THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PROCESSES, STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIES WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2020

Acknowledgements

Foremost, I would like to thank my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for giving me the strength and grace to complete this thesis.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Banita Lal and Dr Mumin Abubakre for their continuous support throughout my PhD process. Their patience, motivation, enthusiasm and immense knowledge has been invaluable. I am indebted to my previous supervisor Prof Alistair Mutch for providing early conceptual focus to this thesis.

My sincere thanks also goes to Prof Yogesh Dwivedi for his continuous support during my PhD process. Also, I would like to acknowledge the support I received from IS community members to name a few: Prof Sue Newell, Prof David Wastell, Prof Savvas Papagiannidis, Prof M.N. Ravishankar, Prof Nripendra Rana and Prof David Wainwright.

I also want to thank Dr Nestor Valero-Silva for his continuous support during my PhD journey. I would also like to thank the Graduate School, with special thanks to Imogen Edwards and Dawn James. Likewise, I am also grateful for the support I received from my fellow research students.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their prayers, support and encouragement. I would like to acknowledge my father - Mr Clement Kwayu, my mum - Mrs Frediel Kwayu, my grandmother - Bibi Masaro, my niece - Christina Ashivanga, my brother - Amani, my sisters: Isaria, Alilya and Dr Aikande. Indeed, I'd like to give a special thanks to Aikande for her academic support throughout my PhD process. Finally, I extend my gratitude to all those who have helped me in one way or another and are not mentioned here. I appreciate your precious support.

Thesis Contributions

Academic Journal

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2018. Enhancing Organisational competitiveness via social media - a strategy as practice perspective. *Information Systems Frontiers*, *20*(3), p.439-456**.**

Book Chapter

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2018. The Impact of Social Media on Internal Communications in the Tanzanian Telecom Industry. In *Emerging Markets from a Multidisciplinary Perspective* (p. 119-131). Springer, Cham.

Conference Paper

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2019, June. Influence of Social Media Practices on the Fusion of Strategies Within Organisations. In *International Working Conference on Transfer and Diffusion of IT* (p. 513-528). Springer, Cham.

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2018, June. The Influence of Social Media on Engendering Strategic Organisational Practices–The Case of Two Tanzanian Telecommunications Companies. In *International Working Conference on Transfer and Diffusion of IT* (p. 47-59). Springer, Cham.

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2016, September. *Strategy Reformation? Materialization of Social Media in Telecom Industry*. In *Conference on e-Business, e-Services and e-Society* (p. 31-41). Springer, Cham.

Doctoral Consortium

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2016, April. Sociomateriality for social media: Agential or critical realism? *UK Academy of Information System (UKAIS)*, St Catherine College, Oxford University

Kwayu, S., Lal, B. and Abubakre, M., 2015, December. The impact of social media on the balance of strategies within organisations. *UKAIS*

& British Academy of Management E-business and E-government SIG.
Newcastle Business School, and Northumbria University

Abstract

In the last two decades, business organisations have seen the emergence and rise of social media platforms that are fundamentally different from traditional Information Technologies. During this time, the use of social media by organisations has advanced from experimentation to become a mainstream activity within the organisation. Despite the influence and advancement in the use of social media in business organisations, the existing literature suggests that organisations are struggling with organising and managing social media as well as understanding what broader changes in the organisational structure and processes are necessary for implementing social media in the organisation. This suggests that organisations are struggling to integrate social media within organisational processes and structure as well as in developing a social media strategy within the organisation.

This research aims to explore the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy within the organisation. Respectively, the intention is to explore social media practices within the organisation using the 'strategy as practice' perspective to understand how social media practices affect processes, structure and strategies within the organisation.

Guided by the interpretivist philosophy, twenty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study with staff and managers from two case study telecommunication organisations in Tanzania: Kili and Mwiko (pseudonyms). The data collected was analysed using the reflexive thematic method.

The thesis findings highlight several contributions to knowledge. First, it highlights that context, competition and behaviours influence how social media is embedded in processes, structure and strategy within an organisation. Second, this research highlights that the influence of social media on organisational processes is mainly through knowledge sharing. Third, this research demonstrates that planned social media practices are influenced by structure whereas emergent social media practices influence structure. In addition, this research contributes to knowledge on IS strategy by identifying seven elements of social media strategy development that are: adoption, recognition, structure, strategizing, resources, management and processes. Furthermore, this research contributes to knowledge about practice by offering insights on how organisations can manage and maximise the influence of social media on processes and strategy through providing IT training and skills to their employees and how informal organisational practices can enhance knowledge management. Finally, the research shows how flexible structures can enhance social media practices, especially planned social media practices. Limitations and directions for future research are also presented.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1 Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Over the past decade, organisations have encountered social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp and Snapchat. Today, most of these platforms have more than a billion users (Piskorski, 2014). Treem and Leonardi (2012) describe social media as a new class of Information Technology (IT) that offers affordances such as visibility, persistence, editability and association which previous sets of IT could not achieve, consequently making social media platforms attractive to organisations in advancing their mission. Social media enhances the Information Systems (IS) within organisations (Kwayu et al., 2018a) and consequently increases competitiveness (Aswani et al., 2017). Thus, social media practice, which is the use of social media by organisations, has advanced to mainstream practice (Pillet and Carillo, 2016). In the US, for example, 83% of organisations have adopted social media in their practice (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015). Social media practice within organisations has become integral to core functions such as marketing, knowledge management and socialisation, consequently improving processes such as customer relationship management and staff relationships (Aral et al., 2013). Academic research has lagged in keeping up with the fast pace of social media practice advancement within organisations: Leonardi and Vaast (2017) have observed that the use of social media within organisations has outpaced empirical studies. For instance, Aral et al. (2013) suggest a deficiency of empirical knowledge on the practice of social media and its impact on processes, structure and strategy. In light of this, it can be argued that there is a need to study social media practice within organisations to understand its impact on processes, structure and the strategy of organisations.

1.2 Research Problem

Although the practice of social media in organisations is thriving (Joos, 2008), organisations are still facing challenges in their social media practices. These challenges include the formulation of social media strategies (Kietzmann et al., 2011); difficulties in the implementation and strategic use of social media (Bharati et al., 2014), organising and managing social media within organisations and understanding what broader

changes in organisational structure and processes are required for implementing social media (Aral et al., 2013). In light of these challenges, it can be suggested that there is a need to understand how social media is embedded within organisations and its influence on processes, structure and strategy within organisations, as well as understanding how social media strategy is developed within organisations. These challenges provide the impetus for further empirical research to examine social media practices in organisations.

1.3 Research Focus

In light of the above, the focus of this study is to explore social media practices within organisations and to understand how they influence organisational processes, structure and strategy. Thus, the study concentrates on the analysis of different organisational aspects that influence - and are influenced by - social media practice. Hence, there is a need to appreciate and understand the influence of social media on a variety of processes, structure and strategies within organisations. In view of this, this study adopts a strategy as practice (SaP) perspective as a theoretical lens. A strategy as practice perspective, which considers strategy as a socially situated activity, focuses on activities as the main unit of analysis (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Considering that the focus of this study is to understand the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy, which are all concerned with the arrangement and flow of activities, the adoption of a strategy as practice perspective as a theoretical lens becomes appropriate to the analysis.

This research focuses on social media; nevertheless, social media is a broad term. It constitutes a wide array of applications such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia and blogs. Each of these applications falls into a different classification such as Social Network Sites (SNS), blogs, virtual social world, collaborative projects and virtual game worlds (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This study did not focus on a particular application or any classification. The study conceptualizes social media as a technology: mobile and Internet-based applications which are built on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This conceptualisation - social media as technology - facilitates a methodological space for exploring social media practice within organisations without biasing or limiting the study to an application or type of social

media. Hence, it helps to capture the reality centred on social media in organisations, especially when considering the dynamic and complex nature of social media. For instance, it enables an analysis of the co-existence of different social media applications in organisations.

As mentioned above, the focus of this research is on processes, structure and strategy. These three areas of focus within organisations are all concerned with the arrangement and flow of activities. 'Processes' are a systematic series of actions directed by organisational members towards a goal (Harris et al., 2013). 'Structure' is defined as a pattern of activities where, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purpose of the organisation (Harper, 2015). Similarly, Jarzabkowski (2005) explains 'strategy' as a goal-directed activity. Fredrickson (1986) suggests that structure and strategy have a reciprocal relationship. However, despite the reciprocal relationship between strategy and structure, Child (1974) suggests that both environment and technology influence structure and strategy. The influence of environment and technology on activity (process, structure and strategy) informs the scope of this research to focus on: processes, structure, strategy, environment (context) and technology (social media).

1.4   Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to explore the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy within organisations. To achieve the main objective this research intends to explore social media practices within organisations through a strategy as practice perspective to understand how social media practices affect processes, structure and strategies within organisations.

1.5   Research Questions

In light of the objective above, this research addresses the following questions:

1. How is social media embedded within an organisation's processes, structure and strategy?
2. What are the influences of social media practices on an organisation's processes, structure and strategy?
3. How does social media strategy develop within organisations?

1.6   Research Methodology

The objective of this research has influenced the selection of the case study method as guided by the interpretivist philosophy. Two case study telecommunication organisations in Tanzania were selected – 'Kili' and 'Mwiko' are pseudonyms for the organisations. Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted from the two case study organisations. Interviewees were staff and managers of different departments from the case organisations. The data was analysed using the reflexive thematic method. Comprehensive explanations for the methodology adopted in this research are discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

1.7   Research Context

According to Jacobsson and Linderoth (2010), context influences the adoption and use of information technology. The context of this study is Tanzania, which is an emerging economy and a developing nation. Mercer (2005) suggests that there is still a digital divide between developed and developing nations when it comes to the use of the Internet by different groups of people: i.e. there is a divide between people who have access to the Internet and those who do not. Likewise, Kwayu et al. (2018a) highlight the lack of empirical studies on social media that have been conducted in the context of developing countries. In light of this, Tanzania has a context which can be investigated in order to understand social media practice in organisations that are located in developing countries wherein infrastructural challenges such as inconsistent electricity supply or poor network coverage exist. Such challenges have a direct impact on the performance of social media practice and potentially influence how social media is utilised by an organisation within this context.

The telecommunication (telecom) industry provides an ideal context for examining social media practice because telecom companies belong to high-tech industries, which adopt new technology more quickly as they face fast shrinking product cycles (Belasen and Rufer, 2013). In order to gain insight, this research required access to organisations that use social media and are advanced in this practice. Thus, through their experience, the practitioners in the telecom industry can share their experiences/reality, hence produce knowledge from which insights can be drawn. In turn, this can help us to understand the use of social media in organisations and contribute to the empirical

analysis and knowledge contribution on social media practice within organisations, specifically within a developing country context.

1.8 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research arises from the following points which stem from existing gaps in academic research as well as the significance of social media in organisational practices.

First, research within the context of Tanzania - a developing nation in Africa - contributes to the IS field. Datta et al. (2005) highlight how IS research has neglected focus on Sub-Saharan Africa which is a major region in the second largest continent, hosting more than 33 countries. Tanzania is one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Research originating from this part of the world is rare and the existing research overlooks some of the fundamental conditions and processes that characterise the environmental context, particularly ignoring the characteristics that illustrate developing nations e.g. poverty and a lack of constant power supply. Furthermore, the consideration of the Tanzanian context in this research helps to advance IS theories by enriching them with context. Theories have been criticised, for example by Avgerou (2017), for being elusive when considering context, and this consequently limits their capacity to explain IS phenomena in developing contexts. Therefore, this research provides a different context to most IS research by considering the context of Tanzania and all the factors involved. This research will put into context the socio-economic and technical challenges in the developing/global south. The findings and analysis in this research will contribute towards bridging the 'digital divide' between developed and developing countries.

Another significance resulting from this research is that by considering social media which is fundamentally different from traditional IS (Steinhüser et al., 2011), it extends the scope of IS by explaining the impact of social media beyond the limited focus of traditional IS (Kwayu et al., 2018a). Social media extends the sphere of IS as it facilitates communication practices that differ from traditional IS technologies such as email and teleconferencing. Thus, researching the impact of social media within organisations helps us to understand ways in which technology is mutually constituted with the organisational context in which it is embedded (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Treem and Leonardi, 2012). Therefore, this research is significant in that it highlights how social media is redefining the scope of IS within contemporary organisations.

Studying and examining processes, structure and strategy contribute to our understanding of the systematic adoption of social media in organisations and how it impacts upon different operations within them. Furthermore, understanding the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy will help organisations that are struggling with organising and managing social media within their organisation. Practically, the research will help organisations to institute broader changes in organisational structure and processes that are necessary for optimising social media implementation. Theoretically, the study will enhance our knowledge of the emergence of social media strategy within organisations and the implications for processes and structure, an area in which Aral et al. (2013) have highlighted a deficiency in the literature.

Finally, this research will help us to understand social media practice; in particular, how social media is effectively appropriated and embedded within organisations. The main purpose is to understand the constitutive role of social media practices in the on-going use and change of technologies in organisations (Orlikowski, 2000). Thus, understanding the use of technology differentiates technology as artefacts and technology in practice, consequently explaining why technological advancement/adoption measures such as investments in technology are insufficient to explain organisational change and effectiveness. Therefore, studying social media practice helps us to understand its value contribution in the organisation. Furthermore, the exploration of social media practice enhances our understanding of the effects of social media in particular areas, for instance the co-existence of social media applications in the organisation as well as how social media blends with the traditional IS within the organisation.

1.9   Research Contribution

This thesis makes the following contributions to theory and practice:

1.9.1   Contribution to theory

Primarily, the results of this research demonstrate how context, competition and behaviours influence how social media is embedded in processes, structure and strategy within organisations. The results highlight that social media practices are appropriated and enacted from the context in which the activities are situated. This contribution advances the findings of Mohajerani et al. (2015) that social media practices were

appropriated from another context by showing that social media practices are enacted from the context in which social media is practiced. In addition, competitive pressure influenced organisations to adopt and embed social media into their processes, structure and strategy. Competition made organisations exhibit similar structures due to mimetic practices. This phenomenon is best explained by the concept of Isomorphism from ecology which explains why organisms from the same environment come to exhibit similar features. Likewise, behaviours associated with social media enacted structures within organisations. Therefore, with regards to the first question which asks, 'how is social media embedded within an organisation's processes, structure and strategy?', this research suggests context, competition and behaviours influence how social media is embedded in processes, structure and strategy within organisations.

Second, this research contributes to IS research by demonstrating that the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy is mainly seen through information and knowledge sharing. The information and knowledge that is shared through social media platforms such as WhatsApp affect processes in day-to-day activities within organisations. In addition, the research contributes to IS literature by demonstrating that organisational structure influences planned social media practice while emergent social media practices influence structure within the organisation. This is because planned social media practices are enabled and constrained within organisational structure, whereas emergent practices can circumnavigate organisational structure.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the strategy literature by identifying seven elements of development of social media strategy. The seven elements are: adoption, recognition, structure, strategizing, resources, management and processes. The contribution on strategy development is different from other social media strategy development approaches such as that of Piskorski (2014) which is based on generic business strategy or Culnan et al. (2010) which is focused on building relations with customers. Further discussion on the contribution is provided in the Conclusion chapter.

1.9.2   Contribution to practice

This thesis provides insight on how organisations can manage and maximise the impact of social media on organisational processes through providing IT skills and training to their employees. In addition, it shows how an organisation can improve knowledge

management at the helm of emergent social media practices. Furthermore, this research offers practical insight into how to manage emergent social media practices in an organisation. Furthermore, the research shows the importance of flexible structures in accommodating social media practices especially the planned social media practices. Such findings could be of benefit to organisations using social media because they will increase efficiency and effectiveness in organizational strategies and processes.

1.10 Overview of Chapters

This thesis is structured and divided into six chapters, they are: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Discussion and Conclusion. The first chapter, the Introduction chapter, contains the background of this study, research problem, the focus of the research, the objectives, questions, brief outline of the adopted methodology for this research, the context of the research, significance and an outline of the contributions of this research.

The second chapter, the Literature Review, contains a review of literature and theory. It starts by reviewing theories that explain the influence of technology on organisations, then proceeds to review the literature on processes, structure and strategy. Following this is a review of the concept of social media and literature of social media impact in organisations. It then presents and discusses the gaps in the literature to identify the research questions.

Chapter Three is the Methodology chapter. It discusses the philosophical approaches to empirical research and selects a suitable approach for this research. It also discusses the research methods, particularly the case study strategy. The chapter explains the research design, the selection of case studies, access and data collection, data analysis and ethical issues.

The findings form Chapter Four of this thesis. The chapter presents data that was collected in the two case study organisations. It starts by providing the context of Tanzania and an overview of the telecom industry there. It then continues to explain the use of social media accounts by the two telecom case study organisations. In addition, the findings chapter discusses how social media is a promotional tool of the telecom organisations - named 'free social media' – which is free Internet access to social media on selected platforms (i.e. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter). Furthermore,

it presents the use of WhatsApp for internal communication in the case study organisations.

Chapter Five discusses the findings in light of the literature review and theory. The chapter considers different factors/aspects of the mutual influence; that is, how different factors are influenced by and influence the practice of social media in the case study organisations as presented in the findings chapter. The areas of focus in this chapter includes: context, the entanglement of social media with organisational practices, development and management of social media practice in the organisations and the impact of social media on organisational structure and processes.

The last chapter is the Conclusion. The conclusion discusses the contribution made by this research; in particular, the implications for theory and practice. It also discusses the limitations and recommendations for future research.

Matrix Summary of the Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Background of research
- Research problem, research focus
- Research objective, question and methodology
- Research context, significance and contributions

Chapter 2: Literature review

- Literature review on influence of technology in organisation
- Processes, structure and strategy
- Strategy as practice theory
- Social media in organisation
- Gaps in literature

Chapter 3: Methodology

- Philosophical perspective on research
- Research design, methods and analysis
- Ethical issues

Chapter 4: Findings

Thematic Dimensions

- Context of Tanzania and the telecommunication industry
- Social media accounts
- 'free social media' service
- WhatsApp communication

Chapter 5: Discussion

- Context, competition, behaviours
- Adoption, recognition, management
- Structure, processes, capacity
- Knowledge management

Chapter 6: Conclusion

- Thesis contribution
- Implication for research, theory and practice
- Limitation and future research

2 Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

For the last two decades, business organisations have experienced the emergence, rise and use of social media platforms which have fundamental differences when compared to previous sets of information technology (IT) (Steinhüser et al., 2011). In 1997, the American Online (AOL) executive Ted Leonsis suggested the need to provide customers with 'social media, a place where they can be entertained, communicate and participate in a social environment' (Bercovici, 2010). In the same year, SixDegrees.com, which is considered the first social media application, was launched. In the early 2000's an increasing number of social media applications started to emerge. From 2003 to 2006 popular social media applications that we have today were launched, including LinkedIn, Myspace, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (Boyd and Ellison, 2010). Today, most of these applications have more than a billion users (Piskorski, 2014) making them very attractive platforms for organisations to advance their missions (Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). Despite the attraction of social media platforms to business organisations, Aral et al. (2013) suggest that business executives are struggling to understand what broader changes in processes, structure and strategy are required for the implementation of social media in organisations. Therefore, considering the rise in use of social media and its challenge to business organisations, this literature review is going to explore the extant literature on the role of technology in organisations to investigate the potential impact of social media on processes, structure and strategy in organisations.

Following the above explanation, the aims of the literature review are five-fold. First, to review scholarly analyses of the role of technology in organisations and theories arising from those analyses that can help in the study of the impact of social media on an organisation's processes, structure and strategy. Second, to analyse the literature on processes, structure and strategy in organisations. This will provide insight on the focal aspects of this research which are processes, structure and strategy. Third, to review the literature of strategy as practice perspective, which is the adopted lens for this study. This will help to understand the undertaken assumption and principles that will assist in explaining the impact of social media on organisation's processes, structure and

strategy. Fourth, to review the conceptualisation of social media and the impact of social media in organisations. This will help to provide understanding of social media and its impact on organisation, which forms a basis for the gaps in literature. Finally, to identify gaps within the literature and develop research questions.

2.2 The Influence of Technology within Organisations

With the advent of information systems (IS) and the consequent integration of technology by organisations, scholars (such as Perrow, 1967; Pfeffer and Leblebici, 1977; Trist, 1963) became concerned with the increasing influence of technology within organisations (Orlikowski, 2000). Specifically, they wanted to know how technology impacts the organisation. During the past fifty years, as technology adoption in organisations has continued to rise, different theories have been developed to assist in the understanding of the role and influence of technology within an organisation (Orlikowski, 2000). Understanding and considering the differences and the development of such theories is essential for the selection of an appropriate theory to adopt in this research which looks at the impact of social media in organisations. The theory that will be adopted has implications on what is included and excluded in the analysis (Leonardi, 2012). Hence, the following is a review of the IS theories which will guide the selection of the theoretical lens that will be adopted in this research.

Earlier scholars such as Perrow (1967) and Pfeffer and Leblebici (1977) assumed the role of technology to be deterministic, i.e. the technological determinism view, - taking technology as an external artefact that affects the organisation. This means that technology affects the business processes and structures of the organisation (Dafoe, 2015). In other words, technology determines the reality of the organisation (ibid). The technological determinism view assumes that particular forms of technology are associated with particular organisational arrangements (Woodward, 1958). For example, Steinhüser et al. (2011) associate traditional IS with centralised organisations and social media with decentralised organisations. For instance, information in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is structured for certain people with certain positions in the organisation to access, often people at the top of management. On the other hand, with social media, information is unstructured, and it is visible to many and can be created by anyone in an organisation. In addition, Mutch (2008) explains technological determinism as an idea that certain forms of technology induce particular

forms of results and only those results. Thus, a deterministic view will hold that an organisation can interact with customers because social media allows interaction between users. Therefore, the technology facilitates (determines) interaction. This view captures the determining role of technology but fails to explain the role of humans in using technology to affect organisations (Orlikowski, 1992). For example, it fails to explain the role of human beings in determining the nature of the interaction, which significantly has an impact on an organisation (ibid). Nevertheless, adopting the technological determinism view is useful to explain the technical functionality of social media (Dafoe, 2015). It is, however, still limited in showing how human beings affect those functionalities in an organisation (Mutch, 2008). Moreover, with the advancement of technology, the deterministic view becomes limited. This is because technology has penetrated and allowed the facilitation of various spaces for interaction within organisations. Hence, making it difficult to measure the deterministic role of technology in comparison to other players in the same spaces (Leonardi and Jackson, 2004). This suggests that other agencies such as social agents i.e. human beings cannot be ignored when explaining change in organisations (ibid).

The limitations of the deterministic view, in considering the role of humans using technology, gave rise to the 'strategic choice' model, which views technology as an instrument designed and appropriated by human beings (Child, 1972). This model highlights the critical role played by organisational politics and different stakeholders in shaping organisations where external factors (technology) are not regarded as determining but as contextual referents for decision-makers when designing an organisation and establishing its purpose (McLoughlin, 1999). With strategic choice, people in organisations play a vital role in deciding how to use technology. For example, within the context of social media, the strategic choice model suggests that people within an organisation consider how to use social media for interaction with customers. This means that people within organisations decide the role that technology plays within their organisation. Though this view can explain how social media is used, it is limited in the sense that it fails to explain the role of technology in defining the structures and processes of organisations (Orlikowski, 1992). Braojos-Gomez, et al. (2015) suggest that technology is crucial for organisational competence, for example an organisation with more technological infrastructure is likely to have staff with familiarity and experience

in technology compared with organisations with less or no technology. Taking this into consideration, the strategic choice model undermines this influence of technology to inform structures and processes of organisations. For example, staff will have no choice when there is insufficient technology in an organisation. Therefore, the strategic choice of people is limited or constrained by the available technology. This is because technology embodies structure which can limit the decisions of the user (Orlikowski, 1992). Thus, technology becomes integral to the processes and it is difficult to separate its role in the processes, structure and strategy of the organisation. For example, social media is designed to facilitate interaction between multiple users and due to this, it enables interaction between customers: an aspect that was not available with previous technology. In this way, social media limits the ability of organisations to control information between customers (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010). This makes the strategic choice model prone to similar criticism as technological determinism in ignoring an equally important factor of analysis of the role of technology within an organisation, which is the material agency (Child, 1997; Orlikowski, 1992).

The sociotechnical perspective, as highlighted by Trist (1978), emerged as a means of countering the flaws of the deterministic and strategic choice models. The primary concern of the sociotechnical perspective was to optimise the interaction of technology and humans in order to increase organisational performance. The sociotechnical view established that work is not just a matter of technical arrangement but includes significant social and individual meaning (Mutch, 2008). Hence, the merit of this perspective is that it addresses the intertwining of humans and technology and, by doing so, it helps to explain organisational stability and change. The sociotechnical perspective explains that organisational change is based on the assumption that organisational outcomes such as job productivity or satisfaction could be manipulated by simultaneously optimizing social and technical agents (Davis and Taylor, 1972). For example, employees might be reluctant to use advanced technology in fear of job insecurity, thus, to increase productivity the organisation will also need to satisfy the social interest of increasing job security. Thus, from a social media perspective, a sociotechnical system will look at both the role played by human beings in deciding how to interact with social media, how social media is helping people to interact and what is the combined effect of the human choice and technological artefacts of social media in

creating the reality of an organisation. This means that putting into consideration both human choice and technological structure has the effect of shaping the form of the organisation (McLeod and Doolin, 2012). Thus, in line with the sociotechnical approach, this suggests that the technical capabilities of social media, to allow multiple interactions and people's choice of how to use those functionalities, has the effect of defining the interaction processes and structures within an organisation. However, the main flaw of this theory is that at times it favours either humans or technology (Cecez-Kecmanovic, et al., 2014). For instance, Mutch (2008) suggests the sociotechnical model is marked by elements of technological determinism. Hence, sociotechnical analysis considers technology as a variable which underplays the human agency, especially in relation to the power and politics in organisations (ibid). Favouring one over the other is a problem because it sets up the same problem as with earlier theories – like the deterministic and strategic choice model – thus, potentially failing to address the complex interaction among agents (i.e. people and technology), structures and processes.

Another view perceives technology as a 'trigger of structural change' meaning that technology is an intervention in the interaction between the human and the organisational structure, with the likely outcome of organisational structure being influenced (Barley, 1986). In other words, this means that technology is built by human beings, so it contains a particular form of structure (technology structure), which will have an impact on the organisation's structure once the technology is in use (ibid). This perspective, thus, assumes that technology is a social instrument, fixed across time and context (Barley, 1986; Orlikowski, 1992). The trigger of structural change approach suggests that a technology, such as social media, mediates between human action and organisational structure, and it is a mediation process that affects organisational structure (Barley, 1990). For example, social media enables interaction between users but in a hierarchical organisation the interaction between a subordinate and a manager is likely to be intercepted by a secretary. However, through social media, the subordinate may bypass the secretary and interact with the manager directly. In a way, social media in this example is shaping the structure and processes of interaction within this organisation. Therefore, in this way, the technology (social media) becomes a social object rather than a material object and the structure is a process rather than an entity (Barley, 1986). Orlikowski (1992) criticises this perspective by arguing that the

assumption may hold in certain circumstances but not in information technologies, as the appropriation of technologies depends on the users, the context of use and with time. For example, although social media may exclude the secretary who acts as a mediator between the subordinate and the manager, still the subordinate might find it useful to use the mediation of the secretary due to social factors such as morality. Despite this criticism from Orlikowski (1992), when considering technology as a trigger of structural change, there are some instances where social media practices have influenced the structure of organisations. For example, Huang et al. (2013) demonstrate how social media has enabled more interactions, reach and richness in communication, not only among peers in the same teams, but also between managers and employees. Similarly, Standing and Kiniti (2011) highlight how social media has increased the flow of communication between employees in different hierarchies in an organisation.

Other perspectives in the IS literature about the relationship between technology and organisations include the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1996), the practice perspective theory (Orlikowski, 2000) and more recently, the sociomaterial perspective (Doolin and McLeod, 2012; Orlikowski, 2007). ANT is like the sociotechnical system in the sense that it removes the tendency to emphasise humans over technologies or technologies over humans (Kautz and Jensen, 2013). ANT combines human and non-human actors to describe instead actants; these are people, environment, technology, knowledge and social structure (Latour, 1996). Empirical analysis done using ANT is appropriate for describing a social phenomenon. The focus of ANT is the relationship between actors and how they perform a temporary stabilisation of a social arrangement. For instance, in studying social media in organisations, ANT is suitable in describing a social phenomenon because of its focus is on how actants assemble and maintain networks of relations to achieve an outcome (Latour, 2005). The main shortcoming of ANT is its inability to explain the structure through which the interaction occurs. This is because ANT is more concerned with accounts that trace the connectivity of actors rather than the social structure in which the events occur. For instance, Latour (2005) argues that there is no society, no social realm and no social ties. This argument undermines social structures which exist and their influence on how they shape the use of technology in organisations. In addition, though Mutch (2008) suggests that ANT has provided a useful language for thinking about the process of embedding technology in

organisations, he criticises ANT's language on material artefacts as having an agency that can seem outlandish. For example, ANT suggests inanimate objects or material artefacts play an important role in the construction and maintenance of networks of action. In equating human and non-human things as actors, it underplays the role of humans in interpreting information, taking an interest and having intentionality.

With regards to the practice perspective, which is considered to be a family of theories rather than as a single theory (Tavakoli et al., 2017), Orlikowski (2000) advances it from the structuration theory. Structuration recognises a social process that involves the reciprocal interaction of human actors and structural features of the technology (Orlikowski, 1992). In this theory, the role of technology is to facilitate mutual interactions between humans and technology itself - making it both a structural object as well as a social construct. Orlikowski (2000) argues that the practice perspective describes emergence rather than embeddedness of technological structure; and for enactment rather than the appropriation of technology use in an organisation. Thus, the practice perspective perceives practice as a key means of understanding human behaviour. Practice includes aspects of intelligibility and allows people to respond to matters in different ways (Cecez-Kecmanovic, et al., 2014). In other words, practice perspective acknowledges that human action involves and can be affected by technology and structure; however, human action needs to be separated, as it can only be associated with determination and emotions. So, when people engage with technology, new structures of technology use emerge and are enacted in practice. For example, when people engage with the interactive features of social media, a practice emerges, and the emerged practice enacts the structure and the process of the organisation. Thus, the idea that organisational structure and policies can be made concrete by material form is rejected by the practice perspective (Mutch, 2019). Therefore, with this theory, the structure of an organisation emerges and is enacted in practice, and practice is the recursive pattern of interaction between people and technology in an organisation. Hence, the practice theory is a suitable view that can be applied to investigate the impact of social media on processes, structure and strategy in organisations.

Furthermore, Orlikowski (2007) conceptualised practice as material since doing any activity depends on the material arrangement in which the activity is taking place. She

argued that, 'materiality is integral to organising, positing that the social and the material are constitutively entangled in everyday life'. This means that the effect of technology also depends on the environment in which the activity is situated. In addition, Orlikowski (2007) explained that the entanglement of material and human is not a one-way interaction or a mutual (two-way) reciprocation, but their relationship is inextricably related - such that there is no material without social and there is no social without material. Thus, the practice perspective acknowledges that although the feature of the technology may be the same to all people, their affordances of that technology are not the same due to the non-neutral nature of technology symbolising different values to different people, who in turn have their specific interpretations of the technology (Leidner and Kayworth, 2006). Thus, applying this argument to social media, the practice perspective suggests that different people (organisations) will find different uses for social media applications even when the same technology is available to all. The conceptualisation of practice as material signifies a shift in the conventional framing of organisational practice as 'social practice', as such, this framing reinforces the idea that the material is not intrinsic to organising. Thus, Orlikowski (2007) suggested viewing organisational practice as sociomaterial which signifies the constitutive entanglement of the social and the material in the everyday life of organisations. Cecez-Kecmanovic et al. (2014) argue that it is important to understand the sociomaterial as a more abstract material-semiotic approach, which does not necessarily imply any particular theory or methodology. In addition to this, they argue that sociomaterial thinking is influenced by other theories such as those discussed above (i.e. ANT, the sociotechnical and structuration).

The sociomaterial perspective is the most recent IS view, which views technical and social organisational practices as inherently inseparable (Orlikowski, 2007); as explained above, that material and human are inextricably related, that there is no social without the material and vice-versa. Leonardi (2013) explains the sociomaterial as a perspective that focuses on how actions are performed in practice. The sociomaterial perspective stems from the practice perspective but differs from it in that the relationship between technology and the social sphere is ontological (Orlikowski and Scott, 2015). This means that the social and material do not exist as separate entities. The ontological difference is due to the footing on agential realism, which makes the social and material inherently

inseparable (Barad, 1999). Thus, conducting analysis using the sociomaterial, one needs to perform an 'agential cut' on the practices, which are enacted in the intra-action between the social and the material. An agential cut is what is being included or excluded from an observable act (Barad, 1998). An agential cut is performed because you cannot separate something that is inherently inseparable. Agential cuts can be conducted at any point and will have different results depending on where the cuts happen. Important to note is that agential cuts are inherently ontologically indeterminate (Barad, 2003) - meaning that rather than having distinct boundaries, properties and distinction, they are contingently performed in practice rather than being available naturally (Scott and Orlikowski, 2014). To agential realists, there is no bad or good cut. Thus, by breaking the dichotomy established in earlier theories, agential realism focuses on practices that are not undertaken by people in roles but on social practices enacted with the technology that instantaneously constitute and organise phenomena. This means that the reality of organisations is a result of the social practices and material arrangements within the organisation. Mutch (2013) argues that sociomateriality is taking a wrong turn by using agential realism, thus, proposing critical realism as an alternative philosophical background for sociomaterial studies. In addition, Mutch (2019) continues to criticise the sociomaterial perspective (based on agential realism) claiming that it gives us no analytical purchase on those aspects of social life that privilege certain aspects of materiality and shape organisational life.

The review above shows how different perspectives can shape our understanding of the role and influence of technology in an organisation. The review is important as it shows the spectrum and development of how IS researchers have theorised ways of investigating and understanding how technology affects organisations in terms of processes, structure and strategy. Significantly, it shows how adopting a theory can have a methodological impact when analysing the influence of technology in the organisation (Leonardi, 2013). Throughout the review the most significant issue was the extent to which the interaction of humans (social) and technology (material) influence process and structural change in the organisation. Following the review, the practice perspective is deemed as the most appropriate theory for this study due to the following reasons. First, the practice perspective is taken to be one of the appropriate theories for this study since it deals with areas that are crucial to understanding the impact of social

media in organisational strategy (Huang et al., 2014). These areas include social processes, mutual interaction (between humans (e.g. employees) and technology), as well as technology and structure. The practice perspective recognises the integral role of technology and the mutual processes that go on in an organisation. Practice, as argued in the practice perspective theory, is key to understanding behaviour. The use of social media in an organisation is a mutual construct that is determined/influenced by many factors and, in turn, it affects processes as portrayed in the discussion in the section 2.4.1 below. Taking the practice perspective approach is a suitable perspective to adopt in order to understand the impact of social media on an organisation's processes, structure and strategy without being biased by a techno-centred or a human-centred perspective (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2014). In light of this, and considering the ongoing objective of IS research to understand the impact of technology on organisational processes, structure and strategy, the next section is going to review literature on processes, structure and strategy in relation to information technology.

2.3 Processes, Structure and Strategy within Organisations

2.3.1 Organisational processes

Business processes have long been of interest to Information Systems (IS) researchers. Davenport and Short (1990) define business processes as the design of workflow and processes within and between organisations. Furthermore, they explain business processes as a set of logically-related tasks performed to achieve a defined business outcome. Similarly, Harris et al. (2013) explain processes as a systematic series of actions directed by organisational members towards a goal. Also, Venkatraman et al. (1993) explain business processes as all work that supports and shapes the ability of a business to execute a strategy. These definitions correspond with Pall's (1987, p. 25) definition of process which is: 'logical organisations of people, material, energy, equipment and procedures in work activities designed to produce specified end results'. All these definitions include a set of activities and an expected outcome from that set of activities. The decomposition of organisational activities into business processes enables the analysis of specific inputs and their role in organisations. Thus, viewing organisational activities as processes enables the examination of the role of IT in different parts of organisation.

According to Seddon et al. (2010) IS systems integrate key business processes within and between organisations by offering improved integration of data, optimization of processes and enabling management with access to information. Mutch (2010) suggests that Information Technology (IT) capabilities such as innovation and agility, which are supported by computers, software and telecommunications have a more fundamental role than automating and standardizing organisational activities in that they can alter the way business is done. For instance, Huang et al. (2014) provide a case of DaM, a leading ticketing company in China, which was innovative in facilitating the use of social media interaction between performing artists and fans to provide an anchor for determining ticket sales. Enabling interaction between performing artists and fans influenced changes in processes related to ticketing practices; for example, it eliminated the use of tier-one ticketing agents. Recognising the ability of IT to reshape the way business is done accentuates the importance of understanding organisational activities. Davenport and Short (1990) suggest that organisational activity should be viewed as processes rather than a collection of individual or functional tasks. Viewing organisational activities as processes enables management to design the activities that increase effectiveness in both the manufacturing and services environment.

Additionally, Scheer and Nüttgens (2000) suggest that a business process is a relevant procedure for adding value to an organisation. They argue that the main point of IS in business process is to add value to the business process by increasing effectiveness and optimization of the process (ibid). For instance, social media (TripAdvisor) helped Village Inn to increase their revenue by nine-fold after it was embedded in its business processes (Scott and Orlikowski, 2012). However, the ability to create value varies from one organisation to another for several reasons. For instance, in the case of social media, Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) suggest factors such as social competitor pressure, IT infrastructure capability and organisational infrastructure capability are key influences on developing competence. Nonetheless, the impact of IS on business processes can vary for the following reasons. First, Leonard and Higson (2014) suggest that the impact of IS on business process may either have a direct effect, tangential or no impact at all on business processes. For example, Marion et al. (2014), when exploring the impact of social media on the product development process, found that twitter had no impact on team collaboration and concept generation. Second, Leonard and Higson (2014) argue

that strategies are dynamic and emergent; thus, an effect of IS on the process may not result in long-term benefit. Last of all, flexible business processes are hard to standardize or automate (Leonard and Higson, 2014).

The impact of IS on business can be varied. For example, the use of IT to automate a process may speed up the process whilst reducing costs through cutting labour, hence providing value to the organisation. Davenport and Short (1990) summarise several ways in which IS impacts upon business processes -see *Table 1* below.

Table 1 IT impact on business process

Type of impact	Impact
Transactional	IT changes unstructured processes into routine ones
Geographical	IT transfers information instantly across boundaries
Automation	Reduces human labour in the process
Analytical	IT can solve complex analytical processes within a process
Informational	IT brings information into a process
Sequential	IT can enable changes in the sequence of tasks in a process, often allowing multiple tasks to be worked on simultaneously
Knowledge management	IT allows the capture and dissemination of knowledge and expertise to improve the process
Tracking	IT allows the detailed tracking of task status, inputs and outputs
Disintermediation	IT can be used to connect two parties within a process that would otherwise communicate through an intermediary (internal or external)

Source; (Davenport and Short, 1990)

The *Table 1* above is significant in highlighting the types of impact that technology can have on business processes. However, it is more important to understand how social media impacts the process. For instance, in the table above Davenport and Short (1990) suggest that technology can have a transactional impact by changing an unstructured process into a routine. Steinhüser et al. (2011) suggest that social media differs from traditional IT by having a loosely defined structure which can potentially complicate a process. On the other hand, social media can impact business processes in the same way as suggested by Davenport and Short (1990): for example, in the case of the DaM ticketing company – as discussed above - social media had a disintermediation effect by removing the need for tier-one agents in the ticketing process (Huang et al., 2014). The impact is significant and thus, there is a further need to explore and understand how social media impacts business processes.

According to Markus et al. (2000), examining business processes helps to understand the impact of IS in organisations and the emergent changes. Due to the importance of process in understanding the IS impact in organisations, as highlighted above, it is significant to understand the characteristics of a business process. Davenport and Short (1990) identify two characteristics of business processes, these are: first, they have customers, who are either external or internal to the organisation. This is because a business process must have an outcome as we have learned from the definitions above. The second characteristic of the business process is that they cut across organisational boundaries. Business processes can go through different business units within organisations; hence, business processes are independent of the organisational structure. Extenuating from these characteristics of business processes, one can identify different types of process. Davenport and Short (1990) classify the types of process in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Types of process

Process dimension and types	Typical example	Typical IT role
Entities		
Inter-organisational	Order from a supplier	Lower transaction costs; eliminate intermediaries

Inter-functional	Develop a new product	Work across geography; greater simultaneity
Inter-personal	Approve a bank loan	Role and task integration
Objects		
Physical	Manufacture a product	Increased outcome flexibility; process control
Informational	Create a proposal	Routinizing complex decisions
Activities		
Operational	Fill a customer order	Reduce time and costs; increase output quality
Managerial	Develop a budget	Improve analysis; increase participation

(Davenport and Short, 1990)

Although IT plays a fundamental role in enhancing business processes, still there are several management challenges facing IT-enabled processes within an organisation. First, management roles may become complicated because processes cut across various parts of organisational subunits (Ter Hofstede and Weske, 2003). This means that the management that oversees the IT implementation may have to intervene in the jurisdiction of other management (e.g. other functional managers) within the organisation hence potentially leading to management conflicts/issues. Second, IT-enabled processes can conflict with the structure of organisations therefore raising the issue of reconciling processes with the traditional functions of organisations (Davenport and Short, 1990). Third, IT may require new skills in the organisation (Wagner et al., 2014). Employees in both the business and IT units have to learn how to use the IT in order to increase IT utilisation within the business processes. This highlights the significance of the hybrid debate - hybrids are people with strong technical skills and adequate business knowledge and vice versa (Earls and Skyrme, 1992). Furthermore, IT-enabled processes require continuous improvement (Davenport and Short, 1990) as a way of perfecting the process. Also, the fact that business strategy is dynamic and emergent means that continuous improvement of IT-enabled processes is an issue to be considered by management. This echoes Tempini's (2014) suggestion that for

organisations to obtain value from social media they need continuous design and redesign of architecture and data structure; thus, changing processes within the organisation.

2.3.2 Organisational structure

Organisational structure has several definitions. According to Harper (2015), structure is a clearly-defined pattern of activity in which, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purpose of the organisation. Bower (1970) defines structure as a context in which decisions are made and observed. In addition, Bower suggests that organisational structure lays out a framework for current operations and channels of strategic decision-making. Thompson (1967) defines structure as an organisation's internal pattern of relationships, authority and communication. Likewise, Child (1974) refers to organisational structure as the formal allocation of work roles and administrative mechanisms to control and integrate work activities including those which cross formal organisational boundaries. Last of all, Whittington (2010) defines structure as long-term general principles of system ordering.

According to Child (1974), organisational structure has three main dimensions that are: centralization, formalization and complexity. Fry and Slocum (1984) explain centralisation as the extent to which the right to make decisions and evaluate activities is centralised. Formalization is explained by Hall (1977) as the extent to which an organisation deploys rules and procedures to guide decisions and activities. Also, Hall explains complexity as a situation whereby an organisation is composed of many inter-related parts. For example, an organisation that concurrently has several levels, a broad span of control and multiple geographic locations is considered to be a complex organisation. Fredrickson (1986) suggests that organisations which differ in their structure are likely to differ in their strategic formulation process. Furthermore, Fredrickson identifies six characteristics where strategy formulation may differ due to differences in organisational structure. These are: (a) process initiation (b) the role of goals (c) the means/ends relationship (d) the explanation of strategic action (e) the comprehensiveness of decision making and (f) comprehensiveness in integrating decisions. For instance, an organisation that is centralised will have a different strategic process initiation compared to an organisation that is formalized. In a centralised

organisation, the strategic process might be initiated by the top manager; however, in the formalized organisation, the organisation might have periodic routines to initiate strategy.

Throughout, there has been a debate around the relationship between strategy and structure. Scholars such as Chandler (1962), Burgelman (1983) and Rumelt (1974) argue that structure follows strategy while Bower (1970) suggests the opposite. In addition, there are others such as Fredrickson (1986) who maintain a balanced view, that the relationship between strategy and structure is reciprocal. The proponents of the strategy-follows-structure view contend that structure influences strategy through a direct influence on the strategic decision-making process (Burgelman, 1983) by imposing boundaries of rationality. In other words, this means that the structure may enable or limit strategic activity. On the other hand, those who argue for a balanced view acknowledge that the strategic decision-making process and its effects can be enabled, constrained or shaped by the structure's direct effect. The acknowledgement that structure influences strategy does not refute the view that structure follows strategy, but it suggests that structure also has a conditioning effect on strategy.

