

RETHINKING THE USE OF SOCIAL BLOGS FOR CORPORATE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN EMERGING MARKETS POST COVID-19

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Abstract

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The study aimed to ascertain how social blogging usage shaped social capital in the new strategy for corporate reputation management, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe's telecoms sector. This was dictated by the more general goal of learning how the telecoms sector reacted to the transition from conventional to modern corporate reputation strategies driven by social capital in the era of social blogs. The study positions Twitter between the traditional corporate reputation guides (top-level managers, operation managers, general employees, and customers) and the contemporary methods (boundary theory, social cognitive, social blogs, and social exchange) (Yang, 2020; Mhlophe & Chinjova, 2022; Moyo et al., 2022). A mixed-method approach was employed in the study. The results show that social blogs, specifically Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, have a direct impact on the management of positive corporate reputation in the telecommunications industry as they contribute to the social capital of the organisation leading to the contemporary management of reputation, which is critical in building organisational resilience post-pandemic. This led to the development of an adapted framework that the industry and practitioners can adopt post the COVID-19 pandemic in emerging markets like Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Social Blogs, Corporate Reputation, Social Capital, Twitter, Emerging Markets

Authors' individual contribution: Conceptualization — T.M.; Methodology — T.M.; Writing — T.M.; Supervision — C.G.P., E.M., and U.G.S.; Funding Acquisition — C.G.P. and E.M.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The interchange of information among the major forces that drive the national economy depends on the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe. Because of this, the companies in this market fiercely compete for a larger market share and profits. This is because it is a business whose daily success depends on the number of clients and users

of telecommunications services. However, a number of companies need help with negative perceptions, mainly from online platforms, due to users' complaints of poor services, network failures, and high cost of services (Chauke, 2012; Chapanga & Choto, 2015; Marumbwa, 2013; Sengere, 2021).

Some larger businesses, such *Telecel* and *Africom* in Zimbabwe, have scaled back their operations, leading to the closure of some of their

countrywide subsidiaries (Bell, 2020). Since subscribers now regard telecommunications industry players as motivated by profit gains ahead of quality, reputation risk issues for the sector have also increased (Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe [POTRAZ], 2018, p. 12). Further, the industry has been, like other businesses, being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw national lockdowns starting in March 2020. Accordingly, since the outbreak, users have been migrating from traditional business practices to digital-based solutions anchored on the telecommunications industry. This shift was not planned for and caught the telecommunications industry flat foot (POTRAZ, 2022, p. 21). This has increased strain on the industry as the network was not conditioned for the upsurge in the number of users and the support that the industry has become to the entire economy through anchoring banking, education, health, transport, and other critical services (Mhlophe & Chinjova, 2022, p. 93). This is a challenge to business and industry resilience (Fundira & Mupfungidza, 2022, p. 19).

This has resulted in a rise in the reputational management challenges contributing to the resilience challenges from this sector and reduced shareholder value. Since the major issue appeared to be coming from the bad perception that the customers had about their services, it is vital to understand the impact of social blogging on the reputation and operation of telecommunication enterprises (Freedom House, 2021). According to POTRAZ (2017), the primary causes of such a poor company reputation have included, among other things, high prices coupled with inefficient service delivery (Mhlanga, 2017). There is a need for in-depth scrutiny and thorough investigation on how matters of corporate reputation impact the operation of firms in the telecommunications industry and, more importantly, how such reputation management can contribute to the industry's resilience post-COVID-19 (Sengere, 2021; Fundira & Mupfungidza, 2022). Zeffass and Viertmann's (2017) observation that ineffective corporate reputation management will lead to decreased market share and a decrease in a business's competitiveness supports this. Corporate reputation measurements already exist and have been generalized to concerns with organizational structure under the direction of senior management, operational staff, and general personnel. These appear to be static in light of the world's shift away from static, unidirectional communication and toward dynamic online interaction and information sharing, which reshapes business reputation management in novel ways. This is accomplished by incorporating modern theories into the conventional methods of managing reputation and the industry's resilience through modern reputation management, therefore, contributing particularly to this new knowledge gap (Brodie et al., 2013; Davids & Brown, 2021; Moyo et al., 2022).

Five categories comprise Zimbabwe's telecommunications sector: 1) postal services, 2) fixed telephone services, 3) courier services, 4) mobile cellular services, and 5) internet access providers, which have emerged as the focus of this investigation due to their close ties to the development of social blogs.

The postal services, which served as the foundation for the sector's development, saw the initial growth stage of the telecommunications industry. Through *Zimpost*, this solidified the initial government monopoly. Following this, fixed telephone services for fixed voice and fixed internet services were established and offered by the government's *TelOne* monopoly (Nyamadzawo, 2011). The establishment of courier services marked the third stage in the sector's development, with seven businesses assisting local and international stakeholders in the sector's expansion. According to Nyamadzawo (2011), the fourth stage saw the introduction of mobile cellular services offered by *Econet*, *Telecel*, and *NetOne* mobile companies. Seven major businesses are now providing data and internet services in Zimbabwe after the last two stages of their development and expansion of these internet service providers. The country today has 19 firms in the telecommunications sector, as opposed to the State monopoly of posts and telecommunications corporations (PTC) in the early years after independence (POTRAZ, 2018).

In the telecommunications sector, social blogging has changed practises from traditional forms of communication. Still, more needs to be done to determine which forms of communication are most appropriate, particularly for the sector. However, the sector is dealing with a wide range of reputation management issues that appear to result from a failure to grasp how to carefully balance the use of old and new media (Marumbwa, 2013; Sengere, 2021; POTRAZ, 2021). On top of this challenge, COVID-19 exponential shift by the country migrating from traditional business approaches and accessing services online, thereby disrupting the industry, which was not prepared for such rapid changes as the infrastructure was strained and altered (Deloitte, 2020; POTRAZ, 2022). The study closes a conceptual and practical knowledge gap on how telecommunications companies are bridging the gap between traditional approaches to corporate reputation and contemporary theoretical propositions on how social blogs, with a focus on Twitter, contribute to industry social capital and shape contemporary methods of improving corporate reputation; and how this, in turn, will impact the industry's resilience to COVID-19 pandemics. The next step in this study was to compare Twitter to other social blogs to determine how efficient it is as a modern social blog in enhancing business reputation for the Zimbabwean telecommunications sector. Twitter was deliberately chosen because it has the quickest user growth rate among social media platforms and is currently the most popular, with 43.62% of the market as of October 2021, while Facebook is rated second with 35.86% (StatCounter, 2021). Understanding Twitter will enable generalisations about usage and theoretical contributions to new knowledge.

The structure of the article is articulated as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature, which is critical in locating the paper's research gap and conceptual design. Section 3 is the research methodology. Section 4 outlines the study results, followed by Section 5, the discussion of the study results, and Section 6, presents the conclusion of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

