Social Media As A Tool To Effectively Communicate With Stakeholders: School Administrators and Superintendents' Perceptions

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SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND
SUPERINTENDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS

by

Steven Coleman Hampton

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016
ABSTRACT

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERINTENDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS

by Steven Coleman Hampton

May 2016

This quantitative research study analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of using social media outlets to communicate with stakeholders. School administrators throughout the State of Mississippi completed an online survey developed by the researcher identifying the social media outlets they use to communicate with their stakeholders and the effectiveness of using social media outlets. Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals, and Public Relations Directors with various years of experience completed the survey. The study revealed there was a statistical significant difference between age groups of the school administrators with the concerns of using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders and the effectiveness of using social media outlets to communicate with stakeholders.
SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH

STAKEHOLDERS: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND

SUPERINTENDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS

by

Steven Coleman Hampton

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the Department of Educational Leadership and School Counseling
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

After four years and many long nights, this journey has come to an end. This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my family and friends. I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Pam, and daughter, Hannah, for their encouragement throughout this process. Thank you for all your support. I love you guys!
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Public education is constantly under a microscope in the United States of America. With ever changing federal and state legislation, school districts and school administrators face a difficult task in meeting the changing standards and expectations for today’s schools. Stakeholders around the country expect their educational system to meet the expectations for their students and communities. School districts and school administrators play a vital role on how public education is perceived in the United States of America.

Therefore, school administrators must become more effective when communicating with stakeholders. In today’s school districts, school administrators are looking for ways to get stakeholders involved in the educational system. One way to get stakeholders involved is to develop relationships with them. In an article about building relationships with families and communities to increase parental involvement, Epstein (2010) asserted:

If educators view students as children, they are likely to see both the family and community as partners with the school in children’s education and development. Partners recognize their shared interests in and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better programs and opportunities for students. (p. 81)

Consequently, improving the way school administrators communicate can help build positive relationships with their stakeholders. According to Hall (2006), there are key factors to an effective communication campaign:
Delivery

1. Identify who your key audiences are – both internal and external.
2. Use multiple mediums to deliver the messages.
3. Communicate on a consistent and predictable basis.
4. Communicate at the level and in the manner they will understand (Put your pride and educational-eze away).

Design/Branding

5. Find powerful visual images to reinforce your key messages – pictures really are worth 1,000 words.
6. Students are powerful components in delivering your message when used appropriately.
7. Develop a catch phrase that captures the mind and heart and then use it in all communication to help instantly identify your department.

Content

8. Focus more on the “why this is helping instruction and students” and less on the technology.
9. Skew the balance to stories (the human side of how it is making a difference) and less news (telling them about progress the department or district is making).
10. Be sure to keep your stakeholders aware of where you are going next. You want them to own the vision and be excited about it. (p. 20)

Social media is emerging as a new way for people to communicate. Burnett, Lamm, Lucas, and Waters (2009) said, “relationships are the foundation for social
networking sites” (p.102). A study conducted by the Pew Research Center found that 87% of American adults use the internet and 68% of adults connected to the internet with mobile devices like smartphones or tablets (Fox & Raine, 2014). Also, the study found that cell phone ownership by adults has risen from 53% in 2000 to 90% now and smartphone ownership has grown from 35% in 2011 to 58% now (Fox & Rainie, 2014).

Social media is becoming popular as more and more people are using mobile technology to communicate. According to King (2015), mobile technology provides a way to connect to your customers anytime, anywhere without sitting in front of a computer. The ever-changing mobile technology and social media outlets give school administrators new tools to communicate with stakeholders.

In fact, public relation experts are using social media outlets to communicate with and market organizations in the business sector. According to a study by Curtis et al. (2010), non-profit organizations are utilizing social media as a beneficial public relations communication tool. The study consisted of 409 participants, employees of non-profit organizations with public relations duties, which used some form of social media to communicate information with stakeholders. The types of social media used included email (97%), social networks (54.5%), video sharing (51.1%), blogs (48.4%), photo sharing (27.1%), instant messaging (13.4%), and text messaging (12.5%) (Curtis et al., 2010). Burnett et al. (2009) suggested non-profit organizations expand the use of social media to meet the stakeholder’s needs and expectations. In addition to non-profit organizations, organizations like libraries utilize social media outlets to communicate with customers. King (2015) focused on how libraries could utilize social media to reach
customers saying the biggest reason was “social media channels potentially provide libraries with a direct connection to your customers” (p. 8).

In the same way public relations experts use social media outlets to communicate and market their organizations, school administrators should use social media outlets to communicate with stakeholders to improve the perception, image, or brand of their school district. Public relations experts try and create a brand when marketing to set their organization apart from the rest. According to Hollenczer and Schneider (2006), school administrators need to understand the concept of branding because every school has a brand or image in the eyes of its stakeholders. In their book, Hollenczer and Schneider gave some branding lessons for public school principals that included:

1. Consistency: Consistency in message(s); consistency in the look and feel of the printed and electronic communications; consistency among the many voices from the school.

2. Dynamics: The need to set the school apart from others.

3. Emotion: An appeal to the publics’ emotion. Emotion sells coffee, lipstick, and shoes. The same appeal works for support for the school. (p. 151)

Consequently, school administrators that can market and create a brand for their school district can improve the perception of the school district.

Some school administrators around the nation are already using social media outlets to communicate with their stakeholders. Burnett et al. (2009) stated “social networking sites can be an effective way to reach stakeholder groups if organizations understand how their stakeholders use the sites” (p. 106). However, there are some concerns school administrators have with using social media as a communication tool. A
qualitative study of 10 Texas principals, elementary and secondary principals, revealed that time, the volume of information sent/received, the ease of accessibility, and training were some area of concerns on how electronic communication has changed the role of the principal (Edmondson, Hines, & Moore, 2008). Also, Gross (2010) stated that time and resource allocations are the biggest obstacles to using social media because of the extra tasks they create. These are just a few concerns school administrators have about using social media outlets as communication tools with their stakeholders.

This study analyzed the perceptions of Mississippi school administrators on the use of social media as a communication tool with their stakeholders. The study analyzed the types of social media outlets that are currently being used, how comfortable school administrators are using social media outlets, the effectiveness of the social media outlets being used to communicate with stakeholders, as well as the benefits and concerns school administrators have with using social media outlets as communication tools with stakeholders. The findings of this study will give school administrators information on new ways to effectively improve communication with their stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

As a school administrator, this researcher understands the need to improve communication with our stakeholders in education. According to Hall (2006), most leaders think effective communication is a top priority, but one of the biggest concerns for stakeholders when asked is that leaders improve communication. A role that school administrators are continually trying to improve on is effectively communicating with their stakeholders. Effective communication can build positive relationships with stakeholders to improve the support and perception of the school district. According to
Epstein (2010), when stakeholders in education form partnerships a community of caring is formed for our students.

The perception of public education in the United States of American is declining, and many Americans feel changes should be made. A Pew Research Center survey found that 45% of Americans feel the educational system needs major changes and 21% of Americans feel today’s educational system needs to completely rebuilt (Tyson, 2013). Radhaswamy and Zia (2011) stated “for human beings, perception is reality and people’s perceptions are highly influenced by the way one puts forward oneself in terms of expression and articulation” (p. 53). Communication can play a big role in how someone perceives something. A role that school administrators are continually trying to improve on is effectively communicating with their stakeholders. If school administrators can effectively communicate with stakeholders, public perception of the education system could improve.

According to Fox and Rainie (2014), 67% of internet users say their online communication like email, messaging, social media with family and friends has generally strengthened those relationships. Additionally, online communication with social media could strengthen the relationships with educational stakeholders. Creating an effective communication strategy can be very beneficial, because stakeholders will become more engaged and buy into your vision (Hall, 2006). Constant communication from school administrators is a need to get stakeholders involved in the school. Hollenczer and Schneider (2006) stated “if a group is informed and knowledgeable, it is more likely to be involved and more likely to pay attention to communication from the school” (p. 147).
Social media outlets provide school administrators with additional communication tools to connect and engage stakeholders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study described and analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. With social media being a new way to communicate, this study analyzed if the age of the school administrator affects their perceptions on using social media as a communication tool. The study also analyzed if the location of the school setting has an affect on how school administrators perceive using social media to communicate with their stakeholders. The results of this study provided school administrators with some effective communication ideas to use with their stakeholders.

Research Questions

The perceptions of school administrators were researched on the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. The following research questions guided this study:

1. Which social media outlets are school administrators currently using?
2. How comfortable are current school administrators with using social media outlets?
3. Which types of information do school administrators communicate with their stakeholders through social media outlets?
4. Do school administrators feel social media is an effective communication tool with stakeholders?
5. What benefits do school administrators see with using social media outlets as a communication tool?

6. What concerns do school administrators have with using social media outlets as a communication tool?

7. Does age factor in the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

8. Does the school district setting have an impact on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

H1: There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions across age groups of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.

H2: There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders based on the school district setting.

Definition of Terms

Brand – For the purpose of this study, stakeholder’s image of the school district or organization.

City School Districts – For the purpose of this study, school districts made up of schools located within the defined boundaries of towns in the State of Mississippi.

Concerns – For the purpose of this study, any issue school administrators encounter using social media outlets. Concerns include but not limited to time, training, resources, security/privacy issues, and feedback.
County School Districts – For the purpose of this study, school districts made up of schools located outside the defined boundaries of towns in the State of Mississippi.

Perceptions – For the purpose of this study, school administrator’s attitudes and beliefs about using social media as a communication tool with stakeholders as measured by the research instrument.

School administrators – For the purpose of this study, District or building level administrators in the State of Mississippi. The district level administrators will be superintendents and assistant superintendents. The building level administrators will be principals and assistant principals.

Social Media Outlets – For the purpose of this study, social media outlets include mobile technology such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, text messaging, blogs, and any other social media outlet available for use on the internet.

Stakeholders – vast network of individuals who have an investment of one kind or another in the schools (Hollenczer & Schneider, 2006). For the purpose of this study, stakeholders include teachers, students, parents, community leaders, business leaders, and local citizens.

Delimitations

The delimitations in this study included:

1. The only participants in this study are school administrators (district level and building level) from the State of Mississippi.

2. The study is limited to only public school districts in the State of Mississippi.
3. Using a convenience sampling method, could limit the number of questionnaires completed and returned for data analysis.

4. Limiting the variables to just age and school district setting.

Assumptions

An assumption for this study was the participants will answer the questionnaire honestly.

Justification

In today’s society, school administrators must improve the way they communicate with their stakeholders to improve the image of the school districts across the country and gain the support of all stakeholders. With the advances in technology, social media outlets provide school administrators another avenue to communicate with stakeholders. Social media provides anyone connected to the internet the opportunity to connect with resources anywhere at any time (Knackmuhs, 2012). According to Berube, Perry, and Young (2008), school administrators and other educational leaders need to use every communication tool available to reach all stakeholders in their school districts.

School administrators could learn a lot about communicating and marketing their school districts from the public relations sector. The role of a public relations expert is to find ways to connect and market his company with their stakeholders no different than what a school administrator is trying to do with their stakeholders. In a study by Curtis et al. (2010) researching how non-profit organizations are using social media for public relations, they stated “social media techniques will become more abundant as public relations practitioners become mindful of their effectiveness in regards to reaching target
audiences, promoting a specific cause, and further developing communication strategies” (p. 92).

The use of social media outlets is becoming another important communication tool for all segments of the population. In an article by Gross (2010), he says:

Donors, political leaders, community advocates, voters, business owners and professionals, nonprofit leaders, grantors, and philanthropists all are migrating away from what was once carefully defined home territory, including traditional print and radio outreach, toward the instant, always-on reach of the Internet. (p. 17)

Knackmuhs (2012) stated, “having a social media presence will become increasingly important if parks want to remain relevant to the next generation” (p. 10). He conducted a study researching the use of social media in general, use of social media in gathering information about the parks, and the use of social media in sharing park experiences of visitors to the parks in the bay area. Similarly, school districts need to have a social media presence to stay relevant with their new generation of stakeholders.

