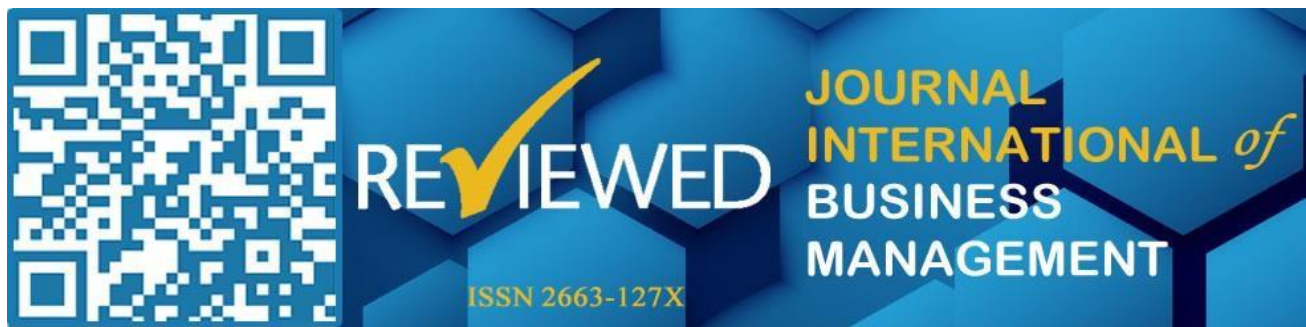




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INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS ON EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AT PARKLANDS SPORTS CLUB, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club, Nairobi County, Kenya. The problem addressed was the limited context-specific empirical evidence on how digital communication practices contribute to employee engagement, collaboration, and relationships between employees and management. The study aimed to assess the influence of information and knowledge sharing, determine the influence of employee training, and examine the influence of policy communication regarding digital communication tools on employee relations. Its scope covered employees across departments and management representatives at Parklands Sports Club. The study is significant to management, employees, human resource practitioners, and researchers seeking to strengthen workplace communication practices. The theoretical review was anchored in Media Richness Theory, supported by Social Exchange Theory. A mixed-methods approach and descriptive research design were adopted. The target population comprised 210 employees, from whom a sample of 136 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan approach. Data collection involved structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were intended for analysis using SPSS Version 27, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The descriptive results presented indicated overall mean scores of 3.948 for information and knowledge sharing, 3.649 for employee training, and 3.553 for policy communication. These figures were based on illustrative frequencies and require verification against the original questionnaire data before being reported as empirical findings. The study emphasises the importance of effective information sharing, regular employee training, and clear digital communication policies. It recommends strengthening digital communication practices, improving employee competencies, communicating acceptable-use guidelines, and periodically evaluating communication effectiveness to support positive employee relations.

Keywords: Digital Communication Tools, Employee Relations, Employee Training, Information Sharing, Parklands Sports Club, Policy Communication

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INTRODUCTION

Technological tools of communication have greatly impacted the way companies communicate information, coordinate work, and manage relations between staff members and managers. Digital platforms have gained significance in internal communication worldwide despite the success of the implementation being highly dependent on how organisations utilise technology and communication processes together. The systematic literature review conducted by Wuersch et al. (2024) proves that digitalisation has increasingly been gaining relevance in internal communication. However, according to Wuersch et al. (2026), it is crucial to develop specific strategies for digital internal communication.

In the African continent, research is paying increasing attention to internal communication being one of the factors that contribute to employee engagement and effectiveness within organizations. For example, Mbhele and De Beer (2022) have researched effective internal communication and employee engagement, stressing the importance of organizational culture and communication climate. Mmutle (2022) has also stressed the role of collaborative, open, and transparent communication.

Waititu & du Plessis (2022) conducted research on online internal communication in a public sector organization in Kenya and its impact on the establishment of interpersonal relationships at the workplace. The more recent study by Mule (2026) was carried out on Microsoft Teams in a non-governmental organization in Kenya and the benefits and challenges thereof.

Against this background, the present study examines the influence of digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club, Nairobi County, Kenya. It focuses on information and knowledge sharing, employee training, and policy communication to understand how these practices relate to employee engagement, collaboration, and relationships between employees and management.

Statement of the Problem

Digital communication tools have increasingly transformed workplace communication globally by facilitating information sharing, collaboration, and employee interaction. However, their effectiveness depends on how organisations manage information exchange, employee competencies, and communication practices. A global study by Chansukree et al. (2022) examined public employees' social media use, competencies, collaboration, and workplace policy communication, demonstrating the importance of understanding how digital communication relates to workplace practices. Research on enterprise social media has also identified privacy boundaries and perceived risks as factors shaping employees' information-sharing decisions.

