

Employee Perceptions of Social Media Regulation and its Impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company

BY:

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I will always love you.

Declaration

DECLARATION

I, **LERATO JOHN NKHAHLE**, identity number: _____ and student number _____, hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree: Master of Communication in Language Practice, was my own independent work and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Centra University of Technology, Free State and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any person in fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

01 OCTOBER 2025

DATE

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Abstract

This study explored employees' perceptions of social media usage regulation and its impact on organisational climate and culture. The study was motivated by the rising incidence of disciplinary actions and job losses related to social media use, underscoring the need for a deeper understanding of social media etiquette within organisational settings. Social media's influence on organisational climate and culture was profound, yet the extent to which social media usage regulation affects these elements has been largely overlooked in prior research. This study sought to fill that gap by examining how such regulations shape employees' thoughts, feelings, and actions, which were critical to corporate reputation management. The research was grounded in the Uses and Gratifications theory, which examined the motivations behind social media usage, and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture, which aimed to align organisational values with employee behaviour. A qualitative approach was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews with 10 employees from Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a cleaning services company based in Welkom, within the Lejweleputswa District of the Free State Province, South Africa, to gather their perceptions of social media regulation. The findings revealed a significant communication gap between management and employees, with many employees uncertain about the existence of a social media policy within their organisation. Based on these findings, the study recommended the implementation of regular communication strategies to consistently reinforce and remind employees of the

organisation's social media policies. This research contributed to a better understanding of the dynamics between social media regulation and organisational culture, offering valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners in the field of organisational communication.

Keywords: Social Media Policies, Employee Perceptions, Policy Awareness, Policy Communication, Organisational Compliance

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background

Organisations are creating and supporting social media accounts and pages to enhance their social media rapport and consequently, their communication effectiveness. Social media platforms have significantly changed how people connect and communicate online, both inside and outside of organisations, (Correa *et al.*, 2010; Turban *et al.*, 2011; Moqbel *et al.*, 2013; Holland *et al.*, 2016). Social media utilisation within an organisation presents both opportunities and challenges. When managed effectively, social media can offer substantial benefits to the organisation; conversely, its misuse may lead to significant detrimental consequences. Therefore, the organisation is responsible for overseeing that usage is within its policy frameworks. This is attainable by regulating employees' social media engagement because employees can misuse social media, which can harm the organisation's image. To this end, Berkelaar (2017); Ravazzani and Mazzei (2018) agree that the employers have technological capability and authority to monitor and discipline employees who make serious online remarks and, in some cases, use personal social media at work when they are not supposed to hence this has become a sensitive subject.

Two major forms of employee social media transgressions are evident: first, when employees make negative or inappropriate online posts about their organisation or its leadership; and second, when employees engage in personal social media activities

during official working hours (McDonald, Thompson & O'Connor, 2016). According to Lam (2016), employers' and managers' justifications for above mentioned misbehaviours include a need to maintain a hostile-comment-free workplace, a desire to protect personal private information, and keeping up with necessary legitimate reporting requirements (, 2016).

As was the case in March 2013, Alan Francis, a full-time Pennsylvania substitute teacher, was let go for “praising” a female student on social media (O'Connor & Schmidt, 2015). This superintendence of employees' social media engagements becomes topical as it might be perceived as an intrusion of the employee's privacy. This is because if an employee posts or tweets about how their day was going, such information may be relayed to the immediate supervisor (McDonald & Thompson, 2016). Furthermore, when an employee posts about an organisation's pre-planned objectives, this might also harm the organisation's reputation and deter potential and incumbent investors (McDonalds & Thompson, 2016), such as when an employee wittingly or unwittingly leaks pivotal organisational information on social media, such damage was hard to reverse. The problem arises when the employer or the organisation employs their technological capability and authority to inspect the employee's social media usage. This is because employees share personal information, discuss with colleagues work-related issues, or even post inappropriate information (Gritzalis, Sideri, Kitsiou & Tzortzaki, 2016). Employees may be using social media to share inappropriate photos or even posting racist remarks to complaining about being overworked and underpaid, such posts might render the employee jobless (Gritzalis *et al.*, 2016). This online behaviour has a negative impact on the organisation.

For the aim and context of this study, Social media can be defined as online platforms that facilitate communication, enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content, and support interaction and self-presentation (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Carr & Hayes, 2015). Social media is used as a blanket term that defines a host of online platforms, including blogs, business networks, collaborative projects, enterprise social networks (Social Network), forums, microblogs, photo sharing, product reviews, social bookmarking, social gaming, social network, video sharing, and virtual worlds (Aichner & Jacob, 2015). Social media include, but are not limited to, social networking sites, instant messaging platforms, apps for content sharing, and other content-sharing platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn. On these platforms, users can upload self-generated content, including routine and everyday material, which may carry the risk of violating organisational social media guidelines. The purpose of this study was to explore and understand how employees perceive social media engagement and regulation in the workplace to determine how organisational culture and climate can be maintained in a dynamic social media environment.

According to Ratnakaram, (2018:70) Organisational climate refers to the prevailing conditions within an organisation that give it a distinct identity and differentiate it from other organisations, thereby influencing the behaviour of employees. "Organisational culture encompasses the collective norms, values, and traditions that are mutually agreed upon within an organisation. According to Ratnakaram (2018), it also includes the foundational values, beliefs, customs, rules, and procedures that are deeply embedded in the organisation. These elements guide employees in organising tasks, exercising authority, implementing reward systems, and adhering to disciplinary measures and control protocols.

In the recent past, social media has profoundly transformed the digital landscape, revolutionised global communication and created new avenues for interaction between governments and citizens, as well as organisations and their customers. Unlike traditional media such as print and broadcast channels which typically employ a targeted and one-dimensional approach, social media offers a significantly broader reach and facilitates two-way interactive communication. This bidirectional nature allows for a real-time feedback, enhanced engagement, and more dynamic interactions between parties (Roy, 2016). Additionally, social media platforms enable organisations to swiftly disseminate information, respond to inquiries, and build stronger relationships with their audiences. The ability to engage directly with stakeholders in a more personalised and immediate manner underscores the pivotal role of social media in contemporary communication strategies, highlighting its advantages over conventional media forms. In an organisation, this means greater reach to its customers and audiences and most importantly, customer feedback. Thus, organisations employ social media to exploit new, more effective, and faster forms of interaction, transactions, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. The material uploaded on social media was made by users, and for the purpose and context of this study, the user was both the employer and the employee. The responsibility rests with the organisations to take up preventative and protective steps such as the execution of a clear and substantial social media policy. There are now general warnings to organisations to have well-thought-out, well-communicated social media policies that clarify the rules for and limits on employee expression (Lam, 2016).

Organisations, and employers stress that employees spend more time on corporate computers for personal reasons, than was required. “They worry that employees spend time on activities like sending personal emails, updating social media accounts,

and buying online” (Furber, 2014:1). Although usage of employee-owned devices has been prohibited in industries such as retail and transportation, “employees will attempt to smuggle devices in by hiding them under desks and counters, or using them during breaks” (Light, 2014: 88, 92). This mistrust ultimately leads to conflict between employers and employees. McDonald and Thomson (2016) presented a model which showed that employees worry about asserting a private identity, voice, and autonomy while engaging with customers when on-duty and off-duty as this might go against the company’s objectives, reputation preservation, and time management. The purpose of this model was to bring light to the everchanging landscape of work surveillance, employee misbehaviour and the ethical considerations around these issues especially regarding employee social media usage during work hours. The principles of the model are employee monitoring, which deals with how employees are being monitored at work by keeping an eye on their online behaviour, when they engage in critical comments on social media platforms, and monitoring their personal social media usage during work hours (McDonald & Thomson, 2016). While employee monitoring forms a central principle of the model, its implementation inevitably raises legal and ethical concerns regarding the regulation of employees’ online behaviour. Legal and ethical dilemmas also emerge when organisations attempt to regulate online behaviour.

These dilemmas relate to tensions between employers’ efforts to protect corporate reputation and employees’ rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and autonomy (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). The aforementioned conflict stems from the disagreement concerning the employer’s right to monitor the employee’s social media usage during work hours and administer disciplinary action against dissenters. It was worth noting that in management’s

attempt to monitor the employee's social media usage during and after work hours, the tools available for them to monitor employees are the same tools used by employees to keep their online presence private. They use tools found mainly outside the workplace and are therefore an interruption to the labour process, tools like InterGuard and Teramind (though there are exceptions, notably the tracking of workplace-based computer (Thompson, McDonald, & O'Connor, 2020). Concurrently, employees may be utilising the same technologies, but for entirely different purposes, such as controlling aspects of their personal sphere.

It thus becomes clear that social media use by employees can also bring about negative results for an organisation when employees engage in social media usage during work hours. Employees, through a variety of devices such as mobile phones and computers use social media, with its capabilities of removing time and space constraints. Social media enables employees to bypass physical and temporal boundaries, meaning personal and work-related interactions increasingly overlap during working hours (Andreassen, Torsheim & Pallesen, 2014).

Social media networks changed the form of working relationships in organisations, in that they have reasonably reduced face-to-face calls while promoting sending messages without considering the feelings of others, and spreading gossip rumours (Ferris, Brown, Berry & Lian, 2008). It becomes clear from the above-mentioned scholars that organisational social media usage is a two-sided coin. The impact of social media regulation on organisations has been overlooked. Therefore, there was a concern about conflict between employees and employers. Employees are a cardinal part of corporate reputation management. Therefore, their thoughts, feelings, and actions can determine the altitude of the business. If their behaviour does not live up to the published values of the business and the expectations created about the

business, the overall reputation of the business can be damaged. Furthermore, if employees' voices are silent in the conversations about social media use and regulation in the workplace, this can be detrimental to organisational culture and climate and ultimately organisational success.

Therefore, this study was justified because all organisations, whether private or public, are now increasingly using social media as a supplement to traditional media, and personnel use social media for both professional and personal reasons. The problem starts when organisations begin to regulate employee social media usage. The rights of employers to monitor and act punitively about workplace dissent and misbehaviour have become debatable legal, policy and ethical issues. Unregulated and unpoliced social media usage by employees could prove detrimental to the organisation. Though social media regulation by organisations is for good cause, research is very scant on the employees' voices about social media regulation in the workplace. Tapping into the employees' opinions could bring more harmony to the workplace and promote good organisational culture and climate.

1.2 Problem Statement

The rapid integration of social media into workplace communication has introduced both opportunities and challenges for organisations. While these platforms can improve collaboration and foster open dialogue, they have also disrupted established norms of professionalism, privacy, and accountability (Anderson, 2020). In many workplaces, employees use social media to share knowledge and maintain interpersonal ties, yet this can simultaneously blur the boundaries between personal and professional communication (Leonardi & Vaast, 2017). Employers often recognise the potential of social media as a tool for engagement but express concern about its misuse and the reputational risks it poses (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). Employees,

however, may view regulatory measures as intrusive and undermining their autonomy, which creates tensions that are difficult to resolve (Brown & Green, 2021). This tension highlights a critical dilemma: while regulation was intended to protect organisational interests, it can inadvertently erode trust and damage workplace climate.

A major issue in contemporary workplaces is the misuse of social media during and beyond working hours. Employees sometimes use these platforms for personal activities that conflict with their professional responsibilities, raising concerns about productivity, confidentiality, and brand reputation (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Cases where employees post negative or inappropriate content about their employers have further complicated employment relations, leading to disciplinary action and even termination (McDonald, Thompson & O'Connor, 2016). Such conflicts extend beyond legal compliance to fundamental questions of fairness, privacy, and the limits of employer control (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). For organisations, the absence of clear and consistently communicated policies deepens this challenge, as employees may remain unaware of the rules governing their online behaviour (Smith & Anderson, 2021). The problem therefore lies not only in social media use itself, but also in how its regulation was perceived and enforced within organisational cultures.

Another challenge arises from the impact of social media regulation on organisational climate and culture. Culture reflects the shared values and traditions that define an organisation, while climate reflects how employees perceive and experience management practices (Schneider, González-Romá, Ostroff & West, 2017). Restrictive social media policies can be interpreted by employees as signals of mistrust, which may damage cohesion and morale (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). Conversely, overly permissive environments can expose organisations to reputational crises and legal risks (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). Striking the right balance

between control and flexibility is thus a complex managerial task that has direct implications for how employees experience their workplace environment (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). When regulation is misaligned with culture or poorly communicated, the result can be disengagement and resistance, undermining both organisational performance and employee well-being.

Despite growing recognition of these tensions, employee perceptions of social media regulation remain underexplored. Much of the existing literature prioritises managerial perspectives on compliance, risk management, and policy enforcement, leaving limited space for the voices of employees themselves (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). This imbalance risks creating regulations that lack legitimacy and fail to reflect the lived experiences of those most directly affected by them (Thorntwaite, 2020). At the same time, there is evidence that inclusive approaches to policymaking where employees are involved in dialogue and decision-making can strengthen trust and enhance compliance (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). The gap in understanding employees' perceptions therefore represents a significant research problem: without recognising how workers interpret, accept, or resist regulation, organisations cannot effectively manage the cultural and climatic consequences of digital communication.

1.3 Research Aim, Questions and Objectives

Aim of the Study

The study aims to examine how employee perceptions of social media regulation influence workplace culture and organisational climate within Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions in South Africa.

Research questions

To solve the above research problem, the following research questions were taken into consideration from employee perspectives:

- a) **RQ1:** What are the Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees' perceptions of their social media use and regulation by the organisation?
- b) **RQ2:** What was the impact of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees' social media use on organisation culture and climate?
- c) **RQ3:** How are the Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees navigating the current state of social media dispensation by their employer?

Research objectives

To answer the above questions, the main objective of this research was laid out as follows "To understand how social media use and regulation impact organisational communication effectiveness, culture and climate, and consequently organisational success from the employees' perspectives. The findings could influence improvement of social media use and regulation in organisations". This overall objective was demarcated using the following sub-objectives:

- a) **RO1:** Find out the Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees' perceptions of their social media use and regulation by the organisation.
- b) **RO2:** Determine the impact of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees' social media use on organisation culture and climate.
- c) **RO3:** Determine what impact the current social media policy has on the employees and their use of social media.

1.4 Preliminary Literature Review

The literature indicates that social media has significantly reshaped workplace communication by increasing immediacy, accessibility, and interaction across organisational hierarchies (Anderson, 2020; Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram are now embedded in organisational practices and function not only as communication tools but also as spaces for identity construction, employee engagement, and reputation management (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). In the South African context, scholars caution that although social media enhances connectivity, it simultaneously heightens risks related to privacy breaches, ethical concerns, and reputational damage (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020).

Research further highlights that social media adoption offers several organisational benefits, including improved collaboration, knowledge sharing, customer engagement, and brand visibility (Jones & Silver, 2021; Eger, Kuckertz & Berger, 2021). However, these benefits are realised only when organisations balance employee freedom of expression with clear and consistently applied regulatory frameworks (Anderson, 2020). Where regulation is unclear, social media use may result in technostress, role conflict, reduced morale, and negative perceptions of organisational climate (Brooks & Califf, 2020; Brown & Green, 2021; Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023).

Studies examining specific platforms show that each offers distinct affordances and challenges. Facebook and Instagram are commonly used for brand building and visual engagement, while WhatsApp remains the dominant platform for workplace communication in South Africa due to its accessibility and affordability (Anderson, 2020; Murire, Flowerday, Strydom & Fourie, 2020). These differences necessitate

nanced and context-specific regulation, particularly in service-oriented organisations such as cleaning companies, where employee behaviour directly shapes public perceptions.

The literature also demonstrates that social media regulation has a direct influence on organisational culture and climate. Digital communication reshapes organisational norms and hierarchies, while monitoring practices affect trust, autonomy, and employee morale (Criado & Villodre, 2018; Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). In the South African context, cultural norms further shape how employees interpret and respond to digital workplace practices (Choi, Chu & Choi, 2019). Consequently, effective social media regulation is viewed as a collaborative process supported by transparent communication, training, and digital literacy (Johnson & Peters, 2022; Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022; Lee, Kim & Park, 2023).

Finally, the literature is underpinned by theoretical perspectives such as Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture, which together provide insight into employee motivations, organisational values, and the alignment of digital policies with workplace norms (Eginli & Tas, 2018; Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012; Wang et al., 2021). These frameworks position employee perceptions as central to understanding how social media regulation influences organisational culture and climate.

1.5 Delineation of the study

This study focuses specifically on Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a private organisation located in Welkom, within the Lejweleputswa District of the Free State Province in South Africa. Unlike public institutions that are compelled to operate under strict statutory oversight, private organisations often exercise greater autonomy in

policy formulation, including matters of communication and employee conduct. Consequently, employee experiences in such contexts provide unique insights into how social media regulation was perceived and enforced. Scholars argue that private sector companies tend to prioritise profitability and client satisfaction, which may sometimes overshadow transparent communication with employees (Smith & Anderson, 2021). In this light, exploring employee perceptions at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions enables a deeper understanding of how social media policies influence workplace culture and climate within a profit-driven environment (Jones & Silver, 2021). This focus also highlights the relevance of examining organisational culture in a labour-intensive sector where staff interactions are crucial to service delivery (Bailey & Clarke, 2022).

The delineation of the study extends to the types of social media platforms under investigation, namely Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok. These platforms were selected because they are widely used by employees for both professional and personal interactions, and they represent distinct modes of digital communication. Facebook has been linked to brand-building and professional networking, while Instagram is increasingly used for visual storytelling that influences corporate reputation (Anderson, 2020). WhatsApp is the most prevalent tool in workplace communication across South Africa, often serving as an unofficial but critical internal communication channel (Murire, Flowerday, Strydom & Fourie, 2020). YouTube is recognised for training and marketing purposes, offering opportunities to disseminate multimedia content to employees and external audiences (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). Meanwhile, TikTok, though relatively new in organisational contexts, was gaining attention for its ability to shape narratives and reach younger demographics (Anderson, 2020). Each platform therefore holds implications for how

employees perceive communication boundaries and the enforcement of regulatory frameworks.

The study does not attempt to examine all possible digital platforms but instead narrows its scope to those most relevant in the organisational context of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. Research shows that organisations face challenges in regulating diverse platforms, as employees often use multiple applications simultaneously for overlapping purposes (Treem, Dailey, Pierce & Leonardi, 2020). Limiting the focus to five key platforms enhances analytical depth and ensures that findings remain contextually grounded. As Smith, Jones and Taylor (2022) point out, restrictive policies can generate confusion if they are not tailored to the actual tools employees use daily. By concentrating on platforms where engagement was highest, the study can meaningfully assess how regulatory practices influence employee behaviour, trust, and workplace morale (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). This delineation also ensures that the research remains methodologically feasible while still capturing a comprehensive picture of social media dynamics in the workplace.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in two primary theoretical perspectives: the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture. The U&G Theory, initially developed by Blumler and Katz (1974), was employed to explore the motivations driving employees' engagement with social media within the organisational context, focusing on the specific needs and gratifications they seek through these platforms. Whiting and Williams (2013) highlight the theory's relevance to social media, emphasising its applicability in understanding the goals behind employees' online activities. By comprehending these motivations, the study aims to identify how social media usage aligns with both individual employee needs and

broader organisational objectives. Concurrently, the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture, influenced by structural-functionalist theorists such as Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) and further developed by Dauber et al. (2012), provides a framework for examining how social media practices influence and are influenced by the existing organisational culture and climate. This model facilitates an analysis of the dynamic interactions between employee behavior on social media and the organisational norms, values, and structures that govern professional conduct (Cooper and Burrell, 1988).

Integrating these two theories, the study seeks to establish a harmonious relationship between employee social media use and organisational culture, thereby fostering a synergistic environment that enhances overall organisational success. The U&G Theory justifies the reasons behind employees' social media activities, while the Configuration Model assesses how these activities interact with and potentially reshape the organisational culture (Ngcongco, 2016). This dual-framework approach enables a comprehensive understanding of both the individual and collective dimensions of social media usage within the organisation. Additionally, the study considers Parsons' (1956) concept of organisational legitimacy, which underscores the necessity for organisations to align their value systems with broader social norms to maintain legitimacy and effective stakeholder relationships. By employing both perspectives, the study positions itself to explore how employee agency interacts with institutional expectations, ultimately influencing organisational climate and cohesion. These theoretical positions are only briefly introduced here; they will be further elaborated, with historical context and detailed assumptions, in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to examine employee perceptions of social media regulation and its influence on workplace culture and climate at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a service company located in Welkom, Free State Province, South Africa. Qualitative research was particularly appropriate because it prioritises the exploration of subjective meanings, enabling a deeper understanding of how employees interpret and respond to organisational policies. Unlike quantitative designs that seek measurement and prediction, qualitative methods focus on depth, context, and meaning making, which aligns with the interpretivist orientation of this study (Levitt, 2021). Qualitative approaches also allowed researchers to explore phenomena in participants' natural settings, thus capturing the lived realities that shape their experiences (Silverman, 2021).

In this context, employees' views on social media regulation cannot be reduced to statistical patterns but must be understood as socially constructed meanings embedded within organisational culture and climate (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This methodological approach was therefore consistent with the study's reliance on the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which examines personal motivations behind media use, and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture, which emphasises alignment between values and behaviour (Miller, 2020; Alvesson, 2022).

1.8.1 Research Philosophy

1.8.2 Ontological Assumptions

Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality. This study was grounded in a relativist ontology, which assumes that reality was not singular or objective but socially constructed through interactions between individuals and their environments

(Cunliffe, 2022). In the workplace context, this means that employees experience and interpret social media regulation differently depending on their positions, responsibilities, and values. For instance, managers may view regulation as a tool for reputational protection, while cleaners or drivers may perceive it as restrictive surveillance. A relativist stance accepts multiple realities and recognises that meaning arises from the subjective perspectives of employees themselves (Tracy, 2020). This ontological position was appropriate because it aligns with the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture, which holds that culture was not a fixed entity but a dynamic arrangement of shared meanings and practices (Schein & Schein, 2021). By acknowledging diverse realities, the study captures the complexity of workplace culture and climate as influenced by digital communication practices.

1.8.3 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and how it can be obtained. This research adopts an interpretivist epistemology, which prioritises understanding participants lived experiences through their own narratives rather than imposing external categories (Schwandt, 2020). Knowledge in this framework was co-created through dialogue between researcher and participants, making semi-structured interviews a suitable method for data collection. Such an approach values depth and context, enabling the capture of nuanced meanings around social media use and organisational regulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The interpretivist stance also reflects the Uses and Gratifications Theory, as it seeks to uncover why employees use platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook in particular ways and how these practices intersect with organisational norms. Moreover, this epistemology supports the Configuration Model by emphasising that cultural knowledge emerges from shared stories, rituals, and symbols communicated within the workplace (Alvesson, 2022).

Thus, the epistemological foundation ensures that findings are rooted in authentic employee perceptions.

1.8.4 Reasoning

The study employed inductive reasoning, which involves moving from specific observations to broader generalisations and theoretical insights (Nowell & Albrecht, 2021). Induction was well-suited for qualitative research because it allows themes to emerge from participants' narratives rather than testing pre-determined hypotheses. In this case, employees' accounts of how social media regulation affects their work experiences were coded and categorised into broader themes such as communication gaps, perceptions of fairness, and workplace culture. This approach resonates with Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis framework, which advocates for systematic coding while remaining open to new patterns. Inductive reasoning also complements the exploratory nature of Uses and Gratifications Theory, as it seeks to understand the specific gratifications employees pursue through social media and how regulation alters these motivations (Miller, 2020). Similarly, it aligns with the Configuration Model, which requires attention to context-specific manifestations of culture rather than imposing rigid categories.

1.8.5 Research Paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm underpinned this study, as it seeks to capture how individuals construct meaning in relation to their organisational contexts. Interpretivism was particularly relevant when exploring employees' perceptions of social media regulation, since such perceptions are subjective, socially mediated, and context-specific (Tracy, 2020). Unlike positivism, which assumes that objective truths can be measured and generalised, interpretivism acknowledges multiple realities and situates

knowledge within the lived experiences of participants (Cunliffe, 2022). For Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a private company where hierarchical relations shape how rules are received, the interpretivist paradigm allows for uncovering differences in how managers and employees make sense of social media policies. This approach was valuable in understanding both the perceived constraints and the opportunities that emerge when digital platforms intersect with workplace culture (Schwandt, 2020). By centring participants' narratives, interpretivism ensures that findings are grounded in authentic experiences rather than externally imposed categories (Nowell & Albrecht, 2021).

Interpretivism also aligns with the theoretical foundations of the study. The Uses and Gratifications Theory assumes that individuals actively engage with media to fulfil specific needs, which makes it necessary to examine personal motivations through interpretive methods (Miller, 2020). Employees may, for example, use WhatsApp to coordinate work tasks informally, while simultaneously relying on Facebook to maintain personal networks during breaks. These practices illustrate the coexistence of professional and private motives, which can only be understood by engaging directly with participants' perspectives. Similarly, the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture views workplace culture as a dynamic arrangement of meanings and practices that differ across organisational levels (Alvesson, 2022). By situating this model within an interpretivist paradigm, the study recognises that employee interpretations of regulation are not uniform but are shaped by organisational structures, power relations, and group norms (Schein & Schein, 2021). This theoretical and paradigmatic alignment strengthens the validity of the study's methodological choices.

Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the importance of reflexivity, whereby the researcher critically reflects on their role in the co-construction of

knowledge. Reflexivity was crucial in qualitative research because data are not simply extracted but co-produced through dialogue and interaction (Levitt, 2021). In this study, semi-structured interviews facilitated an open exchange where employees could express how regulation influenced their trust, autonomy, and engagement at work. Reflexivity also ensures that findings are not presented as universal truths but as situated accounts specific to Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. This reflexive stance enhances transparency, enabling readers to understand how interpretations were formed (Silverman, 2021). Ultimately, the interpretivist paradigm provides the philosophical and methodological grounding to examine workplace realities as socially constructed phenomena, ensuring that the voices of employees remain central to the inquiry.

1.8.6 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was a qualitative single-case study, chosen for its ability to generate rich, contextualised insights into organisational practices. Case study research was well suited to exploring contemporary workplace phenomena where boundaries between context and behaviour are blurred (Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Recent scholarship confirms that the case study approach remains a robust method for investigating organisational processes, especially when addressing under-researched issues such as social media regulation (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). By focusing on Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the study captures how social media policies influence employees' perceptions of workplace culture and climate, which are difficult to measure through quantitative surveys alone (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). The approach further allows triangulation of themes by connecting employee experiences with organisational communication structures (Eger, Kuckertz & Berger, 2021). Unlike experimental designs that control

variables, case study research acknowledges complexity, revealing how social media guidelines intersect with broader dynamics of trust, engagement, and organisational identity. In this way, the chosen design does not simply describe events but critically interprets how policies are experienced in practice, situating employees' voices at the centre of analysis.

This study employs a single-case strategy because Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions provides an ideal bounded system for understanding the nexus between social media regulation and workplace dynamics. Scholars highlight that a single-case design enables deep investigation of unique organisational cultures, especially in environments where policies are contested or poorly communicated (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). The decision to focus on one company was also supported by recent calls for context-specific research on social media governance in developing economies, where formal regulation often lags behind practice (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). In this study, semi-structured interviews with employees create opportunities to probe issues of compliance, trust, and morale, offering insights into how regulations are internalised or resisted (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). Moreover, case studies allow for “how” and “why” questions to be examined in ways that highlight employee narratives rather than abstract generalisations (Johnson & Peters, 2022). In adopting this design, the researcher recognises that organisational culture was dynamic and socially constructed, making qualitative interpretation essential to uncover nuanced perceptions. Ultimately, this research design ensures that findings are not only descriptive but also critically engaged with the realities of workplace climate shaped by social media policies.

1.8 Study population

The study focuses on the employees of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a cleaning services company located in Welkom, within the Free State Province of South Africa. Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions was a high-volume cleaning company employing a total of 106 staff members, encompassing a diverse range of roles, including human resources, stock controllers, site managers, and drivers. This diverse workforce provides a comprehensive perspective on the use and regulation of social media within the organisational context.

Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions actively utilises social media platforms for both professional and personal purposes. Employees engage with social media during working hours to facilitate communication, collaboration, and information sharing relevant to their roles. Additionally, employees use these platforms during their personal time, which intersects with their professional responsibilities and organisational policies. This dual usage underscores the importance of understanding employee perceptions and adherence to social media regulations within the workplace.

Due to resource constraints and the high-demand nature of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the researcher was limited to conducting interviews with a subset of employees. The selection prioritised a representative sample across different departments and hierarchical levels to ensure a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives. The study aims to engage with approximately 10 employees, balancing the need for in-depth qualitative insights with practical limitations on time and access.

The organisational environment at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions presents a unique case for examining the interplay between social media use and organisational culture. The employee's commitment to maintaining high standards of services necessitates clear and effective communication policies, including those governing social media use. By focusing on Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the study seeks to uncover how social media regulations are perceived, understood, and implemented by employees, and how these perceptions influence overall organisational culture and compliance.

1.8.1 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is defined as a procedure to select a sample from individuals or from a large group of a population for a certain kind of research purpose (Bhardwaj, 2019). Non-probability sampling is a method of sampling in which not all members of the population have an equal chance of participating in the study. This type of sampling enables the researcher to focus on specific characteristics of the population and thereby fulfil the study's aims and objectives. "In a non-probability sample, subjects are usually selected based on their accessibility, or by the researcher's purposive personal judgment" (Mugera, 2013: 1). A principle of non-probability sampling is that its findings cannot be generalised to the whole population. However, the researcher has confidence that the findings add to the body of knowledge on social media use and regulation and can thus influence policies. Purposive sampling was employed for this study. The researcher, according to (Mugera, 2013) selects the subjects with the specific intention of focusing on features of interest that best enabled him or her to respond to the study questions.

