009) social bookmarking enables users to post their preferred list of bookmarks or their favourite websites for other users to explore and have a look at. Bookmarks can also be tagged with keywords to differentiate between folders and in which category bookmarks are found in (Anderson, Hepworth, Kelly, et al., 2007). Adding to the definition of social bookmarking, Darwish et al. (2011) argue that its primary purpose is for users to store, organise, search, manage and share webpage bookmarks with other users. Tagging is the additional information which is done by a phrase or keyword that groups together content to prioritise the information for use at a later stage (Almeida, 2012). Tagging is a keyword that is added to a digital object such as a website, picture, or video clip which gives a better description of the object but not as a classification system (Anderson et al., 2007).

According to Anderson et al. (2007) RSS is a family of formats that enables users to receive updates from the content of RSS-enabled websites, blogs, or podcasts without much effort to go onto the site. Additionally, RSS is a web feed format to broadcast timely content on a regular basis, and it allows a user to receive their favourite feeds automatically (Sophia van Zyl, 2009).

File sharing is making big files available to users on a peer-to-peer network. It involves users embedding multimedia into an SNS in which it does not function in isolation from other Web 2.0 applications (Darwish et al., 2011). Additionally, (Anderson, Hepworth, Lecturer, et al., 2007) state that the most considerable growth area is the ability to store and send multimedia content. The well-known examples of this include YouTube (video sharing) and Flickr (photograph sharing).

The word 'podcast' is derived from the words iPod (portable digital audio player from Apple) and broadcasting. Podcasts are digital audio programs that can be subscribed to

and downloaded by users via RSS and this allows a user to listen to them on any digital audio platform (Darwish et al., 2011).

It can be understood that the foundation of Web 2.0 platforms is building relationships, conversations, and sharing of information in groups. Moreover, there are various ways in which social media can be defined and this will be considered in the next section.

2.2.3. Social Media Defined

Even though there is a broad and considerable amount of research on the impact of the internet on society, there is limited research on social media usage among employees, particularly in the South African organisational context. The term “social media” refers to web-based and mobile technologies which are able to turn communication into an interactive dialogue (Alberghini et al., 2014). Social media is a term that is used to describe unparalleled opportunities to connect and communicate with customers (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). At times there is an interlink between SNSs, Enterprise 2.0 and Web 2.0. All these practical applications facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design and collaboration on the World Wide Web (C. S. Lee & Ma, 2012).

Rönkkö et al. (2017) defines social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. Furthermore, Rönkkö et al., (2017) point out that one of the characteristics of social media is the creation and exchange of user-generated content from a bottom-up point of view. According to Baruah(2012) social media is the term that is commonly used to describe web-based and mobile technologies that have been turned into communication and interactive dialogues. Additionally, SNSs are web-based services that enable individuals to establish a public or semi-public profile within a restrained system. Individual users share a connection and engage and interact with strangers (Broughton et al., 2013). All these definitions have an underlining aspect of users interacting, sharing and creating useful information.

Edosomwan et al., (2011) state that social media should not be confused with social networks.

Social media is more of a strategy which helps improve or increase a message across mass media whereas social networks are tools that enable individuals to communicate and connect with one another. According to Mix (2011) social media is characterised by three primary activities: a user generates a unique online identity, establishes relationships with other users, and connects to many communities of users who share connections. The common definition of social media as provided by Boyd et al. (2008) is a web-based service that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Furthermore, Correa et al. (2010) describe social media as a way for a population to interact with one another and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites. Due to the rapid growth and the movement of social media, there is a lack of agreement on the definition of social media (Chen-Olmsted et al., 2013).

According to Abdulahi et al., (2014) SNSs are a web-based service that allows individuals to develop a public or semi-public profile within a limited system with whom they share their interests with. Consequently, Brake (2009) considered social media as activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people who gather on-line to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. Ali-Hassan et al. (2015) describe social media as an umbrella term for a variety of tools and applications.

The development of social media has changed the web into a social space and has given a different manner of supporting social processes with the managing of data, information, and knowledge (Razmerita et al., 2014). It is difficult to have a set definition for social media with the technology environment rapidly changing, however, the term social media is closely linked with Web 2.0, user-generated media, and social networking within an ecosystem of the user's choosing. The dimensions of social media take note of the central role of joining and reinforcing social processes that enable communication and monitoring of knowledge in an organisation (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015).

Social media has numerous advantages over traditional media. The main social media characteristics are related to the nature of the relationship that is formed within the team as described by (Papailiou et al., 2007). Four social media characteristics have derived from the social media technology which are discussed as follows in Table 2.1 (Hu et al., 2013).

Table 2.1: Social Media Characteristics

Social Media Characteristics	
Integration	Integration allows users from across the world to connect, share and exchange information. The integration characteristic between users and information resources illustrated in social media.
Time effectiveness	The users of social media can send and receive information immediately and whenever they choose to, which means information synchronisation and user can fast access to the required information.
Least effort	Social media is open and free, it does not require for an individual to have special skills or special training thus making SM easy to use.
Orderliness	The dynamic and the public of social media makes social media ordered. As we are aware of the Web 2.0 it allows for social media to be open and dynamic.

Social media is a powerful tool that enables individuals to collaborate, engage and solve problems. Currently, organisations have started implementing internal intranets whereby employees are able to discuss, participate and share internal company news.

2.2.4. Enterprise social media

The development and awareness of the use of enterprise social network (ESN) in organisations has been implemented since the conception of social networking tools, interactive project management software and online software

Enterprise social media (ESM) is a distinct form of communication technologies that is used in many organisations (Leonardi et al., 2013). According to Lalić (2020), ESM is a web-based platform whereby social interaction occurs and anyone in the organization can participate at any time from any place which allows workers to 1) communicate messages with specific co-workers, 2) explicitly indicate particular co-workers as communication partners; 3) post, edit and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; 4) view messages, connections, text and files communicated by anyone in the organisation. It is a way for organisational communication to take place with external parties (Leonardi et al., 2013). Furthermore, Mäntymäki & Riemer (2016) discusses that in a report from McKinsey (2012), the effective use of social media technologies can result in 20-25% improvement in knowledge worker productivity. This view is supported by (Grover, 2020) who agrees that ESM can improve employee relationships within the organisation as well as productivity.

Organisations are taking advantage of social networking technology by engaging with applications. This is referred to as “enterprise social networking” (Turban et al., 2011). Additionally, Jarrahi (2012) discusses that enterprise social media supports new informal, network-centric interactions between employees, thus enabling and facilitating their access to informal and distributed stocks in knowledge in organisations.

According to Franchi et al. (2016) there is an integration feature of social networking platforms that allows collaboration amongst people in an organisation with a simple knowledge sharing tool that is called Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). In recent years (Riemer & Scifleet, 2012), discovered that social software applications found their way into corporate practice and there has since been an increasing demand for enterprise social software to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Furthermore, enterprise social networking (ESN) platforms promote the culture of social relationships, communication, conversation and ad-hoc sharing (Riemer & Scifleet, 2012). In support, (Wei et al., 2020) states that ESM is an effective tool for communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is defined by (Tsui et al., 2006) as the process of exchanging knowledge needed: [be it] skills, experience and understanding among researchers, policymakers, and service providers.

Stafford & Mearns (2010) discuss how the use of on-line social networks has significantly changed communication on a professional and social level. As a growing and dynamic field, social media has become a communication tool for enabling knowledge sharing in an organization (Remidez & Jones, 2012). Organisations are now being encouraged to embrace SM tools to create and produce a knowledge-sharing culture and facilitate the organisation's capability to develop new products and processes (Amimejad & Zahra, 2015). Facebook groups are now being regarded as an online community, wherein group members belong, participate together in discussions and share certain practices (Moghavvemi et al., 2018). Given that the key component of any organisation is to effectively get everyone to complete a common goal in the fastest way possible, there are three valuables namely: communication, interaction, and collaboration (Mushonga, 2014). Communities of Practice (CoPs) are groups of individuals in the same areas of common interests which can now organise and exchange information informally ((Lavoué, 2011), (Wenger, 2005)). This interaction can be compared to colleagues who come together to join knowledge, build upon that knowledge, and create an entirely new knowledge bank that never existed before. This exercise is essential to open new perspectives that solve new problems when they arise. Abelmaged (2018) discusses and supports the point that ESN platforms have a widespread transformation of decentralised and on-going knowledge sharing that gets the minds of the employees while they eradicate temporal, social and spatial collaborative sharing impediments.

Research conducted by (Wei et al., 2020) on ESM showed that Chinese employers use the ESM technology in the workplace for collaboration and work-related communication because most of the public social networks are blocked in China. The most commonly known ESM platform is Yammer which provides services to over 100 000 companies and is claiming a user base of more than four million (Riemer & Scifleet, 2012). According to Aboelmaged (2018), firms are more inclined to invest in new technologies that allow for an effective and centralised knowledge creation and sharing repository. According to Lu & Pan (2019) ESM has become an important platform for leisure and entertainment for many employees, where employees discuss interesting topics that they are

concerned about. In 2016, research conducted by (Mäntymäki & Riemer, 2016) examined knowledge sharing uses of ESN which included discussing ideas, updating corporate events, managing tasks, conducting formal discussions and resolving problems.

It is understood that ESN is the strategic integration of Web 2.0 technologies into an enterprise's Intranet. There are principles and practices that are linked to social media and this will be discussed in the section below.

2.2.5. Principles of Social Media

The evolution of the usage of social media has changed our lives and the way knowledge and information is handled (Mushonga, 2014). Panahi et al. (2012) have categorised the characteristics of social media into five features:

- User-generated content. The users are not simply readers, but they can also edit and contribute to their content.
- Peer-to-peer communication. Social media allows individuals to connect with other users and permits real-time connections worldwide.
- Networking. Building a community of individuals with similar interests who develop relationships and discuss freely and transfer knowledge and their experiences.
- Multimedia-oriented. Social media allows users to share and put their different types of media, for example; videos and photos.
- User friendly. The technology required does not need an individual to be technically proficient and the technology is easily accessible.

Social media, social networks and online communities are all ideas grouped within the philosophy known as Web 2.0. which has facilitated the creation of computer-mediated social networking and internet users' collaboration (Parveen et al., 2016). Due to the growth and rapid pace of the evolution of social media, organisations have started implementing the use of social media by means of building and maintaining social media public pages and enhancing interest in their organisations.

2.3. SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN ORGANISATIONS

According to Alasmari Ali (2020), social media has impacted both the internal and external communication of an organisation. There is a great influence on how information is received and shared, and this is where organisations need to implement new approaches and methods in organisational communication (Badea, 2014). The use of social media is viewed as transformative and innovative as it enables a two-way and symmetrical interaction between organisations (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). This view is supported by Marynissen (2011) who agrees that the common objective of organisational communication is to convey information in a way that impacts an individual or collective behaviour. Organisational communication can be defined as “...*that in one organisation all members send and receives the signals, and simultaneously, in dynamical co-action...*” (Siljanovska, 2015). The rise of social media has had implications on several aspects of organisational communication (Thomas & Dittman, 2016).

Carlson et al. (2016) points out that the use of social media by employees in the workplace is unquestionable; the impact of this use, is uncertain. Dwivedi et al. (2021) discusses that people spend an increasing amount of time online, searching for information on products and services, collaborating and facilitating with other consumers about experiences and engaging with companies. Since its inception, social media has changed the lives of people as it enables individuals to identify users online. It can at times be hard to differentiate between the real world and relational networking (Wariara, 2017).

Further research in this topic is considered by Alberghini et al. (2014) who are of the view that social media networks have an important role in mapping and representing relationships as well as connections amongst a group of employees in organisations through visualisation. According to Mushonga (2014), social networks are not expensive to implement in organisations, and the data found on social media usually has some sort of reasoning and explanations that accompany it.

Social networks in enterprises are put together to grow the use of creating knowledge as well as transferring the knowledge as a process to create value in the organisation. One can conclude that knowledge networks can be an informal or formal means of communication. Also identified by Adzharuddin & Kander (2018) is that organisations need to implement and allow staff to use social networking sites in the workplace. Omoregie (2021) asserts that social media use in an

organisation enhances the frontiers of an organisation thus leading to better patronage.

(Wariara, 2017) further discusses the main features of social media, which is the ability to share content communally to facilitate easier retrieval and its availability to other individuals in the same network. Social media allows the use of online resources to be readily available to employees thus reducing financial costs for current research (Franchi et al., 2016). Many employers are simply accustomed to being keen on social media usage in the workplace as a better way of engaging with staff and creating a more collegiate environment (The Use of Social Media in the Workplace, 2011). Many organisations have tried to understand the importance of using and developing social media as a strategic communication channel (B. K. Lewis & Nichols, 2016). Baxter (2015) elaborates that organisation that choose to adopt an Enterprise 2.0 strategy need to ensure that the tools implemented align with their business strategy.

According to Oxenford (2011), social media use by employees is usually tied in with what type of services the organisation offers. For example, should it be an organisation that deals with sensitive, proprietary, and private information, it is preferred that the use of their information stays private. According to Munene & Nyaribo (2013), social media participation has had a positive impact on participants, especially with informal learning, creation, and sharing of knowledge, retention of organisational knowledge, the use of computer-aided communication technologies, and the increased productivity and workflow. Carlson et al. (2016) puts forward the view that social media in the workplace allows people to effectively engage in two kinds of positive work-related behaviours: task-oriented behaviours and relationship-building behaviours.

Social media can be considered a tremendous resource to the business world (Dierksen et al., 2013). This is due to the rapid expansion and adoption of internal social media. Employers are utilising social media to assess the information of prospective employees (Herlle et al., 2013). Aguenza & Som (2012) points out that employees who are social by nature and are connected to other people through SNSs are better in the workplace, thus meaning that they have skills in interacting with others which allows them to solve complex problems. According to Spector (2015), employees in organisations use social media productively during work in order to help them locate the required information and knowledgeable individuals to answer questions, to learn about specific skills and functions of others and to boost their work performance. Research conducted by Razmerita et al. (2014) elaborate that many organisations have thoroughly had an increase of performance,

engagement, and overall team collaboration among employees through the support of social media.

Haddud et al.(2016) as cited by Martin (2013) reports that on average in 2010, each of the Fortune 500 companies have included and approached more than one social media platform. Haddud et al.(2016) further discusses how the use of social media technologies has evolved across organisations as executives and managers try to profit from the power of information and knowledge that lies within their companies. Additionally, many companies are putting more interest in using social media as a way to reach customers more effectively and for mass messaging at a rapid pace (Adzovie et al., 2017).

Organisations are using social networks to collaborate, across different departments (Franchi et al., 2016). Social media has increasingly become a popular means of communication over the years and has resulted in an attraction and attention from researchers in the academic and industry field (Kapoor et al., 2018). Past research ((Babu et al., 2020), (S. Y. Lee & Lee, 2020), (Wei et al., 2020)) has created a dynamic development for social media and work productivity. However, employees' enactment in the workplace has moderately remained uncertain. According to Massarsky (2016), with the emergence of social media as an effective communication tool, there is substantial research to investigate the impact of its use in the workplace. Additionally, Mäntymäki & Riemer (2016) states that ESN holds great opportunities for organisations.

According to Aguenza & Som (2012), SNSs allow organisations to keep and share information on different marketing strategies and procedures. Parveen (2012) adds to the contributions of social media in organisations by stating that social media performs integrated marketing activities with less effort than before. Social media has enabled online communities to allow organisations to draw up insights to improve their business decision-making (Mount, 2014). According to Hajli (2014), social media has opened up new possibilities for social interaction with consumer engagement through the means of the Internet.

Wariara (2017) discusses social media platforms which are often regarded as a mass collaboration that has a prime effect on creating value for stakeholders. Furthermore, organisations that are founded by different individuals and the success of an organisation is how well they work and interact with one another. For a team to be successful, communication needs to take place, thus allowing social

media platforms to become part of the mundane work routine.

In recent years, organisations and researchers were still in the early stages and developments in exploring social media in an organisational environment, hoping to see the benefits it contributes to employees through informal collaboration (Brzozowski et al., 2009). Dlamini & Johnston (2018) point out another benefit of social media use in the workplace; which is that it can provide views of how employees and customers feel if there is a need for change.

Further research by Janhonen & Johanson (2011) affirms that social media can enable and help knowledge conversion and team performance and highlights that social media (when compared to traditional media) allows individuals to actively engage in communication processes. Online platforms have been designed to simplify information sharing, knowledge distribution and opinion exchanges (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2013). Additionally, Razmerita et al. (2016) state that there has been a change in workflows internally and externally within organisations' communication, collaboration, and work culture. Social media can help employees be more productive in staying current with market trends as well as the important issues that concern consumers (Diercksen et al., 2013). By employees staying informed, this allows the individuals within an organisation to prepare for setbacks and they are most likely to develop accurate public relations through the work they do (Diercksen et al., 2013).

Based on academic research articles and consultancy reports, this research investigates the role of social media in the organisation, particularly focusing on how social media is used within the organisation. Social media has become an integral part of organisations in helping with personnel and organisational communication (Mohamed et al., 2017). According to Holland et al. (2017) there are a few studies that focus on social media during working hours for personal use. Holland et al. (2017) states that behaviour and job attitudes are circumstances which predict a counterproductive workplace such as "cyber-loafing" in terms, lurking on the internet/social media for non-work or personal activities. According to Cao et al. (2015) social media has infiltrated the workplace by making it easier for organisational communication and knowledge that has been considered difficult to capture in the past. By contrast, Leftheriotis & Giannakos (2014) explain that using social media during work hours is an advantage by aiding in maintaining external professional networks, creating

and strengthening ties with colleagues, gathering professional information and promoting knowledge sharing and resources.

Additionally, Razmerita et al. (2014) explain that social media allows innovations of elicitation and externalisation of knowledge: self-initiated through blogs or wikis or asked by other individuals through forums or open discussions. According to Voigt & Ernst (2010) social media tools are benchmarked with the ability to sustain an organisations' enterprise processes by means of capturing knowledge, the creation of knowledge, sharing of ideas, and new implementations that are joined through social networks such as Twitter and Blogs. Furthermore, Edosomwan & Seymour (2011) discuss social media in an organisation as having the potential to reach a larger audience. According to Mount (2014), the use of social media is a set of online tools that is open to the public and which assists individuals in sharing, creating, editing content and building relationships through interaction and collaboration.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) further states that with the rise of social media, corporate communication has been adjusted. Additionally, social media technologies have developed a unique method of interacting and communicating (Hanna et al., 2011). O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson (2011) explain that participation in social media provides individuals with benefits which broaden their view of self, community, and the world.

Even with having similarities with both allowing interaction and socialisation, a social media website is defined by Haddud et al., (2016) as a prearranged set of tools that allow individuals to fully become conscious of and respond to real-time information with current content on a regular basis. A social networking site is a site that helps individuals connect, network, and engage with family and friends regardless of their geographical location (Mohammed, 2011). In other words, SNSs are an act of engagement. Social networks are a set of individuals or groups that are mainly joined and connected to each other through socially meaningful relationships (Yeshambel et al., 2016). According to Ellison & Boyd (2013), SNSs are connected platforms in which the individuals have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content. The content has been provided by other users, and system-provided data which can portray the different content publicly and this allows users to consume, produce and interact with the streamed information by user-content generated by the site. The

traditional and popular social networking sites have appeared to be aimed at interpersonal interactions, and the common goal of social networking sites is to communicate simpler with family and friends to create a professional and social identity on social networks (Razmerita et al., 2014).

With SNSs platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Pinterest, organisations see them as timewasters when actual research depicts the opposite of the theory. Organisations have started to notice that SNSs are a great business advantage (Moqbel, 2012). According to Baker et al., (2005) SNSs allow organisations to have rapid and instant contact with subordinates. (Baker et al., 2005) further notes that information is easily retrievable and accessible through the internet. Aguenza & Som (2012) states that if carefully looked at from an organisation's point of view, a social networking site is the fastest way to gather information. Aguenza & Som (2012) further states that SNSs enable an organisation to share, gather and use information by keeping the organisations' online presence alive. The challenge some organisations face with social media usage is that the medium would be used for non-business-related content which will ultimately impact productivity (Bria, n.d.). With the booming of technologies and different social media platforms Abate et al. (2011) elaborate on how employers use social media as an effective way to interact and communicate with the staff and as a way of creating a free-flowing collegiate environment.

The main advantages of social media in an organisation are discussed by (Baruah, 2012), and that is that information and knowledge is shared online, thus resulting in increased communication among employees in an organisation. Furthermore, (Baruah, 2012) adds that the use of social media is relatively low on cost since it is prominently online, thus removing costs of other forms of media such as printing. Social media bridges the gap in communication, allowing individuals with the same common interest to interact easily and effectively. Min (2017) states that SNSs as a social network technology can be beneficial to an organisational social network by enabling employees to communicate, collaborate, share knowledge, and reach out to other employees whom they have never met in a physical environment to gather and look for information. Social media in the work environment offers an amazing and beneficial marketing tool if used correctly, as it can boost an organisations online presence as well as raise awareness (Diercksen et al., 2013).

As discussed above, social media is changing the way individuals and organisations engage. (Brake, 2009) discusses the four aspect levels of engagement on how organisations use social

media.

2.3.1. Communication and Collaboration

The internet has been put in place along with social media for individuals to communicate from e-mail to “tweeting” (Twitter), “jotting” (Jott), blogging and surveying (Brake, 2009). The internet is built as a global tool for any professional who wants to work or collaborate. In organisations, to get employees to collaborate, a company wiki should be installed. Some organisations use of social media pertains to the use of disseminating information about their services, products, causes or classes. According to Priyadarshini et al., (2020), most studies found that there is a negative relationship between time spent on social media and student grade points. Consequently, research by Mulauzi (2018) points out that employees can instantly communicate with other employees and clients online regardless of where they can find connectivity, this introducing the new term “remote working”. Several scholars ((Ten & Vanyushyn, 2017), (Agichtein et al., 2008)) have provided evidence in research that successful internal communication underpins and develops employee understanding of opportunities and threats, and promotes organisational commitment which contributes to building a positive identity.