Despite the debate on the strategy and structure relationship, Child (1974) specifies three factors that influence structure. These are: environment, technology and size. Given the scope of this research, the prime focus shall be on technology. It must be acknowledged that the definition of 'technology' in the IS field is a matter of concern (Orlikowski, 2000). Initially, scholars such as Barley (1986) defined technology as hardware which included physical material; for instance, machines and equipment that were used by people for productive activities. This definition is limited and fails to explain technology beyond sectors such as manufacturing. As a means of correcting this flaw, researchers conceptualised a broader definition of technology that could explain technology in the service sectors. The broader definition termed 'social technologies' included generic tasks, techniques and knowledge utilized when humans engage in any productive activities (Perrow, 1967). Still, the problem with this definition is that it is too broad, and it loses the ability to explain how technology interacts with human agents (Orlikowski, 1992). Although the above definitions of technology have been termed as broad or narrow, technology has also been classified as operational technology (Woodward, 1970) and material technology (Perrow, 1970). Whereas, operational

technology is concerned with the equipping and sequencing of activities in an organisation's workflow; material technology is concerned with the characteristics of the physical and informational material used. Perrow (1970) explains the influence of technology in organisational processes by arguing that the degree of stability in the nature of material used and the extent to which routines are codifiable techniques can be applied to influence the way in which the work roles can be effectively defined. Following the descriptions of structure and processes, the definitions suggest that the unit of analysis is an action/activity taking place within an organisation. Whittington (2010) argues that understanding people's activity is the central purpose of any social analysis. This is because practice makes a difference to outcomes (Orlikowski, 2000) and, thus, understanding practice is essential. In addition, Whittington (2010) suggests that in order to understand the activity, we must look at institutionally embedded 'social structures' which are enablers and constraints of social practice. Social practice - which is an ongoing series of practical activities - is concerned with regularity and continuity with respect to daily work 'activities' which involve getting ordinary but necessary things completed (ibid). The nature and manner of activities within the organisation materialise to form the reality of the organisation (Jarzabkowski, 2005). The structure is thus enacted by the recursive activities (Orlikowski, 2000). Hence, to understand the impact of social media on the structure and processes of an organisation, the focus must be on the pattern of social media activities, (the social media practice), which endure across space and time. Equally, it is important to understand the materiality of social media in order to understand the impact of social media on organisational structure. Marshall McLuhan (1967), in his classic book 'The medium is the message', argues that "it is impossible to understand social and cultural changes without a knowledge of the workings of media" (p. 8-9). In another instance, he argues that "all media are extensions of some human faculty- psychic or physical" (p. 18). The materiality of social media is a constitution of the material aspects of social media and the social aspects of members of the organisation. Leonardi (2013) defines materiality as the arrangement of artefacts - physical and or digital materials - into a particular form that endures across different places and time. This means that it is the material features of technology that do not change across space and time. Important to note is that although materiality is distinct from the social aspect of organisations, they simultaneously indicate their

synergistic interaction, meaning that it is difficult to separate the two. This means that social and material agencies are separate but once they interact, it is difficult to separate them. Whittington (2010) argues that agency is the concern of more than individual will and skills, that it influences the control over resources, and it is exercised through acceptance and rejection of rules. Thus, considering rules and resources as structural properties of the social system called the 'organisation', understanding the structural context is essential for knowing people's practices, which influences - and is influenced by - strategy.

Furthermore, in most organisations, there are different departments or functions. According to Jarzabkowski (2005), some of these departments can have their own strategies which, at times, may conflict with the strategies of the organisation. Thus, Jarzabkowski introduces the idea of multiple strategies. Similarly, Fredrickson (1986) suggests that departments within an organisation may contain structures that are different from that which characterise the organisation as a whole. For instance, the organisation can be decentralised but some of its departments may have a centralised structure. Thus, the structure that characterises the whole organisation is known as the dominant structure. When analysed some issues arise if there is an assumption that there is a dominant structure. First of all, there is an assumption that strategic decisions are made by a few top-level managers in the organisation. Second, there is an assumption that such decisions are made outside of the dominant structure. In practice, strategic issues can emerge anywhere in an organisation (Mintzberg, 1979). Therefore, it is necessary for top-level management to recognise the existence of structures and strategies that differ from the dominant structure and strategy within the organisation. Thus, there is a rationale to consider the strategy as practice perspective that acknowledges that multiple actors create strategy. The next section is going to review the information systems strategy literature to provide an understanding of contemporary thinking about information system strategies in organisations. The aim is also to link together the previous section on processes and structure to strategy.

2.3.3 Information systems strategy

According to Porter (1985), technological advances can significantly influence an organisation's strategy. The significance of technology on organisational strategy has

placed Information Systems (IS) strategy at the core of IS research and practice. IS strategy provides organisational perspectives on the investment in, deployment, use and management of IS (Chen et al., 2010). Thus, IS strategy is a shared view of the role of IS within organisations. Considering the significance of strategy in understanding the role of information systems in organisations, such as the influence on processes and structure, this section is going to review the literature on strategy.

Strategy is particularly concerned with purpose, orientation and the direction of the organisation (Mutch, 2008). Strategy, Mutch explains further, is concerned with the external face of an organisation and how that translates into imperatives for internal activities. Drawing upon the teleological nature of strategy, Jarzabkowski (2005) explains that strategy informs activities that are future-oriented. Thus, strategies are the activities that are taking place within the organisation and influence the prospective form of an organisation. In reference to Jarzabkowski (2005), this research defines strategy as the social media activities that are taking place within the organisation which influence the prospective form of the organisation.

The discourse on strategy has evolved over time in a cumulative way (Venkatraman and Subramaniam, 2002). Since the evolution of strategy is not a replacement but a cumulative process, to understand the current discussions on strategy, it is crucial to consider the history. In addition, understanding the development of strategic thinking over the years is significant for the IS discourse since from the early days, the IS strategy literature has tended to mirror developments in the literature of strategic management, although IS strategy literature has been lagging behind (Peppard et al., 2014). Thus, the remainder of this section will review the evolution of strategy and contemporary strategic thinking. Strategy, in relation to social media (which is relatively new), can be best be understood through a historical lens.

The evolution of strategy has gone through three eras (Venkatraman and Subramaniam, 2002). These are: the business unit level; capabilities and economies of scope, and portfolios of relationships. The first era, the business unit level, was influenced by industrial organisational economics. The major concern was to gain value through economies of scale. At this stage, organisations sought to leverage market imperfections by using physical assets as key resources. The dominant view of this era was that the positioning of an organisation in the market was of prime importance (Porter, 1980). An

organisation seeks to position itself in the market by assessing its weaknesses and strengths, i.e. using Porter's five forces to pursue either cost leadership or differentiation in the market. Thus, the general strategic choices for organisations were: cost leadership, differentiation or focus (Porter, 1985). Placing social media in this type of strategy would mean using it as a tool for positioning the organisation in the market. Alternatively, it could function as a positive factor in cost minimisation (such as cost of marketing) or through developing a social media strategy that is designed to differentiate the organisation from other organisations. The focus of this strategic thinking is on the business unit level. An example of a study that used this approach is by Piskorski (2014) which uses the examples of eBay, Nike and American Express. Piskorski (2014) argues that if an organisation uses social media to differentiate itself, it means that the organisation has strategically managed to influence a customer to pay a higher price for their product or service. However, the problem with this strategic thinking is the underlying assumptions of the position approach: for instance, it assumes that firms within an industry or strategic group are identical in terms of the strategically relevant resources and the strategies they pursue (Barney, 1991). Thus, it ignores the ability of technology to change the industry structure (Alexander, 1994). For instance, Scott and Orlikowski (2012) explain how social media (in the case of TripAdvisor) changed the hotel ranking processes which also affected the structure of the travel sector.

In the second era of evolution, the analysis moved from the business unit level to the corporate level with a focus on capabilities and economies of scope, where an organisation's strategic emphasis was on leveraging skills (capabilities) across the organisation (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). The strategic view aimed to make the processes and routines of an organisation inimitable. The era was a period when strategists started to systematically analyse and understand the internal processes and routines in which an organisation competes within the market (Collis, 1994; Robins and Wiersema, 1995). This strategic thinking, thus, shifted from positioning, towards the ability to change the structure of the industry. Placing social media in this strategic thinking model, it is arguable that social media could influence the structure of the industry. This assumption can be argued, following Huang et al.'s (2014) findings that the use of social media in a ticketing company (DaM) changed (site-shifting) the

structure of the ticketing industry in China by enabling a different way of providing ticketing services. A counter-argument would be that social media is a public resource potentially available to all and not specific to a certain organisation. Nevertheless, this criticism is weak as the value comes not from the platform itself but from how a particular social media platform is used (Culnan et al., 2010).

The third era is the portfolio of relationships. Organisations can generate a broader range of capabilities through relationships (Baum et al., 2000). With this strategic view, an organisation seeks to position itself in a network of expertise to leverage intellectual capital. Therefore, a portfolio of relationships as a strategy takes the form of an economy of expertise. Therefore, the dominant view is that of network centrality (Venkatraman and Subramaniam, 2002). Network centrality is how an organisation is strategically positioning itself in a network of experts both internally and externally. In relation to this view, strategists consider social media as a tool for networking and developing relationships within and outside the organisational boundaries to satisfy the demands of service delivery. For example, a study by Robert et al. (2008) found social networking sites enabled knowledge integration and the creation of social capital which is a set of resources embedded within a relationship amongst actors within a network. Another study that demonstrates the capability of relationships is by Hanna et al. (2011) which describes the case of the Grammy Awards 50th anniversary in 2010 - and how Grammy exploited networks of relationships using social media. The 2010 Grammy Awards developed an integrated marketing campaign which combined both traditional and social media to increase reach and increase intimacy of engagement. This strategy impacted on the Grammy's reputation, previously attracting older audiences and mockingly referred to as 'the Grannies'. The ceremony began to attract more spectatorship, especially from individuals aged between 18 and 49 years.

Apart from the three eras explained by Venkatraman and Subramaniam (2002), Peppard et al. (2014) highlight two of the most recent conceptions of strategy; these are: digital business strategy (DBS) and strategizing. DBS (also known as the 'fusion view of IS') perceives IS strategy as the business strategy (Galliers, 2011), meaning that IS is viewed as embedded into, and integral to, the products or services offered by the firm (Bharadwaj et al., 2013; El Sawy 2003). The increasing use of digital technologies in contemporary organisations insinuates the fusion view, which sees an opportunity for

seamless integration between IT and business strategy. It is also perceived as an extreme form of alignment (Phillips-Wren and McKniff, 2015).

Last of all, is the strategizing concept (Peppard et al., 2014). Galliers and Newell (2003) explain that strategizing is comprised of the human being who can make sense of data provided by both formal and informal systems via the application of their knowledge of the situation. From a practice perspective, strategizing is a dynamic, iterative, interactive and continuous social process (Peppard et al., 2014). The strategizing concept differs from other strategic approaches in that it focuses on production and reproduction of strategic action rather than seeking to explain strategic change and organisational performance (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009).

The strategizing concept is encompassed within the strategy as practice (SaP) field as it is concerned with the doing of strategy (Ibid). According to Jarzabkowski (2005), strategy as practice is concerned with strategy as a situated, socially accomplished activity constructed through the actions and interactions of multiple actors. In addition, Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) suggest that SaP is concerned with how strategy is done, who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use and how do any outcomes shape strategy. Likewise, Hendry et al. (2010) explain SaP as something people in organisations do rather than something organisations have (resource-based) or a position that organisations occupy. Thus, the unit of analysis for SaP is activity. Thus, SaP considers how social media activities shape the organisation. The analysis of social media activities introduces the mix of material arrangements and the social actions accompanied by the use of social media to influence organisational strategy. The SaP research offers clear details on how strategy should be carried out in practice, consequently distinguishing it from the majority of strategy literature which is more concerned with prescription and analysis rather than detailed examination of practice (Mutch, 2008). Following this brief introduction of the strategy as practice perspective, which is the adopted lens for this research, the next subsection is going to review the strategy as practice perspective in more detail and in relation to the literature on processes and structure which form the focus of this research. The aim is to bring together the different concepts discussed thus far in order to provide a cohesive academic context for this research which identifies the existing gaps in the literature.

2.3.3.1 Strategy as practice

As indicated above, this section is going to look at the 'strategy as practice' (SaP) perspective in more detail. First, it will provide a general explanation of SaP in order to give a basic understanding of this theoretical perspective. Second, it will explain how SaP perspective view IT in an organisation. Third, it will explain how SaP differs from other strategy approaches, particularly due to its orientation when considering emergence. Finally, it will explain the elements of the SaP perspective.

As explained earlier, SaP perceives strategy as a situated, socially accomplished activity (Jarzabkowski, 2005). SaP looks at strategy as a verb and therefore it concentrates on strategizing. According to Schatzki (2001), strategizing encompasses those actions, interactions and negotiations of multiple actors and the situated practice that they draw upon when accomplishing activity. Similarly, Jarzabkowski (2005) suggests that strategizing is concerned with the flow of organisational activities that include content and processes, intent and emergence, thinking and acting as reciprocal, intertwined and frequently indistinguishable parts of a whole. In other words, and as explained earlier, SaP is concerned with how practitioners of strategy act and interact (Whittington, 2014) by concentrating on how strategy is done, who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use and what the outcomes are which shape strategy (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). Thus, SaP is a useful way of understanding strategy as it explains how and why interactions (between people and technology) occur, why certain practices come to take on the shape they do, and why people think those practices had to occur as they did (Whittington, 2006).

In addition, the view from the SaP perspective is that information systems strategy is a bundle of situated practical accomplishments (Arvidsson, et al., 2014). In viewing strategy as a bundle, SaP theory is able to explain the synergetic factors, and this helps to provide key insights into how and why organisations become successful in the digital era. Peppard and Ward (2004) argue that IT investment matters only when organisational structure embeds IT capabilities. This means that IT is valuable to an organisation when it is materialised in the organisation's structure and processes. When a technology such as social media is embedded in an organisation's structure and processes, it can be very powerful in making a company competitive. For instance, Porter (2001, p. 78) suggests that 'the next stage of [the] Internet's evolution will involve

a shift in thinking from e-business to business from e-strategy to strategy. Only by integrating the Internet into overall strategy will this powerful new technology become an equally powerful force for competitive advantage'. Thus, IT becomes a process of enactment (Orlikowski, 2000; 2007), which may help in understanding the constitutive role of social practices in the everyday use of technology in an organisation. In relation to social media, this means that social media becomes valuable when an organisation embeds social media capabilities. It is, thus, important to understand how social media is incorporated in an organisation and how it affects the processes, structure and strategy. In respect to this, Whittington (2014) argues that social media is producing its own distinctive practices in organisations as well as influencing other practices concurrently. Hence, SaP theory offers a valuable lens through which to view and understand how these practices are embedded in an organisation's processes and structure. Also, understanding daily practices helps to unfold how strategy is shaped, refined and actualised (Jarzabkowski, 2005) in the internal life of an organisation.

Furthermore, Leonard and Higson (2014) suggest that the SaP perspective differs from other strategy approaches such as planning (e.g. Porter, 1985), policy and process perspectives (e.g. Pettigrew, 1985) due to its orientation on emergence (Henfridsson and Lind, 2014). For instance, Jarzabkowski (2005) argues that, SaP theory realises strategy as indeed a matter of emergence rather than managerial planning. This is because strategic issues can arise anywhere due to the reciprocal relationship that exists between social relations (structure) and material artefacts (technology) (Mintzberg, 1979). The focus on the emergence approach does not undermine the role of planning, however, it does recognise the importance of emergence as an important contributor to a realised IS strategy (Nolan, 2012). Although, the contrasting view between the planning and the emergent strategy has been at the centre of IS debate since the 1970's (Neugebauer et al., 2016), Henfridsson and Bygstad (2013) suggest that the recognition of the emergence approach has been significantly contributed to by the pervasive use of digital technologies such as social media, which, as explained earlier are complex and dynamic technologies (Scott and Orlikowski, 2012) consequently making classic ideas such as alignment of IT and business processes less useful (Henfridsson and Lind, 2014). In addition, the concentration on emergence appreciates the daily reality in organisations by considering the ongoing practices of practitioners, their tacit and non-

tacit accommodation to and experimentation of daily contingencies, breakdowns, exceptions, opportunities and unintended consequences that occur (Orlikowski, 1996). Thus, by focusing on emergence the SaP perspective becomes a useful approach to investigate the emerging influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy as is realised in an organisation.

Despite the orientation on emergence, SaP differs from other strategy approaches in its effort to bring human agency into analysis. For instance, Johnson (2007) argues that there is a questionable absence of human agency and human actions in most of the strategic theories. Even in those that look at the internal side of organisations. Other perspectives on strategy play down human emotions, motivations and actions, which shape strategy (Jarzabkowski, 2005). By bringing human agency into analysis, SaP has set clear parameters for research; these are: practitioners, practice, and praxis (Whittington, 2014).

The practitioners are those people who make the strategy; including direct practitioners (managers and consultants) and indirect practitioners (influencers such as policy makers, researchers, and media) (Huang et al., 2014). Similarly, Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) classify practitioners into three groups these are: individual actors within an organisation, aggregate actors within an organisation and external actors who are termed in total as external aggregate actors. These categorisations of actors set apart the SaP perspective from other strategy perspectives as it allows analysis of strategy at multiple levels of action and interaction rather than at the level of the firm (ibid). The aim of the practitioner in SaP is to reinstate the actor in strategy research (Jarzabkowski, 2004; 2005). By considering the actor in strategy Whittington (2010) suggests that SaP theory gains the theoretical power of practice theory, which is set in the notion that people are more knowledgeable about their practices than they can narrate because they constantly monitor and adjust their practice to achieve a purpose. This suggests that the SaP perspective can better explain a phenomenon by highlighting the implicit and making it ordinary. In other words, by reinstating the actor in strategy SaP theory can provide insight which other strategy approaches cannot.

Praxis is the flow of activities in which strategy is accomplished (Jarzabkowski, 2005). In addition, Jarzabkowski continues to explain praxis as a chain of social events where operation and action meet; a dialectic synthesis of what is going on in an organisation

and what the practitioners are doing. Likewise, Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) expound praxis as a stream of activities that interconnect the micro actions of individuals and groups with the wider institutions in which those actions are located and with which they contribute to strategy. Thus, in relation to technology, praxis is what people do with technology in the ongoing and situated environment (Whittington, 2014). In this way, SaP theory seeks to draw attention to the prescriptive nature of much of the material on strategy (Whittington, 2006). Considering this relation to technology, Whittington (2014) suggests that it is the implication on research that needs close empirical observation of how technology is used; sensitive to all adaptation and improvisation in practical life. Hence, the praxis element makes SaP research a powerful tool for gaining insight into the actual use of technology and its role in the life of an organisation while providing practical insights as well.

Finally, the practices are social, symbolic and material, through which strategic work is done. Huang et al. (2014) explain it as a set of guidelines and routines for doing an activity. Whereas, Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008) explain the practices as tools and artefacts that people use in doing strategic work. In this way, Whittington (2014) suggests that SaP is notable for its quest for a greater understanding of materiality, which makes it relevant for studying technologies within IS. Furthermore, Leonardi (2012) argues that when IS researchers talk about technologies, they are describing practices. Practices can be confused with praxis, Whittington (2014) argues that even when practices are improvised in praxis, technology practices tend to produce recognizable, imperfectly regular behaviours. This reflects an important distinction that Orlikowski (2000) makes between technology as artefacts and technology as practice; that they are patterns of repetitive and situated use of technology. On the other hand, Jarzabkowski (2005) classifies practices into three types: 1) administrative practices - they serve the purpose of organising and coordinating strategy i.e. planning; 2) discursive practices - these are linguistic and symbolic resources for interacting about strategy i.e. academic concepts; and 3) episodic practices - these are practices that create opportunities for and organise interaction among practitioners in doing strategy. In general, Jarzabkowski (2005) suggests the focus of these practices is on the tools (technology) in use, and practice as mediator of interaction between actors in shaping the practice of strategy.

In conclusion, Whittington (1996) suggest SaP theory is a rich means of understanding situated phenomena due to its ability to explain the underlying structure and patterns of action. This is due to the main focus being on activity as a unit of analysis (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Johnson (2007) defines activity as daily issues of management e.g. what managers do, what they manage, and what organisational practitioners engage with at large. Moreover, Watson (1994) suggests that a useful way of looking at management is through three lenses: activity, as a group of people and as a function. Given that SaP theory conceptualises strategy as a situated activity, the situation provides an interpretive context that imbues artefacts and actions with meaning. This means that actions derive meaning from the situation in which they are enacted; situations come from social embeddedness and history (Jarzabkowski, 2005). For example, considering history, Walsham (2017) suggests that the rapid growth in the use of IT in developing countries occurred in the past decade and is associated with mobile technologies. It is in examples such as this that we see what differentiates the situation of developing countries and developed countries in terms of how they derive meaning. Hence, situations are influenced by external factors such as macro-environment. However, internal factors in organisations also affect the situation, thus making each organisation different from the other leading to localised activities within organisations (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Hence, in SaP theory strategy is an outcome of daily activities, that enact the reality of the organisation, which makes strategy a socially constructed activity (ibid). Despite SaP theory's ability to explain situated phenomena and its power to investigate processes and structure within an organisation, it has been criticised for being mostly theoretical, which provides room for an empirical focus and choice of analytical units for operationalising practice (ibid). For instance, Avgerou (2017) criticises practice theory for being elusive in considering context especially in developing countries. Considering this, SaP theory is an appropriate lens for investigating the impact of technology such as social media on processes, structure and strategy. In addition, the selection of SaP theory as the theoretical lens for this study offers an opportunity for applying it in the context of developing nations and enriching the theory with empirical evidence.

Following the above discussion and review of literature on the role of technology in organisations and on processes, structure and strategy, the next section is going to

review the extant literature on the concept of social media as well as the impact of social media in organisations. Thus far, the literature has focused more on the general role of IT/IS in organisations. The following section aims to focus more specifically on social media.

2.4   The Concept of Social Media

In trying to define 'social media', the literature has presented it by comparing it to the previous technology of web 1.0; in the latter case, there was no space for interaction and the content development was created by one side (supply side) with the expectation to feed the demand side. Scholars, thus, have described social media as web 2.0 (Berthon et al., 2012; Dabner, 2012; and Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), meaning that there are interactions between the supply and demand sides and content is developed by both sides.

Dabner (2012) defines social media as Internet and mobile-based applications that integrate technology, telecommunication and social interaction to facilitate the creation and dissemination of words, videos, images and audio. Also, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 that allows the creation and exchange of user generated content. Web 2.0 is a range of web-based technologies that enable users to contribute and consume information (Dabner, 2012). Berthon et al. (2012) explain web 2.0 as a chain of technological innovations, both in software and in hardware, that enable inexpensive content creation, interaction and interoperability that puts users at the centre stage of design, collaboration and a community of web users. Web 2.0, as the foundation of social media, represents both ideological and technical aspects of social media. As an ideology, web 2.0 represents the idea of using the web as a platform whereby content and applications are continuously created and published in a collaborative and participatory way. Boyd and Ellison (2010) assert that the ideology of web 2.0 finds its roots in the open source ideology, which means that users have free access to information and tools to create and extend the available resource base in collaboration with other participants. While, as a technology, web 2.0 represents all of the technical advances of the web that now enable the functioning of social media. These include advances such as really simple syndication (RSS) and Adobe

Flash (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). For example, RSS helps to ease the distribution of headlines, updates and sometimes content to a wide number of users in the Internet. Interactive capability has facilitated social media to transform the web towards user-driven technology (Smith, 2009). Web 2.0 is a central driver for this transformation as it enables content and applications to be created and published by users in a collaborative and participatory fashion, as above. This transformation (also known as the social media phenomenon) has made the web highly interactive, enabling consumers to determine the nature, extent and context of information exchanged (Hanna et al., 2011), as well as changing the way people work in terms of how they create and disseminate information (Standing and Kiniti, 2011).

In light of the above description of the web's interactivity, different types of mobile and Internet applications can be considered to be social media. The different applications have been classified in different ways. There are scholars who have classified applications based on specific characteristics and others who have classified applications based on their functions. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) used social presence and media richness theory to obtain six distinctive types of social media that are: collaborative projects (i.e. Wikipedia), blogs, content communities (i.e. YouTube), social networking sites (i.e. Facebook), virtual game worlds (i.e. World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (i.e. Second Life). For instance, Facebook - which enables high social presence and a medium level of media richness - provides a high degree of self-disclosure and fair means of resolving uncertainty in communication between communicating partners. Table 3 below illustrates Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classification of social media.

Table 3 Classification of social media by social presence/media richness and self-representation/self-disclosure

		Social presence / Media richness		
		low	Medium	High
	High	Blogs	Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook)	Virtual Social Worlds (e.g. Second Life)

	Low	Collaborative Projects (e.g. Wikipedia)	Content Communities (e.g. YouTube)	Virtual Game Worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft)
Self-presentation / Self-disclosure				

Source: Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)

Kietzmann, et al. (2011), in contrast to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), classified social media using the functionalities afforded by social media. They classified seven types of social media functionalities which are: presence (extent to which the user knows if others are available), sharing (extent to which users exchange, distribute and receive content), identity (extent to which users reveal themselves), relationships (extent to which users relate to each other), conversations (extent to which users communicate with each other), groups (extent to which users are ordered or form communities) and reputation (extent to which users know the social standing of others and content). Considering these functionalities, a social media application such as Facebook or YouTube can be understood by the function it facilitates and supports. This means there are social media platforms that can cut across various functional blocks. Facebook, for example, supports presence, sharing, identity, relationships, conversation and groups. Thus, a social media application can support some or all of these functions, which are crucial to understanding how social media impacts an organisation. Table 4 respectively illustrate Kietzmann et al. (2011) classification of social media.

Table 4 The functional block table of social media

Functional Block	Meaning	Impact
Presence	The extent to which users know if others are available	Creating and managing the reality, intimacy and immediacy of the context
Relationship	The extent to which users relate to each other	Managing the structural and flow properties in a network of relationships
Reputation	The extent to which users know the social standing of others and content	Monitoring the strength, passion, sentiment and reach of users and brands
Groups	The extent to which users are ordered or form communities	Membership rules and protocols
Conversations	The extent to which users communicate with each other	Conversation velocity and the risks of starting and joining
Sharing	The extent to which users exchange, distribute and receive content	Content management system and social graph
Identity	The extent to which users are ordered or form communities	Data privacy controls and tools for user self-promotion

Source: Kietzmann et al. (2011)

These descriptions and classifications of social media lead us to examine the impact of this new technology on organisations. Since organisations have deployed technology over years and have worked with traditional web 1.0 to inform its customers, it is crucial to explore the emerging scholarly analyses of the adoption of web 2.0 by organisations and its impact on their processes, structure and strategies (Aral et al., 2013; Treem and

Leonardi, 2012). The next section reviews the existing literature on the impact of social media in organisations.

2.4.1 The impact of social media in organisations

When it comes to social media, organisations have come to face a new type of Information Technology (IT) that supports interaction and collaboration on the Internet. This new type of IT enriches internal and external interactions through different social media platforms (Marion et al., 2014). Kietzmann et al. (2011) argue that the social media phenomenon can significantly influence an organisation's reputation, sales and even its survival. For instance, more than 56% of managers surveyed by Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) suggested social media was extremely important for competitive reasons. Thus, considering its budding relevance in business, it is fundamental to understand social media and specifically the various forms it takes. Considering social media can take different forms, organisations have adopted different types of platform such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. For instance, Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) found that the most frequently used platform by organisations was Facebook (73%), followed by LinkedIn (46%) and Twitter (42%). In addition, social media in organisation is used by different departments (Kwayu et al., 2018a) and therefore it affects all aspect of business from marketing and operation to finance and human resource management (Aral et al., 2013). Hence, this section will attempt to review the impact of social media use in organisations across different functions.

First, social media facilitates and enhances communication between customers (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010) in ways that previous types of IT could not. Unlike traditional IT, social media affords organisations: visibility, persistence, editability and association of information (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). For instance, social media allows visibility to a third party (Leonardi, 2014), which can make information 'go viral' (that's when a video, image or link spreads rapidly through a population by being frequently shared with a number of individuals) (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011). Also, social media allows the provision of real time information to stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers and shareholders). This is an important functionality provided by social media (Nedbal et al., 2013). This is because social media allows information to be shared (visible, editable, persistent and associated) among stakeholders while removing possibilities of information asymmetry within organisations, consequently creating

efficient and effective information system channels. The capability of social media to address such functionalities distinguishes social media from traditional IT across a range of attributes such as how content is contributed, structured, organised and the flows of interaction (Steinhüser et al., 2011). The differences are further highlighted in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Differences between social media and traditional information technologies

Trait	Social media technology	Traditional IS technology
Source of contribution	User generated content	Content is created by the organisation
Flexibility of content	Dynamic and rich	Static and limited
Structure	Loosely defined, bottom-up	Well defined, top-up
Organisation	Mostly decentralized	Mostly centralized
Voluntariness	Knowledge sharing is voluntary	Mostly mandatory
Interaction	M:N interaction	1:1 or 1:N relation
Ease of use	Highly intuitive	Relatively low
Degree of governance	Low	High
Quality assurance	Peer feedback, unstructured	Standardized procedures

Source: Steinhüser et al, (2011).

Table 5 above distinguishes social media from previous IT across a number of attributes. For instance, the content developed on social media is contributed to by multiple users,

whereas, using traditional IT the content is produced from a single source. For example, Scott and Orlikowski (2012) show how the ranking process of a hotel is changed by social media to enable customers' reviews to control the process rather than it being done by an accredited institution which is informed by the hotel. Consequently, this has shifted the power to control information from the hotel to customers. Furthermore, social media is different to traditional IT since it has changed the nature of interaction by allowing multiple interactions, for instance: between employees or between customers. Traditional IT can only facilitate communication that is between two one to one people or between one person and many people.

Thus, when considering the impact of social media, it is crucial for organisations and practitioners to understand social media and the various forms it takes so that the organisations can effectively use social media. For example, Piccoli et al. (2004) found that virtual teams must learn new ways of behaving and interacting with other team members in different social media platforms. Learning new ways of behaving and interacting is critical for building communities on social media platforms, for example, Culnan et al. (2010) suggest that the establishment of presence in social media platforms is not enough to attract and maintain a critical mass of people, hence it requires new ways of working such as developing social relationships with other users, creating compelling content, and recognizing the contributions of other users. Doing this helps to maintain good relationship with customers on social media platforms. Likewise, Pillet and Carillo (2016) found that habits, (which are learned sequences of acts that become an automatic response to specific situations) play a crucial role in the implementation of social media in organisations. For instance, habits arising from the perceived ease of using social media in comparison to email have had a positive influence on knowledge sharing within organisations (ibid). Thus, the social media phenomenon leads organisations to need to learn ways to interact with new partners or customers, who are becoming integral in content creation which spreads to other customers or staff (Culnan et al., 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Therefore, considering the role of behaviour as an automatic response to a specific situation, there is a need to understand behaviours and habits associated with social media and their potential influence in organisational processes, structure and strategy. Analysing work behaviours can help us understand organisational change associated with the use of social media. For example,

as explained above, Pillet and Carillo (2016) highlight how habits associated with social media influence knowledge sharing when compared with email practice.

Aral et al. (2013) suggest that social media is increasingly transforming the way organisations relate to their marketplace through the creation of opportunities and challenges in all aspects of business such as marketing, operations, finance and human resource management. For instance, social media facilitates marketing activities such as sharing information with customers as well as receiving feedback from them. At the same time, social media can be used as a communication tool between different teams within organisations (Huang et al., 2013). In addition, the use of social media in organisation generates complex information dynamics that are propelling organisations in unexpected directions, redrawing boundaries and shifting relationships (Scott and Orlikowski, 2012). For instance, the analysis of Village Inn Hotel by Scott and Orlikowski (2012) shows that social media had an impact on the hotel's processes, structure and strategy. First, social media adjusted the power dynamics between the hotel and customers regarding information. Previously, hoteliers had power over information by controlling information about the hotels through brochures and other traditional media outputs but, with the advent of social media, customers could counter the power of the hoteliers through online reviews and rankings. Second, social media has changed the marketing practices of Village Inn Hotel: previously, the hotel used magazines, brochures and other traditional means of marketing. However, after discovering the power of social media (TripAdvisor) their focus changed, and they started to conduct their marketing activities through TripAdvisor which had the effect of increasing their revenue by nine-fold. Third, the Village Inn stopped their relationship with travel agents who were traditionally an important channel for acquiring customers. Last of all, social media transformed the internal practices of Village Inn hotel as they started to have a weekly reflection on the comments of the reviewers to appraise hotel and staff performance. This example has shown how social media impacts processes and strategy within an organisation.

There are several other studies (e.g. Cabiddu et al., 2014; Dewan and Ramaprasad, 2014; Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010; Leonardi, 2015; Leonardi and Meyer, 2015; Luo et al., 2013; Marion et al., 2014; Treem, 2015; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010), that have explored the impact of social media in organisations. For instance, Leonardi (2015) found that

social media increased 'metaknowledge' - a knowledge of who knows whom and who knows what within an organisation. Social media increases meta-knowledge as it allows third parties to learn vicariously from the communication occurring amongst their colleague's in the organisation. This knowledge enables an individual within an organisation to correctly know what and whom a co-worker knows. Such knowledge enhances team performance, innovation and reduces work duplication across the organisation (ibid). Social media increased metaknowledge within organisations because of how it affords visibility to a third party (Leonardi, 2014).

Another study that explored the impact of social media in an organisation is Treem (2015), who found that low use of social media in organisations is associated with employees' reluctance to face accountability. For instance, users of social media within an organisation were mindful of what they displayed on their social media accounts because they were afraid to face accountability - such as how they will be perceived by others who would see their post. In addition, the fear was based on the potential that the communication in social media could be misinterpreted (ibid). Thus, the reluctance to face accountability limited the use of social media within the organisation.

Also, Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) studied the impact of social media on customer dialog management, where they suggest that social media has greatly enriched traditional customer and firm interaction, and it has also enabled organisations and customers to monitor what other customers are saying about the organisation. Due to this influence Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) suggest that organisations are struggling to navigate the emerging complex consumer empowered environment that is created by social media. For example, organisations are faced with challenges such as whether they should centralise or decentralise their use of social media. For instance, an organisation may find employees have already launched their social media initiatives. Such decentralised use of social media within an organisation presents organisation's processes as disjointed, whereas the alternative (centralising social media) may also strangle innovation within the organisation (ibid). Regardless of the choice that an organisation makes, there is a need to understand how those choices are made with regards to the use of social media, and how this affects processes, structure and strategy within the organisation.

As aforementioned, some literature has put an emphasis on how social media has had an impact on human resource management within organisations. Huang et al. (2013) explored the impact of social media on the established and emerging flows of rhetorical practices between management and employees in an organisation. They found that social media affected rhetorical practices by enabling simultaneous consumption and co-production of rhetorical content, also increasing multivocality, reach and richness in communication. By increasing multivocality, social media stimulates employees' engagement through enhancing effective exchange of ideas, viewpoints and concerns, consequently facilitating cross-functional innovation (Standing and Kiniti, 2011). Multivocality highlights that, social media platforms such as wiki's and blogs have allowed employees to engage in conversation across functions, regions and hierarchical level. In this way, social media reshapes intra organisational communication by making a shift from a single source of information that is legitimatized by the organisation (to represent and avoid ambiguity) towards an environment where communication culture is fostered to allow alternative and multiple views that can be freely voiced and contested (Huang et al., 2013). It is in light of such arguments that social media can be seen as a way of empowering employees within the organisation (Miranda et al., 2016). It empowers them through facilitating communication and the sharing of ideas without hierarchical hindrances/boundaries. Teams can also interact with customers and receive feedback that can enhance performance. Such assumptions as these call for further research and analysis especially when considering that social media can be polarising (Bail et al., 2018) - by attracting like-minded views while avoiding opposite views consequently leading users to form more extreme views in the direction of their original inclination, hence affecting how knowledge and information is shared in the organisation (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017; Gu et al., 2014;). Polarisation is caused by the allure of homophily, which is the tendency of people to seek interaction with others of similar status (i.e. education, religion, income, occupation) and values (i.e. attitudes, aspiration and beliefs) (Gu et al., 2014). In addition, polarisation in social media can be exacerbated by suggested information based on a previous interaction in the platform (Spohr, 2017). For instance, when you conduct a search on the Internet, your subsequent searches will include suggested content based on your previous search. In such circumstances, organisations should explore strategies and ways that employees

with different viewpoints share knowledge (Gu et al., 2014). Therefore, although social media can empower employees with shared information it can also cause division through polarisation. Despite understanding this it is unclear what such varied impacts of social media have on activities within organisation in terms of how they affect processes, structure and strategy.

As is recognised within the literature, social media is integrated in different organisational functions such as marketing, customer service, product development and knowledge management (Aral et al., 2013) hence the impact of social media is felt across different functional processes within the organisation. Therefore, it can be deduced that there is no single way of using social media in the organisation (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). Since there is no single way of using social media in an organisation Huang et al. (2014) suggests that organisations should be ambidextrous, meaning that they should simultaneously learn and use social media. Thus, this may require organisations to develop dynamic capabilities (such as agility) which are vital for a volatile and uncertain environment (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Walters et al., 2002). For instance, Huang et al. (2014) provide the case of DaM a leading ticketing company in China, which explored innovative ways to facilitate the use of social media interaction between performing artists and fans to provide an anchor for determining ticket sales. This innovation influenced changes in processes related to ticketing practices, for example it eliminated the use of a tier-one ticketing agent (for more details see Huang et al., 2014).

Integrating social media can be challenging given that talent plays a significant part in implementing social media (Kumar and Mirchandani, 2012). Talent plays a significant part because building a virtual community requires natural skills and aptitude rather than acquired skills. Apart from talent, Huang et al. (2014) suggest that implementing a digital technology strategy, such as a social media strategy, is not simply a matter of planning or aligning it with business strategy but it requires the accumulation of strategizing activities which create opportunities for innovation and efficiency. Also, as discussed earlier, habits play a significant part in the implementation of a social media strategy in an organisation whilst easing knowledge transfer. Thus, talent, habits and accumulation of strategizing activities highlight the significance of tacit knowledge in the implementation of social media. Tacit knowledge is a form of knowledge that is difficult to transfer from one person to another as it is intuitive and unarticulated (Lam, 2000;

Mutch, 2008). Conceivably, this may pose some challenges for the configuration of processes, structure, functions or strategies within an organisation. Structure, processes and strategy can be affected since social media is asserted to affect knowledge sharing, socialisation and power dynamics within the organisation (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). For example, an impact on knowledge sharing on processes and structure is likely since all human activities involve some use of information and application of some knowledge (Mutch, 2008), aspects which are significantly influenced by social media. For example, referring to the case of the Village Inn Hotel from Scott and Orlikowski (2012) the marketing process changed because the customers could get information from other customers in the form of reviews that were left on TripAdvisor, this reduced and eliminated the need for the accreditation schemes which used to rate hotels. Despite changing the process, this also affected the power dynamics as hotels had less power to control the image of the hotel and that power moved to their customers. This example shows the ability of social media to transform social relations in and out of organisational space (Susarla et al., 2012).

In a quest to have a positive impact on their social media presence, organisations are seeking to identify new sources of competitive advantage by adopting social media (Bughin, 2008). Piskorski (2014) provides cases of organisations such as eBay, American Express and Nike, which have leveraged social media to create social strategies (such as forming online communities like Nike football or Nike Basketball) to gain competitive advantage (Porter, 1985; 2001). They have either increased the willingness of customers to pay more for their products and services or lowered the costs for the organisation in providing services and products. For instance, eBay's group gift application allows a group of friends to collaborate in purchasing a present and offers a suggestion based on what a recipient has liked on Facebook. Another example is Nike's NikePlus which allows people to track their performance and share tips on social media platforms. Such social strategies like NikePlus and eBay's 'group gift' increase brand loyalty, willingness to pay for a product or lower the acquisition cost of data and new customers. Arguably, Piskorski's (2014) cases underscore the sense of ownership that customers can feel about an organisation's product or service. A feeling of belonging to Nike Football or being a member of American Express, for example, triggers a sense of responsibility and ownership of the benefits of being a member.

Another argument becoming prominent in the literature with regards to the impact of social media on organisations is the ability of social media to create business value for the organisation (Aral et al., 2013). Culnan et al. (2010) argue that business value from social media is not contained in the platforms but comes from how those platforms are used, especially when considering that platforms may be used for different reasons. Although researchers such as Culnan et al. (2010) have tried to address the issue of social media and business value, it is still not clear what changes are required in processes and structure to successfully implement social media (Aral et al., 2013). On the other hand, Tempini (2014) suggests that obtaining value from social media depends upon an organisation's ability to achieve a steady, reliable and comprehensive production of information and accompanying data collection by means of complex data architecture and user reporting. Thus, managing social media in organisations requires a continuous design and redesign of architecture and data structure. This ability of organisations to manage social media differs from one organisation to another organisation. Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) define this ability as 'social media competence', which is a company's proficiency in using and leveraging social media for business activities.

On social media competence, Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) further argue that organisations develop it through social competitor pressure, organisational infrastructure capability and IT infrastructure capability. First, social competitor pressure is when organisations decide to develop social media competence when their competitors have adopted social media and achieved business value (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015). This means the use of social media is at times determined by a competitor's activities. This has the potential of making organisations from the same environment have similar characteristics: DiMaggio and Powell (1991) use the concept of isomorphism from ecology, which means that organisms in a similar environment come to exhibit similar features. Isomorphism can be manifested through competitiveness, mimetic, coercive or normative practices (ibid). Mutch (2008) suggests such practices occur in a quest to gain legitimacy through similarity by arguing that organisations not only respond to economic imperatives, but they do it in a way that their actions are recognized as legitimate. This helps us to understand how practices become institutionalised in organisational processes, structure and strategy. Hence it is important to analyse how social media practices are recognised and legitimised within

an organisation, a gap that will help to explain how social media is embedded in organisational processes, structure and strategy.

Second, organisational infrastructure capability such as marketing capability influences the development of social media competence (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015). For instance, a firm with superior marketing ability, may be better at complementing their marketing activity with social media compared with a firm that has low marketing capability. Further, Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) find organisational size has a negative correlation with social media competence. This is because small firms with low resource portfolio tend to use and leverage social media as a crucial element for competing with larger firms in the market. Thus, considering that an organisation may complement their capabilities such as technical and marketing to extend their competence into social media, while others may develop their competence in social media as a substitute for other organisational resources and capabilities, this underscores the fact that successful implementation of social media depends on how the platform is used (Culnan et al., 2010).

In addition, IT infrastructure capability (which is a firm's proficiency in leveraging technical and human IT resources to create, codify, share and embed new knowledge among organisational members) positively contributes to developing social media competence (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015). The second and third factors (organisational infrastructure and IT infrastructure) relate to and have implications for the alignment of strategies within organisations (Venkatraman et al., 1993). Organisational infrastructure and IT infrastructure are the two domains that underpin the alignment model. Alignment which has been the dominant IS strategy, suggests that organisations that achieve alignment between various factors will out-perform those without alignment (Aversano et al., 2012). Wagner et al. (2014) suggest increasing business understanding and IT knowledge between IT and business staff will increase alignment. This suggestion can invoke the hybrid debate — hybrids are people with strong technical skills and adequate business knowledge and vice versa (Earls and Skyrme, 1992). Mutch (2008) suggests that the rationale behind this debate is the desire among staff to preserve and enhance their organisational position. Recalling, Treem and Leonardi's (2012) suggestion that social media affects power dynamics within organisations, there is reason to understand how social media practice affects relations and power politics

within an organisation and consequently how that affects organisational arrangements such as processes, structure and strategy.

Finally, this section has highlighted the impact of social media on different aspects and parts of organisations. Predominantly, the review suggests the effect of social media in organisations is concentrated on processes related to marketing, human resource management, and knowledge management. Also, the review suggests that social media can transform the reality of traditional business strategy to be a modular, distributed, cross-functional and global business process that enables activity to be done across the limits of time, distance and space (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). Alongside this transformation that social media is having on business, social media has caused complexity of information dynamics (Scott and Orlikowski, 2012) and a complex consumer empowered environment that some organisations are struggling to navigate (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010). Aral et al. (2013) make it clear that executives are struggling with what broader changes in terms of processes, structure and strategy are required within organisations to implement social media. Thus, there is a need to understand and analyse the impact of social media on processes, structure and strategy. The next section will discuss the gaps in the literature that will inform the research questions.

2.5   Gaps in the Literature

The literature suggests that social media has enriched organisations by providing interaction through different social media platforms. The literature suggests that the nature of the organisation influences which social media is incorporated into its strategy, how it is adopted and used (i.e Curtis et al., 2010). However, the literature lacks a detailed explanation of how social media platforms are embedded in an organisation's processes, structure and strategy. While the literature shows the role of behaviours (as an automatic response to a situation) while implementing social media in an organisation (Piccoli et al., 2004; Pillet and Carillo, 2016), there is inadequate explanation of the behaviours (repetitive/recurring actions) associated with social media and how those behaviours influence processes, structure and strategy within organisations.

