

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITH
STAKEHOLDERS TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

by

Heather Bowman

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The University of Houston-Clear Lake

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Educational Leadership

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

MAY, 2018

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITH
STAKEHOLDERS TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

by

Heather Bowman

APPROVED BY

Jana M. Willis, PhD, Chair

Michelle Giles, PhD, Co-Chair

Michelle L. Peters, EdD, Committee Member

Amy Orange, PhD, Committee Member

RECEIVED BY THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION:

Joan Y. Pedro, PhD, Associate Dean

Mark D. Shermis, PhD, Dean

Acknowledgements

I would not be the person I am today without the love and support of my parents. I am thankful every day that I am blessed with two people who are my constant champions. This dissertation could not happen without their positive words and prayers. I thank them for teaching me to have a strong work ethic, equipping me with the tenacity to work hard so I could self-fund my entire education.

Second, I would like to thank the professors and mentors who shaped me into a successful scholar and professional. Thank you to Dr. Jana Willis, my dissertation chair, for her selfless service in supporting me through this endeavor. I also want to thank Dr. Michelle Peters, Dr. Amy Orange, and Dr. Michelle Giles for serving on my dissertation committee and providing me with their time and support. Finally, thank you to Dr. Antonio Corrales, Dr. Michele Kahn, Dr. Gary Schumacher, Dr. Tina Farrell, and Chuck Lang for their guidance and support in this journey.

I am also grateful for Lilly Guu, my best friend and colleague, and Susan Westurn, my best friend since childhood. Lilly's constant support, real-world advice, and humor have helped me over the years both professionally and personally. Susan's lifelong friendship, loyalty, and willingness to listen have always been a great comfort. Both of these ladies are my sisters, and I am so thankful to have them in my life. I also want to thank David Dinsmore for being such a good friend over the years. Thank you for your generous help and kindness.

Finally, thank you to the people who gave me the opportunities to take on new challenges and grow. Thank you to Jacki Keithan, my former principal, who taught me so much about doing what is best for students and being a leader. My years at Griffin Elementary will always be a bright spot in my career. Thank you to Steve Shiels, my current supervisor, for being so supportive of me working towards my doctorate and giving me the opportunity to gain district-level experience.

ABSTRACT

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITH
STAKEHOLDERS TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Heather Bowman
University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2018

Dissertation Chair: Jana M. Willis, PhD
Co-Chair: Michelle Giles, PhD

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. Data collected with the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey* and interviews revealed the social media tools used by Texas elementary school administrators and their comfort levels, perceived effectiveness, benefits, concerns, and recommended practices. Overall, participants reported social media as an effective communication tool that can promote positive public relations. However, more professional development is recommended to promote effective implementation and responsible use. Research findings support the further development of school administrator communication practices to develop social capital with stakeholders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xi
Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Research Problem	2
Significance of the Study	6
Research Purpose and Questions	6
Definitions of Key Terms	7
Conclusion	10
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Social Media Evolution.....	12
History of Social Media	12
Integrating Social Media Tools.....	18
Social Media Impact on Social Capital.....	19
Social Media Tools Used to Communicate	23
Comfortability Using Social Media	27
Effectiveness of Social Media	29
Benefits of Social Media.....	32
Concerns of Social Media.....	35
Recommended Social Media Practices	39
Summary of the Findings.....	45
Theoretical Framework	52
Conclusion	54
III. METHODOLOGY	55
Overview of the Research Problem	55
Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs	56
Research Purpose and Questions	57

Research Design.....	58
Population and Sample	58
Participant Selection	61
Instrumentation	61
Data Collection Procedures.....	62
Surveys.....	63
Interviews.....	64
Data Analysis	66
Quantitative.....	66
Qualitative.....	66
Validity	68
Privacy and Ethical Considerations	69
Research Design Limitations	71
Conclusion	71
 IV. RESULTS	 73
Participant Demographics.....	73
Research Question One.....	77
Research Question Two	83
Research Question Three	86
Research Question Four	87
Quantitative Results	87
Qualitative Results.....	91
Meets stakeholders' expectations	91
Immediate communication.....	92
Reaches more stakeholders	92
Promotes a positive school/district image.....	93
Summary	95
Research Question Five	95
Quantitative Results	95
Qualitative Results	97
Research Question Six	100
Recommended Social Media Tools	100
Electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements and school web sites	101
MNS technology	102
Twitter.....	103
Facebook	103
Blogs	104
Summary	105
Recommended Means to Increase Comfort Level.....	105
Embrace change	106
Practice with one tool.....	107
Increase skills and gain peer support	108
District support and examining practices.....	109

	Summary	110
	Recommended Social Media Communication Practices	111
	Understand stakeholders’ preferences and access ..	111
	Use a multimodal approach	112
	Select the appropriate communication tool.....	114
	Select content to communicate	115
	Monitor and update	117
	Address privacy/security concerns	118
	Provide staff professional development.....	120
	Summary	122
	Summary of the Findings.....	123
	Conclusion	127
V.	SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS	128
	Summary	129
	Research Question One.....	129
	Research Question Two	130
	Research Question Three	131
	Research Question Four	133
	Research Question Five	135
	Research Question Six	137
	Implications.....	141
	Implications for School Administrators.....	141
	Implications for Teachers	142
	Implications for Districts	143
	Recommendations for Future Research	144
	Conclusion	144
	REFERENCES	146
APPENDIX A	SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY	159
APPENDIX B	SURVEY COVER LETTER.....	166
APPENDIX C	INTERVIEW INVITATION E-MAIL	168
APPENDIX D	INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION	170
APPENDIX E	INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS	174
APPENDIX F	PERMISSION TO SURVEY MEMBERS OF THE TEXAS ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION	176

APPENDIX G	PERMISSION TO USE <i>SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY</i>	179
APPENDIX H	PERMISSION TO REPRINT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FROM COX.....	181

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 Texas School Principal (Grades K-12) Population Gender and Race/Ethnicity Data for the 2014-2015 School Year	60
3.2 Texas Principal and Assistant Principal (Grades K-12) Population Average Experience Data for 2011-2015	60
4.1 Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age of Survey Respondents	74
4.2 Years of Administrative Experience, Current Administrative Position, and District Setting of Survey Respondents	75
4.3 Interview Participants' Demographic Data.....	76
4.4 Expanded Responses to Frequency of Social Media Use in the Role of a School Administrator (%)	78
4.5 Collapsed Responses to Frequency of Social Media Use in the Role of a School Administrator (%)	79
4.6 Expanded Responses to Frequency of School Administrator Social Media Use for School Communication with Stakeholders (%).....	81
4.7 Collapsed Responses to Frequency of School Administrator Social Media Use for School Communication with Stakeholders (%).....	82
4.8 Expanded Responses to School Administrator Comfort Levels Using Social Media (%)	84
4.9 Collapsed Responses to School Administrator Comfort Levels Using Social Media (%)	85
4.10 School Administrator Perception Regarding Social Media Effectiveness in Stakeholder Communication.....	87

4.11	School Administrator Perception if Social Media Improved Stakeholder Communication.....	87
4.12	Expanded Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Benefits (%)	89
4.13	Collapsed Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Benefits (%)	90
4.14	Expanded Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Concerns (%).....	96
4.15	Collapsed Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Concerns (%).....	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites.....	13

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT), including social media, revolutionized the demand for information and increased communication expectations (Kelly, 2009). This transformation fueled a shift in communication preferences, especially for younger generations, which include information sharing, with multiple ICT applications available on mobile devices (Greenberg, 2010). Through the lens of K-12 education, technology advancements created new gateways for school administrators to develop shared understandings with stakeholders, including parents, in addition to promoting effective communication (Kelly, 2009). As younger generations mature and become parents, their expectation for organizations to share information and communicate with ICT increases (Greenberg, 2010; Kelly, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative for school administrators to take a proactive approach and use ICT, notably social media, to forge positive relationships, provide information, and actively seek parental input to build social capital (Couros & Jarrett, 2012; Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009).

School administrators are in a position to influence campus culture and relationships with parents (Anderson & Dexter, 2005; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Richardson, McLeod, & Sauers, 2015). These leaders have the opportunity to impact how stakeholders perceive the school and enhance public buy-in of campus practices and future endeavors (Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Advances in

technology revolutionized the methods leaders can utilize to collaborate with stakeholders in order to disseminate information and develop rapport (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital.

Research Problem

The Internet changed the way people communicate, receive information, and conduct business. According to the Pew Research Center, 84.0% of American adults used the Internet in 2015 (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). However, Internet use is higher among younger generations (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). In 2015, 81.0% of 50- to 64-year-olds, 93.0% of 30- to 49-year-olds, and 96.0% of 18- to 29-year-olds used the Internet (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). Nearly two-thirds of Americans now own a smartphone; therefore, online communication is now accessible anytime, anyplace (Duggan, 2015).

To add another layer of change to communication trends, ICT tools are also gaining popularity as 65.0% of adults used social media sites in 2015 (Perrin, 2015). These ICT tools include social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, text messages, YouTube, and e-mail (Askool & Nakata, 2011). In 2015, 74.0% of parents used Facebook, the most popular social media tool (Duggan, Lenhart, Lampe, & Ellison, 2015). Internet users are not just parents, they are also stakeholders who may contribute to school funding. In Texas, for example, property taxes fund most of public school revenue and are two-thirds of the total property taxes (Burrows, 2015).

As society becomes more infused with technology, the demand for how

organizations provide information is shifting (Greenberg, 2010). Communities today expect organizations, such as school districts, to provide information using a variety of ICT, including social media, to receive messages and communicate in the stakeholders' preferred format (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Greenberg, 2010; Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). With the communication revolution, the millennial generation grew up with technological communication, and as they entered the workforce, the demand for organizations to utilize ICT tools to engage in two-way communication and more transparency increased (Greenberg, 2010). In 2015, 100.0% of smartphone users aged 18 to 29 years used text messaging, 97.0% accessed the Internet, and 91.0% used e-mail from a mobile device (Duggan, 2015). As younger people mature and have children, the number of parents using ICT increases (Greenberg, 2010).

Responding to changing demands, businesses shifted their customer relationship management (CRM) systems to include social media integration, thus the social CRM public relations framework emerged (Askool & Nakata, 2011). Social CRM gained popularity with increased ICT use and availability of personal communication devices (Greenberg, 2010). Although social CRM models have typically been utilized by businesses to connect with customers, K-12 and higher education settings have increased integration of the social CRM paradigm to forge relationships with stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2014). The social CRM model facilitates valuable two-way communication between school administrators and stakeholders to build relationships, increase engagement, identify needs, promote a positive image, market school programs, and gain stakeholder support (Askool & Nakata, 2011; Cox & McLeod, 2014; Greenberg, 2010).

Furthermore, an organization can create an organizational identity, the image

projected to the public, through strategic communication with stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Rowden, 2004). Social media communication allows a means for an organization to shape an identity (Rindell & Strandvik, 2010). The Internet shifted marketing control from traditional media sources to organizations; therefore, organizations, including school districts, can utilize the Internet to create their own image through directly sharing messages with stakeholders (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001).

Social media provides a valuable gateway for school administrators to connect with stakeholders and build relationships (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). In Cox and McLeod's (2014) study of 12 superintendents, participants felt social media communication facilitated stronger relationships with stakeholders and increased decision-making transparency, thus enhancing stakeholder bonds and trust in the district. Building relationships is essential to developing rapport with educational stakeholders to promote student success (Askool & Nakata, 2011; Cox & McLeod, 2014). Because social media altered communication trends, school administrators need to integrate these tools in school communication plans (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015). School administrators influence initiating changes in communication and connecting with stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Richardson et al., 2015). Considering school administrators' powerful influential position and the rapidly growing ICT integration, notably social media, administrators could better facilitate ICT integration with best practices grounded in research (Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Researchers have begun to examine how school administrators' use technology; however, prior research suggests the school leadership field could be improved with

additional studies focusing upon technology leadership (McLeod, Bathon, & Richardson, 2011; McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson, Bathon, Flora, & Lewis, 2012). School administrators, instrumental in technology leadership, set expectations for their school's entire staff and students (Richardson et al., 2015). In fact, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) developed the National Education Technology Standards for Administrators (NETS-A) in 2009 (ISTE, 2009). The NETS-A standards included a performance indicator that specifically requires school administrators model using technology effectively to communicate and collaborate with stakeholders (ISTE, 2009). Furthermore, the National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA) created the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards to establish required standards of school principal preparation programs (NPBEA, 2011). Specifically, ELCC Standard 4 requires that school administrators communicate and collaborate with stakeholders to promote school campus relationships (NPBEA, 2011).

Social media tools enable school administrators to proactively communicate with stakeholders, forge relationships, and promote a positive school image (Cox & McLeod, 2013). However, limited research exists focusing upon strategies used by school administrators to integrate social media into their stakeholder communications (Cox & McLeod, 2013). Considering stakeholder expectations shifted to include more ICT, specifically social media, and professional education standards that mandate social CRM practices, school administrators would benefit from more information regarding how social media tools affect stakeholder relationships with schools and explore recommended best practices (McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2015).

Significance of the Study

For an increasing number of Americans, ICT is an essential part of life (Gonzales, Vodicka, & White, 2011). As 76 million millennials continue to join the workforce, become taxpayers, and embark on parenthood, the demand for integration of ICT will only increase (Greenberg, 2010; Kelly, 2009). Therefore, school administrators cannot ignore the importance of using social media to promote positive relations between school districts and stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). However, more research is needed in examining the impact of social media on perceived stakeholder relationships in addition to exploring recommended practices from school administrators' point-of-view (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2012). There are several studies that highlight the need for K-12 leaders to be technology communication leaders (Anderson & Dexter, 2005; Hines, Edmonson, & Moore, 2008; Kelly, 2009; McLeod et al., 2011). Sauers and Richardson (2015) state that although effective educational leaders should use technology, the researchers are not providing enough investigation in this area. More research is needed on school administrators' use of technology in effective communication with parents to explore best practices for current and future leaders in supporting parental relationships using ICT (McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2015).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. The study investigated the following questions:

R1: What social media tools are elementary school administrators using to communicate with stakeholders?

R2: To what degree are elementary school administrators comfortable using social media tools to communicate?

R3: To what degree do elementary school administrators perceive social media tools as being effective methods to communicate with stakeholders?

R4: What do elementary school administrators perceive as benefits of utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?

R5: What do elementary school administrators perceive as concerns regarding utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?

R6: What best practices do elementary school administrators recommend regarding the use of social media tools to communicate with stakeholders?

Definitions of Key Terms

Blogs: Blogs are journal-like entries with a date and time stamp that integrate a built-in archive system and include ways for readers to post comments in responses to blog entries (Gonzales et al., 2011).

Comfortability: Comfortability with social media tools is defined as feeling free from stress and anxiety in using technology (Dornisch, 2013).

Community: All of the people who reside primarily within a school district's jurisdiction (Allman, 2012).

Customer Relationship Management (CRM): A business strategy and philosophy that focuses upon systematically improving an organization's human relations (Greenberg, 2003).

Electronic Newsletter: A traditional newsletter formatted for electronic delivery via e-mail that may be html formatted to include Internet links (Heath, Maghrabi, & Carr, 2015).

Facebook: Facebook is a social media site that allows users to create an online profile, providing a method of sharing information with others as well as establish and maintain connections (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Technological applications and services that provide a way to share information and communicate with others (Heath et al., 2015).

Many-to-Many Communication: Technology tools that permit messages to be broadcast to a wide audience who can then reframe and exchange those messages among others (Hogan & Quan-Haase, 2010).

Mass Notification System (MNS or MNS technology): A means to send information and contact stakeholders in a multimodal way with messages and information synchronously disseminated via phone, text, and or/e-mail (Heath et al., 2015).

Millennials: The generation of about 76 million people born between 1978 and 2000 (Greenberg, 2010).

Real Simple Syndication (RSS): A technology method that permits users to set parameters that will automatically locate contents of RSS websites, podcasts, and blogs in order to have specific information sent to the user in what is known as syndication (Dhamdhere, 2012).

Relationship Marketing (RM): Relationship Marketing, which later became customer relationship management, was established in the 1980s and emphasized that companies

should establish continued relationships with their customers (Stone, Woodcock, & Machtynger, 2000).

School Administrators (Educational Administrators or Educational Leaders or School Leaders): School administrators includes principals and assistant principals (Young, Berube, & Perry, 2008).

Social Capital: The collective sum of the relationships, networks, and resources between individuals, groups, and organizations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Social Customer Relationship Management (Social CRM or SCRM or CRM 2.0): Social CRM is an organizational strategy focused upon customer or stakeholder engagement using social media and technology tools to strengthen trust, transparency, and relationships with an organization (Cox & McLeod, 2014).

Social Media (Social Media Web Sites or Social Network Sites): Web sites, services, and applications that engage users via sharing and collaborating in an online environment (Junco & Chickering, 2010).

Stakeholders: Parents are in a position of being a key stakeholder and consumer in the educational equation (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014).

Twitter: A social networking and microblogging, web-based service that allows users to post and share 140-character messages (Junco & Chickering, 2010).

Web 2.0 Tools: Web-based tools, include social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter, blogs, wikis, web sites, RSS feeds, video, and e-mail, that allow users to contribute, reframe, and share content (Askool & Nakata, 2011; Gonzales et al., 2011).

Conclusion

As ICT increases in popularity and becomes the expectation for communication standards, school administrators must evolve their communication practices to meet the needs of stakeholders and forge positive relationships (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Richardson et al., 2015). Using technology to communicate with the public disseminates information in multiple ways, thus increasing the likelihood messages will be accessible and read by a greater percentage of people (Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Although some research findings are available in areas related to the scope of technological communication and educational leadership, more research is needed to explore recommend social media practices for school administrators (McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2012). Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature with a focus upon the evolution of social media, why integrating these tools in communication plans is essential, the impact on social capital, and examining previous research studies and findings. Previous research findings focus upon social media tools used to communicate, comfortability using social media, effectiveness of social media, benefits of social media, concerns of social media, and recommended social media practices.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media communication provides various ways to communicate with stakeholders in convenient, adaptable, and approachable ways, providing an advantage over traditional communication methods (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). With the popularity of ICT, communication methods transformed along with society's demands for transparency, instant information, and online interaction with organizations (Greenberg, 2010). For example, in 2015, 52.0% of Internet users utilized two or more social media tools, a 10.0% increase from 2013 (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). Therefore, school administrators need to be mindful of ICT trends and consider integrating technology into school communication plans (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Considering limited research related to school administrators' use of technology to communicate with stakeholders, more research is needed to investigate best communication practices (McLeod et al., 2011; McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2012). Therefore, this study examined elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. To understand the need for research in technology communication methods, this section will examine previous research to explore the evolution of social

media, why integrating ICT tools in communication plans is essential, and the impact on social capital.

Social Media Evolution

History of Social Media

With the beginning of the industrial revolution, social analysts postulated about the effects of technology on social interactions (Griffith & Liyanage, 2008). From the telegraph to the telephone, radio, television, and now the computer, technology advancements developed over time to our current daily use of the Internet, smart phones, and social media (Larkin, 2013; Leiner et al., 1997). These advancements altered the ways we communicate and exchange information. Correa, Hinsley, and de Zúñiga (2010) state, “The Internet has profoundly changed the human experience” (p. 247). This section will provide a short review of communication trends in the digital age.

Although social media is a relatively recent development, communicating with technology is not a new trend. E-mail was developed in the early 1970s, and the World Wide Web began over 20 years ago as a group of web pages connected with hyperlinks (Junco & Chickering, 2010; Leiner et al., 1997). In 1997, the first social media web site launched; however, it was followed by the rise and fall of many other social media web sites such as MySpace (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media sites are web-based services that permit users to establish public or semi-private profiles to create connections with other users to provide and exchange information, ideas, and opinions (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Many new social media tools launched in a relatively brief amount of time (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). These rapid technology changes resulted in a cultural shift in communication and information sharing (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Although some

social media web sites failed, many of them succeeded along with other online two-way communication tools (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Refer to Figure 2.1 for a timeline of social network sites' launch dates.

Figure 2.1. Launch Dates of Major Social Network Sites

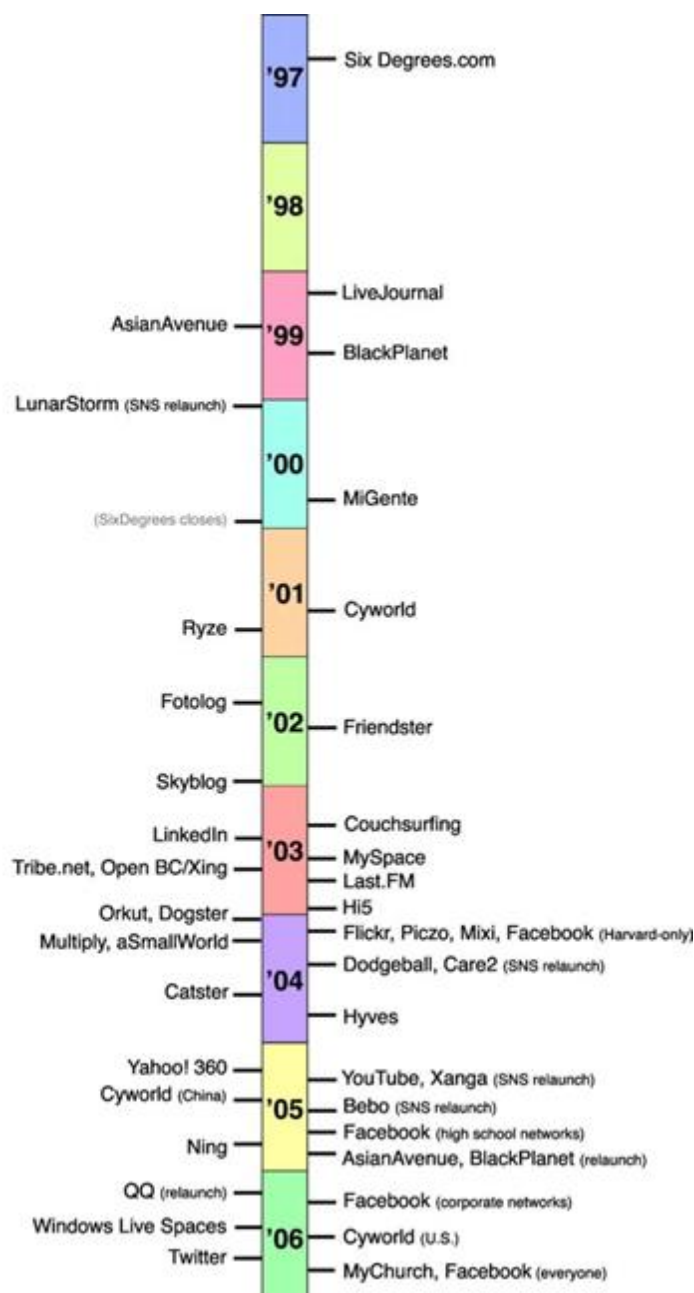


Figure 2.1. Launch dates of major social network sites by D. M. Boyd and N. B. Ellison, 2007, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), p. 212.

As the number of social media tools expanded, a new term emerged to encompass online communication options called ICT (Askool & Nakata, 2011). ICT tools are technological applications and services that provide a way to share information and communicate with others (Heath et al., 2015). Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, text messages, YouTube, and e-mail are just a few examples of ICT tools (Askool & Nakata, 2011). Although social media tools are commonly used for social interaction, many businesses and organizations use them to build collaborative customer relationships through two-way communication that can include multiple users in an online environment (Askool & Nakata, 2011). A few of the more popular tools in education include Facebook, Twitter, and blogs.

Facebook is a popular social media tool used to enhance two-way communication for various purposes (Ellison et al., 2007). Although Facebook began in 2004 for Harvard University students, it was not made available to the general public until 2006 (Facebook, 2015). Today, Facebook has more than 1 billion users worldwide, encompassing a wide range of individuals (Facebook, 2015). Facebook is used by a variety of people, which include school stakeholders, as 74.0% of parents visited Facebook in 2015 (Duggan, Lenhart, Lampe, & Ellison, 2015). Accessing Facebook can provide a gateway to information sharing between organizations and stakeholders in addition to providing a method to connect with friends and relatives (Ellison et al., 2007; Vitak & Ellison, 2013). This shift in information seeking had a big effect on the way people and organizations provide and receive news (Larkin, 2013). Not only has Facebook impacted the displacement of traditional news media, Twitter, another social media tool, also gained popularity for information sharing in recent years (Larkin, 2013).

Created in 2006, Twitter is a microblogging form of social media that allows users to send, receive, and share short messages called a “Tweet” consisting of 140 characters or less (Junco & Chickering, 2010; Sauers & Richardson, 2015). According to Junco and Chickering (2010), Twitter represents one of the more significant social media shifts as the number of Twitter users increased by 660.0% just three years after the tool’s initial launch. This service provides a method for information to travel quickly in a way that mainstream media may not include (Gonzales et al., 2011). However, this quick transmission of information, ideas, and opinions can sometimes backfire when messages are misunderstood and rumors spread (Trump, 2012). Furthermore, the quick pace of Twitter can cause users to send messages without fully examining content for politically incorrect statements or expressing personal opinions to the wrong audience (Wang, 2013). Cox and McLeod (2013) note that social media allows a public forum for parents to voice opinions about schools, which may include positive and negative comments. This can lead to predicaments such as parents posting negative and uninformed comments to a public news story or community Facebook page regarding school staff, academic programs, and school operations (Cox & McLeod, 2013).

On the positive side, Twitter proved successful in promoting political campaigns, fundraising, and community efforts (DiGrazia, McKelvey, Bollen, & Rojas, 2013; Gonzales et al., 2011). DiGrazia et al. (2013) noted a significant correlation between Tweets relating to a candidate’s name and electoral outcomes. Although Twitter provides a way to distribute small bursts of information categorized by topic, this rapid distribution can sometimes impede the ability to locate messages as various news is rapidly posted by other users (Gonzales et al., 2011). As an alternative option to

disseminating succinct messages on Twitter or Facebook, blogging provides another means to share information.