Effective communication can help build strong relationships between school districts and stakeholders. Social media is another communication tool people use to connect with one another. King (2015) stated “one of the main reasons many people use social media is to connect with people they care about or are interested in” (p. 7). School administrators need to find effective ways to communicate with the people they care about, their stakeholders. In an article by Michael Gross (2010), Anne Sroka from Holyake Community College in Massachusetts was quoted as saying “the new reality is that people expect us to be able to communicate with them via the channel(s) they
choose” (p. 26). The data gathered from this study could guide school administrators on how to use social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders.

**Summary**

In this study, the researcher analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. Communication in today’s educational system is vital to the success of school districts and students. School administrators are always looking for ways to make communication more effective. This study identified the importance of effective communication with their stakeholders and how they can use social media to improve the way they communicate with stakeholders.

Schools in today’s public education system are not perceived to be very effective by stakeholders around the country. However, public education provides today’s students with many opportunities and positive experiences. The lack of communication and ineffective communication by school districts help lead to the poor perceptions of public education. This study analyzed the emergence of social media in today’s society, and how other organizations utilize social media to communicate and market their brand to their stakeholders. School administrators can use this study to improve the way they communicate with their stakeholders. As a result, school administrators can improve the perception of public education in their school districts.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In today’s society, education is constantly changing to meet the needs of the students and their communities. Public education in the United States has the challenge of meeting these needs. In the past several years, public education has faced many challenges including standardized testing, accountability ratings, and shrinking budgets. These challenges have impacted the perception of public education in the United States.

With a declining public perception of public schools, it is important for school districts in the United States to effectively communicate and market their schools. School districts must let stakeholders know about the good things that are happening in their schools. Too many times, the only information distributed to stakeholders is negative information.

This study sought to understand the perceptions of school administrators on using social media to communicate and market school districts with stakeholders. There is very little research on the use of social media by school administrators as a communication or marketing tool with stakeholders. Consequently, this study sought to discover ways school administrators could improve the communication process with stakeholders by examining literature of examples of successful use of social media by school districts as a communication or marketing tool.

This literature review’s purpose is to examine current research and literature on social media use by school administrators, and the role social media plays in the communication and marketing process with stakeholders. This chapter will describe the public perception of public schools and the impact perception has on community
engagement. In addition, this chapter will examine how businesses, health care industries, government, and non-profit organizations use social media to improve public relations and market their organizations. School districts could learn from these organizations on effective communication and marketing using social media. Next, this literature review chapter will examine literature on the concerns and benefits of using social media in today’s school districts as well as how social media is currently being used by educators in today’s classrooms. Finally, the last section of this literature review chapter will examine literature of real life examples of how school administrators use social media in their school districts.

Public Perception

School administrators and school districts have been under scrutiny with the advent of No Child Left Behind, Common Core, and high stakes testing. With the public viewing teachers as overpaid and ineffective, public education has had a significant public perception problem (Carr, 2011b). Also, school accountability models and standardized test scores can effect public perception of public schools. The perception of a school district can have an impact on local property values, enrollment, community and voter support, and teacher recruitment (Carr, 2008b). Five ways that a school district can obtain a negative public perception are (a) poor academic performance, (b) board members with their own agenda, (c) well connected vocal stakeholders, (d) leaders’ fear of media, and (e) not gaining public input on controversial issues. (Carr, 2009a). A significant issue with the public’s perception of public education is most people do not know what is actually going on in the schools (Carr, 2011b). Carr (2011b) suggests “good governance marked by civility, integrity, transparency, and responsiveness to
constituents inspires greater social and political trust” (p. 38). Parents and community
stakeholders want to know their school officials are spending dollars wisely to make a
schools without public support will die” (p. 52).

The public perception of public schools is affected by how schools compare with
other schools worldwide. When compared to other schools internationally, the public
schools in the United States have difficulty meeting the new international standards
(Carr, 2011b). Consequently, school administrators need to focus on informing the
public of the positive achievements that are happening in the schools. According to Carr
(2011b), school officials need to concentrate on community engagement activities to
maintain the trust of the public, and they need to be more proactive with media
communications to offset the tendency of the media to release negative media coverage.
Although, negative media coverage seems to be more interesting and keep the public’s
interest school administrators need to be more forthcoming with what schools are doing
on a daily basis. Open and honest communication and interaction helps to build
relationships and relationships build trust (Carr, 2011b). Therefore, Carr (2006c) stated
school districts should not have secrets and be transparent to build trust with
stakeholders. That is, leaders and organizations need to be accountable for everything
they do including admitting mistakes, because leaders and organizations can lose the trust
of their stakeholders when they appear secretive and not accessible (Carr, 2007c).
According to Carr (2007c), “at the core, transparency is as much about an organization’s
values and culture as it is about open meetings laws, cable-casting school board meetings,
making public records easy to get or packing websites with information” (p. 44).
Therefore, school administrators need to focus on gaining the trust of the school’s stakeholders. Pascopella (2005) stated “the more school officials tell the news, honestly, as to what’s going on behind school doors and on school property, the more information will disseminate throughout the community, gaining trust” (p. 31). Furthermore, Carr (2007c) stated, “effective communications is about systematically and strategically building mutually beneficial relationships between your organization and the people who matter the most to your success” (p. 45). Carr (2008b) suggested school leaders needed to listen and respond and not do all the talking when communicating with stakeholders to create a two-way communication system to build relationships and engagement. That is, transparent school leaders listen and are available to stakeholders and willing to make changes based on the stakeholder’s input (Carr, 2007c). Carr (2007a) noted, “If people trust the messenger, they will listen to the message” (p. 44).

Community Engagement

According to Carr (2007c), improving communication with parents and community stakeholders can increase their involvement in public education. Parent and community engagement provides school districts with a vast array of resources, and, and according to Vogel (2006) it is a mistake for school districts to not reach out to these resources to provide a better education for their students. To this point, Ezarik (2002) noted,

Weather your district’s goal is to pass a bond measure, explain and solicit feedback on a policy or get the community more invested in the success of students, a public engagement strategy can get you where you need to go. (p. 29)
Schaffer (2013) suggested “engagement is a tactic to help you achieve your objective – namely, expanding your brand, attracting new customers, and growing your company” (p. 52). According to Carr (2007c), 78% of voters in the U.S. do not have school-age children, so school districts must find effective ways to engage and inform this group about the public education system to gain their support. Carr (2009a) stated “communications professionals can – and should – find various ways to tell the district’s story directly to the people who matter most, with or without the media’s cooperation’ (p. 21). As well as, Ezarik suggested, “parents and other community members not only like to be informed and involved—they expect it” (p. 29). Parents and community stakeholders feel welcome in their local schools when school districts make personal connections with them (Vogel, 2006). School administrators need to build strong positive relationships with community stakeholders to help foster the success of their school district. To this point, Beverly Hall, Superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools was quoted in Ezarik (2002), “the heart of turning around a school system is having a lot of support from the community” (p. 31). Carr (2006a) suggests that public schools should rebuild relationships to restore trust in the schools with the stakeholders that matter most like parents, students, employees, and community leaders.

Social Media

The social media trend has exploded worldwide because of the ease of electronic communication and cellular technology. In fact, Klososky (2012) referred to this trend as a tool to provide companies and individuals the opportunity to communicate and collaborate with each other. Boyd and Ellison (2008) defined social media network sites as:
…web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. (p. 211)

Some examples of social media network sites include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and blogs. Social network sites provide user’s opportunities to articulate, make social networks available to users and connect users to strangers and individuals that would usually not be made (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Similarly, social media is an informal platform that provides useful, informative and consistent interactive communication to stakeholders said Catherine Gluckstein, president of SumAll (Thompson, 2013). The good thing about using social media tools is the cost is minimal for leaders of organizations of any size (Klososky, 2012). “Social media refers to sites that allow the uploading of videos, documents, graphics/photos or presentations and share them with the world” (Klososky, 2012, p.42). In the same way, Martin (2014) said “modern-day users rely on social media for virtually everything they used to turn to traditional websites, emails, and search engines for: communicating, shopping, researching, disseminating content, staying informed, and finding new friends and fans” (p. 20). According to Klososky (2012), social media tools can build relationships like no other element.

According to Schaffer (2013), there are over 50 social media networks and over 10,000,000 members of those networks. A Pew Research Center survey found, 73% of online adults use social networking sites with Facebook being the most dominant site used (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Certain social media sites have been popular among
different demographics. For example, Facebook is popular with a variety of demographic
groups (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Pinterest is popular among females (Duggan & Smith,
2013). LinkedIn is widely used by college graduates and high-income households
(Duggan & Smith, 2013), and Twitter and Instagram are becoming popular with young
adults, urban dwellers, and non-Whites (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Facebook, Twitter and
Instagram are the most frequently engaged sites by users according to the Pew Research
Internet Project (2013). Facebook users visit the site at least once per day 63% of the
time compared to Instagram users at 57% and Twitter users at 46% (Duggan & Smith,
2013). Of the five social networking sites in the Pew Research Center, Facebook is the
most widely used by online adults at 71% followed by LinkedIn at 22%, Pinterest at
21%, Twitter at 18% and Instagram at 17% (Duggan & Smith, 2013). With the advent of
smartphones, 40% of cell phone users utilize a social networking site on their phone
(Pew, 2013). According to Schaffer (2013), 60% of Facebook and 79% of Twitter
followers often recommend sites to other social media users. As a result, school districts
that use Facebook and Twitter could reach more stakeholders if other social media users
recommend their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Why Should School Administrators Use Social Media

Carr (2007c) suggested “marketing campaigns, branding, websites, electronic
communications and proactive media relations will have the desired impact only if they
help support, leverage, and maintain the organization’s relationship-building strategy” (p.
45). A significant part of building relationships is communication. The communication
of important information is vital to building relationships with stakeholders. Eileen
Bernardo, marketing communications manager at Viral-heat, stated in Martin (2014) that
creating new, interesting, creative, and relevant information is important to an effective social media plan. In Martin (2014), Miriam Slozberg CEO of Gemini Rising Ltd., suggested that social media marketing allows people to be interactive and build relationships easily. Effective communication with community stakeholders is critical when communicating information and messages, and the more outlets and media that are used increase the chance information and messages will be received (Dyrli, 2009).

According to Mateas (2008), the most powerful social media campaigns work better with other traditional media outlets like newspapers and television to get the best results.

A social media strategy gives an organization direction on how to manage social media messaging, determines what strategies will and will not be used, and gives current and future personnel a clear definition of what is expected when using social media (Schaffer, 2013). Schaffer (2013) suggests organizations should look at other social media examples to help make your site more effective. A business should write down what it wants to accomplish with the use of social media, because writing down ideas makes the business think through them (Duffy, 2012). According to Tsouvalas (2012), the best thing to do when deciding on social media sites is to get started and see what the sites can do for the business. However, many organizations start using social media without knowing what they want to accomplish with them (Duffy, 2012). When schools decide what social media they are going to use, they must ask themselves what they are trying to achieve (Tsouvalas, 2012). The support of the school district’s school board and superintendent are required when developing a social media philosophy and strategy to improve community engagement (Ezarik, 2002).
According to Schaffer (2013), “social media really is about the convergence of communication and information” (p. 52). For this reason, schools should engage their community, get feedback, post photos and run contests when using social media instead of just using it as a broadcasting tool. (Tsouvalas, 2012). Schaffer (2013) suggests sharing meaningful information and not just information about the business or organization, because when they share interesting information their followers will promote not only the interesting information but also the business or organization’s own content which help grow your social media site. Schools can share meaningful information about the opportunities and accomplishments to the followers of the social media site to help promote the school. Before creating social media profiles for an organization, find out if the organization is already being discussed on various sites to help determine what site to use (Duffy, 2012). When setting up social media profiles, make sure the organization gives detailed information to identify and describe their organization and purpose (Duffy, 2012). According to Duffy (2012), people do not like a “self-obsessed egomaniac” (p. 119). Social media users follow interesting sites. Organizations need to include a variety of relevant items not just content about the organization when posting to their social media site because it makes their site interesting and people want to follow interesting people (Duffy, 2012). Duffy (2012) suggests one way to efficiently manage social media sites is to use an application like HootSuite, TweetDeck, Seesmic, or the Hibari Mac app, which allows you to post information to all your sites from one place. These applications allow the user to post one message to a number of sites at one time. An organization should always add a description or
comment when posting photos, videos, or links, as well as respond to comments to their posts to help build a good relationship with their followers (Duffy, 2012).

