12-2018

New York State Superintendents and Social Media

Roger B. Clough II
St. John Fisher College, rogerbclough17@gmail.com

Recommended Citation

New York State Superintendents and Social Media

Abstract
Little is understood or has been researched regarding which social media tools New York State public school superintendents use in their jobs, how they use those tools, and what challenges they face using social media in their jobs. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine and understand the challenges that superintendents face on a daily basis and to explain how social media is impacting the superintendencies of superintendents, ages 30 to over 65 years. A survey was sent to over 720 public school superintendents in New York State. Participants were drawn from urban, suburban, and rural school districts across the state. The data that were collected through research, interviews, and a survey and were analyzed to identify categories, themes, and perspectives across the participant responses. The data were disaggregated to reveal emergent themes and grouped into different ways of looking at all the themes. The research identified the types of social media that superintendents use in the areas of professional development and decision making in policy development, and social media use with boards of education, professional organizations, and school districts. Recommendations for additional research and initiatives to help superintendents succeed with social media tools are included, and recommendations are also identified as to what social media tools superintendents should be using and the major social media tools superintendents should be looking at daily in their districts.

Document Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department
Executive Leadership

First Supervisor
C. Michael Robinson

Second Supervisor
Shawn Van Scoy

Subject Categories
Education

New York State Superintendents and Social Media

By

Roger B. Clough II

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

C. Michael Robinson, Ed.D.

Committee Member

Shawn Van Scoy, Ed.D.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

December 2018

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Robin, and my two children, McKenzie and Owen, who have supported me these last 2 years. It has been a very long road, and I know I have missed many of your events and special moments at school while working on my degree. I cannot say how proud I am of you and the support you gave me throughout this journey. You are an inspiration to me. I hope you see you can do anything in life that you want to do as long as you put your mind to it, stay positive, and have the support, ambition, and love of your family. I love you both so very much, and as a father, I could not be prouder of you. I someday hope to see both of you succeed in your dreams and endeavors. Remember—you can do anything you put your mind to.

My wife, Robin, who pushed me for the last 2 years and put herself second in her career to advance mine. You always put our family first. You have sacrificed a lot, and I want you to know I appreciate your love and friendship. You are an amazing mother and wife. You are the heart of our family. You have filled in the gaps since my journey began and understood the importance of this journey for me and our family. You have been a rock for all of us. You are my everything. I love you.

I also want to dedicate this dissertation in memory of my parents, Roger Clough and Eunice Clough. You laid the foundation for me to accomplish my goals. You always believed in me. Thank you. I miss you and love you.

Over the last 2 years, I have been blessed with so many outstanding professors. Thank you for the people who helped me along my way. Dr. C. Michael Robinson, thank

you for all your help, your knowledge, and being there to help me through my doctorate and also helped me professionally. Dr. Shawn Van Scoy, thank you for your guidance, support, and encouragement through this journey. Dr. VanDerLinden, for your patience, and encouragement, especially with my survey. Dr. Evans, thank you for listening to me and supporting my future endeavors.

I would like to thank Dr. Michelle Reed, who served as a mentor for me, and who also is a person who supported my journey and helped me in so many ways to achieve this goal. Thank you for providing the positive feedback when I was struggling and ensuring my writing and findings were clearly presented on my journey. Cuyle Rockwell, who also severed as a mentor to me, and who was also my main communication person. You put your own research background to good use and thoroughly analyzed the data that I collected. Cuyle, thank you so much for all your assistance, guidance, and knowledge on my topic.

Last, I want to acknowledge my two sisters, Hidy and Molly. Thank you so much for being my big sisters and for your love throughout the years. Who would have thought that your little brother from the small town of Massena, who you picked on throughout the years, would one day grow up and earn a doctorate. I did it!

Biographical Sketch

Roger B. Clough II has worked as a Superintendent of Schools for 11 years in New York State. He worked as a kindergarten teacher, first-grade teacher, sixth-grade teacher, elementary principal, and junior high principal. Mr. Clough attended SUNY Potsdam from 1991 to 1993 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1993. He had a double major: Elementary Education and History. He attended SUNY Potsdam from 1996 to 1998 and graduated with a Master of Science degree in Education in 1998. His major was reading. He furthered his educational degrees and attended St. Lawrence University from 2001 to 2003 and graduated with a Masters in Educational Leadership with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Administration. His major was Educational Administration/Leadership. He graduated in 2003. He came to St. John Fisher College in May of 2016 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mr. Clough pursued his research in New York State superintendents and social media under the direction of Dr. C. Michael Robinson and Dr. Shawn Van Scoy and received the Ed.D. degree in 2018.

Abstract

Little is understood or has been researched regarding which social media tools New York State public school superintendents use in their jobs, how they use those tools, and what challenges they face using social media in their jobs.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine and understand the challenges that superintendents face on a daily basis and to explain how social media is impacting the superintendencies of superintendents, ages 30 to over 65 years. A survey was sent to over 720 public school superintendents in New York State. Participants were drawn from urban, suburban, and rural school districts across the state. The data that were collected through research, interviews, and a survey and were analyzed to identify categories, themes, and perspectives across the participant responses. The data were disaggregated to reveal emergent themes and grouped into different ways of looking at all the themes. The research identified the types of social media that superintendents use in the areas of professional development and decision making in policy development, and social media use with boards of education, professional organizations, and school districts. Recommendations for additional research and initiatives to help superintendents succeed with social media tools are included, and recommendations are also identified as to what social media tools superintendents should be using and the major social media tools superintendents should be looking at daily in their districts.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Social media tools have changed the way superintendents communicate and manage information, and it has placed dramatic demands on the superintendency (McLeod & Richardson, 2011). The superintendency today requires school leaders to have skills in social media and to excel in some aspects of technology related to social media (Sauers, Richardson, & McLeod, 2014). Porterfield and Carnes (2012) explained that nine out of every 10 Internet users in the United States are visiting social networks every month, and they spend at least 4 hours or more on social media networks monthly. Three quarters of teenagers and young adults, ages 18-29-years old, use social media networks, and social media use among adults 50 and older doubled from 22 to 47% in 2010 (Zickuhur, 2010). Zickuhur (2010) reported that 79% of adults use the Internet, and if 90% of districts get their information from social media, moving to social media tools is no longer an option.

Data for this dissertation was used to determine the scope of the social media tools superintendents stated they were using and what challenges and issues they have had relating to social media. Superintendents face communication challenges on a daily basis from topics such as budgets, graduation rates, test scores, public opinion, and class sizes (Gonzales, Vodicka, & White, 2011). There are not enough superintendents telling their story to their stakeholders. Policy makers and superintendents need to understand

the impact of decisions made on a daily basis and the success that can result from using social media tools successfully (Gonzales et al., 2011).

Studies show that with the advent of social media tools, crucial conversations are taking place about schools, superintendents, boards of education, and teachers through specific types of social media tools, which include, websites, Twitter sites, blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Carpenter, Walsh-Robertson, Johnson, & Blum, 2014). Superintendents are taking an active role in social media so that they can share events that are happening in their district. They are becoming the storytellers for their community. Superintendents must know the types of social media tools and the scope of their use in a school district and community (Carpenter et al., 2014.). Social media allows superintendents to have the power to connect across their districts and around the world (Kennedy, 2014).

Social media is entrenched in our culture. Carpenter et al. (2014) posited that educational leaders and districts have to adapt or adopt its presence in school districts. Today's myriad of social media information is made public in real time (O'Reilly & Matt, 2014). The numerous social media communication instruments used on a daily basis are constantly changing the job of the superintendency, and social media is no longer a part of our culture; it IS our culture (Carpenter et al.). The rapid growth of the Internet has improved communication for superintendents, and social devices have expanded to serve as phones, cameras, and calendars, and they provide access to the Web and social media outlets. Ignoring social media tools such as blogs, websites, Twitter, and Facebook can result in dire consequences for school superintendents and the school district (Carpenter et al., 2014). Furthermore, new social media outlets can be a tool for

superintendents to share their perspectives and to help their stakeholders navigate through certain issues and explain superintendents' points of view on issues (Gonzales et al., 2011).

Gonzales et al. (2011) expressed that superintendents can use social media as a tool to express their knowledge as educational leaders in their private and personal networks. The authors posited that social media networks can become action networks to strengthen messages, and they can be used to create a positive impact on public education. Superintendents can use social media tools to state a clear purpose and message when they post information to connect with friends, colleagues, stakeholders, and experts (Gonzales et al.). Using social media tools for a positive outcome, superintendents can be genuine, promote authentic conversation, and actively monitor their sites so that their message and purpose is specific to the endeavor (Gonzales et al.).

Gonzales et al. (2011) pointed out that to some superintendents, it is a daunting challenge to learn the new social media tools, but if superintendents want to succeed, they have to engage in and become educated on, the social media tools that their students and stakeholders are using. The dissertation topic was used gathered data regarding the challenges that superintendents have had with social media and to describe the social media tools that superintendents state they are using.

Problem Statement

As a superintendent of a school district, the researcher is finding that social media tools are critical in communicating real-time information. Electronic communications and numerous social media tools have enabled superintendents to solve communication problems they face daily (Hines, Edmonson, & Moore, 2008). Cell phones, email, and

social media networks have not been common tools to communicate in the education

environment (Hines et al., 2008). Hines et al. pointed out that administrators now use

these types of social media tools and more. Superintendents are finding it difficult to

know when to use – and not to use – social media tools. Superintendents need to know

what types of social media tools to use, how to use them, and how to deal with the

challenges they face when using social media, and they need to know when they should

not use social media tools. The emergence of social media tools has a tremendous impact

on the way superintendents lead their districts, perform their jobs, and disseminate the

information they receive (Hines et al.). Houston (2001) described that the

superintendents' leadership of the future is changing from being the manager of the *killer*

Bs, such as buildings, buses, books, budgets, and bonds, to the *crucial Cs*, which include

connecting, communication, collaborating, curricular choices, community, and

champions of children. How and what kind of social media tools are being used by

superintendents is important when trying to understand the role social media plays in the

superintendency.

　　Superintendents are often seen as leaders who are disengaged and not part of the

events that are taking place within their districts or teachers' classrooms (Kennedy,

2014). Kennedy found that social media can help the superintendency change that

perception, and that stakeholders can try to provide a version of what they might think the

superintendents' views are or what the superintendent thinks. Local media, unions, and

those in the community may paraphrase comments made by the superintendent

(Kennedy). This can perpetuate misinformation through a superintendent's community

causing credibility issues with the superintendent. Unfiltered information that a

superintendent is unaware of can cause excessive or unwarranted issues within the district. What is in the newspaper today and tomorrow will be discussed on social media today (Kennedy). The use of social media tools can allow superintendents to track what is being said to their stakeholders and validate their own messages (Kennedy).

If constituents are using and looking at district social media tools and an issue comes up in the district that has been commented on, then social media tools could help validate the school's credibility on the issue (Kennedy, 2014). According to Kennedy, superintendents can follow parents, students, media, and community leaders, and engage them with topics that are taking place within the district. Through utilizing social media, superintendents can see what is being discussed on those modes of social media. If constituents want to know what their superintendent is thinking, social media allows the superintendent to do so in a timely manner and on his or her own terms (Kennedy). O'Reilly and Matt (2014) discovered that many superintendents are not interactive with their internal and external public when, it comes to social media, to deal with issues that arise in their school district

New media and social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the iPhone are increasing the demand for how fast we communicate with each other (Stephens & Barrett, 2016). Many superintendents are not experts of social media tools and devices, and they do not use them to communicate with their communities. There is pressure for the superintendent to get a response out when it is needed or to address an issue immediately (Stephens & Barrett). People are looking for instant gratification, often in small pieces, and they want to read easy-to-understand language (Stephens & Barrett). As a superintendent, the researcher has seen a shift in superintendents' communications.

A few years ago, a superintendent would release a lengthy press release to defend an issue or describe an event that took place in his or her district to share information to their constituents. Superintendents have a great deal to lose if they fail to communicate briefly with their constituents—even if the topic is very complex (Stephens & Barrett).

Social media tools are at the forefront as a way to communicate with stakeholders. There have been new ways to communicate through social media tools and how superintendents can send out their messages. The introduction of new social media tools and devices has changed communication in profound ways (Stephens & Barrett, 2016). The need for instant news and the speed at which constituents want information have escalated with the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Stephens & Barrett). This has caused a complexity of issues for superintendents.

Cox and McLeod (2014) posited that social media will continue to play a powerful role in districts, and it is continuing to grow at a fast pace. Research has shown that superintendents who utilize multiple social media tools with their constituents, as part of a marketing effort and communication plan, will increase their development and implementation of social media strategies quicker than those superintendents who do not use these strategies (Cox & McLeod, 2014). In addition, research further shows that superintendents who use social media have allowed for in-depth information and responses with and from the public that would not be printed in traditional media outlets, and it has allowed them with the transparency to explain decisions or topics that are being discussed on social media networks or around the community (Cox & McLeod). The ability for the superintendent to connect directly using social media tools with a constituent or stakeholder group could increase the informal conversations that take

place, and it could strengthen the connection with their stakeholders (Cox & McLeod). Cox and McLeod posited that social media can be a powerful tool for the superintendency. The superintendents may be able to reach their stakeholders, using it to share stories, promote positive change, and change the way that the educational process is performed by promoting positive educational outcomes. The researchers found that social media use leads to greater interactions with stakeholders, provide transparency through shared decision making, and it leads to a stronger bond to a superintendents' stakeholders and beyond (Cox & McLeod). Social media tools are no longer an option, but they are components for a superintendent to succeed (Cox & McLeod).

Given the explosion in the use of social media in our culture, this research examined the types of social media tools that New York State superintendents are using in the performance of their jobs. And, from the perspective of the superintendents, this research sought to uncover the critical issues, concerns, and challenges that superintendents face in the use of social media to perform their jobs.

Theoretical Rationale

The use of social media tools by New York State (NYS) public school superintendents has increased tremendously, and they are innovations that have disrupted the way superintendents communicate. Disruptive innovations are technological inventions, products, services, processes, or concepts that alter the status quo and create a new market value network, which eventually disrupt an existing market and value network, thus displacing established markets, products, and alliances (Christensen, 1997). Disruptive innovation is defined as one that overturns existing technology or products. The term was defined and analyzed by Clayton Christensen in 1995 (Christensen).

Disruptive innovation theory has been in practice for over 18 years, but it has become highly effective in many areas of businesses, government, and education. Christensen and Raynor (2003) changed the term *disruptive technology* to *disruptive innovation*, meaning that disrupting is not an inherent feature of the technology, but that the disruption will decrease through the practice of it. Christensen's (1997) theory describes that a new technology can disrupt existing practices and change the way a practice is being performed. Social media is a disruptive innovation that is affecting how superintendents communicate within their jobs. Social media is a communication tool that is changing the way superintendents communicate.

Christensen (1997) defined a disruptive innovation as one that overturns an existing technology or product. Compared to 10 years ago, superintendents communicate differently because social media tools have had an impact on traditional face-to-face communication, and they have changed other ways of communicating such as with the use of the telephone and paper (hardcopy) illustrations. Superintendents can use social media to share what they do each day with a large audience. By using social media tools, superintendents can be prepared to deal with fictitious and unfounded news, promote their districts, and engage the public with positive news from their districts. The disruptiveness of social media tools regarding the superintendency has truly impacted how superintendents communicate. Superintendents may be resistant to communicate a topic or event in their districts or they may know how to navigate through a story or event. These leaders are sometimes concerned about what topics to discuss to and what to engage their stakeholders in on school or non-school conversations. Social media tools are one way to communicate with stakeholders which include parents, students, and

others. Learning which social media tools to use to communicate with their stakeholders is being explored was well. A disruptive innovation places new demands on employees and organizations (Powell, Olivier, & Yuan, 2015). These include changes to social media tools, practices, and processes (Powell et al., 2015). If we conclude that the old way of superintendents' communicating is no longer the norm because of the advent of social media tools, the use of social media tools is no longer a choice for superintendents. They must use some type of social media tool. Social media tools have changed the way superintendents engage with students, parents, staff, and stakeholders. In this 21st century, they can take their message directly to their stakeholders without the filter of time or traditional uses such as mailing hardcopy letters through the U.S. Postal Service to stakeholders' homes or by calling them on the telephone. Social media innovations will continue to be disruptive. More social media tools are being developed and are growing like Instagram, Facebook, and other Web 2.0 tools (Meyer, 2011). It is fair to say that social media tools will be disruptive, because more people will be using social media tools to communicate, which will cause superintendents to use these tools to get their messages out.

Disruptive innovation can be difficult to define, especially when it is applied to social media. The hard task is to identify what is disruptive innovation and what is a sustaining innovation (Powell et al., 2015). What social media tools are causing disruption with the superintendency and what social media tools are not? Sometimes technology, such as new social media tools, alone, does not provide sufficient criteria (Powell et al.). Are the social media tools that superintendents are using help their communications? It can sometimes be difficult to identify a series of reactions to a

disruptive innovation. You have to look for typical reactions that help identify the existence of a disruptive innovation (Powell et al.). This discovery will help superintendents analyze what social media tools to use, and it will enable them to express their views on those certain social media tools. This may mean postings, comments, or reactions that are happening on social media sites. The theory can help form a strong basis for analyzing how best to respond to social media, but it has to be looked at closely for results (Powell et al.).

Social media today is simpler and more reliable than past technologies (Christensen, 1997). This is true with public school superintendents. They are using blogs, texts, emails, Twitter, and Facebook to get their messages out to their constituents' scrutiny (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). When superintendents are faced with disruptive innovations in social media, they have to react to the disruption by utilizing the social media tools. Sometimes disruption occurs and a superintendent may not know it is happening at that particular time. It could be immediate, but it may be too hard for the superintendent to see its existence because of the lack of the use of social media tools, or the information may be received by the superintendent too slowly, because he or she may be using communication avenues that are very slow in their deliveries (Meyer, 2011). In order to claim something is being disruptive, careful analysis has to be conducted to gauge the extent of the disruption (Meyer).