2.3.2. Entertainment

On an occurrence, an organisation that entertains individuals while selling a message about their products can sell more due to the off-the-wall creative approach which can help consumers talk more about its product (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). According to Razmerita et al. (2014), many organisations have tried to incorporate social media to improve interaction, collaboration, and knowledge sharing by recognising social and collaborative dimensions of social software in organisations. This is also supported by Sigala et al., (2014) who found that social media has changed how an organisation’s knowledge ecosystem has allowed for the expansion and growth of efficiently producing knowledge management activities that go around the organisational borders in continuous and informal ways which are done through social networks. It is undoubtedly noticed that in the last few years, the greatest innovation has been the internet and how information, knowledge, photos, and videos have facilitated the diffusion of retrieving the data required on any type of medium.

Parveen (2012) speaks of social media as contributing great advantages to an organisation namely: it enhances Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practices, it provides interactional and

transactional benefits, it improves export marketing performance, and improves innovation. According to I. J. Chen & Popovich (2003), CRM is a mixture of people, processes, and technology put in place to understand an organisation's customers better, whereas ESN is used for personal knowledge management in an organisation (Mäntymäki & Riemer, 2016). Consensus can undoubtedly be reached that social media enables individuals to network and interact with one another by sharing common interests, goals, and dreams (Wariara, 2017). Organisations have understood that they can embrace social media as a strategic communication channel (Wariara, 2017).

Whilst organisations use and manage social media, it is important for organisations to put in place policies to govern the use of media as well as an ethical structure to govern the use of social media and protect the rights of employees and employers.

2.3.3. Social Media Policy

It can be difficult to construct a policy governing behaviour that covers employee use of SM, whether it being as part of the job or for personal use during work hours (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2016). According to Adzharuddin & Kander (2018), the use of Facebook in the workplace should not be banned. SNS have proven to be the most powerful and most cost-effective form of communication whereby workers in organisations can communicate via social media to communicate urgent matters to colleagues in the same organisations or to external workers in another organisation, Adzharuddin and Kander (2018) suggests that instead of banning the use of SNS, organisations should be creative in finding new ways of harnessing the power of social networks sites. According to Jafar et al., (2019) a social media policy needs to be clear and should cover all the aspects of employees; as well as the intention of SM use in order to create a friendly and cooperative working environment. It is proposed by Mushwana & Bezuidenhout (2014) that implementing a social media policy is regarded as the first step to address social media related risks within an organisation. Despite social media having many advantages and benefits in an organisation, it is important for an organisation to implement clear social media policies for personnel.

Many organisations are using social media to communicate to the public by means of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. According to Patel & Jasani (2010), there are many reasons as to why a business would want to take advantage of social media such as giving direct access to customers. A report conducted by Deloitte Cassim & Rampathy (2017) pointed out that it is the responsibility of the employer to have clear policies in place to help guide employees on the management and

use of social media in the workplace. Overly & Karlyn (2012) state that having a social media policy protects an organisation by setting boundaries around what is acceptable and what is not unacceptable in the organisation. Evidently, in the policies, the gaps that need to be identified includes controlling social media usage during work hours and incorporating social media into company marketing plans (Rothchild, 2016).

One of the best ways to mitigate the risk of employers is by stressing the importance of a clear and thorough social media policy of which employees are aware and understand what contributes to inappropriate behaviour on social media and the repercussions attached to the misuse of social media (Thani et al., 2013). A good social media policy outlines what an organisation will and will not do online, what employees can and cannot do online and what members of the public can and cannot do on company property. Furthermore, Patel & Jasani (2010) presents a guideline on how organisations should establish a corporate Social Media Policy:

1. There should be a difference and separation of social network policies and general technology policies
2. It is important to make employees aware that there is no exception of privacy when using their resources
3. Make an apparent and visible address of privacy and data security in policies
4. Consider prohibiting the use of social media to harass, discriminate or violate the law
5. Employees should be aware of the disclosure about when using social media
6. Policies need to be written, implemented, and monitored

Consequently, some companies have taken drastic action to ban employees from entirely using social networking sites. Whilst this can help the business, it can also be detrimental to employees, therefore, to address this issue, employees are encouraged to disclose their opinions but not of the organisation (Patel & Jasani, 2010).

As much as social media use in organisations can facilitate communication and collaboration, there is a fine line of badly managed social media usage in an organisation. Social media policies are developed to manage the use of social media in an ethical way. The criticism of social media usage in the workplace is discussed below.

2.3.4. Criticism of Social Media usage in the workplace

Mushonga (2014) argues that social networks limit the interaction between individuals, for instance, some platforms cannot support the use of body language therefore some messages that are shared on social media platforms may be misinterpreted. Additionally, even though employers in some sectors have policies on the availability and access to social media at work, the problem is largely impressionistic (Thompson et al., 2020). Furthermore, (Gundeckhuan & Liu, 2014) have observed in their research that social media data is vast, noisy and distributed, unstructured, and dynamic. The researchers discussed that some of the information that is shared could sometimes be highly irrelevant, at times they can be not useful to the organisations or even be difficult to locate on social media platforms where they exist ((Kapoor et al., 2018), (Correa et al., 2010), (Wushe & Shenje, 2019b), (Babiker, 2017) & (Jankingthong & Rurkkhum, 2012)).

Furthermore, research on mining social media suggest employing social media mining tools such as TweetTracker to discover actionable knowledge from social networks (Mushonga, 2014). In discussing the impact of social media in an organisational setting, (Kapoor et al., 2018) found that conflict can cause a concern between workplace values and the individual value social media is attributed to an individual.

Giving employees access to explore with Web 2.0 has raised a great concern with enforcing the data security policies in organisations (Almeida, 2012). There are several issues with employees using social media in the workplace namely: security, ethics, and legal concerns (Oxenford, 2011). According to Fusi & Feeney (2018) social media policies can create a safe place for social media use by setting up a standard procedure that can help in reducing the amount of time and attention required to resolve failures and errors derived from social media misuse. The emergence of social media in the workplace has alerted employers about new emerging employees (Haddud et al., 2016). These new employees are individuals who have grown-up with the connectivity and digital tools, therefore; these individuals do not know a world without the internet (Oxenford 2011). Research conducted by McAfee (2006) showed statistics that whilst knowledge workers primarily use e-mail, 26% felt it was overused, 21% felt overwhelmed, and 15% felt that it affected their productivity in the organisation. Research findings by Mulauzi (2018) highlights that one of the concerns of social media is its over-use by employees which causes challenges in organisations.

According to Munene & Nyaribo (2013), wasting time on internet activities is a huge hidden cost to businesses. Munene & Nyaribo (2013) further state that should an organisation have an eight-person department, and if everyone spends an hour a day surfing the internet, this would result in a waste of company time. Additionally, Celebi & Terkan (2020) recommend that instead of banning social media in the workplace, organisations should monitor the amount of time spent on social networking sites. Adzovie et al. (2017) point out that social media usage has contributed to some new challenges in today's workplace. Ashraf (2014) discusses the challenges with social media usage in an organisation which is the risk associated with how social media uses real-time communication that travels at an incredibly rapid speed which the organisation may at times not want to share with the external environment. The threat is that an organisation can be challenged by internal staff discussing potential innovations on social media thus resulting in competitors to gain insight. Almeida (2012) points out that it has become incredibly difficult for organisations to detect and control these new applications thus resulting in an increase of potential intended to misappropriate dissemination of confidential information.

Adzovie et al. (2017) further discusses how employers have had to deal with the challenge of managing internet use through organisational information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructures. Furthermore (Aguenza & Som, 2012), provide examples of the challenges organisations face such as posting on social media which could make the organisation vulnerable to cyber-attacks by sharing the wrong information which can taint the reputation of the organisation. The negative view of social media usage in a work environment has urged an increasing amount of interest from researchers to investigate, evaluate and understand the impact and consequence social media has on an employee's productivity during working hours.

Moqbel (2012) states that many organisations are skeptical and reluctant of the usage of SNSs in the workplace due to all the risk factors in can contribute to an organisation. Moqbel (2012) further discusses the challenges that organisations face with SNSs in the workplace which is the loss of staff productivity. Social media has become a considerable decision in litigations and modern relations labour with circumstances of increased use of the technology by an employee resulting in misuse. This is in instances where the organisations have policies in place to address and inform the employees' misconduct regarding the use of social media and the employer's systems misuse, and

such misconduct will result in great trouble for the employee (Kirchner & Nabeth, 2000). There are some disadvantages to the excessive usage of social media in an organisation (Mohamed, Sidek, Kudus, et al., 2017). Another problem with social media in an organisation is that it could be used as a platform for gossip which could lead to negative messages being sent from one individual to another (Correa et al., 2010).

Organisations face a huge threat towards the usage of social media among employees during work hours such as causing distraction, employees becoming disruptive, exhausting organisation resources, exposing the organisation's network to malware infection and social engineering attacks that could greatly affect an organisation's stature and reputation (Van Zyl, 2009).

According to Baruah (2012), the main disadvantage with SNSs is the intrusion into privacy as this leads to over sharing of personal data on social platforms resulting in kidnapping, harassment, cyber stalking, and online scams. Furthermore, (Baruah, 2012) notes that there is a reduction in work productivity when employees spend a great amount of time on SNSs during work hours.

Employee internet access has become a common playground and they are exposed to the dissemination of information every day and this has become a necessary tool to complete work deliverables. Organisations are now allowing the integration of social media which opens and allows employees to use social media for their own personal agenda during working hours (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2016). The way in which social media is used by employees in the three top SM platforms is discussed below.

2.4. SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY EMPLOYEES

2.4.1. Facebook usage in the workplace

Since its launch in 2004, Facebook has undoubtedly become one of the largest social media platforms in the world. This view is supported by Alhabash & Ma (2017) who argue that across social media platforms, the number of Facebook users exceed hundreds of millions, and in some cases, even exceeds the number of citizens in the world's largest country. Sherman (2011) describes Facebook as a platform with over 70 languages, a social site that can be accessed from any computer, iPad, or mobile device which in turn allows users to use the site to always stay connected throughout the day. According to Darwish et al. (2011), Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the world, and it is the sixth most-trafficked website in the world with over 80 million active users across 55 000 regional, work, school, and college networks.

Facebook can be regarded as an excellent tool in the working environment; and some organisations believe that Facebook assists employees to “think outside the box” (Adzovie et al., 2017). Adzovie et al., (2017) further goes into detail about how the use of Facebook during work hours has posed as a defiance to employers. According to Wyche et al., (2013), the use of Facebook is compelling in developed countries where infrastructure such as computers, smartphones, high-bandwidth internet, and electricity are a norm. Ariff & Adzharuddin (2021) elaborates on positive communication on Facebook usage at work, that by allowing employees to use Facebook, this leads to better engagement among members of an organisation. However, when an employee is dealing with a heavy load of work, they are expected to stay away from social networking sites.

Results from research conducted by Francois et al., (2013) indicate that almost three-quarters of the respondents (74.7%) admitted to using Facebook during work hours. The prime reason for using Facebook was for personal-sounding choices and socialising with friends. Surprisingly, only 27.7% of the respondents indicated that they used Facebook for work research or similar purposes, which might not accurately reflect the percentage as it was lower according to Francois et al., (2013). Additionally, some respondents claimed that they used Facebook as a work tool, indicating

a blurring of boundaries between personal and professional use as a legitimate communication medium (Leonardi et al., 2013).

In 2020, Deloitte made an alliance with Workplace from Facebook with the intention for employees to be more collaborative by facilitating work to be network fluid, remote working, team-based projects and enhanced current technology (Darbyshire, 2020). Furthermore, Darbyshire (2020) pointed out that 84% of executives stated that employee experience and productivity are linked by what Workplace from Facebook intended to achieve by providing a mobile first experience that is an engagement tool to talk and align with all your employees. The study used learnings from Facebook where usability was easy to use provided an enhanced rate of adoption and engagement in the organisation.

2.4.2. WhatsApp usage in the workplace

WhatsApp is a mobile phone messaging service that is operated using smartphones, it is the most talked-about mobile MIM application made available for any smartphone in the market (Ariffin & Omar, 2018). The service began in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum and it allows users to send text messages, photos, videos, and documents (WhatsApp, 2019). Mobile applications are strategically used in organisations are able to socially connect the media into the overall organisation (Jamil et al., 2018). Most organisations tend to use a formal communication method to transmit and distribute information around the organisation. In formal communication, the messages flow downward, upward, or horizontally (Wariara, 2017). Communication in organisations is a need-based attribute (Attalla et al., 2020).

The purpose of mobile applications is to provide a platform for dialogue and communication (Campbell & Park, 2008). According to Ariffin & Omar (2018) mobile phones have become part of our lives because they are portable and personal. The difference between short messaging services and WhatsApp is that with WhatsApp, the recipient has the control of rejecting or accepting the messages from the sender (Wariara, 2017). For example, according to Wariara (2017), studying how WhatsApp is used in organisations can bridge the identified literature gap that all researchers are wondering about regarding the use of WhatsApp in the organisational context.

Research conducted by Aljaaidi (2020) showed that 33% of employees' common platform of online social media was WhatsApp in the workplace. Omar et al., (2020) found that WhatsApp was mostly used for work purposes which included the use of WhatsApp in immediate meetings. This is supported by Sagar & Verma (2019) who found that the pattern of usage of WA for work purposes during working hours, as it was the preferred means of communication because it is the fastest platform for information diffusion. It can be concluded that the use of WhatsApp amongst employees in an organisation is accessible and is an easy form of communication that offers real-time messaging, quick information-sharing, and it is beneficial to cost.

Furthermore, Jamil et al., (2018) adds that WhatsApp is a combination of cost-efficiency, simplicity, user-friendly features that is able to run on multiple platforms thus promoting employees to use and

have the intention of adoption WhatsApp. Employees' preference of using WhatsApp was its fast alternative to using email (Attalla et al., 2020). De Haan (2017) pointed that the use of Enterprise WeChat groups similar to WhatsApp is associated with increasing work-life conflict whereby there are blurred boundaries that cause an imbalance between work and family roles. According to Papapicco (2019), WhatsApp working groups are responsible for increasing the organisational well-being of professionals. Furthermore, employees preferred using WhatsApp groups since it emerged in hierarchical relationship and facilitated the management of emergencies.

2.4.3. Twitter usage in the workplace

Twitter is a microblogging service that was launched in 2006, which enables users to follow or to be followed (Kwak et al., 2010). According to Ehrlich & Shami (2010) microblogs are short messages that people provide to update their activities, their observations, and interests on specific or related content for themselves or indirectly to others. Kwak et al., (2010) mention that Twitter users tweet and discuss any topic within the 140-character limit and follow others to receive their tweets. Furthermore, Ehrlich & Shami (2010) state that there has been an interest in developing research about the use of Twitter in the workplace. Results from a study showed that 85% of employees checked their Twitter account daily during working hours (Cripps et al., 2020).

The advantages of micro-blogging include information sharing, information seeking, and friendships (Ehrlich & Shami, 2010). Zhao et al., (2011) conducted a study on the benefit of microblogging in a functional department in a large Information Technology (IT) company, and the research showed that micro-blogging was used as a lightweight informal communication media by co-workers that filled a niche of sharing less critical and non-acquired but still important work-related content.

Green (2014) suggests that micro-blogging platforms can improve performance at work and strengthen an employee's sense of identity. An internal proprietary micro-blogging tool developed by IBM found that users engage with the platform to share information and communicate with other colleagues (Ehrlich & Shami, 2010). Collectively, results by Hughes et al. (2012) suggested that

employees who accessed Twitter for information purposes were doing so for utilitarian value and cognitive stimulation.

Furthermore, an employee's Twitter use can affect an employee's well-being due to the fact that it enables horizontal communication and stimulates work group support. However, it may become difficult for an employee to disengage after work hours (Van Zoonen et al., 2016). Additionally, Van Zoonen et al., (2016) closely considered employees' use of Twitter accounts and this resulted in the dissemination of work-related content.

Social media usage is becoming an important tool and is being used for knowledge sharing, communication and decision-making in organisations (Shalini et al., 2018). Nowadays, distractions and disruptions occur all the time in the workplace. With incoming notifications from different platforms, social media can affect an employees' productivity in the workplace.

2.5. SOCIAL MEDIA AND PRODUCTIVITY

Social media relating to behaviour may help employees increase their work performance and productivity. The targeted behaviours of co-workers on an interpersonal level is referred to as interpersonal citizenship and has been linked to work performance (Carlson et al., 2016). In the broad scope of interpersonal citizenship, two categories have been identified: task-focused and relationship-focused. Aljaaidi (2020) states that the economic success of a company is usually measured by its employee performance by its output. In the context of this research, social media networking sites have been linked with the lessening of productivity during work hours (J. H. Usrof, 2017). According to Omoregie (2021) social media has increased employees' productivity by having a number of benefits.

Social media helps improve relationships at work and SNSs have increased cordial relationships among employees and employers (Omoregie, 2021). According to Babiker (2017), e-markers will claim social media increases productivity but found that enterprise social media enhanced employee engagement, awareness, and efficiency. Workforce productivity is closely linked to employee well-being because employee performance often increases as a result of programmes implemented to reduce work stress (Babu et al., 2020). Additionally, Jue et al. (2009) confirm that social media usage in a company allows employees to feel engaged and motivated. Tudu & Pathak (2015) argue that employees who are connected to other individuals

through SNS tend to have a social nature and are overall better employees in the workplace.

Employees are becoming digitally literate and connected to the internet which has become an important life skill (Munene & Nyaribo, 2013). Munene & Nyaribo (2013) further argue that employees spend a lot more time on SNSs on non-work-related activities such as checking up on family and friends, streaming and downloading music and videos, checking sports, and following bookmarks. Many companies are concerned with employee productivity loss which is closely related to cyber-loafing activities (Lim & Chen, 2012). Research conducted by Lim & Chen (2012) showed that employees were spending approximately five to six hours a day surfing the internet during working hours. (Lim & Chen, 2012) found that 34 million American employees would cyber-loaf for up to 200.6 million hours per week.

Absenteeism occurs when employees are at work physically but results in a decreased productivity and below-normal work quality. However, presenteeism is commonly found among mid-senior management that is constantly in an active engagement with the focus on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement thus employee communication and engagement with social media during work hours. This results in wasting time and a reduction in productivity levels (Munene & Nyaribo, 2013). Employee engagement with social media during work hours can contribute to a waste of time leading to reduced and limited productivity levels (Munene & Nyaribo, 2013). Research conducted by (Wushe & Shenje, 2019b) found that social media in the workplace has a negative relationship with employee productivity. There are various studies ((Munene & Nyaribo, 2013), (Yu et al., 2018) and (Çetinkaya & Rashid, 2018) that are against the use of social media and its impact on employee productivity.

Productivity is described by Minor & Housman (2016) as the average measured time it takes a worker to complete a task which has a frequent occurrence. Pekuri et al., (2011) define productivity as the relationship between output created by a system and quantities of input factors used by the system to develop the output. According to Mohamed, Sidek, Izharrudin, et al., (2017) productivity is defined as how much and how well we produce from resources used. In research conducted by (Yeshambel et al., 2016) the term 'productivity' refers to the amount of time spent by an employee

actively performing the job that was assigned to them in order to accomplish desired outcomes. Currently, organisations are encouraging the usage of social media among their employees to build a larger network and high levels of connections within the organisation as well as with other organisations.

A study conducted by Leftheriotis & Giannakos (2014b) explains that social media allows employees to be more productive and successful by enabling them to collaborate easily, reduce cycle times, and improves relationships with customers and partners. Furthermore, (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014b) look at social media usage from a sociological perspective and made the observation that social networking is positively correlated with employees' performance. Social media has both a positive and a negative effect on an employee's productivity (Çetinkaya & Rashid, 2018). According to Ferreira & Du Plessis (2010) SNSs have become an incredibly new field for researchers to explore especially the online social networking on an employee's productivity. Furthermore, Ferreira & Du Plessis (2010) investigates that there is rather a negative perception of the use of SNSs on employees and it is not beneficial to the organisation.

Consequently (Min, 2017) states that the constant use of SNSs reduces the work productivity that is meant to be devoted to performing a task at hand. Herlle & Astray-Caneda, (2013) agree that SNSs are a complete distraction from work thus reducing work being completed on time. Giving full attention to the work at hand as well as work outcomes results in promotions and recognitions. Herlle & Astray-Caneda (2013) add that social media should be controlled in an organisational structure in which training programs give guidance in organisational policies about the use of SNSs and how to be responsible when interacting with SNSs. For example, Cao et al., (2012) expected to find that the use of SNSs would improve software professionals' performance through knowledge transfer and encouraging trust, but found in turn that it contributed to increasing work performance by strengthening the trust between employees.

2.5.1. Social Media and Job Performance

Job performance has been a concern for organisations, especially with the rise of social media sites (Wushe & Shenje, 2019b). Job performance is defined as the degree to which one meets the formal requirements of a job adequately and completes assigned duties (Al-Omari & Okasheh,

2017). Van Der Bank & Van Der Bank (2015) describe job performance as the behaviour employees engage in while at work. Whereas (Moqbel, 2012) describes job productivity as behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organisation. According to Munene & Nyaribo (2013) employees are assets, and their main role and responsibility is to help the organisation succeed in the rapidly changing environment.

Moqbel (2012) is of the view that SNSs could improve job performance by improving work-life balance and found that it affects job satisfaction. Although an organisation's productivity profits fundamentally lie on the employee's performance, the employees are all connected to social networks (Ashraf, 2014). Furthermore, Ashraf (2014) strongly believes that social networks are multi-dimensional in that they provide room for opportunities, weaknesses, risks, and threats for any organisation.