Vogel (2006) stated “you’d be hard pressed to find a school district that leaves improving test scores, budgeting for new technology or developing the curriculum to chance. But too many schools do exactly that with parental and community involvement” (p. 66). School districts do a great job of educating stakeholders about the current trends in education like standardized testing and educational legislation. Social media has influenced how people and organizations deliver and receive the news using sites like Facebook and Twitter to replace traditional media outlets (Larkin, 2013). According to Larkin (2013), school administrators can deliver positive school news on a daily basis with social media instead of waiting on traditional media outlets to report it. Larkin (2013) suggests, “people and groups can harness social media tools to create positive change because these resources connect individuals who share a passion for a particular cause” (p. 72). School administrators should focus on using social media sites to connect to stakeholders and build relationships supplying the stakeholders with current information and news about the school. Eric Sheninger, principal of New Milford High School in New Jersey, stated in Ferriter (2011) that he can give up to the minute updates on Twitter and Facebook compared to using traditional forms of communication like press releases and mail. School districts need to concentrate more on success stories like satisfied parents and successful graduates to build emotion with stakeholders when trying to increase community engagement instead of just presenting facts (Carr, 2006b). Schachter (2011) stated:
Whether communicating with parents and the public, enhancing classroom instruction and staff development, or rallying school spirit, administrators and teachers are beginning to leverage the inter-active and multimedia features of social networks that have the added advantage of being widely and easily accessible - and free. (p. 27)

Engagement with followers on social media provides organizations with real feedback on what they are thinking, liking, and needing (Schaffer, 2013). As Ferriter (2011) stated “integrating social media tools into a school’s work is essential if leaders hope to build meaningful relationships with stakeholders” (p. 88). Organizations like school districts need to be proactive when engaging their social media followers as well as reactive when responding to comments by their followers to build an effective social media site (Schaffer, 2013). Carr (2009a) stated that not responding or commenting is the quickest way to lose the confidence and trust of the public. “Keep in mind that a meaningful interaction with a customer – a problem resolved or a question answered, for instance – can win you the type of loyalty that money cannot buy” (Schaffer, p. 53, 2013).

Public Relations

According to Fulmer (2012), a public relations professional’s success depends on how they reach the right people, and social media gives them new avenues to do so. In fact, Carr (2007a) said “the ability to craft and deliver memorable messages that capture the imagination of others and inspire them to action is an art form for leaders” (p. 43). When considering social media as a public relations/communication tool, public relations professionals should consider the following, whether a specific tool reaches the intended
audience, if the tool can be activated in a timely manner, if the tool can generate innovative content, is the tool a sustainable tactic, and how much it will cost when considering using social media tools to reach their clients (Fulmer, 2012). Steve Goldner, suggested in Thompson (2013), a digital and social marketing executive consultant, suggested that organizations need to understand the audience they are trying to reach and the type of information that is important to them not just the information you want to tell them. According to Carr (2009a), skills a school district’s public relations official should have experience with include public opinion research, strategic planning, marketing, crisis communication, employee communications, parental involvement, community relations and media relations. A good public relations school official understands what is important to their community when it comes to their school district (Pascopella, 2005). When school districts communicate with community stakeholders, the stakeholders want to know specific information such as that the district cares and their children will get a quality education that provides them with opportunities, that they are getting a return on their tax dollars, as well as timely straightforward answers (Carr, 2007a). Public relation professionals understand “communication requires answers to what people need to know, how they get their information, what channels they use, and how they want their information” (Pascopella, 2005, p. 32). Similarly, school administrators need to provide stakeholders with the channels they desire to receive information.

Terry Abbott (2009), former press secretary for the Houston Independent School District, stated if school districts and administrators want to get better media coverage they should look in the mirror and create their own good media coverage. Accordingly, effective communicators prepare interesting stories, interviews, pictures and video
opportunities ahead of time (Carr, 2009b). Abbott suggested school districts should create their own newsrooms to generate and deliver news stories to the media to gain public support. Educators know there are more good activities going on in school districts than bad and the public appreciates hearing the good news and will get involved stated Terry Abbott, former press secretary of the Houston Independent School District, in Pascopella (2005). For this reason, districts that deliver bad news let parents and community stakeholders know the district recognizes their problems and are trying to fix them (Pascopella, 2005).

Marketing

Today’s business leaders acknowledge that using social media is vital to the success in the business world (Schaffer, 2013). Social media outlets, the web, and mobile applications provide businesses with the tools to build trust and relationships to flourish in today’s market (Klososky, 2012). Businesses use media tools to connect with clients at anytime from anywhere, and the media tools allow clients to connect anytime from anywhere (Klososky, 2012). Businesses need to develop social media strategies. Schaffer (2013) stated:

without a social media strategy, how do you know what you are trying to achieve, what you should be doing, how well you are doing, what you should be measuring, and what the return on investment or your social media program is?”

(p. 52)

Paul Gillin, a technology journalist and speaker who advises marketers and business executives, suggested in Thompson (2013):
you don’t need to be active on every social network, but you do need to understand the culture of the ones that matter and you do need to respond to customers when they ask questions or talk about you there. (p. 21)

School districts and school administrators can use the business example of communicating with social media. Social media will give school administrators the opportunity to connect to stakeholders at any time and gives the stakeholder the opportunity to gather information at any time and any place. The use of social media can also help build relationships with the school’s community stakeholders. As some of the fastest growing companies have recognized the importance of social media as a marketing tool, school districts need to explore social media sites to market schools and districts and engage stakeholders.

Why Use Social Media in Marketing?

Whether a person is in public relations or marketing, they are often trying to find new ways to engage the consumer. Businesses worldwide are competing for the attention of old and new consumers. Marketers have to convince consumers why their business or product is the best. When marketing or selling, it is important to get the attention or interest of the target audience. Savage (2008) stated that marketers should “sell the sizzle not the steak” (p. 18).

Savage continued:

A significant aspect of selling is the focus on pushing the sizzle—sizzle is like a movie trailer: it tantalizes, provides the over-all gist, shows some high points and generally is responsible for motivating a customer to see the movie. (p. 18)
The emergence of new social media outlets presents challenges for business advertisers and researchers (Romaniuk, 2012). Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012) suggested that social media is the “vehicle of the day” (p. 325) for connecting businesses with their target audiences. According to Savage (2008), knowing what your consumer wants is a vital aspect of selling. There are numerous social media outlets available to marketers today, and determining which outlet to use can be a challenge. Savage (2008) suggested key word internet searches, YouTube, and other organizational websites are ways marketers can determine what social media outlets are drawing audience participation and what social media outlets are being used in the industry. No single outlet can reach the entire intended audience, so advertisers and researchers must collect some descriptive data to see which social media outlets attract the intended audience and how they can be used (Romaniuk, 2012). According to Deis and Hensel (2010), businesses should look at all possible outlets to increase advertising and improve marketing because using social media to enhance marketing is here to stay.

Once marketers decide what social media sites will be the most effective for their businesses, marketers must use the social media sites to engage consumers. In addition, salespeople have to work hard to show how unique a product or organization is in order to establish value with consumers or stakeholders when marketing or selling (Marshall, Moncrief, Rudd, & Lee, 2012). Social media sites can help marketers get information to consumers to establish the value of the product or organization. Savage (2008) suggested marketers must build value in a product by educating the intended audience on the benefits of the product. A product will sell itself and become more valuable when there is a perceived value for the product (Savage, 2008).
One way that social media helps establish value is by enhancing the brand of the product or organization. Consumers often recognize and identify with product and organization brands. In the business world, a brand describes an idea or image a consumer connects with a certain product or organization. According to Deis and Hensel (2010), enhancing the brand of a business, giving business consumers a chance to talk about the business and increasing customer satisfaction should be the purpose of using social media when marketing. The idea that consumers relate and identify with businesses and products because of brands is not new. Aggarwal (2004) stated:

…it is reasonable to suggest that even though people’s relationships with brands do not necessarily share the same richness and depth as their relationships with human partners, they sometimes do behave with brands as if they have a relationship with them. (p. 88)

Another way social media sites give businesses and marketers the ability to establish value with the consumers; they provide businesses and marketers a variety of outlets. An effective salesperson educates the consumer or audience about a product and by educating the consumer; the salesperson establishes value in a product or organization (Savage, 2008). With the popularity of social media today, businesses are doing more than just maintain a website for basic information purposes and promotion (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012). Social media not only allows businesses to establish value in the product or organization’s brand, but social media provides an outlet for consumers to communicate with other consumers about a product or organization’s brand (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012). Social media gives consumers the ability to spread the word about brands from “a one-to-one basis to a one-to-hundreds, or even one-to-
thousands” (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012, p. 320), and promotes word of mouth communication and a buzz about a business’ brand generated by consumers (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012).

Promoting a product or organization’s brand or value, social media provides marketers and businesses with a variety of benefits. For example, one of the biggest benefits of social media is the word of mouth marketing by consumers with other consumers. Another benefit is the ability of social media to instantly engage consumers. Social media outlets provide constant and instant communication with consumers, as well as opportunities for the consumer to give and receive feedback (Hill & Moran, 2011).

According to Hill and Moran (2011), the marketing benefits of social media include consumer engagement, ability to reach targeted audiences using social media to market, cost efficient marketing campaigns using social media to market, creates a buzz for the product using social media to market, and their followers can influence potential consumers using social media to market.

Marshall et al. (2012) found in a qualitative study examining the impact of social media on the selling environment that salespeople are using social media to connect to their own organization and consumers because of faster, real-time information delivery. With the struggling national economy, marketers and businesses have to be creative and find ways to promote, advertise, and market products and organizations on tighter budgets. Small businesses and entrepreneurs are looking for cost efficient ways to advertise and market their products to consumers. Social media sites can help the small business and entrepreneur market their products worldwide. According to a study by Bulearca and Bulearca (2010), Twitter provides small and medium sized businesses with
a marketing tool to build consumer relationships and networking. Twitter allows businesses to network with people with similar ideas, find and speak to potential consumers, engage with existing consumers and supporters, and provide an outlet for word of mouth consumer marketing electronically (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2010).

Businesses are constantly trying to improve the marketing strategies to engage consumers. Businesses use social media to allow more opportunities to meet consumer demands by increasing interaction between consumers and retailers (Deis & Hensel, 2010). According to Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012), marketers are realizing how powerful social media is in providing a tool to businesses to interact with consumers informally and on a more personal level, and businesses that want to have a significant impact in social media need to focus on creating interesting content, building a community of followers and engaging the followers in a more informal, personal way.

Websites are another way businesses are marketing their product, because the websites can be updated constantly with limited expense and accessed at any point during the day from any location (Savage, 2008). The amount of time businesses should devote to the use of social media is up for debate. Deis and Hensel (2010) suggested that no more than one hour a day, but some organizations create an entire department devoted to social media.

In a study of Inc. 500 companies and their adoption of social media by Barnes and Jacobson (2013), marketing executives from Inc. 500 companies were most familiar with Facebook, Twitter and blogging with 87% of the executives familiar with Facebook. Facebook, Twitter, and blogging were also the most used by Inc. 500 companies. The marketing executives reported that 71% of the Inc. 500 companies used Facebook, 59%
used Twitter and 50% used blogging in their company (Barnes & Jacobson, 2013). When asked about the importance of social media to business and marketing strategy, 56% of the Inc. 500 marketing executives in 2010 felt it was very important compared to only 26% in 2007 (Barnes & Jacobson, 2013).