Meyer (2011) recognized that the careful analysis was not available at the time of the researcher's writing. However, Meyer did posit that it is important to ask what evidence exists that social media has been disruptive, and therefore, social media tools used by the superintendency can be investigated to see if they are used and what the

effects of social media tools are having on how the superintendency in education is doing business. The growth of social media tools may not be disruptive if they can overcome time, budgets, and usage (Meyer). Meyer opined that if people do not have time to learn social media tools, and if districts do not budget for usage of social media tools, then it may not be disruptive for superintendents (Meyer). Disruptive innovation has caused a major shift and disruption in how the communication in the superintendency has changed and the challenges that social media has caused. This current research study includes a rationale for a quantitative study using the disruptive theory.

Research Questions

The research questions to be answered in this study are:

1. What types of social media are used, and to what degree are they used, by current superintendents of school districts in New York State in the performance of their jobs?

2. From the perspective of the superintendents, what are the critical challenges, concerns, and issues associated with the use of social media tools in performing their jobs?

Potential Significance of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the challenges that a superintendent faces on a daily basis and what types of social media superintendents currently use in performing their jobs. Research indicates that social media is rapidly growing and that superintendents can no longer ignore social media networks (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Sauers et al. (2014) posited that superintendents have to gain better

insights into the challenges they face with social media on a daily basis. The challenge remains how they include these new technologies in their daily lives (Sauers et al.).

Anderson and Dexter (2005) stated that superintendents must be actively involved in working with technology, using social media tools, and spending time on the social media tools they are using. The knowledge of technology requires school leaders to have skills that go beyond managing a district (Sauers et al., 2014). It is vital that superintendents understand the challenges and successes of other leaders who have excelled in some aspect of technology leadership (Sauers et al., 2014). Knowing the challenges of social media and what types they need to use can help superintendents become more familiar with social media. Superintendents are being challenged every day by social media outlets and by their communities, districts, and staffs (Sauers et al.).

The results of this study can be utilized by superintendents to gather information about social media tools that other superintendents are using. The data that was collected through research, interviews, and the survey, can be used to help superintendents understand the challenges with social media, make intelligent decisions when using social media, and get information they need from social media tools. The research identifies the types of social media that superintendents are using to inform other superintendents of the social media tools they could, and possibly should, be using. This data can apprise superintendents in the area of professional development and the need to understand the challenges that social media has placed upon them. The data can be used for decision making in policy development for superintendents, boards of education, professional organizations, and school districts. The information from this study may help

superintendents succeed in using the types of social media they find helpful and to apprise them of issues they may face when using the assorted social media tools.

Definitions of Terms

Social Media – A collection of software tools which helps people to share information, create, grow and collaborate with communities (Berners-Lee, Hendler, & Lassila, 2001).

SMS (Short Message Service) – the act of sending a communication, via texting on a cell phone or like device (Stephens & Barrett, 2016).

Web 2.0 – second generation of online technology that helps to greater collaboration among Internet users, content providers, and world-wide enterprises (Harris & Rea, 2009). The social nature of Web 2.0 is another major difference between it and the original, static Web.

Wiki – a website that allows collaborative editing of its content and structure by its users.

Chapter Summary

There are several social media tools that challenge and impact the superintendency, and superintendents are increasingly being required to actively engage in social media and spend significant time using those social media tools (Anderson & Dexter, 2005). Without investigation superintendents may not understand that social media will impact their daily lives in their communities and districts. They may face challenges when it comes to social media. This may include the different types of social media they have to respond to. This may include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or blogs that are put running on their communities' social media posts. Without research,

superintendents may not know what types of social media they must respond to, and they may not understand the challenges associated with responding to social media posts. By understanding the challenges associated with a social media presence and the broad scope of social media, superintendents will be increasing their knowledge and understanding of how social media impacts the superintendency.

The remainder of the dissertation is divided into four parts. Chapter 2 contains a comprehensive review of literature relating to the topic. Chapter 3 describes and defends the instruments that were used. The context, participants, collection instruments, and instruments of analysis of the data are also described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the data collected and the analysis of the data, and Chapter 5 discusses the findings and the implications for research, practices, and policy development.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The literature review explores the research of a variety of entities that use social media, and it presents research pertaining to the efficiency of social media within the different entities.

This chapter reviews the research literature and explains the ways superintendents in school districts utilize social media and what types of social media they use. It also explores other entities and their use of social media, and it highlights some of the most popular social media tools and sites that are being utilized in the world today.

The following components were explored:

- Social media: The history and uses of social media

- Theory: Disruptive theory

- Social media: Government sector

- Social media: Business sector

- Social media: Education sector

History and Uses of Social Media

Media technology has brought to life a new media form that is described as *social media* (Schejter & Tirosh, 2015). Social media is defined in Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (n.d.) as "forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content." Social media can also be defined as a collection of software tools that helps individuals

collaborate, share, create, and grow new social media networks (Berners-Lee et al., 2001).

The Pew Research Center started to systematically track social media in 2005 (Perrin, 2015). Since 2013, 65% of adults have been using some type of social media. That is nearly two-thirds of American adults, which is up 7% since 2005 (Perrin). Social media has a short history, and it has caused a change in how people communicate (Devore & McCarthy, 2015). Social media tools are being used for collaboration, interaction, and communication (Zhao, Truell, Alexander, Sharma, & Smith, 2013), and they are established with accessible, scalable, Internet-based technologies, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and MySpace, which are used by any smartphone and/or computer with Internet access (Zhao et al., 2013). Social media has changed the traditional way people communicate and receive information and the traditional ways of communicating, through newspapers, television, or radio, are taking an increasing lesser role. Today, people are using social media to promote their views to influence people and control information (Zhao et al.).

Scholars have labeled the media of the second decade of the 21st century as social media to explain the difference from previous generations of media (Schejter & Tirosh, 2015). The term social media encompasses both old and new technology, and today's social media allows for an abundance of mobility, multitasking, and multi-interactivity (Schejter & Tirosh). The old media can be defined as devices, such as televisions, telephones, and radios, while the new media includes the Internet and mobile devices (Schejter & Tirosh). Today, you can use social media devices to talk, communicate with different networks, and voice thoughts and opinions while looking at different

technologies. Individuals can also multitask. Social media has allowed the people of society to communicate more with each other and make their presence known, which makes their communication more socially effective (Schejter & Tirosh, 2015).

Social media allows people to interact with a myriad of information, which they can share, comment on, and modify. Every day, individuals across the world are engaging in dialogue within social media forums in which they are publicly voicing their opinions, ideas, and suggestions (Cho & LoCascio, 2013). Social media offers users the ability to interact from any place in the world at any time, and it gives them the opportunity to gain large quantities of information that can be transferred around the world in a variety of forms (Schejter & Tirosh, 2015). In turn, individuals are exposing their thoughts, opinions, and information about others (Cho & LoCascio).

How people use social media and understand it is a major issue (Maynard, Roberts, Greenwood, Rout, & Bontcheva, 2017). Maynard et al. (2017) posited that social media is the largest collection of history that society has ever seen, and social media information can be dynamic because it can show the opinions and suggestions of the authors who are writing it, posting it, or tweeting it. People insert their own opinion, or what they consider to be facts, to express an event or story that may instigate another story that was originally posted on a social media network (Maynard et al.). The amount of social media postings is highly dynamic, in great volume, and is used to promote societal views (Maynard et al.).

Social media tools are also used for commenting on issues that people disagree upon or have an opinion about, such as Twitter, where the individual tweets are personal or about public events. Social media content reflects on the societal and sentimental

fluctuations of the person who is writing the pieces, and generally, the authors who are writing can be triggered by an event or related entries (Maynard et al., 2017). Social media reflects both the ever-changing language used in social media as well as current social views (Maynard et al.).

The world knows that technology is always changing, improving, and pushing new concepts for how we use technology in education (Gonzales et al., 2011). Improvements in technology have provided an explosion of growth in technology, and the fast growth of the Internet has improved and increased communication in distribution systems including school districts (Gonzales et al.). The increase of in the use of mobile devices that serve as cameras, calendars, and Web access has increased the use of social media (Gonzales et al.). Social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, represent Web 2.0 resources that are well known in today's society. Social media has enabled individuals to expect instant gratification, because there does not have to be a long delay in when people will respond.

In describing social media, we have to describe Web 2.0 which is a term that is becoming more familiar every day to people who are using social media tools. Web 2.0 is defined as accessibility of the user to take in information and create, organize, and connect with others who are interested in the same topics (Pritchett, Wohleb, & Pritchett, 2013). It has an implication on the use of technology when using social media tools. There are several types of Web 2.0 technologies, and new offerings appear almost daily (Harris & Rea, 2009). A blog, wiki (a website that allows collaborative editing of its content and structure by its users), podcast, Facebook, and Twitter are included in Web 2.0, and the Web 2.0 technology plays an important role in how effectively

communication is spread across the globe, and it is a vital way to communicate in this era of social media.

The platform Twitter was established in 2006 and it has helped to expand the social media landscape. It has a short history conveying crises and being used as a social media tool in government agencies (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). Twitter is a social media tool that is used to reach large numbers of a target audience quickly (Devore & McCarthy, 2015). It is also a way to get information out by using short messages, and it is a form of microblogging (Kavanaugh et al.). Since March 2006, people have been able to tweet what they think or what they are doing around the globe, and they have an audience for their thoughts, creating a valuable social media tool. Tweets are text-based messages of up to 280 characters in length, and they are displayed on a user's profile page and delivered to followers who have subscribed to those users (Harris & Rea, 2009). When a specific tweet is posted, all of the people following the user are instantly updated. Using Twitter for communication has not gone unnoticed. As of September 2010, according to Twitter's webpage, there were 175 million registered users, and approximately 95 million tweets are posted on a daily basis (Zelin & Baird, 2012). Twitter has increased in growth over 25% from 2013-2014 (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). It is one of the fastest growing ways a person can communicate with their stakeholders (Schachter, 2011). Agozzino and Kaiser (2014) stated that Twitter is an important way that leaders can communicate with their organization and can help resolve situations in numerous ways.

Twitter allows leaders to address issues in a timely manner. It plays an important role in educational leadership because it allows leaders to disseminate information to their stakeholders (Wang, Sauers, & Richardson, 2016). Twitter can have a significant

impact on organizations and how their employees us it from within their organizations. (Gruber, Smerek, Thomas-Hunt, & James, 2015).

Twitter uses patterns that have been analyzed in existing studies by Wang et al. (2016). The Wang et al. study looked at the presence or visibility of users on Twitter, as indicated by the size of the Twitter followers and followings; the frequency of the tweets, as indicated by the tweets per week; and how long users have had a Twitter account. Twitter use patterns show that one's presence on Twitter determines how many Twitter followers an individual would have. The Twitter use patterns also reveal several correlations: (a) how many times a person tweets will indicate the number of tweets per week, and (b) how long Twitter has been used by a person will determine if her or she has a successful Twitter account (Wang et al.). Wang et al. posited that Twitter is a powerful social media tool that will continue to grow along with the implementation of other social media.

The most well-known social media network is Facebook (Devore & McCarthy, 2015). It is the social media network that is most used by adults including educators and professional organizations (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Facebook members can add their own personal information, invite potential members, and join groups (Devore & McCarthy). Facebook members can use several tools on Facebook to help them promote events, send invitations, and set dates for future workshops (Devore & McCarthy). Photos can also be added to their page and create a buzz or interest about events that are taking place (Devore & McCarthy). Files and digital libraries can be created for a variety of materials such as handouts, presentations, and invitations (Devore & McCarthy).

Devore & McCarthy (2015) found that sharing pictures and presentations can cause more information to be out in the public view for people

When Facebook was launched in April 2006, it had 4,000 organizations join within 2 weeks. In 2009, Facebook had more than 68 million users (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). As of March 2017, there were over 1.94 billion users, which is an 18% increase (Facebook, 2017). When Facebook was first introduced, organizations had no idea how to use it to their advantage (Waters et al., 2009). It did not provide a lot of information for external links, news stories, photos, and discussion boards (Waters et al.). At the beginning, Facebook only provided its viewers with an email address or website information (Waters et al.). What it needed to do was to promote companies with all the events that were happening so that people would know what Facebook was about. Organizations did not take advantage of the public relations piece of social media (Waters et al.).

Waters et al. (2009) posited that relationships are important for building social media networking sites. If people are using social media sites, they have to engage their stakeholders and foster relationships with them so that the social media sites they use grow (Waters et al.). Interacting with stakeholders on sites, such as Facebook and other social media platforms, helps to develop relationships (Waters et al.). Since 2009, organizations have used Facebook to promote themselves by posting press releases, summaries, photos, and anything related to business to promote themselves.

Case, Ryan, and King (2015) found that there had been a large increase in the popularity of Facebook and a decline in social media tools, such as MySpace. Social media tools, such as YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn have seen a tremendous increase in

usage (Case et al., 2015). The most utilized social media networks in Fortune 500 companies include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs (Case et al.). In February 2015, there were 159 million visitors to Facebook, 58 million to LinkedIn, 288 million to Twitter, and 166 million visitors to YouTube (Case et al.). The use of Facebook among seniors, 65 and older, increased from 35% in 2012 to 45% in 2013 (Case et al.). Case et al. also noted that Instagram and Twitter increased with the young-adult population.

Waters et al. (2009) found that the leaders in organizations depended upon people who used social network sites—mostly college students—to post messages on their social media sites on their behalf. The researchers hired college interns and volunteers who were familiar with Facebook to keep their page active (Waters et al.). The leaders of the organizations did this because they were not familiar with how to utilize the social media sites that people used to contact their organizations. The leaders had hired communication specialists who were familiar with social media networks to have a successful social media network plan. The communication specialists were aware of the leader's mission. They were familiar with the community and district to help engage the stakeholders. The communication specialists also looked at the social media network that the leaders were endorsing to disseminate information to the stakeholders within the organization.

Social media tools can be a very effective way to communicate with stakeholders in more diverse communities, ages, cultures, and social economic status (Waters et al., 2009). From the explosion of Facebook in 2008, Facebook stakeholders have come a long way in improving how clients use Facebook to improve communication and

transparency in organizations. Leaders are looking at the way Facebook can improve their social own networks (Waters et al.). They are doing this by helping clients use Facebook to promote their organizations and to utilize social networking applications to meet the increasing needs and demands that their constituents present (Waters et al.). Using Facebook promotes public engagement and curbs social issues that may cause problems that stem from an organization's lack of the proper resources and time to update their web pages (Warren, Sulaiman, & Jaafar, 2014). Leaders are able to use Facebook to inform their followers on issues, people, and information within their organizations (Warren et al., 2014). Facebook is no longer just used for entertainment or personal gratification; it is being used as an informational tool to get information out to stakeholders (Warren et al.). Fewkes and McCabe (2012) found that in a poll conducted by the Waterloo Regional District School Board in Ontario, 83% of networking users have added comments or pictures on the district school board's social media site.

Fewkes and McCabe (2012) found that in high schools in Ontario, Canada, 77% of the secondary students posted public messages, 66% posted comments from blogs, and 54% sent instant messages. These statistics show that information can be presented in more ways than was done in the past. In 2009, the top five social networks were: Facebook, with 68 million users; MySpace, with 58 million users; Twitter, with 6 million users; Fixster, with 7 million users, and LinkedIn, with 4 million users (Ribble & Miller, 2015. Whether it is Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, social networks are becoming the norm, and organizations are using these social media sites to get information from to their stakeholders. As of the Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez (2016) publication, the

total global population online was 42.4%, which explains why people use online communication tools to communicate.

Instagram is a photo- and video-sharing social media tool that was introduced in 2010, and it has gained significant popularity around the world (Latiff & Safiee, 2015). Instagram enables users to share captions with pictures in a timely manner (Devore & McCarthy, 2015). After 1 week of its introduction, Instagram had over 100,000 followers, and it reached 1 million users 2 months after its introduction (Latiff & Safiee). This was a huge increase in users, and Instagram started to become a major player in social media. Devore & McCarthy found that Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media tools. In 2016, Instagram had over a total of 500 million users, with 300 million daily users, and 95 million photos and videos were being posted to the social media networks on a daily basis.

Like social media tools, such as Facebook, Instagram relies on the distribution of its followers to receive information and updates and to be part of the recipient list to receive messages (Devore & McCarthy, 2015). It is another way for people to get information out to their audiences. Instagram has unique features compared to other social media tools. Instagram allows users to insert their own photos so they can be recognized by the users' followers, and Instagram gives users' photos a professional look (Latiff & Safiee, 2015). Users can publish their amateur photos in just three steps, and the tool allows them to choose the mood of the photo (Latiff & Safiee). This is an advantage to the users, so that they can set the tone and atmosphere of their photos, and it is another way to for users to share their information.

Individuals who use Instagram are known as Instagrammers, which is similar to people who write blogs being known as bloggers (Latiff & Safiee, 2015). The unique characteristic about Instagram is that it encourages online word of mouth (eWOM); the social media tool exists solely on the concept of its followers sharing the posts (Latiff & Safiee). Word of mouth helps users share their message or messages. By using Instagram, a user's message can be duplicated to several thousand followers in an instant. Businesses use Instagram with no monetary transaction; however, Instagram can increase business profits by sampling products and posting product reviews and sharing events that are happening in the workplace (Latiff & Safiee). Instagram has enabled businesses to grow, allowed news around the world to be shared, and established a platform for events, photos, and users to share their stories and communications. Instagram's most frequent users are between the ages of 18-29 years, and they are representative of around one-third of Instagram users (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). This group of young users use Instagram to focus on self-presentation and promotion (Dumas, Smith, Davis, & Giulietti, 2017). Instagram is a unique way to get a message out to an abundance of people across the nation and world at a variety of age levels. The new generation of students that are now attending our schools are called, the Generation Y members. They have grown up with a variety of social media avenues at their disposal, and Instagram seems to be one of the most valuable in helping them to immediately, and on a daily basis, post photos of the events of their lives, such as shopping, eating, and numerous other categories (Latiff & Safiee).