Mäntymäki & Riemer (2016) states that ESN holds great opportunities for organisations. In the research conducted by Aguenza & Som (2012), a conclusion was drawn that in order to increase productivity for employees, employers must develop an analytical approach to calculate an employee's actual production throughout the day thereafter balancing the findings with the cost of each employee. An employee's effective use of SM technologies is positively linked to task performance and building social ties with colleagues and friends over SM platforms (Jafar et al., 2019). Moreover, Ali-Hassan et al., (2015) have validated that the use of SNS strengthens employees' skills to create, share and obtain knowledge increases job performance. Therefore, it is important for organisations to internally enhance consistency on a transparent communication with employees' by stating the advantages of SM (Jafar et al., 2019).

2.6. CONCLUSION

Social media is now considered a knowledge market where buyers and sellers of knowledge meet to perform knowledge transactions. Most theories of knowledge sharing map well with Web 2.0 technology. Social media is an online platform that allows users to share thoughts and experiences through photos, videos, music, news, and insights. This proves that social media has today become a necessary activity by allowing faster decision-making in organisations. Furthermore, the use of social media across the different platforms is used for multiple reasons, which allows for the transfer of information to be disseminated at a rapid pace and collaboration amongst employees. In organisations, there is criticism that social media affects employers' productivity, whereas it is more a behavioural intention to want to use social media. However, it is imperative that knowledge-intensive firms have social media policies to manage and monitor the use of social media in the workplace to maintain the reputation of the organisation as well as ensure employee productivity is not adversely affected. This study provides clarity on how employees in the consulting industry use social media, the platforms they use and whether the usage of social media affects productivity. Aljaaidi (2020) points out that social networking channels are a viable tool in assisting and improving collaboration amongst employees. Chapter three presents the methodology used to carry out the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to investigate how social media is used and whether the use of social media affects work productivity in the consulting work environment. Furthermore, in this chapter data collection relating to how knowledge sharing is practiced among social-network groups in the workplace. While there is a general perception that social media is a platform for informal socialisation (Kietzmann et al., 2011), it has become apparent that social media is a highly interactive platform where different individuals and communities can share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content (Alberghini et al., 2014). The study is validated by consolidating anecdotal feedback from individuals who use social media in the workplace on a regular basis. Consequently, it is hoped that through this study, social media will be strategically used by organisations to promote collaboration and enhance employee productivity. Seman, (2014) points out that with the growth of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), SNS has taken a new approach in building opportunities for individuals as well as for organisations. This chapter describes the methods used for gathering data, the research design, target population, sampling procedure and data collection instruments. The chapter will discuss the implementation of the research variables and how the reliability of the research instruments was carried out. In addition, it discusses how the analysis of the research instruments were accomplished and how the analysis of the results was carried out.

3.2. METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study, investigating how employees use social media in the consulting workplace. A quantitative method is suitable because the purpose is to reveal the use of social media and how it affects work productivity. The study does not require qualitative responses from the participants. The advantages of a case study is the process by which the subject understands an authentic text which allows the researcher to explore and observe a subject within her environment (Symonds & Symonds, 2016). This is supported by Kothari et al., (2014) who argue that that a case study helps collect details from diverse habits, traits and qualities through an investigation. The disadvantage is that a case study provides very little basis for scientific generalisation due to the fact that they are dependent on a single case exploration (Symonds & Symonds, 2016). Beliya & Devi (2020) point out the limitations of a case study in that the data that is collected from the study is usually based on several assumptions which at times

can be unrealistic.

The reason this research is a case study is because it is an intensive investigation and aims at completing a social phenomenon (Beliya & Devi, 2020). The case study of how employees use social media in the consulting work environment provides an in-depth, multi-faceted exploration of a complex issue in a real-life setting (Crowe et al., 2011).

3.2.1. Phase 1

This study followed these stages in the consulting lifecycle according to Company X's methodology:



3.2.1.1. Conceptualisation

Research questions were formulated around the existing gap within the specialised literature of social media usage in organisations and the impact of social media affecting productivity. A pilot survey was conducted internally at Company X's consulting firm which consisted of a group of working professionals in the consulting industry to verify the clarity of the questions of the designed questionnaire. The consulting industry in South Africa is described as the most powerful spaces that shape an organisation's strategy (Oosthuizen, 2003).

3.2.1.2. Development

From the conceptualization phase, the researcher created a questionnaire from the Checkbox application which automatically creates a summary of results thus making the results easy to analyse. The questionnaire comprised of close-ended questions where the respondents were required to choose from a range. The questionnaire user-interface was simple and easy for anyone to participate in the research. In addition to that, ethical clearance and prior approval was given by the Managing Director of Marketing, Communications and Media of Company X for employees to

participate in the research.

3.2.1.3. Implementation

The survey was sent as a chain email to employees at Company X's consulting firm by using different email chains for the respective levels of authority throughout the organisation. The refined and developed questions resulted in 100 participants from Company X. Furthermore, after the questionnaire was distributed internally at Company X, a pilot test run was conducted. During the pilot test, the questionnaire was emailed to another 10 senior individuals from Company X's firm. This was done to verify the clarity of questions included in the questionnaire as well as to establish whether the questions were unambiguous, straight to the point and comprehensive. Some respondents found the questionnaire too long and immediately stopped participating. Others found the questionnaire quite difficult to understand. The feedback obtained from the volunteered participants allowed for a re-construct and further analysis for the new questionnaire for Phase 2.

3.2.2. Phase 2

3.2.2.1. Transition and Roll-out

The questionnaire was redesigned; and the main questionnaire was sent for ethical clearance to the Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch. Thereafter, the researcher created a LinkedIn paid campaign on LinkedIn targeting consulting firms in South Africa; thus, allowing employees from all levels of consulting firms to participate in the survey. The responses were collected through Google Forms, which automatically stored and recorded the responses. Google Forms also generated a summary of results based on the collected responses. This summary was used to analyse the collected data. The results were also exported to Microsoft Excel where they were further analysed. The results were presented using bar graphs, pie charts, frequency distribution tables, histograms and measurements of central tendency which are tools for descriptive statistics. This process resulted in 153 usable questionnaires for the analysis, and 7 unusable questionnaires due to them being incomplete. The findings were discussed and related to the questions posed, in the context of the literature review. Conclusions were drawn based on the results received.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted a descriptive research design because it helped the researcher to understand and apply the results in which the study was conducted. In addition, the use of descriptive research design assisted the researcher in generating testable hypotheses through deductivism. The aim of design is to describe the specific phenomena in its current trends and linkages among different factors at the current time (Weru, 2015). Suggestions provided by Wushe & Shenje (2019) adds that the use of descriptive research design helps the researcher in elaborating more output for the study as it sought to determine how the use of social media in the workplace affects productivity.

A research design allows a researcher to ensure that the evidence obtained effectively addresses the research problem as clearly as possible. According to Wariara (2017) a good research design has a clear defined purpose and is consistent with the research questions as well as proposed research methods.

According to Wyse (2011) the use of quantitative research is to solve a problem with numerical data that can be used as statistics for the research study. This researcher will explain how social media is used in the workplace by collecting numerical data that will be computed by using conventional mathematical methods. Rajasekar et al., (2006) describes quantitative research as being based on measurements and characteristics.

3.3.1. Population and Sample Size

The target population for the study comprised of professional employees from the age of 23 years old and above from consulting firms in South Africa. Each department has different operating procedures; therefore, the sampled firm is heterogeneous. The researcher resolved to use a composite target population from all departments as well as various occupation levels to survey a wider population as opposed to focusing on only one department. The link to the questionnaire was sent through their LinkedIn inbox through the paid campaign on LinkedIn. All the employees of various consulting firms were invited to participate as a strategy to increase the exposure of the questionnaire to all levels of the organisation. The initial sample size comprised of 153 respondents from the paid ads who fully completed the questionnaire. With a medium sample size, the researcher was able to cluster the sample into sub-groups reflecting intrinsic characteristics of how employees

use social media in the workplace.

3.3.2. Sample Group and Sampling Procedure

The sample group selected were employees from all hierarchical levels in consulting firms, namely: Analysts, Consultants, Managers and Senior Managers of various departments in consulting firms. The intent for this population targeting was to select individuals that work in corporate settings at various levels. The questionnaire did not accommodate individuals that did not work in the consulting industry. Thus, the choice of the population was driven by the need to capture relevant information pertaining to the relationship between social media usage and employee productivity in the consulting industry. The research study approach is a non-probability sample which made participation in the research voluntary.

The questionnaire was sent out as a link to the LinkedIn inbox of the employees and was limited to the specifications above because these were the groups for which ethical clearance had been obtained by the researcher within the parameters of the allocated amount and duration for the campaign. The respondents were kept anonymous, so there is no personal information given besides the demographics. The responses will also be kept confidential, by encrypting the data results and will only be used for the purpose of this study. From the study population of 153 employees, it was important to select a sample size that was representative of the whole target population.

3.3.3. Research Instrument

The research design used in this research was a non-experimental survey which was used to assess how employees use social media in the workplace environment and whether they use it for productivity purposes or personal reasons. Moreover, the surveys were determined to be a suitable exploratory method to gather data (Lewis et al., 2007) and one of the advantages of an electronic survey is that multimedia graphics can be incorporated (Fricker, 2002). The survey, which took the form of a questionnaire, was internet-based. The survey collected data from a sufficient group of individuals, where relevant patterns could be extracted. The questionnaire was self-administered, which was intended to reduce the researcher's influences (Mushonga, 2014). In addition, at any given time, the respondent had the option to discontinue their participation in the survey. Google Forms automatically creates a summary of results that have been obtained by participants. Furthermore, survey questionnaires were simple to administer and maintained the objective of the

study whilst ensuring that the answers directly addressed issues at stake (Wushe & Shenje, 2019). Because the questionnaires were online, it allowed busy employees to complete the questionnaire at their own convenience therefore ensuring an expected higher response rate. Structured questions used to measure the effect of social media usage at workplace on employee productivity were adapted by (Aguenza & Som, 2012), (Yeshambel et al., 2016) and (Wushe & Shenje, 2019). The study used a questionnaire as the primary instrument in collecting data. The initiative mentioned above offers substantial potential to extend our understanding of how employees use social media in the workplace and whether social media affects their productivity. In the section below, it was necessary to re-group the research questions to measure the objectives of the study. This re-grouping is based on the key concepts of knowledge sharing according to (Cheong et al., 2010) cited by (Davenport, in Thomas H, 1998). The questions were divided into four sections: Sections 1 to 4, and groupings of the sections were concepts derived from the literature review. The questions were classified under the following themes:

1. *The impact of social media on communication.*

These are the demographic questions that are put in place to be able to classify and categorise the respondents according to their background.

2. *The effectiveness of social media in strengthening formal and informal internal communications.*

The set of questions explored which classification employees choose between *work* and *personal*. For example, in terms of personal use, the action queried is employees posting pictures. However, commenting on social media posts during work hours is further questioned. How employees communicate with other employees in the organisation is another question that would clarify what type of platforms organisations provide for their employees to communicate internally. In this section, the questionnaire also looks at how many connections or contacts the employees have on each social media platform. The main purpose of the set of questions was to explore how the employee in the organisation, works with social media by classifying two terms for the employee to select; namely, work use and personal use.

These are described as follows:

- Work use (Knowledge Sharing). This is categorised with: Knowledge Management System, Company blogs, Intranet, Skype, and internal communication.
- Personal use (Keeping up with current affairs). This is grouped as social media platforms

namely: YouTube, SnapChat and LinkedIn.

3. *Social Media Usage*

Social media usage questions explored the frequent times an employee spent on their social media platform during work hours, which platform is used and which device an employee uses to access social media.

4. *How Social Media is Used at Work*

These questions demonstrate how employees in the consulting work environment use social media. According to Seman (2014) there has been an increased debate on how and when organisational professionals should be allowed to use SNS and how it ensures SNS use will not affect employee productivity.

Furthermore, the research survey questions used the Likert scale for respondents to provide the answers. De Vaus (2002) affirms that the Likert scale is used to provide respondents with a statement that allows them to reflect and view their attitudes and opinions. The Likert scale is a common response scale for survey questionnaires, whereby positive and negative responses are obtained. In the case of this research, the Likert scale was used for respondents to reflect on their use of social media and the motivation on whether they share and gain knowledge from the social networks as well as whether they use social media during working hours for personal use or for collaboration within the work environment. In terms of the “agreement” Likert had a set of four responses available that follows as: *Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Agree; and Strongly Agree*. The benefit of the Likert scale type questions was that it made the questionnaire easy to construct and was relatively easy for respondents to understand how to use the scale (Wushe & Shenje, 2019b).

It should be noted here, there was no option of “neutral” to avoid a central tendency that leads to skewed results. The survey is attached in the Appendices.

3.3.4. Data Analysis

Moloto et al. (2020) state that the true talent of a researcher is seen in the analysis. In this study, the data collected was obtained from Google Forms as a csv file. Furthermore, the data was coded, thereafter structured and then entered in Python Pandas to analyse the data. Missing responses for each question was replaced by the mode response. For data visualisation, Tableau, Python libraries Matplotlib and Seaborn were used. As the study is quantitative in nature, the findings were presented in simple descriptive statistics involving bar graphs and pie charts for ease of understanding.

3.3.5. Distribution

The pilot questionnaire was added into an email as a link and distributed according to the different levels across the organisation. The questionnaire was active for three weeks and it was often reinforced and reiterated by the Managing Director to participate in the research. While there was no other information given; there was an incentive for the respondents to participate by giving a voucher of R1000 from Takealot. The response rate decreased in the last week as there was no more motivation to participate in the research. This may have affected the number of responses obtained. However, the LinkedIn paid campaign ran for 2 months and was distributed as an inbox message that was intended to target consulting professionals in South Africa.

3.3.6. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are a set of tools essential to epistemology. Validity is determined by whether the study truly measures what it was intended to research through its results (Golofshani, 2003). According to Huck (2008), validity is used when a researcher uses certain procedures to check for credibility and accuracy in the research findings. Content and face validity was followed in this research study by targeting the LinkedIn profiles that confirmed consulting firms and consulting professionals. The LinkedIn profile confirmed the profession, the firm and the position of the participants. Furthermore, the researcher used the proposed suggestion by Wariara (2017) to engage with an expert opinion to examine whether the instrument ensures proper coverage of the research objectives.

According to Segal & Coolidge (2018), reliability refers to the consistency or stability of a

measurement whereby a test or instrument with good reliability from a respondent will obtain the exact same score on repeated testing. However, Huck (2008), describes reliability as the consistency, stability and repeatability of the study. In this study, the reliability in phase 1 was checked by ensuring that the electronic surveys were intended to measure the behavioural attributes of employees who use social media during work hours and whether the social media platform used was contributing to their work tasks. In addition, the researcher engaged in the test-retest method, where the questionnaire was first administered to 100 participants and the responses recorded at Company X through an internal email address that is not included in the main study. The researcher then re-issued a suggested and amended questionnaire to targeted consulting firms in South Africa. The scores from both tests were correlated and the coefficient of reliability was determined. Another aspect of reliability is how the questions were asked to the participants. This particular questionnaire has standardised questions meaning that all participants were asked the same questions.

3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations taken in this study included the anonymity of respondents that participated in the questionnaire, the confidentiality of primary data as well as seeking permission from Company X. A letter of consent (appended) was sent through email to the Managing Director of Marketing, Communications and Media and to the Lead Human Resources (Business Partner) to request participation from employees at Company X for the pilot questionnaire. The researcher promised confidentiality and did not ask for names of participants for the LinkedIn questionnaire. The researcher took into account the recommendations by Bos (2020), and all the study participants were informed of the consent procedure; namely, the goal or aim of the research, conditions of confidentiality, the estimated time of investment, research techniques to which participants are subjected to, and the right of the participant to withdraw at any moment. It was also assured that the data would only be reported in aggregate form. The questionnaire data were kept confidential by means of securing the excel spreadsheet document by means of a password to open the document. According to Dube et al. (2014) anonymity promotes scientific and methodological integrity to the study. Furthermore, the research ensured anonymity of the participants, and this was maintained from the beginning up until the end of the study by removing any identifying characteristics before sharing information.

3.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a guideline on how the study was carried out. In this chapter, methodology, research design, population, sample size, sample group, sampling procedure, research instrument, data analysis, description of questionnaire, distribution, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations are highlighted. Chapter Four covers the findings of the study.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of this study and explains them based on the research question. The chapter starts with information on the participants such as their department, age, current role and gender. This is followed by analysis, which is based on the research questions. The aim of this section is to investigate how employees use social media in the consulting workplace.

4.2. INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of the information collected in this section was to find out about the participants. The information recorded included the department they are from, their specific role in the organisation, their age group, and their gender orientation.

4.2.1. Departments

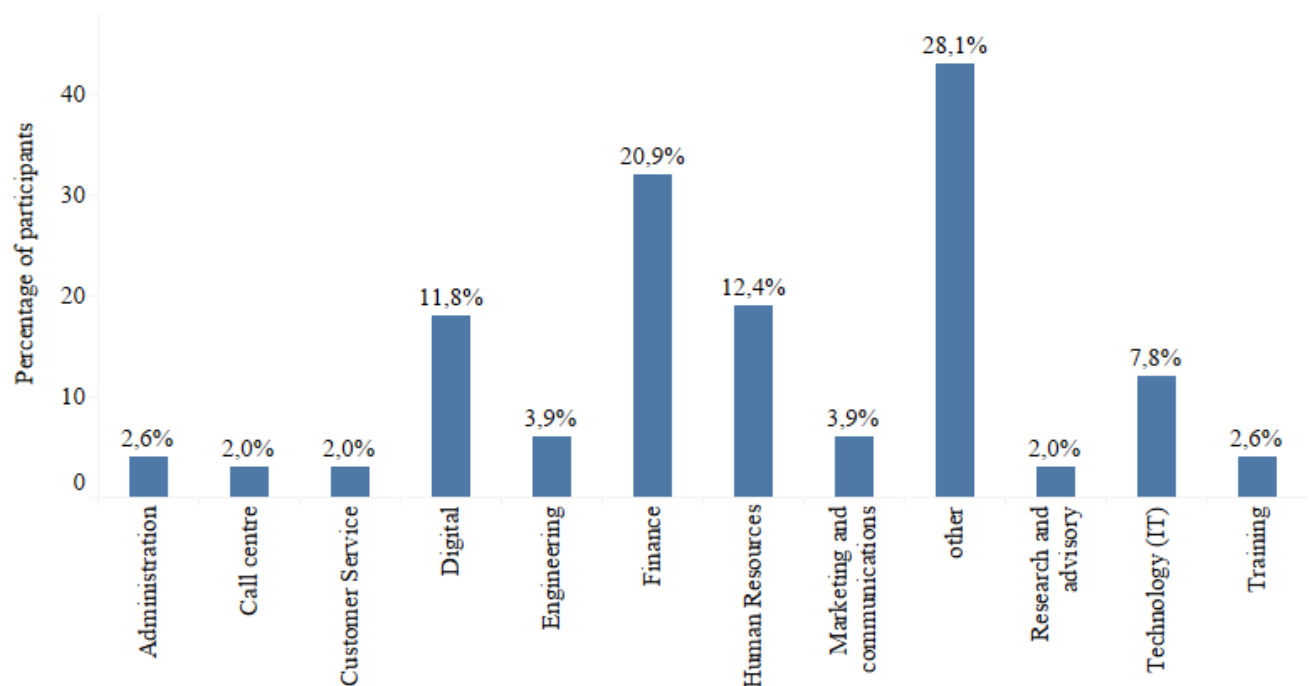


Fig 4.1: Percentage of people in each department (LinkedIn survey)

As shown in Fig 4.1, from the LinkedIn paid campaign, the finance department had the highest

number

of participants constituting 20.9% of all the people who participated in the survey. 12.4% of the participants were from the Human Resources department, 11.8% of the participants were from the Digital department and departments: Technology (IT), Marketing and Communications, Engineering, Training, Administration, Research and Advisory, Customer Service and Call Centre had participants ranging from 2.1% to 8% of the total number of participants. The department “Other” consists of departments with less than 3 participants. The survey was initially designed for Company X and was made available to the public through a paid LinkedIn campaign. The reason why there is relatively many participants’ departments classified as other is they did not fall into the conventional departments at Company X.

4.2.2. Current role

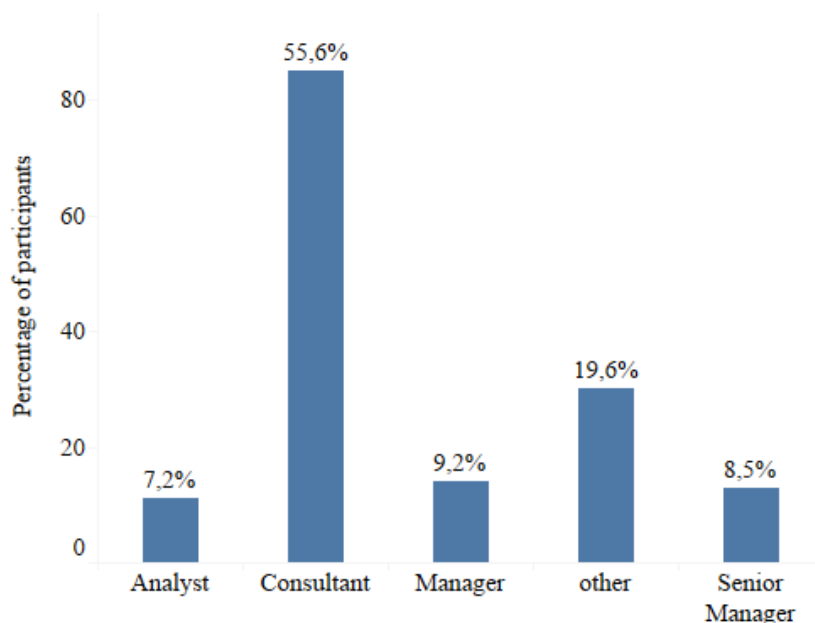


Fig 4.2: Percentage of participants per current role (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.2 shows the constituents of the roles of the participants who took part in the LinkedIn survey. From the survey 55.6% of the participants are Consultants, 9.2% of the participants are Managers, 8.5% of the participants are Senior Managers and 7.2% of the participants are Analysts. 19.6% of the participants are classified as “Other” because they are participants whose roles had less than 2 observations. To reduce dimensionality of the data they were classified as “Other”.

