

2023

The Impact of Social Media on Organ Donation

Miguel Enrique Sewer
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Miguel Enrique Sewer

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Walden University
2023

The Impact of Social Media on Organ Donation

by

Miguel Enrique Sewer

Master's in Public Administration, The University of Arkansas, 1996

Bachelor of Science, California State University, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration Leadership

Walden University

May 2023

Abstract

The organ-donor shortage remains a pressing issue facing the transplant community. There is a significant gap between supply and demand, which continues to broaden. This general qualitative study aimed to provide a road map to define the role of social media and its interrelationship with increasing organ donation. The study utilizes the potential of a communication framework to increase outreach and education, serving as an alternative to increasing organ donors' participation. The conceptual underpinnings for this study are the Social Representations Theory, the Organ Donation Willingness Model, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. The data was collected using an online eight-item Survey Monkey questionnaire, conducted with a purposeful sample of sixty-one transplant doctors, nurses, and coordinators at Kansas Medical University Hospital, along with transplant athletes from the MO-Kan team were used to collect the data. The data were exported from Survey Monkey into Microsoft Excel for the first coding cycle. The second cycle consisted of analyzing the code data using IBM SPSS. The results demonstrated the relationship between social media and organ donation. The social change implications of this study concluded that social media could be a conduit to address the shortage of donor organs. By targeting the public through social media, new interventions, and policies can be identified and developed, and offered as mechanisms to increase donor organs.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Dr. Doris Sewer, who died December 14, 2002, from heart disease, and my father, Edmundo Sewer, who passed on May 08, 2003, from the death of his wife of 44 years. As soldiers of knowledge, my parents believed it was crucial to the foundation of the human condition. Their objective was to provide the value of education to ensure that their children were personally grounded to set us in a positive atmosphere.

Acknowledgments

The journey to obtaining this degree has been long-suffering and daunting at times. Although I had setbacks due to medical problems, those who accept this challenge often place their lives on hold. This meant family members and friends were placed at a distance to focus on this endeavor. Likewise, I would also like to thank the candidates, from Kansas University Medical Center in Overland Park, Kansas, and representatives from the transplant athletes. I would also like to thank the candidates, National Kidney Foundation, and the North Carolina Healthcare Services. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank God for this strength and mercies throughout this journey. Dr. Raj Singh, (committee chair) and Dr. Ernesto Escobedo, (committee member), thank you for your guidance and direction throughout this process. Their advice in this process has been instrumental in my progression within the guidelines of Walden University.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The prospect of a terminally ill child who requires a new heart and is placed on a waiting list due to a lack of available solid donor organs is not an uncommon story in mass media. Although such stories are often seen, the list of patients awaiting a donor organ has increased since the early eighties (Bread, 2013). As of 2020, almost 120,000 people were on the waiting list for a solid organ transplant; however, sadly, approximately 22 people per day have lost their battle awaiting the gift of life (United Network for Organ Sharing, 2020).

Organ transplantation is a definitive treatment methodology intended to extend life when the disease causes irrevocable damage to a human body organ. Consider that the premise of transplantation started in 1818 as the brainchild of James Blundell, a British obstetrician who conducted the first blood-to-blood transfusion to save a mother's life during childbirth. This basic concept has been the standard used to save countless lives over the years, while the lack of available donor organs continues to increase due to many factors. Thus, transplantation is a journey with many sometimes unforeseen intricate and ethical issues (Report on the State of Transplantation, 2009). This epic journey often described as "The Gift of Life" catalogs the contributing factors that have raised the bar of prolonging life. The many pieces to the puzzle of life have been tested using new surgical techniques and medications and patient trials to complete this puzzle with changes occurring daily.