Theory: Disruptive Innovation (DI)

Disruptive innovations are technological innovations, products, services, processes, or concepts that disrupt the status quo (Christensen, 1997). According to Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald (2015), leaders need to be aware that they cannot exclusively focus on the results achieved to indicate that their small district can be disrupted by its own success. They need to be open to failure, identify their successes when they achieve their goals, and use the correct types of technology to align with their needs (Christensen et al., 2015). An example of disruptive innovation relating to technology occurred in the late 1990s when Internet-based retailers tried a disruptive path by changing how they use technology, specifically the Internet (Christensen et al.). They started to use the Internet to sell their products. This changed how their products were being distributed. Instead of selling their products to brick-and-mortar stores, they started to sell and market their products on the Internet. Only a small number of Internet-based retailers succeeded, because they did not know how to win over the market like a lot of their competitors, because there was no way of knowing how to succeed at using the Internet. (Christensen et al.). These Internet-based retailers either did not want technology to be used, or they wanted their competitors to use technology to succeed, while using the Internet (Christensen et al.). They did not keep up with the new technologies to move their Internet-based retail companies forward and did not know how to compete using the companies that were using the Internet successfully.

When new technology is developed, disruptive innovation theory does not dictate what corporations should do (Christensen et al., 2015). This is true for leaders. Just because a new app or new Internet-based technology is created, it does not mean that

leaders should immediately take it on. Leaders need to make strategic choices between taking a sustaining path and/or a disruptive path. Christensen et al. posited that true disrupters will improve product and drive an upmarket.

Meyer (2011) agreed with Christensen's (1997) concept of disruptive innovations and that it can help leaders make sound resource allocation decisions that address their customers' needs within their value network by addressing the status quo. The disruptive innovation may not perform within existing technologies or not satisfy customers at first, but in time, part of the market will be satisfied the by catering to those customers who use technology, in hopes that the technology will satisfy the remainder of the customers (Meyer). Meyer also posited that technology may be disruptive and may suffer some extinction with its existing technology because of new technological innovations. For example, a firm with existing technology may adopt disruptive technology to better serve its customers and create new ones, even though it will have to let go of its old technology to keep operating successfully (Meyer, 2011). Disruption is not just a characteristic of the technology, but it is how it is perceived, how one adjusts to it, and how it is incorporated it into an organization (Meyer). It is not just the technology, but the new ideas and thinking that will come out of that technology that can be disruptive (Meyer). Christensen (1997) explained that successful managers harness the following principles. They:

- align disruptive technology with customers who need them,

- are motivated by small wins,

- learn through inexpensive experimentation and are aware of early failures in identifying what products and applications work,

- use a small organization process to better align for smaller opportunities,

- Find or develop new markets rather than trying to force disruptive technology into the main market that is already using it, and

- ask if they know there is evidence of disruption.

Christensen (1997) defined disruptive innovation as one that overturns an existing technology. Meyer (2011) asked the question, does something overturn or replace something? and found that it takes years to decide what is disruptiveness and to know if an innovation has truly been disruptive. Early signs can help identify disruption; for example, seeing that the old way of doing things is no longer the norm (Meyer). We know that social media has grown in usage over the past several years, indicating a change in how people communicate. This is causing a disruption in how communication is conducted. We know that more innovations will be developed over time and social media tools, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other Web 2.0, tools will grow (Meyer, 2011).

Christensen (1997) explained that the progress the market demands may be different than what technology has to offer. People only know what they need for today, not what they want for tomorrow. Corporations that have well-managed companies that are driven by technology improvements, by creating new products, and by adding to their existing products, have successful organizations, customer base and success with their product and services (Christensen, 1997).

Social Media: Government Sector

The use of social media has grown across all different levels of government agencies (Guo, Liu, & Yu, 2016). Government agencies realize that social media is a very vital source of information and of outlet (Kavanaugh, 2012). Government agencies use

social media to replicate information that is already on their social media pages and to help citizens access information that is already online, for the purpose to build trust with its citizens and provide online transparency (Mergel, 2013). By using this method of social media, the government can integrate information, gather opinions from citizens to assist in policy making, collaborate with the public, and create solutions for government problems (Mergel). Government agencies are experimenting and using government social media (GSM) to introduce social media government services, data, and procedures (Guo et al., 2016). The new buzzword in government when dealing with social media is *government 2.0* (Guo et al.). The term refers to Web 2.0 technologies that are used in social media today. This may include Facebook, blogging, or any type of social media the government may use to communicate.

The United Nations conducted a survey called the E-Government Report 2012 to study how nations are using social media tools (Guo et al., 2016). Out of 193 countries that were surveyed, 92 countries are using social media applications (Guo et al.). In order for governments to reach the people they serve, government agencies have been creating their own social media networks to provide ways for citizens to obtain and share information from them (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). Citizens are relying more heavily on social media communications with their relatives, friends, employers, and the government (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). The use of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media networks have made information available to citizens (Kavanaugh et al.).

With the increase of social media use, government officials can improve their services to communicate with the citizens they serve (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). They now can facilitate group interactions and allow for community leaders, elected officials, and

government leaders to inform their constituents. Monitoring patterns or themes over time when using social media can provide officials with the mood of their community or departments to help address issues more effectively and on matters that are crucial or of public concern (Kavanaugh et al.). Some information on government social media tools can also come with some bias from the citizens they serve. Citizens may put their own thoughts and opinions on social media, taking a piece that they read from a government social media site and inserting their own thoughts and opinions (Kavanaugh et al.). This is an issue that the government has to be proactive on, so they can serve the public positively and to make sure the right message is being sent out. To gather information to make sense of what is happening in the world, their community, or the agency they are working in, government officials also utilize data mining to monitor social media and to look at different types of social media sites in real-time feeds concerning real-world events (Kavanaugh et al., 2012).

Social media has changed the way the public shares information. Social media has provided new opportunities for public individuals to gather and share information with each other, elected officials, and government agencies (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). A national study conducted in 2010 by Pew Research Center and American Life found that 31% of online adults in the USA use social media tools, such as online videos, blogs, emails, text alerts, and social media networks, to keep informed of government issues (Kavanaugh et al.). Social media tools are helping the government and citizens find information, contribute to policy and to discuss and interact with each other on a daily basis, meeting the needs of every citizen (Kavanaugh et al.).

When Barack Obama ran for the presidency in 2008, he was one of the first presidential candidates to use social media to promote his vision and apply social media resources to do so (Kidwai & Imperatore, 2011). President Obama is known as the first social media president because of his use of social media tools (Kidwai & Imperatore). He used Twitter and Facebook to communicate his message (Kidwai & Imperatore). Since then, other politicians and federal government agencies have been using social media tools, such as Twitter and Facebook, to communicate with their constituents (Kidwai & Imperatore, 2011). They use social media to inform constituents of issues, speeches, visits, and their agenda (Kidwai & Imperatore). This also assists in educating the media of events that are happening (Kidwai & Imperatore). Members of President Obama's administration used social media regularly to disseminate information or to gain feedback from the public. Past Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, used Twitter to get feedback on education programs (Kidwai & Imperatore).

When the government uses social media to communicate with its citizens, it uses it to be open and targeted (Graham, Avery, & Park, 2015). Government uses social media to communicate with citizens during a crisis (Graham et al., 2015). In a Pew Research Center report, Duggan and Brenner (2013) found that 72% of U.S. adult citizens use social media sites. The trend shows that the use of social media tools is growing daily, and realizing this, government officials are trying to grow their social media networks to communicate with the public (Graham et al., 2015). Duggan and Brenner's (2013) study for the Pew Research Center also showed a decline in traditional news outlets. The survey suggested that citizens are looking online for organizations' information including information from government agencies (Graham et al.).

Social media tools, and especially Twitter, have provided government agencies with large amounts of public information, which has been generated by sources that the agencies can use to promote public participation, collaboration, and content to re-share with their followers (Wukich & Mergel, 2016). Government agencies can share much of the information that is regenerated from Twitter such as, large scale incidents, storms, preparedness, response and recovery, with their followers to allow citizens to facilitate conversations and provide knowledge on topics citizens want to know about or discuss (Wukich & Mergel, 2016). This results in a breakdown of information silos, allowing government agencies to pass on information to their followers (Wukich & Mergel).

Retweeted accounts provide additional information to government agencies on events, such as disasters and emergencies around the country, which have enabled government agencies to identify reliable social media sources so they can again pass this information on to the citizens that are following their Twitter account (Wukich & Mergel, 2016). This can stop some of the erroneous information that citizens may see on other social media sites. The retweets provide the government with advice and specific information regarding information or insight on a specific topic (Wukich & Mergel). This builds trust and transparency for the government leading its citizens.

Government agencies evaluate how they can effectively use social media to support their mission and use social media practices that can help them (Mergel, 2016). Government agencies can use social media tools to help promote public participation and collaboration with users by offering a different variety of social media (Mergel). The way each government agency uses social media depends on the individual needs of the organization (Mergel). One of the main purposes that the government uses social media is

to increase trust in their operations and provide a transparent form of communication to its citizens (Mergel).

Additionally, government agencies are experiencing constant realignment of their social media networks tools (Mergel, 2016). They must be able to realign themselves with the new social media tools. If they do not, information will not get to their constituents in real time, nor will the lack help build trust and transparency with the people they serve.

Social Media: Business Sector

Technology is changing the way the workplaces function in businesses (Cho & LoCascio, 2013). The use of mobile phones are allowing people to be available 24 hours a day, and the Internet has offered opportunities for colleagues to collaborate within and outside of the workplace (Cho & LoCascio). The same technologies are also available to the public, which results in a tremendous amount of information that was once closed off to the public, and now is available (Cho & LoCascio).

Successful businesses are adopting social media tools to meet the goals of communicating more effectively, making their brands more popular, and researching future employees (Barnes, 2010). Blogs, tweets, and networking are occurring more than ever before (Barnes). Longitudinal data on Fortune 500 companies show that social media is becoming an integral part of a company's marketing strategy, and the social media tools that are being used are shifting (Barnes). Research indicates that social media networks have penetrated parts of the business world at a tremendously increasing rates (Barnes). As of 2009, 75% of Fortune 500 companies were very familiar with social networking, compared to 2008, where 52% stated they were very familiar with social

networking in 2007 (Barnes). From these percentages, it can be seen that Fortune 500

companies have increased their usage of social networking to improve their companies'

services to their stock holders and customers. In the earlier years of social media,

blogging, podcasts, message boards, and online video casts were very popular (Barnes).

Since 2008, these social network tools have declined (Barnes, 2010). Fortune 500

companies have reported a huge increase in the use of Twitter for their use in their

corporations (Barnes). Corporations are using these tools for several reasons, including

Twitter:

- is another way to communicate,

- adds value to their customer,

- helps them keep up with trends and competitors,

- demonstrates the value of their product,

- is more cost effective, and

- is a productive way of marketing (Barnes, 2010).

Fortune 500 companies will continue to use social media and its strategies to help

increase their communications. When the 500 companies were asked if social media has

been successful for their business, overwhelmingly, the companies said yes (Barnes,

2010). The use of Twitter in the Fortune 500 companies was reported at 82%, and the use

of other social media tools was reported at 87% (Barnes). The companies measured this

information by tallying the respondents' use of the tools, how many, comments, leads, or

sales (Barnes). One in four of the Fortune 500 companies considered Twitter the most

important social media tool (Barnes). This shows a trend and a change in the concept of

Twitter and how it is being used (Barnes). Companies are realizing the critical role of social media in their future success (Barnes).

As of 2017, the total global online population was 51.7% of the world's population (Internetwordstats.com, 2017). Half of the world's population is connected to the Internet. Social media and social networks are driven by discussions and conversations (Ratliff & Kunz, 2014). Social media tools have provided a platform for corporations to inform and broadcast their brand, company reputation, and customer feedback about their corporations (Ratliff & Kunz). Corporations are integrating the new communication tools into their communication strategies (Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez, 2016). Corporations are faced with the task to keep up with the new online communication tools in order to disseminate information to the public (Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez). They are realizing the importance of speed, and they are taking action and adopting their communication models to the new changes in technology and society (Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez).

Social media are essential tools for companies to include in their communication plans so they can connect with their stakeholders and get feedback on issues or products (Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez, 2016). An example of a social media tool that allows this is Facebook, which allows ways to present pictures, videos, blogs, and other ways to communicate in an unprecedented scale (Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez). Customers and employees can chat, rate products, and form discussions on relevant issues that companies face. This infers that companies should be aware of their customers, products, and opinions (Escobar-Rodriguez & Bonsón-Fernandez). This, in turn, increases their customer base. Social media allows corporations to communicate

with consumers, be aware of issues, opinions, and attitudes, which help companies connect with their stakeholders, which can influence the conversations and messages they send out (Ratliff & Kunz, 2014). According to Ratliff and Kunz, social media tools support a company's brand and reputation, driving traffic to their brand, which increases communication to the consumer about the corporation.

With social media increases and more demographic age groups using social media tools, corporations are attempting to add more social media platforms into their communication plans to help increase their communication with their stakeholders (Case et al., 2015). There is a direct correlation between time spent on social media and the age of the user (Ratliff & Kunz, 2014). The younger the person, the more time he or she spends on social media (Ratliff & Kunz). It was also found that women are more likely to have Twitter accounts and twice as likely to use Facebook (Ratliff & Kunz). Quinton (2011) explained that in 2010, 31% of corporations used social media, and in 2011 that percentage grew to 50%. Quinton posited that in order for organizations to communicate with younger and older constituents, they must have several social media tools to use

Not only are corporations expanding their various use of social media tools, they are examining best practices of those social media tools in order to achieve the greatest outcome that not only benefits them but also their stakeholders and consumers (Case et al., 2015). Fortune 500 companies are also realizing that having a social media presence gives them an opportunity to leverage positive corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts (Case et al.). This enhances customer service and fosters user-driven communication about their CSR activities. If organizations have a positive CSR, their

constituents will trust their social media networks that they are using, and they will gain

followers who will trust the information that they are receiving.

Fortune 500 companies do use numerous social media networks. The most

common technology is LinkedIn at 97% with Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and blogs at

53-76% (Case et al., 2015). The least-common social media networks that are used by

Fortune 500 companies, at 17% or less, are Google, Pinterest, Flickr, and Instagram

(Case et al., 2015). It should also be noted that in the Fortune 500 companies, the home

page is the most common location for their social media networks (Case et al.). Social

network tools at Fortune 500 companies help the companies and increase potential

marketing advantages for them (Case et al.). Nearly 70% of corporate executives found

that their corporations would be not connected if they did not engage in some type of

social media, and they also believed their competitors were successful when they used

social media (Ratliff & Kunz, 2014). Social media tools are not just a tool that will go

away, so corporations are making it a priority for their future (Ratliff & Kunz).

Facebook and Twitter have created new opportunities for corporations to improve

internally and collaborate with customers, business partners, and their suppliers (Culnan,

McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). Corporations do face challenges as they implement social

media applications to their stakeholders (Culnan et al., 2010). Corporations gain value

when customers engage with a company on a regular basis (Culnan et al.). Stelzner

(2011) reported that the top four social media tools used by corporations included

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and blogs. A larger increase in the use of Twitter occurred

from 2010 to 2011, by 50%, when companies were surveyed to see what social media

tools they used the most (Quinton, 2011). It was also found that over 90% of corporations

that were surveyed use Facebook for their communications (Quinton). By 2011,

Facebook had reached close to 133 million U.S. Internet users, and that figure was

estimated to reach over 150 million by 2014 (Ratliff & Kunz, 2014).

When relationships are successful, customers feel like company insiders, and they

promote the company and its products. Corporations that engage their constituents on a

regular basis and make them feel that their comments and suggestions on the social media

tools are being implemented and heard, help their companies grow. Companies use these

tactics to keep their customers remaining loyal to their companies and products as well as

to promote new offerings (Culnan et al., 2010). Simply by creating a presence on

Facebook or Twitter does not guarantee that a company's customers will look at their

social media page or use their social media tools (Culnan et al.). The company needs to

build relationships with its customers to implement its social media and gain trust with its

customers (Culnan et al.).

Corporations have learned that merely creating social media networks and having

a presence does not ensure a successful social media platform (Culnan et al., 2010). In

order for corporations to have effective social media platforms, they must have three

elements that include mindful decisions regarding the initial adoption of social media

tools and their usage, an understanding of the risks before moving forward, and the right

way to implement the social media tools (Culnan et al.). Social media tools are essential

to communication, and corporations need to build communities to identify with the

community and stay involved (Culnan et al.). Establishing an online presence on social

media does not guarantee that it will attract customers, so corporations have to build a

community and build social relations with their customers (Culnan et al.). The greater

involvement customers have with the social media tools, the more likely they will contribute.

Corporations must provide incentives, be sensitive to public platforms, and populate their sites with engaging content (Culnan et al., 2010). They also need to understand social media and the tools that are being used so they can understand what is being generated by the content of the customers (Culnan et al.). Corporations need to recognize and acquire new knowledge so they can pass it on to their customers and keep up with the ever-changing social media networks (Culnan et al., 2010). They need to decide how they are going to report their information out on about social media by answering messages in a timely manner, sharing knowledge, and structuring their message to the public (Culnan et al.). Fortune 500 companies have successful implemented these strategies and have gained business, customer loyalty, customer interaction, and they have created new stakeholders through successful social media plans (Culnan et al.).

The ever-expanding social media landscape has increased opportunities for people to communicate with each other at any time and in any location (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Social media is a key tool that helps corporations serve the marketing and communication needs of their company (Weiss, 2011). Social media encourages corporate transparency to various stakeholders. Corporations are realizing the power of social media. If companies are living up to their responsibilities, they will be challenged and have to change how they communicate with their stakeholders using social media (Wilburn & Wilburn, 2015). The rise of social media has allowed individuals to share their positive and negative experiences dealing with a particular company or organization (Cox &

McLeod). This feedback helps corporations make decisions to improve their companies, and it helps them with their products. In the end, social media is a key tool for a company to be successful (Cox & McLeod).

Corporations are aware of the impact of social media, and they have added Web 2.0 to their corporations and hired communication specialists to communicate with the various social networks (Zhao et al., 2013). Social media brings an enormous challenge to corporations because consumers are no longer merely passive recipients in the business transactions (Zhao et al. 2013). Cox and McLeod (2014) found that corporations recognized, a long time ago, that the public utilizes social media, so they began to find primary methods of finding, sharing, and creating information. Social media has brought a wealth of opportunities to improve marketing effectiveness for corporations (Gilfoil, Aukers, & Jobs, 2015), and social media platforms have proven to be exceptional tools for realizing growth potential.

Additionally, corporations are using social media outlets, such as Facebook and Twitter, to market products to consumers (Zelin & Baird, 2012). In fact, the use of Twitter by companies to disseminate information about products, promotions, and sales increased over 250% during 2009, and Facebook's increase for the same purpose was 192% in 2009 (Zelin & Baird).

Corporations have created social media mashups, which are numerous social media accounts that serve different purposes and user groups (He & Zha, 2013). Corporations look to see who are on their sites and then they develop strong social communities to groups and organizations (He & Zha). By doing this, they can look at the data and examine what is being said about their products, or they can see what products

are being used or purchased. This helps to guide and develop their social media initiatives.

Businesses have become aware that there are social media networks, and they are adopting practices that help their businesses and social media networks (Weiss, 2011). Corporations are hiring public relations specialists to share information with customers, clients, and users in an effective manner in order to change the way they communicate (Simons, Ocepek, & Barker, 2016). Social media tools rely on communication and the use of information. In one study of corporate public relations specialists, 61% of participants agreed that social media have changed the way their corporations communicate (Simons et al.). Cox and McLeod (2014) found that most of the corporations they studied had a public relations specialist, and as their research indicates, the benefits are tremendous using this approach.

Social Media: Education Sector

Today's superintendency is much different than it was in the 20th century. Houston (2001) found that the superintendent's job is one faced with much criticism. Superintendents have private moments of wins and failures, and they often have unrealistic expectations and goals (Houston). This includes the social media tools that superintendents use daily. Cox and McLeod (2014) gathered that the ability for a superintendent to connect directly with his or her stakeholders helps to strengthen their bonds and increase conversation through social media platforms. The researchers also uncovered that the benefits of superintendents using social media tools cannot be limited to just the stakeholders, they extend to several other areas (Cox & McLeod, 2014). Social media tools provide professional growth as well as personal growth (Cox & McLeod). By

using social media, superintendents have better interactions with employees, parents, students, communities, and fellow educators, and they have a higher level of transparency when making decisions (Cox & McLeod).

Superintendents can fight back to correct misinformation, by posting corrections and making sure that the schools' home page websites are being used to tell their stories (Carr, 2007). They use blogs as one way to get their message out, and they find that they often get negative feedback and aggressive responses—not only from the public but also their employees (Carr). This sometimes causes superintendents to shut down their blogs because of the demanding 24/7 job responsibilities and the politics that go along with it (Carr). Blogs are the Web's hottest and newest growing trend, and superintendents can embrace blogs because by 2006, 57 million people were reading or following them (Carr). Carr posited that blogs represent a form of consumer-generated social media and a new form of personal communication. They also allow superintendents with a way to communicate with parents, teachers, and other key community leaders in their district, allowing the public to understand how the superintendent is thinking and what his or her values are (Carr, 2007). Blogs can be used to interact with the public—not to just communicate issues that might be taking place in their district, but they give superintendents a chance to challenge constituents and to think about topics in a different manner (Carr). In doing so, the superintendent can invite the public to read about different views and topics.

According to Pritchett et al. (2013), Web 2.0 technologies provide superintendents with a variety of technology on a daily basis. In a study with various superintendents in the southeast United States, the interviewees were questioned on the

importance of Web 2.0 technology. Of the 842 who were asked about the importance of Web 2.0, most agreed that using social networks were very important in their jobs (Pritchett et al., 2013). The study was rated on a 4-point scale, 1 being not important, and 4 being very important. Perceived Web 2.0 applications that were important included, blogs, social networks, video sharing, virtual learning networks, and wiki (Pritchett et al.). The findings from Pritchett et al. show that social networks are a very important part of a superintendent's job, and that Web 2.0 technologies are very important to establish systems to make superintendents successful. Cox and McLeod (2014) posited that Web 2.0 to helps control message superintendents want to get out, as well as to promote their vison and goals directly to their stakeholders.

Superintendents can use social media to promote their agendas. In many cases, groups will target superintendents' decisions and, as leaders, they cannot control the groups nor reason with them (Carr, 2007). Sometimes a superintendent will have a group that does not agree with his or her vison or ideologies. Superintendents regularly face different ideologues, reporters who want sensational stories, disgruntled employees, and parents (Carr, 2007). Superintendents can put their explanations out simply, candidly, and without trying to *teach* a group that is against them (Carr). Carr posited that without trying to teach others assists superintendents to build trust by making district decisions, thoughts, and issues more transparent.

According to Kennedy (2014), superintendents are often seen as disengaged and detached from issues in the classroom and schools. By using social media, Kennedy found that this perception can change how the public looks at the superintendency. If constituents are using and looking at social media tools and an issue comes up in their

43

district that they have commented on, then the superintendents social media tools could help them validate their credibility on the issue (Kennedy, 2014). Social media tools can help make the superintendent real, so that people can understand their stance and values. Social media helps the superintendents keep engaged with their communities (Kennedy). Superintendents can follow parents, students, media and community leaders and engage them with topics that are taking place within the district (Kennedy). Superintendents know what is in the news today or tomorrow is being discussed on social media (Kennedy). The constituents want to know what their superintendent is thinking and by using social media it allows the superintendent to do it in a timely manner and on their own terms (Kennedy).

Kennedy (2014) found that superintendents realize there are people who like to speak for them and say what they think the superintendents might be thinking; therefore, it is even more imperative for superintendents to tell their own stories through the use of social media. Media outlets and employees paraphrase what superintendent say and it often results in incorrect being included or valuable words or phrases being left out of the superintendents' text (Kennedy). By using social media, superintendents have a direct line to the community to tell their side of the story, and can they use their own text to their advantage to make sure that they are getting the correct information out and not having another group speak for them. Kennedy stated that superintendents can influence conversations by using social media in the classroom, at local restaurants, teacher lounges, and at community events. Social media can be utilized to post positive and negatives comments about an event that is happening in the superintendents' district, and social media helps to clear barriers from the traditional ways of communicating to reach

the superintendents' constituents (Kennedy, 2014). Social media can help humanize and share superintendents' thoughts and stories in their own words, and connect superintendents and their constituents (Kennedy).

As part of their jobs, Kennedy (2014) pointed out that superintendents are always encouraging teachers and students to learn more about digital technology such as social media. Therefore, posited Kennedy, superintendents have a role to play in modeling the use of social media. Because of the negativity of the new social media outlets and the feedback that superintendents can get back that are associated with their social media posts, social media can be daunting for superintendents (Kennedy). By being the social media leader in a district a superintendent can lead his or her employees, students, and constituents into using the social media tools that he or she is modeling (Kennedy). Superintendents can model for their constituents the organizational power of social media, and superintendents can serve as an example so others can follow (Kennedy). Superintendents can go beyond talking about social media to start being about social media (Kennedy).

Kennedy (2014) found that superintendents who use social media effectively can help their districts to thrive, and they can open up doors for new opportunities. Social media can also help superintendents regarding personal opportunities, such as for consulting opportunities, speaking engagements, and responding to job openings (Kennedy). Kennedy stated that superintendents who see participation in social media as just another responsibility added to their jobs have not yet discovered the power that social media participation can have. If superintendents have not yet engaged in some type of social media, Kennedy felt that they did not yet realize why they should make it a

priority. Superintendents can use social media to help move districts, constituents, and themselves forward, and at the same time, they can become better leaders for using it (Kennedy).

Carr (2006) took the position that superintendents need to look closely at what will get the attention of their audience, and they need to ensure that they know who they are addressing and why. Also, Carr stated that superintendents should make sure that if they are telling a story, it has to be news worthy. Stories that superintendents put out to the public should be meaningful for school people, but not newsworthy for the media or the public (Carr). When using social media to report out on a story, superintendents have to be creative, interesting, and explain why the public should care, and they should not use educational terms that the public may not understand, be defensive, or argue with the public (Carr). Superintendents do not want to give the impression that they are out of touch with reality and the values of their communities (Carr). Carr suggests that superintendents put the good news out first and then follow with the bad news. If superintendents' constituents see them not addressing an issue properly on social media tools or ignoring, certain issues the media and the public will come after them and they will win (Carr). Carr suggested not trying to *dress up* a problem, because it may only lead to trouble. Especially today, with all the social media tools, the problem could spread to all constituents within superintendents' communities. Carr also suggested that superintendents not abandon social media outlets that their local *movers and shakers* use. If superintendents do this, Carr warned, it will probably open up their critics for an attack on them and their districts. By providing a culture of accurate information on social media tools helps people trust superintendents, and the social media communication tools

they are using (Carr 2006). Carr recommended that superintendents keep their messages simple so people can understand them (Carr).

According to Cox and McLeod (2014), the use of social media can help superintendents establish and maintain relationships with their stakeholders within the schools, and they can engage them in trusted, transparent conversations. Superintendents often are engaged in conversations with stakeholders regarding district issues, and high levels of transparency and trust are a must for them to succeed (Cox & McLeod). Cox and McLeod also found that social media can provide greater transparency regarding decisions that are made in districts (Cox & McLeod). This can lead to stronger communications between their stakeholders. As social media continues to grow in the role of the superintendency, many superintendents will have to adapt their practices in their everyday work place to include social media tools so they can meet the demands of communicating with their constituents (Cox & McLeod). Social media tools are an integral part of an effective 21st century school superintendency, and using social media is no longer an option for superintendents (Cox & McLeod).

It has long been known that as a superintendent a significant part of their jobs is communication (O'Reilly & Matt, 2014). School superintendents have made it clear that virtual communities impact school districts on a daily basis (O'Reilly & Matt). In the dawn of the new information age, schools must take notice of the varied ways that individuals and groups in society are communicating with each other (O'Reilly & Matt).

According to Wang (2013), the way superintendents are communicating with their constituents is changing every day. In the world of education, social media has

posed enormous challenges and unleashed its huge potential as a venue to communicate with stakeholders (Wang, 2013).

It is clear that social media has become an important means of communication for district leaders, because households have access to the Internet and social network sites. From June 2009 through 2010, social networking activity, as shown in a study by Nielson in 2011, increased by 43% (O'Reilly & Matt, 2014). Nielson's research involved 73 superintendents across the United States who were surveyed to find out the impact, availability, and usage of virtual communication or social (O'Reilly & Matt). The rise of social media has allowed individuals to share their positive and negative experiences with school districts and the world (Cox & McLeod, 2014). This empowers individuals to challenge the traditional ways in which people communicate their ideas with the public (Cox & McLeod).

Porterfield and Carnes (2012) posited that the debate about social media in schools—as to whether they should be used or not—is over. The researchers believed that superintendents must step forward to lead in social media and to be a part of the social media conversation. They stated that if the superintendent is not responsive, the district loses community support and may be the object of intense media scrutiny (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012).

A study by Cox and McLeod (2014) was conducted to find out what superintendents blogged and tweeted and how their social media network usage was conducted. Six themes emerged from 12 qualitative interviews with superintendents and from Internet data regarding their social media use (Cox & McLeod). Social media allows for (a) more frequent interaction, (b) greater transparency, (c) making an impact

on a superintendents' personal growth and professional growth, (d) stronger connections to stakeholders, but it is (e) no longer optional, and (f) stakeholders can get information from superintendents in a multimodal way (Cox & McLeod).

Carpenter et al. (2014) found that many educators do not know their schools are being discussed in social media. In the Carpenter et all study, the people who did report frequent use of social media tools, such as Facebook, were repeatedly the same people (Carpenter et al.). A small percentage of social media is negative while the other is much more positive (Carpenter et al.).

Young, Berube, and Perry (2008) gathered that school leaders, such as superintendents, have to be selective in using social media communication methods (Young et al., 2008). They have to stay up to date with communication technologies (Young et al.).

McLeod, Richardson, and Sauers (2015) stated that superintendents must be technology leaders in using social media. Sauers et al. (2014) found that tech-savvy superintendents face challenges when dealing with social media. Leaders, especially superintendents, have an important influence on how their district is perceived, and superintendents need to be the social media leaders in their district to introduce this type of communication initiatives to their employees and community members. Sauers et al. believed that in order for superintendents to succeed with a social media plan that has a shared vison, infrastructure, communication, and professional development involving social media has to lead in their districts.

Given that superintendents are district leaders, Sauers et al. (2014) contended that they have to excel in some aspects of social media. In their study, 139 superintendents

were asked to participate in a study about tech savvy superintendents. Of the 139 asked only 10 participated but the study indicated four major themes: (a) shared vision, (b) infrastructure, (c) communication, and (d) professional development (Sauers et al.). According to the study, there is a need to do more training in technology leadership.

According to McLeod et al. (2015) superintendents must navigate rapidly and significantly in technological transformation; and Anderson and Dexter (2005) that technology leadership plays a very central, pivotal role in social media and technology outcomes. Superintendents must be involved in social media, crafting policies, and using social media tools to increase their communication with their stakeholders (Anderson & Dexter).

Chapter Summary

With more than 600 million members on Facebook and the expansion of Twitter users, the growing number of schools and districts that are using social media is rapidly increasing (Schachter, 2011). Using these types of social media tools as a way to communicate with the public or parents can leverage the multimedia and interactive features that social media tools have to offer (Schachter). The research shows that social media is influencing the success of superintendents using social media (Sauers et al., 2014). The use of social media by superintendents is changing rapidly due to the technological revolution that is happening on a daily basis (Sauers et al.). As with businesses, government agencies, and the superintendency, researchers have shown that if leaders do not understand the use of social media and the technology that goes along with it, a successful implementation of social media tools will not occur (McLeod et al., 2011). The literature that was reviewed focused on the use of social media and the types

of social media tools that were and are being used in businesses, government, and the superintendency. As the literature review indicates, the use of social media and the effects of it have a significant impact on communication. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology for this research. Chapter 3 also includes an overview of the research participants, data collection, and research context and data analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Social media has changed how the world communicates. Individuals, corporations, and even the government use social media to effectively reach their associates and/or stakeholders. In turn, social media has become similarly integrated into the communication of the public school superintendency. Unfortunately, little is known at this time about the use of social media by superintendents and the challenges it brings to the job. Without concrete data, it would be overly simplistic and possibly inaccurate to assume social media use by the superintendency mirrors trends in other segments of society. The diversity of social media tools, their intended purposes and audiences, and superintendents' personal comfort level and experience with social media make it impossible to draw any relevant conclusions without knowing more about the types of social media superintendents use. This leaves no foundation from which social media platforms, if any, best meet the communication needs of the superintendency. By not knowing the social media tools that are used, it is difficult to balance the merits of communicating using social media with the risks of public backlash and the potential for adding another obligation to an already overburdened superintendency position. Using social media tools as part of an effective communication plan could help meet superintendents' needs. Rey (2014) posited that properly used, social media could enable superintendents to navigate through what their communities wants to know about educational needs and counter any misunderstandings.

According to Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman, & Tysinger (2012), surveys can be used to collect data about subjects' demographics, personal histories, knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes. Researchers administer a survey when they need to answer questions about a particular topic, and surveys are the most common method used by researchers to obtain data from peers and learners (Passmore et al., 2012). Many researchers employ techniques that are easy to complete, that gather data consistently and accurately, and that have results that answer the specific research questions that they are asking (Passmore et al.). When researchers are developing a survey, the researcher should use care at all stages to strengthen the instrument being used and enhance the quality of the data (Passmore et al.). Using a quantitative methodology, this current study was used to analyze a large, broad, data collection, to glean relevant information that could help superintendents communicate with their many audiences.

Little is understood or has been researched regarding which social media tools New York State public school superintendents use in their jobs, how they use those tools, and what challenges they face when using social media in their jobs. Social media tools may be problematic for superintendents who want to effectively communicate with their internal and external stakeholders. Without quantitative data that examines the role of social media in the superintendency, it is impossible for superintendents to confidently analyze their communication strategies. Further, any research must consider New York State's geographic and demographic diversity.

To answer these questions, this study collected social media use data through a voluntary survey of sitting NYS public school superintendents. Specifically, the survey collected empirical data regarding which social media tools NYS public school

superintendents use. The data collected identify the challenges and concerns superintendents face when using those social media tools in their school districts. For the purposes of this study, all mentions of social media use will expressly refer to superintendents' use of social media within the context of performing their jobs, separate of any personal use.

To address this problem, the study asked two research questions:

1. What types of social media are used, and to what degree are they used, by current superintendents of school districts in New York State in the performance of their jobs?

2. From the perspective of the superintendents, what are the critical challenges, concerns, and issues associated with the use of social media tools in performing their jobs?

This methodology allows for a broader study that involved over 720 superintendents in New York State. This study resulted in sufficient data to support the dissertation topic that was examined. The quantitative methods used to summarize the numerous sources of information and make comparisons across the categories that were asked, ensured objectivity by the researcher keeping a distance from the participating superintendents and using computational techniques in the study.

Other advantages of using this methodology includes a large sample size that represented many superintendents. The data that were collected were in the form of numbers or percentages on charts or tables, which showed the relationships between superintendents and social media. The data will explain what questions were asked in the survey.

Research Context

The research setting for this quantitative study was all New York State school districts. There are 726 public school districts in NYS and 37 Board of Cooperative Extension Services (BOCES). Of the 726 school districts, 11 have a shared superintendent (The New York State School Council of Superintendents [The Council], 2016). Superintendents are the chief executive officers (CEOs) of public school districts, and they are responsible for governance and oversight. In many cases, they are supported by assistant superintendents, directors, and districts that have principals. The superintendent also serves as the executive officer for the board of education and is the unitary leader of the district in relation with the board of education, the State Education Commissioner regulations, and the laws of the state of New York. The superintendent has executive authority over his or her school system and is solely responsible for its daily functions.

Superintendents attend all board of education meetings and participate in all of its deliberations. They advise the board in policy and general planning, and they present issues to the board for consideration. Providing all information to the board concerning progress and problems of the district is another expectation of superintendents. The board relies on the superintendent for educational leadership, financial information, goals, professional counsel, communication to the public, supervision of faculty and staff, and vison in its deliberations. Superintendents are accountable to the board at all times.

Seven types of public school districts exist in New York State:

1. Central districts are the school districts that were formed by combining a number of union-free and central school districts together that provide K-12 education to their communities.

2. Central high school districts provide secondary education services to common or union-free district students.

3. City school districts are traditional school districts that provide K-12 educational services. The school districts have the same boundary lines as that of a city. There are two types of city school districts, those who have a population of fewer than 125,000 residents, and those that have a population more than 125,000 population.

4. Enlarged districts are identical to city districts but the boundaries of the districts extend beyond city limits.

5. Dependent city schools or the "Big 5" schools are in cities with a population greater than 125,00. They include Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers, and New York City.

6. Common districts, which were created in 1812, cannot establish high schools. The high school students are sent to a neighboring district.

7. Union-free districts consist of two or more districts that have merged.

These types of school districts in New York State can be further broken down into the subcategories of suburban, rural, urban, and city. The New York State public school system has 726 districts, 4,477 public schools, and 310 charter schools (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2017). In December 2017, there were a total of

2,640,250 K-12 public school students in New York State and 210,496 public school teachers (NYSED, 2017). There is roughly one teacher for every 13 students, compared to the national average one teacher to every 16 students (NYSED). Further, there is one administrator for every 297 students, compared, nationally, to one administrator for every 295 students (NYSED). New York State has the highest per-pupil spending in the United States at more than $21,206 per student compared to the national average of $11,392 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). More than 81% of students in NYS attend a city or suburban school, while more than 18% attend rural schools (New York State [NYS] Department of Taxation and Finance, n.d.).

Research Participants

The research participants were New York State Public School superintendents. The study examined the social media tools and communications practices of the superintendents. This provided insight as to how superintendents are using social media tools in their districts. There are approximately 720 public school superintendents in New York State (NYS Department of Taxation and Finance, n.d.). As of 2015, the mean age of a NYS school superintendent was 53.5 years (The Council, 2016). The mean age of a female superintendent was 55.5 years and males were 52.7 years (The Council). The average experience in years of a superintendent in 2015 was 7.6 years (The Council).

For this research, the participants were drawn from urban, suburban, and rural school districts across New York State. All superintendents were invited via email to take the survey. The invitation included a description of the survey and the purpose. The New York State Council of School Superintendents (The Council) assisted in providing information to their members about the survey. An email was sent to all superintendents

in NYS containing an introduction of invitation (Appendix A), a consent form/text (Appendix B), and directions/link to the survey. Each participant was an active at the time the survey was distributed. Each participant was from a rural, suburban, and urban district, and the surveys were collected and remain in a locked file on a flash drive at my home.

The superintendents had 14 days to complete the survey. Based on the responses, the superintendents who did not complete the survey received an email 7 days after the initial email. This was a reminder to complete the survey. Five days later, if the superintendents had not completed the survey, they received another reminder email. The superintendents' participation and completion of the survey served as their consent to participate in the survey and the study. The targeted response from the survey was 231 superintendents. The final count for all surveys received was 122 participating superintendents. After all the surveys were completed, the data were organized by category for further analysis to answer the two research questions:

1. What types of social media are used, and to what degree are they used, by current superintendents of school districts in New York State in the performance of their jobs?

2. From the perspective of the superintendents, what are the critical challenges, concerns, and issues associated with the use of social media tools in performing their jobs?

Instruments Used in Data Collection

An introductory statement was provided (Appendix A) to introduce and explain the purpose of the study and the survey that the participants were asked to complete. The

statement contained instructions for completing and returning the survey. The survey was used to collect data from the superintendents in order to describe the challenges, concerns, and issues they face in the use of social media to perform their jobs as well as what types of social media they use in performing their jobs. The survey questions were based on the study's focus on superintendents and social media. Because no survey existed prior to this study, the researcher developed an original survey with which to collect data. The aim of a survey is to ensure that every response to every question can be turned into data, and then the data can be utilized (Dillman, 2000). In alignment with guidelines presented by, the researcher:

- focused on consistency throughout the survey, paying close attention to the positive and negative categories used in questions;
- set a goal to write each survey question so every respondent would be able to interpret it in the same way, minimizing measurement error;
- structured a number of different question formats, including open-ended, and multiple choice, as well as questions incorporating a pre-coded Likert scale, allowing the participant to express the degree to which they agreed/disagreed with a statement of the level at which they did or did not use types of social media; and
- attempted to reduce non-responsiveness by crafting the survey to motivate and encourage people to respond.

In developing the survey, the researcher took steps to satisfy Dillman's (2000) proposed four stages for pilot testing:

- Review knowledgeable colleagues and analysts.

- Interview potential survey respondents to evaluate the motivational qualities and cognitive qualities of each question in the survey.

- Inform participants that they are taking part in a study. Ask the participants to be critical, ask about questions or answers that they do not understand, and ask them for their input to make the survey better.

- Ask a small group of participants who have no role or development in the survey to note mistakes or misunderstandings from the survey.

The survey questions were based on initial interviews with five sitting New York State school superintendents. The five were excluded from the final survey, because they had prior knowledge of the survey questions, and their responses may have been biased by the process. As the study's panel of experts, their responses to the interview questions and resulting conversations narrowed and defined the scope of the survey questions.

The researcher used the initial survey questions to develop a formal quantitative survey as part of the St. John Fisher College Ed.D. Program. The survey was constructed using Qualtrics, an online survey tool. Once the survey was created, it was distributed via email to the superintendents. After it was distributed, the researcher received the responses and viewed the data and analysis. The data were exported and downloaded into a CSV file, and opened in Excel, SPSS, ML, or HTML. The data were then analyzed and remain in a locked file cabinet on a flash drive at the researcher's home, for 3 years, and the results will be shredded 3 years after publishing of this instrument.

The survey included introductory questions about the individual superintendent and his or her school district, followed by a simple question asking whether the superintendent used social media. A No response led to a submit page, and a Yes

response led to specific questions about social media use. The survey protected the respondents' anonymity by not asking any question(s) that could reveal the participants' identities (name, school district, etc.).

The survey underwent a series of checks to ensure its face validity. Face validity refers to the degree to which an assessment or test subjectively appears to measure the variable or construct that it is supposed measure (statisticshowto.com, 2018). In simple terms, face validity is a determination of how well the assessment, test, or survey appears to measure what it claims. In this research, the survey was revised after being reviewed by university professors and the researcher's program mentor. A revised version of the survey was pilot tested by the original five interviewees who used their previous involvement to help interpret the questions and to provide useful feedback, which resulted in better crafted questions and potentially more accurate and relevant answers.

The pilot test identified minor problems with items or responses, and helped to identify redundant and poor questions, while providing an early indication of the reproducibility of each of the responses (Passmore et al., 2012). For example, the researcher eliminated or rewrote any question that confused several of the respondents who took the pilot test (Passmore et al.). The researcher then revised the survey, and resubmitted it to the original five superintendents for a second and final review. The final version was concise and clear based on the multilevel review process.

To maximize participation, an email with a description of the survey and a direct link to the survey was emailed to the 720 New York State Public School superintendents. Clicking the link automatically took the participants to the survey. Once the participants had completed the survey, they clicked send. Respondents received an email

acknowledging they completed the survey and thanking them for their participation. The researcher received an email each time a participant took and completed the survey.

Data Analysis

The goal of this research was to gain a clearer picture of the use of social media in the superintendency. To date, this has been largely impossible due to the lack of data and the broad geographic and socioeconomic diversity of schools, as well as the demographic diversity of school superintendents. Who is more inclined to use social media—male or female, younger, or veteran superintendents? In which types of districts do those superintendents serve—large or small, urban or rural, upstate or downstate? The multiple variables and innumerable combinations made the aggregate data difficult to grasp, and it was of little value. For this purpose, the researcher relied on percentages to summarize the study data and present that data in an understandable and relevant manner. The percentages allowed the researcher to disaggregate the data; identify data patterns, if any existed; and summarize the data in a meaningful way. The percentages are presented in tables and in narrative form. The data were analyzed by the research questions. Likert scale questions were broken down in scale to identify the relative perspective of each superintendent. Where appropriate, data were identified by mean, median, and mode. This includes superintendents' genders, ages, and number of years as a superintendent.

Data were analyzed to identify categories, themes, and perspectives across the responses. The data were disaggregated to reveal emergent themes, by seeking common responses to the survey questions. The data were then grouped into different ways of looking at all the themes. Once each theme was identified, explanations from the themes in the data were identified to ensure the appropriate information was represented and

analyzed. The themes were defined in greater detail to provide the basis for the information in Chapter 4. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions from the data and selected ways in which he would represent the findings, including detailed descriptions, charts, and tables of the information.

The researcher performed all of the data analysis. Each survey was reviewed in detail to validate the accuracy and completion of the information from the survey. The researcher went through the following steps to record the data:

1. Prepare a spreadsheet containing the participants' ages, genders, school demographics, and years of experience.

2. Prepare a spreadsheet to account for the different themes and topics.

3. Identify emerging categories in the survey data.

4. Analyze a spreadsheet, looking for recurring themes.

To ensure the integrity of the data, all surveys, interviews, and data are kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. The records will be retained for 3 years following the completion of the research, and then they will all be destroyed by shredding.

Summary

The research was conducted through a survey of current New York State school superintendents regarding their use of social media tools in their roles as superintendents—both, which tools they use and to what degree, and the challenges they face using social media. Upon completion of the survey period, all data were entered into spreadsheets. The data were then analyzed. Social media tools were ranked by their usage and cross referenced to the superintendent and school district demographics, including superintendent gender, age, number of years' experience, size of school district, and

location of school district. Each survey question was analyzed for emergent themes, common responses to questions and key words that respondents used. The researcher disaggregated the data so that they could be analyzed in different ways, then aggregated the data based on the answers and the themes that emerged from the survey.

This section provided a thorough overview of the rationale for and implementation of a quantitative approach, design method, data analysis methods, and coding techniques that were used by the researcher. The researcher drew conclusions and selected ways to represent the findings in charts, graphs, tables, and text.

Chapter 4 provides an account of how the researcher unfolded the information, and it discusses, in detail, the study's findings. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of those findings and subsequent recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

  This chapter examines the use of social media by New York State school superintendents. NYS superintendents are increasingly using social media tools to communicate. This research study examined the types of social media tools that New York State superintendents were using at the time of this study in 2018, in the performance of their jobs; and from the perspective of the superintendents, what were the critical issues, concerns, and challenges that superintendents face in the use of social media to perform their jobs?

  Additionally, this chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the NYS superintendents who responded to a survey on social media. The data analysis includes percentages relevant to the data. The data also includes responses from open-ended questions. An online survey tool, Qualtrics, was used as the research survey instrument. The survey was emailed to 720 NYS superintendents of schools during the month of May 2018. Of the 720 emailed surveys, 122 superintendents responded. Weekly reminder emails were sent to those superintendents who had not yet responded. If they did not respond after 7 days an e-mail was sent to them and then another email reminder after 5 days. A final reminder was emailed a week before the survey opportunity closed. The survey answers provided data regarding which social media tools NYS public school superintendents used, their usage of social media, and who had access to their social

media accounts. The survey included demographic questions including age, district enrollment, classification of the district, and the gender of participants.

The participants in this survey represented each of the subcategories of school districts in New York State, which included suburban, rural, or urban/city. Data on district enrollment was collected for the categories of fewer than 1,000 students, 1,001-2,000 students, 2,001-3,000 students, and more than 3,000 students. The ages of the superintendents ranged from 25 to over 65 years. Data collected identified the challenges and concerns superintendents faced when using social media tools in their school districts. This chapter outlines the data collection, analysis, and results of the study.

The survey was constructed and administered to collect information and data to answer the following two research questions:

1. What types of social media are used, and to what degree are they used, by current superintendents of school districts in New York State in the performance of their jobs?

2. From the perspective of the superintendents, what are the critical challenges, concerns, and issues associated with the use of social media tools in performing their jobs?

Data Analysis and Findings

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to report the findings of the research. The research sought to examine the New York State school superintendents' use of social media and challenges they encounter on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

This chapter is organized into the categories that emerged from the research questions and the data collected. The questions in the survey asked what types of social

media the superintendents used. Using the survey, the researcher collected data on ages of the superintendents, their gender, size of district they served in, the classification of the districts they serve in, and the challenges and concerns of the superintendents regarding social media on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. This chapter explains the outcome of the survey answers.

Demographics. This section provides an overview of the demographics of the NYS superintendents from which the survey results were obtained. The participants in this study were from all school district designations in NYS including suburban, rural, and urban/city. As of 2015, 30% of superintendents were female, while 70% were males (The New York State School Council of Superintendents [The Council], 2016). Also, as of 2015, the average age for female superintendents was 55.5 years, and it was 52.7 years male superintendents (The Council, 2016). The study contained six males and five females from urban/city districts, 26 males and 11 females from suburban districts, and 52 males and 21 females from rural districts (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

New York State Classification of School Districts

Classification	Responses	Percentage (%)
Urban/City	11	9.02
Suburban	38	31.15
Rural	73	59.84
Total	122	100.00

The number of superintendents who responded was overwhelmingly from rural school districts with fewer than 1,000 students. There were 34 male and 15 female

superintendents from districts with 1,000 or fewer students. There were 22 male and 11

female superintendents in districts with up to 2,000 students. There were eight male and

four female superintendents with up to 3,000 students, and 19 male and 7 female

superintendents with more than 3,000 students (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

District's Enrollment

Student Enrollment	Responses	Percentage (%)
<1,000	49.41	40.50
1,001-2,000	34.28	28.10
2,001-3,000	12.10	9.92
>3,000	26.21	21.49
Total	122.00	100.01

The participant ages, collected from the survey, were from 25 to greater than 65

years of age. There were no participants between the ages of 25 and 35. There were 47

male participants and 16 female participants between the ages of 46-55 years. The next

two highest age levels for males were between 36 and 45 years—there were 16; and there

were 17 participants between the ages of 56 and 65 years. There was only one female

participant in the 36-45 age group, and there were 16 female participants in the 56 and 65

age group. There were four female and four male participants who were over the age of

65 years (Table 4.3). There were 84 males and 37 females (Table 4.4). The majority of

the superintendents who participated in the survey were male; from rural districts, with

fewer than 1,000 students; and they were between the ages of 46 and 55 years.

Table 4.3

Participants' Ages

Age in Years	Responses	Percentage (%)
25-35	0	0.00
36-45	17	13.93
46-55	63	51.64
56-65	33	27.05
>65	8	6.56
Prefer not to answer	1	0.82
Total	122	100.00

Table 4.4

Participants' Gender

Gender	Responses	Percentage (%)
Male	84	68.85
Female	37	30.33
Prefer not to answer	1	0.82
Total	122	100.00

Social media. This section answers Research Question 1, providing an overview of the use of social media by the superintendents, the types of social media they used, the social media tools most used by the superintendents, and the devices they used most frequently when using social media.

RQ1: *What types of social media are used, and to what degree are used, by current superintendents of school districts in New York State in the performance of their job?*

Some type of social media was used 68% of the time by female and male superintendents who participated in the survey. There were 58 male and 30 female participants who had one or more social media accounts linked to their role as a superintendent. There were 28 males and 13 females who had no social media accounts that they used in their role as a superintendent (Tables 4.5 and 4.6).

Table 4.5

Superintendents with Social Media Accounts Who Identified Them

Answer	Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	88	68.22
No	41	31.78
Total	129	100.00

Table 4.6

Presentation of Social Media Platforms Used in the Role as Superintendent

Social Media	Daily	Percentage (%)	Weekly	Percentage (%)	Monthly	Percentage (%)	Never	Percentage (%)	Total
Facebook	32	43.84	18	24.66	4	5.48	19	26.03	73
Twitter	46	56.79	20	24.69	7	8.64	8	9.88	81
Instagram	5	8.62	4	6.90	2	3.45	47	81.03	58
Snapchat	0	0.00	1	1.85	0	0.00	53	98.15	54
YouTube	0	0.00	18	31.03	14	24.14	26	44.83	58
Other	0	0.00	1	9.09	1	9.09	9	81.82	11

The participants accessed many different types of social media. Twitter was used daily by 22 males and 11 females. Twitter was used by 57 males on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis, and there were 20 female participants that used Twitter the same way (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Presentation of the Number of Followers on Twitter

Followers	Responses	Percentage (%)
None	0	0.00
1-50	11	15.49
51-100	9	12.68
101-200	13	18.31
201-300	6	8.45
301-400	10	14.08
401-500	5	7.04
>500	17	23.94
Total	71	100.00

Both male and female superintendents used Twitter to browse, retweet, and click on likes (Table 4.8). The majority of the superintendents from all demographics used Twitter for their primary source of social media communications. The research data revealed that the social media tool, Twitter, was used the most by the female and male superintendents between the ages of 46 and 55. This included rural, urban, and suburban districts.