1.10 Sample Size

The study engaged ten employees of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, drawn from across different departments to ensure a balanced perspective of the organisation's workplace culture and climate. The participants comprised two site supervisors, two administrative clerks, one human resource officer, three cleaning operatives, one driver, and one stock controller. Representing a cross-section of hierarchical levels, this distribution provided insights into how social media regulations are interpreted and experienced by both operational and administrative staff. Scholars emphasise that qualitative research benefits from smaller, purposefully selected samples, as these allow for richer exploration of complex perceptions and lived experiences (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018). In workplace studies, capturing employees from diverse functions has been shown to increase the validity of findings by integrating voices from multiple operational contexts (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). Social media perceptions are rarely homogeneous within companies, and differences often emerge between frontline workers and managers, making departmental representation critical (Anderson, 2020). By incorporating voices across units, the study ensured that the findings reflect the holistic organisational culture rather than isolated departmental sentiments (Smith & Anderson, 2021).

The decision to limit the sample size to ten participants was informed by both methodological and contextual considerations. From a methodological standpoint, qualitative research prioritises depth over breadth, with smaller samples enabling detailed exploration of themes until data saturation was reached (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In similar research on workplace communication and digital governance, saturation was often achieved with between eight and twelve interviews, demonstrating the adequacy of this scale (Treem, Dailey, Pierce & Leonardi, 2020).

From a contextual perspective, time and resource constraints made it impractical to engage a larger number of employees without compromising the depth and quality of data collection (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Furthermore, the absence of triangulation meant that a manageable sample was essential to ensure rigorous analysis and interpretation. Studies highlight that when organisations introduce restrictive social media policies, smaller samples can still effectively reveal employee perceptions, provided that representation was balanced across roles and responsibilities (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). In this case, the inclusion of voices from different departments safeguarded against bias and provided the study with a robust empirical base from which to analyse how regulation shapes workplace culture and climate.

1.11 Data Collection Instruments and Instrumentation

Data for this study were gathered using semi-structured interviews. An interview schedule was developed, outlining the main topics to be covered and the specific questions designed to elicit responses on each topic (Jamshed, 2014). These interviews were conducted face-to-face between the researcher and participants, allowing for in-depth conversations aimed at uncovering employee perceptions of their social media use and the regulations governing it within the organisation. This approach facilitated the collection of detailed and relevant information to address the research objectives effectively.

1.11.1 Semi-Structured Interview

Interviews are considered conversational practices through which the researcher seeks to understand the world of the interviewees and the meanings these interviewees associate with their experiences (Mahama & Khalifa, 2017). Magaldi and Berler (2020) define the semi-structured interview as an exploratory interview. Unlike

in an unstructured interview, the interviewer has an idea of what questions they asked. Unlike in a structured interview, the order of questions was set, but the interviewer was flexible and can digress or probe further based on the interviewee's responses. This study embarked on a semi-structured interview in its quest to understand and ascertain the employees' perceptions of the impact of their social media use and regulation by management on organisational culture and climate. The interview schedule mainly consists of "yes" or "no", open-ended and mirror questions to garner the depth of the interviewee's voices regarding the dynamics of social media use and regulation in their organisation.

1.11.2 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected physically through face-to-face interviews. An audiotape was used to physically record the participants and a notepad in which to jot down certain matters that need further elaboration. This was done to avoid disturbing them while they are talking. A notepad further helped the researcher to record matters which appeared pertinent. Interviews were arranged by way of arranging with the manager, getting his permission to allow his staff to voluntarily participate in the study. The estimated data collection timeframe was one month.

1.11.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the procedure of bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2012). The data were analysed during and upon its completion. The data in the current investigation consisted of transcripts taken during the interview sessions. The data were coded using descriptive themes. The collected data were then be reduced through organising and categorising it to establish patterns that were developed into themes that emerged. To attain that, the researcher

used McMillan & Schumacher (1993) steps for mounting an organising system. This was achieved by coding. The basic coding operation was done in various ways. This study employed a manual coding approach, which allowed the researcher to meticulously arrange, reassemble, and manage the data in creative, yet systematic ways. Inductive coding was a ground-up approach where the researcher derives their codes from the data. The inductive approach was relevant when doing an exploratory study or when no theoretical concepts are immediately available to help you grasp the phenomenon being studied. Working systematically with coding allows the inductive researcher to observe transparency and thus offer credible interpretations of the empirical material (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013). The researcher does not start with preconceived notions of what the codes should be but allows the narrative or theory to emerge from the raw data itself

1.12 Significance of the study

The study is very important to organisations that employ social media, and it serves as a footprint for those that in future will employ social media. It brings about understanding between the employer and employees. As more organisations are jumping on the social media usage bandwagon to make their presence known and felt, it has become imperative that organisations themselves get acquainted with social media use and have their employees on par with the rest of the ever-evolving world of social media. It has become pivotal that a balance was struck between organisations and employees on matters involving social media use, so that there was harmony, and no stakeholder was left out.

1.12.1 Economic Implications

Employees are the most important stakeholders in any organisation, institution, or business and if something affects them negatively, the organisation was likely to suffer financially. Satisfied employees mean happy customers or clients, and social media regulations directly impact them, thus, there needs to be a resolution found on social media usage between organisations and employees.

1.12.2 Social Implications

Inquiring employee perceptions of social media use makes them active participations in matters that directly affect them, in this case, they voiced their opinions on their organisation's communication protocols when using social media channels.

1.12.3 Cultural Implications

Reaching a consensus between management and employees on social media use promotes a healthy and harmonious organisational culture and climate.

1.13 Structure of Thesis

The rest of the study was structured as follows:

a) Chapter One: Introduction and Background of the Study

This chapter introduces the study and outlines its background. The chapter further discusses the aims and objectives within the scope of the study, and a detailed explanation of the research problem was provided along with the research design and methodology overview that the study aims to embark on.

b) Chapter Two: Literature review and Theoretical framework

This chapter provides an overview of existing research about the employee's perception of social media usage, regulation, and its impact on organisational culture and climate. The chapter comprises the work of various scholars that

have opined about this topic and the methods used to conduct the studies. This enables the researcher to situate the current study. The chapter then focuses on reviewing theories that are used by other scholars to support the claims and aims of the study. Theories are analysed and used to underpin the study of the phenomena explored.

c) Chapter Three: Research methodology

This chapter gives an outline of the research methodologies employed during the study and how they were employed to achieve the intended goal of the study.

d) Chapter Four: Data collection and analysis

The data collection methods and results analysis were covered in this chapter. The findings and interpretations of the study was discussed in this chapter.

e) Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendation

In this chapter, a conclusion and recommendations regarding the research problem being investigated was made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, social media has become integral to organisational communication, employee engagement, and workplace relationships across both large multinational corporations and smaller private enterprises. Scholars highlight that platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are now routinely employed to enhance collaboration, knowledge sharing, and team cohesion in professional environments (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). At the same time, studies caution that the misuse of these platforms can blur professional boundaries, undermining trust and productivity within organisations (Brown & Green, 2021). Evidence further indicates that workplace social media use is expanding across regions and industries, signalling the need for consistent regulatory approaches that protect both employee autonomy and organisational reputation (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Against this backdrop, understanding how regulation intersects with organisational culture and climate has become critical for both scholars and practitioners.

The benefits and risks of social media are widely debated, with proponents emphasising its ability to strengthen workplace relationships and critics warning of its potential to cause distraction and privacy concerns. Research demonstrates that when integrated responsibly, social media can contribute to employee engagement and foster a positive organisational climate (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). However, restrictive or poorly communicated policies have been found to decrease morale and increase mistrust between employees and management (Smith, Jones & Taylor,

2022). Scholars argue that organisations must therefore carefully balance the dual nature of social media, leveraging its collaborative potential while mitigating risks associated with surveillance and misuse (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). These findings suggest that organisational culture and climate act as mediators of how employees experience social media regulations in practice.

Global perspectives reveal that organisational size and sector significantly influence how social media was managed in the workplace. Large enterprises often implement formalised policies supported by training and compliance mechanisms, whereas smaller firms may rely on informal norms shaped by workplace culture (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). Comparative studies further show that cultural context matters, with cross-national differences in employee perceptions of monitoring and autonomy reflecting broader societal values (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). As workplaces in both developed and developing economies increasingly depend on digital tools, it becomes essential to examine how regulatory practices interact with cultural expectations at both organisational and societal levels (Smith & Wang, 2023). By situating the discussion within this broader literature, the present study aligns with ongoing debates about the balance between innovation, productivity, and regulation in the digital workplace.

2.2 Social media capabilities in an organisation.

Changes have taken place in the use of social media by organisations, both externally and internally, concerning the different creative approaches and potential social media governance problems. In this instance, social media is referred to as enterprise social media and serves organisations as a means of collaboration and cooperation, as it enables the smooth, rapid, and unimpeded flow of information across different levels of the organisation (Eger, Kuckertz, & Berger 2021). Informal communication is often

perceived to be a barrier, however, communication that is unimpeded or lacking barriers may be exclusionary and lead to misunderstanding (Van Zoonen, 2021). Moreover, in the case of organisational social media, particularly social media in the digital workplace, the social media governance framework may be the one that shapes the extent to which employees achieve compliance and adaptability regarding the expectations of management (Lee, Kim, & Park, 2023). Organisational communication that lacks trust and the psychological safety of employees leads to the disengagement of employees. This is because the extent of organisational communication is determined by the level of trust in organisational policies (Smith & Anderson, 2021). In digital communication governance, the need for equilibrium within the framework has been noted.

Wang and Yu and Fensenmaier (2021) state that digital governance is associated with the weakening or loss of control feelings, and this is likely to diminish the perception employees have of social media. In the governance of social media in developing countries, the social media and technological governance frameworks overshadow the social and cultural communication arbiters of social media (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). In some service firms, like cleaning, mobile informal messaging tools to manage and coordinate operational processes circumvent the formal structures. Informal systems, in addition to operational flexibility, circumvent the formal structures, and require the creation and management of organisational boundaries. Most of the literature focuses on the positive influence of productivity, and very few analyse the consequences of the various forms of control on the climate of the organisation. It is surprising, given the role of control in shaping employee attitudes. Employee communication withdrawal, an expression of low morale, is poorly represented in the literature. It is obvious, then, that social media serves an organisation on the

secondary level and primarily as technology and on the dual level, as an organisational culture system.

The more social media is utilised in professional settings, the more employees can communicate, share, and collaborate. Social media can motivate employees and help facilitate effective team collaboration and creativity (Ali et al., 2020). Motivational digital collaboration tools can help employees drive communication and streamline task organisation. However, excessive reliance on digital tools may create negative boundary issues between work and home life (Priyadarshini et al., 2020). Social media can paradoxically increase the risk of collaboration-related conflict, despite the benefits of increased collaboration (Wang et al., 2021). Digital environments where employees are monitored can lead to self-censorship (Alnuaimi & Al Khaja, 2022). Many companies utilise WhatsApp groups to plan tasks, especially in shift work scenarios. This quickly elevates the communication speed, but also the expectation that employees are available all the time. With workplace social media, communications could be improved, although it may come with risks, and therefore should be handled with caution. Employers must prioritise the psychological safety and general well-being of employees, even if it impedes the speed of work. Most studies still lack a detailed, industry-specific analysis, especially in operational service firms where informal communication is dominant.

It is evident that social media aids in building relationships with customers, as well as accelerating the pace of organisations' responses to customer inquiries. Moreover, customer trust built through social media, improves customer service and strengthens customer relationships (Schaarschmidt & Walsh, 2020). If an employee, however, engages with the organisation's social media in a positive and professional manner, he/she can positively represent the organisation (Sakka & Ahammad, 2020). On the

contrary, the company may get a bad reputation due to lack of communication and excessive posting by employees (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Employees who have undergone social training are said to follow communication guidelines better (Johnson & Peters, 2022).

According to some researchers, employees are more likely to be held accountable for their online communications after having undergone training on communication ethics (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). It has been noted that when customers are the primary focus of communications, this leads to a lack of formality in processes. Employees are under the impression that customers prefer informal communication, but this increases the likelihood of the company being exposed to a cyber threat. There is a growing number of service organisations that have received poor ratings from customers because of employees communicating via social media.

Given the findings, it can be recognised that there is a need for the more constructive training and support monitoring system for social media externalisation. While most of the literature alludes to businesses having a solidified digital infrastructure, this is not the case for a great deal of small enterprises, thereby making it imperative to carry out this research into social media use within operational service environments.

Organisational learning, innovation, and operational problem solving are all influenced by social media in several ways. Digital collaboration improves organisational agility through idea generation and idea sharing (Ali et al., 2020). Digital communication makes it possible to foster knowledge transparency and allows learning from the experiences of others, even from different people in different teams. The social media induced phenomenon known as technostress negatively affects productivity (Priyadarshini et al., 2020). In addition, the absence of boundary management to

minimise digital fatigue and digital burnout is a detriment to performance (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Regarding social media use, the paradox of more moderate, permissive and flexible social media access posits that greater organisational performance is likely to be at risk (Smith & Wang, 2023). Digital literacy impacts understanding of social media policy and usage thereof (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Frontline operational services employees clearly possess varying degrees of digital competence, which affects their policy adherence.

There is considerable variation among staff regarding how social media is utilised. Some staff may simply communicate via social media, while others may network or share information. Thus, this illustrates the digitally engaged employees who, informally volunteer without knowing the policies. There is little research, especially in operational contact labour sectors, that illustrates the digitally engaged employees and informal participation. This suggests the need for more extensive research focusing on social media literacy for employees in non-profit service organisations.

Social media integration in an organisation may improve company culture and workplace social atmosphere. Enhanced communication and trust in an organisation have been attributed to the digital transparency in business communication (Croucher and Cronn-Mills 2021). Digital communication monitoring, however, can cause an environment of fear and communication apprehension (Thompson, Lee, and Chen 2023). The social media phenomena negatively impact employees' voice and commitment to the organisation (Smith, Jones, and Taylor 2022). Digital policies, in the eyes of some scholars, are seen as an extension of the organisation's mission, vision and values (Brown and Green 2021). Usually, if an organisation's digital policies are ambiguous and lack clarity, that results in bewilderment as to what behaviours are acceptable or unacceptable. Employees refrain from social media use out of fear of

being reprimanded. In service organisations that depend on collaboration and trust, this adversely affects the social climate. When employees are actively involved in the development of policies, the results are generally better than in the case of top-down policies. This is especially true for social media policies that are consistently enacted without the involvement of employees. Thus, the social media phenomenon ought to be regarded as a composite of the social, cultural, and technological dimensions. This paper aims to examine the influence of workplace culture and climate on the employees' attitudes toward policies.

2.3 Possible challenges of using social media in organisations.

Social media has introduced complex challenges in organisational contexts, particularly relating to productivity and performance. Studies demonstrate that prolonged digital engagement often distracts employees from task completion, with many reporting difficulties in prioritising work responsibilities when personal notifications compete with job duties (Priyadarshini et al., 2020). Excessive online browsing during work hours has been associated with cyberloafing, where time intended for professional tasks was diverted to personal use (Oksa et al., 2021). This behaviour not only delays deadlines but also diminishes team efficiency, particularly in service-based industries where timely coordination was vital. In cleaning companies, for example, reduced task performance due to mobile distractions could affect client satisfaction and contract renewals. Researchers have also linked excessive workplace social media use to reduced attentiveness during safety-critical tasks, which can be particularly risky in operational environments (Choi, Chu & Choi, 2019). These findings suggest that productivity losses are not merely abstract concerns but tangible risks that undermine operational efficiency and profitability.

Another key challenge lies in data privacy and information security. Employees' online activities expose organisations to risks of confidential information leakage, either unintentionally through oversharing or deliberately through misconduct (Murire, et al., 2020). Scholars note that even seemingly harmless content posted online may contain metadata, images, or client information that can compromise organisational integrity (Smith & Wang, 2023). Security breaches of this kind are particularly concerning in industries reliant on client trust, as a single breach may erode long-term business relationships. Research further shows that in contexts where social media policies are poorly communicated, employees often lack awareness of security protocols, inadvertently exposing the organisation to external threats (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). In the case of cleaning companies that handle access to residential and corporate spaces, a breach of privacy not only endangers clients but also tarnishes the reputation of the business. Thus, unregulated digital behaviour represents a structural vulnerability that requires clear policy design and consistent training.

Boundary management represents another domain where social media introduces challenges. Scholars have observed that online engagement often blurs the distinction between professional and personal roles, leading to conflicts in identity and role expectations (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). For instance, employees may befriend supervisors or clients on platforms like Facebook or WhatsApp, which can create tensions between informal social interactions and formal hierarchical relationships. Research indicates that such blurred boundaries may result in employees feeling pressured to remain digitally available beyond official working hours (Brown & Green, 2021). This "always-on" culture has been associated with increased stress, declining morale, and erosion of work-life balance (Van Zoonen, 2021). In labour-intensive sectors, the inability to disconnect from work-related communications may exacerbate

fatigue and lower motivation, ultimately impacting organisational climate. Therefore, while social media fosters connectivity, it simultaneously complicates the maintenance of healthy professional boundaries.

The phenomenon of technostress has also emerged as a prominent concern in workplaces adopting digital platforms. Brooks and Califf (2017) define technostress as stress induced by constant exposure to digital technologies, which was now amplified through social media demands. Recent research shows that employees frequently experience overload when expected to process large volumes of messages, updates, and notifications within compressed timeframes (Treem, Dailey, Pierce & Leonardi, 2020). This constant information flow can lead to exhaustion, irritability, and diminished problem-solving capacity. In workplaces where employees must juggle physical tasks alongside digital communication, technostress becomes a barrier to effective service delivery (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). Evidence also indicates that unmanaged digital stress contributes to absenteeism and higher turnover intentions, as employees seek less digitally saturated environments (Oksa et al., 2021). These findings imply that without adequate regulatory mechanisms, social media may inadvertently increase psychological strain, with long-term costs for both employee well-being and organisational sustainability.

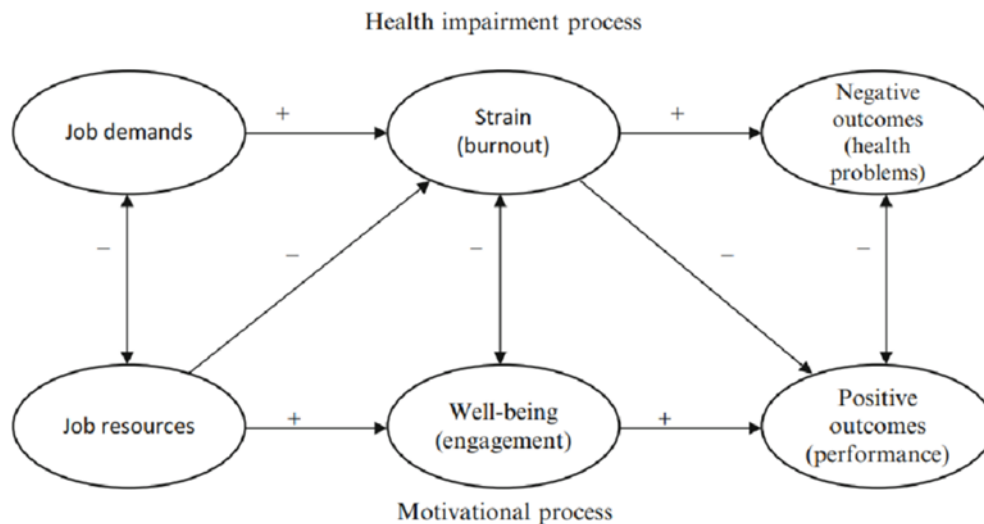
Workplace relationships are further complicated by the introduction of social media into organisational dynamics. Digital communication can encourage inclusivity, but it also heightens risks of exclusion, harassment, and interpersonal conflict (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). Studies show that negative online interactions, such as offensive comments or inappropriate messaging, may escalate into formal grievances, thereby disrupting team cohesion (Taylor et al., 2015). Platforms may also be misused for personal relationships that spill over into the workplace, creating conflicts of interest

or perceptions of favouritism (Maneiro & Jones, 2013). Importantly, organisations often struggle to moderate these behaviours because digital exchanges occur outside formal supervisory structures. Scholars argue that when organisations fail to address such risks proactively, employees perceive leadership as permissive or ineffective, which weakens trust and undermines organisational culture (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). Consequently, the relational risks of workplace social media use extend beyond interpersonal disputes to the erosion of institutional credibility.

Organisational culture and climate are also deeply affected by the way social media is used and regulated. Research suggests that transparent and participatory digital policies foster climates of trust, while restrictive or inconsistently applied rules contribute to suspicion and disengagement (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). Where employees perceive policies as fair, they are more likely to align their online behaviour with organisational values, reinforcing a cohesive culture (Lee et al., 2023). Conversely, inconsistent enforcement of policies can create climates of inequity, where employees feel that some individuals are unfairly targeted or privileged in terms of digital freedoms (Thorntwaite, 2020). In cleaning companies, where organisational identity was built on teamwork and reputation, the regulatory approach to social media becomes symbolic of broader cultural norms. As Criado and Villodre (2018) note, social media was not just a tool for communication but a structural component shaping the everyday experiences of employees. Thus, culture and climate are inseparably tied to how organisations manage digital engagement.

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model provides a useful framework for understanding these challenges. According to Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001), the JD-R model explains how workplace demands, such as constant social media communication, contribute to strain, while resources, such as clear

guidelines, can mitigate negative outcomes. Recent adaptations of the model highlight that social media can increase job demands by amplifying information load while simultaneously functioning as a resource when used for collaboration and recognition (Hossan et al., 2022). In practice, employees often report that while digital platforms enable them to stay informed, the same platforms overwhelm them with non-essential updates, thereby depleting energy and engagement. Integrating the JD-R perspective into the analysis of social media underscores the dual nature of digital tools capable of enhancing motivation but equally likely to produce burnout without balanced regulation.



The Revised JD-R Model – Author: Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; updated by Hossan, Dalowar, Mansor, Jaharuddin & Jantan, 2022.

Reputational risk remains one of the most enduring organisational challenges associated with social media use. Scholars note that employees' online behaviour often extends the boundaries of the workplace into the public domain, with reputational consequences for the organisation (Schaarschmidt & Walsh, 2020). Inappropriate posts, offensive remarks, or unauthorised sharing of company information can quickly escalate into public controversies, amplified by the viral nature of digital platforms

(Smith & Anderson, 2021). Organisations in sensitive sectors, such as cleaning services with access to private spaces, face heightened reputational vulnerabilities if employees share client-related images or comments without consent (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Research shows that once reputational damage occurs online, recovery is costly and often incomplete, making preventive regulation a strategic imperative (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). These findings underline the necessity of clear guidelines, regular employee training, and proactive monitoring to protect organisational reputation in the digital age.

We have to look at social media policy and its effects on comprehension and the culture and the organisational climate. Social media surveillance is seen as employee privacy violation. As a result, employees will remain quiet with one another and will cut off social relations with any digital work (Davis, Smith, and Thompson, 2022). Other scholars showed that social media policy as protective and fair, increases the level of policy compliance in the organisation and decreases the level of policy defiance among employees (Lee, Kim, and Park, 2023). In some organisations, lack of such policies is seen as a sign of deficient managerial trust. In some contexts, lack of monitoring creates more behavioral fears than monitoring (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). Social media policies are overly restrictive, trust, openness, and communication in an organisational setting deteriorates the most (Smith, Jones, and Taylor, 2022). In operational service organisations, and particularly with high team formation, employees use messaging applications in their discussions about work. Policies perceived as punitive on communication may lead employees to avoid use of the communication applications altogether.

This hinders their job since the communication system is supposed to help teamwork. The results from the previous studies show that social media policies are not only

about the technology and its control. They exist within the culture and the psychosocial. Hence, the balance of control, trust, and communication that the organisation employs to maintain a positive climate and effective digit collaborative practices is, psychologically, very important.

2.4 Social media platforms and organisational communication

Social media platforms have become embedded in workplace communication, but their functions and implications differ across contexts. Facebook remains the most widely used platform globally, with billions of active users, making it a dominant channel for both interpersonal and professional engagement (Dollarhide, 2023). In organisational settings, Facebook enables internal groups where employees can share updates, coordinate tasks, and maintain informal networks (Lee & Lee, 2020). Research also highlights its role in shaping collective identity, as employees often extend workplace culture through shared posts and group participation (Robertson & Kee, 2017). However, concerns have been raised about blurred boundaries between personal and professional interactions on Facebook, which may lead to privacy breaches and reputational risks (McDonald, Thompson & O'Connor, 2016). For a cleaning company, where employees frequently operate in client-facing roles, Facebook groups may foster cohesion but also require careful monitoring to protect client confidentiality. Thus, while Facebook strengthens community ties, its dual nature underscores the need for regulated and transparent policies.

WhatsApp has emerged as one of the most influential tools for workplace communication because of its immediacy and accessibility. Scholars have found that WhatsApp groups allow employees to coordinate tasks in real time, share work-related images, and report incidents effectively, especially in dispersed service-based environments (Han & Keskin, 2016). In cleaning companies, WhatsApp can facilitate

quick task allocations between supervisors and cleaning staff, ensuring efficiency and responsiveness to client requests (Suryadinata & Mt., 2022). Studies also highlight that WhatsApp enhances informal social support, fostering stronger bonds between employees and managers (O'Connor, Schmidt & Drouin, 2020). Yet, constant notifications and expectations of after-hours availability may contribute to technostress and reduced work-life balance (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). These findings suggest that while WhatsApp supports operational coordination, its unregulated use may create hidden strains on employee morale. Therefore, policies must balance the benefits of speed and inclusivity with the risks of overreach and intrusion.

X (formerly Twitter) serves as a platform for both external branding and internal knowledge sharing. Research shows that X enables employees to act as ambassadors, amplifying corporate values and shaping public perceptions (Schaarschmidt & Walsh, 2020). In organisations, X was used to monitor trends, respond to client feedback, and circulate company announcements, often serving as a tool for reputation management (Bakshy, Hofman, Mason & Watts, 2011). For employees, engaging on X can enhance professional visibility and strengthen organisational identity (Criado & Villodre, 2018). However, scholars caution that inappropriate posts may quickly escalate into public controversies, placing reputational burdens on both the individual and the company (Smith & Anderson, 2021). In a cleaning company context, where trust and reliability are critical to client retention, even minor online missteps by employees could undermine service credibility. This demonstrates that while X offers opportunities for visibility and influence, it also magnifies reputational risks, necessitating proactive regulation.

Instagram plays a distinctive role by emphasising visual communication. Studies show that organisations use Instagram to cultivate brand culture and showcase

achievements through visual storytelling (Anderson, 2020). Employees often participate in this process by sharing behind-the-scenes content, contributing to a sense of authenticity and transparency (Burgess & Green, 2009). In service industries, including cleaning companies, Instagram can be leveraged to highlight transformation projects, client satisfaction, and team spirit (Barnes, 2014). At the same time, researchers caution that overexposure of workplace images may breach client privacy or create unrealistic expectations of service quality (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Furthermore, the platform's focus on aesthetics may contribute to social comparison pressures among employees, affecting workplace climate (Ryan, Chester, Reece & Xenos, 2014). The implication was that Instagram fosters engagement and pride, but only when managed within clear boundaries that safeguard organisational integrity and employee well-being.

LinkedIn has been widely recognised as a professional networking platform that influences recruitment, reputation, and knowledge exchange. Research shows that LinkedIn fosters employee voice by enabling workers to engage in professional discussions and share achievements beyond the boundaries of their organisation (Holland, Cooper & Hecker, 2016). It was also instrumental for building client networks and supporting recruitment processes, making it valuable for companies seeking to attract skilled workers in competitive labour markets (Cain, Scott & Akers, 2010). For cleaning companies, LinkedIn can highlight professionalism and corporate responsibility, showcasing employee training and certifications to build credibility (Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018). However, there are risks of employees being poached through visibility on the platform, which can lead to talent retention challenges (Leonardi & Vaast, 2017). From an organisational communication perspective,

LinkedIn promotes transparency and professional pride, but it also necessitates strategies to retain employees in an increasingly fluid labour market.

TikTok and YouTube represent platforms with rising influence in workplace communication, particularly among younger employees. Scholars note that TikTok has transformed organisational communication by encouraging short, creative content that resonates with wider audiences (Moshin, 2021). Employees may use it to showcase workplace culture, training demonstrations, or community engagement initiatives, boosting employer branding (Anderson, 2020). YouTube, on the other hand, was frequently adopted for training and knowledge dissemination, offering scalable solutions for skill development (Holland, 2016). However, both platforms also introduce risks of distraction, as employees may misuse them for non-work-related entertainment during work hours (Priyadarshini, Dubey, Kumar & Jha, 2020). Additionally, the viral nature of TikTok and YouTube content raises concerns about confidentiality and reputational harm if inappropriate material circulates publicly (Smith & Wang, 2023). These dynamics highlight that while new platforms foster innovation in organisational communication, their effective use requires training, monitoring, and clear guidelines.

The added layers of complexity in social media governance mean perceptions of fairness, control, and trust from employees must be considered, and digitally, the regulation is perceived in different ways. In terms of social media, workplace social media monitoring results in more compliance to workplace policies and more work engagement (Jones & Silver, 2021). In general, workplace policies that are too restrictive often result in silence cultures, where there is an absence of employee communication (Van Zoonen, 2021). There is an employee social media policy breach, and the social media policy training and social media policy of the workplace are

related (Johnson & Peters, 2022). The absence of communication is the result of social media monitoring in many developing countries, and social media monitoring without consultation is detrimental to employee morale and the organisational climate (Murire et al, 2020). 'Balanced governance frameworks' have been shown to increase 'communication quality and workplace cohesion' because they include training and guidelines (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). The literature has shown that social media policies, as we noted from the literature, are considered more of a controlling mechanism than a communicating climate tool, which in turn, alters the culture of the organisation for the better.