Blogs are journal-like entries with a date and time stamp that integrate a built-in archive system (Gonzales et al., 2011). This medium includes methods for readers to post comments and responses pertaining to each blog post in an online commentary (Gonzales et al., 2011). A benefit of blogging is the ability to post longer amounts of information, yet the power of Real Simple Syndication (RSS) enables third party resources such as Google Reader or Flipboard to receive blog posts categorized by topic so users can subscribe to specific information (Gonzales et al., 2011).

The challenge of studying social media is that new tools are rapidly developed and existing tools quickly launch new features (Gonzales et al., 2011; Quan-Haase, 2008). Furthermore, users tend to select different tools in unpredictable ways (Quan-Haase, 2008). Given that sites like Facebook and Twitter replaced more traditional news sources, it is becoming increasingly important for organizations to share information and promote their image using a variety of social media tools (Larkin, 2013; Norris & Porter, 2011).

Although social media is a powerful public relations gateway, organizations must be mindful of the problems associated with online communication related to privacy, security, and inappropriate subjects (Griffith & Liyanage, 2008). Content can be reframed to misrepresent the original message (Yardi & Boyd, 2010). In face-to-face interactions, people can detect social cues such as facial expressions, vocal tone, body language, and gestures; these details are lost with technological communication and can lead to misunderstandings (Junco & Chickering, 2010). Furthermore, people can freely

project their opinions and online exchanges onto leaders who were once previously considered more inaccessible, such as campus principals and school district leaders (Sanderson & Cheong, 2010). In crisis situations, rumors and threats can spread quickly, causing parents and the media to arrive at campuses even before emergency personnel and while the situation is still being assessed by campus leadership (Trump, 2012).

Furthermore, school district staff and students may use social media to interact inappropriately or express opinions in an incorrect forum (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Sauers, Richardson, & McLeod, 2014). The prospect of inappropriate communication may cause fear for some administrators regarding integration of social media into school communication plans (Sauers et al., 2014). This fear is due to the unknown and the challenge of effectively creating procedures to mitigate inappropriate social media communication, a situation that is not entirely within an administrators' control (Sauers et al., 2014). However, not all aspects of integrating social media communication are negative. For example, prior studies found school administrators' use of social media contributed to strengthening stakeholder connections, increased transparency, and promoted positive public relations (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009).

Despite the potential pitfalls, social media provides a means to connect people through online interactions. Social media tools can be great assets, but rules must be established regarding appropriate use and potential limitations in order to prevent negative consequences and avoid litigation (Trump, 2012). The rapid development of technology challenged both district and campus leaders in maintaining school policy and establishing best practices to effectively address the appropriate use of various

communication methods (Wang, 2013). Regardless, it is essential for organizations to integrate ICT tools into communication plans due to the popularity of social media to communicate and share information (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Integrating Social Media Tools

Social media is an integral component of effective communication plans in the 21st century, which has become a community expectation instead of an option (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015). The business world embraced using social media tools, and while the field of education moves at a slower pace, school administrators cannot deny the importance of using ICT (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Richardson et al., 2015). With increased accountability, demands for transparency, and stricter budgets, effective social media communication is essential for comprehensive communication plans (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). It is foolish for school administrators to neglect the popularity of ICT, which includes social media, and not utilizing technology communication reinforces the stereotype that school administrators are not progressive (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Information and communication technology is necessary to meet society's demands for organizations to promote increased transparency and authenticity (Greenberg, 2010; Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Although imperfect, social media tools are necessary to meet the demands of today's society (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). In this era of technology communication, school administrators are expected to adopt an interactive mindset and meet the community's demands for social media communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). Any modern organization which understands stakeholders are demanding

more from communication initiatives, will focus on CRM that includes social media tools to gain insight into stakeholders' needs (Greenberg, 2010). However, using one ICT method is not enough to meet society's expectations (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Therefore, considering the growing demands for accountability and increased transparency, in conjunction with the widespread use of technology, it is essential to integrate social media in school communication plans (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). The infusion of social media tools places new demands on district and campus leaders (Kelly, 2009). Using ICT, including a variety of social media tools, can positively affect social capital development and meeting community expectations (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Social Media Impact on Social Capital

Social capital is a resource created through building relationships (Ellison et al., 2007). This develops a feeling of being connected to a larger entity created via interactions with a broader, heterogeneous group of people, allowing increased information sharing (Putnam, 2000; Williams, 2006). However, when social capital declines, the community may feel more disorder and distrust, adversely affecting civic activity participation (Ellison et al., 2007). Building social capital can be achieved through branding and social CRM, which is the theoretical framework for this study (Ferriter, Ramsden, & Sheninger, 2011). According to Cox and McLeod (2014), social CRM is the idea that organizations can strategically engage stakeholders using ICT, including social media, to develop trust, promote transparency, and develop stronger relationships. This section will examine how social media affects the development of social capital with a focus upon the field of education.

Recent incidents in history impacted society's trust in organizations and affected the need for organizations' communication efforts to rebuild social capital (Greenberg, 2010). After the 2001 collapse of Enron followed by the decline of several Wall Street financial services, general trust in companies was destroyed (Greenberg, 2010). Customers became disillusioned with companies, losing faith in leadership and big business marketing efforts (Greenberg, 2010). Therefore, customers began to look to their peers for valued reviews and information regarding companies (Greenberg, 2010). According to the 2008 Edelman Trust Barometer, only 23.0% of United States respondents trusted the chief executive officer (CEO) of a company with only 41.0% trusting a company's advertising (Edelman Research, 2008). This general lack of faith in companies and organizations occurred just as the millennials were coming of age and entering the workforce (Greenberg, 2010). Members of this new generation differed from their predecessors as this group was the first generation to grow up communicating via the Internet (Greenberg, 2010).

Millennials tend to seek out information online, gain their peers' opinions, and expect information to be disseminated in a manner most convenient for them (Greenberg, 2010). As millennials continue to develop and become parents, this trend will increasingly affect school districts (Greenberg, 2010). However, it is important to note that younger generations are not the only ones using social media. In 2015, 65.0% of adults used social media sites, which is nearly a 10-fold increase over the last decade (Perrin, 2015). Therefore, organizations need to build relationships with stakeholders utilizing preferred communication methods that are easily accessible (Cox & McLeod, 2014).

Developing strong relationships with stakeholders is vital (Askool & Nakata, 2011). In an age of increased accountability and strict budgets, promoting a positive district image, broadcasting school accomplishments, and building community relationships is increasingly necessary (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). Norris and Porter (2011) emphasize that the impressions people develop of an organization, both internally and externally, are becoming increasingly important and the methods used to influence impressions are changing due to social media. According to Goodlad (1993) and Houston (2001), connecting and collaborating with stakeholders are hallmarks of school leadership best practices. Utilizing social media provides a method to establish stakeholder relationships and engage in collaborative online communications in an effort to increase transparency and trust using a convenient tool (Cox & McLeod, 2014).

The benefits of social media, as used by organizations, include increased transparency, meaningful customer or community relationships, and awareness of stakeholders' needs in a cost-effective and convenient way (Cox & McLeod, 2014). This can promote a positive school image (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Technology greatly transformed the ways leaders are now able to reach constituents to build rapport and develop consensus (Kelly, 2009). Social media affords interaction among multiple users in what is known as many-to-many communication (Rafaeli & LaRose, 1993; Shirky, 2008). Many-to-many communication is unique from one-way and two-way communication methods in that users can reframe content by adding their own opinions when sharing a link to a news story (Yardi & Boyd, 2010). Furthermore, users can engage in online exchanges with multiple people, increasing accessibility (Sanderson & Cheong, 2010). In education, this increased accessibility could include school

administrators. Bridging relationships with stakeholders is an accessible means to build valuable social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Schools have a responsibility to reach out and build trust with stakeholders, the people who make up the school's community, which includes parents and other taxpayers (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Building this trust to develop social capital with stakeholders promotes assurance that schools are using taxpayer dollars to effectively support student success (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

However, changing information sharing from one-way to two-way and even many-to-many dialogues requires a change in the leadership perspective from a focus on management to collaborating and community building (Goodlad, 1993; Hines et al., 2008; Houston, 2001). This shift from one-way communication, such as print-based school newsletters, to two-way dialogues shifted public relations with the community (Scott, 2010). Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs provide a method to disseminate information, promote district accomplishments, increase transparency, address stakeholder concerns, and build stronger connections (Couros & Jarrett, 2012; Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014).

Administrators are expanding communication efforts to include social media to improve the school's image and the quality of stakeholder investment through building stronger relationships (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Principals and district leaders now have the opportunity to provide positive news to the community every day as opposed to waiting for the newspaper to report it or print out a school newsletter to send home (Larkin, 2013). Social media provides an avenue for people to instill change by connecting others with a common vision and dedication to a specific cause (Larkin, 2013). Building trust through relationships with stakeholders is powerful and provides

reassurance that educational leaders are operating with a focus upon meeting stakeholders' needs (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Without integrating social media, district and campus leaders may be revered as detached and unresponsive; therefore, school administrators need to embrace social media communication with the community (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

Social media provides methods for school administrators to interact with stakeholders to build relationships and develop social capital (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Williams, 2006). Porterfield and Carnes (2012) stress the importance of developing and maintaining trusting relationships with students, families, and taxpayers in the community. School administrators' actions greatly affect the behaviors of other leaders and employees; therefore, examining the actions of leaders is essential in exploring best practices (Richardson et al., 2015). To that end, the next sections will review previous research focusing upon social media tools used to communicate, comfortability using social media, effectiveness of social media, benefits of social media, concerns of social media, and recommended social media practices. Given that schools are nonprofit organizations, studies that focused upon nonprofit organizations are also included in a review of the literature.

Social Media Tools Used to Communicate

Technology communication, including social media, e-mail, and text messaging, can promote proactive parental involvement (Olmstead, 2013). Previous studies found schools and nonprofit organizations utilized or were interested in utilizing Facebook to communicate with stakeholders (Olmstead, 2013; O'Neill, Zumwalt, & Bechman, 2011; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). For example, Olmstead (2013) conducted a

mixed-methods study of technology communication and parental involvement. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of technology communication on promoting parental involvement from the teachers' and parents' points-of-view (Olmstead, 2013). Most of the teachers used e-mail (71.4%) to communicate, and although teachers did not use social media to communicate with parents, 85.7% expressed interest in using social media tools (Olmstead, 2013). Of parent responses, 91.1% agreed it was important for schools to communicate with parents using technology, and if the school had a Facebook page, 62.1% of parents indicated interest in "friending" the page (Olmstead, 2013). Although parents expressed an interest in communicating via text messaging with teachers, 71.4% of teachers were not interested in text messaging parents (Olmstead, 2013). Olmstead suggested this could be attributed to teachers' lack of comfort in providing their personal cell phone number to parents; therefore, an MNS technology system that enabled parents to receive text messages without the teacher's personal cell phone number was recommended.

In a study of cooperative extension family economics educators, O'Neill et al. (2011) found Facebook (62.0%) was the most commonly used social media tool as it was used frequently or almost daily. To specifically examine how nonprofit organizations used Facebook, Waters et al. (2009) analyzed 275 nonprofit organizations' Facebook sites across 41 variables. Findings indicated 74.0% of the nonprofit organizations used the discussion boards, 56.0% posted photographs, and 54.0% linked to external news stories (Waters et al., 2009). Furthermore, Ellison et al. (2007) researched college students' use of Facebook. Findings indicated college students used Facebook between

10 and 30 minutes on average each day, allowing a means to develop social capital and connection to the university community (Ellison et al., 2007).

In a study of school administrators, Sauers and Richardson (2015) specifically examined Tweets from 115 K-12 school leaders who actively used Twitter. Results indicated these individuals used Twitter for educational purposes to connect with other school administrators in online professional learning communities and learn about current practices in education. Furthermore, findings showed participants ($n = 89$) used Twitter to communicate with the local community, with Tweets typically focusing upon information sharing or positive, congratulatory posts.

However, other studies revealed both Facebook and Twitter are the more common social media tools used by schools and nonprofit organizations (Goldkind, 2015; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Thackeray, Neiger, Smith, & Van Wagenen, 2012). In a study of state public health departments (SHDs), of the 60.0% using social media tools, 86.7% used Twitter, 56.0% used Facebook, and 43.0% used YouTube (Thackeray et al., 2012). Furthermore, Cox and McLeod (2013, 2014) found school and district leaders most recommended Twitter and blogs. In a study of school leaders who actively used Twitter, Sauers and Richardson (2015) found school leaders used Twitter to create communities for educational purposes with one of the major sub-categories of the educational Tweets involving communication with local stakeholders. Furthermore, Hauge and Norenes (2015) and Heath et al. (2015) found school leaders also utilized MNS technology (which may include text messaging), web pages, e-mail (including newsletters or announcements), and blogs to communicate. However, in the study conducted by Hauge and Norenes, the MNS technology system was referred to as a learning management

system with the ability to distribute messages to parents. School web sites were also recommended despite the fact web sites were not always utilized or updated effectively (Olmstead, 2013).

Although previous studies reported organizations used Facebook, O'Neill et al. (2011) found Twitter and blogs were not always utilized. In some studies, many of the organizations were only using one social media tool, which was used to disseminate information as opposed to engaging stakeholders (Goldkind, 2015; Thackeray et al., 2012). Waters et al. (2009) also discovered nonprofit organizations were not always taking full advantage of using Facebook features to engage users and were instead merely disseminating information on discussion boards.

YouTube was another social media tool examined in previous research. In a content analysis of 100 nonprofit organizations' YouTube channels, Waters and Jones (2011) found that nonprofit organizations primarily posted YouTube videos intended to educate viewers about the organizations' mission, programs, and services. Waters and Jones stated that although the videos were informative, nonprofit organizations were not utilizing the videos to their full potential to engage stakeholders. Furthermore, study analysis indicated out of the 100 nonprofit organizations' YouTube channels, the education field was not highly represented ($n = 4$). Water and Jones stated YouTube videos provide a gateway for nonprofit organizations to build their organizational identity, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and convey their own messages using a tool easily accessible by stakeholders.

When investigating social media tools used to communicate, it is important to consider stakeholder preference (Olmstead, 2013). Parents showed a preference in using

Facebook and e-mail to communicate with schools (Olmstead, 2013; Thompson, Mazer, & Grady, 2015). In a study conducted by Thompson et al. (2015), data revealed parents prefer the asynchronous format of e-mail as it is quick, easy, and allows the option to read and respond to messages according to an individual's own timeline. Parents also preferred e-mail communication with teachers as messages could be delivered and read using a smartphone (Thompson et al., 2015). In addition, parents exhibited an interest in communicating with teachers via Skype as this included the convenience of using technology with the element of face-to-face interaction (Thompson et al., 2015). Olmstead (2013) found that 91.1% of parents indicated it is *important* or *very important* that schools provide a way to communicate via technology. However, this would require schools to utilize this technology and become comfortable with social media.

Comfortability Using Social Media

Previous research results indicated school administrators expressed a positive attitude about using technology to communicate and were not intimidated by technology (Cakir, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015; Young et al., 2008). In a study conducted by Young et al. (2008), educational leaders reported not being intimidated by technology and saw their future including more technology enhancements. In another study of school administrators and social media, Richardson et al. (2015) investigated the core dispositions of superintendents who exhibited technology leadership. Overall, Richardson et al. found superintendents were very comfortable using technology. Each participant knew technological change required setting clear expectations, ongoing collaboration, risk-taking, being personally engaged, learning and growing with technology expertise, and establishing a technology vision (Richardson et al., 2015).

However, not all school leaders and educators expressed comfort with social media tools, but a higher level of comfort was reported with social media tools for which school administrators and educators had training and experience (Cakir, 2012; Cater, Davis, Leger, Machtmes, & Arcemont, 2013). In fact, some previous studies found school administrators and educators were not comfortable using Twitter or blogs (Cater et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). Cater et al. (2013) studied university faculty use of blogs and comfort level with social media platforms. Results indicated most respondents (86.5%) felt comfortable using webinars; however, only 5.3% felt comfortable with blogs and 5.2% felt comfortable with Twitter (Cater et al., 2013). Furthermore, participants felt comfortable with tools they had used more often (Cater et al., 2013).

These findings were similar to a study conducted by O'Neill et al. (2011) who found respondents were more comfortable using Facebook and least comfortable using Twitter and blogs. Therefore, these tools were utilized the least (O'Neill et al., 2011). Interestingly, a study conducted by Cakir (2012) found that although K-12 school administrators felt they were school leaders and had a positive attitude about technology integration, none of the administrators reported familiarity implementing Web 2.0 technology, including social media tools, into school communication. However, nearly all of the school administrators reported personal Facebook use and comfort with the application (Cakir, 2012). Furthermore, Cakir found that although school administrators felt more technology needed to be integrated, this responsibility fell upon computer teachers.

In another study of K-12 school administrators, Afshari, Bakar, Luan, and Siraj (2012) investigated if there was a relationship between school principals' computer

competence, professional development, and computer usage. Results showed principals had moderate competence in media communication, telecommunication, and networking (Afshari et al., 2012). Furthermore, results indicated a significant relationship between a principals' computer competence and computer use, and professional development was found to positively relate to a principal's computer competence (Afshari et al., 2012). Afshari et al. recommended school principals needed more professional development to increase computer competence and comfort levels. Based on the results of previous studies, it was recommended that more professional development was needed to promote comfortability using technology to communicate (Afshari et al., 2012; Cakir, 2012; Cater et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011).

In a study conducted by Adams (2016), teacher mentors with high technology comfort and self-efficacy levels with ICT were paired with a mentee who had a low level of comfort and self-efficacy with ICT. The peer mentoring program increased comfort levels and self-efficacy levels of ICT use, thus this could be a model to increase comfort levels for other school employees. These findings are consistent with Larson (2009) who found a mentor/mentee program provided professional development support from educational technology faculty. Mentees were able to increase their technology skills and comfort, noting an increased comfort in asking questions of the mentors (Larson, 2009). The next section will review previous studies of social media effectiveness.

Effectiveness of Social Media

Limited research is available regarding the effectiveness of social media communication to build social capital with stakeholders. Young et al. (2008) examined 221 school administrators' perceptions regarding technology communication and its

effectiveness. Results indicated most respondents ($n = 94$) felt e-mail communication was *very* or *moderately effective*. High effectiveness ratings were also found for cell phone communication ($n = 79$), web sites ($n = 62$), and video conferencing ($n = 59$) (Young et al., 2008). Overall, findings indicated school administrators felt technology communication included many benefits such as the ability to reach more stakeholders than in the past and that technology increased communication with stakeholders (Young et al., 2008).

Young et al.'s (2008) findings are congruent with parental perceptions regarding technology communication as reported by Olmstead (2013). In a study of technology communication and parental involvement, Olmstead investigated the effectiveness of technology communication on promoting parental involvement from the teachers' and parents' points-of-view. Overall the study found that methods of technology communication used by the participants (e-mail, teacher web sites, and phone messaging systems) promoted parental involvement (Olmstead, 2013). Teachers rated having a means to communicate with parents electronically as *important* or *very important* (Olmstead, 2013). Most of the teachers (71.4%) used e-mail to communicate, and although teachers did not use social media to communicate with parents, 85.7% of teachers expressed interest in using social media tools to communicate with parents, specifically instant messaging or social media tools such as Facebook or Twitter (Olmstead, 2013). Of parent responses, 91.1% agreed it was important for schools to communicate with parents using technology (Olmstead, 2013). If the school had a Facebook page, 62.1% of parents expressed interest in "friending" the page; however, only 24.1% of parents were interested in "following" the school on Twitter (Olmstead,

2013). Parents also expressed interest in using an online instant messaging service to communicate with teachers (85.7%) (Olmstead, 2013).

Considering Olmstead (2013) found that parents reported interest in “friending” their school on Facebook, it is of note that Ellison et al. (2007) found Facebook usage promotes social capital development and building a sense of community.

Ellison et al. examined the relationship between Facebook and the development of social capital. The sample included 286 undergraduate students from Michigan State University (MSU) who completed an online survey measuring Facebook usage, psychological well being using seven items from the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, and social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Findings indicated a strong association between the three types of social capital development and Facebook use, with the bridging social capital dimension ranking the strongest (Ellison et al., 2007). The bridging social capital dimension relates to the level respondents felt integrated into the MSU community (Ellison et al., 2007).

Despite Ellison et al.’s (2007) findings, Waters et al. (2009) found non-profit organizations did not use Facebook to effectively build community involvement as organizations demonstrated using Facebook to merely disseminate information as opposed to interaction with stakeholders. Furthermore, Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton (2012) conducted a study to examine how nonprofit organizations used Twitter to communicate and the effect on stakeholder engagement. Results indicated the nation’s largest nonprofits are not utilizing Twitter to effectively engage stakeholder involvement, as less than 20.0% demonstrated conversations and about 16.0% showed indirect connections with specific users (Lovejoy et al., 2012). These results indicated nonprofits used Twitter to effectively disseminate information rather than engaging stakeholders;

however, LoveJoy et al. noted an organization's use of Twitter shows an effort to engage the public.

Nevertheless, Sauers and Richardson (2015) found K-12 school administrators effectively used social media to build interaction with the community. These findings support those reported by Olmstead (2013) that technology communication promoted parental involvement, which is also a benefit of social media communication. In a study of three campuses, Heath et al. (2015) also found that ICT promoted effective communication and parental involvement through proactive engagement. However, the study revealed a variability in perceived effectiveness between the campuses related to misalignment of communication tool selection and parent preference. Finally, Cox and McLeod (2013, 2014) found social media an effective means for school administrators to promote transparency, increase stakeholder communication, and build stronger connections with stakeholders. The next section will review previous studies highlighting the benefits of social media communication.

Benefits of Social Media

Efforts to develop relationships between an organization and its stakeholders build the valuable resource of social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Popular ICT tools, such as social media, provide a powerful gateway for school administrators to develop trust with parents to gain support (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). This section provides results of previous studies of school administrators' use of ICT, including social media, and the influence of these communication methods on parental relationships.

Considering the increase in social media as a communication gateway, stakeholders expect schools to use ICT tools to share information (Cox & McLeod, 2013,

2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015; Young et al., 2008). In examining campus and district leaders' social media use, several studies found principals and superintendents strengthened connections between stakeholders and school administrators as well as other education personnel through improved communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Young et al., 2008). Kelly (2009) found superintendents perceived this consistent and open dialogue with stakeholders had a positive impact on student achievement.

Heath et al. (2015) also found ICT increased school-home communication, which promoted parental involvement and improved student achievement. Both parents and teachers placed high value on proactive parental involvement, and through the use of technology, a parent is not required to physically be at the campus to communicate with teachers and school leaders (Olmstead, 2013). Communicating with technology is a means to proactively interact with parents to increase parental involvement (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Heath et al., 2015; Olmstead, 2013). In a study of parent-school engagement, Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) found increased principal communication fostered increased parental involvement. This communication was not specifically discussed as technology-based; however, ICT is a gateway for principals to communicate.

Furthermore, communicating with technology increased leader accessibility with more frequent stakeholder interaction, thus promoting transparency (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). Superintendents specifically stated technology communication allowed greater transparency regarding budgeting and decision-making issues (Cox & McLeod, 2014). This provided a way to humanize school administrators as well as

respond to the community's viewpoints while providing decision-making rationales to promote transparency (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Other studies found technology allowed for increased communication with stakeholders (Newbury, Humphreys, & Fuess, 2014; Young et al., 2008).

Various ICT tools, including social media, were found to promote positive public relationships, enhanced professional growth, and kept administrators aware of public opinions (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). O'Reilly and Matt (2013) found school superintendents felt virtual communities allowed a way to generate discussions so leaders can better understand stakeholders' viewpoints of key issues. The virtual communities increased feedback from stakeholders, which may be perceived as a benefit as well as a concern (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013). In another study of district leaders, Kelly (2009) found superintendents perceived there were more benefits to ICT than drawbacks and communicating electronically enhanced networking capabilities and provided a way to solve problems.

Social media was found as a means to reach a wider audience. In a study of K-12 school principals, Cox and McLeod (2013) discovered utilizing various social media tools allowed principals to reach more stakeholders at once. This multimodal approach provided a way for school leaders to influence more stakeholders at one time (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). In a study of extension educators, Newbury et al. (2014) found social media provided quick communication and a direct connection to stakeholders, providing a way to reach more stakeholders and increase school administrator accessibility. Furthermore, Young et al. (2008) found technology allowed

the means to communicate more often and reach a wider audience. However, previous research indicated school administrators felt more comfortable distributing information than interacting with the community to create a shared understanding (Kelly, 2009). Nevertheless, previous research found social media allowed for more in-depth exchanges with the community, which may not be possible without the option of ICT (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Although previous studies identified benefits of social media communication, concerns were also discovered.

Concerns of Social Media

Although there is evidence of ICT tools, including social media, positively impacting social capital, there are also some negative aspects. Privacy was the most common concern cited in previous studies (Chang & Chen, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Yost & Fan, 2014). In a study of childcare workers, Yost and Fan (2014) found that even though more than half of the respondents were in favor of using social media to communicate with parents, in general other respondents expressed confidentiality as a reason against using social media. Chang and Chen (2014) found privacy concerns of Facebook use resulted in a significant negative impact on information disclosure. Furthermore, Newbury et al. (2014) found privacy concerns were compounded through a perception that information sharing cannot be controlled and posts were accessible by anyone. However, trust between users and perceived benefits can mitigate these privacy concerns (Chang & Chen, 2014).

Another concern identified in previous studies is time needed to communicate (Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Waters et al., 2009). Educators and school administrators reported difficulty in maintaining social

media tools and felt hesitant to implement technology communication, as it would add another task to already burdened schedules (Newbury et al., 2014). As previously discussed, Newbury et al. (2014) investigated barriers that impeded social media use in education and outreach practices, through examining benefits and risks of social media communication. Interview findings indicated time and control as the primary barriers to social media adoption in education and community outreach efforts (Newbury et al., 2014). Participants felt the inability to control their online presence contributed to perceived risk of using social media to communicate with the community (Newbury et al., 2014). Furthermore, participants feared using social media tools would require too much time, and with frequently changing technology, they may have to learn a new tool after already committing to an existing tool such as Facebook or Twitter (Newbury et al., 2014). However, many participants wanted social media training (Newbury et al., 2014). Survey findings indicated concerns of using social media included the amount of time needed and privacy (Newbury et al., 2014). Newbury et al. recommended hands-on training using social media tools in an effective and efficient manner.