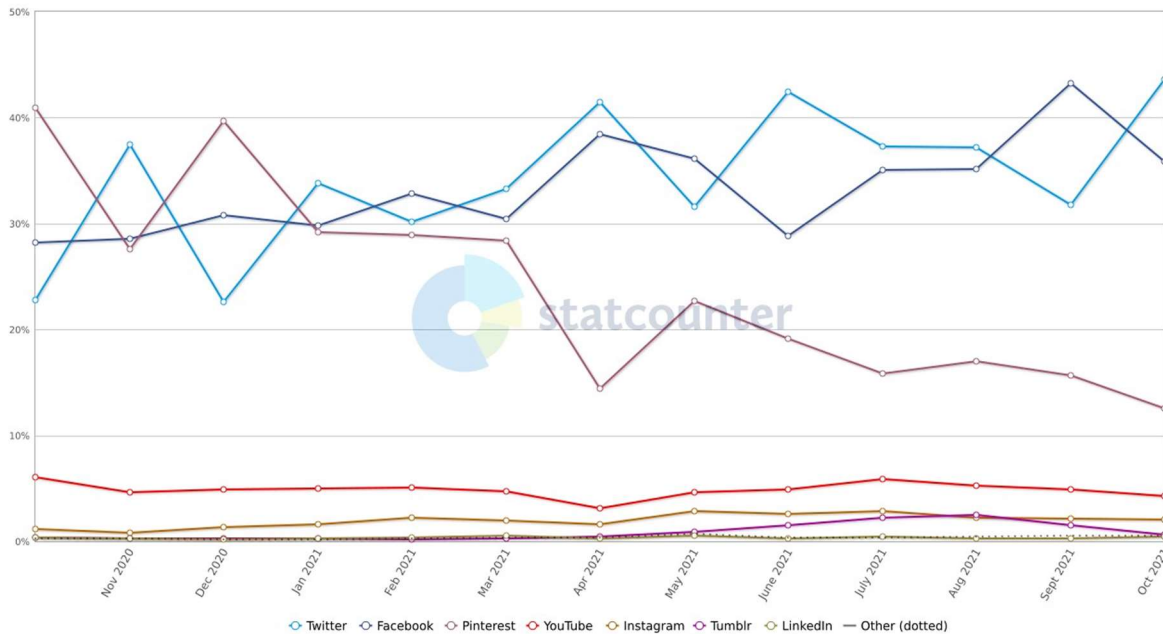
2.1. Social blogs in Zimbabwe

According to StatCounter (2021), the top social blogs as of October 2021 by annual active users are Twitter with 43.62%, Facebook (35.86%), Pinterest (12.53%), YouTube (4.27%), Instagram (2.08%) and Tumblr (0.64%), respectively. The usage patterns are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 demonstrates that Twitter is one of the social blogs that commands frequent usage in the country, which points to the need for further inquiry on how it affects corporate reputation, especially in emerging markets such as Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry. The social media network's usage was reported to be 25% in October 2020, compared to Pinterest's 42% usage, but in just a year, it gained more than 18% to overtake Pinterest as the most popular social media site in the nation. The most popular social media network in general usage in Africa over the same evaluation period is Facebook, with 73.88% of users, followed by YouTube, with 10.96%, and Twitter, with 7.12%. On a worldwide scale, however, the patterns place

Facebook at 72.22%, Twitter at 8.77%, and Pinterest at 8.37% (StatCounter, 2021). This demonstrates how social platform behaviours in Zimbabwe differ from those in other regions and worldwide. Although Facebook usage is in second place at 35.66%, comparative research reveals that the social blog has had a monopoly on use in the nation for the past ten years. Between 2015 and 2019, there was a significant shift in Zimbabwe's use of social media. The numbers revealed a surge in Twitter usage, which suggests that within the next five to ten years, Twitter may overtake all other platforms as Zimbabwe's primary social media outlet. Corporate entities must deliberately choose how to use the platform for reputation management, considering this trend. Scholars have seen significant progress in Zimbabwe's national economy toward the utilisation and exploitation of the phenomena of social blogs, which impacts views around the world. Social blogs are generally appreciated in Zimbabwe's telecommunications sector, but their effects haven't been thoroughly studied. This has limited the inquiry into how reputation management, based on changes in preferences, can form part of the strategic framework for industry resilience post-COVID-19 (Madziwa & Sibanda, 2018).

Figure 1. Social media stats Zimbabwe from October 2020–October 2021



Source: StatCounter (2021).

2.2. Social capital

The institutionalisation of familiar relationships, the interaction between the members of the networks and their identities that are then maintained by institutional means, and the institution's dependence on those networks are all aspects of social capital theory that combines the current and potential. The theory supports that social bases or relationships are a significant resource for organisational goals by establishing notions and constructions such as informal networks, trust, norms, and values (Yang, 2020). Structure, bonding, strong and weak links, and horizontal and vertical

networks are all aspects of social capital. The following forms of social capital are crucial regarding how employees use public social media: "Online bridging and bonding social capital, shared vision and network links, structural, rational, and cognitive social capital, and social capital" (Chen et al., 2020, p. 5).

2.3. Corporate reputation management

Conceptually, corporate reputation has been thought of as an intangible or soft asset, a term for something that cannot be quantified or systematically controlled (Aggerholm et al., 2011;

Balmer, 2017; Swoboda & Hirschmann, 2017; Thiessen & Ingenhoff, 2011). Deephouse (2000) asserts that an organisation's reputation entails a group evaluation of its standing from a perspective of effect, esteem, and knowledge. This shows that the organisation's viewpoint is the result of the many stakeholders' lived experiences and perceptions. This is a change from Fombrun's (1996) formulation, which gave the idea structure and definition. He described business reputation as "the general opinion that its stakeholders have of a corporation" (Fombrun, 1996, p. 9). Since the field of corporate reputation management is new, there is no widely agreed definition. Accordingly, corporate reputation is defined as "the overall assessments of organisations [sic] by their stakeholders" (Van Riel & Fombrun, (2007, p. 43). In terms of "an organisation's ability to fulfil their expectations, whether those stakeholders are interested in buying the company's products, are interested in working for the company, or are considering investing in the company", corporate reputation refers to the general perceptions that stakeholders may have (Verčič et al., 2016, p. 29). According to some research, a company's stakeholders frequently have conflicting interests, which can cause stress and strategic ambiguity (Dickinson-Delaporte et al., 2010). Strategic ambiguity refers to the deliberate use of vague communication to allow for a multiplicity interpretation of a message by different stakeholders in striving towards the achievement of the company's outcomes (Verčič et al., 2016). There is, however, limited study on the nexus between reputation management and new media driven by social capital and how it contributes to industry resilience post-pandemic.

2.4. Corporate reputation management

The World Health Organization deemed the coronavirus (COVID-19), which has wracked the globe since it first appeared in China in December 2019, a pandemic (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020b). Millions were afflicted, over 100,000 of confirmed case, and many more endured anxieties due to the illness (WHO, 2020a). Governments worldwide implemented measures to lessen the epidemic's effects, including limiting domestic and international movement and, in many cases, requiring residents to remain in their homes under total lockdown (WHO, 2020b). The pandemic devastated the world economy, impacting consumers' and businesses' long-term demand and their financial well-being. Although mobile and internet carriers with significant exposure to retail consumers experienced more immediate hardships, the harm eventually spread throughout the entire value chain. Depending on how long the lockdown lasts, the effect varies globally (Kochanov et al., 2020). In Zimbabwe, the pandemic led to a significant fall in the levels of disposable income due to the lockdowns as the informal trade was put to a halt and unemployment levels increased, which impacted heavily on the aggregate demands in the short term as the cost of internet and telecommunication services was steep and beyond the reach of many. This was exacerbated by the fact that in 2018, a gigabyte was pegged at US\$70 in

Zimbabwe, according to Raul (2019). This was far too exorbitant compared to countries like Sudan and Egypt, where the cost was pegged at US\$0.68 and US\$1.49, respectively (Raul, 2019; POTRAZ, 2021). Yet there is limited or anecdotal evidence on studies about the shifts in communications towards new approaches to corporate reputation management and industry resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic.

2.5. Conceptual framework

The main relationship of the study was examined using the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2 below, and formulated by the following hypothesis:

H1: The use of Twitter has a beneficial impact on the corporate reputation of telecommunications enterprises operating in Zimbabwe.

