The Role of Social Media in Government Communication during Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case of KSA

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Abstract

The research study conducts an in-depth understanding of the role played by social media in government communication during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a case study of KSA. The purpose of the study is to gather an in-depth understanding of how social media is a government communication taken by the KSA government. The research takes the help of both primary and secondary research, and the deductive approach of analyzing as well as the descriptive research design as the research design of the study is adopted. The research study has found that social media tools have played an enormous role in government communication by the government of KSA.

Keywords

Social Media KSA, Government Communication, E-Governance, Pandemic, Covid-19

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic brought upon the world severe problems, and for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the pandemic has been one of the most excruciatingly confusing and painful events the kingdom has had to go through in many years. Problems in communication have been among the major problems faced in the kingdom, and the people in the government of the kingdom found it severely difficult to communicate with the people of the country, ultimately leading to a world full of troubles. The required authorities tried to maintain as much contact and communication with the citizens as possible and delivered the news of the restrictions and measures to be adopted for protection against the virus (Hassounah, Raheel, & Alhefzi, 2020). Social media platforms and mass media

channels were among the most effective tool of communication between the authorities and the people.

The first chapter of the research paper focuses on the study's introduction and aims to offer details of the study, therefore, stating the usage of e-governance by the governmental sector for communication measures, objectives of the study, study significance, and problem statement.

Usage of e-governance for communication purposes in different governmental sectors

E-governance has been among the primary tools used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in the KSA for effectively communicating with the people and informing them about the problems, restrictions, measures, and so on related to the pandemic. Among all the government institutions, the MoFA has been the one to use the methods of e-governance the most in ensuring the people are communicated efficiently. The MoFA took the help of social media tools and social networking sites to ensure effective communication with the country's people and inform them of its development. In general, the Ministries had a crucial role in the usage of social media for communication purposes. The Ministry of Economic made the announcement of development being made like construction of more hospitals and the availability of the number of beds in the county, and there has been public interaction on the Ministry's social media account. The working staffs there were a significant shift in the daily activities as they have to get used to carrying work from their respective houses. Through social networks like Google workspace, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, all work activities were carried out. Difficulties did arise due to limited internet connectivity or fluctuation in the bandwidth, which caused difficulty in communication. In addition to this, the office members kept their files on the servers making and used Google drive to send and receive large files. E-governance served to carry out board meetings for office workers, and the interaction between the government and citizen. Business deals also took place mostly through social networks as relevant customers were targeted via advertisement campaigns.

1.1. Research Objectives

The objectives for the research paper are directed as follows:
- To explore the government's usage of social media to face the pandemic.
- To discover the types of interaction with the audience by social media during the pandemic.
- To explore the impacts of social media on the audience's information, attitudes, behaviours.
- To evaluate the role of social media in government communication during the pandemic.
- To recommend certain steps that can be taken to improve government communication through social media in the future during any potential crisis.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study helps in specifying the details of the study and carefully understanding the reason behind why the study is being conducted. The research study highlights the extent to which KSA relies on using social media as a communication tool in emergency management and the understanding of the strategies adopted by the KSA for the same.

1.3. Problem Statement

The problem taken up by the study understands social media's role as a method of communication with the citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic. The government authorities and KSA made sure to adopt the necessary steps to prevent spreading of the virus and make strategies for the same.

2. Literature Review

The Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the most problematic incidents around the world. It has led to the establishment of several restrictions for the protection of the citizens, and government entities have adopted measures for the safety of people. One of the measures adopted is the use of social media communication tools for communicating with the citizens about measures to be adopted, places where the restriction has been implemented for everyone's protection, and several other measures (Stieglitz et al., 2018). Social media tools have been increasingly efficient in helping the world transform and adapt (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Social media communication tools have been used effectively to enhance emergency management efficiency. During the pandemic, social media communication tools acted as one of the KSA's greatest allies of emergency management. Still, the reliability of the process has always been a questioning factor for the country and its authorities (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019). The literature review would help in understanding the communication process of government through social media. There are different roles that are discussed in the literature and the impact of the government communication through social media.

As opined by Figenschou (2020), social media has become a major part of every individual's everyday life, and this was an extremely efficient tool in emergency management during the pandemic. The pandemic led to the use of social media as an efficient tool of government communication because it allowed the government to provide information to the citizens, share data about restrictions with the people, and offer Covid-19 related guidelines to the people every day (DePaula, Dincelli, & Harrison, 2018).