In service operational environments (that is , cleaning companies), where teamwork and trust are vital, employee perceptions of digital fairness can influence service integration and relationships among employees.

Therefore, companies must combine social media governance with psychological employee safety and organisational communication.

2.5 The strategic application of social media platforms in modern business

The contemporary digital landscape is dominated by a diverse array of social media platforms, each possessing unique functionalities and user demographics that present distinct strategic opportunities for businesses, organisations, and public figures. Legacy platforms such as Facebook, with a user base now exceeding three billion, remain pivotal for building communities and deploying highly targeted advertising campaigns (DataReportal, 2024). The video-sharing giant YouTube, with over 2.7 billion users, serves as a primary vehicle for content marketing, enabling brands to distribute valuable, relevant, and consistent video content to attract and retain a clearly

defined audience (Varan, 2023). This "pull" marketing approach, where users opt-in to engage with content, is also central to visually driven platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Instagram, with over two billion users, is indispensable for lifestyle brands, leveraging high-quality imagery, video, and integrated e-commerce features to shape brand culture and drive sales (Statista, 2024). Similarly, TikTok, known for its powerful algorithm and short-form video format, has become a critical tool for generating viral brand awareness and engaging younger demographics (Clement, 2024).

In parallel, messaging applications have evolved into powerful tools for direct-to-consumer engagement. WhatsApp, through its WhatsApp Business API, offers small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) a direct line for customer service, sales, and personalised communication, fostering trust and streamlining the purchasing process (Churchill & Wamuyu, 2023). Its counterpart, WeChat, integrates messaging with a vast ecosystem of services, creating a unique social commerce model that blends social networking with e-business functionalities. In the professional realm, LinkedIn, now with over one billion members, is the definitive network for B2B marketing, talent acquisition, and establishing professional thought leadership (LinkedIn, 2023). Meanwhile, microblogging platforms like X (formerly Twitter) remain vital for real-time information dissemination, crisis communication, and direct customer service interactions, while platforms such as Snapchat leverage ephemeral content and augmented reality to create immersive brand experiences for a youth-oriented audience (Grădinaru, 2022). The effective utilisation of these platforms was therefore not a one-size-fits-all approach; rather, it requires a strategic selection based on an organisation's specific goals, target audience, and desired form of engagement.

2.5.1 Social media influence on organisational culture and climate

Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey (2011) argue that organisational culture and climate are essential to understanding organisational phenomena because they focus on how employees interpret, experience, and make sense of their workplace. Culture and climate, despite from different academic traditions, both study psychological processes in organisations (Ostroff, Kinicki & Muhammad, 2013). Both concepts presume shared meanings and insights into the organisational situation. Culture and climate are intertwined, says (Ostroff *et al.*, 2013).

2.5.2 organisational culture

Organisational culture refers to the shared values, norms, beliefs, and practices that guide how employees think, behave, and interact within the workplace. It operates as the invisible fabric binding members of an organisation, shaping both individual behaviour and collective identity (Ratnakaram, 2018). Culture is expressed through everyday routines such as decision-making styles, approaches to problem-solving, and patterns of communication that establish expectations of what is acceptable or unacceptable at work (Criado & Villodre, 2018). For example, in service-oriented industries like cleaning, a culture emphasising reliability, punctuality, and courtesy directly impacts how employees interact with clients and one another (Brown & Green, 2021). Research further shows that when employees align with cultural values, they are more likely to display higher job satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Culture, therefore, is not merely an abstract set of ideals but a tangible force that shapes both the organisational climate and the experiences of employees in their daily roles.

Scholars argue that organisational culture is multidimensional, encompassing formal structures such as policies and informal practices such as rituals, symbols, or even the tone of internal communication (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). In workplaces where culture is well defined, employees often experience clearer expectations, which can lead to improved engagement and morale (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). Conversely, weak or ambiguous cultures may result in miscommunication, role conflict, and reduced commitment to organisational objectives (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). An example can be drawn from firms that prioritise teamwork and inclusivity; such organisations often encourage staff to share ideas freely, which fosters innovation and collaborative spirit (Eger, Kuckertz & Berger, 2021). In contrast, environments with rigid hierarchies may discourage open dialogue, limiting the development of trust and mutual respect. These contrasts highlight the importance of intentional cultural design, especially in small-to-medium enterprises like cleaning companies, where culture often determines how frontline employees interpret management decisions.

Importantly, organisational culture also has a regulatory function by providing implicit guidelines for behaviour beyond formal rules (Jones & Silver, 2021). Employees frequently rely on shared norms to interpret ambiguous workplace scenarios, such as managing client complaints or handling peer disagreements (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). For instance, a culture that emphasises transparency may encourage employees to report errors openly, while one that prioritises image management may lead to concealing mistakes. Empirical research demonstrates that culture strongly influences how employees perceive fairness in policy enforcement, including disciplinary measures related to digital communication (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). In cleaning companies, where many employees interact with digital platforms

only sporadically, cultural cues are critical in determining whether social media usage was seen as an opportunity for engagement or as a liability for reputational risk. Thus, organisational culture extends beyond traditional work norms, influencing how digital practices are negotiated and embedded in everyday routines.

“Digital Communication and Online Interaction: A New Way to Shape Organisational Culture”

The increase in digital communication has led to significant changes in the way businesses operate and the cultures they adopt. The social media tools available in enterprises have the potential to effect positive knowledge sharing and social/organisational identity construction of employees within the organisation (Eger et al., 2021). The digital communication paradox (where the outcomes of using a communication medium diverge from what is expected) has been reported to be positively addressed by promoting organisational cohesion and trust (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). The negative impacts of digital communication in the case of excessive digital monitoring, weak organisational trust, and the fear culture, remain largely uncontested (Murire et al., 2020). The extent to which social media policies create a perceived lack of organisational justice and discretion is well documented (Davis et al., 2022). In the absence of policies, some researchers have suggested that a culture of informal digital communication is an indicator of the organisational culture (Jones & Silver, 2021). In many services, organisational culture and expectations govern the use of digital communication. However, in the lower-wage service sector, research on the impact of social media use regulation on cultural identity is scarce.

Research shows that policies, leadership style, and employee perceptions create a co-regulated organisational culture within a digital climate of the workplace. In today's

working environments, the culture of an organisation is both a digital and a social phenomenon.

2.5.3 organisational climate

Organisational climate refers to employees' impressions of the workplace's psychological influence on their well-being and functioning. According to Glisson, Green, and Williams (2012), organisational climate is the collective views of workers about policies, practices, and processes and the general mood of the organisation. Glisson and Williams (2015) add that organisational environment influences employee morale, job satisfaction, and stress, which impacts workplace performance and engagement. While corporate culture are the shared ideas and assumptions that drive company behaviour (Schneider et al., 2017), organisational climate is “the shared meaning organisational members attach to the events, policies, practises, and procedures they experience and the behaviours they see being rewarded, supported, and expected” (Schneider et al., 2013:69). Based on the definitions, organisational culture is the shared behaviour and expectations in an organisation, the way employees behave within it, while organisational climate refers to the sentiment, feeling, and mood that employees exhibit at work. Culture and environment are important in corporate communication because they tell workers how to communicate. For instance, should staff be cautious when speaking out or should all conversations be open? Would workers rather get some information via email or in person? The answers to these questions may shape an organisation's culture and communication style (Van Dang, 2020).

In corporate communication, culture shapes how communication is done. The organisational communication environment affects how workers live, speak to, enjoy, feel, work, and adapt to the company (Ruliana, 2016). Abdussamad (2015) found that

climate communication affects 22.7% of workers in industry, commerce, collaboration, and SMEs. The mood and communication style. The communication atmosphere of an organisation links individuals' conceptions, sentiments, and hopes and explains their conduct.

Organisational culture and environment are affected by social media regulation. The communication atmosphere of an organisation links individuals' conceptions, sentiments, and hopes and explains their conduct. Yu et al. (2018) believes that social media integration in operations has negative effects, such as testing employees' boundary management skills, increasing work demands, work-life conflicts, and lowering employee well-being through excessive use and technological dependency. Based on these assertions, the researcher thinks that culture and climate suffers. Thus, social media integration presents both difficulties and possibilities for companies and affects culture and climate both favourably and adversely. Social media usage in companies must be regulated to mitigate unwanted effects.

While examining the organisational climate, a clear link can be made between the employees' experience of the digital guidelines and the communication expectations.

Many studies show the way policies are designed and communicated affect employee moods regarding social media monitoring policies (Thompson et al, 2023). Some scholars say communication policies do reduce workplace communication, in particular, when policies are communicated in an open and transparent way (Lee et al, 2023). Research shows a significant cause workplace stress and dissatisfaction is the absence of clearly defined digital boundaries (Oksa et al, 2021). Some researchers argue that social media serves an important purpose in the workplace by helping to

build and sustain workplace relationships, and social media can also serve as a communications tool (Oksa et al, 2021). Yet, excessive digital system use has also shown to create an environment of distrust and lack of communication (Smith et al, 2022). The climate in service organisations is largely defined by the way frontline staff and supervisors communicate on a daily basis and the climate is a large determinant of communication.

The research shows a lack of understanding of the influence of social media regulation and its influence on the psychological climate in the operational service industries. This means that the employee's psychological climate is most influenced by social equity, sense of fairness, and digital discretion. Therefore, considering the climate of an organisation, it is essential to assess the digital governing practices and communication climate of the employees.

2.6 Social media regulation

Ihechu and Okugo (2013) define regulation as governmental involvement in economic, social, or cultural life based on national political norms. A representative democracy may regulate via presidential edict, religious prescription, or legislative action. Thus, social media regulation involves government or linked authority activities intervening to guarantee they follow a set standard, norm, or code of conduct of the organisation.

Companies control employee social media usage for several reasons. If utilised appropriately, social media may assist an organisation, but if overused, it can hurt the organisation. Organisations are most likely to regulate employee social media use when an employee posts about pre-planned objectives, which may harm the organisation's reputation and deter potential and incumbent investors (McDonalds & Thompson, 2016). When an employee leaks crucial organisational information on

social media, the damage is hard to reverse. The issue arises when an employer or organisation uses technology and authority to monitor employee social media usage. Employees may exchange personal information, discuss work concerns, or publish improper content (Gritzalis, Sideri, Kitsiou & Tzortzaki, 2016). Employees may publish racist comments or indecent images to complain about being overworked and underpaid (Gritzalis et al., 2016). Social media platform operators may regulate corporate social media usage for the reasons mentioned.

Due to the surge in social media usage in organisations, social media habits and workplace rules must be addressed (Oksa et al., 2021). Companies must design and communicate clear social media rules, and training is becoming more important, especially in organisations with poor employee social media literacy. Inappropriate social media use in the workplace may harm external, internal, and employee relationships (Sakka & Ahammad, 2020). To regulate social media use, many companies have developed and implemented workplace policies (Ho & Cho, 2017; Jafar et al., 2019), especially when employees post work-related issues on their personal or company accounts (O'Connor et al., 2016). Social media usage by employees may be harmful if management is not in charge (Miles & Mangold, 2014). Social media posts by workers who expose their employers' real identities may be linked to the company, whether positive or negative (Schaarschmidt & Walsh, 2018). Companies must establish clear, consistent, and stated social media regulations to workers. Andreassen et al. (2014) found that office regulations banning personal social media usage decreased the practice, thus workers must be informed. Fusi and Feeney (2018) found that specific social media norms improved public managers' perceptions. Online communication and media tools allow organisations to engage with their stakeholders, so some employees are expected to use social media tools in their daily

work. Tufts et al. (2015) found that many government agencies monitor workplaces and address social media disciplinary issues without clear procedures.

Recent research has focused on what social media policies organisations should implement to protect their reputations and their data. However, there are concerns about how such policies will impact employee sentiment and the overall workplace environment.

Clear policies can foster a sense of responsibility and accountable use of technology (Lee et al, 2023). It also has a downside though, more monitoring implies more workplace surveillance, and a feeling of distrust sets in, which are negative effects of increased workplace monitoring (Murire et al., 2020). There are some inconsistencies in the literature for example, the gap between employee access to digital training and the employee's understanding of relevant social media policies (Patel et al., 2022). Management's manner of communicating policies often determines whether employees view policies positively, as helpful, or negatively, as controlling, (Jones & Silver, 2021) Evidence has increased to show workplace social media policy frameworks positively influence workplace collaboration and professional development (Oksa et al., 2021). There is a fine line, however, in a workplace between imposing policies that define and structure a workplace, and causing employees to feel that their voices and inputs are silenced (Thompson et al., 2023). Some operational service environments, for example, cleaning companies, can have more extreme social media policies, and these are more pronounced in the supervisor–frontline worker dynamic. The literature still lacks close information on a specific area concerning the effects of social media policies on workplace climate in the low-skilled service industry. Therefore, it is important social media governance includes employees' perceptions of social justice, autonomy, and social trust.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture. These frameworks were selected because they collectively explain how employees engage with social media and how organisational systems respond to these practices. U&G originates from the tradition of media effects theories, which emphasise the active role of audiences in choosing and using media to satisfy their needs (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). It offers a lens to understand why employees at different levels of the company may turn to platforms such as Facebook or WhatsApp during working hours, whether for entertainment, information, or relational purposes (Anderson, 2020).

By contrast, the Configuration Model was aligned with normative models of organisational behaviour that focus on aligning cultural values, internal structures, and external legitimacy (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). This dual-theory framework ensures that both individual agency in media use and systemic cultural influences are considered when assessing social media's impact on workplace climate and culture.

2.7.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) proposed the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, which posits that media users are active participants who select communication channels to fulfil specific psychological, social, and professional needs. In workplace settings, these needs may include staying connected with colleagues or managing personal stress during demanding work shifts (Cao & Yu, 2019). Studies demonstrate that employees often use social networking sites at work to create a sense of community or to escape routine tasks, although such practices may be misinterpreted as cyberloafing by management (Andreassen, Torsheim &

Pallesen, 2014). Anderson (2020) further highlights that modern employees perceive platforms like Instagram and TikTok not merely as distractions but as tools for networking and self-expression, even in formal work environments.

Empirical studies applying the U&G theory in organisational contexts have provided insights into why employees engage with social media at work. For instance, Smith and Clark (2019) found that employees used enterprise social networks to satisfy social integration and information-seeking needs, which were positively correlated with organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Their research showed that when employees perceive value in digital communication channels, they are more likely to engage constructively, rather than view these platforms solely as diversions. Similarly, Lee, Kim and Park (2020) applied U&G to examine social media use among healthcare workers and reported that communicative gratifications such as emotional support and recognition significantly predicted greater engagement with professional online communities, which in turn enhanced collaboration and morale.

Other empirical evidence underscores the practical implications of U&G for understanding social media behaviours in work settings. Nguyen and Barros (2021) studied frontline service employees and found that the need for personal identity expression on platforms like Facebook and Instagram was associated with increased feelings of autonomy but also heightened conflict when organisational policies were perceived as restrictive. Their findings suggest that unmet gratifications can lead to negative perceptions of organisational fairness and climate, reinforcing the idea that social media use is deeply linked to individual motivations. In a study of remote workers, Johnson and Tran (2022) showed that employees who used social media to fulfil informational and social needs reported lower levels of isolation and higher job

engagement, highlighting how digital platforms can function as resources rather than distractions when employees' uses align with organisational communication goals.

Similarly, Demircioglu and Chen (2019) show that social media engagement can satisfy intrinsic needs such as recognition and motivation, particularly when organisational communication is perceived as inadequate. Applied to Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, this perspective clarifies why employees may perceive policy restrictions as limiting personal expression, despite management's intention to protect corporate reputation. The theory therefore helps reveal the underlying motivations behind employee behaviours and provides insights into potential conflicts between personal gratifications and organisational control.

2.7.2 Configuration Model of Organisational Culture

The Configuration Model of Organisational Culture conceptualises culture as a dynamic system that links strategy, structure, and operational practices with the external environment (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). It suggests that culture is not static but continuously reshaped by internal learning loops and external legitimacy requirements (Schein, 2000). In practical terms, this means that organisations such as cleaning companies must ensure that employee norms, communication practices, and client-focused values are mutually reinforcing (Ostroff, Kinicki & Muhammad, 2013).

Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2021) argue that workplace culture is heavily influenced by how communication policies are designed and enforced, which directly impacts morale and cohesion. Lee, Kim and Park (2023) add that restrictive or unclear social media policies often undermine trust, eroding cultural cohesion and creating climates of suspicion. Thompson, Lee and Chen (2023) further illustrate that when employees view regulation as unfair, it negatively influences morale and increases resistance to

compliance. In the case of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the Configuration Model demonstrates how gaps in policy communication weaken organisational climate, leading to employees feeling disconnected from stated cultural values. This framework therefore provides a valuable structure for understanding how misalignment between management's formal policies and employees' lived realities shapes workplace culture and climate.

Empirical research applying the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture has demonstrated its usefulness in explaining how cultural alignment or the lack thereof affects organisational outcomes. For example, Müller and Turner (2019) applied the model to examine how strategic communication practices in service organisations shaped employee perceptions of organisational values, finding that cultures with strong alignment between formal policies and everyday practices reported higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Similarly, Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2020) used the Configuration Model to investigate the relationship between structural communication channels and culture in large healthcare institutions; their results indicated that when communication practices were congruent with organisational strategy and external legitimacy demands, employees reported clearer expectations and stronger cultural identification. In a study of hospitality firms, Singh and Gupta (2021) found that misaligned training practices and communication norms led to employee confusion regarding service standards, which weakened perceptions of cultural coherence and reduced teamwork effectiveness. These empirical applications reinforce the conceptual core of the Configuration Model by showing that culture functions as an interconnected system where strategy, structure, and operational practices must be mutually supportive to sustain strong organisational

culture and climate and underscore the importance of clear communication policies in achieving cultural consistency.

2.7.3 Media effects theories: The evolution of Uses and Gratification Theory and Configuration Model of Organisational Culture

The uses and gratification theory and organisational culture configuration model underlie this research. A brief description of two hypotheses were formed is provided.

Media impacts theories describe how media influences audience views. Media impacts are a key communication topic (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). Media effects were meant to show a three- or four-phase model with "major" or "minimum" media impacts in each phase. The boundaries of each phase are generally established by changing media technologies, the cultural context, and experts' methodologies, viewpoints, and ideologies. The first phase, a huge effects phase, began in the 1920s and 1930s and uses metaphors like "magic bullet" and "hypodermic needle," as if couriers blast messages and effects into recipients. At this early age, when newspaper, cinema, and radio were widely used, media were thought to change opinion, attitudes, and behaviour. Media impact hypotheses include Uses and Gratification.

The second phase was Minimal Effects. This time saw Communications Theory move to more advanced scientific methods (McQuail, 2010; Borah, 2016). Progress throughout the period allows researchers to examine many theoretical assumptions (Borah, 2016). The second stage rejected "the old hypothesis that the media have great power" (De Fleur & Dennis, 1981:294-297). Klapper (1960) discovered media-related characteristics that impacted assessments.

The minimal-effects tradition in media research challenged earlier assumptions that mass communication could directly alter audiences' attitudes and behaviours.

Klapper's work demonstrated that only a small proportion of voters changed their intentions during campaigns, with most interpretations filtered through prior beliefs and interpersonal discussions (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). Katz and Lazarsfeld's two-step flow hypothesis extended this view by highlighting how messages are mediated through opinion leaders who reinforce rather than radically shift attitudes (Criado & Villodre, 2018). This perspective marked a significant departure from deterministic models, recognising that audiences actively interpret messages instead of passively absorbing them (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). More recent analyses suggest that in workplace contexts, employees engage with organisational communication via social media in ways that reaffirm their pre-existing perceptions of culture and climate (Anderson, 2020). By acknowledging that media effects are limited but socially significant, the minimal-effects paradigm provides a useful lens for examining how workers interpret and discuss social media policies.

Subsequent research has further unpacked the complexity of these mediated processes. Studies indicate that social media does not exert influence in isolation but interacts with peer networks and organisational dynamics to shape perceptions (Smith & Anderson, 2021). For instance, restrictive policies may not directly change employee attitudes but can trigger discussions among colleagues that either reinforce resistance or strengthen compliance norms (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Bailey and Clarke (2022) argue that such discussions foster digital collective action, where workplace subcultures form around shared interpretations of organisational rules. Patel, Kumar and Saini (2022) add that employee literacy about digital policies influences whether these reinforcements are constructive or conflictual. In the context of a cleaning company, workers may circulate interpretations of social media rules that reflect their existing trust or mistrust in management, illustrating the reinforcement thesis in a

modern organisational setting. The minimal effects model therefore remains relevant, though its application has shifted from political campaigns to workplace communication, where the interplay of policies, peer networks, and cultural predispositions must be critically assessed.

The "unfair and dismissive minimal-effects notion" drove Effects Theory's third phase (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). New scholars wanted to show the "not so minimal effects" (Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982) and that "if the media couldn't tell you what to think, they were 'stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about'" (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011:178). This phase focused on McQuail (2010)'s 'Direct Effects Model' and cumulative change to influence cultural and institutional habits.

The U&G differentiated itself from early mass communication theories and established a new functionalist mass media communication theory (Luo, 2002). Katz and Blumler (1974) categorised 35 social and psychological needs as Cognitive, Affective, Integrative, Social Integrative, and Escape. Studies have found and used "Information Seeking Pass Time Entertainment," "Relaxation," "Communicatory Utility," "Convenience Utility," "Expression of Opinion," "Information Sharing," and "Surveillance/Knowledge About Others" gratifications (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Cognitive requirements are about information, emotional needs rely on the user's mood, and personal integrative needs include socialising with family, friends, and coworkers. Self-esteem underpins social integration. Comparing yourself to media figures and circumstances helps us achieve credibility. Social internet helps some people escape everyday stress. Finding knowledge or self-educating on social media was the topic of pleasure. Social media was used to kill time and boredom. Social media entertainment was providing amusement and delight. Relaxation was utilising social media to reduce daily stress. Communicatory utility was social media usage that

facilitates communication and information sharing. Convenience utility social media use benefits people.

Use of social media to convey ideas and views was noted by 56% of respondents. Sharing information about yourself on social media was information sharing. Monitoring/knowing others. The goal of U&G Theory was to understand why individuals choose social media. The data show that individuals use social media for numerous gratifications. People utilise many platforms for different rewards (Quan 2002 Haase, Wellman, Witte, Hampton).

2.7.4 Evolution of the configuration model of culture

The configuration model of organisational culture was created because workplaces are becoming more complicated. It builds on older models, like Schein's model from the 1980s and Hatch's model from 1993. People have said that the older models were too rigid because they only looked at internal aspects of organisations and didn't talk about how external, changing things like social media affect culture (Dauber et al., 2012).

Schein's model of organisational culture has three parts: objects, stated ideals, and core ideas. Artefacts, or the obvious parts of culture (like dress rules and office layout), don't tell you much about a company's core ideals. Values that are stated, like goal statements or organisational rules, show how people should act. However, when these values change, society usually only changes in small ways. The most important factors are workers' core values, which shape their ideas about what it means to be successful at work and how people should act. For example, even if a company allows employees to work from home, those employees may still think that being there in person was

necessary to be recognised. These deeply held ideas are the hardest to change, but they also give us the most power to change the culture of an organisation.

2.7.5 Relationship between the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture

This research uses both Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory and the configuration model of organisational culture to look into how employees' use of social media affects how things work at work. The U&G theory tries to explain why workers use social media and what benefits they get from it. The configuration model, on the other hand, looks at how these individual reasons fit with or go against the culture and climate of the organisation.

This makes media use a goal-directed activity. People who work for companies use social media to meet a variety of needs, such as making friends, finding information, and voicing their views. Whiting and Williams (2013) say that the theory was especially useful for social media because it helps us understand why people do what they do in digital spaces with lots of interaction. The U&G theory was used in this study to look at how workers' personal and business use of social media affects their involvement, happiness, and relationships within the company.

The configuration model adds to U&G by looking into how these individual drives fit with the ideals and culture of the organisation. For instance, if workers mostly use social media to feel good about themselves and make personal connections, the company might need to think about how these uses fit in with its goals and the way things are done at work. A "symbiotic" connection may form between social media use and culture when workers' reasons for using social media are in line with the goals of the company. On the other hand, if these reasons don't fit with what's expected at

work, like output or professional lines, then social media strategy may need to be changed to create a welcoming environment for everyone.

The U&G theory and the configuration model work well together to help us understand how social media can both support and change the culture of an organisation. With these ideas as guides, this study looks for ways to make workers' use of social media part of the company culture, making sure that both individual and company goals are met.

The U&G makes five media usage assumptions that remain applicable (Blumler & Katz, 1974). The first assumption is goal-driven communication. So, when an employee wants to utilise social media, they know what they want to do. The regulatory rules may influence use if workers know them. The second suggests that consumers actively choose communication channels to meet their requirements. The second assumption is that people actively choose media. If known, policies must govern participation again. The third theory premise is that individuals define communication reasons, goals, and gratifications. This assumption states that social media users may define their behaviours, therefore organisations regulate social media use. The fourth concerns the media's emphasis on communication styles, media selection, and tool competitiveness. Fourth assumptions are regarding media tone and rivalry amongst various platforms. Regulations must dissuade personnel from platforms that might damage the company's image. Five assumptions: Many social and psychological variables influence communication medium selection (Flaherty, Pearce, & Rubin 1998: 252). Employees choose a platform based on social media, their friends and other groups outside of work, and psychological variables including how they feel using a platform. Information can be collected and transferred quickly, which makes social media appealing to users, especially in the workplace. More crucially, "this exchange

has no geographic boundaries as it can be done globally” (Ngcongco, 2016: 16). The research uses U&G's five supporting assumptions to examine workers' opinions of social media use and regulation by the company and its influence on organisational culture and climate.

The synthesis of these theories provides a nuanced lens for understanding social media regulation in organisations. Studies suggest that cultural norms and policies act as filters through which employee motivations are interpreted, meaning that gratifications such as visibility or connectivity are either reinforced or constrained by organisational structures (Jones & Silver, 2021). For example, if workers use Instagram to showcase cleaning outcomes, the gratification of recognition aligns with organisational goals, reinforcing a culture of pride and quality (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). Conversely, if employees use the same platforms to air frustrations, the misalignment with professional expectations may erode climate and require regulatory reinforcement (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). The configuration model stresses that culture is not static but adaptive, so employee-driven uses of social media can catalyse cultural shifts if left unmoderated (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). Importantly, the combined framework emphasises that regulation must strike a balance: policies should not only restrict harmful use but also leverage positive gratifications to strengthen organisational identity (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). By linking U&G's focus on individual motivations with the configuration model's systemic approach, this study builds a framework that recognises employees as active media users while acknowledging the cultural boundaries that shape workplace climate.

2.7.6 Organisational culture in the digital age

Organisational culture, rooted in the structural-functionalist school of thought, views organisations as systems with goals, purposes, and needs that functionally interact with their environment and society as a whole (Radcliffe-Brown & Malinowski, cited in Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984). The rise of social media has transformed how organisations engage with their internal and external environments, blurring the lines between professional and personal interactions. While this integration has created new opportunities, it has also introduced challenges, prompting organisations to regulate employees' social media use.

Postmodern perspectives, particularly the Configuration Model, offer a more flexible and dynamic approach than earlier models, such as Schein's (1980) and Hatch's (1993), which have been criticised for their static nature and inward focus (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). Postmodern scholars emphasise the need to question established knowledge and power structures, highlight how they emerged, and restore the voices of previously marginalised actors (Cooper & Burrell, 1988). In this study, employees were asked whether organisational rules regarding social media use infringed upon their personal expression. The Configuration Model's generality and adaptability make it particularly suitable for examining group culture in the era of pervasive social media (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010).

Change is central to the Configuration Model, with Dauber et al. (2012) identifying factors such as direction, operationalisation, and behavioural patterns as key drivers. Social media has reshaped how organisations communicate both internally and externally, making it essential to understand its impact on organisational culture. According to Dauber et al. (2012), the internal organisational environment comprises six interrelated processes: three linked to domains expressed in direction,

operationalisation, and behavioural patterns, and three associated with organisational change and learning, including adjustment processes, single-loop learning, and double-loop learning. These processes collectively provide a framework for analysing how social media adoption influences culture and supports continuous organisational learning.

This form of corporate culture is based on the structural-functionalist school of thought. This school of thought, which was shaped by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski in particular, says that “organisations are systems with goals, purpose, and needs that interact functionally with their environment and draw from society as a whole” (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984). With the rise of social media, the way businesses connect with their surroundings has changed, making it harder to tell the difference between business and personal contact. While this merging hasn't been easy, it has led to both benefits and problems, which is why companies now control how their employees use social media.

The postmodern configuration model was better than earlier models like Schein's model of organisational culture from the 1980s and Hatch's model of organisational culture from 1993. These models have been criticised for being static and limited because they only looked at the inside of an organisation (Duaber et al., 2012). Because of this, postmodern scholars try to rethink systems of knowledge and power that are taken for granted, figure out how they came to be, and help restore voices that have been silenced (Cooper & Burrell, 1988). The study asked employees whether the rules put in place by their management do not infringe of their social media use. The configuration model is more general and flexible, making it a good way to

look into group culture in this era of more social media contact (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010).

Change is a big part of the configuration model, and Dauber et al. (2012) say that change is affected by direction, operationalisation, and patterns of behaviour. In this case, using social media has changed how businesses talk to people inside and outside their companies. The current study examined how this change affects the culture of the company. Researchers who support the configuration model (Dauber et al., 2012) say that the internal environment of a company was made up of six processes. Three of these processes are linked to domains and how they show up in the real world through direction, operationalisation, and patterns of behaviour. Adjustment processes, single-loop learning, and double-loop learning are three more processes that have to do with corporate change and learning.

