

## **The Effects Of Social Media Towards Internal Communication Among Employees During Covid-19 Lockdown**

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**Abstract.** This study aims to identify the effects of social media on internal communication among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown. During the Covid-19 outbreak, social media can be used as a platform to assist employees in communicating with each other. This study investigated social media usage among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown. A quantitative approach was undertaken to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was designed in three sections: demographic information, general usage of Facebook among employees during the lockdown and the effects of social media on internal communication among employees during the lockdown. The results showed that the main purpose employees used social media during lockdown was to stay updated with their friends, and the results also showed that the most used social media among employees during the lockdown was Facebook, in fact, most respondents agreed that social media is a good platform to initiate good rapport with colleagues during the lockdown. As a result of this study, it was found that social media played a vital role in helping employees maintain good relationships with each other through social media during the Covid-19 lockdown.

**Keywords:** Internal communication, effects, lockdown, social media, Facebook, information management.

### **1 Introduction**

Social media is a platform that allows individuals inside and outside an organisation to interact and collaborate (Ewing et al., 2019). According to Zhang et al. (2019), employees who communicate with co-workers online through social media blogs are more

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motivated and propose novel ideas. Employees, on the other hand, are less driven and exhibit less initiative when they contact people outside the company.

As Robertson and Kee (2017) mentioned, employees, can use social media to assist them to deal with a bad work situation. If an employee is having trouble solving a problem, social media may be the answer. Bringing up a question on social media is a convenient and simple approach to receiving several answers.

Social media is a simple approach to encourage employees to communicate with one another, share ideas, and enhance engagement at work and home (Men et al., 2020). As social media can be accessed practically anywhere, employees may communicate with one another even while they are not at work (Syrdal & Briggs, 2018).

During the Covid-19 crisis, most businesses were forced to close due to the lockdown. Consequently, employees utilised social media as a means of communication to learn about and share job-related information (Pang et al., 2021).

As outlined by Puriwat and Tripopsakul (2021), social media use may not negatively influence a firm's productivity. Companies will increase employee productivity if they completely implement social media use and an internal social media site.

This study aims to identify the main purpose of using social media among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown, to investigate the most used social media platform among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown and to examine the most frequent social media effect towards internal communication among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *Social Media Usage and Internal Communication among Employees*

The way individuals connect at home and work has changed dramatically as a result of social media. Furthermore, social media platforms provide organisations with significant advantages in terms of public relations, recruiting, organisational learning, and internal and external communications (Hanna et al., 2017). The researchers further highlighted the primary reason most people use social media at work is to take a mental health vacation from their job stress. People use social media to escape into the digital realm. It enables them to see everything they want without having to leave their workplace or go to the break room.

Van Zoonen et al. (2017) mentioned in their study that social media can assist foster good professional connections by encouraging informal chats between co-workers. According to Ahmad et al. (2019), people spend a disproportionate amount of time on social media, thus it has an impact on all of their lives. As outlined by Koch et al. (2018), employees who communicate with their co-workers on social media are more motivated, and they are more likely to come up with inventive ideas at work. On the other hand, it is also obvious that businesses need a mechanism to stimulate casual discussions among their workers but it is said that providing them full access to social media may hurt productivity as well as employee engagement and retention (Verčič & Vokić, 2017).

Other than that, Sievert and Scholz (2017) asserted in their study, CEOs in organisations that utilise social media tend to communicate more easily with lower-level employees and vice versa than CEOs in companies that do not use social media. Social media is just another instrument in a company's strategist's toolbox. Social media will improve the flow of information within a company, but it will not speed up decision-making (Baptista et al., 2017). As highlighted by Salo (2017), social media is increasingly being used by businesses to boost internal efficiency, team cooperation, creativity, organisational alignment, and cultural transformation may all benefit from such projects if they are properly handled.

### *2.2 Social Media Usage during Covid-19 Lockdown*

Many governments have enforced a lockdown in reaction to the Covid-19 outbreak to restrict spread of the disease (Liu et al., 2021). In the study by Király et al. (2020), people suffering from the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown are becoming more sedentary and using the internet as a form of coping and escapism. As outlined by Cauberghe et al. (2021), individuals may use social media to self-regulate their emotions during the Covid-19 lockdown due to social isolation and worry.

As asserted by Paschke et al. (2021), during a lockdown, many people turn to social media as a way to cope with the absence of social interaction. More specifically, research has indicated that young adults who use social media to share positive social relationships are less sad. In the research done by Chatwin et al. (2021), social media may play an important, constructive role by allowing people to communicate their thoughts and information about the situation, but it can also be used to express dread about the pandemic.

Social media became a significant area to engage during a period of social distance and restricted touch with people. Social media platforms are designed to bring people together and have greatly aided in keeping the globe linked during the epidemic (Fernandes et al., 2020). According to Chatwin et al. (2021), people build their virtual communities of care during the Covid-19 pandemic, where they may assist one another and share their own experiences and facts.

## **3 Methodology**

Samples that were involved in this quantitative study were employees who are working in private sector companies. The questionnaires were distributed to the employees in Klang Valley. The subject of the study is the effects of social media usage on internal communication among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown. Employees from private sectors in Klang Valley who were working from home during the Covid-19 lockdown were responsible for guaranteeing the credibility of replies in this study. The researchers chose individuals that met these criteria as the target sample due to their involvement with social media usage during the Covid-19 lockdown.