In a study of school principals, Hines et al. (2008) also found time required at the computer was the number one concern of communicating via technology. Specifically, principals expressed frustration with the large volume of communication received and the effect this had on extending the work day as well as the pressure of being constantly accessible (Hines et al., 2008). This time at the computer can also detract from campus visibility (Kelly, 2009).

The asynchronous environment of social media can lack the ability to fully grasp the true feelings of stakeholders, a concern of school administrators (Hines et al., 2008;

Kelly, 2009). Kelly (2009) found superintendents were concerned that the time required at the computer to respond to ICT would reduce their visibility on school campuses. Superintendents stated electronic communication required more time in the office as opposed to being visible in person, which could reduce the ability to grasp the true feelings of employees and community members, leading to misunderstandings (Kelly, 2009). Therefore, school administrators felt face-to-face interactions could not be replaced by technology to fully grasp stakeholders' true feelings (Kelly, 2009).

Concerns were also found from building level leaders as Hines et al. (2008) examined how electronic communication affected the role of the school principal. The participants acknowledged a growing demand for ICT, and although there was acknowledgement electronic communication fostered a sense of community, there were concerns (Hines et al., 2008). Results indicated time required at the computer was a primary concern for principals (Hines et al., 2008). Additional concerns included volume of communication being sent/received, time spent at work, training needs, impulsive properties, absence of a physical presence, being overly accessible, and complications with privacy (Hines et al., 2008).

Another concern found in previous studies was a lack of manpower and resources to effectively monitor and update ICT, including social media tools (Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Waters et al., 2009). Superintendents reported difficulty in maintaining district web sites and other ICT tools due to time and manpower constraints; however, participants noted the benefits of maintaining a current web site (Kelly, 2009). In another study of school superintendents, respondents identified drawbacks to using social media to communicate with stakeholders included the amount

of time involved and lack of personnel to effectively post and monitor communication, which could include negative postings by the public (O'Reilly & Matt, 2013). Negative and inaccurate postings by stakeholders was a concern expressed in multiple studies (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Sauers et al., 2014).

To address this concern, O'Reilly and Matt (2013) recommended school administrators create a public relations oversight committee of about six members who would each spend one hour per week reviewing social media posts and updates. However, a committee of this nature may not be possible considering nonprofit organizations cited lack of manpower as a reason social media sites, such as Facebook, were not updated with more frequency (Waters et al., 2009). As discussed previously, Waters et al. (2009) studied how nonprofit organizations used Facebook for promotion. The nonprofit organizations in the study failed to take full advantage of Facebook's features (Waters et al., 2009). The conclusion of the study noted that although nonprofit organizations saw the benefit of using social media, organizations often lacked resources, time, training, and manpower to maintain Facebook (Waters et al., 2009).

In addition, another concern cited in previous research pertained to the fact social media can lead to misunderstandings as communication is asynchronous, can be misrepresented, reframed, and forwarded to anyone with an opportunity for people to post negative or false comments (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009). Kelly (2009) found superintendents reported vigilance is needed to prevent misunderstandings due to messages being easily forwarded to unintended recipients, reframed, and taken out of context. This supports findings of Cox and McLeod (2014)

who found superintendents felt concerned about stakeholders posting negative comments for the public to see.

Expanding on the fear of misunderstandings, Sauers et al. (2014) found school superintendents were fearful of the overall changes involved with implementing technology into the district vision and practices. Specifically, superintendents feared inappropriate posts on school accounts, backlash from stakeholders, and the general fear of the unknown (Sauers et al., 2014). Superintendents felt challenged to effectively create procedures to mitigate inappropriate communication due to the perception these communication methods were not entirely within an administrators' control (Sauers et al., 2014). Considering the discussed benefits and concerns of communicating with social media, previous studies cited a number of recommended social media practices.

Recommended Social Media Practices

Previous studies indicated both positive and negative aspects of using ICT tools, including social media (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009). Considering this, strong school leadership includes effectively integrating technology to promote the benefits; however, there is a gap in the research focusing upon effective technology leadership practices in schools (Richardson et al., 2015). This section will review previous studies with findings related to recommended ICT practices.

Previous studies of leadership practices pertaining to ICT policy planning and related processes found a technology vision can guide the integration of ICT into the school's daily practices (Baylor & Ritchie, 2002; Lim & Khine, 2006; Richardson et al., 2015; Vanderlinde, Dexter, & van Braak, 2012). Furthermore, staff should receive professional development to promote success of the plan (Baylor & Ritchie, 2002; Lim &

Khine, 2006; Vanderlinde et al., 2012). Baylor and Ritchie (2002) found that schools guided by an ICT plan and vision demonstrated greater success with integrating ICT. Similar findings were discovered by Lim and Khine (2006) through the examination of four schools, revealing a shared vision and technology plan assisted with guidance throughout the ICT implementation process. Communication practices with ICT must be guided by a vision and supported with policy (Baylor & Ritchie, 2002; Lim & Khine, 2006; Vanderlinde et al., 2012). Although district support of specific ICT tools was not mentioned, it is conceivable specific tools could be included in the district ICT plan. Heath et al. (2015) found that district bureaucracy, the absence of a technology vision, and lack of district support impeded the implementation of ICT. Therefore, it was recommended districts must implement a technology vision and provide support for successful ICT implementation (Heath et al., 2015).

Previous studies showed school administrators need to be accessible and supportive of social media communication to promote parental engagement (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Cox & McLeod, 2013). However, the appropriate communication tool needs to be selected relative to the situation, as ICT does not always enhance communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Young et al., 2008). In a study conducted by Young et al. (2008), school leaders recognized technology needs to be used appropriately and the best communication method needs to be selected depending upon the situation. It is recommended school administrators embrace change, overcome fear, and maintain flexibility (Sauers et al., 2014). It is imperative school administrators take risks and incorporate technology in school

communication plans as it is an expectation among stakeholders and part of conducting school business today (Sauers et al., 2014).

In a study of parental involvement and parent-teacher communication via ICT, Olmstead (2013) found selecting the best communication tool also depends upon stakeholder preference. After surveying and interviewing parents and teachers, results indicated both parents and teachers view technology as an effective communication tool (Olmstead, 2013). However, educators must choose the right communication method preferred by parents (Olmstead, 2013). Parents preferred proactive communication, especially via e-mail, phone messaging systems, and web sites, although parents complained web sites were often not updated (Olmstead, 2013). Parents demonstrated interest in receiving communication via text messages, instant messaging, and Facebook (Olmstead, 2013). Teachers showed more of an interest in using instant messaging and social media tools including Facebook and Twitter (Olmstead, 2013). Olmstead stressed that campus administrators need to model using technology to communicate with parents and provide staff development for teachers on this topic regularly.

In a related study, Heath et al. (2015) found that in order to satisfy parental demands and interest in ICT, including social media communication, school administrators should know their stakeholders and align communication endeavors to parent preferences to positively impact communication and promote parent satisfaction. Heath et al. conducted a multi-case study to investigate how ICT impacts school-to-home and home-to-school communication. The results indicated a misalignment in the ICT preferences between the parents and the principals at two of the three schools (Heath et al., 2015). The findings indicated aligning ICT preferences between principals and

parents enhanced parent satisfaction with the school and positively impacted communication (Heath et al., 2015). Parents and principals at low, mixed wealth, and high wealth schools all preferred technology communication to include: MNS technology (which may include text messages), e-mail, and voice messages (Heath et al., 2015). The authors of the study recommended understanding and aligning parent ICT preferences when developing a communications plan (Heath et al., 2015).

Although Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) did not specifically focus on ICT, their study investigated parents' experiences with both indirect and direct interactions with schools. Parents felt the communication, attitude, and leadership style of the principal was a key factor in maintaining the school's relationship with parents (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). The study found increased parental engagement when principals were perceived as accessible, engaged, and supportive (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). Parents felt the school culture stemmed from the principal; therefore, the principal should be involved in getting to know parents as stakeholders, be available, manage communication, and show interest in gaining feedback from parent groups (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). Although this study did not specifically mention social media, it does support the need for steady school communication with parents. In examining previous studies, communication with parents should include technology (Cox & McLeod, 2013).

As noted previously, Cox and McLeod (2013) studied social media use by school principals. Based upon data collected through interviews, principals in the study suggested augmenting current communication practices with social media tools (Cox & McLeod, 2013). Several of the principals suggested learning about different social media tools first to select the best choice for their school, and then integrate only one or two into

the communication plan (Cox & McLeod, 2013). Another principal exhibited caution in his advice, noting this communication medium is a different culture unto its own and controversial topics should be avoided, allowing communication to focus on positive events (Cox & McLeod, 2013).

Another concern was the ability of stakeholders to post negative or inaccurate information (Cox & McLeod, 2013). Nevertheless, principals urged school leaders to immerse themselves in the tools and not be afraid (Cox & McLeod, 2013). However, all principals stated using ICT tools, such as social media, is the new non-negotiable for school communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). It is recommended educational leaders use multiple ways to communicate with tools such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, web sites, and text messages to disseminate information to increase the likelihood it reaches more stakeholders, including parents (Cox & McLeod, 2013). However, school leaders need to use the appropriate communication method depending upon the situation as opposed to abandoning traditional communication methods, an idea confirmed by other researchers (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Young et al., 2008).

It was recommended school administrators use multiple social media tools to communicate in order to build relationships with stakeholders and promote transparency (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). However, school administrators do not need to stress about implementing a multimodal communication approach immediately as it was recommended to start with only one or two communication tools (Cox & McLeod, 2013). As previously discussed, a common concern of communicating with technology is privacy; therefore, it was recommended organizations customize privacy settings and

employ privacy practices to promote stakeholder trust and increase comfort (Chang & Chen, 2014). Another common concern of technology communication was the time involved in updating, maintaining, and monitoring communication; therefore, it was recommended school administrators create a public relations oversight committee (O'Reilly & Matt, 2013). In addition, time management can be supported by developing a routine for posting information and responding to messages (Hines et al., 2008).

In a study of ICT and the role of the principal, Hines et al. (2008) found participants recommended establishing a routine for responding to e-mail and social media to preserve time for visibility on campuses and manage the concern of time needed on the computer for social media communication. Based on the findings, recommendations for communication practices included training staff in effectively using ICT to communicate, including legal reminders and etiquette (Hines et al., 2008). Staff should also be trained in expectations and guidelines; furthermore, it could be beneficial to provide acceptable use guidelines (Hines et al., 2008). This idea supports Richardson et al. (2015) who found setting clear expectations of staff is imperative. Hines et al. also recommended more training is needed for school administrators regarding effective communication and management.

Other researchers also recommended training for school administrators regarding ICT and social media communication would increase comfort levels and competence (Afshari et al., 2012; Cakir, 2012; Cater et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). Specifically, previous research findings supported ICT training for staff regarding appropriate use and setting expectations to support successful communication plans with technology integration (Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; Olmstead, 2013; O'Neill et al.,

2011; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014). To promote a campus communication plan, acceptable use guidelines could be developed (Hines et al., 2008; Wang, 2013).

However, one of the best methods to promote campus success with ICT is for school administrators to model appropriate use for the staff (Olmstead, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014). These efforts set clear expectations for staff which is essential to the success of integrating technology communication schoolwide (Hines et al., 2008; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014).

Summary of the Findings

Although social media is increasing in popularity and provides many benefits to building community relationships, there is a dearth of research focusing upon K-12 district leadership and technology communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). There are several studies that highlight the need for K-12 leaders to be technology-savvy (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009). Furthermore, previous research reported using social media to communicate is a non-negotiable for school administrators (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). However, Sauers and Richardson (2015) state that although we know effective K-12 administrators should use technology, the researchers are not providing enough investigation in this area.

Studies show that Facebook and Twitter are the more common social media tools used by schools and nonprofit organizations (Goldkind, 2015; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Thackeray et al., 2012). Facebook was also used by organizations (Ellison et al., 2007; O'Neill et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2009). Twitter was also utilized and recommended (Sauers & Richardson, 2015). Twitter and blogs were most recommended by school and district administrators (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). However, school web sites were

also recommended (Olmstead, 2013). Furthermore, Heath et al. (2015) and Hauge and Norenes (2015) found school administrators also used MNS technology (which may include text messages), web pages, e-mail (including electronic newsletters or announcements), and blogs to communicate. Parents showed a preference in using Facebook and e-mail to communicate with schools and an interest in Skype usage (Thompson et al., 2015). Furthermore, although parents showed an interest in Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging, not all schools utilized these tools (Olmstead, 2013). Even though research showed some organizations used Facebook, Twitter and blogs were not utilized (O'Neill et al., 2011). Although YouTube was utilized by nonprofit organizations to communicate, findings indicated education organizations were not widely using this tool (Waters & Jones, 2011). Many of the organizations only used one social media tool (Goldkind, 2015; Thackeray et al., 2012).

Several studies found school administrators were not intimidated by technology and had a positive attitude about using technology to communicate (Cakir, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015; Young et al., 2008). Richardson et al. (2015) found superintendents were very comfortable using technology. However, school administrators felt more comfortable with tools for which they had training and experience (Cakir, 2012; Cater et al., 2013). Furthermore, some studies found school administrators were not comfortable using Twitter or blogs (Cater et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). However, in previous studies, school administrators reported comfort with using Facebook (Cakir, 2012; O'Neill et al., 2011). Afshari et al. (2012) found school administrators had moderate competencies and comfort using media communication. Technology-savvy educational leaders had clear expectations of teachers and students,

developed a technology vision, took risks, continuously improved, engaged in ongoing conversations with stakeholders, learned and modeled technology skills (Richardson et al., 2015).

Few studies focused upon the effectiveness of social media communication; however, participants in several studies felt communicating with ICT tools was an effective means to communicate with stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Ellison et al., 2007; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Sauers & Richardson, 2015; Young et al., 2008). Ellison et al. (2007) found Facebook usage promoted social capital development, notably as it related to building a sense of community integration. These findings align with Sauers and Richardson (2015) who reported Twitter as an effective tool to interact with the community. Although Heath et al. (2015) reported ICT as an effective communication tool, there was variability in the study's findings due to misalignment of ICT preferences and expectations between school principals and parents.

On the contrary, Lovejoy et al. (2012) found nonprofits did not use Twitter to effectively engage stakeholders and simply used the tool to disseminate information. Furthermore, Waters et al. (2009) found non-profit organizations did not effectively use Facebook to develop community involvement. In the study of superintendents, Kelly (2009) found participants were more comfortable disseminating information. However, several studies found technology communication promoted parental involvement (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Heath et al., 2015; Olmstead, 2013). Even though the study did not directly relate to technology-based communication, Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) found increased principal communication fostered increased parental involvement; ICT allowed a means for principals to increase communication. Finally, despite parental interest in

schools using social media, research showed a lag between interest from parents and schools actually implementing these tools (Olmstead, 2013).

With the popularity of social media, the community expects schools to use technology to communicate (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015; Young et al., 2008). In studying campus and district administrators' social media use, several studies found principals and superintendents improved stakeholder communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). A number of social media communication benefits were identified in previous research. First, school administrators felt social media increased communication with stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; Young et al., 2008). Second, research findings revealed social media allowed the ability to reach stakeholders not previously reached (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Newbury et al., 2014; Young et al., 2008). Third, social media communication allowed a method to improve the school/district image (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). Fourth, communicating via technology increased parental involvement (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Heath et al., 2015; Olmstead, 2013). Finally, social media communication increased feedback (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013). This allowed an opportunity for leaders to respond to stakeholders' views and provide decision-making rationales to promote transparency, while at the same time humanizing school administrators (Cox & McLeod, 2014).

Furthermore, administrators could influence more stakeholders at one time by using a multimodal approach, providing information via different social media tools at once (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Young et al., 2008). In

looking at social media communication benefits from educators' perspectives, Newbury et al. (2014) found benefits of using social media included quick communication, being connected through direct stakeholder communication, increased accessibility, and reaching more stakeholders. Using social media allowed for more in-depth exchanges with the community that are not possible with traditional print media (Cox & McLeod, 2014).

Although there are benefits of using social media, there are also concerns; privacy being the most common concern (Chang & Chen, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Yost & Fan, 2014). An additional concern included time needed to communicate (Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Waters et al., 2009). Prior research found participants felt they lacked the manpower and resources to effectively update and monitor online communication (Hines et al., 2008; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Waters et al., 2009). Furthermore, using social media can lead to misunderstandings as communication is asynchronous and can be forwarded, reframed, and misrepresented with an opportunity for negative comments (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Sauers et al., 2014). Administrators may also fear the change involved with implementing technology communication, especially due to the risk of inappropriate posts and the inability to totally control the online actions of others (Sauers et al., 2014). Finally, the asynchronous environment of social media can lack the ability to fully grasp the true feelings of stakeholders (Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009).

There are some recommended communication practices for using social media. Parents saw technology as an effective communication tool, with a preference for e-mail

and web sites, and an interest in schools using other social media tools (Olmstead, 2013). Developing an ICT plan and vision can support the direction and guide ongoing ICT practices both within a campus and across the district (Baylor & Ritchie, 2002; Heath et al., 2015; Lim & Khine, 2006; Vanderlinde et al., 2012). Although not specifically discussed in the research, it is conceivable the district ICT plan could support specific ICT tools. School administrators need to know their stakeholders and align technology communication tools to parent preferences, a practice found to promote increased parental satisfaction and positively impact communication (Heath et al., 2015; Hines et al., 2008; Olmstead, 2013; Thompson et al., 2015). Principals need to be accessible, engaged, and supportive to promote parental involvement (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Cox & McLeod, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015). However, technology does not always enhance communication, and the appropriate medium needs to be selected depending upon the situation (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Young et al., 2008). Therefore, school administrators should not abandon traditional communication methods such as phone calls, face-to-face conversations, and print-based media (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Young et al., 2008).

It was recommended principals use multiple social media tools to communicate as well as engage in conversations with parents to promote transparency (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). However, school leaders should start with only one or two communication tools (Afshari et al., 2012; Cox & McLeod, 2013). Mentoring and peer support can provide a means to increase comfort and self-efficacy levels with ICT tools (Adams, 2016; Larson, 2009). School administrators should focus on positive communication and avoid controversial topics (Cox & McLeod, 2013). Privacy was a

common concern found in previous research; therefore, organizations should customize privacy settings (Chang & Chen, 2014). Time was another common concern; therefore, it was recommended school administrators create a public relations oversight committee (O'Reilly & Matt, 2013). Furthermore, school administrators should develop a routine for communicating with technology (Hines et al., 2008). Despite fears, it was recommended school administrators exhibit courage and embrace change with the understanding using technology is part of conducting school business in today's world (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014).

Researchers who conducted previous studies recommended professional development for school leaders focused upon technology communication could increase comfort levels and competence (Afshari et al., 2012; Cakir, 2012; Cater et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). Furthermore, prior research recommended professional development for staff regarding appropriate use and setting expectations could promote successful technology integration (Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; Olmstead, 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014). This could even be supported with acceptable use guidelines (Hines et al., 2008; Wang, 2013). Finally, school administrators need to model technology communication (Olmstead, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014). These efforts support recommendations for setting clear expectations of staff, an essential component in successful technology communication implementation (Hines et al., 2008; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014).

Despite research into ICT, few efforts focused upon effective educational leadership with social media communication (Afshari et al., 2012; Cakir, 2012; Cater et

al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011; Richardson et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a notable gap in the literature as school administrators are at the forefront of influencing school change and modeling communication efforts (Richardson et al., 2015). More research is needed focusing upon school leaders' effective use of ICT (Richardson et al., 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Advances in technology created new methods of communication and information sharing, thus impacting how the community interacts with organizations and what is expected of leaders (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Kelly, 2009). Information is now a shared commodity; therefore, effective leadership styles have shifted to meet communication needs from a top-down approach to a collaborative endeavor (Kelly, 2009; Richardson et al., 2015). Inaccessible district leadership of yesterday gave way to the community's demands for transparency and accessibility with a shift towards greater collaboration between school administrators and stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Richardson et al., 2015). Therefore, in this study, two theoretical frameworks were utilized as a basis.

The first theoretical framework used in this study focused upon leaders collaborating with stakeholders. Chrislip and Larson (1994) conducted civic collaboration and leadership research in the 1980s and 1990s. Through that research, Chrislip and Larson developed collaborative leadership theory, which is a symbiotic relationship between two or more parties who work towards agreed upon endeavors through collaboration and shared responsibility for achieving the outcome (Chrislip & Larson, 1994). For successful collaboration to occur, all stakeholders must be included and provided a forum to share views and input with leadership (Chrislip & Larson, 1994). Implementation of the collaborative leadership theory is evidenced in Richardson et al.'s

(2015) study of technology-savvy superintendents as effective district leaders collaborated with staff, students, parents, and the community. This aligns with additional literature that states effective leadership must be distributive (Daresh, 2007; Fullan, 2007, 2011; Hall & Hord, 2014). More than one person is needed to effectively lead school endeavors and establish relationships with stakeholders (Kelly, 2009). Building stakeholder relationships leads to the second theoretical framework of this study.

The second theoretical framework utilized in this study was social CRM. Social CRM grew originally from relationship marketing (RM), a popular public relations framework in the 1980s with a focus upon building relationships between customers and businesses (Stone et al., 2000). In the 1990s, RM gave way to a newer model known as CRM that included an increased focus on customer relationships via two-way interactions (Askool & Nakata, 2011). There is no one set definition of CRM as it can adopt different meanings depending upon the organization and the relationship; however, CRM includes three components: technology, process, and people (Askool & Nakata, 2011).

Emerging from CRM is the social CRM model, which is also known as CRM 2.0 or collaborative CRM (Greenberg, 2010). This model originated between 2007 and 2008 in response to the growing popularity of ICT, notably social media, and included two-way customer interaction with a focus upon organizations gaining customer insight (Greenberg, 2010). Employees and leaders in businesses, nonprofits, and education organizations use social CRM to forge relationships with customers and stakeholders (Greenberg, 2010). As with CRM, there is no set definition of social CRM as it can change depending on the organization (Greenberg, 2010). Cox and McLeod (2014) conducted a study of integrating social CRM theory into educational leadership

communication to develop their own definition. Cox and McLeod define social CRM as a way for organizations to strategically engage stakeholders using social media to collaborate in an effort to promote stronger relationships, develop trust, and increase transparency.

As community demands call for increased transparency and collaboration, the collaborative leadership theory and social CRM model provided a solid framework for this study. To build relationships and trust with the community, school administrators must change their leadership style to a collaborative nature that utilizes the technological means most stakeholders will readily access (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Collaborative leadership theory and the social CRM model align with this study as together they address the need for building relationships and the use of technology.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of social media evolution, why social media tools are essential and impact social capital, and a review of related literature of social media tools used to communicate, comfortability using social media, effectiveness of social media, benefits of social media, concerns of social media, and recommended social media practices. The theoretical framework of this study focuses upon collaborative leadership theory and social CRM. The next chapter provides information about the study's methodology, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures and analysis, as well as limitations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. A purposeful sample of Texas elementary school administrators was solicited to complete the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. Qualitative data were also collected through semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive coding process. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, validity, privacy and ethical considerations, and research design limitations.

Overview of the Research Problem

Communities today expect organizations, including school districts, to provide information using a variety of social media tools to receive messages and communicate in a format preferred by stakeholders (Greenberg, 2010; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Social media provides a valuable gateway for school administrators to connect with the community and build relationships (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). School administrators are influential in initiating these changes in communication and connecting with the community (Cox & McLeod, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Leithwood et

al., 2008; Richardson et al., 2015). In view of this powerful position of influence combined with the rapid growth of social media integration, best practices need to be explored based upon research measures (Kelly, 2009; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Considering limited research focusing upon school leadership technology practices and perceptions, further examination is needed (McLeod et al., 2011; McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2012). Considering the shift in community expectations regarding social media communication and integration of social CRM practices in education, leaders would benefit from more information regarding how these tools affect their community relationships to better facilitate stronger bonds and build a positive image (McLeod & Richardson, 2011; Richardson et al., 2015).

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study consisted of five constructs: (a) social media tools, (b) comfortability with social media tools, (c) effectiveness of social media tools, (d) benefits of social media tools, and (e) concerns of social media tools. Social media tools are defined as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, MNS technology, Instagram, electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements, school web sites (may include apps), text messaging, and other social media tools. Comfortability with social media tools is defined as feeling free from stress and anxiety in using technology (Dornisch, 2013).

Effectiveness of social media tools is defined as connecting and collaborating with stakeholders using social media to develop social capital (Cox & McLeod, 2013). Benefits of using social media tools are defined as increasing parental involvement, increased communication with stakeholders, increased feedback, improvement of district image, and reaching stakeholders not previously reached (Hampton, 2016). Concerns of

using social media tools is defined as issues encountered by school administrators relating to social media including security, feedback, resources, training, and time (Hampton, 2016). The constructs were measured using the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. The study investigated the following questions:

R1: What social media tools are elementary school administrators using to communicate with stakeholders?

R2: To what degree are elementary school administrators comfortable using social media tools to communicate?

R3: To what degree do elementary school administrators perceive social media tools as being effective methods to communicate with stakeholders?

R4: What do elementary school administrators perceive as benefits of utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?

R5: What do elementary school administrators perceive as concerns regarding utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?

R6: What best practices do elementary school administrators recommend regarding the use of social media tools to communicate with stakeholders?