For a more in-depth study, intervening variables were introduced because the purpose of the study was to place Twitter between traditional corporate reputation guides (top-level managers, operations managers, general employees, and customers) and contemporary methods (boundary theory, social cognition, social media, and social exchange). In this regard, a second hypothesis can be formulated:

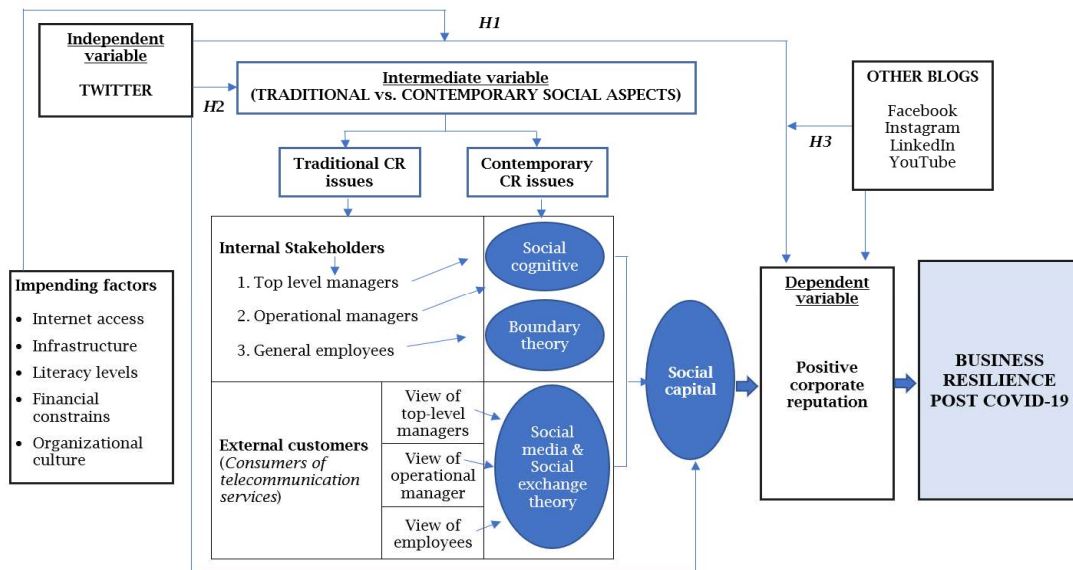
H2: The use of Twitter has a beneficial effect on the transition from conventional to modern approaches and the development of social capital in the telecommunications industry in Zimbabwe.

The study invited other comparable alternative types (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube) as a comparison to assess their impact on corporate reputation against Twitter because Twitter is not the only social blog in the landscape, which leads to the formulation of the third hypothesis:

H3: Other blogs affect how Twitter, moderating factors, and themselves shape corporate reputation management.

The framework contains a number of inhibiting elements, such as infrastructure, financial limitations, organisational culture, and literacy levels, which have an impact on the use and use of social blog platforms. The fact that traditional corporate reputation factors are linked to modern problems and, if properly managed, can build social capital for telecommunication businesses is more significant in guiding the study's main gap and how it affects business resilience after the COVID-19 pandemic. The directed hypothesis was used to develop the hypotheses. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this is the process of creating a prediction about the predicted outcome based on prior literature and studies on the subject that hint at a possible conclusion. The hypotheses were developed through the directional hypothesis. This is defined as the process of making a prediction about the expected outcome, basing this prediction on prior literature and studies on the topic that suggest a potential outcome (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.189). This is because of the research approach of Quan-Qual mixed methods where the researcher seeks to contribute to knowledge by further developing the known while moving to the unknown (Saunders et al., 2016).

Figure 2. Research conceptual framework



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed-methodologies approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods into its development. The quan-qual sequential mixed approaches are used for this (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). Therefore, a solid foundation in sequential mixed methods research was essential for the study. The sequential exploratory study design or the sequential explanatory research design, where the former starts with qualitative before moving on to a quantitative approach and the latter starts with quantitative, followed by a qualitative approach, are two major strategies in data collection, according to Saunders et al. (2016). This study's data was initially gathered using a quantitative methodology employing survey questionnaires. In-depth interviews with a few chosen research participants were then done using a qualitative approach. As a result, 18 carefully chosen key interview informants (KII) were questioned for this study due to their knowledge of the sector. They also highlight that complicated questions necessitate doing interviews for the researcher to gather trustworthy, credible, and detailed data from the process and that top management workers are highly inclined to agree to be questioned in person rather than filling out a questionnaire.

Therefore, the research objective is to develop a framework for social blogs and corporate reputation driven by Twitter to enhance reputation and resilience after COVID-19 in the telecommunications industry.

3.1. Population and sampling

The quantitative portion of the study employed a stratified random sampling technique. Each member of the target population has an equal probability of being selected for the sample when simple random sampling is used. When the researcher wishes different subgroups in the sample to also be represented in the final sample picked, however, a stratified random selection approach is used (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The researcher must choose the specific categories or groups of instances that should be purposefully included in the final sample when using a stratified random sampling strategy (Robinson, 2014). The sample is then divided or stratified in accordance with these categories in terms of factors that can be geographical, demographic, socioeconomic, or psychological (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016). The only prerequisite is that "there is a clear theoretical rationale for assuming that the resulting groups will differ in some meaningful way" (Robinson, 2014, p.17). Based on these requirements, the researcher used the stratification approach to determine the top five service providers in terms of the duration of operation, annual revenue generated, market share held by each organization, and total employee count. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of these factors for each of the five top companies: *Econet*, *NetOne*, *Telecel*, *TelOne*, and *Liquid*.

Table 1. Top five service providers in Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry

| Organisation | Years in operation | Annual revenue | Market share: Subscriptions & national coverage | Number of employees |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|---|---------------------|
| Econet | 20 | 686,882,893 | 80.8% | 1532 |
| NetOne | 22 | 105,520,406 | 12.4% | 705 |
| Telecel | 22 | 57,477,190 | 6.8% | 528 |
| TelOne | 41 | 116,571,070 | 100% Fixed telephone 23% Internet access points (IAP) | 1910 |
| Liquid | 14 | 98,234,302 | 52.6% | 159 |
| Total | | | | 4834 |

Source: POTRAZ (2018, p. 15).

A simplified formula to calculate sample size (Yamane, 1967) was used to reduce the total identifiable population of 4834 personnel (as

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{4834}{1 + 4834 \times (0,05)^2} = 369 \quad (1)$$

where: n — sample size; N — population size; e — the level of precision.

Therefore, the total population was proportionally reduced to a representative sample using the calculation above. As a result:

- The formula takes a 95% confidence interval and the standard error = 5%, therefore: $e = 0.05$.
- A stratified sampling was employed to categorise the respondents.
- This was followed by the proportion approach used to calculate the number of employees selected from each organization to be included in the sample of 369 from the five companies sampled.

The proportionate representation is illustrated in Table 2 below, which indicates the number of questionnaires distributed in each of the top five companies sampled.

Table 2. Questionnaire distribution in the telecommunications industry

| Organisation | Proportion | Total number of questionnaires |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Econet | $= (1532/4834) \times 369$ | 117 |
| NetOne | $= (705/4834) \times 369$ | 54 |
| Telecel | $= (528/4834) \times 369$ | 40 |
| TelOne | $= (1910/4834) \times 369$ | 146 |
| Liquid | $= (159/4834) \times 369$ | 12 |
| Total | | 369 |

3.2. Qualitative sampling procedure

Purposive judgmental sampling was utilized to choose participants for the qualitative portion of the study based on their standing in their individual organizations, years of work experience, credentials, and areas of expertise. According to the definition of purposeful sampling, it is a “non-probability sampling process in which the researcher’s judgment is utilized to pick the instances that make up the sample. This can be done using critical cases, theoretical cases, critical cases with maximal similarity, extreme cases, heterogeneity, or typical cases” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 724). Purposive sampling is frequently used in qualitative

investigations since these studies attempt to produce in-depth understandings, which can be obtained from fewer people than would be considered in quantitative studies. Due to their expertise in the telecommunications sector in Zimbabwe, the researchers specifically chose key interview informants from the sector. To do this, the researcher used the POTRAZ database to locate the 19 active companies in the industry and then interviewed 18 KII who volunteered to participate in the study. Due to the KII’s experience, practice, and expertise, they are knowledgeable about these strategic, operational, and administrative issues. As a result, the participants were also purposefully chosen to evaluate how strategically positioned social blog use is in reputation management within the companies. To get insights into the practice of corporate reputation management, the researcher purposefully chose all the KII in the sector. The goal was to use their expertise to triangulate the patterns that emerged from the quantitative data gathered.