2.8 Configuration model of culture: Balancing between social media and organisational success

Social media governance is primarily focused on social rules and the social practices that accompany them. There can be control over social media communication ethics and over the social behavior of employees when social media rules and policies are communicated and enforced. Employees abide by the rules when they are made aware of the policies on social media and when their behavior is guided through supervision (Smith & Anderson, 2021). According to Jones and Silver (2021), policies that remain vague give social media employees the opportunity to self-regulate their behavior, which more often than not is in violation of the policy. Anderson (2020), and concur, states that the values and the communication culture of an organisation are predetermined by the digital resources that the organisation provides. For instance, social media policies are only relevant to social media if they are incorporated into

employees' work schedules and into their communication with clients (Bailey and Clarke, 2022). Most organisations assume that simply communicating a policy to employees is sufficient for the organisation to achieve policy compliance. This, however, is not true for most organisations.

The lack of policies from businesses in developing economies causes distrust and lack of clarity about what is deemed acceptable online (Murire, Nyatsanza and Ngirande, 2020). Additionally, policies are often less effective in shaping digital behaviour than peer pressure. In one instance with some cleaning companies, formal policies may be superseded by informal normative control of behaviour in organisational communication through WhatsApp groups. Hence, the absence of policies, the study argues, explains the socially constructed phenomenon of domain manifestation. In fact, the phenomenon of domain manifestation is understood to be primarily influenced by communication environment and employee's perception, as opposed to policy documents.

The second principle, learning loops, describes how organisations strengthen digital governance with feedback and experiential adjustment. For example, single-loop learning involves strengthening a policy after a social media misuse incident (Thorntwaite, 2020). Double-loop learning examines the more profound assumptions, such as the extent to which strict control goes to close off trust and communication openness with and among employees (Johnson & Peters, 2022). When organisations manage to combine both learning types, they tend to address the challenges of the digital workplace more effectively (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Other researchers argue that there is a greater reliance on punitive measures than on reflective learning (Brown & Green, 2021). Digital policy authorship, along with solicitation of employee feedback, is indicative of greater communication trust and

policy acceptance (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Scholars also noted that involving employees in policy making reduces the misinterpretation and ambiguity of the policies (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). Operational service managers often underestimate digital communication barriers that frontline employees encounter. Some employee surveys show that the majority stated ambiguity regarding posting restrictions due to the policy's initial rollout. Training modifications and policy changes are usually the result of the findings. This indicates that, in contrast to the more rigid enforcement of rules, the social media governance paradigm is more flexible and oriented toward learning. Thus, the research describes learning loops as central to the development and reinforcement of social media guidelines in response to employees' social media practices.

The Adjustment and Adaptation principle focuses on technological changes, employee expectations, and digital threat changes. While social media can improve engagement, it can also increase risks regarding privacy, reputation, and personal and professional boundary blurring (Davis et al, 2022). For Smith et al (2022), employee digital governance update neglects disengagement and resistance to policy. Some researchers suggest that digital governance structure pliability positively impacts equitable perceiving, compliance, and governing (Patel et al, 2022). The impact of age, digital exposure, and social media on the development of policies is documented (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). In one case, a cleaning company's older employees used voice calls for task coordination, while the younger employees used messaging apps. Many researchers agree that understanding and compliance of digital policies needs training (Chansukree et al, 2022). Some researchers cite the lack of or inconsistent communication as a factor that brings policy changes, which creates confusion and resistance. In some service organisations, customized digital training

initiatives resulted in a persistent reduction in policy violations. This indicates that policy changes are taken more seriously within training and when communication is stepped up. It is evident that shifts intertwine organisational resilience and the employees' digital realities.

Management of Legitimization theory addresses the response of stakeholders and the trust they give and sustain to an organisation as a result of the congruence of their internal conduct and the external social expectations. An organisation obtains legitimacy when it exhibits ethical digital governance and responsible online conduct (Schaarschmidt & Walsh, 2020). The stakeholders of an organisation assume that the organisation is concerned about the trust of its clients and the social media use of its employees, therefore, managing the reputation of the organisation involves monitoring employees' social media activities (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). Employees enhance an organisation's reputation by their social media use and by posting about the organisation (Sakka & Ahammad, 2020). The absence of social media monitoring harms organisational legitimacy and diminishes the trust of clients (Smith & Wang, 2023). For cleaning companies, employees' direct interactions with clients increase the reputational risk associated with employees' digital behavior.

Understanding and practicing digital ethics can assist employees in safeguarding the organisation's reputation (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Some researchers claim that digital sphere over-control can limit employee self-expression and authenticity (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). In some service companies, employees' social media constructive engagement has increased the visibility and trust of the service. This suggests that, instead of over control, a balanced approach to governance is the basis of trust. This is how legitimisation management reconciles an organisation's internal culture and the social expectations of external stakeholders.

Having integrated the four principles, the configuration model holistically captures the interplay of organisational policy, employee behaviour, and workplace culture. The study explores the social media phenomenon in the workplace using social media theories of uses and gratifications. With regards to research, Anderson (2020) refers to employees as internet users for the purposes of communication, networking, and professional visibility. The professional context of social media has, in some instances, promoted and facilitated the communication and collaboration of users, provided some boundary conditions are observed (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Most cleaning company employees coordinate their work and support their teams via social media. Ali et al. (2020) demonstrated that employees' motivation affects the compliance level toward a social media policy and how it is used. Some researchers believe that a policy framework is bound to fail if it overlooks the employees' intent to communicate and the technology at their disposal (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). Moyo and Nkhahale (2024) found that governance is most effective when policy and communication behaviour are aligned. The study, within the combined framework, simultaneously addresses organisational control and employee motivation. Therefore, the most effective social media policy will encompass all three elements: organisational control, employee requirements and the workplace psychosocial climate.

2.9 Chapter Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that social media in organisational contexts provides both substantial opportunities and considerable risks. Scholars emphasise that platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook support knowledge exchange, collaboration, and relationship building within work environments, thereby contributing positively to organisational climate (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). At the same time, excessive or inappropriate use was linked to technostress, privacy violations,

and reduced productivity, underscoring the dual nature of digital communication (Brooks & Califf, 2017). Evidence further shows that social media blurs professional and personal boundaries, intensifying the challenges of maintaining healthy workplace cultures (Van Zoonen, 2021). Organisations that lack well-designed policies often experience fragmented norms and inconsistent compliance, which erode trust and legitimacy (Smith & Anderson, 2021). Collectively, these findings highlight that the regulatory environment surrounding social media has direct implications for organisational culture and employee morale. This study therefore positions regulation not only as a managerial necessity but also as a cultural instrument shaping workplace climate in cleaning service companies.

Integrating theory has been critical in developing a conceptual lens for this research. The Uses and Gratifications theory provides insight into why employees engage with social media at work, pointing to motives such as information seeking, peer interaction, and social recognition (Whiting & Williams, 2013). In contrast, the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture explains how organisations embed such behaviours within cultural frameworks by linking rules, adaptation, and legitimacy (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). Recent research confirms that combining individual motivations with structural constraints produces a more nuanced understanding of digital workplace dynamics (Oksa, Kaakinen, Savela, Ellonen & Oksanen, 2021). This dual-framework perspective allows the present study to examine not just how employees use social media, but how regulatory practices influence cultural outcomes such as cohesion, trust, and compliance (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). In advancing this argument, the chapter shows that theory was not abstract but deeply connected to the lived organisational experiences of employees, providing a foundation for empirical investigation.

A central thread in the literature is that regulation of social media must be transparent, fair, and adaptive if it is to support a positive organisational climate. Studies highlight that poorly communicated rules foster resentment and resistance, whereas participatory and clearly articulated policies encourage voluntary compliance (Jones & Silver, 2021). Research also reveals that training initiatives play a decisive role in aligning employee behaviour with organisational expectations, particularly in contexts where digital literacy is uneven across demographic groups (Johnson & Peters, 2022). Furthermore, the literature illustrates that over-surveillance risks damaging morale and innovation, while balanced approaches can enhance legitimacy and cultural cohesion (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Taken together, these insights reinforce the importance of approaching social media governance as a cultural rather than purely administrative exercise. By framing regulation as a shared organisational practice, companies such as Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions can transform social media into a driver of cohesion rather than conflict.

This chapter has therefore consolidated theoretical and empirical insights to establish a framework for exploring employee perceptions of social media regulation. It has shown that the subject matter extends beyond compliance to include fundamental questions of culture, climate, and identity within contemporary organisations. In preparing for the next stage of the study, it was important to shift from secondary sources to the primary investigation. Chapter Three focused on the research methodology and design, outlining the philosophical stance, qualitative case study strategy, sampling methods, data collection instruments, and analytic techniques employed. In doing so, it demonstrated how the theoretical perspectives reviewed here are operationalised into practical tools for gathering and interpreting employee perceptions. This transition ensures that the study moves coherently from abstract

theoretical framing to empirical exploration, thereby grounding the analysis in rigorous and contextually relevant evidence.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed some literature regarding the control of social media, the culture and climate of the organisation, Uses and Gratification Theory and the Configuration Model of Organisational Culture. The primary focus was the organisational culture and the implications of social media use in the workplace, and traversed the social and psychological implications of the regulation of social media in the workplace on employee morale, trust and social cohesion. The empirical research framework to be delineated in this chapter draws on the cited literature and concerns the employees' perceptions at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a cleaning service provider in Welkom, South Africa, located in the Free State. The chapter outlines the research methodology and the research framework and philosophy, research paradigm, and the design and methodology of the study in relation to the population and sampling, as well as the data collection and analysis. In this way, the chapter demonstrates the conversion of the literature-based arguments presented in the previous chapter into an empirical framework.

Qualitative research studies social phenomena and focuses on their social meaning, emphasizing phenomenology of the concerned social actors. Understanding how employees define and meaningfully construct the rules and the culture in their work surroundings is the focus of qualitative research (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). This kind of research captures the social intricacies in certain organisational contexts

which, despite their importance, are largely disregarded by the quantitative approach, especially when informal and face-to-face communication occurs alongside formal and written policy (Smith and Anderson, 2021). In the current research, the qualitative case study method allows the researcher to attend to the details of the specific contexts at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, where employees, as social and organisational entities, are employees, social and organisational entities, and are subject to the regulations of social media (Jones & Silver, 2021). This approach attempts to illuminate the vulnerable and complex interrelationship of culture, climate and regulation. This will help to prioritize issues of practical and theoretical significance.

Constructing the methodology involves obtaining an interpretivist perspective, which assumes that people's lived experiences can help them understand reality, as opposed to a more positivist approach which seeks to understand reality through empirical measurements. Different experiences, along with contextual information and specific evidence, are appreciated from an interpretivist angle (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Within this study, most focus is given to the social media regulations at the workplace, and through the interpretivist angle, the researcher views these regulations as social systems, and besides being a formal rule, a regulation socially systematises an employee's identity and, in combination with other regulations, the social climate of the workplace (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). This corresponds with the previous literature suggesting the need to bridge organisational communication with employees' lived experience within digital ecosystems (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023). Therefore, the methodology integrates the empirical objectives with the theory of the study and provides a comprehensive articulation of the research problem, the literature, and the research design.

Each section explains every part of the chapter in depth. It starts with the philosophy of the research with the focus on the assumptions of the ontology and epistemology, type of reasoning, and which paradigm guides the inquiry. The next section details the research design, in particular the qualitative case study, and describes how the design interfaces with the study's aims. Further, the chapter outlines the study's population, sampling method and sample, research instruments, and the methods used for data collection and analysis. The chapter justifies the selection of its methods and also explains the processes involved in the inquiry. The organisation of thought and expression in the chapter is indicative of credibility in the study, assuring the reader of the soundness of the methods used in arriving at the results.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A development framework describes a study's perspective on reality and understanding, as well as how the research is carried out. It guides the research design, data collection, and result analysis, ensuring all methodological choices correspond to the research issue.

The value social science voters give to having a social science research paradigm as a function of philosophy and overall empirical social science research as a function of real people and their social practices is noteworthy (Alharahsheh and Pius 2020). Some authors mention paradigms in their methodology chapters partly to preserve conceptual continuity, which serves some explanatory function for the research methodology. This is what Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) describe. In organisational research, a paradigm determines the scope of study, whether it is the tangible outcomes or the intangible, lived experience of the members of the organisation (Park, Konge and Artino, 2020). The importance of the interpretive paradigm in the research

on organisational culture and communication is the same as it is in other fields of study, considering these areas of study look at the social construction of culture and of meaning through the use of voice and other forms of social interaction (Croucher and Cronn-Mills, 2021). Focusing on the employees' social perceptions and feelings as social beings and lived experience, rather than the quantitative data paradigm, is most appropriate when the employees' interpretation of social media policy is the focus.

This is the case as the individual trust, the communication climate, the SM-policy and social media as organisational justice, all impact how employees utilise social media in the workplace. In service-centred organisations, informal communication as opposed to the formal written ones, mainly directs the employees' behaviours. Hence, it is in this paradigm the employee perception of social media regulation and its impact on workplace culture and climate is the most relevant.

This study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm since it seeks to understand how employees make sense of social media regulation with the organisational context. In interpretivism, social reality is perceived and understood as being constructed through the interaction and context, as opposed to being linear, fixed and measurable.

The most common approach in studies in workplace culture and organisational communication focuses on employee experience and usually takes the interpretative approach (one of the most popular approaches) (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The authors also recognized the relevance of interpretivism in the studies of digital behavior in the workplace, as employees understand, experience, and interpret organisational structures and policies differently due to varying levels of digital knowledge and digital literacy. (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Furthermore, in most cases, employees experience greater erosion of trust and lower morale due to social

media monitoring policies rather than the policies themselves (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Also, to some extent, employees' knowledge and understanding of social media policies in the workplace affect the social media policies of the workplace (Lee, Kim, & Park, 2023). The first interview insights at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions described employees' varied social media use and social media policy boundary, which implied dominant social media policy use and varied policy social media use. Employees noted they moderated their posting behavior based on their perceived organisational posting risk.

This aligns with the interpretivist school, which focuses on understanding context and meaning, and uses them as the basis for drawing conclusions. The researcher is justified in viewing the employees' comprehension of digital governance and the communication climate at the workplace as an interpretivist phenomenon. Apart from valuing the complexities and specifics of the employees' lived experiences, which would be overlooked and unmeasured through positivism and critical theory, an interpretivism approach singularly grants this perspective.

Most research adopting a positivist approach has a weak grasp on unexplained phenomena that can be described, and for which a cause and effect relationship can be established and analysed via a statistically significant relationship (Park et al., 2020). Even in studies that have researched social media in the workplace, informal communication networks are pervasive and difficult to quantify (Priyadarshini et al., 2020). While critical theory can be applied to policy and slants toward the meshes of power and the inequitable distribution of it, it tends to disregard the micro level of workplace communication (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Most scholars and practitioners have argued that, among the numerous lenses and methodological approaches, interpretivism, as it relates to workplace culture and climate, is the most appropriate

because it focuses on the collective sense-making of employees, which is often the most difficult to grasp (Croucher and Cronn-Mills, 2021). In 'scaffolding' services like cleaning companies, the inner mechanisms of teams, especially remote informal communication subgroups, are opaque.

Wang et al. (2021) analysed the social media of the workplace and the trust–collaboration–conflict relationships. With regard to Bokamoso, the employee narratives illustrate the social media impact on the alignment of individual activities within a team and the context-related inter-personal conflict.

In this case, it suggests that when studying social media, one does not have to analyse social media usage solely in quantitative terms, but rather, one should try to construct an understanding of social media phenomena what employees understand, interpret, and make sense of. Thus, by applying an interpretivist approach to evaluate social media phenomena in the context of culture and climate of the organisation, centering on employees' perceptions and experiences.

3.3 Research Design

The research uses a single case study of private enterprise Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions in Welkom. A case study is an in-depth examination of a person, group, or unit that aims to generalise (Gustafsson, 2017). Yin (2014:18) defines a case study as "an empirical investigation that analyses a current phenomenal in depth and within its real-life scenario environment, particularly when the borders between the phenomenon and context are not well defined." This research examines Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions social media regulation. Case studies are helpful because they employ existing information, such individuals and their relationships (Hyett, Kenny, &

Dickson-Swift, 2014). Hyett et al. (2014) recommend tailoring a case study to the research topics and situation.

3.4 Study Population

The study population comprised managers and employees of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a private cleaning services company based in Welkom, Free State Province, South Africa. The company provides commercial and residential cleaning, sanitation, and support services, including office cleaning, waste management, and specialised floor care. Its operations span several districts in the Free State, with Welkom serving as the central hub from which employees are deployed to private households and corporate facilities. Bokamoso employs 106 staff members distributed across various units, including site managers, cleaners, drivers, security personnel, and administrative officers. This diverse workforce reflects differing levels of exposure to social media platforms and policies in the workplace, which is shaped by the nature of tasks performed and the degree of autonomy associated with each role (Chansukree, Sagarik & Cho, 2022). Understanding the dynamics within the company therefore requires consideration of both frontline service staff and managerial personnel, as their communication channels and experiences of workplace culture differ. Providing this detailed description of the study population establishes the foundation for interpreting the findings of the research.

Although the company has 106 employees, this study engaged 10 participants selected through purposive sampling, the managers and cleaners only. This was not a predetermined number but rather the realised sample was shaped by voluntary participation and data saturation. Qualitative research scholars maintain that in-depth interview studies often require fewer participants because the emphasis lies in the

richness and depth of responses rather than numerical representation (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Within Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the participants included seven cleaners, and three supervisors. Bailey and Clarke (2022) emphasise that in organisations with layered hierarchies, perceptions of policies vary significantly across ranks, meaning that including multiple categories strengthens the validity of insights. In this case, the study was focused on the cleaning aspect of the business hence only the cleaners were reached. Anderson (2020) similarly argues that workplace communication studies must prioritise employees whose roles are directly affected by organisational policies, which supports the inclusion of staff regularly exposed to communication tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook. The final sample of 10 participants therefore represents the operational and leadership mandate of the business.

A recurring concern in perception studies was whether small samples adequately capture organisational realities. In this study, a total of ten interviews were conducted to capture a range of perspectives across the organisation. Participants were selected to include both frontline staff and managerial personnel, ensuring representation of the diverse roles, responsibilities, and experiences of employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions (Houghton et al., 2013). At Bokamoso, participants consistently highlighted three issues: limited awareness of the existing social media policy, perceived inconsistencies in enforcement, and the cultural tensions created by blurred boundaries between personal and professional online spaces. These findings resonate with research indicating that restrictive or poorly communicated policies often undermine employee trust and morale (Smith, Jones & Taylor, 2022). While a larger sample might have introduced additional voices, the small but strategically diverse group provided the necessary insight to interrogate the study objectives effectively. The methodological stance taken here therefore balances pragmatism with academic

rigour, ensuring the findings remain credible and analytically sound despite the limited number of participants.

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

This study employed a combination of purposive and convenience sampling to select participants from Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, involves deliberately choosing individuals who are most likely to provide relevant and rich information for the research topic (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). In this study, purposive sampling targeted employees who actively use social media in their daily work and personal lives, as they were best positioned to provide insights into how social media regulation affects organisational culture and climate. Convenience sampling was also applied, as participation was limited to employees who were available and willing to be interviewed during the study period. In practice, not all staff could be accessed due to work schedules, site deployments, or personal reluctance to participate. This combination of strategies ensured that the study captured relevant perspectives while remaining practical and feasible within the organisational context.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to target employees who actively use social media in their daily work and personal lives, as they were best positioned to provide insights into how social media regulation affects organisational culture and climate. Scholars argue that purposive approaches allow researchers to select participants who are information-rich, especially in qualitative studies where depth of understanding was prioritised (Taherdoost, 2016). At Bokamoso, employees varied in their levels of digital engagement, but those who regularly interacted on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram were deemed critical for uncovering how

social media influences organisational practices. As Patel, Kumar and Saini (2022) observe, digital literacy among employees was a key determinant of whether policies are understood and adhered to. Similarly, Davis, Smith and Thompson (2022) highlight that workers with higher exposure to digital tools are more likely to interpret regulations as part of organisational governance rather than as external restrictions. By prioritising employees with visible online engagement, this study ensured that the data collected was both rich and aligned with the research objectives. In this way, purposive sampling enhanced the study's ability to explore meaningful connections between employee perceptions and organisational regulation.

At the same time, convenience sampling was applied because participation was limited to employees who were both available and willing to be interviewed during the study period. Convenience sampling targeted those employees that were present when the interviews took place. In practice, not all staff could be accessed due to work schedules, site deployments, or personal reluctance to participate. Convenience sampling was often adopted in workplace research when time and access constraints restrict the researcher to those who are easiest to reach (O'Connor, Schmidt & Drouin, 2020). Within Bokamoso, cleaners and site supervisors were more readily available compared to senior managers, which shaped the final sample of ten participants. Research has shown that such pragmatic approaches, though limited in generalisability, remain valuable when the aim was to capture authentic lived experiences rather than statistical representation (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Lee, Kim and Park (2023) similarly note that consent-based participation reflects ethical standards in social media research, as coercion undermines the credibility of responses. The outcome was a small but diverse group representing operational, supervisory, and administrative roles, thereby ensuring variation in perspectives. The

methodological choice to combine purposive and convenience techniques thus reflected both strategic selection and practical realities, allowing the study to balance rigour with feasibility in a private business context.

3.5 Justification for the Sample Size

The use of purposive sampling is justified because employee participation in social media policies is important. In purposive sampling, the researcher has the privilege of examining a case by selecting participants who have distinct and diverse experiential attributes in the organisation. Such diversified pluralism within the service and organisational roles, as well as varying service levels, necessitated the need for more selective participants. At Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the division of roles is so that there are full time employees who are cleaners, supervisors, and admin staff, each of whom is exposed to varying and different organisational communication resources.

Patel et al. (2022) and Oksa et al. (2021) link social media policies to the employee's position and degree of social media use in the organisational setting. The phenomena Eger et al. (2021) center on refers to the paradox of the relationship between the workplace communication tools and employee collaborative behavior and knowledge sharing. Moyo and Nkhahle (2025) review the existing scholarship on the harmonization of organisational and automated communication in the African context. Purposeful sampling in this instance confirmed the inclusion of employees who would most likely articulate the influence of social media policies on workplace culture and climate.

In the initial sample, the study focused on the 10 employees out of 106 who pertained to the operational, human resource, and support units in order to capture all the organisational strata. The study aimed to sample between 10 and 15 employees, but

ultimately, only 10 employees completed the study, and as such, this limited the dataset.

Compared to other methods of social media monitoring and policy enforcement, custom interviews are likely to yield more insightful data than enforcement questionnaires. This is what policy participants 'less is more' (Lee et al, 2023) and social monitoring policy questionnaires (Thompson et al, 2023) suggest. Social media sparingly used within organisational contexts will still permeate and influence organisational levels of employee engagement and communication (Wang et al, 2021). Similar to the African context, employee privacy and monitoring concerns are best addressed through small qualitative studies, rather than large, mixed methods studies (Murire et al, 2020). Confirming the appropriateness of the sample, most participants utilized Facebook to receive company announcements and coordinated work through WhatsApp. The final sample offered valuable depth to assess employee perceptions of the organisation's social media policies.

No new patterns emerged from the eighth data collection interview, and thus additional interviews were conducted for the purposes of pattern reliability. As a marker of success, quantitative research focuses on achieving data saturation. Research shows that the pattern and use of a certain social media tool for a given profession and the pattern or theme of employee engagement for that same organisation, seems to reach a stabilizing pattern in just a few interviews (Oksa et al, 2021). Regarding the organisation, employees tend to voice similar concerns about the social media policies, particularly the concerns of clarity, equitable, and privacy (Smith et al, 2022). Most of the time, similar policy systems within an organisation tend to create the same climate perceptions among employee subgroups, (Brown & Green, 2021). There is an emotional climate of vigilance, control, and self-censorship that social media policies

in the workplace create (Alnuaimi & Al Khaja, 2022). Within this study, the themes that were persistent were the social media policies that were vague, the mixing of professional and personal lives, and the absence of policies that were written.

Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions' staff noted that, on some occasions, policies were communicated informally via supervisors and WhatsApp groups, which affected the perception and understanding of the policies. The impact of the social media policy and its consequences on the culture and climate of the workplace provided enough justification for the refinement of the final sample to this focus area. The culture of the organisation and the primary means of communication is likely to shape the understanding of a social media policy more than the number of employees (Johnson & Peters, 2022). The social media policies that an organisation has, even in small and micro-organisations, can positively or negatively impact organisational trust, the extent to which communication is free flowing, and psychological safety (Davis et al., 2022). The social media policies in different organisations, despite their different size or the number of their employees, are likely to have an impact on employees' morale and job satisfaction (Thompson et al., 2023). Walliman (2021) emphasizes that a qualitative, small sample, which is purposefully selected, is an asset when trying to understand the subjective experiences of a specific practice area. Instead of the number of participants included, qualitative research of this nature is primarily focused on the richness and depth of the responses. The larger the sample size, the more varied responses that are likely to be found. The methodology of this research involves using an interpretive framework within qualitative research in order to promote analysis that is contextual and understanding based.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments and Instrumentation

The first form of primary data for this research was acquired via semi-structured interviews with the employees and management of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. In semi-structured interviews, the attempt to strike a balance between the freedom to let the interviewees elaborate on their experiences concerning the regulation of the consolidation of social media, and the controlled communication practices of the organisation. In this case, the interviewers' social media communication experiences were the focal point, and it was hoped that the interviewees could discuss their experiences fully. Most, if not all, organisations today, use social media to some degree for internal communication. The positive social media effect on Collaboration and teamwork within organisations is increasing within the social media worksphere. Social media, for instance, Eger, Kuckertz, and Berger (2021), cited within the social media worksphere documentation, encourages communication and knowledge sharing among employees. In contrast, social media policies govern social media behavior and use by employees within a work setting. According to Lee, Kim, and Park (2023), policy formulation, use of social media, and policy adherence by employees is a function of social media policy framework. During data collection, numerous employees mentioned that they used WhatsApp daily for workplace coordination and communication, which greatly facilitated the interviews. The researcher conducted interviews to gain insight into how participants understood the social media policies and how they perceived the impact of the policies on the culture and climate of the workplace.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interview

With the assistance of semi-structured interviews, the researcher understands the employees' experiences and steers the conversation towards the social media

regulations and the effects of the workplace culture and climate. This method considers the different experiences of employees, depending on their level and role. As Magaldi and Berler (2018) observe, semi-structured interviews help capture the essence of the experiences of the respondents. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) describe this method, which is viewed as flexible, as the lived experiences of the participants. For instance, at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions and other similar cleaning service companies, the employees vary in their levels of computer-mediated communication according to their specific roles and shift cycles. Bailey and Clarke (2022) note that obtaining the narratives of employees is the most effective means of studying and comprehending workplace cohesion. Oksa, Pahkin and Poikkeus (2021) note that employees face digital boundaries defined by their personal and professional life dilemmas. The method enabled the researcher to capture the social and individual experiences of the participants regarding the regulation.

This approach fits the study's interpretivist inquiry about organisational culture. It described the extent of regulation of the social media communication. The approach examined issues of trust, and nature of relationships in the workplace.

A total of ten semi-structured interviews were carried out to achieve the depth of the relevant data. The sample consisted of seven employee interviewees and three management interviewees to capture operational and decision-making layers. Chansukree, Sagarik and Cho (2022) defend the perspective of social media workplace governance understanding from the purview of employees and management. Questions posed to employees were focused on social media, social media usage, forms of communication, and governance of social media. Oksa, Kaakinen, Savela, Ellonen, and Oksanen (2021) posit the professional utilisation of social media and workplace engagement as interrelated. Employees revealed that

there was a high rate of communication regarding role tasks and work shifts through WhatsApp. WhatsApp, as cited by Churchill and Wamuyu (2023), is a popular platform for communication for small businesses in developing nations. Therefore, despite acknowledging the usefulness of WhatsApp, the interviews attempted to capture the understanding, communication, and transparency of the organisation's policy.

According to Patel, Kumar, and Saini (2022), employee comprehension of social media policy is a function of the employee's level of digital literacy. The interview findings revealed low digital and social media literacy levels. Wang, Yu, and Fesenmaier (2021) refer to social media as a double-edged sword because of its tendency to foster good collaboration but also conflict. Nonetheless, most of the employees interviewed expressed their appreciation of effective communication.

The interview protocol developed for the management and employee participants enabled both sample groups to address the insights on overall governance and policy execution, and culture and climate impact on the employees. Jones and Silver (2021) mention that the management's communication of policies influences the policy compliance of employees. Social media policies, according to Brown and Green (2021), may indicate a trust deficit and erosion of control to employees. Lee, Kim and Park (2023) imply that policies of control in an organisation reflect employees' feeling of victimisation.

Management participants stated that social media policy's primary purpose was to protect the firm's reputation and control the confidentiality of the firm's customers. According to Murire, Nyatsanza and Ngirande (2020), developing countries' firms primarily concern themselves with the social media information security. Some managers were also concerned with employee posts that would misrepresent the

organisation and cause reputational damage. Smith, Jones and Taylor (2022) indicate that inadequate social media policy communication may contribute to a negative perception of the social ambience of the organisation. Using different interview guides captured the various employee experiences versus managerial goals, thus balancing the validity of the findings.

Both employees and management were interviewed using the same interviews schedule to corroborate their understanding of the organisation's social media policy. Feeney and Porumbescu (2021) attributes ethically responsive digital tools to the relationship between the organisation and the employees. This suggests a need for improvement of digital workplace policies. The interviews facilitated comprehension and articulation of the lived experiences of regulation on the one hand and usage on the other.

