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# Influence of Social Media Practices on the Fusion of Strategies within Organisations

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**Abstract.** Contemporary information technologies such as social media have brought into question the usefulness of the alignment perspective in understanding the role and influence of technology in organisational strategy. This has prompted some scholars to argue for a fusion view of Information Systems (IS) which sees IS as integral to business strategy. Despite the suggestion of the fusion view, there is little empirical evidence of how the fusion of strategy is realised. For instance, literature suggests that executives are struggling with how to implement social media strategy within an organisation. This paper uses the strategy as practice lens guided by the interpretivist philosophy to explore the influence of social media practices on the fusion of strategies within an organisation. The paper uses empirical evidence from the case study of a telecom organisation in Tanzania to gain theoretical insight into the role of social media in organisational strategy. This research contributes to the management literature by arguing that the fusion of strategy is achieved by the intertwinement of historical background, context, technological advances and social intent. Also, it contributes to IS literature by showing how social media extends the IS scope within an organisation while minimizing the need for organisational IT infrastructure. In practice, this research highlights the significance of informal social media practices such as WhatsApp communication in organisational processes such as knowledge sharing and customer service.

**Keywords:** Fusion of Strategy, Digital Business Strategy, Social Media, WhatsApp, Strategy as Practice

## 1 Introduction

Following the rise of social media and its increasing influence in organisations (Alalwan et al. 2017; Dwivedi et al. 2015; 2016; Kapoor et al. 2018), scholars such as El Sawy (2003) suggest a new perspective - the 'fusion view of IS' - that sees Information System (IS) as embedded in, and integral to, the product and services offering of the firm. Primarily, the fusion view perceives IS strategy as the business strategy; it does not separate the two. Alignment divides them into two distinctive domains, the

IT domain (IT strategy) and the business domain (business strategy). Furthermore, Bharadwaj et al. (2013) and Henfridsson and Lind (2014) have argued that it is increasingly necessary to rethink the role of information technology (IT) strategy due to the intertwining of new digital technologies and human actions. Specifically, they argue that the increasing role of digital technologies is making the alignment perspective in strategy less useful. Considering this, Bharadwaj et al. (2013) have also termed the fusion view as the Digital Business Strategy (DBS). Meanwhile, the increasing intertwining of digital technology and human actions has led to a new conception of IS theories such as the practice perspective (e.g. Orlikowski, 2000) and the socio-materiality (e.g. Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2014; Orlikowski, 2007) perspective that seek to explain the interaction of humans and technology. Scott and Orlikowski (2014) and Huang et al. (2014), suggest that these perspectives are suitable for understanding the role of technologies such as social media, where their effect is highly integrated with human action. Thus, newer IS theories, which negate the separation of technology and human activity, are influencing a shift in thinking from the alignment perspective, which sees IT strategy and business strategy as separate domains, to that which reflects a fusion of IT and business strategy. For instance, Phillips-Wren and McKniff (2015) suggest that the concept of embeddedness can be used to study and frame the fusion of technology in an environment. Orlikowski (2000) suggests that the practice theory extends the concept of embeddedness with enactment and appropriation with emergence. Thus, practice theory, which is considered as a family of theories (Tavakoli et al., 2017) including sociomateriality (Orlikowski, 2007) and strategy as practice (Jarzabkowski, 2005), have concepts that are useful for studying and framing the fusion of technology with consideration of context.

Of late, IS studies on the effects of digital technologies in organisations, i.e. Huang et al. (2014), have supported the fusion view. Thus, considering that the fusion view is gaining ground in the IS field, it can be considered timely to analyze how our thinking is shifting from the alignment view to a fusion view by investigating the impact of contemporary technology within organisations. For example, the review by Kahre et al. (2017) on the shift from the alignment to fusion view suggests that future research should use different theoretical lenses to explore how DBS (fusion of strategy) is realized. Similarly, Aral et al. (2013) suggest that organisational executives are struggling with how and what broader changes in organisational structure and processes are required for implementing social media. Thus, this suggests there is a gap in understanding how the fusion of strategy is realized due to the influence of digital technologies such as social media.

