



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT THE HYDROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF GHANA

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2023  
Received in revised form  
20<sup>th</sup> May, 2023  
Accepted 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023  
Published online 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

#### Key words:

Distraction Osteogenesis, Callotaxis, Reconstruction, Callus.

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This paper aims to identify the impact of social media on employee performance at the Hydrological Services Department (HSD) of Ghana. Understanding how employees use social media, how social media use leads to building a structural, relational and cognitive capability and how social media can be managed to ensure office productivity influenced this study. **Design/methodology/approach:** The grounded theory approach was used to conduct a systematic review of social media research. This method aimed to arrive at a comprehensive and theoretical understanding of a field or topic to identify the dominant themes and suggest knowledge gaps in this study. Purposive sampling was utilized to choose the research interview subjects with a qualitative research approach also adopted as an efficient way to understand the subject under study. **Findings:** The findings show that network connections facilitate employee social engagement. Employees who share goals develop common standards and obligations, strengthening sentiments of trust and identification. Finally, trust encourages people to communicate and share. This study stresses the need for businesses to encourage employees to use social media for more than just social networking. It can also be used to assist with open-ended knowledge management responsibilities.

## INTRODUCTION

Social media (SM) has transformed people's lives, interactions, and work (Mitali & Jain, 2021). On numerous social networking platforms, people can share weekend plans, ask for directions to unique locations to visit, introduce new friends or colleagues, seek professional assistance, or build others up through knowledge sharing, mentoring, and acts of kindness. These factors and many others are essential for employees and organizations to thrive. It facilitates the flow of knowledge and information, stimulating creative thinking and generating new ideas. It also helps to reduce absenteeism and turnover and improve organizational performance (Yu *et al.*, 2018). Social media, an interactive Web 2.0 platform for sharing information and ideas, is slowly gaining traction in business. It transforms how personnel communicate and interacts within an organization, opening up a new universe of possibilities. With all its benefits, social media has become an indispensable tool for information sharing, communication, socializing, and product, service, and brand marketing among employees in diverse enterprises (Yu *et al.*, 2018). As a result, job performance improves significantly.

Despite its practical importance, information system (IS) research needs to pay more attention to the potential detrimental impacts of increased social media use on work performance (Hou *et al.*, 2017). Most government agencies, departments, and ministries employees can be found on their phones or laptops using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, blogging, downloading movies and music videos, or indulging in personal non-work-related activities. This leads to the wastage of primary government resources, lost productive office hours, broken work ethics, and a decline in employee performance (Brooks & Califf, 2017; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). The scope and intensity could explain this, and the work characteristics of social media users influence the mechanism of social media's impact on work productivity (Jiang *et al.*, 2019; Chen *et al.*, 2020). The impact of social media on work performance and crucial situational aspects, boundary conditions, and comprehensive frameworks still need to be discovered based on the available evidence. This paper has addressed three research questions as follows:

- How do employees use social media at the Hydrological Services Department?
- How do social media use lead to building a structural, relational and cognitive capability at the Hydrological Services Department?
- How can social media be managed to ensure office productivity at the Hydrological Services Department?

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## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Methodology

The grounded theory approach was used to conduct a systematic review of social media research. This method aimed to arrive at a comprehensive and theoretical understanding of a field or topic to identify the dominant themes and suggest knowledge gaps in this study (Wolfswinkel *et al.*, 2013). Consequently, this paper's literature review followed four steps, i.e. defining, searching and analyzing. First, the defining step involves establishing the focus of a review by determining the keywords to be used in fetching articles from journal databases. This paper's keywords that aided in the such for relevant articles were "social network, social communication, media platform, social site, public network, social networking website, social web, media, and employee performance. Second, the searching step involves using the keywords to search selected online journal databases, which included Emerald, EBSCO HOST, Taylor and Francis, Wiley and Blackwell, Science Direct, and JSTOR. Three hundred and fifty papers were downloaded for the study's purposes. After entering them into Mendeley, an electronic referencing management tool, duplicate articles were removed, leaving one hundred and twenty-six articles for the study's analysis. Third, the analysis step involved loading the downloaded articles into electronic referencing management software, i.e. Mendeley, and checking each abstract from which the research purpose was retrieved. The final abstract samples were analyzed by extracting explanatory texts labelled open codes, such as user preference, acquisition, adoption, threats, application, innovation, etc. Similar open codes were combined to form axial codes like identification, challenges, analysis, performance, outline, etc., subsequently combined to form implementation, impact, and acceptance as the selective codes. This can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1. Representation of Open Codes, Axial Codes and Selective Codes**

Open Codes	Axial Codes	Selective Codes
A. Usage	User Acceptance	Acceptance of Social Media in Organizations
B. User Preferences		
C. Customer Behaviour		
D. User Perspective		
E. Appropriation	Adoption	
F. Adoption	Analysis	Impact of Social Media on Employee Performance
G. Evaluation		
H. Responses		
I. Examination		
J. Study	Performance	
K. Capability		
L. Execution		
M. Applications	Development	Implementation of Social Media in Organizations
N. Prospects		
O. Innovation		
P. Outline	Outline	

Source: Authors' Construct, 2023.

