




# Factors influencing the intention to use social media for work-related purposes at a South African higher education institution



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**Orientation:** The rapid development of information communication technology (ICT) has changed much of contemporary society. ICT's influence extends to the working context with ramifications not only for employees but also for the entire organisation.

**Research purpose:** The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the behavioural intention of a sample of employees at a traditional higher education institution to make use of social media within the workplace.

**Motivation for the study:** Social media has become a common tool within society for communication and networking purposes. An understanding of the factors that influence behavioural intention to use social media within the workplace can assist the organisation to better manage social media usage within the workplace.

**Research design, approach and method:** The research adopted the positivism paradigm with a quantitative research approach. The data were analysed making use of exploratory factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. A traditional higher education institution was chosen as the research site for the study, relying on a convenience sample ( $n = 134$ ) and data gathered using the work-related social media scale and behavioural intention to use scale.

**Main findings:** Although most employees make use of social media for problem-solving and communication purposes already in the workplace, organisations should allow their employees to help manage their reputation on social media.

**Practical and managerial implications:** An understanding of the factors that influence behavioural intention to use social media within the workplace can serve as a useful precursor for both employee and organisational-specific interventions. This study has specific relevance to the use of ICT platforms, such as social media, in traditional higher education institutions in South Africa. The study's results are therefore useful to both employees as end-users and managers as drivers of such interventions in the workplace.

**Contribution:** This study is one of the first within a South African work context to investigate social media usage in a traditional higher education institution and proposes a workplace social media usage framework (WSMUF) that helps not only employees but also the entire organisation to predict intention to use social media in the workplace.

## Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has changed how the workplace functions. Social media is seen as a powerful tool that can be used for a variety of purposes within the workplace, resulting in organisations dedicating a separate budget for this activity (Hysa, Mularczyk & Zdonek, 2015; Nielsen, 2013). More and more organisations are including social media in their marketing activities, market research, customer service, recruitment and promotion strategies (Gerber, 2016; Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). In accordance with this trend, Chinyamurindi and Louw (2010) argue that more research should be conducted that focuses on technology within the South African context.

Social media is defined as 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 60). The decision to include social media in the organisation's business strategies is motivated by several factors. These include the convenience of using social media services, greater awareness of the benefits that may be gained through social

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media tools and access to potential recruits with the possibility of disseminating information to a wider audience (Palonka & Porebska-Miac, 2014). For the customer, social media provides an online communication platform to discuss their favourite brands or raise concerns about the organisation (Stefko, Bacik & Fedorko, 2014).

In South Africa, nearly 30 million South Africans have access to social media networks through their mobile phones. Examples of social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google + and YouTube. BusinessTech (2015) reported that the most popular social media site in South Africa is Facebook with an estimated 12 million users. This popularity, as framed in the literature, could be because of a number of reasons. Firstly, Facebook has transformed the workplace in that it is social in nature and allows participants to send, receive and process information freely for use by others (Aula, 2010). Furthermore, Facebook allows for open participation and the assimilation of information across different communication channels (Gerber, 2016). It also provides a communication channel for employees to discuss work-related issues away from management oversight and to share personal and work information. This, however, means that the organisation (unlike with conventional media) is no longer able to control the information that is put in the public domain about their products or services (Aula, 2010).

Secondly, Facebook is commonly referred to as *grassroots technology*, which means that the employees were using the technology before the organisation implemented a social media strategy. This means that employees are familiar with the technology and are more likely to adopt it for business purposes. Thus, many social media tools, such as Facebook, can be used both at work and at home, obscuring the boundary between these two contexts. For example, employees can upload information on their personal page that could be inconsistent with or may harm the organisation's image or brand (Dreher, 2014). In a study, 60% of management believed that they had a right to know what their employees post, but despite this acknowledgement, only 17% of these organisations had implemented a programme to monitor and mitigate risks related to social networks (Lanham, 2010). These characteristics provide an interesting question concerning the factors that will determine how employees in traditional higher education institutions decide to make use of social media to perform their duties.