4.2.3. Age group

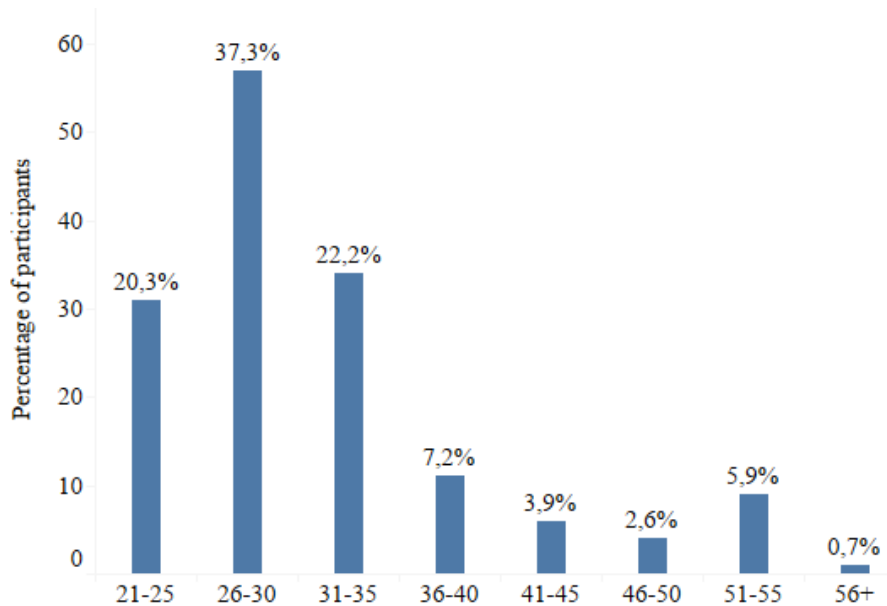


Fig 4.3: The percentage of participants in each age group (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.3 shows the age groups of the people who participated in the LinkedIn paid campaign. From the LinkedIn survey, the age group with highest number of participants is 26-30 constituting 37.3% of the total participants. The second highest number of participants fall under 31-35 age group, constituting 22.2% of the total number of participants. 20.3% of the participants are aged between 21 and 25 years, 7.2% of the participants are aged between 36 and 40, 5.9% of the participants are aged between 51 and 55 years, 3.9% of the participants are aged between 41 and 45 and 0.7% of the participants are over 56 years old.

4.2.4. Gender orientation

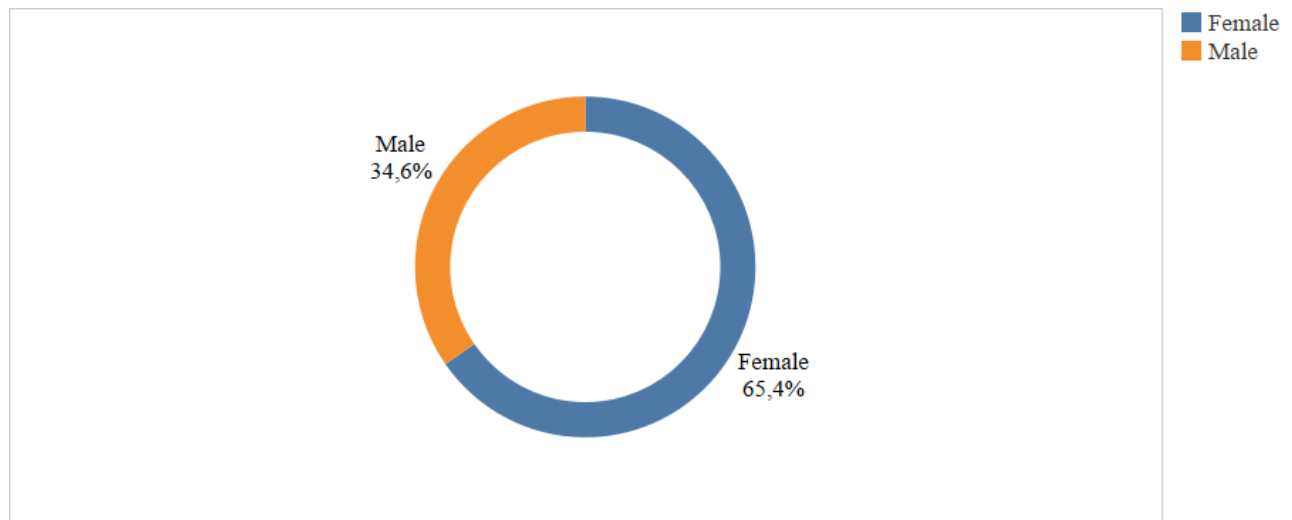


Fig 4.4: Percentage of participants in each gender group (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.4 shows the gender orientation of the people who participated in the survey on LinkedIn. 65.4% of the participants are female and 34.6% of the participants are male.

4.3. HOW MUCH SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED IN THE WORKPLACE?

This section shows an analysis on data aimed at addressing the following questions from chapter 3:

4.3.1. How many times a day do you use social media during the day?

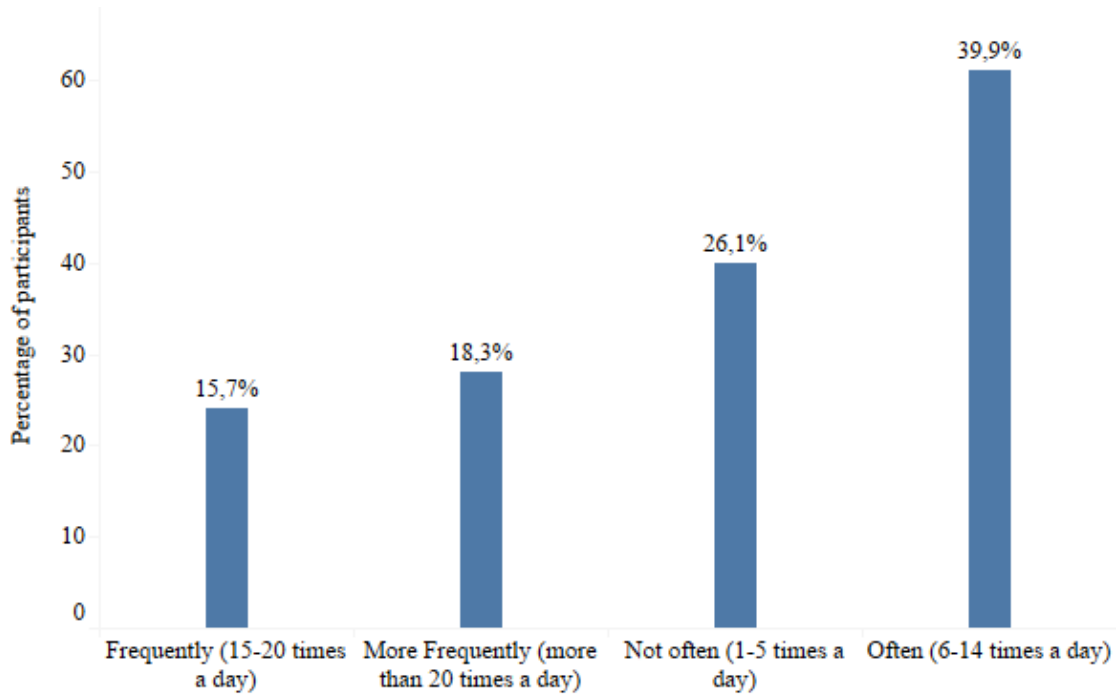


Fig 4.5: Number of times employees use social media per day (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.5 shows responses to question 5 by participants from the LinkedIn campaign. 39.9% of the participants use social media often (6-14 times a day), 26.1% of the participants use social media 1-5 times a day, 18.3% of the participants use social media more than 20 times a day and 15.7% of the participants use social media 15-20 times a day.

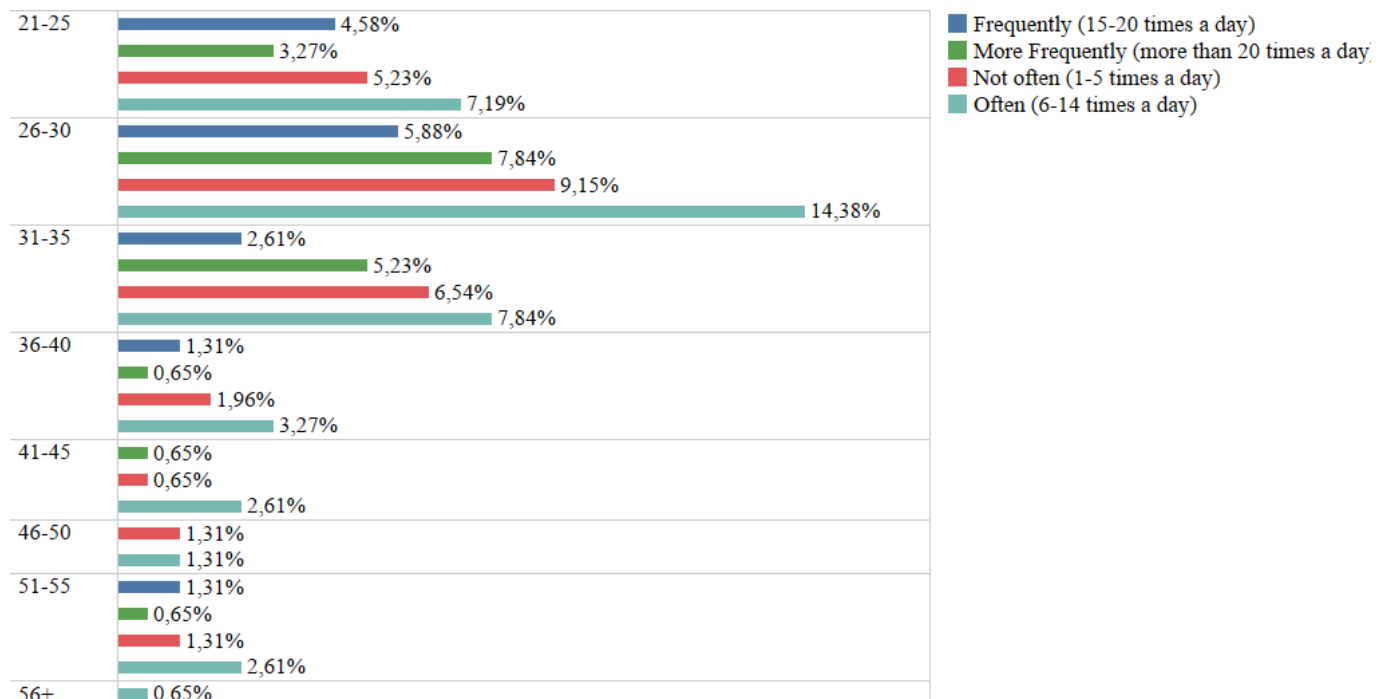


Fig 4.6: Social media usage by age group (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.6 shows the responses from the LinkedIn campaign on the usage of social media in the workplace according to age. For the age group 21-25, 74% of the participants in this age group responded that they either use social media often (6-14 times a day), frequently (15-20 times a day) or more frequently (more than 20 times a day). 26% of the participants in this group responded that they do not often (1-5 times a day) use social media in the workplace.

For the age group 26-30, 75% of the participants responded that they either used social media in the workplace often (6-14 times a day), frequently (15-20 times a day) or more frequently (more than 20 times a day). 25% of the participants stated they do not often (1-5 times a day) use social media in the workplace.

72% of the participants in the 31-35 age group responded that they either used social media often (6-14 times a day), frequently (15-20 times a day) or more frequently (more than 20 times a day) whilst the rest of the participants in this age group responded that they do not often (1-5 times a day) use social media in the workplace.

The participants in the 41-45 age group, 84% of them responded that they either use social media often, frequently or more frequently and only 16% stated that they do not often use social media. In the 46-50 age group 50% of the participants stated that they either use social media often, frequently or more frequently and the other 50% responded they do not often use social media in the workplace. 77% of the participants in the 51-55 age group stated that they either use social media in the workplace often (6-14 times a day), frequently (15-20 times a day) or more frequently (more than 20 times a day). On the other hand, 23% of the participants do not often (1-5 times a day) use social media in the workplace.

4.3.2. Are there social media platforms put in place at your workplace to facilitate communication?

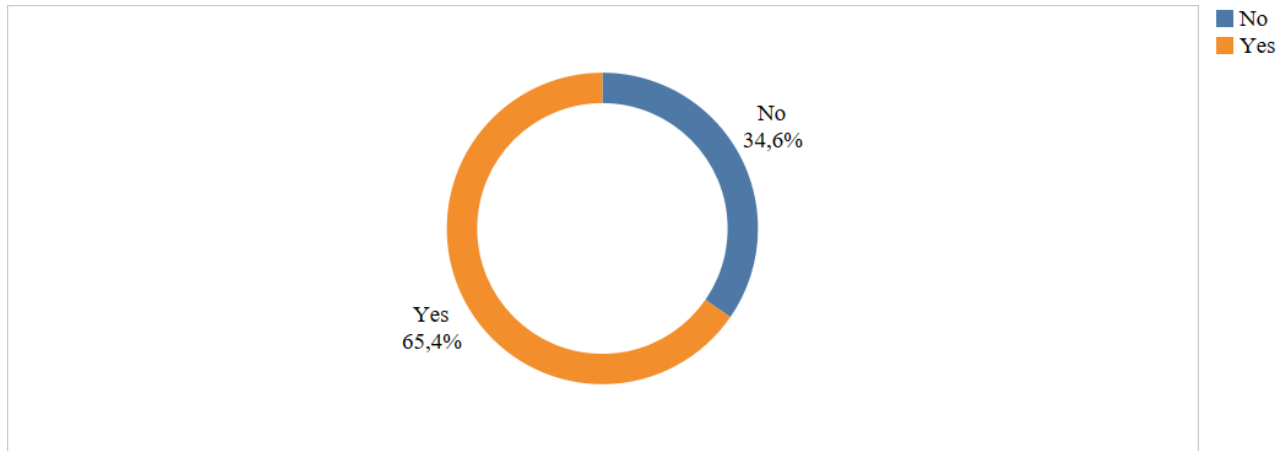


Fig 4.7: Are there social media platforms put in place at your workplace to facilitate communication? (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.7 shows responses from the participants of the LinkedIn campaign whether their respective organizations have social platforms put in place to facilitate communication. 65.4% of the participants responded 'yes' there are platforms put in place and 34.6% of the participants stated that there are no social media platforms put in place to facilitate communication with colleagues.

4.3.3. What social media platform do you use the most to communicate with your colleagues in the workplace?

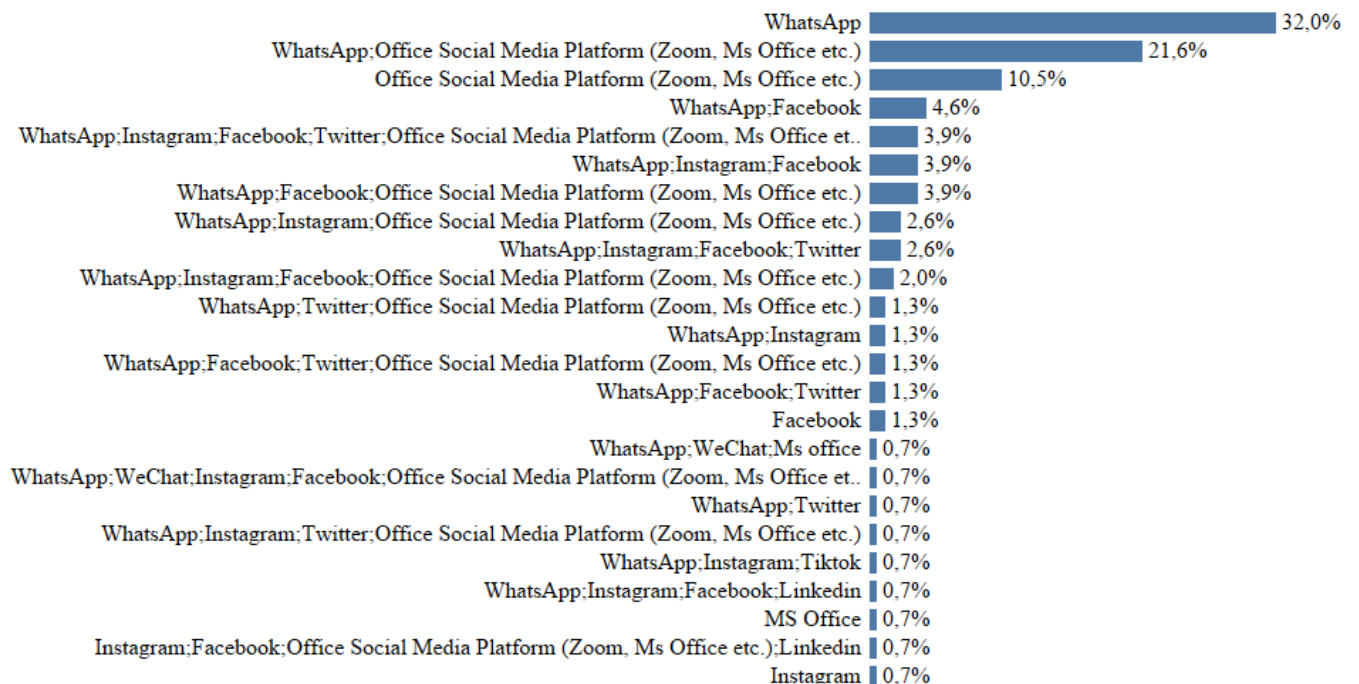


Fig 4.8: Social media platforms used in the workplace (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.8 shows responses from the LinkedIn paid campaign on the social media platform used in the

workplace. The participants were allowed to choose all social media platforms on the options provided or a combination of what they use to communicate in the workplace. All the participants chose either 1 platform or a combination of platforms. 87% of the participants responded that they use WhatsApp to communicate. However, 32% of the participants responded that they exclusively used WhatsApp to communicate in the workplace. 49% of the participants use an office social media platform (Zoom, Ms Office etc.) in combination with other social media platforms for example WhatsApp, Facebook etc. 10.5% of the participants exclusively use an office social media platform to communicate with colleagues. 27% of the participants use Facebook to communicate and only 1.3% of all participants exclusively use Facebook to communicate in the workplace. 20% of the participants use Instagram and only 0.7% of the participants exclusively use Instagram. 12% of the participants use Twitter with other platforms to communicate with colleagues. Less than 10% of the participants use social media platforms: LinkedIn, Snap Chat and TikTok to communicate with colleagues.

4.3.4. Does your organisation track employees' usage of social media on company-owned computers or handheld device?

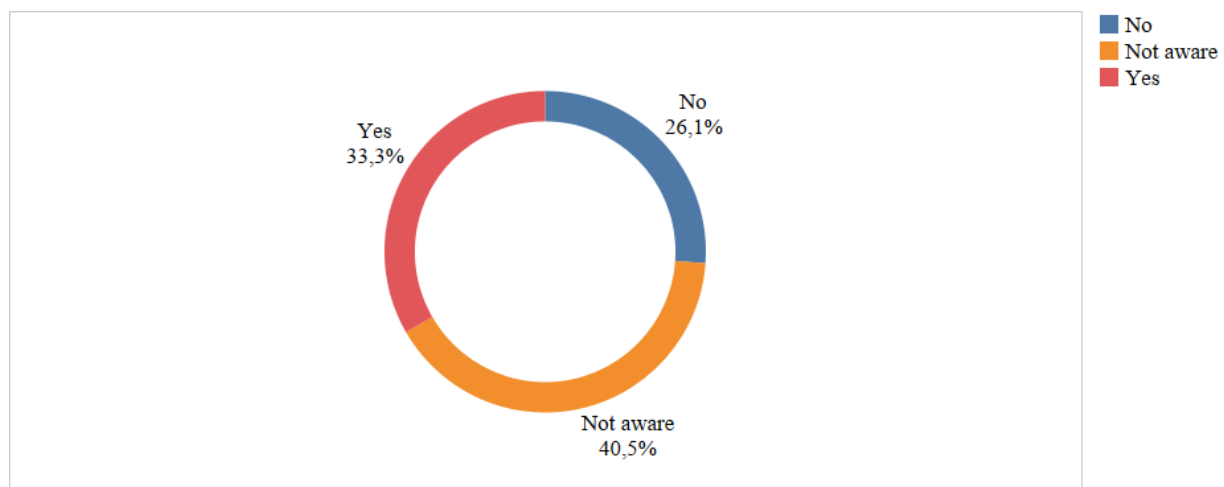


Fig 4.9: Does your organisation track employee use of social media on company-owned computers or handheld device? (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.9 shows responses from the LinkedIn paid campaign whether the participants' organizations track their employees' social media usage on company computers and hand-held devices. 33.3% of the participants responded 'Yes', 26.1% of the participants responded 'No' and 40.5% of the participants are not aware whether their organizations track their social media usage on company owned computers and hand-held devices.

