

New Patterns of Internal Communication in Public Organization: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Given the nature of public organizations environments compared to private organizations, integrating the use of social media platforms in internal communication follows a slow-based trend compared to private organizations. This paper examines the use of new patterns instead of traditional ways of communication for internal communication within public organizations from employees' perspective. Using a quantitative research approach and adopting the systems theory, which offers a means of conceptualizing the functions within an organization, this research uses Saudi Arabia as a case study to survey selected sample of public employees in the country and to test the hypotheses of the relationship between the new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) and work efficiency, productivity and employee engagement, as well as whether public organization employees prefer to use modern / new pattern of communications in all aspects of internal communication. This paper establishes three main findings which are: there is a significant positive relationship between the use of modern/new pattern of communication and work efficiency and productivity, public organizations' employees prefer to use modern/new pattern of communication in all aspects of internal communication and there is no significant positive relationship between employee engagement through social media and improved relationships in the organization. A list of recommendations based on the study's findings were established to be considered by public administration leaders (specially in Saudi Arabia). Finally, limitations of this study along with future research suggestions were provided.

Keywords: system theory, new patterns of communication, social media, computer-mediated communication (CMC), public organization, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

In the last few decades, numerous changes and developments have taken place within the realm of information and communication technologies globally. These changes have resulted in the development of new ways of organizing processes of corporate communication (Siljanovska, 2015). Taking into consideration that communication is among the most vital and dominant activities in an organization, internet communication significantly contributing to the organization's functions; particularly the determination of the organization's aims, values, and strategies (Siljanovska, 2015). Specifically, social media has developed and grown, and has today become the most popular form of computer-mediated communication as an outcome of the increased technologies in the marketplace (Langer, 2014). According to Leonardi et al. (2013), the social media phenomenon has affected all forms of communication, and is now pervasive in organizations, where it provides a platform for organizational communication. Currently, over 50% of the workforce constitutes Millennials that are individuals born between the years 1980 and 2000 (Thomas & Dittman, 2016). Millennials prefer using social media for communication, rather than direct communication. Given the increased use popularity of social media use, the purpose of this study is to establish the use of social media in organizational internal communication. The rationale being that social media is beneficial to an organization internal communication (Ewing et al., 2019), improved organizational relationships (Parry & Solidoro, 2013), and according to Devereux et al. (2017), fosters the public identity and reputation of an organization.

1.1 Problem Statement

Given the nature of public organizations environments compared to private organizations, integrating the use of social media platforms in internal communication follows a slow-based trend compared to private organizations. Moreover, the increased use of modern communication channels and current situation of COVID-19 pandemic,

this study aims to examine the use of modern communication channels in internal communication of public organizations (employee-to-employee or employee-to-organization). This study will focus on examining the use of social media in public organizations from employees' perspective.

1.2 Importance of the Study

Most of the studies that have been reviewed in the following literature review section focus on the studies that use social media platforms as communication in private organizations. Through our literature review, a very small number of papers examined the practice of social media within public organizations as an internal communication channel. In addition, some studies have examined the use of social media from a leadership perspective and whether leaders are willing to accept such communication channels in their organizations or not.

2. Literature Review

Developments within the realm of communications technologies have produced novel means of communication and reorganized the organization communication processes. Social media has played a significant role in the performance of both public and community activities. Social media is increasingly being used as a core communication channel by employees while sharing ideas, exchanging experiences, and for both vertical and horizontal communication (Siljanovska, 2015). Firms ranging from small businesses to large organizations and government departments have increasingly adopted social media as a strategy for corporate and organizational communication, including public relations (PR) (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). Such undertakings are considered positive in regard to the openness of the Web 2.0 environment that has resulted in democracy, increased participation, dialogue, and community building (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). As social media is increasingly gaining prominence within firms, it is vital to understand how the process inherent in organizational communication (internal and external) and social media communication's impact on the organization (Langer, 2014). To acquire such an understanding requires the comprehension of communication, organizational communication, and social media, then followed by a review of literature on the impact of organizational communication through social media on the firm.

2.1 Communication – A Theoretical Discourse

Communication can be described as a process where information is created and shared between individuals. These individuals are the participants in the communication process (Siljanovska, 2015). The communication process comprises the channel/medium of transmitting or sharing the information. The channel selected is dependent on the type of data to be transmitted (Siljanovska, 2015). Mass media as a communication channel is increasingly useful in the creation of motivational knowledge and the channels promote greater social engagement. The mass media also promote modelling and changing opinions and perceptions towards novel concepts and ideas (Siljanovska, 2015). The influence generated determines whether the new concept or idea will be accepted/rejected.