4. RESULTS

A strategy for the efficient use of social blogs to improve company reputation in Zimbabwe was created by the study. Structural equation modelling was used to assess the links between the constructs or latent variables in the proposed model (SEM).

4.1. Qualitative sampling procedure

In this case, the model parameters were estimated using the maximum likelihood method. The model’s goodness of fit is evaluated using fit indices (Kline, 2005; Hair et al., 2010). The fit indices that assessed if there was an agreement between survey data and the model included the Chi-square (χ^2) test, Chi-square (χ^2) to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Goodness of fit indices (GFI), Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair et al., 2010). The test results and conclusions are displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. SEM model fit indices

| Fit Index | Recommended value | Value obtained | Decision |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Chi-square (χ^2) | $p > 0.05$ | 437.234 ($p = 0.000, p < 0.05$) | No model fit |
| Chi-square (χ^2) to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) | < 5 preferably < 3 | 2.789 | Model fit |
| Goodness of fit indices (GFI) | > 0.9 | 0.912 | Model fit |
| Root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) | < 0.08 preferably < 0.05 | 0.049 | Model fit |
| Comparative fit index (CFI) | > 0.9 | 0.930 | Model fit |

These findings show that, except for the Chi-square (χ^2), which was significant ($p > 0.05$), all fit indices were within acceptable bounds, indicating a satisfactory fit between the survey data and the theory. The Chi-square test cannot be trusted when evaluating model fit because it is unstable. The more stable approach is the Chi-square (χ^2) to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df). The better metric for determining model fit today is the $CMIN/df < 3$,

which indicates a good fit. Since the calculated $CMIN/df < 3$, $CFI > 0.9$, $GFI > 0.9$, and $RMSEA < 0.05$ indicate that the theory and survey data are well-matched, and the proposed model is likely to fit the data well. The researcher looked into the model’s proposed relationships after determining that the data were consistent. The route coefficients for the hypothesised relationships in the suggested model are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. An overview of the survey's direct hypothesis results

| No. | Proposed relationship | | | Effect type | Path coefficient (B) | p-value | Study results |
|-----|-----------------------|---|-------------|-------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|
| 1. | Challenges | → | Twitter | Direct | -0.183 | 0.004 | Accept |
| 2. | OrgStaOpp | → | Twitter | Direct | -0.071 | 0.448 | Reject |
| 3. | Customers | → | Twitter | Direct | -0.247 | 0.038 | Accept |
| 4. | Twitter | → | Operational | Direct | 0.250 | 0.001 | Accept |
| 5. | Twitter | → | General | Direct | 0.134 | 0.006 | Accept |
| 6. | Twitter | → | Top-level | Direct | 0.119 | 0.137 | Reject |
| 7. | Twitter | → | SocCap | Direct | -0.272 | 0.254 | Reject |
| 8. | Facebook | → | OrgStaOpp | Direct | 0.063 | 0.405 | Reject |
| 9. | Facebook | → | Top-level | Direct | 0.060 | 0.453 | Reject |
| 10. | Facebook | → | Operational | Direct | 0.280 | 0.010 | Accept |
| 11. | Facebook | → | General | Direct | 0.180 | 0.043 | Accept |
| 12. | Facebook | → | SocCap | Direct | -0.315 | 0.519 | Accept |
| 13. | OrgStaOpp | → | Top-level | Direct | 1.056 | *** | Accept |
| 14. | Display | → | Customers | Direct | 0.630 | *** | Accept |
| 15. | SocCap | → | PosCopRe | Direct | 0.540 | *** | Accept |

Note: PosCopRe — positive corporate reputation; OrgStaOpp — Organizational strategic opportunities. *** $p > 0.001$.

As presented Table 4 above, it summarises the standardised regression estimates of the influence of social blogs (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) on the relationship between social capital and positive corporate reputation and how they contribute to business resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2. Twitter

Challenges were shown to be adversely connected with Twitter, which was the first association to be investigated regarding *H1*. The findings show a marginally negative and statistically significant link between Twitter and challenges ($B = -0.183$, $p < 0.05$). The ability of Twitter to boost a positive company reputation declines as obstacles multiply.

In relation to *H2*, the second relationship stated that organizational strategic opportunities (*OrgStaOpp*) including vision reputation, strategy formulation, strategy coherence, and strategy drafting lead to improved reputation through Twitter. The results show no evidence of a significant relationship between Twitter and organizational strategic possibilities ($p > 0.05$). As a result, we reject the theory and come to the conclusion that Twitter and organizational strategic opportunities are unrelated. This is consistent with the findings of the literature research and the negative standard deviation on the issues when measuring top-level management use and roles on Twitter. It is possible that senior managers are too focused on the institution's strategic concerns to effectively manage and produce content for its Twitter handles. Instead, they should be setting the agenda for the fulfilment of the institution's long-term strategic goals.

The third relationship looked at the connection between top-level managers and organizational strategic opportunities. Results show a marginally negative correlation ($B = -0.247$, $p < 0.05$) between the two. According to research, top-level managers are not putting organizational strategic opportunities to good use, which hurts organizations' reputations in the marketplace. This further supports the requirement for a structured approach to make sure that top-level managers are in line with the perspectives and methods used by the other internal stakeholders for managing the company's reputation in the digital age and building resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic.

Customers use Twitter to promote a good corporate reputation, according to the results of the fourth relationship test pertaining to *H2*. The findings

show a somewhat negative but statistically significant relationship between Twitter users and businesses ($B = -0.247$, $p < 0.05$). Every time a customer utilises Twitter, an organisation's reputation suffers. As a result, in order to obtain favourable results, the actors in the telecommunications business must take intentional action to mediate a positive reputation process. There is no shared understanding of how social platforms should be used, as seen in the replies to questions about internal stakeholders' use of platforms. It appears that management has a clear vision for the organization, but there is little evidence to support how this vision is communicated to other organizations to ensure consistency and a shared purpose. Developing consistency on the important platforms and their key components, and how they feed into modern approaches to building a favorable reputation, based on the gaps identified in the literature review, will assist the industry players, addressing both concept and practice in building industry resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic (Cao et al., 2016; Delavari & Badizadeh, 2018).

The sixth connection examined by this study's hypothesis one (*H1*) was Twitter's connection to conventional problems with business reputation management. Results show a somewhat negative connection between Twitter and external clients ($B = -0.247$, $p < 0.05$). Twitter and operational managers were shown to have weakly positive connections ($B = 0.250$, $p > 0.01$), as well as Twitter and general employees ($B = 0.134$, $p > 0.05$). Top-level management and social capital (*SocCap*) did not appear to be significantly correlated with Twitter ($p > 0.05$). This implies that there is no internal consensus within the telecommunications sector over how to shift away from conventional methods of reputation management or management of traditional issues that are driven by social blogs. This, in turn, impacts how the industry's key players use social blogs to manage their reputation. As evidenced by the findings, while appearing to be aware of social media's existence, these participants continue to manage the process haphazardly by utilising digital platforms, which impacts negatively attempts at building industry resilience post-COVID-19. The literature review and the problem statement defining the reputational challenges facing the Zimbabwean telecoms industry provide additional support for this (Sengere, 2021).

4.3. Facebook

According to the six relationships, organisational strategic possibilities, including vision reputation, strategy formulation, strategy crafting, and strategy idea coordination, enhance Facebook's reputation relative to *H3*. The results show no evidence of a significant relationship between Facebook and organisational strategic possibilities ($p > 0.05$). As a result, we reject the theory and come to the conclusion that Facebook and organisational strategic prospects are unrelated. A strategic framework is needed to guarantee that top-level managers establish the tone and direction of engagement for the entire organisation because the same effects found for Twitter appear (Kaul & Chaudhri, 2019). This requires the proposed framework to establish a consolidated approach upon which the social blogs, in a seamless manner contribute to the industry resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic.