It is more critical than ever for businesses and organizations to find effective marketing strategies to build relationships with potential and existing consumers. Marketing strategy objectives should include “raising awareness, informing and educating target audiences, gaining understanding, building trust, giving consumers a reason to buy, and motivating consumer acceptance” (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012, p. 323). The effective use of social media by businesses is no different than any other marketing strategy; it all depends on how it is used. If a business does not use social media consistently, it will not be effective. On the other hand, businesses that provide useful information to their consumers on a consistent basis will increase viewership and engagement of customer groups through the use of social media (Deis & Hensel, 2010). When presenting or marketing new ideas or products, businesses and organizations must persevere through the marketing process including the use of social media to receive the benefits (Savage, 2008).

Social Media in the HealthCare Industry

With the desire to define symptoms and medical diagnoses, more and more people are going to the Internet and social media sites for answers regarding health care. According to Weaver, Lindsey, and Gitelman (2012), the use of social media in the healthcare industry to communicate and provide electronic patient information is on the rise. According to Greene and Kesselheim (2010), 60% of Americans use the Internet
when searching for health related information. Social media can provide a vital information outlet for the healthcare industry. Some examples, according to Weaver et al. (2012), include posts of helpful health and wellness information, following other sites as a source of education, professional networking for members of the healthcare industry and messaging patients with reminders and alerts. Electronic communication, including social media, may help to modify health behaviors that contribute to chronic diseases in the United States. Weaver et al. (2012) stated:

…whether used to educate, remind, and engage patients or to monitor their behavior and provide feedback, electronic communications can save time, effort, and thus dollars, as well as improve outcomes by enabling patients to become more competent partners in their care. (p. 1)

State public health departments play a vital role in communities around the country. The public health departments provide needed services to those that cannot afford them as well as provide important health related information to stakeholders in their communities; therefore, effective communication with stakeholders is critical to state public health departments. A study by Thackeray, Neiger, Smith, and Van Wagenen (2012) revealed that 60% of state public health departments used social media sites. The Thackeray et al. (2012) study showed that state public health departments were only using social media sites to distribute information and not engage with the community stakeholders. The use of social media sites as an interactive tool to engage stakeholders could help state public health departments build community based partnerships to help combat the health problems in their community (Thackeray et al., 2012).
An article by George (2011) discussed the results of a mini-course on the use of social media by health professionals at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. The mini-course introduced the health professionals to various social media sites and how they could use them in the health industry. Some of the social media sites were really simple syndication (RSS) readers, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google Alerts. RSS readers are free outlets that allow subscribers to streamline the latest news daily from journals, websites, or blogs written by health care professionals. Facebook allowed subscribers to connect to other health care professionals, medical organizations, medical journals, and medical support groups. Twitter allowed the health professionals an opportunity to follow colleagues and health organizations. LinkedIn provided the health professionals with a professional networking community. Google Alerts provided health professionals new information on health related search terms (George, 2011). The results of the mini-course examined in the George (2011) article revealed that the health professionals identified RSS readers, Facebook and Google Alerts as the most useful social media tools.

Social Media Use in Governmental Agencies and Non-Profit Organizations

Governmental agencies are beginning to engage stakeholders with the use of social media. Politicians have found ways to utilize social media on the campaign trail as well. Smith (2010) reported in a Pew Research Center survey that 82% of Internet users (61% of which were U.S. adults) accessed a governmental website to obtain information or complete a transaction. The use of mobile technology and social media sites has enabled governmental agencies to engage diverse segments of the U.S. population that
would normally be disengaged (Krzmarzick, 2013). In a survey conducted by Pew Research Center author Aaron Smith (2010) said:

Minority Americans are significantly more likely than whites to agree strongly with the statement that government outreach using tools such as blogs, social networking sites, or text messaging ‘helps people be more informed about what the government is doing’ and ‘makes government agencies and officials more accessible.’ (p. 6)

According to Krzmarzick (2013), governmental agencies are using social media sites to meet some challenges including:

1. Train employees to develop geographically disbursed stakeholders,
2. Inform the public about agency activities,
3. Organize groups to take action,
4. Elicit feedback on policy decisions,
5. Create efficiency in contracting and procurement, and
6. Disseminate multiple sources of content for ease of access. (p. 23)

Social media provides governmental agencies and politicians instant access to the American public.

There are numerous non-profit organizations that provide services and help to individuals and communities around the country. Many non-profit organizations usually are limited on funding and have small workforces. Social media can provide outlets for non-profit organizations to engage with the community and stakeholders. Waters, Burnett, Lamm, and Lucas (2009) conducted a study on how non-profit organizations utilized Facebook to engage with stakeholders. Waters et al. (2009) stated that Facebook
open up registration to organizations in 2006 and over 4,000 organizations joined Facebook within two weeks. Of the 275 non-profit organizations studied, the data revealed that these organizations were not taking advantage of the interactive capabilities of the site. The non-profit organizations were only using Facebook to disclose and disseminate information about their organization as well as including photos, links to external news stories, and contact e-mail addresses to encourage involvement in the organization (Waters et al., 2009). As a result, the Waters study can provide valuable information to school administrators on the interactive capabilities of social media sites.

**Social Media Uses in the Classroom**

Throughout the years, educators have tried to find ways to get students interested in learning. With all the distractions students face today, school districts and educators are fighting an uphill battle trying to find ways to engage their students. The modern technologies that students have available to them today seem limitless. Students and adults from all walks of life use social media sites in their everyday lives. Jackson (2011) stated that social media is part of our kids’ lives and educators needed to embrace and utilize social media to make school relevant and interesting to our students.

Integrating social media into U.S. classrooms is a relatively new trend. Abe and Jordan (2013) stated “in order to effectively integrate social media into the course curriculum, it is necessary to instruct students in using social media critically and intentionally to optimize learning outcomes” (p. 18). Social media can serve educators as an effective and cost efficient tool to supplement the delivery of class materials and develop intellectual skills for the students (Abe & Jordan, 2013). When implementing social media into the classroom, Steer (2012) suggested that educators only implement
one or two social media tools at a time and then measure how successful the tools were before doing more.

_Examples of How Educators are Using Social Media_

According to Friedman and Freidman (2013), educators had to reinvent education and make it fun and relevant for students and the best way to do that is by using social media. There are numerous social media sites available to educators and students. For example, Shim, Dekleva, Guo, and Mittleman (2011) suggested that educators teach using blogs to create a discussion environment with students. The blogs can be used to collaborate discussions within the actual classroom, between classes, in online courses, and it provides opportunities for students who do not like to speak up in class to engage in discussions (Shim et al., 2011). Mitchell, Fougler and Wetzel (2009) suggested that schools use social media to:

1. Create a classroom website to provide classroom information and post assignments
2. Send individual positive e-mails to parents about a student’s accomplishments or activities
3. Post photos of classroom website focusing on the learning process
4. Provide at-home educational activities on the classroom website
5. Create a form on the classroom website to gather feedback and questions from parents
6. Establish and moderate discussion forums for parents and families
7. Send group e-mails to remind parents of upcoming events. (pp. 46-49)
Educators can allow students to complete pre-class activities like bell ringers, questionnaires and pre-readings using social media tools (Steer, 2012). Online learning communities have emerged not only in higher education but in K-12 education as well.

The social media site, Skype, is just one example of how social media provides a useful online learning environment for students who might not be able to get to the classroom or campus (Abe & Jordan, 2013). Another example of how educators are using social media is an elementary school in Katy, Texas piloted a mobile device initiative that provided 136 fifth graders with smartphones, with telephone and texting capabilities disabled, to use in their classrooms to upload classwork, complete homework and send assignments electronically to their teachers (McCollum, 2011). Social media allows students the opportunity to collaborate with other students. For example, Pensacola Catholic High School in Florida started an initiative to use iPods to collaborate with students at a surrounding elementary school producing podcasts to introduce topics to the elementary students (Koenig, 2011). The Princeton City School District in Ohio has embraced the use of social media throughout the school district, and according to Chase (2013) the district uses:

1. iPads that are accessible to K-12 students for learning applications and special projects
2. iPod Touches that can be checked out by students to collect data and make video presentations of field trips
3. Smartphones that can be used by students to access web-based platforms
4. Facebook that is used by the district to connect with alumni and to get stakeholder feedback
5. District’s YouTube channel PrincetonVikings that creates videos for curriculum, sports, traffic and school campaigns. (p. 26)

All these examples show how school districts throughout the United States are starting to embrace social media as a valuable tool in the classroom.

Social media provides educators with new innovative ways to engage students and make school interesting for our students. According to Chase (2013), “technology is so prevalent today, why not engage students in school with the same interactive devices and communication tools they love using” (p. 24).

Social Media Policy

Policy Development

With the growing popularity of social media use in school districts around the country, school districts and school administrators have to monitor how social media is being used in their district. In an effort to regulate how social media is used in schools, some state education governing bodies are developing social media policies. For example, the New York City Department of Education released a social media policy that prohibits conversations between staff and students through social media in response to sixty-nine reported cases of inappropriate teacher-student behavior between January and November 2011 (O’Donovan, 2012). Also, the Missouri legislature ordered Missouri schools to develop a social media policy. According to O’Donovan (2012), many Missouri schools adopted a sample policy created by the Missouri School Boards Association that stated teachers and staff must maintain appropriate boundaries with students. The policy provides examples of appropriate behaviors and behaviors that are not appropriate and violate the professional boundaries with students.
When discussing the importance of institutions having a clear social media policy, Matthew Kelly (2012) stated

a policy is the best form of protection, which identifies clear boundaries on permitted use of social media, what is and is not allowed as well as a warning that comments made on social media sites should be treated as public, rather than private. (p. 5)

School administrators, when developing a social media policy for their district, should consider several factors. O'Donovan (2012) suggested that school administrators answer the following questions when developing a social media policy:

1. How can schools clearly define legitimate school business that can be conducted between teachers and students through social media?

2. What are appropriate physical and emotional boundaries that staff should observe with students?

3. How can staff avoid misusing social media in the conduct of professional interaction with students?

4. How can staff keep their private speech separate from their interactions with students on private and school-based sites, including texting and cell phones?

5. How can educators avoid putting a chilling effect on the use of social media as a learning and communication tool? (p. 36)

A social media policy must support an organization’s goals, objectives, culture, and governmental structure (“Keys for Developing,” 2013). When developing a social media policy, a school district should:
1. Identify the need for the policy to govern the use of social media technologies.

2. Examining existing policies to identify any policies that already cover social media use.

3. Determine if the social media policies need to be embedded into existing policies or be separate stand-alone policies.

4. Ensure the new social media policies are aligned with the existing policies.

5. Identify key stakeholders that are responsible for social media policy and approval. ("Keys for Developing," 2013, p. 42)

According to "Keys for Developing" (2013), there are some policy elements to include when developing a social media policy. The elements include:

1. A purpose statement to describe how the purpose and goals of the social media policy aligns with the district’s goals.

2. A scope statement that identifies the types of social media to be used and the personnel that the policy applies.

3. Definitions to define the social media terms used in the policy.

4. A roles and responsibility statement that identifies the stakeholders and their responsibilities pertaining to the policy.

5. References that identify any legislation or regulations that the social media policy follows.

6. Version control to ensure the most current social media policy is being followed including policy approval date and version number.
7. A review statement identifying the person and department responsible for reviewing the social media policy and the date it was reviewed.

8. A behavioral expectations statement to describe expectations of users on how to communicate and conduct themselves when using social media.

9. An expectation of privacy and confidentiality statement to establish the level of privacy users should expect when using social media sites, and informs the users of the protection of confidential and personal information when using social media.

10. A permissible information statement to identify the types of information considered permissible to create, capture, and transmit through social media.

