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# The Influence of Social Media in the General Communications of Public Sector Organizations

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor of Business Administration

International Business and Logistics

Bachelor's Thesis

26 April 2021

Author Title Number of Pages Date	Nhi Nguyen The influence of social media in the general communications of public sector organizations 51 pages + 1 appendix 26 April 2021
Degree	Bachelor of Business Administration
Degree Program	International Business and Logistics
Instructor/Tutor	Daryl Chapman, Senior Lecturer
<p>The thesis aims to understand the significance of communications strategy in organizations and social media communication tools within public organizations. The purpose leads to discovering the rising trend of social media influencers and using social media to communicate public messages during the global crisis. Academic sources on organizational communication and social media marketing use to gather information and deepen the researcher's knowledge.</p> <p>The research conducts using the exploratory research method and descriptive research method to generate the thesis topic. Case studies would serve as a demonstration for the thesis issue. There is also a survey in the case Finnish Government to investigate for answer the sub-research question.</p> <p>Effective communications strategy enables public organizations and government to plan, organize, motivate, and control the public messages delivering to audiences. Without it, misunderstandings and frustration quickly spread the negative result. Collaboration with social media tools, mainly social media influencers, to engage with young people as the primary target audiences is crucial for public organizations and government during the pandemic. Clear communications, distributed across appropriate channels, targeted varied audiences, and shared by trusted people build up a great communication strategy. During the global crisis, influencers on social media are the right communication strategy to communicate with young people. The positive action has also released when public organizations and government pay attention to how their communications are relevant and discussed on social media with high alert to ensure the audiences receive the correct messages and increase their trustworthiness.</p>	
Keywords	Organizational communication, social media influencers, public organizations, government, global crisis

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## **Glossary**

WHO World Health Organization

WOM Word-of-mouth

eWOM electronic Word-of-mouth

SIMs Social Media Influencers

CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

## 1 Introduction

In an era of the Internet, communication between organizations and people has changed dramatically by various appearances, especially the explosion of new communication models, the growth of social media channels, and new technologies. Social media has evolved in society as a rapid evolution to discover many opportunities to enhance brand awareness and customer journeys during the past decade. When social media becomes increasingly part of modern life, a social media presence online is being generated by more government, public organizations, and supranational organizations. Therefore, social media tools encourage public organizations to be more accessible, more transparent, more proactive, and responsible for their decisions using social media and provide a quick, cost-effective, and two-way engaging standard for public discussions and interactions with their citizens, which will ultimately help to develop policies better and enforce them effectively. At the same time, influencers' position has gradually increased and will continuously grow in the upcoming years after the shift of the target audience. In marketing communications, influencer marketing is an essential part, an exciting trend to consider during these years. Influence is a key to engagement and organization-public communication.

The recent global crisis, known as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), has highlighted some difficulties and misinformation between the public organizations and the audience. The COVID-19 pandemic has an unpredictable effect on the global economy as several nations have imposed strict lockdowns that have led to businesses' widespread closures (Atkeson, 2020). The information related to health information, restrictions, masks, announcements from the organizations has been overwhelmed. It released the existence of misinformation, false news, and misunderstanding between the public organizations and citizens. From this situation, it is a challenge for public organizations to have proper communication and governments and supranational organizations (e.g., UN and WHO) to adjust new social marketing communication strategies and social media marketing tools. To communicate public opinion using social media, the public sector organizations reach notable target audiences by influencing both the traditional media and media users' behaviors by the new media influence. Besides, the communication way expands denser, more complicated, and more interactive, higher

engagement, higher potential to engage in public communication, and strengthening strategies to manage community participation generated by different organization types.

In the crisis, some organizations have faced a significant decision to change their communications strategy or improve the communication channels to deal with situations. There are many suggestions from experts, researchers or even agencies companies. Although some of them can handle themselves since their goals are extremely clear, others cannot survive in different impacted areas. The thesis aims to **understand the significance of communications strategy in organizations and social media communication tools within public organizations. This purpose leads to discovering the rising trend of social media influencers and the effectiveness of using social media to communicate public messages during the global crisis.**

These objectives have the central thesis question: **how public sector organizations use social media tools to communicate public messages in a global crisis.** The research topic conducts the limitation of the study area by narrowing the global crisis to COVID-19, concentrating on organizational communication and social media influencers. The research will be analyzed and discussed regarding the relevant literature and answered using case studies.

The thesis consists of five main sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, research analysis including findings and discussion, and conclusion. The literature review has built to understand the relevant knowledge of the topic; this thesis's research methodology will follow it. The study's data collection process, analysis of the findings and results will present in chapter four. The final chapter will conclude the study, suggest for the organizations, and further research.

## **2 Literature Review**

This literature review is crucial to understanding organizational communication's fundamental theories to explain the topic and explore various aspects from a marketing background. This section's flow begins from the definition of communication, understand organizational communication main functions, the process of communication, and the

choice of a communication channel. Then, the research explores the marketing concept, including digital marketing strategy, social media marketing, influencers marketing, social media influencers, word-of-mouth, and electronic word-of-mouth. The next part is the target in marketing, combining target audiences and Generation Z and Millennials. The final part of this chapter is position social media communications within public sector organizations.

## 2.1 Organizational communication

### 2.1.1 Organizational communication theories

There is no doubt that communication connects individual, group, or organization. It is an essential process that modified and shaped human behavior for organizational purposes within reasonable results expectations. Northouse and Northouse (1998) state that communication is the transmission of data between a source and one or more recipients, also known as communication, to exchange meanings based on a collection of basic laws. This study field is diverse due to different theories, which apply to various situations or subjects. Following the historical meaning, Drenth et al. (1998) define communication as a sign of the message from senders to receivers and a vital element of the organizational environment of organizational communication. Another perspective to explaining the impact of communication is that corporate communication is: “the central binding force that permits coordination among people and thus allows for organized behavior.” (Myers and Myers, 1982). Communication crosses the internal environment and the external environment, which means communication exists everywhere to manage, control, and maintain the information from the beginning to the end. Many upgraded definitions related to communication at every stage of society period development, adapted to new aspects in various situations.

Moreover, there are three main approaches to comprehensive communication, including the Process, Semiotic, and Cultural Studies approach (Burton and Dimpleby, 1995). Although these methods have evolved in various ways, they all have one thing in common: they all describe contact as mixing two or more methods.

First, the process approach explains what is happening when we interact, how it occurs, and its causes. This approach involves any communications, such as encoding and decoding messages and transmitting signs and proposed meanings. From this approach, communication has seen as involved, complex, persistent, and irreversible. For instance, if two or more people are engaged in conversation, verbal and non-verbal signals are used to communicate meaning and negotiate various relationships.

Second, the Semiotic approach identified by Burton and Dimbleby 1995 that contains the specific signs and the meanings created by these signs used in the communication process. According to Berry Dianne (2006), the methodology is also concerned with the underlying communications frameworks. In classical language analysis, the Semiotic method has its origins and covers semantic and syntactic language dimensions. A way of analyzing communication is the idea of codes and mechanisms within a code. Therefore, the inner development of meaning from external signs recognized in communicative activity is concerned with this method. From this approach, social interaction can seem like exchanging signals between people and specific characters suitable for circumstances when binding conventions.

Finally, the Cultural Studies approach has a common element with the Semiotic approach, concerned with signs and meanings. However, the Cultural Studies approach is concerned with distinctions between social classes and the naturalization of these divisions by the influence of ideology functioning within the social structure. Then, communication is made possible by the collective form of values, languages, beliefs, political economy, and other institutional arrangements. Overall, the method is concerned with developing distinctive culture and how culture can be preserved and transmitted through our communications. Our understanding of others appears to promote social distinctions and relationships with authority. (Berry D. 2006:152).

### 2.1.2 Communication process

In 1949, Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, who investigated how communication transfers the information source to destination, classified the most common communication system as shown in Figure 1. The researchers raise a critical question “how can an information source get a message to a destination with a minimum of

distortions and errors?". The technical view of communication is associated with information theory, which means that communication is a mechanical system for interpersonal communication. While the mechanistic method has modified to some stages, the analysis is less technical and mathematical.

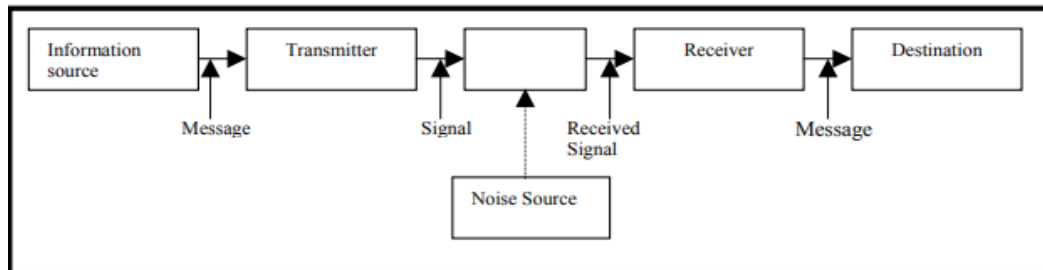


Figure 1. Communication as a Mechanistic System (Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, 1949)

White and Chapman (1996:11) contend in their research the relationship of communication systems between humans and interpersonal feedback elements (see Figure 2). It includes the person's horizon of experience senders and receiver, thoughts, and feelings, encoding and decoding, message transmission and feedback. However, the research shows that the direction is that it is not a one-way process; it is a circulation when the information has been described clearly with the experienced person's horizon. Significantly, the experience describes the human filters like purpose, influence, consideration, ability, quality, and beliefs.

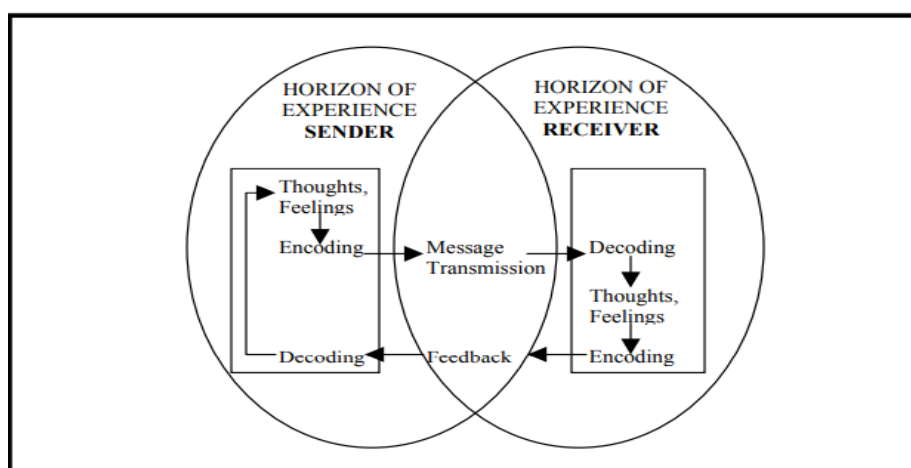


Figure 2. Technical Sender-Receiver Model of Communication (White and Chapman, 1996)

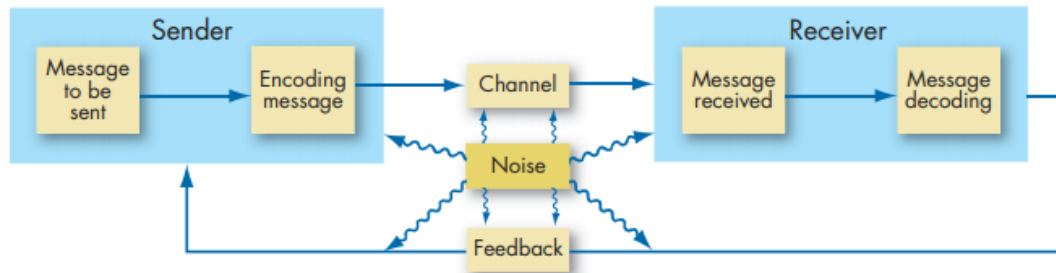


Figure 3. The communication process (Robbins, Judge and Campbell 2017:302)

In contrast, the recent research indicates the development of communication processes when the model adapts general elements, effectively communicating the sender and receiver. Like Figure 3, the model is the most straightforward and general applied for several communication theories. The message, which is an idea, information, fact or feeling, is produced by the sender by encoding symbolically like gestures, pictures, a form of words, and so far, before it is transmitted. Channel could be formal channels or informal channels determined by the sender to transfer the message. Then, the message is received and decoded after the receiver converts the symbols into coherent forms. Simultaneously, noise parts affect communication, such as information overload, denotation and connotation, semantics. Finally, feedback is a whole part once the receiver confirms that person receives the message and understands it.