Following the above, this paper aims to explore *the influence of social media practices on the fusion of strategies within organisations*. Examining social media practices will help to understand how social media is implemented within the organization and its effect on organisational structure and processes. Also, exploring social media practice will help to understand the implementation of social media hence offering an opportunity to understand the extent to which DBS is realized. Hence, the paper adopts a strategy as practice (SaP) perspective, which falls within a family of practice theory. The strategy as practice theory perceives strategy as a goal-directed activity in a situated environment (Jarzabkowski, 2005). The focus of strategy as practice is on

strategizing, the actual doing of strategy (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009), which emphasizes on real day-to-day activities, context, processes and content that relates to a strategic outcome (Peppard et al., 2014). Hence, the SaP lens will help us to understand the implementation of social media within an organisation while considering the context. Therefore, in a broader sense, SaP will help us understand how DBS is implemented in an organisation.

To address the aims of this research, this paper adopts an interpretivist philosophy to gather empirical evidence from a case study organisation in Tanzania. The case study organisation is a telecommunication company in Tanzania. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with employees and managers of SIMU (a pseudonym of the company). Apart from the semi-structured interviews as primary sources of data collection, observation and documentary analysis were additional methods of gathering evidence. Further details are provided in the methodology section.

This research contributes to the management literature by arguing that the fusion of strategy is assisted by the intertwining of historical background, context, technological advances and social intent. Also, it adds to IS literature by showing how social media extends the IS scope within an organisation while minimizing the need for organisational IT infrastructure. Furthermore, this research shows how social media practices are changing work processes which become integral to the emergent strategy of the organisation. In practice, this research demonstrates the significance of informal social media practices such as WhatsApp communication in organisational processes such as knowledge sharing and customer service.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: first, we discuss the literature on social media practice and value. Then follows a discussion on strategy as practice which is the theoretical lens adopted for this research. Thereafter follows the methodology section which discusses the research context, site selection and access, data collection and data analysis. Following this, we present the findings and a discussion on the implications to literature and practice. Lastly, the paper ends with concluding remarks.

## **2 Social media practice and value**

Over the last decade, social media practice has accelerated to become a mainstream practice within organisations (Pillet and Carillo, 2016). For example, McKinsey & Company reported that 83% of companies in the US used social media (Braojos-Gomez et al., 2015; Culnan et al., 2010). Social media is used for various reasons in organisations. For example, Hutchings (2012) suggests that organisations can use social media as a powerful means of communicating, promoting brands and products, selling as well as increasing knowledge sharing in organisations. Likewise, Aral et al. (2013) suggest that organisations use social media for value creation. The idea of an organisation using social media for value creation and competitive advantage is defined by Piskorski (2014) as a social media strategy. A social media strategy helps an organisation to lower its cost or increase its ability to charge higher for their products

and services. The strength of an organisation to leverage social media differs from one organisation to another. Braojos-Gomez et al. (2015) term this ability as social media competence, which is defined as an organisation's proficiency in using and leveraging social media for business activities. They argue that social media competence is dependent upon several factors, which include business infrastructure capability and IT infrastructure capability. These two factors specifically relate to the internal activities of an organisation and, if both are in alignment with one another, this provides an ideal environment for organisations to implement social media to obtain value successfully (Henderson and Venkatraman, 1989).

Alignment refers to an organisation's ability to reconfigure internal activities and processes to cope with changing demands from the environment (Huang et al., 2014). Thus, within the context of social media, alignment is the ability of an organisation to reconfigure its internal activities and processes in response to this new technology. According to Venkatraman et al. (1993), the alignment between IT and business infrastructure is imperative for any IT investments within an organisation to gain efficiency at the operational level. Similarly, Wagner et al. (2014) suggest that achieving alignment at the operational level is vital for both IT utilisation and organisational performance within a business. Therefore, considering the above, there is a degree to which the alignment perspective can explain the role of social media in an organisation. Despite the dominance of the alignment perspective in IT strategy, and with empirical validation from various studies such as Luftman et al. (2012), it still receives substantial criticism. Chan and Reich's (2007) review of alignment highlights that the alignment research is mechanistic and fails to capture real-life. For social media, which is entangled by both social and technical elements (Scott and Orlikowski, 2014), a theory that is mechanical with less consideration of social factors will be less insightful to explain how social media impacts organisations.