Good communication is the foundation of understanding; therefore, it is required for internal and external communication. There are four goals of the entire communication process that are informing, pursuing, motivating, and/or acquiring mutual consent (Siljanovska, 2015). As highlighted by Ahlqvist et al. (2008) efficiency in the communication process demands knowledge on the components of the communication process, the understanding of the recipients of the messages, the perceptual influence of individuals, and the media tool that is most appropriate and effective in communication a particular message.

Communication is the foundation of both direct and indirect interaction that occurs daily. Communication involves some form of interaction between the communicating participants with the most crucial forms of social behavior evoked through the communication process (Siljanovska, 2015). The term communication was derived from two Latin words that are "communicatio" which means to announce and "communicare" which means making something common together (Siljanovska, 2015). However, within the context of contemporary literature, communication refers to both announcing, the process of communication, and a conversation between two parties using different channels depending on the purpose and information being communicated.

As further highlighted by (Thurlow, 2018), there are as many systems of communication as the different forms/frames of social interaction that exist. The multiplicity of the communication models is indicative of the various routes the information being communicated follows that is from the sender to the receiver and vice versa when there is a reply (Thurlow, 2018). Communication models may be complex, while others are simple. The models comprise of the four essential elements of communication that are the sender (encoder), message, channel, and receiver (decoder) (Thurlow, 2018). In the modern communication model, feedback is also included (Siljanovska, 2015). Communication feedback can be considered as two-way communication and is more efficient compared to the monologue-like nature of one-way communication.

2.2 Organizational Communication

Organizational communication, according to Langer (2014), has provided the foundation for establishing the impact of communication on organizational functioning. Communication is a core component of not only human interaction outside of a firm's context but also within the firm. It is deemed a means for creating and sustaining the organization (Santra & Giri, 2009) as cited by (Langer, 2014). The importance of communication emanates from its ability to shape the organizational culture through individual perceptions and organizational attributes that strengthen the identity of the firm and its ability to achieve its goals and objectives (Santra & Giri, 2009) as cited by (Langer, 2014). Modaff et al. (2007) describes organizational communication as a process involving the creation, exchange, interpretation (correctly/incorrectly), and storage of messages within a human interaction system. It is a dynamic process that goes beyond the simple transfer of information as it aims at influencing specific organizational behavior (Langer, 2014). The importance of organizational communication has been well-established. This is obvious with the significant number of studies on organizational communication in multiple contexts. Initially, the focus of organizational communication research was on the variations in communication across different types of communication. However, recently, the emergence of new communication channels such as social media, has led to a shift towards understanding the variations of communication in different types of companies and their impact on these companies (Langer, 2014).

A typical example is an early study by Santra & Giri (2009) that targeted at understanding the impact of computer-mediated communication (CMC) on organizations. The researchers focused on understanding how CMC has improved the effectiveness, convenience, and affordability of communication for organizations (Santra & Giri, 2009). Therefore, it is vital to consider organizational communication and its impact on different facets of the firm.

2.3 Understanding the Social Media

The advent of the internet revolutionized human interaction, information retrieval, and significantly influenced daily living. The developments that have taken place in advancing internet use have generated new possibilities, opportunities, and challenges for individuals and companies (Secher, 2012). Notably, recent developments have resulted in the emergence of social media and multiple social media channels and tools of communication. These tools and channels have provided a means of close and personal two-way communication and interaction regardless of the time or geographical location (Secher, 2012). According to Safko (2012), social media comprises two words. These words are 'social' which is the human need to connect with others and be surrounded by like-minded individuals to share thoughts, ideas, and experiences in a non-judgmental, comfortable, and trustful way. The other word is 'media' that is the technological means of connecting and interacting with others (Safko, 2012). Therefore, social media uses various media and technologies for connecting and communicating, building trust, and creating relationships with others. Baruah (2012) provides a more technical definition of social media, where she described social media as using web-based and mobile technologies to transform communication into an integrative dialogue. Social media is, therefore, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2012), a group of internet-based applications built on the ideas and technology of Web 2.0 and allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Social media has transformed organizational communication and may be of different forms that include magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating, and social bookmarking (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2012). Through the application of different theories, Kaplan and Haenlein (2012) generated a tool for classifying different social media types in their earlier works. They determined that six types of social media include collaborative projects, blogs and microblogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The technologies comprise blogs, sharing pictures, sharing videos (vlogs), wall-postings, email, instant messaging, sharing music, crowdsourcing, and voice over IP to mention a few (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The services can be integrated through different platforms for network aggregation.