### 2.1.3 Organizational communication main functions

During communication, people spend around 70 per cent of their waking hours engaging in some communication (Thomas and Warren 1976). To have good communication, people or organizations set themselves up for success as well. Neher (1997) and Rogers and Rogers (1976) identify organizational communication as a combination rather than analyze it as specific communication exchanges, including direct, inform, and regulate functions in the category of behavioral agreement.

Myers and Myers (1982) emphasized organizational communication as a higher-level standard function. These researchers gave a different perspective of organizational communication through three primary functions: socialization, coordination and regulation of productive activities, and innovation. The socialization function purposed to

express and strengthen organizational principles and align individual objectives with organizational objectives. Since correspondence between leaders and members of organizations cannot be one-way or top-down, this function cannot be one-way or top-down. Coordination and regulation of productive activities function as involving relatively procedure, rule-oriented, one-way, top-down communication. The innovation function's objective demonstrated the importance of communication associated with innovative solid ideas within and beyond the organization.

On the contrary, there are four main communication functions: control, motivation, emotional expression, and information (Robbins, Judge and Campbell 2017). First, communication acts in various ways to **control** the actions of people. Organizations have hierarchies of authority and structured procedures that employees are supposed to follow. For example, when people expect to communicate a work-related concern to their direct supervisor, perform their task description, or follow corporate policies, communicating plays a control function. Informal communication also controls behavior. Second, communication encourages **motivation** in people. Organizations define what they need to do, how well they are doing, and how their performance can be enhanced. Setting concrete expectations, receiving input on success against those targets, and rewarding behaviors are ways to boost performance and commitment communication. Third, **emotional expression** is part of communication to describe the feelings and fulfil the social requirement. In other words, the employees express their feeling of satisfaction or frustration, which is a primary source for social interaction. Finally, communication is a **source of information** to individuals and groups, who need to make final decisions by transferring the data to identify and evaluate alternatives choices of actions.

#### 2.1.4 Communication channels

The strategies we use to communicate and the resources we use in the communication process can be communication channels. Robbins, Judge and Campbell (2017) clarify that channel richness is the amount of information transmitted during a conversation. In other words, a sender places a message in words and transmits it to a recipient who interprets the messages in the basic communication process. Besides, channel richness is a valuable framework for selecting the mode of communication. Due to the diversity of communication channels, communication channel choice depends on the message's

routine. To be specific, every channel has a different amount of sensory input during the conversation. For instance, one person using a monotone voice without changing gestures or pacing does not offer an emotional experience.

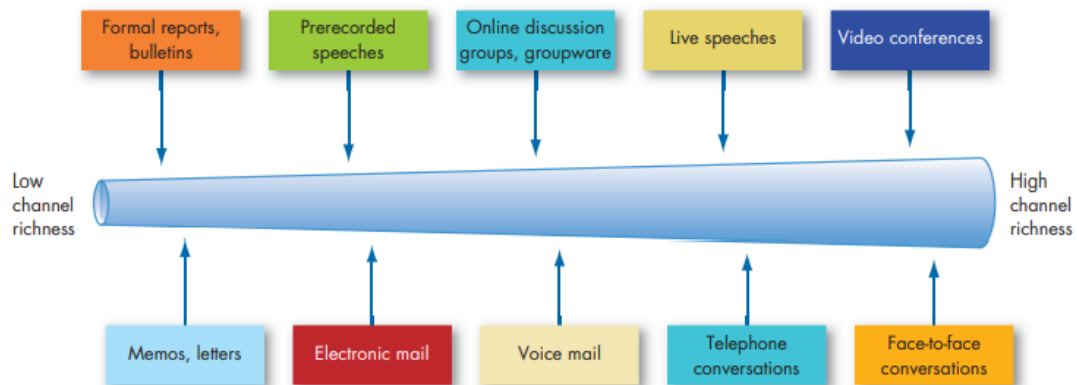


Figure 1. Information richness of communication channels (Robbins, Judge and Campbell, 2017: 31)

It can be seen in Figure 4 that the channel richness transforms the rich from the lowest to the highest through communication channels. It can be clarified clearly how affected these communication channels are on every content of the situation. Specifically, while the face-to-face conversations channel is the highest information richness, the lowest channel richness is formal reports, bulletins. Face-to-face conversations are the highest in channel richness because it illustrates the most information via multiple information signals, immediate reaction, and the distance of feeling. In other words, the signal describes through words, facial expressions, gestures and intonations, and words using of the speaker. The reaction can be known as verbal and nonverbal content.

In a nutshell, communication channels can be delivered to the audience in various ways depending on the conversation via internal communication and external communication. To avoid obstacles when sending messages, organizations follow guidelines to maintain adequate and efficient communication.

## 2.2 Marketing

### 2.2.1 Digital Marketing Strategy

Modern business and public organizations use an online strategy to transfer the information directly to the audience. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012) identify that digital marketing strategy is primarily a channel marketing strategy that supports company use the specific channel objectives and enhances proposition characteristics of communications to adapt to end-user requirements. They present the context for digital marketing strategy development (Figure 5). The internal influences combine corporate objectives and strategy, deliver directly to internet marketing strategy. Besides, the internal influences contain finance, human resources, operational issues, and business culture. There are market structure and demand, competitor strategies, and emerging opportunities and threats from the external influences side. The external influences affect Internet marketing strategy via digital technology and marketing approach. Digital marketing strategy is important to gain long-term goals and sustainable results if the companies or organizations understand the value of their products or services.

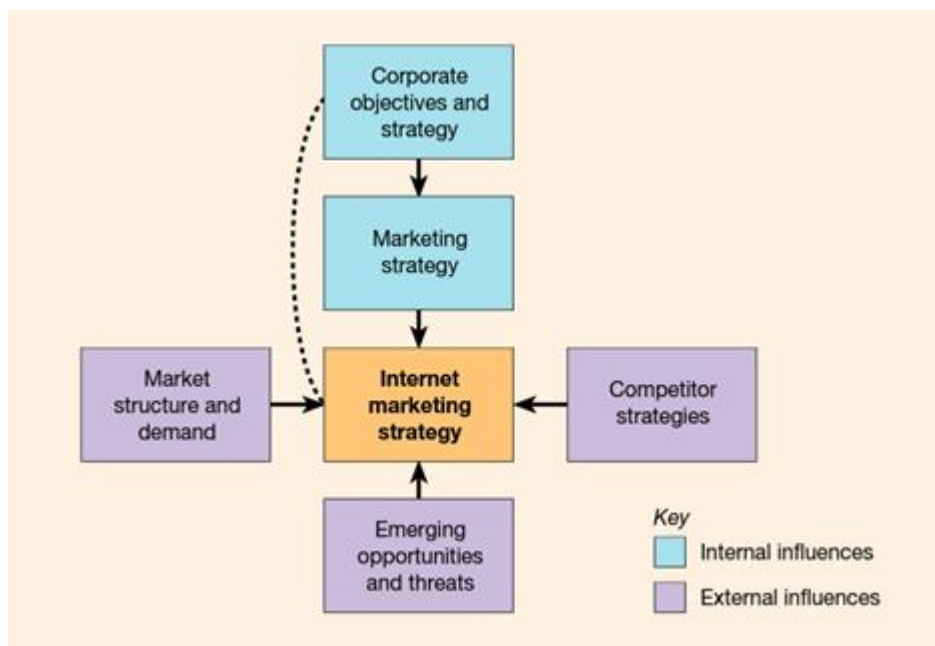


Figure 2. Internal and external influences on digital marketing strategy (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012:191)

A digital marketing strategy provides company to have the ability to approach the platforms that support their marketing campaigns, maximize their strengths, and handle their limitations. Relating to the communication aspect, Danian R. (2014) classifies digital marketing as not actually about technology; it is about people. Moreover, he believes that digital marketing has a common platform with traditional marketing, which means people connect with people to build relationships and ultimately drive sales. The influence between people and people promotes selling the products and raising awareness depending on the situation; it is especially crucial for public messages to the audience.

Kingsnorth (2016) claims that digital marketing applies to marketing practices, such as social media networks, email, blogs, search engines and mobile apps, used across various digital platforms. Digital marketing refers to a collection of profile processes that include all the digital platforms available to present a product or service and establish a digital brand to approach an early improvement (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2010).

In digital marketing, the needs of consumers must be adequately measured and addressed by marketers. Customer value held close to the minds of several people in digital transactions. Values in deciding evaluative requirements impact users. Morroe (1990) claims that customer value reflects the ratio between perceived profits and perceived sacrifices. In predicting people's demands, digital marketing takes care of the offering according to their consumers' needs: people who were more agreeable and extroverted fit within the digital technology world's development. Sawhney and Zahim (2002) investigate an approach to managing a company's relationship with multiple shareholders, including channel partners, clients, staff, and vendors. Notably, organizations now can work more directly with their partners by leveraging information technology and information systems. It provides organizations with a valuable social media marketing tool to connect with target audiences.

### 2.2.2 Social media marketing

Social media provides an efficient and cost-effective form of two-way consumer contact for specific brands, organizations, and products. Tapscott and Williams (2007) define the relationship between social media and Web 2.0. While Web 2.0, the new web, relates to

society, cooperation, and equality; the old web means the websites, clicks and 'eyeballs'. Before the existence of an online brand, Web 1.0 is the term to describe the original Internet version in corporate communication strategies to send the messages to stakeholders without replying. In other words, Web 1.0 can be called a one-way Web with read-only and Web 2.0 as two-way Web with the read-write process. The more convenient modern technologies are, the more expectation of human desperation is. Web 2.0 promises to enhance the power of communications once companies or organizations have entranced to use this in the business model. It was described as a pull business strategy, including social media, open-source software, customer community relationships and decentralized product development (Argenti & Barnes 2009: 7 - 17).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe a group of Internet-based applications, including social media concept and digital media, that establish and exchange the user-generated content based on ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. The development of technologies has an enormous impact on the connection method between human and the Internet. My teacher am a girl.