In addition to above criticism of alignment, Chan and Reich (2007) argue that alignment is not possible when the business strategy is unknown. Nevertheless, the recent body of literature suggests that strategy is emergent rather than planned; a strategy as practice field in IS is an example of this literature. This current literature that conceives strategy as an emergent phenomena supports Ciborra's (1994) argument that the successful application of IT is more often due to serendipity than to any formal planning. Thus, the alignment view is where strategy is designed and mostly done by management is contrary to 'strategy as practice' where strategy is emergent and done with all members of the organisation (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Thus, with a collaborative technology as social media, the organisational strategy is substantively dependent on activities (practice) of its members that contribute to emergent strategy. Thus, the dynamic nature of social media, which is due to the intertwinement of social and technical elements, challenges our understanding of obtaining value from IT through aligning IT and business strategy. Hence, scholars such as El Sawy (2003), Bharadwaj et al. (2013) and Phillips-Wren and McKniff (2015) suggest adopting an extreme form of alignment, the fusion view, which sees an opportunity of seamless integration of IT and business strategy that cannot be disentangled. The fusion view, which has also been termed as a Digital Business Strategy (DBS) (Bharadwaj et al., 2013) appreciates a new logic of competitive strategy that recognizes the fused nature

of IT and its central role in product development and service delivery of an organisation. Thus, this suggests a paradigmatic shift that challenges our assumption of competitive strategies, particularly with how IT value is sourced.

The fusion of IT with business practices has the potential to influence organisational strategy significantly. For instance, Huang et al. (2014) suggest that social media can shift the site of activities within an organisation; such an effect can be integral to organisational strategy and value creation. Similarly, Scott and Orlikowski (2012) suggest social media generates complex information dynamics that are forcing organisations into an unexpected direction, redrawing boundaries and shifting relationships. With such effect of social media on organisational strategy, proponents of fusion such as Bharadwaj et al. (2013) suggest the reality of traditional business strategy has changed to modular, distributed, cross-functional and global business processes that enable activity to be done across the limits of time, distance and space. Thus, with changing business dynamics that are centrally operated by these digital technologies. It is apparent that the traditional way of viewing organisations by separating the role of IT is no longer appropriate especially when considering that social media is transforming social relations inside and outside of the organisational space (Susarla et al., 2012). Hence, this signifies the value of using a fusion view in studying social media influence in an organisation as it helps to understand a reality that is dynamic and multiple.

### 3 Strategy as Practice

As aforementioned, the strategy as practice (SaP) perspective perceives strategy as a goal-directed activity (Jarzabkowski, 2005). SaP views strategy as a situated, socially accomplished activity (ibid). Jarzabkowski (2005) continues to explain SaP as a strategy under investigation since it focuses on actions, interaction, negotiation of multiple actors and the situated context that contributes towards accomplishing the activity. Similarly, Whittington (2014) argues that SaP is concerned with how practitioners of strategy act and interact. Hence, SaP is concerned with strategizing, meaning how strategy is done, who does strategy, what they do, how they do it, what they use and what outcomes it has on shaping strategy (ibid). In this way, SaP distinguishes itself from other strategy approaches with its orientation towards 'how' a strategy emerges (Henfridsson and Lind, 2014). The focus on how strategy develops positions SaP as a suitable lens for studying how the fusion of strategy in an organisation is realized, therefore making it an appropriate lens for this research.