**Empirical Review:** The dominant themes that were detected on social media are presented in this section. The section will be separated into three parts using the selective codes analysis.

**Acceptance of Social Media:** Although many previous studies have focused on professional competency, autonomy, insecurity, employability, political skill, and networking, few researchers have tested the impact of professional competency and workplace social networking on career success (Avci,

2020). Both internal (innovation activity and strategy) and external (competitiveness intensity and technology turbulence) factors have a direct impact on business model (BM) experimentation, according to the prevailing theoretical paradigm. This study implies that BM experimentation, which entails discussing and trying out different BMs, impacts BM practices or transitioning from strategy to BM. According to this study, BM practices also positively impact a company's innovativeness and overall commercial performance. Finally, according to this study, innovativeness impacts total business success (Bouwman *et al.*, 2018). The study follows a two-step process, with the first estimating a measurement model that shows how the variables - social media technologies (SMT), technological knowledge competencies (TKC), innovation capability (IC), and organizational performance (OP) - come together to portray the theory—the second designing a structural model that shows how the constructs relate to one another. Adopting social media creates valuable connections affecting how various actors and organizations communicate, resulting in the transformation of the business model. Due to this change, businesses can access many new internal and external options (Garcia-Morales *et al.*, 2018). Demographics (like age, gender, work experience, and education level), organizational size, facilities (like meeting spaces), workspace type (i.e. alone in a closed space or open space), and use (i.e. personal office or shared office) all influence networking and knowledge sharing behaviour in single-tenant buildings (Weijs-Perrée *et al.*, 2019).

**Impact of Social Media on Employees' Performance:** Three categories of elements influence the adoption of social media in the workplace: technological, organizational, and environmental. Several structural factors may influence an organization's adoption of new technology in each sector. The diffusion of innovation (DOI) theory's technological features were relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, and trialability. Having top-level support for social media adoption decisions was an organizational trait. The bandwagon effect, competitive intensity, and competitive pressure were incorporated into the Technology Organization Environment (TOE) paradigm as environmental factors. The framework employed in this study has ten constructs that span the three categories and help to build the four hypotheses (Ahmad *et al.*, 2019). We discovered that social networking site acceptability is mainly determined by trust and enjoyment from a social standpoint. In the context of online retail acceptance, the technology acceptance model (TAM) was revised with new constructs, trust and enjoyment. Because trust is widely considered a critical aspect of e-commerce acceptance, previous empirical research has incorporated trust into TAM in various ways. According to the research, trust predicts usability, usefulness, disposition, and behavioural intent. However, social media has a moderate impact on the encounter stage of luxury car acquisition, implying that other factors such as personal experience, traditional peer influences, word of mouth, financial affordability, taste, education level, and personal image influence. Internal and external variables have been mentioned as potential triggers for demands. Commercials and consumer material in the online community can stimulate consumer demand, an influential factor. Social networking sites enormously impact the need awareness and information-seeking stages. According to the data, social networking sites have a considerable and favourable impact on the luxury vehicle purchasing decision process, particularly in

the first two stages (need recognition and information search) (Al-Abdallah *et al.*, 2021).

**Implementation of Social Media:** Little about how organizational features like norms and policies influence social media use is known. This research aims to see how social media usage affects employee engagement and productivity in public hospitals. Furthermore, the research will examine how organizational context factors like resources, processes, and policies influence public hospital adoption and use of social networking sites. According to various studies, employees' economic incentives and social influence improve knowledge exchange and contact with one another. In addition, this research aims to see how social media might help health professionals share information, learn, and collaborate better, which could help reduce organizational task overload in public hospitals (Naeem & Ozuem, 2021). Other research discovered that organizational environmental characteristics such as leadership trust and organizational justice could boost employee engagement. However, how social media sites affect employee engagement and productivity is still being determined. According to the findings, individual and organizational variables had a substantial impact on technology acceptance and utilization (French *et al.*, 2018).