2.4 Organizational Communication and Social Media

Positioning social media within the context of communication and in this regard organizational communication requires the understanding of both the organization and the social media. The social media allows the transitioning from the web where one reads to the web to where an individual can write or read to the web (Langer, 2014). The implication is that it is a web that contains user-generated content, which allows the use of applications by users using an internet-connected computer. Web 2.0 is a business revolution within the computer industry that is an outcome of the shift of the internet as a communication platform, and an attempt towards understanding the rules for success on the new platform (O'Reilly, 2006). Social media in the context of organization communication is challenging communicators to promote employee engagement, offer relevant information, and find the insights and challenges employees experience. The implication is that there should be a shift in the professional role of

communication in organizations from the dissemination of information by organizational leaders and/or managers to allowing dialogue (Badea, 2014). Also, eliminating the idea of control, carefully and actively listening to others, engaging in direct and clear communication, and transforming managers into communicators.

Social media has revolutionized communication and reconfigured the traditional model of communication within an organization. It has increased the volume, speed, and daily flux of communication (Badea, 2014). It has also increased connectivity among employees and provided them with a platform for stimulating discussions and sharing interests. In this regard, social media has been positioned in multiple positions within the organization (Badea, 2014). For example, public relations and internal and external communication to mention a few. The primary goal is transmitting information for communication facilitation and promoting mutual understanding within and outside the organization.

2.5 Impact of Social-Media on Organizational Internal Communication Practices

Effective communication is vital for organizational success. The rationale is that it impacts organizations leaders' ability to engage employees and meet the company objectives. The study by Qasim et al. (2018) aimed at examining the impact of internal organizational communication and enterprise social networking. The researchers developed a subset of eight hypotheses and analyzed data collected through a survey (Qasim et al., 2018). They found a positive correlation between each success factor of employing enterprise social networking and internal communication. The implication is that social networking can be applied to improve internal communication practices and lead to organizational success.

Another study by Ge and Johns (2013), the researchers explored the effect of using social media in internal marketing. Through interviews conducted among seven participants from Baixing.com, they established that developing internal communication capabilities via social media is effective and necessary (Ge & Johns, 2013). The findings revealed that social media developed a conducive climate for its employees and allowed effective communication between the employees and their managers (Ge & Johns, 2013). The same is indicated to be achieved using Weibo in China.

2.6 Social Media Engagement and Organizational Relationships

Social media has been found to promote employee engagement and build positive organizational relationships. The study by Parry & Solidoro (2013) targeted at examining social media use in organizations as a means of engaging with current and future employees. The research aimed at ascertaining the claims that social media use promotes employee engagement and build relationships via the examination of the use of social media at a television company and an international telecommunications company in the United Kingdom (Parry & Solidoro, 2013). Data collection was done using a semi-structured interview, and the findings revealed that social media promoted engagement among existing employees (Parry & Solidoro, 2013). However, this was dependent on the leadership's adoption of a culture of openness and participation in communication.

Haddud et al. (2016) in their study targeted at exploring the correlation between the use of social media by employees and employee engagement, including the relationship between the degree and purpose of internal social media use and self-reported competencies. They conducted their study in the context of North American operations in a multinational firm (Haddud et al., 2016). They collected data for 1694 employees and the findings highlight variations in social media use and employee engagement depending on the business division and career band. They also identified the tasks that were undertaken via social media (Haddud et al., 2016). The study further revealed that the higher the self-reported use of social media, the higher the degree of self-reported engagement (Haddud et al., 2016). Therefore, social media promotes employee engagement and improves relationships through communication and self-reported competencies.

3. Method / Theoretical Framework

Systems theory offers a means of conceptualizing the functions within an organization. An organization is considered to be a dynamic process comprising of multiple interactions that occur internally and externally (Almaney, 1974). These interactions are at the core of the organization's survival and success. Therefore, efficiency in communication determines how effectively the organization will achieve its goals and objectives, including organizational development. The theory provides a comprehensive view of an organization and is dependent on the growth and stability factors of the organization (Almaney, 1974). The theory is designed to provide a precise and holistic outlook of an organization, including the organization's levels of communication and interaction between its employees that justifies how they are interdependent within the organization (Poole, 1997). The theory, as argued by Langer (2014), has offered a significant framework for determining the impact of communication in an organization.