Whittington (2014) identifies three elements of the SaP perspective that are: practitioners, practice and praxis. Practitioners are the people making strategy; they include direct practitioners (managers, consultants and employees) and indirect practitioners (policymakers and researcher). Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009) classify practitioners into three groups that are: individual actors within an organisation, aggregate actors within an organisation and external actors who are conceptualised as a total; thus, its external aggregate actors. A practitioner aims to reestablish the actor in strategy research (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Thus, by considering humans in strategy, SaP over-

comes the weakness of other strategy approaches such as alignment which are perceived as mechanical while at the same time it appreciates strategy as a social construction.

'Practices' are defined as guidelines and routines of doing an activity (Huang et al., 2014). Leonardi (2012) claim that when IS researchers talk about technologies, they are describing practices as well. Also, practices are explained as tools and artefacts that people use in doing strategy work (Whittington, 2003). Whittington (2014) suggests this is because even when improvised in praxis, technology practices tend to produce recognizable, imperfectly regular behaviors. Hence, this underscores the vital distinction which Orlikowski (2000) makes between information technology as artefact and technology in practice, which are patterns of repetitive and situated use of technology. Thus, practices as an element of SaP consider both technical and social agency.

Lastly, praxis is the flow of activities in which strategy is accomplished (Jarzabkowski, 2005). It is a stream of activity that interconnects the micro action of individuals and groups with the broader institutions in which those actions are located to which they contribute (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). Whittington (2014) explains praxis as what people do with technology in ongoing and situated activity. Also, Whittington (2014) explains the implication of praxis in research as it needs close empirical observation of how technology is used, sensitive to all adaptation and improvisation of practical life. Thus, SaP research is a useful lens for gaining insight within an organisation while producing practical insights. Therefore, by adapting the SaP lens into this research, it will help to understand how social media is implemented within an organisation hence gaining insight on how the fusion of strategy is realised.

## 4 Methods

Following the research aim of understanding the influence of social media practices on the fusion of strategies within an organisation led to the selection of the case study method. A case study method is a valuable method for providing an in-depth understanding into a real-life phenomenon through combining both research phenomenon and context to produce a richer understanding of context and process to which is enacted (Yin, 2013). The choice of case study allows this research to dig deeper into an organisation to understand the micro-activities which constitute the life of the organisation. This case study is guided by an interpretivist philosophy, which argues that knowledge is socially constructed through language, shared meaning and consciousness (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). This philosophy is adopted for this research as it advocates studying a phenomenon in its natural environment enabling us to remove our predetermined views that may obscure the process of gaining new knowledge. Thus, it aims to eliminate biases. Also, the interpretivist philosophy is in line with the strategy as practice (SaP) perspective that views strategy as a social construction.

#### **4.1 Research Context**

The case study organisation is SIMU (a pseudonym). SIMU is one of the largest telecom companies in Tanzania. It has more than a thousand employees with extensive infrastructure and branches all over the country. SIMU has adopted social media within its operations making it a suitable case for this research. Furthermore, the context of Tanzania, a sub-Saharan country, provides the potential of harnessing the explanatory power of practice theory in explaining the role of IT in a developing context (Avgerou, 2017). This context offers a different environment of understanding strategy in action compared to that of western developed countries which have relatively more literature. Walsham (2017) suggests that the rapid growth of ICT use in developing countries that occurred in the last decade is mostly attributed to mobile phones; prior to that, there was little literature on the use of IT in developing countries. This can suggest a difference in the use of IT due to historical path dependency as well as a different material arrangement. In addition, this suggests that literature from the developing countries context is emerging. Hence, this context provides a novel opportunity to advance the literature on strategy as practice.

#### **4.2 Site Selection and Access**

The selection of a case organisation was based on the size of the organisation and its use of social media. A large organisation was preferable as it had greater possibilities of having departments and multiple strategies within the organisation (Jarzabkowski 2005). Hence it would provide a good premise for studying the fusion of strategies within an organisation. As well as being a large organisation, the organisation supported the use of social media in its operations. Thus, following Belasen and Ruffer's (2013) suggestion that high-tech industries such as telecom organisation are quicker in adopting new technology as they are faced with fast shrinking product cycle, this research opted for a telecom organisation as a valuable case.