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A specially designed questionnaire was created to obtain significant data. The questionnaire for this study comprised 22 question items on the language barriers in the multilingual workplace and the solutions for addressing them. Data collection used in this study was via a questionnaire using a Google form link. The respondents were given a questionnaire to fill out in order to acquire important data and background information. Multiple choice and Likert-scale items were included in this questionnaire. For this research, questionnaires were distributed to 100 private sector employees who worked from home during the Covid-19 lockdown. This research used a quantitative approach to obtain numerical data which is more reliable and consistent. An online questionnaire was distributed, and 200 responses were obtained, which were then analysed using SPSS (version 26).

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Main Purpose of Using Social Media Among Employees During the Covid-19 Lock-down

According to Table 1, there are 100 respondents. During the Covid-19 lockdown, 38% of the respondents used social media to stay updated with their friends. 21% of the respondents used social media to obtain the latest news, 15% gained interesting posts from other social media users and 14% used social media to stay updated with family members. 7% of the respondents used social media to motivate other social media users, 4% used social media to share interesting posts with other social media users and lastly, 1% of the respondents used social media to receive advice from other social media users. As highlighted by Jadhav (2020), people used social media during the lockdown because they wanted to update the current affairs of other people during the lockdown. In the study completed by Laguna et al. (2020), social media users used social media to enhance their well-being.

Table 1: Main purpose of using social media during Covid-19 lockdown

Main purpose	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Stay updated with friends	38	38
Stay updated with family members	14	14
Motivate other social media users	7	7
Receive advice from other social media users	1	1
Gain interesting posts from other social media users	15	15
Share interesting posts with other social media users	4	4
Obtain latest news	21	21

### 4.2 Most Used Social Media Platform Among Employees During the Covid-19

*Lockdown*

Based on the results shown in Table 2, there are 100 respondents. During the Covid-19 lockdown, 38% of the respondents used Facebook, 14% used Instagram and 7% used Twitter. Facebook is the most popular social media network since it caters to a wide range of users and incorporates several media elements, such as images, chat, and content (Mannino et al., 2021). The authors further outlined that Facebook is the leading and well-known social media platform, making it a perfect place to start socialising.

Table 2: Most used social media during Covid-19 lockdown

Social media	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	65	65
Instagram	20	20
Twitter	15	15

*4.3 Most Frequent Social Media Effect Towards Internal Communication Among Employees During The Covid-19 Lockdown*

According to Table 3, during the Covid-19 lockdown, the highest mean of social media effects was ‘social media is a good platform to initiate good rapport with my colleagues during lockdown’ which scored 4.58. The second highest mean is 4.54 which is ‘social media helps me to deliver my message successfully during lockdown’. Next, ‘I have been spending more time communicating through social media than official workplace video call during lockdown’ which scored 4.44, ‘social media is a good platform for me to foster a closer relationship with other employees during lockdown’ which scored 4.43, ‘I get to know my colleagues better through social media during lockdown’ which scored 4.42 and ‘social media provides good impacts towards the relationship between me and my colleagues during lockdown’ which scored 4.41. The following effects are ‘social media is a good platform to keep connecting with my colleagues during lockdown’ which scored 4.40, ‘social media helps to convey my thoughts easily during lockdown’ which scored 4.30, ‘the response rate from my colleagues in social media is higher than emails’ which scored 4.27, ‘my colleagues understand the message that I intend to deliver better via social media during lockdown’ scored 4.26, ‘the response rate from my colleagues in social media is higher than phone messages’ scored 4.21 and lastly ‘the response rate from my colleagues in social media is higher than phone calls’ scored the lowest mean which is 4.17. As Radhakrishnan et al. (2021) mentioned, most of the employees used social media to enhance a good relationship with each other during the lockdown. In the study done by Verma et al. (2021), the pressure an employee feels due to work-related circumstances is referred to as work stress or job stress. When employees’ demands do not meet their available resources, such as knowledge, ability, or talents, they are likely to be stressed.

Table 3: Social media effects during Covid-19 lockdown

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<b>Social media effects during Covid-19 lockdown</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Social media is a good platform to initiate good rapport with my colleagues during lockdown.	4.58	.499
Social media helps me to deliver my message successfully during lockdown.	4.54	.501
I have been spending more time communicating through social media than official workplace video call during lockdown.	4.44	.496
Social media is a good platform for me to foster closer relationship with other employees during lockdown.	4.43	.498
I get to know my colleagues better through social media during lockdown.	4.42	.516
Social media provides good impacts towards the relationship between me and my colleagues during lockdown.	4.41	.494
Social media is a good platform to keep connecting with my colleagues during lockdown.	4.40	.492
Social media helps to convey my thoughts easily during lockdown.	4.30	.482
The response rate from my colleagues in social media is higher than emails.	4.27	.446
My colleagues understand the message that I intend to deliver better via social media during lockdown.	4.26	.463
The response rate from my colleagues in social media is higher than phone messages.	4.21	.556
The response rate from my colleagues in social media is higher than phone calls.	4.17	.587

## 5 Conclusion

This study highlighted social media as a vital part of maintaining good relationships among employees during the Covid-19 lockdown. To sustain good connections, the employees used social media to start social interaction digitally during the lockdown. Most employees also preferred to use Facebook compared to other social media during the lockdown. Due to the function offered by Facebook, they tend to use Facebook to communicate with their colleagues. Other than sharing posts and photos, Facebook users also used Facebook as their platform to stream games and gain the latest information. Primarily, employees used social media to create good relationships with each other. They also used social media to get to know their colleagues better and on a deeper level.

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