Unfortunately, the incidence of death continued to rise due to the shortage of donor organs. Thanks to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), which was started in 1984 to address the growing concerns about organ availability and social ethics, strides have been made within the transplant community. Currently, the organization provides the network used to facilitate the process of organ donation, which is the bridge to organ transplantation. UNOS provides the service as a national clearing house known as the “national waiting list” for donated organs from around the United States by continually monitoring and evaluating organ availability that is then categorized. Thus, it marries the patient through the National Kidney Foundation with an available organ using UNOS for a transplant match. This life-saving approach gives hope to the over 120,000 people awaiting organ transplants in the United States. The process of organ transplantation can add years and meaning to the patient while adding happiness to their families (Organ Procurement & Transplantation Network, 2020).

Although the shortage of donor organs has increased annually, researchers such as Morgan (2009), along with Movius and Cody (2009) suggested that the need for public awareness, attitudes, and knowledge for organ donors is geared toward mass media. This has been the framework used to anchor the social discourse regarding organ donation. Due to changing means of social communication, social media is becoming the framework of choice. For example, social media is currently used to transmit information like the telegraph. This process is viewed as one-on-one communication vs. mass media.

Over the years, many measures have been proposed to ensure donor organs are made available through the influence of information within the national narrative and ethical rules to address the social justice concerns within the transplant community (Surg, 2011). Friedman (2005) suggested the root of this trend often depicts actions that humans take in decision-making as attributed to cognitive biases, and mental models that can foster unplanned or unintended results; this problem remains extraordinary. The needs are many when it comes to finding a pragmatic solution to address the narrative in the process of increasing donor organs. The transplant community is in flux to discover the communication tool of choice.

The use of mass media remains the tool of choice; nevertheless, the lack of donor organs is a major social problem that has been around for years Morgan (2009). Researchers suggest this is due to multiple factors, such as attitudes, personal beliefs, and cultural norms, which play a role in this phenomenon of organ donation, Childress (2001). The continued lack of donor organs speaks to a lingering social problem that remains a cry for help in the transplant community. Scholars and practitioners recognize the social implications regarding the lack of donor organs as the underlying reason for the imbalance of organ donation (Mahoney, 2009). The key to understanding the basis of organ donation is altruism. The notion of altruism is giving one's organ (Trivers, 1971).

Chapter 1 presents the major facets detailed in future chapters. This division provides the context of this study that examines a concise historical and existing viewpoint regarding organ donation through mass media. Subsequently, these sections

will consist of the following: a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the operational definitions of terms. The remaining portion of the chapter includes descriptions of the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, the importance and social change implications of the study, assumptions, and scope and delimitations of the study, and concludes with a summary.

Background of the Study

As detailed by UNOS (2021), organ donation is a lifesaving medical intervention intended to prolong life. Although there are many success stories regarding organ donation, on the surface, this transactional approach seems impressive around the margins. The success of organ transplantation has outstripped the supply of donor organs, creating a shortage that continues to grow annually (Waterman & Rodriguez, 2009). This disparity has resulted in a growing list in each organ category, such as kidneys, livers, hearts, pancreas, etc. Individuals who demonstrate their desire to donate can potentially save an estimated eight lives awaiting a transplant. The gift of life comes at no cost to the donor's family once their loved one is deemed medically suitable at their time of death (U.S. Department of Health & Human Service, 2010).

Childress (2001) suggested that many factors, such as belief systems, symbols, sentiments, and emotions, drive the limited understanding of this social benefit resulting in a stagnant procurement process. These barriers must be addressed to eliminate the many misconceptions surrounding this topic. Furthermore, a lack of knowledge about organ donation continues to contribute to the shortage of organs within the United States

and the world. Other influencing factors in the shortage of organs are a failure in public policy efforts to adequately articulate the complexities and the lack of concessive protocol for communication and education.

Morgan (2009) suggests that using social representations theory (SRT), the art of communication can provide the needed narrative in creating a social message useful in promoting organ donation with mass media. In addition, there is a need to strike up a pragmatic approach to face the problematic experiences relative to organ procurement. This theory, based on the intersection of conversation, provides the gateway to the social representation of organ donation defined through the SRT and mass media. The essence of the social media strategy has brought awareness to the global digital divide shedding light and public awareness proven through organ donation by multiple researchers in standard multimedia (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011). Although mass media has been the standard used to promote organ donation, the missing link of scholarly literature has been based on media campaigns, demonstrating the need for additional pathways to enhance the process of education and organ donation social awareness.