3.6.2 Data Collection Procedures

To evaluate the operational and policy levels of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the researcher engaged with both management and employees. Out the 10 interviews conducted, 7 were with the employees and 3 with management. Employees the interviews were pre-structured and pre-scheduled with the partner, which enabled the researcher to align the interviews with the cleaning schedules. The researcher established some rapport with the interviewees which, in turn, fostered a positive trust relationship, increased interviewee engagement, and improved the quality of interviewee responses. The case does provide the flexibility and focus that semi-structured interviews are designed to provide in an organisational setting. Chansukree, Sagarik, and Cho (2022) state that the data improves with the direct engagement of the study participants. The operational tools and workplace social media have been studied and (Anderson, 2020) has integrated them. Empirical studies have also used

workplace social media to enhance collaboration and knowledge. Eger, Kuckertz, and Berger (2021) state that social media tools in the workplace improve collaboration among employees.

The clarity of social media guidelines will most likely predict employees' conduct on social media as well as outside social media. Policies are more likely to be followed when they are clear. Lee et al. (2023) suggest that employees follow social media policies more when social media policies are clear. Considering that some employees interviewed claimed to use WhatsApp on a daily basis to coordinate shifts and to talk to their managers, it was appropriate to conduct interviews to explore their communication at work.

Participants agreed to the recording of their interviews. Interviewers made contextual notes, including their impressions of the interviewees' voice and emotional reactions, and some relevant sketches from their work environments. Interviewers add contextual notes to the qualitative data they report to improve precision and detail. Creswell and Creswell (2017) state that recording interviews and taking notes generally improves the quality of data in qualitative studies. Certain researchers point to employees' concerns about being observed and monitored when using social media and digital instruments at work. In the presence of workplace surveillance, Davis, Smith, and Thompson (2022) state that employees tend to trust their managers less and feel more remote from them. Employees' morale and psychological comfort are adversely affected when they feel that their social media activities at work are being monitored by their employers. Thompson, Lee, and Chen (2023) attempt to address

the psychological and emotional impact on employees of monitoring social media in the workplace.

In emerging economies, the intersection of social media use in the workplace, social media governance, reputation management, and information security is noteworthy. Managing the risk of information loss is the central concern and therefore, management enacts social media restrictions with employees (Murire, Nyatsanza, and Ngirande, 2020). On one hand, employees may pose the question whether or not their social media posts are overly personal, while on the other hand, management is more focused on protecting customer confidentiality as well as the reputation of the organisation. This indicates the challenges that are associated with the need to provide justification for social media posts that are being questioned.

For some participants, email was used, while for others, WhatsApp was used. As a result of their preferences for communication channels, it might increase their likelihood of responding to the request. As for the logistics of shift work, they involve no set office hours, which also means no set work hours. Churchill and Wamuyu (2023) characterize work, which includes the use of WhatsApp in many developing countries. WhatsApp here is work/research used in many places, including the work described. The use of social media for work purposes is becoming more and more commonplace. Communication and collaboration in work-related activities are positively influenced, as noted by Oksa et al. (2021), in social media used in professional contexts. In a work context, specifically a professional context, social media is used based on the employee's digital competences. Social media and work are positively correlated, according to Patel et al. (2022). The communication climate in a given organisation shapes employees' views and reactions to the managers' expectations regarding the use of ICT. Bailey and Clarke (2022) believe that the use of digital communication

technologies changes the way in which teams work together and the level of cohesion at work. Thus, managers used email for interview coordination, while employees used WhatsApp. The flexibility in scheduling meant interviews could be done to a greater extent, and fewer needed to be cancelled. Thus, all 18 interviews were completed.

3.6.3 Data Analysis Procedures

Data collection served as an experiential cycle for this study. Reflection occurred both during and after collection. Thematic analysis was done more rigorously after all interviews had been completed. The key element in the analysis of qualitative data is the processing, understanding, systematising, and bearing meaning to the participant feedback and responses. Creswell and Creswell (2017) assess qualitative data, and it is true what they state that qualitative analyses begin during the collection of data, with noted reflections and the identification of patterns. For example, it is common for qualitative researchers to analyse a specific phenomenon, contemplate its broader social ramifications, and discern patterns, themes, and social problems.

The peripheral employees of organisations have been the subject of qualitative studies. The responses of employees to workplace digital policies highlight some patterns and themes of workplace communication (Chansukree et al., 2022). In the case of developing economies, employees voice similar complaints regarding surveillance and monitoring (Murire et al., 2020). In addition, the lack of an organisational social media policy is interpreted as a lack of trust and support (Thompson et al., 2023). The analytical process is assisted by the researchers' self-reflections to refine and focus the research questions. Interestingly, the first self-reflections concentrated on restrictive policies, fear of punishment, and use of WhatsApp for work coordination.

The first self-reflections influenced the design of the interviews, and in the case of barriers, thematic coding was done post data collection. It assisted in explaining the distinction of overlapping reflective analyses with data collection and the post data collection exclusive structured analyses. The researcher, after collecting the data, performed a detailed thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, WhatsApp chat samples and meeting audio recordings. As an illustration, thematic analysis involves the finding and explanation of the patterns in the experiences of the various participants. According to Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013) the best way to ascertain empirical themes is through inductive qualitative analysis for the participants' data. In interpretivist qualitative research, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) assert that the participants' data should be foregrounded and the researcher's pre-constructed framework becomes secondary. While the researcher used Braun and Clarke's thematic structure to guide the allocation of data into themes and codes, for better familiarity with the data, she opted for manual coding. Most workplace social media, Oksa, Pahkin, and Poikkeus (2021) state, shows some form of boundary management. Regarding social media, Lee, Kim, and Park (2023) suggest that the perception of equity and the directness of the social media policies is in relation to the employee's attitude and the social media policies.

The initial codes for this study included policy awareness, reliance on digital communication, and surveillance anxiety, which were subsequently combined into trust in the organisation, communication climate, and fairness of policies. This method made it possible to centre the analysis on employee experience, as opposed to employing the data to fit into predetermined categorical structures. With the manageable sample size, the researcher was able to give attention to each transcript and hence, chose a manual coding technique to analyse and organise the data.

Contextual coding in qualitative research allows the researcher to work with the participants' meaning and context. In the case of smaller sample studies, Walliman (2021) posits that manual qualitative analysis deepens the layers of interpretation. There are emotional and contextual intricacies that need to be interpreted, and these variables describe the phenomena of social media monitoring and analysis that Davis et al. (2022) described. Smith et al. (2022) demonstrate that the organisational climate perceptions are primarily the same narrative structures that are recurrent within a set of multiple interviews. The narrative interpretation of the workplace cohesion and the communication culture is better captured than the narrative interpretation of workplace cohesion and the communication culture (Bailey and Clarke, 2022). The researcher had to review the transcripts several times to ensure that the statements matched the codes she assigned.

The coding of the statement, "I felt apprehensive when I posted something on social media" was classified as monitoring anxiety, and the coding of the statement, "I was dependent on WhatsApp" was classified as informal communication reliance. The researcher was able, using this technique, to rearrange the experience of the participant accurately. The technique assisted in enhancing the exhaustiveness and legitimacy of the thematic findings.

The final stage of the analysis consisted of the integration of the described themes in relation to the study objectives and the theorising pertaining to the culture and climate of the workplace. This analysis was able to capture the extent to which the laws governing workplace social media communications affect the interactions and relationships of the employees. Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2021) address workplace social media communications and other digital communication tools and the psychosocial relational and psychological effects in the workplace. Brown and Green

(2021) explain the extent to which social media communication policies comply with and how they restrict social media communication. These dynamics, therefore, affect employees' psychosocial integration and the social and professional relationships that they have. Wang et al. (2021) define the workplace social media communication paradox as the potential to promote collaboration and cause problems. Smith and Anderson (2021) explain that employees in organisations that have poorly communicated social media policies are less engaged in work and social activities.

The study's themes outlined social media policies that were imprecise and created ambiguity. The last analysis connected employees' perceptions to the organisation's culture and the communication climate it created.

3.7 Trustworthiness (Validity and Reliability)

Qualitative research requires trustworthiness to guarantee data and conclusions are genuine, authentic, and dependable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability. These criteria answer the main question: *Can the findings be trusted?*

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is like internal validity in quantitative research; it shows how sure people are that the results are true. In this study, it was done by asking the same questions in different ways to make sure that the answers of the subjects are consistent (Polit & Beck, 2012). This method helps make sure that the data really does reflect what the people thought.

3.7.2 Transferability

How well research findings apply to different situations is called transferability. This research on employee perceptions of social media regulation may be applicable to

other labs with comparable social media rules (Houghton et al., 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied or “transferred” to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, transferability was achieved by providing a thick, detailed description of the research context, the organisation, and the participants, including their roles, responsibilities, and exposure to social media. By clearly outlining the characteristics of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the composition of its workforce, and the sampling criteria, other researchers or practitioners can assess the relevance of the findings to similar organisations, such as service-oriented companies with diverse employee roles and social media engagement patterns. Additionally, documenting the data collection and analytical procedures enhances the ability of others to determine whether the results could be applicable in comparable organisational settings.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability means that the results stay the same over time and that the data and results match what the people said. To ensure dependability, the study participants reviewed the recorded data to confirm that it accurately reflected their statements and perspectives (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Dependability made sure that the results are a true picture of what the participants thought.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability made sure that the results and conclusions of the study can be easily linked to the data. To achieve this, the researcher established a transparent audit trail consisting of raw interview transcripts, coding sheets, analytic memos, and reflective journal entries that document decisions made throughout the research process. This

helped show that the study's results are based on what the subjects said and are not skewed by the researcher.

3.7.5 Ethical issues.

Henning, van Rensburg, and Smit (2004) say that ethics are the moral rules that tell scholars and volunteers how to be polite and accountable. The Central University of Technology, Free State Ethics Committee gave permission for this project, and it followed all ethics rules with clearance number (2025/000728).

After ethical approval, Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions management gave legal permission, and then staff agreed if they want to be interviewed. Participants were told about the study's goals and how it worked, as well as their right to quit. They signed permission forms to show that they understand the study's goals and their rights as volunteers.

In the study, all staff members who take part were called "social media users," and they used pseudonyms to protect their privacy, anonymity, and secrecy. All of the answers were kept safe, and only the researcher was able to see them. Participants needed to agree to be recorded on audio as well.

The researcher was careful with the data and only used the results for this project. By letting people say what they think, the researcher wants to make the space open, polite, and helpful so that people feel respected and at ease.

3.7.6 Limitations of the study

Limitations in research refer to inherent constraints that cannot be fully overcome despite careful design. This study was restricted by the small sample size of ten employees, which reduces the generalisability of findings to larger or more complex organisations. While qualitative inquiry values depth, the absence of additional

triangulation limited the scope of verification across data sources. The reliance on interviews alone raises concerns about subjectivity, as responses may have been shaped by employees' willingness to disclose their views or their perceptions of management oversight (Johnson & Peters, 2022). Scholars argue that incorporating multiple data points, such as observations or content analysis of organisational platforms, enhances validity by cross-checking narratives (Treem, et al., 2020). However, time constraints and access challenges restricted the ability to fully integrate such techniques in this study. The acknowledgment of these limits was essential in clarifying that while the findings offer meaningful insights into workplace culture, they are bounded by the methodological choices adopted (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021).

The study was also geographically constrained, as it was conducted within Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, located in a South African district where social media practices are shaped by both infrastructural and socio-cultural factors. Employees' access to affordable internet and their reliance on mobile platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, may not reflect the experiences of employees in regions with more advanced corporate communication infrastructures (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Research indicates that the digital divide across regions affects how employees engage with workplace policies, with those in resource-limited settings often facing barriers in accessing official communication channels (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Furthermore, local workplace norms and community expectations influence how employees perceive the boundaries between personal and professional use of social media (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). These contextual specificities restrict the transferability of findings to organisations operating in environments with different technological capabilities or regulatory frameworks (Smith & Wang, 2023). The emphasis on geographic location therefore highlights that while insights are valuable

to similar small- to medium-sized enterprises in comparable contexts, they may not be universally applicable.

Another limitation relates to the dynamic nature of social media policies and platforms. The rapid evolution of applications such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp means that regulations adopted by organisations quickly become outdated, creating a moving target for research (Anderson, 2020). As corporate communication trends shift, employees' perceptions of fairness, transparency, and control may also change, affecting the stability of findings over time (Brown & Green, 2021). Scholars note that studies in this area must therefore be understood as time-bound, capturing employee sentiments at a particular moment rather than as definitive accounts (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data raises issues of bias, as participants may have downplayed their own non-compliance or exaggerated organisational shortcomings due to fear of reprisal (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). Such challenges are common in organisational communication studies, where power dynamics influence disclosure, and they underscore the need for cautious interpretation of themes. Recognising these limitations ensures transparency in reporting while also signalling avenues for future research to incorporate triangulated data and broader samples to strengthen reliability.

3.7 Conclusion

Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology employed to explore employee perceptions of social media regulation and its impact on organisational culture and climate at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. The study adopted a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to gather rich, contextualised data from a purposively and conveniently selected sample of ten employees, representing both

managerial and frontline staff. Detailed descriptions of the study population, data collection procedures, and sampling strategies were provided to ensure transparency and support the trustworthiness of the findings. Measures to enhance credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were integrated throughout the research process, including participant verification of transcripts and comprehensive documentation of the organisational context. By establishing a clear methodological framework, this chapter provides a robust foundation for the presentation and analysis of the study's empirical findings in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of data collected from semi-structured interviews with employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. The objective was to examine how social media regulation shapes employee perceptions and influences workplace culture and climate. As social media use intensifies across organisational settings, tensions often emerge between employee autonomy and managerial oversight, making regulation a critical governance mechanism (Brown & Green, 2021). In this context, the study explores how regulatory practices intersect with employee interactions, collaborative processes, and organisational norms, offering a situated perspective from the South African cleaning industry. The chapter therefore builds directly on the research objectives and provides insight into how workplace culture evolves under conditions of increasing digital surveillance and regulation (Smith & Anderson, 2021).

To guide the reader, the chapter explicitly addresses the study's research questions: (1) How do employees perceive social media regulation within Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions? (2) In what ways does social media regulation affect workplace culture and climate? (3) What implications do these perceptions hold for organisational communication and cohesion? The first question was examined through participants' interpretations of policy clarity, fairness, and implementation, which reveals how rules are experienced at the individual level (Johnson & Peters, 2022). The second question was addressed by analysing how regulation shapes patterns of teamwork, morale, and trust, thereby influencing both culture and climate (Thompson et al., 2023). The third question was explored through a synthesis of themes that connect employee

perceptions to broader debates on communication ethics, organisational cohesion, and policy design (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021).

The analysis follows a structured approach, beginning with a demographic overview of participants to contextualise responses, before turning to the major themes identified in the data. Each theme was unpacked through four analytical steps: presentation of data patterns, incorporation of verbatim quotations, interpretation of meaning, and critical linkage to the literature. This layered method ensures that findings remain grounded in employee voices while engaging with theoretical debates on social media regulation and organisational communication (Lee et al., 2023). For instance, preliminary analysis suggests that while some employees view regulation as protective of organisational reputation, others perceive it as intrusive and demotivating. Such ambivalence echoes prior research highlighting how restrictive digital policies can simultaneously enhance compliance and erode trust (Smith et al., 2022). By systematically addressing each research question, the chapter positions employee experiences at the centre of analysis, providing evidence that informs both practice and theory.

4.2 Demographics of the Participants

4.2.1 Gender Composition and Its Relevance

Demographic analysis of study participants shows a fair gender mix in the cleaning organisation. Gender composition in qualitative research, especially workplace studies, affects viewpoints, communication styles, and social media involvement (Sakka & Ahammad, 2020). According to research, women use social media more for relational and expressive communication than males (Lee & Lee, 2020). This balanced participant pool provides a thorough perspective of how social media laws influence

workers differently, mirroring organisational gendered communication norms. While having both genders was positive, social and cultural issues in South African companies may still restrict social media usage (Choi, Chu & Choi, 2019). Thus, gender diversity in the sample enhances the data, allowing for nuanced insights on social media regulation, The study sample consisted of 10 participants from Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, representing both managerial and frontline staff. Among these participants, 4 were male and 6 were female, reflecting the gender distribution within the organisation's workforce. Including both genders ensured that diverse perspectives on social media use, regulation, and its impact on organisational culture and climate were captured, thereby enhancing the richness and representativeness of the findings.

4.2.2 Age Distribution and Experience Level

The people who took part were as different as their work and life situations. They were between the ages of 18 and 50. Oksa et al. (2021) say that age is a key factor in studies about social media use at work because it often affects how well someone knows how to use technology, how open they are, and how they feel about the rules their company sets. People who are younger at work are usually better at and more comfortable with social media sites. As Patel et al. (2022) say, they may be less ready to follow strict rules, but they are more likely to be interested. Older workers, on the other hand, might not use social media as much and prefer more standard ways to talk to each other. Also, they might not care as much about company rules or see them as too strict (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). People of all ages who took part in this study help to show the full range of how people use social media, understand rules, and follow them.

There was a link between a worker's age and their position in the company's structure and the number of years they've worked there. This changes how strong they believe they are when talking about following company rules and social media speech within the company (Van Zoonen, Verhoeven & Vliegenthart, 2017). This range was important for figuring out how social media rules affect different groups of employees in different ways.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Participants

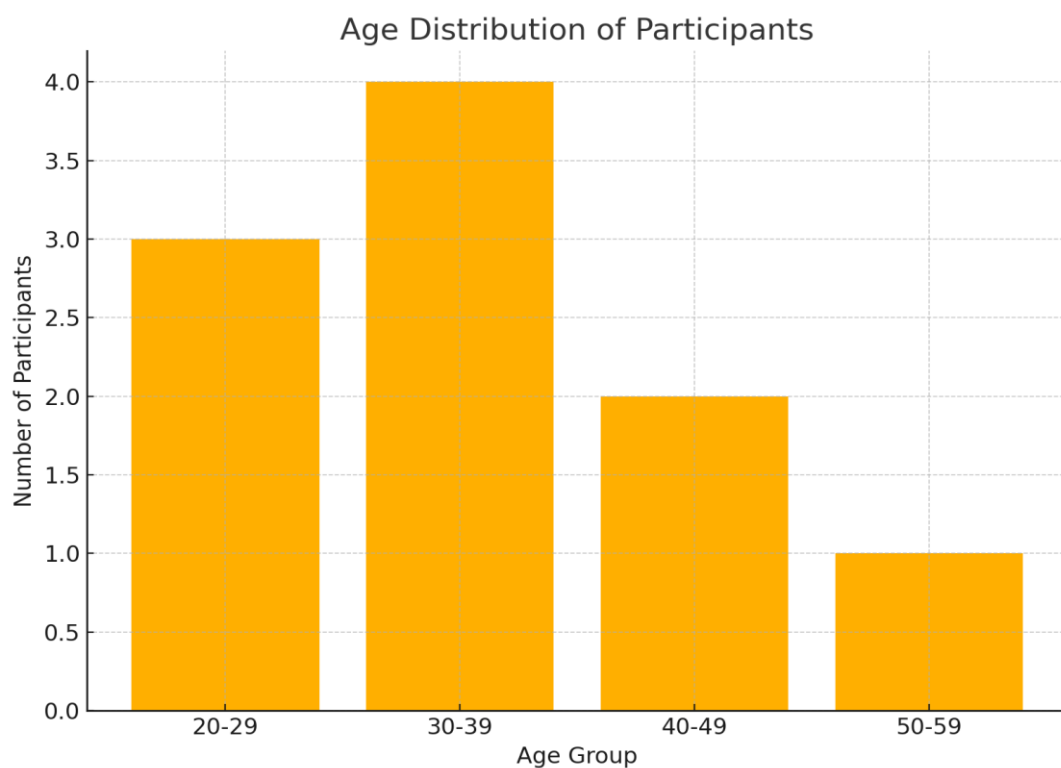


Figure - 1: Age Distribution of Participants

Age demographics of interviewed workers are shown in the bar chart. The biggest age group (4 participants) was 30–39, followed by 3, 20–29. The 50–59 age group has 1 participant, while the 40–49 category has 2. A youthful to middle-aged workforce suggests different digital fluency and social media control views. Younger age groups

may be more adaptable to digital communication platforms, while elderly workers provide intergenerational views to the research.

4.2.3 Educational Background and Its Influence

The participants' levels of education ranged a lot, from those with only a basic school education to those with diplomas from colleges or universities. A big part of making sure workers know and understand social media rules and digital communication ethics was educating them (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). Employees with more schooling are usually more aware of the effects of digital tracks and managing an organisation's image, which makes them more careful when they're online (Patel et al., 2022). On the other hand, people with less schooling may need more specific instructions and training to understand how to use social media at work (Oksa et al., 2021). The types of respondents show how important it was to have customised training and communication plans to deal with these differences. Policies should be easy for everyone to understand and follow so that everyone in the system does so (Jones & Silver, 2021). This difference shows areas where less-educated workers might accidentally break the rules, which stresses how important it was to keep learning.

Figure 3: Educational Background of Participants

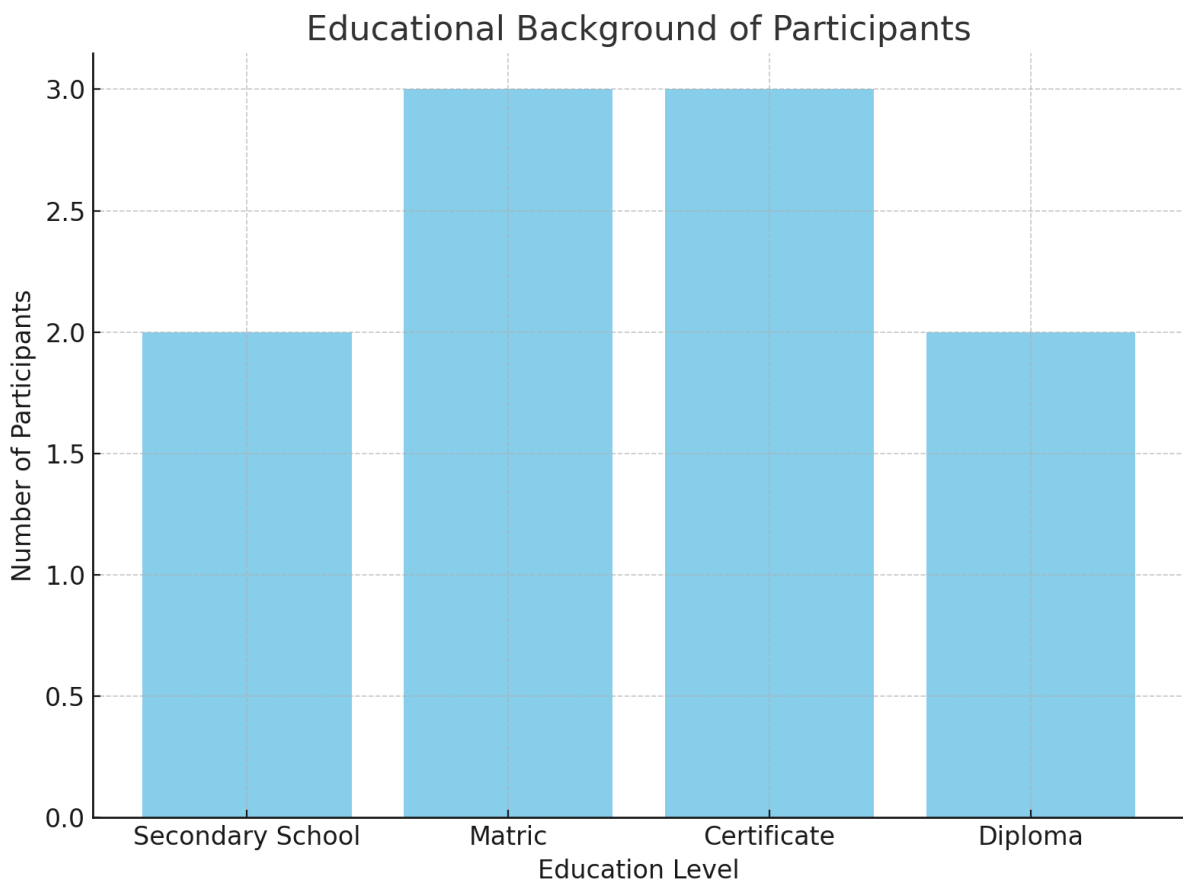


Figure - 2: Educational Background of Participants

The bar chart shows interviewees' academic credentials. Matric qualifications and Certificate have three participants, followed by Diploma and Secondary School with two each. A workforce with a modest to diversified educational profile has different degrees of formal policy training and digital communication standards. Higher education participants may be better aware of social media professional norms, while individuals with little education may need more specialised coaching. The study's depth was enhanced by education variety, which allows for a nuanced understanding of how education affects workplace social media activity and policy participation.

4.2.4 Employment Status and Tenure

The sample included regular, contract, and part-time workers with tenures from a few months to almost 10 years. Employment status and job stability impact how workers see social media restrictions and whether they self-censor or be open online (Patel et al., 2022). Permanent workers may be more willing to obey the regulations and be cautious online to maintain their jobs. However, contract or part-time workers may feel less constrained by business regulations and be more willing to speak out against them (Van Zoonen et al., 2017). In addition, length of service influences how familiar workers are with corporate regulations and culture, which impacts how they comprehend and follow social media standards (Jones & Silver, 2021). Understanding these elements was crucial for successful policy enforcement and creating a workplace that supports diverse needs.

Figure 4: Employment Status of Participants

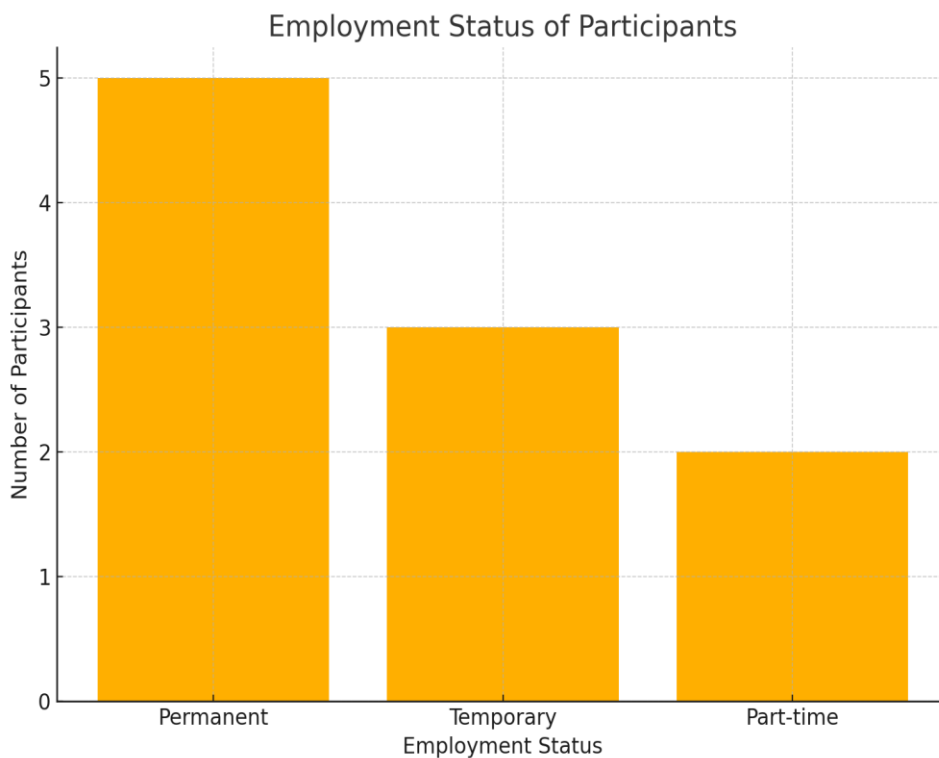


Figure - 3: Employment Status of Participants

The bar chart shows the members based on how they are contractually linked to the group. There are five full-time participants, three casual participants, and two part-time participants. This change in work status shows how job steadiness affects how people use social media and follow rules. Permanent employees who care about the long-term health of the company may be more likely to follow the rules. Temporary and part-time workers may not feel as obligated to follow institutional standards because they are not as integrated or valued in the workplace. This brings out the complexities of group culture, which was shaped by different levels of hierarchy and different ideas of membership.

Figure 5: Tenure of Participants

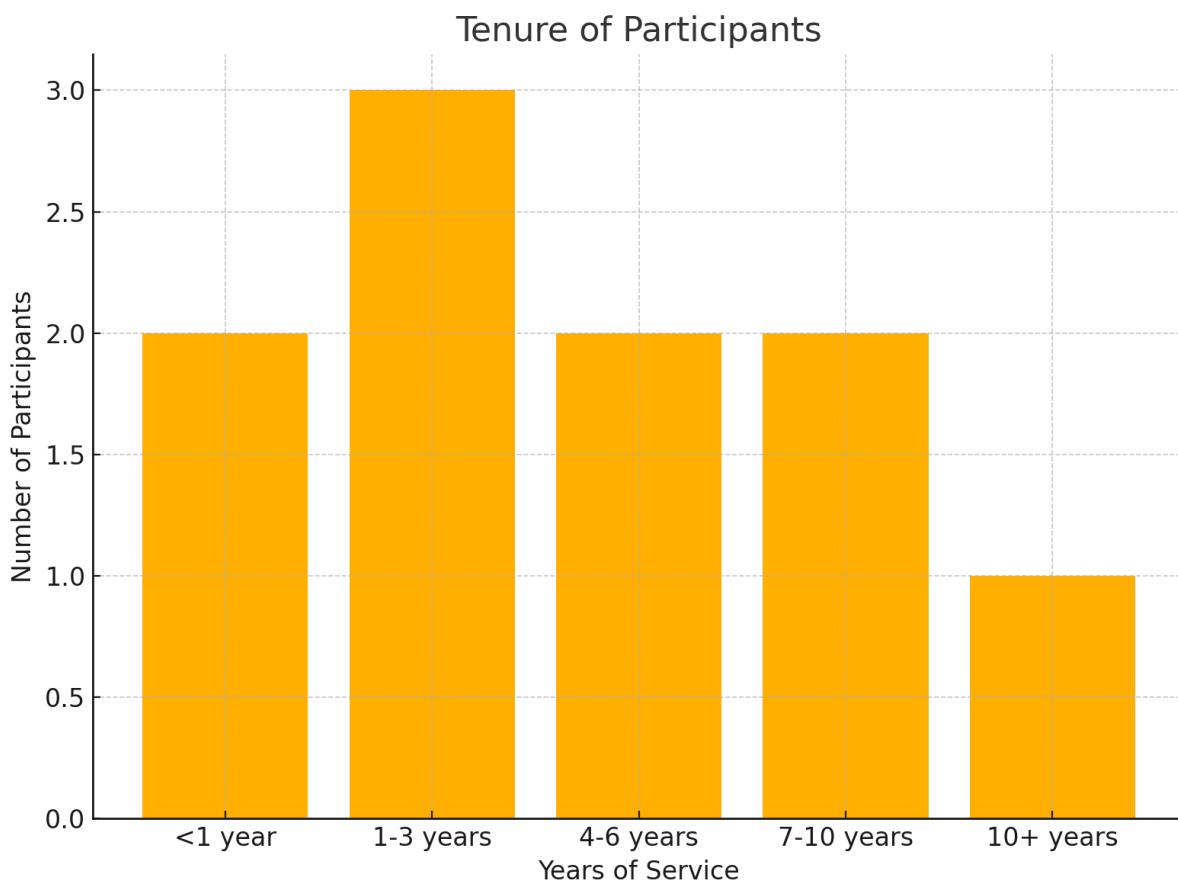


Figure - 4: Tenure of Participants

The bar chart illustrates how replies are distributed by firm tenure. Three of the chart's participants have served for one to three years, two for less than one year, four to six years, and seven to ten years. One person reported being there for almost 10 years. This broad variety of term groups helps us examine how workers' employment experience influences their understanding and compliance with business social media guidelines. Long-time employees may know more about the organisation and how to interact with others. However, younger workers may be more receptive to digital participation but less knowledgeable about rules. This diversity of experience helps us understand how tenure influences workplace social media restrictions.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis Table

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Linked Research Objective
1. Perceptions of Social Media Use in the Workplace	1.1 Positive Engagement and Social Connectivity	RO1: To explore how employees perceive the use of social media in the workplace.
	1.2 Concerns about Distractions and Productivity	RO1
	1.3 Use for Organisational Communication	RO1
	1.4 Perceived Risks to Professionalism	RO1

	1.5 Unclear Role in Daily Workflow	RO1
2. Social media and Organisational Culture	2.1 Contribution to Workplace Identity and Belonging	RO2: To examine how social media use shapes organisational culture and climate.
	2.2 Reinforcement of Hierarchies and Informality	RO2
	2.3 Role in Teamwork and Collaboration	RO2
	2.4 Influence on Workplace Atmosphere and Morale	RO2
3. Impact of Current social media Policy on Use and Behaviour	3.1 Policy Effect on Employee Behaviour Online	RO3: To assess how organisational social media policies influence employee behaviour.
	3.2 Policy Implementation and Enforcement	RO3
	3.3 Impact on Personal and Work-Life Boundaries	RO3

	3.4 Suggestions for Policy Improvement	RO3
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4.3 Major Theme 1: Employees' Perceptions of Social Media Use and Regulation

4.3.1 Sub Theme 1.1: Social Media Usage Patterns at Work

Semi-structured interviews revealed that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees primarily relied on WhatsApp as their main communication platform, while other social media tools such as Facebook or Instagram were not reported as part of daily operations. To ensure analytical transparency, the coding process in NVivo began by linking each interview question to a specific node, which was then categorised into sub-codes such as “operational use,” “personal use,” and “resistance to use.” These were subsequently merged into broader themes to reduce abstraction and to illustrate how the findings emerged from the data itself. Prior research indicates that WhatsApp has become a dominant workplace tool in environments where formal communication systems are absent, providing immediacy and accessibility (Anderson, 2020). Scholars have also highlighted that the choice of platform often reflects affordability and ease of access rather than organisational policy (Oksa et al., 2021). Other studies suggest that WhatsApp fosters informal but functional workplace networks that can substitute for rigid bureaucratic systems (Church & de Oliveira, 2013). At Bokamoso, the findings show a similar pattern: WhatsApp’s prominence was driven less by formal rules and more by accessibility, reinforcing the view that platform choice can shape workplace communication norms (Han & Keskin, 2016).

“We use it to pass on messages when we need to inform each other. That was how it works for us” (Participant 7).

“I use social media for work purposes, specifically when I am short of chemicals or when I have to report problems like an injury or when I am overloaded with work” (Participant 4).

“I don’t use social media at all with work-related matters. I use it for my private matters outside of work” (Participant 6).

“We created a WhatsApp group for our things. It makes the job go smoothly. If I need to give instructions or look for a colleague, I use it to find them” (Participant 4).

“When I am done with my work, I respond to social media messages. If I don’t respond, they know I am busy” (Participant 7).

The diversity of these responses highlights the importance of role-specific dynamics in explaining communication behaviours. Supervisors, such as Participant 4, emphasised the operational benefits of WhatsApp for reporting shortages, monitoring tasks, and coordinating colleagues, thereby using it as an extension of managerial oversight. Cleaners, on the other hand, such as Participant 6, resisted using social media for work-related matters, drawing a firm boundary between personal and professional communication. This variation demonstrates why the small sample size was justified, since each participant provided perspectives grounded in their biographical and occupational context. Research affirms that supervisors often appropriate social media for oversight and delegation, whereas frontline staff may perceive it as intrusive or irrelevant (Lee et al., 2023). Other scholars similarly argue that role distinctions within organisations influence whether employees perceive social media as a tool for empowerment or surveillance (Davis et al., 2022). Furthermore,

studies suggest that boundary-setting was an important digital coping mechanism for workers in low-autonomy environments (Patel et al., 2022). By examining these patterns, the findings show that employees' interpretations of social media were closely tied to their roles, supporting a role-based rather than generalised understanding of workplace communication (Jones & Silver, 2021).

Another key finding was the absence of formal company regulations on social media use. No participant indicated awareness of a formal policy governing WhatsApp groups, suggesting that practices were largely employee driven. This lack of direction led to uneven access to information, with some workers benefitting from real-time updates while others were excluded from conversations. Evidence shows that, in the absence of formal guidance, employees regulate their digital practices based on peer norms and perceived expectations (Treem et al., 2020). Other studies confirm that unregulated digital spaces can both enhance collaboration and create risks of inequality in information-sharing (Leonardi & Vaast, 2017). Recent work has also highlighted that without clear digital literacy training, employees often rely on informal mechanisms that may not guarantee fairness (Smith & Wang, 2023). The case of Bokamoso mirrors these dynamics, where WhatsApp groups were created as adaptive solutions to communication gaps, but in doing so, introduced inconsistencies in access and accountability. Scholars argue that informal arrangements may create parallel communication systems that undermine organisational inclusivity (Van Zoonen, 2021). These findings underline the need for management to implement clear policies and training to ensure that digital tools promote equity rather than deepen divides.

Recent evidence and scholarship show that employee use of WhatsApp at Bokamoso exemplifies the case where, as part of their practice, employees informally negotiate the rules of digital communication 'policies'. While employees informally negotiate the

'policies' of digital communication, they use 'rules' of digital communication, and this 'informal' digital communication practice from Moyo and Nkhahle (2025) manifests in the way that organisations (re)allocate and (re)loosen control over communication. Extant literature points to the fact that in environments with fewer resources, the informal 'spaces' of digital communication positively impact the rate of communication and the level of organisational coordination (Oksa et al., 2021). Some scholars warn however that in the less digitally informal communications, the injustice of the communication power asymmetries, who advantage employees with frequent access to digital devices and strong networks among their peers, are likely to be reproduced (Van Zoonen, 2021). Inadequate social media policy, however, has shown to increase employee disengagement, and create a lack of clarity of the behavioural expectations in the digital space of employees (Smith and Anderson, 2021). In this case, the patterns of the interviews show that employees who were less involved in some WhatsApp groups, progressed fewer reports of their work, and seemed to be less aligned with their colleagues and less coordinated, which, again, emphasized the negative aspect of information asymmetry. In this context, the evidence indicates that the need for some communication policy regulations is required, while the lack of any such regulations may cause operational paradoxes in the form of hidden structural inequities within teams.

This confirms the view that the digital means of communication should be considered more of a socio-organisational phenomenon rather than a neutral technocentric phenomenon (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). The researcher therefore regards WhatsApp use at Bokamoso as adaptive communication, where the primary influence was the necessity for communication as opposed to some strategic intention. Consequently, the analysis offers the need for managerial social media frameworks

that paradoxically allow operational social media use while providing specification, closure, and social equity concerning digital participation.

4.3.2 Sub Theme 1.2: Awareness and Understanding of Social Media Policies

Semi-structured interviews show Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees' social media policy knowledge and comprehension varies. Several participants said that social media rules were never officially stated or established lately without complete execution. Some workers said they were briefed about social media usage during interviews or inductions, indicating selective disclosure. Many respondents were uncertain about the details or presence of a written policy, indicating an organisational gap in communicating rules to all staff. This ambiguity caused different opinions about whether the policies were fair, clear, or relevant to work. Most participants reported receiving no official social media behaviour instruction, adding to the uncertainty. Due to uneven knowledge, workers relied on informal conventions and personal judgement to govern their work-related internet activity.

“I was informed during my interview that whatever you post on social media can have a big impact on your work environment” (Participant 2).

“We don’t have any official rules. If they exist, I have never seen them” (Participant 6).

“There was a policy, and we were given a policy to sign, but no one explained it to us” (Participant 8).

“I don’t think we have a clear policy. The document was started recently, but it was not implemented” (Participant 1).

“I’m not sure if there was a social media policy because no one has ever told us about it” (Participant 9).

These replies demonstrate Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions' inconsistent social media information. Participant 2's knowledge suggests that some workers are engaged, but most show that policies are not conveyed. The accounts of participants 6, 8, and 9 indicate that rules are established differently from how engaged workers are, which may make them less successful. Participant 8 replied that without training or clear explanation, policies are not followed properly. Workers learn social media using their own judgement, not government guidelines. When regulations are unclear, workers may misinterpret them and break them. This gap reflects a managerial error or poor internal communication that made the policy less effective.

The absence of communication of social media policies at Bokamoso may indicate the absence of communication in the whole organisation. Social media literacy training must be a precursor to social media policy design (Chansukree, Sagarik & Cho, 2022). Clarity, among others, helps to minimise organisational digital misconduct to maintain the same behaviour of employees (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Other scholars argue that when policies exist as empty signed documents, employees make their own judgments and look to their peers to guide their online behaviour (Van Zoonen, 2021). Moreover, scholars described in Patel, Kumar and Saini (2022) found that employee perceptions of the fairness and the surveillance related to monitoring are influenced by digital literacy and their awareness of the policies. This study's interview data patterns confirmed that employees who signed documents during induction were confident about the online behaviour expected of them.

Ambiguous social media organisational policies can result in loss of trust and increase the confusion around the communication barrier (Smith & Anderson, 2021). In services where business seamless integration relies on real-time virtual communication, operational ambiguity and communication gaps can increase risks.

The policy awareness gap at Bokamoso seems to reinforce informal communication in the workplace climate. This can be so, given that employees' self-initiated digital norms often emerge in the absence of formally instituted governance communications (Moyo & Nkhahle, 2025). It is, therefore, valid to perceive policy awareness at Bokamoso as an example of uneven institutionalisation of operational flexibility at the cost of reliable communication and trust. This further demonstrates that for social media governance to be operationalised, training and feedback is fundamental.

4.3.3 Sub Theme 1.3: Perceptions of Policy Fairness and Necessity

The semi-structured interviews generated five key responses that reflected how employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions perceive the fairness and necessity of social media policies. These views ranged from support and acceptance to resistance and ambivalence, illustrating the complexity of how workplace culture and individual freedom intersect in the context of regulation. The direct responses were as follows:

“I think the policies are fair because they protect the company’s image at all costs” (Participant 2).

“Sometimes the rules feel too strict, like they interfere with what I can say on my personal page” (Participant 4).

“These policies stop us from posting things that could cause problems for the business” (Participant 8).

“I feel like the company watches everything I do online; it’s a bit too much control” (Participant 10).

“Even though they are strict, I understand that they are necessary to prevent misuse and negative consequences” (Participant 7).

From the analysis, four participants mostly supervisors with more than five years of service expressed positive perceptions of the policies. They emphasised that regulations were crucial in protecting the company's image and preventing reputational harm. This reflects the Uses and Gratifications theory, as employees recognised policies as enabling responsible and beneficial communication while fulfilling needs for security and organisational identity (Whiting & Williams, 2013). The Configuration Model of Organisational Culture also explains how shared norms around communication help sustain cohesion and reinforce ethical behaviour across teams (Dauber et al., 2012). Recent studies similarly suggest that when organisations adopt transparent social media guidelines, employee trust increases and reputational risks decrease (Jones & Silver, 2021), aligning with the principle of legitimacy in the configuration model. These insights show that some employees internalised the rules as essential safeguards rather than restrictions, indicating a positive cultural alignment (Lee et al., 2023).

On the other hand, three employees, primarily cleaners with less than two years of tenure perceived the policies as overly restrictive, describing them as intrusive and controlling. They associated the regulations with surveillance, which they felt blurred personal and professional boundaries. Research confirms that employees who feel monitored often report reduced morale and greater resistance to compliance (Brown & Green, 2021). From the U&G perspective, this occurs when organisational rules obstruct gratifications such as self-expression and social connectivity (Ngcongco, 2016). Similarly, the Configuration Model suggests that excessive emphasis on control creates a culture of compliance rather than collaboration, which may undermine workplace climate (Smith & Anderson, 2021). Other scholars emphasise that without participatory policymaking, strict monitoring can erode trust and reduce long-term

engagement (Davis et al., 2022). Hence, negative perceptions stemmed not only from a rejection of regulation but also from unmet expectations for autonomy and trust. The recent pushback against Bokamoso's social media policies reflects more than just backlash against the policy; it speaks to the organisation's protective boundaries and the employees' freedom.

Policies are accepted more in workplaces if employees perceive them as workplace ethical communication as opposed to workplace control fixation, as Thornthwaite states. Ellis, Davis, Smith, and Thompson (2022) stress that workplace communication and policies that do not propose to involve workers as active participants, will likely result in resistance and disconnected compliance. Workers develop behaviours of resistance to policies and communications they perceive to be unfair. Policies that control or restrain employees' use of digital workplace resources often have a negative impact on the psychological workplace climate from perceptions of monitoring and trust in the workplace (Thompson, Lee, and Chen, 2022). Employees in some organisations (for example, Van Zoonen, 2021) resist compliance when they perceive the rules as overly restrictive.

Social media policies are more likely to be followed when companies practice social discipline in the workplace (Chansukree, Sagarik & Cho, 2022). As detailed in the interviews, Bokamoso employees perceived the managers as protective of the organisation at the expense of the employees' psychological well-being. Organisations that promote dialogue concerning employees' digital conduct enjoy greater compliance and trust (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). The authors, in this case, imply that dialogue yields positive attitudes towards and acceptance of policy. Therefore, social media governance should not serve an administrative purpose to employees but rather be open to favourable communicative strategies. Such an insight only

serves to strengthen the authors' assertion that the results of workplace culture and climate are the reflections of employee perceptions of digital respect, equity, and inclusion within the organisational environment, and not the stated policies of the organisation.

4.3.4 Sub Theme 1.4: Experiences with Social Media Regulation

Interview results show that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions workers get infrequent but significant social media abuse discipline. Some interviewees remembered being chastised for social media policy violations, mainly for improper company-bashing remarks. The guideline was often followed, since staff appear determined to avoid unfavourable repercussions notwithstanding these rare cases. An underlying sensation of being observed or “policed” on social media generates a conflict between personal expression and organisational requirements. Employees understand the need of following norms but are uncomfortable with the apparent monitoring, reflecting a complicated control-autonomy dynamic. Most workers use care while working online due to official warnings and informal social pressure. This regulation affects how workers balance personal freedom and professional responsibilities on social media.

“There was a lady that we work with and we were cleaning at this other nice house, and she took the pictures and then she posted them on Facebook, and then our boss saw it and she got a warning.” (Participant 10)

“I have not been disciplined, but I know others have been warned for posting things about the company.” (Participant 4)

“Yes, sometimes it feels like they are watching what we do online, especially when we get reminders about the policy.” (Participant 8)

“We try to follow the rules because we don’t want to lose our jobs or get into trouble.”

(Participant 2)

“It’s like they are policing us on social media, which makes me careful about what I post.” (Participant 7)

These responses show that workers are well aware that the social media policy was strictly followed, with specific examples of punishments. The warning that was given to Participant 10's coworker serves as a lesson that encourages obedience. People who took part in the study agreed that there was both official and informal tracking going on, which makes people more likely to watch themselves. The feeling of being "policed" was part of how companies try to keep control of their image, and it also affects how workers feel about their privacy and freedom online. People usually obey the rules to maintain their employment, not because they like it. This multifaceted perspective reveals that workers must balance personal expression with business loyalty, altering their behaviour to avoid controversy.

When looking at the social media regulation at Bokamoso, there are different dimensions to unpack. More specifically, the attempt to mitigate social media use at the level of employee self-regulation, trust, organisation, and privacy, versus expectation from the organisation is dual-faceted. On the one hand, from the employee’s perspective social media regulation is meant to control them. On the other hand, from the management perspective, social media use by the employees is restricted in order to safeguard the reputation of the organisation and to protect the organisation’s confidential business etiquette (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). What is problematic is that there is an absence of trust as well as job satisfaction when employees think that their employer does not trust them enough by monitoring their

social media use (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Furthermore, as Davies, Smith and Thompson (2022) explain, there is a paradox that employee monitoring is said to enhance trust and satisfaction. However, Smith and Anderson (2021) elaborate that vague and inconsistent social media policies contribute to employee withdrawal and ambiguity in relation to the organisation's planned engagement with social media.

According to some scholars, employees show greater willingness to accept social media governance when an organisation combines training with open two-way communication about digital practices in the workplace (Chansukree, Sagarik & Cho, 2022). Within Bokamoso, the reminders of the policies and instances of disciplinary action, appear to reinforce the behaviour of prioritising the protection of the organisation's image from social media, even more than the collective digital protection.

Alnuaimi & Al Khaja (2022) argue that the more the environmental surveillance, the more self-censorship and online communication restraint there is likely to be. In some studies, employees, however, defend the violation of social media policies for the sake of retaining equilibrium, regarding the social media policies as undesirable (Thorntwaite, 2020). In the case of Bokamoso, "compliance" could be regarded more from the perspective of risk as opposed to the loyalty to the organisation. From the researcher's assessment, social media monitoring practices at Bokamoso appear to be leaning more towards the control model of governance rather than the participatory digital culture model. This view aligns the workplace culture and climate with the feeling of fairness, transparency, and communication, in relation to the monitoring of digital activities that employees experience.

4.3.5 Sub Theme 1.5: Training and Guidance on Social Media Use

The interview data shows that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions seldom provides formal social media training. Most workers reported receiving no workplace social media training. Some participants reported getting just verbal instruction during onboarding or casual conversations with managers. Despite the lack of official training programme, individuals who got any direction appreciated it for clarifying expectations and reducing policy infractions. Many workers want more detailed and systematic training. They feel such training would help them grasp social media policy and effectively manage the complicated lines between personal expression and professional behaviour. Lack of formal training tends to lead to uneven policy awareness and ambiguity regarding social media usage.

“I have only received verbal guidance about social media use at work, and I think it helps to know what we can and cannot post.” (Participant 2)

“No formal training was given to us; we were just told about the policy briefly during induction.” (Participant 5)

“It would be good to have structured training so that everyone understands the rules clearly.” (Participant 7)

“I have not had any official training, but when they talk to us, it helps prevent mistakes.”
(Participant 4)

“More training was necessary because social media changes so fast, and we need to keep up with what was allowed.” (Participant 9)

These quotes show that informal advice was helpful but not enough to ensure employee understanding and compliance with social media regulations. Employees

agreed that ongoing, planned training on social media sites and how to use them professionally was necessary. Structured training was a responsible way to make sure that employees know how to handle their digital appearance in a way that protects the organisation's interests. Based on the comments, official training might boost employee confidence, stop employees from breaking rules by accident, and make sure that everyone in the company uses social media in the same way.

Bokamoso must start by training their staff on social media literacy before social media policy. Untrained staff appear to have an overly relaxed approach towards social media policies. The employees have not been trained about the social media tools that the organisation uses. The employees do not have a clear and specific understanding of the boundaries of communication and the associated risks to the organisation and hence, do not breach social media policy intentionally (O'Connor et al, 2020). The risks that untrained employees pose, and the adverse effects of their untrained actions, have been described by Patel et al. (2022), indicating poor decision-making. Thornthwaite (2020) agrees with the assertion that the ignorant use of social media by employees poses the greatest risk of problems due to the overlapping of personal and professional domains.

Smith and Anderson (2021) state that policies that lack clarity may result in the disengagement of employees. Yet some scholars argue that in the face of rapid changes of norms and the social media associated risks, real-time digital coaching is unavoidable (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). This indicates that the training gap at Bokamoso causes workplace ambiguity and irresponsible use of media. The researcher is of the opinion that social media training should centre on the culture of the workplace rather than mere compliance. This strengthens the notion that digital training impacts on the

behaviour in the workplace, and more critically, on the employees' self-belief, trust and communication confidence.

4.4 Major Theme 2: Impact of Social Media Use on Organisational Culture and Climate

4.4.1 Sub Theme 2.1: Influence on Workplace Communication

Concerning activities, making schedules for tasks, and getting important information to everyone, the interview data shows that social media sites, especially WhatsApp, have a big impact on how people at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions talk to each other. Employees often said that WhatsApp was their main way of planning work. It was said that this way of communicating was faster and easier to use than standard ones, allowing for instant replies and real-time information. Participants said that this kind of digital communication improves organisational efficiency by making sure that workers are quickly notified of changes to their jobs or places. Even though social media has a good effect on communication in general, some workers said that it can sometimes lead to mistakes or problems between people. Many of these disagreements start with personal information that was shared outside of work hours. This information can then be brought into the workplace and negatively impact teamwork and the overall atmosphere. Therefore, even though social media was a useful way to communicate, it can be hard to keep personal and business conversations separate.

“WhatsApp makes it easy to get quick updates from the boss on where we need to clean next.” (Participant 10)

“We coordinate all our work schedules through WhatsApp groups; it helps avoid confusion.” (Participant 8)

“Sometimes, things posted outside work cause arguments when we come to the office.” (Participant 4)

“If someone posts something offensive on social media, it affects how we get along the next day.” (Participant 7)

“Social media communication was faster than calling or messaging individually.” (Participant 9)

The extracts show that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions uses WhatsApp to streamline work management and share information quickly. However, the existence of social media-driven disputes indicates the challenge of mixing personal online activities with professional interactions. Social media overflow into professional relationships underlines the necessity for clear limits and rules to address such difficulties. Employees' experiences show that social media may both facilitate communication and cause interpersonal conflict, highlighting the complex impact of digital communication technologies on organisational culture.

The study confirms that for Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, social media is not only an instrumental technical tool, but also an important socio-cultural tool that affects the daily social management of control, activity governance, and the dynamics of relations. The use of WhatsApp as a means of communication in daily operational tasks improves harmonisation in the organisation (Churchill and Wamuyu, 2023). However, employees argue that such integration has not sufficiently closed the meaning interpretation gap (Chansukree, Sagarik, and Cho, 2022). Importantly, in some cases, the blurring of social media use for work and personal reasons via mobile phones violates customers' privacy (Thorntwaite, 2020). The literature reiterates that the workplace culture of the organisation has greater impact on the perceived

effectiveness of workplace communication than the communication tools that are utilised (Anderson, 2020). In the case of Bokamoso, the managers, perceive regulation as more effective than the communication tools.

The managers insisted that if the employees followed the regulation, there would calm in the organisation. However, from the employees' perspectives, the organisational culture and climate should take precedence over regulation. In this case, the literature is enriched by providing evidence that, in the resource-strained service settings, the digitised communication tools serve as an extension of the leadership style and a trust resource within the organisation.

4.4.2 Sub Theme 2.2: Effect on Employee Interaction and Relationships

The semi-structured interviews show that social media has a complicated and mixed effect on how employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions talk to each other and work together. Social media sites help some workers stay in touch, but they also make it harder for people to get along with each other. Most participants talked about keeping in touch with coworkers through social media, which helps with both official and unstructured contact and the organisation of work-related tasks. Others, on the other hand, purposely keep a clear line between their personal and professional social media use. This shows how important compartmentalisation was for setting limits at work. The interview data also show that social media was a space where lies and mistakes sometimes spread, which makes things difficult between workers. Still, these disagreements don't seem to cause major problems at work very often. This was likely because workers either know to keep their personal lives and work life separate, or the culture of the workplace prevents such effects from happening. The results show that social media can help bring people together or make them fight. The overall effect depends on how people feel and what the organisation's rules are.

“Business was business, personal was personal. I don’t want to mix” (Participant 2).

“Sometimes we argue about things that are viral on social media” (Participant 7).

“We have created a WhatsApp group for our things” (Participant 4).

“It does not come here. No, it doesn’t” (Participant 3).

“Some information was received by others and not by everyone” (Participant 7).

A deeper analysis at these extracts shows employee views on how social media affects professional interactions. Participant 2's focus on compartmentalising personal and job-related social media usage may be a way to retain professionalism and reduce social media's impact on work dynamics. However, Participant 7's recognition of viral social media discussions shows how external information cascades might inflame staff conflicts. Participant 4 observed a specialised WhatsApp group, demonstrating social media's collaborative potential for communication and task organisation. Participant 3's assurance that social media disagreements seldom disrupt work relationships shows how social norms or organisational culture might prevent workplace problems. Participant 7's observation of asymmetrical social media information flow suggests information equity and employee exclusion in the social media communication network.

The results support and expand research that views social media as a double-edged sword in organisations. Leonardi (2017) and Treem and Leonardi (2012) note that social media may improve information exchange and connectedness but can cause misconceptions and disputes. Wang et al. (2021) found that workplace social media usage may promote cooperation or conflict depending on individual and group characteristics. Conversely, van Zoonen et al. (2017) argue that social media blurs personal and professional boundaries, potentially exacerbating conflicts, but interview

data show that many employees actively manage these boundaries, supporting Oksa et al. (2021) on social media boundary management strategies. This suggests that social media's effects on employee relationships depend on corporate culture, individual conduct, and communication standards. This research adds empirical depth to arguments on social media's function in workplace social capital and emphasises the need for organisational strategies that recognise these intricacies.

The employees of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions seem to be affected more by the social media boundaries imposed on them rather than the social media exposure itself. Employees noted that social media-related problems are less of an issue when social media is private. This aligns with the research that recognises the role of boundary management in forging digital workplace relations (Oksa, Pahkin, and Poikkeus, 2021). This demonstrates the impact of social media on employee relations within and outside the organisation (Wang, Yu, and Fesenmaier, 2021). It has been noted that social media decreases relational distance, and, at the same time, increases the likelihood of relationship ambiguity and miscommunication (Brown and Green, 2021). As given in the interviews, the requirement to protect the organisation's culture indicates that online conflicts are less likely to generate conflicts in the workplace. This corroborates the existing research that links the impact of social media and digital interactions to organisational culture and trust (Davis, Smith, and Thompson, 2022). In this case, the social media platforms available cause less workplace friction, and more influence on strengthened workplace relations. Social media is an enhancer of relationships, particularly in teams with existing trust and respect. The current friction in relationships appears to be heightened by digital communication tools.

4.4.3 Sub Theme 2.3: Role in Teamwork and Collaboration

The study of the data shows that social media helps the team at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions work together in a variety of ways. Most workers said that applications like WhatsApp make real-time contact easier, which lets them delegate tasks and give information right away. This quick connection makes it easier to coordinate work tasks, which was helpful in settings that change often. But social media doesn't always have the same effect on teamwork. Some workers said it didn't have much of an effect because they didn't use it much at work or chose to limit their access. In addition to daily practical contact, efforts on social or community problems through social media were said to help staff feel like they belong to a group and work together. Social media makes it easier for people to work together, but it also comes with a lot of different levels of involvement and possible distractions that need to be carefully managed.

“Now, because we all use WhatsApp, it’s easy to get a hold of each other” (Participant 10).

“We have created a WhatsApp group for our things” (Participant 4).

“It hasn’t influenced us because sometimes we argue about things that are viral on social media” (Participant 7).

“When we post on social media about community issues, it unites us” (Participant 2).

“We don’t use social media much, so it hasn’t changed teamwork for me” (Participant 3).

Social media serves as a tool for coordination and a platform for communal interaction. Participants 4 and 10 stressed the relevance of WhatsApp groups as primary communication centres for speedy information transmission and cooperation.

Participants 7's worry about social media dispute shows the difficulties of maintaining online relationships. Participant 2 sees social media as a representation of teamwork around social concerns. Participant 3's minimal social media usage demonstrates variation in effect, determined by access and personal desire, demonstrating that social media was not uniformly incorporated into cooperation.

Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions uses social media for improving operational speed and awareness of tasks while leaving team organisation mostly unaltered. Employee comments about visibility, accountability, and communication via WhatsApp are aligned with social media in business, improving the coordination and knowledge transfer in teams (Eger, Kuckertz, and Berger, 2021). The employees' various levels of use of communication tools indicate that the social media presence and digital self-assuredness of employees likely limit the degree to which technology can support Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. This aligns with research regarding the negative effects of social media on the ability to work collaboratively (Kohnke and Gericke, 2020).