#### **4.3 Data Collection**

The primary method used for data collection was semi-structured interviews which allowed the researcher to hear what each informant says on the topic and areas identified by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2009). The interviews were carried out with employees and managers of SIMU. The rationale for choosing managers and employees was based on the premise that strategy is something done by all members of the organisation (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Golsorkhi et al., 2015). The choice of managers is based on the notion that they are the ones who oversee and make decisions regarding the use of social media, while the employees are the implementers and their actions play a significant role on emergent strategy. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with members from different departments (see table 1). Thus, the sampling was purposive. Purposive sampling is a common form of non-probability sampling that does not require a set number of participants but the researcher decides when sufficient insight is generated due to the participants' knowledge or experience (Fusch



and Ness, 2015). Following Guest et al. (2006), saturation was reached within the first twelve interviews while elements of meta-themes are present as early as six interviews. Also, the literature review informed the interview questions, which had three main parts: understanding the role of the informants, their use of information technology and their use of social media within the organisation. Furthermore, the research gathered complementary evidence from documents (published documents) and observation. Published documents include Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) annual reports and statistics, and telecoms published product information. In addition, observation was made on the telecoms activities on social media platforms.

**Table 1.** Interviewee profile at SIMU

No	Profile
1	CEO
2	Manager IT Operation
3	IT Staff
4	Marketing Manager
5	Marketing Staff
6	Finance Manager
7	Manager Network Development
8	Manager Product Development
9	Human Resource Head
10	Human Resource Staff
11	Regional Manager
12	Public Relation Officer Communication

#### 4.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was done using an inductive approach which collects data and explores it to extract the themes and issues that arise (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The analysis was done through structuring data using the narrative method. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) define the narrative method as an account of an experience that is told in a sequenced way, indicating a flow of related events which, when taken together, are significant for the narrator and they convey meaning to the researcher. One way of doing a narrative analysis is through creating a coherent story from the data collected during an interview. This enables the research to consider the social and organisational context where events occur (Saunders et al., 2009). After transcribing and translating the interviews from SIMU, the data was structured using the narrative method. The structuring involved summarizing the interview transcripts, coding the summaries, categorizing into clusters, displaying the themes and finally narrating. A narrative style highlights the points that were made and what they symbolize and how they spell specific issues such as organisational politics, culture and change.

## 5 Social Media Practice in SIMU

SIMU uses social media both for internal and external communication. For external communication, SIMU has official pages on major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Observation, shows social media accounts of SIMU are active with regular posting and interaction with customers. These pages are centrally controlled by the public relation office cooperating with the marketing department. SIMU uses these social media accounts to communicate with customers on their products and services as well as getting feedback from their customers. There are various reasons why social media is used in SIMU. For example, promotion of their products, i.e., selling data (internet) services, SIMU offers free usage of various social media sites without consuming customers' data allowance once they have bought a service. Social media is used for selling as many people who use the internet use social media.

The usage of social media platforms for marketing is influenced by the changing context of Tanzania which makes social media usage a strategic endeavor. The marketing manager explains how the rise of internet consumption in Tanzania created a market for their service. He states that: *'things are quite different compared to ten years ago, you could hardly find two million users of the internet, but now you have about 20 million internet users, even in rural areas people are using the internet, most of the people are using social media. So, we decided we can't be left behind we must tap this market so that they can use our service.'* Data from Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) shows internet penetration in the country has increased from 5 million users (12% of the population) in 2011 to 20 million users (40% of the population) in 2016 (TCRA, 2017). The primary internet providers in Tanzania are the telecom organisations. This data shows the exponential growth in the use of mobile and internet technology in Tanzania. Thus, the use of social media practice in SIMU is influenced by the increasing consumption of internet in Tanzania.