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed methods design. A mixed-methods design includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide for a data rich study that will create a more complete examination of the research questions (Morse, 2003). The mixed methods design allowed the researcher to more completely examine how elementary school administrators used social media to communicate with stakeholders in an effort to explore recommended practices. A purposeful sample of Texas elementary school administrators was solicited to complete the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey* to assess the practices and perceptions of elementary school administrators' social media use to communicate with stakeholders. Qualitative data were also collected using semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), while qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive coding process.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of elementary principals and assistant principals employed at public elementary schools across the State of Texas. In the State of Texas, principals and assistant principals are required to hold at least a Master's degree from a university that is accredited from an agency recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (TEA, 2017a). Furthermore, Texas principals and assistant principals must hold a valid classroom teaching certificate, have two years of creditable teaching experience, complete an approved principal certification program, and pass the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) principal certification exam in order to obtain the principal certificate with the State Board of Educator Certification

(TEA, 2017a). Some members of the population belong to the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA), an affiliate of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

In 2015-16, Texas elementary school administrators served 2,398,643 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th (TEA, 2016). In 2015-16, Texas student demographics in grades Kindergarten through 5th were 52.2% Hispanic, 28.5% White, 12.6% African American, and 4.0% Asian (TEA, 2016). Table 3.1 provides principal demographic data for all educational levels (grades K-12) in the State of Texas in 2014-2015. Table 3.2 provides principal and assistant principal frequency and mean years of experience for all educational levels (grades K-12) in the State of Texas in 2011-2015. A purposeful sample of elementary principals and assistant principals was solicited to participate in this study. These administrators were selected because they communicate with stakeholders to promote school relationships at the campus level, behaviors that support ELCC Standards (NPBEA, 2011).

Table 3.1

Texas School Principal (Grades K-12) Population Gender and Race/Ethnicity Data for the 2014-2015 School Year

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	3,047	37.5
Female	5,079	62.5
2. Race/Ethnicity		
White (Non-Hispanic)	5,114	62.9
Hispanic	1,871	23.0
Black/African American	977	12.0
Asian	40	0.5
American Indian/Alaska Native	31	0.4
Pacific Islander	24	0.3
Two or More Ethnicities	69	0.9

Note. Adapted from "Employed Principal Demographics 2011-2015," by the Texas Education Agency, 2017b, Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Educator_Data/Educator_Reports_and_Data/

Table 3.2

Texas Principal and Assistant Principal (Grades K-12) Population Average Experience Data for 2011-2015

Year	Principals		Assistant Principals	
	Frequency (n)	Years of Experience (M)	Frequency (n)	Years of Experience (M)
2014-2015	8,131	19.7	10,601	15.6
2013-2014	8,011	19.6	10,194	15.5
2012-2013	7,915	20.0	9,768	15.9
2011-2012	7,885	20.3	9,362	16.2
2010-2011	7,892	20.5	9,579	15.6

Note. Adapted from "Administrator Experience 2011-2015," by the Texas Education Agency, 2017b, Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Educator_Data/Educator_Reports_and_Data/

Participant Selection

After survey data results were analyzed, a purposeful sample of Texas elementary school administrators was solicited to participate in interviews. School administrators who were selected indicated social media use to communicate with stakeholders in survey responses; therefore, additional data regarding recommended best practices were sought through interviews. These 11 administrators were selected because they communicate with stakeholders to promote school relationships at the campus level, behaviors that support ELCC Standards (NPBEA, 2011).

Instrumentation

The research instrument, *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*, was developed by Hampton (2016) through rewording items from studies conducted by Cox (2012) and McCutcheon (2013). An expert panel of school administrators reviewed the pilot questionnaire to determine the instrument's validity. Following the expert panel review, the instrument was refined. To determine reliability of the instrument, Hampton pilot tested the survey with 17 participants in central Mississippi. Data from questions 11 and 12 subscales were analyzed using averages and Cronbach's alpha test to measure the instrument's reliability. Question 11 measured benefits of using social media and had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .91. Question 12 measured concerns of using social media and had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .74.

The instrument consisted of 14 items to collect demographic information and data about how school administrators' use and perceive the effectiveness of social media to communicate with stakeholders (see Appendix A). The survey's first six items collected demographic data. For the purpose of this study, one additional demographic

subcategory was added to collect information about campus level. The questionnaire portion of the survey measured what social media tools school administrators used to communicate (using a 5-point scale ranging from *Not at All* to *6 to 7 Days Per Week*), degree of school administrator comfort using social media (using a 4-point scale ranging from *Not at All* to *Very Comfortable*), effectiveness of social media to communicate with stakeholders (using a 5-point scale ranging from *Ineffective* to *Highly Effective*), benefits and concerns of using social media to communicate (using a 5-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*), and the degree of social media communication upon improving communication with stakeholders (using a 5-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*). For the purpose of this study, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Google+, on items 7, 8, and 9, were modified to reflect current tools used in today's market. These three tools were not frequently selected by this study's pilot respondents. Based upon pilot study qualitative data, these social media tools were replaced with MNS technology, electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement, and school web site (may include apps) as they were frequently utilized by this study's pilot participants.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher gained approval from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) at the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL). Furthermore, the researcher gained permission to use the survey instrument from the author (see Appendix G). Survey participants were solicited using two methods. First, the researcher contacted TEPSA prior to data collection seeking approval to survey the association's members (see Appendix F). The survey was available through TEPSA's newsletter, distributed via e-mail, and TEPSA's Twitter account. Second, the researcher downloaded elementary

school principals' e-mail addresses from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) web site. Given that the survey was disseminated via e-mail using addresses available through public domain and via TEPSA, site based Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was not necessary. The study's records and results will be stored on a password-protected computer, backed up on a password-protected flash drive, for five years before being destroyed by the researcher.

Surveys

After obtaining approval to disseminate the survey via the TEPSA e-mail newsletter, the researcher provided TEPSA a link to the survey cover letter and a short summary inviting association members to participate in the study. Elementary school administrators, including principals and assistant principals, were solicited via e-mail; receiving the TEPSA newsletter containing a link to the survey cover letter. The TEPSA members could also access a link to the survey cover letter via TEPSA's Twitter account. Furthermore, the researcher downloaded elementary school principals' e-mail addresses from the TEA web site and solicited elementary school administrators via e-mail; sending the survey cover letter. The survey cover letter described the purpose of the study, directions for how to complete the survey along with a link to the survey, the timeframe for completing the survey, assurance that participation was voluntary, and that the participants' identities would remain confidential (see Appendix B). Each participant provided consent to participate in the study by accessing the link to the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey* provided in the cover letter. The survey was created using Qualtrics through a UHCL account.

The researcher was available to respond to questions via e-mail. The survey was available for two months. After participants completed the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*, data were organized and disaggregated. Collected data were exported for analysis to the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS).

Interviews

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with elementary school administrators. First, an invitation was sent to the potential participants describing the study's purpose, rationale for participant selection, interview length, assurance participation was voluntary and participants' identities would remain confidential, and how the data would benefit educational research (see Appendix C). The invitation was in the form of an e-mail and requested potential participants indicate their ability to participate in the interview.

Once potential participants agreed to engage in the interview process, a date and time was established to conduct each individual interview. Since the researcher conducted interviews with elementary school administrators across the state of Texas, interviews occurred via telephone or face-to-face depending upon each school administrator's location. Prior to the interview, each participant received an informed consent form via e-mail. The informed consent described the purpose of the study, the estimated length of each interview, disclosure that each interview would be recorded and transcribed, assurance participation was voluntary, and assurance all participant identities and all study records would remain confidential (see Appendix D). Participants received a copy of the informed consent via e-mail prior to their interview.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher reviewed the informed consent form and answered questions as needed. Each participant provided verbal consent to participate in the recorded interview. Then, the primary researcher used 10 standard questions as a guide to collect information with a focus upon participants' perceptions of social media use (see Appendix E). Interview questions were adapted from a study conducted by Cox (2012). Additional demographic data about each participant was collected through initial survey responses. Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed after the interview. The interviews ranged from 30 to 45 minutes in length.

Using Yin's (2016) definition for qualitative interviews, the researcher integrated the following guidelines. First, interviews were not strictly scripted; however, there were 10 standard questions integrated into each interview to provide consistency (Yin, 2016). The phrasing and order of these questions varied depending on the flow of the interactions with each subject (Yin, 2016). Second, the interviews included open-ended questions to provide a deeper understanding of the subjects' perceptions (Yin, 2016). Third, the researcher did not adopt a uniform demeanor for each interview; instead a conversational format was utilized (Yin, 2016). Since the interviewer was the research instrument, the trustworthiness and credibility of the interview process was reinforced by following the interview protocols, as recommended by Yin. The researcher modeled Yin's suggestions for conducting successful qualitative interviews. These guidelines included: speak less, stay nondirective, maintain rapport, remain neutral, utilize an interview guide to maintain focus, and constantly analyze (Yin, 2016).

In following Cox and McLeod's (2014) study as a model, each interview recording was uploaded to Rev.com, a third-party transcription service, to provide

transcriptions of each interview. Cox and McLeod caution that transcription services are not entirely accurate; therefore, the researcher reviewed each interview transcription and made the necessary corrections. In addition to the recordings, the researcher took notes during each interview with a focus upon the research questions. Following Yin's (2016) advice, notes were organized and archived after each session. This supported efficient and effective data analysis. All collected quantitative and qualitative data were stored on a password-protected computer and backed-up on a password-protected flash drive. The records and results of the study will be stored for five years before being destroyed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Data were collected from the survey, downloaded from Qualtrics and imported into IBM SPSS for analysis. Given the survey collected categorical data using Likert scales, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To answer questions one through five, data were analyzed using percentages and frequencies to identify school administrators' practices and perceptions regarding social media tool use, comfortability, effectiveness, benefits, and concerns.

Qualitative

To answer questions four through six, qualitative data gathered from the interviews were analyzed for emergent themes. The qualitative data collected in this study were analyzed using Yin's (2016) recommended five analytic phases for qualitative data. This five-phased cycle included: compiling, disassembling, reassembling and

arraying, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2016). This section will describe each of these five steps in further detail.

Each of Yin's (2016) five phases of qualitative data analysis were revisited in a nonlinear manner. The first phase, compiling, included data collection (Yin, 2016). The second phase, disassembling, consisted of labeling or coding data collected into smaller, focused pieces of information (Yin, 2016). The third phase, reassembling and arraying, included taking the fragments coded in the disassembling phase and reorganizing them into cohesive themes and patterns (Yin, 2016). The fourth phase, interpreting, involved reassembling data to create a new understanding, which sometimes led the researcher to return to the third phase to reassemble data in different ways (Yin, 2016). The fifth phase, concluding, linked to the interpretations in the fourth phase to establish final study conclusions (Yin, 2016).

Following transcription of the digital interview recordings in the pilot study, preliminary analysis of qualitative data included creating a color-coding system, assigning each color to six categories. The six a priori categories aligned with the study's research questions, which were initially created based upon the research instrument and previous studies. The six initial categories included: social media tools used, comfortability, effectiveness, benefits, concerns, and recommended practices. The interview data within these six categories were then analyzed into emergent themes to effectively answer questions four through six regarding recommended social media practices. These themes emerged through the inductive coding process based upon interview responses. The final three themes in the pilot study included: recommended social media tools, recommended methods to increase comfort level, and recommended

social media communication practices. The same qualitative data analysis process utilized in the pilot study was repeated in the final study; however, instead of using a color-coding system, interview transcripts were coded using NVivo software. Furthermore, questions four and five included qualitative data in the final study. Conclusions for this study are presented in the form of detailed descriptions and tables.

Validity

The qualitative data analysis included several validation methods. After the researcher organized and verified interview transcripts, interview data were organized into preliminary results. The interview data were subject to member-checking as participants received a summary of preliminary results for review and approval. The goal of this step was to ensure the data were valid and reliable to support the study's credibility. To increase validity, survey data and interview data were compared and cross-checked. In addition, triangulation of data was utilized through collection from both quantitative and qualitative data sources. This promoted the validity of the interview data throughout the data collection and transcription process.

Furthermore, researcher bias was acknowledged and addressed. Researchers need to remain cognizant of how their prior beliefs, assumptions, and experiences may affect the ability to remain objective during the data collection, analysis, and reporting phases (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Therefore, being self-aware and monitoring how these aspects may affect researcher perceptions is imperative (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Researcher bias may exist in that prior experience as a school counselor as well as working with instructional technology may have caused assumptions by the researcher that building and sustaining relationships in the school environment is vital. Furthermore, the

researcher believed technology provides a viable means for school leaders to communicate and build relationships and that this means of communication will be increasingly expected by stakeholders. Due to the increase in smartphone use, it was assumed stakeholders would want schools to increase their communication via technology.

Given that participant answers which align with these beliefs could be assumed as “correct” answers, several steps were taken to mitigate the effects of researcher bias. Through previous counselor training, the researcher was trained to ask questions to gather information without leading the participant in a specific direction. Furthermore, this prior training enabled the researcher to focus on the perceptions expressed while maintaining a boundary to prevent personal beliefs from interfering with data collection.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

The researcher gained UHCL’s CPHS approval prior to data collection. After approval had been granted, the researcher e-mailed school administrators the survey cover letter that outlined the purpose of the study, instructions for completing the instrument, a statement regarding voluntary participation, assurance of the anonymity and confidentiality protections of participants in the study, and a link to the survey (see Appendix B). Participants could also access the survey cover letter via TEPSA’s electronic newsletter distributed via e-mail or TEPSA’s Twitter account. The cover letter included a link to the survey with a message that stated by clicking the link and choosing to respond to the survey, participants granted permission to provide data and participate in the study.

Interview participants received an invitation via e-mail describing the study's purpose, rationale for participant selection, interview length, assurance that participation was voluntary and identities of participants will remain confidential, and how the data will benefit the educational research (see Appendix C). Interview participants received an informed consent describing the purpose of the study, the estimated length of each interview, disclosure that each interview would be recorded and transcribed, assurance participation was voluntary, the participants' identities would remain confidential, and assurance all records would remain confidential (see Appendix D). The researcher provided a copy of the informed consent to each participant prior to the interview and reviewed the form at the beginning of each interview. Each participant provided verbal consent to participate in the study at the beginning of the recorded interviews.

After the study was complete, the researcher maintained a copy of the data on a password-protected computer, backed up on a password-protected flash drive. The records and results of this study will be stored for five years before being destroyed by the researcher. To promote honest feedback in the instrument, participant identities remained confidential. Furthermore, school districts names were not disclosed in the study and participant pseudonyms were used. Given another researcher originally developed the survey instrument, the researcher of this study gained permission to use the instrument and proper credit was given to the instrument's author (see Appendix G). Furthermore, given another researcher originally developed the interview questions, the researcher of this study gained permission to reprint the interview questions and proper credit was given to the author (see Appendix H).

Research Design Limitations

The study consisted of several limitations. According to Creswell (2002): “Limitations are potential weaknesses or problems within the study that are identified by the researcher” (p. 253). First, the scope was limited to elementary school administrators. Despite the range of students supported by these leaders, there may be a lack of generalizability of the study’s results to secondary school administrators. Second, the voluntary nature of the study may have prevented participation of administrators, resulting in a low response rate. This may have limited the representation of who participated and thus the sample size. To try and overcome this limitation, the benefits of researching the study’s topic were clearly communicated in hopes of increasing the participation rate.

Third, during participant interviews and survey data collection, the researcher could not control the honesty of participants. To mitigate this limitation, cover letters encouraged participants to provide truthful answers and ensured all participant identities would remain confidential. Fourth, although the instrument was pilot tested, it was created by one researcher and provided limited reliability data. Furthermore, the instrument did not include a qualitative component. To further validate the instrument’s reliability, an additional pilot study was conducted. The final study included qualitative interviews conducted via telephone or face-to-face.

Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology of the study. Details were provided about the research problem, theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data

analysis, privacy and ethical considerations, and research design limitations. The next chapter will provide results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative data findings of this study. Participant demographics are presented first followed by the study's results for the six research questions. This chapter culminates with a summary of the findings.

Participant Demographics

A purposeful sample of Texas elementary school administrators was solicited to participate in the study. These administrators were selected because they communicate with stakeholders to promote relationships at the campus level, behaviors that support the ELCC Standards (NPBEA, 2011). The researcher solicited a sample of principals and assistant principals representative of Texas elementary campuses.

Out of the Texas elementary school administrators solicited to participate, 104 chose to complete the survey. Of the 104 survey respondents, female respondents were in the majority with 76.9% ($n = 80$), and male respondents comprised 23.1% ($n = 24$) of the sample. The race/ethnicity across survey respondents were comprised of White (73.1%, $n = 76$), Hispanic (18.3%, $n = 19$), Black (5.8%, $n = 6$), Asian (1.9%, $n = 2$), and Other (1.0%, $n = 1$). Nearly half of the respondents (46.2%, $n = 48$) indicated they were 40 to 49 years-of-age, with 50 to 59 years-of-age being the second highest reported

category (25.0%, $n = 26$). Respondents who indicated an age range of 30 to 39 years ranked third by a small margin (24.0%, $n = 25$). Table 4.1 provides demographic data of survey respondents' gender, race/ethnicity, and age.

Table 4.1

Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age of Survey Respondents

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	24	23.1
Female	80	76.9
2. Race/Ethnicity		
White	76	73.1
Black/African American	6	5.8
Asian	2	1.9
Hispanic	19	18.3
Other	1	1.0
3. Age		
29 or younger	1	1.0
30 – 39	25	24.0
40 – 49	48	46.2
50 – 59	26	25.0
60 or older	4	3.8

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.

Most respondents had six to 10 years of administrative experience as 29.8% ($n = 31$) selected this category followed by one to five years of administrative experience (26.0%, $n = 27$). More respondents indicated a principal role (79.8%, $n = 83$) in contrast to an assistant principal role (20.2%, $n = 21$). More than half of the respondents worked in an urban setting with 54.8% ($n = 57$), and respondents who worked in a rural setting comprised 45.2% ($n = 47$) of the sample. Table 4.2 provides demographic data of survey

respondents' years of administrative experience, current administrative position, and district setting.

Table 4.2

Years of Administrative Experience, Current Administrative Position, and District Setting of Survey Respondents

	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
1. Years of Administrative Experience		
1 – 5 years	27	26.0
6 – 10 years	31	29.8
11 – 15 years	23	22.1
16 – 20 years	13	12.5
21 – 25 years	4	3.8
26 or more years	6	5.8
2. Current Administrative Position		
Principal	83	79.8
Assistant Principal	21	20.2
3. District Setting		
Urban	57	54.8
Rural	47	45.2

Furthermore, 11 of those administrators responding to the survey participated in interviews; four conducted the interview face-to-face and seven conducted the interview via telephone. To protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms were used in the presentation of the research results. Female participants were in the majority with 63.6% ($n = 7$), and male participants comprised 36.4% ($n = 4$) of the sample. Most of the participants were White (72.7%, $n = 8$); however, there was nearly an equal representation between principals (54.5%, $n = 6$) and assistant principals (45.5%, $n = 5$). Nearly half of the participants reported one to five years of experience (45.5%, $n = 5$) and

most of the participants worked in an urban setting (72.7%, $n = 8$). More than half of the participants were 40 to 49 years-of-age (63.6%, $n = 7$). Table 4.3 provides demographic data of interview participants.

Table 4.3

Interview Participants' Demographic Data

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Years of Admin. Experience	Position	District Setting
1. Ms. Ridge	Female	40 – 49	African American	11 – 15	Principal	Urban
2. Ms. Brown	Female	40 – 49	African American	11 – 15	Principal	Urban
3. Ms. Colony	Female	30 – 39	White	1 – 5	Assistant Principal	Urban
4. Ms. Pine	Female	40 – 49	White	1 – 5	Assistant Principal	Urban
5. Mr. North	Male	30 – 39	White	6 – 10	Principal	Urban
6. Mr. Red	Male	40 – 49	White	6 – 10	Principal	Rural
7. Mr. Frank	Male	40 – 49	White	16 – 20	Principal	Urban
8. Ms. Singer	Female	40 – 49	White	1 – 5	Assistant Principal	Rural
9. Ms. Coast	Female	50 – 59	White	1 – 5	Assistant Principal	Urban
10. Ms. Rise	Female	40 – 49	White	16 – 20	Assistant Principal	Urban
11. Mr. South	Male	30 – 39	Asian	1 – 5	Principal	Rural

Research Question One

Research question one, *What social media tools are elementary school administrators using to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered using frequencies and percentages calculated from responses to the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. Two survey items pertained to social media tools used by school administrators and included 10 social media sub-items, which participants rated using a 5-point Likert scale (*Not at All, 1 Day Per Week, 2 to 3 Days Per Week, 4 to 5 Days Per Week, 6 to 7 Days Per Week*). The first item asked elementary school administrators to rate frequency of social media tool use according to their role as a school administrator, whereas the second item asked elementary school administrators to rank the frequency of social media tools as used to communicate with stakeholders.

In the role as a school administrator, several tools were reported as being used to communicate. It was not clear if respondents utilized social media tools according to a posting schedule that could range from one day per week to multiple days per week. Therefore, examined totals are inclusive of *1 Day Per Week* to *6 to 7 Days Per Week*. The highest three reported tools were school web site (may include apps) (94.2%, $n = 98$), electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement (84.6%, $n = 88$), and MNS technology (83.6%, $n = 87$). However, Facebook (74.1%, $n = 77$), text messaging (72.1%, $n = 75$), and Twitter (67.3%, $n = 70$) were also highly reported at least *1 Day Per Week* to *6 to 7 Days Per Week*. The least used social media tools reported *Not at All* were Instagram (77.9%, $n = 81$), blogs (76.9%, $n = 80$), YouTube (68.3%, $n = 71$), and other social media tools (61.5%, $n = 64$). Tables 4.4 and 4.5 displays the percentages and frequencies of school administrators' responses in expanded and collapsed form respectively indicating frequency of social media used in the role of a school administrator.

Table 4.4

Expanded Responses to Frequency of Social Media Use in the Role of a School Administrator (%)

Social Media Tool	Not at all	1 day per week	2 – 3 days per week	4 – 5 days per week	6 – 7 days per week
1. Blogs	76.9 (n = 80)	12.5 (n = 13)	5.8 (n = 6)	3.8 (n = 4)	1.0 (n = 1)
2. Twitter	32.7 (n = 34)	12.5 (n = 13)	22.1 (n = 23)	17.3 (n = 18)	15.4 (n = 16)
3. Facebook	26.0 (n = 27)	11.5 (n = 12)	23.1 (n = 24)	18.3 (n = 19)	21.2 (n = 22)
4. MNS Technology	16.4 (n = 17)	50.0 (n = 52)	24.0 (n = 25)	5.8 (n = 6)	3.8 (n = 4)
5. YouTube	68.3 (n = 71)	17.3 (n = 18)	10.6 (n = 11)	3.8 (n = 4)	0.0 (n = 0)
6. Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	15.4 (n = 16)	39.4 (n = 41)	14.4 (n = 15)	15.4 (n = 16)	15.4 (n = 16)
7. Instagram	77.9 (n = 81)	8.7 (n = 9)	7.7 (n = 8)	2.9 (n = 3)	2.9 (n = 3)
8. School Web Site (May Include Apps)	5.8 (n = 6)	48.1 (n = 50)	17.3 (n = 18)	11.5 (n = 12)	17.3 (n = 18)
9. Text Messaging	27.9 (n = 29)	22.1 (n = 23)	19.2 (n = 20)	7.7 (n = 8)	23.1 (n = 24)
10. Other	61.5 (n = 64)	20.2 (n = 21)	11.5 (n = 12)	5.8 (n = 6)	1.0 (n = 1)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.; *Other* identifies additional social media tools not included in the survey.

Table 4.5

Collapsed Responses to Frequency of Social Media Use in the Role of a School Administrator (%)

Social Media Tool	Not at all	1 – 7 days per week
1. Blogs	76.9 (n = 80)	23.1 (n = 24)
2. Twitter	32.7 (n = 34)	67.3 (n = 70)
3. Facebook	26.0 (n = 27)	74.1 (n = 77)
4. MNS Technology	16.4 (n = 17)	83.6 (n = 87)
5. YouTube	68.3 (n = 71)	31.7 (n = 33)
6. Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	15.4 (n = 16)	84.6 (n = 88)
7. Instagram	77.9 (n = 81)	22.1 (n = 23)
8. School Web Site (May Include Apps)	5.8 (n = 6)	94.2 (n = 98)
9. Text Messaging	27.9 (n = 29)	72.1 (n = 75)
10. Other	61.5 (n = 64)	38.5 (n = 40)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.; *Other* identifies additional social media tools not included in the survey.

When respondents rated these same social media tools according to communication with stakeholders, blogs (84.6%, $n = 88$), YouTube (78.8%, $n = 82$), Instagram (77.9%, $n = 81$), and other tools (72.1%, $n = 75$) were still rated as *Not at All*. It was not clear if respondents utilized social media tools according to a posting schedule that could range from one day per week to multiple days per week. Therefore, examined totals are inclusive of *1 Day Per Week* to *6 to 7 Days Per Week*. The highest three reported tools were school web site (may include apps) (93.3%, $n = 97$), MNS technology (87.5%, $n = 91$), and electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement (85.6%, $n = 89$). However, Facebook (77.9%, $n = 81$), text messaging (67.3%, $n = 70$), and Twitter (66.3%, $n = 69$) were also reported as used *1 Day Per Week* to *6 to 7 Days Per Week*. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 displays the percentages and frequencies of school administrators' responses in expanded and collapsed form respectively indicating frequency of social media used to communicate with stakeholders.