The use of social media offers an element regarding social networks, a model to address knowledge regarding organ donation through multiple channels of communication (Steinfeld et al., 2008; Waterman et al., 2009). These models present a compelling way to assess the magnitude of characteristics to approach social behaviors affecting organ donation within a contextual and social networks perspective (Ladin & Hanto, 2010). This unique system offers a theoretical perspective on how groups of

people communicate on emerging and novel phenomena regarding the social aspect and social representation. This process helps to mold the behavior of individuals who belong to these social groups (Markus & Plaut, 2001). Social media also provides an avenue of understanding to address organ donation issues. It could shed light on the need for donor organs while enhancing public morale (Siegel et al., 2008). In one example, D'Alessandro et al. (2012) conducted a study aimed at exploring the viral nature of social media to diffuse organ donor-related information. The results of this study demonstrated how social media can provide the rationale for understanding the willingness to have influence in becoming an organ donor.

Over time, mass media has been the standard used to promote organ donation. The missing link of scholarly literature has been based on mass media, which demonstrates the need for additional pathways to enhance education and social awareness. This study intends to narrow the gap in knowledge through social media regarding organ donation by providing a structural pathway through education and social awareness to increase organ donation, which remains to be determined in this study. Although previous studies have looked at social media as it relates to college students as seeders to promote organ donor registration, social media education can be a standard principle to reach social awareness (Cameron et al., 2013; Stefanone et al., 2012).

The purpose of this study is to use a qualitative method to discover the potential of social media to increase organ donation while building on the study conducted by Morgan (2009), "*The Intersection of Conversation, Cognitions, and Campaigns: The*

Social Representation of Organ Donation,” regarding mass media using the SRT model. Similarly, the review of this literature offers a theoretical framework, using the social networking theory serving as a building block to engage and create communication processes to advance the foundation of social media and organ donation, as described by D’Alessandro et al. (2012).

Problem Statement

The act of organ donation draws into question many subjective meanings for organ donors and recipients. Factors such as bioethics, medical practices, and cultural norms are but a few of the complexities that contribute to the landscape of this ever-changing social phenomenon. Researchers have wrestled with the lack of cohesiveness of public support reflected in opinion polls, and the donation process (Gallup, 2005). Historically, extensive scholarly research has been conducted around organ donation registration through mass media such as radio, magazines, newspapers, and television to increase donations; however, research is limited to social media (Markus & Plaut, 2001; Morgan, 2009).

Informational campaigns promoting organ donation have been in the public consciousness; nevertheless, it makes sense that social networking offers a significant role in organ donation (Eysenbach & Kohler, 2002). There appears to be a psychological distance causing scholars to search for “better clues” to advance their understanding of the continuing distortion of donor organs (Siminoff et al., 1995; Stark & Riley, 1984; Stoeckle, 1990). Even with the advent of clinical and scientific advances in organ

transplantation, such as improvements in transplant solutions, and new transplant techniques, Alvaro et al. (2006) used the impact of the Spanish language to construct the maze using the SRT along with the concepts of the model of organ donation willingness and theory of planned behavior; the hope is to provide the framework needed to study and understand the social media platform to address the lack of education concerning organ donation. A review of the literature showed an empirical correlation between social media and organ donation registration. The aim of social media is to use the social framework to address registration although education was not the basis of this study Cameron et al. (2013).