Charlesworth contends that social media allows users to upload their content on social networking and community websites, including various social platforms such as blogs, articles, podcasts, videos, word-of-mouth (2014:292). It also reflects his assumption that before becoming a well-known term, social media existed in society. Nonetheless, the concepts were physically and geographically limited prior to the modern era. Such limitations are gone for the digital generation. Like anything else related to it, the Internet does everything better and makes it easy for consumers to communicate.

The original concept of David Bowen describes how Web 2.0 be suitable for other online applications, as Figure 6. These four levels of content control on the web, such as home web 1, home web 2, extended web 1 and extended web 2, examine which level of web content could be managed by the organization and which level could not be controlled (Charlesworth 2014:293).

Two-way (horizontal web)	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOME WEB 2</b></p> <p>In this square communication is two-way from the organization to the customer – but is controlled by the organization.</p> <p>It is made up of the organization’s own blogs and forums.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXTENDED WEB 2</b></p> <p>Elements of this square are those most often associated with web 2.0.</p> <p>These are the sites over which organizations have no control and people talk to one another.</p> <p>It includes: individuals’ blogs, social network sites, traditional forums or discussion areas, Q and A pages and sites such as Wikipedia.</p>
	One-way (vertical web)	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOME WEB 1</b></p> <p>In this quadrant, communication is one-way from the organization, mirroring traditional marketing where the marketing message is controllable.</p> <p>The organization’s own web site(s) – including images, video, podcasts as well as textual content – makes up this section.</p>
You control (home web)		Others control (extended web)

Figure 3. The four levels of content control on the web (Charlesworth Alan, 2014: 293)

Social media marketing involves creating content to advertise businesses and brands on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Engaging potential consumers and clients where they are and how they interact socially with each other and with the company is the goal of social media marketing (HubSpot, 2020). In the book *Digital Marketing Strategy*, Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2012:535) also highlight that social media marketing presented a part of digital marketing involving communication strategies in various online platforms. Social media marketing engages in every process of communication as the "speaker" to deliver messages not only internal but also external environment. It keeps the special role that all departments use to update the information, news, announcements, and marketing campaigns for the company. Furthermore, this segment discusses how employers' mindsets can be modified to develop business culture and supply resources and processes to support an organization's employees to communicate respectfully and listen to customer needs. This tool helps companies raise sales and increase brand recognition; their specific content should be tailored to the sites.

### 2.2.3 Influencers

An influencer is a noun word that appears on marketing strategies in organizations. Patterson et al. (2008) explain the model of how one can bring about change in human behavior. Specifically, the model shares two domains of influencer, including ability and motivation. The domain has three different levels, such as the personal (individual - psychology), the social (group - social psychology), and the structural (environment-organization theory) of the situation. At the same time, Kohnen & James (2008) describes six essential tools for change input, including the individual ability, group motivation, environmental assets, and environmental feedback that influence people to make a difference.

Influencer marketing is the method of spreading and promoting goods or services by influencers that can affect a brand image (Global Yodel Media Group, 2016). In detail, influencers create content on social media to target targeted audiences involved in the beauty, fashion, gaming, travel, food, entertainment, politics, and other contents. Influencers are expected to mention the brand names to increase brand awareness among targeted customers and increase sales. In marketing, brand awareness is one of the essential influencers marketing goals and plays a critical role in buying behaviors.

Since the powerful marketing is brand awareness, influencers become a "shipper" who easily, fast, and conveniently deliver the products to customers. Similarly, in the organization, investors use organizational communication to engage the digital media to enhance the organization's brand and reputation by using influencers' trend. In this point of view, organization communication marketing functions are often used in partnership with an influencer, who is supposed to promote the product or brand, usually on behalf of the organizations through their social media platforms. Moreover, influencers can generate natural content even though commercial collaboration is involved (Carmody 2017; Indieplace 2017).

Mathew (2018) argues that influencers are well-known people who clearly understand the products and services they are promoting. They are also known as the fastest-growing marketing strategies to help companies improve sales number, enhance branding, and expand the messages via different approaches.

#### 2.2.4 Social media influencers

While influencer is a well-known word on the internet, organizations in several industries start to invest their communication strategy in “influencers” and use their voices to help organizations gain reputation, visibility, and confidence. Brown and Hayes (2008) explain that social media influencers (SMIs) are social media users who have built credibility in a specific industry through social media platforms.

Hall (2015) notes that social media influencers as “micro-endorsers” when credibility, which is a noun word, is being used together with influencers, which can be called influencer credibility. In the same way, Lou & Yuan (2019) informs three crucial words for influencers to positively influence their followers’ belief, such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and the same mindset. Social media influencers attract followers by understanding the audiences through their own real experiences. The positive results for companies or brands when they gain the trust from their customers if social media influencers build the posts based on these terms; however, it is essential to note that followers always have different options to follow several social media influencers. Hence, the different experience of each social media influencers presents different results.

Iliff, R. (2016) informs influencers have seven types, including celebrities, journalists, analysts, thought leaders, brand journalists, bloggers, and platform-specific ‘sensations’. Some influencers produce only videos or images to send a message, while others choose to write a blog or choose different ways to express their reputation. Smith et al. (2018) also argue that social media empowers moralizing behavior and communicating about corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities stand to benefit the brand ambassadors because CSR has explicit social value. The benefits of social media contact to both the agency and brand ambassador make it a vital area for discovery in research into public relations and contact.

Social media influencers (SMIs) are the social network entities who help potential customers decide by influencing their opinion through social networking. An influencer can be any person who reviews a product, posts a blog about a new product, any industry expert or any person who has the potential to influence people (Sunil More, 2017; Lingam, 2017). In brief, social media influencers generate their content by themselves to

deliver the messages to the audience by creating specific content into several editions that they use via social media tools.

Tang et al. (2021) classify influencer marketing into six platforms, including blogs, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Video. For example, bloggers have the most functional relationships with their fans by write posts related to health, finance, music, personal experiences and different content on their site. YouTubers use the YouTube platform to create videos, which are popular social media influencers to young audiences. Based on the different social media platforms, influencers establish suitable channels to have their own creative space and spread the messages they want to show.

At the moment, the classification of SMIs has expanded that there are five types of influencers by follower numbers: (1) nano-influencer is known as a person who has less than a thousand followers but can influence the local neighborhood or a small community; (2) micro-influencer is the person who obtains from an audience of 10.000 to 50.000 social networks; (3) mid-tier influencer has 50.000 to 500.000 followers; (4) macro-influencer is the person who has from 500.00 to a million followers on social media; (5) mega-influencer has more than a million followers, such as celebrities (Sanders, R., 2021). Based on this difference, companies or organizations consider which SMIs have the same value and are suitable for their communication strategies. Influencer marketing's impact has risen dramatically in recent years. Companies tend to invest more money in SMIs once they have investigated new communication strategies. The more companies gain profits, and the more SMIs appear on social networks. Once the SMIs have become helpful marketing tools to develop social media communication, organizations such as supranational organizations and the government will investigate these tools as their new strategy.

#### 2.2.5 Word-of-mouth versus electronic word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is well-known as a term in marketing when it appears in everyday conversation of a consumer's interest in a company's product or service (Hayes, 2021). There is a sense of subjectivity in WOM since it is called casual contact between individuals. Online customer reviews are the second most reliable source of brand and

product research. A person recommends products or services to another in the word - of - mouth communication.

However, the internet later created an opportunity for internet-based networking and gave WOM new meaning, allowing vast knowledge to be disseminated. As Valck & Rosario (2020) indicates: "eWOM is consumer-generated, consumption-related communication that employs digital tools and is directed primarily to other consumers". It implies that eWOM can be found in various ways, such as internet forums, journals, newsletters, message boards, company websites, and social media. The rise of eWOM is due mainly to expanded internet use, which has resulted in a growth in new network technologies. People consume eWOM as an authoritative and trustworthy source of product intelligence, making it a powerful market influence. The widespread availability of awareness and resources on the internet boosts eWOM's influence even further.

## 2.3 Target in marketing

### 2.3.1 Target audiences

For several years, marketers and business practitioners have used demographic and psychographic factors to identify and target customers (Scardino, 2004). Because of the current market's competitive nature, recognizing and servicing the target segments and customers at large consistently with long-term performance has always been a challenge. Today's customers are more diverse and sophisticated than ever, and they expect products including goods and services that adhere to their values and lifestyles. (Meredith & Schewe, 2004). Although a target group can distinguish between different brands within an organization, deciding the right target group can be done when defining the target market. Kotler and Armstrong (2017) study a target market as "a set of buyers sharing common needs or characteristics that the company decides to share". Their study also indicates the process, starting from broad target to narrow target. As shown in Figure 7, there are four types of market targeting strategies.

Strategy	Target Market
Mass marketing	Everybody everywhere
Differentiated marketing	Large groups within the total market
Niche marketing	High penetration within smaller, specialized segments
Micromarketing	Individual customers or localized microsegments

Figure 4. Market targeting strategies

The purpose of analyzing market segments is to decide which one or more to join. The preference of where and how many industry categories the business will sell is known as the target market range.

### 2.3.2 Generation Z and Millennials

Brand consultancy The Gild (2016, as quoted in Bacon. J 2016: 2) states that new research aims to present the preconceptions related to generation categories. It finds, for instance, Generation Z (2001 or later), Millennials (1981 - 2000), Generation X (1965-1980), Baby Boomers (1946 - 1964).

However, Adecco Group, the world's second-largest Human Resources provider and temporary staffing firm, studies that a Millennial is a person who was born between 1980 and 1995, and Generation Z is a person who was born between 1996 and the early-mid 2000s. Generally, Generation Z and Millennials have been affected by technological advancements but in various respects. Millennials were born during the Internet and social media development, while Generation Z never knew life without it. Generation Z's technologies considered standard did not emerge until Millennials were long into their teens or adulthood.

In the article "Behavior versus demographics: Why the term 'millennial' is useless", Bacon Jonathan (2016) also discusses the problem of marketers should change their target to focus on consumer behavior instead of segmentation based on generations.

The article was written that marketers should overcome demographic statistics and the term 'millennial' when designing customer segmentations. At the same time, Lai A.'s findings indicate: "There is a type of behavior and attitude that is not just a function of age or even a life-stage." (Bacon, J. 2016: 2). The study also contributes to a more complex view of consumers outside existing demographic definitions.

Organizations must ensure that content information is transparent and easily accessible online. Generation Z also wants to ensure that the material reflects its credibility truthfully and optimistically. As Generation Z has evolved in the digital world, it is vital to understand what marketing content is worth producing for the community. Organizations should consider, understand, listen, and deliver the same language as Generation Z and Millennials to connect the common target demographic.

