

A Review of Literature: The Organizational Discourse Challenges with Integration of Social Media and Virtual Conferencing in Communication for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract - Convincingly, the dissemination of information has not remained the same with the advent of social media and virtual conferencing. These platforms afford efficient methods, enabling large scale, and even for Organizational Discourse communications. Suffice to point that also smaller communities are provided with vast opportunities for virtual collaboration and communication. At the same time this brings about great development towards integration of social media and virtual conferencing in communication even in religious circles and can stir an invigoration of this same process. We can here argue that due to this phenomenon, the church is being caused to depend more on social media and virtual space to hold its community but at the same time this reveals the challenges posed by digital divide among its congregants. This paper reviews a list of literature using the theoretical and systematic reviews on the present day organisational discourse practices and modelling an integrating communication system. This review of literature was done particularly with a search technique of “Social Media and Virtual Conferencing Integration”, which aims at examining what other existing literatures have embodied various aspects associated with social media and virtual conferencing integration alongside the methodologies and frameworks applied in the process. The review was based on the systematic database searched and included 20 peer reviewed articles by 2022.

Index Terms – SDA Church, Virtual Conferencing, Covid-19, communication, Organizational Discourse.

I. INTRODUCTION

Amid the Covid1-19 pandemic, most nations around the globe went into varying lockdowns which resulted into temporal limitations on how to do businesses, even as public gatherings were prohibited. This resulted into religious congregations and communities restricting the number in attendance for religious worship, stopping events, physical meetings for various committees, boards, and unofficial groups, [1]. Besides, it cannot be argued against that COVID-

19; the lockdowns and subsequent economic woes has had untold consequences, punishing especially the womenfolk, ethnic minorities and low-income earners as a whole, [2]

Like for any other Christian denomination, the core business for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church is Christian mission. This mission, with various objectives such as the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the whole world, bringing the human race into a renewed relationship with God, establishing of Christ’s Kingdom on earth, seems to fundamentally refer to principles that are normally attained only somewhat and or temporarily. For Seventh-day Adventists, part of their social identity lies in their mission discourses, [3]. In this context, mission draws to potentiality. Potentiality and reality are always coupled as conversions in their agreeable founding relationship. Mission, in its context to ideals doesn’t just lead to potentiality but is grounded in these discourses of potentiality and realities, [4].

The first SDA congregation in Zambia was organized in 1905 with seven named baptized members, [5]. Since then the church has experienced an exponential membership growth of almost 1, 295, 153 from 7834 congregations, [6]. Historically, the growth of this church in Zambia is as a result of its robust evangelistically and outreach campaigns that are strategically plotted all year round. As a matter of in-reach activities that are beneficial to the already baptized members, every year the various congregations of the SDA church run a camp meeting in specified locale to socialize, worship, study, pray, sing together, and share the Holy Communion (Lord’s super). Due to Covid-19 the church subsequently for two years had to either suspended or shifted this yearly ceremonial event to a virtual one. further to say, most church buildings remained closed for church gatherings as per directive from the church’s

higher office of the land and therefore some resorted to doing church business virtually.

This research aims to understand or identify the variables that are effective for virtual collaborations and digital communication platforms in order to minimise the communication gap which hamper meaningful organisational discourse by (1) applying saliences such as volume, tone, topics, ties, timings and (2) establishing how they can occur on virtual spaces for information, transaction, communication and distribution purposes. This study is necessitated by the current laggardness, apprehension, conspiracies, and indifferences towards an effective integration of digital communication as far as the organisational discourse is involved. At the same time to bring about great development towards integration of social media and virtual conferencing in communication even in religious circles and stir an invigoration of this same process which [1,7] coined as “deep mediatization”.

Table 1: Methodology

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

With detailed data analysis and modelling from this research, The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia and other denominations would be made aware of the challenges that hampers its Organisational Discourse communication in the face of an integration with social media and Virtual conferencing, and come up with effective digital communication strategies and plans in the face of digital divide. This in turn will cause many other organisations and government urgencies to relook at effectiveness of their communication strategies in line with this work’s established model or adopt the same model in integrating their social media and virtual communication. The study will revive and modernise the church communication department and position it as significant in the structural system and thereby making it relevant in the digital space in piloting the organisational discourse.

3. METHODOLOGY

Table 1 below depicts a summary of the methodology, philosophy, design, data instrument and data analysis to be used in this research.

Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Objective	To review existing OD communication practices	To establish OD communication challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.	To evaluate current OD models with integration of digital media	To analyse church members Perceptions of implementation	To develop a model that will address these integration challenges
Research Paradigm/Philosophy	Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm [8] with embedded Subjectivism Philosophy [8].[9]				
Approach/Design/Model	Qualitative approach	Embedded Mixed Methods-Quantitative embedded over Descriptive Qualitative	Embedded Mixed Methods-Quantitative embedded over Descriptive Qualitative	Embedded Mixed Methods-Quantitative embedded over Descriptive Qualitative	Exploration and modelling study
Instrument/ Data Collection Method	Document Review, Interview Guide	Interview Guide Questionnaire Surveys Document Review	Interview Guide Questionnaire Document Review	Questionnaire Surveys Interview Guide	Document Review on Case Studies
Target Population	2 national offices, All 10 provincial offices	Provincial church officers, directors, local church leaders, church members	2 national offices, All 10 provincial offices	Church members	2 national offices, All 10 provincial offices
Sampling	Non-probability sampling-Purposive sampling [10] 4 representatives per provincial office	Non-probability sampling-Purposive sampling [10] 39 representative per target population	Non-probability sampling- Purposive sampling [10] 5 representatives per target population (administrative office)	Probability-Stratified random sampling [10] 385 members distributed accordingly (sampling calculator used)	Document Review on Case Studies
Data Analysis	Content analysis Thematic analysis [11]	Content analysis Thematic analysis [11] SAS analysis tool	Content analysis Thematic analysis [11] SAS analysis tool	Content analysis Thematic analysis [11] SPSS	Content analysis Thematic analysis [11]