Among all the roles played by social media in government communication and government offices, one of the most significant roles was building trust with the citizens. Social media allowed the government official to directly engage with the people in direct communication, which allowed them to clearly understand the problems being faced, by the people, ultimately allowing trust to be built in people for the government official and government institutions. Social media in

government has led to more transparency in operations, which has been one of the most significant ways to enhance trust within the people.

The concept of social media has become one of the significant and hottest topics, which catch the attention of experts, consultants, and researchers as they can attain benefit utilizing it in their fields. The social media allows the democracy to be shared globally, allows the public to share their perspectives, and enables the government to collect feedback from their public. Utilizing these platforms between the governments and their stakeholders opens the dialogues between the government and its citizens. It is done by distributing information to the people via social networking sites and by also by listening to the public's feedback and opinions on such data.

According to Darwish (2017), social media helps enhance the capabilities of government communication and enhances performance. Social media helps in government communication by allowing the government to get reports on people's opinions, presenting effective solutions for people in terms of gathering responses from the citizens, and so on (Masngut & Mohamad, 2021).

As stated by Voorveld et al. (2018), the Covid-19 pandemic is the first global pandemic to come in the age of social media networks like Facebook, and Twitter. The Government of KSA used social media sites to provide citizens with a better understanding of events and their impact. Apart from that, these sites also helped the government to deal with falsehoods, misinformation and false claims about the pandemic.

Social media, similar to other media platforms, allowed the KSA to gather people's attention, ensure the government's restrictions are being undertaken properly, and gather and issue news and policies about the pandemic to the people. According to Obied et al. (2020), the KSA administration took extra steps, including a rigorous policy requiring all residents to wear masks in public places and frequent usage of hand sanitizer in workplaces. If citizens of Gulf countries went on a trip to another country before entering Saudi Arabia, they were required to stay in their home country for at least fourteen days.

According to Anil & Alagha (2021), social media platform such as Twitter has been a major supporter of the government authorities of the KSA in spreading awareness about the pandemic among the people. Social media platforms also help the government inefficiently emphasise health regulations' importance. The KSA government emphasized the health and well-being of their residents and citizens. According to Anil & Alagha (2021), the government developed Tawakalna App to support their effort in countering Covid-19 cases. The app was designed by SDAIA (Saudi data and Artificial Intelligence Authority). The application makes it easier for private and government personnel to get movement permits during curfews by issuing them digitally. Individuals, security, health, and private entities who are exempt from the curfew can use Tawakalna to automate all transactions between related parties, reducing the economic, health, and social consequences of lockdowns.

As per Obied et al. (2020), the effectiveness of social media platforms such as Twitter, and so on have helped the KSA government in conducting regular as well as mobilized campaigns, gathering the attention of people for direct communication and creating a public form without gathering the physical presence of any individual.

The social media websites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter helps in mobilizing social campaigns, which helps discussion and communication on several public forums. The Government made principal activity concerning setting up a council that will help decide and execute the critical activation against Covid-19 in the country. The Government was able to gain trust and confidence from the citizens and successfully provided information concerning ongoing Covid-19 cases (Obied et al., 2020).

Therefore, based on the updates, the KSA government got several benefits from encouraging the resources and scrutinizing the information. The government of KSA started to monitor the misinformation related to the crisis on different social media platforms. Twitter, which was one of the most effective social media platforms, was frequently monitored by the KSA government so that the people would get the actual and real updates. Therefore, it helped to win the trust of the people of the country. Hence, it can be said that the social media platforms acted as an "infodemic" for the government of KSA, especially during the Covid-29 pandemic time.

E-governance or electronic government was developed to provide all kinds of support to the people of the country. This can also be called as the combination or unification of ICT or information and communication technology. This phenomenon helped the government to fulfil the requirement of the country and its people through a potential service. It is also said that digitalization and e-governance helped the KSA government to reduce the corruption and enhance the transparency and convenience. Moreover, the implementation of e-governance and digitalization helped in developing the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the country during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As per Alrehaili (2021), government communication through social media became the number one strategy of the government to help the government recognise the need for physical and mental health strength. The government was able to offer strength to people through e-governance strategies through social media platforms.

During the pandemic, the KSA Government did everything possible in their reach to support and aid the people. The government recognized that in order to survive Covid-19, people need to have both mental and physical strengths. The government communication helped people to have faith on authorities and healthcares. On other hand, the continuous communication also enabled government to motivate people through several digital campaigns and activities in order to get rid of boredom.