The seventh connection test examined how operational managers and organisational strategic possibilities related to *H3*. The findings show an extremely strong positive correlation between the two ($B = 1.056, p > 0.01$). According to research, operational managers utilize Facebook to boost a company's good corporate reputation. Operational managers always take an active role. But without a predetermined framework or set of rules that promote consistency in the same direction, this is the situation.

The utilisation of social blogs and general employee perceptions of the impact of business reputation in connection to *H3* were the subjects of the eighth relationship test. The findings show a highly significant positive correlation between the two ($B = 0.180, p > 0.001$). According to research, regular employees utilise Facebook to boost a company's good corporate reputation. As a result, a structured method to direct their usage of the platforms is required to allay the concerns expressed by the KIIs in the in-depth interviews, who felt that all employees' use of the platforms poses a reputational risk. Modern reputation management demands a planned method to ensure that employees' social capital contributes as much as possible to the social capital of the corporation as a whole. The industry is struggling with managing reputation using both classic and modern ways, where social blogs are playing a crucial role, as seen by the players' anxieties and control-oriented behaviour. As a result, a framework is required to help the sector unlock the value that comes from adopting and placing modern ways to manage

corporate reputation at the core of the sector's survival and sustainability post-pandemic era.

4.4. YouTube

The ninth relationship test indicated that there would be a favorable relationship between YouTube (*Display*) and outside users (*H3*). The results show a substantial, somewhat high-positive association between the two ($B = 0.630, p > 0.05$). This is supported by research findings that demonstrate YouTube has a strong visual display, enabling users to interact with products and services using a variety of video, audio, and graphic elements. These are critical variables that are structuring a framework for industry resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic.

4.5. Social capital and positive corporate reputation

H2 examined the key research association between social capital (*SocCap*) and favourable corporate reputation (*PosCopRep*). According to the findings ($B = 0.540, p > 0.001$), social capital is a moderately strong positive predictor of favourable business reputation. The interaction between social blogs and social capital, as stated in the literature review, is at the heart of the change from conventional to modern techniques in corporate reputation management. According to the research findings, this calls for a mental shift away from control-focused traditional approaches and toward a more modern approach that is based on teamwork, participation in dynamic online communities, engagement, and investment in employees who, in turn, lead engagements with the public. Given that the public sphere of the compared online platforms is increasingly replacing traditional forms of communication, which increases business visibility and viability post-COVID-19, the results demonstrate that social capital, as a driver of positive corporate reputation, is an important factor in the performance and survival of an organization. This study reveals how social blog platforms generate social capital, laying the groundwork for subsequent studies in other sectors. This is endorsed by academics like Cao et al., (2016), Delavari and Badizadeh (2018), Yang (2020), and Davids and Brown (2021). The study confirmed the interactions between top-level management, operational management, general employees, and external customers to establish the mediating components in the process of managing corporate reputation. The relationships are either direct or indirect, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Mediating effects of internal and external stakeholders on Twitter and positive corporate reputation

| Mediator | Direct | Indirect effect | Total effect | Conclusion |
|----------------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Top-level managers | - 0.601 | 0.714 | 0.113** | Mediation |
| Operational managers | -0.601 | 0.373 | -0.228*** | Mediation |
| General employees | -0.601 | 0.728 | 0.127** | Mediation |
| External customers | -0.601 | 0.601 | 0.000 | Mediation |

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, NS: mean \pm SEM.

Table 5 above displays the mediation effects of top-level managers, operational managers, and general employees on the relationship between Twitter and managers' and employees' social capital in the management of business reputation, as well

as their responses to external customers. The standardised total (direct and indirect) impact of top-level management's use of Twitter is 0.113. That is because top-level management's usage of Twitter had both direct (unmediated) and indirect

(mediated) effects, both of which increased the dependent variable's standard deviation by 0.113. This suggests that Twitter use at the highest levels of management should be fully mediated for the management of the company's reputation.

Twitter's standardized overall impact on consumers (direct and indirect) is 0.000. This means that while Twitter use grows by a standard deviation, it grows by a standard deviation of zero as a result of both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) influences on users purchasing decisions. This demonstrates that there was no direct mediating relationship between customer impact on brand reputation and Twitter use. The real link assessed was based on managers' and workers' perceptions of how Twitter usage by customers affected business reputation management.

The standardised total effect of operational managers using Twitter is -0.228 (direct and indirect). Thus, operational managers' use of Twitter has both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects on maintaining a positive corporate reputation. In other words, operational manager engagement would have decreased by 0.228 standard deviations when Twitter use increased by one standard deviation.

The overall standardised effect of general employees using Twitter is 0.127 (direct and indirect). This means that general staff using Twitter impacts managing a positive corporate reputation both directly (unmediated) and indirectly (mediated). That is to say, if Twitter usage increased by one standard deviation, it would have increased by 0.127 standard deviations among all employees.

Table 6. Mediating effects of top-level managers, operational managers, general employees, and external customers on Facebook and positive corporate reputation

| Mediator | Direct | Indirect effect | Total effect | Conclusion |
|----------------------|--------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Top-level managers | -0.220 | 0.369 | 0.149** | Mediation |
| Operational managers | -0.220 | 0.440 | 0.220*** | Mediation |
| General employees | -0.220 | 0.256 | 0.036* | Mediation |
| External customers | -0.220 | 0.412 | 0.192** | Mediation |

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, NS: mean \pm SEM.

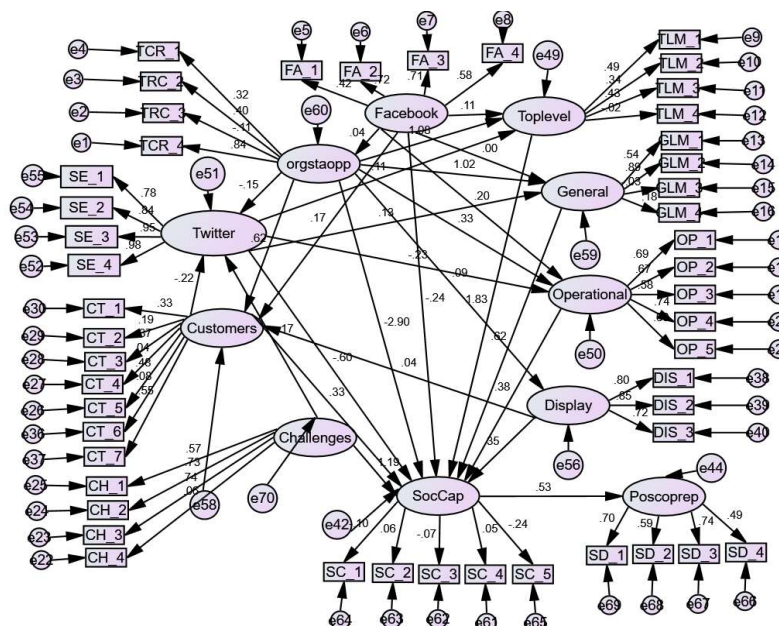
Facebook use has a standardised overall (direct and indirect) effect on customers of 0.192. That is, when Facebook use increases by one standard deviation, consumers increase by 0.192 standard deviations, which impacts company reputation management due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of Facebook on customers.

Facebook's standardised total influence on operational managers (direct and indirect) is 0.220. That is when Facebook increases by one standard deviation, operational managers increase by 0.220 standard deviations as a result of both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects on operations.

Facebook's standardised overall effect (direct and indirect) on all employees is 0.036. That is to say, when Facebook increases by one standard deviation, general increases by 0.036 standard deviations as a result of both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects on general personnel.