Digital communication at the regional level has become very significant to organizational communication in Africa even though the evidence that has been collected varies from one country and institution to another. For instance, in Kenya, Waititu and du Plessis (2022) carried out research on online internal communication within an organization within the public sector and established that training, open communication, participation of employees, motivation, and trust were some of the aspects worth considering in managing employee relations.

The heavy use of digital communication platforms at Parklands Sports Club raises a number of concerns about how they can improve communication between staff members and their managers. While they offer many chances for workers to interact in the workplace, the use of such platforms by itself does not necessarily mean better communication and collaboration. How far these digital modes of communication are aiding in the development of the employee relations in the Club setting has not been sufficiently discussed. Specifically, there is a dearth of empirical evidence regarding the relationship between the sharing of information/knowledge, training of employees, and policy communication in relation to employee relations in the Club. This research gap makes it imperative to conduct empirical research to establish the relationship.

Objectives

- To assess the influence of information and knowledge sharing through digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club.
- To determine the influence of employee training on the use of digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club.
- To examine the influence of policy communication regarding digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club.

Scope

The study will consider the Parklands Sports Club in Nairobi County of Kenya. The study will consider the impact that digital communication methods have on employee relations in terms of sharing of information and knowledge, employee training, and communication of policies. The research will be conducted among employees in various departments and management members.

Limitations

The main limitation that faced the research was that some of the respondents were limited due to the fact that the employees of Parklands Sports Club worked in different departments where they had different time schedules. The research also faced difficulties from some respondents who did not want to give true answers regarding the communication process within the company. The study would only include one organization making it difficult for generalization.

Significance

Parklands Sports Club will gain from the research as it will reveal the manner through which digital means of communication can be used to improve the relations among employees. The employees can benefit from better information and knowledge sharing, training, and proper communication policies. This study can help human resource experts design communication policies that can be effective. Finally, this research will contribute to the academic literature concerning digital communication and employee relations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital communication technologies help in the exchange of organisational knowledge, work-related information, and operational information. Yang et al. (2021) found that the communication visibility on social media can help employees in the exchange of knowledge and work efficiency. Similarly, Kwayu et al. (2021) conducted research on informal social media and its importance for the process of knowledge sharing in organisations. This indicates that digital communication could help employees interact, but its impact on employee relations needs to be considered in organisational context.

Training employees is essential in acquiring competences needed for the effective use of digital communication technologies. Waititu and du Plessis (2022) identify insufficient training as one of the issues impacting online employee relations management in a case study carried out in Kenya's public sector. The research conducted implies that proper training can help enhance the capability of employees to engage in professional digital communication.

Communication policies provide clear guidelines on the use of digital platforms, professionalism and organizational communication. Zhou and Yin (2025) have revealed from their review of literature on enterprise social media that organizational communication, knowledge sharing and digital competency are critical issues for study. This shows the significance of looking at the role of communication policies alongside digital technologies in fostering workplace relations.

Theoretical Review

Media Richness Theory

According to Daft & Lengel (1986), Media Richness Theory attempted to examine how various media differ with regard to the amount of information that is being sent, the possibility of getting immediate feedback, and the possibility of making ambiguous information explicit. In rich media environments, there was a need for clarity of messages.

For this research, the theory provided the main grounds for the existing connection between digital communications technologies and employee relations at Parklands Sports Club. This was achieved through such platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, where employees could share job-related information and communicate across departments. It was important that employees would receive relevant information timely and understand it. Training of the employees also had a significant impact on the selection of the proper platform and communication.

Nevertheless, digital communication could also lead to misunderstanding when there was no context, tone, or immediate clarification. The theory hence explained how the appropriateness of the means of communication could affect communication in the workplace.

Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory by Blau (1964) proposed that the development of relationships resulted from exchange processes where people gave each other valued resources such as information, support, trust and cooperation. Within organisations, relationships between employees and their superiors could be built on the perceptions of open communication, support and fairness.

According to Ahmad et al. (2023), recent studies on the theory have focused on its applicability within the context of the social and organisational environment and identified the concept of reciprocity as an integral aspect of the theory of social exchange. The authors Einwiller et al. (2021) have also emphasized the importance of internal communication that contains both information and relationship components in relation to employee reactions.

In this study, Social Exchange Theory allowed investigating the impact of information and knowledge exchange, training and communication policies on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club. If employees obtained sufficient information, appropriate training, and organizational expectations through communication policies, they would be able to perceive more support from the organisation and cooperate, engage, and interact with colleagues.