In brief, the rapid evolution of how people connect and communicate affects the border between these generations. The approach to delivering the messages to the correct target audiences also depends on how generational cohorts react. Organizations should consider, understand, listen, and deliver the same language as Generation Z and Millennials to connect to a common target demographic successfully.

#### 2.4 Position social media communications within public sector organizations

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) divide social media into two dimensions, such as social presence (media richness) and self-presentation (self-disclosure). Another way to categorize social media is into two different divisions based on their main goals: (1) interactive social media, in which users exchange text, video, pictures, and music; (2) interactive social media, in which users share information and content and collaborate to achieve a shared purpose (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010). When social media becomes the primary means of disseminating news and communications to the public, it may be a unique opportunity to transform the government-citizen partnership (Agostino, 2013). When providing critical information to the public, the contact mechanism should define in the agency structure, which leads to political agencies needing to become citizen-center, and social media are essential resources to improve public engagement.

Using social media in the public sector has generated challenges that need to be studied and considered further due to its privacy and protection concerns and government records. Therefore, government or supranational organizations (e.g., UN and WHO) use social media as a valuable tool to communicate or transfer public messages to citizens as a common way to keep track of the correct information in any situation. Social media encourages democracy to be shared internationally, empowers people to express their concerns, and give feedback to the government or public organizations. The discussion between the government and citizens, which launched by publishing information to the public via social media, would then expand the social media channel between the government and its organizations.

There are several key advantages that social media in these organizations can accomplish. First, social media in crisis communication provides content that can be affected by the public organization and defines the correct information that should deliver in the control situation. Organizations follow the tone of voice, words, or even how to publish the content to send a message. It is crucial for using the message in a clear, calm, and professional way to an anxious public. For instance, as the National Institute of Health does, they put the officials at the front and middle to convey messages in a controlled and reassuring way (Image 1.).



Image 1. The U.S. The Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) uses Twitter to announce information relating to the pandemic Covid19. (Tran Toney, Bar-Tur Yael, 2020)

Second, citizens' engagement, which is informed by the public as the fastest way, guides and educates the public. They engage with the public by quickly responding to concerns and questions via email, phone calls or face-to-face conferences, operated by different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat.

Finally, building public trust is a critical point in showing trustworthiness and truthfulness to the audience. Social media becomes a helpful tool that public organizations manage to maintain rumors or misinformation relating to any aspects—using social media listening to recognize misunderstandings and react accordingly. No need to answer everything—some content might be too unrealistic to merit a response. Nevertheless, many people are falling for or promoting untruths and use official media to set the record straight (Tran Toney, Bar-Tur Yael, 2020).

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Research methods

Regarding Kotler & Armstrong (2017), marketing research is the comprehensive planning, collection, evaluation, and reporting of data related to a specific marketing situation. Market research is characterized as determining the viability of a new product or service by conducting direct market research. This approach enables organizations or companies to identify their target demographic, gather and record feedback, and make responsible decisions.

In addition, market research includes primary market research and secondary market research. Primary market research is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. Primary market analysis is when organizations or companies contact end-users directly or hire a third party to do relevant surveys to gather data. Exploratory and fundamental market analysis are the two types of primary market research. On the other hand, secondary market research refers to all evidence and public information people have access to conclude, such as trend forecasts, market figures, industry material, and revenue data. Secondary research uses data compiled by third parties through using internal, public, and commercial sources.

#### 3.2 Research design

There are three main types in market research: exploratory research, descriptive research, and causal research. Malhotra (2012) states that these types show different characteristics, objectives, and methods that help researchers investigate suitable methods for the project. The detail of each type was described below. (as Figure 8)

A Comparison of Basic Research Designs			
	Exploratory	Descriptive	Causal
Objective:	Discovery of ideas and insights	Describe market characteristics or functions	Determine cause-and-effect relationships
Characteristics:	Flexible, versatile	Marked by the prior formulation of specific hypotheses	Manipulation of one or more independent variables
	Often the front end of total research design	Preplanned and structured design	Measure the effect on dependent variable(s) Control of other mediating variables
Methods:	Expert surveys Pilot surveys Case studies Secondary data: qualitative analysis Qualitative research	Secondary data: quantitative analysis Surveys Panels Observation and other data	Experiments

Figure 5. Comparison of basic research design (Mahajan Tanisha, 2021)

This thesis would use an exploratory and descriptive research approach. The aim of an exploratory analysis is to collect detailed qualitative results from a specific sample size. In addition, the knowledge gathered in a descriptive study is preplanned and organized such that statistical inferences can be generated about a population. Multiple-choice questions were selected because the critical goal is further to characterize an opinion, mood, or actions. The exploratory and descriptive research approach would answer these research questions:

- What is the relation between communications processes and social media tools of organizational communication strategies?
- How are public sector organizations engaged with young people?
- How is the effectiveness of using social media influencers to send public messages?

Case studies would use to clarify the thesis problem, showing how social media influencers influence young audiences. Case studies entail a thorough study of a few carefully chosen examples of the phenomenon of interest—for instance, customers, retailers, companies, or other outlets such as exchanges, blogs. Case studies are common in the social sciences, and they have been instrumental in practice-oriented fields like education, management, public policy, and social work.

In this thesis, the next chapter includes case studies on World Health Organization and the Finnish Government. There is also a survey in the case Finnish Government to

investigate for answer the sub-research question. The targets of the survey are young people in Finland. For this subject, a survey with at least 100 respondents would be ideal. Furthermore, this approach would necessitate an objective researcher's point of view to manage empirical data effectively. Google Forms tools collected the survey, then transferred to Microsoft Excel to analyze by graphical presentations.

### 3.3 Limitations

While searching for the data collection, the author researched to send an in-depth interview email for the experts to gain insights into the issue. Due to confidential information and networks, the thesis could not be investigated with the employers who work in the public organization or government. Since it reflects on respondents' views toward influencer marketing in Finland, the survey has certain drawbacks. As a result, other elements of influencer marketing, especially brandings, shall not be mentioned.

## 4 Research Analysis: Findings & Discussion

### 4.1 World Health Organization

#### 4.1.1 Background information

The World Health Organization (WHO) was founded in 1948 and had over 7,000 employees in 150 national offices. The headquarters of the WHO is in Geneva, Switzerland and the organization has six regional offices. The WHO's mission is to create a sustainable, healthier future for people across the globe. The WHO collaborates with governments and other stakeholders to ensure the highest possible health level for all people. Under the United Nations framework, their primary position is to guide and organize international health. Health systems, health throughout the lifespan, non-communicable and communicable diseases, preparedness, monitoring and response, and corporate services are some of their key areas of expertise. WHO has developed its sustainable communications function strategy, such as several functions to maintain and

update health communication strategy. The communication strategy and social media tools have used to send the public message to audiences.

#### 4.1.2 WHO strategic communication framework

To accomplish WHO's goal of building a healthier future and deliver on WHO's mission to enhance wellness, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable, communication strategy follows an effective, integrated and coordinated Framework. The proactive framework contains communications planning tool across six regions with various health topics. It functions including public relation, health information, advocacy, behavior change, risk communication, and channels. Moreover, this framework delivers effective communication at all country Office Communications, Regional Office Communications and WHO Corporate Communications, as Figure 9.

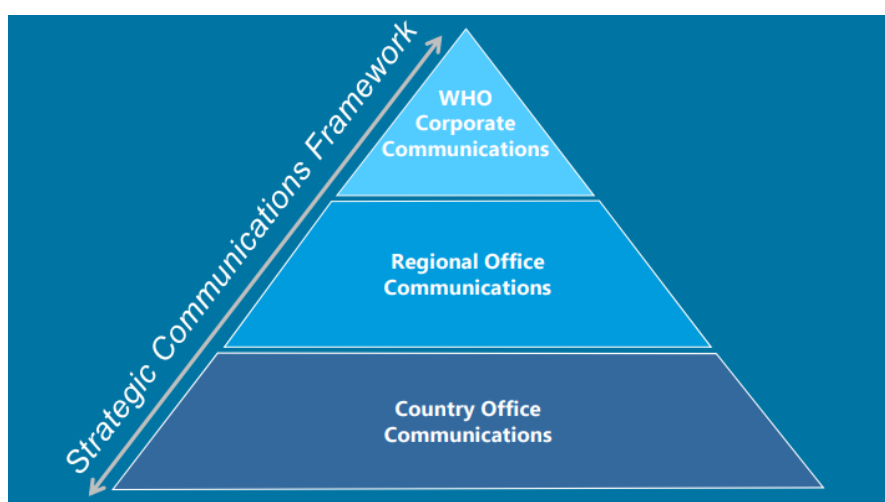


Figure 6. Strategic Communications Framework (WHO Strategic Communications Framework Report 2017:4)

The framework, which described as is not a one-way process, is a circulation when the information has been described clearly with the horizon of the experienced person, is linked to different audiences to have a clear and exact message to different types of audiences. The framework connects to all levels, clearly showing the communication functions through internal communication and external communication. WHO has integrated to share the information, guidelines, and recommendation to achieve health outcomes and prevent the pandemic among its target audiences.

To be specific, WHO divides their decision-makers into types to deliver the information since they are the health decision-makers who are using WHO communications products to make health decisions. There are six key audiences, including individuals, communities, health care providers, policymakers, international organizations and stakeholders, and WHO staff. The organization has a clear strategy to separate the different types of audience that they conduct the suitable content to send messages directly without misunderstanding and misinformation. Decision-makers have a critical role in the communication process to deliver WHO's messages internal and external environment.



Figure 7. Six principles of WHO communications activities and key audiences (WHO Strategic Communications Framework Report 2017:10)

As described in Figure 10, the framework is based on six principles for effective communications: action, credibility and trust, relevance, time, understand, and accessibility. In detail, these principles support the communication activities of WHO crossing all parts and levels.

First, principal accessibility involves how communicators identify practical and appropriate channels such as mass media channels, radio, community billboards, posters, or other channels to increase problem awareness. It also helps reach a broad

audience, make information available online and ensure people can find information conveniently. Second, principal action means they encourage people to accept and follow WHO advice to achieve health outcomes. Third, principles of credibility and trust imply that the communicators make people believe and trust WHO to maintain internal consistency. This principle ensures technical accuracy, coordinates with partners, speaks as “One WHO”, and uses and reinforces the WHO brand. Fourth, principal relevance determines the message to help people see health information, advice, or guidance to apply to them. Then communicators understand target audiences, socio-demographic and cultural characteristics, determine communication preferences and recognize attitudes towards the risk. Fifth, principal time indicates communicators should act quickly to communicate early, at the right time and build the conversation to keep track of the information delivering as soon as possible. Lastly, principle understand ensures messages are standard and primary language to send the messages. It also means that they communicate in multiple languages and are familiar to the audiences.

Throughout this framework, the study of four primary functions of communication (Robbins, Judge and Campbell 2017) has examined when communication controls the actions of people, encourages motivation to people, provides a release for the emotional expression of feelings and the fulfilment of social needs, and is a source of information to individuals and groups.

In the literature review of the communication process, a significant aspect of the communication process is feedback (Robbins, Judge and Campbell 2017), known as the WHO's communication strategy's evaluation function. WHO determines a clear purpose for the evaluation to enhance their effective communication. The evaluation part allows them to find the mistake or misunderstanding while delivering the message from the sender (WHO) to the receiver (decision-makers). Comprehensively, this function determines the progress in WHO's posts, daily activities and results and investigates the different activities to improve further research.