Earlier studies, for example, those by Chin (1966) and Hickson (1973) have contributed to the application of system theory in organizational communication as is evident today. Their study findings revealed that through communication, organizations can adapt their products, services, and information to meet external requests and deal with complaints and hence meet the consumer demands (Chin, 1966; Hickson, 1973). The studies have also highlighted that communication and information transmission are among the critical components for analysis and organizational functioning (Chin, 1966; Hickson, 1973). Therefore, applying the systems theory will offer a framework for this study to establish the impact of social media communication on an organization. A quantitative research approach will be used in this study and the following subsections will give details about specific information related to the research quantitative approach.

3.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How can a public organization get the benefit of modern communication in its internal communication practice?
- 2) Which parts of internal communication should the public organizations use modern communication for?
- 3) Can the use of modern communication lead to better relationships within the organization (employee-to-employee or employee-to-organization)?
- 4) What obstacles are facing employees to use social media as a platform for internal communication in public organizations?

Hypotheses

This study aims at establishing the impact of organizational communication via new patterns of communication (i.e. social media) by answering the research questions provided above. This will be attained by testing the following research hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) and work efficiency and productivity.

H2: Public organization employees prefer to use modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) in all aspects of internal communication.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement through social media and improved relationships in the organization.

3.2 Sampling and Sample Size

The population of the study will comprise of all the employees within the public organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). To acquire the sample population, the non-probabilistic sampling approach (Judgement Sample) will be used for selecting the sample population. The sampling approach allows the selection of the most suitable participants and ensures the aims and objectives of the study are met.

3.2.1 Sample Size

The target sample size for this study is approximately 100 data points. This sample size is calculated based on:

- 1) Population of 1.5 million (total number of civil servants in Saudi Arabia).
- 2) 10% Margin of Error.
- 3) 95% Confidence Level.

Using the above 3 parameters the sample size can be easily calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{(z - \text{score})^2 \times SD \times (1 - SD)}{(\text{Margin of Error})^2}$$

The above formula yields a sample size = 97.

3.3 Research Ethics

There are no anticipated research ethical issues associated with this research study. The participants will voluntarily join the study and take the designed survey questions. In addition, the participants will be notified by the purpose of this research before answering the survey questions.

3.4 Data Source and Collection

The primary source of data for this study will be a Survey Data that will be collected from a specified and targeted population using an online surveying tool (Google Forms). The initial target population for the survey will be civil

servants who work in public organizations in Saudi Arabia. The population sample will not be focused on a specific public organization in Saudi Arabia but rather diverse which include civil servants working in different public organizations in Saudi Arabia.

The survey data for this research was collected using Google Forms which is a website services provided by Google that allow researchers to collect data through survey. The survey was launched on September 30, 2020, and closed by October 7, 2020. The total number of participants was 103. The questions of the survey are included in appendix A. The following figure 1 show demographic information of the sample participated in the survey of this research.

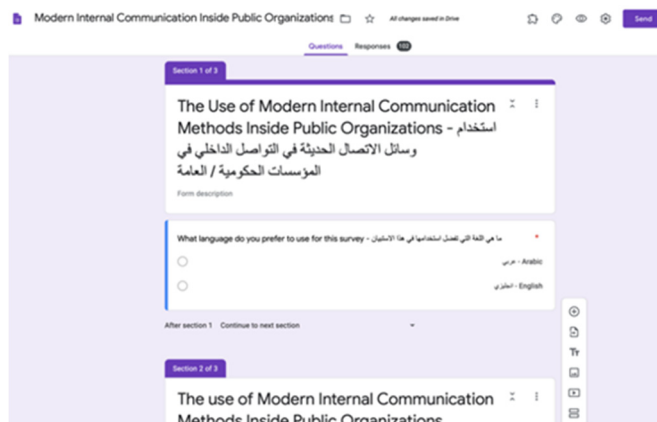


Figure 1. Demographic information of the sample participated in the survey

It can be seen from the above demographic information figure that the number of female participants (78%) outweigh the number of male participants (22%) and more than 50% of the participants are in the age group of 25-35 years old. In addition, most of the participants (88%) have a bachelor’s or master’s degree level of education. The following figure 2 is taken from Google Forms webpage assigned to this survey.