The theory complemented Media Richness Theory by explaining the relational consequences of communication rather than focusing primarily on the characteristics of communication channels.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology to be employed is a mixed methods approach, with a descriptive research design, in order to determine how digital communication tools affect employee relations within Parklands Sports Club located in Nairobi County, Kenya. A mixed methods approach combines quantitative and qualitative data to allow for a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The target population consists of 210 employees who work in various departments such as administration, finance, housekeeping, sports, maintenance, and food and beverage service. To obtain a representative sample from this target population, a total of 136 employees will be systematically sampled based on the formula created by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items (5-point) will be used to collect data. Management key informants will be interviewed. The clarity and appropriateness of the research tools will be assessed through a pilot test, and the content validity will be assessed through an expert review. The questionnaire reliability will be established during the pilot test. Quantitative data will be analyzed using

the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27, with a view to providing descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics to test the study hypotheses. Quantitative interview data will be analyzed thematically. They will be integrated with the quantitative data through triangulation. The study will focus on information and knowledge sharing, employee training, and policy communication as aspects of digital communication tools in the field of employee relations.

RESULTS

The study captured two key biodata characteristics of respondents: gender and department. First, regarding gender, 65 respondents (54.2%) were males while 55 respondents (45.8%) were females. This shows a good representation of both genders. Secondly, regarding departmental representation, the administration department had the highest representation with 28 respondents (23.3%), Food and Beverage had 25 respondents (20.8%), Housekeeping had 22 respondents (18.3%), Sports and Maintenance had 20 respondents (16.7%), Finance had 12 respondents (10.0%), and casual employees had 13 respondents (10.8%) across the department. This representation enabled the study gain insights from various unit of the organization on digital communication and employee relation.

Objective One: Information and Knowledge Sharing through Digital Communication Tools

The first objective sought to assess the influence of information and knowledge sharing through digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 1

Information and Knowledge Sharing through Digital Communication Tools

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
Digital tools facilitate sharing of work-related information.	4	8	14	62	48	136
Digital tools improve knowledge sharing between departments	5	10	18	60	43	136
Information shared digitally improves employee collaboration	3	9	17	65	42	136
Digital communication improves relationships among employees	6	12	20	58	40	136

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

The results show that the majority of respondents had a positive opinion on the role of digital communication tools in the sharing of work-related information. Of the respondents, 62 (45.6%) agreed and 48 (35.3%) strongly agreed. Overall, 80.9% of respondents agreed with this statement.

For those who agreed to share knowledge with other departments, 60 respondents (44.1%) agreed, whereas 43 (31.6%) strongly agreed. There were 65 respondents (47.8%) who agreed that sharing information digitally helped employees collaborate better, whereas 42 (30.9%) strongly agreed. Finally, 58 respondents (42.6%) agreed, and 40 (29.4%) strongly agreed that using digital methods of communication helped improve employee relationships.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Information and Knowledge Sharing

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
Sharing work-related information	4.044	0.980
Knowledge sharing between departments	3.926	1.037
Digital information improves collaboration	3.985	0.951
Digital communication improves employee relationships	3.838	1.083
Overall mean	3.948	

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

An overall mean of 3.948 suggests that there are general positive responses towards dissemination of information and knowledge via digital communication tool.

Sharing work-related information (mean=4.044) and improving employee relationship (mean=3.838) were found as the highest and lowest means respectively.

These findings imply that digital communication has more relevance in the field of disseminating information and coordination of work than fostering employee interpersonal relationships which relies upon other organisational factors

Objective Two: Employee Training on the Use of Digital Communication Tools

The second objective sought to determine the influence of employee training on the use of digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club.

Table 3: Employee Training and Digital Communication

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
Training enables employees to use digital communication tools effectively	8	15	25	54	34	136
Training improves employees' digital communication skills.	7	13	22	58	36	136
Training helps employees observe digital communication etiquette.	10	18	27	51	30	136
Training improves employee interaction and workplace relationships	9	16	24	54	33	136

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

Generally, there was a positive perception among participants regarding training programs' ability for enabling employees to utilize different tools for digital communication. Regarding this claim, fifty four out of hundred and thirty-four (39.7%) participants agreed while thirty four (25.0%) strongly agreed with such claims making up to sixty four point seven percent (64.7%) agreeing as depicted by figure two above. Regarding enhancing digital communication skills fifty eight (42.6%) people agree while thirty six (26.5%) strongly agree about the same subject. Fifty one (37.5%) agree while thirty (22.1%) strongly agree on digital communication etiquette. Lastly fifty four (39.7%) agrees while thirty three (24.3%) strongly agree that training enhances employees' interactions and works place relations as displayed below.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Employee Training

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
Training enables effective use of digital tools	3.669	1.142
Training improves digital communication skills	3.757	1.106
Training promotes digital communication etiquette	3.537	1.186
Training improves workplace relationships	3.632	1.166
Overall mean	3.649	

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

Overall, the result reveals a mean of 3.649 which indicated a generally positive perception towards employee trainings. Training for improving digital communication skills has got the highest mean (3.757) whereas training on digital communication etiquette had the least mean (3.537).

This implies that trainings can be useful in helping employees acquire technical skill in communicating but more needs to be done in terms of addressing professional etiquette and appropriate use of communication platforms.