4.3.5. Are there policies put in place at your organisation with regards to using social media during work hours?

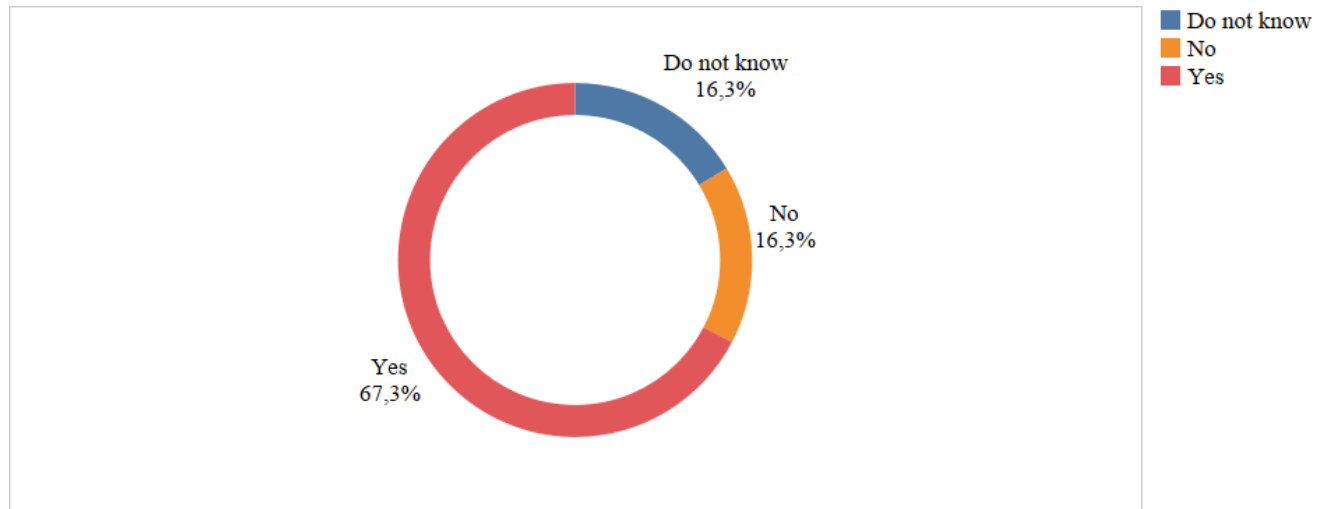


Fig 4.10: Are there policies put in place at your organisation with regards to using social media during work hours? (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.10 shows the responses from the LinkedIn paid campaign whether the participants' respective organisations have policies in place to govern the use of social media in the workplace. 67% of the participants responded 'yes', 16% of the participants responded 'no' and 16% of the participants are not aware whether their employers have policies put in place to govern the use of social media in the workplace.

4.4. EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN STRENGTHENING INFORMAL AND FORMAL INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

This section explores how employees in an organization use social media by classifying usage into two groups: personal use and work-related use as well as the devices used to connect to social media.

4.4.1. Time spent on social media for personal use or work-related purposes

Fig 4.11a shows the amount of time that the participants from the LinkedIn campaign spend on social media as part of their responsibilities to their employer. 31.4% of the participants spend 1-25% of their time working on social media, 18.3% of the participants spend 26-49% of their time working on social media, 17.65% of the participants spend 51-75% of their time working on social media and

14.4% of the participants spend almost all (76-100%) their time working on social media.

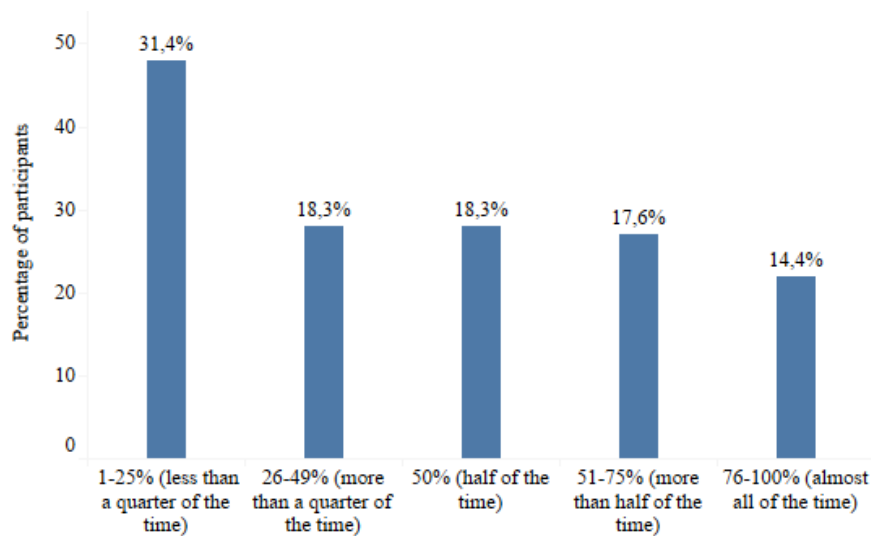


Fig 4.11a: Amount of time spent on social media due to work-related purposes (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.11b shows the amount of time spent on social media by the participants for work-related purposes grouped by age group. 62% of the participants aged 21-25 years spend more than 50% of their time working on social media. More than 50% includes the following categories: 50%, 51-75% and 76-100%. 44% of the participants from the 26-30, 47% of the participants from the 31-35, and 46% of the participants from the 36-50 also spend more than 50% of their time at work working on social media. The percentage of participants in each age group who spend more than 50% of their time working on social media increases to 51% for the 41-45 age group, decreases to 27% for the 46-50 age group and increases to 80% and 100% for the 51-55 and +56 age groups, respectively. This general increase may be attributed to the fact that the number of participants in these age groups are few. These age groups have less than 6% of the total participants (less than 10 people). This does not give an indication of what happens in the workplace.

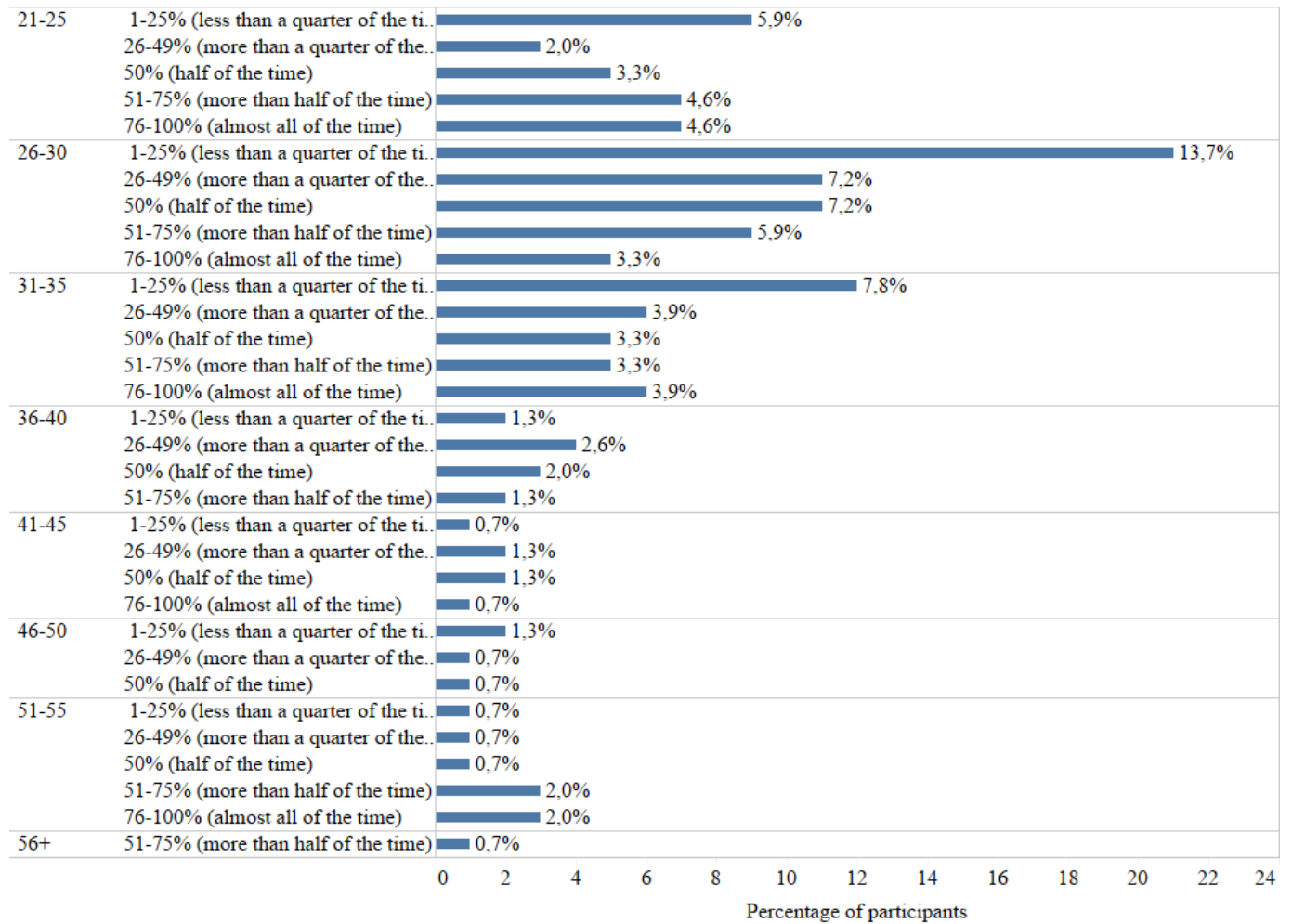


Fig 4.11b: Amount of time spent on social media due to work-related purposes for each age group (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.11c shows the amount of time spent on social media by the participants grouped by department. The Digital, Finance, Human Resources, and technology have 11.8%, 20.9%, 12.4%, and 7.8% of the participants respectively. The other departments are not included in this analysis because they constitute less than 5% of the participants. The Digital department has the highest proportion of participants who spend more than 50% of their time working on social media. 72% of the Digital department, 69% of the Human Resources department, 42% of the Technology department and 35% of the Finance department spends more than 50% of their time working on social media.

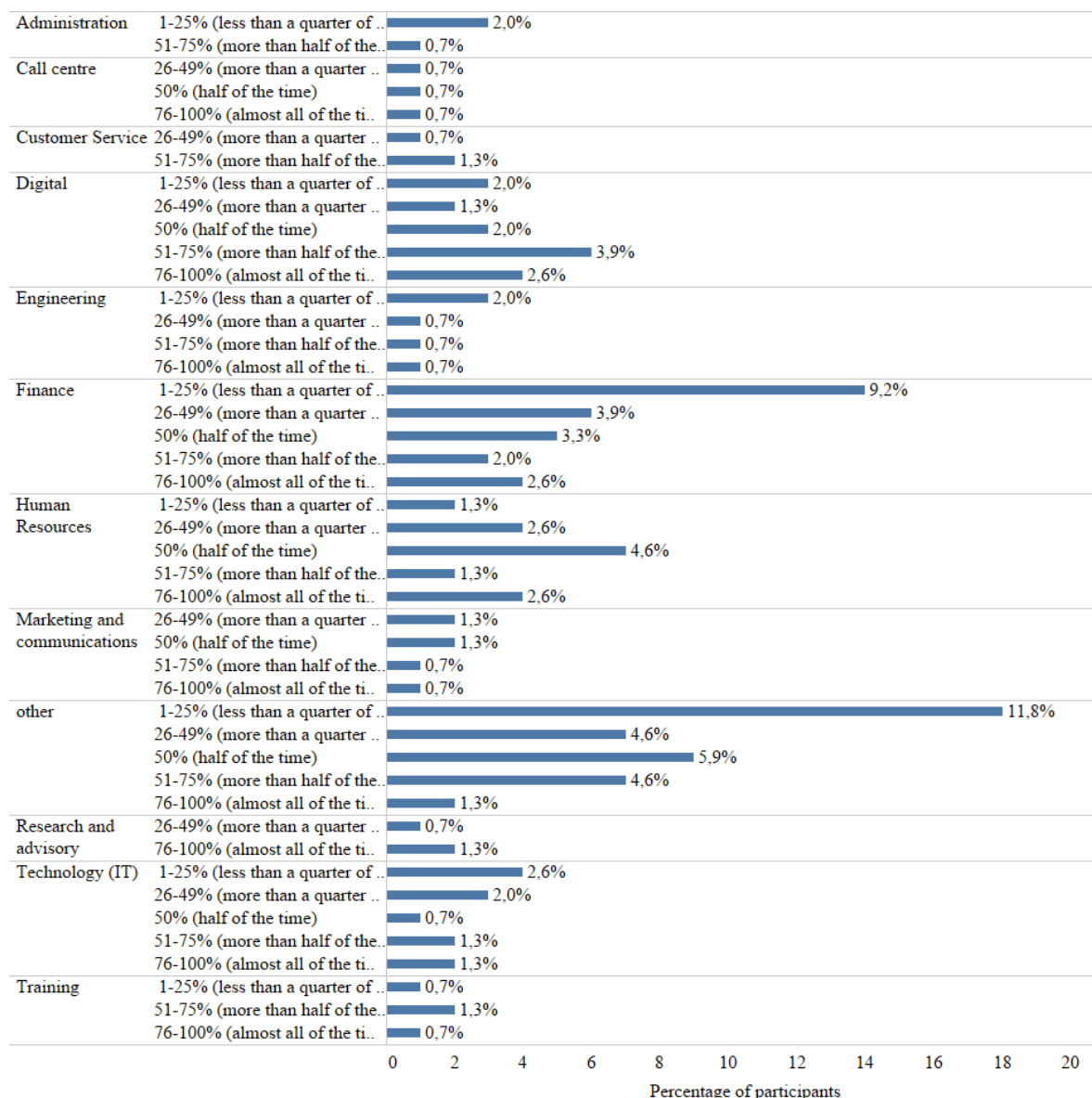


Fig 4.11c: Amount of time spent on social media due to work-related purposes by department (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.11d shows the amount of time spent on social media by participants performing tasks unrelated to their job descriptions. 47% of the part the participants spend 1-25%, 19% spends 26-49%, 15.7% spends 50%, 9.8% spends 51-75% and 8.5% of the participants spends 76-100% of their time during working hours for personal purposes.

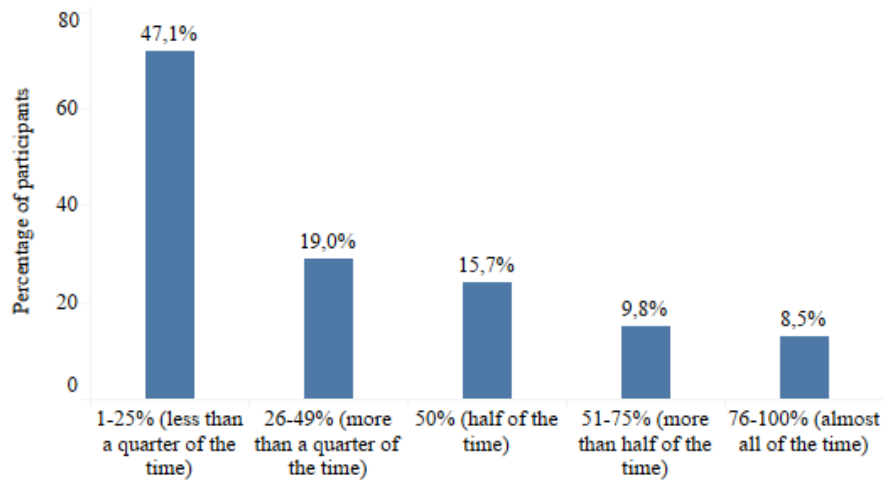


Fig 4.11d: Amount of time spent on social media on personal use

Fig 4.11e shows the amount of time spent on social media by the participants for personal use grouped by their age group. 32% of the participants aged 21-25 spends more than 50% of the time on social media on tasks unrelated to their work. 40% of the participants aged 26-30, 32% of the participants aged 31-35, 56% of the participants aged 36-40, and 27% of the participants aged 51-55 also spend more than 50% of their working time on social media for personal purposes. It is interesting to note that none of the participants in the +56-age group spends more than 50% of time on social media for personal purposes.

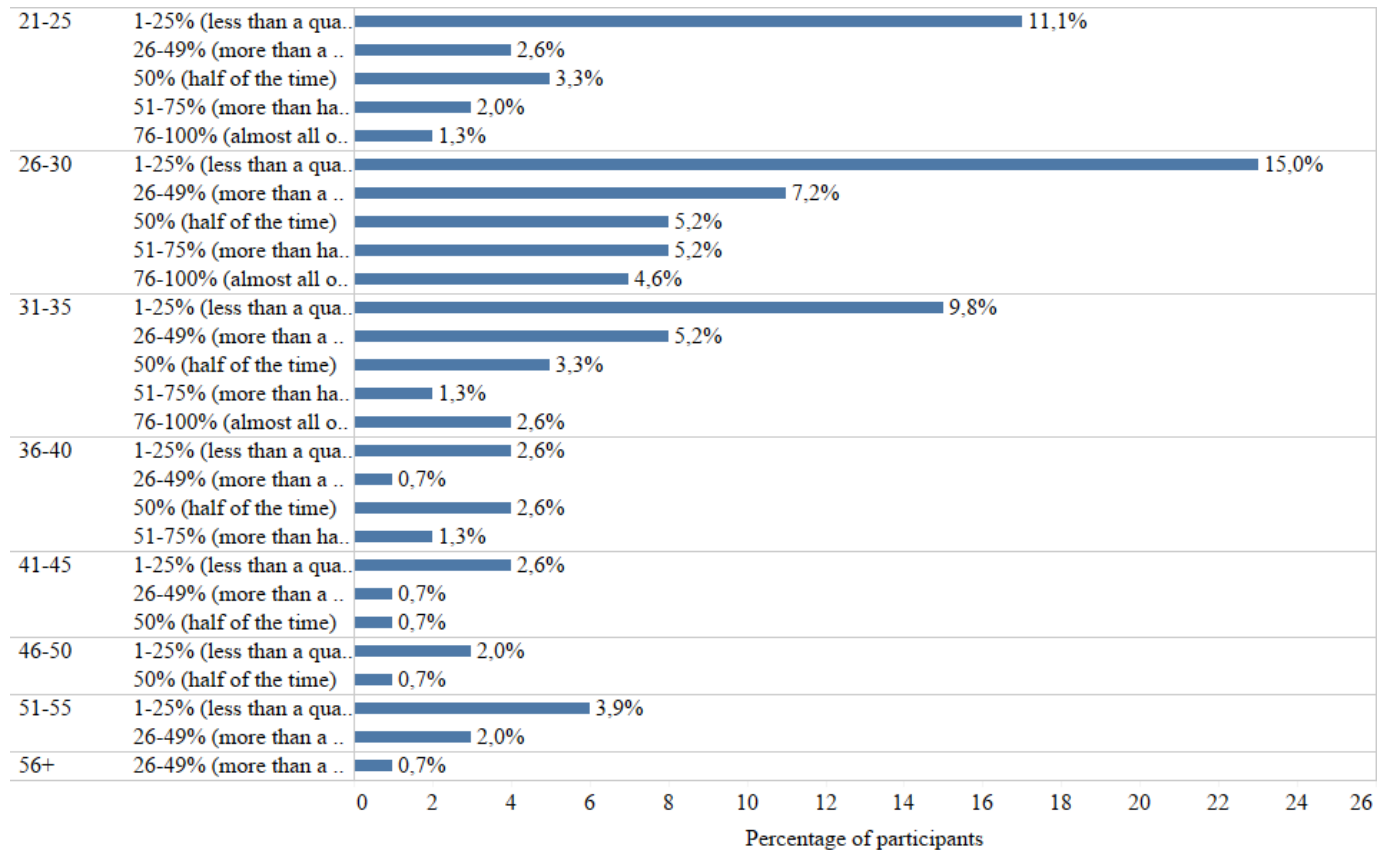


Fig 4.11e: Amount of time spent on social media on personal use by age group (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.11f shows the amount of time spent by participants on social media for personal purposes grouped by department. The technology department has the highest proportion of participants who spend more than 50% of their working time on social media for personal purposes. 42% of the participants from Technology, 37% of the participants from Human Resources, 28% of the participants from Digital and 10% of the participants spend more than 50% of the time on social media for personal purposes during working hours.