Employee social media usage can be considered a strong indicator of the technology's success and will ultimately determine the acceptance, implementation and strategic benefit of social media in the workplace (Ajzen, 1991; Ali-Hassan, Nevo & Wadec, 2015). Organisations are also interested in their employees' social media usage to derive benefits from and assess the business value of the technology. Behavioural intention occurs when the employee decides to use the different features of the information technology artefact (in this case Facebook) to accomplish a task

that is associated with a predefined organisational goal (Ajzen, 1991).

Researchers have previously studied the use of social media in the workplace, with most of these studies focusing on a specific discipline or field, for example, corporate, public sector, academia or the health care sector (Gholami-Kordkheili, Wild & Strech, 2013; Guy, 2012; Magro, 2012; Wu, Sun & Tan, 2013). These studies focused almost exclusively on the externally focused usage of social media technologies such as advertising, communication and marketing of organisations in developed countries. The internal usage of social media, in comparison, has not been investigated as thoroughly (Ouiridi, Ouiridi, Segers & Henderickx, 2015). In addition, very few studies have been conducted in developing countries.

Academia has traditionally used social media to improve collaboration and communication with students to improve teaching and learning (external usage of social media; Cilliers, 2016). Social media technologies have been recognised as a viable supplement to the traditional learning environment. However, in line with the international trend, not many studies have focused on the internal usage of social media among academic employees in developing countries such as South Africa.

## Research purpose and objectives

Research into the use of social media in the workplace is growing both locally and internationally (Hysa et al., 2015; Palonka & Porebska-Miac, 2014). Nevertheless, there is a need for further research in South Africa on the factors that will determine the behavioural intention to use social media in the workplace. Although it is acknowledged that social media is often used in the higher education context to improve teaching and learning or for external purposes such as marketing the institution, there is very little information available about how employees in higher education institutions decide to make use of social media to perform their duties, for example, internal usage (Birch & Irvine, 2009; Chen & Bryer, 2012; Cilliers, 2016). The purpose of this study was to identify employees' behavioural intention to make use of social media in the workplace at a South African traditional higher education institution. The overall research question that guided this study was: 'What factors influence the behavioural intent of employees in the South African higher education sector to make use of social media for work purposes?'

## Literature review

### Theoretical development

This research draws on the theoretical underpinnings of the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003), which posits that attitude towards social media usage reflects the potential to not only use but also adopt the technology. This view within a South African setting has been supported by a number of

studies (e.g. Chinyamurindi & Louw, 2010; Chinyamurindi & Shava, 2015; Shava, Chinyamurindi & Somdyala, 2016) leading to the TAM, specifically behavioural intention to use, being theorised to be a useful predictor of behaviours, such as intention, when deciding to adopt technology (Agundo-Peregrina, Hernández-García & Pascual-Miguel, 2014; Venkatesh et al., 2003).

### Social media usage and behavioural intention to use

The TAM was developed by Davis in 1986 and is one of the most cited theoretical frameworks in the Information Systems field. It is used to examine the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use that will ultimately determine the employee's intention to make use of social media and can, therefore, be used to predict and validate factors that will influence technology adoption, acceptance and use (Cilliers & Flowerday, 2012). Within an organisational setting, an employee's intention to make use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, can improve co-worker and supervisor support and create a platform to highlight job-related demands as it provides direct communication in the quickest possible time (Lilley, Grodzinsky & Gumbus, 2012; Ouiridi et al., 2015). Furthermore, the intention to make use of social media in the assimilation of new, young employees was found to increase morale and the employees' feelings of cultural belonging, whereas the use of an internal social networking improved employee engagement and job performance (Ouiridi et al., 2015). Landers and Callan (2014) proposed a Work-related Social Media Questionnaire (WSMQ) that could be used to determine the beneficial and harmful social media-related work behaviours that are applicable across various industries and jobs. The positive work-related social media behaviours were identified as reputation management, extra-office communication, and task-related and intra-office communication, whereas the negative behaviours included offending others and behaviours that can damage reputation and relationship or waste time.