Facebook's standardised overall influence on top-level managers (direct and indirect) is 0.149. That is to say, when Facebook increases by one standard deviation, top-level managers increase by 0.149 standard deviations as a result of both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects on top-level managers. Figure 3 below highlights the relationships and hypotheses under consideration.

Figure 3. The architecture of the contributing model



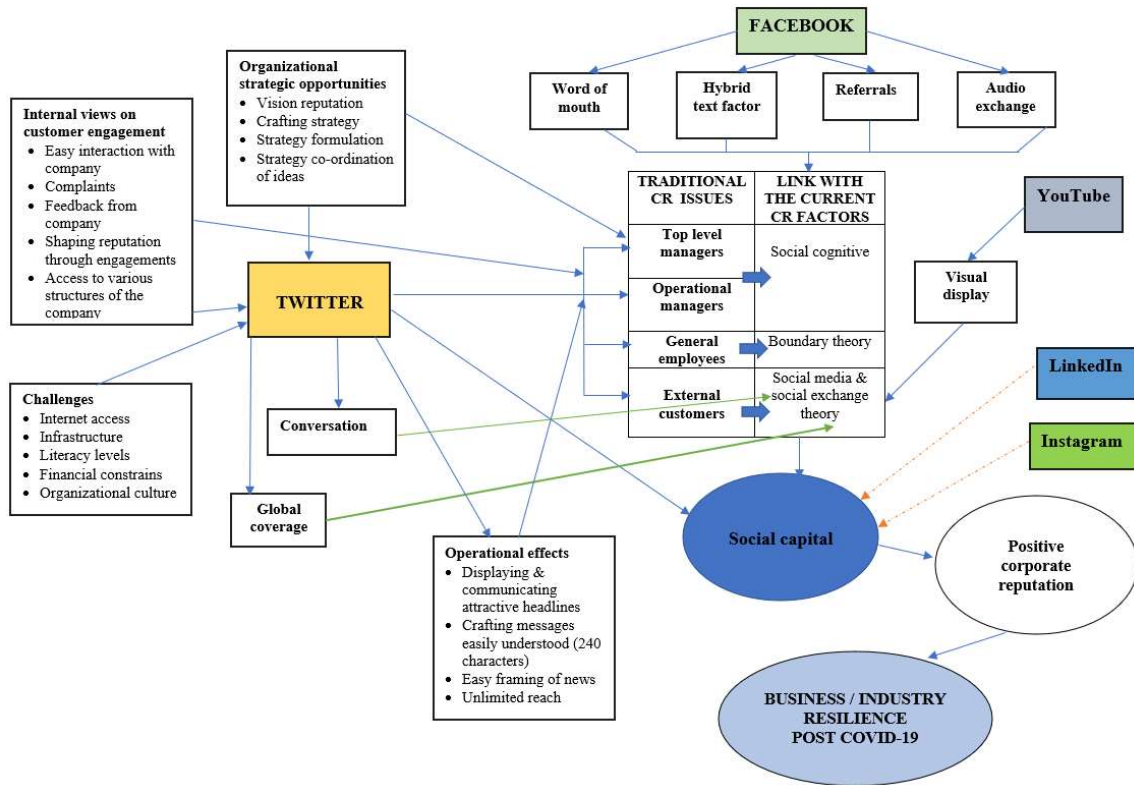
Source: NVivo software generated.

The quantitative results of the structural equation modelling on the effects of Twitter as a social blog on business reputation management in Zimbabwe's telecoms industry are shown in Figure 3 above. The statistical linkages played a crucial role in the suggestion of a condensed framework for the industry and the demonstration of knowledge contribution while directing future research and investigation on the topic.

5. RESULTS

The technical result of Figure 3 structural equation modeling, which statistically illustrates the relationships between and among variables, culminated in the study's framework. However, the statistical display must be made simpler and more operational through interpretation. The essential stakeholders and industry participants are depicted in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Framework on the effect of social blog platforms on positive corporate reputation management in Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry towards resilience post-COVID-19



Source: Authors' elaboration.

The final framework of the research study proposes a dynamic relationship between social blogs and corporate reputation management towards building a resilient business and industry post-COVID-19 pandemic. The levels of influence and effects on corporate reputation using the various social blogs differ from one platform to the other contributing differently towards building a sustainable industry, mainly focusing on improving companies' digital infrastructure and capabilities to support remote working and customer engagement. This will keep the companies invested in the tools and mechanisms critical in continuously feeding into internal and external stakeholders' social capital and positive reputation through the new approaches as part of the business resilience process. Part of business resilience within the age of the social blogosphere is investing mechanisms that ensure continuous information online and building trust among the stakeholders and the top-level. Operational management and general employees can manage to keep this process as the centre pivot in the age of social blogs as part of the resilience strategy as outlined in the social

media and social exchange theory. Given the challenges highlighted in the research, such as internet access, infrastructure, literacy levels, financial constraints, and organisational culture, as part of the resilience strategies post-COVID-19, companies need to implement effective communication strategies to ensure employees and the rest of the stakeholders are continuously engaged to minimise the impact of these challenges which pose a reputational risk on the business.

The research study's final framework suggests a dynamic partnership between corporate reputation management and social blogs in order to create a resilient business and industry after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the literature analysis, many kinds of social blogging can have a good impact on the development and maintenance of a favourable company reputation in the Zimbabwean telecoms sector. The levels of influence and impacts on business reputation brought about by the numerous social blogging platforms, however, vary from one platform to the next. Understanding the impact of numerous social blogs on the development of business identity, personality, and strategy is

necessary to establish a positive reputation (Etter et al., 2018; Kaul & Chaudhri, 2019; Kotler et al., 2017). Second, the study demonstrates how modern perspectives have affected such a traditional approach to managing corporate reputation, particularly the impact of internal stakeholders' social capital, and how this affects their usage of open social media blogs for the modern management of corporate reputation. According to this study, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are the three primary social blogs that impact good reputation management. The management of reputation is where each of these three systems excels. According to the survey, Twitter has a significant global audience and generates more discourse than other social media. In contrast, Facebook encourages recommendations from friends and family, offers hybrid text features, and has better referrals and audio interchange than the other networks. This will pivot organisational resilience post-COVID-19 as the framework gear organisations towards strategic engagement online, where the bulk of the audience and stakeholder migrated during the pandemic.

A survey of the literature revealed that 1.6% of Zimbabweans were using Twitter in 2015, and that usage has been rising over the previous five years. It has increased from 1.6% to 43.62%. By accounting for 43.62% of all social platform users in Zimbabwe as of October 2021 (StatCounter, 2021), it was the most popular platform there. In less than six years, its membership increased by 42.02%. There was therefore consensus in this literature regarding the increase in the use of Twitter and the findings found in this study because both the in-depth interviews and the survey results revealed that Twitter was one of the three main platforms being used in the industry to manage corporate reputation. The findings of this study indicate that Twitter has a solid position in terms of its worldwide reach and capacity to spark conversations. Through the real-time publication of headlines, framing of the issues, development of content, and crafting of the messages, these aspects enable the platform to contribute to creating positive news and entice a large audience of users to watch messages. This, in turn, encourages people to share the tweets made, which raises the likelihood that these tweets will become popular. The platform serves as both a hub for lively and passionate discussions and a means of spreading the electronic word of mouth essential to managing a good reputation. Additionally, Twitter contributes to the social capital foundation from which the modern strategy for company reputation is built.