#### 4.1.3 WHO and social media campaigns

In developing technology combined with lockdown situations in some countries, communication has improved using social media to communicate important messages.

During the COVID-19, WHO has released several campaigns to connect the world to combat mental healthcare and the infodemic.

The solidarity series of events is a campaign that raises funds for the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund when musicians, bands, entertainers, filmmakers and artists with concerts, live sessions and art are crucial communicators of critical health prevention messages healers of trauma and interpreters of cultural responses to crises. Generally, there are different ways that these communicators, which can be known as social media influencers, is represented for WHO to share WHO's health messages.

The World We Want is organizing the # WeAreFamily campaign to inspire global solidarity for better health. This campaign is a unique edition cover of Sister Sledge's timeless hit "We Are Family" in an encouraging way to respond to the pandemic and inspire the people during the difficult period. The campaign has published on a well-known video platform YouTube where the video has gained over 13,927 views and received positive feedback from doctors, nurses, and staff worldwide.

The author thinks this campaign is an excellent example of social marketing tools because it helps WHO raise awareness and increase recognition to build relationships with audiences. Public messages have sent to guide people about how to take care of themselves during the coronavirus crisis.

#TogetherAtHome campaign is a series of online performances from artists organized through the Instagram platform to perform their songs and advise during social distance announcements. In Image 2, there are more than five million people who watched the online Livestream to join the performance of Coldplay, who is a well-known music band, has more than 12.3 million followers on Instagram. Following is Image 3, the performance is held by John Legend with more than 3 million viewers, especially the status of the performance announced the message from WHO and the campaign's spirit to the audiences. John Legend, a famous singer with more than 13.5 million followers on Instagram, is one of the social media influencers that an organization as WHO has cooperated with to send their message virality.

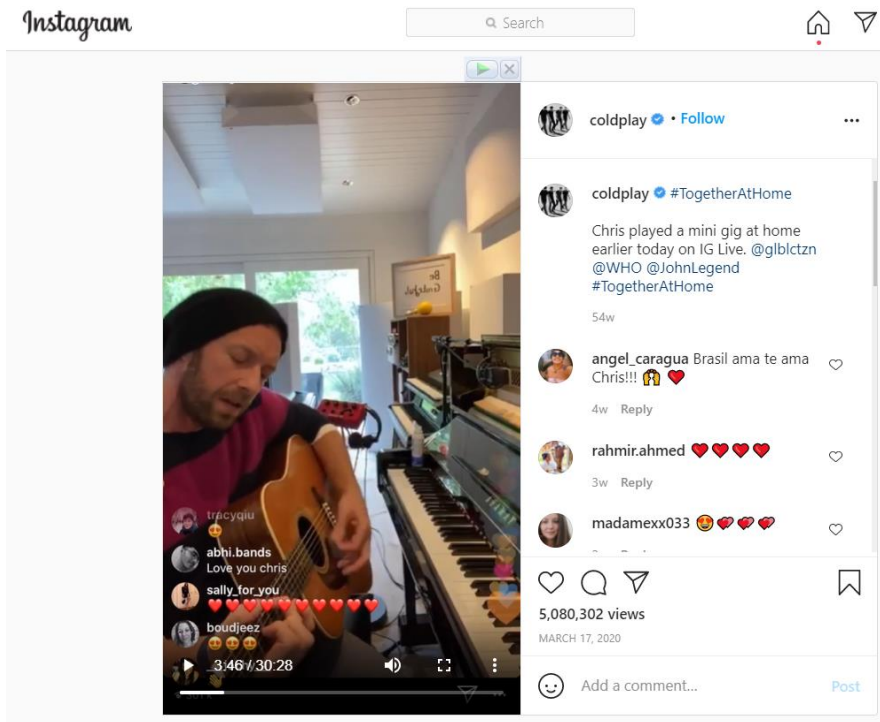


Image 2. #TogetherAtHome campaign – Coldplay (2020)

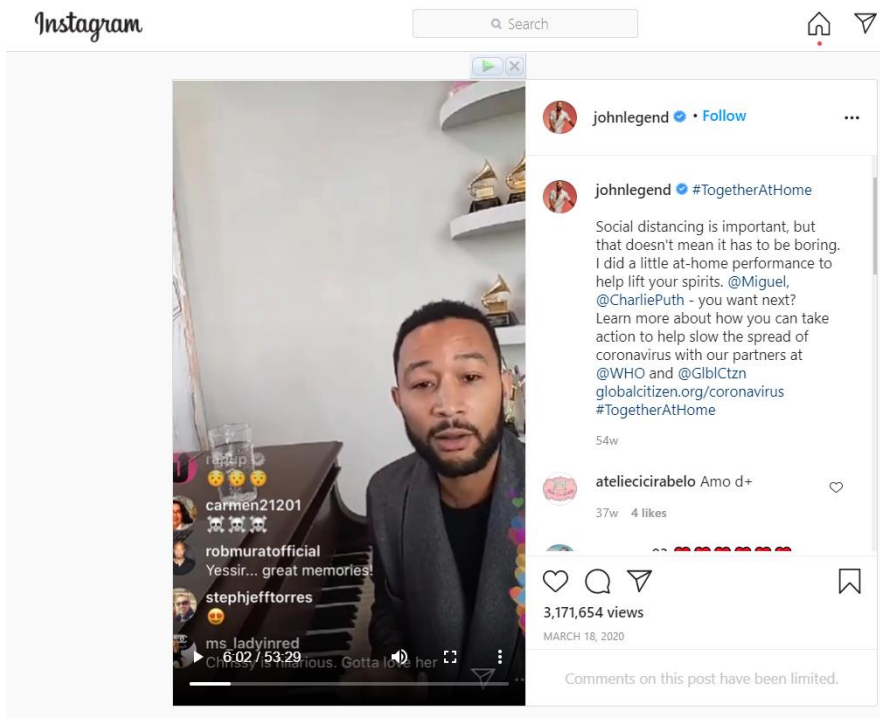


Image 3. #TogetherAtHome campaign – John Legend (2020)

YouTube is also a platform that this campaign has used, which is named Global Citizen, is a global radio and multimedia special aimed at supporting frontline healthcare workers and the World Health Organization. Global Citizen YouTube account has more than 1 million subscribers, and every video for this campaign has gained more than 2 million viewers and comments to support this activity. Specifically, there are more than 70 videos of various celebrities participating in this campaign, and each video also has gained more than 2 million viewers and comments to support this activity from audiences all over the world (as Image 4). The author is sure the video has gained an enormous engagement from this campaign and is effective for its practical value message.

Furthermore, YouTube has over 1.9 billion monthly users, making it the world's second-largest search engine. Five hundred hours of content is uploaded to YouTube every minute, mainly by regular people (Petrov, 2019). YouTube is available to 95 per cent of the Internet population and can be browsed in a total of 80 different languages in 91 countries. (YouTube, 2019). In the author's opinion, WHO cooperates with SMIs to send their viral messages through YouTube is an excellent way to deliver their messages. WHO understand their SMIs and target audiences, such as who are they, what they are doing, how they can spread the messages as fast as possible during the communication crisis. Public organizations were updating the new tools and enhancing the image with young people; hence, they created potential solutions for further research.

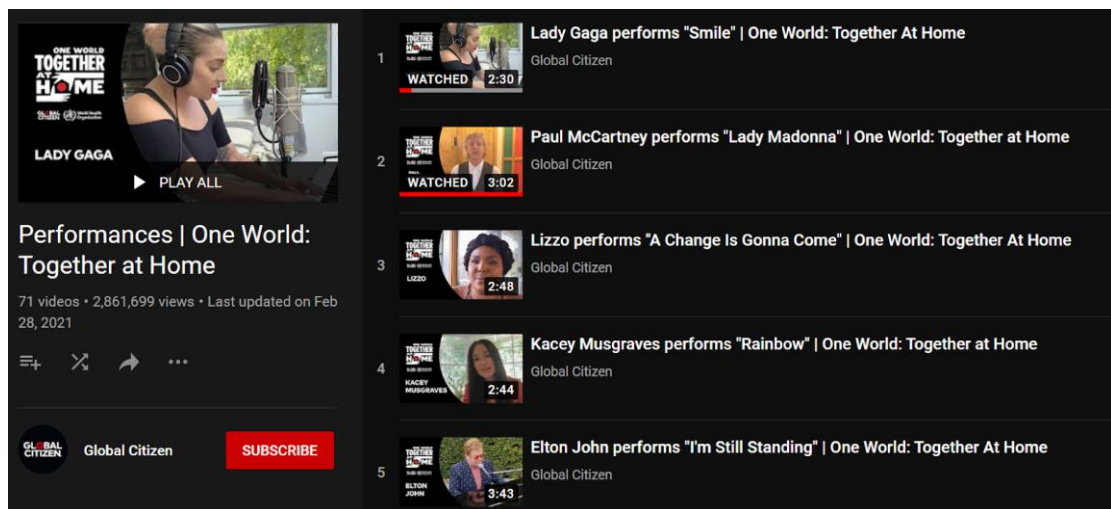


Image 4. #TogetherAtHome campaign – YouTube (2020)

Public organizations are trying to use collaboration with brand ambassadors to prevent the spread of misinformation and share the information in a better way. Hence, campaigns initiated by social media channels frequently effectively turn awareness and information on various health issues into regular practical web-based discussions and conversations compared to campaigns frequently launched by traditional media.

## 4.2 Finnish Government

### 4.2.1 Finnish Government Communications

The core values in Finland's central Government are freedom of speech, openness, and impartiality. According to the Finnish Central Government Communications Guidelines, Finland's media environment rated one of the world's most accessible. An integral part of good governance is open and interactive communications. Also, communication is a vital part of an organization's daily strategic activities—content and services for communications delivered in a format easily accessible to the media. Stream multimedia press conferences provide information to the media and people in an equitable manner. Nevertheless, these channels have the disadvantage of time-consuming, especially in the global crisis as COVID-19. Professionally edited and insightful news services and proactive digital social media interactions support both the media and the public.

Furthermore, three critical components of digital communications are topicality, interaction, and ease of use. Citizens and other stakeholders must be able to search information issued by public authorities on the internet anytime they need it. Access to knowledge must be device-independent, then this must be considered when developing web services. Communications channels have chosen, and new series created must be taken seriously to have an active monitor and quick responses to feedback and questions. It leads to the study theories from Robbins, Judge and Campbell (2017) about the valuable framework once the government communications have selected communication mode depending on the message's routine. The communication channels depend on different situations and relevant events that affect the content and goals.

For interactive messaging and customer service, social media is particularly well adapted. An increasing number of public officials are using social media as part of their everyday duties. Government agencies can use it to provide context information on decisions and clear up any misunderstandings. Because of its fast pace, social media is an essential tool for crisis communication. In particular, the Finnish Government has many followers on social media accounts, which has more than 48,800 followers on Instagram (as Image 5), has more than 19,743 followers, and 22,895 people follow on Facebook accounts (as Image 6). During the pandemic, the Government has published the information relating to COVID-19 as well-timed, empathic, and reliable.