Table 4.8

Survey Participants' Rate of Engagement on Twitter

Activity	Daily	Percentage (%)	Weekly	Percentage (%)	Monthly	Percentage (%)	Never	Percentage (%)	Total
Texts	21	31.34	26	38.81	12	17.91	8	11.94	67
Photos	16	22.86	35	50.00	13	18.57	6	8.57	70
Videos	4	6.67	17	28.33	20	33.33	19	31.67	60
Brows	40	64.52	15	24.19	5	8.06	2	3.23	62
Retweet	26	37.68	25	36.23	12	17.39	6	8.70	69
Click on or search #s	13	23.64	11	20.00	14	25.45	17	30.91	55
View video	12	21.05	20	35.09	14	24.56	11	19.30	57
Click "Like" or "♥" a tweet	28	44.44	20	31.75	8	12.70	7	11.11	63

Facebook was the second-most used social media tool with 22 males and 9 females. There were 48 males and 21 females that used Facebook on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Only 14 males and 5 females had more than 500 friends on Facebook. The males had between 0 and 500 friends, and the range for female participants was 0-3 friends. Only 34 males and 16 females answered this question (Table 4.9). Many male and female participants used Facebook as a way of posting, updating, or browsing (Table 4.10). The average participant for males was 34 posts, and the average participant for females was 16 posts.

Table 4.9

Presentation of the Number of Superintendents' Friends on Facebook

Amount	Response	Percentage (%)
None	5	10.00
1-50	4	8.00
51-100	2	4.00
101-200	6	12.00
201-300	8	16.00
301-400	3	6.00
401-500	3	6.00
>500	19	38.00
Total	50	100.00

Table 4.10

Survey Participants' Rate of Activities on Facebook

Activity	Daily	Percentage (%)	Weekly	Percentage (%)	Monthly	Percentage (%)	Never	Percentage (%)	Total
Post updates and announcements	18	36.00	25	50.00	3	6.00	4	8.00	50
Post photos	15	31.91	21	44.68	5	10.64	6	12.77	47
Post videos	4	8.51	21	44.68	9	19.15	13	27.66	47
Browse profiles and posts	9	20.93	11	25.58	5	11.63	18	41.86	43
Read postings	24	51.06	9	19.15	4	8.51	10	21.28	47
Comment on status updates and posts	6	13.33	10	22.22	6	13.33	23	51.11	45
Reply to comments on your posts	11	24.44	11	24.44	8	17.78	15	33.33	45
Click "Like" or "♥" to posts	14	19.15	9	19.15	4	8.51	20	42.55	47

There were only 21 males and 10 females who used YouTube on a weekly basis.

When using YouTube, it was to view videos or to reply to videos. Instagram had a total

of seven males and three females who used the social media tool, and Snapchat had a

total of zero males and three females who used the social media tool. An overwhelming 83% of the superintendents did not blog.

Examples of statements made by both male and female superintendents between the ages of 36 and over 65 years to highlight how social media helps in their role as a superintendent included:

"It is a great communication tool."

"Biggest pro is keeping people informed."

"Great tool to post pictures of school events, example on Twitter."

"Shows I am visible at school events."

"Great tool to reach out to stakeholders [and] garner participation from the community."

"Gather feedback on important issues."

"Control negative comments."

"Highlight accomplishments in district."

"Great to promote students."

Many comments (60%) came from rural school superintendents. Less than 6% of the comments came from urban/city district superintendents, and 26% of the comments came from suburban district superintendents. Overall, 47% of the male and 30% of the female superintendents stated that social media helped them to be a better superintendent. This means that 77% of the superintendents believed social media is an effective tool. Of those participants surveyed, 27% of the male and 22% of the female superintendents agreed that social media is a distraction, which totals 49%. Overall, though, 31% of the male and 24% of the female superintendents believed it was expected that they use social

media in their positions, and 41% of the male and 30% of the female superintendents agreed that social media was a part of their daily lives. Of those superintendents who used social media in their position as superintendent, 38% of the males and 21% of the females had their workplace social media account accessible most of the time; and 36% of the male and 28% of the female's superintendents agreed that social media "helps them take the pulse of the community." See Table 4.11 for a representation of this data.

Overall, 52% of the male and 44% of the female (totaling 96%) of the superintendents believed that social media is an effective tool for communicating with stakeholders about events, news, and activities. In addition, 28% of the male and 19% of female superintendents (totaling 47%) believed that social media is an effective tool to share their opinions and perspectives to their stakeholders (Table 4.12).

Issues, Concerns, and Problems

To answer Research Question 2, the study asked the participants to identify what concerned them when using social media and the challenges that took place.

RQ2: *From the perspective of the superintendents, what are the critical challenges, concerns, and issues associated with the use of social media tools in performing their jobs?*

There were many concerns that the superintendents had when using social media. First, the comments from male superintendents who were between the ages of 36 and over 65 years included *false information*:

"Forum provides inaccurate information."

"Social media used by the community is often inaccurate."

Table 4.11

Rate Your Level of Agreement With the Following Statements

Activity	Strongly Agree	Percentage (%)	Agree	Percentage (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Percentage (%)	Disagree	Percentage (%)	Strongly Disagree	Percentage (%)	Total
Social media helps me to be more effective as a superintendent.	15	17.86	50	59.52	14	16.67	5	5.95	0	0.00	84
Social media is a distraction.	13	15.48	29	34.52	17	20.24	21	25.00	4	4.76	84
Social media is part of my everyday life.	22	26.19	38	45.24	11	13.10	11	13.10	2	2.38	84
I use social media because it is expected of me.	12	14.29	35	41.67	17	20.24	17	20.24	3	3.57	84
I have my social media accounts "open" and accessible most of the time.	12	14.29	38	45.24	13	15.48	13	15.48	6	7.14	84
Social media helps me "take the pulse" of my stakeholders.	16	19.05	38	45.24	12	14.29	12	14.29	1	1.19	84

Table 4.12

Rate Your Level of Agreement With the Following Statements

Activity	Strongly Agree	Percentage (%)	Agree	Percentage (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Percentage (%)	Disagree	Percentage (%)	Strongly Disagree	Percentage (%)	Total
Social media is an effective tool for communicating with my stakeholders about general school news, events and activities.	35	42.17	45	54.22	2	2.41	1	1.20	0	0.00	83
Social media is an effective tool to share my opinions and perspectives with my stakeholders	8	9.52	32	38.10	15	17.86	25	29.76	4	4.76	84
Social media is an effective tool for my professional development and networking.	13	15.48	36	42.86	23	27.38	12	14.29	0	0.00	84
Social media is an effective tool for gathering news and information about other school districts.	13	15.48	50	59.52	17	20.24	4	4.76	0	0.00	84
Social media is an effective tool for gathering news and information about the community.	12	14.29	54	64.29	13	15.48	5	5.95	0	0.00	84

"It is hard to respond to inaccurate information or attacks without getting into a debate with social media users."

"Too many lies can be posted."

"Several negative information."

"It is the devil, more negative than positive."

"The negative lies that spread on social media accounts grow daily."

Second, the comments from male superintendents who were between the ages of 36 and over 65 years included *interference at work*:

"Social media can be a disruptor on our daily lives."

"You need to know how to use social media, or it can get you into trouble."

"Distracts your day-to-day work when you have to fight the misinformation."

"The time spent by superintendents on social media increases daily. We cannot concentrate on our work because of the social media posts."

"Not comfortable."

"No ability to keep the site current."

"Ruins students, communities and districts."

"To[o] many people will ask to 'friend.'"

"I am an idiot at social media."

"This consumes a great deal of time, and we must correct the information. It is overwhelming. "

Third, the comments from male superintendents who were between the ages of 36 and over 65 years included *parents and community use*:

"Provides anonymous post[s] without people taking responsibility for their actions."

"Parents rant on social media tools without realizing the consequences to the district."

"People do not understand the consequences that their post has on students."

"Ruins students, communities and districts."

"To[o] many people will ask to 'friend.'"

"Privacy concerns and mean-spirited people."

Finally, the comments from male superintendents who were between the ages of 36 and over 65 years included *employees*:

"Teachers and staff do not realize the consequences that they post on their social media sites."

"BOE concerns with what is posted."

"The staff, students, and parents who use social media is a huge problem, for schools, as superintendents we are facing daily. "

There were many concerns that female superintendents had when using social media. The comments from the female superintendents between the ages of 36 and over 65 included, first, *false information*:

"The anonymity of social media tools such as Facebook makes it difficult at times."

"Rumors spread very quickly before you can respond."

"People run threads on social media tools such as FaceBook [sic] without having all the information."

"Too many lies."

"Too many people rely on social media as the 'real news.'"

"Read it on social media such as FaceBook [sic] or [T]witter it must be true. No one takes the time to find out the truth."

"Can't control social media tools. Lies are posted and rumors spread. We cannot respond to all the false allegations that is posted."

Can't control social media tools. Lies are posted and rumors spread.

Second, the comments from the female superintendents between the ages of 36 and over 65 included *interference at work*:

"Being aware of what comments are out there and how to respond."

"Superintendents are conscientious about posting anything that can be controversial."

"It consumes so much of my time."

"Taking too much time to call people who post inaccurate information on social media. Takes away from my job as a superintendent."

"My lack of comfort with how to use social media."

"Do not know how to use social media effectively because of my age and lack of training."

We cannot respond to all the false allegations that is posted."

Last, the comments from the female superintendents between the ages of 36 and over 65 included *parents and community use*:

"Issues should be talked about before being put on social media."

"FaceBook [sic] groups such as parents are destructive and challenging."

The concerns came mostly from rural districts. See Table 4.13 for a representation of the challenges that superintendents mentioned when using social media. Superintendents across NYS, both males and female, felt that social media is combative and disruptive to their districts.

About half of the superintendents, at 49%, believed that social media is a tool of distraction in their districts. The list of negative comments and false accusations grow daily and weekly on social media, causing superintendents to spend a great amount of time trying to explain situations that are posted on social media sites with half-truths and sometimes even lies. These posts can consume superintendents on a daily basis, causing distractions to their daily lives and day-to-day operations within their district. Superintendents have a hard time controlling what is said on social media tools and deciding how to react to each post. The superintendents agreed that there is no doubt that social media tools are changing on a daily basis and that some new social media tools are still developing and will continue to challenge superintendents in NYS districts. Social media tools will continue to be used in school districts and communities, they will continue to grow, and superintendents will have to embrace them.

The participants' concerns came mostly from the rural districts. See Table 4.13 for the challenges that the superintendents mentioned when using social media. The superintendents in this study, across NYS, both males and females, felt that social media is combative and disruptive to their districts.

Table 4.13

Research Participants' Risk or Challenge When Using Social Media

Risk or Challenge	Strongly Agree	Percentage (%)	Agree	Percentage (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Percentage (%)	Disagree	Percentage (%)	Strongly Disagree	Percentage (%)	Total
Legal	11	13.25	40	48.19	18	21.69	14	16.87	0	0.00	83
Time commitment	16	19.05	46	54.76	10	11.90	12	14.29	0	0.00	84
Employee comments	11	13.25	37	44.58	21	25.30	13	15.66	1	1.20	83
Combative/divisive topics or comments	25	29.76	39	46.34	12	14.29	8	9.52	0	0.00	84
Public vulnerability/Lack of control.	20	23.81	36	42.86	15	17.86	12	14.29	1	1.19	84
Other (Text) (Social media is a necessary evil)	1	16.67	0	0.00	5	83.33	0	0.00	0	0.00	6

Overall, the male and female superintendents felt that the use of social media is an effective tool to communicate with their stakeholders, and it helped them become a better superintendent. According to the data, 96% of both the male and female superintendents were very confident that using social media is an effective tool for communicating with stakeholders, and 77% of both the male and female superintendents agreed that social media helped them to become a more effective superintendent. The superintendents, both male and female, at 47%, believed that social media is an effective tool for superintendents to voice their opinion, and at 49%, the male and female superintendents believed that social media is a distraction. Overwhelmingly, the male and female superintendents wanted to remain anonymous when replying to negative comments about their district (Table 4.14).

According to the responses, 48% of the female and 58% of the male superintendents did not post on their own social media accounts because of time constraints, lack of professional development, and not knowing what types of information they should post. They had their district clerks, principals, other administrators, and BOCES public relations specialists post and monitor their social media sites. The superintendents had these individuals monitor and post to their account on their behalf. The female superintendents had this type of staff person monitor their accounts 79% of the time, and 86% of the time, the staff employee posted something on social media on the female superintendents' behalf; while male superintendents had this type of person monitor their accounts 86% of the time, and that staff person posted something on the male superintendents' social media accounts 71% of the time.

Table 4.14

Research Participants' Level of Agreement

Activity	Strongly Agree	Percentage (%)	Agree	Percentage (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Percentage (%)	Disagree	Percentage (%)	Strongly Disagree	Percentage (%)	Total
I am confident in my technical ability to effectively use social media.	5	6.10	9	10.98	21	25.61	39	47.56	8	9.76	82
I am confident in my ability to effectively use social media to promote the district.	10	12.35	25	30.86	25	30.86	19	23.46	2	2.47	81
I enjoy interacting with my stakeholders on social media.	25	30.86	49	60.49	3	4.94	4	4.94	0	0.00	81
I prefer to stay anonymous when on social media.	20	24.39	44	53.66	9	10.98	8	9.76	1	1.22	82
Social media is an effective tool for communicating with my stakeholders about emergencies	25	30.12	34	40.96	15	18.07	8	9.64	1	1.20	83

The data show that the use of social media tools is an effective tool for superintendents to communicate with stakeholders. In this study, the age group that used social media were between the ages of 35 and 65 years. The data that were collected came mostly from the rural school districts. This indicates that those superintendents relied heavily on social media tools to get their message out on a daily and weekly basis. The rural superintendents had limited access to provide news about their districts. In many rural districts, social media is the one tool that their community may have access to. These social media tools include Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Twitter was the most popular social media tool used, and it helped many of the superintendents communicate with their community. The superintendents can get messages out quickly to their community, using minimum words and devoting less time communicating with their stakeholders. Messages are short, and the content addresses what the superintendents need to say.

The findings also suggest that both the male and female superintendents enjoyed interacting with their stakeholders, at 90% (Table 4.14). Many of the superintendents from rural, suburban, and urban districts followed social media tools to get an understanding of what their communities' concerns were and to also get a *pulse* of what the community was thinking or hearing. Some superintendents were cautious when using social media tools to find out what their community were saying because many times the facts were not posted correctly, and information could be distorted.

This can cause distress for superintendents and their districts if they repeat what might be posted on social media sites. The superintendents noted that they have to be very careful as to what they read and repeat when looking at information from parents,

teachers, and the community on social media sites. Such repeating can cause much anguish if the truth is not posted. Overwhelmingly, the superintendents felt that social media does more harm than good, creates extra work for them, and is time consuming. These issues all take away from their daily jobs as a superintendent of schools.

Chapter Summary

There are legitimate concerns for both male and female superintendents and the use of social media. The participants in this research were between 46-55 years of age, which coincides with the average age of the male superintendents in New York State, at 53, and the average age of the female superintendents in New York State, at the age of 55. The data came from mostly rural superintendents in New York State. There are approximately 299 rural districts in New York (NYSED, 2017). There are primarily two types of social media tools that the superintendents used—Twitter and Facebook. Many of the superintendents had an employee to assist and post for them. There were many concerns with the use of social media and how to use it.

Chapter 4 provided a detailed analysis of the data collected from New York State superintendents. Chapter 5 will include recommendations for New York State superintendents to help them with using social media.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter addresses the implications, findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research dealing with superintendents and social media. The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges that a superintendent faces on a daily basis and to explain how social media is impacting the superintendency. This study was conducted to understand the effects of social media on the New York State superintendents. In addition, the study emphasized the types of social media, the degree of social media use, and the time superintendents use social media within their daily lives as a superintendent. The study also looked at the challenges and issues that superintendents encounter on a daily basis as leaders of districts in NYS. The information and research received from this study can inform superintendents across the nation about the use of social media, the effects of social media, and the challenges that they may encounter in their daily work.

Superintendents need to understand the impact and challenges of social media on their daily work effort. The rise of social media has had an impact on the superintendency, specifically how information is disseminated to the public and concerning the information that comes from the community. NYS school superintendents are finding that social media tools are becoming critical in communicating real-time information. They are learning that they need to keep stakeholders informed and let communities know what is happening in their districts. If not, consequences can occur.

Social media tools can be draining, exhausting, and dispiriting (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). This can make one feel chaotic and powerless. The superintendent's position has changed so much in the past 10 years that it is no longer enough to run districts and make sure students are being taught). Superintendents must build trusting relationships with the community and the taxpayers they serve.

Implications of Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges that superintendents face on a daily basis and to explain how social media is impacting the superintendency. Superintendents who are not using social media tools will face consequences if they are not part of the conversation taking place (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Information can spread rapidly. In the past, disseminating information was a lot simpler. Now, with the advent of so many social media tools, superintendents have to not only look at the social media tools they are using, but they need to be conscious of what they are saying as well.

Due to the widespread use of social media tools, like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, superintendents must develop skills and be aware of the social media tools that can help them on a daily basis, must learn how to use these types of social media tools, and also must have assistance in using these tools. Understanding the perspectives of social media and the effects it can have on a district is something that superintendents must meet *head on*. They can no longer ignore the effects of social media on their districts, boards of education, students, and constituents.

The findings in this study indicate that social media is being used by NYS superintendents. There was a limit to what social media tools they used. They also had many challenges and concerns they faced on a daily basis. The findings produced by this

study can provide superintendents with a better understanding of how social media tools are effecting superintendents across New York State, what other superintendents are using their social media tools for, what social media tools superintendents are using, and which social media tools may help them get their message out to all stakeholders, may help them with the challenges they face on a daily basis with social media, and it may help them understand the importance of having someone to help monitor and post messages on their social media accounts.

Superintendents have to react to disruptions by utilizing the social media tools that stakeholders are using and by learning how to use those social media tools. They also have to use existing social media tools to communicate with their stakeholders. Given the demand of the social media tools that people are using, superintendents have to change their communication styles.