Fusch (2011) divides social media tools into three important categories for the user: communication, sharing and collaboration. Facebook, the social media site chosen for this study, provides employees with the opportunity to conduct activities in all three groups. Employees can further communicate with each other by posting on other employees' Facebook sites, they can share information or documents, and groups of employees can open a Facebook page with the aim to collaborate on a specific topic (Guy, 2012). For these reasons, Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms in South Africa with some estimates being at 12 million users (BusinessTech, 2015).

Within the organisational setting, some concerns exist around social media usage. For instance, concerns are raised around the type of content that can be posted on platforms such as Facebook, which speaks to the usefulness of the technology (Hysa et al., 2015; Palonka & Porebska-Miac, 2014). Other researchers caution that Facebook can have a negative

influence on both employee and workplace productivity, or ease of use, resulting in social media platforms being blocked during working hours (Hysa et al., 2015). Shullich (2011) cautions that the increased use of social media in the workplace can be a source of malware (Trojans, viruses and spyware) that can compromise the data security and integrity of the organisation. To safeguard against such threats, Dreher (2014) advises organisations to pay attention to issues through the implementation of policy governing social media usage in organisations. Such policy should be accompanied by both punitive and corrective measures when violations occur (Hysa et al., 2015). In addition, Gerber (2016) argues for a greater presence of the ICT department in supporting all business functions, given that social media usage may transcend across business functions.

A review of the extant literature positions the need for this study on three fronts. Firstly, there is a growing body of empirical work paying attention to the role of ICTs within the South African workplace (e.g. Chinyamurindi & Louw, 2010; De Wet, Koekemoer & Nel, 2016; Erasmus, Rothmann & Van Eeden, 2015). However, within this growing body of work, scant attention is given to social media usage within the workplace. Secondly, no proposed framework(s) appear to have emerged based on the findings of the growing body of empirical work within a South African context in relation to social media usage. Thirdly, calls exist for studies that investigate work-related social media usage in various national, cultural, social and economic contexts (Landers & Callan, 2014). As its contribution, this study seeks to fill these identified research gaps through assessing the following four hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** A significantly positive relationship exists between university employees' problem-solving methods and intention to use social media.
- **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** A significantly positive relationship exists between university employees' (intra and extra) communication methods and intention to use social media.
- **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** A significantly positive relationship exists between university employees' reputational management methods and intention to use social media.
- **Hypothesis 4 (H4):** A significantly positive relationship exists between university employees' task accomplishment and intention to use social media.

## Research method

### Research approach

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) consider a research paradigm as a means to study social phenomena from which certain understandings can be achieved. This study made use of a positivistic paradigm with a descriptive research design and a quantitative approach. Such a philosophy and approach has been used in previous studies especially within a South African context following the same research lines (Chinyamurindi & Louw, 2010; Chinyamurindi & Shava, 2015; Cilliers, 2016; Shava et al., 2016). Positivism assumes that

social reality is singular, objective and is not affected by the researcher's attempts to investigate it (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

Quantitative research is deductive as it is concerned with testing theories; generating models, theories and hypotheses; developing instruments and methods for measurements; experimental controls; and collection of empirical data (Kuhn, 1961). For the purpose of this study, a quantitative survey method was used to gather data, whereas a convenience sampling method was used to identify the study participants. A survey method was considered appropriate as large quantities of raw data could be accumulated in a short period of time, thus facilitating advanced statistical analyses. A key component of analysis of the data collected for this study included factor analysis. The purpose of factor analysis in social research is to summarise the data through the identification of latent relationships within the data.