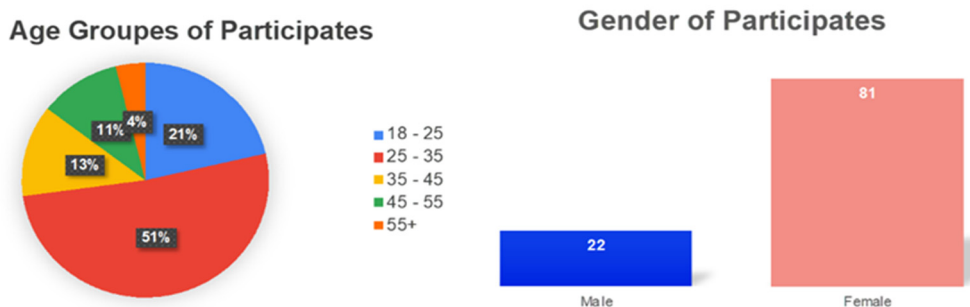


Figure 2. Google Forms screenshot for the survey of this research study

4. Results and Analysis

Data analysis is the process of organizing the information collected. In the case of this study the hypotheses listed earlier will be tested and will lead to identifying the primary themes based on research questions and hypotheses. These will then be summarized and presented in tables and figures. This will allow the understanding of meaning and patterns in the area under study and deriving relevant conclusions. Interpretation of the analyzed data will involve associating the study findings with the reviewed literature to ensure in-depth interpretation of the data collected and drawing appropriate conclusions.

In this section, the collected data will be analyzed to test the hypotheses of this research that were presented in section 3.1 of this paper. The analysis will be done by studying each hypothesis individually where a statistical regression method is used with 95% confidence level to study each hypothesis. After that more information gathered from the survey will be presented and analyzed.

4.1 Statistics and Data Analysis

Hypothesis# 1 of this research study and its null are as follow:

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant positive relationship between modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) and work efficiency and productivity.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive relationship between modern and new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) and work efficiency and productivity.

To test this hypothesis, the participants of this study were asked to express their level of agreement with this statement “I believe that the use of modern communication platforms for internal communication increase my work efficiency and productivity?”. The result of their answers is presented in the following table 1.

Table 1. Participants answer to the question of hypothesis# 1

I believe that the use of modern communication platforms for internal communication increase my work efficiency and productivity?	
Strongly Agree (Scale =1)	41
Agree (Scale =2)	37
Neutral (Scale =3)	18
Disagree (Scale =4)	4
Strongly Disagree (Scale =5)	3
Total	103

A stational regression method was used to study hypothesis# 1 where the result of the regression model is shown in the below table 2 and figure 3.

Table 2. Hypothesis# 1 regression model statistics

R ²	0.93
P-value	0.008
Standard Error	5.45

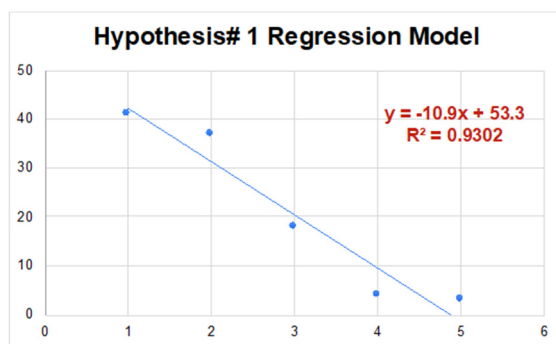


Figure 3. Regression model of hypothesis# 1

By looking at the above statistics of the regression model, it can be seen that the P-value (0.008) < α (0.05). Therefore, the NULL hypothesis# 1 can be rejected, and we accept the alternative hypothesis# 1. This result confirms the initial hypothesis (hypothesis# 1) that there is a significant positive relationship between modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) and work efficiency and productivity in public organization in Saudi Arabia.

The second hypothesis# 2 of this research study and its null are as follow:

Null hypothesis (H0): Public organization employees don't prefer to use modern / new pattern of communication

(i.e. social media) in all aspects of internal communication.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Public organization employees prefer to use modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) in all aspects of internal communication.

A Likert scale question was asked to the participants of this research to assess this hypothesis. The question asked the participants to what degree they agree or disagree with the statement of “Public organization employees should use modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) in all aspects of internal communication”. The percipients answer to this question is summarized in the figure 4.