According to the findings of this study, the prevailing social media tools that superintendents use are Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Twitter was the most used by the superintendents, at 90%; Facebook use was at 74%; and YouTube use was at 55%. The percentage of the use of Twitter by the participating superintendents was 16% higher than Facebook and 35% higher than YouTube. Twitter, being the most used social media tool by the superintendents in this study, allowed the superintendents to follow stakeholders on their Twitter accounts.

Tweets are short messages that are limited to 280 characters and that create hashtags, using the pound (#) symbol, to create words or phrases. By creating hashtags, this allows superintendents' stakeholder to connect with the district or even hold *Twitter chats* from various hashtags. This creates an easy and limited conversation with

superintendents' stakeholders, and it still keeps stakeholders engaged in the tweets with the superintendent who is tweeting.

Superintendents are now living in a world where connections and information sharing through social media go hand in hand, and it is the currency of the world (Porterfield & Carnes, 2012). Superintendents must step out boldly and meet the new social media challenges. Through this disruption of social media, the only question is how long will it take superintendents to adapt to the new social media tools and start using the new communication among their districts? Social media has now become the norm of doing business. The research shows that over 68% of the 122 superintendents who took the survey identified with some type of social media tool, and an overwhelmingly 96% of the superintendents believed that social media tools is an effective tool for communicating with stakeholders. Overwhelmingly, 79% of the superintendents in this study believed that social media is an effective tool for gathering news and information about their community. Social media tools have caused conversations about districts to take place year-round, instead of just during the school year. Social media is now a major tool in how superintendents communicate to the public.

It is vital that superintendents understand the challenges and successes of the leaders who have excelled in some aspects of technology leadership (Sauers et al., 2014). This can help them become more familiar with social media. Superintendents are being challenged every day by social media outlets. They have to gain better insights into the challenges that they face in this area. Superintendents have to be engaged in some type of social media tool with their stakeholders. The data reveal (64%) of the superintendents in

this study found it helpful to engage in social media to assist them in *taking the pulse of the community*, while 71% believed social media is a part of their everyday lives. The challenge remains as to how superintendents can transform these new technologies into their daily lives. When superintendents were asked about why they did not use social media or why it was not helpful, the superintendents stated,

"It is hard to respond to inaccurate information or attacks without getting into a debate or conversation. Teachers and staff do not understand why things they say on social media are an issue."

"Social media and negative issues and in-school drama caused by social media eat up a tremendous amount of time for both the superintendent and other school administrators."

"Facebook groups [of parents] are very challenging and destructive. Too many parents rely only upon it for 'news.'"

"Little added value at the expense of the many and prevailing challenges social media causes districts, staff, families, students, and community members."

"Concerned regarding negative community reaction and input."

The results also show that many of the superintendents in this study had communication specialists or other people in their districts to post to their social media accounts. The people who did post on behalf of the superintendent included principals, secretaries, district clerks, webmasters, athletic directors, and technology employees.

Superintendents must be actively involved in working with technology, using social media tools, and spending time on the social media they are using . The knowledge of technology requires school leaders to have skills that go beyond managing a district.

Superintendents need to be using social media tools, and they also have to have some type of communication specialist to help aid them when using these tools. The communication specialists need to be knowledgeable and proficient in all the types of social media tools. They need to be knowledgeable of the issues in the district and community, and they need to be able to decipher what information placed on social media tools is true and what is false. By having a communication specialist, this will help superintendents focus on their duties, so that they do not have to spend enormous amounts of hours looking at social media sites and trying to go through issues that could affect the district in a harmful way.

Limitations

Every study has its limitations, and there are some that should be mentioned for this study. The number of superintendents that participated in this study was only 122. The overall response rate was 17% out of a total of 720 of New York State superintendents of schools. The study did capture many of the rural school superintendents. Out of 122 superintendents who took the survey, 60% were from rural districts, 32% were from suburban districts, and only 9% were from urban districts. The amount of data collected, and the data that were collected from the rural and suburban districts provided additional information to make comparisons of superintendents who worked in those districts.

Overwhelmingly, the data came from male superintendents. The research study primarily obtained data from male superintendents, at 69%, compared to female superintendents, at 30%, and the responses came primarily from those superintendents from ages 46 to 55 years, at 52%, which could have limited the viewpoints by gender and

age. A larger participation base in the study could have provided a better point of view that was not presented in the data within this study.

Recommendations

Through the research and data, it is evident that New York State superintendents are aware that social media tools are an important part of their jobs. Based on the findings, there are several recommendations that superintendents should be following and using on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. From the research and data that were found, further research in social media, policy development, and best practices should be done when using social media tools. The researcher's recommendations follow.

Further research. This study introduced the types of social media that superintendents are using, how often are they using it, and the challenges and issues that social media are causing in superintendents' lives on a daily basis. Social media is a very popular tool with superintendents' constituents, and they can be powerful tools for superintendents, also, for both allies and enemies of themselves or their districts. Superintendents have to realize when to utilize social media networks and when not to respond to social media network questions. Further research into the use and effects of social media on school districts and superintendents needs to be done. We know that social media tools are playing a huge part in how districts communicate and how people in districts communicate news and events that are taking place. Social media has had a tremendous impact on how schools communicate with their stakeholders. More research needs to be done to show the best practices when communicating on social media and when not to comment on social media sites. This will help alleviate many untruths that might be posted on these sites.

There are some major findings from the study. First, there are different organizational missions for each school district, but they must keep the missions they have established and build on them, with the use of social media, in a successful manner. Superintendents need to keep their stakeholders informed and let their communities know what is happening in their districts. The traditional ways of sharing information are no longer viable. School districts need to adapt to the changing trends of social media to communicate, and they have to have a successful communications person to make sure that the superintendents' messages are getting out in the right manner and within the correct social media outlets.

First, further research has to be done on the professional development that superintendents need when it comes to social media tools and what they should to communicate to their stakeholders. This will help to improve communication with superintendents' stakeholders and, again, allow the superintendents to gather information to send out to their stakeholders immediately.

Second, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are the social media tools that people around the world are using to communicate with each other. Superintendents must use these social media tools to communicate with their constituents in order to effectively get their message out to their stakeholders. Twitter is the major social media tool that superintendents use for their stakeholders. Superintendents who have a Twitter account connect with their constituents and pass valuable information on to the people who are following them. Twitter can also assist superintendents in gaining additional information on some of the Twitter accounts that he/she is following to pass on information. This will build trust and transparency in the districts that the superintendents are leading.

This study attempted to understand the implementation of social media on superintendents' roles. There is little known about superintendents and the impact that social media on their positions on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Superintendents should be requesting more information from their state and national organizations to help them navigate through their social media questions. The data from the survey will help superintendents better understand what tools to use to be successful communicators in their districts. Superintendents need to know what social media tools their stakeholders are using, how their stakeholders are using those tools, and for what reason are their stakeholders using such the social media tools. Superintendents have to be sure they are using the social media tools that their stakeholders are using, so they can get the information out that they want their stakeholders to know, and so that the superintendents know that their stakeholders are getting the information that the superintendent are conveying. Also, more research is needed regarding what superintendents should reply to, or not to reply to, on their social media tools.

Policy development. There are many advantages and disadvantages of using social media. Additionally, disruptive theory provided a contextual background on how social media has been a disruptor for the superintendency. In most cases, social media places an enormous challenge on the superintendency and causes a disruption for the superintendent. Over 75% of the superintendents in this study felt that using social media can be combative, and decisive topics or comments are a risk or a challenge when using social media, while 75% felt vulnerability/lack of control when using social media. Evidence has suggested that superintendents must use social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and they need to learn how to be brief and to the point

when using those social media tools. The data collected from the research questions can be utilized to develop a comprehensive social media policy for superintendents to use with their constituents. This plan can also help superintendents and boards of education develop social media policies for their district. There is still a lot of work to be done in understanding social media. Additional research on policies of social media and analysis of different types of social media policies would benefit superintendents. Superintendents should be looking at the business sector for policies and procedures to help increase their communication.

Superintendents should look at social media models that corporations are using. Like corporations, superintendents need to take steps to build communities in their districts, so they can use social media tools and learn from the interactions that they have on social media (Culnan et al., 2010). Superintendents need to understand which social media tools their community is using. Corporations and the government have been using social media tools since the late 1990s and early 2000s. They have policies, procedures, and best-practice models in place, and they have improved their social media procedures in the last 20 years. The government and corporations have been using social media tools before they became popular with the population as a whole. The blueprint is already done for districts; superintendents just have to model them for their district and communities. Superintendents need to look at the corporate and government models and start to implement them in their districts.

Mastering social media implementation and mastering the skills to go along with are daunting tasks, but they are tasks that superintendents need to face. By looking at the corporate model of social media it can help make them successful in communicating

information. By looking at corporate social media policies, it would help districts navigate through social media decisions that arise from the community. Like corporations, superintendents have to begin shifting their communication and marketing practices in order to develop relationships with their stakeholders and provide them with the information they want in real time. A model like corporations are using with public relations specialists would greatly benefit a superintendent and his or her district.

Just like government agencies, superintendents must be aware of media tools that their public is using, and they have to understand the important role that the tools have when they make their decisions. In this manner, a superintendent can use *data mining* to make sense of things that are happening in their school district or their communities in looking for topics that are being discussed and communicated within their districts. This data mining helps them act accordingly when public issues arise and are critical, or if there are emergencies in their districts (Kavanaugh et al., 2012). If superintendents use data mining like government agencies, this could help them improve their use of social media in a positive manner. The superintendents could look for emerging themes, specific users, and repetition of stories and events that are taking place in the district, both good and bad. They could zero in on specific issues that they think may be bigger issues in the future and correct them before the expand into the community.

Superintendents have to realize the importance of social media in their success as a superintendent and also in the success of their school districts. They should have extensive professional development training to help make them aware of the types of social media they should be communicating on, the effects of social media if one is not using it, and how to use social media to get their messages out to their constituents.

Professional development should be used so that the superintendents know what their

students are using to communicate with one another and what the students are putting out

on their social media tools. In order for superintendents to develop these skills,

preparation programs for new and veteran superintendents, which are related to social

media and social media tools programs, should be added topics to state and national

organizations. Recommendations for additional research and information from this study

may help superintendents successfully use different types of social media when facing

issues in their district, to know what types of social media tools their constituents are

using, and to have successful social media policies in place.

By using social media, superintendents can answer questions immediately instead

of using the traditional way of the gathering and reporting style of journalists (Kavanaugh

et al., 2012). There is no delay in sending information out to the public, and this is how

the majority of government agencies use their social media tools. This can be applicable

for a superintendent of a public-school district. Their constituents are no longer using

traditional news outlets, but they are looking on social media networks for information.

Data from the survey can inform boards of education and superintendents to implement

policies that will address issues that superintendents face on a daily basis. Boards of

education can no longer ignore the effects of social media on superintendents and the

need to implement policies to help superintendents with that social media.

Improved practices. Superintendents need to embrace the disruptive change that

will require them to change their whole communication network and cause changes

within their district. The risk can be high if they do not know what social media tools to

use and how to effectively use them. Superintendents need to be flexible, ready for

change, and be ready for new attempts to use social media. Further research is needed to examine the best practices for superintendents to use when it comes to social media tools, the specific types of social media that superintendents should be using, and when to comment on such social media.

The research contained a discussion regarding how social media has changed the superintendent's job and how social media is an integral part of the superintendent's position. A survey was administered to all sitting superintendents of NYS, which contained different questions about the social media tools they use, concerns they have, assistance they receive with social media, and the challenges they face. All types of districts participated in the study including, rural, suburban, and urban/city.

Superintendents are encouraged to increase opportunities to take new roles in social media and receive professional development in using social media. This will allow them to understand the benefits of social media and when to respond to what social media accounts in their community. Superintendents have to be the technology leader in their districts.

Superintendents have to commit to getting assistance when using social media on a daily basis. The research shows that superintendents spend many hours during their day on social media issues. This may be from the public, students, or employees. By having a communication specialist or some type of assistant, the superintendents would limit the time they would have to spend on such social media issues. It also would help superintendents to have an *expert* in the field of social media to answer questions, to know what social media tools the superintendent should be using, to reduce time spent on social media, and to have assistance if an emergency takes place within their district.

These situations require that superintendents have a communication specialist to help assist them in their navigation of social media and to help to get the correct messages out—and when they should not to answer rumors or input from the community. From the comments and the data provided in this study, some superintendents do use social media, but they have enough to do on a daily basis with their leadership duties, and adding social media to their workload is causing an increase in anxiety within their jobs. A communication specialist can help superintendents navigate through this territory that they may not yet have explored.

One social media tool that superintendents should be using is Twitter. This study data shows that 90% of superintendents use Twitter to communicate when using social media. The superintendents used Twitter 57% on a daily basis and 25% on a weekly basis. They are using Twitter to tweet 70% of the time on a weekly and daily basis, post photos 73% of the time on a weekly and daily basis, and they browse 79% of the time on a weekly and daily basis. Twitter communication has been increasingly used by educational institutions. A study conducted by Wang et al. (2016) to examine the Twitter communication between superintendents and their stakeholders provided recommendations to help them use social media in a productive manner, to help them engage with the public, and to gain support for their use of social media networks. Wang et al. (2016) was one of the first studies that assessed Twitter communication between superintendents and the public. As of June 2014, 40 out of 51 states in the United States used Twitter for communication. Twitter communication was originally used for one-way conversations, rather than two-way communications. Wang et al. found that superintendents use Twitter 25% more than the public to disseminate positive

information. The study found that out of 100 school districts, the public found Twitter to be positive toward superintendents (Wang et al., 2016). The two-way communication on Twitter gives the public a voice instead of a one-way system where the superintendents' tweet something out without expecting a response. The Wang et al. (2016) study provided insights into how effective the use of Twitter communication is for superintendents. These findings are important, because as the superintendents experimented with Twitter communication, it helped to provide them with effective social media communication. The use of Twitter can assist superintendents in connecting with their stakeholders.

Twitter communication also has consequences and factors for administrators who use it. A sampling of 17 administrators were asked about using Twitter in a professional manner (Cho & Rangel, 2016). Twitter has benefits to promote administrators' social and technological lives in their organization if they are used daily. The use of Twitter changed how administrators used and viewed the tool (Cho & Rangel, 2016).

Twitter is important for leadership management, especially when sharing good news to stakeholders in a timely and appropriate way. Superintendents can tweet about districts initiatives, link the tweets to district blogs or their website, and use the tweets to promote their district. The more ways superintendents can find to communicate, the more transparent they can be when tweeting. Superintendents are using Twitter more often to listen to their stakeholders, which helps them to understand what is going on in their districts. Superintendents use Twitter to interact with people at home and at school, and they use it to connect with other superintendents. Tweeting is used as a natural

communication tool for both genders to participate in conversations with their stakeholders (Wang et al., 2016).

There is more research to be completed about Twitter and the role it plays in educational leadership. The themes leaders are discussing and the effect of tweeting on stakeholders and districts has yet to be fully researched. The extent of the offline identities that superintendents communicate with on Twitter is also unknown. Who are the people reading the superintendents' tweets, and what are they are saying about the tweets they are reading from their superintendents? Current Twitter data needs to be examined, so it can capture the kind of communication that is occurring between the superintendents and their stakeholders.

Conclusion

The intent of this study was to examine the use of social media by NYS superintendents from rural, suburban, and urban/city school districts in New York State. Further, this study examined the challenges and concerns associated with the use of social media tools in performing superintendents' jobs on a daily basis.

Little has been understood or been researched regarding which social media tools New York State superintendents use in their jobs, how they use those social media tools, and the challenges they face using social media tools. Superintendents are finding it difficult to know when to use—and not to use—social media tools. They need to know what types of social media tools to use when they face issues in their district. Many superintendents are not experts in the use of social media tools; therefore, when they are trying to communicate with their communities on social media, they need assistance.

New York State superintendents are finding that social media tools are becoming crucial in communicating real-time information. Social media tools have changed the way that superintendents communicate and manage information, and it has placed dramatic demands on the superintendency (McLeod & Richardson, 2011). Superintendents have to respond to the community immediately when an issue arises or a rumor spreads in their districts. This creates a strong demand for the superintendent to make sure his or her information gets out before the public has time to tweet their opinion. It is crucial for superintendents to get their message out first, so the correct information is sent out to the community. This helps the superintendent by stopping any rumors or misconception that may be happening in their districts.

The research for this study was collected from over 720 New York State superintendents from the types of school district in New York State, which included rural, suburban, and urban/city districts. The data collected were obtained from a survey that solicited measurable characteristics of population, age of superintendent, gender, district size, etc. The data were obtained using tables, graphs, or figures to consolidate large numbers of data to show the relationship, or differences, among the variables.

As stated, the participants were drawn from school districts across New York State. The data came mostly from male superintendents from rural school districts. This was because most superintendents in New York State are male, at 69%, while 30% of the superintedents are female, at 30% (The Council, 2016).

The findings indicate that most superintendents use social media on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Both female and male superintendents had one or more social media accounts that they used as a superintendent. The social media tools varied among

the superintendents, with Twitter being the number-one social media tool. There was a low percentage of female and male superintendents that had no social media accounts. Of the 122 participants that took the survey, 16 males and six females had no social media account for various reasons, which included they did not know how to use the social media tools, they felt it created conflict, or they just did not want to communicate using social media. Overall, most of the superintendents used social media and felt it helped to communicate their message to their stakeholders. From this research study, 48% of the males and 46% of the females, totaling 84% of the study-participant superintendents in New York State, said they would continue to use some type of social media tool in the future.

The research overwhelmingly suggests that superintendents can no longer shy away from the effects of social media in their districts. This is true with the use of Twitter. When it came to using Twitter, 79 male and 31 female superintendents in this study used it on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. They use it to post videos, tweet, and retweet. In order to use social media effectively, they need to know latest verbiage, which includes words such as *trending*, *tweeting*, *hashtag*, and *retweeting*. Facebook was used by the 62 male and 27 female superintendents in this study on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. They were using Facebook to make announcements, post updates, post videos, post photos, and to read postings. As also recommended by Pritchett et al. (2013), when it comes to the superintendent qualitative research about how superintendents use Web 2.0 technologies on a daily basis, additional research needs to be conducted on the use of Facebook and Twitter.