KSA government communication on different social media platforms is typi-

cally used for national policies, or for any kind of emergency cases. These social media platforms helped to increase the government's communication and engagement with the people of the country. E-government and digitalization worked on different productivity levels to maintain public administration during the pandemic time. However, the KSA government also faced several challenges in terms of creating laws and implementing new regulations for pandemics through digital communication with the community and society. It is said that in terms of government communication, social media platforms created several typical challenges regarding technology and organization for the KSA government.

Risk communication was based on the risk factors and risk perception of the people and the community of KSA. It is also considered as a major driving factor that helped the KSA government in dealing with different challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic time. Therefore, the KSA administration got an outline regarding the public health infrastructure and the public health risk factors. Based on the outcome of the risk communication, the KSA government got several benefits for adequate the risk perception. Hence, the risk communication of the KSA government provided risk-averse opportunities and behaviours for adopting the safety guidelines. In the case of risk communication of the KSA government in Covid-19, the necessary teams and necessary steps are significantly associated with the pandemic situation, exaggerated risk factors or miscommunication. Therefore, the government got additional advantages to taking precautionary measures and strategies, which minimizes the panic reaction in the community and people of KSA.

The previously conducted research has not presented information about social media's role in building the efficiency of government communication. Previous research studies have also not detailed the explaining the effects of social media in terms of its benefits harnessed in terms of development of rapid online communication, which has come as a blessing in disguise in the economy of Saudi Arabia during the critical periods of the pandemic. This research has been conducted to fill the gaps suitably.

Summary

The development of awareness in terms of the use of social media in government-based communication has been portrayed nicely in the review-based discussion. Different kinds of communication-based benefits of social media have been discussed in the review in terms of facilitating the transaction of data of governments, and the significance of the public-oriented trust criterion has been highlighted in this aspect. The effect of social media on government communication in terms of the development of relations between citizens in Arab societies and the government has also been mentioned in the discussion thoroughly.

Uses of social media during the critical periods of the pandemic have been limited by practices like wearing masks and the use of sanitisers infrequently in the economy. The development of consciousness has been highlighted as one of

the essential properties of media-backed interactions. The efficiency level of maintaining communication by governments has been analysed, emphasising its use in disaster management-based strategies. The development of government-oriented communications highlighting such practices during risks has been examined, followed by the gaps in previous studies.

3. Research Questions

The following are the research questions for the research:

1) How much time did you spend usually on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2) What are social media platforms have you accessed in order to stay connected during the pandemic?

3) What have been the benefits of using social media during the pandemic?

4) What is the most authentic information source for Covid-19 updates?

5) What have been the most accessed and trustable official government accounts on social media to guide and prevent the people from pandemic?

6) How the information provided by official government accounts has helped people to stay protected on social media during the pandemic?

7) How have the official government accounts encouraged people to follow them on social media during the pandemic?

8) How have the official government accounts been made more accessible and visible to the users on social media?

3.1. Research Approach

A researcher has the option of either choosing an inductive approach to their study or a deductive approach (Azungah, 2018). For this study, the researcher has opted for the deductive approach because it allows the researcher to study the previously published work to gather knowledge of government communication through social media channels.

A researcher may opt for a research design from various options, reflecting upon the aspects of the study (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). For this study, the researcher has opted for the descriptive research design because it has allowed the researcher to gather information about the characteristics and efficiency of KSA government communication.

In this research, the descriptive design has enabled in studying the characteristics of KSA government and their efficiency in maintaining communication during the pandemic using social media. This research design has enabled in analyzing the characteristics of individuals involved in the survey. The usage of this research design is done by primarily choosing the Saudi society for the survey and selecting the sample size of 350 samples from Saudi Society universities, colleges and other places to conduct the survey in a thorough manner. This design formation allows the researcher to depict the outcome of the research better.

3.2. Data Collection Methods

In the study, the researcher has taken the help of primary qualitative data collection tools of survey questionnaire as the method of data collection for the research. Three hundred fifty participants from Saudi society have been adopted for the survey questionnaire. The researcher has also opted for the secondary data collection method.

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

To conduct this research study, the researcher has opted for the quantitative data analysis method to allow the researcher to conduct the data analysis of the survey questionnaire. For analysing the secondary data, the researcher has selected the statistical data analysis method.