Table 4.6

Expanded Responses to Frequency of School Administrator Social Media Use for School Communication with Stakeholders (%)

Social Media Tool	Not at all	1 day per week	2 – 3 days per week	4 – 5 days per week	6 – 7 days per week
1. Blogs	84.6 (n = 88)	11.5 (n = 12)	2.9 (n = 3)	1.0 (n = 1)	0.0 (n = 0)
2. Twitter	33.7 (n = 35)	15.4 (n = 16)	22.1 (n = 23)	16.4 (n = 17)	12.5 (n = 13)
3. Facebook	22.1 (n = 23)	16.4 (n = 17)	24.0 (n = 25)	19.2 (n = 20)	18.3 (n = 19)
4. MNS Technology	12.5 (n = 13)	49.0 (n = 51)	24.0 (n = 25)	13.5 (n = 14)	1.0 (n = 1)
5. YouTube	78.8 (n = 82)	14.4 (n = 15)	3.8 (n = 4)	2.9 (n = 3)	0.0 (n = 0)
6. Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	14.4 (n = 15)	44.2 (n = 46)	21.2 (n = 22)	13.5 (n = 14)	6.7 (n = 7)
7. Instagram	77.9 (n = 81)	8.7 (n = 9)	8.7 (n = 9)	2.9 (n = 3)	1.9 (n = 2)
8. School Web Site (May Include Apps)	6.7 (n = 7)	34.6 (n = 36)	23.1 (n = 24)	16.4 (n = 17)	19.2 (n = 20)
9. Text Messaging	32.7 (n = 34)	24.0 (n = 25)	17.3 (n = 18)	16.4 (n = 17)	9.6 (n = 10)
10. Other	72.1 (n = 75)	13.5 (n = 14)	11.5 (n = 12)	2.9 (n = 3)	0.0 (n = 0)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.; *Other* identifies additional social media tools not included in the survey.

Table 4.7

Collapsed Responses to Frequency of School Administrator Social Media Use for School Communication with Stakeholders (%)

Social Media Tool	Not at all	1 – 7 days per week
1. Blogs	84.6 (n = 88)	15.4 (n = 16)
2. Twitter	33.7 (n = 35)	66.3 (n = 69)
3. Facebook	22.1 (n = 23)	77.9 (n = 81)
4. MNS Technology	12.5 (n = 13)	87.5 (n = 91)
5. YouTube	78.8 (n = 82)	21.2 (n = 22)
6. Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	14.4 (n = 15)	85.6 (n = 89)
7. Instagram	77.9 (n = 81)	22.1 (n = 23)
8. School Web Site (May Include Apps)	6.7 (n = 7)	93.3 (n = 97)
9. Text Messaging	32.7 (n = 34)	67.3 (n = 70)
10. Other	72.1 (n = 75)	27.9 (n = 29)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.; *Other* identifies additional social media tools not included in the survey.

Research Question Two

Research question two, *To what degree are elementary school administrators comfortable using social media tools to communicate?*, was answered using frequencies and percentages calculated from responses to the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. One survey item pertained to comfort levels of school administrators in social media use and included 10 social media sub-items which participants rated using a 4-point Likert scale (*Not at All, Slightly Comfortable, Comfortable, Very Comfortable*).

In examining totals inclusive of *Comfortable/Very Comfortable*, the highest comfort levels were reported for text messaging (91.4%, $n = 95$), MNS technology (90.4%, $n = 94$), electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement (89.4%, $n = 93$), Facebook (87.5%, $n = 91$), school web site (may include apps) (86.5%, $n = 90$), and Twitter (74.1%, $n = 77$). In examining comfort levels rated *Not at All*, the lowest comfort level was reported for Instagram (42.3%, $n = 44$); however, this tool was reported almost equally as *Comfortable/Very Comfortable* (43.3%, $n = 45$). The second lowest comfort level rated as *Not at All* included other tools (41.3%, $n = 43$); however, other tools (40.4%, $n = 42$) was rated almost equally as *Comfortable/Very Comfortable*. The second lowest comfort level rated as *Not at All* also included blogs (41.3%, $n = 43$); however, blogs (35.6%, $n = 37$) was rated almost equally as *Comfortable/Very Comfortable*. The third lowest comfort level reported as *Not at All* included YouTube (35.6%, $n = 37$); however, YouTube was rated almost equally as *Slightly Comfortable* (34.6%, $n = 36$). Tables 4.8 and 4.9 displays the percentages and frequencies of school administrators'

responses in expanded and collapsed form respectively indicating comfort levels using social media.

Table 4.8

Expanded Responses to School Administrator Comfort Levels Using Social Media (%)

Social Media Tool	Not at all	Slightly Comfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable
1. Blogs	41.3 (n = 43)	23.1 (n = 24)	21.2 (n = 22)	14.4 (n = 15)
2. Twitter	12.5 (n = 13)	13.5 (n = 14)	26.0 (n = 27)	48.1 (n = 50)
3. Facebook	4.8 (n = 5)	7.7 (n = 8)	20.2 (n = 21)	67.3 (n = 70)
4. MNS Technology	2.9 (n = 3)	6.7 (n = 7)	30.8 (n = 32)	59.6 (n = 62)
5. YouTube	35.6 (n = 37)	34.6 (n = 36)	15.4 (n = 16)	14.4 (n = 15)
6. Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	2.9 (n = 3)	7.7 (n = 8)	23.1 (n = 24)	66.3 (n = 69)
7. Instagram	42.3 (n = 44)	14.4 (n = 15)	15.4 (n = 16)	27.9 (n = 29)
8. School Web Site (May Include Apps)	0.0 (n = 0)	13.5 (n = 14)	39.4 (n = 41)	47.1 (n = 49)
9. Text Messaging	6.7 (n = 7)	1.9 (n = 2)	27.9 (n = 29)	63.5 (n = 66)
10. Other	41.3 (n = 43)	18.3 (n = 19)	19.2 (n = 20)	21.2 (n = 22)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.; *Other* identifies additional social media tools not included in the survey.

Table 4.9

Collapsed Responses to School Administrator Comfort Levels Using Social Media (%)

Social Media Tool	Not at all	Slightly Comfortable	Comfortable/ Very Comfortable
1. Blogs	41.3 (n = 43)	23.1 (n = 24)	35.6 (n = 37)
2. Twitter	12.5 (n = 13)	13.5 (n = 14)	74.1 (n = 77)
3. Facebook	4.8 (n = 5)	7.7 (n = 8)	87.5 (n = 91)
4. MNS Technology	2.9 (n = 3)	6.7 (n = 7)	90.4 (n = 94)
5. YouTube	35.6 (n = 37)	34.6 (n = 36)	29.8 (n = 31)
6. Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	2.9 (n = 3)	7.7 (n = 8)	89.4 (n = 93)
7. Instagram	42.3 (n = 44)	14.4 (n = 15)	43.3 (n = 45)
8. School Web Site (May Include Apps)	0.0 (n = 0)	13.5 (n = 14)	86.5 (n = 90)
9. Text Messaging	6.7 (n = 7)	1.9 (n = 2)	91.4 (n = 95)
10. Other	41.3 (n = 43)	18.3 (n = 19)	40.4 (n = 42)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.; *Other* identifies additional social media tools not included in the survey.

Research Question Three

Research question three, *To what degree do elementary school administrators perceive social media tools as being effective methods to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered using frequencies and percentages calculated from responses to the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. Two survey items pertained to school administrators' perceptions regarding effectiveness of social media tools. The first item asked administrators to rate the effectiveness of using social media to communicate with stakeholders from five choices (*Highly Effective, Effective, Undecided, Somewhat Effective, Ineffective*). The second item asked administrators to indicate their agreement 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?" Participants selected from five choices (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*).

Overall, elementary school administrators indicated they perceived social media tools as an effective means to communicate with stakeholders as 85.6% ($n = 89$) indicated *Highly Effective/Effective*. Furthermore, results indicated elementary school administrators perceived social media improved stakeholder communication as 83.6% ($n = 87$) selected *Strongly Agree/Agree*. The results of these two survey items revealed that school administrators perceived social media as an effective communication tool with stakeholders. Table 4.10 displays percentages and frequencies of elementary school administrators' perceptions regarding social media effectiveness in stakeholder communication. Table 4.11 displays percentages and frequencies of elementary school

administrators' perceptions as to whether or not social media communication improved stakeholder communication.

Table 4.10

School Administrator Perception Regarding Social Media Effectiveness in Stakeholder Communication

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Highly Effective	41	39.4
2. Effective	48	46.2
3. Undecided	2	1.9
4. Somewhat Effective	11	10.6
5. Ineffective	2	1.9

Table 4.11

School Administrator Perception if Social Media Improved Stakeholder Communication

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Strongly Agree	38	36.5
2. Agree	49	47.1
3. Undecided	14	13.5
4. Disagree	2	1.9
5. Strongly Disagree	1	1.0

Research Question Four

Quantitative Results

Research question four, *What do elementary school administrators perceive as benefits of utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered using

frequencies and percentages calculated from responses to the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. One survey item pertained to elementary school administrators' perceptions regarding benefits of using social media tools to communicate with stakeholders. The item asked elementary school administrators to rate five statements regarding potential social media benefits using a 5-point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree*).

Results indicated respondents mostly selected either *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* for all five of the social media benefits listed. In examining totals inclusive of both *Agree/Strongly Agree*, the highest agreement rate was reported for the statement, "Social media has increased the amount of communication with stakeholders" (87.5%, $n = 91$). The second highest agreement was reported for the statement, "Use of social media as a communication tool has allowed the school/district to reach stakeholders not previously reached" (85.6%, $n = 89$). The third highest agreement was reported for the statement, "Use of social media to communicate information to stakeholders has improved the school/district image" (82.7%, $n = 86$). The fourth highest agreement was reported for the statement, "Using social media has increased parental involvement" (77.9%, $n = 81$). The fifth highest agreement was reported for the statement, "Use of social media has increased feedback" (67.3%, $n = 70$). Tables 4.12 and 4.13 displays the percentages and frequencies of school administrators' responses in expanded and collapsed form respectively indicating benefits using social media.

Table 4.12

Expanded Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Benefits (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Using social media has increased parental involvement.	1.9 (n = 2)	3.8 (n = 4)	16.4 (n = 17)	53.9 (n = 56)	24.0 (n = 25)
2. Social media has increased the amount of communication with stakeholders.	1.0 (n = 1)	1.0 (n = 1)	10.6 (n = 11)	41.3 (n = 43)	46.2 (n = 48)
3. Use of social media has increased feedback.	1.9 (n = 2)	7.7 (n = 8)	23.1 (n = 24)	43.3 (n = 45)	24.0 (n = 25)
4. Use of social media to communicate information to stakeholders has improved the school/district image.	1.0 (n = 1)	1.9 (n = 2)	14.4 (n = 15)	47.1 (n = 49)	35.6 (n = 37)
5. Use of social media as a communication tool has allowed the school/district to reach stakeholders not previously reached.	1.9 (n = 2)	2.9 (n = 3)	9.6 (n = 10)	52.9 (n = 55)	32.7 (n = 34)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.

Table 4.13

Collapsed Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Benefits (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree/ Strongly Agree
1. Using social media has increased parental involvement.	1.9 (n = 2)	3.8 (n = 4)	16.4 (n = 17)	77.9 (n = 81)
2. Social media has increased the amount of communication with stakeholders.	1.0 (n = 1)	1.0 (n = 1)	10.6 (n = 11)	87.5 (n = 91)
3. Use of social media has increased feedback.	1.9 (n = 2)	7.7 (n = 8)	23.1 (n = 24)	67.3 (n = 70)
4. Use of social media to communicate information to stakeholders has improved the school/district image.	1.0 (n = 1)	1.9 (n = 2)	14.4 (n = 15)	82.7 (n = 86)
5. Use of social media as a communication tool has allowed the school/district to reach stakeholders not previously reached.	1.9 (n = 2)	2.9 (n = 3)	9.6 (n = 10)	85.6 (n = 89)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.

Qualitative Results

To better understand the benefits of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, research question four was further supported with qualitative data. Qualitative data were collected through 11 semi-structured interviews of school administrators that were conducted either face-to-face or via telephone. Data were analyzed using an inductive coding process. Participants discussed multiple benefits of social media practices, which were categorized into four themes: (a) meets stakeholders' expectations; (b) immediate communication; (c) reaches more stakeholders; and (d) promotes a positive school/district image. Each of the four themes will be discussed in the following sections.

Meets stakeholders' expectations. All participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) reported a perception that stakeholders expect an option of social media communication, a benefit not specifically reported in survey data. It appeared this finding was a benefit to both stakeholders and parents in that social media communication enables schools to align communication practices with stakeholder expectations. "I think that social media is how our parents are communicating. They're not reading a newsletter or going to your portal all the time. They need it on their device, ready to go," explained Ms. Rise. The popularity of mobile devices with social media access contributed to this perception. Ms. Singer explained, "I think it's easy access for most parents and something they already use in their daily lives." Mr. North, a campus principal, agreed, saying, "With social media, parents can access most information we send out on their devices wherever they are. That's a benefit."

Immediate communication. In further examination of benefits, participants (90.9%, $n = 10$) valued the immediate nature of social media communication, a benefit not specifically reported in survey data. However, this benefit could relate to two benefits reported in survey data, which included: increased feedback and an increased amount of communication with stakeholders. It appeared this benefit supported meeting perceived stakeholder expectations and provided a means for participants to disseminate information quickly. Mr. Frank explained, “With the explosion of Web 2.0 and social media, it has just mushroomed the impact and need for this immediate communication.” Ms. Singer agreed, saying, “It’s quick, fast, and gets to a lot of people quickly.” Participants expressed an overall impression that social media’s real-time communication affords schools the opportunity to develop positive public relations within a shorter period of time. “It’s really about being right then and reaching more and then people being able to spread the positive word quicker, so it’s fast,” explained Ms. Brown. The ability for stakeholders to have information available immediately and at their convenience produced the added benefit of fewer questions and complaints from parents. “A serendipitous benefit is the better we share, the fewer questions we receive. Our front office fields fewer calls and questions about what’s happening. We get fewer complaints because of it [social media],” explained Mr. Frank.

Reaches more stakeholders. Through the discussion of social media’s convenience, a third benefit that emerged through participant interviews included reaching more stakeholders, including those not previously reached. This benefit also emerged in survey data. Overall, 72.7% ($n = 8$) of participants expressed this was a benefit. According to the participants, it seemed this benefit applied to both stakeholders

and participants as reaching more stakeholders promotes effective communication practices. “Parents can access most of the information we send out on their phones, tablets, computers, wherever they are or whatever they’re doing,” stated Mr. North. Furthermore, Mr. North explained that social media allowed his campus to share information with grandparents and divorced parents who do not live in the area, providing a gateway for these remote stakeholders to feel engaged and included in their child’s school, despite the distance. “I see when friends of parents like our page, I’m starting to feel an international presence. Technology allows a way for other stakeholders, such as grandparents and family friends, to know what’s going on in the kids’ lives,” Ms. Rise elaborated. When asked to discuss the benefits, Mr. South reflected that social media had expanded his audience, saying, “I feel like we’re reaching a different group of people. The more I keep utilizing it, the more parents realize it’s a good resource.” With only 70 Twitter followers compared to a campus enrollment of 840 students, Ms. Colony did not feel she had enough social media followers, but she expressed hope, commenting, “The more I keep pushing it, the more I keep utilizing it, the more parents will realize it’s a good resource and start using it themselves because it’s so convenient.”

Promotes a positive school/district image. Finally, participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) explained social media provides an opportunity for schools to improve the school and district image, a benefit also reported in survey data. It appeared this benefit supported both stakeholders and the schools in promoting stakeholder buy-in and strengthening the relationship between schools and stakeholders. “It [social media] sends out the image that we care about our school. It helps to build community connections, and then people

want to live in your community,” explained Ms. Coast. Specifically, for parents, social media can provide a bridge between home and school. “Parents love to see their kids doing good things. They’re not here to see them all day, and the posts help them to feel like they’re here with them,” stated Mr. South. This connection can promote increased stakeholder buy-in. Mr. Red explained, “It seems like it gets more buy-in from parents, and more involvement from parents. It keeps the public informed of what’s going on campus, and what’s going on with the kids.”

Participant discussions included the news media promoting negative public relations for schools. “Public education has always been scrutinized. It’s being scrutinized more so today than ever before,” explained Mr. South. “The news media loves to sensationalize anything negative about schools, so we need the positive out there. There are a lot of great things going on, but they may not be considered newsworthy by a news channel,” clarified Mr. Frank. However, social media was perceived as a gateway to tell a different story. Ms. Brown explained that with social media, “We really have control over painting that picture.” Ms. Pine expressed a similar view: “I think it helps build confidence in your campus, your brand, and your ethics. It builds a respectful level for this profession.” Furthermore, building school pride was an added component of positive public relations. “I strongly believe it creates a sense of pride that the more someone can see that we’re trying to make sure we build our school and keep it positive,” explained Ms. Ridge. Furthermore, social media also extends positive public relations to taxpayers in general. “I want people who are not a part of our school but pay taxes to see the great things we’re doing,” explained Ms. Rise.

Summary. In summary, participant data for research question four revealed a perception that stakeholders expect an option of social media communication. Furthermore, the immediate nature of social media communication was also seen as a benefit. A third benefit expressed by participants focused upon reaching more stakeholders, including those not previously reached. Fourth, participants felt social media provided an opportunity for schools to improve the school and district image. The next section will discuss the results to question five.

Research Question Five

Quantitative Results

Research question five, *What do elementary school administrators perceive as concerns regarding utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered using frequencies and percentages calculated from responses to the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. One survey item pertained to school administrators' perceptions regarding concerns of using social media tools to communicate with stakeholders. The item asked administrators to rate five statements regarding potential social media concerns using a 5-point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree*).

In examining response totals inclusive of both *Agree/Strongly Agree*, three statements indicated the highest concerns. Results indicated the highest concern was reported for the statement, "Security/privacy issues" (60.6%, $n = 63$). The second highest concern was reported for the statement, "Lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media" (42.3%, $n = 44$); however, this statement was almost equally reported as not a concern as 46.2% ($n = 48$) selected *Strongly Disagree/Disagree*. Furthermore, the third

highest concern was reported for the statement, “Receiving feedback” (32.7%, $n = 34$); however, this statement was almost equally reported as not a concern as 37.5% ($n = 39$) selected *Strongly Disagree/Disagree*. In examining response totals inclusive of both *Strongly Disagree/Disagree*, the least two concerns were reported for the statements, “Too much time needed to post information” (69.3%, $n = 72$) and “Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain information” (62.5%, $n = 65$). Tables 4.14 and 4.15 displays the percentages and frequencies of school administrators’ responses in expanded and collapsed form respectively indicating concerns using social media.

Table 4.14

Expanded Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Concerns (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Too much time needed to post information	16.4 ($n = 17$)	52.9 ($n = 55$)	5.8 ($n = 6$)	21.2 ($n = 22$)	3.8 ($n = 4$)
2. Lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media	8.7 ($n = 9$)	37.5 ($n = 39$)	11.5 ($n = 12$)	36.5 ($n = 38$)	5.8 ($n = 6$)
3. Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain the information	5.8 ($n = 6$)	56.7 ($n = 59$)	17.3 ($n = 18$)	19.2 ($n = 20$)	1.0 ($n = 1$)
4. Security/Privacy issues	2.9 ($n = 3$)	22.1 ($n = 23$)	14.4 ($n = 15$)	43.3 ($n = 45$)	17.3 ($n = 18$)
5. Receiving feedback	5.8 ($n = 6$)	31.7 ($n = 33$)	29.8 ($n = 31$)	30.8 ($n = 32$)	1.9 ($n = 2$)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.

Table 4.15

Collapsed Responses to School Administrator Rating of Social Media Communication Concerns (%)

	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Undecided	Agree/ Strongly Agree
1. Too much time needed to post information	69.3 (n = 72)	5.8 (n = 6)	25.0 (n = 26)
2. Lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media	46.2 (n = 48)	11.5 (n = 12)	42.3 (n = 44)
3. Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain the information	62.5 (n = 65)	17.3 (n = 18)	20.2 (n = 21)
4. Security/Privacy issues	25.0 (n = 26)	14.4 (n = 15)	60.6 (n = 63)
5. Receiving feedback	37.5 (n = 39)	29.8 (n = 31)	32.7 (n = 34)

Note. Percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100.0%.

Qualitative Results

To better understand the concerns of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, research question five was further supported with qualitative data. Qualitative data were collected through 11 semi-structured interviews of school administrators, that were conducted either face-to-face or via telephone. Data were analyzed using an inductive coding process. Participants discussed multiple concerns of social media practices, which included two themes: (a) negative feedback or posts and (b) privacy/security. Both themes will be discussed in this section.

Interview data revealed 81.8% ($n = 9$) of participants expressed concerns about using social media to communicate with stakeholders. Specifically, 63.6% ($n = 7$) discussed concerns with receiving negative feedback or posts. These data were more specific than survey data that simply measured receiving feedback as a concern. In response to the risk of negative posts, Mr. North agreed, “That’s a risk. It’s a legitimate risk. We haven’t had that experience, but with informal networks, people can communicate things they’re unhappy about.” Unfortunately, that risk has been a reality for Ms. Brown: “We’ve had parents put negative posts about teachers.” However, the concern of negative posts was not only bound to school accounts. Ms. Pine discussed a private Yahoo parent group, saying, “It’s a sounding board for a lot of negative voices and a lot of disgruntled voices. We have to protect our campus from that.” This inability to control what is posted on social media in general can contribute to fear. Ms. Rise explained, “I always fear it’s going to be used against us somehow and not knowing how someone could use it against you.”

Regarding the immediate quality of social media being a positive aspect, Ms. Brown commented this can also be a concern: “The same thing that’s positive about it can also be negative because it’s so instant. When you share something, it goes very quickly to a lot of people, and you may not be able to get it back.” This same rule applied to faculty’s personal social media pages. Ms. Coast discussed the risk of teachers’ personal posts, that could be deemed inappropriate, being visible to parents and affecting the school’s image. Furthermore, concern was expressed over parents posting negative comments about whether teachers “friending” the school’s Facebook page at the campus level could lead parents to access teachers’ personal pages. Ms. Colony clarified,

“We don’t have Facebook because we are concerned there is a risk parents may have a greater opportunity to post negative comments on their [teachers’] pages.”

Privacy/security concerns were also commonly reported amongst participants with 90.9% ($n = 10$) expressing specific concerns as to whether or not to post photos showing students’ faces. Mr. South explained, “With the students that are being put on there, you have to go through those papers to know who is allowed to be photographed.” For Ms. Pine, some of her students did not have permission to have photos posted, and one of her staff members did not want her photo posted for safety reasons; therefore, she expressed a need for vigilance in responsible posting to social media. Photo permission can be a big concern; Ms. Ridge’s concern of posting student photos contributed to her decision to only post student photos without their faces showing. Most participants expressed concern about inadvertently posting a child’s photo without parent permission.

Mr. Frank mentioned a concern that was unique, but it was a viable concern. Since he worked at a technology-rich campus with a one-to-one ratio between students and devices, he discussed logistical drawbacks relating to lack of adequate infrastructure to manage the network. “There have been times when we believed we had posted something to Facebook and it hadn’t gone out until our phone had gone cellular when we leave the campus.” He explained this caused a problem for messages that needed to reach parents before the end of the school day.

In summary, participants expressed concerns about using social media to communicate with stakeholders. Specifically, participants discussed concerns with receiving negative feedback or posts. Part of this fear appeared compounded by the immediate nature of social media. Privacy concerns were also a commonly discussed

concern amongst participants, specifically focusing upon showing students' faces in posts. Although only one participant mentioned it, another concern included lack of adequate technological infrastructure to manage the network. The next section will discuss results to question six.

Research Question Six

To answer question six, *What best practices do elementary school administrators recommend regarding the use of social media tools to communicate with stakeholders?*, 11 semi-structured interviews of school administrators were conducted either face-to-face or via telephone. Data were analyzed using an inductive coding process, revealing three themes. *Recommended Social Media Tools* detailed which applications school administrators recommended to communicate with stakeholders. *Recommended Means to Increase Comfort Level* captured methods that can increase school administrators' feelings of ease and proficiency with social media tools. Finally, *Recommended Social Media Communication Practices* captured the participants' best practices in the integration and application of social media tools to communicate with stakeholders. Each of these themes will be discussed in the following sections.

Recommended Social Media Tools

All participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) felt using social media to communicate with stakeholders is a necessity in the 21st century. Ms. Ridge, a principal with 13 years of campus administration experience, illustrated this point by saying:

As a school system, we've had to change our practices to be able to keep up with the ongoing technology so that we can keep our parents informed, we can keep the community informed as well as reaching out for support or when we're

reaching out for community partnerships.

Participants recommended multiple social media tools, which included: (a) electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements and school web sites; (b) MNS technology; (c) Twitter; (d) Facebook; and (d) blogs. Each of the five sub-themes will be discussed in the following sections.

Electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements and school web sites. All

participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) recommended using electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements and school web sites to communicate with stakeholders. Although a school web site and electronic newsletter may not be considered traditional social media, these tools can serve as a gateway in linking to other social media accounts. “Any communication we make sure it goes on our web site. We try to tag our Twitter feed as much as possible from the site,” explained Ms. Colony. Providing a network of social media communication assists administrators, like Ms. Coast, who stated, “We’re going to try to use every type of social media to communicate to reach more stakeholders and build a social media network.”

Electronic newsletters were disseminated through various electronic formats such as e-mail blasts and web site postings. Ms. Pine indicated, “I think all of our newsletters go home electronically now.” Ms. Brown also stated all of her communication is now electronic; furthermore, she commented the district electronic newsletter is a great support for campus communication. She explained, “Everything is electronic. We connect things, attach it [district and campus newsletters] to e-mails. I mean, I’m using totally different tools now.”

MNS technology. Another tool that was recommended and utilized by interview participants (90.9%, $n = 10$) was MNS technology, which transmits e-mail, text messages, or a recorded message delivered to parent contact information on file. A tool called Remind 101, a form of MNS technology, permitted administrators to disseminate information to parents' e-mail and/or cell phones via a text message or voicemail. Ms. Colony explained, "The Remind 101 can be multimodal, so you can have the option to select text, e-mail or call out." Ms. Pine indicated the principal sends out mass e-mails on a weekly basis. She explained, "I think the frequency of at least once a week getting the e-blast is a continuous update of opportunities, links, resources, people, numbers, and important dates." Remind 101 can also be utilized for two-way communication. Mr. North stated, "With Remind 101, I receive those messages on my phone. So, when a parent has a concern, they can immediately let me know and I can immediately respond." Other school administrators preferred to respond according to a schedule for time management purposes. This suggestion is discussed in further detail in the *Recommended Social Media Communication Practices* section.