The potential effect of social media could serve as a conduit using the recent phenomenon of social media, in the digital space. Hoijer (2011) speaks to the link of society and individual, media and public communication to transform and generate collective cognition (p. 3). Thus, understanding this organ donation process places the illness on education to move this study forward. Based on this generic qualitative study, the human and social experience is intended to expand the knowledge gap to understand social media as it relates to organ donation education. The potential benefits, and the possible strengths that social media could offer to the transplant community positive changes regarding persons needing an organ donation (Fleck & Johnson-Migalski, 2015). The potential benefits of using this social media application are intended to address the indemnified gaps between donor organs and education. Promoting the understanding of

organ donation education through social media outreach proposes to address the social dynamics of education and human nature (D'Alessandro et al., 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Social media phenomenon over the last ten years has been the new standard for communication. This process has changed the dynamics of personal behaviors to increase organ donation (Morgan et al., 2010). This format has transformed the art of online communication providing the art of social interaction to promote effective networking. Based on this research, additional effective tools are needed to advance the understanding of the organic nature of organ donation, which could add relevance to this approach because little is known regarding the widespread nature of this social media conduit and organ donation.

The purpose of this generic qualitative study is to provide a road map in which to define the role of social media and its interrelationship to possibly increase organ donation. The goal of this study is to use the potential of the communication framework to increase outreach and education, serving as an alternative to increasing the availability of organ donors. The use of social media as a peer-to-peer format can provide the intervention needed to disseminate firsthand information. Social media is a source of communication in the public space which creates an open feedback loop to enlighten social discourse (Fleck & Johnson-Migalski, 2015). The goal of this qualitative study is to use knowledge gained from the social media arenas to provide a positive direction by

using the outlet of social interaction in the digital space to address the lack of donor organs through knowledge and education.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this study is to use social media to increase the number of organ donations. This study aims to explore the underpinning of social media through SRT, expanding on the premise of this model to address social media as an accepted method to increase organ donation through education. The generic qualitative study approach allows for a penetrating review of an in-depth perspective allowing the researcher to focus on issues of concern (Stake, 1995). In addition, this thoughtful approach lends itself to a social or humanistic problem through the criterion-based sampling phenomenon (Babbie, 2007; Creswell, 2007). The problems associated with organ donation are multifaceted in nature and need to be evaluated through the experiences of individuals and practitioners to capitalize on the needs of this social problem (Horton & Horton, 1999; Morgan & Cannon, 2003).

Although a qualitative method such as grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies could have evaluated this hypothesis, they lack rich detail compared to a qualitative research approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The intent of this generic qualitative study is to explore and analyze the social media phenomenon through the SRT framework to understand the complex interplay of organ donation and social education. This research is based on the study “*The Intersection of Conversation, Cognitions, and Campaigns: The Social Representation of Organ Donation*” conducted by Morgan (2009)

uses the SRT framework to examine the interrelationship between interpersonal communications and mass media requiring a social response. This study ultimately aims to understand the complexities of organ donation in determining how to encourage and develop a deeper understanding needed to motivate and promote behavioral change through education.

Moscovici (2000) suggested that the SRT framework examines the dynamics of collective representations, which refers to standard ways of thinking that are static compared to the understanding of contemporary society. The interplay of social structure and individual “sets free” social binding from traditional structures like family and religion (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Giddens, 1994). The intent is to gain a richer understanding of individual and social behaviors to educate and influence organ donation willingness. Through a criterion-based sampling approach, two selected groups of volunteers were used to collect the participants’ online survey data from braiding SRT framework and the pragmatic nature of this problem, which was intended to reveal a richer understanding as described by qualitative research methods (Babbie, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Moreover, the objective of SRT is to provide a basic framework for social media that is aimed at providing a high-quality and valid research technique to address the social medium phenomenon of Facebook. Morgan’s (2009) research on interpersonal communication, mass media, and other peer-reviewed information provides the boundaries needed to address the willingness and understanding of altruism. Likewise,

the plan was to employ, as mentioned, common organ donation models to check the credibility and reliability of the qualitative study, as suggested by Creswell (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Morgan, 2009).

Research Questions

The study is directed by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do transplant doctors, transplant nurses, and transplant coordinators at Kansas University Medical Center depict the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ2. How do representatives from the transplant athletes' team from Kansas, Missouri describe the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ3. How do transplant doctors, transplant nurses, transplant coordinators at Kansas University Medical Center, and representatives from the transplant athletes' team from Kansas, Missouri perceive that organ donation can be enhanced via social media?