### Research instrument

The WSMQ was used as the data collection tool in this study. The WSMQ is a tool used to measure how employees use social media within the workplace for reasons related either positively or negatively to their work performance. The instrument used consists of three sections and 27 items overall. Section A (6 questions) solicited demographic information from respondents (gender, ethnic group, age, level of education, employment status and level of computer knowledge). Section B (18 questions) measured the positive work-related social media actions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The final section (Section C) of the instrument consisted of the dependent variable comprising three items and measuring behavioural intention to use social media in the workplace as identified in previous studies (Ajzen, 2006; Ong & Lai, 2006). The scale measures intent, prediction and planning, which represent three progressive levels of seriousness about the intention to use social media in the workplace. The scale was found to have sufficient ratings of reliability above the recommended threshold of 0.7 suggested by Nunnally (1978).

A pilot study was used to pre-test the original WSMQ questionnaire among a sample of 20 respondents (10 academics and 10 administrators) that was not included in the subsequent main study. Suggestions and amendments from this process were used to refine the research instrument of the main study. These included aspects of simplicity and clarity of questions and a suggestion to include a detailed definition of what is meant by social media in the workplace in the accompanying instructions. Further, two lecturers in the human resources management and Information Systems fields were consulted to review a copy of the questionnaire before it was used for data collection. The pilot study provided for the face and content validity of the questionnaire.

### Research respondents

Data were collected from university staff ( $n = 202$ ) at one campus of a traditional university. All respondents were

affiliated with the university either as an academic or administrative staff member. Respondents were informed of their rights that participating in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. If respondents were in agreement to this, an ethical consent form was signed before completion of the questionnaire. A total of 200 questionnaires were randomly distributed to academics and administrators at a university event (over a period of 1 week). A total of 134 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 67%, which was deemed acceptable. Table 1 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics of the respondents who took part in the study.

The results in Table 1 show a dominance of black female respondents with the majority being aged between 30 and 50 years. The majority of the respondents had obtained a post Grade 12 qualification. The respondents indicated that they had 'a good' knowledge of computers. All of these results are regarded as representative of the gender, age, qualifications and computer knowledge of the work population at a traditional university (Higher Education South Africa, 2015).

### Descriptive statistics

In examining the descriptive statements related to the WSMQ as displayed in Table 2, it is evident that more participants viewed the statements positively as opposed to negatively, with some having higher means than others. Statements 9 and 11 pertaining to employees contacting co-workers via social media and employees posting on their organisations' social media pages appear to have higher means than statements such as WSMQ4 and 6 which relate to contacting clients or customers via social media. Because of the fact that

**TABLE 1:** Descriptive statistics of respondents.

Demographic	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	50	37.3
Female	84	62.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Black African	111	82.8
Mixed race	19	14.2
White	4	3.0
<b>Age</b>		
20–30 years	11	8.2
31–40 years	65	48.5
41–50 years	51	38.1
Above 50 years	7	5.2
<b>Educational qualifications</b>		
Matric	4	3.0
Certificate	2	1.5
Diploma or degree	78	58.2
Postgraduate studies	50	37.3
<b>Position in university</b>		
Academic	58	43.3
Administrator	76	56.7
<b>Computer knowledge</b>		
Great	39	29.1
Good	93	69.4
Average	2	1.5

*n* = 134.