However, for more urgent messages, most of the interviewed school administrators (90.9%, $n = 10$) commented on how they enjoyed the text and voicemail message delivery methods of MNS technology for announcements such as rainy-day dismissal or school closures. Ms. Colony explained how text messages and Twitter were used for time-sensitive announcements, saying, "For a quick reminder of a rainy-day dismissal, we're not going to send a piece of paper home." She continued to describe how she first knew about a district school closure due to bad weather via the district's Twitter feed. Ms. Rise enjoyed the automated system's advanced features: "It's a

wonderful system for us so that we can go in and send a message to every parent, parents of just one grade level, or only faculty.”

Twitter. Overall, 81.8% ($n = 9$) of interview participants recommended using Twitter to communicate with stakeholders, especially to publicize positive campus activities or disseminate time-sensitive reminders. “I would definitely recommend the Twitter account because it’s not a lot [of information], but it’s enough to get your viewers interested in what’s going on,” stated Ms. Ridge. According to Ms. Pine, an assistant principal with four years of campus administration experience, “If I had control over it, we would be sending Twitter at least a couple of times a week.” It may be important to note that for some participants (36.4%, $n = 4$), the school districts supported and promoted campus-based Twitter use, thus participants seemed to feel safer and more supported in integrating this application. Ms. Brown, whose district promoted campus Twitter communication, explained, “I like Twitter because I feel like it’s a tighter connection to the district.”

Facebook. Facebook was recommended by 63.6% ($n = 7$) of the participants. The four participants who did not utilize Facebook explained they did not feel comfortable integrating this tool into communication plans, as they did not have district support for it. Ms. Brown explained, “When I ask about Facebook, they [the district] reference Twitter, and I’m not sure if the district has control or support for Facebook like they do for Twitter.” For school administrators who did report Facebook use, one recommendation was to link Facebook and Twitter so messages sync and update on both sites to reduce the time needed to post. Mr. North explained, “Anytime we use Facebook it automatically goes to Twitter. Then we reach both audiences.” Ms. Singer and Mr.

South also recommended linking Twitter and Facebook to ease account management. Mr. South explained with linking accounts, “You’re talking about just hitting the masses with one post.” Mr. Frank recommended Facebook as at least 75.0% of his school’s community follows the campus on Facebook. Mr. Red also stated, “With the popularity of Facebook, it seems like everyone is on Facebook, and that’s one way to connect and communicate with parents.”

Two participants (18.1%) expanded campus Facebook use further by utilizing Facebook Live. Mr. North explained that when parents could not attend an informational event at the campus, “We decided to go with Facebook Live to transmit the event. The last time I checked, I think there were 1,500 views of that principal chat. That’s higher than the event’s attendance rate.”

Blogs. Five participants (45.5%) recommended using blogs in school communication plans. Specifically, Ms. Ridge recommended writing a blog during the summer to keep stakeholders connected when school was not in session. “I would definitely recommend a blog during the summer because it’s really nice that you don’t lose touch with your faculty or community because you are keeping them updated,” she said. Although only four other participants briefly mentioned maintaining blogs during the school year in their responses, Ms. Ridge spent considerable time detailing the benefits of a summer blog to stay connected with stakeholders. This variance in responses could be attributed to the fact that even though the other four participants recommended using a blog, this application was not utilized to the level of Ms. Ridge. Mr. Red explained, “I want to utilize a blog more, but I just need to schedule the time. Once a routine is set and everything is created, it’s not that time consuming.”

Summary. In summary, interview participants expressed strong support for integrating social media tools into stakeholder communication efforts. Overall, electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements and school web sites were mentioned most frequently throughout the interviews and recommended by all interview participants. Furthermore, interview participants recommended MNS technology as it allows campuses to disseminate mass e-mails, text messages, and/or voicemail messages using parent contact information on file. Most interview participants recommended using MNS technology to disseminate information, reminders, and urgent updates. Twitter was the third most recommended tool by participants.

Although participants recommended Facebook, it is important to mention the only four participants who did not recommend Facebook stated their districts did not endorse or encourage the use of this tool. Some participants also suggested using Facebook Live to increase virtual parent attendance at campus events. Connecting to the idea of a newsletter, five administrators recommended incorporating a blog into communication practices. Throughout the interview process, it was clear the school administrators only used tools with which they felt comfortable. Therefore, *Recommended Means to Increase Comfort Level* were analyzed for each participant.

Recommended Means to Increase Comfort Level

Participants discussed multiple recommendations for school administrators to increase their comfort levels. Inductive coding analysis revealed four sub-themes: (a) embrace change; (b) practice with one tool; (c) increase skills and gain peer support; and (d) district support and examining practices. Each of the four sub-themes will be discussed in this section.

Embrace change. As with anything new, fear can impede progress towards change. Although 45.5% ($n = 6$) of participants expressed they had initial fears regarding social media communication, participants offered some advice to overcoming fear and developing comfort. Mr. North explained, “Parents will recognize that you’re trying to communicate with them. So, I think you’ve got to just get over your fear of trying.” Ms. Rise noted, “I often hear from other school administrators the fear almost cripples them. I think you have to put safeguards in place and take it one step at a time.” Mr. Red had also heard fears from administrators regarding time involved and the inability to control negative comments. In fact, Mr. Frank expressed fear delayed his progress in initiating campus social media communication. He explained, “Fear of things being posted, things being linked inappropriately and causing a negative impact, and not understanding how this new method of communication could be better than the old school ways.” However, Ms. Singer stated, “I think a healthy amount of fear is a good thing, as long as you use it to act responsibly as opposed to holding you back.”

Regarding fears of negative posts by parents, Ms. Coast stated, “If they’re saying something negative, they’re saying it anyway whether it’s online or not. You can’t let that fear stop you.” To increase comfort and reduce fear, Mr. Frank expressed the importance of an active account with many positive posts to offset any negative comments. He explained, “If we tell our story with positive photos and stories, and someone decides to post a negative comment, we are already out there to offset and counteract that negativity with a timeline of positive posts.” Although Mr. Frank expressed he had fears of communicating through social media, he encouraged school administrators to embrace this change. He explained, “It is the way people are

communicating today, and if you want to reach your clientele, then social media is one, if not the best, tool of choice we have available.” Mr. South echoed this idea stating, “Why fear it or fight it when you can simply embrace it? That’s what I would tell administrators who fear social media communication.”

Practice with one tool. Across interview participants, 100.0% ($n = 11$) recommended that taking the time to practice with social media tools is the best method to increase comfort, focusing upon one tool at a time. Ms. Rise stated, “I started with one, Facebook, and practiced each day a little bit until I felt like I knew what I was doing.” Ms. Pine explained taking time to practice is essential: “I think the steps are like with any new software or any new upgrade, it’s just forcing yourself to sit down, go through the steps, and take the time to do it and then make sure everyone feels comfortable.” This viewpoint was echoed with Ms. Ridge, as she postulated, “I think with anything, the more you use it, the more comfortable you become with the tool because then you start picking up little subtle things that you didn’t know that you are able to do with it.”

Taking small steps was a common theme exhibited throughout the interviews; notably, Mr. Red stated, “This is the 21st century, and this is just the world we live in. I would take small steps at a time until you started to feel more comfortable posting more complicated things.” However, all participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) stated they exhibited initiative and practiced with one social media tool at first to develop proficiency and comfort without any formal training. Ms. Singer stated, “If we want to access our families and community that are already using these tools, then the best way is to just do it, start small, start with one thing.” Ms. Brown also recommended starting with one tool,

but she cautioned against taking too long before learning a second tool. “It doesn’t take long to really get into the tool and learn it through experience, but that doesn’t mean a whole year,” she stated.

Increase skills and gain peer support. All participants mentioned professional development (100.0%, $n = 11$) as an area of need to increase comfort with social media. Ms. Ridge commented there had been no district training in how to use and effectively implement social media into school communication; however, she felt administrators would attend if it was offered. As opposed to formal professional development, most participants appeared to have increased comfort through independent study. Ms. Pine said she utilized YouTube videos to assist her in learning about social media communication methods, how to use them, and recommended practices. Ms. Pine elaborated, “I saw this one really cute video of these kids teaching their teacher...and it’s how to get their teacher on Twitter because she wanted to communicate with her parents and show them what she was doing with the classroom.” However, Ms. Ridge had two teenage daughters; therefore, she learned a lot about Twitter from them. Ms. Ridge stated, “Actually, I knew because I have two teenage daughters who will help me with a lot. I learned some new features, absolutely.”

Several interview participants (54.5%, $n = 6$) noted they utilized peer support to help them increase their comfort levels with social media. It seemed asking a peer questions about basic use of social media was less intimidating than asking a perceived expert in the district technology support department. Ms. Colony explained a peer group is her strongest support by stating, “It’s easy to ask for help from your peer and not feel ashamed or embarrassed about it whereas sometimes it’s more difficult to ask for outside

help.” Ms. Ridge expanded on this idea by recounting an instance when a group of campus administrators taught and supported a district level administrator with how to set up and use a Twitter account. “One of the upper administrators I was with recently did not have a Twitter account. So, the time we were together, we [principals] assisted that person in setting up a Twitter account,” recounted Ms. Ridge.

Furthermore, some school administrators commented that district sponsored training that allowed time for participants to set up an account for applications such as Twitter was helpful in taking the first step in implementing a new social media tool. Mr. Frank mentioned, “I am presently involved with an innovative teachers’ academy. I’m learning a lot through that.” Mr. Frank and Mr. South leaned heavily on the support of other staff in monitoring social media accounts as they did not feel comfortable committing too much time to online communication. Mr. South explained, “I’m way too busy to keep up with it [social media]. Having someone who can actually run it is a God send.” Mr. South specified, “We really lucked out with having a counselor who can run it [social media].” Mr. Frank agreed: “I am very fortunate to have an assistant principal who is well versed [in social media], and so I give her our communication plan.”

District support and examining practices. For 54.5% ($n = 6$) of the participants, district approval of specific social media tools increased comfort level. Ms. Ridge expanded upon how district support assists campuses with integrating Twitter into school communications, “I know it’s [Twitter] being effective when it’s connected to the district’s web site because I will post something and they Retweet it and it hits the district page which they have over 14,000 followers.” Mr. South, who works for a small, rural district, met with his superintendent for approval to use social media in his school

communication plan prior to implementation. He explained, “I’ve talked to my superintendent about doing things, about running our Facebook page beforehand.”

Three participants (27.3%) recommended examining the practices of other schools and districts to develop a communication plan and increase comfort. Mr. North explained, “The only way to really get comfortable with social media is to use it. And I would look at what other schools are doing.” Mr. North explained he adopted best practices based upon his research of other schools’ communication methods. Ms. Colony also described how she looked at other schools’ accounts to see how information is organized, shared, and what content is posted. She explained: “Looking at what other people do and being able to look at other schools’ accounts helps in learning what to post and what not to post.”

Summary. In summary, interview participants recommend that school administrators take the time to practice with social media to increase comfort levels. However, it was recommended to only focus upon mastering one social media tool at a time. The overall message from participants focused upon school administrators overcoming fear through recognizing social media as a viable way to reach more stakeholders and proactively build a positive school image. Participants recommended training and independent study as a means to increase comfort. Some administrators expressed a desire for district sponsored professional development about social media use and effective implementation. However, participants stated they took the initiative to practice learning one social media tool independently. For some, this included learning how to use social media from adolescents either in person or via YouTube videos and examining best practice of other schools.

District approval and support of specific social media tools assisted participants with increasing comfort. Peer supports were another commonly mentioned method to increase comfort level. It seemed participants felt less intimidated in asking a peer for help. To further understand the best methods to promote the success and avoid the perceived drawbacks of using social media, the interview data were analyzed regarding *Recommended Social Media Communication Practices*.

Recommended Social Media Communication Practices

Participants discussed multiple recommendations for communication practices. Inductive coding analysis revealed seven sub-themes: (a) understand stakeholders' preferences and access; (b) use a multimodal approach; (c) select the appropriate communication tool; (d) select content to communicate; (e) monitor and update; (f) address privacy/security concerns; and (g) provide staff professional development. Each of the seven sub-themes will be discussed in this section.

Understand stakeholders' preferences and access. Of the interview participants, 100.0% ($n = 11$) recommended understanding campus stakeholders' technology access levels and preferred tools for receiving information. Mr. North explained, "It's important to listen to the people who you're trying to communicate with and hearing what their needs are." In terms of social media options, participants recommended knowing which tools stakeholders use the most. "I would begin with a community survey and just find out what types of social media the parents and families use regularly," recommended Mr. Frank. He continued, "Look at those tools used by your stakeholders and develop a purposeful communication plan." This could mean disseminating information in multiple ways, which may include paper-based methods.

Ms. Pine recommended:

You have to know your clientele. The social economics or their mode of communication would really drive your decision whether to use it [social media] or not. While it may be well intended to want to reach out to them, it won't work if they don't have smart phone access or they don't go on Twitter, or they don't have a computer.

Even though participants recommended not abandoning traditional communication methods, when it comes to including technology in school communication plans, Mr. South stated there is no question ICT must be included. However, he recommended, "Know your community." Mr. North also observed that the younger parents grew up with technology and communicate with social media more than e-mail; he felt social media communication is more proactive. Ms. Rise agreed, "Our parents are from a different generation, and this is the way they communicate. They want to know what's going on and feel included. We need to communicate the way they communicate." Ms. Rise also felt campus social media use builds community connections, saying, "We want our parents and community members informed and involved."

Use a multimodal approach. All participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) recommended using a multimodal communication approach including both ICT and traditional communication methods (i.e. paper-based, face-to-face conversations, telephone calls). There was consensus among participants a multimodal approach can increase the likelihood stakeholders will receive information. "We as a school community have to rely on multiple communication means not just to meet the needs of our parents, but to

meet the needs of our kids who might or might not get flyers home,” explained Ms. Colony. Ms. Ridge worked at a school with parents of a lower socioeconomic background and less access to technology. Although Ms. Ridge actively used Twitter, she explained, “We do a paper copy as well as communicating via the web site just to make sure we’re not missing any of our parents.” In contrast, Ms. Brown worked at a campus in an affluent neighborhood where parents have technology; however, she cautioned, “If your stakeholders don’t have the option of having technology, you can have a Twitter feed all you want, but you will never be able to access your stakeholders.” Ms. Pine, who also worked at a campus in an affluent neighborhood, indicated paper copies were not only sometimes necessary, they may also be preferred by parents. She stated, “I think people sometimes like the paper format or they want to be able to print it out to put it on the refrigerator as a visual reminder.” Ms. Singer also indicated she sent home a paper-based newsletter each week, even though she also utilized social media to communicate with stakeholders.

Ms. Colony also worked at a school in an affluent neighborhood and felt sending home paper copies was necessary to supplement electronic communication. She explained that it takes time to build followers on Twitter and advertise a school web site: “An interesting thing about social media is you can have the account, but you have to actively promote yourself to get the followers on Twitter.” Furthermore, she felt permission slips requiring a parent signature should be sent home on paper so there are no excuses as to why it was not returned. Ms. Colony stated, “We have to put it out as many different ways as possible because the needs of our society have changed so much, but you still will have somebody come in and say they didn’t get any information.” To

build social media followers, multiple communication methods can be used to promote social media sites. Mr. South explained, “We promote our Facebook and Twitter pages on our school web site and newsletter to increase followers.”

As previously discussed, MNS technology provides a means for multimodal communication via text messages, e-mail, or recorded voice messages delivered via phone. Mr. Frank explained, “I would send weekly e-mails to families via MNS technology, making sure our messaging was consistent through that avenue, because for those families that don’t follow us on other accounts, we wanted to be sure they got similar messaging.” Mrs. Ridge also discussed how MNS technology provided a means for multimodal communication. She stated:

I also use School Messenger weekly which is a system provided by the district.

We get to make callouts where they’re [parents] hearing my voice. If they [parents] have an e-mail address, I attach flyers or information that I’m speaking about to that school message so parents can get that immediately on their phone.

So, that has increased the ability to communicate in multiple ways.

The recommendation by participants to utilize a multimodal communication approach was consistent in all 11 interviews. Although various forms of communication methods are available, another recommendation pertained to selecting the appropriate tool.

Select the appropriate communication tool. All participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) recommended the mode of communication needs to align with the situation and what is being communicated. Participant data revealed that small amounts of information, reminders, urgent messages about a school closure or rainy-day dismissal, and positive messages were more appropriate for ICT. However, if the content of the message was

more complicated or of a sensitive nature, participant data revealed a phone call or face-to-face meeting was deemed more appropriate than using ICT. Ms. Coast explained, “If I felt I needed to talk to a parent, I would pick up the phone and call them instead of sending an e-mail.” However, for quick reminders, an e-mail or social media post is more appropriate. “For small amounts of information, I’m not going to send home a piece of paper,” Ms. Colony clarified.

Interestingly, Ms. Rise recounted an experience in which parents were upset she had not posted information about an unplanned school evacuation on social media as the event was unfolding. “We had a bomb threat and evacuated. I would never post anything that had to do with security. That information is on a need to know basis, and I don’t feel our Facebook followers needed to know.” She continued to explain she did provide information to parents through the school’s MNS technology system after the event, as this only sends messages to parents. This example demonstrates the overall message from participants that using professional judgment is key in selecting the right communication medium.

Select content to communicate. Results from the interviews indicated that 100.0% ($n = 11$) of participants perceived social media as a way to promote positive events occurring on campus; therefore, it was recommended that school administrators take advantage of social media to disseminate this information to stakeholders, focusing upon positive or informational posts. Overall, participants recommended communicating information about school events, reminders, classroom activities, community outreach programs, service projects, ways to get involved, celebrations, and campus information such as rainy-day dismissal, holidays, early dismissal, and how to report bullying. Mr.

Red elaborated, “Anything that involves kids actively learning is always popular, and I think that just draws more and more people to the social media aspect of it.”

However, participants agreed communicating the proper image is imperative. Ms. Pine explained, “I think you have to brand yourself by your actions and what you do. I think it helps to build confidence in your campus, your brand, your ethics, you as a professional, and your whole campus.” Other administrators agreed social media provides a gateway for a campus to tell their own story, promote positive classroom activities, spotlight student achievements, and provide important reminders and announcements. Ms. Coast encouraged administrators to be mindful of the message they send: “We live in a glass house, and everything we do, and everything we say is perceived by the public.” Aligning the school’s communication efforts to the campus vision was also noted by a majority of participants (81.8%, $n = 9$). Concerning any campus employee with the ability to post on the school’s social media accounts, Ms. Brown explained, “Make sure whoever is communicating is in line with what your vision is for the campus and they understand what’s to be communicated and what’s not.”

Most interview participants (90.9%, $n = 10$) recommended Facebook and Twitter to disseminate information as opposed to interacting with stakeholders. Although campus Tweets could be Retweeted by parents and comments could be posted on Facebook, several administrators (36.3%, $n = 4$) indicated the district had disabled the option for parents or other stakeholders to leave comments on campus Twitter pages, thus limiting these tools to dissemination of information only. However, Mr. North felt using social media to interact with stakeholders was a benefit because he could address parent concerns quickly. “There’ve been several times that I’ve had conversations with parents

on the weekend by text message using Remind [101] where they're concerned about something and I can immediately respond," explained Mr. North.

Monitor and update. All participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) recommended keeping social media sites monitored and updated. "You can't have an inactive account. You've got to be active on it so that you don't lose your audience," recommended Mr. North. To ensure items are posted, most interview participants (90.9%, $n = 10$) recommended scheduling time to post in addition to keeping a device within reach. "I think if you schedule something, and you see the positive outcome you're more likely to do it," said Ms. Pine. Ms. Rise described her weekly posting goal is made possible through Facebook's scheduling tool. She explained, "The Facebook scheduling tool allows me to say post this next Thursday at 1:00 p.m., and then I don't have to think about it." Ms. Pine also recommended posting at least once a week to provide a continuous update and ensure an online calendar is current to keep parents informed and on track with their busy schedules. Although Mr. Red also scheduled posts for specific times, he recommended monitoring accounts with greater frequency. "Occasionally parents will try to post something negative on there, or something that's not accurate. I think it's important to monitor frequently for that reason."

Ms. Colony eased time constraints for posting updates and school events by keeping a device on hand. She stated, "Phone's always in the pocket; I can whip that thing out and get a reminder out really quickly on Twitter." Mr. South shared that his counselor, who oversees the campus social media accounts, always had her phone with her, taking pictures of class activities and posting them on the school's accounts. Some participants (27.2%, $n = 3$) specifically mentioned easing the posting process by syncing

the campus Facebook and Twitter accounts so one post will appear on both pages.

Mr. Red felt that a lack of time should not detract administrators from including ICT in campus communication plans. He explained, “Although setting it up may be a little time consuming, once you get the initial set up completed, then monitoring it is not that time consuming if you have a routine.” For some participants (45.5%, $n = 5$), delegating the task of monitoring social media accounts can assist busy administrators with integrating social media. “Find someone who can actually spend the time to do it. That’s the key. Find someone to take ownership of the role,” explained Mr. South. He continued by explaining that if an administrator delegates this task, the campus vision and expectations need to be clearly explained. Participants mentioned different delegates to monitor accounts including the Parent Teacher Association, teachers, the assistant principal, and the school counselor.

Address privacy/security concerns. Survey responses indicated feedback and security/privacy were concerns of using social media. Participants were asked several questions to better understand recommendations to mitigate these concerns. All participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) recommended administrators and staff exercise mindfulness when posting, remember the nature of social media, and the purpose of school communication. Ms. Brown cautioned, “Once it’s out there, it’s out there.” Ms. Colony urged administrators to monitor social media and think before they post, saying, “Even if you think you can quickly recall it or quickly delete it, it’s archived someplace.” Ms. Pine agreed this is a concern, yet she provided recommendations for overcoming this concern as she stated, “There’s an opportunity because rather than have people be disgruntled or stir up a ridiculous rumor on a Yahoo Group, you could totally stop that by

being informative.” She further clarified, “I think as a campus, it’s important that we’re showing people that we’re on point and we’re operating with integrity and not allowing silly stories to run reckless.”

Another method to address privacy concerns recommended by participants involved taking the time to customize privacy settings (27.3%, $n = 3$). Although a small number of participants provided this recommendation, it was a valid suggestion to mitigate a reported concern in the survey data. “Set the filters and monitor routinely who follows your site,” recommended Mr. South. Furthermore, Mr. South enlisted the help of the school counselor in monitoring the campus social media accounts. The school counselor approved anyone who requested to “friend” or “follow” the campus’s social media sites. Ms. Brown also recommended limiting who has rights to post on social media accounts. Furthermore, Ms. Singer suggested reviewing followers on a regular basis. “If they don’t have any connections here, and they don’t have any connection to somebody that we know in our school, we usually delete them.” However, Ms. Singer did not explain how lack of connections were determined.

In particular, one privacy concern shared amongst most participants (90.9%, $n = 10$) included whether or not to post photos showing students’ faces. Some participants (18.2%, $n = 2$) explained their district included an automatic implied parental consent during the school registration process for posting student photos online with an option for parents to sign a waiver, while other participants (81.8%, $n = 9$) stated their district required a parent signature for consent. “We do allow student faces to be shown, but we never identify them with a first or last name,” explained Ms. Rise. Mr. Frank’s district had a similar permissions policy, “A lot of families choose to give permission once they

understand it's for educational purposes, showing what's taking place at school, then they're fine with it." If there is uncertainty whether or not students have permission for their photo to be posted online, participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) recommended posting the photo without students' faces showing. Furthermore, to prevent families from feeling excluded, Ms. Rise said the school never posted academic awards photos or honor roll lists. To better support school administrators and staff in responsible posting and addressing security/privacy concerns, participants recommended professional development.

Provide staff professional development. To prevent concerns relating to security/privacy, most participants (81.8%, $n = 9$) recommended professional development. Ms. Pine explained, "I would make sure the administrators, the attendance clerk who has to check for Internet safety, the counselor, and the team leads are all trained properly." To further delve into the topic of professional development, 81.8% ($n = 9$) of participants stated important objectives include expectations, responsible use, and confidentiality, especially concerning which students may have photos posted. In addition, Ms. Brown recommended, "Think about what are the messages that you want to send through the tool and then really train your staff and the community on the social media tools that we have available." She continued that training for parents as well could promote responsible usage and increase the number of people who follow the school's online sites. Participants (63.6%, $n = 7$) recommended creating official social media use guidelines in the school's handbook. "I think best practices would be number one, make some guidelines for yourself and your teachers or for whoever's going to administer your page," Ms. Rise suggested.

Expanding on the idea of responsible use training, Ms. Coast explained the importance of reminding teachers to post responsibly on their personal social media accounts as this reflects upon their own professionalism as well as the school's image. Ms. Coast clarified, "I explain social media is not private. Think about what you post. What image does this give our community and about you?" Ms. Colony included similar information in campus professional development, advising teachers, "Be aware of your online presence and of the company you keep." Ms. Rise explained that some of their teachers are Facebook friends with parents, even though this practice is discouraged by the district. "We have to have those hard conversations that you need to be really careful about what you post because parents see us differently than friends, they see you as a teacher." If teachers post to the school's account, Ms. Singer suggested, "Keep it short and sweet, and don't put anything personal."

Regarding frequency of staff training, 81.8% ($n = 9$) of participants recommended training at least once per year if not more. "I would say once a year, but it needs to be a decent amount of time," said Ms. Pine. She continued by stating, "It should be part of the handbook and it should be something that's reviewed and that they sign on." Other participants (18.2%, $n = 2$) recommended training staff twice per year. Ms. Brown explained, "I have to do that twice a year, in the fall and in the spring." Ms. Brown discussed conducting social media trainings due to private conversations that occurred with employees regarding inappropriate Facebook usage, citing a need for proper social media usage training will increase as more millennials join the workforce. Ms. Brown explained, "It's a cultural mindset. They're [millennials] a little bit more open which sometimes can hurt you." She further clarified, "With new teachers who are millennials,

you see people are more comfortable with crossing boundaries and becoming [social media] friends with parents to where it's more of an issue. We need to teach millennials how to draw that line."