Conceptual Framework

Through the lenses of SRT, this basic framework provides for the understanding of using mass media (Berglez et al., 2009; Hoijer, 2010; Olausson, 2010). Likewise, other theories, such as planned behavior, seek to predict behavior based on one's beliefs and attitudes (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and organ donation willingness (Horton & Horton, 1991). The purpose of these other theories is to provide a window to various aspects of organ donation.

Social Representation Theory

The SRT was first developed by Serge Moscovici and describes the collective processes that result in common cognitions that produce social bonds uniting societies, organizations, and groups (Hojjer, 2011, p.3). This principle of communication offers a novel approach to assessing mass media (Bergleze et al., 2009; Hojjer, 2010; Olausson, 2010). This theory lays the foundation for mass media, reinforcing it as a conceptual guide to advance communication. It also lends itself to understanding how the media and individuals process societal and political issues (Hojjer, 2011). The essence of this theory enables the researcher to address communication mechanisms that reveal how new ideas create attitudes to influence social patterns.

Model of Organ Donation Willingness

Horton and Horton (1991) were the first to suggest individuals' willingness as an influence on attitudes to organ donation. This model proposes the concept of individual knowledge that contributes to one's values, age, and attitudes, as well as to one's understanding of death. Likewise, (Horton and Horton's model positioned the information by Kopfman and Smith (1999) and Skumanich and Kintsfather (1996) not only fundamentally but to accommodate new psychological variables that impact organ donation willingness.

Additionally, Morgan and Miller (2002) determined that factors such as knowledge, attitude, values such as altruism, and behavioral willingness intent are fundamental in organ donation. Historically, theories such as the organ donation

willingness model have addressed the fundamental issues of attitudes, knowledge, values, and perceived social norms to understand the complexities of organ donation (Horton & Horton, 1991). Other aspects of this model are elements of psychological variables, such as empathy (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1996), acceptance of mortality (Cleveland, 1975; Robbins, 1990; Sanner, 1994), humanitarian impulses (Cleveland, 1975; Steven, 1998), low death and/or body anxiety (Kopfman et al., 1998, 1998; Robbins, 1990; Sanner, 1994), and rationality (Morgan & Miller, 2002; Sanner, 1994). Researchers have provided the groundwork to understand the intent of an organ donor as purely altruistic for those needing an organ transplant.

Overall, the combination of these researchers and the constructs of this model advance predictive nature as a causal relationship to predict willingness behavior. For example, as noted in the research by Kopfman (1994), the variable of fear can be countered through education. Morgans (2009) study regarding the intersection of the interrelationships between interpersonal communication, cognition, and the mass media relies on organ donation as a social responsibility. Although this theory is behavioral in nature, the components of SRT unpack the elements of the interpersonal communication phenomena, which are a part of the social cues of mass media.

Researchers have addressed this theory to establish ones willingness to contribute by advancing the potential of personal attitudes and behavior that transform social norms (Gary et al., 2004). Recent empirical studies involving motivation suggest the idea of not only the precondition of organ donation but also communication methods that build

relationships to foster the understanding of organ donation in the social context (Feely & Vincent, 2007).

Theory of Planned Behavior

Historically, attitudes and subjective norms were the sources of behavioral research to predict personal intentions (Hyde & White, 2009). Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB) is one such view. He postulated that attitudes, subjective norms, and the consideration of control factors aided in predicting intentions and behavior. This theory is an extension of the theory of reasoned action, which is intended to account for behaviors said not to be under the individual's cognitive control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991; Hyde & White, 2009). In this context, this social psychological model of human behavior is the measure of altruistic behavior along with health-related behaviors (Choi, 2012).

Furthermore, SRT captures the interrelationships which can facilitate social and behavioral change. In this context, real-time social cues can help integrate better communication tools in numerous ways. Morgan (2009) pushed this idea while developing and encapsulating a framework to triangulate the elements of mass media and social responsibility. While this framework addresses the idea of communication, it fails in attitudes and willingness to understand the human element.