3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Method

An accurate sample size and sampling method need to be adopted by a researcher to conduct an accurate research process. The researcher has taken up a 350-sample size for this research, and the simple random sampling method has been chosen for accurate data collection.

Sample:

		Numbers	Percentage
Sex	Female		57.60%
	Male		42.40%
Age	22 - less than 26		55.20%
	26 - less than 33		28.60%
	18 - less than 22		16.20%
Education	Bachelor		52.10%
	Post-Graduate		30.40%
	Secondary		17.50%
Nationality	Saudi		60.90%
	Arab		20.30%
	Non-Arab		18.80%

4. Results

1) Time spent on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic

Table 1 now presents that 75.10% of responders either strongly agree or agree

Table 1. Time spent on social media.

Sr. No.	Time Spent on social media	Responses
1	1 to 2 hours per day	42.30%
2	1 to 2 hours per day	33.70%
3	1 to 2 hours per day	15.40%
4	More than 7 hours	8.60%

to spend around 1 to 2 hours and 3 to 4 hours of time on social media. Since there has been a tie, therefore, it is an even number of participants who like to spend a lot of time to less time on social media. Surprisingly there are around 8.6% of the participants like to spend over 7 hours on social media. It has been observed that most of the participants like the spend a lot. During the pandemic situation, the amount of internet consumption is said to have reached its peak due to the increase in social media consumption.

The people who have taken part in the survey were people who have suffered the pandemic. People have said that they have spent nearly 3 to 4 hours daily on social media; The main reason behind this is that people are getting bored, and this is resulting in major issues. People are getting addicted to the overuse of social media, and this is a major issue that can be pointed out. In major cases, it can be seen that people are using more social media, and this is turning out to be a major issue for people. People use social media on a daily basis and this is one of the major malice that is occurring with people.

2) Social media platforms used to stay connected

It has been observed that Facebook is the most accessed social media platform as 58.5% of the participants have stated the same. Twitter is considered to secure the second position in the number of participants accessing the social media account. Table 2 states that 18.9% of responders stay connected through Twitter. Instagram is considered to secure the third position in regard to the number of participants accessing the social media accounts as it gets 15.8% response.

People are using major social networking platforms to perform their daily activities. This is the major reason for people to get addicted to social media. This is the causing different issues like mental as well as physical issues. People majorly use Twitter as it has easier get news and information as compared to other social media platforms. Common people are getting prone to the use of social media, and this is causing a major issue to the people. People are also getting addicted to the other social media platforms, and this is causing a major issue as addiction towards social media can pave the path towards ill-health.

3) The benefits of using social media during pandemic

Table 3 has been observed that the participants accessed social media with the objective to have entertaining events and activities, as 54% of responders agree that this purpose of using social media is entertaining activities and events for educational scopes and resources get the second-highest percentage 16.4%. The

Table 2. Social media platforms.

Sr. No.	Social media platform	Responses
1	Twitter	58.50%
2	Facebook	18.90%
3	Snapchat	15.80%
4	Instagram	5%

Table 3. Benefits of using social media.

Sr. No	Benefits of social media	Responses
1	Entertaining events and activities	54%
2	Educational scope and resources	16.40%
3	Authentic knowledge and information	12.60%
4	Flexibility and transparent communication	10%
5	Contacting with other people during lockdown	5%
6	Online shopping	3%

third-highest percentage is 12.6%. According to chart three, contracting with other people during lockdown is an important agenda that works behind maintaining social media connections among the responders.

However, there are a few positives as well. People need to ensure that they are using social media to their advantage so that the issues can be mitigated. People can stay connected to their near and dear ones with the help of social media. The people can at the same time get the things done in the proper manner so that they can use social media to their advantage. The advantage needs to be the best and this is therefore the main idea of the people to get the things done in an advantageous manner. People also get major news and spread it among others.

4) Most authentic information source for Covid-19 updates

According to Table 4, it is the social media government accounts where the participants did receive the authentic source of information. It has been observed that there 43.4% have stated it is through social media government accounts responders get a maximum number of authentic information. Ironically under social media, private accounts get a percentage of 18.9%. Social media private accounts are a great source of sharing false information. It has been proved that the responders to gather information about Covid-19-related updates use social media news accounts. Social media news accounts get the third highest responses from the survey participants. TV channels, news platforms, radio stations, and newspaper magazines get fewer percentages which are not counted in percentage.