Participants (72.7%, $n = 8$) also recommended modeling and providing examples regarding appropriate social media use in professional development. "I think sometimes visuals and examples really are more impactful, especially for the way that we take in information these days," stated Ms. Pine. Ms. Colony agreed with this idea, saying, "If you're going to require people to use something, you need to show them exactly what you expect and model it." Ms. Coast provided examples of inappropriate social media posts in campus training and asked teachers to reflect upon how this message may influence parents' perceptions of the school and of the teachers. Ms. Rise stated, "If we model how to be a good poster for our students, staff, and parents, then they'll feel better about how to appropriately post."

Summary. In summary, participants saw social media as a viable means to promote their campus in a positive light, disseminate time-sensitive announcements, and provide weekly news and updates. This included school branding and alignment with the campus vision. However, participants recommended school administrators understand stakeholders' technology access and tool preferences. Social media sites must be updated and maintained. To ease the task of monitoring and updating social media, some participants recommended either scheduling time or keeping an electronic device handy. School administrators who were too busy to manage campus ICT recommended delegating the task of monitoring and updating social media sites to staff members.

All participants expressed security/privacy concerns; therefore, participants

recommended annual or semi-annual staff training focused on confidentiality, responsible use, and expectations. Training sessions should include examples and stress the importance of responsible posting even to personal social media accounts. Participants recommended school administrators create social media use guidelines for the school's handbook. Furthermore, participants recommended customizing privacy settings. In addition, participants recommended verifying parent permission prior to posting photos displaying students' faces.

Finally, all participants recommended using a multimodal approach to disseminate information and ensure it reaches all stakeholders. Participant recommendations included aligning the mode of communication with the message content and purpose. For example, participants mentioned urgent announcements aligned appropriately with social media communication, whereas items requiring a parent signature aligned appropriately with a paper-based format. Other messages may align appropriately with a telephone call or face-to-face meeting. Participants discussed school administrators must use their professional judgment to select the appropriate communication method depending upon the situation and message. Overall, participants recommended maintaining positive and informative social media communication.

Summary of the Findings

Overwhelmingly, survey data revealed elementary school administrators used school web sites, electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements, and MNS technology in the role of a school administrator and to communicate with stakeholders. However, Facebook, text messaging, and Twitter were also highly reported. Qualitative data revealed participants recommended using electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements,

MNS technology, Twitter, and Facebook for social media communication with stakeholders. Participants recommended all communication remain positive and informative, avoiding any messages of a controversial nature or that could be misinterpreted.

Quantitative data revealed elementary school administrators felt most comfortable with text messaging, MNS technology, electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements, Facebook, school web sites, and Twitter. In contrast, respondents demonstrated the least comfort with Instagram, other tools, blogs, and YouTube; however, nearly an equal number of survey respondents reported feeling comfortable with these tools. Participants recommended several options to increase comfort. First, participants recommended school administrators take the time to practice with social media to increase comfort level, focusing upon one tool at a time. An additional recommendation included increased social media skill development to increase comfort level; however, participants admitted to taking the initiative to learn about social media tools and practice independently. Participants recommended peer support groups as a means to increase comfort as this option allowed for a less intimidating environment.

The school administrators interviewed used social media and seemed eager to learn more about it; however, they appeared to feel comfortable only with tools with which they had experience. Further qualitative interview questioning revealed elementary school administrators felt more comfortable with social media applications which had district backing and security. For example, interview participants who worked in districts which endorsed and encouraged Twitter for school communication felt more comfortable using this application over Facebook, which was not endorsed.

Overall, quantitative data revealed elementary school administrators perceived social media tools as an effective means to communicate with stakeholders. Furthermore, data indicated respondents perceived social media improved stakeholder communication. Elementary school administrators identified several benefits of using social media to communicate with stakeholders including: increased communication with stakeholders, reaching stakeholders not previously reached, improved school/district image, increased parent involvement, and increased feedback. To better understand the benefits of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, qualitative data revealed participants perceived stakeholders expect an option of social media communication. Participants further explained the ability to immediately communicate and reach more stakeholders allowed the school's positive messages to improve the school and district image.

Survey data revealed elementary school administrators felt most concerned about "Security/privacy issues." The second and third highest most reported concerns were "Lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media" as well as "Receiving feedback." However, it is important to note both "Lack of training/knowledge" and "Receiving feedback" were almost equally reported as not a concern by survey respondents. The least indicated concerns were "Too much time needed to post" and "Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain information."

To better understand the concerns of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, qualitative data revealed participants were specifically concerned about receiving negative feedback or posts on social media accounts. The immediate communication quality that was also noted as a benefit by participants was also a concern as this feature could contribute to irresponsible and negative posting by both external

stakeholders as well as faculty. Finally, participants also expressed privacy and security concerns, specifically regarding student permissions to post photos showing their faces.

To promote social media communication benefits and mitigate concerns, qualitative data revealed participants recommended a number of social media communication best practices. Participants recommended knowing stakeholders' technology access and social media tool preferences so posted material was accessible to the intended audience. Furthermore, participants recommended disseminating information using a multimodal approach, including multiple ICT and paper-based formats, to reach more stakeholders. Participants noted to not abandon traditional communication methods and recommended using the appropriate communication method to align with the message.

Overwhelmingly, participants recommended using social media to communicate positive events and informative news, including school branding, announcements, reminders, and important alerts. However, participants urged school administrators to use their best judgment to mindfully post and communicate messages aligned with the campus vision. For social media communication to be successful, participants stated sites must be updated and maintained. Recommendations included scheduling time in the day dedicated to social media posting or keeping a mobile device handy to ensure this task is completed and promote time management. For school administrators who may be too busy to monitor social media sites, participants suggested delegating this task to another employee provided specific expectations were established.

Since security/privacy was a concern evident in both quantitative and qualitative data, participants recommended annual or semi-annual staff professional development

with a focus upon confidentiality, responsible use, and expectations for both school and personal social media accounts. Participants recommended school administrators create social media use guidelines in the school's handbook. Modeling and examples could prove helpful in professional development sessions to promote faculty comprehension. Furthermore, recommendations included verifying parent permission before posting pictures with students' faces.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the study's quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Chapter 5 displays the results of this study compared and contrasted with previous literature and study results. Furthermore, implications of this study's results will be discussed in addition to recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. Although social media is growing in popularity, provides many benefits, and garners parent interest, there is a lack of research focusing upon K-12 district leadership and technology as related to communications strategies (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). Several studies note the need for K-12 leaders to be technology-savvy (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009). However, although effective K-12 leaders should use technology, researchers are not providing enough investigation in this area (Sauers & Richardson, 2015).

To investigate the study's research questions, quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data were collected through the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders Survey*. Of the elementary school administrators solicited in the State of Texas to participate in the study, 104 completed the survey. Additionally, 11 elementary school administrators from the survey sample participated in semi-structured interviews. This qualitative data enriched the understanding of social media benefits, concerns, and best practices in using social media to communicate with stakeholders. This chapter will provide and examine the study's findings in comparison to previous research. Implications for school administrators'

social media communication practices as well as recommendations for future research are included.

Summary

Research Question One

Research question one, *What social media tools are elementary school administrators using to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered by calculating percentages and frequencies of survey responses to two questions. According to the quantitative data, elementary school administrators most commonly used school web sites (may include apps), electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement, and MNS technology in their role as an administrator and to communicate with stakeholders. However, Facebook, text messaging, and Twitter were also highly reported social media tools by respondents. Instagram, blogs, YouTube, and other tools were reported the least by respondents. Although the survey did not provide a field for respondents to provide specific data defining which other social media tools they utilized, qualitative data indicated other tools could include Facebook Live.

These results support previous research that showed school web sites, electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement, and MNS technology were used by schools and nonprofit organizations (Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Heath et al., 2015). Results also aligned with Olmstead (2013) who found schools utilized web sites to communicate with parents. This study's results also support previous research, which found several social media tools were utilized by schools and nonprofit organizations, including: Facebook (Ellison et al., 2007; Goldkind, 2015; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2011; Thackeray et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2009) and Twitter (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014;

Goldkind, 2015; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Sauers & Richardson, 2015; Thackeray et al., 2012). This study's findings indicated use of text messaging, which could be supported by prior studies reporting MNS technology use since this system can distribute information via text messages (Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Heath et al., 2015).

Previous research results indicating Twitter was not utilized by school employees to communicate contradict this study's results (Olmstead, 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). This could be attributed to rapidly changing technology trends, and these studies were conducted over four years ago. Additionally, this study's results contradict previous research indicating text messaging was not utilized (Olmstead, 2013). This could be attributed to lack of teacher comfort with providing personal cell phone numbers to parents; therefore, Olmstead (2013) recommended MNS technology as this tool allows dissemination of text messages without the need for educators to share their personal cell phone numbers. Furthermore, this study's quantitative results contradict previous research that school and nonprofit organization personnel utilized blogs (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Heath et al., 2015). However, previous research is congruent with this study's quantitative findings that blogs were not commonly reported (O'Neill et al., 2011). Furthermore, this study's results align with previous research that indicated YouTube was not highly utilized by education organizations (Waters & Jones, 2011). These variances could be attributed to differing levels of comfort and routines in using specific social media tools.

Research Question Two

Research question two, *To what degree are elementary school administrators comfortable using social media tools to communicate?*, was answered by calculating

percentages and frequencies of survey responses to one question. Quantitative analysis indicated school administrators felt most comfortable with text messaging, MNS technology, electronic newsletter/e-mail announcement, Facebook, school web sites, and Twitter. Results indicated nearly an even split between *Not at All/Slightly Comfortable* and *Comfortable/Very Comfortable* for Instagram, blogs, other tools, and YouTube.

Regarding participant ratings demonstrating comfort using social media, results are consistent with Richardson et al. (2015) who found school leaders felt very comfortable using technology. Furthermore, this study's results are consistent with Cakir (2012) and O'Neill et al. (2011) who found school leaders felt comfortable using Facebook. Considering respondents indicated both levels of *Not at All/Slightly Comfortable* and *Comfortable/Very Comfortable* for four social media tools, these results may be consistent with Afshari et al. (2012) who found school administrators had moderate competencies and comfort with media communication. Furthermore, results indicating *Not at All/Slightly Comfortable* are consistent with Cater et al. (2013) and O'Neill et al. who found respondents did not feel comfortable using blogs, yet results indicating *Comfortable/Very Comfortable* contradict these previous research results. Furthermore, this study's findings somewhat contradict previous research indicating respondents were not comfortable using Twitter (Cater et al., 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). These variances could be attributed to different levels of comfort in and experience with using specific social media tools dependent upon the population.

Research Question Three

Research question three, *To what degree do elementary school administrators perceive social media tools as being effective methods to communicate with*

stakeholders?, was answered by calculating percentages and frequencies of survey responses to two questions. Quantitative analysis indicated that overall, school administrators perceived social media tools as an effective means to communicate with stakeholders. Furthermore, results indicated respondents perceived social media improved stakeholder communication.

These findings are consistent with previous research, which reported social media improved stakeholder communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014). Notably, these findings are consistent with previous research in which participants perceived ICT tools as an effective means to communicate with stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Ellison et al., 2007; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Sauers & Richardson, 2015; Young et al., 2008). Specifically, research conducted by Ellison et al. (2007) found a relationship between Facebook usage and developing social capital, especially as it relates to feeling integrated into the school community. Furthermore, research conducted by Sauers and Richardson (2015) found results consistent with this study in that organizations used social media to effectively build interaction with the community. These results are consistent with Olmstead (2013) who found technology communication, specifically e-mail, web sites, and phone messaging systems, promoted parental involvement. Furthermore, Olmstead found parents were interested in receiving school communication via Facebook and instant messaging. Other studies also found ICT promoted parental involvement (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Heath et al., 2015). Although Heath et al. (2015) found ICT was an effective communication tool for schools, there was variability in the findings based upon misalignment of utilized tools with parent preferences.

This study's results are inconsistent with Lovejoy et al. (2012) who found nonprofit organizations do not effectively use Twitter. Furthermore, Waters et al. (2009) found non-profit organizations were not using Facebook to successfully build community involvement. However, Waters et al. did find non-profit organizations used Facebook to effectively disseminate information. What is interesting is four interview participants in this study indicated they would be more apt to effectively use Facebook if certain interactive features could be deactivated to reduce the opportunity for parents to leave negative comments. Therefore, the differences in these results could be attributed to the variance in populations, comfort levels, training, and differences in the definition of the term "effective."

Research Question Four

Research question four, *What do elementary school administrators perceive as benefits of utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered by calculating percentages and frequencies of survey responses to one question.

Furthermore, question four was answered using inductive thematic coding of 11 semi-structured interviews of elementary school administrators. Quantitative analysis indicated that participants identified benefits of using social media to include: increased communication with stakeholders, reaching stakeholders not previously reached, improving the school/district image, increased parental involvement, and increased feedback. Findings aligned with previous research, which found that elementary school administrators perceived ICT increased communication with stakeholders (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; Young et al., 2008). Furthermore, findings were consistent with previous research, which found that ICT

reached stakeholders not previously reached (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Newbury et al., 2014; Young et al., 2008).

In addition, this study's findings were consistent with previous research in that social media provided the benefit of improving the school/district image (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). Previous studies also found social media promoted parental involvement (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Heath et al., 2015; Olmstead, 2013). Specifically, Heath et al. (2015) found that ICT promoted school-home communication and increased parental involvement; however, this varied between campuses dependent upon the alignment of tool selection with parent access. Additional findings indicated proactive school communication using ICT promoted parental involvement (Olmstead, 2013). Furthermore, Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) found increased principal communication fostered increased parental involvement; ICT is a gateway for principals to increase communication.

This study's findings are also consistent with research indicating social media communication increased feedback (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013). Specifically, Cox and McLeod (2013) found school principals kept more informed of public opinions through social media communication. In addition, Newbury et al. (2014) found social media communication allowed for direct interactivity between stakeholders and staff. Furthermore, Kelly (2009) found social media communication developed a shared understanding with stakeholders. However, Kelly found school leaders often preferred face-to-face communication to mitigate misunderstandings. Several studies found increased transparency as a benefit of social media communication (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). However, this study

did not address increased transparency as a possible benefit. This could be attributed to the difference in questions asked of participants between various studies.

To better understand the benefits of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, qualitative data revealed participants perceived stakeholders expect an option of social media communication. This finding is congruent with previous research (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Porterfield & Carnes, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015; Young et al., 2008). In addition, participants explained that technology affords the ability to immediately communicate with more stakeholders, which allows the school's positive message to promote the school/district image. These findings align with previous research (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009). However, the immediate nature of communicating with technology was also reported as a concern.

Research Question Five

Research question five, *What do elementary school administrators perceive as concerns regarding utilizing social media to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered by calculating frequencies and percentages of survey responses to one question. Furthermore, question five was answered using inductive thematic coding of 11 semi-structured interviews of elementary school administrators. Quantitative analysis indicated participants identified "Security/Privacy issues" as a primary concern. This aligned with previous research, which indicated security/privacy is an ongoing concern amongst school leaders (Chang & Chen, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Yost & Fan, 2014).

Results indicated a secondary concern was "Lack of training/knowledge in the use

of social media”, which aligned with previous research indicating a need and recommendation for school administrator professional development (Afshari et al., 2012; Cakir, 2012; Cater et al., 2013; O’Neill et al., 2011). The third highest reported concern was “Receiving feedback”, a concern that aligned with previous research indicating concerns related to irresponsible and negative postings (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; O’Reilly & Matt, 2013; Sauers et al., 2014). However, both the “Lack of training knowledge in the use of social media” and “Receiving feedback” concerns were almost equally reported as not a concern by survey respondents. These differences could be attributed to variances in school administrators’ comfort levels with using social media to communicate.

Results indicated “Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain information” was not a concern, a finding inconsistent with previous research (Waters et al., 2009). Furthermore, results were inconsistent with previous research that identified “Too much time needed to post information” as a concern of using social media (Hines et al., 2008; Kelly, 2009; Newbury et al., 2014; O’Reilly & Matt, 2013; Waters et al., 2009). These differences could be attributed to the use of different survey questions to solicit information as well as differences in the populations surveyed.

To better understand the concerns of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, qualitative data revealed participants were concerned about negative and inappropriate social media posts from both external stakeholders and staff, a finding that aligned with quantitative data and congruent with previous research (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Heath et al., 2015; Kelly, 2009; O’Reilly & Matt, 2013; Sauers et al., 2014). Qualitative data also revealed participants were concerned about privacy and security, a

finding that aligned with quantitative data and congruent with previous research (Chang & Chen, 2014; Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Yost & Fan, 2014). It is of note that lack of manpower to effectively update and monitor ICT was reported in previous research (Hines et al., 2008; O'Reilly & Matt, 2013; Waters et al., 2009). However, this concern was not reported in this study. This could be attributed to the use of different survey questions to solicit information as well as differences in the populations surveyed.

Research Question Six

Research question six, *What best practices do elementary school administrators recommend regarding the use of social media tools to communicate with stakeholders?*, was answered using inductive thematic coding of 11 semi-structured interviews of elementary school administrators. Responses were organized into three major themes: *Recommended Social Media Tools*, *Recommended Means to Increase Comfort Level*, and *Recommended Social Media Communication Practices*. Overall, interview participants (100.0%, $n = 11$) felt using social media to communicate was a non-negotiable, which aligns with previous research (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014).

With regard to recommended social media tools, qualitative analysis indicated school administrators recommended using electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements and MNS technology to send mass e-mails, texts, and voicemail messages, social media tools recommended in prior research (Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Heath et al., 2015).

Interview participants also recommended Twitter, a finding consistent with previous studies (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Goldkind, 2015; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; Sauers & Richardson, 2015; Thackeray et al., 2012). However, this contradicts findings by O'Neill

et al. (2011) who found Twitter was not utilized. Participants also recommended using Facebook, a social media tool reported in prior research (Ellison et al., 2007; Goldkind, 2015; Hauge & Norenes, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2011; Thackeray et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2009). Specifically, Ellison et al. (2007) recommended Facebook to build social capital. Some participants recommended using blogs. Although Cox and McLeod (2013, 2014) found school and district leaders recommended using blogs, O'Neill et al. found blogs were not utilized. Furthermore, this study's results included recommendations to utilize YouTube for professional development as opposed to communicating with stakeholders; however, this contradicts previous research (Waters & Jones, 2011). Variances in selection and recommendation of social media tools could depend upon district support, training, and comfortability.

Interview findings revealed participants were not intimidated by technology and had a positive attitude about using social media to communicate; which supported previous research (Cakir, 2012; Richardson et al., 2015; Young et al., 2008). Furthermore, participants expressed greater comfort for social media tools with which they had experience. This aligned with previous research findings (Cakir, 2012; Cater et al., 2013). Participants also felt increased comfort with social media tools, which had district backing, a finding congruent with previous research recommending a district technology plan and support (Baylor & Ritchie, 2002; Heath et al., 2015; Lim & Khine, 2006; Vanderlinde et al., 2012). Study results indicated school leaders were interested in receiving training to increase comfort level. This supports recommendations from previous research for more professional development for administrators to increase technology competence and comfort levels (Afshari et al., 2012; Cakir, 2012; Cater et al.,

2013; O'Neill et al., 2011). Overall, participants recommended school leaders practice with social media tools, preferably one at a time, to increase comfort levels, a finding supported by previous research (Afshari et al., 2012; Cox & McLeod, 2013). Participants recommended scheduling time to post on social media to effectively manage time, which supports a recommendation by Hines et al. (2008). Congruent with Adams (2016) and Larson (2009), participants also recommended peer support groups as a way to increase comfort communicating with social media.

Privacy was a primary concern revealed through quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Qualitative analysis regarding recommended practices addressed this concern, suggesting school administrators customize privacy settings, a finding congruent with Chang and Chen (2014). Furthermore, to mitigate privacy concerns, staff professional development was recommended with a focus upon responsible use, a recommendation cited in previous research (Hines et al., 2008; Newbury et al., 2014; Olmstead, 2013; O'Neill et al., 2011; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014). Participants suggested addressing privacy concerns and promoting responsible use could be supported with guidelines in the school's handbook; this aligned with previous research findings (Hines et al., 2008; Wang, 2013). Furthermore, modeling ICT appropriate use by school administrators for staff was recommended by participants and supported by previous findings (Olmstead, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014).

With regard to social media communication practices, results further indicated school leaders need to know their stakeholders, including stakeholders' preferences and technology accessibility, a finding supported by previous studies (Heath et al., 2015;

Hines et al., 2008; Olmstead, 2013; Thompson et al., 2015). Specifically, Heath et al. (2015) found aligning technology communication tools with parent preferences increased satisfaction and positively affected communication. Furthermore, results indicated it is important for schools to disseminate information using a multimodal approach, selecting the appropriate medium depending upon the situation, and not abandon traditional communication methods. This confirms prior research findings (Cox & McLeod, 2013, 2014; Kelly, 2009; Olmstead, 2013; Young et al., 2008). Study results revealed communicating positive events and news, providing announcements and reminders, and informing parents of important alerts were recommended, a finding supported by Cox and McLeod (2013).

Congruent with previous research, participants recommended social media sites must be updated and maintained (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Cox & McLeod, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015). To promote time management, participants suggested school administrators schedule time in the day to post information, a finding congruent with Hines et al. (2008). However, for school administrators who are too busy to monitor social media sites, participants recommended delegating this task, a suggestion supported by O'Reilly and Matt (2013) who recommended a public relations oversight committee could assist with monitoring social media accounts.

Finally, for school administrators who are hesitant or fearful about implementing social media into school communication plans, participants encouraged them to overcome fear and embrace change. This message was echoed in previous research (Cox & McLeod, 2013; Richardson et al., 2015; Sauers et al., 2014). In consideration of schools moving forward with integrating social media into school communication plans,

this study's findings provide implications for school administrators, teachers, and districts.

Implications

School administrators are leaders in developing stakeholder relationships with a direct impact upon social capital development. Communication is a core responsibility of K-12 leaders (Sauers & Richardson, 2015). As preferred communication methods shift to technology integration, school administrators must also evolve to meet the needs of the community and forge positive relationships (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Results from this study support previous research findings that social media is a tool to effectively communicate with stakeholders. Furthermore, results of this study were consistent with previous research regarding benefits of social media communication, such as increasing communication and promoting a positive image, in addition to concerns such as security/privacy. Finally, results of this study included recommended social media communication practices consistent with previous research.

Implications for School Administrators

Despite the limitations of this study, research findings have implications for future social media communication practices by school administrators. School administrators should practice using social media tools to increase comfort, with recommended tools including school web sites (may include apps), electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements, MNS technology, Facebook, and Twitter. Attending training should be considered as a means to increase comfort level in addition to ongoing practice, preferably with one tool at a time. Another means to promote comfort levels is for administrators to form peer groups and support each other in setting up technology

applications as well as providing a safe place to ask questions, regardless of technology level.

Furthermore, it is important for school administrators to know stakeholders' communication preferences and access to technology. A multimodal communication approach is recommended, using a blend of traditional communication and social media. It is imperative the appropriate communication means are selected depending upon the situation. Finally, school administrators need to set clear expectations regarding social media use with their staff, perhaps through an annual professional development. This should include acceptable use guidelines, examples, and possibly a handbook.

Finally, administrators need to develop a plan for communicating with technology. Setting aside time ensures this task is completed in an efficient fashion. However, it is important to remember that communicating via technology does not replace face-to-face interaction; therefore, school administrators should not abandon traditional communication methods.

Implications for Teachers

This study revealed teachers would benefit from professional development for social media communication. Specifically, training should focus upon social media communication best practices aligned with district and campus expectations.

Professional development sessions may also include information about security/privacy, a concern of school administrators revealed in this study. Teachers would benefit from an administrator modeling effective communication practices using technology and an acceptable use handbook. As was recommended for administrators, teachers would benefit from starting small with one social media tool, practicing in its use to promote

comfortability. School web sites, electronic newsletters/e-mail announcements, MNS technology, Facebook, or Twitter may be preferable tools to use as a starting point.

Implications for Districts

Districts must consider stakeholder communication preferences and understand parents' access to technology. This study revealed school administrators use technology for which they are most comfortable; therefore, districts should consider hosting professional development focusing upon social media for school administrators. Specifically, professional development could focus upon basics of utilizing tools, how to effectively communicate with technology, and how to promote security. Furthermore, since security/privacy issues were a primary concern amongst school administrators, districts should promote security/privacy measures so that school administrators feel increased comfort in using social media. This could come in the form of specific district-sponsored social media tools and taking measures to limit some features to promote communication while ensuring privacy and security support. Finally, it is recommended districts create training for all staff regarding social media best practices to promote communication with stakeholders while also following security/privacy measures. A written handbook of acceptable use guidelines could support staff training and promote established expectations. Including legal considerations in the training is also recommended.

Finally, school districts must develop a technology vision and review policies regarding technology communication with a focus upon security/privacy. This study revealed school leaders see social media as a viable means to communicate with stakeholders. However, there are privacy/security concerns that may be limiting the full

integration of technology communication. By establishing a framework of expectations and code of conduct endorsed by the district, school leaders and staff will be equipped to communicate using best ICT practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several recommendations for future research. First, increasing the sample size for both quantitative and qualitative data collection would provide richer data, thus increasing the potential for more significant results. Second, utilizing a sample from a more diverse population may yield results that are more significant. This study focused upon school administrators at the elementary level. It is recommended future studies utilize secondary school administrators to provide a more diverse sample.

Furthermore, it is recommended the survey instrument continue to undergo modifications to ensure survey choices include the most current communication tools. This could be achieved without affecting the instrument's reliability and validity provided items 11 and 12 are not modified. For this study, three of the tools represented on the original survey were modified to reflect current tools used in today's market. It is conceivable the tools represented on the survey in this study may become outdated as new tools come on the market. Finally, future researchers may want to consider collecting data from stakeholders to compare parents' perspectives regarding social media communication as used by schools to the perspectives of school administrators.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital. The

ultimate focus of this study was to develop recommended social media communication practices to support school administrators and promote social capital development.