Ethical Considerations	Participants consent forms Ethical Clearance from UNZA	Confidentiality, Honesty and trust Research outcome will be shared to relevant to church bodies in Zambia
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4. RELATED WORK

There is not much scholarly work that has been done in the recent past in relation to modelling organizational discourse integration with Social media and video conferencing communication. This is a review of what so far is available science that is somewhat close in helping to design a fitting model. In this analysis this scholar is looking at just a few frameworks which among include but not limited to; community of Inquiry, VT4, ICDT, and Computer Mediated Communication.

The Seventh-day Adventist church most used method of discourse sense making and sense giving is through the mission proclamation found in the Bible in Matthew 28:19-20 which mandates the organization and its members to preach and teach about the good news of Jesus’s second coming. The church has both teaching and preaching segmented for each time it gathers as a community of believers. Community of Inquiry Model somewhat fits in when it comes to the two ways the church does its discourse mandate

The use of Computer-mediated communication has in the recent past become a phenomenon in the education environment. Many education institutions at a higher level are seeing CMC especially with an integration of virtual conferencing as a robust medium for dissemination of knowledge “anytime, anyway.” Its potentiality in that vein cannot be denied except that its effects on discourse sense making process and outcomes have not been explored. The model’s elements and their linkages were succinctly outlined with particular attention to how these vital components of knowledge gaining can be sustained when the process is moved into a CMC environment. There is an assumption from this model that learning happens in the boundaries of the community through the contact of three main elements of the model which are cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence, [12].

Technology has turned around how business is done. That means that, rather than depend solely on one-on-one communication, employers and their workers alike have a wide choice of technology-mediated assets at their disposal. It can’t be argued that earlier and reportedly out-of-date telecommunication systems demand encoding, transmitting, and decoding of information, whereas present day’s computer-mediated communication expresses the creation and exchange of information , [13], [14], [15], [16].

Computer-mediated communication is defined as here quoted: “a dynamic force, the potential for creativity, the element of unpredictability ... where orderly patterns and random developments provide an engaging focus ...” [17].

Computer-involved communication has evolved the way humans relate socially, advance their distinctiveness, express their interactions, and form their societies, [18]. Proficiency in computer-mediated communication (CMC) very much elucidates the difference in overall out of station involvement. Some scholars admit that much of computer-mediated communication research had focused on the effects of media and technology irrespective of social dynamics and their related hypothesis. [19]

One of the objective of this research is establish organisational Discourse communication challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. A research was conducted by [20] in Poland who posited that the migration of the church discourse unveiled digital media inequalities that were brought about as a result of this switch. Inequalities such as technological accessibility and proficiency indicated that some church members were into forced absence from the church community in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. This scholar brought to light some cases of elderly Adventists who could not afford Internet access from their homes, needless to mention the poor congregants who could not manage to purchase a computer or smart phone or a reliable internet connectivity, or even the immobile Adventists due to disability that cannot use digital media without being helped. In certain situations, the clergy unintentionally took up the role of digital media trainers instructing congregants on how to use or to install the hardware or software so as to cushion the lockdowns and restrictions effects were minimized on the community. For this reason, somehow the pastoral mandate, as a matter of necessity had now to some degree comprise digital or virtual technical knowhow. Subsequent researches suggest that the Church in general had since admitted the pressure to catching up with speed of innovation and the realization of digital divides and exclusions (by mitigating them).

The final objective of this research is to develop a model that can be adopted address the organizational discourse challenges with integration of social media and virtual conferencing in communication for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia. There literally lack of literature relating to Zambia on this subject matter. But works of [20] brings to light the challenges of the SDA church in Zambia having scanty digital presences. The researchers used VT4 model to establish their findings and it is out of this that fact that this research will create a model on the premise of VT4 which can link effectively with another model’s elements that are virtually inclined such as of ICTD model of [Angen]. This model gives four virtual variables that relate more less with a traditional physical transactional space. The informational space is basically like a billboard, placard or poster which is a way communication and the church usually has the segment in the physical segment when announcements are given in a one

synchronous way. The second space which is stated as virtual communication is what is can be referred to as an interaction segment. This happens when congregants split into smaller units of between 8 to 12 persons and those are deemed as Sabbath school classes. Members in those units identify with each other and they for forty-five minutes every Sabbath interact as they share a Sabbath school lesson. They keep a record of each other whereabouts and visit each other in case one misses worship on a particular day. They encourage each other with personal narratives and sometimes have potluck together. The third virtual space is what is referred to as distribution. This space is very limited for service limited. This is more or less of the hour dedicated for homily delivery every time the congregants meet for worship. The fourth and last space called transaction is where the trading occurs but nothing physical is brought into this space rather its invoicing, commitments, and transfers of money that happen here. In a typical church is setup this is where, financial contributions or commitments such as tithe and offerings happen

5. CONCLUSION

There remains a huge knowledge gap on organizational discourse challenges with integration of social media and virtual conferencing in communication for the Church in Zambia. Otherwise there is more literature on office modification in a working environment when it comes covid-19 crisis such as challenges, implication, opportunities, and future directions. There were limitations to none availability of literal works relating to the Zambian scenario and or any developing country. Therefore, this research will create a literal impact for this scope of research.

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