11. An account maintenance statement to explain how to create, maintain, and close social media accounts.

12. A legal statement to provide a legal disclaimer for inclusion in the district’s social media posts.

13. An enforcement statement to indicate how the policy will be enforced and the consequences for violating the policy.

14. A signature page to allow each user to sign the policy to acknowledge they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms of the policy. (p. 44)

Once a social media policy is drafted, stakeholders should review the policy and feedback should be encouraged to ensure the policy is aligned with the district’s goals and objectives and to identify any errors. Once the policy is approved, the district should train and communicate the policy to all users through training activities (“Keys for Developing,” 2013). School administrators should focus on training students and
employees on how to properly use social media, follow social media policy, guiding social media use, and maintaining privacy when using social media instead of shutting down access to social media (Carr, 2011a; Joosten, Pasquini, & Harness, 2013). Training and professional development are very important elements in implementing the successful use of social media in education. According to Barnes and College (2012), just a one hour professional development training session on the possible risks and dangers of social media could save an administrator from problems down the road. According to Huffman (2013), the professional development training might include:

1. An understanding of the social media platform like safety guidelines, features, etc.
2. The ethical use of online technology.
3. Protection from predators for both teachers and students.
4. The snare of cyber bullying.
5. The benefits of social interaction with online teaching.
6. The development of positive learning spaces in a social networking environment. (p.159)

Concerns with the Use of Social Media in Education

School administrators seem hesitant to embrace the use of social media, because they worry about what students and teachers might do when using social media. It seems almost daily a person can read about inappropriate behavior on school campuses whether it is a teacher and student relationship or student and student relationship. School administrators do not want the negative exposure in the press for such behavior. In order to avoid negative exposure, school administrators will likely have to educate the teachers
and students on what is expected when using social media. Carr (2011a) gives some tips to educators to avoid the appearance of inappropriate behavior including, to be mindful of what is posted on social media, to avoid communicating with students on non-school related issues, to respect student and employee privacy rights if the content is not appropriate in your classroom it is not appropriate on social media, to identify yourself as an educator, and to share ideas in a respectful manner.

With the popularity of social media in today’s society, the implementation of social media in education presents school administrators with concerns like privacy issues, cyber bullying, and the replication and manipulation of content posted on social media (Huffman, 2013). Cyber bullying is a concern for school administrators and it is not only a concern for students but also adults. Jennifer Holladay (2010) defined cyber bullying as “the repeated use of technology to harass, humiliate or threaten” (p. 43). Privacy issues and the manipulation and replication of content posted are a concern; because once the content is posted it is out there for everyone to see (Huffman, 2013).

There are other concerns when using social media. Many school districts, individual schools, and teachers create official social media pages to communicate with stakeholders and disseminate information. According to Reuben (2008), one concern is that anyone can create an official account, since there are no background checks on individuals creating accounts. Other concerns according to Reuben (2008) include the loss of control of the information disseminated through comments made on the site, and the time commitment involved to maintain the social media sites.
Benefits of the Use of Social Media in Education

When school administrators are deciding whether or not social media will be beneficial to the educational environment in their schools, a common thought may be that social media will be a distraction and not be used educationally by students. A study conducted by Fewkes and McCabe (2012) revealed that 73% of the students surveyed stated that they use Facebook for educational purposes. In addition, social media provides a variety of outlets for educators to enhance the learning environment and to engage students. According to Huffman (2013), one of the biggest benefits of using social media in education is the ease, convenience, and speed of the access and distribution of information. With the technology devices available to both teachers and students, information can be communicated almost instantly with the use of social media. That is, social media provides individuals with the capability to receive information instantly in the palm of their hand. Other benefits of the use of social media in education include collaboration, participation, and communication not only with students but with all stakeholders (Fewkes & McCabe, 2012).

Social Media Use by School Administrators

In public education today, school administrators take responsibility for the success of their schools and districts. One responsibility that all school administrators must embrace is communicating with stakeholders and marketing the good news and good accomplishments happening in their districts. According to Carr (2012), school administrators take for granted that stakeholders know about positive activities offered in their schools like performing arts, athletics, advanced placement courses, and special education services. With all the activities and events that go on at school, it is almost
impossible for stakeholders to be aware of everything that happens at the school. As a result, school administrators have taken on a more active role in marketing the school.

School administrators’ job descriptions have changed through the years, and administrators are expected to market and brand their schools with parents and other stakeholders to help with issues like falling enrollments and school choice (Padgett, 2007). Every school and district has good stories to tell, and administrators can use marketing strategies and techniques to be proactive and take advantage of opportunities to get those stories told (Carr, 2008a). Unfortunately, most stories reported by traditional media about public education are negative. School administrators need to be proactive and create their own stories about the positive activities happening in their school instead of waiting on traditional media to report it (Larkin, 2011). According to Carr (2009c), school administrators need to dedicate more time to talking about the many positive activities happening in their schools to attract their stakeholders, because people naturally gravitate to winners. By talking about the positive activities going on in the school, school administrators can influence stakeholders to perceive the school as an effective, winning school. According to Carr (2006b) when marketing schools, school administrators need to concentrate on telling good stories that create emotion to reach stakeholders as well as testimonials from highly respected community leaders, satisfied parents, and successful graduates. Furthermore, school administrators need to use a variety of methods and outlets to tell the positive stories about their schools and build relationships with stakeholders to gain confidence in their school and district (Carr, 2009c). Social media sites can serve as another outlet school administrators can use to
market their schools by “finding ways to help busy parents and community leaders stay informed and engaged in the work of public schools” (Carr, 2009c, p. 39).

With the focus on high stakes testing in public education, school administrators usually market their schools through the use of test data, which may be very confusing to parents. Parents want their children to receive a quality education in a safe environment. Parents elect to send their children to schools where they feel their children will not get lost in the crowd or struggle academically (Carr, 2009c). When talking about the importance of marketing public schools, Bill Harrison, chairman of the North Carolina Board of Education, was quoted in Carr (2012):

…if we don’t try to maintain a structure in which public schools are central, we are left with many different types of schools that are not held accountable to the same standards and that do not provide equal access or opportunities for all students. (p. 33)

School administrators are spending more time establishing their brand promise with stakeholders, and their brand promise is what sets their school apart from other districts (Carr, 2009c). School administrators need to market that public schools provide students with a rich educational experience in a diverse environment that other private and parochial schools cannot (Carr, 2009c).

Examples of How School Administrators are Using Social Media

In an effort to find more effective ways to communicate and market information to stakeholders, school districts are turning to electronic communication like social media tools. Dr. Heath Morrison, superintendent of the Washoe County School District in Nevada, stated “transparency is key—without it, you will not earn the trust of your
stakeholders” (Campbell, 2012, p.11). When Dr. Morrison took the Washoe County superintendent job, he decided communication was his highest priority and focused on proactive instead of reactive communications (Campbell, 2012). One way Dr. Morrison was proactive when communicating with stakeholders was by using social media sites. Some examples of the social media Dr. Morrison used included posting information on the district’s Facebook and Twitter accounts, establishing a legislative blog to inform stakeholders of K-12 educational legislation, as well as sending out e-newsletters (Campbell, 2012). Anoka-Hennepin District 11 in Minnesota uses Facebook to target parents, teachers, and administrators through individual school and official district Facebook pages to let stakeholders know what is going on in the district (Waters, 2011). Superintendent Trent Lovett from the Marshall County School District in Kentucky uses Twitter to instantly update stakeholders of district events (Hughes, 2010). Fayette County Kentucky Superintendent Stu Silberman thinks Twitter is a necessity. In the Hughes (2010) article, Silberman said “I will send out a message referring folks back to our website to view a press release or something special going on. Overall, we see this as a way to enhance communication to our constituents” (p. 8). Blogs are another social media outlet that U.S. superintendents are starting to use as a communicating and marketing tool. Carr (2006d) described blogs “as an instantaneous, transparent, and credible way to publish news and information, blogs may also be used to set the record straight—quickly and authoritatively” (p. 46). Peter Gorman, superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina, uses blogs to discuss items like school district reform, school issues, youth risk behaviors, and communicate with stakeholders to establish trust (Carr, 2007b). Patrick Larkin, principal of Burlington High School in
Massachusetts, uses blogs to distribute news and information to the school’s stakeholders and local newspapers have linked the blog feed to their online news website (Larkin, 2011). When talking about how effective the Burlington High School blog has been viewed, Larkin (2011) said “the feedback from parents and students has been tremendous because we have used the blog to brag about our students and teachers, pass along news and updates, and discuss local and national educational issues” (p. 24). In response to public interest, the Salt Lake City School District in Utah created Facebook and Twitter accounts to share information about school events, school announcements, provide links to articles or television news stories about the schools, as well as communicate with parents during emergencies (Butler, 2010). The Bellevue School District in Washington created Facebook and Twitter accounts to share information with stakeholders about weather related school closures (Butler, 2010). Some school districts are using social media sites to communicate with employees. For example, according to Butler (2010), the Houston Independent School District’s North Region in Texas uses Twitter to communicate with principals about important events, meetings, news, or training sessions.

Clearly, districts around the country are starting to recognize the importance of social media, but districts are not hiring social media managers to maintain social media sites. Early in 2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District in California became the first school district to hire a social media manager (“The Emergence,” 2012). Many school district Twitter and Facebook accounts are inactive and do not respond to stakeholders, but Los Angeles Unified School District’s social media director Stephanie Abrams was quoted in “The Emergence” (2012) “having those accounts means nothing
without feeding them with fresh and important information and engaging with the community by responding to comments, questions, and tweets in a timely manner” (p. 73). According to (“The Emergence,” 2012), Palm Beach County School District in Florida created a district Twitter and Facebook account to be active in the growing national trend of districts utilizing social media. Hence, more and more school districts throughout the United States are creating social media accounts like Facebook and Twitter to communicate and market their school districts.

Social media sites provide school administrators with opportunities not only to market and communicate with stakeholders but also to establish professional learning communities. The professional learning communities allow school administrators the opportunity to share ideas and learn from other school administrators around the world. Social media allows users to modify and create new content, and build online educational networks with individuals with shared interests (Lightle, 2010). Eric Williams, superintendent of York County School Division in Virginia, has used Twitter to connect with teachers and administrators inside and outside his district to learn innovative instructional strategies, as well as acknowledge the teachers in his district that have demonstrated effective classroom strategies (Demski, 2013). According to Patrick Larkin, principal of Burlington High School in Massachusetts, Twitter allows for instant feedback from educators from all over the world on educational issues and initiatives that affect his school (Larkin, 2011). In Palo Alto Unified School District in California, Facebook is an important communication outlet for students to learn about school activities and events, teachers to communicate information about assignments, and an outlet for teachers and staff to interact with each other (Waters, 2011).
Other than social media sites, electronic communication can also provide outlets for administrators to market their school or district. An effective school or district website can be a powerful tool to reach stakeholders. According to Carr (2007b), an effective website is organized and interactive that provides information to meet the needs of the stakeholders. Louisiana’s East Baton Rouge Parish School District created a district website that provides photography, facts, videos, and testimonials to address misconceptions and myths about the district (Carr, 2012).

Summary

School administrators are continuously trying to find ways to effectively communicate with community stakeholders especially parents. Furthermore, school administrators are learning to market schools to educate the community stakeholders of the opportunities and activities available to students. Brad Thomas, president of Ritenour School District’s Board of Education in St. Louis, Missouri, was quoted in Carr (2006c) that schools need “to let people know that good things are happening here, so they can feel a sense of pride and feel better about the education they can get in their local public schools” (p. 68). This chapter examined literature on how school administrators can improve their communication and marketing strategies of their school districts when dealing with stakeholders. It also described how businesses, health care industry, government, and non-profit organizations utilize social media as a marketing or public relations tool.

A limited amount of literature exists on the use of social media as a communication and marketing tool in school districts. Therefore, this study examined how businesses, governmental agencies, healthcare industry, and non-profit organizations
utilized social media to communicate and market with consumers. Social media is the popular trend when communicating with consumers. Social media provides these organizations with easy ways to communicate with consumers as well as develop relationships. As a result, this chapter examined how school administrators can utilize the examples of other organizations like businesses and the healthcare industry to use social media as a communication and marketing tool for school districts.

In this review of literature, I discussed actual examples of the social media outlets school administrators are using to communicate and market the positive news and activities happening in their school districts. The examples were from superintendents and principals throughout the United States. In addition, this review of literature provided examples of how social media was being used to communicate not only with parents but faculty members, students, and other school administrators.

Additionally, Chapter II examined social media benefits, social media concerns, and social media policy development. In doing so, this review of literature provided implications for school administrators on how to effectively communicate and market school districts with the use of social media. Effective communication between school districts and stakeholders is vital to the success of the school districts.

The methods, procedures, and participants for this study will be described in Chapter III. The results of this study will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV, and the implications of this study and future research will be discussed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative research study described and analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. The focus of this study is whether the age of a school administrator and the school district setting influence the perceptions of school administrators of how effective social media outlets are when communicating with stakeholders. Another focus of this study analyzed what concerns school administrators have with using social media outlets as a communication tool. This chapter provides the process used to analyze the perceptions of school administrators of the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. This chapter outlined the research design, participants in the study, the research instrument used in the study, and how data were collected and analyzed.

Research Design

The research methodology in this research study is descriptive in nature. A causal-comparative method was used to analyze the perceptions of school administrators of the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. The study’s independent variables include the age of the school administrator and the school district setting. School district settings were defined as city and county school districts. For the purpose of this study, city school districts made up schools located within the defined boundaries of towns in the State of Mississippi and county school districts made up schools located outside the defined boundaries of towns in the State of Mississippi. The dependent variable in this study is the school
administrator’s perceptions of the use of social media as an effective communication tool.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Which social media outlets are school administrators currently using?
2. How comfortable are current school administrators with using social media outlets?
3. Which types of information do school administrators communicate with their stakeholders through social media outlets?
4. Do school administrators feel social media is an effective communication tool with stakeholders?
5. What benefits do school administrators see with using social media outlets as a communication tool?
6. What concerns do school administrators have with using social media outlets as a communication tool?
7. Does age factor in the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?
8. Does the school district setting have an impact on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

H₁: There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions across age groups of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.
H2: There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders based on the school district setting.

Participants

A convenience sampling method was used to gather participants. The participants in the study were superintendents and building level school administrators from the State of Mississippi. The participants from the building level administrators represented assistant principals and principals. The participants from the district level administrators represented superintendents and assistant superintendents. The researcher contacted the Mississippi Department of Education and received an email listserv from the Mississippi Department of Education that included the email addresses of all superintendents and principals from the State of Mississippi. The participants included superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals from across the State of Mississippi.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this quantitative research study was a questionnaire distributed to school administrators throughout the State of Mississippi. After researching various research instruments, the researcher developed the questionnaire in this study. After receiving permission, some questions and answer responses were reworded from Dr. Daniel Cox and Dr. Neal McCutcheon dissertation research instruments (Appendix B). The questionnaire included basic demographic information and social media items. The completed questionnaire consisted of 14 items (Appendix A). The researcher emailed the two researchers to get permission to reword
and use some of the information on their research instruments (Appendix B). The first six items collected basic demographic data on gender, age, ethnicity, administrative experience, and the school setting. This information provided statistical descriptive data that showed how school administrators use social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.

The questionnaire has eight items, Questions 6 through 14, that collect data measuring how often school administrators use social media (using a 5-point verbal frequency scale ranging from not at all to several times per week), what social media outlets school administrators are using to communicate with stakeholders (using a 5-point verbal frequency scale ranging from not at all to six to seven times a day), how comfortable school administrators are using social media outlets (using a 4-point horizontal numeric scale ranging from not at all to very comfortable), how often various types of information are provided to stakeholders using social media (using a 5-point verbal frequency scale ranging from never to always), benefits and concerns of using social media as a communication tool (using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree), the effectiveness of using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders (using a 5-point horizontal numeric scale ranging from ineffective to highly effective), and has using social media outlets improved communication with stakeholders in their school district (using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The data gathered with this information provides statistical data on how social media outlets are being used by school administrators in the State of Mississippi and the perceptions of school administrators of the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool.
The data gathered from Questions 7 and 8 on the research instrument guided research question one on the types of social media being used by school administrators. In this study, Question 9 on the research instrument analyzed how comfortable school administrators are using social media outlets and guide research question two. For Research Question 3, the types of information provided to stakeholders using social media outlets were gathered in question ten of the research instrument. Research Question 4 was measured by Questions 13 and 14 on the research instrument to gather data on the school administrator’s perceptions on the effectiveness of using social media outlets as a communication tool. Question eleven on the research instrument guided research question five on the benefits of using social media outlets as a communication tool. For Research Question 6, Question 12 on the research instrument gathered data on the concerns of school administrators with using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. Question 2 on the research instrument gathered data on the age of participants to guide research question seven to determine if age factors in the perceptions of school administrators on using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. Finally, Question 6 on the research instrument guided research Question 8 to determine if the location of the school district impacts the use of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.

With the use of social media outlets in education being a relatively new trend, the researcher analyzed data to determine if the age of the participant or location of the school is related to the perception or use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders. The researcher developed an initial questionnaire and had it examined by experts in the field of school administration to determine the questionnaire’s validity.
(Appendix C). After receiving suggestions from the panel of experts, the researcher refined the questionnaire.

Once the questionnaire was refined, the researcher conducted a pilot test with a group of participants and collected data to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The pilot test group consisted of 17 participants from east central Mississippi.

Procedures

The data collection method used in this quantitative research study was a questionnaire. The researcher gained the permission of the IRB at The University of Southern Mississippi to conduct this research study with the superintendents, assistant superintendents, building level principals, and assistant principals across the State of Mississippi (Appendix D). The researcher got an email listserv from the Mississippi Department of Education that included the email addressess for all superintendents and principals in the State of Mississippi. The researcher emailed all the participants the questionnaire. The participants were provided a link to the questionnaire by email. The questionnaire was administered through www.qualtrics.com in a location of the participant’s choice.

A cover letter was emailed to participants assuring that all data collected would be anonymous and all information inadvertently obtained during the course of the study would remain confidential (Appendix E). The participants were informed that participation in this study was voluntary. The questionnaire was designed to take no more than 10 minutes to complete.
Data Analysis

The data collected from this quantitative research study was analyzed using SPSS statistical software. A descriptive analysis identified means, standard deviations, and frequencies to summarize the descriptive data collected in this research study. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared the data collected on the perceptions and concerns of school administrators of the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. Upon the completion of the research study, the questionnaire database was deleted and the online account was closed.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology of this research study. The chapter identified the design of the study, the participants, the research instrument, the data collecting procedures, and how the data was analyzed for this research study. Chapter IV will present the findings of this research study.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to analyze perceptions of school administrators of the use of social media outlets as a way to effectively communicate with their stakeholders. The study examined what social media outlets school administrators were currently using, types of information given to stakeholders through social media outlets, the benefits of using social media outlets, and the concerns school administrators have with using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. The focus of this study is whether the age of a school administrator and the school district setting influence the perceptions of school administrators on how effective social media outlets are when communicating with stakeholders. An online questionnaire was used as a research instrument to gather data from school administrators throughout Mississippi.

A pilot study was administered to determine the reliability of the research instrument. The pilot study was distributed to school administrators within the researcher’s local school district and to several retired Superintendents. A total of seventeen participants completed the pilot survey. Data collected from the pilot survey was uploaded into the SPSS statistical software program. An average of the participant’s responses to the sub questions in questions 11 and 12 was calculated, and a Cronbach’s Alpha test was run on the data for questions 11 and 12 to determine the instrument’s reliability measuring the benefits and concerns of using social media. Question 11 collected data on the benefits of social media increasing parental involvement, increasing
the amount of communication with stakeholders, increased feedback, improving the school/district image, and allowed schools/districts to reach stakeholders not previously reached. The benefits of using social media all had high reliabilities, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 91$. Question 12 collected data on the concerns of using social media needing too much time to post information, lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media, lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain the information, security/privacy issues, and receiving feedback. The concerns of using social media also had high reliabilities, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .74$. A Cronbach’s Alpha statistic of .70 or greater indicates a reliable scale on the instrument.

After completion of the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test, the researcher emailed the research instrument to every Superintendent in the State of Mississippi. The researcher was provided a list of emails from the Mississippi Department of Education for all Superintendents in the state. The email included the link to the questionnaire, the cover letter for participation in the study (see Appendix E), as well as asked the Superintendents permission to distribute the questionnaire to the other school administrators in their district (see Appendix F). A total of one hundred fifty nine questionnaires were completed.

Descriptive Statistics

The questionnaire, *Social Media As A Tool to Effectively Communicate With Stakeholders: School Administrators and Superintendents Perceptions* (Appendix A), was distributed to Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals, and Public Relations Directors throughout the State of Mississippi. A total of one hundred fifty nine questionnaires were completed. The data collected were
downloaded from the online survey site, Qualtrics, and uploaded into the SPSS statistical software program.

*Demographics*

Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 on the questionnaire collected data on the demographic information of the participants. The sample of school administrators represented in this research study are district level and building level administrators from the State of Mississippi. Of the 159 completed questionnaires, a total of 80 (50.3%) participants were male and 79 (49.7%) participants were female. The research instrument was completed by 134 (84.3%) white school administrators and 25 (15.7%) black/African American school administrators.

Question 4 on the research instrument described the years of experience of each school administrator. The participant’s years of experience as a school administrator are represented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Years Experience As A School Administrator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research study collected data from district and building level school administrators. The district level positions were Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Public Relations Director. The building level positions were Principal and Assistant Principal. Of the 159 participants in the research study, 113 participants were building level administrators. Table 2 represents the frequency and percentage of the participant’s current administrative position.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Superintendent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Principal</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations Dir.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 159 participants were asked how often they use various social media outlets in their role as a school administrator, and they were asked which social media outlets they use to communicate with stakeholders. The social media outlets included blogs,
Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, Text, and other outlets. The responses were five possible categories: not at all, 1 day per week, 2 to 3 days per week, 4 to 5 days per week, and 6 to 7 days per week as represented in Tables 3 and 4. The participants provided a response for each social media outlet. The data gathered from questions seven and eight on the research instrument guided research question one on the types of social media being used by school administrators. In this study, question nine on the research instrument analyzed how comfortable school administrators are using social media outlets and guide research question two. For research question three, the types of information provided to stakeholders using social media outlets will be gathered in question ten of the research instrument. Questions 7, 8, 9, and 10 addressed the following research questions:

1. Which social media outlets are school administrators currently using?
2. How comfortable are current school administrators with using social media outlets?
3. Which types of information do school administrators communicate with their stakeholders through social media outlets?
Table 3

*In your role as a school administrator, how often do you use the following social media outlets?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Outlet</th>
<th>Not at all Percent</th>
<th>1 day per week Percent</th>
<th>2-3 days per week Percent</th>
<th>4-5 days per week Percent</th>
<th>6-7 days per week Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 159.*
Table 4

*Note: N = 159

Please indicate using the following scale which social media outlets are used for your school’s communication with stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Outlet</th>
<th>Not at all Percent</th>
<th>1 day per week Percent</th>
<th>2-3 days per week Percent</th>
<th>4-5 days per week Percent</th>
<th>6-7 days per week Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 9 on the research instrument asked the participants how comfortable they are using social media outlets as a communication tool. The 159 participants responded to each social media outlet of their comfortable level using the outlet. The social media outlets included blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, Text, and other outlets. The responses were four possible categories: not at all, slightly comfortable, comfortable, and very comfortable as represented in Table
5. The participants provided a response to each social media outlet. Of the 159 completed questionnaires, 57 (35.8%) participants selected Facebook and 52 (32.7%) participants selected Google+ as the two social media outlets they were most comfortable using as a communication tool. The two social media outlets participants are the most uncomfortable with using as a communication tool are blogs and Instagram. Of the 159 participants, 88 (55.3%) selected blogs and 76 (47.8%) selected Instagram.