With more than 64% of all social blog subscribers worldwide, Facebook is the most popular platform. Despite a fall in usage, Facebook remains a very competitive platform in Zimbabwe. According to the literature analysis, Facebook had nearly a monopoly in the social blogosphere in 2015 with 97.1% of users, but as of October 2021, usage had plummeted to just 35.86% due to a significant change in the market structure of the social blogosphere (StatCounter, 2021). However, the study's findings show that Facebook is still a top choice for managing a positive reputation in Zimbabwe's telecommunications industry. Both study participants and respondents noted that Facebook encourages word-of-mouth marketing, information sharing

through hybrid text, and referrals for a good reputation and has the edge over other platforms when it comes to audio exchange. The platform is second to Twitter in terms of usage in Zimbabwe, where Twitter rules the market. According to Kotler et al. (2021), interactive platforms and management of a positive corporate reputation are positively correlated, which is evident from the findings mentioned above and the fact that Facebook is preferred because of its interactive capabilities and subsequent favorable impact on corporate reputation. Accordingly, the study found that Facebook, through its four main drivers — which were described above — is a major enabler in the contemporary approach to the management of business reputation. The ability of internal stakeholders to mobilise the social capital of their networks in their use of social blogs to shape corporate reputation through fresh viewpoints is influenced by several factors, including word-of-mouth, the facilitation of information sharing through hybrid text, the ability to referrals for positive reputation, and a superior advantage in audio exchange.

Only five years ago, YouTube had no subscribers in Zimbabwe, where it now ranks fourth in terms of usage with 4.27% of the nation's social blog users (StatCounter, 2021). The study's findings demonstrated that the platform was highly suggested because of its capability for visual display. This indicates that the platform offers outstanding value for reputation management. In doing so, the research found that the platform is crucial in influencing fresh viewpoints on the growth of social capital, which is essential for supporting a favourable business reputation and resilience post-COVID-19.

The study found that Twitter is essential to fostering an organisation's long-term reputation, contributing to its vision, formulating its strategies, and strategically coordinating its thoughts. This places Twitter in a competitive position for further leveraging the social capital of internal and external stakeholders to build a positive reputation in the era of social blogs. For the purpose of promoting a positive reputation in the business, stakeholders in the telecommunications sector must develop internal standards to assist the logical use of this social platform. Table 6 provides an illustration of this when all internal stakeholders, including top-level operational managers, employees, and external stakeholders (customers), perform a mediation function that is supported by a favourable direct effect. The new media, in the form of social blogs, present an opportunity for the telecommunications industry to manage their respective reputations in more efficient and effective ways, as demonstrated by how Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, through their key features, present opportunities to consolidate the social capital, which then drives new perspectives to reputation management. As a result, the study's findings show that the social blogosphere has the potential to go beyond simply reaching large audiences at once to spark debates, promote openness and transparency, and spread good word of mouth. As social blog platforms have replaced traditional news communication systems, which were characterised by top-down communications, vertical information flow, and one-to-multiplicity boomerang of information, new

paradigms have emerged, claim Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016). Social blogs now provide a different method for the public disseminating opinions and judgments regarding a certain company. For instance, online platform users are empowered to scrutinise, in public, the acts of organisations and to contribute, through their communities, opinions that will always be visible in public platforms through embedded platforms in new media, such as blogs and discussion forums (Brodie et al., 2013; Davids & Brown, 2021). Additionally, experts contend that the online environment gives users of the platform the opportunity to interact, share information, viewpoints, lived experiences, and experiential therapies, as well as to mobilise an endless audience on important problems of concern (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Yang, 2020).

Online platforms are important boosters of eWOM since reviews posted on numerous blogs, which are read by billions of people worldwide, allow for user-generated collective judgments and evaluations. The foundation of the impact of the evaluations posted on social blogs is the size of the audience within a particular community that is required to access the reviews or the eWOM (Etter et al., 2018). In other circumstances, such influence depends on how other users respond, as seen by their sharing, retweeting, liking, commenting, and forwarding of posts, among other actions (Barnett & Pollock, 2012). Individual opinions are, therefore, fundamental to the construction of reputations in the new media environment through their influence on communities and social groups toward an organization's services and goods, thereby influencing the choices of present and potential consumers and employees (Orlikowski & Scott, 2014; Delavari and Badizadeh, 2018).

This was affirmed in the literature review, these viewpoints on the shifting power dynamics between brands and audiences that result in the co-creation of reputation between the business and stakeholders were articulated. The growth of social blogs has highlighted the Zimbabwean telecommunications companies' obligation to manage customer interface, safeguard corporate reputation, and manage the touchpoints of customers and stakeholders, as noted in the literature review, findings from the in-depth interviews, and survey. As a result, there is a significant opportunity for co-building a company's reputation because customer participation ranges from passively watching messages to actively forwarding postings and information, commenting, and producing, moderating, and arbitrating messages. The social media and social exchange theory, which emphasizes the crucial role of employees in regulating online conversations through active involvement, further articulates and elaborates this (Kaul & Chaudhri, 2019; Davids & Brown, 2021). This offers fresh possibilities for managing a company's reputation in a way that is more dynamic than is possible with conventional methods.

Additionally, social blog usage is increasing rapidly in Zimbabwe, which is also associated with a high mobile phone penetration rate. This demonstrates that the companies in the telecoms business cater to a stakeholder chain that is very mobile and where it is necessary to manage the highest levels of stakeholder involvement and

content consumption (Mandiwanzira, 2016; Media Institute of Southern Africa [MISA], 2018; Mudzingwa, 2019). This means that there is a huge possibility for businesses to leverage eWOM in order to position their brand in online discussions that will influence how other industry participants are perceived.

Social blog platforms also lower the cost of informing stakeholders about the organization's mission and strategic goals, coordination of strategies, handling of complaints and feedback, and formation of corporate identity, corporate personality, and strategy — all essential components of managing a positive corporate reputation. Most of the responses from the in-depth interviews with KII state that social blog platforms are economical because they enhance reputation management via word-of-mouth, hybrid text, referrals, audio exchange, visual display, fascinating conversations, and global reach. This is even more crucial in a country like Zimbabwe that is experiencing economic hardship. The results of the in-depth interviews, survey, and literature review, as well as the fact that Twitter and other social blog platforms like Facebook and YouTube are among the most well-liked global online brand platforms with near-monopoly status, suggesting that these platforms present additional opportunities. They are also widely used, have a vast audience, are platforms that are available worldwide and are simple to use.

These are moderating elements that mediate how Twitter use affects positive reputation, as mentioned in the component headed *Challenges*. These include issues with internet accessibility, difficulties with the infrastructure, literacy levels, financial limitations, and organizational culture, among others.

Internet access in Zimbabwe via the broadband infrastructure created by the connectivity of the regional state members hence determines the use of social blogs. Zimbabwe's national infrastructure needs to be improved, which limits its ability to integrate and connect to the Internet (POTRAZ, 2018). Zimbabwe has some of the highest prices for data and communication services in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (POTRAZ, 2018).

The majority of KII of the telecommunications companies lamented the lack of regulation in the social blogging space as being a serious flaw, as it permits "anyone" to open an account, which may eventually promote unethical use of the platforms and damage the reputation chains of the industry players. The respondents pointed out that this contributes to the spread of false information, wherein messages are disseminated as true information without enough verification. The platforms' market reach is constrained, particularly in rural areas, according to KIIs, particularly those whose businesses cater to mass audiences rather than businesses. This creates issues with stakeholder representation and market penetration on these platforms. The restricted nature and lack of regulation of social blogs affect positive perception, identity, and, most importantly, their capacity to define their corporate strategy and personality due to the constrained breadth. This inhibits their ability to establish a solid reputation. Firms in the sector must help their workers and internal stakeholders get online at home and work in

order to enable active participation in the usage of social blogs as a contribution to the management of corporate reputation. Finally, KII interviews show that most industry actors exhibit a widespread culture of control reminiscent of traditional methods for maintaining reputation. Supporting the usage of social media is greatly aided by this organizational culture moderating problem. In order to create a digitally compliant culture that encourages use and promotes standards of use and learning. So that internal stakeholders are confident in engaging customers online, openness, transparency, and internal engagement from top-level managers to general employees are necessary.