The next-highest social media tools used by the superintendents was YouTube. There were 21 male and 10 female superintendent participants that used it on a weekly basis. They used YouTube to view videos or reply back to videos. Just like Twitter, YouTube needs to be used more by superintendents. YouTube is growing every day with new users, particular the students. Superintendents should be aware of what their students are posting on their YouTube accounts and it is also a great social media tool to communicate with the students in their districts. YouTube is becoming a major social media tool used by teenagers. A survey administered by NORC, a social research organization at the University of Chicago for the Pew Research Center, found that 85% of teens between the ages of 13 and 17 years said that they used YouTube 85% of the time when communicating on online platforms (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Facebook is not the leading social media tool for this age group; only 51% use it as a social media tool (Anderson & Jiang). Again, if superintendents are not on YouTube or using YouTube, they are not communicating with their students and some of the stakeholders in their communities (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Students are their concern and responsibility, and superintendents should be trying to get information out to the student body and also understanding what students are communicating to on another.

Other social media tools that the superintendents in this study did not use or paid little attention to were Instagram, where only seven males and three female superintendents used it on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis; and Snapchat, where zero superintendents used it on a daily , weekly, or monthly basis. Of the superintendents surveyed in this study, 83% did not blog.

Most of the superintendents in this study did agree that social media helped them to be a more effective superintendents, at 78%, and that social media can help them take the pulse of their stakeholders, at 64%. Superintendents are finding that social media tools can help them get information about their communities and other districts and that networking is part of their daily life, and it is expected of them, just as is expected that they will share their opinions. Many, over 50% of the participant superintedents, were concerned with legal issues, time commitment, employee comments, combative or decisive comments, and lack of control of social media tools and comments. Over 90% of the superintendents in this study enjoyed interacting with their social media stakeholders. In examining the data, most of the superintendents, over 70%, believed that social media is an effective tool to communicate with stakeholders about an emergency. The superintendents believed that making good decisions regarding how social media tools are used and connecting with all of the superintendents' stakeholders on the various social media tools will help improve communication skills in their school districts.

The findings show that there was a limit to what social media tools the superintendents used. Superintendents face challenges and concerns on a daily basis. They need assistance when using social media tools, and superintendents need to look at *future research* regarding,

- the use of social media and the effects of social media on school districts and superintendents,
- best practices when communicating on social media and when superintendents should not comment on social media sites,

- the use of social media tools on which to communicate, and what they need to communicate to their stakeholders,

- use of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and

- requesting more information from their state and national organization to help them navigate through their social media questions.

Superintendents need assistance when using social media tools, and they need to look at *policy development* regarding:

- developing a comprehensive social media policy for superintendents to use with their constituents;

- additional research, which should be done on the policies of social media, and an analysis of different types of social media policies would benefit superintendents;

- looking at the corporate and government models of social media to help superintendents become successful in communicating information; and

- being aware of social media tools that the superintendents' public is using, and understand the important role that the tools have when they make their decisions.

Superintendents need assistance when using social media tools, and they need to look at *improved practices* regarding:

- examination of the best practices for superintendents to use when it comes to social media tools;

- specifying the types of social media that superintendents should be using and when to comment on social media;

- Twitter and the role it plays in educational leadership;

- the themes leaders are discussing and the effect of Tweeting on stakeholders and districts;

- the extent of the offline identities that superintendents communicate with on Twitter; and

- Twitter data that needs to be examined, so it can capture the kind of communications occurring between the superintendents and their stakeholders.

Additionally, this research may inform recommendations for superintendents, school administrators, boards of education, and stakeholders in the community.

Further research would help explain the influence that superintendents have on the information that they put out on their social media tools. Studies would offer insight into how superintendents are using their social media accounts, who they are contacting, and what are some of the responses from their stakeholders. More research needs to be done on social media and the most effective way for superintendents to use social media tools when engaging with all key stakeholders. If more in-depth interviews with stakeholders involved in social media communication were completed, it would help superintendents understand their constituents and assist them in leading their district. Additionally, more information about social media communications and what responses superintendents need to use within those social media tools needs to occur in order to for superintendents to have a better understanding of the use of social media tools.

Additional research is needed to determine the reasons for the various differences regarding the importance of Web 2.0 technologies with superintendents; however, the

findings in the research do imply that Web 2.0 technology is being used by superintendents, but they lack the expertise on how and when to use it. Further professional development and research to help superintendents is needed so they can understand what they should post, when they should post, and what information they need to be aware of that may affect their job and district. There is available research that is helpful in explaining Web 2.0 and the new Web 2.0 technologies for strategies to help superintendents improve their technologies in social media (Cox & McLeod, 2018; Harris & Rea, 2009; Meyer, 2011; Pritchett et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2013).

Finally, this chapter discussed the implications of the social media findings and their link to the up-to-date body of literature from articles and books. The limitations of this study and its design were reviewed, and suggestions for future research were presented. Recommendations were also stated for superintendents, boards of education, and national and state superintendents' associations.

In conclusion, superintendents should be using Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube—daily—to successfully communicate effectively with their district stakeholders. Superintendents also need to have an assistant or communication specialist in the district to help them navigate through all the social media tools and help them to communicate with their stakeholders. Superintendents can use the research data to create policies to help with their use of social media and improve their communication skills when using social media tools. Professional development in state and national superintendent associations should be offered for new and veteran superintendents to help them learn how to use social media tools, what social media tools to use, and when or when not to comment on social media.

References

Agozzino, A., & Kaiser, C. (2014). Social media as a practical approach in engaging key stakeholders in school crisis communication plans. *Journal of School Public Relations, 35*(44), 44-61.

Anderson, R., & Dexter, S. (2005). School technology leadership: An empirical investigation of prevalence and effect. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(1), 49-82.

Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018, May 31). Teens, social media & technology 2018. *Pew Research Center, Internet & Technology.* Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/

Barnes, N. G. (2010). How do successful companies use social media? *Marketing Research, Spring*, 8-13. North Dartmouth, MA: Center for Marketing Research, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Retrieved from https://archive.ama.org/archive/ResourceLibrary/MarketingResearch/documents/Tweeting.pdf

Berners-Lee, T., Hendler, J., & Lassila, O. (2001). The sematic web. *Scientific American, 284*(5), 35-43.

Carpenter, D., Robertson-Walsh, J., Johnson, M., & Blum, S. (2014). Social media analytics in education. *Journal of School Public Relations, 35*(1), 7-43.

Carr, N. (2006). Media savvy educators: Pushing past new lite reporting. *Education Digest, 72*(1), 48-52.

Carr, N. (2007). Using blogs to humanize our school leaders. *Education Digest, 72*(7), 29-32.

Case, C., Ryan, K., & Darwin, K. (2015). Marketing social networking in Fortune 500. *Business Studies Journal, 7*(2), 57-68.

Christensen, C. M. (1997). *The innovator's dilemma: When new technologies cause great firms to fail.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Christensen, C., Raynor, M., & McDonald, R. (2015).What is disruptive innovation? *Harvard Business Review, December*, 44-53.

Cho, J., & LoCascio, B. (2013). An analysis of social media use in America's Fortune 500 companies. *International Journal of the Academic Business World, 7*(1), 67-75.

Cho, V., & Rangel V. S. (2016). The dynamic roots of school leaders' Twitter use: A structurational perspective on technology use. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(September)*,* 837-864.

Cox, D., & McLeod, S. (2014). Social media marketing and communications strategies for school superintendents. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(6), 850-868. doi:10.1108/JEA-11-2012-0117

Culnan, M., McHugh, P., & Zubillaga, J. (2010). How large U.S. companies can use Twitter and other social media to gain business value. *MIS Quarterly Executive, 9*(4), 243-259.

Devore, D., & McCarthy, J. (2015). Tricks and tweets: Social media and technology use for state associations. *Journal for Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, 86*(8), 53-54.

Dillman, D. (2000). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Duggan, M., & Brenner, J. (2013, February 14). *The demographics of social media users – 2012.* Retrieved from http://www.pewInternet.org/2013/02/14/the-demographics-of-social-media-users-2012/

Dumas, T., Smith, M., Davis, J., & Giulietti. (2017). Lying or longing for likes? Narcissism, peer belonging, loneliness and normative versus deceptive like-seeing on Instagram in emerging adulthood. *Computers in Human Behavior, 71*(June), 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.01.037

Escobar-Rodriguez, T., & Bonsón-Fernandez, R. (2017). Facebook practices for business communication among fashion retailers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, 21*(1), 33-50.

Facebook. (2017). https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/12/facebooks-2017-year-in-review/

Fewkes, A., & McCabe, M. (2012). Facebook: Learning tool or distraction. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, 28*(3), 92-98.

Gilfoil, D., Aukers, S., & Jobs., C. (2015). Developing and implementing a social media program while optimizing return on investment. *American Journal of Business Education, 8*(1), 31-48.

Gonzales, L., Vodicka, D., & White, J. (2011). Leadership 2.0 social media in advocacy. *Leadership, 41*(1), 18-20.

Graham, M., Avery, E., & Park, S. (2015). The role of social media in local government crises communications. *Public Relations Review, 41*(3), 386-394. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.02.001

Guo, J., Liu, Z., & Liu, Y. (2016). Key success factors for the launch of government social media platform: Identifying the formation mechanism of continuance intention. *Computers in Human Behavior, 55*(B), 750-763. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.004

Harris, A., & Rea, A. (2009). Web 2.0 and virtual world in technologies: A growing impact on education. *Journal of Informational Systems Education, 20*(2), 137-144. Retrieved from https://www.unf.edu/uploadedFiles/aa/acadaffairs/provost/VirtualWorld_Technologies.pdf

He, W., & Zha, S. (2014). Insights into the adoption of social media mashups. *Internet Research*, *24*(2), 160-180.

Houston, P. (2001). Superintendents for the 21st century: It's not just a job, it's a calling. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(6), 429-433.

Huffman, S. (2013). Benefits and pitfalls: Simple guidelines for the use of social networking tools in K-12 education. *Education, 134*(2), 154-160.

Internetwordstats.com (2017). *Internet traffic statistics*. Retrieved from www.internetwordstats.com/stats.htm

Kavanaugh, A., Fox, E., Sheetz, D., Yang, S., Li, L., Shoemaker, D., . . . Xie, L. (2012). Social media use by government: From routine to critical. *Government Informational Quarterly, 29*(4), 480-491. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2012.06.002

Kennedy, C. (2014, February). The superintendency and social networking. *School Administrator, 71*(2), 38-42.

Kidwai, S., & Imperatore, C. (2011). How to use social media as an advocacy tool. *Techniques: Connecting Education and Careers, 86*(6), 36-39.

Latiff, Z., & Safiee, N. (2015). New business set up for branding strategies on social media – Instagram. *Procedia Computer Science, 72*, 13-23. doi:10.1016/j.procs.2015.12.100

Maynard, D., Roberts, I., Greenwood, M., Rout, D., & Bontcheva, K. (2017). A framework for real-time semantic social media analysis. *Web Semantics: Science, Services and Agents on the World Wide Web, 44,* 75-88. doi:10.101/j.websen.2017.05.002

McLeod, S., & Richardson, J. (2011). The dearth of technology leadership coverage. *Journal of School Leadership, 21*(2), 216-240.

McLeod, S., Bathon, J., & Richardson, J. (2011). Studies of technology tool usage are not enough: A response to the articles in the special issue. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 6*(5), 288-297.

McLeod, S., Richardson, W., & Sauers, N. (2015). Leading technology-rich school districts: Advice from tech savvy superintendents. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 10*(2), 104-126. doi:10.1177/1942775115584013

Mergel, I. (2013). Social media adoption and resulting in tactics in the U.S. federal government. *Government Information Quarterly, 30*(2), 123-130. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2012.12.004

Mergel, I. (2016). Social media institutionalization in the U.S. federal government. *Government Information Quarterly, 33*(1), 142-148. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2015.09.002

Meyer, K. (2011). Is online learning a disruptive innovation? It isn't the technology per se, but the new thinking it inspires, that can be disruptive. *Planning for Higher Education, 39*(4), 44-53.

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.tax.ny.gov

New York State Education Department. (2017). *Directory of public and non-public schools and administrators in New York State*. Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/schoolDirectory

O'Reilly, M., & John, M. (2013). Public relations opportunities for schools utilizing innovations in virtual communities, *Journal of Education and Learning, 2*(2), 139-143.

Passmore, C., Dobbie, A., Parchman, M., & Tysinger, J. (2012). Guidelines for constructing a survey. *Family Medical, 34*(4), 281-286.

Perrin, A. (2015, October 8). *Social media usage: 2005-2015.* Retrieved from http://www.pewInternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/

Pritchett, C. C., Wohleb, E. C., & Pritchett, C. G. (2013). Educators' perceived importance of Web 2.0 technology applications. *Tech Trends: Linking Research and Practice to Improve Learning, 57*(2), 33-38.

Porterfield, K., & Carnes, M. (2012). School communication in the age of Google. *Journal of Public Relations, 33*(2),* 115-130.

Powell, S., Olivier, B., & Yuan, L. (2015, January 1). Handling disruptive innovations in HE: Lessons from two contrasting case studies. *Research and Learning Technology, 23,* 1-14. doi:10.3402/rlt.v23.22494

Quinton, B. (2011, October). Social marketing goes mainstream. *Chief!Marketer.* Retrieved from http://chiefmarketer.com/images/2011SocialMarketingSurvey.pdf

Ratliff, J. M., & Kunz M. B. (2014). A profile of social media use by fortune 500 and INC. 500 corporations. *Academy of Strategic Management, 13*(2), 61-73.

Rey, J. (2014). The rural superintendency and the need for a critical leadership of place. *Journal of School Leadership, 24*(3)*, 509-536.

Ribble, M., & Miller, T. (2015). Educational leadership in an online world: Connecting students to technology responsibly, safely, and ethically. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network, 17*(1), 137-145.

Sauers, N. J., Richardson, J. W., & McLeod, S. (2014). Technology-savvy school superintendents: Successes and challenges. *Journal of School Leadership, 24*(6), 1177-1201.

Schachter, R. (2011, July 1). The social media dilemma. *District Administration*. Retrieved from https://www.districtadministration.com/article/social-media-dilemma

Schejter, A. M., & Tirosh, N. (2015). "Seek the meek, seek the just": Social media and social justice. *Telecommunications Policy, 39*(9), 796-803. doi:10.1016/j.telpol.2015.08.002

Simons, R. N., Ocepek, M. G., & Barker, L. J. (2016). Teaching tweeting: Recommendations for teaching social media work in LIS and MSIS programs. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science Education, 57*(1), 21-30.

Statisticshowto.com. (2018). *Face validity.* Retrieved from http://statisticshowto.com/face-validity/

Stephens, K. K., & Barrett, A. K. (2016). Communicating briefly: Technically. *International Journal of Business Communication, 53*(4), 398-418.

Stelzner, M. A. (2009, March). Social media marketing industry report: How marketers are using social media to grow their businesses. Retrieved from https://digitalintelligencetoday.com/downloads/SocialMediaMarketingIndustryReport.pdf

The New York State Council of School Superintendents. (2016). *Snapshot IX: The 9th triennial study of the superintendency in New York State.* New York, NY: Author.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/

Wang, Y. (2013). Social media in schools: A treasure trove or hot potato? *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 16*(1), 83-91.

Wang, Y., Sauers, N., & Richardson, J. (2016). A social network approach to examine K-12 educational leaders' influence on information diffusion on Twitter. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(3), 495-522.

Warren, A. M., Sulaiman, A., & Jaafar, N. I. (2014). Facebook: The enabler of online civic engagement for activists. *Computers in Human Behavior, 32*(March), 284-289. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.12.017

Weiss, M.-A. (2011). The use of social media sites data by business organizations in their relationship with employees. *Journal of Internet Law,* 16-28.

Wilburn, K., & Wilburn, R. (2015). Social purpose in a social media world. *Journal of Global Responsibility, 6*(2), 163-177.

Young, S., Berube, W., & Perry, S. (2008). The influence of technology on communication for school leaders: Preferences, beliefs, and use. *Planning and Changing, 39*(1/2), 81-97.

Zelin, R., & Baird, J. (2012). Ensuring student awareness of corporate social media usage: an accounting information systems course project. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice, 12*(2), 44-50.

Zhao, J. J., Truell, A. D., Alexander, M. W., Sharma, S., & Smith, S. M. (2013). Strategic use of social media on companies' e-commerce sites. *Journal of Research in Business Education, 55*(2), 50-68.

Zickuhur, K. (2010). Generations 2010: Generations online in 2010. *Pew Research Center: Internet & Technology.* Retrieved from http://pewreserch.org/pubs/1831/generations-online-2010

Appendix A

Introductory Email to NYS Superintendents

New York State Superintendent:

My name is Roger Clough, Superintendent of Schools in Walton, NY, and I am asking for 15 minutes of your limited time to complete a survey.

In speaking with other superintendents, I have learned that we would like to harness the power of social media but find little information or guidance specific to our profession.

For that reason, I am conducting doctoral research to better understand social media and its role in the superintendency.

I plan to share the data and analysis at future education conferences and through education publications. What I learn will benefit you as you maneuver the ever-changing social media landscape.

Please take a few minutes to be a part of this important work by taking this survey. The more we understand about social media, the better we can lead our districts.

If you decide to participate:

- The survey is confidential. We track no identifying information except to note participation for follow up emails reminders, which is not part of the data retained.
- The survey adheres to St. John Fisher College's strict privacy and security policies.
- You do not have to answer every question, and you can stop participating at any time.
- In submitting the survey, you provide your consent to participate in this research.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Roger Clough
Superintendent of Schools
Walton Central School District, Walton, NY

Appendix B

Informed Consent Text

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

By clicking "Acknowledge," you are consenting to participate in the survey. Please click Acknowledge to start the survey.

○ **Acknowledge**