**Gaps from the Literature Review:** The study identified the in-house assumptions about social media in the literature samples analyzed. The study evaluated the assumptions, developed alternative assumption grounds and generated potentially new research questions based on the alternative assumption grounds. First, most research concentrated on the expansive view of SM use, with no strategy for employee productivity indicated. Social media use at work enhances employees' abilities (Fusi & Feeney, 2016); thus, more is needed regarding the consequences of social media usage on employee productivity. Existing research, for example, has not examined how employees' social media usage can improve their job performance through information-sharing or how such causal links are tempered by employees' perceptions of social media restrictions. Second, businesses are motivated to learn more about social media and how to use it successfully because of this benefit (Ketonen-Oksi *et al.*, 2016; Cardon *et al.*, 2009), however, further studies must be conducted on the possible mediating factors influencing employee motivation and job productivity when using social media. Third, more studies must be done on how employees acknowledge and accept their employer's policies and how this awareness might assist enterprises. As a result, one of the primary objectives of this study is to investigate the fundamental expertise strategies that act as a bridge between a worker's professional and personal use of social media and job performance. Given the listed gaps, evaluating how an employee's personal and job-related social media use affects their work performance is essential.

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

**Social Capital Theory:** Social capital refers to the assets a person or organization has due to their network of connections, including their interpersonal interactions and the resources they have access to because of those connections (McFadyen, 2004). Scholars feel that social capital theory is a potential model for describing how people participate in social networks to gain psychological and practical benefits from their interactions (Coleman, 1990).

In earlier studies, social capital is essential in determining how new media are used and their impact. According to Ellison (2007), the use of social media (such as Facebook) is heavily influenced by a person's existing social capital (Ellison *et al.*, 2007). The concept of social capital can be broken down into structural, relational, and cognitive components (Nahapiet, 1998). Structural considerations include the complete web of human connections; from whom you are linked to how they are linked. The relational dimension refers to the socially ingrained trust, dedication, and reciprocity of resources. According to Sum (2008), Internet use can increase social capital by fostering stronger online connections than traditional offline ones (Sum *et al.*, 2008). While some studies claim that social capital is a unique resource (e.g. (Coleman, 1990)), others, such as Alex (2015), argues that social capital is rooted in connections and social institutions (Alex, 2015) rather than an individual resource. These resources include emotional support, mutual trust, and access to societal information (Cao *et al.*, 2016). Structure and interaction in social settings are essential components of one's social capital (Robert, 2000). Employees' use of social media to communicate with coworkers is the subject of the study. Employees with strong social ties can access resources embedded in those connections, called social capital. In the ordinary course of business, employees converse face-to-face at their desks. Nevertheless, social media has had a profound effect on the way people engage with each other. Gibson (1982) argues that different performances in a particular medium can be distinguished based on which performers provide affordances (Gibson 1982). Consequently, social media may influence how individuals engage with their peers within their organizations. Social media may be an invaluable tool When organizing meetings, scheduling appointments, sending documents, or chatting with coworkers. Consequently, we may expect that this benefit will improve the results of workers' employment, such as job satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and performance in the workplace (Yen *et al.*, 2020).

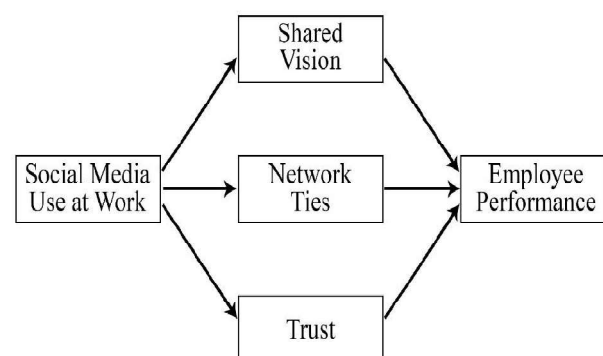


Figure 1: Social Capital Model Source: Author's construct, 2023

**Background of the Hydrological Services Department (HSD) of Ghana:** The Hydrological Services Department (HSD), which is a division of the Ministry of Works and Housing (MWH), is responsible for monitoring all rivers and surface water bodies in Ghana as well as offering the Ghanaian government engineering services in hydrology, water resources, drainage, sewage, and coastal engineering. At the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the HSD represents Ghana's hydrology and water resources. The goal of HSD is to *evolve into a top-tier organisation that offers outstanding services to safeguard the environment and advance sustainable development by using international best*