Objective Three: Policy Communication Regarding Digital Communication Tools

The third objective sought to examine the influence of policy communication regarding digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club.

Table 5

Policy Communication and Digital Communication Tools

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Total
The organisation communicates clear policies on digital tool use.	12	20	28	48	28	136
Employees understand the rules governing digital communication.	10	19	30	49	28	136
Communication policies help minimise misunderstandings.	8	17	26	55	30	136
Clear policies promote professional employee relationships.	7	15	25	56	33	136

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

The results show generally positive perceptions about the organisations' communication policies regarding clarity around the usage of digital tools by organisational stakeholders, with 48 (35.3%) agreeing while 28 (20.6%) strongly agree that their organisation communicated clear policies on the use of digital tools. Regarding employees' understanding of digital communications rule sets, 49 (36.0%) agree and 28 (20.6%) strongly agree.

With regard to whether they perceive that their organisation's communication policies have helped to mitigate misunderstanding among people within their organisation, a large majority –85 (62.5%)– agreed or strongly agreed; Similarly, when asked if clear communication policies at work can promote professional relationships between colleagues and other employees at work place, 89 (65.4%) agree or strongly agreed..

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Policy Communication

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
The organisation communicates clear policies	3.441	1.222
Employees understand digital communication rules	3.485	1.180
Policies help minimise misunderstandings	3.603	1.137
Clear policies promote professional relationships	3.684	1.114
Overall mean	3.553	

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

The mean score of 3.553 would indicate generally positive perceptions of policy communications but there are differences. A statement indicating “clear policies promote professional relationships” received the highest score with a mean of 3.684 whilst “communication of clear organisational policies” scored the lowest with a mean of 3.441.

This last result appears to reinforce the idea that if you communicate your digital communication policies clearly and consistently this will help manage expectations, reduce misunderstandings and encourage professional employee interactions.

Table 7

Summary of Descriptive Findings

Research objective	Overall mean
Information and knowledge sharing	3.948
Employee training	3.649
Policy communication	3.553

Source: (Researcher, 2026)

Information and knowledge sharing recorded the highest overall mean (3.948), followed by employee training (3.649) and policy communication (3.553). Across the three dimensions, the illustrative results indicate generally positive perceptions of digital communication practices in relation to employee relations at Parklands Sports Club.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The research investigated the effect of digital communication tools on employee relations at Parklands Sports Club, Nairobi County, Kenya with respect to sharing of information and knowledge, training of employees and communication of policies. The descriptive findings shown suggest that digital communication tools could have a positive influence on communication, collaboration and employee relations in the workplace.

Information and knowledge sharing received the highest overall mean at 3.948, implying that digital platforms can be especially effective in supporting exchange of work-related information and coordination within and cross intra departments. Employee training received a mean of 3.649, emphasizing the need for employees to enhance their digital communication skills and the positive communication etiquette in the digital media. Policy communication received a mean of 3.553, suggesting that a set of clear policies could be useful in reducing the misunderstandings and increasing the professionalism.

The study also highlights the need of combining digital communication tools with employee training and explicit organisational policies. Parklands Sports Club could improve employee relations by promoting efficient information sharing, enhancing digital communication skills and clarifying expectations regarding professional online behaviour. But the results shown are based on illustrative frequencies and should be tested against the actual questionnaire data before being considered empirical conclusions. The original dataset would be required to perform correlation and regression analyses to determine the relationships among the study variables and the contribution of each to employee relations.

Based on the three study objectives, the following recommendations are made:

i. Information and Knowledge Sharing

Management of Parklands Sports Club should encourage the use of digital communication channels to improve timely information sharing and coordination between departments. The organisation should encourage employees to use relevant digital platforms for work-related announcements, collaboration and to share information. Management should also implement communication practices that promote accuracy, timely feedback and positive communication among staff.

ii. Employee Training

The Club ought to conduct periodic training sessions to enhance the digital communication skills of its staff. Training will include the professional use of digital platforms, communication professional etiquette, the consideration of what work-related information should be shared and how to manage misunderstandings that may arise through digital communications. Again, whenever there are new technologies of communication or procedures of communication within the organisation, refresher training will be needed.

iii. Policy Communication

Parklands Sports Club: Establish and Communicate Clear Guidelines regarding the Use of Digital Communication Platforms. The policies need to address acceptable use, professional conduct, response time,

confidentiality, and communication out of the workday. All staff should be made aware of the policies and understand them via management: this may include the use of staff briefing, written guidance and periodic revisits. Employees should also be encouraged to ask for clarification if there is any confusion as to the rules of communication.

iv. Monitoring and Evaluation

Management is expected to evaluate the efficiency of digital communication practices on a regular basis through employee feedback, departmental reviews and internal communication assessments. The results should inform improvements to information sharing, training and policy implementation to drive better employee relations.

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