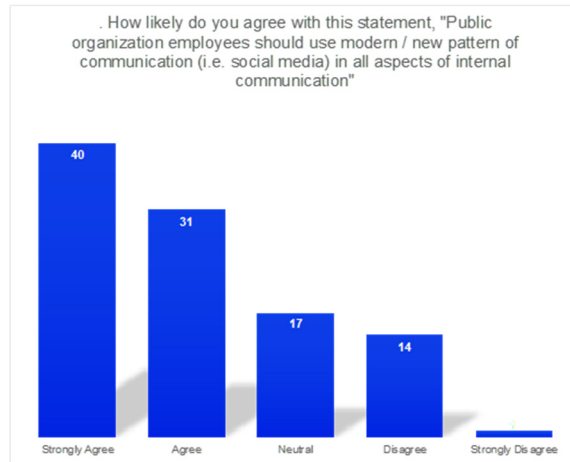


Figure 4. Participants answer to the question of hypothesis# 2

Based on these answers, a 95% confidence level confident regression model was developed to study hypothesis# 2. The result of the model is shown in the following table 3 and figure 5.

Table 3. Hypothesis# 2 regression model statistics

R ²	0.975
P-value	0.0016
Standard Error	2.75

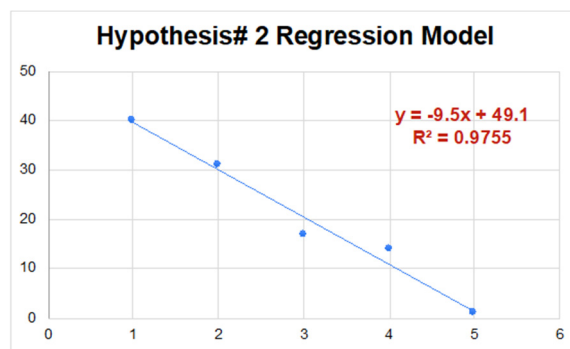


Figure 5. Regression model of hypothesis# 2

Using the above regression model statistics, we can see that the p-value of the model (0.0016) is α (0.05). Therefore, the NULL hypothesis# 2 can be rejected, and we can conclude with 95% confidence level that public organization employees in Saudi Arabia prefer to use modern / new pattern of communication in all aspects of internal communication.

The third and last hypothesis# 3 of this research study and its null are as follow:

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant positive relationship between employee engagement through social media and improved relationships in the organization.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement through social media and improved relationships in the organization.

Similar to the previous hypotheses a Likert scale question was asked to the participants to evaluate the following statement: “The use of modern communication platforms in internal communication develop my relationship and engagement with my workmates”. The responses to this question is summarized in the following table 4.

Table 4. Participants answer to the question of hypothesis# 3

The use of modern communication platforms in internal communication develops my relationship and engagement with my workmates	
Strongly Agree (Scale =1)	25
Agree (Scale =2)	44
Neutral (Scale =3)	25
Disagree (Scale =4)	5
Strongly Disagree (Scale =5)	4
Total	103

Similar to the previous hypotheses tests, a 95% confidence level stational regression model was used to study the hypothesis and the result of the regression is shown in the below table 5 and figure 6.

Table 5. Hypothesis# 3 regression model statistics

R ²	0.593
P-value	0.127
Standard Error	12.23

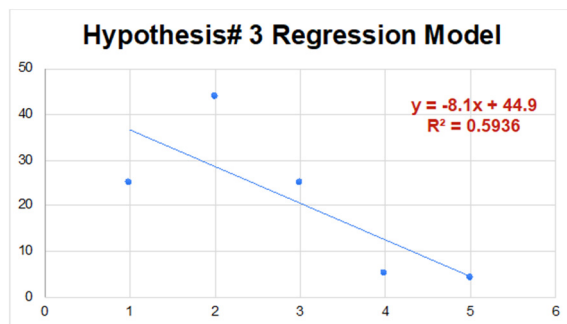


Figure 6. Regression model of hypothesis# 3

As per the above results of the regression model, the p-value of the model (0.127) is $< \alpha$ (0.05). So, the NULL hypothesis# 3 is accepted (the alternative hypothesis is rejected). This led us to conclude that there is no significant positive relationship between employee engagement through social media and improved relationships in the organization. Therefore, the initially assumed hypothesis# 3 is not correct and rejected.

4.2 Additional Data Analysis

Part of the survey for this research study was designed to collect additional information from the participants to study their behavior / preferences related to the modern communication platform for internal communication. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, one of the questions was asked to the participants to investigate if the participant has used any of the modern communication method before the COVID-19 pandemic. The below table 6 summarizes the responses of the participants to this question.