In addition, the literature suggests that social media enriches information and knowledge sharing within an organisation. For example, social media increases ambient

awareness (Leonardi, 2015) and meta-knowledge (Leonardi, 2014), which helps team performance and reduces duplication of work. However, there is a lack of explanation of how information and knowledge shared through social media affects work arrangements and relationships within an organisation. This implies a lack of understanding of how information shared on social media affects processes, structure and strategy in an organisation. Furthermore, the literature highlights how social media enhances information with richness and reach, increasing multivocality and the potential for polarisation (Standing and Kiniti, 2011). Notwithstanding, there is an inadequacy of understanding on how processes, structure and strategy are influenced by this impact of social media on information. For instance, there is not an understanding of how processes or strategy are affected when a practitioner is faced with multiple and competing information which is facilitated by social media.

Furthermore, the literature presents social media as dynamic, with multiple and contemporaneous effects (Scott and Orlikowski, 2012), which makes talent (Kumar and Mirchandani, 2012) and strategizing (Huang et al., 2014) play a significant role in implementation of social media. This suggests social media is an emergent phenomena. In addition, it is understood that the development of social media competence is influenced by the following factors: social competitor pressure, organisational infrastructure capability and IT infrastructure capability (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015). Hence this suggests social media is a planned and emergent phenomena. Despite such understanding, there is a clear deficit of understanding on how social media strategy is developed within organisations, in terms of how social media practices emerge and embed in organisational processes, structure and strategy. For example, there is inadequacy of understanding of how improvisation (praxis), informal and unrecognized use of social media becomes legitimate practice within an organisation. In addition, with regards to the development of social media strategy in an organisation, there is a deficiency of understanding of what are the essential skills for proper implementation of social media within the processes and structure of an organisation.

The absence of detailed examination of how social media practices are embedded in organisational processes, structure and strategy is key for providing insight on the debate between the emergence and planning approach which has lasted since the 1970's (Neugebauer et al., 2016). This is because IT practices are valuable when

embedded in an organisation's structure and processes (Peppard and Ward, 2004) hence, it is important to understand how social media is embedded into an organisation. Also, the lack of detailed examination on how social media practices become embedded in organisational structure and processes leads to what Aral et al. (2013) suggest – which is that executives in organisations are struggling to establish the necessary broad changes in organisational structure and processes required for the implementation of social media.

Considering the discussion above, this literature review has identified three main gaps. First, the literature shows there is a lack of understanding of how social media is embedded in organisational processes, structure and strategy. Second and related to the first gap, there is a lack of understanding of what influence social media has on organisational processes, structure and strategy. Finally, there is a deficiency in the understanding of how social media strategy is developed within an organisation. Considering these gaps and following the suggestion of Jarzabkowski (2005) SaP literature has been mainly theoretical in nature and there is a need for a greater empirical focus as well as Mutch's (2008) suggestion that there is a need for further examination of practice rather than description and analysis in strategy research. This research intends to answer the following questions: (1) How is social media embedded within an organisation's processes, structure and strategy? (2) What are the influences of social media practices on an organisation's processes, structure and strategy? and (3) How does social media strategy develop within an organisation?

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on social media and business and identified key gaps. These gaps are due to the limited scope of the research to date: research has been focused on the influence of social media on strategic organisational practices. The review has shown how social media is different from previous forms of IT and it has highlighted the impact that social media has had on organisational processes. To strengthen the analysis (as well as to understand the general discourse) this chapter included a review of the role of technology in organisations. This required a historical perspective, which involved tracing analyses from the 1960s to date. As a result, different theories on the role of technology in organisations were discussed. With respect to the focus of this thesis, (the impact of social media on strategy), as well as the

contemporary views on strategy (i.e. digital business strategy) that brings in technology as integral to the strategy, the chapter also analysed various views on strategies. Informed by the literature, a SaP perspective has been chosen as the theoretical lens for this thesis. Following the review of literature, the next chapter will discuss the research methodology, which will review research philosophies and methods that are in line with the SaP perspective and suitable for addressing the research questions.

3 Chapter III: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in this study. In this respect, the chapter discusses (1) the available philosophical approaches to empirical research, (2) the qualitative research methods and rationale for the selected design and methods and (3) data analysis techniques that are used in the study. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the steps and methods for addressing ethical issues. The methodology is designed with the aim of fulfilling the research questions.

3.2 Philosophical Approaches to Empirical Research

According to Proctor (1998), good research work considers the consistency of its research aims, questions, methods and philosophy. Likewise, Saunders et al. (2009) suggest good research considers the fundamental assumptions for undertaking research as well as following appropriate methods. Research philosophy takes assumptions that are often based on aspects of the world including the mind, reasoning, matter, reality, truth, proof of knowledge and nature of knowledge (Hughes and Atwell, 1994). In addition, Proctor (1998) suggests research philosophy enables us to understand the interrelationship between ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (what can be known) and methodology (how the researcher can discover what needs to be known). In light of this, the deployed methods in this study ensure a connection with philosophy. This connection provides a guide in conducting the research and consequently becomes an important pillar of the way knowledge is created and contributed to (Hirschheim, 1985). Furthermore, Easterby-Smith (1997) identifies three reasons for considering research philosophy in the methodology. First, research philosophy helps in the identification and refinement of the methods adopted. Second, it enables the evaluation of different methods and the scope of research from an early stage. Third, it provides the researcher with flexibility in using unfamiliar methods. Thus, in general, research philosophy helps to provide a guide for how to plan and undertake the respective research whilst ensuring the consistency of aims, questions and methods.

In view of Easterby-Smith's (1997) rationale for considering research philosophy, it is important to understand different research philosophies and various classifications of

social research (qualitative and quantitative) epistemologies which exist (Chua, 1986; Crossan, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). These include: positivist and post-positivist, of which positivist adopts a quantitative approach to investigate phenomena contrary to post-positivist, which aims at an in-depth description and exploration of the phenomena through qualitative approaches (Crossan, 2003). In addition to positivist and post-positivist, other scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (1994) add two further categories: critical theory and constructivism. There are other categories too, including interpretivist, critical paradigms (Chua, 1986) and scientific realism (Bhasker, 1989). The line separating these various categories is blurred. However, Klein and Myers (1999) suggest that they have a significant effect when adopted in social research. This is because research philosophies demonstrate the understanding of a researcher's perspective on the research problem. Due to the complex nature of social sciences, the researcher's engagement with the subject is mutually influenced. As much as the researcher influences the subject, so the researcher is influenced by that subject. Kant (1998) argues that there might be several ways of understanding the world other than by observation. This means that our representation may conform to objects as well as objects may conform to our representation. It is thus crucial to consider a researcher as part of the research in the social world. This awareness of the mutual influence is in line with the practice tradition which emphasises the mutual influence of human and material artefacts. In addition, to understand how knowledge is created in a particular field it is important to understand the epistemic culture of that particular field i.e. SaP research. Epistemic culture is defined by Knorr-Cetina (1999) as amalgams of arrangements and mechanisms bonded through affinity, necessity, and historical coincidence which in a particular field make up how we know what we know. Thus, epistemic culture represents a dominant practice in a research stream (ibid). Hence understanding the epistemic culture of a particular field is important for selecting the guiding research philosophy. Laamanen et al. (2015) suggest that the epistemic culture of strategy as practice research is dominated by an interpretivist tradition and qualitative methods. Thus, the next section is going to discuss the interpretivist philosophy which underpins SaP research.

3.2.1 Interpretivist philosophy

Interpretivist research emphasises the human role as social actor (Saunders et al., 2009). That is, it puts more focus on social actors rather than material artefacts such as computers. Social actors interpret phenomena and assign meaning to the roles that they play in a particular setting. Because human beings assign meaning to particular phenomena, interpretivists argue that reality/knowledge is socially constructed through language, shared meaning and consciousness (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Thus, interpretivists believe there is one reality that is subjected to various interpretations. Therefore, interpretivist reality is not rigid, but a creation of those individuals involved in the research. Reality becomes multiple, subjective and mentally constructed by individuals (Crossan, 2003). Consequently, an interpretivist philosophy can reflect researcher bias and may produce research conclusions which are difficult to reproduce outside the paradigm. In other words, it can be difficult to distinguish between researcher bias and the subjectivity revealed by the interpretive strategy adopted. To address this apparent limitation, Crossan (2003) suggests that researchers who use the interpretivist philosophy should acknowledge this and be proud of revealing a trend to better help understand the problem in space rather than claiming to provide an absolute truth.

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) set out preconditions for undertaking interpretivist research including: (1) no predetermined view on the phenomena, as it will obscure the process of gaining new knowledge; (2) the phenomena should be investigated in its natural environment and, as such, this will remove bias, and (3) an outside understanding of the situation should not be imposed on the study.

Critics of the interpretivist philosophy argue that it leaves a lot of space for the researcher to influence the results. Nevertheless, interpretivist research can be recommended because it considers social factors as well as the natural context/setting. It therefore helps the researcher to uncover the complex reality of human beings and their organisational processes (Klein and Myers, 1999). For this reason, the interpretivist philosophy is considered to be a suitable approach for conducting the research for this thesis; because it can uncover the complexity associated with social media practice in organisations.

Furthermore, the underlying philosophy is in line with the strategy as perspective (SaP) lens that is adopted for this research, particularly in its effort to analyse the role of a social agent in strategy research. As discussed earlier, SaP accounts for human agency by focusing on practitioners as a fundamental element of the research. These strengths make it suitable for this research which looks at the impact of social media; a technology that is highly intertwined with social agency. Therefore, interpretivist philosophy has been selected, due to its ability to account for social factors as well as contexts that are fundamental elements of this research. This selection inherently leads to the adoption of a qualitative method. The next section will discuss the qualitative method and explain why it is appropriate for this research when compared to a quantitative approach.

3.3 Qualitative Research Methods

According to Cassell and Symon (2004), qualitative research is centred on the idea that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. Unlike quantitative research, which is of a positivist nature, qualitative research is better suited for social sciences that investigate people and their institutions (Saunders et al., 2009). In this respect, qualitative research is in line with interpretivist philosophy, as explained above. Qualitative research allows and facilitates open questions and opinions from informants to be part of the analysis (Creswell et al., 2003). In doing so, qualitative research helps us to understand the depth and complexity of phenomena in their natural environment (Myers, 1997). The interpretation is crucial in identifying meaning (Orlikowski, 2000) which people enact in their natural environment.

Saunders et al. (2009) conceptualise qualitative data as all non-numeric data or data that is not quantified and that can be sourced from different research strategies such as interviews, observations, visual diagrams and questionnaires. This distinguishes qualitative research from quantitative research which is positivist in nature and makes law-like generalisations (Bunge, 1993). The table below shows the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data.

Table 6 Distinctions between qualitative and quantitative data

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data

Based on meanings derived from numbers	Based on meanings expressed through words
Collection of results which are numerical, and the data is standardised	Collection of results as non-standardised data requiring classification into themes
Analysis and interpretation conducted using tables, diagrams and statistics	Analysis and interpretation conducted using conceptualisation

Source (Saunders et al., 2009)

According to Saunders et al. (2009) interviews, observations, archival data and structured exercises such as cognitive mapping are examples of data for qualitative research. Furthermore, there are various qualitative research methods including action research and ethnography, grounded theory and case study. These methods are discussed below to provide an understanding of them as well as to guide the selection of an appropriate method that will be adopted for this research.

3.3.1 Case study

A case study method is a research strategy that involves the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 2002). A case study method is eminent for combining both research phenomenon and context which helps to provide a richer understanding of the context and the process which is enacted (Yin, 2013). Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2009) acknowledge the case study method for its ability to answer the *why*, *what* and *how* questions that makes it a preferable method for exploratory research. Exploratory research is a valuable means for seeking new insights and assessing phenomenon in a new light because it is flexible and adaptable to new data and insights that occur (ibid). There are two types of case study: a single case study and a multiple case study. These two types can either be holistic or embedded (Yin, 2013). A single case study is preferred when there is a critical or unique case because it provides an opportunity to observe and examine a phenomenon which has not yet been considered (Saunders et al., 2009). A multiple case study is often adopted in order to help with generalisation of the results and involves the study of more than one situation/context. Gerring (2006) suggests that a case study is a unit of analysis for generalisation. The problem with Gerring's argument

is that it originates from a positivist approach and it therefore fails to capture the uniqueness of the context. Correspondingly, Yin (2013) classifies case studies using a single-unit of analysis classification, dividing case studies into two types: holistic and embedded. A holistic case study involves treating the organisation as a whole, whereas the term embedded is used to describe a case study which examines a number of sub-units within an organisation, department or a work group. The diagram below illustrates the types of case study.
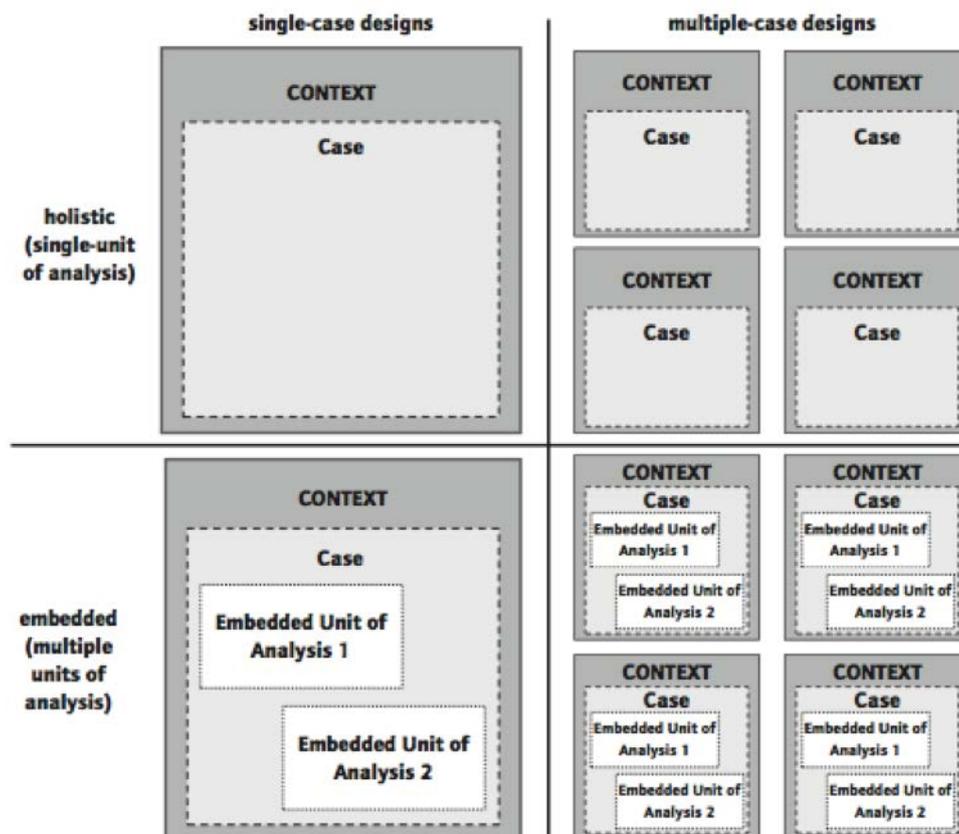
Figure 1 Basic Types of Case Study Design

Source: Yin, 2013

The case study is one of the most powerful methods in the IS field as it allows the studies to take place in their natural settings whilst shedding light on the complexities of the process involved in the IS system (Choudrie and Dwivedi, 2005). Galliers and Huang (2012) insist on the need to deploy a case study approach for IS research as most IS studies have utilised positivist and quantitative approaches. There are various pieces of IS research on social media which have employed a case study method including Scott and Orlikowski's (2012) case study, using a rural hotel and Mohajerani et al. (2015)'s

case study of Iran. Likewise, a case study method has been used in SaP research, for example Huang et al. (2014) used a case study of DaM ticketing company in China. Also, Jarzabkowski (2005) used three case studies of universities to do a comparative analysis to demonstrate the utility of an activity base framework for SaP research.

Critics have highlighted several issues with the case study as a method which Yin (2009) identifies in an attempt to address them. These include: lack of rigour related to failure of the research to carry out a systematic procedure and researcher bias. Another criticism is the inability of the case study to generalize the results. Yin (2009) counters this criticism by arguing that although the case study is not for statistical generalisability, it can provide analytical generalisability. Gerring (2006) also counters this criticism by arguing that the case study is not a method for sorting research questions but an art for looking at - and theorising about - one or two aspects of social reality. The case study is also criticized for taking too long and it generates masses of unreadable documents. This criticism can be considered to be unfair and reflects the critics' confusion of the case study with other data collection methods such as ethnography (Yin, 2009). Positivists have disregarded and over-looked the case study for its inability to establish causal relationships between phenomena (ibid). Nevertheless, critics do not form a strong rationale for abandoning the case study as a research strategy. The purposes for choosing the case study strategy are different from those of a positivist nature. First, what case studies aim to capture cannot be done with quantitative methods that are often abstract with a lack of regard for the context. Second, case studies follow systematic research procedures including analytical frameworks that maintain focus on addressing the research question(s) (Yin, 2013). Furthermore, within a case study one can use a variety of methods.

Thus, the case study remains an ideal strategy for this study due to the nature of this research and the questions this study seeks to answer. This study uses two case organisations as shall be further explained in section 3.4 on research design. The case study contributes to knowledge of individual groups and organisations as well as capturing social, political and related phenomena which makes it suitable for IS, business and social science research (Yin, 2009). In summary, the case study is a suitable strategy for this study for the following reasons: first, the case study answers the question of how and why, which provides an explanation and exploration of a social phenomenon.

Second, the case study strategy is useful for this study as it does not require any control of behaviours or events. Therefore, it helps to study a phenomenon as a whole and not necessarily for generalizability but for the extension of our understanding of the phenomena. In addition to and related to the previous points, the case study helps to increase understanding of contemporary events and behaviour, which can best be studied through either direct observation or interviews with the practitioners. Furthermore, by using the case study method the research can examine current real-life phenomena in depth and capture fundamental contextual issues. Given the above and the fact that within a case study one can use a variety of methods the next sections will run through the options.

3.3.2 Action research

According to Coghlan (2007) action research is a research strategy that emphasises the purpose of research in action rather than research about action; more specifically, it is concerned with the resolution of organisational issues with those involved directly in/with those issues. Similarly, Robson (2002) explains that action research is an iterative process of diagnosing, planning, acting and evaluating a matter within a specific context and with clear purpose. In other words, action research is a research method in which a researcher is a participant and is involved in an iterative process of understanding how to resolve an issue in an organisation. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that it is a particularly useful method for answering the *how* question as it helps to explain how a certain action should be done. Although ethnographic and case studies are common methods in the field of SaP as they provide depth, Balogun et al. (2015) suggest action research as a suitable method for SaP in providing breadth and flexibility especially in highly diversified change oriented organisational settings. Action research has potential for SaP research which seeks to re-engage with practitioners and the exploration of doing strategy as a human activity. In addition, Balogun et al. (2003) argues for the need to be close to strategic practice and practitioners. This suggests the action research method for SaP research, whereby the researcher and research participants engage in the research journey together. Nevertheless, due to its iterative process, action research is a time-consuming method and Myers (1997) argues that there are very few studies in IS that have used this approach. Though action research is useful in answering the *how* question and providing the solution to issues in an organisation, this research is unable

to select it because it is time-consuming and would be impractical considering the time frame for this research.

3.3.3   Ethnography

Saunders et al. (2009) explain ethnography as a research method that is rooted in anthropological studies with the main concern of describing and explaining the social world in which the research subject resides, and in a way that the subject would explain and describe it. This research requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the subjects' social world as much as possible, as well as requiring them to have high flexibility as the researcher will constantly develop new patterns of thought. Cunliffe (2015) suggests ethnography as a valuable method for conducting SaP research as well as for studying contemporary organisations which have complex and dynamic relationships that occur every day. The ethnographic method has the potential to generate new insights into and understanding of the relational and reflexive nature of strategizing as an emerging and lived experience (ibid). Although the ethnographic method is potentially suitable for this research, it is a time-consuming process and very complex for young researchers (Klein and Myers, 1999).

3.3.4   Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a theory-building approach which uses a combination of both deductive and inductive approaches (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It is a useful method for predicting and explaining behaviours (Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004) as it collects data without an initial theoretical framework. In so doing, it develops a theory from the data generated from several observations which is then tested and validated. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that grounded theory is an interpretive process, not a logical deductive process, and the researcher should treat it as a highly creative one. Furthermore, they argue that grounded theory should not be assumed to be an easy method and warn that the perfect craft of good grounded research is the product of considerable experience, hard work, creativity and, occasionally, good luck.

Myers (1997) claims that grounded theory is becoming popular within the IS field as it enables context-based process orientation and an explanation of research phenomenon. Likewise, Orlikowski (2000) recommends grounded theory for IS research, as it advances theoretical concepts on observed phenomena, whilst simultaneously

considering the context of the observed phenomena. Despite the rise and suggestion of using grounded theory in IS, the use of grounded theory in SaP research is scant with the exception of Golden-Biddle and Azuma (2010), where they drew an extant framework by extracting opportunities for contribution using grounded theory analysis of eighty-two articles. Although grounded theory is applauded for considering context and theory development, this research is unable to use it as it somehow depends on luck and the researcher lacks the experience that is required.

3.3.5 Documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews

Considering that this research uses two case studies, and as pointed out earlier one can use a variety of methods within one case study, this research uses case studies with a combination of documentary sources and semi-structured interviews. The use of two sources is good for providing validity as it enables triangulation of data while collecting (Denzin, 2012).

Documentary sources are essential for providing an industry analysis of the telecom sector (selected industry of the case study organisations). The main way that documentary data was sourced was through virtual outputs. Bryman and Bell (2015) suggest that organisations produce significant amounts of virtual outputs that tend to play a fundamental role in establishing an organisation's identity and image. The merit of virtual output data is that it is readily available for public access and it is well disseminated. Therefore, data was collected for this thesis from the websites of the respective organisations and from their official social media profiles to provide background analysis of social media use by these telecom organisations in Tanzania. For example, some data used in this research was collected from the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) website.

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the case organisations Mwiko and Kili (pseudonyms of the case study organisations). Parveen et al. (2015) suggest semi-structured interviews as a useful method for a researcher to hear what informants say about the research topic. In addition, Longhurst (2003) recommends semi-structured interviews, which provide a verbal interchange whereby the researcher can elicit information from informants through a predetermined list of questions whilst allowing the opportunity of unfolding the conversation in a manner

that allows a researcher to have the chance of exploring additional issues which they deem significant. This method is in line with the interpretivist philosophy as it enables an understanding of reality from the narratives of the practitioners and makes sense of their daily reality. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to get close to the practitioners lived experience which make it suitable for SaP research.

After considering the above review of qualitative research methods, and bearing in mind that this study focuses on social media (which is the current reality in contemporary organisations), the use of two case studies and a combination of documentary sources and semi-structured interview has been selected as an appropriate method for this research. The case study method is adopted as it is a common and appropriate method for providing depth in SaP research. In addition, the case study method helps to provide holistic and meaningful knowledge of real-life events in organisational processes. Hence, the next section will discuss the research design for this study.

3.4   Research Design

Following the main research objective - of understanding the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategy within an organisation - this research intends to conduct semi-structured interviews and record documentary analysis using the case of two telecommunications organisations in Tanzania. This approach will help to explore and examine the daily practice of practitioners and management as well as accessing their views on the daily lived experience in the organisation. Also, this approach will help to answer the 'how' question (Yin, 2013). Furthermore, adopting this approach will help to explore the perception of, and the complexity caused by, social media on organisational strategy.

Additionally, this research intends to apply the interpretivist philosophy that will enable an understanding of how social media practices have developed and embedded into organisational structure and processes as well as the way in which they have become part of the organisational strategy through an interpretative process. The combination of the documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and case study method with interpretivist philosophy provides an enriched first-hand description of the intertwined relationships between people (managers and practitioners) and the material arrangement with regards to social media in an organisation.

3.5   Site Selection

The objective of this research provides a framework for selecting case study organisations; the chosen organisations are the ones that have widely incorporated social media into their organisational processes with evidence of the organisation dedicating enough resources to the use of social media. These include human resources and non-human resources such as finances and technical resources. The selection criteria provides a rational base for understanding how the case organisations organise their resources in developing a social media strategy. Furthermore, the selection of multiple case studies helps to provide a better understanding of phenomenon as it offers an opportunity to explore differences and similarities between cases, with the aim of replicating the findings (Yin, 2003). In general, results from multiple case studies are considered more robust and reliable (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

Furthermore, the research is going to take a multiple embedded approach to the case study. This means that the study will have multiple units of data for analysis that will be collected from two different telecommunications (telecom) organisations. In addition to this, within the organisations, this research will investigate different units or departments. For instance, marketing, human resources and IT units and how they have aligned with social media. Analysing units within the organisations will help to develop understanding of how social media strategy is initiated, developed, integrated and routinized within the organisations' functions.

The selection of the telecom industry was based on the criterion that the industry must have a high adoption density of social media. This criterion was informed by the work of Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015), which suggests that organisations adopt social media as a result of social competitor pressure. Similarly, Culnan et al.'s (2010) findings reveal that the social media adoption density of an organisation is reliant on industry. Additionally, Belasen and Rufer (2013) suggest that high-tech industries such as telecom industries are faster at adopting new technologies because they are faced with fast shrinking product cycles. Thus, given that social media is a new technology, telecom organisations are a suitable case in which to explore the impact of social media.

Furthermore, this research has selected Tanzania as a context for exploring the role of social media in organisations. Many social media studies have taken place in the developed Western context, with the exception of a few (e.g. see Mohajerani et al.,

2015; Parveen et al., 2015) which are from the Asian context. The Asian context is also a significantly distinct context to that of Tanzania, which is a sub-Saharan African context. The sub-Saharan African context has been branded as a neglected continent in IS research (Datta et al., 2005). Tanzania is a suitable context since it is an emerging market that is experiencing growth in the use of globalised technologies such as the Internet, social media and mobile telecommunications. Therefore, a case study drawn from this context will be instrumental for both practitioners and academicians.

3.5.1 Case organisations

The telecom industry in Tanzania has seven telecom organisations that are Vodacom, Tigo, Airtel, Halotel, Zantel, Smart and TTCL. The total telecom service subscription in Tanzania is around 40 million (TCRA, 2017), which is equivalent to 80% of the population in Tanzania. Furthermore, the rise in mobile service subscription has led to a rise in Internet consumption. It is estimated that there are 20 Million-Internet subscribers in the country (TCRA, 2017). Most of these subscribers access the Internet via the telecom industry. Figure 2 below shows the size of the telecom organisations through the market subscription share in Tanzania.
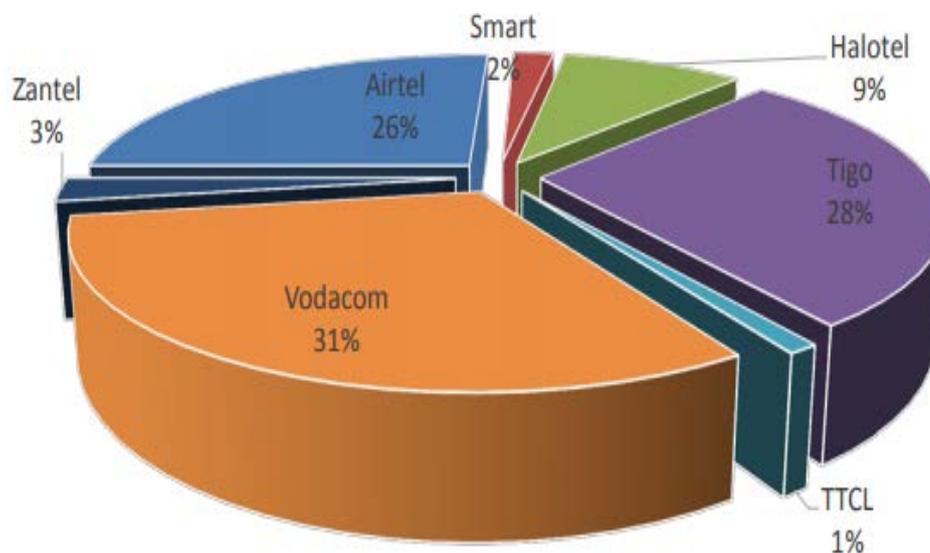
Figure 2 Telecom Subscription Market Share in Tanzania

Source: (TCRA, 2017)

Considering the context of the telecom industry in Tanzania, this research has selected two telecom organisations as case studies. To preserve anonymity and for ethical

purposes,[1] the names of the selected case organisations are pseudonyms - Kili and Mwiko. Both of these telecom companies in Tanzania are active users of social media platforms. Combined, they have approximately 1.5 million followers on their Facebook pages, over 0.2 million Twitter followers, over 0.3 million Instagram followers and over 6,000 YouTube subscribers. These numbers increase every day. Moreover, the telecom companies reach beyond their followers and subscribers because social media platforms allow sharing (i.e. retweets and likes) and visibility to third parties (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Apart from their social media usage, both companies have a network across the country, with offices in each region of Tanzania (Tanzania has 30 regions). Each company employs over a thousand people. As discussed in more detail in the analysis chapter of this thesis, both of these companies have, subsequently, dedicated substantial amounts of their resources to their social media platforms. Having an active social media platform and dedicating enough resources to social media was one of the main criteria for the selection of these two organisations (as per section 3.5). Furthermore, the selected organisations are those that provide access to the researcher to gain information and conduct research in their organisation. Gaining insight from two organisations was preferable as it provides a base for furthering the understanding of how social media is influencing processes, structure and strategy within telecom organisations.

3.5.2 Social media applications

There is a diverse range of social media applications which are available to organisations. Organisations have implemented social media in different areas such as for advertising, internal structure, management systems and public relations (Go and You, 2016). Furthermore, organisations employ a diverse range of social media applications in a combinatory way to maximise the synergistic effects. Organisations deploy multiple social media applications to utilize different aspects of social media functionality therefore rationalising the need to understand how and for what purposes organisations use social media to achieve their strategy (Go and You, 2016). Considering the use of

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[1] In negotiating access to the organisations' data and interviews, it was agreed that we will not disclose their names in the writing.

multiple different social media platforms by organisations, this research has chosen not to specify a social media application as a specimen but rather to explore the comprehensive use of social media in organisations in order to understand the dynamic use and application of social media as a technology in an organisation. Each of the selected case organisations' rationales for implementing social media and the tools they use are discussed and analysed in detail in the analysis chapter. As it will be discussed later, the findings show that social media is increasingly being integrated within the operational structures of organisations and across various departments.

3.6   Case Access

Shenton and Hayter (2004) suggest that one of the fundamental steps in undertaking qualitative research is gaining access to a particular organisation and ensuring that individuals associated with the organisation, for instance employees and practitioners, will serve as informants. This research required access to organisations and individuals within the organisation, therefore access was a process to be undertaken. This section explains how that access was gained both at the organisational and individual levels.

Telecom companies in Tanzania are in stiff competition with each other, hence making them sensitive and resistant to research due to suspicion of spying. Some organisations have a clear policy for not allowing access to academic researchers. Overall, it was realised that the telecom industry does not openly welcome academic research. Nevertheless, this research used the following strategies to gain access to the telecom organisations and the access was successfully obtained.

First, the researcher sought a Research Permit from the Government's Research Commission (COSTECH) before contacting the organisations. This was an alternative way, as usually a researcher would first contact the organisations in order to gather more supporting documentation for the research permit application. With confidence, the researcher applied for the permit using the University's ethical research clearance (Appendix 4 Ethical Clearance) as well as the collaboration/hosting letters (Appendix 5 SMMUCo letters) from the data collection period at the host University (SMMUCo University) and the organisation (Bumaco Ltd) in Tanzania. The possession of the Government's Research Permit and clearance were key and instrumental for obtaining access, as both organisations trusted the academic motive for the research. The

research clearance permit (Appendix 1: Research permit) underscored the legitimacy and credibility of the research.

Second, Peters et al. (2012) suggest reciprocation as a technique for gaining access to organisations. Reciprocating is agreeing to share findings with the organisation and to make available copies of any papers that emerge from that research. While seeking access to the organisations, the researcher suggested an opportunity to share some findings with the organisations and discuss how the organisations could benefit from the research findings. This was a win-win agreement as it will, amongst other things, facilitate the dissemination of the research findings to the relevant audience, may help the organisations improve their practice and also test the recommendations for future research prospects.

Mention can also be made of the published article co-authored by the researcher (Kwayu et al., 2016b) with the focus on one of the telecom organisations in the country. The presence of the published article, which was also shared with the organisations, cemented the trustworthiness of the research.

Third, Gorman and Clayton (1997) suggest openness as a means of influencing access to an organisation. They suggest that the researcher is open about a range of issues that will address concerns that the representatives of the collaborating organisations may have. This includes issues such as choices of field work sites. Tanzania is a relatively big country with some areas still remote and far from the main towns and cities. Visiting some of these sites may need more resources, in terms of finance, time and coordination. Thus, being honest about such limitations during access negotiations enabled a practical schedule for valid research to be drawn up. For example, the fieldwork schedule at Mwiko was coordinated by the human resources manager of the company which may have been difficult for the researcher to do. Some of the sites which he intended to schedule had to be re-negotiated according to the details of the research clearance permit as well as the field dynamics. Thus, openness enabled access which was well coordinated and ensured the success of the project.

The fourth technique that was used to gain access to the telecom organisations was a demonstration of professional suitability (Shenton and Hayter, 2004). The researchers developed contact with professionals while making preliminary approaches to the organisation. This was done by demonstrating an awareness of wider professional

trends occurring in the telecom industry as well as local developments. For instance, the researcher was engaging in various discussions regarding the new Cyber Crime Act (2015) in Tanzania that is linked to the use of social media. The professional contacts facilitated the researcher's contact with the authorities, which enabled the researcher to gain access at Mwiko and Kili.

Furthermore, other techniques such as exploiting past links with organisations as well as being receptive to suggestions contributed to gaining access to the organisations. Through links with professionals and practitioners, the researcher was advised on ways to gain access. The authorities of the organisations suggested things that could be done in order to get access to the organisations. For instance, being directed to the right people who dealt with research such as the human resources departments.

In addition to gaining access to the organisations, access to individuals who are the informants was also a crucial process to undertake. Individual consent to participate was a necessity. Furthermore, individual willingness and openness was essential for enriching this research with significant information. The following tactics were deployed to gain access to individual informants.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) advise the researcher to place an emphasis on individual personal contribution. This can be done through showing gratitude and acknowledging informants' time, cooperation and the importance of them contributing to the research. This technique was often used to encourage participants who felt that their contribution would not be valuable. The researcher explained how their experience will contribute to new knowledge. This steered informants' passion and energy to contribute as well as to consent to the interviews.

In addition, since Tanzania is a power society, where much emphasis put on authority (Hofstede, 1985), this research often referred to the support of some 'authority' who (i.e. managers) / which (i.e. research clearance authority) had already backed this research in order to influence access to individuals (Shenton and Hayter, 2004). This, as explained earlier, provided assurance to participants that the research was legitimate and credible. In absence of this, participants would fear that their participation would be interpreted as spilling organisational secrets. Hence, participants had nothing to fear because it had the seal of approval of relevant authority. Also, important to note, is that

individuals were informed of their rights, so they were not forced to participate and hence this eliminated potential of biasness.

3.7 Data Collection

As indicated earlier (section 3.3.5), the data for this research was collected through documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. In addition, section 3.3.5 explains how data was collected from documentary sources. Concerning semi-structured interviews, the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one hour long and were done with managers and staff at Mwiko and Kili. The rationale for doing this was based on Golsorkhi et al. (2015) and Jarzabkowski (2005)'s suggestion that strategy is something that is done by an organisation and its multiple actors, which include managers and staff. The managers were selected for interview based on their decision-making role with regards to social media whereas the staff are the practitioners who implement the decisions and their actions have significant implications on the outcome of strategy.

Often with semi-structured interviews, there are pre-determined questions to guide the interview (Longhurst, 2003). Apart from providing a guide to the interview, these pre-determined questions (which are in Appendix 2: Interview Schedule) played a significant role in gaining access to the organisation, as well as to the individuals, as they could look at the sort of questions that would be asked. It also gave them a chance to know, in brief, what the interview would be about. In general, the interview schedule had three parts. The first part was to discover the roles and duties of the informant. The second part was to ascertain the information technologies that the interviewee used in his/her roles and the third part was to learn how they used social media and how it has affected their roles. The nature of the interview guiding questions allowed for open discussion and probing as more questions arose from the explanations given by the interviewees. For cross-checking purposes, interviewees were questioned about some of the issues/responses that were raised in previous interviews. This helped the researcher to understand some of the issues in a deeper way and from different perspectives; it was also a means of exploring new things that the informant had to say. This echoes Orlikowski and Baroudi's (1991) suggestion that on undertaking interpretivist research the researcher should not hold predetermined views on the phenomena, as it will destroy the process of gaining new knowledge.

A total of twenty-two semi-structured interviews were carried out with staff from both companies Mwiko and Kili. Twelve interviews were done at Mwiko and ten interviews at Kili. The interviews were conducted with different participants from different departments such as marketing, management, public relations, product development, finance and the IT department. In some instances, clarification was sought, meaning that the interviewer had to contact informants again to seek clarification on certain explanations (i.e. if there was contradictory information that was gathered in another interview). This happened twice and, in both cases, the interviewees were willing to clarify, and the explanations and meanings became clear. Table 7 has a profile of all the interviewees in this research.

Table 7 Interviewee profile

No	Profile	Organisation	Place of Interview (Region)	Date of Interview	No	Profile	Organisation	Place of Interview (Region)	Date of Interview
1	CEO	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	06/12/2016	1	Zonal Manager	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
2	Manager IT Operation	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	16/11/2016	2	Zonal customer care manager	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
3	IT Staff	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	17/11/2016	3	Branch manager (Branch A)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	25/01/2017
4	Marketing Manager	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	18/11/2016	4	Branch manager (Branch B)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	29/01/2017
5	Marketing Staff	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	18/11/2016	5	Sales person	Kili	Kilimanjaro	03/02/2017
6	Finance Manager	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	21/11/2016	6	Team leader	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
7	Manager Network Development	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	22/11/2016	7	Customer Service (Branch A)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
8	Manager Product Development	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	23/11/2016	8	Customer service (Branch B)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	29/01/2017
9	Human Resource Head	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	24/11/2016	9	Marketing Manager	Kili	Kilimanjaro	03/02/2017
10	Human Resource Staff	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	24/11/2016	10	IT staff	Kili	Kilimanjaro	03/02/2017
11	Regional Manager	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	28/11/2016					
12	Public Relation Manager Communication	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	29/11/2016					

One of the most important things in research is to decide upon an ideal sample size. Braun et al. (2019) suggest that there is no magic formula for determining the ideal sample size in fully qualitative research. This research adopted a purposive sampling technique which is recommended by Saunders et al. (2009) as a suitable technique for a case study, since it allows the selection of the sample based on the characteristics of the population and the objective of the study. The criterion that was used in this research was the selection of at least two representatives from every functional department, a manager and a member of staff. This selection criterion was informed by Jarzabkowski's (2005) suggestion that strategy is not only done by the managers but by multiple actors. In addition, Bharati et al. (2014) suggest that social media is deployed by multiple departments. Unfortunately, in qualitative research, sample size cannot be wholly determined in advance of data collection as it is often informed by various contextual and pragmatic considerations (Braun et al., 2019). Although it was intended to select a manager and a member of staff from each department. It was impossible to meet this objective due to reasons such as the level of access given by the organisation or the nature of the department. This is an example of some of the limitations that the researcher encountered. Flexibility was key to ensure successful collection of data. Considering that this research is exploratory, these changes have no significant effect as the main aim is to gain insight.

On the other hand, Yin (2013) suggests the 'construct validity test' as a means of selecting an ideal sample size, recommending the use of multiple sources of evidence to establish a chain of evidence. The construct validity test happens at the data collection phase. This research collected data from different sources which included observations of activities and context within the case organisations, documentary analysis and interviews with staff and managers of Kili and Mwiko. Furthermore, following Saunders et al.'s (2009) argument that interview data collection should proceed until data saturation is attained, the researcher continued interviewing until it was deemed that the data was saturated. Guest et al. (2006) suggest that saturation is reached within the first twelve interviews while elements of meta-themes are present as early as the sixth interview. Despite the fact that saturation can be obtained with around twelve

interviews, Hennink et al. (2017) suggest that to obtain codes that go beyond the surface level, a large sample size of around 16-24 interviews is needed to achieve saturation or not at all. This research includes 22 interviews and saturation was evident from the fact that interviewees kept on re-emphasising information that the previous interviewees had said and there were no new or significant pieces of information from further interviewees. Nevertheless, as part of the contingency plan, this research agreed with the respective organisations to conduct further interviews if the researcher needed more information. Also, participants were willing and agreed to answer further questions via Skype or email correspondence if the researcher needed further clarification. Furthermore, another element of the construct validity suggested by Saunders et al. (2009) is to have key informants to review the draft case study report, which is done in the composition stage. Some of the findings from this research have been presented in published academic papers and a journal article, which had a review from experts and key informants. This was an appropriate litmus test of the collection of data and of the research, indicating that it has provided a valid and credible contribution to knowledge.

The interviews were conducted in both the Swahili and English languages. The researcher is Tanzanian and fluent in both languages. In Tanzania, people mix Swahili and English when they talk to other Tanzanians. It was, thus, rational to use both languages so that the informants could freely express themselves in their language of choice. Each interview lasted for a period of 45 minutes to an hour. These interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The recordings were done for accuracy to confirm the correct recollection of information. Therefore, records were made to aid the analysis process.

The interview schedule is attached in the Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

3.8   Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research has been done using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (which refers to themes) is a method of identifying and analysing patterns of meaning in a dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006) with the aim of highlighting the most

salient constellations of meaning present in the dataset (Joffe, 2012). Joffe (2012) suggests that such constellations include an affective, a cognitive and a symbolic dimension. In this way, thematic analysis can capture the manifest and latent drivers concerning an issue. Thus, thematic analysis can reveal issues that are directly observable or latent issues that are implied (ibid). The ability to capture observable and latent issues makes this approach significant for this research as strategic practices are often difficult to measure, observe or represent as they are hidden, tacit and often linguistically inexpressible in propositional terms (De La Ville and Mounoud, 2015). Understanding the meaning of the theme is central in conducting thematic analysis otherwise the analysis can be highly subjective (Joffe, 2012). Braun et al. (2019) argue that there are two competing conceptualisations of the theme: the theme as a domain of summaries and the theme as a shared meaning-based pattern. As a domain summary, themes are summaries of what participants said in relation to a topic or issue. This approach captures the surface level of meaning and it has been criticised as being underdeveloped, whereas the theme as a shared pattern of meaning reflects a pattern of shared meaning organised around a core concept or idea. In this approach, the themes capture the essence and spread of meaning by uniting data which might otherwise be observed as being disparate or meaning that occurs in multiple and varied contexts. Braun et al. (2019) suggest that this conceptualisation captures implicit ideas beneath the surface level of the data as well as more explicit and concrete meaning. Following these two types of themes, this research develops themes which share meaning that are organised around a core concept or idea. In general, themes are developed from codes which are smaller units of meaning (DeSantis and Ugarriza, 2000). Another important aspect of understanding themes is how they are developed. There are two ways of developing themes: the deductive approach and the inductive approach. Using the deductive approach, themes are developed from theoretical ideas that the researcher brings into the research (Joffe, 2012). Braun et al. (2019) conceptualise the deductive approach as analytic inputs where patterns are identified and developed at the start of the analytic process. In the inductive approach, which Braun et al. (2019) conceptualise as analytic output, patterns are identified and

developed later in the analytic process. In the inductive approach, themes are developed from the raw data (Joffe, 2012). Data is collected and explored it to extract issues and themes that emerge and followed by concentration on them (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In qualitative research, the inductive approach is preferable since there is little significance in conducting qualitative research without naturally obtaining the themes from the data itself. Despite these two archetypes of thematic approach, in practice both are utilised together, as a researcher approaches data with preconceived ideas derived from theory as well as being open to new concepts and themes that emerge. This research took a pragmatic approach of utilising both inductive and deductive approaches. Thus, this research follows an inductive process to understand the emergence of strategic practices within the organisation. Such an approach is consistent with the emphasis on emergence in SaP. However, it also recognises that research data is approached with ideas that are derived from existing literature and theory.

Braun et al. (2019) identify three types (schools) of thematic analysis that are: coding reliability, codebook and reflexive. The distinction between these schools is significant and assists the researcher in avoiding common pitfalls by citing sources on - and sometimes following - procedures for approaches to thematic analysis that do not align conceptually or in practice. Considering this significance, the school of thematic analysis will be explained briefly.

Coding reliability is considered as a partial qualitative approach because it shares some values with the quantitative approach such as reliability and replicability of observation (Joffe, 2012). Braun et al. (2019) argue that this approach bridges the divide between the qualitative and quantitative approaches by adopting some of the logic of post-positivist philosophy. Themes in this approach are mainly domain summaries, whereas coding is guided by a code book which is a list of codes with labels, definitions and procedure on how to identify a code with data examples (Boyatzis, 1998). Normally, this coding process is done with more than one person. After coding, the level of agreement is calculated using Cohen's Kappa and reliability is obtained with a score of 0.80 or above to signal accurate and reliable coding. Cohen's Kappa is a statistic that is used to measure inter-reliability for a qualitative term. It is normally done when there are two or more

people involved in coding. This method is used to control researcher bias or influence. This research did not deploy this method because there was just one researcher involved in the coding process and also it does not follow the coding reliability school of thematic analysis. Furthermore, Braun et al. (2019) criticise this approach because it disregards the meaning of good qualitative research which is centred on deep engagement, commitment and rigour in an open, exploratory design and analytic process that prioritizes researcher subjectivity and reflexivity.

Another school of thematic analysis is the codebook approach. Braun et al. (2019) suggest that this approach is similar to the code reliability approach especially in the way of coding, but it differs from coding reliability in the way it measures reliability; for instance, it does not rely on formulas such as Cohen's Kappa. Furthermore, they suggest that the codebook approach is underpinned by the philosophy of reflexive thematic analysis which will be explained further below. The downside of this approach is that themes are typically conceptualised as domain summaries (Ibid).

 A reflexive approach to thematic analysis is conceptualised as a fully qualitative approach which usually emphasises meaning as contextual or situated, reality or realities as multiple and researcher subjectivity as not just valid but a resource (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This approach is suitable for understanding social media which is dynamic, complex and has multiple effects. In addition, this analytical approach is appropriate for this study which conceptualises strategy as situated activity (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Hence, this study follows a reflexive approach to thematic analysis which is conceptually consistent with this research.

A reflexive approach considers a theme as shared meaning and coding as output. Coding in the reflexive approach is an organic and open iterative process which is not fixed at the start of the process (Braun et al., 2019). Codes are developed throughout the process whereby initial codes might be split into two or more different codes, renamed or combined with other codes. This helps the researcher to understand the meaning of the data beyond the surface level. Braun et al. (2019) suggest that the aim of this process is not to summarize data or reduce researcher subjectivity but to provide a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data from the data set. Thus, a researcher becomes a

storyteller, actively engaged in interpreting data through the lens of their own cultural membership, social positioning, theoretical assumptions, ideological commitments and their scholarly knowledge (ibid). In this way, Braun et al. (2019) suggest that the reflexive thematic approach gives a voice to socially marginalised groups or to groups rarely allowed to speak or be heard in a particular context. In a keynote speech by Prof Jarzabkowski (2019) on the state of the art of strategy as practice research, she emphasised the importance of narrative in SaP research as well as the novelty of SaP to make the ordinary become explicit. For instance, most of the strategy research associates strategy making with managers but the SaP perspective acknowledges strategy is made up of multiple actors in an organisation and provides a voice to socially marginalised groups such as staff and other actors in that organisation. Likewise, De La Ville and Mounoud (2015) suggest that narrative enables strategy research to engage more deeply in the practice and, in turn, to develop a certain research sensibility to the unspoken, the inarticulate and even the often-unconscious aspects of strategy making. Thus, a reflexive approach to thematic analysis is consistent with the theoretical underpinning of this research as well as the phenomenon of social media which is a complex and dynamic technology.

Braun et al. (2019) set out six phases for doing reflexive thematic analysis. These phases are not linear but reflexive and recursive. The phases are: familiarisation, generating codes, constructing themes, revising themes, defining themes and producing the report. The remainder of this section will explain how analysis was done in this research in accordance with these phases.

The first phase is familiarisation, which requires a shift in focus from data generation (including transcription) to analysis, a relaxed process which requires the researcher to be immersed and engaged with the data in different ways (Braun et al., 2019). As mentioned earlier, the data was collected in a mix of Swahili and English, therefore, it was transcribed and also translated. This provided an extra opportunity to become familiar with the data. In addition, the data was analysed manually without the assistance of computer-aided software such as NVivo. The researcher used Microsoft Word, with tools such as comments to tag, code or write thoughts on the data. The

researcher engaged with the data recursively as part of it was used for writing research articles and book chapters. The whole process of analysis allowed the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data through listening to the interview records, re-reading transcripts and making notes/comments.

The next aspect of data analysis is generating codes, which is a more systematic and detailed engagement with the data. It is a rigorous process of making sense of the data, where data is organised around similar meanings and the content is reduced into collated chunks of text. It involves attaching clear labels to these chunks of data (Braun et al., 2019). This research developed codes in an inductive orientation. Codes (labels/tags) were assigned to a group of text using the comment tool of Microsoft Word. The tags were assigned based on the meaning of the data and informed by ideas drawn from the literature on social media and the SaP perspective. In addition, depending on the context, a single code could have a different meaning. For example, social media could mean social media account, a 'free social media' service package, and or WhatsApp groups. Considering this, the researcher distinguished the codes and the context by developing three different dimensions that could explain the context of the content. These dimensions were: social media accounts, 'free social media' (i.e. free Internet access to social media) and social media (WhatsApp) communications. The dimensions were developed to assist the presentation of the findings and to enable understanding and clear interpretation of the message that was conveyed by the data set. Occasionally, the content meaning could be applicable to all contexts (dimensions) and on some occasions, it meant a particular context e.g. social media account. The dimensions are different from themes. The dimensions were developed because the use of the term 'social media' in Tanzania telecom organisations has multiple meanings and sometimes they overlap. Thus, the codes captured both the explicit and the implicit meaning of the content. Overall, the coding process was done repeatedly.

Theme construction was also a part of the analysis process in this research: it was a continuation of the coding process. Braun et al. (2019) suggest that themes are built, moulded and assigned meaning at the intersection of data, research question(s), researcher experience and subjectivity. In addition, they explain that good themes are

those which tell a coherent, insightful story about the data in relation to the research question. The themes for this research were developed by clustering together similar codes with their associated data. As seen in Figure 3 below a group of codes formed a theme. And a group of themes formed thematic dimension. The themes of this research were not simply domain summaries, but they were categorised into a meaning-based pattern. The themes were constructed/designed in a way that linked: data, research questions and theoretical knowledge. Since themes in this research are at the intersection of data, research questions and theoretical knowledge, they are well-represented in Chapter IV: Findings and Chapter V: Discussion. Figure 3 below shows the analysis of social media in the Tanzanian telecom case organisations.

Subject	Thematic Dimension	Themes	Codes

		Tanzania context	• Population • Economic growth • Incomes
	Context	Telecommunications industry	• Telecoms • Mobile subscription • Internet penetration • Social media usage
		Presence & perception of social media in telecoms	• Presence • Rationale • Recognition
Social media in Tanzania Telecom organisations	Social media Platforms	Selection and management of social media	• Selection • Centralisation • Skills • External assistance
		Impact of social media in Telecoms	• Marketing • Cost • Feedback • Negative attacks
		Implementation of 'free social media'	• Billing • Capabilities
	'Free social media' service	Rationality of 'free social media'	• Technological Advancement • Competition
		Impact of 'free social media'	• Sales • Promotion
		Use of WhatsApp communications	• Formation • Composition • Recognition • Behaviours
	WhatsApp Communication	Implication of WhatsApp Communications	• Knowledge sharing • Processes • Structure • Social capital
		Affordances and constriction of WhatsApp	• Speed • Ease • Assistance • Mobilization • Distraction • Search

Figure 3 Analysis of Social Media in the Tanzanian Telecom Case Organisations

Figure 3 above illustrates the analysis of social media in the two telecom case organisations in Tanzania. It contains an analysis of data from two main sources; that is from documents and from interviews. To gain context most of the data was documentary analysis of Tanzania and the telecommunications industry in Tanzania. The analysis explains the demographics, income, Internet and mobile use in the country. The analysis of context is crucial to support the understanding of social media within case organisations. The other three thematic dimensions are from interviews within the case organisations and they represent three dimensions of social media practice within telecom organisations. The dimensions explain, first, how social media platforms are used by organisations. Second, how telecom organisations offer a 'free social media' service – free Internet access to social media when purchasing their service. Finally, how telecom organisations use social media (WhatsApp) for internal communication. The codes represent different aspects associated with the social media practice in telecom organisations.

Furthermore, the analysis included revising and defining the themes. Braun et al. (2019) suggest this process is essential in ensuring that themes are rich in meaning and their richness is not diminished by overlapping themes. The themes were revised to ensure that each theme represents a central organising idea and meaningful pattern across the data set. Revision of each theme was carried out in the iterative process of clustering and categorising codes. This revision process was done with assistance from my research supervisors. In addition, this research carried out four rounds of revising the themes, in different copies of a Word document. Each copy represented a version of refined themes as different codes were arranged and clustered together to form themes and dimensions. The constructed themes emerged from the data and the subjects of the research questions; theory signalled the scope of the themes which were implicitly defined by their labels. In addition, the revision and scope of the themes was further polished during the writing-up process.

The final phase of analysing the data was in the writing-up process. The writing-up process weaves together the extant literature from social media and the SaP perspective, results from data collection and discussion, while offering a final

opportunity for inspiration and deeper insight into the analysis. The writing-up process re-assists in the revision and definition of the themes by re-aligning data extracts with analytical claims. The writing-up process, as part of analysing the data, was carried out in this thesis as well as other outputs of this research which include: conference papers, a journal article and book chapters. The analytical story is presented, in detail, in Chapter IV: Findings.

3.9   Research Credibility

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), research credibility is a proposed criterion against which the truth value of qualitative research should be judged. To develop credibility and rigour in qualitative research, Patton (1999) suggests that attention should be centred on reliability, validity and generalisation.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) suggest that reliability is the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures yield consistent findings, which means dealing with the researcher's and the participants' bias and errors. This research dealt with participants' bias while collecting data by organising one-to-one interviews which created an environment for the participants to speak freely without fear of their managers. Also, it made their participation anonymous. The participants' errors were dealt with by asking similar questions to the same participant to ensure the consistency of their answers. Likewise, other participants were asked similar questions to confirm the data provided by the participants. In addition, because this was exploratory research, I did not insert my pre-determined views in order to allow new knowledge to be collected from the views of the participants. Although there was an interview guide, questions were at times generated by the responses of the interviewees, in order to gain deeper insight indifferent to any predetermined views.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about. Thurmond (2001) suggests triangulation as one of the best ways to increase validity and to strengthen the interpretative potential of a study. Furthermore, Thurmond suggests that triangulation reduces researcher bias and also enriches the study with multiple perspectives. Denzin (2012) explains

triangulation as a combination of two or more data sources, methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives or analytical methods within the same study. As explained in the discussion of data collection, this study performed triangulation using different data sources. Documentary data and interviews were used as the main sources for this research. In addition, the researcher used the observation method to observe some of the practices of telecom organisations in Tanzania. Observations were carried out whilst in the field conducting the interviews and during informal interactions with the organisations. For example, during an interview, the regional manager of Mwiko showed me his WhatsApp groups so I could see what he was talking about. The use of different data collection methods such as observation and documentary analysis helped the triangulation of this study as it informed the researcher with deeper understanding of the phenomena. Thurmond (2001) suggests that the use of triangulation is to contribute to the understanding of the phenomena under study.

Finally, Saunders et al. (2009) explain generalisability (which is also referred to as 'external validity') as the extent to which the research results are generalizable. In addition, generalizability depends on the purpose of the research, for example, in some cases the aim is to provide a theory that is generalizable to a population while in other cases the purpose is simply to try and explain what is going on in a particular setting. Given the aim of this research, which was to explore the phenomena, the generalisability of these results will depend on the future studies that are spawned from this research.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical research is a moral and sustainable way of creating knowledge in any particular discipline, including in the field of information systems. An ethical approach considers the appropriateness of researcher behaviour in relation to the rights of the subjects (participants and organisations) and how such behaviour can affect the subjects. Saunders et al. (2009) suggest that in researching ethically, a researcher should consider how they formulate and clarify their research topic, design, gain access, collect data, process, store and analyse the data, and write up the research. This indicates that ethical issues are important in every stage of research development. Furthermore, Saunders et

al. (2009) identify two philosophical positions in research ethics: a deontological and a teleological view. The deontological view argues that the products of the research cannot justify the use of unethical research. The teleological view argues that the ends justify the means. This research follows a deontological view, which means that this research will lose credibility, be invalid and illegitimate if it fails to consider ethical issues.

This research has followed all the ethical procedures for conducting research at all of the development stages. The research was guided by the Nottingham Trent University's code of ethics, which outlines the principles and procedures for conducting research in an ethical manner. For instance, this includes respecting the consent of the informants, and their respective organisation, and keeping the interviewee responses anonymous from their managers and other staff. This research obtained ethical approval (Appendix 4 Ethical Clearance) from the University Research and Ethics Committee. Ethical issues that were considered included: privacy of the organisations and interview participants, voluntariness and consent of participants, confidentiality of the individuals and their respective organisation (Appendix 6 Participant Consent Form), participants' rights (Appendix 7 Participant Information Sheet) as well as the effects on the participants in the process after collection of data (e.g. during analysis and reporting of the data). In practicing an ethical approach, this research is impacted in several ways such as the use of pseudonyms for the companies. In addition, some of the data that would lead to identification of the companies is purposefully disguised, so there can be no means of identifying the companies. Despite such effects to this research, efforts have been made to ensure the knowledge obtained from the field is not undermined in any significant manner. For instance, the history of the companies can easily lead to the identification of the organisations but, on the other hand, it is important for understanding the present phenomena in the organisations.

In addition, data from this research was collected in Tanzania, where procedures for doing research in the mainland of Tanzania must comply with the government circular MPEC/B/10/1 of 4th May 1980 which requires that any individual or institution that wishes to carry out research must obtain a research clearance permit from the

Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH, 2017). Following this prerequisite, a research clearance was sought for this research - a copy of the permit is attached as Appendix 1: Research Permit. Evidence of emails and other correspondence between the researcher and organisations can be presented upon request.

4 Chapter IV: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings collected from the two telecom organisations, Mwiko and Kili. The chapter is organised based on the four thematic dimensions obtained from the data analysis. First, the chapter presents the context of Tanzania, a brief overview of the telecommunication industry in Tanzania and the usage of social media in Tanzania. The intention is to provide an understanding of the context in which the telecom organisations operate. Following this, the chapter presents the findings on social media practice from the case of the two organisations Mwiko and Kili. The findings are presented in the narratives of the practitioners (interview respondents) from the case organisations with complementary explanations. The aim was to show the reality of social media practice from the interpretations of the practitioners. Thus, following the context, the chapter continues to present the social media platform, which explains the various social media accounts owned by the organisations. It describes how the case organisations view social media platforms, how they manage the platforms and the implications for social media platforms of the case organisations. The third part of the findings presents how the two telecom case organisations offer 'free social media'. This part explains how the 'free social media' is implemented within the case organisations the rationality of 'free social media' and the impact of 'free social media' on the two telecom case organisations. Lastly, the chapter presents the use of social media for internal communication within the case organisations which is mainly via WhatsApp. It explains the use, implications, affordances and limitations of WhatsApp communication within the telecom organisation.

4.2 Context

The aim of this section is two-fold. First is to provide the context of Tanzania and second to give the context of the telecommunications industry in Tanzania. Hence, this section is divided into two parts. The first part, which is the Tanzania context, explains the

population of Tanzania, the economic growth, and the average income of the citizens in Tanzania. The second part, which discusses the context of the telecommunications industry, provides information about the telecom organisations, mobile subscriptions, Internet penetration and the usage of social media in Tanzania.

4.2.1 Tanzania context

Tanzania, located in East Africa, has an estimated population of 44 million people (URT Census, 2012) with a per capita income of £345 (MOF, 2017). Around 90% of the population are small-scale farmers (Sedoyeka et al., 2008). Since 2001, the country has experienced impressive economic growth averaging 6-7% annual growth. However, there is still a significant part of the population, approximately 12 million, living in poverty with earnings of less than £0.50 per day (World Bank, 2017). The economic growth is in large part contributed to by the service sector including communication, of which the highest growth was recorded in comparison with other economic activities with a growth rate of 20.6% (MOF, 2017). This growth was contributed to by development and increased investment in technology, which also led to the increased use of social media within organisations; thus, making the study of social media and its impact within organisations a topical phenomenon for investigation.

4.2.2 Telecommunications Industry

Currently, there are seven telecommunications (telecom) organisations in Tanzania. The largest and the oldest fixed telecom company in the country is Tanzania Telecommunication Company Limited (TTCL), which is state-owned. TTCL has 129,597 fixed-line subscribers (TCRA, 2017). The company enjoyed the luxury of monopoly up until the mid-1990s when the country adopted market liberalisation. The telecom sector has seen growth in mobile phone services with the current seven companies that are Vodacom, Tigo, Airtel, Halotel, Zantel, Smart, and TTCL. The total number of telecom service subscriptions in Tanzania is 40,173,783, which is equivalent to 80% of the population. In addition to the growth of mobile services, Tanzania has also experienced growth in Internet penetration. There are 19,862,525 Internet subscribers, which is almost half of the mobile subscribers using the Internet. The telecom companies are the

major Internet suppliers in the country. The figures below illustrate this data. Figure 4 shows the percentage of telecom subscriptions in the country according to the market share held by each of the telecom companies, whereas Figure 5 shows t Internet penetration in Tanzania.
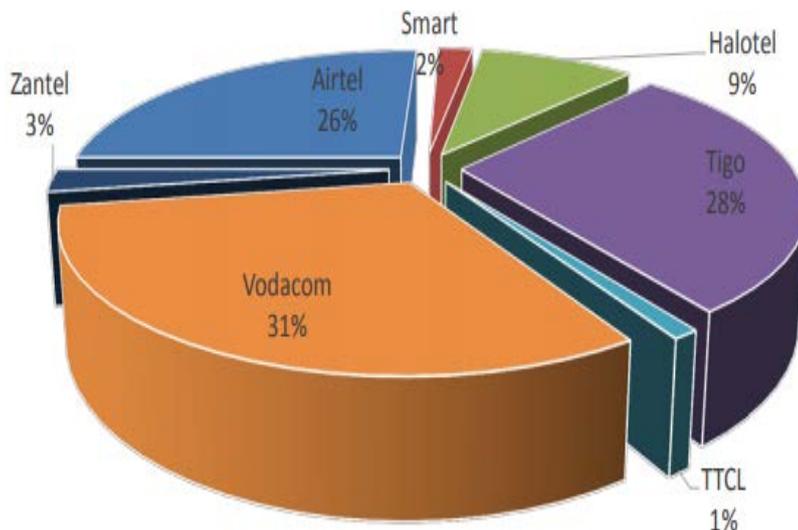
Figure 4 Telecom Subscription Market Share in Tanzania
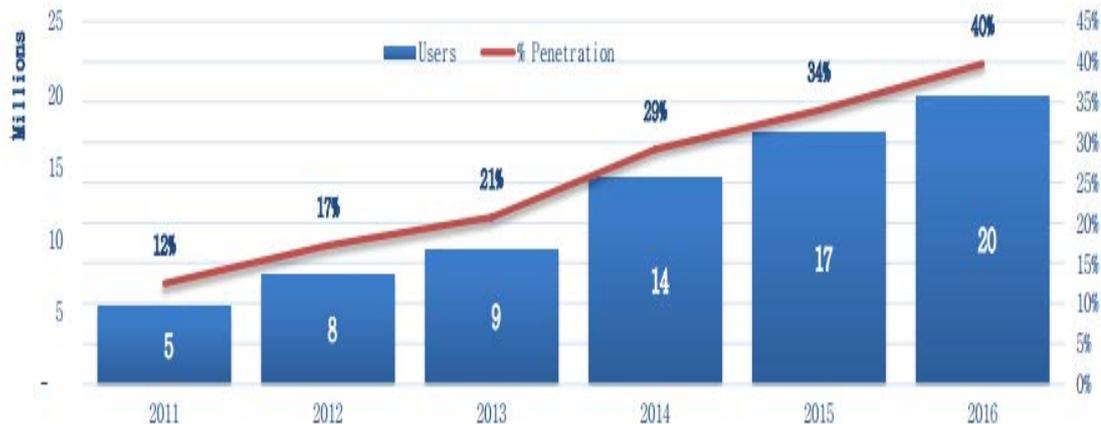
Source; (TCRA, 2017)

Figure 5 Trend of Internet Penetration in Tanzania

Key: Y-axis; LHS – Population in millions, RHS- percentage of population. X-axis; Years
Source; (TCRA, 2017)
In terms of subscription, the figures above show that three major companies (Vodacom, Tigo, and Airtel) dominate the telecom industry. These three organisations own 85% of the subscription market share. This indicates stiff competition between these three

organisations. On the other hand, Figure 5 shows impressive growth in Internet penetration in Tanzania from 2011 to 2016. It underscores Walsham's (2017) observation of the explosion in the use of Internet and mobile technologies in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade. The growth of Internet penetration in Tanzania is not just the growth in the number of Internet users but also their proportion to the population has increased. This reflects an increase in demand for Internet usage, which creates a conducive environment for social media usage. In addition, it is arguable that social media is the driver for increasing the demand for the Internet. Rana and Dwivedi (2015) suggest that the impact of mobile and telecommunication growth prompts citizens to learn new ways of exploiting technology in a wide range of styles, such as communication and seeking information through social media.

Although Internet penetration has increased in Tanzania, the infrastructure that supports modern demands for the Internet (high-speed Internet services such as online streaming) is relatively low. The coverage of a 4G (Fourth Generation) network that supports high-speed Internet is comparatively small compared to 2G (Second Generation). Figure 6 shows the coverage of 2G, 3G, and 4G networks in the country. The shaded areas in each diagram indicate the coverage of the respective 2G, 3G, and 4G networks. The difference is significant, and it reflects the varying quality of the communication services in the country.
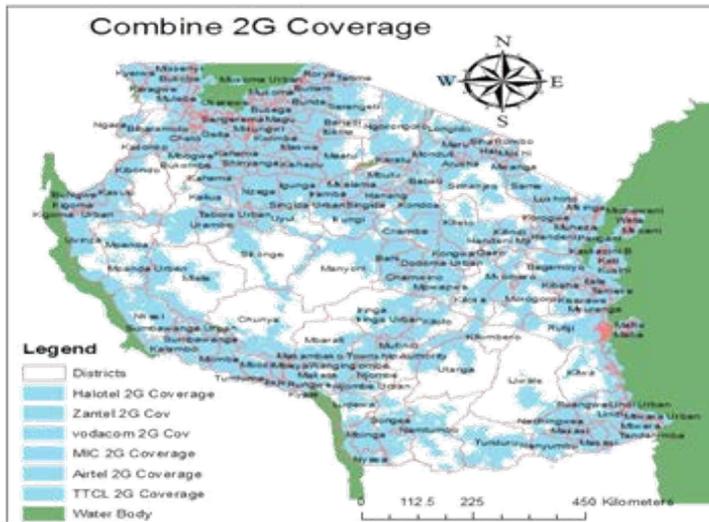
a)
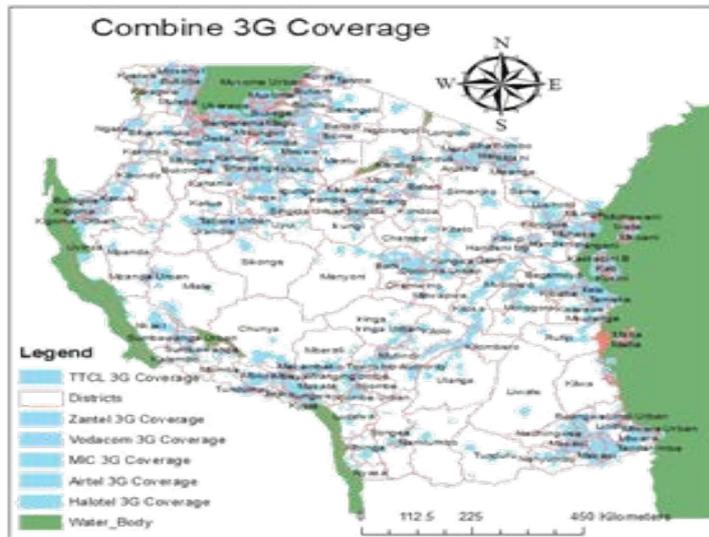
b)
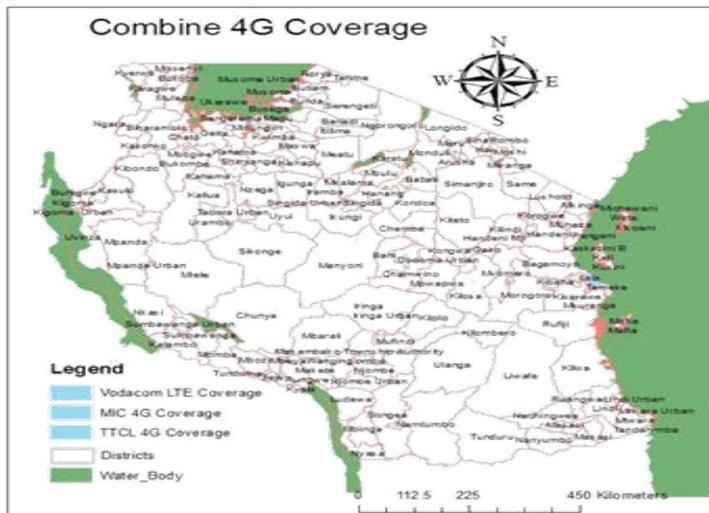
c)

Figure 6 Network Coverage in Tanzania

Source: UCSAF (Universal Communication Service Access Fund) Tanzania

The diagrams above suggest that despite increasing access to the Internet, the quality of Internet connections fluctuates depending on the infrastructure set up in the country. The network coverage influences the quality of the Internet consequently potentially affecting the use of the Internet for activities such as social media consumption.

The available statistics on the usage of social media in Tanzania indicate the growing use of social media in the country. According to GlobalStat, Facebook is the most-used social media platform in Tanzania followed by Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Facebook has an estimated 6.1 million subscribers in Tanzania, which is equivalent to 14% of the population (Internet World Stats, 2017). The data on social media usage in Tanzania is vague, howeverm from my observation and experience, it is apparent that Instagram and WhatsApp are more popular and more widely used than Pinterest, Twitter and YouTube. The usage of Instagram, and WhatsApp is arguably reaching the levels of Facebook usage. Figure 7 below shows the percentage usage of different social media platforms in Tanzania based on the data from GlobalStats.
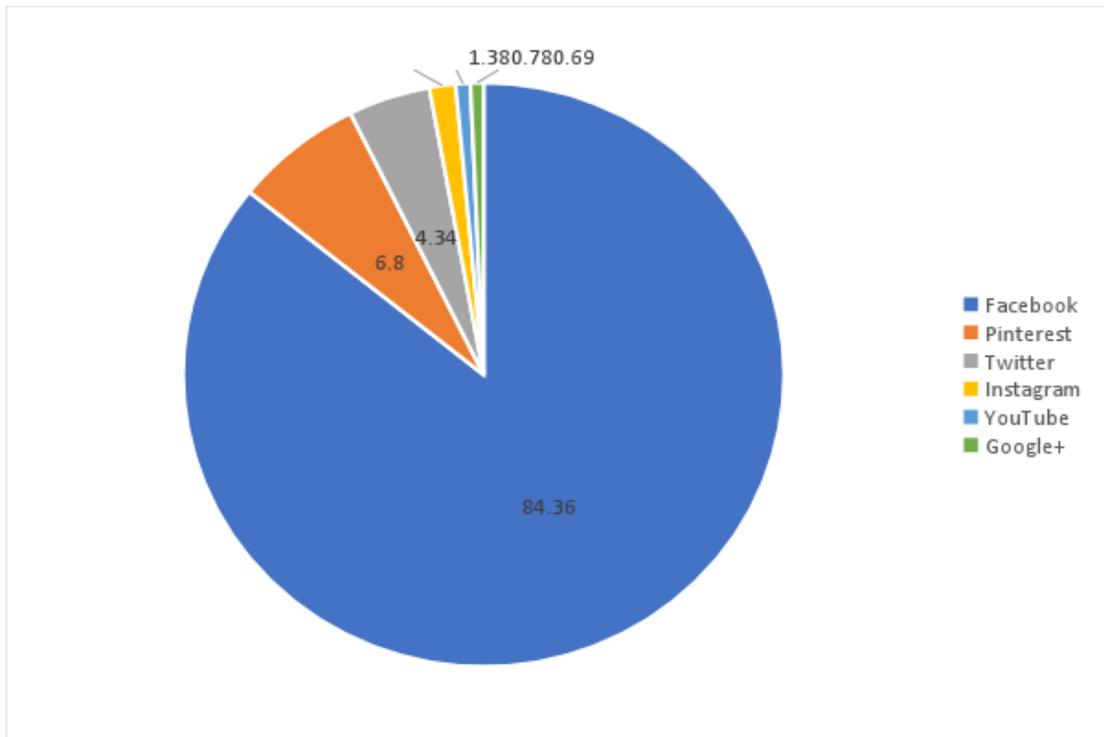
Figure 7 Social Media Use in Tanzania

Source: GlobalStats, 2017

Figure 7 above shows Facebook is the dominant social media platform in Tanzania. Considering Facebook has 6.1 million users, which is 84.36% of the total social media users, this means that Tanzania has 7.2 million users of social media, which is equivalent to 16% of the Tanzanian population. Based on this data and compared to the data on Internet penetration, this means that 36% of Internet subscribers are using social media. Thus, more than a third of Tanzanian Internet users are using social media. Therefore, these statistics suggest there are a significant number of Tanzanians who are using social media, especially interesting when considering Tanzania is a developing country.

The next sections discuss how telecom organisations practice social media and the different dynamics involved in their own practices. In addition, the sections link the practices with the Tanzanian context, industry dynamics, and public consumption of social media. Direct quotations will be used from the interviews at both companies to highlight the key practices, experiences and thoughts of the respondents. The key themes are explicitly a result of data analysis process, as highlighted in Figure 3.

4.3 Social Media Platforms

This section is going to explain the telecoms practice on social media platforms through the use of their social media accounts. This section is going to present three themes which are centred around the use of social media platforms by telecom organisations. Each theme has a section and the themes are; (1) presence and perception of social media in telecoms, (2) selection and management of social media, and (3) the impact of social media in telecoms.

4.3.1 Presence and perception of social media in telecoms

The key findings on this theme are: the presence of telecoms in the social media platforms, the rationale for using social media platforms and the recognition of social media platforms by the telecom organisations.

The statistics above show the rising usage of the Internet and the significant consumption of social media by the Tanzanian public. This context attracts telecom organisations to consider social media as important platforms to advance their organisational goals. Concerning the uptake of social media within the telecom industry in Tanzania, the following explanation provided by the marketing manager of Mwiko highlights the rising significance of the Internet and social media very vividly over recent years:

> *'The Tanzania we have now is different from a decade ago. A decade ago you could hardly find 2 million Tanzania [ns] using the Internet but now we have more than twenty million Internet users. In addition, it is not only people in urban areas who are using it but also people in the villages - you will find people having WhatsApp, Facebook and they post their issues there. Therefore, we said we cannot be left behind. We should use social media to capture that market'.*

Although there is no specific information that explains when telecom organisations first adopted social media into their practice, the explanation above indicates that social

media practice within telecom organisations is less than a decade old. All references indicate social media as a new or recent phenomenon, which provides an unclear date on when exactly did the organisations start to use social media in their practice. However, it can be reasoned that the rise of social media practice within organisations is reflected by the increasing penetration of the Internet in Tanzania, as shown in Figure 5 above. Furthermore, the explanation shows the growth of the Internet has led to and enabled the growth in the use of social media in both urban and rural areas. This has turned out to be a significant marketing opportunity for telecom organisations as well as a sphere for increased competition.

The use of social media by the public is perceived within the telecommunications industry as primary and of considerable importance to consumers. This perception creates attention and forms an attraction to telecom companies to social media users where the latter are perceived as a potential market. A marketing manager at Kili explains the behaviour of social media users as follows:

> *'Social media is primary; when someone wakes up in the morning the first thing to look at is updates on social media. If social media is the first thing, we should provide it to our customers'.*

Taking into consideration this behavioural change amongst consumers as an influence on social media - and the overall growing usage of social media in Tanzania - telecom organisations would be enthusiastic about new affordances social media can equip them to increase their competitiveness.

Considering this view of telecom organisations on the context and usage of social media by Tanzanians, telecom organisations in Tanzania have established their presence on social media platforms by creating official accounts on popular social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Some telecom organisations have accounts on other platforms such as Google Plus and LinkedIn. The table below shows the platforms on which the telecom organisations have established their presence with an official account.

Table 8: Popular social media platforms used by telecom organisations in Tanzania

	Facebook (Page likes)	Twitter (Followers)	Instagram (Followers)	YouTube (Subscriber)	Other platforms
Airtel	Yes (1,086,918)	Yes (197,000)	Yes (209,000)	Yes (2,209)	-
Tigo	Yes (1,418,168)	Yes (253,000)	Yes (313,000)	Yes (5,918)	LinkedIn (814 followers)
TTCL	Yes (55,735)	Yes (4,841)	Yes (6,391)	Yes (56)	G+ (182 followers)
Vodacom	Yes (874,903)	Yes (195,000)	Yes (203,000)	Yes (2,799)	-

Source: gathered by the researcher from the social media platforms

The parenthesis in Table 8 highlight the number of followers – the extent of community - which the telecom companies have amassed on different social media platforms. The table shows that Facebook, Instagram followed by Twitter are the largest virtual communities that the telecom companies have on social media platforms. YouTube has a smaller number of subscribers compared to the other major platforms. Although the numbers may indicate the selection of these platforms, respondent information gathered from the interviews within the two organisations' will help to understand further how the organisations select and adopt the platforms.

It is crucial to understand the rationale of telecom organisations to adopt and establish their presence on social media platforms. Interviews with employees of the telecom organisations have identified two interrelated reasons for their organisations to adopt

social media. First, is the competition. Other telecom organisations have adopted social media and so a telecom organisation would not want to be left behind by competitors. Second, social media has created a new business opportunity for telecoms. As noted above, the context of Tanzania has significantly changed over the last decade with approximately twenty million Tanzanians using the Internet, which has resulted in increased usage of social media. Thus, social media platforms provide an ideal space for telecom organisations to capture the market. The following explanations from Kili's zonal manager and Mwiko's public relations manager and marketing manager, respectively, give contextual explanations as to why telecom companies have decided to adopt social media:

> *We first sell a digital lifestyle and we value it because the world is moving to the digital. For instance, when an event occurs now after an hour it is spread all over because people share photos. This is the reason why we have official pages on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – Zonal manager (Kili)*

> *The truth is that we are the company with the widest infrastructure in the country and we have the best prices. We want to use these advantages to reach out to groups that use social media. We want to reach secondary school and university students who chat and browse for entertainment, information and academic material on the Internet. So, we want to change that perception that we are old ones to appear to be for young people. In doing so, we shall make business. The demand comes automatically as our competitors have done so, so why not us? We must go and compete with our fellows. When you observe, everyday people wake up with messages on WhatsApp and other social media. There is a lot happening on social media so we decided we should not be left behind. That can be said to be the foundation of why we are on social media. First, our competitors are doing this and second there is a room for more business. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)*

In principle, we do not want to lose those who use social media, we want
them to know of our existence so they can come and use our services. That is
the main objective. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)

From the explanations above, the pressure from competitors and opportunities for creating more business appear to be significantly influencing the adoption of social media in the telecom organisations. The above excerpt from the interview with the public relations manager highlights that the telecom organisations are influenced by competitor pressure. Apart from the competitor pressure, the potential to make good business using social media is significant, which is highlighted by the respondents from both the organisations. This contributes to the adoption of social media within the organisations. These two reasons, competitor pressure and business opportunity, form the basis for adopting social media. In connection to this, it is also important to consider how social media platforms are recognised within the organisation.

The findings suggest that social media platforms (accounts) have a formal recognition within the telecom organisations. The formal dimension of social media accounts within the organisation is backed up with policy. For example, as it shall be seen in the next section, the centralisation of social media accounts exhibits a formal recognition of social media accounts. The human resources manager in Mwiko states the following on the legality of social media within the organisation:

I can say that we have officialised our social media because we use it for
business marketing. – Human resources manager (Mwiko)

The human resource manager considers social media as formal because Mwiko uses it for business marketing. In other cases, social media is considered informal when used in other processes within the organisation. For instance, members of staff communicate with WhatsApp and it is considered to be informal communication. The aspects that are recognised as formal are the ones in which organisations have the ability and urge to control. In contrast, the aspects in which the organisation cannot control even when they are practiced within the organisation cannot be formalised. The formalisation of social media within organisations is difficult since social media, unlike other networks,

is owned by a third-party organisation and hence would be challenging to control. The finance manager of Mwiko explains this further as follows:

> *Officially, organisational networks are owned by the organisation. Social media are owned by other organisations. For an organisation to control something outside itself is so difficult … social media is mainly for disseminating information, to know what's going on around the world. However, you find these networks are also efficient when they are officially used to for example; get a job or to advertise, because social media are accessed by many people. – Finance manager (Mwiko)*

The above comment suggests that social media is more efficient when it is formally recognised within the organisation. However, the trouble with formalising social media originates from the ability to control it and the subsequent power dynamics. As it shall be noted in the next section, the centralisation of social media is a means of maintaining power for controlling information. Hence, this suggests formalisation as a means of controlling some aspects of social media practices within the organisation.

The next section will discuss the adoption and management of social media accounts owned by the telecom organisations.

4.3.2   Selection and management of social media platforms

Selection, centralisation, skills and external assistance are the main findings under the theme of selection and management of social media platforms. These findings are presented below as follows.

As seen in Table 8 above, the telecom organisations have established their presence on the platforms that are popular with many users including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The selection of platforms involves several dynamics including the ability to block users, edit, filter content as well as the resources needed to manage the account. These abilities are considered important for risk management associated with social media platforms especially when considering that social media can threaten the survival of the organisation, as highlighted in the quotation below. The public relations

manager of Mwiko explains the dynamics involved in the selection of social media platforms with the following comment:

> *There are many social media platforms but we have selected a few. We chose those, which we can work with in an easy way. We look at those, which we can filter, we can follow up, we can change people's ideas, we can get people's opinions, and we can ban bad information. Some people curse a lot when they are annoyed by small things. We deal with those people. We see that this can threaten the survival of our organisation but also, we see the great importance of it. We cannot stand aside because we are afraid of the negative implication. That is why we have someone on standby to take an action. If there is information that has come up and needs an intervention. If it is removing the information, we do it. If it is something that needs response, we respond to make our customer satisfied. Therefore, we see the risk but it is nothing compared to the advantages. (.....) We will respond to queries on time and the ones that need to be removed we will remove them faster. We are not afraid of criticism. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)*

The comments of the public relations manager highlight that costs are weighed against the benefits to assist the selection of a platform. The advantages outweigh the costs (risk) and that becomes the basis for establishing a presence on the selected platforms. In addition, the comment from the public relations manager points out the ability to manage the risk, through monitoring the discussion on the platforms and resolving arising concerns. Thus, although in Mwiko they can exercise a ban on negative information, they prefer to resolve issues with the consumers before it hurts the organisation through the platforms.

After selecting social media platforms, the management of social media accounts is central to the success of social media practice by organisations. To manage the interaction that occurs in social media, Mwiko upgraded its call centre to accommodate social media interaction. The IT manager of Mwiko explains this as follows.

> *We supported the marketing people by providing an extension of those [social media platform] services. We upgraded the call centre to*

accommodate comments from social media and make them visible on the call centre system, where they can act on it. So there was a certain integration. – IT manager (Mwiko)

As indicated earlier, during the selection of social media platforms the management of social media platforms is a factor that is taken into consideration. Considering social media practice within the organisations is considered a recent phenomenon, Mwiko's public relations manager and Kili's branch manager A explains how they manage social media and issues involved in the management as follows:

Because it is a new thing we have one person who manages it, but our plan is to engage with outside people to come and help us run these social media accounts in a more competitive way. Because the way we are doing now is slight in terms of resources, we have one person. In addition, we do not have enough time to develop creative ideas. When you look, social media depends a lot on people's understanding of technology for example ICT, designing ability, and creativity. These capabilities are difficult to find in communication people and it is not easy to multitask and do them. Our training does not facilitate a wide understanding of ICT. Something that we need our colleagues to support us with in this matter. We are expecting next year [2017] if things go well to outsource, so that we can have good service providers. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)

There are people employed to look at what is going on those platforms … the platforms are centrally controlled in our headquarters in Dar es Salaam… it is prohibited to start a page on the platform on behalf of the organisation because they believe everything needs to reach a certain standard. – Branch manager A (Kili)

From the quotation by the public relations manager and branch manager A above, it is apparent that resources are required to manage social media for instance, human resources. In addition, understanding the technology from designing to content creation requires not only a number of staff but also skills, which appears to be an issue. The lack

of internal skills therefore brings about the consideration of outsourcing as an option to fill the skills gap. In addition, the quotation by branch manager A reveals that social media is managed using a centralised structure, which signifies that the management of social media is centred at the headquarters of Kili and Mwiko. These three findings – centralisation, personnel resource and outsourcing are expanded further below.

Considering the relative newness of social media and the associated risks and the resources required for managing social media, a centralised form of managing social media turns out to be an inevitable choice for telecom organisations in Tanzania. Decentralisation of social media would require having members of staff from regional offices (branches) across the country as well as providing training and guidelines to ensure consistency in terms of standards in using the social media accounts. Mwiko's public relations manager and Kili's branch manager explained this difficulty in decentralisation and the consequent rationale for centralisation:

> *This is just the beginning; there was no social media before. Since our department is in the headquarters, we cannot have offices all over the country in terms of cost and other things. We shall see how we can enable our regional offices to show their creativity in social media. We shall look into a way to do that. Even now, we give them a chance - when there is anything from the regional offices, we share it on social media. For example, event photos, news. What they need to do is to send us the information, we send it through the system and we post it. We use the intranet here inside, but we also post on to our social media pages. When the regional offices have skilled people, like we do in our department we will not have a reason to centralise it. We will only give out guidelines to limit the freedom, because when there is too much freedom anything can happen. Therefore, the guidelines are there to guide. - Public relations manager (Mwiko)*

> *[An individual employee/branch] is not allowed to start a page because management believes everything needs to have a certain quality. For instance, sometimes we go to the media. We are given talking points so that*

we meet the standards of the organisation. In lower level jobs, we have to follow the standards set from above. –Branch manager A (Kili)

The above public relations manager quotation highlights the mechanism by which the telecom organisation gathers and distributes information to the branches, which are spread across the country. The two quotes above state that centralisation is a strictly enforced policy within the telecom organisations. Managers from branches of the telecom organisations interviewed understood that they were not allowed to have accounts on social media that represented the whole organisation. The managers, below, explained and reaffirmed the centralisation of social media accounts as follows:

We have Facebook, Twitter and YouTube they are managed at the headquarters. As a branch, we are not allowed to operate a social media profile. They are centralised and if the customer post anything that concerns us, they will send it to the branch hence we can respond. There is someone responsible for controlling and attending to customers' queries on social media. – Regional manager (Mwiko)

The pages are centralized at the headquarters in Dar es Salaam. The centralisation is sometimes a challenge because sometimes there are things you want to express but you cannot because information might not reach you on time and many things we might not hear. If it were decentralised, it would be better. – Branch manager A (Kili)

The managers' comments above highlight issues with the centralisation of social media in the telecom organisations, which includes a delay in the distribution of information as well as the inability to communicate certain information. The branch managers get information when the headquarters need a response. In addition, they only get information that concerns them. Furthermore, the centralisation limits the ability of branches to express themselves. For example, in the quote above the branch manager A suggests that centralisation is a challenge when they want to express themselves because it delays the exchange of information. Despite these challenges, the regional/branch managers understand the rationale for centralising social media and, in

particular, the need for quality control, risk management and maintaining uniformity – i.e. a single organisational voice:

Social media platforms are tools, which you can use to sell, you can use to gather feedback from customers but it needs to be controlled. Nevertheless, when you talk of an organisation like this, it needs to have a spokesperson. A spokesperson is the one to control social media content. The spokesperson, will advertise new products, current issues, and if there is a concern, he is the one to consult managers. We give him information to post. This controls a lot the idea that anyone can post what he wants. This is because an organisation needs to have one voice. In personal social media, people can misbehave but, in an organisation, social media needs to be controlled. If you allow everyone to post, a staff member can have his own agenda and it can be visible to the public, then people will ask what is going on. This is the reason why it is centralised. This gives an image of customer care with one central point. When a customer has a question or comment reach one central point and then it is distributed. If something needs to go to the CEO, it goes to the CEO, if it needs to go to the branch it goes there, if it needs to go to the technicians it goes to them. – Regional manager (Mwiko)

Another challenge is that some people have a hidden agenda. Someone has his own agenda and goes and posts something that is not true. For example, now we are in competition with other companies and they may go there and decide to defame you. Things like this have happened. Someone says bad things, but when you go into detail, you discover that this thing does not have any truth in it. However, they know when they post it people will see it. It is like an advert place. That many people will see and it destroys the image of the company. These things happen in the current globalised world, you cannot escape this, it is all about how you manage it. How do you address it as a company? That is why we are centralised. This is why not everyone can respond to what they see. –Regional manager (Mwiko)

It is okay to centralise because you get one voice for it, in order for it to be good and to maintain a high quality. Therefore, if there is anything it should

start from the top to the bottom through training and resources. When you allow anyone to post something, when they do something destructive, it will be seen as an action of the whole organisation. In addition, when there is something on social media, it needs to be resolved quickly; when it is left, it might destroy the image of the organisation. This is a good system but sometimes you might have an idea and you are not able to implement it. We should not use the same system, posting to social media should just be allowed as long as it does not destroy the company image; it is not fraud, not lies and not bad language. regional social media content can be aligned with company objectives. In this way, we can gradually develop our skills [in the regional branch] but not to the extent that it differs with the whole organisation. – Branch manager A (Kili)

The quotations above from the managers highlight the significance and importance of centralisation of the social media accounts with contextual references. For instance, the regional manager at Mwiko links defamation and competition as reasons for centralising social media. Likewise, branch manager A at Kili highlights the sensitivity of social media and the impact that it might have on the organisation. Social media is sensitive: issues with the organisation can quickly go viral and affect the organisation's reputation. This is why issues need to be resolved quickly. In addition, the above quotations also highlight the importance of having one, consistent voice which represents the whole organisation, which may not be achievable if branches had individual social media accounts. Thus, these findings signify the importance of centralising the management of social media as a means of managing risk associated with social media. In addition, another important point highlighted by the managers is that not everyone can manage social media accounts on behalf of the organisation. A person who manages social media is a representative of the organisation and some people, when they are provoked, can quickly react. Thus, a person who manages the organisation's social media accounts needs to have some diplomatic sense especially when considering that on social platforms, they maintain a lot of interaction with customers in a less formal way (i.e. in a humane way).

As has been established in the above quotations, managing social media accounts for a large organisation requires having adequate human resources in terms of staff and skills. In an effort to understand the number of people responsible for managing social media accounts, there were varying responses even within the one organisation. In Mwiko, for example, the public relations manager said there is one person who manages the social media accounts, while the marketing manager said two people were responsible and another marketing officer said that currently, there were three people who helped each other in monitoring and engaging with the social media accounts (see extracts below). Whereas in Kili, the response was straight that only two people are responsible for managing the social media accounts and there were no contradicting responses (extract from zonal director below). Given these responses it is rational to accept that social media accounts for telecom organisations are managed by more than one person - potentially, by two to three people. A team of two to three people can easily coordinate and help each other in managing the interactions occurring on the platforms 24/7. Mwiko's product development manager, marketing manager and marketing staff, as well as Kili's zonal director, elaborate on the work of people responsible for managing social media accounts:

We have three people who manage our social media accounts. They post and it is very busy. Even when you visit it, you can see how interactive it is. People comment a lot. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)

Through our PR department there is someone dedicated to managing the social media accounts to make sure all the information about our products is seen by our customers. – Product development manager (Mwiko)

Two people are managing social media, they are here because of the marathon that we are sponsoring. Right now, they are busy covering the event but they may continue in their posistions – Zonal director (Kili)

We have someone who monitors oursocial media accounts 24/7. He looks if there is any issue, sends it to the responsible person, once resolved he gets

The excerpts above indicate that the work of the social media custodian(s) is intense due to the liveliness of social media interaction as well as playing an intermediary role between the organisations' departments/branches and customers on social media platforms.

As highlighted above, the management of social media requires skills and training. Bearing in mind that social media is a recent phenomenon to telecom organisations, many of the staff within the telecom organisations who are responsible for public relations lack the necessary skills that are needed for managing social media as indicated earlier by the public relations manager. The skills that are required for social media management include ICT knowledge, designing ability and creativity, as highlighted above by the public relations manager and elaborated upon below. Creativity is a skill needed to make the social media platform active and effective, such as crafting a message depending on the type of people you are communicating with and the platform you are using. The marketing manager of Mwiko and the zonal director of Kili explain how creativity in content construction is significant for navigating and engaging on social media platforms:

…The type of content and the type of people on the platform is important. For instance, on Twitter the message is small but very strong and powerful because people on Twitter have a better understanding. When you send information there, it needs to be structured. On Instagram, it is more of an image. It is more of a lifestyle, therefore on Instagram you can send information that is challenging in a funny way, even people do not respond in a serious way as they do on Twitter. It is a little bit softer. It needs the support of an image or short clip. Therefore, you can provide more information on Instagram. Facebook has more engagement because there are so many people on there. You will get many comments and we need to engage by responding to the comments. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)

We are more dynamic in understanding what people want. We do what people want, that is why people are into our products. When you look at our pages, we post 10% social issues and 90% company issues. The social issues that we post are the ones which entertain customers. For instance, you can see here we have asked if people know that in Tanzania there is a hotel under the ocean, then we tell people to google it through our Internet. That is the social part. It is creativity; we do something that people will like. So, it is more about creativity. Creativity is not about training but it is encouraged. – Zonal Director (Kili)

The comments from the marketing manager and zonal manager highlight the importance of creativity in the management of social media accounts. In addition, the zonal manager suggests that creativity is not about training, implying that it is a form of tacit knowledge that can only be encouraged to unleash the potential of social media in organisations. In addition, the comments above highlight the differences in social media platforms and how each platform requires a unique approach.

Furthermore, the management of social media involves a practice of structuring content, using support images and short clips depending on the social media platform and the communication requirements. In a wider perspective, this means that the design and content development process is a part of the management of social media accounts for the organisations. The design and content must meet organisational standards and levels that can appeal to customers as well as standing out from the competition, as noted in the findings earlier (branch manager A comment in p. 105). Also, as highlighted earlier by the public relations manager (p. 105), sometimes employees working in the communications department do not have the required skills as well as there being an inadequate number of personnel. Therefore, making them consider outsourcing the management of social media.

Considering the skills deficiency of people managing social media accounts within Mwiko, hiring skilled staff seems to be a possible alternative to outsourcing this activity. However, the interview data suggest that the dynamics of hiring staff is a somewhat complicated process. The hiring process is a very structured process, whereby the

position must be prescribed within the organisational structure. A new member of staff cannot easily be hired: the position must first be created and prescribed and then a hiring process can follow. Thus, in a situation where the company would want to fill a gap due to immediate needs, it becomes a very complex process even when the management, the respective department (public relations department) and the human resources department are willing to do so. This is because departments have boundaries that define the limits of their power. In addition, the boundaries explain the ordering entity of human action and interaction within the organisation. Thus, the organogram, which is an organisational chart, an illustration of the ordering of human action and interactions that constrains and enables individuals and collectives (departments) to mobilize energy for acting in organisations. In some circumstances, the order of the organisation may constrain individuals and departments to act even if it is necessitated. For example, the hiring complexity creates a constraint for the development of social media practices within Mwiko. The following remarks from Mwiko's public relations manager demonstrate this constraint:

> When you look at the organisational system, every department has its borders. The authority of each departments has its limits. For example, I would like to have an IT expert, who is an expert in social media, within the organisation so we can do this from within. I believe we could be in a better position to supervise it and make sure, we get what we want. However, due to employment limitations I have found it is difficult to get someone that we want. I have found that the HR department wants to support us but the organisation organogram does not have that position. Therefore, this is a matter to be thought about in the near future. We can make that type of position with a job description that indicates the person with particular skills and education who can do the work at a particular payment level and create a contract. Then, our colleagues [in other departments] will think it is ideal and they will be ready to support us but the organisation structure does not allow it. Other departments see the importance of such things but they also have limitations. Marketing has a procurement person and they are ready to support us when we need it. They advertise the work, do a shortlisting, then

discuss it, come to an agreement and at the end of the day we get what we want. Therefore, we coordinate and work as an organisation with the aim of pushing forward our company in terms of sales, customer base and profits. Nevertheless, the structure limits us in some of our responsibilities. The structure allows us to perform and in some place it limits us. Unless there are changes made to allow us to get these things done. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)

The above explanation by the public relations manager highlights the need for an IT expert on social media within the organisation, which ideally would align or fuse their aspirations with social media capabilities. Furthermore, the public relations manager explains that the complexity in hiring social media personnel arises from the inexistence of this position in the organogram and the collective inability of their department and other departments to fill the position, which is non-existent on the organogram. The departments are unable to modify the organogram without the approval of another agency within the organisation. However, it is unclear which agency has the power to authorise such a change in the organogram. The structural boundaries set on individuals and collectively on the departments constrain their ability to act in the matter of filling a position which is not on the organogram. Furthermore, the public relations manager indicates the need for the organisation's structure to change so that it can remove the constraints that limit them from exercising their responsibility in terms of social media activity. The public relations manager highlights how every department has its borders, how the authority of each department has its limitations and how the departments collaborate to achieve their organisational goals. Nevertheless, at times they fail to meet these goals due to structural limitations.

In addition, the interview data analysis highlighted that the management of social media accounts of telecom organisations entails some form of external assistance in the design and development of content. The interpretation of this external assistance is imprecise, especially when considering outsourcing. Nevertheless, this highlights the elusiveness of the agreement between the external parties who provide help in the development of social media content and the organisation. In addition, it infers social media as a recent

phenomenon within the organisation. Thus, this form of external assistance is considered as an arrangement to sort out the urgency of social media in terms of engaging in/using while finding a permanent solution on whether it will be a formal outsourcing arrangement or whether the organisation will resort to an internal solution. The following quotes from Mwiko departmental managers demonstrate how external assistance is used in the management of social media accounts:

It is not outsourcing. They help us to develop content and images. Then we have an internal team, which responds to questions. We do not have a capacity in the company to make graphics that will appeal and are in line with brand management. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)

There is a partner who helps to create content. They know we use those three platforms. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)

The person who oversees social media engages well with people because he answers their questions and requests. So, people find it easy to get information. We collaborate with an agency in managing social media. The agency helps us to develop content. – Marketing staff (Mwiko)

We are in the process, the ones we have right now have been asked to help, but we have not made an agreement with them. We want to see what changes they will bring compared to what we can do by ourselves in the department. The main objective of the organisation is to manage social media as part of our responsibility but at the same time, we have a challenge ourselves in terms of skills. We can take a photo, give it a caption, and post it online but we can't sit down and design, draw out different kinds of messages, like other companies with the technology can do, so it is difficult for us. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)

We have started small with our people inside who have knowledge of journalism and communication, not ICT. Therefore, they are doing marginal work based on their knowledge and sometimes down to personal creativity. But not expertise. Since we are not doing it the way we would like, as well as

our competitors, we decided to address our weakness by finding people with expertise and who are affordable to do it on our behalf and we will support them. We tell them what is going inside our organisation and they process and share it. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)

The quotations above highlight that external assistance from companies helps to tackle the skills deficiencies currently within the telecoms organisation and enables the latter to maintain an active presence on social media and to compete. Strategically, it can be regarded as being important for telecom organisations as it helps them to identify their competence in what they can do well on social media platforms and what they cannot do well. It also gives them a chance to organise themselves by developing skills which will enable them to not wholly rely on external assistance and still be able to manage the platforms on their terms.

4.3.3   Impact of social media platforms in telecoms

The impact of social media platforms in telecoms is on marketing activities, costs, provision of feedback and exposure to negative attacks. These implications are further expounded in the following explanations.

The data analysis highlighted that the main impact of social media platforms to telecom organisations is in marketing. Social media offers a marketing platform for advertising an organisation's products and services. When compared to other marketing tools, social media helps telecom organisations to focus and tailor their advertisements to market segments that they have identified. For instance, when a telecom organisation has a product that is not yet available to all regions, it can easily target the regions in which they wish to launch their product through social media. This ability is significant as it reduces wasteful advertisement. Thus, the ability to select and focus provides flexibility that enhances marketing activities. The following extracts explain different ways in which social media practice benefits marketing in telecom organisations:

Social media is one of the marketing tools. Where you can broadcast, you can communicate a product. People will read, they will try and they can share the experience whether it is bad or good. If it is bad, it is a disadvantage to you

116

that your market can deteriorate in seconds. If it is good, you can prosper within a few seconds and gain huge benefits. Basically, to me, social media, I view it like one of our advertising tools. You can advertise your product for people to see and test. You can communicate the value of your product. – Regional manager (Mwiko)

Social media helps the marketing people a lot because they use it to advertise. The young people nowadays have gadgets and they want to use them. – Finance manager (Mwiko)

On our pages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - we use them to advertise our products. We advertise phones or any product that we have launched. For instance, now we are advertising the *Karibu* app, which helps a customer to get a ride from anywhere. – Manager branch B (Kili)

For example, there is something called the sponsored ad, first it is selective. Selective in terms of location, who you want to target. For instance, we now have 4G and we want to launch the network in Arusha region. Social media provides a way to target the people of Arusha through the sponsored ad. Therefore, anyone who uses social media in Arusha gets the advert. Social media is very precise compared to other channels. If it is TV, people from other regions will also see the advert and they will start to question information that was not meant for them…. Also, the use of analytics that you get from social media makes it powerful. It helps to focus when addressing the customer segments with product and services. It is a very segmented tool, which we wanted. Therefore, it has reduced the cost and also improved the way we communicate with our customers to a more efficient and effective way. – Marketing staff (Mwiko)

According to the quotations above and below, concerning marketing, telecom organisations find social media platforms to be useful tools for advertising and enhancing the organisational brand by promoting both existing and new offerings. For example, in section 4.3.1 (p. 101), the public relations manager at Mwiko explains the reason for using social media is to create a youthful image for customers. Social media

is mostly used by youths who are in schools and universities. Thus, organisations use social media platforms to appeal to youth groups and to people who like technology. The following extracts from the marketing manager at Mwiko explain how social media is used for rebranding:

> *Previously we were a bit dormant. We started rebranding … With new rebranding, we started pushing up the social media. – Marketing Manager (Mwiko)*

Another advantage of using social media is in raising awareness. Social media as a tool for raising awareness is valuable because of the speed and ease of transmitting information. It also allows interaction, making room for enhancing understanding unlike other traditional media like TV or radio where the interaction is limited between the telecom organisations and their audience (customers). The following testaments from a salesperson and marketing staff elaborate on how social media is useful for raising awareness and gaining feedback:

> *Social media is very powerful in terms of speed, ease and raising awareness. Everyone is on social media and it is easy to share information. It has a viral effect. Also, it gives feedback. It is the easiest way of getting feedback. - Marketing manager (Mwiko)*

> *Facebook helps because you can share something and people can say 'I have seen this product from your organisation and I liked it'. Therefore, it helps us to do sales. It helps to advertise the business. – Sales person (Kili)*

Social media has benefited telecom organisations in terms of cost efficiency when compared to traditional media, especially when it comes to advertising and marketing. Advertising on social media is cheaper compared to advertising on television, radio and magazines. Social media is instrumental in telecom organisations, especially when they are constrained within budgets for advertising or doing research. When a department does not have a budget for research or conducting surveys, the feedback on social media is practical for providing insights. Critically, although social media provides this

affordance it is important to remember that it is still limited as it only reaches those with smartphones and Internet. However, mention may be made of the growth of Internet users and mobile subscribers as seen in section 4.2.2, which strengthens the use of social media. The following remarks highlight how social media is beneficial to telecom organisations in terms of cost-efficiency:

> *The cost has decreased because previously we were based on radio, TV, landline, and ground activities were the means of interacting. For instance, if you wanted to have an advertisement in the middle of the news for a whole month you would use $5,000 but on social media you can use less than that and have greater traffic and feedback. At least on the radio, they can speak and have callers. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)*

> *Social media groups help a lot with the marketing budget. Now if you focus on social media you do not need billboards, and still you can get enough coverage, although it might not be the same but you can still reach potential customers. Because social media users are the ones with phones and the Internet. – Regional manager (Mwiko)*

> *This is an alternative because the traditional way is too expensive. We have given an example of advertising in a page of a gazette – it's 3 million [$1,500], on Television for one session it is 4.5 million [$2,250] and you haven't included the tax and production cost. If the government recognised the contribution of social media and decided to change from the changes occurring - it should reduce some of the regulations on for instance: advertising should only be in the government newspaper and the rest on social media. Social media needs to be given equal rights of publication. In that way we will be honouring employment law as well as reducing costs. I think it is ridiculous to advertise for the whole week for a cost of 20 million just for one position, that is too much. A fraction of that could be used and reach the same goals. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)*

The data analysis also suggests that social media has increased collaboration at Mwiko. Social media has enabled a participatory engagement from different stakeholders such

as customers and members of staff who offer opinions, suggestions and feedback on the products and services offered by the telecom organisations. Through the visibility and interactive affordance offered by social media, telecom organisations have become more transparent and friendlier to the public. The public relations manager at Mwiko, who is responsible for organisational communication, explains how social media has changed their approach to becoming participatory as follows:

> *We have changed our approach. It is now a participatory approach. We inform about what we think will help to increase sales, customers and revenue. We have also become more open to the public. They also tell us what they need from us. What sort of service they want, what sort of challenges they have, sometimes they give us the solutions. They also demand a lot of service. For instance, they might say in our areas there is an absence of vouchers, or no network, therefore we get feedback and we have a serious interaction with our customers on social media. We also share our information with them. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)*

The findings also suggest that telecom organisations in Tanzania find social media significant in terms of reaching wider audiences on a scale and style that traditional media cannot afford. For instance, it enables customers to get a response through social media when they post a comment or question. In addition, the information reaches a lot of people beyond those who follow the accounts because people share information posted by the telecom organisations. For instance, in section 4.3.1 (p. 101), Kili zonal manager explained the rationale for having social media accounts is because information can spread instantaneously. Likewise, Mwiko's marketing manager explains below how social media helps reach out to customers:

> *We look at the reach. On TV, we want many people to see and there are studies that show how many people watched TV yesterday night. When you look at a gazette you look at how many copies were distributed then you take 70%. People share magazines so there is a way to look. Social media is easier. Many engagements on social media prove it has a wider reach. When people read the content, or comment the engagement is greater than in traditional*

media. We do not say traditional media is dying but the speed and engagement. Nobody can ask an advertisement on TV but on social media people can ask and get a response. So, on social media you can be sure people have understood your message but on TV people might not understand. Therefore, there is breakage on traditional media but a link on social media.
- Marketing manager (Mwiko)

Also, telecom organisations in Tanzania benefit from feedback obtained via social media platforms. The feedback obtained is channelled into different aspects such as: organisational strategy or product development. Also, it is used to identify different needs such as training needs and recruitment measures. For instance, the human resources (HR) manager can understand the training needs from the feedback of social media. For example, if customers are complaining about poor customer service and comments indicate they are coming from a particular area. The HR manager will know that staff from a certain branch need further training on customer service in contrast to providing customer service training to all staff, which can be costly and time-consuming. Likewise, if complaints regarding poor customer service come from different branches, then the HR manager will know that there is a need for training the entire customer service team in the organisation. Further, the feedback is used to improve products and services. It also provides consumer insights into products and services. Such insights are useful for measuring the performance of the organisation's products and services. The following extracts from Mwiko's CEO and Human Resources Manager are sample exhibits of how feedback from social media is useful for telecom organisations:

The good thing with social media for example WhatsApp Facebook etc. is that first, there some feedback that you get. For example, from the Facebook. Also, you can see how you can put the feedback in to your strategy, in to the bigger strategy. – CEO (Mwiko)

In HR we benefit a lot from social media. For instance, when marketing people post something on social media people react negatively or positively. When a customer laments about customer service, training personnel

understand that they need to train their staff in customer service. A recruitment person will also learn that certain types of people are not needed in the organisation. Therefore, we do the recruitment process and we work on the comments from our customers. The same with training. We collect training needs from different regions because each has its own needs. Then we compile and find the generic. We can know that this is a generic problem that the customer service is poor according to the feedback we are getting. Therefore, social media helps a lot. – Human resources manager (Mwiko)

In general, social media can make various contributions that are interrelated. Social media helps the organisations to communicate with many people in a faster and more cost-effective way. In addition, it allows the organisations to receive feedback. These capabilities of social media have made social media a handy tool for telecom organisations in advancing their mission such as corporate social responsibility and marketing. The following is a general statement from the public relations manager at Mwiko, which highlights how social media can contribute to the telecom organisation in various ways:

Social media has many contributions. We use social media platforms to communicate with many people. For example, today there is a work position advertised. By the end of the day, that information will reach many people with an affordable cost compared to a page in a gazette which would cost 3 million TSH (approximately USD 1450) for it to be published for just one day. The advantage is that it spreads more quickly. Also, it reaches the right people, the youth who have graduated and are looking for a job. At the end of the day, you might even get a response of 100+ applications. When it is in a gazette, someone needs to buy it first, needs to find the right page, it is a long process. But we see from social media we are getting lots of advantages. The information goes out fast, and feedback comes early. Feedback is important for us because we use it effectively. We also use social media when we are doing corporate social responsibility, exhibitions, launching ceremonies and in many other events. When you visit our pages, you will see and the response is good. – Public relations manager (Mwiko)

Despite the positive effects, social media has some constraints for the telecom organisations. The findings suggest that telecom organisations may receive negative attacks via social media. In some instances, social media has been a weapon for attacking other organisations. Sometimes, attacks come from other organisations in a covert way, and in other cases, attacks come from individuals who might have hidden motives. For instance, in section 4.3.2 (p. 108) the regional manager of Mwiko explained how competition could influence negative attacks. Social media is an open platform and people understand that when you post something on a social media platform, it is visible and it can spread, hence discredit, an opponent. It is easy to post something on a platform; it can be deception, propaganda, or any negative information that may have negative effects on an organisation. In most cases, negative information spreads quickly and hence can damage the organisation's image. The organisation, thus, needs to give a good substantial response. Organisations cannot afford to ignore negative attacks via social media. The following extracts show how social media is at times a tool for negative attacks:

> *Externally, it can open gates for negative attacks and negative remarks when people start to abuse the network on social media. – CEO (Mwiko)*

> *Social media is good for organisations but sometimes they deceive [false information may spread quickly]. The regulatory authority, TCRA, needs to look at social media to prevent these attacks. – Zonal manager (Kili)*

> *There was an incident where someone aired an attack [on social media]. They posted that Mwiko had been attacked. When you have an attack on your network it means that there are some malicious codes or whatever that have affected things. We have a section called IT security, they confirmed that there was an attack and they mitigated it. After this, we had to issue a press conference because whoever reported about this attack exaggerated a lot. So in our part we inserted the caps, firewalls and everything to protect our networks from the attacks. We continue with our work as a means of mitigating attacks. – IT manager (Mwiko)*

Following the above findings, we learn that although social media has had a positive impact on telecom organisations it also exposes the organisations to negative attacks via social media platforms.

4.3.4 Summary of social media accounts in telecom organisations

Social media accounts play a significant role in connecting telecom organisations with their customers on social media platforms. Telecom organisations have established their presence online and amassed a significant community of followers on major platforms as seen in Table 8 (p. 100). Competitor pressure and opportunity for business are the main reasons for telecom organisations to practice social media. The telecom organisation weighs the cost against the benefits when selecting the platforms to engage with. The cost-benefit analysis weighs the risk involved in the platforms and the ability to manage the accounts, for instance, the ability to filter and edit information. In addition, the selection considers the audience size of the platform. The social media accounts are managed in a centralised way by a small team of staff (two to three staff) who help each other. In Mwiko, the staff also collaborate with external people to run the accounts. The external assistance is influenced by structural constraints in Mwiko as well as a deficiency of skills required to run the accounts. The management of social media accounts requires talent, creativity and ICT skills such as graphic design which may not be available in-house. Furthermore, we learn that social media accounts are recognised as formal practice within the organisations because the telecoms use them for marketing and public relations. Social media accounts benefit organisations in several ways, especially in marketing aspects such as advertising, targeting segments, sales, reducing advertising costs and receiving feedback on products and services. It also helps to improve efficiency through facilitating fast communication. On the down side, social media accounts expose organisations to negative attacks. In addition, most of the findings on social media accounts come from Mwiko, which limits generalisation and comparison with Kili. This limitation is because of the position of respondents. In Kili, the roles (positions) of the respondents denied them any information on the practice of social media accounts. Also, to note, most of the information from Mwiko on social

media accounts come from the marketing and public relations staff. The IT staff had little to say on social media accounts as they do not manage the accounts. The comments of the IT manager at Mwiko in section 4.3.2 indicate this is not part of their roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, the information contributed by different respondents from both organisations provided insight into social media practice with a focus on social media accounts.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that social media platforms have affected processes, structure and strategy within the two telecom organisations as follows. First, in terms of processes, establishing a presence on social media has introduced new processes such as designing which require new skills that are not within the organisation (at least for the case of Mwiko). Regarding structure, social media platforms have consolidated the centralisation structure, this is due to the resources that are required to manage the presence of the organisation on the platforms. Also, to protect the organisation against negative attacks on social media platforms. Further, the social media platforms have exposed structural limitations that hinder the development of social media practice particularly in the platforms. Finally, the findings suggest that telecom organisations use social media platforms strategically because of competition and to gain market share. The next section will explore another aspect of social media practice in the telecom organisations which is known as 'free social media'.

4.4 'Free social media' service

Another dimension of social media in the telecom organisations in Tanzania is that it is used as a sales factor on their service packages. Specifically, the telecom organisations in Tanzania offer 'free social media' i.e. free Internet access to social media on selected platforms (i.e. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter) in their service packages. The notion of 'free social media', means that you can use social media without being billed for the data service. The marketing manager of Mwiko explains 'free social media' as follows:

> *To make it clear, when we say we are giving WhatsApp or Facebook free it does not mean it is free in the sense of 'free' because the customer must first*

125

buy a bundle. If you do not have a bundle, you will never get that free
WhatsApp. Therefore, you have to purchase the bundles and it is then that
you get the rest free. — Marketing manager (Mwiko)

The classic business of telecom organisations in Tanzania is selling voice and data services. Voice is the traditional service of the telecom organisations while data is the Internet service. In Tanzania, the telecom organisations are the main Internet providers. Therefore, social media, which uses the Internet, is a driver for data services. Thus, the inclusion of 'free social media' in their service packages is an innovative way of using social media to advance their organisational mission. 'Free social media' as an inclusion in the service packages is a unique way of using social media by telecom organisations. Table 9 shows the types of offers available for the flagship service packages in the telecom industry in Tanzania: these offers are available to customers when they buy a bundle/deal, i.e. once they have made a financial investment in the organisation's products/services.

Table 9 Service packages

Company	Types of offers	Service Packages
Airtel	● Free Facebook ● Free YouTube	Hatupimi Bando (we don't measure)
Tigo	● Free WhatsApp ● Free Facebook	Halichachi (It does not expire)
TTCL	● Free Facebook ● Free WhatsApp ● Free Twitter ● Free Instagram	Toboa bundle (Go through)

	● Free Facebook	
Vodacom		Haliishii bando (It does not end)

Source: Gathered by the researcher from the telecom organisations' services information via their respective websites

4.4.1 Implementation 'free social media'

The 'free social media' service is implemented by the product development department, which works closely with the marketing department and the IT department. 'Free social media' involves both a marketing aspect and technical advancements to enable it to be offered for free:

> *I am not involved with 'free social media' that is for marketing, pricing and category segment departments. If we decide to release free WhatsApp, for instance, now we have a bundle called ****. I cannot talk a lot about that but that is their section and there are people who design those products. — Zonal director (Kili)*

The role of the marketing team in implementing 'free social media' is minimal. The product development and the IT departments are the main implementers of the 'free social media' service in Mwiko. The IT department is the custodian of the billing system in the telecom organisation and they are the ones who are responsible for billing the services which are offered by the telecom organisations. The product development team is the designer of the packages. Thus, the plan of 'free social media' was developed by both the IT and the product development team in a collaborative way. The following explanation from the IT manager and the product development manager describes how the 'free social media' offering was devised:

> *Back in the day, Mwiko telecom was telecom. Nevertheless, with the evolution of the telecom industry some things are now IT based. We are the IT department but there is a section called IP data networks which enables things like free Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or some items which they use.*

127

However, it is not IT who deal with that. We in IT, we define the price plan on our billing system - meaning that when given a package a customer will get what and what they ordered. — IT manager (Mwiko)

Our relationship with the IT system is that they manage the billing system and our products are implemented on the billing system. The billing system works with other systems to make sure that customers are served. When providing a service, you have to know how it is billed and whether it can be billed. IT people are the ones managing the billing system. When we design products, we may put a different specification for instance like banning a streaming service or you might specify a certain time to provide free Internet. For instance, when people are out of work in the evening, they use the Internet a lot therefore you might ban streaming during that peak time because if you do not do that the data will be consumed a lot. It might even be the reverse, maybe during the peak hour I provide free WhatsApp. Therefore, there are things you want to do but for them to be do-able they have to be implemented on the billing system. Therefore, I have an idea, I make documentation and then I send it to them to implement. Therefore, the whole process needs thinking about. Sometimes you need a product quickly but they have not found the right codes. Therefore, there are lots of challenges. Sometimes I might change my product depending on the capability of the system. — Product development manager (Mwiko)

From the explanation by the IT manager and the product development manager, we learn two things. First, the relationship between the IT department and product development is key to the development of 'free social media' design. Second, the importance of capability in implementing 'free social media'. For example, the product development manager might have an idea of how 'free social media' should work but this depends on the capability of the IT department.

4.4.2 Rationality of 'free social media'

'Free social media' seems to contrast with the business of telecom organisations. With 'free social media', people can communicate and hence there appears to be little/no

reason for having the voice service (normal call and text functions). Nevertheless, telecom organisations have ceased to perceive social media as a threat to their business and rather take it as an opportunity to drive their data business. Furthermore, through a bundle (service package) the telecom organisations can sell both data and voice services whilst offering 'free social media' as a means of curbing the threat and sustaining their business:

> *In the beginning, they thought things like WhatsApp Call were a threat to their business. Because if everything is free people will not make a normal call. However, when someone makes a WhatsApp call, since it has its requirements - it depends whether the receiver has data too. So, they knew you might have data but the respondent does not have and that will force you to make a normal call. − Network planning (Mwiko)*

Another reason for telecom organisations to offer 'free social media' is the widespread use of social media amongst the Tanzanian public. Given the wide use of social media and the need for it by the public, telecom organisations are offering it for free as a means to attract the customer to their organisations:

> *Social media is now a basic need. When people meet, they ask do you have a phone. Yes. When you give out the phone number, they continue to ask do you have WhatsApp. Are you on Facebook? Therefore, social media questions come first. Social media platforms are well known. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Everyone wants to use that, so, why not give it out for free? That is a basic need; if you have WhatsApp, you can send messages, voice notes and everything. When you solve someone on social media, everything else is certain − Marketing manager (Mwiko)*

> *Many Internet users in Tanzania are on social media. Therefore, we know that people want to use social media and that is why we tell them to buy Internet and we will give them free [social media]. From the Internet, you can go to other sites like google but [customers] will go to Facebook. Therefore, the allowance that we have given you for Internet, it might expire and you*

have not used it. When we are saying that we are banning streaming in an actual sense we are not banning it, what it means is that we will bill you when you stream. Therefore, looking at the picture is free but when you want to download it and save it, that is when it will cost you. We have a means of controlling the usage of the Internet. – Product development manager (Mwiko)

Also, technological advancements have made it inevitable for telecom organisations to offer 'free social media'. The advancements in social media are also forcing telecom organisations to change. Likewise, the advancement in technology is trending towards Internet and digital services, making them cheaper and forcing organisations to offer them for free:

Social media are often updated; thus, they are improved and changed. For instance, when WhatsApp started there was no WhatsApp call. In addition, when WhatsApp call started there was no video. They have also changed that because of changes in technology. Therefore, we are also supposed to adjust. Thus, when you develop a product you need one that accommodates the requirements of changing technology. If you do not do that, the customer will go to another operator. Therefore, you have to target the customer for whom social media is their lifestyle. Sometimes you might give them a free offer but, on the offer, you restrict some services for example they may use WhatsApp to text but not to call or download a picture. Alternatively, they may use Facebook but you can restrict video streaming. – Product development manager (Mwiko)

The focus of the company was on selling vouchers and bundles, nevertheless, voice services are just part of the business. The development of technology has shifted the focus to Internet, that is why operators are offering free Facebook, WhatsApp. When you buy a new sim card, you get free Facebook or WhatsApp for a certain time. Now, many social sites offer voice services such as WhatsApp, Skype, Viber and Tango. This increased the demand for

data services. That is why they say where there is great potential you offer a

lot. – Manager branch A (Kili)

In addition, competition is driving the 'free social media' service. Every telecom organisation in Tanzania is offering 'free social media' and they tend to imitate each other in fear of losing customers to their competitors. Thus, it is a form of social competitor pressure that is further driving the offering of 'free social media'. Furthermore, the telecom industry wants to use this as a method for attracting the youth, capturing market share and not losing customers. For example, in the quotes below from Mwiko's product development manager who, although he shrugs off competition, signals market sensitivity as the driver for 'free social media':

> *The market itself dictates 'free social media'. I think it is more or less like a*
> *competitive edge. It is the market that is making social media a good thing,*
> *if you want to succeed, you want to be competitive, you need to offer free*
> *social media. The market is offering it free; our competitors are also offering*
> *that. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)*

> *The competition is not that bad because when you are developing a product*
> *you look at the target customer. There are many users on social media but*
> *not all are interested in free social media. Some people buy big bundles and*
> *even when they are charged it does not make a difference to them. Therefore,*
> *I do not think that the competition is very stiff. – Product development*
> *manager (Mwiko)*

> *The challenge is that the market is very sensitive and those who use social*
> *media are young people. When developing a product for young people it*
> *must be high quality, on trend, with less restriction and it must be affordable.*
> *Therefore, even the profit margin of social media products can be minimal.*
> *Sometimes someone buys 500mb and uses more than 500MB because you*
> *have promised that once you buy the bundle use of social media is free. In*
> *such a situation, you incur loss. – Product development manager (Mwiko)*

4.4.3   Impact of 'free social media'

'Free social media' is a sales factor for telecom organisations in Tanzania. The telecom organisations use the 'free social media' offer as a selling point. As noted earlier, a customer receives 'free social media' once they have bought a bundle. Thus, offering 'free social media' is a marketing aspect, which leads people to buy Internet from the telecom organisations:

> *Many customers come to our organisation because you get free Facebook. Now they give you that free with 50mb per day. – Sales person (Kili)*

> *If Facebook provided free Internet, it would affect our business because we are using social media as a sales factor. Because we tell people when they buy our Internet that they get free Facebook. Our aim is for people to buy Internet. Sometimes people buy a bundle with lots of allowance, and even if they use Facebook it will not use up their data allowance. So, when they bring out free Facebook use we will lose a factor with which we can influence a customer to buy our products. Therefore, we will have to find another way of influencing customers to buy our products. – Product development manager (Mwiko)*

> *When you go to the market, you need to have something to convince customers. A customer will also ask what type of offers do you have? When you tell them that they will receive something free they will ask you to help them to get that and you will complete your sale. - Team leader (Kili)*

> *We see that by using social media we get an advantage to our organisation; we improve sales and get customers. – Marketing manager (Mwiko)*

'Free social media' is also used to target customers. The customers who are targeted with 'free social media' are young people and students. As we observed in section 4.3.1, social media is used to appeal to and target the youth group. The offering of 'free social media' is another means by which social media is used to appeal to the youth group. Young people and students are often influenced by fashion, embrace modernity and

132

want cheap things of high quality. Thus, offering 'free social media' attracts the youth market, which makes up 35 percent of the Tanzanian population (URT Census 2012). Mwiko's product development manager explains how 'free social media' is used to target young people. It is important to note from his explanation, although he is talking within the context of 'free social media', he is also referring to the overall use of social media, which also includes the use of social media accounts. This is one of the examples of how the term social media might have multiple and overlapping meanings:

> *When we develop a product, we look at the needs of the targeted customers. Therefore, you find a segment like the youth market; we have many products for which we are using social media to attract young people. In many of our products, we provide free Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram. Therefore, we are using social media because we know we are targeting the youth market. Those are the social platforms used by young people most of the time. Someone might buy a bundle but will not go on to google or elsewhere but on social media. Therefore, we have seen this as an opportunity to attract customers to buy our products. We just set an agreement that you buy the bundle and you get the rest free. Therefore, someone will buy a bundle - not for surfing but for using social media. — Product development manager (Mwiko)*

Furthermore, telecom organisations are offering 'free social media' as an incentive or gratitude token for new customers. These types of offers are used to influence customers in the market and they are effective when considering that income levels are low in Tanzania:

> *A new customer gets free Facebook. Also, it is only Kili that provides Facebook in Kiswahili because they are the ones who started this. — Team leader (Kili)*

Apart from attracting customers, 'free social media' is also used to retain customers. The telecom organisations perceives social media as being addictive to customers and once people are addicted to something, they will continue to use it. Thus, offering 'free social media' is a strategy for retaining customers in the organisation:

The telecom organisation has discovered that people are addicted to social networks so they provide 'free social media' but they understand that the users will eventually be forced to buy their bundles. To retain customers, they give free Facebook, and WhatsApp. I am sure that over time people will buy the bundle and will realise how the company will force you to buy more. — Network planning (Mwiko)

As touched upon briefly above, social media is also acknowledged in increasing the sales of telecom organisations through attracting customers. Social media is the driving force for the consumption of the Internet, which is provided by telecom organisations. Thus, the 'free social media' is a business for the telecom organisations, which helps to increase sales and consequently, revenue. Although, as noted above, it is difficult to measure by how much 'free social media' has increased sales:

Social media has been attractive to customers and we can say that it is pushing the sales of the organisation. When you look, many packages that we sell are ones with Internet. People want Internet so they can access social media. When you look at our bundles, when a customer buys a week bundle or monthly bundle, we provide free Facebook and WhatsApp. You get free WhatsApp and Facebook on any weekly bundle. Also, there is a specific bundle for Facebook and WhatsApp for a week and a month. With this, you only pay a little price of 1000 or 2000 and you only get Facebook and WhatsApp. — Branch manager B (Kili)

Despite 'free social media' helping telecom organisations with sales and marketing, the challenge associated with 'free social media', or social media in general, is an Internet connection problem. Although there is significant progress with Internet connectivity, the challenge exists. The Internet is still not available in many areas, especially in remote rural areas. Furthermore, the use of social media is also accompanied by some development such as income (to buy bundles), education, exposure and electricity supply to charge the phones. Thus, the effectiveness of an aspect like 'free social media' is still constrained by contextual supporting factors:

The biggest challenge is Internet connectivity. Most of the areas are remote. Nevertheless, it is not only Internet; someone has to have electricity and another thing. Other places are very poor, in some places there is no electricity, they are using solar. I do not know how the free Internet will be supplied unless they are using satellite. However, I believe Internet comes with a package, people who are using Internet have certain benefits like income, education, exposure. Of course, there are normal people who use social media but I look at it from a different perspective because there are some people for whom when their battery is out of charge they do not know where to charge their phone. − Network planning (Mwiko)

Regarding social media performs in developed areas where people can buy good phones, there is network, people can afford to buy bundles and there is electricity. We should remember some places do not have this supporting infrastructure. Therefore, although there is development of social media it is not in all areas thus, we also need to have the traditional media to blend so that the whole country can get where we want to be. − Public relations manager (Mwiko)

Another challenge associated with 'free social media' is having the skills/capability available to develop it. Sometimes the telecom organisations may have limited capability to develop a 'free social media' package due to reasons such as deficiency of skills required to develop the service or technical incapacity:

The challenge in developing a product is that you may have the view that this idea is good but the management may disagree. Second, the idea might be very good but maybe the infrastructure and the system does not have that capability and perhaps they require an upgrade or further investment. Therefore, you might not be able to convince the company to do that investment because there are other things which also require money. Sometimes the system maybe is not able to restrict some services like streaming; when you provide sites for free, you will get a loss. Therefore, you need a system to control that. − Product development manager (Mwiko)

4.4.4 Summary of 'free social media'

'Free social media' can be regarded as an additional value that is offered to customers in addition to the service packages offered by telecom organisations in Tanzania. 'Free social media' is influenced by the demand for social media by the public, technological advancement and competitive pressure. Telecom organisations use a 'free social media' service as a means of increasing sales. It increases sales as they can be used to promote offers and products. In doing so, it attracts customers, therefore, enabling organisations to penetrate the market. The downside of 'free social media' is that at times it reduces profit or leads to loss. However, when the concern is penetrating a market, the organisation sometimes takes the position of incurring a loss as the cost of penetrating the market. In addition, 'free social media' faces challenges such as a lack of organisational capabilities required to implement it. Likewise, contextual factors such as low income to purchase the service packages, poor network connectivity and electricity supply are challenges to the provision of 'free social media'.

'Free social media' practice affects processes, structure, and strategy within the case telecom organisations. First, the thesis shows that the processes of implementing 'free social media' require capabilities and collaboration between the IT and the product development department. Also, the thesis highlights that the availability of technology infrastructure and skills is essential for processes. Second, the findings on 'free social media' show the strategic importance of 'free social media' is centred on marketing and sales.

Also, as noted earlier (section 4.3.4), the data on 'free social media' is skewed from Mwiko. This is because most of the practice takes place from the headquarters of the telecom organisation and respondents from Mwiko were in a position to provide more details compared to those at Kili who are from the zonal areas. In addition, the practice of social media is concentrated in the product development department, IT department (who deal with the billing) and the marketing department. Nevertheless, the information gathered from all correspondents was significant in contributing to the understanding of how 'free social media' influences the organisation. For example, the

findings from the respondents from Kili, who deal with customers in their daily undertaking, enable us to see the contribution of 'free social media' to sales.

4.5   WhatsApp Communication

This section presents how staff used social media as an internal medium of communication the case organisation - Mwiko and Kili. They actively used WhatsApp communication in the form of groups for internal communication. This part explains and shows the practice of WhatsApp communication within the organisation. It will explain the formation of WhatsApp groups, recognition of WhatsApp in the organisation, composition of WhatsApp groups, and the behaviours represented in the group. In addition, it explores the influence of WhatsApp on knowledge sharing, socialisation, structure and work processes. Finally, it will point out the affordances and constrictions of WhatsApp communication for telecom organisations.

4.5.1   Use of WhatsApp communications

WhatsApp is a mobile application (also accessed via computers) that allows users to send text messages, images, documents, voice calls, video calls, user locations and other media. WhatsApp enables a user to communicate with another individual user or in groups of individual users. The use of WhatsApp for internal communication within Mwiko and Kili was a significant finding and this part will present formation, composition, recognition and behaviours associated with WhatsApp groups in telecom organisations.

WhatsApp groups are formed through individual initiatives within the telecom organisations as WhatsApp communication is not an official means of communication within the case organisations. For example, Mwiko's regional manager explains the emergence of WhatsApp as individual initiatives within the departments (see the regional manager's remarks below). Despite this, WhatsApp is becoming more prevalent within organisations since conventional means such as e-mail are not as fast, neither always accessible, to all the staff. Consequently, staff members used WhatsApp as a supplementary means of internal communication since it is convenient and an easier means of sharing information. For instance, the Branch Manager at Kili explains how not

all people in his branch have access to e-mail. Likewise, Mwiko's human resources manager argues that since WhatsApp is mobile phone application that the staff already posses; their department uses it for communication. For example, explanations of Mwiko's CEO and Kili branch manager A, suggest reasons for using WhatsApp: because it is easy, modern, efficient and quick. Given these attributes of WhatsApp, the CEO of Mwiko instructs a formation of two different groups for the senior management team and the executive management team so that he could easily communicate with the teams. Thus, the groups are formed for work-related purposes although sometimes, depending on the consensus of members, the group may include social content such as jokes. For example, the Kili branch manager identifies two groups that exist on WhatsApp: social groups and workgroups. Further, although there is no WhatsApp group for the entire organisation, normally groups exist for people who work together on a project or in a unit and department (see Mwiko's human resources manager's comment below). WhatsApp groups help staff to communicate and collaborate easily by sharing and updating each other while at times advancing their social relations through sharing social conversations such as jokes. The following extracts from the interviewees give insights into the state and formation of WhatsApp groups in the telecom organisations:

Those are initiatives of individual departments. For example, in the regional branches every unit has its own WhatsApp group. Where they can share, work related issues, jokes and do whatever. For instance, I have one group called Dar es Salaam central commercials. Central commercials is all the staff within the commercial department, this is the group [showing me the group on his phone]. When you go into the group, you will find updates. For example, the manager is not in the office and he wants to communicate something then he can do it through the group. — Regional manager (Mwiko)

Our office uses WhatsApp. I have a WhatsApp group of eight people, we update each other. Not everything can be shared through email. Not everyone uses email. For instance, there are eight customer services employees using two computers. This means some people do not have access

to the email system but they are using WhatsApp because it is modern and it is easy to communicate anything in the office. This is just an example of my office, but in the zone, there are many groups. There is a social group and work group. When I look at my phone I have not less than eight groups and they are all related to work. It simplifies things because when you need information quickly the phone is nearby. For example, someone is in Dar es Salaam [headquarters] and is requesting how many agents do you have in your branch, when you send it on the WhatsApp group, it becomes easy because everyone shares that information at the same time. − Manager branch A (Kili)

Yes, in work now there are things like WhatsApp. Perhaps it is weekend and there is information we need to share in the department, we have a department WhatsApp group where we can share information. However, we do not have a WhatsApp group for the entire organisation, since something like WhatsApp, is just a facility that someone has. So as a department we have a group, which we use to communicate. − Human resources manager (Mwiko)

I have told the entire senior management team to have a WhatsApp group so all of us who are in SMT - the senior management team have a WhatsApp connection. We also have a lower level of management is called EMT- the Executive management team, for which there is a WhatsApp group. This helps us to convey a message in a quicker and more efficient way to all of our team members… I use it as a medium of communicating with my staff. - CEO (Mwiko)

From the extracts above, we learn some things. First, although WhatsApp is an individual initiative, the management recognises its significance in facilitating communication in effective ways. For example, the Mwiko CEO directs his management team to participate in WhatsApp groups. Second, an individual (staff member) can simultaneously exist in multiple WhatsApp groups within the organisation. For example, as the quotations above suggest, the CEO of Mwiko has at least two groups while Kili's branch manager

has at least eight groups. This suggests that groups are work-related. Finally, given that individuals form groups, WhatsApp facilitates self-organisation within the organisation. For instance, employees may decide to create their own group and exclude the management while at the same time having a similar group including the manager.

Also, as mentioned above, WhatsApp communication is an individual initiative, meaning that it is not a formal means of communicating within the case organisations. WhatsApp as a tool for communication started to emerge when people working together on similar projects needed to communicate and update each other on the respective project. For that reason, WhatsApp use started casually (see Mwiko's IT manager's explanations below). It is, on occasion, perceived as a personal communication tool and not an official application. The IT manager and human resources manager at Mwiko explain how WhatsApp communication is perceived in the organisation as well as explaining how it emerged:

> *They are not formal. They started informally with people doing similar things, for instance engineers. For example, right now our company is going through a transformation and there are big projects to upgrade the networks and all that. Therefore, there are some groups that are formed to include people with similar functions and who give each other updates on their progress. — IT manager (Mwiko)*

> *No, we do not use social media in our offices maybe some people use it for personal issues. — Human resources manager (Mwiko)*

Mwiko's human resources manager refutes the existence of social media in the office because it is not formally recognised; nevertheless, the human resources manager acknowledges the use of WhatsApp in his department (see comment on p. 139). Thus, several challenges arise because WhatsApp is not an official communication in the organisation. First, any communication that occurs on WhatsApp may easily be disregarded with a justification that WhatsApp is not an official means of communicating. Second, there is an absence of organisational policy to reinforce communication taking place within WhatsApp groups. Thus, it is a personal influence

that makes WhatsApp groups effective as explained below by the regional manager. Mwiko's regional manager provides a context, which explains the informality of WhatsApp groups in telecom organisations:

> *These things are out of policy, when things are out of organisational policy you can just use your personal persuasiveness/influence. However, you cannot reinforce the use of something outside of policy by using your authority. When something is part of policy I can persuade and reinforce this with my power as a regional manager. As in our organisation, we follow regulations and policy. A policy says this and this, a regulation says this and this. However, you find the reality is that things criss-cross; hence, it becomes very difficult to use your power. Therefore, on social media, there can be times when someone cannot face you but he can share something and say how it is, and from there you can act. In other circumstances, a thread might start and as a manager, you can learn and understand that there is a problem or something good. Therefore, you can take that information and work on it.*
> *— Regional manager (Mwiko)*

Given the effectiveness of WhatsApp communication, within the two telecom organisations there is a strong desire for it to be formalised. However, no one knows how this can be done. Some people attribute the obduracy of formalising social media to trust issues between staff. In addition, formalisation of WhatsApp is hindered by the inconsistency between how WhatsApp works and organisational policy, rules and regulations. Furthermore, there is the perception that once WhatsApp groups are formalised they may cease to be effective. Many people will be forced to join the groups, and the groups will somehow be open, which might not be a conducive environment for having a robust discussion. Below are some quotes from various respondents, which support the above statements. The quotes demonstrate respondents' wish to formalise WhatsApp without knowing how the organisations can do so:

> *Concerning formalizing social networks. I do not know what to say, I think maybe people do not trust each other. Nevertheless, people take these groups as leisure that is why other people are silent not because they have*

nothing to say. They are something good but everyone takes it differently depending on their perception. To make the groups formal is a good thing but what I think is that it will force the groups to be open because the groups are closed and have administrators, they have ten or twenty people. When you make it formal, it might have many more people and cause confusion. There are advantages and disadvantages and the challenge are in between, but people have not taken them that serious. However, I see them as a good thing because it simplifies work. – Network planning (Mwiko)

I think the organisation should make WhatsApp a channel of official communication although I am not sure if it is possible. – Manager branch B (Kili)

The organisation should accept the groups, for instance, the heads of department should be on groups, they should chat and if there is something that comes up, then they should do it. At the moment they might be asked something but they decide to be silent. - Network planning (Mwiko)

This is an informal way of communicating, usually I use it if I want to inspire or motivate people. In addition, I use it if I want to communicate something very quickly. ….. I do not think we can formalise WhatsApp because according to the rules, regulations and policies there is no way we are going to adapt. Maybe God knows in the future but not now. Not in the near future. – CEO (Mwiko)

The formalisation of WhatsApp groups appears to be somewhat impossible for the time being from the CEO and practitioner's perspectives within the case organisations. Nevertheless, as it shall be discussed below, the WhatsApp group composition plays a significant role in influencing the effectiveness of the WhatsApp groups in the case organisations.

WhatsApp groups within the case organisations have different compositional structures. A compositional structure reflects the characteristics of the group and each structure has its advantages and disadvantages. Predominantly, there are two types of groups;

categorised as homogenous and heterogeneous. A homogeneous group includes people from the same team/level/unit who have similar characteristics - for instance, a group of engineers, marketing team or customer service team. The homogenous usually, have thorough discussions and are open to each other. However, this type of group contains a limited perspective: they only see things from their perspective.

The heterogeneous groups have a mix of people, either from different fields such as marketing, finance, engineering or from different levels of management or different units within the departments. The benefit of a heterogeneous group is that it influences culture as it takes different perspectives, the broader perspectives enrich its discussion, it saves time, and it contains some order. Therefore, it can be regarded as being more serious. For example, a group in which a senior manager posts something will be taken more seriously and junior staff will make an effort to provide answers compared with a group that has members with the same seniority. The following extracts explain the composition of a WhatsApp group in telecom organisations:

> *Social media is used in a social way by people having groups. For instance, there is a technical team group on WhatsApp, where people share information.* — IT manager (Mwiko)

> *It is possible that WhatsApp is influencing the culture of the organisation. For instance, a WhatsApp group [heterogeneous] may contain engineers, managers, and heads, therefore, the chances of members withdrawing from main topics is minimized. There is some sort of order. In terms of knowledge, if there is a problem and there is management in the group, people have to find solutions because they fear leaders. Matters are not taken lightly in the group depending on its composition.* — IT manager (Mwiko)

> *The positive thing about the subgroups [homogenous] is that when there is a situation it is discussed thoroughly. The negative part is that the perspective might be limited to that small group but if it contained people from other groups there is a potential to get solutions from different views. Perhaps it could save time in finding a solution.* — IT manager (Mwiko)

For instance, we have a WhatsApp team for managers [homogenous], which helps a lot because people chat, make jokes, and relax. Someone can send a joke on a work group. So, I might be in the field and the network is down so I can write on the group [heterogeneous] that this area has no network and the zone director can see from the group and they will report it to the engineers. So maybe the feedback can say there was a fibre cutting. Therefore, sometimes we might have information that has not even reached the headquarters yet because we have seen it on the group. So, if I say I have not heard from headquarters but now since I have the information, I can be directed on how to tell the customers. - Manager branch B (Kili)

The size of the WhatsApp group is a significant factor in making the group effective. The maximum limit for a WhatsApp group is 256 people. In telecom organisations, the size of groups ranges; there are some groups that have lots of people, while others have fewer people. As indicated earlier (p. 141-2) by Mwiko's network planner, the average size of the group is ten to twenty people. Thus, a group with less than ten people can be considered a small group whereas a group with more than twenty can be considered to be a large group. The convention is that when the size of a group is too large, it turns out to be chaotic. In a situation where the group is too large, it is likely to have several group administrators who control the group. The administrators can remove or add a member and they are the ones who control the group. Where the team is big, for instance a call centre with about 300 members of staff, normally they will organise themselves into smaller groups and have supervisors, so when a matter needs attention it is easier to reach out to the supervisors and the supervisors will reach the right person. Thus, the division of the team is used to create groups that have an optimal size. Consider the explanation of the Kili branch manager in the extracts below. As noted earlier, an individual can simultaneously exist in several groups: the significance of this tendency is that information tends to move from one group to another through forwarding messages. Forwarding messages helps the transfer of information within the organisation and it makes WhatsApp an effective means of sharing information within the organisation. A branch manager and team leader at Kili explain how the size of a

WhatsApp group, multiple group administrators and how simultaneous existence of individuals in several groups helps in the transfer of information, below:

The size of the group is an issue. For example, when you say you want a group for all the call centre staff, there are more than 300 staff, therefore it will be total chaos. What they did is they took the supervisors and made WhatsApp groups for their groups. Therefore, if there are any issues that need attention the supervisor will find the right person and tell him. For other groups, which have few members, for example zonal directors, the formation is easier. Also, people have several groups, therefore information can move from one group to another, they just forward it. Therefore, people can have groups of subordinates and at the same have another group of peers (same level). This helps to transfer information. — Manager branch B (Kili)

We use a WhatsApp group. I am a leader [WhatsApp group administrator] of twelve people; our WhatsApp group has twelve of us with three leaders [WhatsApp group administrators]. When there is any challenge that we face, we send it on the group. My team and I have a WhatsApp group, when they get a problem in the market, they have my WhatsApp and I help them. — Team leader (Kili)

From the extract of Kili's team leader above, we learn of the existence of several administrators in a WhatsApp group. As aforementioned, WhatsApp allows several administrators in a group who can add or remove a member. In Tanzania WhatsApp administrators have a significant role in monitoring the conversation as they are liable for the content shared in the group under the Tanzania Cybercrime Act of 2015.

Related with the composition of the groups are the behaviours exhibited in the WhatsApp groups. Different behaviours can be observed in WhatsApp groups within the two case organisations. First, WhatsApp groups are a platform in which people can express themselves to their peers. It is not a formal platform and that makes it an effective place for self-expression including through opinions, questions, and jokes, as highlighted by Mwiko's regional manager on p. 138 and the finance manager at Mwiko in the quotation below:

In our department, there is a WhatsApp group. If there is something that you want to say you can put it on there but it is not compulsory. — Finance manager (Mwiko)

On the other hand, a WhatsApp group enables quick response. If a staff member has a concern or needs guidance on something, it is easier to get a faster response from members within a WhatsApp group. Usually, the first person to see the message responds or it could be that anyone who knows the answer will reply to the message, as highlighted by the quotation below:

The one who sees the message first is the one who helps. Anyone who sees the message can help. — Team leader (Kili)

As people express and respond to issues on a WhatsApp group it becomes a useful platform for observing people's behaviour. From WhatsApp group conversations, it is easier to understand people's personalities, thinking capacity and other attributes. The WhatsApp platform is a good place to get to know other people with whom employees may not have previously had close interaction. Hence, WhatsApp groups help seniors and managers to understand staff behaviours and may offer a useful lens through which to get to know thoughtful and scatter-brained people as the CEO at Mwiko explains below:

At least from there [WhatsApp group] you can also know who are serious people and who are the jokers. Who are mediocre people. You can get this from there. I hardly participate unless there is a very sensitive issue or an issue related to the company, or relating to the industry at large. So, when you get people who are talking about their dogs or they talk about their cats etc. I usually don't contribute; I just keep quiet. I just keep silent. — CEO (Mwiko)

Although WhatsApp groups offer a good platform for identifying serious workers from mediocre ones, according to the CEO at Mwiko above, not all senior staff find WhatsApp useful as a tool for observing the characters of the staff. The reason being that some

seniors are very close to the group members, and they already know them in-person. In addition, some of the seniors, when they observe something erratic on the WhatsApp group, do not deal with it via the WhatsApp group first. Instead, they seek out the staff member to talk in-person. This insinuates that the use of WhatsApp groups is also dependant on the composition of the group. A group composed of people who have strong offline relationships already know each other. For the groups composed of people who do know each other quite well, the WhatsApp group becomes a useful place to learn the behaviours of others:

> *For me, a group does not challenge me in understanding who is a good worker because I see them at work. When a member contributes in a group and it is something controversial, I will go in person to see them and talk to them. I will also go and verify if it is true, or official, then I find the truth. After that, I will address it officially. Sometimes there are a lot of jokes, conspiracy and rumours on social media. – Manager branch B (Kili)*

WhatsApp groups provide a place where people are supposed to speak freely; however, some people fear to talk, especially when there is the presence of their seniors. Various factors can explain the fear of participating in discussions. For example, some do not want to be perceived as ill-informed by their seniors, or people from other departments. This reemphasizes the argument that the composition of the WhatsApp group influences the behaviours of individuals, as suggested by the quotations below:

> *The groups are always free, even when the boss is in them however some people are afraid due to their perception. They become silent. However, some people talk a lot. Some people will talk somewhere else but when they are in the group, they will be silent. - Network planning (Mwiko)*

> *The fear that I was talking about is on groups with bigger scope, you find maybe it has three levels of management and perhaps the CEO is there. Obviously, people will be constrained. However, for most of the subgroups [homogeneous] inside the department's people are free and talk freely. Also, when you find groups [heterogenous] composed of people from different*

departments, members of the group do not like to be perceived as if their
department has any weakness or they have a challenge. So, people do not
open up as much on their situations when they're on inter-departmental
groups. But in smaller groups they do not have those problems. – IT manager
(Mwiko)

In addition, WhatsApp group members may fear and abstain from freely participating in WhatsApp groups because some managers create certain forms of barriers. The managers tend to create barriers since some people tend to abuse the friendship privilege by not taking the managers seriously. Thus, some managers behave in a way to preserve their power. The managers may decide not to comment on every issue, or they may decide to abstain from social chats/jokes and only respond on serious matters, as highlighted below:

Many bosses like to create a certain form of barrier. Some people might have
a minor issue but the interaction between bosses and them is minimal.
Sometimes the bosses do that so that they do not dilute their power. –
Network planning (Mwiko)

Although some managers may create barriers as a means of preserving their power, they also balance it by creating a friendly environment as a means of allowing members to open up on issues. A friendly environment is crucial for allowing honest and free discussion in the WhatsApp groups. As mentioned earlier by Mwiko's network planner, the presence of bosses in a WhatsApp group can restrain members from participating freely. A way of creating a friendly environment is by being less formal. For instance, from the CEO at Mwiko's comment below, we can observe how the CEO abstains from being a WhatsApp administrator as a means of preserving power while being a normal member of the group as a means of being friendly:

First of all, I am not an [WhatsApp] administrator, and I would never wish to
be one. I have left the conversation to be controlled by other people. I am just
an ordinary member. The idea of people opening up to you depends on how
friendly you are. I am a very friendly person, young, energetic, open to new

ideas and challenges. Therefore, I do not think anyone is threatened by me or scared to raise his opinion. It depends on how you treat people. I treat all my colleagues with respect, I am not formal at all times. I call people by their first names and I encourage them to call me by my first name. – CEO (Mwiko)

It is apparent that informal behaviour practiced by managers in a WhatsApp group is important for making that WhatsApp group active with honest and free discussions. Some groups have developed a practice of treating members equally irrespective of their positions. Such groups tend to impose discipline through other by-laws set by the group members themselves. Thus, apart from the discipline which emerges from the nature of composition, the by-laws are another means that impose discipline. An example of by-laws is having strict exclusion of social issues from work WhatsApp groups. This works through separation of work groups and social groups, as stated below:

The good thing about my group is that we have a culture that there is no boss although the levels are still there. Our group has a discipline of separating work and social things. There is one group, which is dedicated to work and another for social activities. – IT manager (Mwiko)

The interview data suggest that WhatsApp groups accentuate classes within the telecom organisations. Apart from heterogeneous WhatsApp groups which might contain people from different levels of management, the homogenous WhatsApp groups tend to cement classes within the organisation. For example, such groups (homogenous WhatsApp groups) might exclude a senior, supervisor, or even a junior so that people from the same level can discuss their matters and get consensus. For instance, sometimes, when there is an issue, junior staff might discuss it thoroughly on WhatsApp then find a way of presenting it to their seniors. In other instances, they may decide to hide something. In some cases, some of the people at Kili perceived that WhatsApp groups in work should not be available to other groups, for instance, junior staff. For example, consider the views below of the zonal manager and branch manager at Kili:

Social media is good, although it depends on the management levels. There is a norm which says the more you go down the more supervision is required. That is why I have been advocating that official WhatsApp groups should be for leaders. Social media has an impact and it needs to be monitored. For instance, on the level of managers and directors there is no problem, because we do calls, send files and give updates through WhatsApp. — Zonal manager (Kili)

Should people be free on WhatsApp groups? It depends. For instance, here in the northern zone their social group includes everyone, also there are groups for management, there is a group for zonal managers. Perhaps a zonal manager will create a group for the northern supervisors. We can also have our own group for supervisors from which the director is excluded. In this group, we can be freer to chat about our own issues. How we address a certain issue. Therefore, if you [manager] cannot tell them [subordinates] you will find them already have their own group created which you are not included. They will talk about their own issues and when they need you, they will tell you. — Manager branch B (Kili)

Beyond the WhatsApp group composition, the history of the WhatsApp group members explains the behaviour of the WhatsApp group in the two case study organisations. Although the presence of a manager in a WhatsApp group imposes discipline, that is not the case in all groups. If someone had become a manager or supervisor through promotion, he would have already known his juniors well since they were colleagues before the promotion. Likewise, the juniors tend to know the manager well since s/he was once one of them. WhatsApp groups of this nature tend to be freer and have more open discussion compared to groups where their manager has no history with the other group members, as suggested below:

Yeah it is possible and this happens to many groups. For instance, with my group many people talk freely because before I became the regional manager I was working in commercial. Therefore, sometimes they consider me as one of them. Therefore, when they share things, they do it in a commercial way

because they know I am from commercial. I know many commercial things and I can advise the best on commercial matters. So, if there was a new manager who has never been on the commercial team, they would hesitate to share some things. A good example is that in my office people from commercial come to see me, if you compare this to other units you see a difference. Commercial teams do not see visiting me as a problem. They will say 'we have come here for these issues, can you help us'. They do it freely compared to others. In other departments they take too long in considering visiting me. When they come here, they truly have a big issue. The commercial team has no barrier to visiting. But, as a manager, I am open to everyone. I do not classify people who come to see me. They try to come visit me but you see they hesitation. — Regional manager (Mwiko)

In addition, WhatsApp groups tend to discuss issues which are non-confidential. For instance, updates, elaborations on matters and guidance. Confidential issues are not discussed on WhatsApp platforms because WhatsApp is not an official means of communication in the two case organisations. Thus, any confidential or serious matter will be addressed via official means of communication such as email. WhatsApp will just supplement serious issues, for example providing an explanation on business matters. Thus, WhatsApp group communication has emerged as a means of updating each other on business issues within the organisations:

Confidential issues go through email. That is the relationship. Email is the most formal communication and WhatsApp is more for business updates, direction, asking for guidance or for a way forward. — Zonal manager (Kili)

The different behaviour and practices presented above give insights into WhatsApp groups within the two telecom organisations. Such insights are fundamental in understanding the impact of WhatsApp groups on the processes, structure and strategy within the telecom organisations.

4.5.2 Implication of WhatsApp communications

The interview data suggest that WhatsApp communication within the two case organisations facilitates knowledge sharing. WhatsApp has enabled the flow of information between members of staff. It has enabled people to share information and exchange views within the organisation. WhatsApp has facilitated learning in the organisation through discussions that happen on WhatsApp. Knowledge and information sharing through WhatsApp are facilitated through various forms such as pictures, videos, voice notes and text messages. The human resources manager at Mwiko explains this further as follows:

> *WhatsApp helps a lot in knowledge sharing. For instance, if all staff were in one group, if we had something in common, it could be very easy to disseminate. This is because you walk with WhatsApp in your hand. For email you have to have a computer, although you also can have it on your phone. I think WhatsApp is easier. It is easy to send pictures, voice notes etc. In addition, it is something that many people are using right now. – Human resources manager (Mwiko)*

Also, WhatsApp groups tend to benefit those who contribute because they end up learning more. Those who only read the discussion shared in the groups also absorb the knowledge and information.

> *There are people who are introverts and extroverts. Introverts do not contribute a lot on groups but they have their way of communicating. In contrast to extroverts, people who share knowledge are very different. I do not say those who are not sharing knowledge on groups do not share it in practice. I do not know how to put this. Nevertheless, a contributor in WhatsApp normally gets more knowledge. They normally make the group active and people open up so they end up with more knowledge. Because when sharing knowledge people bring different views. Even the ones who keep quiet gets something. However, when you have three extroverts*

arguing the introvert will join in and provide his perspective. — Human resources manager (Mwiko)

Furthermore, WhatsApp facilitates knowledge sharing by gathering views from outside of the organisation. The members of staff at Mwiko learn and get information from across the world through their friends and family. This gives them more exposure to what is happening outside of the organisation and consequently adds to their knowledge:

> *Social media has rejuvenated business trends and the flow of information to large extent. That is why today's world is different to that of two or three years ago. From social media we get a lot of global information that previously we could not access. Most of the [WhatsApp] group members you find in the UK, US, India and other places. … we also have groups which cut across organisations, in such groups we share a lot of issues and business practices. But as a manager I must be careful because you can easily find yourself sharing organisational secrets, which can be a weapon in the market if the group has members from competitors. If there are no competitors in the group you can share your expertise and strengths and this helps a lot. But if competitors are in the group most of them [groups] tend to die because everyone is a threat. — Regional manager (Mwiko)*

The advantage of WhatsApp groups to the telecom organisations is the sharing of knowledge between staff. Knowledge sharing is the by-product of WhatsApp groups because when people discuss, offer guidance, or elaborate on something, knowledge is shared.

Another influence of WhatsApp communication in the two telecom organisations is on the structure. However, the influence of WhatsApp communication on the structure of the two telecom organisations is debatable. Some argue that it has somehow influenced the structure of communication within the organisations while others argue that it has not changed the structure. Although the changes to communication are apparent, as discussed in the section above, it has become a supplementary and preferred method

of communication for different types of information exchange. Those who argue that it has influenced the structure claim that WhatsApp has enabled people to bypass or circumvent the normal process of communication. For instance, someone might approach a senior manager without following the 'right' channel like going through the secretary. This influences the setup of the organisation, as suggested below:

> *Somehow, social media [WhatsApp] influences the structure because you can directly contact someone. Though it is not to that extent because people still obey the stages, that when you start here you go there then afterwards you reach your destination. In some instance, someone can approach a senior without passing the right channels. For instance, here in IT we have a help desk, whereby if anyone has an IT problem they call and are assigned to an engineer. Now instead of people going through the help desk they contact the engineer directly and ask them to help. Somehow this bypasses the helpdesk which is used to measure the engineers [Key performance indicators] KPI's. Therefore, it significantly affects their KPI's by not accounting for the works which have not been logged in the system. – IT manager (Mwiko)*

In work relationships, bypassing someone has the potential to strain relationships between staff. For example, when a junior staff member talks to a senior staff member without first speaking to their supervisor or manager, the working relationship between the junior and the supervisor may deteriorate because the supervisor might feel irrelevant. Thus, although WhatsApp destroys this sort of bureaucracy, it can sometimes have a side effect such as stirring up conflicts between staff, as suggested below:

> *I look at it positively, communication wise. I have my manager and I have my head. It is good to communicate to my manager first then to my head. Sometimes I may understand something more than my manager does and if I communicate this to my head through my manager some details get lost in the process. However, if I have these two bosses in my WhatsApp, anyone who wants to question me will be able to do that in the group. In addition, I will be able to justify it because it originates from me. …. sometimes this*

brings conflict; sometimes a boss might feel bad. They feel bad when you say something that is inside and they did not know because they feel they are in charge. For certain types of processes that is okay, but in the current world they should not have those kinds of feelings. — Human resources manager (Mwiko)

For those who contend that WhatsApp has not changed the communication structure, they argue that the structure of communicating is still the same in the sense that it is a top-down approach in that communication starts from the top and diffuses to the lower levels. This means that everything starts from the top management/headquarters level and goes down to the branch levels. It follows the management levels in descending order. Thus, the argument is that WhatsApp is just working on the same structure. The only difference that WhatsApp and other social media have brought is the form in which the message is delivered that it is in an instant and has increased the use of media use - such as videos and photos, as highlighted below:

The structure of communication in the company has not changed. It is still the same. It starts from the top and goes to the bottom. Although the communication might not reach all areas directly, it will reach everyone eventually because team leaders will communicate it. Every area in the organisation has managers and supervisors. The communication is through email. The only difference is that previously there used to be a lot of writing to explain something, nowadays photos and videos are used to explain something. Often, they will send it via email and we will take the videos or picture from the email and distribute them through WhatsApp. Facebook and WhatsApp have made it easy to communicate because it is easy to communicate with images. It is also easier to train people with pictures and videos rather than phone calls and emails. Through social media, we can receive video and know what we are supposed to do. — Manager branch A (Kili)

The explanation above implies that the structure of communication has not changed because WhatsApp is a supplement to the official communication means such as email.

Following these two views on the influence of WhatsApp to communication structure within the case organisations, it is rational to wait and give time to learn the impact on structure given that structural changes take time and WhatsApp is just a recent phenomenon. Structure is an enduring form in which organisational activities take place; thus structural changes may take time to take a new form.

Further, the interview data suggest that WhatsApp influences processes within the organisations by facilitating faster communication. Although WhatsApp is not an official means of communication (as discussed above), it has been noted that it simplifies work within the organisation. A good example of how WhatsApp is influencing processes is the registration of new subscribers (customers) in the street:

> *In the organisation, we do not use social media. Informally, we use social media especially people in customer service. They use social media groups, especially WhatsApp groups to host customer queries. Even if the customer care is at home, still he can assist because it is easy to access WhatsApp. It is easy to know what the problem of the customer is and solve it immediately. However, when you go into the street to do a campaign to register customers they use WhatsApp groups. If someone gets a customer, he sends the details through WhatsApp and they are loaded to the system. The TCRA has made it that a customer cannot send a message without being registered. There are various systems used to register a customer but WhatsApp is used a lot. When you get a customer, you can send his information, take a photo ID, then you send it to be printed and it will be attached with the registration form and the customer will be activated on the service. Therefore, WhatsApp is used even for official business operations. — Product development manager (Mwiko)*

> *I think social media increases efficiency by facilitating speed. Efficiency is about information. Without information there are no deliverables. We need to process information as quickly as possible. When you process information slowly, there is no efficiency at all. We think social media has a large contribution in transforming an organisation because you need efficiency in*

processing information. When you are efficient you make a profit, we make
a profit. – Regional manager (Mwiko)

The examples given by the product development manager at Mwiko illustrate how customer service has changed the process of registering customers through WhatsApp. This highlights the importance of emerging practices to the process and, ultimately, the organisational strategy. For example, the registration process of customers does not include WhatsApp in the sequence of activities, but the practice of using WhatsApp brings efficiency by facilitating speed as highlighted above by Mwiko's regional manager. Furthermore, the findings also suggest that WhatsApp groups in the two case organisations influence the social capital of the workers. WhatsApp groups increase ambient awareness - an awareness of who knows whom and who knows what in the organisation. Through WhatsApp, members of staff get to know other members of staff, their roles and responsibilities. This is beneficial to staff as it gives them more knowledge about their organisation and it saves time when in need of assistance from others because they know who to contact or where to go:

Groups help people to know who knows what from what people like to
contribute or talk about. Some people gain social capital from these groups.
- Sales person (Kili)

The WhatsApp groups helps us to know each other, I know who does what,
what their responsibilities are and if there is a problem who to see. I know
exactly who to contact. For instance, when the line is cut, there are network
groups in the headquarters which we have. Therefore, if the line is cut, within
30 minutes I can give notice that there has been a line cut off in our branch.
Through that, I can insist. – Manager branch B (Kili)

Also, WhatsApp groups influence others' perceptions of an individual depending on how they contribute to the group:

In life, people who contribute have an advantage because they are deemed
know more compared to those who stay silent. The others will be seen to not

know until when they do something. Therefore, contributing has benefits because it increases the positive perception of an individual. Maybe someone does not know something but opens up and speaks about it confidently and people will think he knows more about it compared to someone who is silent.
– Human resources manager (Mwiko)

Also, WhatsApp groups are improving staff relationships. Some relationships that could have been difficult to form, for instance, between juniors and seniors or people from different departments, are now easier to form through WhatsApp groups:

Social media improves industrial relations. There are people you are not very close to but if you share something and they reply over time you develop a relationship. It also improves the relationship between juniors and seniors when you are in the same group, e.g. when a boss jokes on social media you feel closer to them and have something more in common. Therefore, it improves your relationship. – Human resources manager (Mwiko)

From the extracts above, we observe the significance of social interaction such as jokes, which happen on WhatsApp workgroups. Social interaction increases staff relations and social capital. Thus, telecom organisations can potentially benefit from having good welfare of staff due to improved relations. We also see the significance of WhatsApp in mixing social issues and work, which makes the telecom organisations an enjoyable place for staff.

In light of the above discussion, from the interview data, it has been identified that WhatsApp groups have the following affordances and constrictions for the telecom organisations:

4.5.3   Affordances and constrictions of WhatsApp

WhatsApp communication is an important means of communicating within the two case telecom organisations. Although WhatsApp is not formal, it helps to inform members of staff of any urgent matter that needs attention. Since staff members use WhatsApp for both personal and office purposes, it can still be easy to get staff attention to a specific office issue even outside of office hours, as explained below:

They have benefits because it is a communication medium. If something is urgent, it is where you can communicate especially now when everyone has a smartphone - it is easy to access information and act. For example, I have written an email to a member of staff this morning to assign some task but because he might be out of the office with no access to Outlook, I told him [On WhatsApp], 'hi, please can you prepare one freelancer to do the daily routine connection'. He replied, 'I have spoken to Saeed he is on his way' it is stuff like that which you can communicate. I have communicated a work issue, which was carried out so this is an advantage. – Regional manager (Mwiko)

The interview data suggest that the speed of WhatsApp messages increases efficiency and simplifies the communication process within the organisation. It helps information to be diffused quickly, sometimes even before the information is officially announced:

The advantage is that when something has happened and you're connected you get the information. Therefore, it helps you to get information before it is announced officially. — Finance manager (Mwiko)

Also, the speed of WhatsApp messages accelerates work processes within the organisation, consequently simplifying work by saving time and energy to send or receive information related to work. For instance, in section 4.5.1, the CEO of Mwiko explains how WhatsApp helps him convey messages in a quicker and more efficient way to all his team members. Likewise, the salesperson in Kili has the following to say regarding the speed of WhatsApp.

WhatsApp has benefits because it simplifies my work. We use groups to share for instance instead of searching for someone, when you share the message gets there faster. - Sales person (Kili)

Another advantage of WhatsApp is that it is easy and intuitive to use compared to other communication tools such as email. As mentioned above, WhatsApp communication is a faster means of reaching people. Also, how WhatsApp is configured makes it easy to use. Further, many people use and understand how WhatsApp works. Hence, it is easy

for someone to get help in terms of use because people have a wide experience of using WhatsApp. This is especially for the older staff who are not tech-savvy: they can easily find help on using WhatsApp at both work and home settings. Furthermore, WhatsApp functionalities such as voice calls make it even easier to use the application when it is one-to-one communication, as suggested below:

> *WhatsApp is about individuals. Even if it is about work, most of the staff will be on WhatsApp for other social activities and social groups. Therefore, when any work thing is broadcasted someone will get it instantly. When you compare it with email, which unless you have installed it on your mobile, then its accessibility is complex. Therefore, given that we are on groups it is easier when there is a breakdown to reach someone compared to via email. This is because of the fact that people are more proficient on social media compared to emails and when it is free Internet, people can easily call you when they do not have credit. The instantaneous aspect of social media helps a lot in work. — Regional manager (Mwiko)*

The interview data suggest that within the two case organisations, WhatsApp is used to inform and mobilise people even when they are not in geographical proximity or are outside of the work setting, for instance during the weekend:

> *The groups are instrumental in facilitating work. They provide updates even when you are at home you can get an update and you can know who did what. — Network planning (Mwiko)*

Likewise, WhatsApp groups are useful for organising and mobilising people. WhatsApp helps to gather people virtually. This makes it a platform where people can exchange views, opinions and get into an agreement on something, consequently making the WhatsApp groups instrumental for urgent matters which cannot wait for the normal procedures. For example, when there is a bereavement of a staff member during the weekend, the process can sometimes be quick. Thus, through a WhatsApp group: staff can inform each other and organise themselves to go and offer their condolences. The human resources manager at Mwiko explains this in a precise way below:

There are many benefits for HR because we deal with lots of people's issues. Maybe there is staff bereavement on a weekend, through WhatsApp, we can inform people and facilitation may start for instance payments for the funeral, arranging for other staff to attend. Therefore, with WhatsApp we get information very quickly, sometimes people die on Saturday and on Sunday they are buried or someone is transported the next day, therefore some process needs to start immediately so that on Monday you can complete things. Therefore, that is an advantage. - Human resources manager (Mwiko)

According to the data collected, WhatsApp groups are useful for helping. When a member of staff needs help, it is easier to ask on a WhatsApp group, and colleagues will be able to answer and help. The groups are beneficial since the one who sees it first will be able to answer. Also, for heterogeneous WhatsApp groups, help can come from people in other departments or different positions, as stated below:

Apart from Facebook, there are platforms such as WhatsApp which help us to connect with people. Also, there are groups for work. There are people working in different positions if you are stuck somewhere, they can help. — Network planning (Mwiko)

WhatsApp has offered an alternative means of communicating within the telecom organisation. In doing so, it has enhanced the portfolio of means by which members of staff can communicate. The significance of enhancing the portfolio of communication tools is important for the telecom organisations especially when you consider contextual factors such as a lack of constant supply of electricity, Internet and network connections, as well as the disparity of supporting infrastructure across the country. Thus, an alternative means of communicating enriches the information systems of the organisation and subsequently helps work processes, as suggested below:

Nowadays we have many ways to communicate, not only in our department, but also with others, we use WhatsApp groups. If there is any issue, we post

it on a group or forward it to another group and ask people to work on it and

it is done. − Marketing manager (Mwiko)

The interview findings also suggest that WhatsApp is valuable for telecom organisations because of its rich media quality. WhatsApp enables the easy transfer of photos, videos, audio and text, which enhances the communication and work processes. For example, when a report and evidence is needed, WhatsApp can facilitate the transfer of such data through location services; also, pictures can support the evidence:

When an issue has happened here in the branch and maybe I do not know what it is they will tell me to take a photo and send it to them. For instance, if I reported that there is a computer that is broken or a certain device is not working, they will tell me to send a photo or perhaps take a photo of the MIC number and send it to us. WhatsApp is used many times in solving problems. − Manager branch B (Kili)

Social media has helped us a lot in terms of communication. When we communicate, we need evidence. For example, if I have gone to market, I must take a photo to show where I am and I will send it on the group. WhatsApp is good as it enables lots of functions such as photos, which I can show as evidence. This is an organisation; when money is spent on anything there has to be supporting documents. − Manager branch A (Kili)

According to the data collected, getting feedback is another advantage of WhatsApp groups. WhatsApp is useful for gathering feedback from members of staff. Feedback is a significant advantage of social media platforms because of their interactive nature. In the case of WhatsApp, feedback manifests itself in terms of responses from colleagues and their opinions on the subject/issue discussed:

These groups are informal but they help a lot, because through them people work on issues, and they provide feedback. - Marketing manager (Mwiko)

In addition, WhatsApp has significantly reduced bureaucracy in the normal operations of the two telecom organisations because people know who to see or find when they

need something and they can access the right person. On the other hand, because WhatsApp spreads the message faster and makes it more visible, it forces people and management to act faster on issues, consequently reducing bureaucracy as suggested below:

> *Social media platforms have helped in daily operations. Things can be seen on the platform and the management can act upon them. It has reduced the bureaucracy. For instance, finding IT people because they give out information. – Network planning (Mwiko)*

> *Social media helps a lot in removing bureaucracy for instance making things go faster. For example, I can use WhatsApp as a medium for communication. One day I was not in the office and my boss wanted me to do something on Monday. He came over on the weekend; there was no other means he could reach me if it was not WhatsApp. He put the entire directive on WhatsApp, I knew everything that was supposed to be done by Monday, and I was ready and able to do that. Therefore, you can see that in one way or another if we were using the official means we would not be able to communicate. WhatsApp is not official. In many offices WhatsApp is not used officially but we could reach our objective through WhatsApp. It was almost three and I was outside the organisation. I would need a VPN to be able to login into the company intranet to access email. He could not call me because those directives were impossible to explain over the phone. – Product development manager (Mwiko)*

Furthermore, WhatsApp is beneficial for simplifying work. It simplifies work through various means described above; for example, through different media formats facilitated by WhatsApp it enriches information by easing things such as report filing. In other instances, it helps to provide guidance and assistance. In general, it can be argued that WhatsApp simplifies work through managing knowledge in the organisation. For instance, if several people are experiencing a similar problem and one person has sought assistance, the rest will have no reason to seek assistance because an issue has been raised and will be solved for all:

Social media reduces the work for us, for instance a boss might request a report. With an application like WhatsApp I only need to take a photo and send it to the boss and he receives it instantly. This simplifies things a lot. — Sales person (Kili)

The benefits of a WhatsApp group are non-duplication of the same message from each individual. If someone posts a message and you have a similar challenge, the answer posted will solve the problem for everyone. This is good because there are lots of people. — Team leader (Kili)

Highlighted above are the advantages of WhatsApp to the two case telecom organisations. The advantages are related and entwined, meaning that some of the advantages are related to each other. Nevertheless, WhatsApp has some disadvantages, as discussed below.

The interview data suggest that WhatsApp causes a lot of distraction in work. It is disruptive because WhatsApp is also used for personal communication. This, subsequently, affects individuals' concentration on work duties. For instance, when a staff member receives a personal message from home it can distract his/her attention from work. In addition, the entwinement of work and social issues as manifested in WhatsApp communication can be disruptive when work cannot be separated from social issues such as jokes. Furthermore, the way WhatsApp is configured, respondents argue that although you can mute messages, it is still difficult to stop WhatsApp messages when you want to work unless you are offline. In some ways, this restricts the freedom of using the Internet without being distracted by WhatsApp messages. The Network Planner at Mwiko explains this in detail further below; similarly, the Finance Manager and CEO at Mwiko explain how WhatsApp is at times a distraction:

I have not seen its [WhatsApps] impact especially on work, because most of the time people are on their phones and sometimes people might forget to work. If someone was supposed to be effective for five hours he becomes effective for one and half hours. The other time they spend on their phone. – Finance manager (Mwiko)

WhatsApp has one tendency when I put on my Internet and the messages start to come. Sometimes I do not want to get message from WhatsApp. There should have been an option for being offline. Even when I am using the Internet there should be an option. We want that functionality where you can object to receiving messages. – Network planning (Mwiko)

My main concern is that sometimes people post irrelevant information. That is my biggest concern. I would have expected the group, which is constituted of the senior management team and executive management team to share some serious stuff pertaining to how we run the organisation, pertaining to how we can develop our company. That is the perception I have but then you go on there and you find people posting some funny stories or jokes etc. I do not find that is something that we need to do especially in the WhatsApp group which is work related. - CEO (Mwiko)

Interview data suggests that searching for information in WhatsApp is not easy. The way WhatsApp is configured, to search for information, one has to scroll back and, most of the time, information is buried in a sea of new messages:

There is a problem when searching for a message on WhatsApp. Until you start scrolling back, you cannot get it easily even though they store those messages. – Network planning (Mwiko)

Considering the usage of WhatsApp and the amount of information exchange occurring relating to projects and how to carry out tasks, WhatsApp could be viewed as a useful repository for storing information. However, this brings its problems; for instance, the existence of many WhatsApp groups could result in too many repositories.

According to the interview data, WhatsApp communication has affected where and when work is done. Sometimes staff are at home and are still connected to work. They still get the updates of what is going on in the organisation. This makes it difficult for the staff to separate work and home issues. In addition, the fact that employees can be accessed via WhatsApp, which they also use for personal matters, compromises their

quality of life in the sense that they are alerted to work matters and this may affect their mood, as suggested below:

> *There are times when you are working on Saturday and the manager WhatsApps you and says you should complete your work by Monday and they are coming to look on Tuesday am. In situations like that your mood changes and the Saturday does not feel the same.* − Network planning (Mwiko)

Reliance on Internet access and connection appears to be a setback for WhatsApp communication. At times, WhatsApp communication is ineffective because of poor Internet connection. In Tanzania, access to the Internet is relatively expensive in proportion to the income of people. Thus, sometimes people do not have an Internet package and therefore cannot send or receive WhatsApp messages until they buy the Internet data bundle. Also, the Internet coverage is not the same across the country: in cities and towns, the Internet is useful compared to the rural areas. Although there has been a significant improvement in Internet access across the country, still some challenges exist, as stated below:

> *The challenges come from having Internet packages on phones, sometimes the person to solve the problem is on the group but he is not connected to the Internet. Therefore, by the time he gets connected he says he was in a location with no Internet. Therefore, the issue is access to the Internet, if it was all the same as normal messages that would be very good. This means that I would be able to receive the message whether I have a [Internet] package or not. − Manager branch B (Kili)*

> *Groups have challenges. In a work group you find people bringing issues which are not concerned with work. The second challenge of a group is the bundle [Internet package], sometimes your help is needed but at that moment, perhaps you do not have a bundle. Therefore, you cannot help in time. − Team leader (Kili)*

The advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp usage in the telecom organisations are, to some degree, embedded within the context of the country. The effectiveness of WhatsApp is dependent on the setting of the Internet infrastructure within the country. This section identified the gains and setbacks associated with WhatsApp communication.

4.5.4 Summary of WhatsApp communication

In general, this section has attempted to illuminate the dynamics of WhatsApp in the two telecom organisations. It is a complex and comprehensive phenomenon affecting different aspects within the organisations with many interpretations from the practitioners. First, WhatsApp communication is an emerging practice coming from the staff of the telecom organisations. Although it facilitates communication amongst staff in the organisations, the organisations are finding it difficult to recognise it as an official means of communication. WhatsApp group communication is significant as it enables departmental and interdepartmental collaboration. In addition, different behaviours are manifested depending on the composition structure of the group. Also, WhatsApp affects socialisation and knowledge sharing within the organisation. Apart from socialisation and knowledge sharing, WhatsApp is also influencing processes and structure within the case organisations. Although WhatsApp is affording organisations with intuitive and fast communication, it also has its dark side such as causing a lack of concentration in work.

Considerably, the main influences of WhatsApp communication practice on processes, structure and strategy within organisations are as follows: first, WhatsApp has influenced different processes within the organisation, mainly through sharing information and knowledge. This has induced speed and simplification of work processes within the case telecom organisations. Second, with regards to structure, WhatsApp circumvents the organisational structure which affects some processes within the organisations (for example, the appraisal process). Strategically, the influence of WhatsApp is on daily operations within the organisation, which is because of how it has enabled knowledge and information sharing within the organisations.

4.6 Conclusion of the findings

Significantly this chapter has presented the influence of social media within the two telecom case organisations. The chapter has shown different dimensions of social media practice within the organisations. The findings have revealed different sides and dynamics of social media practice. For example, it shows that some social media practices are planned while others emerge within the organisation. In addition, it shows how some practices receive formal recognition, while others have informal recognition. Furthermore, it has shown that some practices require resources from the organisation while other practices use an individual's resources. For example, the management of social media accounts requires some financial resources to pay for the external support in designing content. Whereas, WhatsApp communication practices uses individual's mobile phone and data expenses (internet costs). Following these dynamics, the findings have shown how social media practices influence processes, structure and strategy within the organisations. Different social media practices affect processes, structure and strategy differently. For example, social media accounts influenced strategy in terms of gaining market share and being competitive, which is strategically similar to 'free social media' practice, which has influenced marketing and sales. In terms of structure, the social media account has influenced the consolidation of centralised structure due to the resources required for managing social media accounts and controlling the risk associated with negative attacks on platforms. Process-wise, social media accounts introduced new activities that required external assistance. On the other side, WhatsApp communication practice influenced organisational processes through information and knowledge that was shared in WhatsApp groups. Finally, WhatsApp's key influence on structure was in circumnavigating the structure in place. The next chapter will discuss these findings with the aid of theory and literature.

5   Chapter V: Discussion

5.1   Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings that were presented in Chapter IV: Findings in conjunction with the literature review and theory. The chapter discusses how social media influences processes, structure and strategy. First, the chapter discusses the influence of context on social media practice in the two telecom organisations. Second, the chapter discusses the entanglement of social media with organisational practices: it explains how social media is entangled with organisational aspects such as competition, marketing, behaviours and knowledge sharing. Third, the chapter discusses the development and management of social media within the two case telecom organisations. It explains the adoption and emergence of social media, formal and informal recognition of social media practices, centralisation and decentralisation of social media, and capabilities for managing social media within organisations. Fourth, the chapter discusses the impact of social media on organisational structure and processes. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the discussion chapter.

5.2   The Influence of Context on Social Media Practice

The findings suggest that context plays a significant role in how social media is used within the telecom organisations. In Tanzania, the telecom industry has achieved significant progress over the last decade. 80% of the population of Tanzania subscribes to telephone services (TCRA, 2017). Further, from 2011 to 2016, Internet subscriptions, surged from 12% to 40% of the population of Tanzania, which is equivalent to a rise from 5 million users to 20 million Internet users (TCRA, 2017). This means that half of the population that subscribed to a telephone service uses the Internet. Furthermore, the number of fixed-line subscribers is deficient, only 129,597 in 2017 (TCRA, 2017). These statistics illustrate the predominance of mobile services. Furthermore, the statistics indicate the infrastructure setup with regards to Internet access, it shows how internet network coverage varies across the country. The majority of Tanzanians access their Internet service using mobile phones. The availability of the Internet is also informing

the type of business carried out by the telecom organisation. For example, the telecom organisations sell internet packages, which includes social media packages.

Strategy as practice perspective is concerned with how context affects micro-activities (Hendry et al., 2010). Despite of the progress made within the telecom industry and the communication sector in Tanzania, there are still significant challenges that hinder social media communication. First, some remote areas in the country have no access to the Internet yet and have weak network coverage. Second, inadequate electricity supply in the country affects communication; some places are disconnected from electricity while some places have frequent blackouts. Finally, income per capita is still low at only £0.50 per day. This makes it hard for staff and customers to afford communication all the time, consequently affecting the time people are available online or on social media platforms.

Duncan (1972) argues that context influences decision-making. The context of raising Internet access and mobile subscription in Tanzania has influenced the decision making of telecoms. As noted in the findings, Mwiko's decision to adopt social media was due to the rising usage of Internet users - now around 20 million users in Tanzania. Mwiko realised that social media could enable them to capture this market. Likewise, in Kili the reason to adopt social media is for the reach that social media facilitates. For example, the zonal manager of Kili (p. 101) suggested the reason for Kili to adopt social media is due to the fact that information can disseminated very quickly via social media platforms.

On the critical side, Ward and Rivani (2005) suggest that contextual factors can affect organisational capacity to produce value. This argument further underscores the influence of context albeit, in a negative way. Similarly, Dwivedi et al. (2015) suggest that appreciating and knowing the role of context helps to understand social factors that are central in understanding the use and impact of technology. In relation to the findings from this study, it was found that context can restrain the use of technology which can impact processes within the organisation. Evidence of such contextual restraint was seen, for example, in Kili (p.166), whereby there were instances when a group member/person with a solution to a problem fails to share it through WhatsApp due to

a lack of Internet access. Figure 6 portrays the variation of network coverage, which reflects the variation of Internet services, which affects access and usage of social media platforms such as WhatsApp. This variation affects the performance of social media with a consequent effect on processes such as subscribers' registration. On the other hand, a member of staff can fail to use social media due to a lack of Internet access when s/he has not purchased a service package (Internet bundle). Therefore, this example shows how income to buy a bundle (service package) or other contextual conditions such as inadequate network coverage may affect the functioning of social media within the organisation. Such context caused hindrances that affected processes within the organisation, consequently impacting the value of the organisation as theorised by Ward and Rivani (2005).

The theoretical view of strategy as practice (SaP) conceptualizes strategy as situated activity (Jarzabkowski, 2005) or context-dependent (Hendry et al., 2010). This means that strategic activities derive their significance from the context in which they are enacted. Hence, actions can be interpreted through two elements of a situation: social embeddedness and history (Jarzabkowski, 2005). The provision of 'free social media' i.e. free Internet access to social media, for example, is influenced by social factors such as the economic level of the people. The majority of Tanzanians earn a low-income; hence free offers are attractive. It is only recently that the majority of Tanzanians have had the Internet. Walsham (2017) suggests that this is due to the proliferation of mobile technologies in Sub-Saharan Africa over the last decade. The simultaneous rise of Internet access and the proliferation of social media has led to a situation whereby Internet usage is almost on a parallel to the rise of social media use. This has led to popularity and proficiency in the use of social media apps, such as WhatsApp compared to email within organisations. Consequently, the social dynamics and historical path explain the vivacity of social media practice within telecom organisations.

Context explains why practices differ because practices are enacted in contexts (Jarzabkowski et al., 2016). Mohajerani et al. (2015) explored the role of social media in the importation of logic across different contexts. They found that people discovered practices from another context (e.g. the Western context), appropriated them (in Iran)

and then objectified the practices. The regional manager of Mwiko pointed out (p. 153) how they use social media to access global wide information (i.e. business trends) that they previously could not access. Before their use of WhatsApp, they could not exchange information with friends the way WhatsApp allows, such as allowing group discussions. Nonetheless, the regional manager indicated that the 'free social media' practice is not copied from another context (like Western countries) but emerged from, and is enacted within the Tanzania context, where things such as income are low and something free is perceived as attractive. Both Mwiko and Kili acknowledge that changes in technology are what is driving the provision of 'free social media'; thus, indicating that the processes of developing of 'free social media' service packages are enacted from the context. This study is hence consistent with Orlikowski's (2000), while advancing Mohajerani et al. (2015) as it shows how social media practices are not only appropriated and objectified but are also enacted and emerge from the context in which the practices are taking place.

Inadequate supporting infrastructure such as electricity and Internet connectivity hinder the development of social media practice within the telecom organisation because social media use is dependent on these infrastructures. Many people will be offline because they are in areas where there is no Internet connection. Frequent blackouts also lead to inaccessibility as mobile phones may run out of charge. These contextual factors - that are also related to macroeconomics - have effects on the telecom organisation. First, they lose revenue from customers. Second, lack of connectivity for employees affects organisational processes, as staff with answers/solutions to a problem may be offline and unreachable consequently leading to process delays. This shows the role of context in the development of a strategy. Duncombe (2006) highlights how a developing context affects the accessibility and affordability of ICT for microenterprise. Hence, this finding is significant in showing how such contextual factors have the same effect even in large organisations like telecom companies. Also, it shows how external technological factors (i.e. electricity and internet connectivity) can limit the impact of social media even when it (social media) is free and accessible to all.

5.3 The Entanglement of Social Media with Organisational Practices

In the organisational setup, social media is entangled with different practices. These include competition, marketing, work behaviours, and knowledge sharing. This subsection examines the influence of social media on these practices.

5.3.1 The influence of competition on the development of social media practice

The findings suggest that competition influences the social media practice of the telecom organisation in several ways as described below.

First, competition is one of the main reasons for adopting social media. The telecom organisations are adopting social media because other telecom organisations have done so (see p. 101 Mwiko's public relations manager). Thus, the adoption of social media is a response to pressure from competitors. Sinclaire and Vogus (2011) argue that organisations will tend to follow what their competitors are doing so that they do not lose their competitiveness. Furthermore, Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) conclude that competition influences the adoption of social media, which positively affects the development of social media competence within an organisation. In addition, the imitation that arises from competitive pressure leads to isomorphism, which makes organisations from the same environment (industry) exhibit similar features (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Mutch (2008) suggests such mimetic practices occur in the quest for an organisation to gain legitimacy through similarity and not only for economic reasons. Reflecting on the findings and considering Mutch's suggestion, the practices (social media account and 'free social media' i.e. free Internet access to social media) which were adopted due to competitive pressure are recognised as formal and legitimate practices within the organisation. Legitimacy gained from these practices allows an organisation to channel resources towards social media. From a theoretical point of view, the strategy as practice position emphasises on practitioners' actions (Whittington, 2014); thus, imitation as an action suggests that practices can be contagious within an industry due to the social competitor pressure. Therefore, this research contributes to current knowledge by suggesting that social media practices are contagious within the industry due to social competitor pressure.

Second, competition influences the ways that social media is managed within the organisation. The telecom organisations understand the power of social media and how competitors can use it as a weapon. Concerned with this fear, telecom organisations tend to prefer centralisation (see more in section 5.4.3) as a means of managing social media to curb the risk of such negative attacks on social media platforms. Mwiko's Regional Manager maintained that centralisation is a better way to handle competitors' attacks on social media platforms. Likewise, Kili's Branch Manager argued that centralisation of social media helps to maintain standards and quality that can stand out from competitors in the market. Aula (2010) explains that social media expands the spectrum of reputational risk and boosts risk dynamics which can have effects on strategic organisational endeavours. Organisations have, as a result of these risks, grappled with the decision to either centralise (hence strangling innovation) or to decentralise and run the risk of communications being perceived as disjointed in the market (Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010). Though Gallaugher and Ransbotham relate risk management to centralisation, these findings bring in competition as another factor in enhancing centralisation and also as a risk factor. Furthermore, in theory, these findings suggest that competition is influencing practices (guidelines and routines for doing an activity (Huang et al., 2014)) by imposing on the way organisations manage social media accounts.

Finally, the provision of 'free social media' is due to competition. It is a conventional theory that competition lowers prices and increases innovation (Eatwell and Milgate, 1994). The effect of competition between telecom organisations has made telecom organisations innovative in providing 'free social media' in their service packages. 'Free social media' is an innovative way that telecom organisations are using to be able to sustain their competitive advantage in the market. 'Free social media' as seen in the findings, needs a creative capacity within the telecom organisation to design it and to be able to implement it. The marketing manager of Mwiko explained that they offer 'free social media' because of competitors also offering 'free social media', and they do not want to be behind the competition. This point further signifies the findings of this

research that social media practices are contagious within the industry due to social competitor pressure.

5.3.2 Impact of social media on marketing practice

Social media has greatly influenced the marketing practice within the telecom organisations. Social media platforms and 'free social media' practices by telecoms are efforts to use social media for marketing themselves to the public. First, social media platforms are used to raise awareness and improve branding. Strategically, organisations are targeting social media users because they drive their data (Internet) business, which is considered the future of their business due to the increasing usage of Internet and declining use of voice services. Second, the 'free social media' packages are used as a sales factor. They assist in promoting the service packages and consequently they increase sales. 'Free social media' is an additional value to the products and services offered by telecom organisations. Finally, social media is advantageous to the organisation as it decreases the cost of advertising while affording to target different market segments in society. Social media enables marketing even when the budget is constrained. The cost of social media advertising is relatively low compared to traditional media such as billboards, magazines, televisions and radios. Thus, social media has not only changed the marketing practice by making it digital, but it has also brought about efficiency and effectiveness through targeting, adding value to products and services, and lowering the advertisement costs. Mangold and Faulds (2009) noted that social media changed the practice of marketing because in a traditional sense social media enabled organisations to communicate to their customers while in a non-traditional sense it enables customers to communicate with other customers. Therefore, social media magnifies the marketplace by spreading messages through word of mouth. On a similar note, Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) observed that social media improved marketing practice because it facilitates organisation to customer, customer to organisation and customer to customer communication. In addition, social media is becoming valuable to marketing practice because customer's activities are increasingly located inside social media and other digital platforms (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Apart

from the increasing importance and enhancement that social media has brought to marketing practice, Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) found social media to be useful to the company when it has a limited budget. In a similar way to Kaplan and Haenlein, Mwiko's regional manager suggested that social media is helping them to do marketing even when they have a limited budget. Likewise, the marketing manager (P. 119) explained that social media had lowered the cost of doing market research as they can quickly source feedback from customers. Thus, the entanglement of social media and marketing practice is strategically important for value creation in telecom organisations. It also changes the way marketing is done by enhancing marketing processes such as targeting, communication, advertising, sourcing of feedback and budgeting.

On the other hand, social media exposes telecom organisations to negative attacks. Social media is an open space where anyone can post anything. Thus, rivals and dissatisfied customers can use social media platforms to attack an organisation hence putting its reputation at risk. The telecom organisations understand this risk. Some measures have been taken by telecoms to reduce the risk of negative attacks. First, they have centralised the management of social media accounts to control the risk. Second, they provide quick responses to negative comments especially from customers who are dissatisfied or who have raised a serious concern. A quick response is useful as negative information spreads quickly and social media can have a viral effect. Third, they have selected platforms where they can block users who are negative to the organisations. Finally, in some cases, the organisation responds to such attacks using press conferences in particular cases when negative or false information has already spread. Berthon et al. (2012) associated the risk of negative attacks with a shift of power from the organisation towards individual communities. They provided an example of how United Airlines was attacked by the 'United Breaks Guitars' song on YouTube. In this way, they show how individuals can negatively attack an organisation. In the case of Tanzania telecoms, a rival telecom can deploy an individual to launch an attack through social media on another telecom. This can negatively harm the organisation's reputation. Thus, internally organisations organise themselves in terms of structure (i.e. centralisation) to ensure the organisations' reputation is secure. In conclusion,

therefore, the entanglement of social media on marketing practice has both positive and negative implications for organisations. It can enhance marketing practices as well as harm organisational reputation in the marketplace. In this respect, social media is a double-edged sword.

5.3.3 The interplay between behaviours and social media practice

Behaviours play a major role in the development and performance of social media practice within the telecom organisation. Both public behaviour and internal (organisational and staff) behaviours influence the performance of social media practice within the telecom organisations. Social media platforms are characterised by active engagement, participation and the contribution of people, which interplays people's behaviour and materiality. Considering this, the following are ways in which behaviours affect social media practice in the organisation.

First, the perception within the telecom organisations of the behaviour of using social media frequently (Andreassen et al., 2017; Kuss et al., 2014) among the public is the driver of social media practice within the telecom organisations. The perception among telecom staff that there is excessive use of social media by Tanzanians has prompted telecom organisations to adopt social media into their strategy to capture the market. The practitioners within the telecom organisations believe that people use social media as soon as they wake up in the morning and just before they fall asleep at night (Kili marketing manager p.99 & Mwiko public relation manager p.101). This belief about the behavioural use of social media has prompted the telecom organisations to provide 'free social media' as something that can attract customers (see p. 129, Mwiko's marketing manager and product development manager). Telecom organisations also find it easy to reach out to the public through social media platforms (p.101, zonal manager -Kili). Internally, the findings show that proficiency in social media contributes to the speed and easiness of using WhatsApp. The proficiency of using social media is due to the frequent use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp. Thus, responses from WhatsApp are faster than other corresponding mediums such as email. Thus, the frequent behaviour (practice) of using social media fuels the performance of social

media practice in the telecom organisations. Kuss and Griffiths (2011) argue that the frequent use of social media is due to social purposes. Thus, the use of WhatsApp is further enhanced due to its dual role for work and personal communication. Its ability to make communication easy and fast is what makes WhatsApp an effective medium for communication within organisations. Theoretically, this suggests that it is not only the material artefacts that affect speed and ease but also the entanglement of material artefacts and social aspects such as habits that make WhatsApp an effective medium of communication in the organisation in organisational processes and strategy.

Moreover, the findings suggest different behaviours manifest in WhatsApp groups depending on the composition of the group members. There is a significant difference in behaviours portrayed in WhatsApp groups that are heterogeneous compared to homogeneous groups. The heterogeneous groups were more serious, disciplined and efficient but members had limited freedom to express themselves. Whereas, the homogeneous group members were freer to discuss their issues but their perspective on certain issues was limited. The simultaneous coexistence of both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups makes WhatsApp a significant platform for information processing within an organisation. An individual can belong to several groups. This means that WhatsApp platforms blend the behaviours into groups that are homogeneous and heterogeneous. Moreover, the findings highlighted the importance of tie (relationship) strength between workers in an organisation. Gilbert and Karahalios (2009) looked at mechanisms in which tie strength manifests itself in social media, which affects privacy and information prioritization. From the findings, in the homogeneous groups people felt the freedom to speak because of privacy. In contrast, the heterogeneous groups, people acted (responded) faster, and the information was prioritized compared to when it was on the homogeneous group. This is something, which made the heterogeneous group more efficient. Furthermore, this study shows how users (staff) controlled their self-disclosure and self-representation depending on the composition of the group especially when comparing their social presence in heterogeneous versus homogeneous WhatsApp groups. Thus, in theory this suggests a combination of technology structure (the social media application) and social structure

(organisational structure) influences the behaviour manifestation in social media platforms, which consequently impacts organisational processes such as knowledge sharing.

Finally, the visibility afforded by social media influenced the organisational behaviour. For example, in the findings it was noted that the feedback or customer queries, which were received through social media had to be dealt with because they are visible to other customers. This behaviour is contrary to the way feedback and query were dealt with when they were not visible to other customers, sometimes their response was delayed or customers did not receive feedback at all. Kwayu et al. (2018a) found out that feedback on social media was processed due to visibility offered by social media. Thus, through visibility social media is changing the way processes such as feedback are conducted. This finding contributes to the literature on social media by extending communication visibility theory (Leonardi, 2014) by suggesting that social media affects the way an organisation conducts its processes, for instance, in the handling of feedback.

5.3.4   Social media enhancing knowledge sharing

Social media has enhanced knowledge sharing in several ways within the studied telecom organisations. First, it has helped the organisation to provide and share knowledge with customers. The findings suggest that customers get significant information about the telecom organisations through social media sites. The engagement between organisations and customers as well as customer to customer engagement has improved knowledge of different products and services offered by the organisations and it helps organisations to learn from the customers' viewpoints. Second, WhatsApp has revolutionised knowledge sharing within the telecom organisations by improving discussions and sharing of information. This has consequently increased the ambient awareness and metaknowledge within organisations. The metaknowledge and ambient awareness impact a structure within the organisation. For example, Mwiko's IT manager explains how staff bypasses the help desk because they know the IT staff, the result of this practice affects the process of

measuring KPI of the IT staff. Hence, it reduces the significance of the help desk within the structure of the organisation.

Furthermore, according to Leonardi (2015), knowledge sharing increases team performance, innovation, and reduces work duplication. Likewise, Mutch (2008) argues that all work activities involve the use of information and application of some knowledge. In the findings, the WhatsApp groups are instrumental in sharing knowledge and information, especially as staff acknowledges that when they need information, clarification, or understanding organisational matters, the WhatsApp groups are of great help. This has consequently helped team performance by enabling collaboration; it has induced innovation in processes such as customer registration and reduces duplication as people share information instantaneously between groups. Hence, the use of WhatsApp in telecom organisations has become central to problem-solving because it affords knowledge and information sharing between employees. In general, social media is efficient for knowledge sharing and learning. It disseminates information through different formats such as audio, video, images and texts. This has also changed the way training is done in the organisations. Most of the training nowadays in the telecom organisation is done through short videos, which makes it easier for them to understand compared to booklets that were provided before the social media era in the organisation. These videos are usually shared through WhatsApp either before or after training sessions.

There are challenges concerning the use of social media and knowledge sharing. For instance, WhatsApp is not very useful at storing information, and it is sometimes difficult to search for knowledge, which has already been produced or shared in that platform. The search functionality of WhatsApp is not very useful, and information is not structured; the new information, which is continuously generated by the conversation taking place in WhatsApp, tends to conceal the old information. Also, although social media is rich in the production of knowledge as it is co-created by its users, the quality of knowledge produced varies as both false and accurate information can be produced. Furthermore, knowledge shared in social media is at times biased or polarised, especially on the homogeneous WhatsApp groups.

Standing and Kiniti (2011) findings suggest that social media influences knowledge sharing through increasing multivocality, reach and richness in communication as it enhanced the effective exchange of ideas and viewpoints. This is similar to WhatsApp, having an influence on the telecom organisations with regards to knowledge sharing as discussed above. Gu et al. (2014) suggest that organisations should seek strategies whereby people with different viewpoints can share knowledge. The existence of heterogeneous WhatsApp groups has facilitated people with different perspectives to exchange views thus bringing solutions to problems. Furthermore, the fact that WhatsApp is an emergent phenomenon shows how self-organising can engender different forms of knowledge sharing within organisations. This research reaffirms Leonardi's (2014; 2015) argument that social media increases ambient awareness and metaknowledge. In the case of the telecom organisations, WhatsApp played the role of increasing ambient awareness and metaknowledge. This research further shows how informal use of social media substitutes the role of knowledge management systems in organisations. The findings, thus, suggest organisational management needs to recognise the informal practices that play a significant role in organisations such as knowledge sharing practices occurring via WhatsApp within the telecom organisations in Tanzania.

5.4 Development and Management of Social Media Practice in the Organisations

5.4.1 The adoption and emergence of social media practice in organisations

The adoption of social media in an organisation is one of the initial stages of the development of social media practice in an organisation. As discussed above, one of the reasons for adopting social media is the context – in which social media has become inevitable and the consequence of competition from other organisations – which creates pressure for telecoms to adopt social media in their strategic practice. The expanding use of the Internet and social media by the majority of Tanzanians has created room for new business in telecom organisations. Thus, to capture the market and for positioning purposes, telecoms have had to adopt social media in their

strategies. Culnan et al. (2010) suggest a mindful adoption of social media whereby firms pay keen attention to its local context, weighing the risk, cost, and benefits before adopting social media. Mindful adoption includes the selection of platforms, assigning the responsibility of governing, identifying metrics to measure value, as well as risk management. In the findings, we saw that the telecom organisations practice mindful adoption. In addition to competitive pressure and business opportunities arising from social media due to the context, organisations consider other dynamics such as manageability, editability, filtering and influence of the platforms in their adoption and selection of social media accounts. Furthermore, the telecom organisations consider risk management through a cost-benefit analysis. The telecom organisations are aware of the risks that come with social media. These risks can threaten the survival of the organisation. However, the organisations believe that the benefits of social media outweigh the cost. In the modern age of business, it has become fundamental to have social media. This underscores that telecom organisations in Tanzania practice a mindful adoption.

The organisations' social media accounts and their 'free social media' packages are manifestations of the practice of mindful adoption. Mindful adoption implies a conscious planned decision. Nevertheless, mindful adoption is incapable of explaining the adoption of WhatsApp communication practice within the telecom organisations. WhatsApp communication emerged from the staff. In the findings, the emergence of WhatsApp is explained as individual initiatives. From a theoretical point of view, the emergence of WhatsApp as a result of individual initiatives strengthens the importance of the strategy as practice perspective. The strategy as practice perspective focuses on practitioners (Whittington, 2014) rather than just the manager as a sole player in shaping strategic activities in the organisation. The existence of various WhatsApp groups in the organisation shows how emergent social media practice can be diverse, dynamic and multiple. The main reason for adopting WhatsApp includes ease of communication. WhatsApp groups characterises WhatsApp as a local adaptation that is dynamic and emergent (Luna-Reyes et al., 2005).

The evidence that social media adoption in an organisation can be both planned (mindful adoption) and unplanned (emergent), proves that strategic practices in an organisation are not necessarily dependent on the decisions of management only, but also of individuals' initiatives and actions. Such individual initiatives can be fully shared and understood by other organisational members consequently becoming shared practices, which shape organisational process and strategic outcomes. Therefore, this signifies that the contribution of both an emergent and a planned approach realise strategy within the organisation. It also contributes to our understanding of the long debate between the significance of this contrasting view between a planned approach and emergence of strategy (Neugebauer et al., 2016) by showing that strategy is a continuum between planned and emergence especially when it comes to complex and dynamic technologies such as social media.

5.4.2   Formal and informal recognition of social media practices

The findings suggest that different social media practices receive different forms of recognition. Some practices have formal recognition within the organisation while others have informal recognition. For example, social media accounts and social media products ('free social media' i.e. free Internet access to social media) have a formal recognition while WhatsApp communication practices within the organisation have informal recognition. The findings suggest that recognition matters because it explains how the practice is interpreted within the organisation. This consequently affects the support for the practice in terms of both resources and legitimacy. Telecom organisations, for example, support the social media accounts by assigning members of staff whose work is to manage the accounts. The telecoms companies also put in place procedures for running the accounts such as a ban on opening a branch social media account for the organisation. Whereas, in WhatsApp communication practice some members of staff ignore the communication with an excuse that they do not recognise WhatsApp as an official means of communicating in the organisation. The regional manager explained that they could not reinforce their power on WhatsApp groups because they are out of policy. Lack of formal recognition sometimes confuses. Kili

branch manager explained that, at times, they interpret WhatsApp as a formal means of communication because their leaders use WhatsApp. These different forms of recognition lead to different forms of strategizing. Practices that are formally recognised are subject to procedural strategizing whereas informal practices receive an interactive form of strategizing. Leonard and Higson (2014) suggest that procedural strategizing helps to provide diagnostic controls and offers persistence through the use of formal administrative practices to shape the flow of strategy in organisations, consequently leading to structural legitimacy.

Hendry et al. (2010) explain structural legitimacy, which is derived from procedural strategizing - it reflects planning, hierarchy, administration, and formality. Whereas, 'Interactive strategizing', is a deliberative face-to-face interaction between management and staff to shape the flow of strategy (Jarzabkowski, 2005). This strategizing offers interpretive legitimacy, which constructs conventional meaning and normative controls. It then aligns an individual's action with the action of others in the organisation (Leonard and Higson, 2014). Interactive strategizing is useful for managing fluidity within an organisation (Leonard and Higson, 2014). In addition, Hendry et al. (2010) suggest that interactive strategizing helps to provide credibility for new practices where their contribution is doubtful within the organisation. It also helps to counter resistance by promoting the benefits of the new practices to the organisation (ibid). The presence of formal and informal recognition of social media practices in telecom organisations is harmonised by the interplay of procedural and interactive strategizing. This proves that the interactive and procedural forms of strategizing are not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other (Hendry et al., 2010; Jarzabkowski, 2005). Significantly, the findings from telecom organisations highlight where and how different forms of strategizing become effective in organisations as formally recognised practices; such as social media accounts are associated with procedural strategizing and informal practices such as WhatsApp communication are associated with interactive strategizing.

The findings further show that it is difficult for the telecom organisations to recognise some practices due to practical issues. First, it is the ownership of the IT infrastructure that poses practical problems in recognising some of the social media practices. Mwiko's

finance manager, for instance, asserted that recognition is challenging because third-party organisations own social media. Unlike emails where staff can have organisational email, which gives the organisation some degree of ownership, it is not very easy for the organisation to formalise WhatsApp, which is personal to staff. This also highlights how organisational IT infrastructure are substituted and extended by personal IT devices such as mobile phones and WhatsApp communications. Second, the logic of formalizing some practices is a challenge for telecom organisations. The CEO of Mwiko (p. 142) and several other respondents (i.e. network planning p. 141-2) explained that they could not see a way of recognising practices like WhatsApp communication as formal despite the acknowledged benefits. The difficulty in recognising some social media practices reflects the fluid, complex and dynamic nature of social media. For instance, the CEO argues that according to the rules, guidelines and policies within the organisation there is no way to formalise WhatsApp.

Similarly, the network planner of Mwiko (p.141-2) suggests that when you formalise WhatsApp communication, it will cease to be effective. This also highlights the gap between praxis (what people do) and practices (guidelines and routines of doing work) (Huang et al., 2014) as people are supposed to communicate via email but are instead using WhatsApp. This highlights that recognition can bridge the gap between what people do versus what they are supposed to do consequently helping towards efficient investment in IT in an organisation rather than investing in infrastructure that is not put into use by members of staff. In doing so organisations will be able to achieve an alignment of their IT investment and new organisational practice considering that IT capabilities matter when they become embedded in new organisational practices (Arvidsson et al., 2014; Doherty and Terry 2009; Peppard and ward 2004).

Finally, the findings underscore that in some cases recognition increases the use of social media while in other cases it reduces the use of social media. Recognising the community of followers (customers) on social media platforms by responding to their comments with likes, sharing, and answering their queries makes social media an interactive platform. Likewise, when leaders respond and engage in WhatsApp it increases the use of WhatsApp. Some members of staff engage on WhatsApp to be

recognised by their leaders or fellow staff. This is similar to what was found by Hayes and Walsham (2001) that some staff harnessed the visibility of a type of 'groupware' (Lotus Notes) to allow direct access and recognition by their seniors who determined their career progression. However, as noted before, others refrain from communicating freely when there is the presence of their leaders or when they do not want their practices to be visible (hence recognisable) to others. Treem and Leonardi (2012) and Culnan et al. (2010) argue that recognition motivates people to use social media in an organisation and it is useful for building a community of followers on social media platforms. This finding brings a mixed conclusion in that it echoes Culnan et al.'s (2010) arguments but at the same time contrasts it as we have seen how recognition can hinder the freedom of expression due to visibility. These mixed findings imply that there is an extent to which recognition should be exercised by management and it is equally necessary to allow privacy in some communications taking place in the organisation by not interfering with recognition or presence of management.

5.4.3   Centralisation and decentralisation of social media practice

As mentioned earlier, the management of social media is one of the considerations when selecting social media platforms. Inherently, the management of social media platforms is concerned with assigning the responsibility to manage and monitor the organisation's social media accounts. The findings show that a team of two or three people manages and monitors social media accounts. Although this team is responsible for the monitoring and management of social media accounts, it also coordinates with the public relations and marketing departments. Furthermore, we also learn that, due to social media visibility employees voluntarily visit the social media accounts of the organisation to monitor the discussion that is taking place on the platforms. The employees even share some of the discussions with others when it concerns or is relevant to their responsibility. Despite this practice, the organisation has formal way of sharing information from social media with the rest of organisation. This formal way of sharing information has challenges. Some information might not be shared with the concerned people unless it is urgent. In a way, information is lost during the sharing due

to it being filtered. Few research studies have highlighted the size of the team responsible for managing social media. Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) revealed that Starbucks had a team size of six people who manage and monitor social media accounts. Revealing the size of the team responsible for managing social media accounts has practical significance as many executives are faced with the dilemma of allocating resources when they plan to develop a social media strategy (Aral et al., 2013; Kwayu et al., 2018a).

The skillset of team members is another issue of concern as well as the number of team members. From the findings, it was evident that a new set of skills is required for managing social media. Managing social media needs creative skills for interacting, designing content (text, words, images, and videos) and graphics in a way that appeals in the market. Given that social media is new in the organisation, marketing and communication people within the department have inadequate expertise for managing social media thus end up improvising and seeking external help. Consistent with Huang et al. (2014), the telecom organisations are trying to be ambidextrous by simultaneously learning the skills to manage social media while exploiting (using) social media. This is a strategic practice. The Public Relations Manager of Mwiko asserted that they were trying to see what they can do by themselves and compare it with what the external help is providing. Kietzmann et al. (2011) suggest that when an organisation starts to implement social media, they usually do not have the talent at the initial stages and capabilities to succeed. So they often hire consultants to act on their behalf and that the organisation makes sure the consultant maximises the opportunities while minimizing the risks.

Furthermore, the findings suggest centralisation as an ideal structure for managing social media in the organisation. Although there were preferences for decentralisation, in practice it was impossible. Centralisation was inevitable due to resources, control and maintenance of a single organisational voice. The problem with centralisation on management of social media was that it limits the freedom of expression and innovation of some practitioners. Lots of information is also lost in the process. There are prospects towards the organisations moving to decentralisation. However, this will happen after

they have trained enough people on how to manage social media. On the other hand, decentralisation will also mean the organisation will need people to do the same task across different branches/regions within the country. Doing so will consume more resources. Policies and guidelines for managing social media will have to be developed so that a standard can be maintained across the spectrum. Thus, control, resources, and maintaining a single voice rationalises the centralisation of social media management in the telecom organisations.

Furthermore, findings have shown that centralisation has historical roots within organisations. The telecom organisations have been using a top-down approach where everything starts from the headquarters. Communication within organisations has been centralised under the public relations and marketing departments. Thus, managing social media has followed a historical path dependence - meaning that the centralisation in managing social media has developed because of the structural properties and values of the organisations. Hence, the management of social media is aligned with the centralised structure of the telecom organisations. Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) suggested that decentralisation risks a firm being perceived as disjointed while centralisation allowed the firm to capture learning from experimental initiatives, synthesize expertise and disseminate it. The results of Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) correspond with the findings as it was noted above that centralisation of social media enables the telecom organisations to be ambidextrous in synchronous learning and exploiting (using) social media. Furthermore, Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) found out that Starbucks was using a centralised form of management. Thus, this research confirms that centralisation of social media is more practical at the initial stages of social media implementation in an organisation as it allows learning and experimentation.

5.4.4 Capability for development of social media practice

Organisational capability is instrumental for the development of social media practice within the telecom organisations. As discussed in section 5.5.1, the organisational structure of the telecom organisation constrained capabilities in two ways. First, the

structure of the telecom organisation did not have a position for people to manage social media. The pre-existing structure did not consider social media (perhaps because it is a new phenomenon), and due to bureaucratic rigidity, it becomes difficult to modify the structure to have a place for social media management. Thus, the current arrangements in managing social media are just a means to deal with the urgency (i.e. social competitor pressure) to use social media. Consequently, the structure acts as a constraint hindering the capability to manage social media. Second, the structural separation of the IT department and other operational departments such as product development department is another way that the structure is limiting the development of social media practice. The Product Manager of Mwiko, for example, explained the compromises and delays due to misunderstanding between his staff and IT staff, which is partly due to a lack of IT knowledge amongst non-IT staff. Similar sentiments were expressed by the public relations manager, thus underscoring the structural problem.

Inadequate skill is another concern when considering the capability to develop social media practice within the telecom organisation. One of the reasons for inadequate skills was attributed to inadequate ICT training. The majority of staff who were dealing with social media had training in journalism. This deprives the organisations with important capabilities such as graphic designing, which they had to seek externally. Learning and training are perceived as ways to fill the skills gap. Also, as pointed out earlier, in this matter the organisation is trying to be ambidextrous by learning in practice. However, there is a concern that training is insufficient for developing the skills necessary for managing a dynamic technology like social media, when considering that at times talent plays a significant role in the success of social media (Kumar and Mirchandani, 2012). The zonal manager of Kili vehemently contended that creativity is necessary for the management and development of social media and that it is something that someone cannot be taught. Hence, the knowledge associated with the management of social media is tacit - knowledge that is difficult to transfer to another person as its intuitive and unarticulated (Lam, 2000). Thus, although learning and training are significant factors for increasing capabilities and skills, there is a limit to its use, especially when considering that social media interplays within different social behaviours consequently

creating the absence of a blueprint for social media management. Considering the deficiency in capability, the telecom organisations will be in a better position if they develop new and dynamic capabilities which can help them respond to changes brought about by continuous technological advancement as well as serving them during unstable and volatile situations (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Walters et al., 2002). Considering that the telecom organisations use social media to compete to gain online market share, they will enhance their position if they make the new and dynamic capabilities into core capabilities to give them a competitive edge (Andreu and Ciborra, 1996). Because of the dynamic nature of social media, Tempini (2014) suggests that organisation should have continuously designed and redesign technology architectures and data structures for it to be able to achieve value and competitive advantage. Tempini's (2014) suggestion is difficult in practice. It is a challenge for an organisation to develop structures that match the flexibility and complexity of social media in particular if consideration is put on the entanglement of all the technical and non-technical elements as well as blending the required expertise. Thus, it is still uncertain what is the best way to fill the skill deficiency, which is brought about by the complexity of social media. The best way is to learn in practice while nurturing talents through consideration of digital natives[2] who are more proficient in this new and dynamic digital technology.

On the other hand, social media increases organisational capability. The telecom organisations with social media are capable of reaching out to customers, operating in time and they have better means of organising themselves. In short, social media has enabled telecom companies in Tanzania to create business value. Ross et al. (1996) observe that IT capabilities are concerned with planning, cost efficiency, and timely delivery. The experience of the use of WhatsApp in telecoms shows us how it has helped staff to organise themselves thus improving the planning process as well as saving time through facilitating faster communication. As previously noted, social media has

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[2] Digital natives are people who are born in the digital era

extended the IT infrastructure within the telecom organisations. Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) found out that IT infrastructure capabilities and organisational infrastructure capabilities were among the factors that increased social media competence. This research advances Braojos-Gomez et al.'s (2015) study by showing that social media increases organisational capabilities within the organisation consequently creating a reciprocal effect between social media capability and organisational capability.

5.5   The Impact of Social Media on Organisational Structure and Processes

5.5.1   Reciprocal relation between organisational structure and social media practice

There are instances where social media shows an element of influence on organisational structure. Conventionally, processes in the telecom organisations are initiated with a top-down approach. However, the initiation of WhatsApp in the telecoms has led to a break away from this tradition (structure). An individual staff member can initiate the process in a WhatsApp conversation. WhatsApp initiative is one example, which shows how social media is gradually influencing the structure of the organisation. This is a departure from the traditional decision-making hierarchy. Process initiation is one way that strategy formulation can differ from one organisation to another based on the structure (Fredrickson, 1986). Another example is that WhatsApp users circumvent the communication structure within the organisation. The usual way to communicate with a senior manager is to go through the secretary or junior manager. However, through WhatsApp people are able to communicate with their senior managers without going through the intermediary. In Mwiko people contact the IT engineers directly and bypass the IT help desk, which measures the KPIs. This is because WhatsApp groups have increased the meta knowledge - knowledge of who knows what and who knows whom (Leonardi, 2014) as discussed above. Therefore, WhatsApp groups reduce the bureaucracy and the relevance of some structures in place. Consider the circumvention of the IT helpdesk. In a state where people do not know the capabilities of specific engineers the help desk is instrumental in directing people to the right engineer within the organisation. However, given that staff now know who knows what, the relevance of the helpdesk is becoming less significant. Theoretically, when activity such as

191

bypassing the normal communication structure within the organisation becomes repetitive it becomes a practice, which consequently enacts a new structure (Orlikowski, 2000). In addition, this redefines the information system within the organisation as new communication channels are instantaneously enacted in the telecom organisation. Nevertheless, there are still instances where a structure is influences social media practice within the telecom organisation. For example, the organogram of Mwiko does not have a position for social media staff. This limits the development of social media practice given that the organisation is restrained from employing someone who has skills for running social media. Every staff position in the organisation is prescribed and there is a criterion for filling each position. Thus, to employ someone who has the right capabilities to manage social media is a long and bureaucratic process. First, the position needs to be created within the organisation's structure. Consequently, the skill gap for running social media is significantly contributed by structural rigidity. Another example, where structure influences the development of social media practice, is when social media products are developed. Developing social media products involves interdepartmental cooperation including the department for product development and the IT department while each has its roles and mandate/limits. This structural separation of departments may constrain the development of social media packages out of bureaucratic delays and differences in departmental priorities. Mwiko's product development manager wished that the IT and product development departments were one department. That, he argued, could have reduced the compromise done during the development of social media products. This casts light on operational alignment between the IT department and the product development department. Wagner et al. (2014) suggest that beyond the conventional wisdom of fostering communication to achieve a better alignment between the departments; fostering knowledge, trust and respect drive alignment, organisational performance and increases business value. On the other hand, the idea of separating departments (which is hugely supported by alignment models) is perhaps outdated due to the increasing need for IT knowledge (skills and capabilities) amongst non-IT staff. The need for IT knowledge, skills and capability among non-IT staff creates a demand for hybrid staff; staff with strong

technical skills and adequate business knowledge (Earls and Skyrme, 1992). The demand for hybrid staff is relevant due to the increasing use and dependency of digital technologies such as social media within the organisation. The increasing intertwinement of digital technologies and organisational practices is not just increasing the demand for hybrid personnel. However, it is also shifting our theoretical understanding of technology strategy in organisations. For example, the alignment of business and IT has been the dominant strategy in IS strategy. However, due to the increasing use of digital technologies in organisations scholars such as El Sawy (2003) and Bharadwaj et al. (2013) have suggested a fusion view (also known as digital business strategy), which is a seamless integration between IT and business strategy. Thus, a fusion between IT and business operations is a reflection of the need for hybrid personnel. This implies that its business departments must have IT skills and capabilities, which will altogether reduce the knowledge gap established by the dichotomy underpinned by the alignment model. This view intends to remove the dichotomy established by the alignment view as a result of the increased role of digital technology in the organisation. Porter's (2001) argument that the next generation of Internet evolution will need a shift of thinking from e-business to business and from e-strategy to strategy; this is of much importance. It means that only by integrating the Internet (technology) into overall strategy will organisations be able to convert this powerful technology (Internet/ social media) into an equally powerful force for competitive advantage. Thus, it becomes more efficient and effective to fuse the product development team with the IT support team. This will increase the speed of development of the product and the attainment of envisioned products. Therefore, structural rigidity that hinders the development of social media practice within the organisation should be reformed to accommodate the increased demand for IT across operations. This will consequently help the organisation to achieve a competitive advantage.

The above discussion shows that social media practices may influence organisational structure and organisational structure influences social media. Thus, the relationship between social media and organisational structure is reciprocal. Moreover, the practices

that influence structure are inevitable and cannot be easily controlled by the organisation. Practices associated with WhatsApp use are the ones that influence structure. Whereas, practices that are enabled or constrained by the structure are those on which performance depends on managerial decisions and organisation procedures. The reciprocity of social media and structure suggests that strategic issues can emerge anywhere in the organisation (Mintzberg, 1979). Whittington (2010) suggests that agency is more than an individual's will and skills influencing the control over resources, and it is exercised through acceptance and rejection of the rules. Thus, managers need to keep an eye on the emerging practices that have an influence on structure, which may also influence power dynamics in the organisation. WhatsApp is an emancipatory technology for staff within the telecom organisations as it enables them to overcome structural borders. For example, the homogeneous WhatsApp groups enable staff to reorganise themselves whilst excluding the manager and thus giving them the power of unity against managerial power. In this way, WhatsApp affects the power dynamics within the organisation, which are inscribed in the organisational structure. Although, organisational structure can influence some social media practices, management should also beware of practices which are not limited by organisational structure and learn ways to navigate this as the new structures are enacted.

5.5.2 Influence of social media on processes

Social media has an influence on some processes within the telecom organisations. For example, WhatsApp is significantly used during the registration of customers. The law requires telecom organisations to register their subscribers before they are activated. When marketing teams are running campaigns in the streets, they use WhatsApp to transfer customers' details to the back office in order to activate the new customers. WhatsApp increases the speed of registering customers. WhatsApp creates value for an organisation by reducing the risk of losing a subscriber to competitors because of the interval between registration and activation. Another process where social media has to influence is the management of customer relationships. This has even led to an upgrade in customer service at Mwiko to accommodate social media queries (see Mwiko's IT

Manager p.104-5). Social media seems to have an imbricative impact on processes within the organisation. This means that social media introduces new elements that overlap with pre-existing elements of the process hence giving it a historical path. Social media, for example, has not changed customer service practice such as the call centre but has become added into the portfolio of customer service delivery. With time, customers might substitute a call with social media interaction, which can reduce the relevance of call centres and reshape it. Through this imbricative process practices construct the reality of the organisation. Thus, social media can emerge as a dominant channel for practicing customer service within an organisation. The figure below illustrates further the imbrication process within the organisation.