Table 5

*How comfortable are you using social media outlets as a communication tool?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Outlet</th>
<th>Not at All Percent</th>
<th>Slightly Comfortable Percent</th>
<th>Comfortable Percent</th>
<th>Very Comfortable Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 159.*
The 159 participants identified the types of information and the frequency of that information they provide their stakeholders using social media outlets as a communication tool. The participants were given several types of information they would communicate with stakeholders. The types of information included athletics, parent events, school/student achievements, academic information, pictures/videos, announcements, important dates, links to parent resources, and emergency communication. The participants also selected the frequency they provide the types of information to their stakeholders. The five frequency responses were never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, and always. Of the 159 participants, 53 (33.3%) participants always communicate emergency communication with their stakeholders. Athletics, announcements, and important dates were frequently communicated with stakeholders by 63 (39.6%) of participants. The frequency and types of information communicated with stakeholders is represented in Table 6.

Table 6

*Please indicate how often the information in the following list is provided to stakeholders using social media.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Never Percent</th>
<th>Rarely Percent</th>
<th>Occasionally Percent</th>
<th>Frequently Percent</th>
<th>Always Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Events</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Student Achievements</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Info</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 6 (continued).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9.4</th>
<th>10.1</th>
<th>23.3</th>
<th>38.4</th>
<th>18.9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pics/Video</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important Dates</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to Parent</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Communication</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 159

**Statistical Analysis**

This research study analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. The study’s independent variables included the age of the school administrator and the school district setting. The dependent variable in this study was the school administrator’s perceptions on the use of social media as an effective communication tool. The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do school administrators feel social media is an effective communication tool with stakeholders?
2. What benefits do school administrators see with using social media outlets as a communication tool?
3. What concerns do school administrators have with using social media outlets as a communication tool?
7. Does age factor in the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

8. Does the school district setting have an impact on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

**H1:** There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions across age groups of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.

**H2:** There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders based on the school district setting.

Research question four was measured by questions thirteen and fourteen on the research instrument to gather data on the school administrator’s perceptions on the effectiveness of using social media outlets as a communication tool. Question eleven on the research instrument guided research question five on the benefits of using social media outlets as a communication tool. For research question six, question twelve on the research instrument gathered data on the concerns of school administrators with using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. Question two on the research instrument gathered data on the age of participants to guide research question seven to determine if age factors in the perceptions of school administrators on using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. Finally, question six on the research instrument guided research question eight to determine if the location of the
school district impacts the use of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis analyzed if the independent variable age had a statistically significance difference on the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. The hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA to analyze the perceptions of school administrators of the effectiveness of social media outlets as communication tools with stakeholders.

Questions 11 on the research instrument analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the benefits of using social media outlets as a communication tool with their stakeholders. The participant’s responses were transformed to calculate an average of the benefits. The benefits of using social media had a high reliability, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 91$. The benefits of using social media as a communication tool included increasing parental involvement, increased the amount of communication with stakeholders, increased feedback, improved the school/district public image, and increased the ability to reach stakeholders not previously reached. The mean and standard deviation of the age groups are represented in Table 7. Levene’s test did not violate the assumptions of homogeneity of variance with $F(3,155) = 1.24, p > .05$. The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed the benefits of using social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders was not significant across age groups on the perceptions of school administrators, $F(3,155) = 1.92, p = .13$. 
Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviations of Age Groups on the Benefits of Using of Social Media Outlets as an Effective Communication Tool with Stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 12 analyzed if age made a difference in the perceptions of school administrators on the concerns of using social media outlets to communicate with stakeholders. The concerns of using social media as a communication tool with stakeholders included too much time needed to post information, the lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media, lack of resources for stakeholders, security/privacy issues, and receiving feedback. The participant’s responses were transformed to calculate an average of all the concerns. The concerns of using social media also had good reliability, Cronbach’s \( \alpha = .74 \). The mean and standard deviation of the age groups are represented in Table 8. Levene’s test did not violate the assumptions of homogeneity of variance with \( F(3,155) = 1.16, p > .05 \). The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed the concerns of using social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders was approaching a significant difference across
age groups on the perceptions of school administrators, $F(3,155) = 2.22, p = .09$.

Tukey’s Post Hoc test was run to analyze the data and found there was a statistically significant difference between the age group 30 to 39 ($M = 2.76$) and 60 and over ($M = 3.27$), $p = .05$.

Table 8

*Mean and Standard Deviations of Age Groups on the Concerns of Using Social Media Outlets as an Effective Communication Tool with Stakeholders.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13 analyzed the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets as an effective way to communicate with stakeholders. The responses were five categories: ineffective, somewhat effective, undecided, effective, and highly effective. The means and standard deviations of the age groups are represented in Table 9. Levene’s test did not violate the assumptions of homogeneity of variance with $F(3,155) = .74, p > .05$. The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders did have a significance difference across age groups on the perceptions of school administrators,
\[ F(3,155) = 2.92, \, p = .04. \] Tukey’s Post Hoc test was run to analyze the data and found approaching statistical significant difference between the age group 40 to 49 (\( M = 3.84 \)) and 50 to 59 (\( M = 3.35 \)), \( p = .09 \), as well as approaching statistical significant difference between age groups 40 to 49 and 60 and over (\( M = 3.20 \)), \( p = .09 \).

Table 9

*Mean and Standard Deviations of Age Groups on the Use of Social Media Outlets as an Effective Communication Tool with Stakeholders.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>( N )</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 14 was the last question on the research instrument that analyzed the independent variable, age, regarding the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets improving the communication with stakeholders. The responses included five categories: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly disagree. The mean and standard deviations of the age groups are represented in Table 10. Levene’s test did not violate the assumptions of homogeneity of variance with \( F(3,155) = 1.37, \, p > .05. \) The one-way ANOVA revealed the use of social media outlets as a communication tool improving communication with stakeholders did not result in a
significant difference across age groups on the perceptions of school administrators,

\[ F(3,155) = 2.00, p = .12. \]

Table 10

*Mean and Standard Deviations of Age Groups on the Use of Social Media Outlets as an Effective Communication Tool Improving Communication with Stakeholders.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis II**

The second hypothesis analyzed if the independent variable school district setting had a statistically significance difference of the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. The hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA to analyze the perceptions of school administrators of the effectiveness of social media outlets as communication tools with stakeholders. Of the 159 participants, 112 school administrators worked in county school district and 47 school administrators worked in a city school district. The mean and standard deviation of the school district settings are represented in Table 11.
Questions 11 on the research instrument analyzed the perceptions of school administrators of the benefits of using social media outlets as a communication tool with their stakeholders. The participant’s responses were transformed to calculate an average of the benefits. The benefits of using social media had a high reliability, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 91$. The benefits of using social media as a communication tool included increasing parental involvement, increasing the amount of communication with stakeholders, increasing feedback, improving the school/district public image, and increasing the ability to reach stakeholders not previously reached. Levene’s test did violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance with $F(1,157) = 5.60, p < .05$. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variance were violated, the results of this test should be interpreted with caution. The one-way ANOVA revealed the benefits of using social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders did not show a significant difference between school district settings regarding the perceptions of school administrators, $F(1,157) = 2.44, p = .12$. 

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean and Standard Deviation of School District Settings on the Benefits of Using Social Media Outlets as an Effective Communication Tool with Stakeholders
Question 12 analyzed the perceptions of school administrators of the concerns of using social media outlets to communicate with stakeholders. The concerns of using social media as a communication tool with stakeholders included too much time needed to post information, the lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media, lack of resources for stakeholders, security/privacy issues, and receiving feedback. The mean and standard deviation of the school settings are represented in Table 12. The participant’s responses were transformed to calculate an average of all the concerns. The concerns of using social media also had good reliability, Cronbach’s α = .74. Levene’s test did not violate the assumptions of homogeneity of variance with $F(1,157) = .33, p > .05$. The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed the concerns of using social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders did not have a significance difference between school district settings on the perceptions of school administrators, $F(1,157) = 2.28, p = .13$.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13 analyzed if the school district setting made a difference in the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets as an effective
way to communicate with stakeholders. The responses were five categories: ineffective, somewhat effective, undecided, effective, and highly effective. The mean and standard deviation of school settings (City, $M = 3.83$ and County, $M = 3.50$) is represented in Table 13. Levene’s test did violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance with $F(1,157) = 8.33$, $p < .05$. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, the results of this test should be interpreted with caution. The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders did not have a significant difference between school district settings on the perceptions of school administrators, $F(1,157) = 3.10$, $p = .08$.

Table 13

*Mean and Standard Deviation of School District Settings on the Use of Social Media Outlets as an Effective Communication Tool with Stakeholders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 14 was the last question on the research instrument that analyzed the independent variable, school district setting, on the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets improving the communication with stakeholders. The responses included five categories: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly disagree. The mean and standard deviation of school settings is represented in
Table 14. Levene’s test did not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance with 
\( F(1,157) = 1.56, p > .05 \). The one-way ANOVA revealed the use of social media outlets 
as a communication tool improving communication with stakeholders did not result in a 
significant difference between school districts on the perceptions of school 
administrators, \( F(1,157) = 1.95, p = .17 \).

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

This chapter collected data of this quantitative research study to analyze the 
perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective 
communication tool with stakeholders. The participants in this research study were 
district level and building level administrators from the State of Mississippi. The chapter 
analyzed the perceptions of school administrators by age group and school district 
setting. The research study indicated there was a statistical significant difference 
between the age group 30 to 39 and 60 and older on the concerns of using social media 
outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. The research study also indicated a
statistically significant difference between the age group 40 to 49 and 50 to 59 and 60 and over on their perception of social media outlets being an effective way to communicate with stakeholders. Chapter V will discuss the findings of the quantitative research study, and discuss any future research.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary

This research study was a quantitative study to analyze the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. The study analyzed if the age or school district setting of the school administrator had an affect on their perception of the use of social media as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. The researcher developed the instrument used in this study. An online questionnaire collected the data from the school administrators. The researcher obtained the email addresses for every Superintendent in the State of Mississippi from the Mississippi Department of Education, and a link to the questionnaire was emailed to every Superintendent in the State of Mississippi, along with a cover letter explaining the research study. Included in the email, the researcher asked each Superintendent, if they approved, to have the other district level and building level administrators in their district to complete the online questionnaire. The completed questionnaire consisted of fourteen items. The first six items collected basic demographic data on gender, age, ethnicity, administrative experience, and the school setting. The last eight items on the questionnaire collected data on the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective communication tool.

A convenience sampling method was used to gather participants for this study. The participants were district level and building level school administrators. Once the data was collected, 159 questionnaires were completed. After reviewing the data, the
participants in the research study included Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals, and Public Relation Directors.

Conclusions and Discussion

This research study tested two hypotheses on the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

H1: There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions across age groups of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders.

H2: There will be a statistically significant difference of perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders based on the school district setting.

Hypothesis 1

After running an ANOVA statistical test, data indicated there was a statistically significant difference across age groups of the perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. The data indicated there was a statistically significant difference between the age group 40 to 49 and 50 to 59, as well as the age group 40 to 49 and 60 and older. Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012) suggested that social media is the “vehicle of the day” (p. 325) for connecting businesses with their target audiences. When asked about the importance of social media to business and marketing strategy, 56% of the Inc. 500 marketing executives in 2010 felt it was very important compared to only 26% in 2007 (Barnes & Jacobson, 2013). Social media is being used more and more by businesses, the
healthcare industry, and by government agencies to communicate information and get feedback from their target audiences. School administrators need to follow their examples and embrace social media. This study confirms that younger school administrators recognize social media outlets as an effective communication tool to reach their target audience of stakeholders. With the popularity of social media in today’s society, the implementation of social media in education presents school administrators with concerns like privacy issues, cyber bullying, and the replication and manipulation of content posted on social media (Huffman, 2013). When looking at the data of the concerns of using social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders, the data indicated the study was approaching a statistically significant difference across age groups of perceptions of school administrators between the age group 30 to 39 and 60 and older. The lack of knowledge and understanding of social media by the older school administrators leads to their concerns on using social media outlets to communicate with their stakeholders. Whereas, the younger generation of school administrators utilizes and is comfortable with social media. However, there was not a statistically significant difference across age groups of perceptions of school administrators on the benefits of using social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders. Data also indicated there was not a statistically significant difference across age groups of the perceptions of school administrators on the use of social media improving communication with stakeholders.