Examination of participants' comfort levels as well as perceived benefits and concerns of using social media supported the development of recommended practices to promote benefits and mitigate concerns. This information will enable districts and school leaders to better implement these communication practices effectively and ethically. This will ultimately benefit stakeholders in receiving information from schools and districts to promote the development of social capital and parental involvement.

REFERENCES

- Adams, S. C. (2016). *Improving teacher comfort levels and self-efficacy with technology and application of technology into the elementary education curriculum through the tech buddy program* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Proquest No. 10120866)
- Afshari, M., Bakar, K. A., Luan, W. S., & Siraj, S. (2012). Factors affecting the transformational leadership role of principals in implementing ICT in schools. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 11(4), 164-176.
- Allman, B. A. (2012). *Principals and technology: A case study of the use and perceived effectiveness of technology to communicate with constituents* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (Proquest No. 3506021)
- Anderson, R. E., & Dexter, S. (2005). School technology leadership: An empirical investigation of prevalence and effect. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(1), 49-82. doi:10.1177/0013161x04269517
- Askool, S., & Nakata, K. (2011). A conceptual model for acceptance of social CRM systems based on a scoping study. *AI & Society*, 26, 205-220. doi:10.1007/s00146-010-0311-5
- Barr, J., & Saltmarsh, S. (2014). "It all comes down to the leadership": The role of the school principal in fostering parent-school engagement. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 42, 491-505. doi:10.1177/1741143213502189

- Baylor, A. L., & Ritchie, D. (2002). What factors facilitate teacher skill, teacher morale, perceived student learning in technology-using classrooms? *Computers & Education*, 39, 395-414. doi:10.1016/S0360-1315(02)00075-1
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x
- Burrows, A. (2015). School finance and tax reform in Texas. *Journal of State Taxation*, 33(2), 41-51.
- Cakir, R. (2012). Technology integration and technology leadership in schools as learning organizations. *TOJET: The Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 11(4), 273-282.
- Cater, M., Davis, D., Leger, B., Machtmes, K., & Arcemont, L. (2013). A study of extension professional preferences and perceptions of usefulness and level of comfort with blogs as an informal professional development tool. *Journal of Extension*, 51(4), 1-13.
- Chang, L., & Chen, J. V. (2014). Aligning principal and agent's incentives: A principal-agent perspective of social networking sites. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 41, 3091-3104. doi:10.1016/j.eswa.2013.10.040
- Chrislip, D. D., & Larson, C. E. (1994). *Collaborative leadership: How citizens and civic leaders can make a difference*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W., & de Zúñiga, H. G. (2010). Who interacts on the Web?: The intersection of users' personality and social media use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26, 247-253. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2009.09.003
- Couros, A., & Jarrett, K. (2012). Twitter. In S. McLeod & C. Lehmann (Eds.), *What school leaders need to know about digital technologies and social media* (pp. 147-152). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cox, D. D. (2012). *School communications 2.0: A social media strategy for K-12 principals and superintendents* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3511374)
- Cox, D. D., & McLeod, S. (2013). Social media strategies for school principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 98(1), 5-25. doi:10.1177/0192636513510596
- Cox, D. D., & McLeod, S. (2014). Social media marketing and communications strategies for school superintendents. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52, 850-868. doi:10.1108/JEA-11-2012-0117
- Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Daresh, J. C. (2007). *Supervision as proactive leadership* (4th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Dhamdhere, S. N. (2012). Web technology based innovations in education sector. *Educational Quest: International Journal of Education and Applied Social Science*, 3, 297-303.

- DiGrazia, J., McKelvey, K., Bollen, J., & Rojas, F. (2013). More tweets, more votes: Social media as a quantitative indicator of political behavior. *PLoS ONE*, 8(11), e79449. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0079449
- Dornisch, M. (2013). The digital divide in classrooms: Teacher technology comfort and evaluations. *Computers in the Schools*, 30, 210-228.
doi:10.1080/07380569.2012.734432
- Duggan, M. (2015). *Mobile messaging and social media 2015*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <http://pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/mobile-messaging-and-social-media-2015/>
- Duggan, M., Ellison, N. B., Lampe, C., Lenhart, A., & Madden, M. (2015). *Social media update 2014*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website:
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/>
- Duggan, M., Lenhart, A., Lampe, C., & Ellison, N. B. (2015). *Parents and social media*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website:
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/>
- Edelman Research. (2008). *Edelman trust barometer*. Retrieved from Edelman website:
<https://www.edelman.com/assets/uploads/2014/01/2008-Trust-Barometer-Global-Results.pdf>
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook “friends:” Social capital and college students’ use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12, 1143-1168. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x
- Facebook. (2015). *About Facebook* [Web page]. Retrieved from

https://www.facebook.com/facebook/info/?tab=page_info

- Ferriter, W. M., Ramsden, J. T., & Sheninger, E. C. (2011). *Communicating and connecting with social media*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2001). Internet use in the contemporary media environment. *Human Communication Research*, 27(1), 153-181.
doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2001.tb00779.x
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Change leader: Learning to do what matters most*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Goldkind, L. (2015). Social media and social service: Are nonprofits plugged in to the digital age? *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 39, 380-396. doi:10.1080/23303131.2015.1053585
- Gonzales, L., Vodicka, D., & White, J. (2011). Leadership 2.0: Social media in advocacy. *Leadership*, 41(1), 18-38.
- Goodlad, J. I. (1993). School-university partnerships and partner schools. *Educational Policy*, 7(1), 24-39. doi:10.1177/0895904893007001003
- Greenberg, P. (2003). A commonwealth of self-interest. *CRM Magazine*, 7(10), 26.
- Greenberg, P. (2010). The impact of CRM 2.0 on customer insight. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 25, 410-419. doi:10.1108/08858621011066008
- Griffith, S., & Liyanage, L. (2008). An introduction to the potential of social networking sites in education. In I. Olney, G. Lefoe, J. Mantei, & J. Herrington (Eds.),

Proceedings of the 2nd Emerging Technologies Conference 2008 (pp. 76-81).

Wollongong, Australia: University of Wollongong.

Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (2014). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Hampton, S. C. (2016). *Social media as a tool to effectively communicate with stakeholders: School administrators and superintendents' perceptions* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (ProQuest No. 10056549)

Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (1997). Relations between organizational culture, identity and image. *European Journal of Marketing*, 31, 356-365. doi:10.1108/eb060636

Hauge, T. E., & Norenes, S. O. (2015). Collaborative leadership development with ICT: Experiences from three exemplary schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 18, 340-364. doi:10.1080/13603124.2014.963689

Heath, D., Maghrabi, R., & Carr, N. (2015). Implications of information and communication technologies (ICT) for school-home communication. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 14, 363-396.

Hines, C., Edmonson, S., & Moore, G. W. (2008). The impact of technology on high school principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 92, 276-291. doi:10.1177/0192636508328593

Hogan, B., & Quan-Haase, A. (2010). Persistence and change in social media. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30, 309-315. doi:10.1177/0270467610380012

Houston, P. (2001). Superintendents for the 21st century: It's not just a job, it's a calling. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 82, 428-433. doi:10.2307/20439929

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Statistics (Version 24) [Computer software]. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). (2009). *NETS for administrators 2009*. Retrieved from the ISTE website:

<http://www.iste.org/standards/ISTE-standards/standards-for-administrators>

Junco, R., & Chickering, A. W. (2010). Civil discourse in the age of social media. *About Campus, 15*(4), 12-18. doi:10.1002/abc.20030

Kelly, V. L. (2009). The impact of technology on superintendent communication. *Journal of School Public Relations, 30*, 309-324.

Larkin, P. (2013). Tweeting the good news and other ways to use social media. *Educational Leadership, 70*(7), 70-72.

Larson, L. (2009). A descriptive study of mentoring and technology integration among teacher education faculty. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 7*(1), 119-135.

Leiner, B. M., Cerf, V. G., Clark, D. D., Kahn, R. E., Kleinrock, L., Lynch, D. C., ... Wolff, S. S. (1997). The past and future history of the Internet. *Communications of the ACM, 40*(2), 102-108. doi:10.1145/253671.253741

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership & Management, 28*, 27-42.
doi:10.1080/13632430701800060

Lim, C. P., & Khine, M. S. (2006). Managing teachers' barriers to ICT integration in Singapore schools. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 14*, 97-125.

- Lovejoy, K., Waters, R., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Engaging stakeholders through Twitter: How nonprofit organizations are getting more out of 140 characters or less. *Public Relations Review*, 38, 313-318. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.01.005
- McCutcheon, N. (2013). *Use of social media as a school principal* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3589535)
- McLeod, S., Bathon, J. M., & Richardson, J. W. (2011). Studies of technology tool usage are not enough: A response to the articles in this special issue. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 6, 288-297.
doi:10.1177/194277511100600512
- McLeod, S., & Richardson, J. W. (2011). The dearth of technology leadership coverage. *Journal of School Leadership*, 21(2), 216-240.
- Morse, J. (2003). Principles of mixed- and multi-method research design. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 189–208). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). (2011). *Educational Leadership Program Standards: 2011 ELCC Building Level*. Retrieved from NPBEA website:
<http://www.ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=zRZI73R0nOQ=>
- Newbury, E., Humphreys, L., & Fuess, L. (2014). Over the hurdles: Barriers to social media use in extension offices. *Journal of Extension*, 52(5), 1-10.

- Norris, S. E., & Porter, T. H. (2011). The changing face of leadership: Making an impression in the technically mediated landscape. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 4(4), 69-73. doi:10.1002/jls.20199
- NVivo (Version 11) [Computer software]. Burlington, MA: QSR International.
- Olmstead, C. (2013). Using technology to increase parent involvement in schools. *TechTrends*, 57(6), 28-37.
- O'Neill, B., Zumwalt, A., & Bechman, J. (2011). Social media use of cooperative extension family economics educators: Online survey results and implications. *Journal of Extension*, 49(6), 1-6.
- O'Reilly, F. L., & Matt, J. J. (2013). Public relations opportunities for schools utilizing innovations in virtual communities. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 2(2), 139-143. doi:10.5539/jel.v2n2p139
- Perrin, A. (2015, October 8). *Social media usage: 2005-2015*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>
- Perrin, A., & Duggan, M. (2015, June 26). *Americans' Internet access: 2000-2015*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015/>
- Porterfield, K., & Carnes, M. (2012). School communication in the age of Google. *Journal of School Public Relations*, 33, 115-130.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Qualtrics (2017 version) [Computer software]. Provo, UT: Qualtrics.

- Quan-Haase, A. (2008). Instant messaging on campus: Use and integration in university students' everyday communication. *Information Society*, 24, 105-115.
doi:10.1080/01972240701883955
- Rafaeli, S., & LaRose, R. J. (1993). Electronic bulletin boards and “public goods” explanations of collaborative mass media. *Communication Research*, 20, 277-297.
doi:10.1177/009365093020002005
- Richardson, J. W., Bathon, J., Flora, K. L., & Lewis, W. D. (2012). NETS*A scholarship: A review of published literature. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 45, 131-151. doi:10.1080/15391523.2012.10782600
- Richardson, J. W., McLeod, S., & Sauers, N. (2015). Technology leadership is just good leadership: Dispositions of tech savvy superintendents. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 12(1), 11-30.
- Rindell, A., & Strandvik, T. (2010). Corporate brand evolution: Corporate brand images evolving in consumers' everyday life. *European Business Review*, 22, 276-286.
doi:10.1108/09555341011040976
- Rowden, M. (2004). *Identity: Transforming performance through integrated identity management*. Hampshire, England: Gower Publishing.
- Sanderson, J., & Cheong, P. H. (2010). Tweeting prayers and communicating grief over Michael Jackson online. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30, 328-340.
doi:10.1177/0270467610380010
- Sauers, N. J., & Richardson, J. W. (2015). Leading by following: An analysis of how K-12 school leaders use Twitter. *NASSP Bulletin*, 99, 127-146.
doi:10.1177/0192636515583869

- Sauers, N. J., Richardson, J. W., & McLeod, S. (2014). Technology-savvy school superintendents: Successes and challenges. *Journal of School Leadership*, 24(6), 1177-1201.
- Scott, D. (2010). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use social media, blogs, news releases, online video, and viral marketing to reach buyers directly*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Stone, M., Woodcock, N., & Machtynger, L. (2000). *Customer relationship marketing: Get to know your customers and win their loyalty* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Kogan Page Business Books.
- Texas Education Agency (TEA). (2016). *Enrollment in Texas public schools, 2015-16*. Retrieved from Texas Education Agency website:
http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/enroll_index.html
- Texas Education Agency (TEA). (2017a). *Becoming a principal or superintendent in Texas*. Retrieved from Texas Education Agency website:
http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/Additional_Certifications/Becoming_a_Principal_or_Superintendent_in_Texas/
- Texas Education Agency (TEA). (2017b). *Educator reports and data*. Retrieved from Texas Education Agency website:
http://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Educator_Data/Educator_Reports_and_Data/
- Thackeray, R., Neiger, B. L., Smith, A. K., & Van Wagenen, S. B. (2012). Adoption and

- use of social media among public health departments. *BMC Public Health*, 12, 242-247. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-12-242
- Thompson, B. C., Mazer, J. P., & Grady, E. F. (2015). The changing nature of parent-teacher communication: Mode selection in the smartphone era. *Communication Education*, 64, 187-207. doi:10.1080.03634523.2015.1014382
- Trump, K. S. (2012). The post-crisis crisis. *School Administrator*, 69(4), 39-42.
- Vanderlinde, R., Dexter, S., & van Braak, J. (2012). School-based ICT policy plans in primary education: Elements, typologies and underlying processes. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 43, 505–519. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2011.01191.x
- Vitak, J., & Ellison, N. B. (2013). ‘There’s a network out there you might as well tap’: Exploring the benefits of and barriers to exchanging informational and support-based resources on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 15, 243-259. doi:10.1177/1461444812451566
- Wang, Y. (2013). Social media in schools: A treasure trove or hot potato? *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 16(1), 56-64. doi:10.1177/1555458913478424
- Waters, R. D., Burnett, E., Lamm, A., & Lucas, J. (2009). Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using Facebook. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 102-106. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.01.006
- Waters, R. D., & Jones, P. M. (2011). Using video to build an organizations’ identity and brand: A content analysis of nonprofit organizations’ YouTube videos. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 23, 248-268. doi:10.1080/10495142.2011.594779

- Williams, D. (2006). On and off the 'Net: Scales for social capital in an online era. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11, 593-628. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00029.x
- Yardi, S., & Boyd, D. (2010). Dynamic debates: An analysis of group polarization over time on Twitter. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 30, 316-327. doi:10.1177/0270467610380011
- Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Yost, H., & Fan, S. (2014). Social media technologies for collaboration and communication: Perceptions of childcare professionals and families. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(2), 36-41.
- Young, S., Berube, W., & Perry, S. (2008). The influence of technology on communication for school leaders: Preferences, beliefs, and use. *Planning and Changing Journal*, 39(1/2), 81-97.

APPENDIX A

*SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY*

APPENDIX A

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY (HAMPTON, 2016)

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 of 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, please list position:

Q6. School Setting Demographics

Q6.1. What best describes your school district's setting?

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Rural

Q6.2. What best describes your school's level?

- ☐ Elementary/Primary
- ☐ Secondary (Middle School/Junior High/High School)

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

	Not at all	1 day per week	2 to 3 days per week	4 to 5 days per week	6 to 7 days per week
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass Notification System*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Web Site (may include apps)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text Messaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Social Media Outlets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Mass Notification System is a means to send information in a multimodal way with messages synchronously disseminated via phone, text, and/or e-mail. (Ex. School Messenger)

Q8. Please indicate using the following scale which social media outlets are used for your school's communication with stakeholders.

	Not at all	1 day per week	2 to 3 days per week	4 to 5 days per week	6 to 7 days per week
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass Notification System*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Web Site (may include apps)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text Messaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Social Media Outlets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9. How comfortable are you using social media outlets as a communication tool?

	Not at all	Slightly Comfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable
Blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mass Notification System	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic Newsletter/E-mail Announcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Web Site (may include apps)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text Messaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Social Media Outlets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Athletics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent Events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School/Student Achievements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pictures/Videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Announcements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important Dates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Links to Parent Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emergency Communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Using social media has increased parental involvement	O	O	O	O	O
Social media has increased the amount of communication with stakeholders	O	O	O	O	O
Use of social media has increased feedback	O	O	O	O	O
Use of social media to communicate information to stakeholders has improved the school/district image	O	O	O	O	O
Use of social media as a communication tool has allowed the school/district to reach stakeholders not previously reached	O	O	O	O	O

Q12. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding possible concerns of using social media outlets.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Too much time needed to post information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of training/knowledge in the use of social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of resources for stakeholders to obtain the information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security/Privacy issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

If you would be willing to participate in an interview (either face-to-face or over the phone) please provide your name and contact information below.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY COVER LETTER

APPENDIX B
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Date

Dear School Administrator:

Greetings! You are being solicited to complete the *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders* survey. The purpose of this survey is to examine school administrators' technology communication practices with stakeholders. The data obtained from this study will assist in examining and developing recommended technology communication practices.

Please try to answer all the questions. Filling out the attached survey is entirely voluntary, but answering each question will make the survey most useful. This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and all responses will be kept completely confidential. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you may stop your participation at any time. In addition, you will also not benefit directly from your participation in the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your willingness to participate in this study is implied if you proceed with completing the survey. Your completion of the survey is not only greatly appreciated, but invaluable. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Heather Bowman.

By clicking on the survey link to access and complete the survey, the participant gives permission to participate in the study and provide anonymous and confidential data.

Sincerely,

Heather Bowman
Doctoral Student

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW INVITATION E-MAIL

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW INVITATION E-MAIL

Date

Dear Participant:

My name is Heather Bowman, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. I recently received your response to a survey focusing upon how school administrators use social media tools to communicate with stakeholders in an effort to develop recommended communication practices. Thank you for providing your feedback. Because you are a school administrator who showed evidence of using social media to communicate with stakeholders, I am inviting you to participate in this research study through a telephone or face-to-face interview.

The interview will consist of 10 questions and should last about 30 minutes. There is no compensation for completing the interview and there is no known risk. All information will remain confidential and anonymous. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you can decline at any point in time without penalty. No obvious undue risks will be endured. In addition, you will not benefit directly from your participation in the study.

I am available to conduct an interview at a time that is convenient for you. **Please send a few options (day/time) when you are available to participate in an interview via telephone or face-to-face.** I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you again for your support of this research.

Sincerely,

Heather Bowman

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully, and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: School Administrators' Use of Social Media with Stakeholders to Build Social Capital

Principal Investigator(s): Heather Bowman, MEd

Student Investigator(s): Heather Bowman, MEd

Faculty Sponsor: Jana Willis, PhD

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study will be to examine elementary school administrators' practices and perceptions of using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices to build social capital.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures are as follows: Surveys will be disseminated to participants via the TEPSA e-mail newsletter, TEPSA Twitter, and via e-mail using principals' contact information available publicly through the Texas Education Agency. The primary researcher will review survey results and invite those school administrators whose survey responses indicated social media use to participate in a telephone or face-to-face interview. Potential interview participants will receive an invitation e-mail and request of available dates and times. After a time is agreed upon, the interview participant will receive a copy of the interview informed consent for review. During the interview, the participant will acknowledge receipt of the informed consent, ask any questions, and provide verbal consent to participate in the study. Interviews will be digitally recorded and uploaded to Rev.com, a third-party transcription service. Participants will receive a preliminary copy of the results for their review and approval.

EXPECTED DURATION

The total anticipated time commitment will be approximately 30 minutes.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) better understand social media use by school administrators to communicate with stakeholders.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participants' documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the Principal Investigator for a minimum of five years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions. If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Heather Bowman, MEd.

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, Heather Bowman by e-mail. The Faculty Sponsor Jana Willis, Ph.D. may be contacted by phone or e-mail.

SIGNATURES: Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Participant's Printed name: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE # FWA0000406

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

(adapted from Cox, 2012)

Hello, my name is Heather Bowman. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I really appreciate your time to provide input for this research project. Today I hope to gain a better understanding of how you use social media tools to communicate with stakeholders. In order to ease the interview process, I am using a third-party source to record and transcribe our conversation. If at any time you would like the interview to cease, please let me know.

Do I have permission to record our interview?

Will you agree to participate in the interview after reviewing the Informed Consent agreement?

Do you have any additional questions before we start?

1. How long have you been an administrator?
2. How do you perceive communication with stakeholders has changed in the last five years?
3. Do you use social media tools to communicate with your stakeholders? If so which ones and how do you use them?
4. Why did you start using social media?
5. What steps did you take to become comfortable using social media to communicate with stakeholders?
6. What information do you communicate using social media? Why? Is there any information you don't share using social media? Why?
7. What are the benefits of using social media to communicate with stakeholders?
8. What are the drawbacks of using social media to communicate with stakeholders?
9. What do you recommend to other school administrators who want to implement social media into a school communication plan? How could they start the process?
10. Based on your experience, what best practices would you recommend to another administrator to promote the success of using social media as well as avoid the drawbacks? Is there anything else you'd like to share?

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION TO SURVEY MEMBERS OF THE
TEXAS ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION TO SURVEY MEMBERS OF THE
TEXAS ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION

Dissertation Study Request



Inbox x



Heather Bowman

Feb 8 ☆



Dear Mr. Damian,

I attend the University of Houston-Clear Lake and am working towards my Doctorate in Educational Leadership. The purpose of my dissertation study will be to determine the practices and perceptions of school administrators on using social media to communicate with stakeholders and explore recommended social media communication practices. There is limited research in this field of study, and considering information communication technology (ICT) trends, I hope this information will help principals improve upon their school communication plans and practices to develop social capital. I will present a proposal of my study at the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA) conference later this month. For more information about my study, please see a copy of what I will present at SERA (attached).

The mixed method study includes a survey of 15 items. Although I had estimated this survey would take no more than 15 minutes, the pilot study showed participants needed between 7 and 10 minutes to complete the survey. My quantitative methodologist states I need to collect at least 100 survey responses for my final study. For the qualitative component, I would conduct 10 to 12 interviews via telephone or Skype. In the pilot study, interview participants were selected based upon survey feedback indicating they would be willing to participate in an interview. The same format will be followed in my final study. Based on the pilot study, interviews lasted about 30 to 45 minutes, and the participants seemed interested in the topic.

I am reaching out to you because I am in need of a means to reach enough school administrators for my final study. Can you think of an organization or district that would be of assistance? Of course, I would be happy to share a summary of the results with the organization or district.

Thank you for your time,

Heather Bowman

**Eddie Damian**

to Harley, Anita, me ▾

📎 Feb 8 ☆



Heather, I just visited with our Executive Director, Harley Eckhart, and he has approved your request to survey our members. Per his approval, please send your survey and relevant documents to Ms. Anita Jiles and she will assist you in this task.

Have a great day, Eddie

APPENDIX G

PERMISSION TO USE

*SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY*

APPENDIX G

PERMISSION TO USE

*SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH
STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY*

Dissertation Instrument



Dissertation x

**Heather Bowman**

to steven.c.hampt. ▾

7/10/16



Dear Dr. Hampton,

I am a doctoral student majoring in educational leadership with the University of Houston-Clear Lake. I became interested in studying school leaders' use of social media to build social capital based upon articles by Cox and McLeod. However, I lacked a good instrument for my study. Without an instrument, I feared I would have to totally change my topic, but then I read your dissertation "Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders: School Administrators and Superintendents' Perceptions." I am interested in replicating your study using the instrument you created while also adding a qualitative question. I would like to know if I have your permission to use the instrument you created for your study with the addition of a qualitative question. Of course, I will cite proper credit for the instrument in my study, and I will be happy to provide you with the reliability and validity measures based upon a pilot study and my final study.

Thank you for your consideration,
Heather Bowman

**Steve Hampton** ✓

to me ▾

7/10/16



Heather,

I would be honored if you used my research instrument. I wish I would have added a qualitative component to my study as well to get more specific data. Feel free to use whatever you need. The dissertation process is all about perseverance. If I can be of any assistance, let me know. Good luck! I would love to hear how your results turn out.

Wish you well,

Steve

APPENDIX H
PERMISSION TO REPRINT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
FROM COX

APPENDIX H

PERMISSION TO REPRINT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FROM COX

Doctoral Student Seeking Permission to Reprint



Inbox x



Heather

to dcox

Oct 9 (4 days ago) ☆



Dear Dr. Cox,

I am a doctoral student majoring in educational leadership with the University of Houston-Clear Lake. I became interested in studying school leaders' use of social media to build social capital based upon articles by you and Dr. McLeod. For my dissertation, I crafted a mixed methods study using Hampton's survey from his dissertation *Social Media as a Tool to Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders: School Administrators and Superintendents' Perceptions* for the study's quantitative component. I was very impressed with your dissertation, *School Communications 2.0: A Social Media Strategy for K-12 Principals and Superintendents*. Therefore, to provide for a more data-rich study, I utilized your interview questions as a foundation for my qualitative interview questions. As doctoral students at my university, we must base our research instrument and interview questions on previous studies.

I am now at the library check phase of the dissertation process. Although I cited your name with the interview questions in the Appendix, my university library is asking for written permission from you to reprint the interview questions, with some modifications, in my dissertation. Please let me know if I have your permission to reprint your interview questions from your study, *School Communications 2.0: A Social Media Strategy for K-12 Principals and Superintendents*, in my dissertation with some modifications. Of course, I will properly cite the interview questions in my study.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather Bowman

**Dan Cox**

Oct 10



to me ▾

Heather,

You have my permission to reprint the interview questions I used in my study, *School Communications 2.0: A Social Media Strategy for K-12 Principals and Superintendents*. The social media landscape has changed so much over the past five years. I would be very interested in reading your finished dissertation.

Sincerely,

Dan

Daniel D. Cox, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Charles City Community School District