Although TPB is advantageous in understanding the premise of an individual's attitudes and subjective norms, the basis of one's attitude can be based on other contributing factors (Huber & Kaiser, 2006). Huber and Kaiser (2006) conducted a large

study to demonstrate the relevance of TPB variables in the process with the willingness to communicate coincide with the elements of predictive behavior. Despite the potential influences of altruistic behaviors, social norms within the context of social science make up interdisciplinary research and multiple methodologies these elements help make up the landscape of the interpersonal effect of mass communication (Morgan, 2009). Thus, TPB is a theoretical framework used to lay the foundation that accounts for the facts that contribute to the attitudes and behaviors of the individual that can lead to psychological obstacles to organ donation (Hyde & White, 2009a).

Definition of Terms

Operational terms allow researchers to define what they intended or meant using a specific term (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). This permits other researchers or readers to comprehend the variables and evaluate the study has validity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). The definitions for the following terms are below and are specific to this study.

E-Learning. E-learning refers to online or electronic learning (Tamm, 2022). It is the acquisition of knowledge that occurs via electronic technologies and media (Tamm, 2022). This can be seen via social media networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, text messaging, and blogs.

Facebook. Facebook is an online social media and networking tool used to communicate with friends, family, and colleagues (Nations, 2021).

Mass Media. Communication and information can reach large numbers of individuals in a short time, such as via television, newspapers, magazines, and radio (Free Dictionary, 2014).

Organ Donation. Organ donation usually occurs after an individual dies. It takes healthy organs and tissues from one individual for transplantation into another (Medline Plus, 2017). Organs that can be donated include the heart, liver, kidney, pancreas, intestines, lungs, skin, bone, bone marrow, and cornea (Medline Plus, 2017).

Organ Donor. An organ donor is an individual or cadaver that donates their organs to a recipient (The Free Medical Dictionary, 2022).

Organ Transplantation. Organ transplantation is a medical procedure where an organ is removed from one body and placed into the body of the recipient to replace a damaged or missing organ (The Free Dictionary, 2022).

Social Media. Social media is a web-based communication tool such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube which is used to present information to individuals, specialized groups, or mass consumption. These types of communication are viewed more often as two-way communication tools (The Free Dictionary, 2022)

Assumptions

Assumptions are defined as obvious facts or truths accepted by researchers, colleagues, and other readers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). The first assumption is that the respondents will be honest while providing their answers. This study elicited the perspectives from an online survey with transplant doctors, transplant nurses, and

transplant coordinators at Kansas University Medical Center and representatives from the transplant athletes' team in Kansas and Missouri. To reduce social desirability bias, I informed the participants that their answers were confidential and would not be shared with anyone not associated with the study. Dishonest answers could jeopardize the study's findings, validity, and reliability (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020).

The second assumption was that using SRT was appropriate in examining the interrelationship between impersonal communication cognition of mass media. This study assumes that because this model was successful in examining organ donation in mass media, this same model can be feasible and successful in this qualitative study to examine organ donation in social media space. In addition, this model was one of three models to examine the relationship between social media regarding the educational value of this study.

The third assumption was that the author would remain objective and bias-free while performing this study. Being objective will prevent the study from being contaminated or manipulated during data collection and analysis. These occurrences were minimized by following the University's standardized protocols for data collection, and an outside statistician was hired that was not affiliated with the study to conduct the data analysis. These steps would allow the study results to be generalized.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations occur within a study and could impact the results and conclusion. They are conditions a researcher had no control over (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). The

limitations defined in this study are based on one's understanding of social media. The first limitation is my ability to capture data from the underlying three parts of this study prospective organ recipients that are members of the social media community, practitioners from the Kansas medical healthcare systems, and the transplant athletes' Kansas and Missouri. This process of data collection could be costly due to time and money.