**TABLE 2:** Descriptive statistics for Work-related Social Media Questionnaire results.

Number	Question	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
WSMQ1	I have found tutorials and lessons on social media to help me learn how to perform my job better.	2	5	3.57	0.594
WSMQ2	I have used social media to learn how to perform better at my job.	2	5	3.39	0.612
WSMQ3	I communicate with existing customers or clients via social media.	1	5	3.42	0.739
WSMQ4	I maintain contact with existing customers or clients using social media.	1	5	3.33	0.646
WSMQ5	I reach out to potential new customers and clients using social media.	2	5	3.49	0.622
WSMQ6	I've identified potential customers and clients by searching social media.	2	5	3.38	0.611
WSMQ7	I request help from people on social media when I am having trouble solving a problem at work.	2	5	3.48	0.646
WSMQ8	When I can't solve a problem at work, I ask for help on social media.	2	5	3.42	0.579
WSMQ9	I use social media to contact my co-workers when I am unable to reach them by other means.	2	5	3.62	0.647
WSMQ10	Through social media, I maintain contact with other people in my organisation.	2	5	3.42	0.579
WSMQ11	I post on my organisation's social media site or group page.	2	5	3.60	0.639
WSMQ12	I use my organisation's official social media presence to network.	2	5	3.46	0.609
WSMQ13	I have found pictures, videos, or other content on social media of a co-worker that may harm his or her reputation and warned him or her about them.	2	5	3.54	0.596
WSMQ14	I have told my co-worker about slander others have posted on social media about him or her.	2	5	3.47	0.622
WSMQ15	When someone posts something negative about our organisation or its employees on social media, I try to do something about it.	2	5	3.47	0.645
WSMQ16	If I find something on social media that will harm the reputation of my co-workers or our organisation, I let people know.	2	5	3.45	0.583
WSMQ17	I have taken advantage of the technical features of social media (like file sharing or scheduling functions) to accomplish work tasks.	2	5	3.47	0.584
WSMQ18	I have used software features of social media to accomplish a work task faster or more easily.	2	5	3.47	0.622

this study takes place in a university setting, these findings would be consistent with the nature of the organisation, involving administrators and academics who do not generally contact students via social media.

### Reliability and validity testing

The researchers adhered to issues of reliability and validity while collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. The statistical analyses were carried out with SPSS V24. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was used to test for internal consistency of the measuring instrument (Pallant, 2010). A high Cronbach's alpha coefficient suggests that the scale used is reliable. Values of 0.70 and above represent a good level of reliability, whereas values between 0.50 and 0.69 are considered to indicate an acceptable level of reliability (Pallant, 2010). The Cronbach's alphas were calculated for Sections B and C of the questionnaire and found to be acceptable in both cases. Table 3 provides the results of the empirical reliability testing for the scales used in this research. Both the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the positive workplace social media scale and behavioural intention to use scale indicated adequate levels of reliability.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify and validate the sub-constructs contained in the 18-item WSMQ. Prior to performing the principal components analysis, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.4 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.686, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability

**TABLE 3:** Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales comprising the measuring instrument.

Scale	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Positive work-related social media scale	18	0.704
Behavioural intention to use social media scale	3	0.698

**TABLE 4:** Exploratory factor analysis results.

Item	Problem-solving	Communication	Reputation management
WSMQ6	0.682	-	-
WSMQ8	0.777	-	-
WSMQ10	0.749	-	-
WSMQ12	0.731	-	-
WSMQ5	-	0.766	-
WSMQ7	-	0.820	-
WSMQ9	-	0.697	-
WSMQ11	-	0.724	-
WSMQ15	-	-	0.758
WSMQ16	-	-	-0.707
WSMQ17	-	-	0.502

of the correlations matrix (Kaiser, 1970, 1974). Thus, the EFA was conducted for the purpose of determining validity of the constructs and their associated items. Principal components analysis revealed the presence of three components that collectively accounted for 55.98% of the variance in the data. The principal components analysis conducted utilised Equamax with Kaiser normalisation as the rotation method. The rotated solution revealed three components (problem-solving, communication and reputation management) with a number of items loading on each of the components, as is evident in Table 4. The three factors were assessed and named according to the components of the workplace social media usage framework (WSMUF). These factors include problem-solving, communication with peers and clients, and

reputation management. It is important to note that the sub-construct of job performance was eliminated from the study at this point because of the fact that the measurement instrument appeared not to capture the essence of the construct adequately, and therefore, it could not be operationalised properly.