Table 6. Question# 5 of the survey and its results

Before COVID-19 pandemic, have you ever used Modern communication platforms in internal communication?	
Yes	71
No	32

From the above table we see that approximately 69% of the participants used some sort of modern communication before COVID-19 pandemic for internal communication purpose. Therefore, we can conclude that 69% of the participants provide their answers based on their experience that isn't only influenced by the COVID-19 situation.

Another question was asked to the participants to generally express their preferences about using the modern communication platform is shown in the below figure 7. It can be seen that 78% of the participants preferred using modern communication instead of the traditional way of communication (i.e. one-to-one meeting).

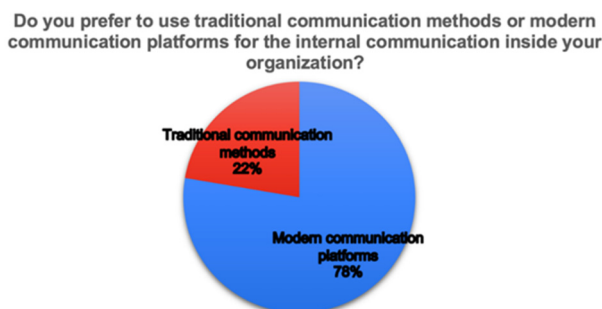


Figure 7. Question# 6 of the survey and its results

Participants were asked a question to verify the outcome of hypothesis# 2 regression model. The question and its results are shown in the following table. 55% of the sample indicated that they prefer using the modern communication for all aspects of internal communication which support the regression model results of hypothesis# 2.

Table 7. Question# 8 of the survey and its results

Do you prefer using modern communication platforms for all aspect of internal communication inside your organization?	
Yes	56
No	47

Personal preference may affect someone's desire to use modern communication platforms in internal communication. Therefore, the participants in this research study were asked two questions in this regard. The first one, if the type of platform affect their decision to use modern communication or not. The other question was asked to investigate their personal preference of platforms. The summary of these two questions is summarized in the below table. 60% of the sample agreed that the type of planform does affect their decision to use modern communication method for internal communication. In addition, 80% of the participants preferred using Zoom and WhatsApp among other platforms for internal communication practice.

Table 8. Question# 12 & Question# 13 of the survey and its results

Does the type of platform (i.e. Zoom or Vs Facebook) affect your decision is using modern communication in internal communication?	
Yes	61
No	42
What is your preferred modern communication platform to be used in internal communication? in internal communication?	
Zoom	44
WhatsApp	39
All the above	8
Google Teams	7
FaceTime	2
Microsoft Teams	1
Skype	1
Webex meet	1

Finally, a question was asked to all participants to evaluate / investigate the obstacles that they're facing to use modern communication platforms for internal communication. The responses to this question are displayed in the following table. It can be seen that the top three obstacles for using modern communication platforms for most the participants (62%) are: improper timing, privacy issue, and not preferring the use of modern communication platforms.

Table 9. Question# 12 of the survey and its results

In your opinion what obstacles, if any, are facing you and your workmates for using modern communication platforms in internal communication?	
Improper communication timing	34
Your privacy	18
It's not effective compared to traditional way	12
Leadership opposition	11
Some are unfamiliar with modern technology	9
The lack of hardware equipment	8
You prefer traditional way of internal communication	6
No obstacles	5

5. Discussion

Based on the findings of the previous section, the following are some recommendations that should be considered by public administration leaders in Saudi Arabia in regard to the internal communication practices:

1) Continuous development and enhancement of organizations internal communication practices is crucial to have an effective and productive internal communication. The development of the internal communication can include the way that the communication is performed (i.e. face-to-face or ONLINE) or the tools that are used to communicate (i.e. software or physical assets). The employees are required to be involved in any development plan since they will be the end user of any new development.

2) Public organizations shall be encouraged to adopt modern communication platforms that has a positive relationship with increased level of productivity and efficiency of employees' work (hypothesis# 1)

3) Most of the current public organization's employees are Millennials or younger which have been heavily exposed to the modern communications and technologies in their lifetime. Therefore, switching to modern communications platforms is an important step that must be taken by organizations' leaders in order to increase the work productivity. In addition, these types of communication platforms have many other benefits such as: eliminate time requirements, minimize transportation requirements, easy tracking and recording of communication, etc.

4) Although, modern communication is highly recommended as per the findings of this study. There is a portion of public organization employees still in favor of traditional ways of communication (mostly generation before Millennials). Therefore, a careful consideration should be taken to encourage and train these employees to gradually switch to the modern communication channels. In the extreme case, some organizations may need to keep a room in their internal communication practice for traditional communication methods.