The second limitation concerns receiving sufficient information from the participants due to time factors, their roles, or busy schedules. The third limitation is that this study employed a qualitative approach to collect, analyze, and address the interpretations gathered. Creswell and Creswell (2018) spoke of bias as a limitation of this type of study. To minimize the potential internal and external biases, steps were taken, such as data quality techniques to ensure that the research used was from quality sources devoid of missing data and missing variables (Babbie, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam, 2002).

Scope and Delimitations

The parameter of this qualitative study is single in nature and limited in scope and nature. The first is relevant to this qualitative case, *The Intersection of Conversation Cognitions and Campaigns: The Social Representation of Organ Donation* (Morgan, 2009). The observations found in this case study consisted of research literature regarding mass media and in conjunction with the formal context nature of organ donation.

Although, the premise of this study uses the SRT to understand the lack of relevance of mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television. The intent was to use the phenomenon of social media. Secondly, an online survey was conducted with several groups consisting of transplant medical staff at Kansas University Medical Center; representatives from the transplant athletes' team from Kansas and Missouri that represent the transplant community. Finally, these interviews intend to gather detailed analysis based on social media through the lens of SRT methodology, which has been utilized to study health-related topics. This research information will articulate delimiters regarding mass media and social media.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this generic qualitative study is to provide an understanding for practitioners and scholars of how the use of social channels impacts organ donation. As previously mentioned, the literature elevated the contextual makeup of organ donation and the lack of organ available organ. Nevertheless, empirical relationships have advanced the potential effects of mass media and organ donation (Morgan, 2009). This study was constructed to bridge the gap in knowledge while advancing the understanding of organ donation needed to provide the educational framework of social media to address the shortage of donor organs.

Although scholars and practitioners have dealt with this social issue, as noted earlier, the policies developed over the years, through mass media, still need to create an effective long-term strategy to increase the lack of donor organs through education.

Likewise, government policies and recommendations such as The National Organ Transplant Act, a section of the Social Security Act (2000), have yet to advance the availability of donor organs. In most cases, previous studies have primarily addressed donor registration. Nevertheless, this study aims to help create triggers through an educational, social media framework to effect positive social change.

Summary

Societal change is an active process. Friedman (2005) asserted that the human condition is resistant to change and tends to embrace the status quo. This research problem enlightens the value of literature that is based on the phenomenon of organ donation and the lack of organs. Additionally, the purpose of the study is to explore and understand the knowledge gap between social media and organ donation through digital platforms. This study draws on SRT, the TPB, and the model of organ donation to guide the underpinning of this study. Like mass media, the phenomenon of social media is the portal that addresses the attitudes of engagement at a social level without barriers (Friedman, 2005).

Chapter 2 accounts for a detailed literature review that analyzes previous and current theoretical frameworks to investigate the link between mass media and organ donation. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology used in this qualitative approach and explains the rationale for this study. Chapter 4 presents the results, and the closing chapter discusses the interpretation of these findings, study limitations, recommendations, and study implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The notion of organ donation has been around since the early eighties. Yet the process of receiving an organ continues to have shortages in the system. The basis of this study is asserted by the notion, that strategic shift by health care professionals and researchers toward social marketing principles is placing greater emphasis on finding ways to involve community members in promoting the benefits of pro-social health issues (D'Alessandro et al., 2012). The recent phenomenon of social media's potential to increase education regarding organ donation is based on the understanding of SRT, often used in social culture to communicate, and influence social behaviors (Morgan, 2009). SRT helps influence attitudes, and cognitions in relation to framing a given social issue (Abric, 1993; Wagner et al., 1996). Nevertheless, perceptions are anchored by the issue which guides SRT.

Likewise, the societal currency is the utility used to formulate attitudes that help frame perceptions. Although this approach is not unique, the usage of SRT in addressing the problem of organ donation helps carry the function of this social issue. Its strengths rely on the potential to increase education and organ donation. Its inherent weakness is based on the lack of current social norms due to changing methods of communication approaches. This chapter aims to review the literature regarding SRT and traditional communication modes such as newspapers, radio, and TV.