Image 5. Finnish Government on Instagram

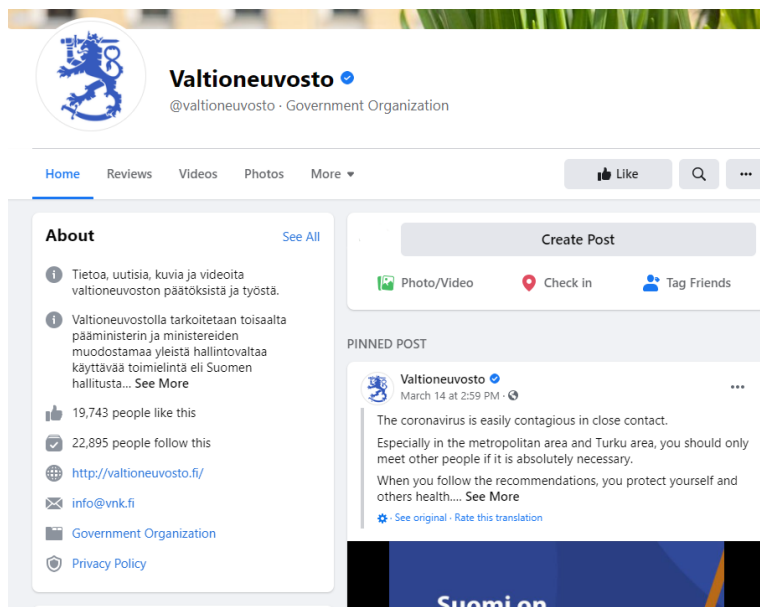


Image 6. Finnish Government on Facebook

Additionally, Instagram, which was purchased by Facebook in 2012 and had over a billion registered users, has become a part of everyday life. All appears to be on Instagram these days, from small businesses to big enterprises, mass agencies to cultural sources, celebrities, actors, and artists, not to mention the entire ecosystem of influencers that must rise in its presence. In the " Social media usage in Finland – statistics & facts" article, Niinimäki, E. (2020) explores that almost 70% of the Finnish population aged 18 to 64 used social media in 2019; frequent social media use increased by more than 16%, with 16- to 24-year-olds spending more time on social media than any other age group in 2020. According to Statista's Digital Market Outlook, the number of social network users in the country would reach 3.7 million in 2021 and rise annually after that, with a penetration rate of about 60%. By maintaining an active presence and a daily posting schedule, the Government will increase content exposure and meet its target audience.

#### 4.2.2 Finland and social media influencers during COVID-19

There is no surprise that the top three popular keywords searching on social media in Finland during 2020 are coronavirus (koronavirus), US elections (USA vaalit), and Finland Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) (Luu 2020). During the coronavirus crisis, healthcare staff, doctors, nurses, grocery store employees, drivers, and social media influencers, maintain critical roles in Finland. Although they have different careers, their careers are meaningful work to help the Finnish Government. In early 2020, the Finnish Government, the country's national emergency supply agency, collaborated with PING Helsinki, a social media influencer consultancy, to conduct a new communications strategy. Based on the number of followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the number of engagements on other social media platforms, the Government understand social media marketing is an advantageous method for updating the information to their target audiences. Finland's Government is working with social media influencers to raise awareness of the situation to spread public messages to all citizens by the most productive approach. The cooperation has reached a new step to shorten the "bridge" public messages delivering between government citizens without misinformation or false news.

Politico (2020) states that Finland is one of the first nation defined social media as a significant spokesman. In the following quote, Aapo Riihimäki, a communications specialist at the Finnish prime minister's office, said:

*We are aware that government communication does not reach everyone. Before this was possible through traditional media like television, today especially young people get their news through social media. (Politico 2020)*

The author recognizes that the Finnish Government's communication strategy has been changing and further upgrading to new concepts due to the crisis time. The Finnish Government implements face-to-face conversations and video conferences to deliver the messages to the citizens because of its advantages of high engagement. Simultaneously, social media influencers become a solution to deliver public messages since they understand the advantage of using these marketing tools to engage young people.

According to PING Helsinki, the company sent to 1500 influencers with friendly format messages. Then, Influencers created their images and messages as they wanted to engage with their audiences. For example, Inari Fernández, who is a professional social media influencer, has more than 42,700 Instagram followers and more than 100,000 YouTube viewers, joins the campaign. Several times a week, Fernández shares the information related to the Government's coronavirus announcement or advice through Instagram Stories, engaged her followers and spread the messages quickly. While there are many definitions of SMIs, mostly, SMIs get paid from their jobs, SMIs of this campaign are voluntary. Following up on Fernández's activities, she states that she declines the fee and is responsible as a citizen. From this point, the author believes that there are more aspects of SMIs such as the corporate socially responsible content, health information content, society's content that we investigate as a new study case for further study. Hence, the corporate social responsibility activities are a case that can be an answer for the role of SMIs when SMIs are not only the one who makes content to deliver the messages relating to profits but also the one who sends the messages relating to important news as their social responsibility.

The value of this project develops the sustainable strategy of communication between the Government and citizens; moreover, it determines that social media communication

has a crucial role in communication and use as a part of a positive communication strategy for the Government to get their message across. Even with misinformation and false news, the collaboration aims to encourage communication between social media influencers and audiences based on trustworthiness and credibility during the crisis and in the future.

In the author's opinion, trustworthiness and attractiveness are keywords for public organizations. The Finland government, especially the target audience, is critical for the communication strategy when sending public messages. More and more young people refer to trust social media influencers than traditional media since the experience of social media influencers through previous daily experience, not only in the difficult time as a global crisis.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of the literature review, the concept of word-of-mouth could create content expectations that are impossible to follow. People may persuade to implement the guideline by a particularly optimistic suggestion from SMIs; on the bright side, if the recommendation meets their expectations, people may understand the situation and become less chaotic. People who have no prior information of the crisis and no experience are more likely to be satisfied until they realize what is going on than people who arrive with unrealistic experiences.

#### 4.3 Results of survey

The survey has 12 questions, divided into three parts, enclosed in Appendix 1. Part one asked for background information to observe the target audiences. The second part has six questions about the Finnish Government and social media tools. Then the final part contained three questions aimed to know the Finnish Government and social media influencers. The last question was an open question included in the final part. The survey covers 106 respondents aged 18 to 40 in Finland reached through emails and social media in Finland between March 2021 and early April 2021. The survey aims to examine the effectiveness of the new strategy that the Finnish Government was using to communicate the COVID-19 information; hence, the result may provide new ideas for the development of this new cooperation.

#### 4.3.1 Background information

The author collected 106 answers, with 78 responses, equaling 73% from Female respondents; 21 responses, equal to 20% from Male respondents; and the rest, 7 responses, equal to 7% from Other respondents.

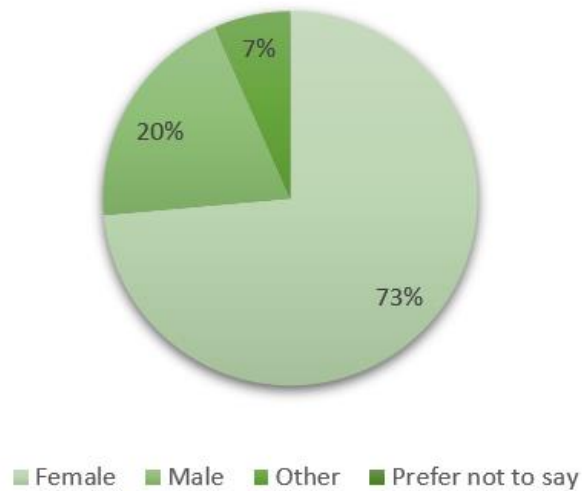


Figure 8. Respondents by gender

The second question of age was shown in the Figure 12. There were 5% people from 30 -39 years old; 39% were people from 18 - 24 years old, and 56% were people from 25 to 29 years old. Although most respondents are from 25 - 29 years old, the answers from the 18 - 24 years old audiences also provide the crucial opinion to provide the author with an overview of how they engage with the communication strategy of the Finnish Government as well as their influence from using social media influencers.

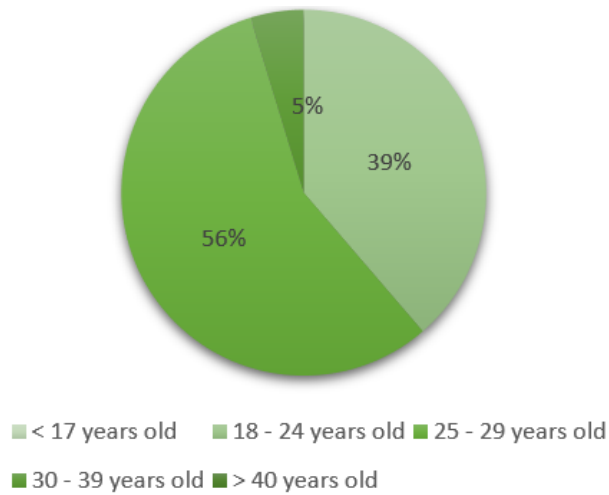


Figure 9. Respondents by age

Figure 13 showed the highest number is the percentage of people who follow Finnish Government official channels was 57%. While the percentage of people who do not follow was 27%, the percentage of “maybe” and “I do not care the Government official channels” were 16% and 4%, respectively. This figure delivered a positive result when people followed the Finnish Government channels, which means the interaction between government and citizens is shorten once the government understands their new target audiences.

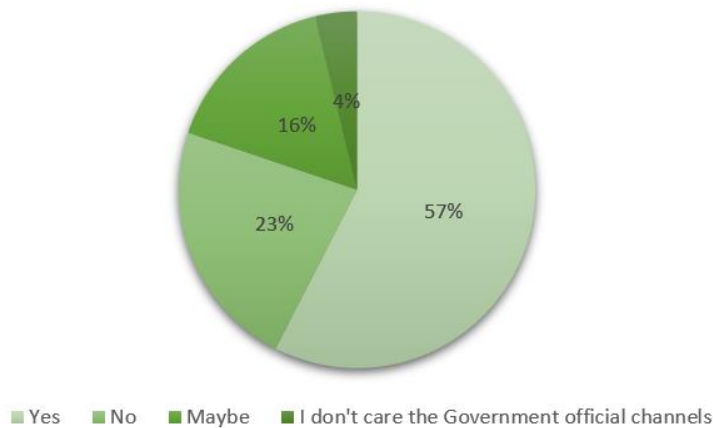


Figure 10. Respondents and the Finnish Government official channels

#### 4.3.2 The respondents' opinion on Finnish Government social media

Figure 14 indicated that half of all respondents were moderately aware of information from the Finnish Government on social media channels. The number of respondents who answered, “extremely aware” and “slightly aware” were nearly equal, 16% and 17%, respectively. The percentage of respondents who answered, “not at all aware” was 12%, and the rest was 2% of “somewhat aware”. Figure 15 showed that two-thirds of the respondents quickly found the needed information from the Finnish Government channels. The frequency of appearance of the Finnish Government on social media has been working. It is also a considered decision to expand the goals of sending public messages across via social media tools.