There are several benefits of using social media and the benefits cannot be overlooked. People get authentic news, and this is one of the major reasons

Table 4. Most authentic information source for Covid-19 updates.

Sr.	Authentic source of information	Responses
1	Social media government accounts	43.40%
2	Social and private accounts	18.90%
3	TV channels websites	18.60%
4	Printed and online Newspaper and magazine	5%
5	Radio stations and websites	4%
6	News platforms	3%
7	Friends and relatives	3%

people rely on social media. People also get entertained because of social media and this is causing the people to get the authentic news. The government is also using social media as their weapon so that they can spread awareness among the people in regard to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, they get can reach out to the major people as they are a part of the social media, and it is used by people globally.

5) The most accessed and trustable official government accounts on social media to guide and prevent the people from the pandemic

Table 5 claims that the health ministry gets the highest percentage. Among the 350 responder's majority supports that they get the most useful information from the foreign ministry's social media account. The above analysis stated that the accessible and trusted source of social media information had been observed to be the Health Ministry, which counts for 51.7%. 19.4% of the participants have stated that there it is from the Foreign Ministry that responders get all the information from the Foreign Ministry. Education Ministry gets the third-highest percentage, 12.9%. Environmental ministry and interior ministry simultaneously get 10% and 6% responses. These two ministries get the least percentage.

6) Information provides provided by government websites and social media during the pandemic situation helped people to stay connected (Table 6)

7) The manner in which social media accounts have encouraged people to follow the same during the pandemic situation

Table 7 includes five different options. Enchanting and innovative graphics are the two most important areas where most of the responders say that they agree social media accounts encourage responders to agree on innovative graphics and enchanting. For the second section or the option, the responders stay neutral. For images and video sharing, responders neither agree nor disagree. Information and awareness are in the third section, and people stay equally neutral and strongly agree on the matter. For the last two options, responders stay neutral. All the options get the least percentage on not agreeing on any of the options.

8) The way the government has made official government accounts more accessible and visible to the users: (Table 8)

It has been observed that the procedure of search engine optimisation was considered to be the most effective way in which government did make their

Table 5. The most accessed and trustable government social media accounts.

Sr. No.	Most accessed and trustable government social media	Responses
1	Health Ministry	51.70%
2	Foreign Ministry	19.40%
3	Education Ministry	12.90%
4	Environment Ministry	10%
5	Interior Ministry	6%

Table 6. Information provide provided by government websites and social media during the pandemic situation helped people to stay connected.

Sr. No.	Information provided by government	Agree	%	Neither agree nor disagree (Neutral)	%	Not Agree	%
1	Creating awareness about the existing guidelines and measures	200	27%	125	16.60%	20	13.99%
2	Warning and restricting people from violating the guidelines	131	17%	172	22.84%	29	20.28%
3	Spreading information about the efficiency and importance of Covid-19 vaccine	139	18%	154	20.45%	30	20.98%
4	Promoting safety and health measures	134	18%	162	21.51%	30	20.98%
5	Dealing with the procedures followed with infected cases	150	20%	140	18.59%	34	23.78%

Table 7. The manner in which social media accounts have encouraged people to follow the same during the pandemic situation.

Sr. No.	Social media accounts have encouraged people	Agree	%	Neither agree or disagree (Neutral)	%	Not agree	%
1	Enchanting and innovative graphics	172	23.47%	130	16.93%	31	21.83%
2	Images and videos on Covid-19 patients, measures and healthcare centres	131	17.87%	175	22.79%	23	16.20%
3	Informative and awareness related texts	152	20.74%	152	19.79%	25	17.61%
4	Enriched and creative contents	135	18.42%	161	20.96%	30	21.13%
5	Useful Links to other health institutions	143	19.51%	150	19.53%	33	23.24%

Table 8. The way the government has made official government accounts more accessible and visible to the users.

Sr. No.	How the government has made their websites and social media accounts more accessible	Agree	%	Neither agree nor disagree (Neutral)	%	Not Agree	%
1	Search Engine Optimization	165	22.60%	127	17.09%	27	16.98%
2	Feedback and Comments	138	18.90%	165	22.21%	26	16.35%
3	Reposting the important guidelines, images, news and videos	133	18.22%	152	20.46%	40	25.16%
4	Emotional Intelligence	144	19.73%	155	20.86%	32	20.13%
5	Appropriate Layout	150	20.55%	144	19.38%	34	21.38%

websites visible to the users. Most of the participants agreed with the question. There are certain participants who have stated that they agree with the statement appropriate layout of the websites have allowed users to figure out the authenticity of data and information being stated for better understanding. Surprisingly there are a certain number of the participants do not agree that emotional intelligence is considered does not compel the statements.