Process (1) - e.g call centre to accommodate queries from traditional information systems

Process (2) - e.g the call centre upgraded to accommodate social media inquiries

Process (n) - the call centre might change/emerge to another structure which, at the moment is unknown
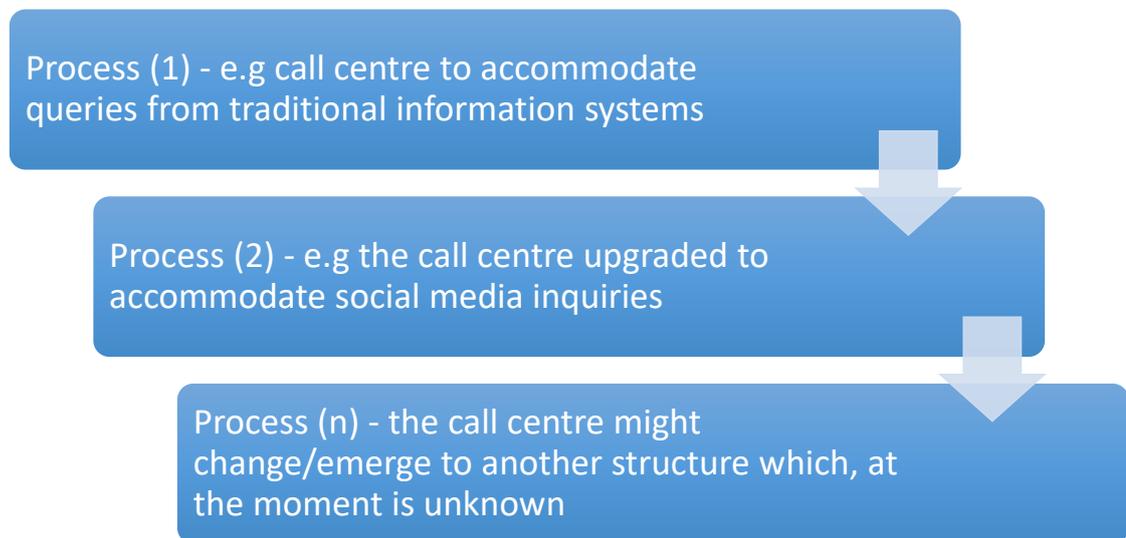
Figure 8 Imbrication Process

Source: Kwayu et al. (2018a)

The figure above shows how new processes contain elements of pre-existing processes. Also, it shows how processes emerge when the pre-existing setup intra-acts with new technology. This intra-action enacts the new processes. Orlikowski (2000) suggests that the enactment helps us to understand the ongoing use of technology in organisations. The enactment of new processes in the organisation occurs in an imbricative manner,

195

which helps us to understand the impact of the technology on the process. Ciborra and Willcocks (2006) suggest that imbrication captures the reciprocal, self-reinforcing, often non-linear, impacts of one representation upon the other. In this way, we can see multiple and complex effects that technology has on organisation processes. For example, how it speeds up the process of registration, or how it introduces new elements of customer relationship management. The ability to see what conversations between customers and organisation, customers, and customers, is a dynamic that influences processes and how the processes are conducted. Thus, the impact of social media on organisational processes has affected not only the sequence of activities but also the how those activities are taking place. This is a significant finding because its shows how the impact of social media is not just mechanistic but also an entanglement of both social behaviours and materiality.

Furthermore, social media (particularly WhatsApp) assist the completion of many daily ordinary activities, which are necessary for the survival of the organisation. There are two important things to consider about WhatsApp use in the telecom organisation. First, it is used widely in the sense that every unit in both cases acknowledged their use of WhatsApp in a work-related manner. Second, it is not an officially recognised means of communication. It is an informal practice within the organisation. In connection with these two factors, the importance of practitioners in the organisation on how they decide to undertake their activities (i.e. praxis – what they do) even with the existence of practices (rules, guidelines and routines of doing work) is confirmed. This means that even though WhatsApp is not official, it is still used to achieve daily outcomes – i.e. completion of the process. In the findings it is highlighted that WhatsApp was used in reporting, updating colleagues, providing elaboration, help and guidelines. The assistance that social media is bringing for the completion of tasks comes with elements inscribed within the application such as speed and ease of use. This finding is unique because it shows how social media is having a multiplier effect on different activities within organisations. Literature has shown the impact of social media on a single function. For instance, Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) show how social media is used in customer relationship management. Leonardi (2014; 2015) show how social

media affects knowledge management and innovation. Scott and Orlikowski (2012; 2014) show how social media affect marketing in the hospitality industry. Therefore, this finding consolidates the other findings as it shows how WhatsApp has a contributing effect on operational activities across the organisational functions for example in registering subscribers (marketing) and organising staff (human resources).

5.6   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed various aspects that are associated with social media practice within telecom organisations in Tanzania. First, it has shown how the changing context of Tanzania is influencing the emergence of social media practice within the studied telecom organisations. The context is affecting the performance of social media practice as well as the decisions involved in the development of social media practice within the organisations. Second, the chapter has discussed the entanglement of social media and organisational practices such as competition, marketing, behaviours, and knowledge sharing. With regards to competition it has shown how it influences adoption of social media as well as imitation of social media practices. This research has also shown how social media practices become isomorphic within the telecom industry due to competition (Mutch, 2008; Sinclaire and Vogus 2011). The discussion examined the entanglement of social media and marketing practice. Social media enhances marketing practice consequently impacting value creation in the organisation. Nevertheless, the entanglement of social media and marketing practice exposes organisations to negative attacks. Concerning the entanglement of behaviours and social media practice, the discussion has shown how it shapes the how processes are conducted within the organisation. Furthermore, the discussion has examined how social media enhances knowledge sharing in organisations.

Additionally, the discussion examined the development and management of social media. First, it observed how social media is adopted in organisations. The adoption of social media can be both planned (mindful adoption (Culnan et al., 2010)) and unplanned (emergent) within the organisation. Second, the discussion explored how organisations recognised different social media practices. Some practices had formal

recognition while others had informal recognition. The formally recognised practices were the planned practices while informal practices were emerging practices. Furthermore, the discussion observed how centralisation was a predetermined structure for managing planned social media within the organisation. However, the emerging social media practices remained decentralised. Finally, the discussion examined how capabilities affect the development of social media practice in the telecom organisations.

Finally, the chapter has discussed the influence of social media on organisational structure and processes. It has shown a reciprocal relationship between social media and organisational structure. Social media is gradually influencing the organisational structure of the telecom organisation especially through informal practices that are not constrained by structure. Likewise, the structure is influencing the development of social media by enabling and limiting social media practices, especially those that are interpreted and recognised as formal practices. The structural constraints exerted on social media practice and the need for organisations to gain more value from social media, the chapter highlights the need for hybrid personnel (Earls and Skyrme, 1992). Also, the chapter discusses the shift in strategic thinking towards a fused view which sees a seamless integration of IT and business to achieve the digital (social media) business strategy (El Sawy, 2003). This move will enable telecom organisations to move from traditional business model to a more dynamic and cross-functional business process to enable activities to be done across limits of time, distance and space (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). In addition, the chapter has shown how social media is influencing the process in an imbricative manner (Ciborra and Willcocks, 2006) as well as how social media (WhatsApp) is influencing different processes within the organisation. The final chapter concludes the thesis by discussing the contribution to knowledge in light of the proposed research questions.

6 Chapter VI: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this thesis. It provides a summary of the thesis and the contribution that this thesis has added to the literature in terms of its impact on theory and in practice. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the limitations of this research followed by recommendations for future research. To end, the chapter presents concluding remarks for the entire thesis.

The pervasive use of social media and limited understanding of its impact on strategies within organisations (Effing and Spil, 2016) instigated this research to study the impact of social media on processes, structure and strategies within organisations. While undertaking the study, literature (i.e. Huang et al., 2014) suggested the accumulation of strategizing activities rather than planning and aligning as key to effective implementation of digital technologies such as social media in organisations, since strategizing provides opportunities for innovation and efficiency (ibid). Hence the study adopted a strategy as practice lens which focuses on strategizing activities within the organisation (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). Therefore, using the strategy as practice perspective this study analysed social media practices within two Tanzanian telecom organisations, Mwiko and Kili. Conducting the study in Tanzania provided a novel context for understanding the impact of social media in organisations that are operating in developing markets. Walsham (2017) suggests a developing context like Tanzania is key in understanding local adaptation and development of new information technologies like social media as well as standardization versus localization of technology. In addition, the vibrant use of social media by the two organisations made them strong cases for generating efficient data and analysis for understanding the impact of social media in organisational strategies.

The study carried out a critical review on the existing literature on social media, IS theory and strategy. The review provided insight and understanding into social media technology and its impact in the organisation. Social media has a fundamental difference

from traditional IS technologies (Steinhüser et al., 2011). Its effect on organisations is multiple, dynamic and contemporaneous (Scott and Orlikowski, 2012). Considering these features; organisations struggle with deciding efficient means of organising and managing social media within themselves. Organisations' executives are struggling to understand what broader changes in organisational processes and structure are required for the implementation of social media (Aral et al., 2013: Effing and Spil, 2016). In the light of that, this study researched the influence of social media on organisational processes, structure and strategy. On the other hand, the strategy as practice lens, which views strategy as situated activity, has emerged as a new way of understanding contemporary strategy in an organisation (Jarzabkowski, 2005).

Information systems theories investigating the role of technology in organisations have often undermined social or material agencies over others (Orlikowski, 2000). Nevertheless, practice theory counters this problem by focusing on practice (activity), which is an interplay between people (social) and technology (material) (Orlikowski, 2007). In respect to that, the practice perspective influences this study especially when considering the tight entanglement of social media with a social and material aspect. Furthermore, considering the focus of this study is on strategies, practice theory influenced the adoption of the strategy as practice perspective. Whittington (2010) suggests that the practice perspective derives its theoretical power from the premise that people are more knowledgeable about their practices and they constantly monitor their practice to achieve their goal. This means that practice perspective puts enormous weight on people's interpretation of their reality. The strategy as practice perspective, thus, provided a suitable lens for investigating the impact of social media on processes, structure and strategy within organisations.

To strengthen the analysis, the study was informed by interpretivist philosophy, which believes there is one reality that is subjected to various interpretations (Crossan, 2003). In connection to that, the research deployed qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is in line with interpretivist philosophy as it is based on the premise that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Both interpretivist philosophy and qualitative methods were appropriate

for this research from a practice perspective – which argues that people are more knowledgeable about their practice. The study used a case study of two telecom organisations as aforementioned, Mwiko and Kili. A case study strategy was selected due to its ability to blend the research phenomenon and context. Understanding of the context was crucial for this research since it is through the context that processes are enacted (Yin, 2013). Both Kili and Mwiko provided adequate information and context for this research. Both cases incorporate social media in their organisational processes. They have also allocated significant resources to the use of social media. Twenty-two semi-structured interviews were carried out with managers and staff members from different departments of Kili and Mwiko. The collected data was transcribed, translated and analysed through a reflexive approach to thematic analysis. A reflexive thematic analysis is considered as a fully qualitative approach, which emphasises meaning as contextual or situated, reality or realities as multiple and researcher subjectivity as not just valid but a resource (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

This study found that developments in Tanzania's communication sectors such as growth in mobile and Internet subscription influenced the growth of social media usage in the country consequently making social media an important platform for telecom organisations. The state of communication infrastructure such as uneven network coverage influences the performance of social media practice within the telecom organisations. Furthermore, the study found three ways in which social media is practiced in telecoms organisations. First, is through social media platforms – which are the social media accounts owned by the organisations for reaching and interacting with customers and the public. Second, is 'free social media' – whereby the telecom companies offer free Internet access to social media platforms. The telecoms use social media as a product/service package with the brand of 'free social media'. Finally, social media (WhatsApp) is used for internal communication between staff. As a result of those practices, several themes emerged. The thematic dimensions are as follow with the themes in parenthesis. Context (the Tanzanian context and telecommunication industry context), social media platforms (presence and perception of social media in telecoms; selection and management of social media; impact of social media in telecoms), 'Free

social media' service (implementation of 'free social media'; rationality of 'free social media'; impact of 'free social media'), WhatsApp communication (use of WhatsApp communications; implication of WhatsApp communications; affordances and constrictions of WhatsApp). The key findings in these themes were discussed in the discussion Chapter V: Discussion with the synthesis of literature and theory.

First, the discussion explained how context plays a significant role in the emergence of social media strategy within the organisation by influencing the decision-making process. It further explained how context situates activity and explains why practices differ because of the context in which they are enacted. Second, the entanglement of social media and organisational practices were discussed - particularly, how social media is entwined with competition, marketing, behaviours and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the discussion examined the development and management of social media practices within the organisation. These are: how social media practices are adopted; the way social media platforms are recognised within the organisation; the management structure of social media and; capabilities required for social media practice in an organisation. Finally, the discussion explored the influence of social media on organisational structure and processes.

The conclusion of this thesis describes the contribution to theory and practice of this thesis. In general, the aim of this thesis was to explore social media practices in organisations in order to understand how social media influences the processes, structure and strategies within an organisation. Thus, this research intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of social media influence without deducting or fragmenting reality, hence gathering insight rather than generalisation.

The rest of this chapter is split into three main sections. The first section discusses the thesis contribution to knowledge – the implication for theory and practice. The second section discusses its limitations and pointers for future research. Finally, the chapter will end with concluding remarks.

6.2   Thesis contribution

This study intends to provide a constructive contribution to understanding the influence of social media in organisations. In particular, on how social media influences processes, structure and strategy. In doing so the research contributes towards understanding of the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategies within an organisation. Most of the information systems literature on social media falls short in explaining the impact of social media on different processes within organisations, consequently depriving managers of knowledge on how to institute broader changes in processes, structure and strategy. This study has examined the impact of social media practices on different aspects of an organisation thus the insight gained from this research will contribute towards addressing the aforesaid deficiency.

Thus, the following section answers the following questions:

1. How is social media embedded within an organisation's processes, structure and strategy?
2. What are the influences of social media practices to an organisation's processes, structure and strategy?
3. How does social media strategy develop within organisations?

6.2.1   Implication for theory

This research puts forward the following implications for information systems (IS) research and theory. It will discuss the implications in accordance with the research questions.

The first part of the research intended to understand how social media is embedded within an organisation's processes, structure, and strategy. In theory, technology is believed to embody structures that are built-in by designers, and users in organisations appropriate them during their use (Orlikowski, 1992). This means technology embodies structure and it is appropriated within an organisation. Although this theory explains to some extent how technology is embedded in organisations it is limited in explaining ongoing changes in technology and their use, especially regarding technology like social

media that is complex and dynamic. Orlikowski (2000) complements the idea of embodied structure with the idea of an emergent structure and appropriation with enactment. The idea of enactment and emergence starts by focusing on human action and examines how it enacts emergent structures (ibid). The analysis of this research has examined the practice of social media in Mwiko and Kili to understand how social media becomes embedded in processes, structure and strategy. The analysis shows that context, competition, and behaviours influence how social media is embedded within organisational processes, structure and strategy. Below is a discussion of how context, competition and behaviours contribute to our understanding of how social media is embedded in processes, structure and strategy.

This research, through examining in the context of Tanzania, has shown how socially embedded factors such as low levels of income and the historical development of communications infrastructure in Tanzania are integral in understanding the appropriation and emergence of social media practice within the case organisations. Also, this thesis strengthens strategy as practice theory, which looks at strategy as a situated activity (Jarzabkowski, 2005). This thesis shows that social media practices are situated within the context of Tanzania. These practices are enacted and emerging from the context. The 'free social media' i.e. providing free Internet access to social media platforms, for example, has emerged and been enacted by telecom organisations. This has underscored the influence of context in shaping the use of technology and highlighted the distinctive impact of context on technology. On the other hand, the study has also shown that some use of technology is not inherent to context. This study contributes knowledge about the appropriation and enactment of technology structures. It shows that in some instances, structures inscribed in the technology are appropriated in the use of technology while, in other instances, the use of technology is enacted, leading to an emergent structure of use. Thus, it is not one or the other, but there is both appropriation and enactment of technology structures. This contribution reaffirms Orlikowski's (2000) suggestion that enactment complements the notion of appropriation. However, Mohajerani et al. (2015) argued that people appropriated social media practices from another context. Still, this study shows that social media

practices are both appropriated and enacted in the context in which the activity is situated. Avgerou (2017) criticises new IS theories like strategy as practice theory for being elusive in considering context, which limits the theory's explanatory capacity to explain IS phenomena in the developing context. Hence, this research contributes to IS research by using the explanatory power of strategy as practice to explain how the developing context, such as the Tanzanian context, influences the use of social media in organisations.

Further, the analysis of this research shows that competition influences how social media is embedded in organisational processes, structure, and strategy. It has outlined how social media practices are contagious within the industry because of competitive pressure. For instance, competition influences the adoption of social media, the management of social media as well as the provision of 'free social media'. Competitive pressure makes organisations mimic competitor practices making organisations have similar practices. Thus, organisations exhibit similar structures due to isomorphism. Isomorphism, which is a concept from ecology that explains how organisms from similar environments come to exhibit similar features (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Hence the concept of isomorphism, explains why social media practices in Tanzanian telecom organisations are similar. Isomorphism implies the combined influence of context and competitive pressure in embedding social media in organisational structure, strategy and processes. Mutch (2008) associates isomorphism with a quest to gain legitimacy. This research shows how recognition influences legitimacy. Social media practices, which are influenced by competition, were formally recognised and had gained some form of structural legitimacy in the organisation. Therefore, competition influences the integration of social media within organisational processes, structure and strategy. It enacts structure by mimicking a competitor's activities.

This research shows behaviours (habits) as another way in which social media is embedded in organisational processes, structure and strategy. Orlikowski (2000) suggests people's use of technology is structured by habits, among other factors, such as knowledge and facilities. Consequently, the habitual use of technology enacts a specific set of rules and resources in practice that then serve to structure future use as

people continue to interact with technology in their recurrent practices. In this way, habits enact a structure of technology use. Furthermore, understanding different behaviours in the organisation helps to understand the multiplicity of structure (Orlikowski, 2000) and strategies (Jarzabkowski, 2005). For instance, the overall structure and strategy of an organisation can be different from the departments within the organisation. The analysis of this research shows how different behaviours manifest in WhatsApp groups depending on the composition of its members. For example, the homogeneous and heterogeneous WhatsApp groups exhibit how hierarchical (centralised) structure and decentralised structure can co-exist and overlap with each other within organisations. Behaviours manifested in WhatsApp groups and the other social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) used in the case organisations recursively instantiate and reconstitute rules and resources that structure processes within the organisation. For example, customer registration and customer service processes have been embedded in an imbricative way as new elements are enacted, which overlap with pre-existing elements of the processes (Kwayu et al., 2018a). Thus, analysis and observation of behaviours related to social media help us to understand how social media is embedded within an organisation by either reinforcing or transforming existing structures. Pillet and Carillo (2016) suggested future work to investigate behaviours in organisations that use social media. This research responds to Pillet and Carillo's (2016) suggestion through generating insights on how behaviours associated with social media enact structure and processes within an organisation.

Accordingly, this research contributes to IS knowledge on processes, structure, and strategy by showing how social media is embedded in organisational processes, structure and strategy through context, competition and behaviours. This furthers our understanding of embeddedness, appropriation, emergence and enactment of structures with empirical evidence from the developing context.

The second question - what are the influences of social media practice on organisational processes, structure, and strategy, allows us to understand the impact of social media on processes, structure, and strategy within an organisation.

This research explored the influence of social media on processes in organisations. First, the visibility afforded by social media affects processes not just in terms of the sequence of activities but also how the activities are conducted. Second, social media has multiple effects on processes as it assists ordinary daily activities that are essential for the survival of an organisation. In theory, these insights contribute to knowledge in the following ways. First, they enhance the communication visibility theory, which suggests that once invisible communication is visible to the third party, it increases metaknowledge - knowledge of who knows whom and who knows what (Leonardi, 2014). This finding contributes to knowledge of how social media affords visibility by suggesting that it does not only add metaknowledge, but it also changes the manner of the processes in an organisation. Also, related to metaknowledge, this research has shown how social media influences information and knowledge sharing within the organisation. It has explained how WhatsApp has enhanced knowledge sharing among employees. Though WhatsApp is superb for sharing knowledge, it is not ideal for storing information and it is hard to search for information within it. Considering how knowledge is shared differently depending on group composition structure, this highlights how practitioners in organisations control their social presence, self-presentation and self-disclosure even within the same platform. Hence this underscores the limitation of media richness theory, which Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) used to classify social media platforms. Whereas, on the other hand, it strengthens the practice perspective, which differentiates technology as artefact and technology use (Orlikowski, 2000). Therefore, considering the influence of social media in organisational processes (i.e. on knowledge sharing), it helps us understand how the social and material interweave to institute change and stability in organisational processes (Leonardi, 2011). Thus, this research contributes to knowledge on the impact of social media on processes by showing how informal social media practices, such as using WhatsApp groups, influences knowledge sharing within organisations. The influence of social media on knowledge sharing affects different processes within the organisation as every process involves some application of knowledge.

Furthermore, this research examined the influence of social media on structure to show a reciprocal relationship between structure and social media practice. There are instances where structure influences social media practice by either enabling or limiting. There are other instances where social media is influencing structure. The reciprocal relationship between structure and technology is not new knowledge. However, this research contributes to the field by showing the linkage between social media practices that are influenced by structure, which are those planned practices with formal recognition, including the social media accounts and 'free social media' packages. The emergent practices such as WhatsApp communication practices influence structure, due to their repetitiveness, which enacts a new structure (Orlikowski, 2000). Thus, by showing that WhatsApp communication practices influence the structure of the telecom case organisations and the structure of the case organisations influences the practice in using social media platforms and 'free social media'. This research establishes the relationship between social media practices that are likely to influence structure and those social media practices, which structure is likely to influence. Therefore, following Mintzberg's (1979) argument that strategic issues can emerge anywhere in the organisation, this finding suggests that an organisation should be conscious of emergent practices because of their power to influence structure and consequently alter power dynamics (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). For example, Mwiko's network planner (p. 148) suggests that bosses tend to create a barrier in WhatsApp groups in order not to dilute their power. As aforementioned, structure limited some social media practices. For instance, the structural separation of the IT department and the product development or public relations departments leads to bureaucratic delays and compromise due to lack of IT knowledge thus slowing processes such as marketing and product development. Bureaucracy and inadequate IT knowledge underscore the hybrid debate. Hence, signifying why the increasing use of social media necessitates staff with adequate IT skills and seamless integration of IT in business processes and strategies in an organisation. Alongside, the demand for having a seamless integration of IT in business processes and strategies with adequate IT skills, this research suggests the need for a flexible structure that can accommodate dynamic and complex social media practices.

Finally, this research intended to understand how social media strategy develops within an organisation. Thus, this final part will discuss the contribution to knowledge about social media strategy.

This research contributes to IS strategy, particularly by highlighting seven elements crucial to the development of social media strategy in an organisation. The elements are; adoption, recognition, structure, strategizing, resources, management and processes. First, this research shows that the adoption of social media is a continuum of planned and emergent approaches. The use of social media accounts and creation of 'free social media' were planned whereas WhatsApp communication is an emergent phenomenon. This contributes to a long debate within IS research between planned and emergent, which is biased towards the planning approach (e.g. Neugebauer et al.,2016; Nolan, 2012). Thus, with regards to adoption, this research contributes by reinforcing the importance of the emergence approach to strategy. Second, this research shows the role of recognition in strategy development. Planned social media practices received formal recognition, whereas emergent social media practices had informal recognition. Recognition enhanced the legitimacy of the practices and resource allocation. Formal practices had structural legitimacy, and the organisation could allocate resources to enhance those practices. Whereas, informal practices had interpretive legitimacy, and they contributed towards organisational resources through individual personal devices and resources such as mobile phones and WhatsApp to supplement organisational infrastructures.

Third, the recognition of social media practices also engendered different forms of strategizing, such as procedural and interactive strategizing. Procedural strategizing is associated with formally recognized practices, whereas interactive strategizing is associated with informal strategizing. The fourth element is resources. The planned practices received resources from organisations, but emergent practices received individual resources as explained above. The fifth element of the development of social media strategy is structure. The planned social media practices were supported and influenced by the organisational structure, whereas the emerging social media practices influenced the organisational structure. Looking at this through the strategy as practice

lens we observe practices within the planned practices, and praxis within emergent practices. Another element of development of social media strategy is management of social media. This research reveals how social media is managed within the organisations, the planned social media is centralised whereas the emergent social media is decentralised. The last element of development of social media strategy is the effect on processes. Planned social media practices affected processes such as marketing, product development and the feedback process. Whereas, emergent practices affected the internal feedback process, socialisation, information and knowledge sharing within the organisation. Important to note is that these elements of social media strategy development are not in sequential order, nevertheless figure 9, below, shows how they link and relate to each other. The research contributes to knowledge on social media strategy by showing the elements of development of social media strategy within the organisation. This differentiates our study on social media strategy with other studies such as Culnan et al.'s (2010) study, which is focused on building a community of customers in social media platforms and the capacity to source value from them.

| Practice	Social media practice	
Adoption	Planned	Emergent
Recognition	Formal	Informal
Structure	Influenced by structure	Influence structure
Strategy	Procedural strategizing	Interactive strategizing
Resources	Requires skills and resource	Enhance skills,capabilities, IS infrastructure
Management	Centralised	Decentralised
Processes	Product development, Marketing, Feedback	Information sharing, internal feedback, socialisation

Figure 9 Development of Social Media Practice in Organisation

6.2.2   Implications for practice

This thesis makes the following contribution to practice.

First, this thesis suggests that an organisation should provide training on IT knowledge, which is necessary for the increasing use of social media and digital technologies. Inadequate IT skills among members of staff hinder processes and development of social media strategy within the organisation. It underscores the importance of hybrid personnel. The best way to embed social media within an organisation's processes, structure and strategy is through providing necessary skills, maximising value from social media technologies. Organisations cannot realise IT as integral to their business strategy if their human resource is not equipped with IT skills. Therefore, for social media to be a powerful tool for competitive advantage organisations should train their workforce with the necessary IT and digital skills. This will create efficiency and effectiveness in organisational processes such as marketing and product development by saving time and compromises which are instituted due to the separation of IT and business operations.

Related to the first point above, schools and universities colleges should integrate digital and IT skills into their curricula, as digital technologies such as social media are becoming central to life and work. The increasing dominance of social technologies within organisations necessitates education and training to embed digital and IT skills, and to prepare students for the demands of the future labour market. The pervasive use of social media means the majority of activities in organisations will require some form of IT/digital skills and knowledge since most activities will be inseparable with the technology.

Secondly, as social media is proving a novel for producing and generating knowledge in the organisation, organisations should find ways to control the quality of knowledge produced as well as storing the knowledge for future use. Unfortunately, some of the very novel knowledge produced in WhatsApp groups and other social media practices is often buried in the new information, which is constantly generated within social media platforms. Identifying useful information and making it accessible for future use is one of the challenges for organisations that want to maximise the value of social media. Also, organisations should encourage their staff to contribute further and share knowledge. Organisations can do this by

allowing more freedom and privacy in social media platforms where people can engage constructively. Also, designing interdepartmental projects will enhance different perspectives on knowledge generated within these platforms. For example, the heterogeneous WhatsApp groups were deemed insightful. Another recommendation for enhancing knowledge management is that organisations can create a separate knowledge repository and encourage staff to highlight useful knowledge shared in social media platforms for the organisation to store for preservation and sharing. Rewarding groups that submit useful information can be used to encourage such practice/initiative.

Furthermore, this research suggests that organisations should practice interactive strategizing. The research has shown the importance of emergent practices and their influence on structure. For organisations to be able to manage and understand the emergent practices associated with social media, the executives and their management should be interacting with organisational members of staff. Interactive strategizing requires wisdom and good interpersonal skills, which will help managers to gain moral legitimacy, which is based on normative approval (Suchman, 1995). Similarly, Castelló et al. (2016) suggest that organisations can gain legitimacy when firms can reduce control over engagements and relate non-hierarchically with their public. The findings of this research suggest that if the management recognises WhatsApp communication, the communication practice happening in WhatsApp will cease to be effective. Therefore, for organisations with a strict hierarchal culture or centralised structure, their management should learn how to balance the procedural strategizing with interactive strategizing by understanding when to switch between the two, so that they do not lose their structural legitimacy as well as their moral legitimacy (Hendry et al.,2010).

Finally, organisations will fail to compete if they do not have a flexible structure to accommodate the changes brought about by social media. Changes brought about by social media can be hampered by structural rigidity. Hendry et al. (2010) suggest structural rigidity comes from procedural strategizing which primarily serves to maintain existing strategies, particularly those with a long organisational history. This research has shown how structural rigidity impedes the development of social media strategy in organisations, especially the

planned social media practices that derive their legitimacy and strength from structural support. For example, the separation of departments leads to bureaucratic delays in the development of social media products and services. Delaying products and services in the markets causes inefficiency, which may hamper an organisations competitive advantage. In the era of social media, where consumers want instantaneous gratification, it is important to have a flexible infrastructure that can change with the times and technological demands. Thus, in a complex and dynamic environment created by social media, structural flexibility is a fundamental element for the successful implementation of social media in an organisation.

6.3   Limitations and Future Research

There were several limitations to this research. First, the access level to organisations was different, which denied this study the ability to compare the two cases. The study had wider access in Mwiko, which enabled the researcher to gain insights from its top management in the headquarters as well as from organisational members in the branches. In contrast, the access gained in Kili was zonal, which gave access to the intermediate level of management and organisational members in the branches. This was not a significant concern as the main objective of this research was exploratory and to gain insight. Although, the access level was different, the data obtained was complementary in providing insight. The researcher was able to triangulate the information obtained from the respondents in the two case organisations. However, future research could embark on a similar study with the aim of comparing and generalising.

In addition, in the quest to preserve the anonymity of the case organisations some insightful information was not revealed in this thesis as it may easily display the identity of the organisation. The telecom industry in Tanzania has a few organisations each with unique characteristics. For example, they have different histories and ownership structures, which makes them easily identifiable. Therefore, some of the information, which could better explain the phenomena and generate insightful knowledge, is intentionally removed to preserve the anonymity of the organisations.

The research highlights key areas that future research could explore. Further research is needed on emergent social media practices in the organisation and their influence on structure. According to Whittington (2010), structure is relatively enduring thus understanding the influence of emergent social media practices on structure will need longitudinal research. This research has indicated that emergent social media practices influence structure. In light of that, future research can validate and enhance this finding with more empirical examples to strengthen this result.

Another key area for future research is on knowledge management in WhatsApp groups. This research has shown how WhatsApp is used for internal communication and how knowledge and expertise is shared through WhatsApp groups. Future research can explore the impact of WhatsApp on knowledge sharing and its impact on organisations. In addition, future research can explore the usage of WhatsApp in other industries - as well as how they co-exist with traditional knowledge management systems (KMS).

Furthermore, this research has used a strategy as practice perspective, which focuses on human activity as the interplay of the social and the material to understand how social media has influenced process, structure and strategy in an organisation. Although the strategy as practice perspective has much greater potential for understanding the influence of social media in organisational processes, structure and strategy, still it is lacking the imaginative skills (Kautz and Jensen, 2013) with which to think and write about how social media is reconfiguring the material fabric of our lives (Zammuto et al., 2007). Therefore, this research suggests that future research should extend the strategy as practice theory to provide theoretical, philosophical and conceptual tools, which will enhance imaginative skills to understand, think and write about how social media and contemporary digital technologies are influencing the material fabric of our lives and organisation.

Finally, this research has shown how work behaviours, competition, products, and services, as well as marketing practices are entangled in social media. Also, it has shown how social media practices can be emergent and planned and how they engender different strategic practices such as procedural and interactive practices. Furthermore, it has shown how structural rigidity and separation of IT and business operations, which is underpinned by

alignment thinking, are obscuring the performance of practices entangled with social media and negatively affecting organisations competitiveness. Hence, forming an argument for the hybrid debate in this social media era. Following this, future research can explore the fusion of strategy and hybrid personnel in a further quest to understand social media integration and strategy in organisations.

6.4   Concluding Remarks

This research was set up to explore the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategies within organisations. The objective was to understand the integration and impact of social media on processes, structure and organisational strategy. This research adopted the strategy as practice theory, which considers strategy as situated socially accomplished activity (Jarzabkowski, 2005) in the quest to understand how technology influences change and stability in an organisation. Data for this research was collected through semi-structured interviews from two telecommunication companies Kili and Mwiko in Tanzania. Further, data was collected through documentary analysis of reports from the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Agencies and other government agencies for the purpose of gaining insights into the context. Also, Tanzania provided a context for understanding IS phenomenon in a developing nation that is hugely required in the quest to bridge the digital divide that exists in IS research between the developed and developing nations.

The results of this research highlight the influence of social media on processes, structure and strategies within organisations. First, it shows that social media is embedded in organisational processes, structure and strategy under the influence of context, competition and behaviours. Second, it shows that social media influences processes, mainly through knowledge sharing, which affects most of the processes within the organisations. Likewise, the research has shown that emergent social media practices influence the structure of the organisation and are not constrained by organisational structure, whereas, planned social media practices were influenced by organisational structure. Third, this research has identified seven elements of social media strategy development which are adoption, recognition, structure, strategizing, resources, management and processes.

Finally, through exploring social media practices this research has provided comprehensive insights into different aspects of social media's influence in organisations. Significantly, this creates a basis for future research such as research into informal emergent forms of knowledge management.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Permit

TANZANIA COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(COSTECH)

Telephones: (255 - 022) 2775155 - 6, 2700745/6

Director General: (255 - 022) 2700750&2775315
Fax: (255 - 022) 2775313
Email: rclearance@costech.or.tz

Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road
P.O. Box 4302

Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

RESEARCH PERMIT

No. 2016–289-NA-2016-204

9th August 2016

1. Name   :   **Shirumisha Clement Kwayu**

2. Nationality   :   **Tanzanian**

3. Title   :   **The Impact of Social Media on Balance of Strategies within Organisation**

4. Research shall be confined to the following region(s): **Dar es Salaam**

5. Permit validity from: 9th August 2016 to 8th August 2017

6. Contact/Collaborator: **Dr. Emmanuel Kileo, Stefano Moshi Memorial University College, P.O. Box 881, Moshi**

7. Researcher is required to submit progress report on quarterly basis and submit all Publications made after research.

M. Mushi
for: **DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Interview Schedule

Opening

My name is Shirumisha Kwayu, a research student at Nottingham Trent University. My research topic is how social media impacts the balance of strategy within the Organisations.

I would like to ask you some questions about your work, how your organisation use information technology (IT) within your organisation. How you use social media within organisation and how it is impacting the organisation. Your answers and views will help our understanding of the impact of social media on organisation strategy and such knowledge will be useful for organisations.

I will use the information in analysing and to providing recommendations to organisations on how they can better use social media

The interview will take 30 to 45 minutes. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

Let me begin to ask you information about your work.

Body

Work background

    I.   How long have you worked with this organisation

   II.   How long have you been working for this department

 III.   What are your main roles

 IV.   What are the main targets of your work

Information Technology

I.   What form of information technologies do you use in these organisation

II.   How are they helping in reaching your targets

III.   What are the challenges of using this technologies

IV.   What do you think could help to overcome the challenges

Social media

I.   Your website hosts links to social media, how do you manage your social media accounts?

II.   How is social media impacting your work processes within organisation

III.   Apart from the social media links on your website, are there other ways that your department or organisation is using social media

IV.   How is social media helping your department/ organisation in achieving its goals

V.   How has social media changed the use of IT in your organisation

VI.   How have your organisation needs inform the way you use social media

VII. In what ways do you think social media can be used to benefit your organisation

VIII. What are the challenges of using social media

IX.   How could organisations overcome those challenges

Closing

I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know that will help us understand how social media can be used in organisations.

I should have all the information I need. Would it be right to contact you if I have more questions? Thanks Again.

Appendix 3: Interviews Conducted in Telecom organisations

No	Profile	Organisation	Place of Interview (Region)	Date of Interview
1	CEO	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	06/12/2016
2	Manager IT Operation	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	16/11/2016
3	IT Staff	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	17/11/2016
4	Marketing Manager	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	18/11/2016
5	Marketing Staff	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	18/11/2016
6	Finance Manager	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	21/11/2016
7	Manager Network Development	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	22/11/2016
8	Manager Product Development	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	23/11/2016
9	Human Resource Head	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	24/11/2016
10	Human Resource Staff	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	24/11/2016
11	Regional Manager	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	28/11/2016

12	Public Relation Manager Communication	Mwiko	Dar es Salaam	29/11/2016
13	Zonal Manager	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
14	Zonal customer care manager	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
15	Branch manager (Branch A)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	25/01/2017
16	Branch manager (Branch B)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	29/01/2017
17	Sales person	Kili	Kilimanjaro	03/02/2017
18	Team leader	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
19	Customer Service (Branch A)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	23/02/2017
20	Customer service (Branch B)	Kili	Kilimanjaro	29/01/2017
21	Marketing Manager	Kili	Kilimanjaro	03/02/2017
22	IT staff	Kili		03/02/2017

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Anton Muszanskyj, MA PG Cert
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Shirumisha Clement Kwayu
Postgraduate Researcher
Nottingham Business School
Nottingham Trent University
50 Shakespeare Street
Nottingham
NG1 4FQ

26 October 2016

Dear Shirumisha

Application to the College Research Ethics Committee

Please accept this letter as written confirmation that your application (No. 2016/33), entitled *The Impact of Social Media on the Balance of Strategies within Organisations*, was considered by the College's Research Ethics Committee (CREC) and approved on 17 July 2016.

Yours sincerely

Mr Anton Muszanskyj
Research Support Office
College of Business, Law and Social Sciences
Nottingham Trent University

Stefano Moshi Memorial University College
(SMMUCo)

A Constituent College of Tumaini University Makumira

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4/4/2016

Director of Research Clearance,
COSTECH,
Dar es Salaam.
Tanzania.

Dear Sir,

RE: Shirumisha C. Kwayu

I am writing to confirm that the Stefano Moshi Memorial University College (SMMUCo) will be hosting Shirumisha C. Kwayu as visiting scholar during the months of November 2016 to March 2017. Mr. Kwayu will be hosted in the Faculty of Business and Management Studies.

During this brief tenure, Mr. Kwayu will be collecting data for his research in Tanzania's telecom organizations as well as engaging in faculty academic activities such as seminars, discussions, and presentations. Mr. Kwayu will be sharing his preliminary research finding to members of the faculty and students.

In brief, Mr. Kwayu's research, whis is supervised at Nottingham Trent University (UK) analyses the impact of social media on the balance of strategies within organizations. This research is topical and relevant to the business strategies as the saliency of social media is an inevitable aspect in business research and scholarship. Thus, we welcome Mr. Kwayu's research as it will further contribute to our growing and vibrant faculty.

Thank you,
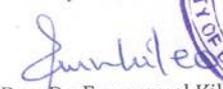
Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Kileo
Dean, Faculty of Business and Management Studies
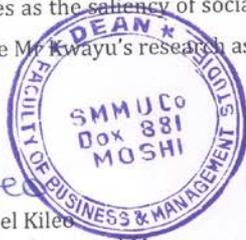
All correspondence should be addressed to the Provost

248

Stefano Moshi Memorial University College
(SMMUCo)
A Constituent College of Tumaini University Makumira

P. O. Box 881 Moshi, Tanzania Tel: + 255272757070 / 272757071 Fax: +2552757880 Email: smmuco@smmuco.ac.tz Web: www.smmuco.ac.tz

Tuesday, April 06, 2016

Dear Shirumisha C. Kwayu,

Re: Welcome to SMMUCo as Visiting Scholar

Reference is made to your letter dated 31st March, 2016 requesting to join SMMUCo as a visiting scholar in the Faculty of Business and Management Studies.

Your request has been granted! We are looking forward to hosting you in the time mentioned.

With best regards,

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Kileo,

Dean, Faculty of Business and Management Studies

All correspondence should be addressed to the Provost

Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I have agreed to participate in this research project conducted by Shirumisha C Kwayu from the Nottingham Trent University. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about social media and IT strategy within the organisation.

My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, then this will be kept confidential and no one from my organisation will be told.

1. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question and/or to end the interview.

2. Participation involves being interviewed by a researcher from Nottingham Trent University. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview, and an audiotape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. I understand that if I do not want to be taped, then I will not be able to participate in the study.

3. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies, which protect the anonymity of individuals and organisations.

4. Executives, managers and staffs from my organisations will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

5. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of Nottingham Trent University College Of Business, Law And Social Science

6. I have read and understood the information sheet provided to me and I have had all questions answered to my satisfaction.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

8. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Printed name:

 Signature:

Date:

Signature of Researcher:

For further information on this research, please contact my director of studies Dr Banita Lal,

banita.lal@ntu.ac.uk

The Impact of Social Media on the Alignment of Strategies within Organisation

Thank you for considering participating in this research project. Before you decide whether to grant me an interview, it is important that you understand the reason why this research is being carried out, and what your participation will involve. I shall be grateful if you will take the time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with colleagues or other people if you wish. Please feel welcome to get back to me if anything is unclear, and to take as much time as you need to decide whether or not to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is being undertaken as part of a PhD degree in Information Systems at Nottingham Trent University, UK. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of social media on the alignment of strategies within the organisation.

Recently, the world has seen the rise and development of social media, a new class of Information Technology (IT) that supports interpersonal communication and collaboration via Internet. The rise of social media has changed the way communication is conducted within the organisation by allowing cheap content creation, interaction and interoperability of users. Also, it has changed the way the institute interacts with customers by allowing communication between the organisation and customers and more significantly allowing a customer to interact with other customers. As a result, social media has changed both organisation and consumer space. As social media is a new technology, little is known about the change that it has effected or how organisations use and exploit the opportunities that are offered by this technology. Thus this research intends to study how social media is used and its impact on business strategy within organisation. Understanding the impact of social media on business strategies within the organisation will help organisations when strategizing on ways to use social media to reach their organisational goals.

The key research objectives

The aim of this research is to examine the impact that social media has on how strategy is created, shaped and aligned with other strategies within organisations.

Thus the objectives are:

- To provide an understanding of how the usage of social media can impact organisational strategy and functional strategies
- To appreciate how existing perspectives of strategy can assist in understanding how social media is used and embedded into organisational processes
- To update our knowledge on strategy, in particular how strategy changes with the introduction of new technologies

Research questions

The main question of this research is; *what impact does social media have on the alignment of strategies within an organisation?*

Other questions alongside this main question are:

- How do the changes brought about by social media affect existing procedures within the organisation?
- Which functions within an organisation are affected by social media technologies and how, in terms of processes?
- How do organisations plan for/around a technology that is distinctly different in nature compared to previous IT investments that organisations may have made?

This project commenced on 1st November 2014 and is due to be completed by 31 October 2018.

Who is running this study?

The study is being run by Mr Shirumisha Kwayu, a PhD Student at Nottingham Trent University, and supervised by: Dr Banita Lal, Dr Mumin Abubakre and Professor Alistair Mutch, all of whom are faculty members at Nottingham Business School within Nottingham Trent University.

Who is funding this study?

This study is self-funded.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

I am asking you for an interview because you are either a manager or staff of a selected telecom organisation.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are therefore free to take part or not, as you choose.

If you do decide to take part, you will be given an information sheet to keep, and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. You will still be free to withdraw at any time before December 2016; this includes the right to withdraw your interview from the study after it has taken place.

If you decide not to take part, or to withdraw at any stage, you will not be asked to provide any reasons.

What do you want me to do?

I would like you to take part in an interview lasting approximately one hour. It will take place in your workplace, if appropriate, or another location designated by yourself or the researcher, and will be arranged at a time convenient to yourself. The topics to be covered have been identified in the section of this document titled 'What is the purpose of the study?'. There will also be plenty of scope for discussing issues around the area of the study.

I will ask for your written permission to tape the interview, to ensure that the information you give me is accurately recorded.

What will happen to the information I give in my interview?

The tape of your interview will be transcribed. I will then analyse the information and feed it into our results. The recording and transcript will be handled only by the researcher, in line with data-protection principles and our approved research protocol.

At the end of the study, all the transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my desk at NTU in a safe and secure place. The data collected from the interviews will also be transferred from Tanzania to the UK and will be kept in a safe place. Also, electronic files are kept on password-protected computers which are not accessible to any other university staff. While this is usual practice, because it makes valuable research data available to other researchers, the transcripts will be fully anonymised before they are archived. Any information that identifies you or your organisation, or that gives any clues to your identity, will be removed. I am confident that these precautions will ensure that no-one will be able to trace your transcript back to you or your organisation.

How will you protect my confidentiality and anonymity?

You will not be named in any publication arising from this project unless your role forms part of a narrative that is already in the public domain, for example if you were the named author of a published document or gave evidence to a public inquiry relevant to the study. No unpublished opinions or information will be attributed to you, either by name or position, without your express consent.

I will, unless consent is given, exercise all possible care to ensure that you cannot be identified by the way we write up our findings.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

The main cost to you will be the time needed to be interviewed. The main risk is that you might give me information that is detrimental to you or your organisation, or that runs counter to data-protection laws.

I am confident that the arrangements described above will prevent any of your information being shared with anyone outside the research team. For this reason, we believe that the risk of any detriment is extremely low.

What are the possible benefits?

I hope that you will find the interview interesting, and will take satisfaction from helping to develop knowledge of this important topic. I also hope that you will find the results of the project helpful to your work.

What will happen to the results?

I will write up the results in a PhD thesis at Nottingham Trent University, and will publish academic articles on my research in journals that are widely read by students, researcher and practitioners.

How can I find out more about this project and its results?

I will send a copy, if requested, of the executive summary to all our interviewees, so you will be able to read about our findings. The researcher will be happy to discuss any aspect of the study with potential participants prior to or following their involvement.

Has anyone reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the supervisory team, and has been accepted by the College Research Degrees Committee at Nottingham Trent University, and my research project has been registered for MPhil with the possibility of a transfer to PhD.

The project has received ethical approval from the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC), under arrangements for research governance at Nottingham Trent University.

Who is responsible if anything goes wrong?

This project is being administered by Nottingham Trent University, which is therefore responsible for the conduct of the project.

Contacts for further information

Please feel very welcome to contact the researcher for further information at the following address:

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Also, the supervisory team can also be contacted at the following addresses:

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Mr Shirumisha Kwayu
PhD Student
Nottingham Trent University