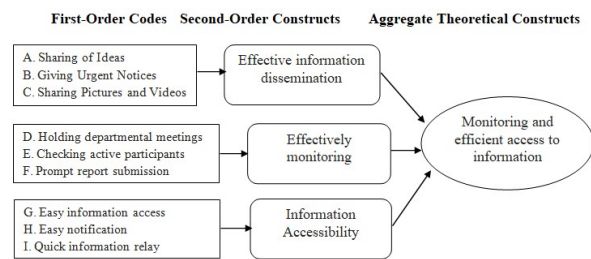
hydrological practices. Additionally, its goal is to promote quality hydrological service delivery in drainage improvement, river development, operational and applied hydrology, flood control mechanisms and coastal protection systems. Also, to provide hydrological, drainage/sewage engineering, and coastal engineering services and assure the observance and maintenance of international standards and best practices in hydrology, drainage/sewage engineering, and coastal engineering, the division's mandate reads. The six guiding principles are diligence, teamwork, quality assurance, responsibility, integrity, and discipline. The Hydrological Services Department performs four crucial duties. The first is to give the Ministry of Works and Housing general guidance on hydrology, drainage, and coastal engineering. Promote drainage and hydrology engineering services for flood protection, second. Third, offer coastal engineering services to stop storm surges and beach erosion. The fourth is to create plans for allocating resources for sewage, coastal protection, drainage, and hydrological projects. HSD has six divisions: Quantity Surveying, Land and Hydrographic Surveying, Coastal Engineering, Operational Hydrology, Drainage Engineering, and Sewage Engineering.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Data Collection Methods:** Purposive sampling was utilized to choose the research interview subjects since it was determined that a qualitative research approach was the most efficient way to understand the subject under study. According to Saunders (2016), this approach draws attention to particular themes or patterns found in qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006), Maguire and Delahunt (2009), and other authors were frequently cited in this technique. Field notes were taken during the interviews to record the participants' responses. Transcripts and field notes are referred to as *data* in this study. This method was chosen because it is flexible and user-friendly for analyzing qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In March 2022, the researchers conducted preliminary data collection by talking with HSD personnel to establish contact with them and become acquainted with their level of use of social media. In May 2022, The presented interview responses were transcribed and then analyzed. The analysis for this study, which attempted to answer the research questions, was based on the results of the abstractions made from the interviews conducted.

**RESULTS**

Semi-structured interviews with twelve (12) workers of the Hydrological Services Department were conducted. Because social media is a quicker and more effective way to share information and get timely updates than traditional methods, HSD has fully acknowledged it as one of its primary means of doing so among its employees and essential stakeholders. HSD has six divisions: Operational Hydrology, Drainage Engineering, Sewage Engineering, Coastal Engineering, Land and Hydrographic Surveying, and Quantity Surveying, and at least one employee from all the divisions was interviewed. The categories of staff interviewed include principal administrative assistants, senior records officers, information technology assistants, data entry clerks, accountants, site supervisors, technician engineers, and hydrologists.

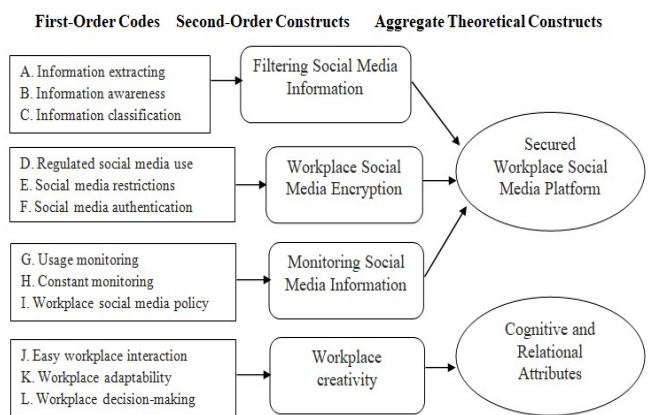


Source: Authors' Construct, 2023

**Figure 2. Coding of Interview Responses**

The first research question, which aims to explain *how the employees of the Hydrological Services Department use social media* and the results, is related to this section. The transcribed data from the interview are represented as the first-order codes in Figure 2. These data include sharing ideas, giving urgent notices, and sharing pictures and videos, and these sets were coded as effective information dissemination. The next set comprising holding departmental meetings, checking active participants, and prompt report submission, was coded as effective monitoring, while the last set consisted of easy information access, easy notification and quick information relay. The second-order constructs culminated into the aggregate theoretical construct. From this, we can deduce the first finding.