Bailey and Clarke (2022) focus on remote digital workers as a unit. Employees who use distracting digital content and social media for entertainment while working impede collaboration. This is what research suggests regarding workplace digital communication tools creating tensions (Wang, Yu, and Fesenmaier, 2021). This illustrates the extent to which digital media influences the collaborative performance of teams. The findings add to the literature, stating that, in the context of service-based organisations, social media positively impacts teamwork through operational coordination.

4.4.4 Sub Theme 2.4: Influence on Workplace Atmosphere and Morale

Interview data shows that social media use has a big effect on the mood at work and on the happiness of the people who work at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. Most employees see social media to connect with others and make the workplace a friendlier, more open place to be. This has a good effect on the overall work atmosphere. Sharing events at work and at play on social media sites was often linked to higher happiness because it makes employees feel like they belong and are part of a group. Restrictive social media rules, on the other hand, make people more cautious and hesitant to share personal or work-related views online. Some participants said they felt like they were being watched or policed, which can make it hard for people to talk to each other and could lower confidence. Despite this, using social media was said to boost output by making it easier to communicate and coordinate tasks more quickly, which was good for the work environment.

“Social media has made life a lot easier because now we can communicate much easier, and it makes us talk to each other better” (Participant 10).

“Sometimes it feels like you can’t post certain things, and you can’t talk about certain things, which was a bit restricting” (Participant 8).

“When we share pictures from company events on social media, it really lifts our spirits and brings us closer” (Participant 7).

“The policies make us more careful about what we post, and sometimes that makes us hesitate to speak freely” (Participant 2).

“Social media use has improved our productivity because communication was faster and we know exactly what to do” (Participant 4).

These samples show how social media affects workplace morale and environment. Social media improves workplace morale and connectedness by fostering interpersonal interactions. The cautiousness caused by monitoring programs suggests that stringent regulation may have detrimental effects. This conflict between connectedness and control impacts employees' experiences and views of social media usage in the office. The productivity gains demonstrate the real advantages of social media integration into business communication.

Recent research supports these findings. For instance, Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2021) claim that social media may boost workplace morale by promoting social connectedness and support. Smith et al. (2022) argue that restricting social media rules may lower staff involvement and fear of speech, which can damage organisational atmosphere. Lee and Park (2023) found that social media usage boosts productivity, especially in real-time communication and cooperation. These studies show the multifaceted effect of social media on working climate and morale, supporting the idea that businesses must combine regulation with open communication to maximise benefits. Management must carefully create social media rules that safeguard organisational interests without restricting employee speech and social engagement.

At Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, the employees' perceptions about the social media policies, instead of the actual use of social media, seem to affect employee morale. The perceived social media use as a channel of communication and connection has good emotional and social support that corresponds with research confirming that social media interactions positively affect employee morale and cohesion (Croucher and Cronn-Mills, 2021). However, when social media policies are viewed as surveillance, employees become quiet and lose their informal communication, which

corresponds to research that documents the paradox of employee surveillance, trust (or lack of it), and therefore, no engagement (Smith, Jones and Taylor, 2022). Additionally, social media policies are said to negatively affect employee psychological safety, which aligns with the research that documents an inverse relationship of unambiguous managerial expectations and the emotional and behavioral climate of employees (Lee, Kim and Park, 2023). The information highlights that employees from developing economies, like Murire, Nyatsanza, and Ngirande (2020), who are being surveilled, and those concerned with privacy and monitoring, show greater surveillance sensitivity. This aligns with the research that documents an increasing tendency when social media policies are perceived to be more protective than punitive. Employees appeared to have more social motivation when social media policies were created to avoid controlling employees and to encourage professionalism and social media rapport.

The reasoning suggests that the significance of the policies is on par with the communication of the policies. The results validate the reasoning provided for the control of social media. The justification is that protecting the relevant organisational concerns and enhancing the social autonomy of the employees will positively influence the emotional climate at work.

4.5 Major Theme 3: Impact of Current Social Media Policy on Employees'

Social Media Use

4.5.1 Sub Theme 3.1: Policy Effect on Employee Behaviour Online

In response to the question, *“How has the current social media policy influenced your personal use of social media platforms?”* the findings reveal that employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions regulate their online behaviour through self-censorship.

Many participants indicated that they carefully manage their posts to prevent potential conflict with organisational rules. This behaviour demonstrates an acute awareness of the organisation's image and the consequences of associating personal content with company reputation. Previous studies confirm that organisational policies often lead employees to engage in digital boundary management, balancing personal freedom with professional accountability (Smith & Anderson, 2021). Scholars such as Patel et al. (2022) highlight that policies exert strong influence on employees' online self-presentation, while Jones and Silver (2021) show that policy clarity reduces reputational risks but also narrows avenues for self-expression. Similarly, Lee et al. (2023) observe that regulation significantly reshapes digital practices across diverse cultural settings. These patterns indicate that self-censorship was not only defensive but also adaptive, reflecting employees' attempts to reconcile professional expectations with personal agency.

"I always think twice before posting anything because it can affect both my image and the company's image" (Participant 2).

"The policy makes me filter what I say, so I don't post anything that could cause trouble for me or the company" (Participant 7).

"Sometimes I feel like I can't freely express myself because of these rules" (Participant 8).

"You have to be careful with everything you put online, knowing it could be used against you" (Participant 4).

"The fear of disciplinary action means I often self-censor what I would otherwise share" (Participant 9).

The above responses highlight a culture of caution where employees internalise the policy as part of their day-to-day digital conduct. The data further show that self-censorship stems primarily from fear of disciplinary action, with some employees equating online openness with professional risk. Murire et al. (2020) argue that digital surveillance contributes to this climate of fear, particularly in developing economies where workplace policies are often rigidly enforced. Thompson et al. (2023) found that such restrictions negatively affect employee morale, while Brown and Green (2021) emphasise that strict rules blur personal-professional boundaries, generating resentment. Conversely, Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2021) demonstrate that supportive social media practices can enhance workplace atmosphere and engagement. Taken together, these perspectives indicate that Bokamoso's current policy, while effective in safeguarding organisational image, may simultaneously erode trust and openness. As the researcher, it was evident that the challenge lies in balancing reputational protection with cultivating a participatory organisational culture where employees feel both safe and empowered online.

While examining the nature of employee self-censorship at Bokamoso, the observation might suggest a negotiated model involving a relative balancing of the safeguarding of the organisation's reputation, and the protection of the individual's digital identity, as opposed to mere disengagement. Staff members tend to limit their comments online owing to the potential for negative organisational outcomes that may endanger the organisation (Schaarschmidt and Walsh, 2020). Employees also modify their online actions due to the feeling of being watched (in developing economies, this concern is more prevalent and is linked to employment risk) (Murire, Nyatsanza and Ngirande, 2020). When employees are conscious about being watched, the anticipation of less digital control and more trust in the workplace is likely to be lower,

as is the expectation of less digital control (Smith, Jones and Taylor, 2022). In some cases, authors suggest that there may be a correct balance of policy elements that may enhance the expected online behaviour in situations where there is little support for the individual's online and free expression (Lee, Kim and Park, 2023). Bokamoso employees noted that, when self-censoring, the concern for the organisational reputation acted as a motivating factor, and a few employees mentioned that self-censorship was necessary to think through some issues. The author noted self-censorship, in this case, as a form of self-imposed restriction to the expression of one's online self.

This adds to the literature by proposing that social media deployment in the service industry may protect the organisation's brand by limiting the social media participation of employees. The findings in this case strengthen the need to assess the social media employment policy's effectiveness beyond mere compliance to include employee trust and the disproportionate digital control of the workforce.

4.5.2 Sub Theme 3.2: Policy Implementation and Enforcement

In response to the question, *"How was the organisation's social media policy communicated and enforced?"* the findings suggest that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions faces major challenges in implementing its rules consistently. Most employees reported that the policy exists but was seldom explained or actively monitored, resulting in widespread uncertainty. Participants noted that disciplinary actions are rare but highly visible when they occur, producing an atmosphere of unpredictability. This was consistent with Murire et al. (2020), who emphasise that inconsistent policy enforcement weakens employee trust in governance mechanisms. Similarly, Davis et al. (2022) found that unclear communication of digital rules reduces

respect for organisational authority. Johnson and Peters (2022) highlight that comprehensive training was crucial to embedding compliance in daily routines, yet Bokamoso employees reported never receiving structured workshops. Lee et al. (2023) further argue that irregular enforcement fosters a culture of suspicion rather than clarity. Collectively, the results reveal that weak communication and absence of training make the policy ineffective, and in turn, employees operate within blurred boundaries between personal and professional online conduct.

“We have a policy but it was given last month and not really implemented yet” (Participant 1).

“Disciplinary actions don’t happen often, but when they do, everyone notices and gets worried” (Participant 7).

“No one really explains the policy properly, so we’re left guessing what was allowed and what was not” (Participant 5).

“We have not had any training or workshops about how to use social media at work” (Participant 6).

“Sometimes I don’t know if the rules apply to personal accounts or just work ones” (Participant 9).

The responses demonstrate that employees perceive the organisation’s social media rules as ambiguous, selectively enforced, and disconnected from practical guidance. Scholars such as Smith and Anderson (2021) caution that poorly implemented policies undermine employee engagement, while Brown and Green (2021) stress that weak boundary management erodes morale. Feeney and Porumbescu (2021) similarly find that the absence of ethical communication frameworks increases risks of misuse. Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2021) add that clear and continuous dialogue was critical

for sustaining workplace cohesion in digital contexts. At Bokamoso, confusion over whether rules apply to personal accounts reflects inadequate consultation and communication during policy roll-out. As the researcher, it was evident that enforcement gaps weaken both organisational culture and climate by leaving employees to navigate uncertainty without institutional support. The evidence underscores the need for a comprehensive framework that combines clarity, consistent enforcement, and regular training to embed digital policies as part of workplace norms rather than as symbolic documents.

Most importantly though, we can argue that most of the policy implementation challenges at Bokamoso are shaping employee responsive expectations of organisational equity, as well as trust, in the governance, particularly, beyond the effects of compliance. It is stated, the more policy communication is inconsistent, the more employees' trust in the leadership declines, and the more they rely on informal structures (Jones and Silver, 2021). The literature shows that employees are not sufficiently trained, and that this brings about policy misinterpretation and, in the extreme, renders policy ignorance (Johnson and Peters, 2022). Also, it is stated that the more the policies are complied to, and the more they are communicated, the more employees are willing to adhere to them (Davis, Smith and Thompson, 2022). It has been documented that in managerial unclarity and lack of policy enforcement generate negative stress, and the unclarity of expectations of the latitude of deviance (Thompson, Lee and Chen, 2023). Bokamoso employees indicated that while use of everyday policy remediations is not frequent, when they do, they are very glaring. This appears to further reinforce fear compliance more than real understanding of the policies.

Some employees pointed out a gap in the communication of the policies and whether they cover one's personal social media profiles.

This shows that the value of having a policy is diminished without mechanisms to implement the policy. The researcher is suggesting that Bokamoso's policy is a governance document in name only; that it is not treated as a policy that is embedded in the organisation.

This contributes to existing scholarship by demonstrating the weak enforcement of informal digital norms, as they develop in tandem with employee expectations. The presence of a policy framework that integrates communication, training, enforcement, and policy in a balanced manner to promote a sustainable culture of digital workplace is once again validated.

4.5.2 Suggestions for Policy Improvement

A close look at the interview data for this sub-theme shows that most of the workers agree that social media rules need to be made clearer and communicated better. Participants kept asking for policy information to be shared in a clearer and easier-to-find way, with regular notes to make sure that all staff are aware and up to date. Many people think that the current rules are not clear and are not always enforced the same way, which causes misunderstanding and uneven use. Also, workers made it clear that they wanted official training programs to teach staff how to use social media properly.

They stressed that this kind of instruction would encourage responsible behaviour and cut down on accidental breaches. Participants think this training was necessary to close knowledge gaps and encourage a culture of following rules while still respecting each person's freedom. There was also a clear call for less tight implementation. Employees want rules that respect people's right to privacy on social media and don't

put too many limits or spying on them. Lastly, most participants suggested that companies should run their own social media sites or official lines of communication to centralise work-related messages. This would cut down on the use of personal accounts for business communication and reduce the chance of disagreements.

“Management must clearly communicate the policy and remind us regularly so we don’t forget” (Participant 3).

“Training sessions would really help us understand what we can and cannot post” (Participant 6).

“The policy was too strict; they should give us more freedom on our personal social media” (Participant 8).

“I think the company should create official pages where we can post work-related stuff, not on our personal accounts” (Participant 1).

“Less harsh enforcement would make employees feel more trusted and less scared” (Participant 5).

These extracts show workers' practical and psychological policy implementation demands. Clarity and education enable workers to cooperate without feeling unfairly confined. Regular communication addresses concerns that policies are frequently “set and forgotten,” reducing their efficacy. Training was seen as an empowering technique that reduces worry about rules infractions. Reducing strictness and creating formal platforms indicate a preference for more supportive and organised structures that clearly define personal and professional limits. These proposals represent workers' desires for fair, transparent, and balanced policy settings that preserve corporate reputation and individual dignity.

Modern studies emphasise policy communication and social media governance training, which the evidence supports (Jones & Silver, 2021). Jones and Silver (2021) found that extensive training and policy revisions increased staff compliance and morale. Instead of stringent enforcement, Patel et al. (2022) recommend collaborative alternatives that include workers in policy creation to avoid opposition and distrust. Thompson and Lee (2023) suggest using corporate social media platforms for work-related communication to secure personal accounts and improve message management. These results complement the present research and recommend that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions should emphasise communication clarity, education, courteous enforcement, and official digital channels when improving policy. These approaches should improve adherence, minimise conflict, and improve company culture.

From an analytical perspective, the suggestions made by the staff of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions imply moving away from the conventional supervision and control model towards a governance framework defined by trust and communication, supplemented with digital tools. Social media policies will certainly be more effective if employees know and understand the policies, what behaviours are expected of them and the purpose of the organisation, rather than just signing the policies (Jones and Silver, 2021). In addition, most employees, especially after digital literacy training, tend to be more positive and to understand the digital world and the boundaries of their roles at work, reducing the chances of unintentional policy violations (Patel, Kumar and Saini, 2022). In addition, the indiscriminative enforcement of policies fosters poor morale and avoidance of communication at work (Smith, Jones and Taylor, 2022).

Smith and Wang (2023) explain how employees value automated digital communication because it allows the organisation to control the information flow while

keeping employee information confidential. Moreover, employees conveyed the need for 'consistency' for the rules to be applied the same way. This is consistent with Davis, Smith, and Thompson (2022) and other scholars who found that trust is undermined and rules misinterpreted when unevenly applied. From the employees' perspectives, these suggestions indicate that employees are not against the use of social media for surveillance purposes, but rather the social media regulatory framework. This further strengthens the study's assertion regarding how far the organisational culture and climate is influenced by the employees' feelings and experiences about the rules. Hence, the findings contribute to the literature by demonstrating that in service-dominant organisations, the presence of clear policies, effective training, and minimal communicative disruption are indicators of cultural integration rather than compliance mechanisms.

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

The retrieved results align with the project goals which were shaped by the organisational culture, communication climate, and control of digital maladaptive behavior theories. Evidence relevant to RO1 suggests that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees view social media, and particularly WhatsApp, as integral to operational communication. It enables the coordination of activities, as well as real-time updates. Communication and messaging tools are essential for coordination and communication in smaller firms, particularly those in developing economies (Churchill and Wamuyu, 2023). Employees' unease regarding social media use in the workplace stems from organisational surveillance and control. They tend to regulate their digital behavior in response to a perceived threat to their company's reputation or regulatory compliance (Schaarschmidt and Walsh, 2020). In the context of Uses and Gratifications, the social media in this case serve the function of mitigating

organisational risk (Oksa et al, 2021). Thus, employees' ambivalence to the social media use policies in the workplace reflects the paradox of operational simplicity and behavioral control.

Employees' digital reluctance and ambiguity may stem from vague policies (Jones and Silver, 2021). There is evidence supporting organisational communication climate and related theories. In this scenario, communication tools (expressiveness) influenced employees' behavioral interactivity and disposition. The perception of the employees, in this scenario, was that policies termed protective were support policies. On the other hand, some employees experienced the policies as restrictive of their self-expression. This demonstrates that the perception of fairness and justice among employees is related to the acceptance of digital governance. More regulation, in the researcher's view, is needed, as social media-psycho and operational social balance in the workplace is sensitive. The impact of social media on the workplace climate and culture can be referenced in the discussion related to RO2. By enhancing team cohesiveness, social media also improves workplace culture, but it can strain interpersonal relations. Findings show that WhatsApp groups improve real time coordination and problem solving, as well as shift management among team members.

According to Eger, Kuckertz & Berger (2021), enterprise social media improves collaboration and understanding of joint responsibilities in dispersed settings. Eger, Kuckertz & Berger (2021) also state that enhancing informal social networks through social media may increase the feeling of belongingness of employees. Strengthened social ties in the workplace due to social media also indicates the workplace social

media's effectiveness in enhancing shared understanding and coordination (Bailey and Clarke, 2022). Some employees, however, noted that social media can also lead to unwanted implications, such as workplace gossip and social media threads generating unconstructive criticism about the workplace. In the case of workplace social media, social media collaboration and social media social tensions, particularly the undesirable consequence of blurring the social and professional communication divides, are likely to occur (Wang, Yu and Fesenmaier, 2021); they are likely to occur simultaneously. Regarding the communication climate, the findings indicate that workplace digital communication can either facilitate or impede the interpersonal relationships of employees. Some employees, however, noted that they exercise greater self-restraint in their online communication due to perceived enforcement of accountability.

How people communicate and self-express in more constrained ways possibly due to perceived observation (Davis, Smith and Thompson, 2022). Within the paradigm of theoretical integration, the theory of organisational culture configuration explains that the configuration of workplace structures centres on the dominant the dominant communication patterns of the workplace, which in turn, determines the behavioural and interaction norms of the workplace. The results, therefore, confirmed that social media at the workplace primarily influences the workplace culture in a communicational way, rather than a technological way. From the researcher's perspective, to some extent, the organisational communication policies ought to be adjusted in order to safeguard the organisational image while simultaneously promoting integration and trust among the teams. In relation to the social media policy and the online behaviour of employees, a through the process of self-management and conscious digital behaviour, particularly in terms of expressing and sharing

personal perspectives, employees pointed out that they practice self-restraint in their professional posting and professional framing of posts that connect them to the organisation, to themselves, and to their personal life. Studies show that employees engage in less risky digital behaviour in order to safeguard the reputation of their organisation and their job (Alnuaimi and Al Khaja, 2022). Employees, in this case, reported that they have no clear guidelines on the policy's enforcement and acceptable behaviour. The ambiguity of digital governance and the lack of confidence in digital governance are compounded by the absence of policy enforcement (Smith and Anderson, 2021). Moreover, some employees pointed out that the digital self-restraint they practice tends to be higher than what would be expected because the absence of digital restraint and the infrequent application of the rule mean they have to self-regulate their digital activities more than they would otherwise. It has been shown that employees do not find any increase in adherence as a result of training or any type of fear-based workplace behavioural control (Thompson et al., 2023). Social media policies that are easier for employees to understand, as well as training employees, are likely to result in fewer issues of noncompliance and violations (Johnson and Peters, 2022). These findings are consistent with the theoretical study of the framework of trust and communication within the organisation, where employees feel most at ease when a framework is in place, and when the organisation is willing to offer the needed support.

The researcher appreciates that policies are designed to protect the organisation, but policies, along with training, must be more effective in articulating the details of the policy, and in helping employees to develop their digital confidence and responsibility. The investigation has proven its success and findings show that the social media policy from Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions demonstrates the organisational shifts in

digital governance continuum in relation to global changes. TikTok as a means of collaboration and a behavioural risk space, that the socially optimum regulation of the risk space must be managed. There is a need, however, for social media policies to be more protective of the organisational reputation and less protective of the operational discourse, the communication rights of organisational members, and the rights of Thornthwaite (2020) to speak. There is, however, some proof that policy communication and employee training, to some extent, resulted in compliance and decreased obstruction to the policies (Patel, Kumar and Saini, 2022). There is some proof that social media policies and organisational culture affect organisational justice and employee trust in the organisation (Lee, Kim, and Park, 2023). The research has provided primary research evidence from a labour-intensive cleaning company, which is social media governance research from an underwriting social media governance field. It has been shown that social media policies belong to the management of the communication climate and not just the management of compliance. This illustrates the study's contribution to workplace communications and digital governance.

4.7 Summary of Findings

This chapter explored how employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions perceive social media regulation and its implications for organisational culture and climate. The findings revealed that social media was widely used by employees, particularly WhatsApp, as a key communication tool that enables fast information sharing, coordination of tasks, and stronger workplace connections. Employees recognised its value in facilitating collaboration and teamwork, but they also noted challenges such as distraction during working hours and concerns about organisational restrictions. These dual perspectives highlighted the tension between social media as an enabler of productivity and its potential to disrupt workflows.

The study further showed that employees expressed mixed attitudes toward regulation. Some viewed social media rules as necessary for protecting the company's professional image and reducing reputational risks, while others considered them restrictive and undermining of their personal freedom of expression. This ambivalence reflected broader uncertainties in balancing organisational needs with employee autonomy. Additionally, the results demonstrated that demographic factors such as age, educational background, and job role shaped how workers engaged with social media and interpreted the company's policies.

The findings also underscored the influence of social media on organisational culture and climate. On the positive side, it created opportunities for cohesion and trust-building, strengthening collective identity within the organisation. However, negative dynamics also emerged, such as the spread of misinformation and interpersonal conflicts triggered by inappropriate online interactions. Furthermore, restrictive policies often led to cautious self-monitoring among employees, which reduced openness in communication and sometimes lowered morale.

Finally, the analysis confirmed that Bokamoso's social media policy was poorly communicated, inconsistently enforced, and inadequately supported by training. Workers often self-censored due to uncertainty, while disciplinary actions, though rare, created a climate of fear. This demonstrated the need for clearer policies, consistent enforcement, and ongoing education to foster both compliance and employee empowerment.

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion of how social media usage and regulation affect workplace dynamics at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. The findings

confirm that social media plays a dual role: it strengthens communication, teamwork, and cohesion while also creating risks of distraction, misinformation, and tension between organisational control and employee freedom. These tensions highlight the complex nature of regulating social media in contemporary workplaces. By presenting both the positive and negative aspects, the chapter demonstrates the need for a balanced approach that safeguards corporate reputation without undermining employee engagement.

The chapter also demonstrated that perceptions of regulation are strongly influenced by the effectiveness of policy communication and enforcement. Employees were aware of the existence of a policy but uncertain about its scope and application, leading to inconsistent practices and self-censorship. The absence of structured training further limited employees' understanding of what was expected of them, creating confusion and undermining compliance. These findings reinforce the importance of transparent communication, consistent enforcement, and employee development in achieving effective workplace governance.

In line with the study's objectives, this chapter has drawn on empirical data to illustrate how regulation interacts with organisational culture and climate. The evidence highlights the role of social media in shaping workplace relationships and shows how policies must evolve to remain inclusive, clear, and responsive to digital realities. The results contribute to a growing body of literature on workplace social media governance by providing insights from a context that was often under-researched — the cleaning services industry.

Looking forward, the next chapter built upon these findings to provide overall conclusions, practical recommendations, and directions for future research. It

synthesises the study's contributions, outlines implications for management and employees, and identifies strategies that can enhance both compliance and organisational wellbeing.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the empirical investigation on Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees' social media use and regulation perceptions. Social media's complex role in workplace communication, policy implementation, and organisational culture and employee behaviour has been presented in earlier chapters. The present chapter summarises these findings and offers practical suggestions for strengthening social media governance in similar organisations. It also acknowledges study limitations and advises more research to grasp this fast-changing topic.

Social media integration in service companies has pros and cons, according to this study. WhatsApp and other social media let workers share knowledge and establish community. Social media rules can be restrictive or inconsistent, highlighting employee autonomy and organisational control difficulties. These interactions show the need for balanced regulatory regimes that promote transparency, trust, and diversity while protecting organisational interests and reputations.

Four essential sections make up this chapter. First, it reviews significant literature and empirical study findings, highlighting convergences and divergences that deepen theoretical and practical insights. Objectives include assessing employee social media use and policy control. The next part suggests policy communication, training, and enforcement. The chapter concludes with study limitations and recommendations for future research to keep workplace social media regulation current with technology and society. This chapter integrates rigorous qualitative data analysis with academic discourse to enrich digital workplace communication studies. It stresses the necessity for flexible, employee-focused social media rules in underexplored businesses like

cleaning. These strategies improve compliance, morale, and digital-age organisational effectiveness.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

5.2.1 Findings from the Literature Review

The literature on organisational social media use and regulation demonstrates a complex relationship between employee digital activity and management surveillance. Many experts agreed that social media was a powerful communication tool and can complicate organisational governance (Kietzmann et al., 2021). Faster information interchange and operational coordination boost workplace efficiency and cohesion (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). Social media's benefits and hazards in organisations are discussed in the literature. Ambivalence complicates Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions personnel views and actions on social media regulation.

Differences in demographic characteristics influence how employees use social media, shaping their perceptions and affecting their compliance with organisational policies. Gender, age, and education affect digital literacy and engagement (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). Younger workers reject restrictive regulations because they are more sociable and tech-savvy (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Older workers may prefer conventional communication and find social media legislation restrictive or unimportant (Lee & Lee, 2020). Men may focus on tasks, whereas women converse relationally and expressively online (Lee & Lee, 2020). Education impacts employees' understanding of social media's ethical, reputational, and policy implications (Jones & Silver, 2021). The demographics suggest that policy communication and training should be tailored to avoid miscommunication and promote equal engagement.

The literature emphasises clear, consistent social media policy communication and training to create employee compliance and attitudes. Effective policies balance organisational authority and employee autonomy to foster transparency and trust (Lam, 2016). Compliance and good perceptions of regulation rise with comprehensive social media training and regular communication (O'Connor, Schmidt & Drouin, 2020). Poorly communicated or inconsistent policies cause misunderstanding, non-compliance, and confidence loss (Smith & Anderson, 2021). Employees rely on informal norms and personal discretion to interpret and apply policies without formal training (Treem, Dailey, Pierce & Leonardi, 2020). Employee participation in policymaking and ongoing education programs that adapts to changing digital environments are recommended by the literature (Patel et al., 2022).

A major literature topic was the contradiction between company reputation and employee privacy. Social media policies help companies avoid reputation-damaging online wrongdoing (O'Connor et al., 2016). This motive often conflicts with employees' autonomy and work-life constraints (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Inaccurate policy phrasing and over monitoring might make people feel demoralised and resistant (Smith & Wang, 2023). Overly rigorous governance can limit employee input, trust, and working climate, according to Thompson et al. (2023). To balance these competing needs and foster mutual respect and understanding, nuanced policies that clearly define appropriate behaviour without compromising personal freedoms are needed (Lee, Kim & Park, 2023). Social media alters corporate culture and climate in complex ways. Klonke and Gericke (2020) found that real-time social media communication and collaboration promote teamwork, coordination, and knowledge sharing. Connectivity fosters community and belonging, which was crucial for strong company culture (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). Personal content on social media can cause problems

and blur professional-personal boundaries (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). Good policies and cultural management maintain workplace harmony and alleviate relational strain and tension (Thorntwaite, 2020; Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2021). This dual nature requires businesses to harness social media's benefits while setting clear guidelines to avoid risks.

Technology affordances, organisational aims, and employee experiences influence modern workplace social media use and regulation, according to research. The body of research views social media as both a communication tool and a risk that requires monitoring. Demographics, company culture, and policy communication and enforcement affect employee conduct. Balanced, transparent, and participatory policy frameworks that respect employee autonomy and organisational interests are supported by research (Van Zoonen et al., 2017). These insights assist Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions assess this study's empirical findings and advise digital workplace regulation.

5.2.2 Findings from the Empirical Study

5.2.2.1 Dual Role of Social Media: Communication and Conflict

Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions employees have complex perspectives on social media and regulation. Social media was ambivalent as both a communication tool and a source of diversion or conflict. Employees highlighted WhatsApp as crucial for operational coordination and fast information dissemination, validating research on social media's role in real-time workplace communication and collaboration. However, social media can perpetuate interpersonal problems, especially when personal content enters professional settings, supporting research on its paradoxical effects in

companies (Wang, Yu & Fesenmaier, 2021). The study indicates that workplace social media management requires solutions that balance utility with relational risks.

5.2.2.2 Social Media Policy: Awareness, Enforcement, and Training

Understanding social media policies was difficult for most employees due to inconsistent communication and informal guidance. Effective policy communication is essential for compliance (Jones & Silver, 2021). While some employees acknowledged the need for regulation to protect company reputation, others felt policies violated personal freedoms or encouraged surveillance (Alnuaimi & Al Khaja, 2022; Brown & Green, 2021). The absence of formal social media training further compounded confusion, highlighting the need for structured education and clear guidelines (O'Connor, Schmidt, & Drouin; Johnson & Peters, 2022). Inconsistent enforcement and ambiguous sanctions reduced the legitimacy of governance and compliance, underlining the importance of systematic and transparent implementation.

5.2.2.3 Impact on Workplace Culture and Recommendations for Improvement

Social media had both positive and negative effects on workplace culture. Interaction promoted connectivity, communication efficiency, and morale, yet personal content spillover occasionally caused conflicts (Bailey & Clarke, 2022; Van Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Vliegenthart, 2017). Employees self-censored online content to align with organisational expectations, balancing discretion and freedom. Recommendations for improvement included clearer policies, frequent communication, balanced enforcement, structured training, and respect for privacy and work-life boundaries (Patel, Kumar, & Saini, 2022; Thompson & Lee, 2023; Brown & Green, 2021). These measures could enhance compliance, trust, and organisational effectiveness, while reducing digital conflicts and surveillance-related anxiety.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The employee perceptions of social media use and regulation at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions revealed that it boosts workplace connectivity and efficiency. Employees actively use WhatsApp to coordinate daily tasks, share updates, and streamline communication, which has strengthened teamwork and operational responsiveness. However, the same platforms also introduced challenges related to blurred personal and professional boundaries, as well as occasional interpersonal conflicts. These findings confirm that social media plays a dual role within the organisation—on one hand promoting collaboration and cohesion, and on the other creating tensions that require careful management through balanced workplace policies.