Hypothesis II

After running an ANOVA statistical test, the data indicated there was not a statistically significant difference of perceptions of school administrators on the
effectiveness of social media outlets as a communication tool with stakeholders based on the school district setting. The data indicated that the assumptions of homogeneity of variance were violated for the perceptions of school administrators on the benefits of using social media as a communication tool with stakeholders, and the perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of using social media as a communication tool with stakeholders based on school setting. Since the assumptions of homogeneity of variance were violated, the results of this test should be interpreted with caution.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the lack of social media use in public education and the size of the participant sample. When analyzing this data, these limitations should be considered.

The use of social media in public education today is limited. School districts are hesitant to use social media because of concerns with privacy as well as the lack of understanding. Some school administrators do not use social media and are not as comfortable using it to communicate with stakeholders. Social media is a new communication method for the younger generation, and it has just not caught on with the older generations.

Also, the size of the participant sample is another limitation. The link to the questionnaire was emailed only to the Superintendent of the school district, and they distributed the questionnaire to the other administrators in their district. A larger sample to include teachers throughout the State of Mississippi using social media outlets to communicate with stakeholders could be beneficial, or look at specific districts in the State of Mississippi that are currently using social media outlets to communicate with
stakeholders could produce a better analysis. A sample of stakeholders could also be included to further validate the results of this study. A study of the stakeholders on the ways they prefer to receive communication or the types of social media outlets they prefer could be beneficial to school administrators on improving communication with their stakeholders.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

In education today, parental involvement and the perception of public schools are two issues facing school administrators and school districts today. Parental involvement is an issue every school is facing today. School districts, school administrators, and teachers are looking for effective ways to communicate and get parents involved. Increasing parental involvement cannot only help student achievement but also it can improve the culture of the school.

The perception of public education in communities in Mississippi and in the United States of America is not favorable. The lack of communication with communities and stakeholders leads to the poor public perception. People do not understand what is going on in public schools across this country especially the success stories in public schools across this nation. School districts could improve the perception of public education just by communicating the positive accomplishments and activities happening within their schools.

The use of social media outlets can be another way school districts communicate with their stakeholders. In today’s society, most people have some type of smart device they use to communicate with others. Social media outlets are just one more avenue school districts and school administrators can use to reach their stakeholders. Social
media outlets provide school districts and school administrators instant access to a large portion of the stakeholders in their district.

Recommendation for Future Research

The results of this research study provide direction for future research studies. Future research could include a qualitative study of school administrators, a quantitative or qualitative study of actual school district stakeholders and teachers, or the study could collect data from school administrators nationwide.

A qualitative study could be conducted to interpret their views of school administrators on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders. The qualitative study could focus on how school administrators are currently communicating with their stakeholders and how effective they are, as well as determine if the school administrators feel social media outlets are a viable means of effective communication with stakeholders. The interviews would give the school administrators a better opportunity to express their opinions on communicating with stakeholders.

Another area of future research could gather data on the perceptions of stakeholders and/or teachers on the use of social media as an effective communication tool. The study could be conducted as a quantitative or qualitative study to determine the communication tools stakeholders feel are the most effective, as well as how they would prefer to receive information. As well as, a study of teachers could also be conducted to find out what communication tools they are currently using to effectively communicate with their stakeholders.

Lastly, increasing the sample size of the participants could further the research on the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. A
nationwide study of school administrators on the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders could produce more significant results by expanding the sample of participants. The results of this study could be compared to the results of a nationwide study to determine the validity of this study.
Q1 What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

Q2 What is your age?
- 29 or younger
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

Q3 What is your ethnicity?
- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Other

Q4 How many years experience do you have as a school administrator?
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26 or more years

Q5 What is your current administrative position?
- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Other
Q6 What best describes your school district's setting?
- City School District (school districts made up of schools located within the defined boundaries of towns in the State of Mississippi)
- County School District (school districts made up of schools located outside the defined boundaries of towns in the State of Mississippi)

Q7 In your role as a school administrator, how often do you use the following social media outlets?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Outlets</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1 day per week</th>
<th>2 to 3 days per week</th>
<th>4 to 5 days per week</th>
<th>6 to 7 days per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkedin</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+ Text Messaging</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Social Media Outlets</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
<td>≡</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8 Please indicate using the following scale which social media outlets are used for your school's communication with stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Outlet</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1 day per week</th>
<th>2 to 3 days per week</th>
<th>4 to 5 days per week</th>
<th>6 to 7 days per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkedin</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Messaging</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Social Media Outlets</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
<td>∙</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9 How comfortable are you using social media outlets as a communication tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Outlet</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Slightly Comfortable</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Very Comfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkedin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Messaging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Social Media Outlets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q10 Please indicate how often the information in the following list is provided to stakeholders using social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Student Achievements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures/Videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important Dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to Parent Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90
Q11 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the benefits of using social media to communicate with stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using social media has increased parental involvement</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media has increased the amount of communication with stakeholders</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of social media has increased feedback</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of social media to communicate information to stakeholders has improved the school/district image</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of social media as a communication tool has allowed the school/district to reach stakeholders not previously reached</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding possible concerns of using social media outlets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too much time needed to post information</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain the information</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security/Privacy issues</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving feedback</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q13 Do you feel social media outlets are an effective way to communicate with stakeholders?
- ○ Ineffective
- ○ Somewhat effective
- ○ Undecided
- ○ Effective
- ○ Highly effective

Q14 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:
If you are currently using social media as a communication tool in your school/district, has the use of social media improved communication with your stakeholders?
- ○ Strongly Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Undecided
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly Agree
APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO REWORD RESEARCH INSTRUMENT ITEMS

Steve,

Thank you so much for asking. Yes, you may reword any of the questions that you'd like to use in your own questionnaire. When do you plan to finish? I'd enjoy reading your findings after you've defended.

Good luck!

Dan

On Fri, Mar 27, 2015 at 3:03 PM, Steven Hampton <steven.c.hampton@eagles.usm.edu> wrote:
Dr. Cox,

I am currently working on my dissertation at the University of Southern Mississippi, and I am studying how Mississippi school administrators perceive the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. During the process of gathering information for my Lit Review, I came across your dissertation School Communications 2.0: A Social Media Strategy for K-12 Principals and Superintendents.

I read through your dissertation and looked at your interview protocol questions. I liked some of the information you gathered from your interviews. My study is quantitative, but I would like use some of your questions to create my own questionnaire. I plan to reword some of your questions to gather some similar information on my questionnaire.

I respectfully ask your permission to use some of the questions from your interview protocol to create questions for my research instrument.

Thank you,

Steve Hampton
106 Betty Circle
Quitman, MS 39355
Cell: 601-479-2574
Work: 601-776-2186
steven.c.hampton@eagles.usm.edu
Good morning Steve! Please feel free to use any part of the survey to gather your data. It was an interesting process and I am sure the findings would be different now. If there is anything I can do to assist or if you need to brainstorm, please do not hesitate to contact me. I wish you the best of luck. Please remember, perseverance is the biggest piece of acquiring your PhD. There will be many highs and lows, but keep forging ahead. It will be well worth your time and effort.

Best of luck!

Sincerely,

Neal McCutcheon

Dr. Neal McCutcheon
Principal
Wainwright Middle School
7501 E. 700 S.
Lafayette, IN 47905
765-269-8350
765-269-8359 fax
Facebook: http://goo.gl/uIK1ss
Webpage: http://wms.tsc.k12.in.us/

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Dr. McCutcheon,

I am currently working on my dissertation at the University of Southern Mississippi, and I am studying how Mississippi school administrators perceive the use of social media outlets as an effective communication tool with their stakeholders. During the process of gathering information for my Lit Review, I came across your dissertation *Use of Social Media As A School Principal*.

I read through your dissertation and looked at your social media survey. I liked some of information you gathered from your survey. My study is also quantitative, but I would like use some of the information in your questions to create my own questionnaire. I plan to re-word some of your questions to gather some similar information on my questionnaire.

I respectfully ask your permission to use some of the questions from your social media survey to create questions for my research instrument.

Thank you,

Steve Hampton
106 Betty Circle
Quitman, MS 39355
Cell: 601-479-2574
Work: 601-776-2186

steven.c.hampton@eagles.usm.edu

APPENDIX C

VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE
Thank you for volunteering your time to assist me in the development of this survey. Your input is very important to the development of my dissertation overall. Your willingness and consideration to participate in this study is greatly appreciated.

Please rate the included survey based on the following information:

1. Does the survey contain language that can be easily understood by school administrators who have used social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to the use of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

3. Do you find any of the questions offensive or obtrusive?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

4. Are there any questions that you would exclude from the survey?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. Are there any other statements that you would include that are not a part of the survey?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

6. Please make any other comments or suggestions about the survey below:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

APPENDIX D

SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION LETTER

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NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by the University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 21, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Event Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
- Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15070201
PROJECT TITLE: Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders: School Administrators and Superintendent Perceptions
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Steven C. Hampton
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership and School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 07/07/2016 to 07/06/2017

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT PERMISSION LETTER
Dear Potential Participant,

I would like for you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to gather data on the perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool with stakeholders. Participating in this study will allow you the opportunity to reflect on your opinions concerning the use of social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. The study has the potential to improve the way school administrators communicate with their stakeholders.

The attached questionnaire covers 14 items related to the use of social media and basic demographic information. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please do not put your name or any identifying information on the questionnaire. All data collected will be anonymous, and any information inadvertently obtained during the course of this study will remain completely confidential. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary, and you can decline or discontinue participation at any point without penalty or prejudice. The questionnaire is hosted online and included in the packet mailed to potential participants. The data collected will be aggregated and summary reports will be submitted by the researcher to a dissertation committee at the University of Southern Mississippi. This research study is being conducted under the supervision of David E. Lee, PhD. Upon completion of the research study, the questionnaire database will be deleted and the online account will be closed. If you have any questions concerning this research, please contact Steven C. Hampton at 601-776-2186.

This project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

By completing and returning the attached questionnaire the participant gives permission for this anonymous and confidential data to be used for the purposes described above.

Thank you for your consideration to this project.

Sincerely,

Steve Hampton

APPENDIX F

SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSION LETTER
Dear Superintendent,

My name is Steve Hampton and I am a doctoral student at The University of Southern Mississippi. I know this is a busy time of year with the semester winding down, but I would greatly appreciate your participation in a research study. I am currently at the research stage of my dissertation at The University of Southern Mississippi. The purpose of this study is to gather data on the perceptions of school administrators on the effectiveness of social media as a communication tool with their stakeholders. The study has the potential to improve the way school administrators communicate with their stakeholders.

I am attaching a cover letter for the study that explains the study and assures that all information will remain anonymous and confidential. The survey will only take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Follow this link to the Survey:

Click here to take a survey

My study is based on data from the perceptions of Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, and Assistant Principals from the State of Mississippi. With your permission, I would like to gather data from the other administrators in your district. It would be very helpful if you could forward this email to the other administrators in your district.

Thank you for your participation in the study.

Sincerely,

Steve Hampton
Asst. Superintendent
Athletic/Federal Programs/Personnel Director
Quitman School District

REFERENCES


The emergence of district social media managers. (2012). *District Administration, 48*(7), 73.


Keys for developing a social media policy. (2013). *Information Management Journal, 47*(6), 42-44.


doi:10.1080/10496491.2012.696458