5) The choice of proper, reliable, and preferable communication platform is very important for successful internal modern communication. Approximately 60% of the participants in this study agreed that the choice of software / platform for the internal communication affected their desire to use or not use modern internal communication. Therefore, employees' (end-user) feedback is required before, after and during switching to a modern communication platform to ensure the success of this switch.

6) As per the findings of this study, some obstacles have been mentioned by the participants that hinders the implantation /switching to modern communication methods. Such obstacles need to be resolved to ensure proper execution by ensuring the following:

7) Provide proper training and information for the employees before implementing any new communication methods.

8) Setup rules to preserve the employees' privacy during or outside the work time. This may include prohibiting any kind of communication outside the work time frame.

9) Provide employees with all necessary hardware equipment to allow them to effectively practice modern internal communication.

6. Conclusion and Future Prospects

Our interest in conducting this research study was inspired by the current situation that the whole world is facing COVID-19 and the rapid development in the field of online communication. Despite of many benefits of using modern internal communication methods, many public organizations in Saudi Arabia facing a number of challenges before and during the COVID-19 pandemic to switch to the use of modern internal communication platforms. Given the fact that most of the current workers in public organization are Millennials and younger who have been exposed to technology and advance method of communication, this study aimed to study the current behavior/experience of public workers of using modern communication platforms for internal communications. While further research is needed to include various and larger sample size, this preliminary study concluded that the use of more communication platforms should lead to a more productive and effective work cycle.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

Many research studies experience some limitations from different reasons such as: methodologies, sample size, etc. This study is not an exception. The followings are some of limitations that exist in this research study:

1) Sample size: due to the time limitation of this research study, the sample size of 100 participants was small and wouldn't result in very accurate findings. The error margin of this research study is 10% with a 95% confident interval which is considered a quite large error. Therefore, higher error of this study is one of the limitations that was a result of time and sample size constraints.

2) Prior research studies: one of the limitations of this study is the lack of comparison with other similar studies. There is a lack of prior study in the field of modern internal communication specially in the studied region (Saudi Arabia).

3) Sample variety: the sample involved in this study was imbalanced where 80% of the participants were female. In addition, most of the participants of this study were public workers working in the field of education.

4) The effect of COVID-19 pandemic: this research study was conducted during the time of COVID-19 pandemic which has a huge effect on this research topic. Most of organizations have switched to modern communication methods during the pandemic time. Therefore, this situation may have affected participants responses and it may be hard for a participant to distinguish between the current situation (COVID-19) and normal operation practice.

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Appendix A (Survey Questions)

The following are the questions that were asked in the survey for this research paper:

1. What is your age group?
 - a) 18 - 25
 - b) 25 - 35
 - c) 35 - 45
 - d) 45 - 55
 - e) 55+

2. What gender do you identify as?
 - a) Male
 - b) Female

3. What is your education level?
 - a) High School
 - b) Bachelor
 - c) Master
 - d) Ph. D.

4. Are you currently working in a public organization?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

5. Before COVID-19 pandemic, have you ever used Modern communication platforms in internal communication?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

6. Do prefer to use traditional communication methods or modern communication platforms for the internal communication inside your organization?
 - a) Modern communication platforms
 - b) Traditional communication methods

7. I believe that the use of modern communication platforms for internal communication increase my work efficiency and productivity?
 - a) Strongly Agree

- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

8. Do you prefer using modern communication platforms for all aspect of internal communication inside your organization?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. Does the type of platform (i.e. Zoom or Vs Facebook) affect your decision is using modern communication in internal communication?

- a) Yes
- b) No

10. The use of modern communication platforms in internal communication develop my relationship and engagement with my workmates

- a) Strongly Agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

11. How likely do you agree with this statement, "Public organization employees should use modern / new pattern of communication (i.e. social media) in all aspects of internal communication"

- a) Strongly Agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

12. In your opinion what obstacles, if any, are facing you and your workmates for using modern communication platforms in internal communication?

Improper communication timing

- a) Your privacy
- b) It's not effective compared to traditional way
- c) Leadership opposition
- d) Some are unfamiliar with modern technology
- e) The lack of hardware equipment
- f) You prefer traditional way of internal communication
- g) No obstacles

13. What is your preferred modern communication platform to be used in internal communication?

- a) Zoom
- b) WhatsApp
- c) Microsoft Teams
- d) Google Teams
- e) All the above
- f) FaceTime
- g) Skype
- h) Webex meet

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