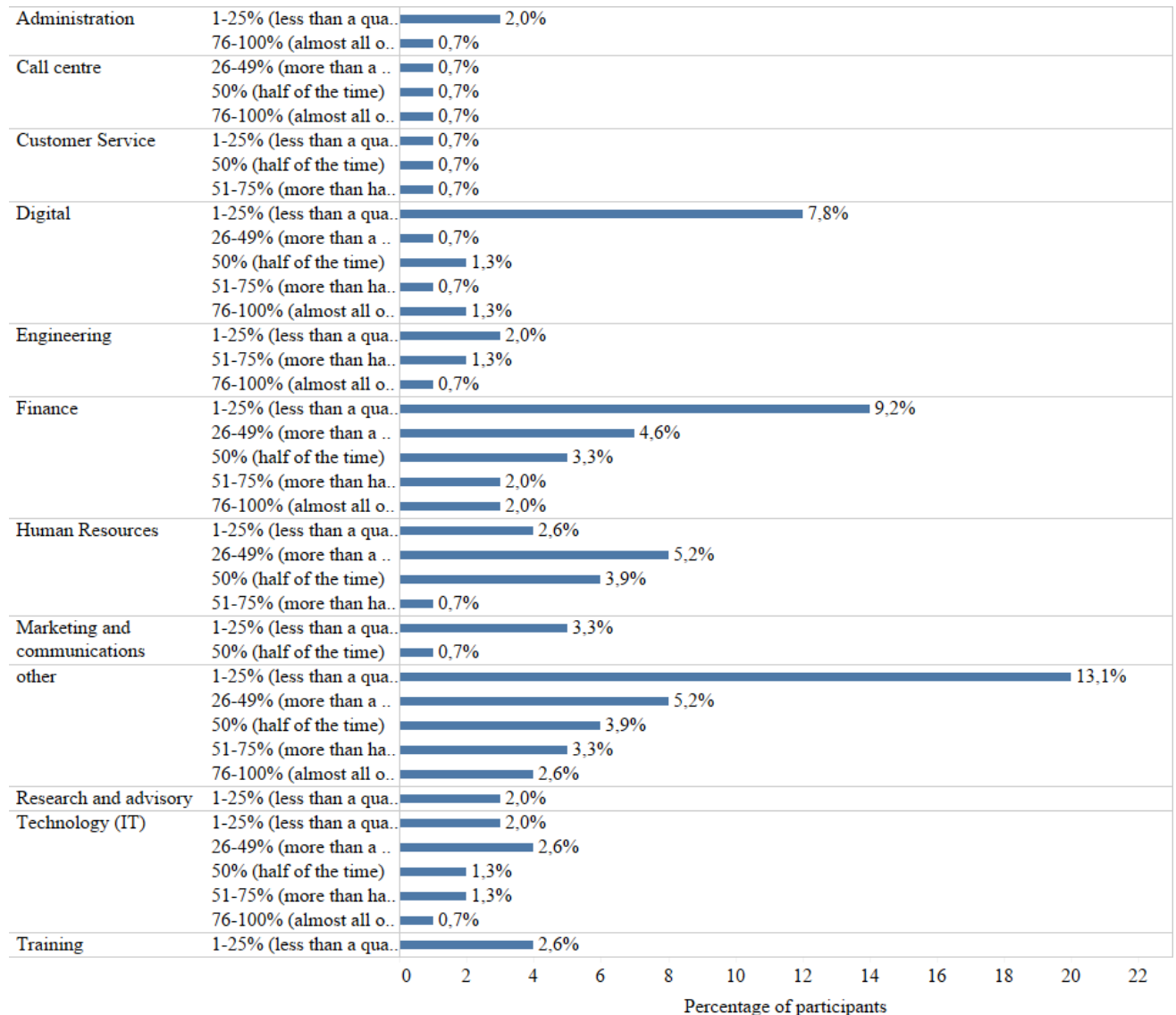


Fig 4.11f. Amount of time spent on social media on personal use by department (LinkedIn survey)

4.4.2. Reasons why employees use social media during working hours for work-related purposes and personal purposes

Fig 4.12a shows responses from the participants on how they use social media for work related purposes. 11.1% of the participants use social media exclusively to research but 64% of the participants use social media to research. 8.5% of the participants exclusively use social media to network and a total of 59% of the participants use social media to network. 2% of the participants exclusively use social media to collaborate and a total of 24.6% of the participants use social media for collaboration. 32.5% of the participants use social media to keep up with current affairs and 38.4% of the participants use social media for continual professional development.

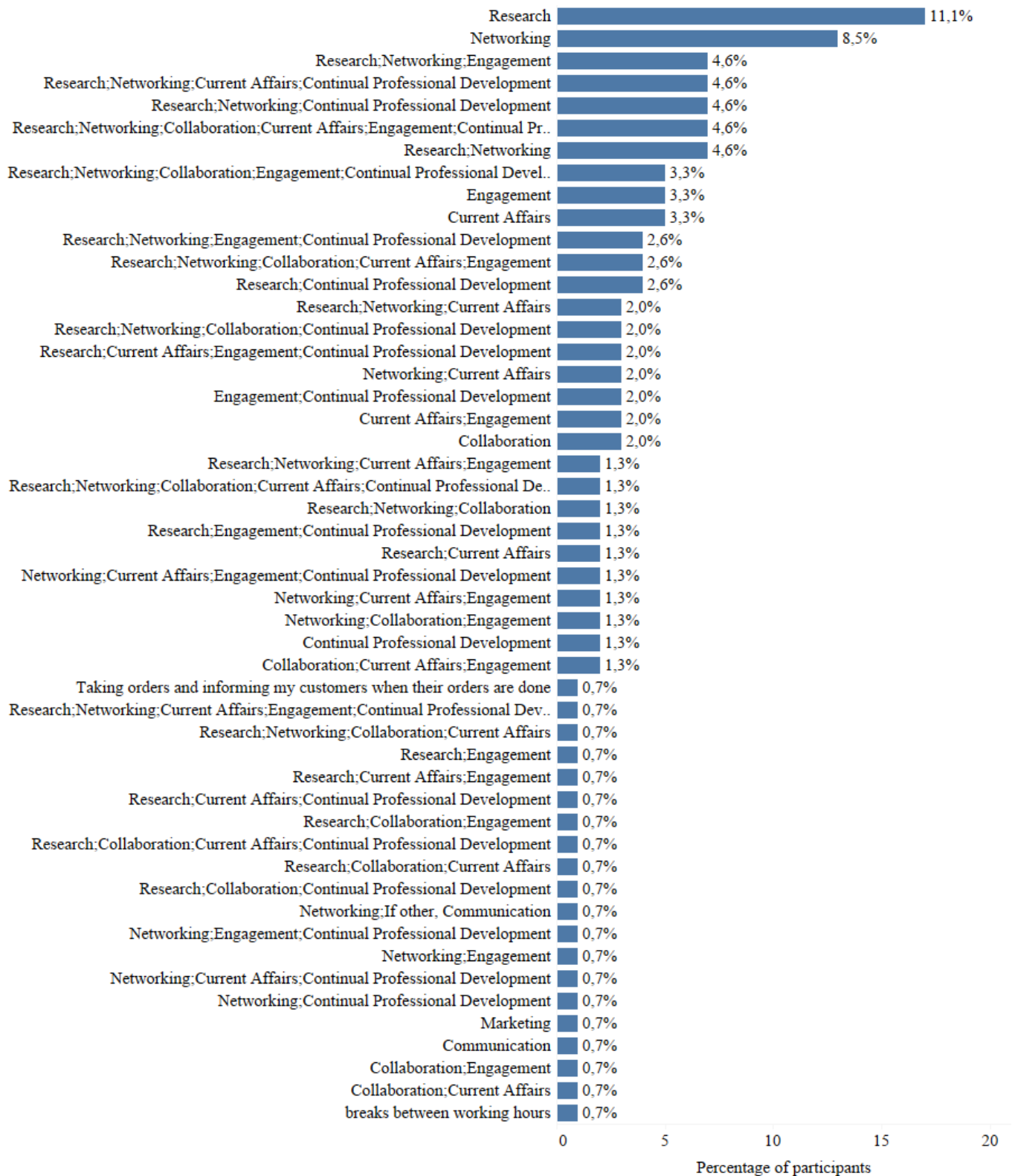


Fig 4.12a: How employees use social media for work (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.12b shows how employees use social media for personal purposes during working hours. 28.8% of the participants only use social media to communicate. A total of 77.2% use social media as a tool to communicate. 2% of the participants responded that they only use social media because they are bored, and they did not specify how else they use social media. However, 19.5% of the participants attributed their use of social to be a result of boredom at work. 5.9% of the participants responded that they only use social media to keep up with current trends. A total of 39.9% of the participants use social media to keep up with current trends and they also use social media for other activities. 2% of the participants responded that the only reason they use social media is for entertainment. A total of 33.3% of the participants also stated that they social media for entertainment among other activities.



Fig 4.12b: How employees use social media for personal purposes (LinkedIn survey)

4.4.3. Social media platforms used to communicate with friends or family in the workplace

Fig 4.13 shows the social media platforms used by participants to communicate with friends and family. 52% of the participants only use WhatsApp. A total of 99% of the participants use WhatsApp to communicate with friends and family although some of the 99% also use other platforms. 35% of the participants use Facebook, 21.8% of the participants use Instagram, 8.6% of the participants use Twitter and 4.0% of the participants use office social media platforms (e.g., Zoom, MS Office) to communicate with friends and family. 21.1% of the participants use Facebook and WhatsApp and 7.1% of the participants use WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.

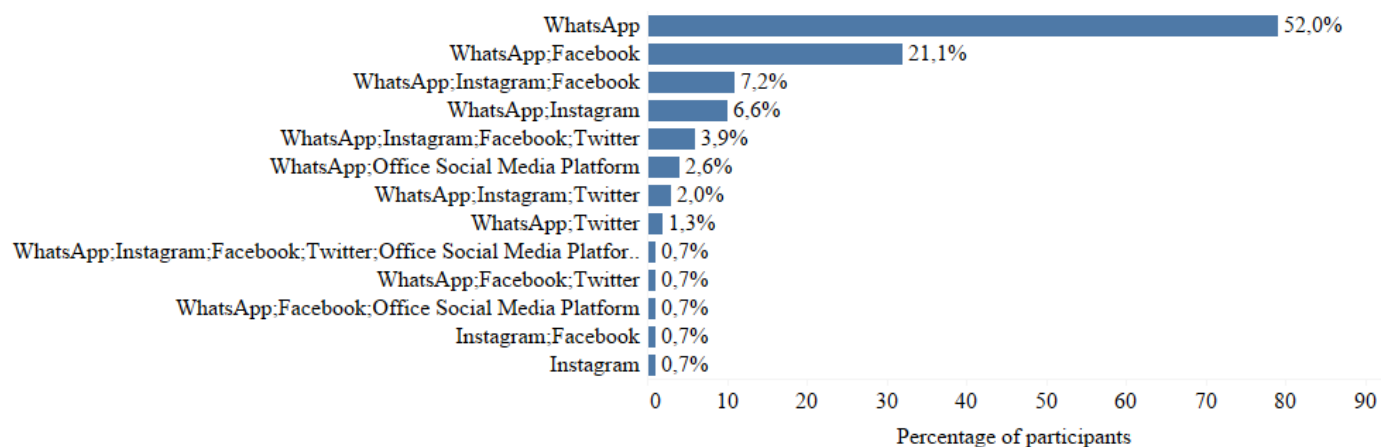


Fig 4.13: Social media platforms used to communicate with friends and or family (LinkedIn survey)

4.4.4. Devices used to connect to social media

Fig 4.14a shows the type of devices used to connect to social media for work- related use. 59.2% of the participants use a laptop, 73.1% of the participants use a smartphone and 3.4% of the participants use a tablet. 30.9% of the participants connect to social media using a laptop and smartphone and 21% of the participants connect to social media using all 3 devices: laptop, smartphone, and a tablet.

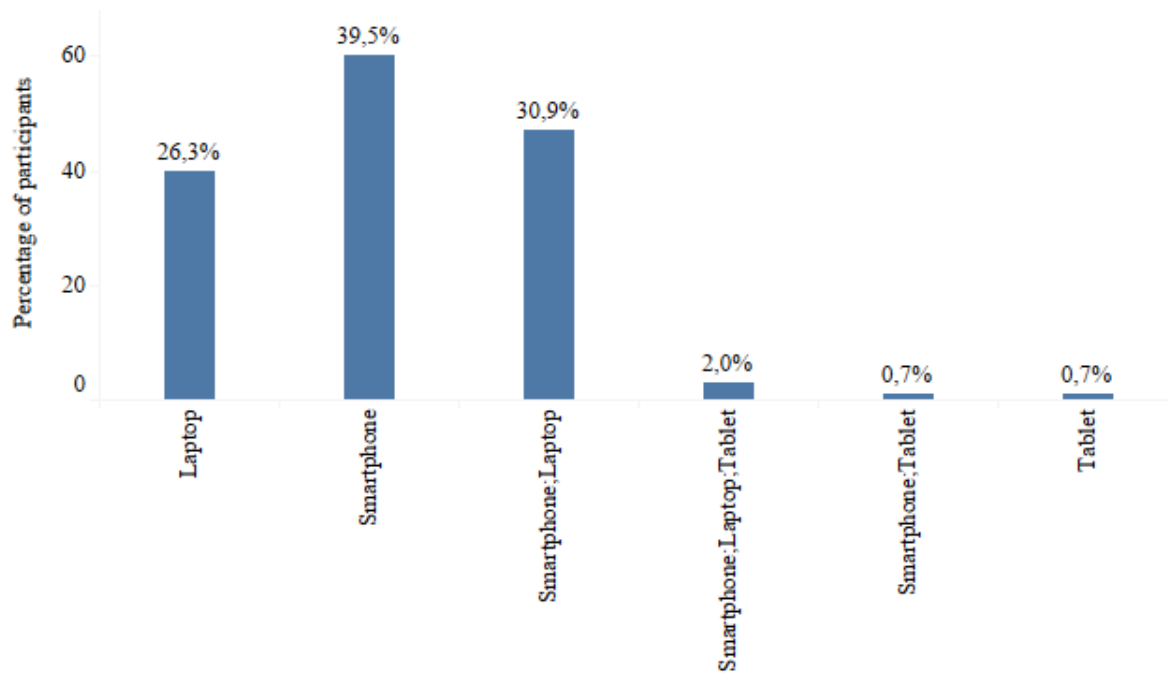


Fig 4.14a: Devices used to connect to social media for work related use (LinkedIn survey)

Fig 4.14b shows the types of devices used to connect to social media during working hours for personal use. 78.4% of the participants use a smartphone only. 97.4% of the participants in total use a smartphone to connect to social media for personal purposes. 2% of the participants only use laptops to connect to social media, but 21% of the participants use laptops to connect to social media. 3.4% of the participants use tablets to connect to social media platforms together with other devices.

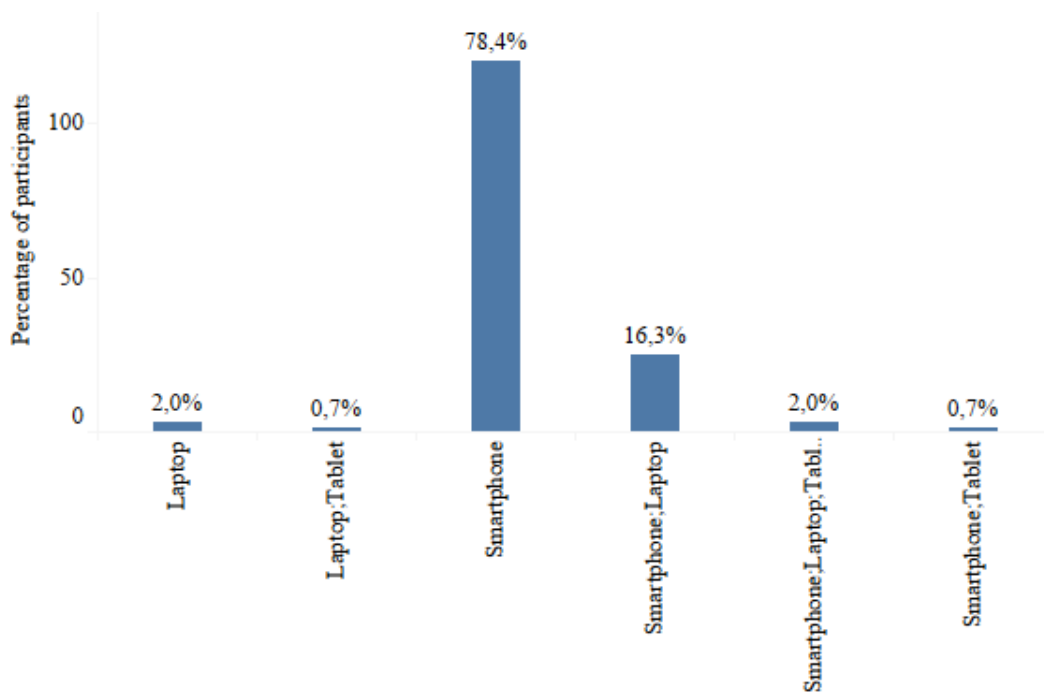


Fig 4.14b: Devices used to connect to social media for personal use (LinkedIn survey)

4.4.5. How much time do you spend using your personal devices for work-related purposes?

Fig 4.15 shows the amount of time spent by participants on personal devices performing work related tasks on social media. 60.1% of the participants spend 26-49%, 15.7% spend 50%, 11.8% spend 51-75% and 12.4% of the participants spend 76-100% of the time on their personal devices performing work-related tasks.

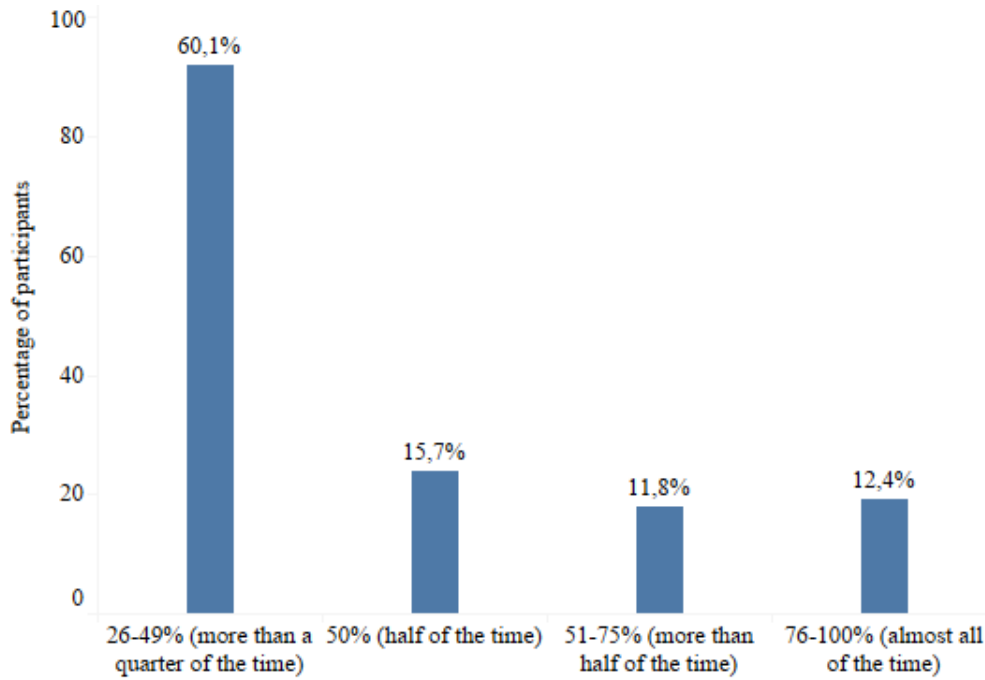


Fig 4.15: Time spent using social media for work related purposes using personal devices

4.5. USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN AN OFFICE SETUP

The section below highlights the usage of social media platforms in an office setup.

4.5.1. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to share information with colleagues

Fig 4.16 shows the participants' responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to share information with colleagues. 51.6% of the participants agree, 23.5% strongly agree, 19.6% are neutral, 3.9% disagree and 1.3% of the participants strongly disagree.

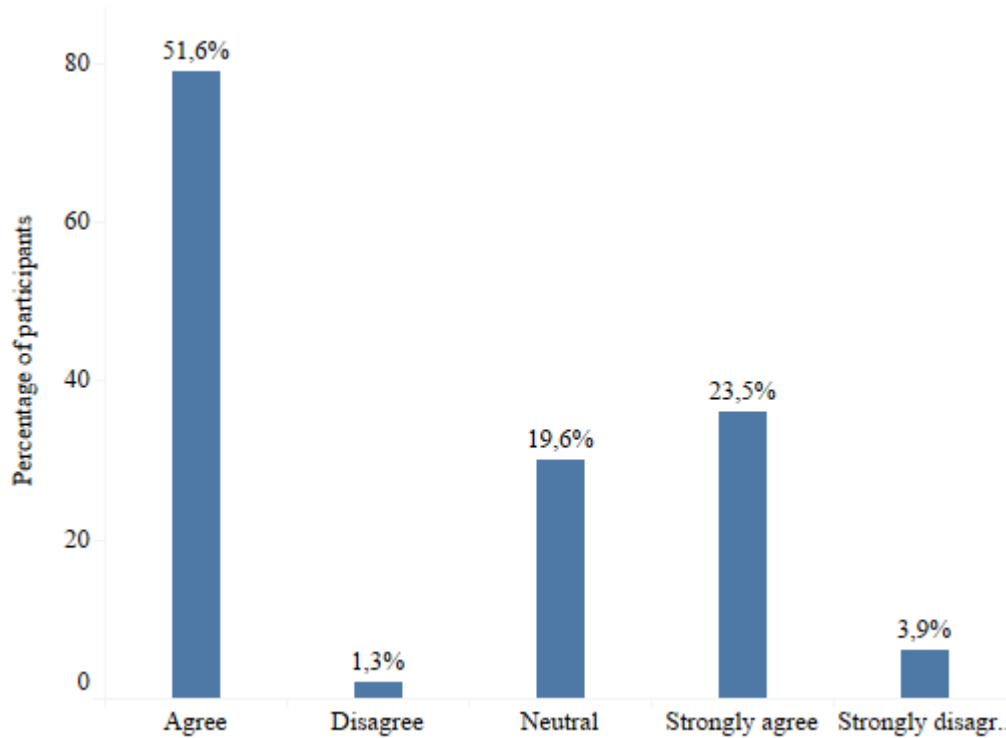


Fig 4.16: Social media enables employees to share information with colleagues (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.2. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to learn new things

Fig 4.17 shows the participants' responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to learn new things. 54.9% of the participants agree, 30.1% strongly agree, 11.8% disagree and 2.6% of the participants strongly disagree.