Apart from the external use of social media, which is more of a formal process within the organisation, social media (i.e. WhatsApp) is used informally for internal communication. Official communication within the company is via intranet and email communication. However, the use of WhatsApp for internal communication is a widely-held practice within SIMU. Often, SIMU employees use WhatsApp to communicate between themselves. Employees use WhatsApp groups for social and work purposes. Different groups can easily form WhatsApp groups for their objective. For example, the human resource manager explains that: *'On work, we now have WhatsApp for every department, the department has their information, and they may want to share it among themselves. For instance, it's a weekend, and there is information we need to share, WhatsApp becomes very useful in such instances.'* The WhatsApp groups can contain members of the same department and sometimes members from different departments (especially when working on a project). Also, the WhatsApp groups can have members from different levels of management or members from the same level.

Additionally, WhatsApp groups are used in assisting work processes within SIMU. Because of its wide use, it supports work processes in different ways. For example, WhatsApp is used to improve customer service. It is used in the customer registration processes. When a telecom organisation subscribes a new customer, the TCRA requires that the customer is registered before their number is activated. Sometimes, the registration process is done in the field with the sales team. Therefore, to ensure that the customer number is activated in time, they use WhatsApp to transfer information to the back office and this helps them to complete the subscription process without losing a customer due to delayed activation. Similarly, the product development manager explains how WhatsApp helps customer service as follows: *'customer service people use a lot the WhatsApp groups, especially on hosting customers' queries, because the group has everyone even if someone is at home, he or she can easily know customer's problem and offer a solution immediately. But also, when you go in the street to campaign for products, we use WhatsApp to transfer the details of the customer quickly, and they are then uploaded to the system. Because when you get the customers, you can get his information and take a photo of his ID then send it to be printed and be attached to his official forms then the customers become activated to the service. Therefore, WhatsApp is used on several official business operations.'*

The explanation of the product development manager shows how the forming of WhatsApp groups is an informal practice but is used in official business operations. It further highlights how WhatsApp is redefining where employees do work as they can address issues even when they are physically out of the organisational work space.

To understand the strategic influence of social media practice is vital to understand the organisational strategy. The CEO of SIMU is mainly in charge of the organisational strategy so is therefore a central figure in the formulation of SIMU's strategy. The CEO explains his role and strategic intent as follows: *'As the CEO of SIMU, I am expected to oversee the entire organisation strategy but also to visualize where I want to go as an organisation and put together resources including people in the sense of human capacity, financial resources, as well as other infrastructures for the benefit of the company (...) The company has not been doing so well, it has been making a loss. It's an average of 13 to 15 billion [Tanzanian Shillings (Tsh)] per year; that is the loss that we are making. And me as somebody who comes from the banking sector which is a business my first role is to turn around those figures to break even meaning that we get at a point we are not making any loss anymore but to start making profit.'* From the CEO's explanation, it is apparent that SIMU's strategic intent is to eliminate the loss and create profit. To achieve this strategic objective the CEO outlines his plan as follows: *'The firm's intention of using social media is on cutting down the cost. For example, now I told them there is no need for somebody to travel from upcountry to here. We are a technological company put on a video teleconference, video or telephone conference and then you're done. So, I am cutting down the cost. By doing that 15 billion (Tsh) loss that I am talking about it will keep on reducing until we reach a stage where we can break even.'* From the CEO's explanation, the use of social technologies is central to achieving the organisation's objectives as it can help cut cost because removing the need for travel saves time, cuts cost associated with travel such as accommodation, per diems. Thus, social technologies help to redefine the meeting

practice as these move from the physical to the virtual. The CEO's view is shared amongst organisational members; for instance, the IT manager made a similar comment that: *'With Lync [skype for business], the intention is that we are in a cost-cutting phase. Previously, if you wanted to reach branch managers, you had to transport them, pay them their dues and its very costly process. But now you can plan a video conference or telephone conference using Lync'*.

Also, social media practice is associated with reducing the cost associated with stationary, marketing and surveys. For instance, the finance manager of SIMU - who has been with the organisation for 35 years - states that social media has helped SIMU to *'reduce cost on postage, from regional offices from what it was earlier on there was lots of cost on paper rims and postage.'* Likewise, the human resource officer claims that *'from the commercial side, it [social media] helps a lot the marketing in reducing cost compared to earlier expenses. Because anyone who opens Twitter sees SIMU, if someone opens Facebook sees SIMU, not like the previous Billboards.'* Equally, the social media practice is associated with the reduction of survey costs due to the quick feedback that is obtained in social media platforms. The regional manager states that: *'social media can help reduce the cost of marketing survey we are doing. You can air a question; you communicate, and people will respond. You can say you don't have enough funds, but that is an issue.'* These explanations demonstrate how different social media practices from various social media platforms support organisational strategy in multiple ways.

## 6 Discussion

From the findings, we learn that although strategy is an intent for the future, it is significantly influenced by the past and present conditions. The historical background of SIMU can help to explain the strategic choice of the company. For instance, the loss-making of SIMU is influencing the company to pursue a strategic vision of breaking even or profit-making, a vision that can be achieved through a cost-cutting strategy. SaP (see Jarzabkowski, 2005; Orlikowski, 2000) explains the cost-cutting strategy as an emerging practice. This practice emerges when path dependence is broken which then leads to adjustments. Pickering (1995) terms it as a 'mangle' of practice. This mangling of practice represents a shift in the interpretive sensibility that envisions the predefined goals of the organisation. This underscores the idea that value is always shifting and moving the target, which necessitates a change in strategic practices. The interpretive sensibility of the CEO of SIMU is to integrate the use of social media into his overall strategy of low cost through cost-cutting. Essentially, social media is central to the CEO's strategic objective of breaking even. In this way, social media practice is intertwined with the organisational objective of reducing cost.

In the absence of social media, it would be unimaginable to redefine some organisational practices such as meeting and marketing processes. This is because social media has helped members of the organization from different geographical locations to be able to collaborate and participate instantaneously. In addition, the visibility functionality enabled by videoconferencing provides an alternative to face-to-face

interaction. Theoretically, this highlights the inseparability of social and material agency once they interact (Leonardi, 2012). It underlines how social practices are mediated with technology. For instance, videoconferencing is a social (work) practice in SIMU, where managers virtually meet to make decisions regarding the organization. In practice, this shows how micro-activities within an organisation are related to organisational outcomes. For instance, the use of WhatsApp between staff reduces organizational expenses on communication. Thus, the apparent fact that might be overlooked for the realization of this strategy is the context and time. This social media strategy could not materialize if internet consumption and penetration were stagnant to what was five or ten years ago. The exponential growth in the use of the internet and mobile technology in Tanzania shows a change in context with time, which makes social media practice in SIMU inevitable. Thus, the empirical evidence gathered from this research contributes to literature that digital business strategy added with the intertwining of historical background, context, technical advancement and social intents. SIMU's loss making history, the growing use of internet in Tanzania, social media applications and the need to make profit explain the digital business strategy of SIMU.

From the communication practice in SIMU, we learn about social media use and its influence on processes and structure in an organisation. The formal communication practice in SIMU is as follows: internally it is conducted through the intranet, email and Lync. Whereas for external communication, SIMU uses official accounts established on major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. We see the emergence of WhatsApp group communication as the most used and preferred means of communication within SIMU. From a practice perspective, the rise of WhatsApp group communication could be explained as a praxis. Huang et al. (2014) explain praxis as the actual activity of creating and enacting an IS strategy, which may be like the traditional routines because of the sense-making of practitioners involved and because of unanticipated circumstances that may disrupt routine practices. From this case, we see the difference between the actual guidelines of the communication activity and the real activity of communicating. Reckwitz (2002) explains this to be the difference between practice and praxis. The emergence of these activities which take place in the organization, the praxis, are the ones that give the chance of interpretation to actors and thus they lead to social construction. The praxis here helps us to understand how strategy is done (processes and structure are enacted) because it shows the interplay between actors and practice in every communication activity that is taking place. Thus, we argue that it is this interplay between the actors and practices that affect processes and structure, consequently influencing strategy at SIMU. For example, the actual use of Lync to conduct video conferencing is one that reduces cost. Similarly, the use of social media to advertise is reducing the marketing cost. Therefore, the actual practices of social media are the ones influencing the cost-cutting strategy. Furthermore, through the practice lens, we learn about the practical use of technology in an organisation which can inform investment in IT infrastructure. For instance, the presence of widely-used WhatsApp as a means of internal communication can save SIMU on their investment on their IT infrastructure such as emails and computers because WhatsApp provides the infrastructure, thus supporting a cost-

cutting strategy of the organisation. Thus, social media extends the IS scope within the organisation with less organisational IT infrastructure since it uses external infrastructure such as employees' personal phones (Kwayu et al., 2018).

The praxis influences strategy through changing work processes — for instance, the use of WhatsApp in the customer activation process. The recurring use of WhatsApp in this process implants a structure. Giddens (1989) explains a structure as what gives a social life a form and shape, but itself is not that form or shape. The emerging structures resulting from various social media practices at SIMU has the following implication. Beforehand, the emerging structures are the result of 'natural' process redesign. This emerging process performs a shift of activities by removing unnecessary processes and/or introducing new processes through the utilisation of information affordances enabled by social media. For example, similar to Treem and Leonardi's (2012) study, the social media affordances of participating and collaborating highlighted from SIMU employees' use of WhatsApp groups or Lync videoconferences; thus, enabling employees and management to perform their duties with the new processes compared to the traditional processes. One notable impact of social media use in SIMU is bringing employees together in completing tasks. The implication of this is the bundling of activities that enact new processes and organisational structures, consequently merging some strategies. For instance, through the WhatsApp group, IT personnel will collaborate with marketing personnel to accomplish a project. Through the group their relationship will be established and the group removes the structural boundaries between the IT department and marketing department. Thus, IT and marketing activities are both bundled into a group, which consequently fuses the strategies. Thus, considering that a group can contain multiple actors from different departments which have different strategies, this may lead to the fusion of various strategies. For example, people from different departments have a different perspective, but through groups which are enabled by WhatsApp, their views become fused through daily interaction and knowledge sharing, consequently increasing meta-knowledge – a knowledge of who knows what and who knows whom (Leonardi, 2014) and ambient awareness (Leonardi, 2015).

Lastly, the way the fusion of strategies happens is through the production of a single effect from multiple strategies within an organisation. The cost-cutting strategy of SIMU is enabled by different efforts from different strategies across the organisation. For example, the marketing strategy is exercising a cost-cutting strategy using social media. Likewise, the human resource department is also applying a cost-cutting process using social media: instead of paying allowances and dues for employees who travel, they cut those costs with teleconferences. However, when it comes to the connection of the Lync, it is conducted either by the individual or sometimes by IT members. Thus, all these efforts, which result from different strategies, have a fused effect to the overall strategy of cost-cutting: the relationship here is social media. This is consistent with Jarzabkowski (2005) highlighting the existence of multiple strategies with the organisation. From our case, we learn that social media practices are performing 'structuration' which fuses various strategies within the organisation to reflect a single strategy. Hence this contributes to the management literature on multiple strategies.

## 7 Conclusion

Empirical evidence from this research evidences the widespread nature of social media practice within a specific organisation. This research shows how technologies such as social media drive a digital business strategy. In respect to this, the paper contributes to the literature by arguing that the fusion of strategy is assisted by the intertwinement of historical background, context, technological advances and social intent. Second, this research contributes to IS literature by highlighting how social media extends the IS scope while minimizing the need for organisational IT infrastructure. Third, this research demonstrates how social media practices are changing work processes which become integral to the emergent strategy of the organisation. Finally, this research contributes to the literature on multiple strategies (Jarzabkowski, 2005) by highlighting how organisational strategy is assisted by various strategies from different parts of the organisation. In practice, this research demonstrates the significance of informal social media practices such as WhatsApp communication in organisational processes such as knowledge sharing and customer service.

The findings of this paper were limited to one organisation; future research can benefit by comparing different cases from the same context or with a different context. This will help to increase understanding on the practices that are embedded within a context, hence contribute to concepts of embeddedness and enactment. Furthermore, future research can benefit from longitudinal data which can highlight the changing practices over time.

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