Social blogs are redefining the conventional methods for managing a company's reputation, where the corporate identity has traditionally been characterised by academics as an organisation's "actual identity, conveyed identity, imagined identity, and ideal identity" (Stuart, 1999, p. 200). According to the study, top-level operational managers and general staff shape identities through their interactions with social blogs, which are thought of as mediating factors in reputation management. The results of this study demonstrate that senior management and operational levels both play a significant part in establishing a favourable reputation through their use of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube platforms.

In conclusion, it is imperative to get the workforce ready for the shift away from conventional approaches that heavily rely on traditional media and control of what enters an open digital ecosystem, where social blogs require constant and immediate engagement, breaking away from the conventional approaches of holding meetings to make decisions. Kolter et al. (2017) claim that in order to effectively communicate with external stakeholders, organizations must use digital/online processes. In the digital economy, customers are socially interconnected to one another in a horizontal web of communities. Therefore, in order to better understand and manage their reputation in the digital era, organizations must organize themselves in accordance with the new strategy of developing internal communities and embracing the horizontal nature of internal interaction.

Contrary to conventional methods of managing corporate reputation, businesses in the telecommunications sector should have a comprehensive perspective of the organization and its clients. Perhaps the most important is the notion that effective corporate reputation management online develops from the inside out, necessitating that internal stakeholders be understood and supported before the process of managing reputation or engaging with stakeholders online is started (Sarkar & Kotler, 2020; Yang, 2020; Davids & Brown, 2021; Kotler et al., 2021). In this regard, social cognitive theory's recommendations on how firms should use social media and the workplace environment to establish a strategic fit are taken into account by contemporary reputation management techniques (Papadopoulos et al., 2013; Carlson et al., 2016; Moqbel & Kock, 2018). Internal harmony should exist amongst all internal stakeholders, literally on horizontal levels, to better prepare them for the realization of the accommodating and supporting atmosphere toward

a great corporate reputation. The distinction between work and home, which impacts how social blogs are utilized at any one moment, is the second factor. As noted in the responses from the survey, which are also related to the challenges/moderating variables, the players in the sector need to make deliberate efforts toward balancing a delicate issue of the home and work domain. To ensure that both internal stakeholders who need to use the platforms in their home countries and remote workers can do so, it is crucial to make sure that the platforms are accessible (Yang, 2020). Last but not least, the study revealed that internal stakeholders provided important viewpoints on the clients, highlighting the need for established methods to promote interaction between internal and external stakeholders. The most crucial thing in this regard is to develop leaders in the form of staff members and activists who actively use both their personal and professional accounts to advance the management and defence of the company's online reputation. This fosters a compassionate strategy for online engagement with stakeholders, claim Kaul and Chaudri (2019). According to the social media and social exchange theory, internal stakeholders are essential for interacting with customers on social blogs (Davids & Brown, 2021). The modern approach to corporate reputation does not mean that traditional approaches should be replaced; rather, the two should be combined as stakeholders' information consumption and engagement patterns change and as they engage with traditional communication channels like print media in other contexts. However, it is imperative that the industry's actors begin to make deliberate transitions toward modern methods for managing corporate reputation.

There are additional social blogs that need to clearly demonstrate how they affect the management of business reputation, but the environment demonstrates that the use and development of social blogs are dynamic. In this situation, it is important to pay close attention to how social blogging platforms like LinkedIn and Instagram are developing and make the necessary adjustments to include them in a larger industry strategy on the use of social blogging for managing corporate reputation. Because of this, in Figure 4, they are connected to social capital by broken lines. According to the study, "which alternative social blogs are more effective than Twitter in managing company reputation in Zimbabwe's telecoms industry?" the comments suggested that there is a strong case for continuing to watch the two social blogs. As a result, the respondents indicated that other platforms would be better choices for managing business reputation. These included YouTube (15%), Instagram (15%), and LinkedIn (18%). A significant number of respondents (17%), however, believe that only some of these other social blogs can top Twitter. As a result, if not for helping Twitter improve its business reputation, a response rate above 17% should be regarded as the next best option.

Every component of structural equation modeling is either directly or indirectly related to social capital. This illustrates how relationships and conventions can affect the quantity and level of social contacts, which can be a strategic benefit for an organization. As a result, industry players must strategically harness the social capital base by

connecting the networks of employees, businesses, and customers as the best way to build the trust and engagements that make up a positive reputation in order to close the gap between traditional and modern approaches to reputation management. The primary components of social capital are structure, ties, strong and weak links, and horizontal and vertical networks. The use of public social blogging by staff members highlights the significance of the following types of social capital: “online bridging and bonding social capital, shared vision, and network links”, as well as “structural, rational, and cognitive social capital” (Chen et al., 2020, p. 5). Both the industry and academia should continue to be aware of how social capital cuts across traditional and modern methodologies and the necessity to harness both in order to develop meaningful social capital for the management of a positive reputation online.

The development of insights on the expansion and use of networks, both at work and online, depends on social capital. In this aspect, online social platforms serve as a social base that makes it simple to coordinate communication and information exchange about the credibility of people or organisations, based on those parties’ reputations and reciprocity. The loop that makes up the process starts with one’s experiences, whether they be personal, social, or professional. Whether positive or negative, these actual group work experiences ultimately shape a reputation. Such a reputation is passed on to others, whether consciously or unconsciously, and is then accepted as reality by a group of people. The bulk of the time, when this occurs online, the eWOM spreads quickly or “virally”, necessitating the continued presence of telecom players in order to favourably affect their reputation there. The research on the impact of social capital theory on company reputation provides additional evidence in favour of this (Cao et al., 2016; Delavari & Badizadeh, 2018). Therefore, it is best to view how employees use public social blogging in the context of social capital as mediating. According to Cao et al. (2016), employees who use public social blogs for work purposes perform better at their jobs and transmit knowledge more effectively because of the connections made through networking, social relationships, and trust.

6. CONCLUSION

The study provided a model to summarise how social blogs, specifically Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, function as generators of social capital and shape the modern approach to managing business reputation. The study also offered a paradigm for how to interact with social media

sites like Twitter and other social blogs in the modern era. This is crucial for practitioners who are juggling managing reputation across old and digital media. The study emphasises the important connections between the study’s four main pillars, specifically corporate reputation management, social capital, social blogs, and business resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic. The telecommunications industry needs to periodically audit the social blogs that are dominant in the country, intending to adjust to the evolving platforms. In addition, the study indicates the need for the industry to set standards and benchmarks on social media engagement using the social capital drivers that form new perspectives on corporate reputation management. This ought to be done by enhancing the organisation’s digital capabilities and infrastructure to accommodate remote work and customer engagement. However, the study also noted the imperative need to improve customer service programs to ensure clients have access to the appropriate information and support when required. This could involve developing online customer care communities on social blog platforms to offer round-the-clock online support as well as investing in customer relationship management systems to manage customer data better and offer more specialised services. Lastly, the study reveals the need for putting in place efficient communication systems to make sure that staff, clients, and other stakeholders are kept up to date on any changes to operations and company advancements. Setting up social media profiles to share important news and launching email campaigns to keep everyone informed could be part of this. The study’s main limitation was that it was focusing on the internal stakeholders, without triangulation with the customers due to the challenges of the industry being highly regulated in sharing customer contact details with researchers without their consent. It is recommended that future research focuses on the customer’s perspectives. Therefore, as articulated in the abstract, the results show that social blogs, specifically Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, have a direct impact on the management of positive corporate reputation in the telecommunications industry as they contribute to the social capital of the organisation leading to the contemporary management of reputation, which is critical in building organisational resilience post-pandemic. This is also articulated in the study contribution framework that guides contemporary approaches towards the management of corporate reputation in the telecommunications industry. Therefore, the framework guides the industry and practitioners on post COVID-19 pandemic in emerging markets like Zimbabwe and the behaviour of the corporates.

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