Findings

The data was gathered from a survey questionnaire with 350 participants, among

whom 42.4% were male and 57.6% were female. The participants were asked questions primarily oriented around the intensity of social media, how well the government has been using social media platforms for government communication, and in what ways. The data gathered from the study has allowed the researcher to gain in-depth information about how the government communication process has been enhanced due to the inclusion of social media platforms. Questions related to the benefits of social media during the pandemic, the most trusted platforms for government communication, the effectiveness of social media platforms, and so on were asked to the participants during the survey.

The research study conducted through a survey questionnaire has helped gather the data that create awareness of the pandemic, and the policies and regulations of the pandemic have been among the most useful information shared by government authorities using social media platforms. The survey results have offered the participants were mostly confronted by the website of government authorities due to the use of search engine optimization. Most participants of the study have stated that the awareness campaigns conducted by social media platforms of government entities have been extremely effective in helping the awareness confront the participants.

5. Discussion

The analysis evaluated from the survey results that most of the survey participants are female, and among all the respondents, most belong to the age group of 22 - 26 years. The survey questionnaire results also offer the data that the majority of respondents are qualified enough to be part of the survey about social media and government communication and belong to different countries. The survey questionnaire results have also offered the information that respondents of the survey have increased their social media presence hours and now are using social media for three to four hours every day.

The respondents of the survey offer the information that the KSA government has carefully used social media platforms as a method of creating stable and effective communication between the people and the country. Through the help of social media platforms as a government communication strategy, government authorities have shared information about the lockdown, health regulations, policies and restrictions imposed, and other major information during the pandemic. Social media became a source of authentic information gathering during the pandemic and was used by the KSA government authorities to share accurate and important information and provide news updates and health regulation policies (DePaula, Dincelli, & Harrison, 2018).

The survey participants offered the data that social media platforms became an effective communication platform for the government, and they were able to share data using social media channels of communication. Social media has uplifted the communication channels between the citizens and the KSA government, which was also achieved through websites and other online portals of the

government. The government used social media platforms, websites, and portals to share health and safety information, vaccine information, regulations and policies information, restriction information, and so on. The KSA government also arranged systems for raising awareness and starting health and safety campaigns through the website and social media channels.

Considerably, the analysis presented in the literature review highlights key points in relation to the role of social media in government communication and processes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Communications through social media platforms have acted as one of the greatest allies of the KSA government institutions during the pandemic. Government communication is an essential strategy implemented by any government or governmental organization for exchanging information with the country's people. Social media platforms have become one of the most significant strategies implemented by the government organizations of the KSA for effective communication, sharing information, and raising awareness among the people of the country. Social media platforms act as an ally of the government institutions in reaching out to the citizens and providing them with important information during the pandemic (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

Platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and other social media platforms have become effective government communication platforms for the KSA government. Social media platforms allow broader communication channels for the government and help the government establish a direct individual connection with the country's citizens. During the pandemic, the KSA government used social media platforms as the most effective tool for raising awareness and sharing information about the pandemic and its related problems. Raising awareness about the policies regulations and developing trustful relationships between the people and the government are clear examples of how government communication through social media has been effective during the Covid-19 pandemic (Wang & Ye, 2018).

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be gathered that the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly created a severe change in the government communication system in the KSA, and the new system of social media platforms being used as communication channels has enhanced the process. The KSA government has efficiently enhanced the use of social media platforms to engage with the citizens and gather their attention for communicating with them, sharing valuable information with them, informing them about policies and regulations, and so on. Risk communication and government communication are some of the most significant parts played by the social media platforms for the KSA government.

Recommendation

The government of KSA can easily understand the requirements, needs, as well as grievances of the citizens of the country by establishing effective communica-

tion between the government authorities and the citizens. The government may promote using social media platforms and online portals to open the space of more authenticity, accuracy, and reliability through better communication. If the government promotes social media channels of communication, they will be able to provide information efficiently, start campaigns and raise awareness efficiently, and so on with the help of communication through social media and related systems such as government websites and portals.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Abbreviations

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

E-governance: Electronic governance

MoFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs