**Research Article**

# Determinants of social organizational credibility: Towards a formal conceptualization

**Yolandi Botha [1]***

0000-0003-3778-0920

[1] University of South Africa, Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA
* Corresponding author: slabby@unisa.ac.za

| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
|---|---|
| | Organizational credibility is an important component of organizational survival. The need to build and maintain organizational credibility in the social media context is specifically significant, largely due to the popularity of the medium in the current interactive communication environment. Social media, however, create a challenging environment for accurate information consumption, because it excludes the journalistic gatekeeper, are subject to misinformation and allow for information proliferation by both official and nonofficial users. For organizations to enhance their credibility in the social media context, it is important, firstly, to determine what constitutes social organization credibility. To establish an enhanced understanding of social organizational credibility and to build towards a formal conceptualization, this article quantitatively explored the preliminary identified determinants of social organizational credibility among active social media users. An exploratory factor analysis indicated that social organizational credibility consists of the determinants of trustworthiness, qualified resonance, homophily, personable interaction, informed conversation, and apt social word-of-mouth. Furthermore, the results also highlighted that an organization's connections (including social media influencers and experts) are also a key determinant of social organizational credibility. This research provides guidance as to how social media users assess an organization's credibility in the social media context, which could help alleviate the misinformation stigma that is associated with social media as an interactive communication platform. The identified determinants and the conceptualization of social organizational credibility extend existing organizational credibility literature and provide organizations with much needed guidelines to enhance their credibility in the social media context.

**Keywords:** credibility, social media, source credibility, social organizational credibility, social media users |

## INTRODUCTION

We no longer live in a society that exists with the media: "society now operates within the media" (Holtzhausen et al., 2021). Social media, specifically, have grown exponentially as information source over the past decade. It is the most popular information platform for individuals who seek information or who would like to change information to foster relationships (Yuan & Lou, 2020). The popularity of social media could further be ascribed to it being cost-effective, user-friendly, accessible and adaptable (Huang et al., 2022). According to the South African social media landscape report for 2021, 4.2 billion social media users exist globally, exhibiting a growth of 490 million users since 2020. Accelerated usage over the last two years has also been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, as described by Microsoft's chief executive officer, Satya Nadella, who states that "the pandemic boosted two years of digital transformation into only two months" (Ornico, 2021).

The use of social media has changed the way in which stakeholders interact with both organizations and brands. It provides stakeholders with more control, which could either be valuable or detrimental to the organization concerned (Li et al., 2021). Stakeholders can add value to the organization by acting as brand

ambassadors, and by way of advocating use of the organization or brand through the promotion of vlogs, tweets and online reviews (Holtzhausen et al., 2021). This allows continuous information sharing, idea generation and the creation of new meaning (Kim & Brown, 2015). In contrast, when a brand or organization loses clout, stakeholders can also use social media to damage the organization's reputation (Holtzhausen et al., 2021).

Social media are also known as a platform, where misinformation flourishes and cannot easily be refuted (Sharma et al., 2017; Vraga & Bode, 2017; Wu & Mustafa, 2023). Information on social media suffers from a lack of professional gatekeepers to monitor the content, as the public themselves have become producers of information (Chon & Kim, 2022). This has caused the credibility of information to become a burning issue (Li & Suh, 2015) as social media users need to evaluate the credibility of the content and become gate-watchers themselves (Amazeen et al., 2018). Moreover, the concise nature of social media messages makes the credibility assessment thereof increasingly problematic (Keshavarz, 2021).

In the past, several studies have been undertaken on credibility in the social media context, specifically in terms of source credibility (Coursaris & Van Osch, 2016; Dedeoglu, 2019; Jamal & Bakar, 2017; Westerman et al., 2014), message credibility (Li & Suh, 2015; Tandoc Jr, 2018) and credibility associated with social media as communication medium (Keshavarz, 2020; Kim & Brown 2015). Jamal and Bakar (2017) argue that the impact of credibility on organizations must still be fully understood. As the way in which individuals assess a source's credibility on social media has become a pertinent area of inquiry (Westerman et al., 2014), the current article is specifically concerned with exploring the building blocks of organizational credibility in the social media context by identifying the determinants of social organizational credibility, to build towards a formal conceptualization. Such an exploration and conceptualization of social organizational credibility could guide organizations in devising strategies to enhance their credibility in the social media context.

This article will, firstly, provide an exploration of existing literature to provide conceptual clarity on credibility, source credibility and organizational credibility to, in essence, identify provisional determinants of social organizational credibility. These determinants will be categorized in relation to foundational source credibility determinants, organizational determinants in the social media context and alternative social media determinants. Based on the research questions to emanate from the literature review undertaken, a discussion on the quantitative research design will then be outlined. This will be followed by the reporting on, and the discussion of, results obtained from a sample of social media users, on the proposed determinants of social organizational credibility. Considering the contributions to, and the limitations of the study, the article will conclude with eight determinants of social organizational credibility.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Credibility, Source Credibility, and Organizational Credibility

The term 'credibility' is often associated with qualities of reliability, trust, believability, accessibility and openness (Kim & Brown, 2015). Credibility is a perceived quality that individuals construct, based on the interaction of various factors (Edwards et al., 2015; Kreegimäe et al., 2019). Differently put, credibility is a perception, rather than being an intrinsic quality within a particular channel or source (Westerman et al., 2014). From this perspective, the nature of credibility is equated with that of perceived credibility.

Credibility can be divided into source credibility and message credibility. In the context of the present discussion, source credibility relates to the characteristics of the communicator (the organization) that influence the receiver's acceptance of the message involved (Kreegimäe et al., 2019). The perspective of the current article is that message credibility (the level of credibility that the individual attaches to a message) and source credibility are issues that are intrinsically linked to each other. However, "when individuals trust the source, their perception of risk for the content will decrease and they will be able to benefit more from the content … in this way, individuals attach importance to information provided by a trusted source" (Dedeoglu, 2018). From this viewpoint, it is accepted that source credibility enables message credibility, which could also be regarded as its precursor. This article will, thus, explore source credibility as its starting point, while aspects related to the content of the message on social media is beyond the scope of this exploration.

**Table 1.** Foundational source credibility determinants*

| Element | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Safety/trustworthiness | In showcasing nature of *honesty* & *believability*, this element encapsulates an organization's concern for its stakeholders. Issue of trustworthiness resonates with those of *authenticity* (i.e., being true to what an organization represents), *dependability*, & *reliability*. |
| Qualification/expertise | This element refers to *validity* of information provided, with it also reflecting *knowledge* & *experience* of organization (as communicator) involved. |
| Dynamism/energy/motivation /attractiveness | This element relates to whether information user perceives organization as being *familiar*, *similar*, or *likeable*. |

Note. *Jamal and Bakar (2017), Kreegimäe et al. (2019), Li and Suh (2015), & Westerman et al. (2014)

Broadly speaking, the term 'source' refers to the origin of information (Tandoc Jr, 2018). Source credibility refers to the "judgements made by a perceiver … regarding the believability of a communicator" (Westerman et al., 2014). Source credibility is often paralleled with the attributes of the communicator, which are awarded by the information user, and include expertise and competence, trustworthiness, attractiveness, believability and power (Bhattacherjee, 2001; Coursaris & Van Osch, 2016; Keshavarz, 2020; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). In the context of this study, source credibility constitutes the qualities that an information source should exhibit to be regarded as reliable by the information users concerned. This article will explore organizational credibility as an example of source credibility.

Organizational credibility is the extent to which the organization involved, as information source, is perceived as being trustworthy and reliable and to whether the organization could possibly live up to its claims and professional credentials (Jamal & Bakar, 2017; Khoury et al., 2021). Organizational credibility is often related to organizational reputation; some even argue that it is derived from reputation. Such a viewpoint is, however, inadequate. Organizational reputation concerns how members of the public perceive the overall performance of the organization over time. In contrast, organizational credibility focuses on whether the organization involved is perceived as a credible source of information (Jamal & Bakar, 2017). Organizational reputation can, therefore, be inferred as focusing on all an organization's activities, whereas organizational credibility focuses specifically on the issue of its communication. The present article explores the concept of organizational credibility in terms of the social media context. Hence, for the remainder of this discussion, the concept 'social organizational credibility' is used to refer to the extent to which information users perceive an organization as being a reliable source of information on social media.

## Foundational Source Credibility Determinants

The most prominent work in the field of source credibility is, probably, the study conducted by Hovland et al. (1953), who concluded that a source's credibility depends on the level of trustworthiness and expertness involved, as perceived by the receiver of the message. Berlo et al. (1970), in their desire to expand the existing body of research on the nature of trustworthiness and expertness, established that the receivers of a message use the credibility criteria of safety (which could be associated with trustworthiness), qualification (which concept resembles expertise) and dynamism to evaluate the message source. The source credibility determinants concerned are defined in **Table 1**.

Trustworthiness, qualification and dynamism, which are accepted as foundational source credibility determinants, are regarded as the basis for any source credibility study (and not just for those that are undertaken within an organizational context). Based on such a supposition, exploring the source and organizational credibility literature it was found to be key to identifying the organizational credibility determinants that are specifically evident within the social media context.

## Organizational Credibility Determinants in the Social Media Context

Social media are "all kinds of online or digita1 technologies through which people create, share and exchange information and ideas" (Cornelissen, 2020). Notably, however, the term 'social media' does not refer to the technology itself, but, rather, to the nature of the content and of the active roles that are associated with the production and utilization thereof (Bosch, 2017). The use of social media connects audiences in specific ways that allow direct communication and interaction to occur in the building of collective intelligence (Westerman et al., 2014).

Several studies on organizational credibility determinants have been conducted within the social media and organizational context. Existing studies that are relevant to the current article include for example, Newall and Goldsmith (2001) who specifically explored trustworthiness and expertise to identify a concise scale to measure corporate credibility. Furthermore, Westerman et al. (2014) concluded that cognitive elaboration is a mediator in the relationship between the recency of organizational updates on social media and their credibility. Kim and Brown (2015), in focusing on exploring how organizations employ social media to build their credibility among a limited sample of social media users, highlight that personable interaction, expertise, invitational rhetoric and trust are key dimensions of organizational credibility.

The current article aims to expand on the aforementioned studies by means of integrating existing and newly identified organizational credibility determinants that apply to the social media context and exploring these within a new setting and context. Organizational credibility determinants that could be relevant to the social media context include, homophily, personable interaction, invitational rhetoric, high issue involvement and recency of information.

The concept of homophily, which relates to the element of dynamism highlighted earlier, is associated with phrases such as "similarity breeds connection" (McPherson et al., 2001) and "like to associate with like", meaning that one's demeanor tends to resemble that of family, friends and acquaintances (Kossinets & Watts, 2009). Considered as one of the most important traits of human sociality, homophily outlines people's connection with others with whom they have shared attributes (Asikainen et al., 2020).

In the social media context, homophily refers to the level of perceived similarity that a message receiver attaches to the message source (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Tandoc Jr, 2018). The message receivers involved are regarded as exposing themselves to sources that resemble them. Social media users are likely to share their experiences of an organization, or of a service, product or brand, that are similar to those experienced by others (Yuan & Lou, 2020).

Personable interaction takes place when social media users tend to regard an organization as having greater credibility when they interact with, and relate to, it in a personal manner, which serves to showcase its transparency and altruism (Kim & Brown, 2015). Picard (2015) argues that social media have the potential to overcome the limitations of mass communication by means of humanizing communication, thus displacing the qualities of "artificiality and alienation" associated with mass communication. Organizations should use social media to provide individuals with a sense of clarity and direction by means of providing a suitable platform on which to unite around a common interest and from which to ignite change (Chon & Kim, 2022).

The concept of invitational rhetoric can be defined as "an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination" (Foss & Griffin, 1995). This definition highlights that invitational rhetoric should be accepted as a communication exchange in which the communicative parties create an environment of growth and change (Bone et al., 2008). The goal, rather than being to change one another, should be to establish dialogue, to share different perspectives and positions, and to increase the existing levels of understanding. Similarly, invitational rhetoric refers to the quality of respecting others' inputs on social media. Rather than driving the conversation involved, organizations should remain true to the primary purpose of social media, namely social interaction. Organizations should, in short, strive to respect others' inputs and to build understanding (Kim & Brown, 2015).

High issue involvement points to the organization's awareness of, and participation in, topical issues (Westerman et al., 2014). The determinant concerned here necessitates that an organization stays abreast with issues that could directly influence it, as well as with its extent of knowledge regarding contemporary societal, democratic, and political issues.

The recency of information determinant highlights that an organization's credibility could be increased by regular and timeous updates of information (Sundar, 2008; Westerman et al., 2014). The factor also points to the immediacy of the information that is available on social media. Westerman et al.'s (2014) study, however, also found that cognitive elaboration (the process of forming correlations between new and existing knowledge) tends to act as a mediator in the relationship between the recency of updates and their credibility. The implies that, when social media messages are regularly updated, the receivers of such messages might be more inclined to react to them, due to the recency cue that is present in the structure of the message.

## Additional Social Media Determinants

Two additional social media aspects, not necessarily applied to organizational credibility literature, could, arguably, affect an organization's credibility within the social media context, namely, social word-of-mouth (sWOM) and the organization's followers and connections (associations with social media influencers [SMIs] and experts).

Organizations could provide online platforms on which individuals can evaluate the organization, product or brand, which could persuade individuals to share their knowledge and experiences with their peers, thereby developing electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Hajli, 2018). eWOM, also referred to as online reviews, recommendations and opinions aimed at consumers to evaluate an organization's products or services (Erkan & Evans, 2016). In essence, eWOM concerning the organization or the organization's products and/or services could have an impact on its credibility. Ismagilova et al. (2020), however, state that the reviewer should have expertise in the field to be able to influence the organization's credibility. Evaluations, comments and experiences generated by social media users on social media platforms are also sometimes labelled 'social word of mouth' (Hajli, 2018), which is also the preferred term used in the current article. sWOM is defined as "positive or negative statements made by strangers, friends and family within personal existing social networks about a product, service or company, … which are made available to a multitude of people and institutions via social media" (Lin et al., 2017:383). sWOM has the unique advantage of referability, with support for the entries being available globally for an unlimited time (Hajli, 2018). Most importantly, the credibility of sWOM could be improved by the contributions made by other social media users. As social media users engage with specific social media platforms, they provide contributor profile to these platforms, which gives more source credibility to the evaluation and participation of social media users (Hajli, 2018). sWOM, arguably, relates to homophily; social media users with high homophily partake in sWOM with other social media users (Ismagilova et al., 2020).

The connections that an organization have on social media, specifically in terms of associations with SMIs and with experts on topical issues and their followers, as well as with the organization's followers in general, could have an impact on its credibility. SMIs could include brand ambassadors, celebrities or "regular people who have become well-known due to a specific stand, which makes them prominent" (Kreegimäe et al., 2019). Many organizations have identified SMIs as intermediaries, as they provide access to and influence "hard-to-reach stakeholders" (Enke & Borchers, 2019). SMIs produce content, with them acting as sources of advice to their followers, with the quality, significance and prominence of their content serving to attract followers (Leite et al., 2022). Furthermore, this content involved usually relates to a specific topic or field and concerns the SMI's personal experiences with, for, example, a specific organization's products or services (Leite et al., 2022). Such personal experiences enhance feelings of connection and relatedness among their followers. An organization's connections on social media also include associations that the organization has with experts in the field, in relation to drawing expert opinion or obtaining factual correctness, especially during the debating of topical issues. Experts, in the context of the present article, constitute those individuals who are regarded as possessing valuable and in-depth insights regarding an issue, based on their own substantial experience of the topic, field or discipline concerned (Bode et al., 2020). Experts also play a role in terms of the high issue involvement determinant outlined earlier, as insights might be gleaned from experts on topical issues that might fall outside the organization's area of expertise.

An organization's followers could, further, play a role in the development of social organizational credibility. Such followers, apart from including those of the organization, also, possibly, encompass the followers of the SMIs and the experts with whom the organization associates. In line with the determinant of homophily outlined earlier, social media users tend to turn to groups that are likely to collect information from information brokers or from the evangelists of information. Such individuals include specific groups that generate facts on a topic related to the organization and distribute it to affected social media users (Haataja et al., 2016).

Both connections and followers could also aid in the making of social corrections, which implies trying to contest inaccurate information about the organization concerned, to mitigate misperceptions. The social corrections are helpful when their source is reliable, when a reliable source substantiating the correction is cited, and/or when multiple corrections are being made by several social media users (Vraga & Bode, 2017).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To build towards a conceptualization of social organizational credibility, the relevance of the proposed social organizational credibility determinants required exploration in practice. **RQ1** focused on exploring the pragmatic relevance of the proposed foundational source credibility determinants, while **RQ2** was aimed at exploring the identified organizational credibility determinants within the social media context. Both **RQ3** and **RQ4** explored the relevancy of the additional social media determinants.

**RQ1:** Do social media users regard trustworthiness, quality, and dynamism as foundational source credibility determinants within the social media context?

**RQ2:** Do social media users regard homophily, personable interaction, invitational rhetoric, high issue involvement, and recency of information as important determinants of organizational credibility within the social media context?

**RQ3:** Could sWOM related to the organization's posts contribute towards building the credibility of an organization within the social media context?

**RQ4:** Do an organization's connections (SMIs and experts) and followers influence an organization's credibility within the social media context?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was cross-sectional, exploratory and descriptive in nature (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). A quantitative research design employing a web-based survey (Nardi, 2018), hosted on SurveyMonkey, was used, consisting of four sections containing 67 closed-ended, statement-based questions. The first section consisted of biographical questions related to age, gender, work experience, the industry of employment and education. The second category of the questionnaire was aimed at exploring the respondents' social media usage. The third section of the survey consisted of questions that were informed by the literature, aimed at exploring the proposed foundational source credibility determinants. In alignment with the literature, the final survey section explored the identified organizational credibility and the additional social media determinants. The foundational, organizational and additional determinant questions also necessitated respondents contextualizing their answers from an organization-wide perspective, rather than on basing their answers on the products and services offered by the organizations involved. In this regard, the respondents were asked to answer the questions in relation to their favorite corporate brand(s), which they follow on social media. Furthermore, a six-point Likert response scale was used, with the responses ranging from "agree very strongly" to "disagree very strongly" (Clark et al., 2021). Before each section, the context of the questions was briefly explained, and all keywords used were defined, to ensure that the respondents understood the questions, context and rationale involved. To increase the reliability of the data collection instrument, the questionnaire was pilot tested (Creswell & Creswell, 2022) with 15 selected social media users. The survey questionnaire was also evaluated by a statistician, who reviewed the statistical correctness of the questionnaire, to facilitate the exploratory factor analysis.

As credibility is a perceived quality (Andersson & Niiranen, 2019), it was important to explore the proposed determinants of social organizational credibility purposefully among active social media users. The survey was shared via the researcher's Facebook and LinkedIn social media accounts, to enable the requesting of active social media users to complete the survey. The survey was also shared on selected communication and management association platforms, as it was deemed necessary that the members of these associations should actively use social media, due to the nature of their disciplines. The data concerned was collected over a period of six weeks and anonymously completed by the respondents involved.

The statistical software, SAS version 9.4, was used to aid the data analysis process. Descriptive analyses (Mertler, 2017) were applied to analyze the demographic and social media usage data of the respondents, which mainly consisted of calculating frequencies. To explore the interrelationships between the proposed determinants of social organizational credibility, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted (Haig, 2018; Holmes, 2020). To establish whether the items in each category were sufficiently correlated, Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) (Hair et al., 2018) was used prior to conducting the factor analysis. Eigenvalues
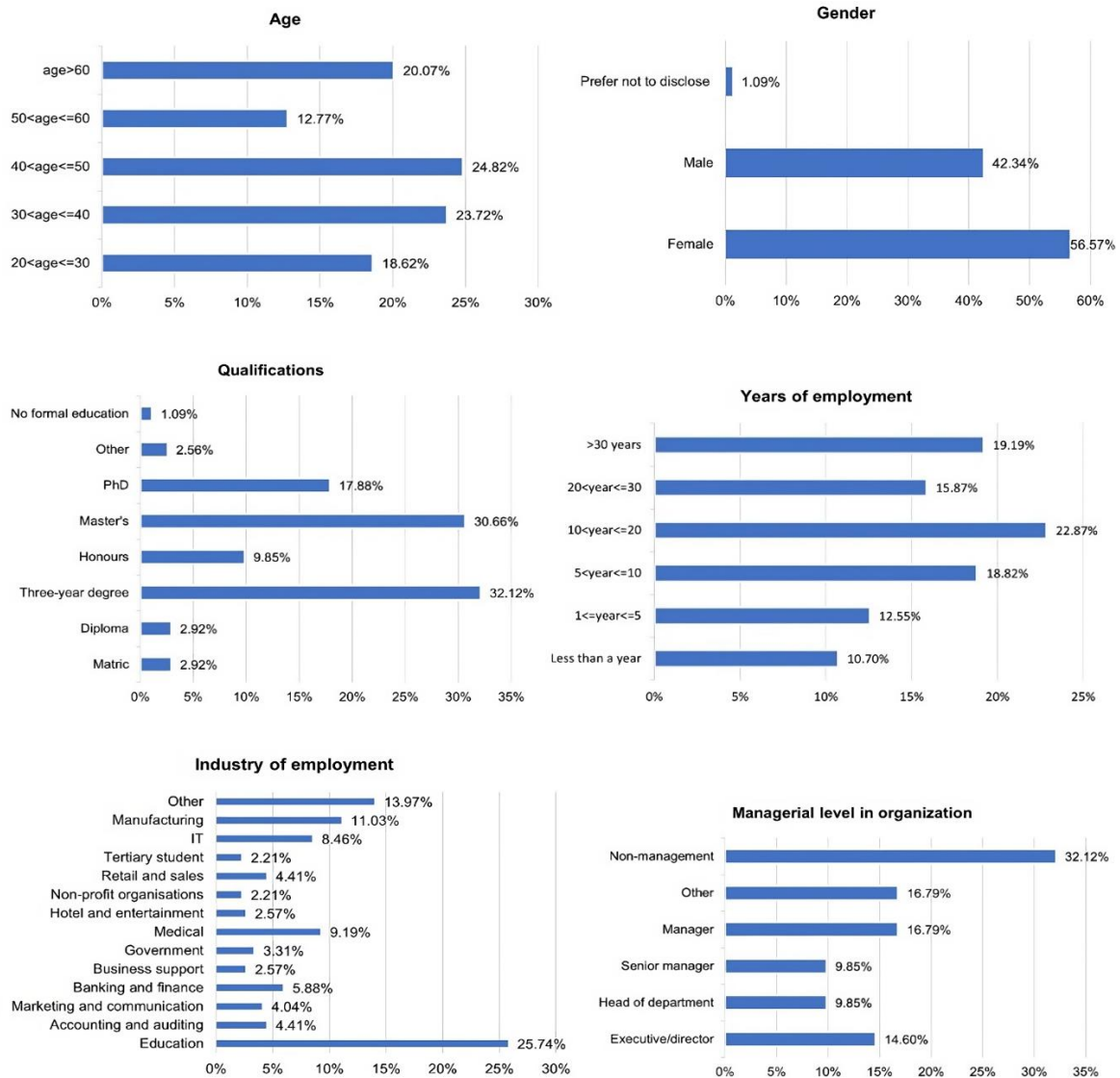
**Figure 1.** Biographical data of the realized sample (Source: Author)

(latent roots) were used as the default method of retaining factors (Holmes, 2020). Once a factor analysis had been completed, only factors with eigenvalues greater than one, which were considered significant, were retained for interpretation (Holmes, 2020). The Cronbach's alpha measure was used to measure the internal consistency of the identified factors (Holcomb & Cox, 2017). Notably, the results of the current research are confined within the parameters of this study. Only those who had access to the researcher's Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, as well as members of the selected communication and management associations, had the opportunity to complete the survey. Thus, the results are not generalizable to other social media users.

## REPORTING OF THE RESULTS

The realized sample of this article consisted of 274 social media users, with this number pertaining to only those sections that explored the biographical information and social media usage of the respondents concerned. Only 242 respondents completed the section of the survey that measured the foundational source credibility determinants. Furthermore, only 224 completed the section that measured the organizational credibility determinants within the social media context and the additional social media determinants. In accordance with Hair et al.'s (2018) guideline that one should have at least five responses per item (43x5=215) to obtain reliable results, the average of five to six responses per item (242/43=5,62 and 224/43=5,2) obtained in the present research was deemed to be acceptable for the purposes of the current study. **Figure 1** provides a summary of the realized sample's biographical data.

**Table 2.** Foundational source credibility (FSC) determinants

| Label | Item* | Determinant |
|---|---|---|
| FSC1 | My selected corporate brand(s) is/are honest on social media. | Trustworthiness |
| FSC2 | The posts made by my selected corporate brand(s) on social media are believable. | |
| FSC3 | The information that my selected corporate brand(s) post on social media is authentic (true to what the organization represents). | |
| FSC4 | I can depend on the information that my selected corporate brand(s) post on social media. | |
| FSC5 | The information that my selected corporate brand(s) post on social media is reliable. | |
| FSC6 | My selected corporate brand(s) post valid information on social media. | Qualification |
| FSC7 | My selected corporate brand(s) display knowledge on their area of expertise on social media. | |
| FSC8 | My selected corporate brand(s) support their claims with the necessary substantiation (e.g. factual information, statistics, research reports, etc.). | |
| FSC9 | My selected corporate brand(s) display expertise on topics in social media. | |
| FSC10 | My selected corporate brand(s) associate with experts in the field when a topic is outside their area of expertise. | |
| FSC11 | I can associate with my selected corporate brand(s) on social media. | Dynamism |
| FSC12 | I share a sense of familiarity with my selected corporate brand(s) on social media. | |
| FSC13 | I can resonate with the values of my selected corporate brand(s) as displayed on social media. | |
| FSC14 | I regard my selected corporate brand(s) as a likeable brand on social media. | |

**Figure 1** depicts that the respondents within the age group of 40 to 49 years were active social media users, who consisted of the largest part of the realized sample (24.82%), followed by those within the age group of 30 to 39 years (23.72%). This data contrasts with existing literature on the topic, which highlights that consumers between the ages of 20 and 29 years old tend to be the most active social media users, comprising one-third (32.2%) of all social media users worldwide (Oberlo, 2022). The 20 to 29 years age group of the present study consisted of only 18.62% of the total sample, which is surprisingly less than the percentage of the >60 years age group, who made up 20.07% of the respondents.

**Figure 1** showcases that the respondents represented diverse industries, with most of the respondents (25.74%) being employed in the education industry. Notably, small representations of an industry, which were collated under the label 'other', included the following industries: environmental, automotive and aviation, logistics, architecture, real estate, legal, and engineering.

Regarding the responses made to the question of social media usage, most respondents indicated that they used social media either several times a day (64.58%) or at least once a day (27.31%). The minority of the respondents indicated that they use social media on a weekly (6,27%), monthly (0.74%) or yearly (1.11%) basis. The data further indicates that 52.03% of the respondents used social media for multiple reasons, including for social purposes, to obtain information on topical issues and to obtain information about an organization. Of the respondents, 30.26% highlighted that they used social media only for social purposes. The remainder of the respondents specified that they used social media only to find topical information (8.49%) or only when they wanted additional information on an organization (4.06%).

The respondents were, further, asked to elaborate on their activity on social media. Most of the respondents (39.11%) indicated that they would comment on social media posts, while 19.93% of the respondents stated that they would actively engage with other social media users. The remaining 39.01% stated that they preferred to be passive social media users, only reading other social media users' posts. Lastly, the respondents were asked to select multiple social media platforms that they would most likely consult to obtain information on an organization. The respondents indicated that they mostly used Facebook (74.82%), YouTube (51.09%), Instagram (48.91%), LinkedIn (39.42%) and/or Twitter (33.94%) to seek out information on organizations. The above result is in line with Barnhart's (2022) study that Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, followed by TikTok, Pinterest and Snapchat, are popular organizational social media platforms.

The results of the exploratory factor analysis pertaining to the four **RQs** are provided next.

## RQ1: Do Social Media Users Regard Trustworthiness, Quality, and Dynamism as Foundational Source Credibility Determinants Within the Social Media Context?

**Table 2** provides an outline of label, items (as informed by the literature), and associated determinant.

**Table 3.** Kaiser's MSA for foundational source credibility determinants

| FSC1 | FSC2 | FSC3 | FSC4 | FSC5 | FSC6 | FSC7 | FSC8 | FSC9 | FSC10 | FSC11 | FSC12 | FSC13 | FSC14 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0.951 | 0.940 | 0.945 | 0.968 | 0.959 | 0.955 | 0.950 | 0.970 | 0.961 | 0.945 | 0.955 | 0.938 | 0.955 | 0.957 |

Note. Overall MSA=0.954

**Table 4.** Final factor solution: Foundational source credibility (FSC) determinants

| Rotated factor pattern | | | Variance explained by each factor | | | | Cronbach's coefficient alpha | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Factor FSC1 | Factor FSC2 | Factor 1 | | Factor 2 | | Factor 1 | | Factor 2 | |
| FSC2 | **0.87874** | 0.30707 | 4.595 | | 2.635 | | 0.956 | | 0.844 | |
| FSC6 | **0.83189** | 0.34870 | Final communality estimates: Total=7.231 | | | | | | | |
| FSC5 | **0.82782** | 0.36068 | FSC1 | FSC2 | FSC3 | FSC4 | FSC5 | FSC6 | FSC10 | FSC11 | FSC12 |
| FSC3 | **0.82340** | 0.34235 | 0.812 | 0.866 | 0.795 | 0.812 | 0.815 | 0.814 | 0.785 | 0.758 | 0.773 |
| FSC1 | **0.81316** | 0.38787 | | | | | | | | | |
| FSC4 | **0.80317** | 0.40882 | | | | | | | | | |
| FSC10 | 0.24866 | **0.85061** | | | | | | | | | |
| FSC12 | 0.39018 | **0.78805** | | | | | | | | | |
| FSC11 | 0.49761 | **0.71409** | | | | | | | | | |

The results of the Kaiser's MSA for the items are provided in **Table 3**.

Overall MSA of 0.954 is an indication of a good intercorrelation between the 14 items aimed at measuring the proposed foundational source credibility determinants of social organizational credibility. The individual MSAs of the items in this section were also close to one, which supported the conducting of a factor analysis.

As guided by the literature of the potential foundational source credibility elements, a three-factor solution was considered, as the cumulative variation explained was found to be close to 80% (78.98%). Once the rotated factor structure was examined, it was found that there were a few double loaders, which resulted in the last (third) factor not being well defined. Consequently, the double loaders (items FSC7, FSC8, FSC13, and FSC14) were removed, while a two-factor solution was retained, after which the analysis was repeated. Using such a solution resulted in a combined explanation of 80.34% of the total variation in the data. **Table 4** displays the final two-factor solution that was obtained from 242 respondents by applying varimax rotation method.

The final communalities should have been approximately 50% for each item, suggesting that, following the two-factor solution extraction, at least 50% of the variation of each item should still have been explained by the factor solution. **Table 4** signifies that the communalities are, indeed, above 50%. Therefore, all the items in the final solution are well represented in this two-factor solution. Cronbach's alphas for both factors were 0.96 and 0.84, respectively, indicating internal consistency and thus, high reliability. The items that were removed (i.e., the double loaders) predominantly represented the qualification determinant, and could be reviewed in future research.

Factor 1 embodied all the items allocated to the determinant of trustworthiness and one item allocated to the determinant of qualification. However, on exploring the specific item, it was found to focus on the validity of the information conveyed by the organization on social media. The finding closely resonates with that made in relation to trustworthiness, in that the information that the organization posts on social media should be believable, authentic and reliable (Kreegimäe et al. 2019). Validity could, therefore, easily form part of the trustworthiness determinant. The necessary knowledge and experience associated with an organization (as represented by the proposed qualification determinant) could be explored in greater detail than at present in future. Factor 2 highlights that social media users aspire to associate with an organization when a sense of familiarity with the organization's social media posts are shared. Furthermore, an organization should, when a topic of discussion falls outside its area of expertise, consult an expert in the field. The results obtained point to an integration of the dynamism and qualification determinants, implying that the extent of social organizational credibility could be increased if social media users were to feel resonance with an organization, based on their knowledge of, and experience in relation to, specific issues. Since the results obtained do not support dynamism and qualification as separate determinants, as proposed in the literature, a more suitable label for this integrated determinant, as represented by factor 2, would be 'qualified resonance'. In accordance with such results, the foundational source credibility determinants in the context of the present study include trustworthiness and qualified resonance.

## RQ2: Do Social Media Users Regard Homophily, Personable Interaction, Invitational Rhetoric, High Issue Involvement, and Recency of Information as Important Determinants of Organizational Credibility Within the Social Media Context?

**Table 5** provides a summation of the label, the item (as guided by the literature) and the associated determinant that were categorized as organizational credibility determinants within the social media context and additional social media determinants.

**Table 5.** Organizational credibility & additional social media determinants

| Label | Item* | Determinant |
|---|---|---|
| Organizational credibility (OC) determinants in the social media context | | |
| OC1 | My selected corporate brand(s) that I follow on social media hold similar interests to myself. | Homophily |
| OC2 | I tend to respond to posts from social media users with similar interests to myself. | |
| OC3 | I am more likely to share the posts from a corporate brand when it resonates with my principles. | |
| OC4 | I am more likely to share the posts from (a) corporate brand(s) when it is aligned with my beliefs. | |
| OC5 | I am likely to share my experience with a corporate brand on social media when my experience is similar to other social media users' experience with the respective corporate brand. | |
| OC6 | My selected corporate brand(s) is/are transparent on social media. | Personable interaction |
| OC7 | My selected corporate brand(s) display(s) altruism (selflessness) on social media. | |
| OC8 | The posts of my selected corporate brand(s) on social media are clear. | |
| OC9 | Posts of my selected corporate brand(s) on social media provide direction (for example, in a crisis). | |
| OC10 | The posts of my selected corporate brand(s) stimulate change among its/their followers. | |
| OC11 | The posts of my selected corporate brand(s) unite its/their users around a common interest. | |
| OC12 | My selected corporate brand(s) encourage(s) interaction among social media users. | Invitational rhetoric |
| OC13 | My selected corporate brand(s) drive(s) the conversation on social media. | |
| OC14 | My selected corporate brand(s) react(s) to social media users' comments on its/their posts. | |
| OC15 | My selected corporate brand(s) welcome(s) diverse perspectives on its/their posts. | |
| OC16 | My selected corporate brand(s) encourage(s) inputs from social media users towards building understanding about a topic. | |
| OC17 | My selected corporate brand(s) possess(es) knowledge on topical issues. | High issue involvement |
| OC18 | My selected corporate brand(s) provide(s) inputs on topical issues. | |
| OC19 | It is evident that my selected corporate brand(s) endeavor(s) to communicate the latest facts about contemporary issues. | |
| OC20 | My selected corporate brand(s) possess(es) knowledge about issues directly affecting its/their business. | |
| OC21 | My selected corporate brand(s) provide facts about issues that directly affect its/their business. | |
| OC22 | My selected corporate brand(s) regularly post(s) messages on social media. | Recency of information |
| OC23 | My selected corporate brand(s) provide(s) timeous updates on social media. | |
| OC24 | My selected corporate brand(s) provide(s) updates when information is urgently required (for example, in a crisis). | |
| OC25 | I am more aware of an update on an issue if the post includes a cue that states that it is the most recent update/information on the respective issue. | |
| OC26 | My selected corporate brand(s) include(s) cues in its/their posts to highlight that it is the most recent update on an issue. | |
| Additional social media (ASM) determinants | | |
| ASM27 | My selected corporate brand(s) invite(s) comments on their posts/products/services on social media. | sWOM |
| ASM28 | I am aware of sWOM about my selected corporate brand posts/products/services. | |
| ASM29 | I take part in sWOM about my selected corporate brand posts/products/services. | |
| ASM30 | sWOM about my selected corporate brand posts/products/services builds its credibility. | |
| ASM31 | My selected corporate brand(s) associate(s) with social media influencers. | Organization's connections (SMIs & experts) & followers |
| ASM32 | I take note of information posted by social media influencers on my selected corporate brand(s). | |
| ASM33 | Information posted by social media influencers contributes to building my selected corporate brand credibility. | |
| ASM34 | I find the information posted by social media influences my corporate brand credibility based on its/their credentials. | |
| ASM35 | I find information posted by social media influencers my selected corporate brand credible if it is substantiated by facts (like those that are evidenced/contained in statistics, research reports, etc.). | |
| ASM36 | I find the information posted by social media influencers on my selected corporate brand credible if it is supported by other social media users. | |
| ASM37 | My selected corporate brand(s) draw(s) from expert opinions when a topic is beyond its/their scope of expertise. | |

**Table 5 (Continued).** Organizational credibility & additional social media determinants

| Label | Item* | Determinant |
|---|---|---|
| ASM38 | The information provided by experts with whom my selected corporate brand(s) associate(s) could help to build the corporate brand credibility. | Organization's connections |
| ASM39 | I find the information posted by experts with whom my selected corporate brand(s) associate credible, based on their credentials. | (SMIs & experts) & |
| ASM40 | I find the information posted by experts with whom my selected corporate brand/s associate credible, if it substantiated by facts (such as those that are evidenced/contained in statistics, research reports, etc.). | followers |
| ASM41 | I find the information posted by experts with whom my selected corporate brand(s) associate credible if it is supported by other social media users. | |
| ASM42 | The followers of my selected corporate brand(s) build the corporate brand credibility. | |
| ASM43 | The followers of my selected corporate brand(s) build the corporate brand credibility when they positively engage with the posts of the corporate brand(s). | |

Note.*Enke and Borchers (2019), Haataja et al. (2016), Hajli (2018), Ismagilova et al. (2020), Kim and Brown (2015), Kreegimäe et al. (2019), Tandoc Jr (2018), Vraga and Bode (2017), Westerman et al. (2014)

**Table 6.** Kaiser's MSA for organizational credibility & additional social media determinants

| OC1 | OC2 | OC3 | OC4 | OC5 | OC6 | OC7 | OC8 | OC9 | OC10 | OC11 | OC12 | OC13 | OC14 | OC15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.96 | 0.93 | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.96 | 0.94 | 0.97 |

| OC16 | OC17 | OC18 | OC19 | OC20 | OC21 | OC22 | OC23 | OC24 | OC25 | OC26 | ASM27 | ASM28 | ASM29 | ASM30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.96 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.94 | 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.95 |

| ASM31 | ASM32 | ASM33 | ASM34 | ASM35 | ASM36 | ASM37 | ASM38 | ASM39 | ASM40 | ASM41 | ASM42 | ASM43 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.94 | 0.95 | 0.92 | 0.94 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.94 | 0.91 | 0.92 | 0.96 | 0.94 |

Note. Overall MSA=0.948

The results of the Kaiser's MSA for the items in section D are provided in **Table 6**.

**Table 6** depicts an overall MSA of 0.948, which indicates a good intercorrelation between the 43 items that were aimed at measuring the proposed organizational credibility determinants within the social media context. The fact that the individual MSAs of the items in this section were very close to one supported the conducting of a factor analysis.

The eigenvalues obtained for the various items indicated that an initial seven-factor structure could be considered, with it being aligned with the seven combined determinants identified in the literature for the organizational credibility and additional social media category. On examining the rotated factor structure, several double loaders (items OC7, OC9, OC10, OC12, OC14, OC17, OC24, OC25, OC26, ASM28, ASM29, ASM37, ASM42, and ASM43) were found, which resulted in the last factor being poorly defined. In addition, the cumulative proportion of variation explained was also studied. When the seventh factor was removed and the factor analysis repeated, a combined explanation of 71.93% of the total extent of variation in the data was provided. Therefore, the decision was taken to remove the double loaders from the analysis, and to retain a six-factor solution. **Table 7** depicts the factors that emerged from the final six-factor solution, by means of the Varimax rotation method.

In answering **RQ2**, three factors (factors 4, 5, and 7) emerged from the factor analysis. Factor 4 shows combined support for the items allocated to the determinants of invitational rhetoric and high issue involvement. The integration of the two determinants could make sense in the context of the current study, as it may well imply that the organization's credibility within the social media context could be heightened if the organization displays its knowledge of contemporary issues or topics and if it encourages social media user interaction regarding such issues or topics. Collectively, factor 4 could be labelled 'informed conversation', thus representing an integration of the original determinants of invitational rhetoric and high issue involvement.

Factor 5 strongly supported the determinant of homophily, as per the existing literature. In essence, this denotes that social media users are likely to engage with, and respond to, social media posts that are in line with their own interests, beliefs and principles (Tandoc Jr, 2018). Furthermore, social organizational credibility could be enhanced if other social media users' experience with a specific organization resembles their experience with the respective organization, as has already been confirmed by Yuan and Lou (2020).

**Table 7.** Final factor solution: Organizational credibility & additional social media determinants

Rotated factor pattern

| | Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 | Factor 6 | Factor 7 | Factor 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ASM33 | **0.80737** | 0.29679 | 0.11527 | 0.13748 | 0.13493 | 0.12838 |
| ASM34 | **0.80497** | 0.20517 | 0.10171 | -0.00070 | 0.29742 | 0.15234 |
| ASM32 | **0.75294** | 0.27853 | 0.10669 | 0.09944 | 0.31028 | 0.09705 |
| ASM36 | **0.72269** | 0.21156 | 0.23459 | 0.20964 | 0.10540 | 0.17492 |
| ASM41 | **0.66890** | 0.18778 | 0.16535 | 0.42031 | 0.03226 | 0.08870 |
| ASM35 | **0.66181** | 0.10787 | 0.19110 | 0.25344 | 0.21735 | 0.16402 |
| ASM31 | **0.64153** | 0.28546 | 0.14706 | 0.12303 | -0.08894 | 0.41186 |
| OC16 | 0.27514 | **0.72156** | 0.13994 | 0.25998 | 0.13800 | 0.25153 |
| OC18 | 0.28203 | **0.71976** | 0.12986 | 0.15117 | 0.27028 | 0.07853 |
| OC15 | 0.25587 | **0.68582** | 0.20237 | 0.16364 | 0.25604 | 0.14283 |
| OC19 | 0.33520 | **0.67667** | 0.07283 | 0.20456 | 0.31919 | 0.19235 |
| OC13 | 0.36805 | **0.64386** | 0.09624 | 0.09504 | 0.20251 | 0.30237 |
| OC21 | 0.10967 | **0.58835** | 0.18209 | 0.25485 | 0.20979 | 0.25908 |
| OC4 | 0.12954 | 0.06722 | **0.84680** | 0.24267 | 0.23137 | 0.10641 |
| OC3 | 0.17855 | -0.01757 | **0.83277** | 0.24402 | 0.25637 | 0.12223 |
| OC2 | 0.16119 | 0.31826 | **0.73977** | -0.04270 | -0.00689 | 0.20601 |
| OC5 | 0.33669 | 0.43291 | **0.67001** | 0.01629 | 0.08880 | 0.11737 |
| ASM40 | 0.14155 | 0.10886 | 0.09055 | **0.84260** | 0.14161 | 0.16654 |
| ASM39 | 0.30679 | 0.24711 | 0.12153 | **0.69866** | 0.25627 | 0.14472 |
| ASM38 | 0.35987 | 0.27185 | 0.19980 | **0.62678** | 0.07440 | 0.31891 |
| OC20 | 0.09580 | 0.31647 | 0.12802 | **0.57856** | 0.26560 | 0.28291 |
| OC1 | 0.25580 | 0.35535 | 0.20039 | 0.11767 | **0.66735** | 0.08713 |
| OC11 | 0.15623 | 0.25290 | 0.15003 | 0.18947 | **0.66287** | 0.23522 |
| OC8 | 0.21652 | 0.23179 | 0.19413 | 0.32661 | **0.60543** | 0.21838 |
| OC6 | 0.23058 | 0.41929 | 0.13320 | 0.12794 | **0.60184** | 0.20426 |
| ASM27 | 0.24134 | 0.21746 | 0.16162 | 0.14338 | 0.16485 | **0.73460** |
| OC23 | 0.18320 | 0.26381 | 0.12353 | 0.31053 | 0.25633 | **0.65072** |
| OC22 | 0.08935 | 0.13593 | 0.09281 | 0.21825 | 0.46683 | **0.63697** |
| ASM30 | 0.28354 | 0.23871 | 0.21982 | 0.20141 | 0.07690 | **0.62757** |

Variance explained by each factor

| Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 | Factor 6 | Factor 7 | Factor 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.977 | 4.261 | 3.003 | 2.986 | 2.834 | 2.797 |

Cronbach's coefficient alpha

| Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 | Factor 6 | Factor 7 | Factor 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.923 | 0.888 | 0.875 | 0.857 | 0.841 | 0.834 |

Final communality estimates: Total=20.859

| OC1 | OC2 | OC3 | OC4 | OC5 | OC6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.699 | 0.719 | 0.866 | 0.862 | 0.772 | 0.667 |
| OC8 | OC11 | OC13 | OC15 | OC16 | OC18 |
| 0.659 | 0.641 | 0.701 | 0.690 | 0.766 | 0.717 |
| OC19 | OC20 | OC21 | OC22 | OC23 | ASM27 |
| 0.756 | 0.611 | 0.567 | 0.706 | 0.704 | 0.719 |
| ASM30 | ASM31 | ASM32 | ASM33 | ASM34 | ASM35 |
| 0.626 | 0.707 | 0.771 | 0.807 | 0.812 | 0.625 |
| ASM36 | ASM38 | ASM39 | ASM40 | ASM41 | |
| 0.708 | 0.743 | 0.745 | 0.798 | 0.696 | |

Factor 7 encapsulates the determinant of personable interaction and therefore supports the existing literature (Kim & Brown 2015). This suggests that social organizational credibility could be enhanced if organizations humanize its communication on social media (Picard, 2015). Furthermore, social organizational credibility could be enhanced if the organization manages to create a sense of unity among its users, by means of posting information in which users appear to have a common interest (Chon & Kim, 2022). Factor 7 also includes an item that was originally allocated to measure the determinant of homophily. This item focused on the alignment between social media users and the organization's interests. This item could be associated with personable interaction as it aligns with the organization's endeavors to unite users around a common interest.

To answer **RQ2**, homophily and personable interaction were supported as important determinants of organizational credibility within the social media context. Invitational rhetoric, high issue involvement and recency of information could not be supported as individual determinants. The results did, however, provide evidence that a combination of invitational rhetoric and high issue involvement could impact on organizational credibility within the social media context. This insight resulted in a new determinant, namely informed conversation. The recency of information determinant relates to the determinant of sWOM, which falls under the additional social media determinants category, which is outlined in the next section.

### RQ3: Could sWOM Related to the Organization's Posts Contribute Towards Building the Credibility of an Organization Within the Social Media Context?

Similar to factor 4, sWOM was not confirmed as being a distinct determinant of the additional social media determinant category. Instead, factor 8 pointed to an integration of the recency of information and sWOM determinants, implying that sWOM could build an organization's credibility in the social media context if it is timeous and consistent. Based on this insight, referring to this determinant as 'apt sWOM' would be more appropriate. This specifically suggests that the sWOM related to the organization should be appropriate,

regular and fitting, in terms of contributing to the building of social organizational credibility. Although the current study could not provide support for the recency of information determinant on its own, apt sWOM could be regarded as providing some support for Westerman et al.'s (2014) argument that cognitive elaboration plays an important role in accepting the recency of information in the context of credibility. This is because the term 'apt sWOM' implies not only both timeous and consistent information, but also that the exchange of information is both appropriate and fitting to the existing facts and contexts.

### RQ4: Do an Organization's Connections (SMIs and Experts) and Followers Influence an Organization's Credibility Within the Social Media Context?

**Table 7** shows that both factors 3 and 6 support the proposition that an organization's connections (SMIs and experts) influence an organization's credibility on social media. Factor 3 consists of all the items that measured the role of SMIs in relation to enhancing the organization's credibility in the social media context. The respondents confirmed that SMIs play a definite role in building an organization's credibility on social media, provided that they produce quality and significant content and showcase expertise in terms of the discussion topics (Leite et al., 2022). Factor 6, which represents the items that measured the role of experts in building the organization's credibility on social media, also included an item that was originally allocated to the high issue involvement determinant. This item asserts that an organization should possess knowledge about issues directly affecting its business. The inclusion of this item in factor 6 makes sense, as it resonates with an organization's connections with experts on topics beyond its area of expertise. Factor 6, therefore, indicates that an organization should, firstly, be aware of the issues affecting its business before experts can be approached to comment on issues that are beyond their area of expertise. Like SMIs, this factor highlights that experts must also be regarded as credible (based on their credentials) and able to substantiate their claims. The items that aimed to measure the organization's followers in terms of building social organizational credibility were not confirmed to be part of this determinant, because it was removed from the final factor analysis, due to it being a double loader. Future research could focus on reviewing the potential role that an organization's followers could have in building social organizational credibility.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study confirmed the pragmatic relevance of previously identified determinants, namely trustworthiness (Jamal & Bakar, 2017; Kreegimäe et al., 2019), homophily (Ismagilova et al., 2020) and personable interaction (Kim & Brown, 2015), to the building of social organizational credibility. This indicates that social media users place high value on transparency and selfless acts of organizations when evaluating an organization's credibility. Furthermore, if social media users feel that an organization resonates with their personal interests and that they hold common ground with the organization, they are likely to perceive the organization as credible. The results obtained, however, did not support the credibility determinants outlined in the literature, like qualification and dynamism (Berlo et al., 1970; Jamal & Bakar, 2017), invitational rhetoric (Kim & Brown, 2015), recency of information (Westerman et al., 2014) and high issue involvement (Westerman et al., 2014) as single determinants. Instead, the study extended existing credibility literature by means of showcasing the relevance of the determinants to the building of social organizational credibility as reciprocal relationships, in the form of qualified resonance (dynamism and qualification), informed conversation (invitational rhetoric and high issue involvement) and apt sWOM (recency of information and sWOM). This implies that contemporary social media users have higher expectations when evaluating an organization's credibility in comparison to previous studies.

Social media users expect organizations to showcase expertise and knowledge on topical issues and their area of specializations in accordance with their own beliefs on the respective topic. The results also emphasized that the organization's awareness and expertise on a topic should be used as a platform for social media users to engage on topical matters. Furthermore, the results provided support for Westerman et al.'s (2014) finding that one's existing knowledge coupled with recent updates on a topic by the organization could have a significant impact on the credibility assessment of an organization. The results showcased that this is specifically relevant to sWOM–thus, sWOM could contribute to social organizational credibility if it is recent and contextualized with the social media user's existing knowledge.

In addition to recognizing the importance of sWOM, the present study also confirms that the newly identified determinant, SMIs and experts, plays a significant role in building social organizational credibility. The results showed support for Leite et al. (2022) arguments in a credibility context and suggests that organizations who connect with reliable SMIs and experts, who reflect on personal experience and provide knowledge on issues, could contribute to building social organizational credibility.

A limitation of the study is that the results are not generalizable, as only the social media users who were members of the selected communication and management associations concerned, or followers of the researcher's social media accounts, were able to participate in the survey. Furthermore, various items in the survey questionnaire were identified as double loaders in the factor analysis. These items were removed from the analysis and resulted in some determinants not being sufficiently analyzed. These items could be reviewed in future research. Despite such limitations, the results suggest that social organizational credibility consists of the foundational source credibility determinants of trustworthiness and qualified resonance. Such credibility also includes organizational credibility determinants in the social media context of homophily, personable interaction, informed conversation and apt sWOM. The results indicate that an additional social media determinant, namely SMIs and experts, could play a significant role in building an organization's social organizational credibility. This conceptualization of social organizational credibility provides a more holistic understanding of organizational credibility in the social media context and, consequently, affords guidance to organizations to enhance their credibility on social media.

By using the identified determinants identified in this study, future research could focus on devising actual strategies to assist organizations to enhance their social organizational credibility. This could be done by means of a qualitative approach among organizational managers and leaders. As part of such an exploration, the role of the communication professional as facilitator and coach could be examined. The extent of social organizational credibility could, still further, be measured using a different sample of social media users, whose results could be compared in accordance with various demographic categories, such as age, gender, level of employment and work experience. The conceptualization of social organizational credibility extends the existing body of literature on organizational credibility by offering direction as to how social media users evaluate an organization's credibility on social media. Such studies that aid in providing an understanding of organizational credibility assessment in social media are indispensable to address the lack of professional gatekeeping and misinformation associated with social media as interactive information platform.

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