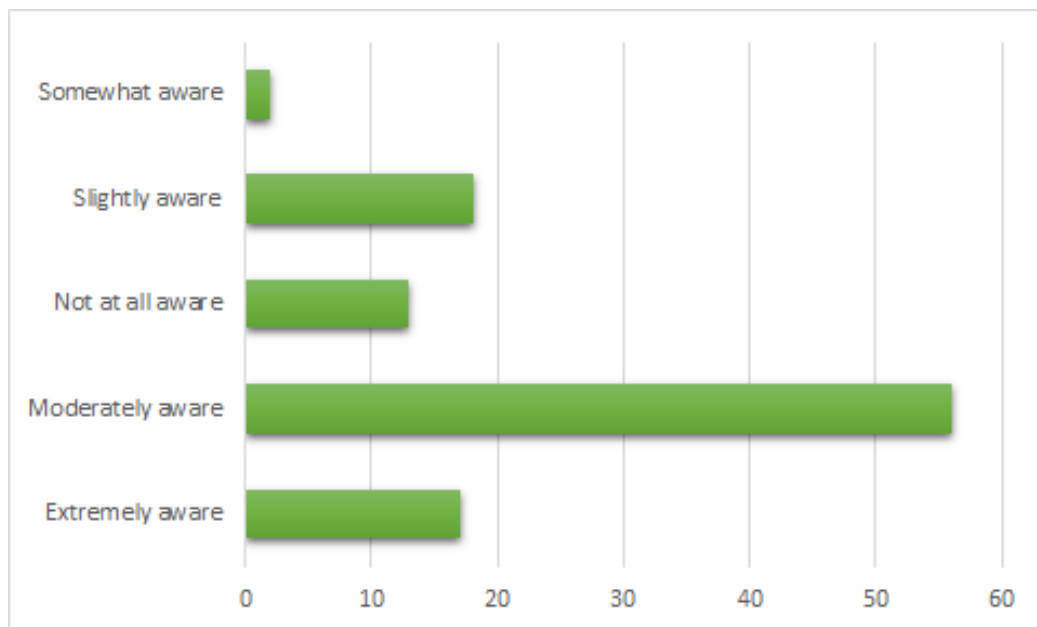


Figure 11. The recognition of Finnish Government social media channels

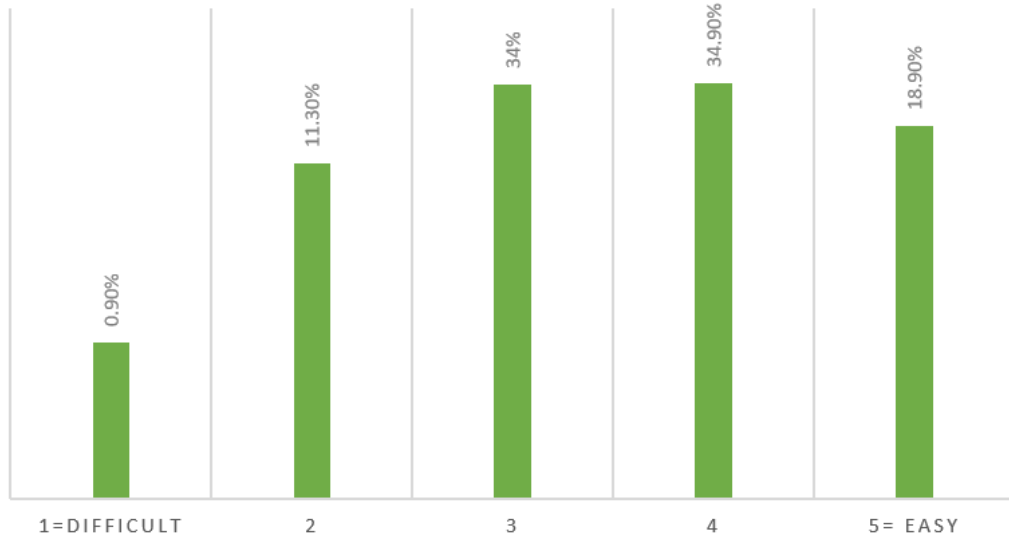


Figure 12. The efficiency of finding needed information from the Finnish Government on social media

As shown in Figure 16 - 17, the line charts peaked at "8" on a scale of 1-10 for both questions. Both lines were quite similar since they were erratic; nevertheless, the overview of the extent of how they feel about communications strategy and the qualities of this information was excellent. The communications were considered reliable and balanced.

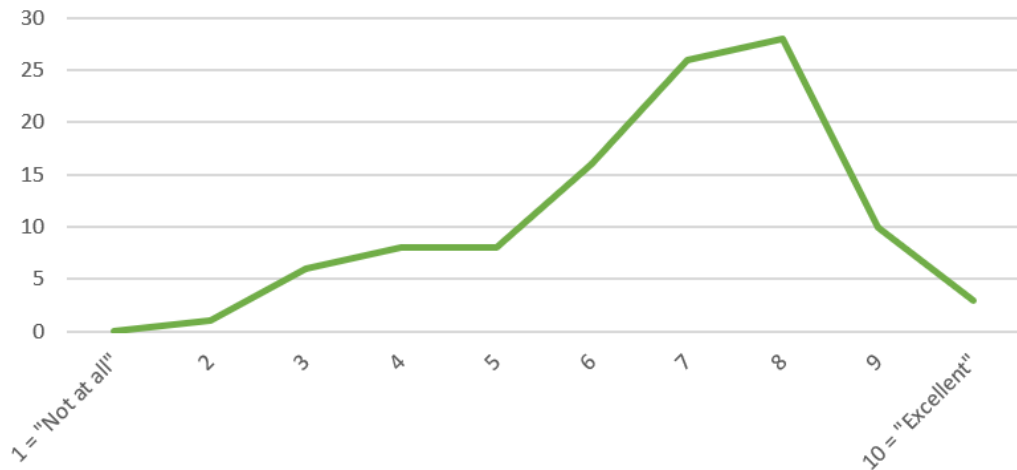


Figure 13. The connection of communications strategy between Finnish Government and respondents

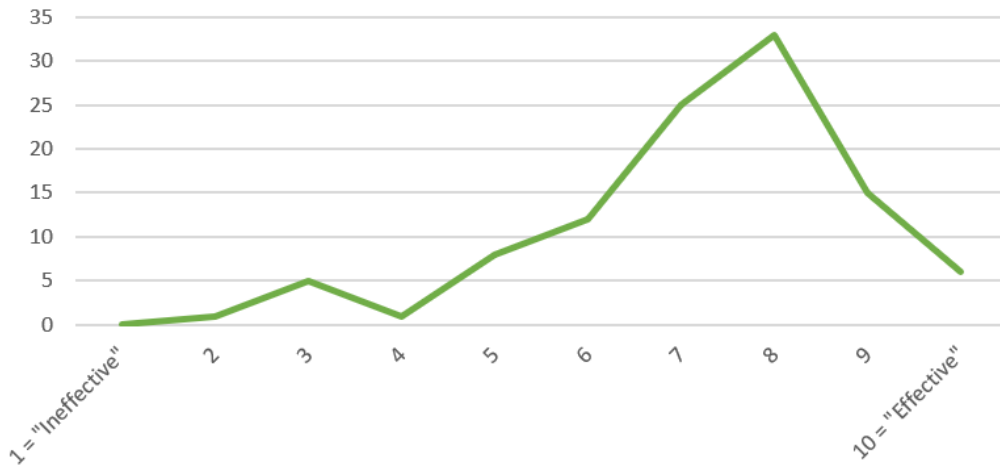


Figure 14. The qualities of the information received from the Finnish Government

Figure 18 and Table 1 depicted the result of the question, which asked about the COVID-19 information from the Finnish Government. "Moderate satisfaction" was the highest with 37.7% out of 100%, while the minor position was "extreme dissatisfaction" with 0.9%. The following positions were "neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction", "slight dissatisfaction" and "strongly satisfied", 34.9%, 17%, and 9.4%. They became well-informed or fairly well-informed about the COVID-19's effect on their daily lives due to the study.

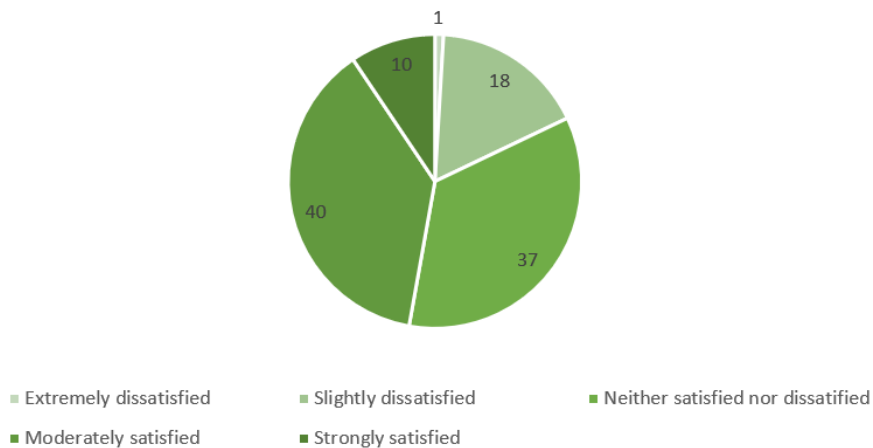


Figure 15. The satisfaction with the COVID-19 information from the Finnish Government

Table 1. The satisfaction with the COVID-19 information from the Finnish Government

Answer	Extremely dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Moderately satisfied	Strongly satisfied
Percentage	0.9%	17%	34.9%	37.7%	9.4%

#### 4.3.3 Marketing Influencers

Figure 19 showed that the highest number of respondents was "somewhat trusted" with 51 responses; on the other hand, the smallest number of respondents was "don't know" with two responses. The following positions were "trust", "don't trust at all", and "highly trust", consisting of 34, 13, and 5 responses, respectively. The result of this question was 50% positive when respondents tend to trust the Covid -19 relating information from social media influencers, who were usually creating the content or delivering the content not directly from the Government. As a result, the answer "somewhat trust" could understand that they have not entirely placed their faith in this information; they are wary or hesitant for whatever reason. Perhaps, using SMIs to deliver public messages is unfamiliar to young people since SMIs are usually known as delivering messages related to beauty, lifestyle, fashion, food. However, the official content has been corrected by the Government's communications department as well as the content has been edited to engage with people in a friendly but formal way.