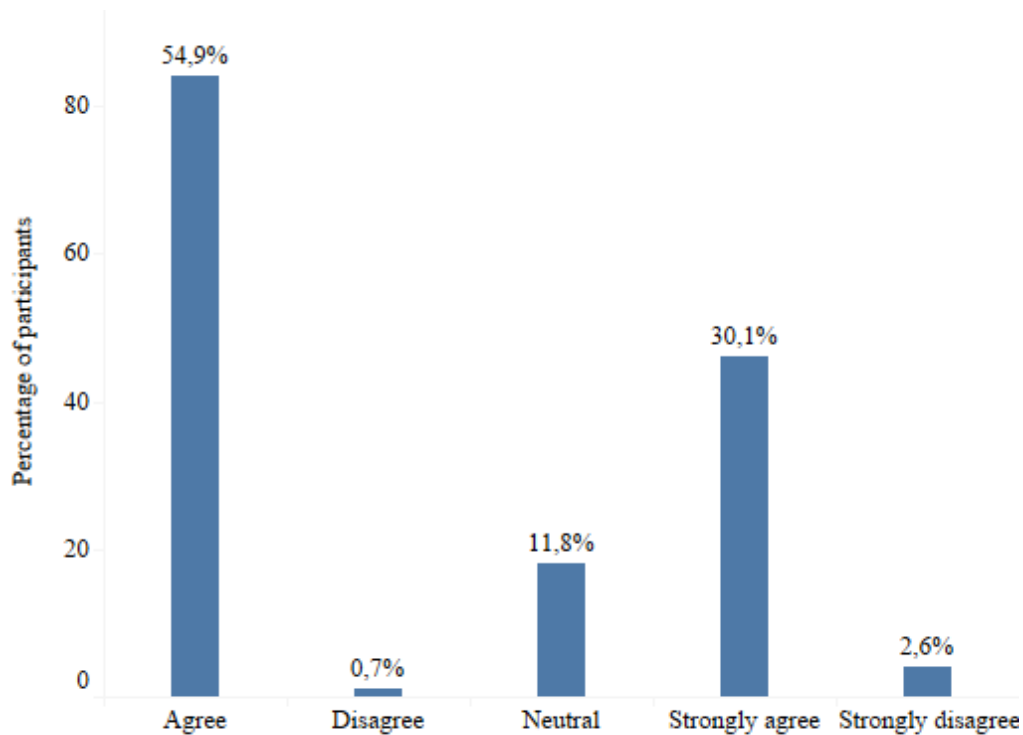


Fig 4.17: Social media enables employees to learn new things (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.3. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to know my colleagues better

Fig 4.18 shows the participants' responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to know my colleagues better. 40.5% of the participants agree, 28.8% of the participants are neutral, 14.4% disagree, 10.5% strongly agree and 5.9% of the participants strongly disagree.

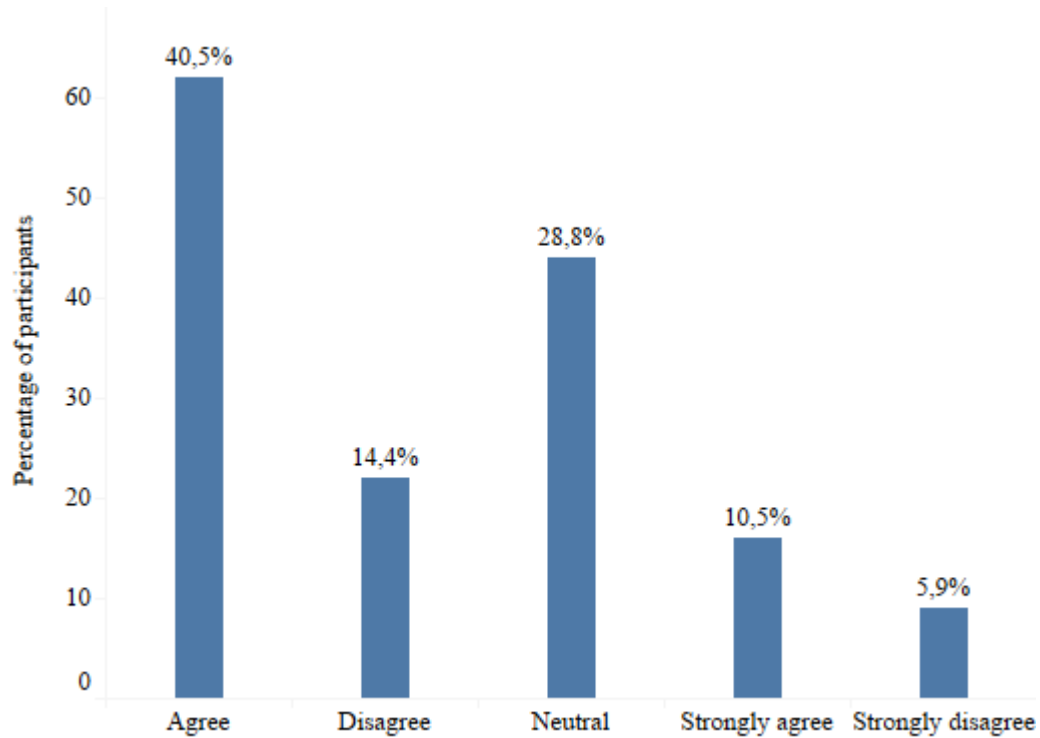


Fig 4.18: Social media enables employees to know each other better (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.4. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to be entertained

Fig 4.19 shows the participants' responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to be entertained. 46.4% of the participants agree, 21.6% are neutral, 18.3% strongly agree, 7.8% disagree and 5.9% of the participants strongly disagree.

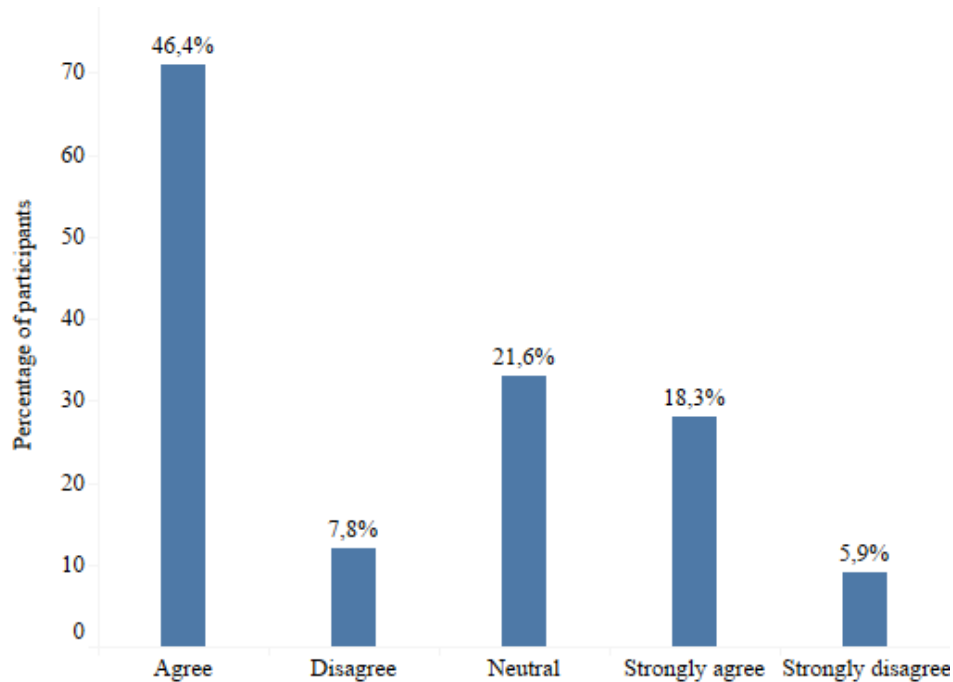


Fig 4.19: Social media enables employees to be entertained (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.5. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to participate in discussions

Fig 4.20 shows the participants' responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to participate in discussions. 61.4% of the participants agree, 16.3% are neutral, another 16.3% strongly agree, 3.9% disagree and 2.0% of the participants strongly disagree.

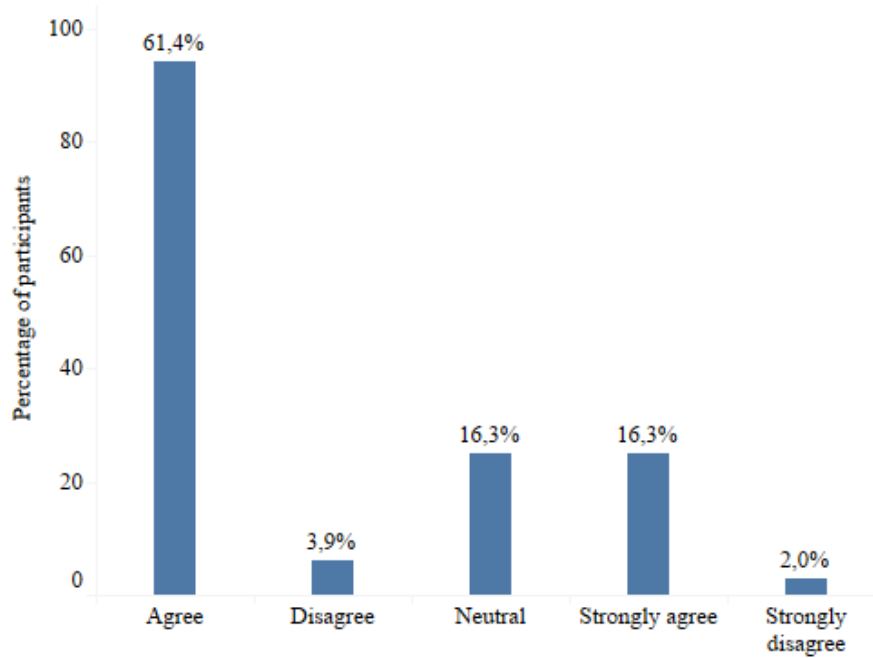


Fig 4.20: Social media enables employees to participate in discussions (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.6. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to pass time and unwind

Fig 4.21 shows the participants' responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to pass time and unwind. 45.1% of the participants agree, 19.6% are neutral, 19.0% agree, 10.5% disagree and 5.9% of the participants strongly disagree.

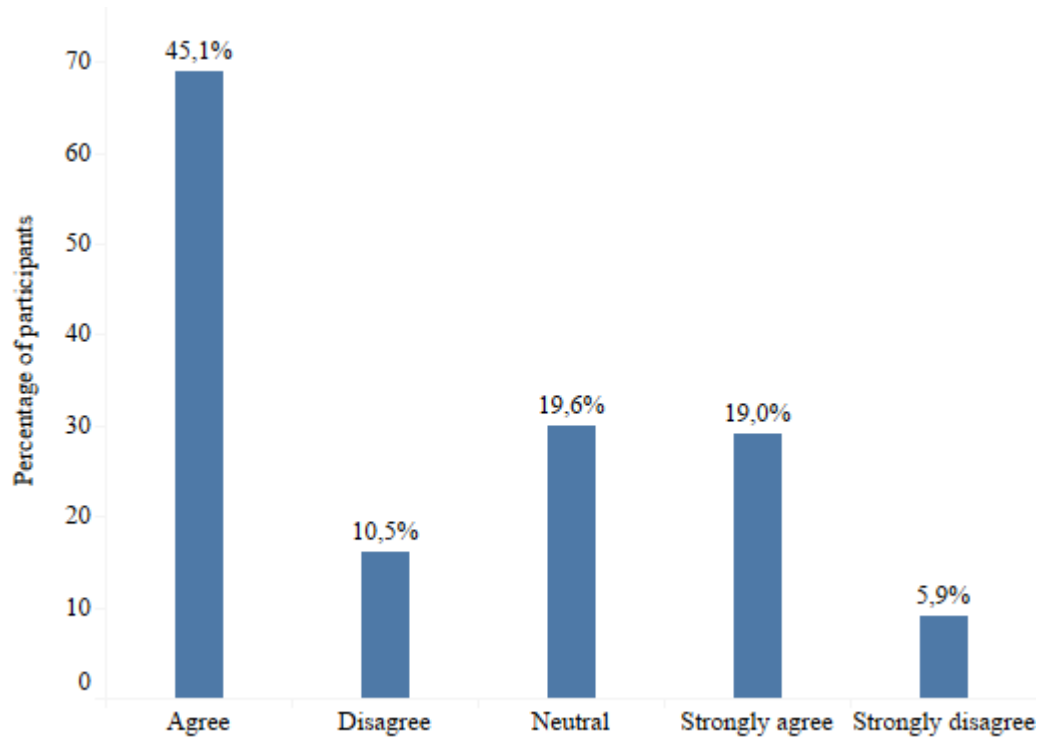


Fig 4.21: Social media enables employees to pass time and unwind (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.7. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to share photos, videos, and other interests

Fig 4.22 shows the participants responses to: I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to share photos, videos, and other interests. 50.3% of the participants agree, 23.5% of the participants are neutral, 13.7% strongly agree, 8.5% disagree and 3.9% of the participants strongly disagree.

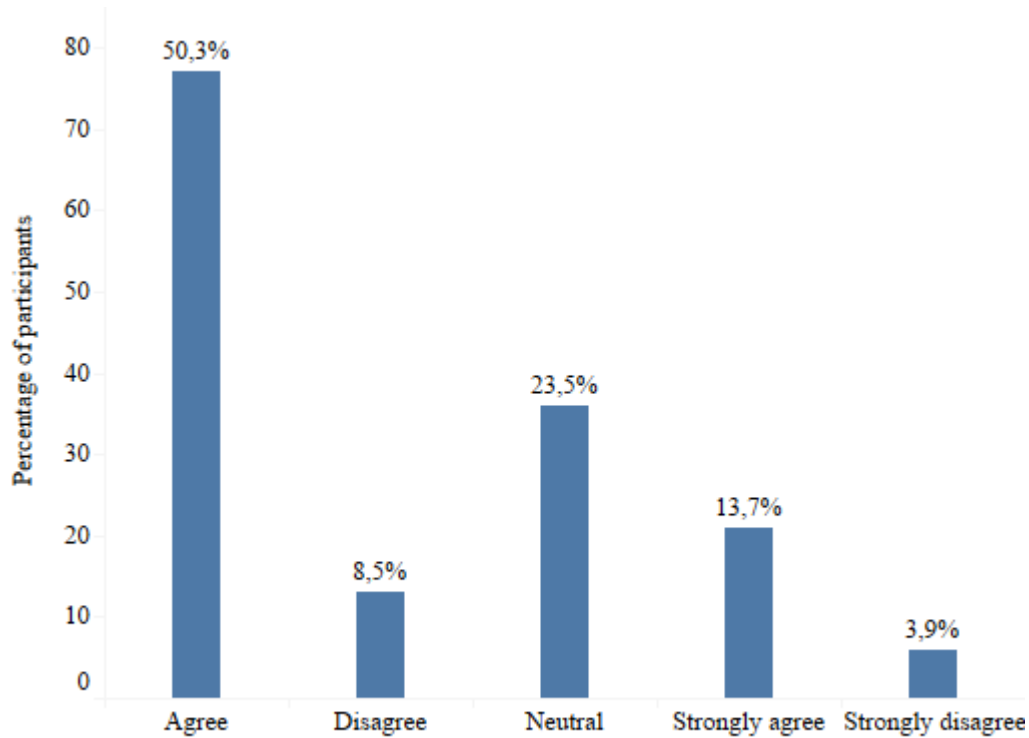


Fig 4.22: Social media enables employees to share photos, videos, and other interests (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.8. Social media allows me to stay in touch with friends and family

Fig 4.23 shows the participants' responses to whether social media allows the participants to stay in touch with friends and family. 51% of the participants agree that social media allows them to stay in touch with friends and family, 17.6% of the participants are neutral, 15.0% strongly agree, 13.1% disagree and 3.3% of the participants strongly disagree.

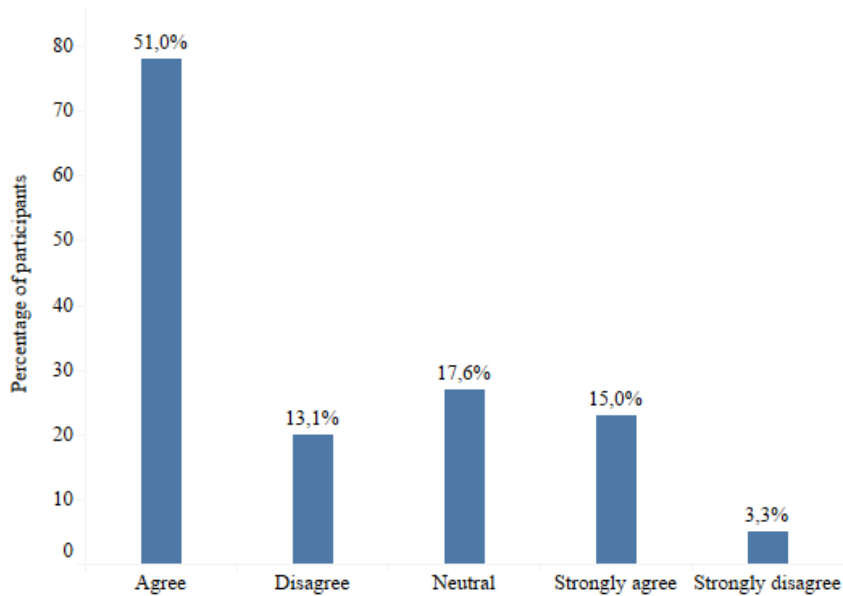


Fig 4.23: Social media allows me to stay in touch with friends and family (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.9. Social media allows me to stay informed on current affairs

Fig 4.24 shows the participants' responses to: social media allows me to stay informed on current affairs. 56.2% of the participants agree, 17.6% strongly agree, 14.4% are neutral, 9.2% disagree and 2.6% of the participants strongly disagree.

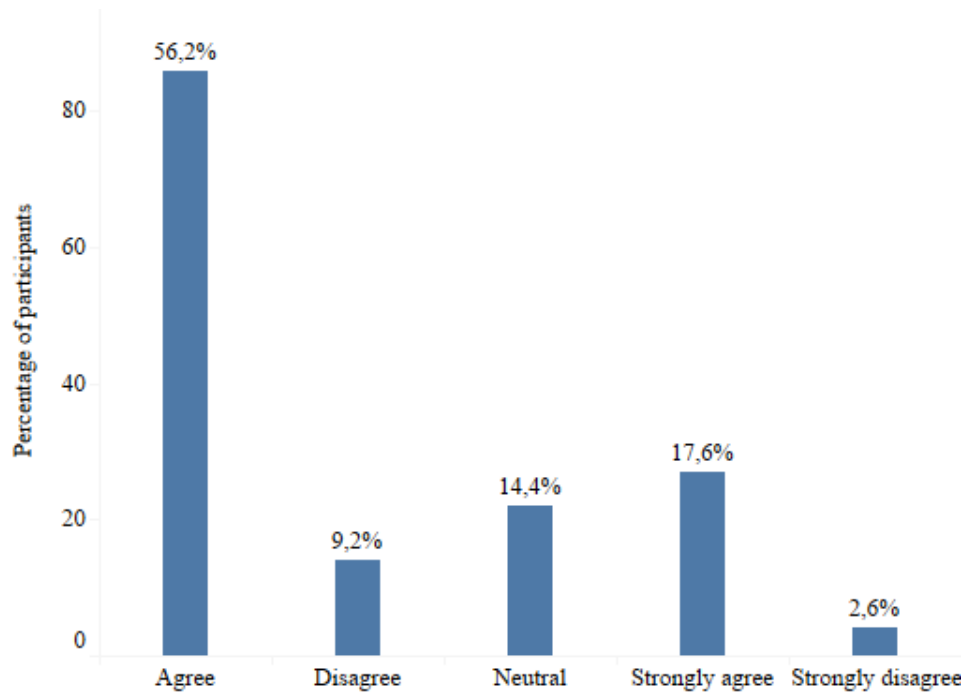


Fig 4.24: Social media allows me to stay informed on current affairs (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.10. Social media allows me to collaborate with colleagues

Fig 4.25 shows the participants' responses to whether social media allows them to collaborate with colleagues. 46.4% of the participants agree, 22.9% of the participants are neutral, 19.6% strongly agree, 9.2% disagree and 2% of the participants strongly disagree.

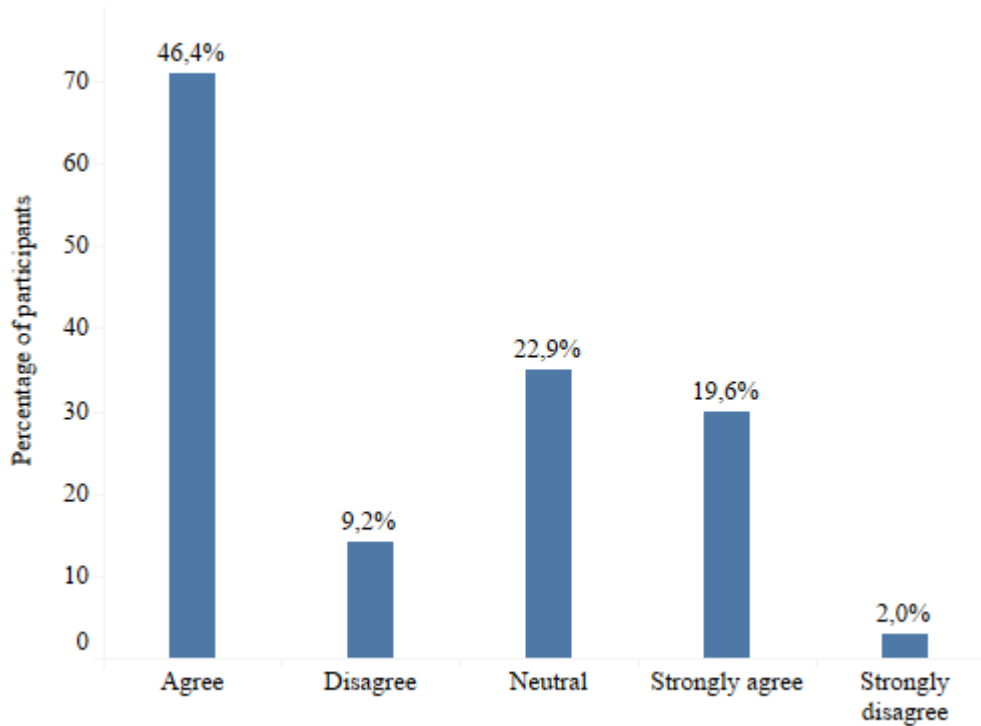


Fig 4.25: Social media allows me to collaborate with colleagues (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.11. Social media allows me to relax from work pressure

Fig 4.26 shows the participants' responses to the question: does social media allow you to relax from work pressure? 43.8% of the participants agree, 20.3% of the participants responded neutral, 16.3% of the participants disagree, 15.0% agree and the remaining 4.6% of the participants strongly disagree.

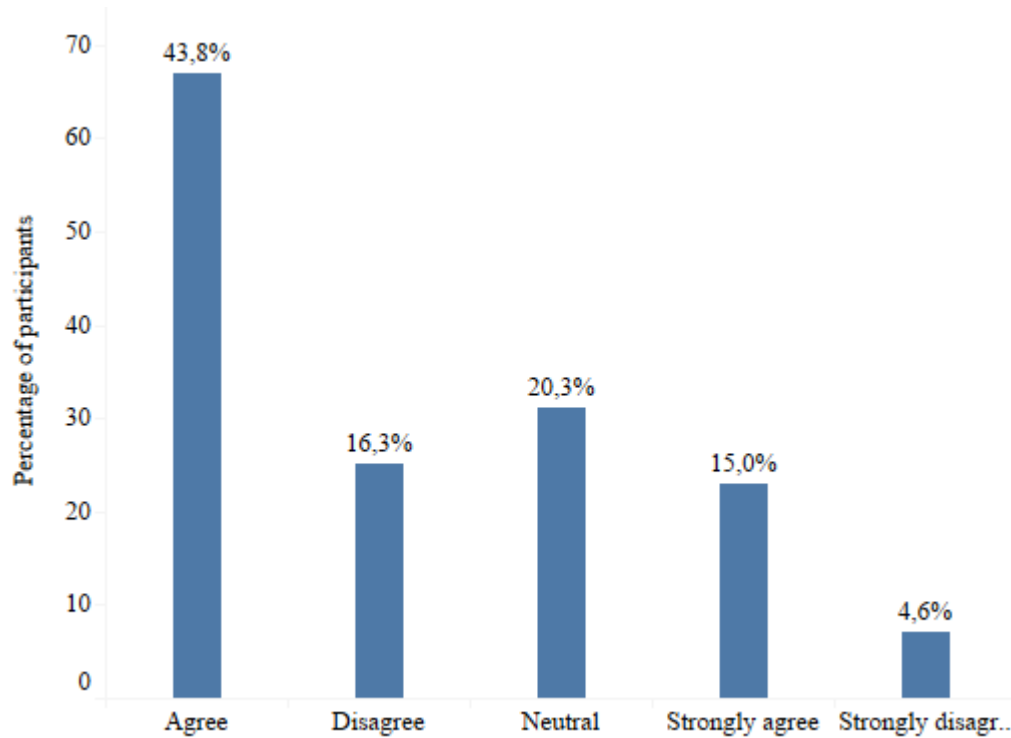


Fig 4.26: Social media allows me to relax from pressure from work (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.12. Social media allows me to acquire work related information

Fig 4.27 shows the participants' responses to whether social media allows them to acquire work related information. 46.4% of the participants agree, 22.2% are neutral, 19.0% strongly agree, 9.2% disagree and the remaining 3.3% strongly disagree.

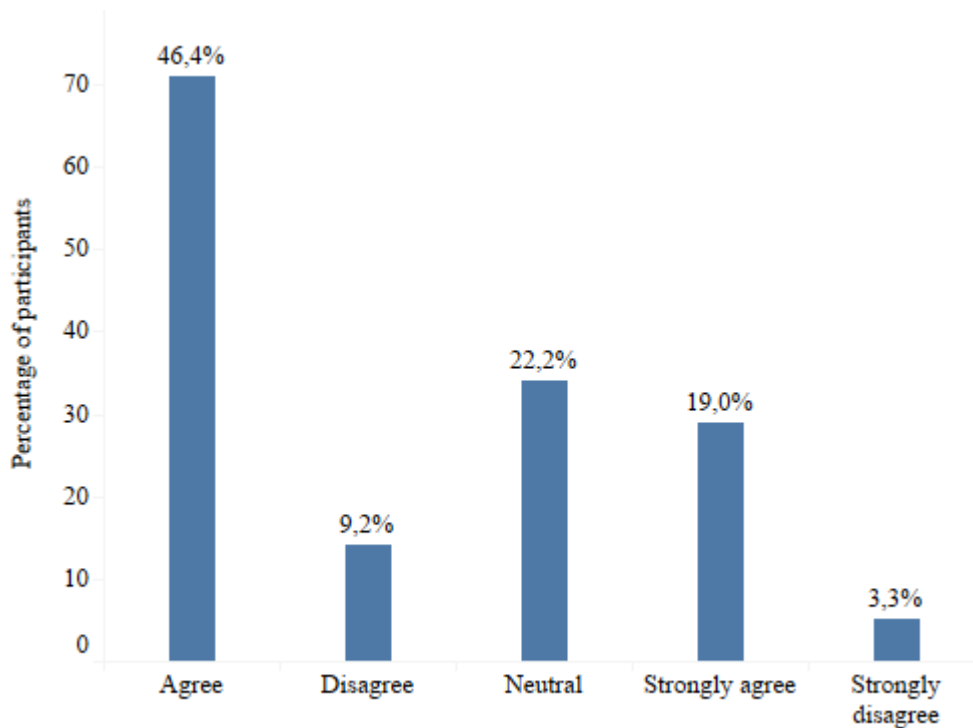


Fig 4.27: Social media allows me to acquire work related information (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.13. Does using social media during working hours distract you from your tasks and deadlines

Fig 4.28 shows the participants' responses to the question: Does using social media during working hours distract you from your tasks and deadlines. 19.6% of the participants responded yes and 80.4% of the participants responded no.

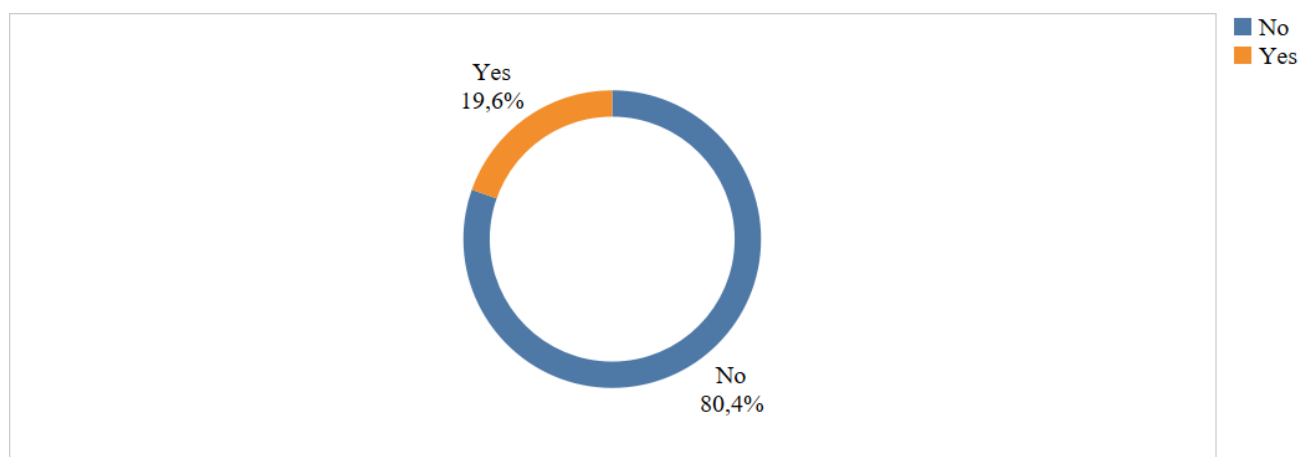


Fig 4.28: Does using social media distract you from work related tasks and deadlines (LinkedIn survey)

4.5.14. Do you think your frequent use of social media at work for personal purposes affect your productivity?

Fig .29 shows the participants' responses to the question: Do you think one's frequent use of social media for personal purposes affects their productivity. 28.8% of the participants responded yes and 71.2% of the participants responded no.

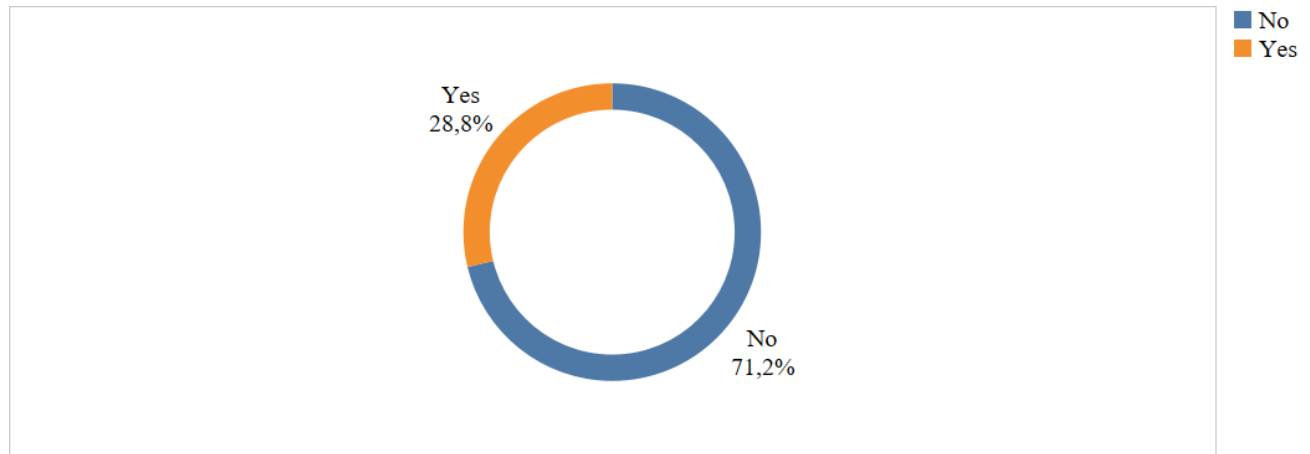


Fig 4.29: Do you think your frequency of using social media affects your productivity (LinkedIn survey)

4.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings of the study in accordance with the research objectives. The chapter outlined the findings, regarding the use of social media on employee productivity in a consulting work environment. In general, the findings motivate the adoption of social media in the workplace. The following chapter covers the study discussion, conclusion, limitations, and significance of the study.

5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, STUDY LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the empirical research is discussed in relation to the theoretical framework previously highlighted. This chapter is categorised into sub-headings which aim to measure every theoretical path separately before concluding and answering questions. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the key findings from the study, and offers the limitations and significance of the study. The objective of this research study was to investigate the use of social media in the consulting work environment and whether it affects productivity during working hours. The four objectives and three research questions are discussed below.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study used a descriptive research design, with a total of 160 participants from consulting firms in South Africa. Through a targeted campaign on LinkedIn the study managed to achieve 153 questionnaires. All questions were answered, and this resulted in a response rate of 95.6% which was substantial enough to make reliable analysis and conclusions in relation to the effect of social media usage in the consulting work environment. The response rate agrees with the views of Mugenda (2012) who suggests that a 60% response rate is adequate to make meaningful primary data analysis.

The data profile of the findings from the respondents resulted in a participation of (65%) females and (35%) males, with the highest respondent job roles being consultants at (57%) and with a low response from senior managers at (9%). The largest age group was the age group of between 26 to 30 years (37%) and the lowest response rate was from the 56+ age group (0,7%).

Currently, the internet has become an information repository, and social media is an integral part of this process. According to the findings found in the study, the common mode to access social media is smartphones (40%), and the convenience and personification of the smartphone is that it raises employment managerial concerns. Research by Tandon et al., (2022) points out that the popularity of smartphones and the use of social media in the modern workplace has influenced employees, and reveals that smartphones improve and assist in work-related activities. From the findings, it appears that (97%) of respondents used smartphones to connect to social media for personal

purposes. It can be understood that due to the portable nature of smartphones, access to social media is more likely and easier with the advantage of certain sites not being restricted nor being monitored within the workplace.

Organisations track their employees' social media usage on company computers and hand-held devices. Thirty-three percent of participants responded 'Yes' to being aware that their organisations track and monitor social media usage on company owned computers and hand-held devices. Furthermore, (26%) of the participants responded 'No'; and (42%) of the participants are not aware of whether their organisations track their social media usage on company owned computers and hand-held devices.

5.3. DISCUSSION

5.3.1. What is the commonly used social media platform used by employees in organisations?

In the first research question (RQ1), the study examined which social media platform is commonly used by employees in the workplace. The study established that the three top social media platforms used during working hours is WhatsApp (32%), Microsoft Office & Zoom (22%) and an Internal ESM (11%) by employees in the consulting workplace. A study conducted by Wariara (2017) highlights that the level of engagement with WhatsApp is high among employees with about (55%) of them sending team-related and work information on the platform. The use of WhatsApp in the work environment is significant because employees create WhatsApp groups for projects and this affords the opportunity for recipients to respond immediately. This is supported by the finding that (87%) of the participants responded that they use WhatsApp to communicate with colleagues. WhatsApp allows a functionality of connecting your smartphone to the web, which allows for a multitasking way of staying connected through your smartphone and on your laptop. The group feature also allows users to actively participate in discussions (Ariffin & Omar, 2018). Less than (10%) of the participants indicated that they use the following social media platforms: LinkedIn, Snap Chat and TikTok to communicate with colleagues.

5.3.2. Does using social media during working hours affect productivity?

In the second research question (RQ2), the study explored whether or not using social media during working hours affects productivity. Forty percent of participants use social media 6-14 times a day during working hours. However, the age group 21 to 25 (74%) were the highest age group to often use social media. This can be associated with Generation Y being digital natives that prefer using social media for interactions with family and friends (Bolton et al., 2013). Employers perceive social

media as a platform that can possibly derail employee productivity. However, the findings showed that (80%) of the respondents stated that they do not believe social media is a distraction from work; yet, (20%) do believe social media is a distraction from work. The results discussed by (Seman, 2014) reveal that although many employees spend their time on social networking sites, there was a moderate relation affecting their work productivity. Sixty percent of respondents found themselves spending more than a quarter of their time using social media during working hours, which translates to 15 minutes a day spent on social media.

5.3.3. What is the impact of using social media for employees in the workplace?

The third research question (RQ3), on the impact of social media in the workplace highlight that 52% of respondents use social media at work to share information with colleagues. According to Adzharuddin & Kander (2018), the supply of informal and formal communication assists in knowledge transfer and communication in the workplace. Furthermore, 55% of the respondents found that social media use helps them to learn new things, particularly, current trends in their fields of work. Power & Phillips-Wren (2011) found that social media had a positive impact on decision quality when participants' task-relevant knowledge is high. 46% of respondents stated that they are motivated to use social media for entertainment purposes. Research by Ali-Hassan et al. (2015) elaborate on the use of social media for entertainment purposes to include posting of photos and videos as well as the playing of games to pass time. Furthermore, from the findings, 50% of 21–25-year-olds spend their time on social media which is half their time at work doing other things online (7.8%) whereas training comes in the least of the factors.

5.4. STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study was limited in terms of industry, scope and respondents. In terms of industry, the study was limited to employees working in professional consulting firms in South Africa. No other industries or sectors were considered and all the respondents came from organisations working within South Africa. While general conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study to fit different contexts, the limitation on scope and location is important to consider as it may not be true for all professional consulting firms across the African continent, and the world at large.

In terms of scope, the study focused on the use of social media in the workplace. It did not consider the use of other forms of traditional media (e.g., radio, print media) or web media (e.g., online articles

etc.) nor did it consider the use of other forms of communication (e.g., telephone calls, smses) which employees may use to keep in contact with their loved ones during working hours. Social media is a contemporary trend and, in many ways, has overtaken other forms of media and communication channels, as one is able to gain information as well as to keep in contact with family and friends on social network sites.

Moreover, the study is limited in terms of the respondents. While 160 questionnaires were sent out, only 153 were successfully completed. In terms of sample size, this may represent a small proportion when compared to the total number of professional consulting firms present in South Africa and total number of employees working within this sector. However, the response rate of 95.6% was substantial enough to make reliable analysis and conclusions in relation to the effect of social media usage in the consulting work environment.

5.5. CONCLUSION

This study adds to the body of knowledge on social media usage as it provides unique insights to which platforms are popular amongst employees, the duration of time that is spent, and also the various reasons why social media is used during working hours.

Understanding the relationship between social media usage and employee productivity can reveal the underlying rationale for organisations to either permit or disallow the use of social media in the workplace. As suggested in the findings, the social interaction of employees with friends, family members and colleagues through social networking sites during working hours *does not affect productivity nor does it increase productivity*. It is understood through the findings that employers are concerned with the delivery and quality of the work at the required time. At the same time, the use of social media in the workplace has a *positive benefit* on employee performance because it provides an ease for employees to gain insights, suggestions, and knowledge transfer from other colleagues in the workplace.

Ali-Hassan et al., (2015) point out in their research that the social and cognitive use of social media has a positive effect on employees' routines. Çetinkaya & Rashid (2018) are of the view that the results in the research prove the "usefulness" of social media as it contributes to improve the performance of employees.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

It should be noted that the continuous growth of social media is inevitable, and organisations will need to accept the reality that most employees will make use of social media during working hours. It is important to therefore manage its usage and to promote positive employee productivity. This study recommends that further research should be conducted to consider using managerial information in measuring employer reported worker productivity and usage of social media.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Approval Letter for Pilot



Accenture (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd
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CONFIDENTIAL

June 27, 2019

CLAIRE LUPOSO

This letter serves to confirm that Claire Luposo is currently employed by Accenture South Africa as a Technology Consulting Analyst. She has been in the employ of this company since April 01, 2018.

We are aware that name is completing a Masters' degree and wants to focus on how Accenture employees use our social media platforms. This research may be conducted under the following conditions

- o Accenture will not be mentioned
- o Duration of research: Not exceeding one month
- o Accenture employee information cannot be used (not even anonymously)
- o Research is specific to the Johannesburg data base
- o Prior to providing the research specific to her studies another approval is needed

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully

BRENT CAIRNS
HUMAN RESOURCES

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Appendix 2: Pilot Questionnaire

Social Media Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the relationship between social media and the organisation.

The target population for this study is employees in various departments across a leading consulting firm.

The study is to be carried out with all participants that are assured that the results will be treated with the strictest confidentiality possible. A short and concise summary of the data finds and conclusion will be shared with the relevant departments upon completion of the study which will result in being distributed to the rest of the employees in the organisations.

Instructions:

- Please fill out this questionnaire as completely and to the best of your knowledge and ability.
- The questionnaire consists of series of short questions, the majority of which will require descriptive answers from the participant.
- Mark with an X where applicable.

SECTION 1: General

1. Please tick your department:

Technology	
Products	
Resources	
Communication, Technology and Media	
Digital	
Operations	
Health and Professional Services	
Other	

2. Current role:

or Manager	
ager	
sultant	
yst	

3. What is your age:

25	
30	
35	
40	
45	
50	
55	

4. What is your sex?

Female	
Male	
Other	

SECTION 2: Impact of social media on communication

Now we like to know how you use social media at work. In this survey we see social media as media which enable two-way communication. In other words: media enabling dialogue over the Internet. Examples of these are: Facebook, Twitter, blogs and YouTube.

5. How many times a day do you use social media during the day?

Not often (5-10 times a day)	
Often (15 – 20 times a day)	
Frequently (more than 20 times a day)	

6. Is there a social media platform put in place to facilitate communication across departments?

Yes	
No	
Other: please name them.	

7. As a company, how long have you been using social media?

Before 2000	
Between 2002 - 2005	
Between 2006 - 2009	
After 2010	

SECTION 3: Effectiveness of social media in strengthening formal and informal internal communications.

In this section of the survey, we would like to know how you, in your organisation, work with social media.

8. According to the two examples below of social media, what type of social media do you use during work hours?

Work use: *Knowledge management system, Company blogs, Intranet, Skype and internal communication.*

Personal use: *Social media, YouTube, SnapChat and LinkedIn.*

Work use	
Personal use	
Both	

9. For personal use, how many times do you post pictures, comments etc. on your social media accounts during working hours?

Extremely often (+30 times)	
Very often (+15 times)	
Slightly often (+5 times)	
Not at all often (0 times)	

10. What social media platform do you use to communicate with your colleagues?

WhatsApp	
Facebook	
Twitter	
Internal social media platform	
Other: Please explain	

11. Which device do you use to connect to your social media platforms?

Smartphone	
Laptop	
Tablet	
Other:	

12. How many friends do you have on social media? (Indicate number)

Facebook	
LinkedIn	
Twitter	
Instagram	
SnapChat	

13. Does your organisation track employee use of social media on company-owned computers or handheld device?

Yes	
No	
If no, explain why:	
Not applicable (if they do not have social media platform):	
Not aware	

14. Are there policies put in place at your organisation with regards to using social media during work hours?

Yes	
No	
Do not know	

Section 4: Social Media Usage

The following section relates to the usage of social media platforms in the office setup.

For each of the statements stated below, tick the box that best represents your own motivation in the use of social media. Your response should be based on the following scale:

1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Agree, 4 – Strongly Agree

15. I am motivated to use social media because it enables me to:

	Scale			
	1	2	3	4
1. Share information with my colleagues				
2. Have fun				
3. Learn new things				
4. Know colleagues better				
5. Be entertained				
6. Participate in discussions				
7. Pass time and unwind				
8. Share photos, videos and other interests				
9. Other				

16. Using social media during work hours allows me to meet the following needs:

	Scale			
	1	2	3	4
1. Stay in touch with family and friends				
2. Stay informed about current affairs				
3. Collaborate with my colleagues				
4. Relax from work pressure				
5. Acquire work-related knowledge				

17. How significant is the use of WhatsApp in your socialisation at work?

Extremely Significant	
Significant	
Not significant	
Extremely insignificant	