**Finding 1:** Employees at HSD utilize social media for monitoring and efficient access to relevant information.



Source: Authors' Construct, 2023

**Figure 3. Coding of Interview Responses**

The second research question explains *how social media use builds a structural, relational and cognitive capability at the Hydrological Services Department*. The transcribed data from the interview are represented as the first-order codes in Figure 3. These codes were further grouped into second-order constructs and subsequently into aggregate theoretical constructs. Information extracting, information awareness, and information classification were coded as filtering social media information, while regulated social media use, social media restrictions, and social media authentication were coded as workplace social media encryption. Also, usage monitoring, constant monitoring and workplace social media policy were coded as monitoring of social media information. Lastly, workplace creativity was coded as easy workplace interaction, adaptability, and decision-making.

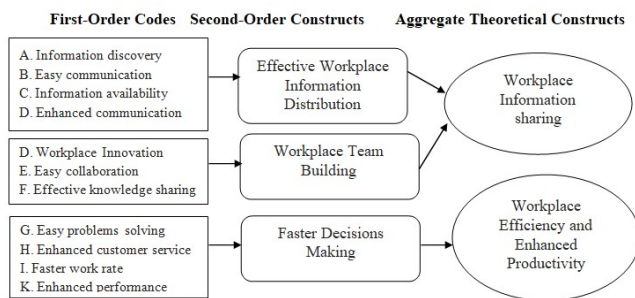


It can be deduced from Figure 3 that filtering social media information that is shared at the workplace, encrypting workplace social media use, and monitoring the type of information shared via social media at the HSD led to a secure platform for social media use at the HSD. In addition, easy workplace interaction, adaptability, and decision-making, which culminated in workplace creativity, generated cognitive and relational attributes among the employees of the HSD. From the foregoing, we can deduce the following findings:

**Finding 2:** A social media strategy can be developed to allow employees at HSD to interact with their networks without worrying about violating laid down rules and also enhancing cognitive and relational attributes.

**Finding 3:** Finding 3: Network ties which emanate from easy workplace interaction and workplace adaptability facilitate social interaction among employees.

**Finding 4:** When employees have common goals, shared standards and responsibilities are created, strengthening emotions of trust and belonging.



Source: Authors' Construct, 2023

Figure 4. Coding of Interview Responses

The third research question explains *how social media can be managed to ensure office productivity at the Hydrological Services Department*. The transcribed data from the interview are represented as the first-order codes in Figure 4. These codes were further grouped into second-order constructs and subsequently into aggregate theoretical constructs. Information discovery, accessible communication, information availability and enhanced communication were combined to form effective workplace information distribution, and workplace innovation, easy collaboration, and practical knowledge sharing were combined to form workplace team building. Also, easy problem-solving, enhanced customer service, faster work rate, and enhanced performance were combined to make faster decisions. Effective workplace information distribution and workplace team building were coded as Workplace Information sharing at the HSD, and faster decisions making led to workplace efficiency and enhanced productivity at the HSD. The fifth finding can be inferred from the information above:

**Findings 5:** The use of social media in the workplace leads to excellent performance and a boost in productivity among employees.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study discussed the influence of social media on employee performance.

The findings show that network links boost employee social activity. Common goals among employees provide common standards and obligations, which heightens sentiments of identification and trust. Few researchers have examined the effects of professional competency and workplace social networking on career success. However, many studies have been undertaken on professional competency, autonomy, instability, employability, political skill, and networking. Social media plays a vital role in employee performance at the HSD, and its usage needs to be regulated. It has been identified that employees at HSD utilize social media for monitoring and efficient access to relevant information. A social media strategy can be developed to allow employees at HSD to interact with their networks without worrying about violating rules and enhancing cognitive and relational attributes. When employees have common goals, shared standards and responsibilities are created, strengthening emotions of trust and belonging. The findings indicate that a shared vision, strong network ties, and trust considerably increase employee performance, which is consistent with the idea that influence is primarily mediated through information transfer. It demonstrates that aspects of information sharing may serve as mediators in research on the impact of social capital on productivity in the future.

**Declarations Conflict of Interest:** The authors disclose that they have no competing interests.

**Financial Support:** No financial support was received from anyone or anywhere.

## Glossary of Abbreviations

- BM: Business Model
- DOI: Diffusion of Innovation
- HSD: Hydrological Services Department
- IC: Innovation Capability
- IS – Information Systems
- JSTOR: Journal Storage
- MWH: Ministry of Works and Housing
- OP: Organizational Performance
- SM – Social Media
- SMT: Social Media Technologies
- TAM: Technology Acceptance Model
- TKC: Technological Knowledge Competencies
- TOE: Technology Organization Environment
- WMO: World Meteorological Organisation

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