To conclude the issue of validity and reliability of the measurement instruments, it is important to note that retests of reliability were conducted based on the factors derived from the EFA. Adequate Cronbach's alphas for the three factors were achieved. Further to the retest of reliability, it is necessary to address the issue of the credibility of the scale used to measure the dependent variable: behavioural intention to use. The dependent variable scale was tested for both reliability and validity, and the following results were derived: The Cronbach's alpha score recorded was 0.698, indicating the scale was moderately reliable, and the factor loadings to establish unidimensionality of the scale ranged from 0.724 to 0.874, indicating the scale was measuring a singular construct.

### Correlation and multiple regression results

In order to derive results to the hypotheses posed, a correlation analysis was first conducted to determine the significance of individual relationships. The correlation analysis was followed by a multiple regression analysis (MRA) which provided further insights into the strengths and directions of the hypothesised relationships. As previously indicated, Hypothesis 4 was eliminated from the analysis; therefore, Hypotheses 1 to 3 were tested. The results of the correlations achieved between the constructs are provided in Table 5.

Table 5 indicates that Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to depict the level of correlation achieved between the variables under study. A  $p$ -value of less than 0.05 was selected to indicate statistical significance. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded from Table 5 that the only significant and positively highly correlated relationship evident between the dependent variables (behavioural intention to use) and the independent variables (problem-solving, communication and reputation management) is the one that exists between

behavioural intention to use and reputation management. To further contextualise the various relationships and to understand the possible influence the independent variables have on the dependent variables, an MRA was conducted. The various summarised outputs generated from the MRA are presented in Table 6.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Ethics Committee.

## Discussion

### Outline of the findings

The purpose of this study was to identify the behavioural intention of a sample of employees at a traditional higher education institution to make use of social media within the workplace. The MRA indicates that the independent variables explain 41.90% of the behavioural intention to use the construct. Table 6 confirms the findings of the correlation analysis presented in Table 5. The only significantly positive relation evident is the one between behavioural intention to use and reputation management ( $b = 0.650$ ;  $p < 0.005$ ) which, therefore, supports Hypothesis 3. These results indicate that employees are actively concerned with maintaining their organisations and co-workers' reputations on social media and will actively pursue behaviour that results in reputation management. The findings, however, also reveal that there is no statistically significant relationship, negative or positive, between the other two independent variables (problem-solving or communication) and the dependent variable (behavioural intent), respectively. Based on these findings, no support can be found for Hypotheses 1, 2 or 4. These findings imply that employees do not actively intend to use social media to assist them with task accomplishment, such as

**TABLE 6:** Influence of independent variables on behavioural intention to use social media.

Independent variables	Beta	$t$	Significance ( $p$ )
Problem-solving	-0.050	-0.737	0.463
Communication	-0.117	-1.736	0.085
Reputation management	0.650	9.615	0.000*

Dependent variable behavioural intention to use –  $R^2 = 0.419$ .

\*,  $p < 0.005$ .

**TABLE 5:** Test of correlation between constructs.

Construct	Description	Behavioural intention to use	Problem-solving	Communication	Reputation management
Behavioural intention to use	Pearson's correlation	1	-0.009	-0.044	0.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.921	0.612	0.000
	$N$	134	133	134	134
Problem-solving	Pearson's correlation	-0.009	1	-0.053	0.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.921	-	0.547	0.542
	$N$	133	133	133	133
Communication	Pearson's correlation	-0.044	-0.053	1	0.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.612	0.547	-	0.211
	$N$	134	133	134	134
Reputation management	Pearson's correlation	0.635**	0.053	0.109	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.542	0.211	-
	$N$	134	133	134	134

\*\* , Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

problem-solving and communication at work, and there could be various reasons for this, for example, restricted access to Facebook. However, the findings should be contrasted with the descriptive findings reported in Table 3 which indicate that employees are already using social media for communication and problem-solving in a work environment. In considering the items used to measure the constructs of problem-solving and communication, it is possible that employees use social media as a 'last resort' when they are unable to contact a colleague or need some form of assistance and have not been able to obtain it from another channel in the organisation. Thus, although employees are using social media to assist them in the workplace, they perhaps do not consider these to be legitimate 'work tools', thus explaining the lack of relationship between problem-solving, communication and behavioural intent to use social media in the workplace. The main findings of this research indicate that the behavioural intent to use social media in the academic workplace is predicated by only one factor: reputation management.