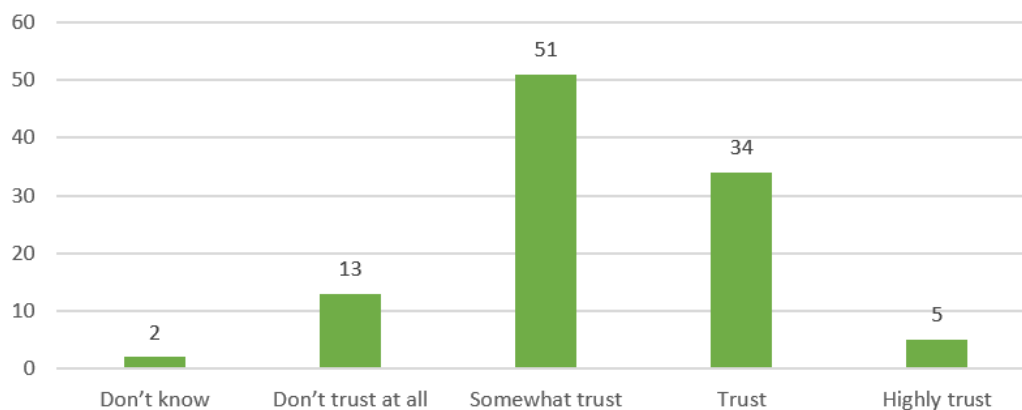


Figure 16. Social media influencers provide the Covid - 19 information from the Finnish Government

Figure 20 indicated a fluctuating decision that respondents would follow and share content sharing by SMIs even those contents were from the Finnish Government. Most of the answer leaned on “always”, which was started from number 6 to 10. People may confuse whether they should share and follow; however, the positive side of these results was that they are willing to share these contents.

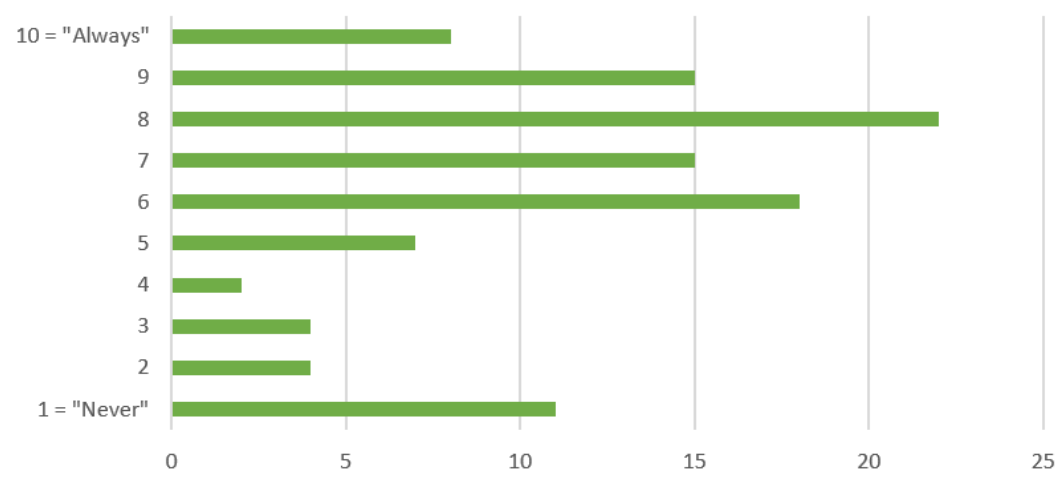


Figure 17. The Engagement between people and the Finnish Government promoted by SMIs

It is evident that respondents are satisfied with the information from the Government via SMIs in Figure 21. There were 39 responses of "moderate satisfaction" and 11 responses of "strong satisfaction", then the following position was "neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction" with 33 responses. The rest were "slight dissatisfaction" and

"extreme dissatisfaction", which were 22 and 1, respectively. The result examined the effectiveness of using SMIs to send messages to young people with enormous potential.

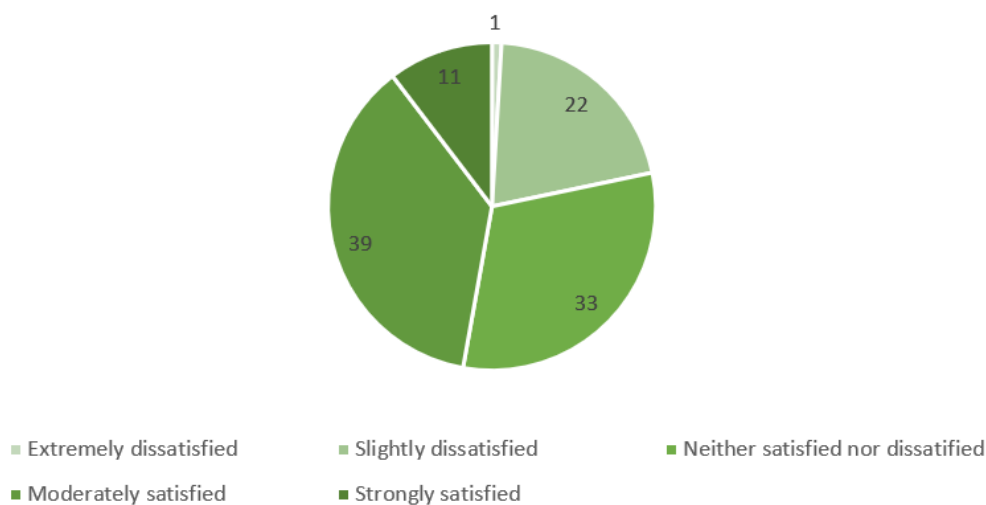


Figure 18. The information that the Finnish Government send messages on social media by cooperating with social media influencers

The last question was an opening question, the Finnish governments' feedback, and advice to engage with audiences on social media. The open statements raised many contemporary issues in daily lives. After reviewing the feedback, the author decided to analyze some highlight feedback raised in the same content. The most recent opinion was related to vaccination due to many countries having released to use it; the Finnish Government communications did not mention this news as much as they should be. An anonymous X said, "I hope that the public organization should publish the latest news or information in the most accurate and fastest way. e.g., current COVID-19 vaccination information." The subsequent opinion was also limited spreading, which was language when the Government tends to use only Finnish to send the messages. The messages from SMIs in Finland also presented in Finnish; another anonymous Y said, "Moving restriction. It was not widely announced, and normally the information is not in English." Although some respondents like the way Finnish Government have updated weekly or every day the COVID-19 situation, the articles were in Finnish, and they need to translate them because no English version is available. The next issue was comment sections on the social media channels, "when there are Social media campaigns/news/suggestions about the pandemic of COVID-19, the aspect that annoys is the comment section on

social media. The comment section is true ought, ideas, inform their relatives or friends. However, most of the time, the comments were negative, people giving false information that false information affects others even more than the information in the campaigns", which was said by anonymous Z. This feedback has raised new issues to consider for the researchers. The last feedback was late of up-to-date information because the pandemic situation has become chaotic, the number of contracting diseases has increased, and the Government should be more aware of restrictions for their citizenship. It was mainly related to the late action from the Finnish Government of how they solved the problem during the pandemic, which also related to different Government departments. Since this feedback is out of the thesis topic, the author received it as another perspective from the respondents.

To summarize this chapter, there were positive points taken from the case studies once WHO has a clear strategy and quick action to send the messages through macro-SMIs who can spread the messages to millions of people worldwide. The case study of the Finnish Government and survey results highlighted the engagement between people and the Government when they had communication strategy plans and adapted new trends to send the messages virality. Although there was a misunderstanding of fake news and postponed action, the public messages shared with young people were an excellent approach to improving trust between people and the Government.

## **5 Conclusion**

The thesis was to contribute an inclusive look at the influence of social media communications in public sector organizations in COVID-19. By reviewing relevant literature and analyzing case studies, and surveying to gain feedback from young people, the thesis aims to understand the significance of communication strategy in organizations and social media communication tools within the public organization.

Organizational communication is vital since it describes how people and organizations communicate with one another to achieve organizational objectives and become more consistent with core organizational principles. Its fundamental goal is to strengthen organizational practices, break down silos, keep everybody in the process, and

minimize mistakes. Any public organization's effectiveness and development depend on its ability to communicate effectively. Organizational communication, unlike regular communication, is still goal oriented.

The rising trend of social media influencers is an essential tool to engage with target audiences in an era of technology. Furthermore, influencers on social media are the right communication strategy to communicate with young people during the global crisis. In some cases, people have been suffering from the tremendous message, especially in crisis time; false facts or misinformation negatively affect the situation. Influencers on social media have a deep knowledge of the channels they use and know how to create engaging and humorous content to raise people's awareness.

The author is recommending the public organizations have a crisis response strategy in place, reduce misinformation, ensure an optimal communication flow, and improve communications timeliness. Public organizations ensure that communication processes can effectively connect, interpret, and transmit the appropriate information by implementing direct, transparent communication across the most efficient networks to improve social media engagement. Additionally, public organizations should adopt different media to engage and interact with the audiences, and different target audiences follow their strategic communication framework.

The collaboration with SMIs is a new step for every public organization and government. The most difficult challenge is dealing with people who can spread false facts, potentially undermining the public organization's credibility. Whether it is inside the organization or to the public, accurate, precise contact is crucial during a crisis. A good media relations strategy is also essential. A practical engagement approach will turn social media tools into a source of encouragement and joy. It takes time and commitment to earn people's credibility and trust, but it is well worth it.

To sum up, in a short time, people are experiencing mixed emotions due to the coronavirus pandemic, and they are unsure of how to think or act. An equal and opposite reaction characterizes every pandemic reaction. People become sensitive and overreact whenever several cases appear on social media when there is a lockdown situation in some countries. The panic of stocking up and striking out is one of the

pieces of evidence to show how people are facing. Concurrently, positive action has also released when public organizations and government pay attention to how their communications are relevant and discussed on social media with high alert. Public organizations listen to what people are saying and communicate openly based on the new behavior. It is an excellent way to make sure that the public organizations still have a good impact on the audience.

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## Appendix 1. Survey Questions for Case Study

### 1. Background information

Question 1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Others
- Prefer not to answer

Question 2. What is your age?

- <17 years old
- 18-24 years old
- 25-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- >40 years old

Question 3. Do you follow the Finnish Government official channels?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- I do not care the Government official channels

### 2. The Finnish Government and social media communication

Question 4. Are you aware of information from the Finnish Government on social media?

- Extremely aware
- Moderately aware
- Not at all aware
- Slightly aware

- Somewhat aware

Question 5. How easy can you find the needed information from the Finnish Government on social media? Likert-scale: 1 (Difficult) – 5 (Easy)

Question 6. On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel about communications strategy between the Finnish Government and citizens? Likert-scale: 1 (Not at all) – 10 (Excellent)

Question 7. On a scale of 1-10, how do you raise the qualities of the information that you received from Finnish government social media channels? Likert-scale: 1 (Ineffective) – 10 (Effective)

Question 8. Are you satisfied with the COVID-19 information from the Finnish Government on social media?

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Slightly dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

### 3. Marketing influencers

Question 9. How do you trust social media influencers when they provide COVID-19 information from the Finnish government?

- Do not know
- Do not trust at all
- Somewhat trust
- Trust
- Highly trust

Question 10. On a scale of 1 - 10, do you follow and share the content that social media influencers promote the campaigns for the Finnish government? Likert-scale: 1 (Never) – 10 (Always)

Question 11. Are you satisfied with the information that the Finnish Government send messages on social media by cooperating with social media influencers?

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Slightly dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Question 12. Open question. Do you have any advice for public organizations/governments that want to implement social media tools into their marketing strategy to send their message during a Covid19