A significant conclusion from this study was the lack of consistent awareness and understanding of the company's social media policy among employees. Many participants reported uncertainty about whether rules applied equally to personal and professional accounts, while others admitted they had only a superficial knowledge of the policy itself. This lack of clarity was compounded by the absence of formal training or structured communication, leading employees to rely on informal practices or personal judgement when engaging online. Such gaps reduce compliance, increase the risk of misinterpretation, and weaken trust in organisational governance.

Another key insight relates to the issue of fairness and autonomy in regulation. While employees generally acknowledged the importance of rules to safeguard the company's reputation, many expressed concerns that the policies felt intrusive, overly restrictive, or inconsistently enforced. Disciplinary measures, though rare, were perceived as highly visible and often created fear rather than learning. This inconsistency discouraged open digital engagement and reinforced self-censorship, which in turn had negative implications for morale and workplace culture. The study

therefore highlights the importance of striking a balance between organisational control and employee independence to maintain a culture of trust and openness.

Finally, the findings underline that sustainable social media governance requires clear communication, regular training, transparent enforcement, and sensitivity to employee diversity. Social media in the workplace can strengthen relationships, enhance communication, and build a sense of belonging when managed inclusively. However, if left poorly regulated, it can just as easily contribute to conflict, disengagement, and mistrust. Employees themselves recommended practical steps such as clearer guidelines, more frequent updates, the creation of official communication channels, and inclusive policy development. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that adaptive, transparent, and participatory governance structures are essential for leveraging the benefits of social media while minimising its risks in modern workplace settings.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

5.4.1 Enhance Communication and Clarity of Social Media Policies

This study revealed that many employees at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions were either unaware of the existence of a social media policy or uncertain about its scope and application. Some participants admitted they had only received vague information, while others noted that rules were never properly explained. This lack of clarity resulted in confusion, inconsistent compliance, and reliance on informal practices. To address these challenges, the organisation should prioritise clear and continuous communication of its social media policy. Policies should be written in simple, accessible language and communicated across all levels of the company to ensure shared understanding. Beyond distributing written documents, management should use staff briefings, digital reminders, and visual aids to reinforce key points and answer

employee questions. Providing open platforms for feedback also allowed workers to raise concerns and contribute to refining the policy. Enhancing clarity and communication in this way reduced misunderstandings, encourage compliance, and build employee confidence in the company's governance structures.

5.4.2 Implement Comprehensive and Continuous Training Programs

The research strongly recommends that Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions provide staff with ongoing digital literacy and social media governance training. Most employees received informal or limited assistance, resulting in inconsistent policy adherence and misunderstandings about permissible use. Johnson and Peters (2022) stress the relevance of training in improving worker compliance and reducing breaches. O'Connor, Schmidt, and Drouin (2020) show that formal training enhances employees' confidence and competence in complex digital communication norms. Customised interactive training for employees' educational backgrounds and technological skills maximises efficacy (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Thornthwaite (2020) stresses the importance of training that balances organisational authority and employee autonomy to foster acceptance rather than alienation. Real-life case studies, role plays, and scenario-based learning boost training and comprehension. The survey found that ongoing, inclusive training was essential for creating a responsible digital culture and encouraging employees to use social media appropriately.

5.4.3 Foster a Balanced Policy Framework Respecting Autonomy and Control

Given social media policies' varied reputations for protection and restriction, Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions should adapt its policy framework to balance organisational control and personnel autonomy. Brown and Green (2021) warn that intrusive policies can impair employee morale and engagement, while Alnuaimi and Al

Khaja (2022) demonstrate how restrictive governance can limit employee input. Lee, Kim, and Park (2023) argue that well-designed policies can protect organisational interests without reducing personal freedoms. Policymaking should include employee feedback to achieve justice and reasonableness (Jones & Silver, 2021). Personal and professional social media use must be separated for privacy (Smith & Wang, 2023). Participation and transparency may increase policy legitimacy, trust, and voluntary compliance, which lasts longer than fear or coercion.

5.4.4 Develop Official Digital Communication Channels

According to the survey, employees prefer specialist organisational platforms to separate business and personal social media accounts. This selection suggests Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions centralise workplace messaging using corporate WhatsApp groups or intranet forums. Bailey and Clarke (2022) stress that dedicated platforms enable digital collaborative action and reduce personal use. In unregulated social media use, formal collaborative approaches improve information accuracy and reduce misinterpretation hazards, according to Kohnke and Gericke (2020). Platforms can improve professional discourse, privacy, and work-life balance (Oksa, Pahkin & Poikkeus, 2021). Management can provide timely updates, policy reminders, and training materials through these channels, boosting organisational communication. Therefore, formalising digital communication channels promotes message management, inclusivity, and conflict prevention from mixed personal and professional social media interactions.

5.4.5 Strengthen Consistent Policy Enforcement Mechanisms

Improving social media policy enforcement was key. Employees reported inconsistent disciplinary methods and unclear punishments for violations, undermining policy

confidence and creating an unpredictable environment. Inconsistent enforcement undermines organisational norms, Smith and Anderson (2021) find. Compliance and justice require predictable and transparent disciplinary processes (Lee et al., 2023). The report proposes Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions communicate clear enforcement processes to all employees to build trust and deter policy infractions. The organisation should also consider progressive discipline to balance punishment and learning and rehabilitation (Jones & Silver, 2021). This reduces harshness while keeping standards. Implementing enforcement measures alongside communication and training strengthens social media governance and company culture.

5.4.6 Promote a Culture of Trust and Openness

Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions should encourage social media trust and transparency to balance monitoring and staff morale. The study found that surveillance hindered employee self-expression, causing self-censorship and disengagement. Thompson, Lee, and Chen (2023) suggest trust-building to reduce the psychological effects of social media restrictions on morale. Free communication empowers but requires digital citizenship, according to Anderson (2020). Engaging employees in policy debates, addressing their concerns, and providing feedback helps develop trust (Jones & Silver, 2021). Monitoring scope and rationale openness reduces anxiety and distrust (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). A culture of policy compliance, organisational dedication, and inventiveness makes social media governance collaborative rather than coercive.

5.4.7 Address Demographic and Digital Literacy Diversity

The study found that employee age, education, and employment level affect social media use and attitudes. Patel, Kumar, and Saini (2022) suggest employee-specific

digital literacy programs to ensure equal awareness of norms and expectations. Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2020) say age influences digital tool comfort and engagement. Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions should target these demographics with its training and assistance. Basic seminars for non-technical staff and advanced courses for experts are possible. The organisation addresses diversity to promote inclusiveness, decrease digital inequities, and improve policy. The digital workplace demands differentiated approaches to encourage all employees to engage fully and confidently.

5.4.8 Monitor and Evaluate Social Media Policy Impact

The research advises Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions to routinely assess its social media strategies and interventions. Continuous feedback loops reveal new issues, adapt rules to new technologies, and meet employee demands. Feeney and Porumbescu (2021) recommend ongoing ethical evaluation of digital communication governance for relevance and fairness. Johnson and Peters (2022) recommend combining qualitative and quantitative data to show how behaviour and morale are affected. Regular staff polls, focus groups, and policy compliance checks provide information. This flexible approach makes social media governance responsive, supportive, and aligned with business goals. Governance must include monitoring and assessment for successful and adaptive social media management.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

5.5.1 Scope and Sample Size Constraints

This study was limited in scope as it focused only on Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions, a privately owned cleaning company operating within the service sector in the Lejweleputswa District of the Free State Province, South Africa. While this provided valuable insights into employee perceptions within a small, labour-intensive

organisation, the narrow focus restricts the wider applicability of the findings. The cleaning sector has unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics that may not reflect the realities of larger corporate environments, public sector institutions, or knowledge-intensive industries. The study was also constrained by a small sample size of ten participants, which, although sufficient for a qualitative exploration, limited the diversity of views captured.

Including multiple cases, such as public sector cleaning enterprises or companies in related service industries, could have provided opportunities for comparison and enriched the analysis. Broader, multi-sectoral studies with larger samples would therefore generate more representative findings and allow for stronger generalisations. Nonetheless, the focus on a single organisation enabled a deep and detailed exploration of issues that may have been overlooked in larger surveys.

5.5.2 Reliance on Self-Reported Data and Potential Bias

Semi-structured interview data may be influenced by social desirability and memory-related limitations. Because social media surveillance and disciplinary procedures are sensitive topics, participants may have altered their views to align with organisational expectations or to avoid possible repercussions (Alnuaimi & Al Khaja, 2022). Employees in digital workplaces often balance openness with caution, which can influence the candour of their responses (Brown & Green, 2021). It was also possible that individuals with particularly strong opinions about social media policies were more likely to participate, which may have skewed the findings towards more polarised perspectives (Jones & Silver, 2021). Additionally, the interviewer's phrasing and tone could have subtly shaped how participants chose to respond (Feeney & Porumbescu, 2021). While these factors present potential biases, the study applied anonymous

coding and reflective thematic analysis to minimise distortion and ensure that conclusions remained credible and grounded in participant experiences.

5.5.3 Temporal and Technological Dynamics

Another drawback was social media and workplace digital communication's quick evolution. Policies and employee perceptions recorded during data gathering may become outdated as platforms, features, and organisational practises change (Thornthwaite, 2020). New social media technologies or WhatsApp updates could change how employees use these platforms for work or socialising. Additionally, changing data privacy and digital rights laws may affect organisational social media governance, rendering current findings obsolete (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). Perception and policy efficacy changes over time could be tracked using longitudinal research. However, the study's snapshot technique captures key aspects and problems for comprehending social media governance complications.

5.5.4 Absence of Quantitative Triangulation

Qualitative techniques prohibit statistical study of workforce views and behaviours, another drawback. Surveys and other quantitative measures can validate and generalise qualitative themes, offering more data on social media policy effects (Tijunaitis, Jeske & Shultz, 2019). Triangulation improves research credibility and provides a more comprehensive view in mixed-methods techniques (Jones & Silver, 2021). Quantitative data could show how many employees feel monitored versus how supportive policies are. Without this dimension, the study's empirical breadth was limited, but rich qualitative data provides in-depth insights. Future research could use concurrent mixed methods to combine qualitative and quantitative strengths.

5.5.5 Organisational Context Specificity

Finally, the organisational context of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions limits the transferability of evidence. The cleaning sector differs considerably from knowledge-intensive or technologically advanced enterprises, particularly in terms of operational routines, employment arrangements, and the generally lower provision of formal digital training (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Organisations in business, education, or healthcare sectors with distinct workplace cultures and advanced digital infrastructures may not reflect the informal communication styles, peer-enforced norms, or ad hoc policy implementation observed here (Anderson, 2020). Therefore, the findings are most relevant to organisations with characteristics comparable to Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions such as labour-intensive firms with varied employment statuses and limited digital governance capacity rather than being widely applicable across all industries. Companies operating in similar contexts could replicate the study to gain more nuanced insights into how sectoral conditions influence social media governance and compliance.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Studies

Future studies regulations should cover more companies and industries. This would help us understand how organisational cultures and operational environments affect social media policy attitudes and behaviours (Bailey & Clarke, 2022). Knowledge-intensive sectors like banking and healthcare may have different policy consequences and employee experiences than service-based sectors like cleaning or manufacturing (Patel, Kumar & Saini, 2022). Cross-sectoral studies could permit comparisons to find universal themes and sector-specific subtleties, improving organisational communication governance theory and practice. Social media is employed in diverse workplaces, thus such research could inform legislation.

In the fast-changing digital ecosystem, longitudinal studies are essential to analyse employee attitudes and social media use. Social media, organisational policy, and external regulations affect employee behaviour and culture in various ways (Thorntwaite, 2020). A longitudinal design might track digital literacy, policy adherence, and monitoring's psychological effects, providing further data on adaptation and resistance. It would also enable analysis of how training programmes and policy changes effect employee morale, productivity, and compliance (Johnson & Peters, 2022). Modern workplace social media governance patterns can be understood using such studies.

Mixed-methods study using qualitative and quantitative methods was another option. This study used qualitative interviews for in-depth insights, but quantitative surveys could measure the prevalence and severity of specific beliefs and behaviours across broader employee populations (Tijunaitis, Jeske & Shultz, 2019). Surveys could evaluate self-censorship, perceived surveillance, and digital boundary management to complement qualitative themes. These methodologies improve findings' robustness and generalisability and provide a more holistic view of social media regulation's organisational impact (Jones & Silver, 2021).

Cultural and gender variables should be studied to see how they affect social media use and regulation. The literature shows how cultural norms and gendered communication patterns influence employees' digital actions and policy views (Lee & Lee, 2020). This study did not fully address these elements. Cross-cultural comparative research could examine how privacy, hierarchy, and expressive values affect social media policy adoption and compliance across national or organisational contexts (Brown & Green, 2021). Gender-sensitive research could show how regulation and monitoring affect men and women differently, guiding more equal policy

(Patel et al., 2022). Addressing these gaps would improve theory and inclusive organisational strategies.

Organisational power structures and hierarchy should also be studied in social media governance. Employee rank, managerial oversight, and policy enforcement affect digital monitoring experiences and attitudes (Van Zoonen & Rice, 2020). Studies could examine how leadership styles, decision-making authority, and organisational justice affect social media fairness and autonomy. These parameters may disclose methods that reduce or increase digital boundary and control tensions (Davis, Smith & Thompson, 2022). Unpacking power dynamics would improve policy design and implementation and increase organisational trust and cooperation.

Finally, researching technical advancements and workplace social media regulation was worthwhile. AI-driven monitoring, automated compliance checks, and privacy-enhancing technologies are changing how companies manage employee digital behaviour (Murire, Nyatsanza & Ngirande, 2020). Such technologies could be studied for their ethical, practical, and psychological effects on personnel and organisational culture. Studies could examine whether automation decreases prejudice, enhances transparency, or increases surveillance and control. Understanding the pros and cons of integrating modern technologies into social media governance could help organisations balance efficacy and employee rights. This approach would focus future study on digital innovation and organisational behaviour.

5.7 Final Remarks

This study examined Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions' complex link between employee attitudes, social media use, and organisational control. Social media can improve communication and collaboration but can cause conflict and control. Employees use

self-censorship, deliberate involvement, and informal norms to navigate these dynamics under variable policy clarity and enforcement. Nuance enhances digital governance discourse in modern organisations (Alnuaimi & Al Khaja, 2022).

The study emphasises clear, inclusive, and adaptive social media policies that respect employee autonomy and organisational interests. Continuous training and transparent communication foster governance confidence and compliance rather than fear and opposition. Context-sensitive methods that account for age, education, tenure, and culture are needed due to population diversity. These findings support digital border management and organisational openness studies affecting managers and policymakers (Thornthwaite, 2020).

The qualitative technique and single organisation focus limited the research but also opens openings for further inclusive studies. Academic study of shifting digital landscapes and workplace relations was encouraged. In increasingly digital workplaces, social media administration requires balancing power, trust, and independence, according to the study. Last, businesses must manage employee digital lives with agility and empathy (Thompson, Lee & Chen, 2023).

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – Participant Informed Consent Declaration



Central University of
Technology, Free State

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(To be signed by research participant/s)

Project Title: Employee Perceptions of Social Media Regulation and its Impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company.

Mr. Lerato John Nkhahle from the Department of Communications Sciences, Central University Technology (CUT) has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

The purpose of this study was to explore how employees perceive organisational regulations on social media use and to examine the ways in which these perceptions influence workplace culture and climate. By focusing on both office-based and field workers within a cleaning company, the study seeks to understand how social media regulation affects employees' attitudes, behaviours, and interactions. The aim was to generate insights that can inform organisational communication strategies and support effective corporate reputation management.

1. CUT has granted ethical clearance to this research project, **CUT/REIC 2025/000502**, and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the CUT Research Ethics office at (REIC@cut.ac.za).
2. By participating in this research project, I will be contributing towards a better understanding of how employees perceive social media regulation and its impact on the workplace. Basically, the study will help generate insights that can assist organisations in improving their social media policies, fostering a positive workplace culture and climate, and enhancing organisational communication."
3. I will participate in the project by providing relevant information as per the research.

4. My participation was entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
5. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. There will be no compensation to participants at all.
6. The following risks are associated with my participation: There will be no risks involved in the research.
7. The Researcher intends to publish the research results in the form of **Master's Dissertation and Academic Articles in DHET accredited journals**. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained, and my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conducting of the research, ***unless I indicate to the contrary/recognize that as a public figure my identity will inevitably be/become known, in which case I agree to accept the loss of anonymity.***
8. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013) it remains my right to request the Researcher to provide me with a detailed explanation of exactly how confidentiality and anonymity of the data I provide will be achieved. I may also request to know exactly how my personal information will be stored securely, for how long it will be stored.
9. If any data collected from me for this research project was to be used by the Researcher for any further study, I am to be informed in writing and my written consent requested again. I need not give consent for the new research if it was incompatible with the initial purpose of the present study (POPIA, s15(3)). Equally, I can simply reject the request. In such cases, a formal request needs to be made to me by the researcher via the Research Ethics Integrity Committee (**REIC@cut.ac.za**).
10. In terms of the POPI Act, I possess the right to receive feedback about this research. This will take the form of copies of a thesis to all courtrooms who participated in research.
11. Any further questions that I might have regarding the nature of the research and/or my participation in it will be answered by Lerato John Nkhahle, jnkhahle@cut.ac.za and Dr R Moy, rmoyo@cut.ac.za and the ethics office REIC@cut.ac.za
12. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record by the Researcher.
13. I **agree/disagree (delete inapplicable)** to the Researcher's request to take photographs, or videoing me as part of this research project, recognizing that agreement here was likely to raise the risk of compromising my anonymity and that

steps will be taken to ensure this will not happen if my consent was given. Furthermore, I have the right to request a copy of the photographs, or videoing of me as a participant in this research project.

14. I agree/disagree (delete inapplicable) to the Researcher's use of voice recording of my comments and opinions during interviews, the purpose of which was to ensure the accurate recording of my views/responses. Furthermore, I have the right to request a copy of the interview transcriptions to confirm that my opinions are accurately recorded.

I,, have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what was expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....
Participants signature	Participants Initials and Surname	Date
.....
Witness signature	Witness Initials and Surname	Date

APPENDIX B – Informed Consent Form



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title:

Employee Perceptions of Social Media Regulation and its Impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company.

Dear participant

My name was Lerato Nkhahle, a lecturer in the Department of Communication Sciences at the Central University of Technology, Free State in South Africa. I am conducting a research interview for my master's dissertation on the above title in fulfilment of the theme: What was the impact of BOKAMOSO CLEANING SOLUTIONS employees' social media use on organisation culture and climate and What are the BOKAMOSO CLEANING SOLUTIONS employees' perceptions of their social media use and regulation by the organisation? Therefore, your consent was requested to spare some 15 to 30 minutes of your time to respond to all the questions in this interview/questionnaire schedule to the best of your knowledge.

The information provided in this study will remain confidential and no names will be attached to the study. Hard-copy data sources will be destroyed after the study. You can withdraw from participating in this study at any time should you wish not to continue. There are no potential negative consequences anticipated from your participation in this study. Your selection to participate in this study was by convenience. The findings could influence social media use and regulations in your organisation and will inform you as Management/ Employee on how to fully integrate and use social media harmoniously. The study findings will be communicated to you via one of the local communication channels.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Lerato Nkhahle (Researcher)

SECTION A



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR BOKAMOSO CLEANING SOLUTIONS STAFF

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender (Tick appropriate box)

Male	Female
-------------	---------------

Age-group (Tick appropriate box)

18-23	24-29	30-35	36 +
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Section 1: Employee Perceptions of Social Media Use and Regulation

1. How do you currently use social media in relation to your work at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions?
2. Are there any official policies or guidelines regulating social media use in your organisation?
3. If yes, how were you made aware of these policies or guidelines?
4. How do you feel about the organisation's social media regulations? (e.g., fair, too strict, unclear, etc.)
5. Have you ever faced restrictions or disciplinary action related to your social media use at work?
6. If yes, can you describe what happened and how it affected you?
7. Do you believe it was necessary for the organisation to regulate social media use? Please explain your reasoning.

Section 2: Impact of Social Media Use on Organisational Culture and Climate

8. In your view, how has social media use influenced workplace communication at Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions?
9. How has the organisation's social media policy affected the work culture?
10. How has it affected employee interactions?
11. Would you describe these effects (on work culture or interaction) as mostly positive or negative? Why?
12. Have you observed any changes in teamwork or collaboration because of social media use? Please give examples.

13. Does social media contribute to shaping the overall work atmosphere in your organisation? If yes, how?
14. In your opinion, does social media use enhance productivity and morale, or does it hinder them? Please explain.

Section 3: Employee Adaptation to Social Media Policies

15. How has the current social media policy influenced the way you use social media?
16. Do you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts on work-related matters on social media?
17. Do you think the current policy affects your ability to express yourself freely? Why or why not?
18. Have you received any training or guidance on appropriate social media use at work?
19. Do you think such training was necessary? Why?
20. What do you think the organisation could do to improve how it manages social media use?
21. What advice or recommendations would you give management regarding social media policies?

APPENDIX C – Audio Consent To Take Part In Research

AUDIO CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

TITLE: Employee perceptions of Social Media Regulations and its Impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company.

RESEARCHER INFORMATION:

Student

Welkom Campus
Communication Sciences

Cell: 073 3642 367

Email: jnkhahle@cut.ac.za

Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT)
PO Box 1881, Welkom, 9460, South Africa

Central University of Technology, Research Development

Research Ethics: REIC@cut.ac.za

t: +27 (0) 51 507 4328

Room K024, Dirk Coetzee Building, President Brand Street, Bloemfontein, 9301

**Title of Study: Employee perceptions of Social Media Regulations and its Impact on
Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company.**

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM TO BEING AUDIO RECORDED

Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company

Researcher: Lerato Nkhahle

Institution: Central University of Technology (CUT)

Supervisor: DR. R Moyo

Purpose of the Study: This research aims to explore how employees perceive social media regulation within the workplace and how it affects organisational culture and climate

Participation:

Your participation was voluntary. You have the right to decline or withdraw at any time without any

penalty or loss of benefits.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed. The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure

accuracy in data analysis. All recordings will be kept confidential and used solely for research

purposes.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will remain confidential. Any information you provide will be anonymised in the final

report. Data will be securely stored and only accessed by researchers and academic supervisor.

Consent Statement:

I hereby confirm that:

- I have been informed about the purpose, procedures, and confidentiality aspects of this

study.

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I give permission for the interview to be audio-recorded.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

- I understand that my responses will be used for academic purposes only and reported

anonymously.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Name: Lerato Nkhahle

Signature: _____

Date: _____



207 Koppie Alleen Road, Welkom

 **057 357 2600/1**

 **076 694 4283**

 **info@bokamosocleaning.co.za**

 **www.bokamosocleaning.co.za**

Date: 14 January 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

Permission to Conduct Research at BOKAMOSO CLEANING SOLUTIONS.

This letter serves to confirm that Lerato John Nkhahle of student number 206017596, , a Master's student at the Central University of Technology, Free State, has been granted permission to conduct research within **BOKAMOSO CLEANING SOLUTIONS**. The study, titled **Employees' Perception of Social Media Regulation and its impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company**, aims to gather insights into employee perspectives on social media regulation policies within the organization.

We understand that the research involves semi-structured interviews of our employees, and we consent to participation of our employees at **BOKAMOSO CLEANING SOLUTIONS**.

This permission is granted under the following conditions:

1. All data collected will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.
2. Participation by employees is entirely voluntary, with no risk of harm or reprisal.
3. The research will comply with all ethical guidelines as outlined by CUT.

Should you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Lerato Nkhahle on 0733642367 or the undersigned at Company Representative's Contact Details

Authorized By:

Mrs. Nthabiseng Makgasane]

HR Admin

APPENDIX E - Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions Social Media Policy (Excerpt)

Introduction

This appendix presents selected excerpts from the official *Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions social media Policy*, included with permission for academic research purposes. The excerpts are provided to support the analysis of employee perceptions regarding social media regulation and its influence on organisational culture and workplace climate.

Due to the confidential nature of internal corporate documentation, only relevant sections related to employee conduct, acceptable use, and disciplinary procedures have been included. Sensitive operational details have been omitted in accordance with the organisation's confidentiality agreement.

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy was to provide clear guidelines for the responsible and professional use of social media by all employees of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions. The policy aims to protect the reputation and integrity of the company, safeguard client confidentiality, and promote ethical communication that reflects the organisation's values of respect, accountability, and teamwork.

2. Acceptable Use

Employees are encouraged to use social media in a manner that supports positive communication and professional collaboration. Limited personal use of social media during working hours was permitted, provided it does not interfere with job performance or the delivery of cleaning services at client sites.

Employees must exercise discretion when using mobile phones or other devices during working hours, ensuring that client service standards and safety procedures are not compromised.

3. Confidentiality and Representation

Employees must not post, share, or comment on confidential company information, client details, pricing structures, or operational activities on any social media platform.

Only authorised personnel, such as management or designated communications officers, may represent the company's views or issue official statements online.

Employees should also refrain from discussing workplace issues, management decisions, or internal disputes on public platforms.

4. Prohibited Conduct

The following actions are strictly prohibited:

- Posting or sharing images of clients' premises, company vehicles, uniforms, or equipment without prior authorisation.
- Uploading photos or videos of cleaning sites, even after hours, if they display company branding or client property.
- Making defamatory, discriminatory, or offensive remarks about the company, clients, or colleagues.
- Engaging in online arguments or posting content that could harm the company's image or relationships.

5. Disciplinary Measures

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action. The severity of the action will depend on the nature of the offence and may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or dismissal. The company reserves the right to take additional legal or contractual steps where reputational or financial damage occurs.

6. Monitoring and Compliance

Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions reserves the right to monitor publicly available online content where the company name, logo, or employees are mentioned. Monitoring was conducted to protect the company's reputation and to ensure compliance with professional and ethical standards.

Confidentiality Statement

These excerpts are included solely for academic purposes within the dissertation titled *Employee Perceptions of Social Media Regulation and its Impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company*.

The complete policy remains the property of Bokamoso Cleaning Solutions and may not be reproduced, distributed, or cited beyond this research without written permission from the company.

APPENDIX F – Editing Certificate

EDITORIAL & PROOF-READING CERTIFICATE



PROOF READING & EDITING

DATE: 20 October 2025

DISSERTATION AUTHOR(S): MR. L J NKHAHLE

DISSERTATION TITLE: Title: Employee Perceptions of Social Media Regulation and its Impact on Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter confirms that the dissertation corresponding to the information detailed therein was edited by a professional, native English-speaking editor at PolishedVIEW Proof Reading & Editing Services.

We make no claims as to the substantive matter covered by the paper and have not altered the intent or research content drafted by the author(s).

The author(s) may accept or reject any of our comments or suggestions upon receipt of the document we edited.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact assist.withediting@gmail.com

Sincerely,

PolishedVIEW Proof Reading & Editing Services

PolishedVIEW was a premier international English editing service. Our mission was to help researchers, scholars, and professional reach their full potential through clear communication in their writing. By providing premium English editing services at affordable rates to clients from around the world, PolishedVIEW seeks to tear down language barriers and contribute to the advancement of research and education.



Signature

Managing Editor Date:20/10/2025

APPENDIX G – Ethical Clearance



2 November

2025 Mr L.

Nkhahle

jnkahle@cut.ac.za

**Communication Sciences
Central University of
Technology**

**Degree: Master of Communication: Media
Studies Risk Category: Low**

**Protocol Reference Number: CUT/REIC
2025/000728 Approval Date: 2 November 2025**

Expiry Date: 1 November 2026

**Project Title: Employee Perceptions of Social Media Regulation and Its Impact on
Workplace Culture and Climate at a Cleaning Company.**

Dear Mr Nkhahle,

This letter serves to notify you that your application for study for the above-mentioned title was reviewed by the CUT Human Research Ethics Committee (CUT HREC). I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the CUT HREC that the study has been approved, and you have been granted ethical clearance for your project.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, was **CUT/REIC2025/000728**.

The ethical clearance number was valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension using the Clarivate Converis System or contact the Research Ethics Office for assistance.

We request that any changes that may take place during your research project be submitted to the HREC for approval to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise. This includes any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

All data collected by CUT applicants must be stored in a secure and encrypted storage cloud that has restricted access to only those researchers involved in the study. The data should be uploaded to the approved university repository. Please contact Ms Dora Ackerman, Deputy University Librarian: Electronic Resources and LIS Systems (dora@cut.ac.za) in this regard.

NB: The decision or approval of this study does not supersede compliance with the residence period and was only for data that was yet to be collected and not for retrospective approval.

Kind regards

Laetus O.K. Lategan

Digitally signed by Laetus O.K.
Lategan Date: 2025.11.02
21:22:33 +02'00'

**Prof. Laetus O.K.
Lategan CUT HREC:
Chairperson**

Human Research Ethics
Committee Research
Development Office
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APPENDIX H - Note on Ethical Clearance

The researcher acknowledges that the ethical clearance letter for this study lists the qualification as *Master of Communication: Media Studies*. However, the official registered qualification was *Master of Communication in Language Practice* under the Department of Communication Sciences at the Central University of Technology.

This variation in title reflects administrative categorisation within the faculty and does not affect the focus, scope, or academic integrity of the research. The study remains grounded in the field of organisational communication, aligning with both the Language Practice and Media Studies disciplinary frameworks.