Thus, one of the contributions of this study, given the scant empirical focus on studies on social media usage in the South African workplace, is the knowledge that although academic staff does make use of social media in the workplace for communication and problem-solving, only reputational management of the institution is pursued actively. This extends understanding to the growing body of empirical work in South Africa focusing on the role of ICTs in South Africa (De Wet et al., 2016; Erasmus et al., 2015) and uniquely with social media usage. Practically, organisations can emphasise the communication capability as argued by the WSMUF to improve not only communication processes but also channels through which information is shared. Furthermore, the WSMUF can be a useful basis through which interventions that follow responsible social media usage can be based on. For instance, through the factor associated with reputation management, employees can be made aware of the positives and negatives of social media on not only employee reputations but also organisational reputations. A platform such as social media should not be seen as entirely counterproductive to ideals of improving organisational productivity but one that can improve such.

### Relating main findings to the literature

Social media has been identified in literature as being used by organisations for marketing activities, market research, customer service, recruitment and promotion strategies (Gerber, 2016). These strategies have an external focus. Very little has been written about the internal usage and behavioural intent to make use of social media among employees. Facebook, in particular, has allowed for open participation and the assimilation of information across a variety of different communication channels (Stefko et al., 2014). The WSMUF supports this notion as communication and problem-solving among employees in the workplace were identified as two factors that will predict behavioural

intent to use social media in the workplace. The third factor, reputation management, is the most important predictor of behavioural intent to use social media in the workplace. Organisations recognise that brand management becomes more difficult if employees are allowed to post information that may be incongruent with the organisation's image, as they no longer control the information that is put in the public domain about their products or services (Aula, 2010). The employees believe that managing the reputation of their organisation and fellow employees is one of the key tasks when they engage in social media in the workplace. This means that the organisation could use their employees to manage their brand on social media.

### Limitations of the study

Although the study was a useful precursor to understanding the factors that influence behavioural intention to use social media, some limitations can be flagged. Firstly, the findings of the study are only generalisable to the entire population of employees working in universities that fit the same profile as those respondents sampled or any other South African university. Secondly, the study made use of a sample consisting of both an academic and administrative function. The findings of this work should be viewed with caution especially given the skewed sample. The purpose of this work was to access a sample most accessible to the researchers, hence adoption of a convenience sampling approach. Finally, a further shortcoming of this research is its reliance on retrospective data that include how employees use social media. The reliability of such data is questionable as in some cases employees may forget events and experiences.

### Suggestions for future research

Future research could qualitatively explore the factors in the WSMUF as proposed in this study. This could take the form of exploring the tensions and relatedness (if any) that may exist between the factors in the WSMUF. Future research could also test the WSMUF in other contexts of interest, such as the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sector, argued by Chinyamurindi and Louw (2010) to be key Human Resource Management clusters of the South African economy. Although the scale for measuring work-related social media usage is relatively new (Landers & Callan, 2014), given the diversity that exists in the South African context, future research could test this against such.

### Conclusion

Social media is transforming the workplace in South Africa. The study set out to determine what factors will influence the behavioural intention of employees at a traditional higher education institution to make use of social media in the workplace. The main activities identified through the WSMUF that will contribute to this intention are communication among colleagues, problem-solving and reputation management. The WSMUF for the first time provides a tool for South African organisations to manage

their employees' behavioural intent to make use of social media in the workplace to stay competitive in the social networking age.

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### Authors' contributions

L.C. was responsible for conceptualisation and literature review and K.V. was the statistician. W.T.C. was responsible for conceptualisation and data collection.

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