The observation of social culture helps to underpin this research problem, and the purpose of this study leads to the first section of this literature review. This section will focus on the findings of scholarly peer-reviewed articles from the perspective of a qualitative methodology through the lens of a phenomenology approach.

Phenomenology designs refer to data collection strategies in which measurements are obtained from an individual's experience (Onghena & Edgington, 2005). In addition, this chapter will reveal knowledge of mass media, social media, and their contrast. Likewise, the organ donation willingness model and the TPB contribute to the triangulating of data from multiple researchers that reflect the understanding of theories, practices, and complexities of organ donation.

Understanding culture and the assimilation of attitudes, behavioral norms, knowledge, and values are the key components that empower social norms (Horton & Horton, 1991). Childress (2001) spoke to the many factors that add value to the intentions and discussions that impact beliefs, symbols, and sentiments that often contribute to the emotional push that can lead to social good. Central to the perception of this social problem is establishing a continuum of knowledge missing in the potential nexus of the social media relationship and organ donation by way of the social media platform. Central to this study are these three questions to address the gap in the knowledge regarding social media being used to increase the availability of donor organs.

Research Questions

The study is directed by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do transplant doctors, transplant nurses, and transplant coordinators at Kansas University Medical Center depict the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ2. How do representatives from the transplant athletes' teams in Kansas and Missouri describe the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ3. How do transplant healthcare personnel from Kansas University Medical Center in Overland Park, Kansas, and representatives from the transplant athletes' team in Kansas and Missouri perceive that organ donation can be enhanced via social media?

In addition, references used by previous authors were used to locate additional resources as part of the general research. The net effect of the literature review regarding social media and organ donation was very limited. However, strong empirical evidence advanced the notion of mass media and the intersection of the conversation of organ donation (Morgan, 2009). This gives credence to the approach and intended goal of this study while providing a holistic approach that utilizes the tenor of mass media through Morgan's empirical study to drive and expand this qualitative study of social media (Morgan, 2009).

Although medical research has been in the media for many years, researchers have focused on the impact of television on informal communication (Harrison, 2000; Kim et al., 2006; Kraemer & Greene, 1999, 2000; Strasburger et al., 2009; Villani, 2001). The effects on the public are from mass media; thus, perceptions regarding organ

donation may be inaccurate. Nevertheless, in many cases, falsehoods are portrayed, leading to mistrust (Centers for Disease Control, 2008).

Morgan's empirical study provided the keywords or search terms used alone or in combination, *including communication models, mass media, medical choices, national organ donation data, organ donation, organ donation theories, social communication, social attitudes regarding data, social media, social attitudes, attitudes regarding data, and medical choices.*

This study is structured as follows: (a) the phenomenon of organ donation; (b) the nature of organ donation; (c) defining and conceptualizing organ donation; (d) the scope of mass media and communication; (e) defining and conceptualizing mass media; (f) background literature on social media and its role on organ donation; (g) the scope of promotion and social media; and (h) summary and conclusion. To capture the relevant literature that demonstrates empirical evidence the Walden University research databases were the primary source of documents. Databases and search engines included but not limited to EBSCO (Academic Search Premier and Business Search Premier), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses-Full Text Collections, ABI/INFORM Global, SAGE Full-Text Collections, Education Research Complete, ERIC, and PsycINFO. Databases used were Facebook, Gallup Organization, Loyola Medicine, Organ & Tissue Transplantation in America, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, UNOS, and Google.

Likewise, articles and publications used throughout this literature review discovered in this review offered traditional intervention through mass media. However,

content regarding organ donation and social media was limited in nature. The phenomenon of social media is evolving as a tool to analyze patterns in communication (Boyd, 2015).

The Nature of Organ Donation

The comprehensive approach of organ donation is intended to capture organ procurement's true nature, which adds to the foundation needed to bring this problem to the social forefront. As mentioned, about 120,000 people are waiting for organ transplants of some type; however, on average, the availability of organs to be transplanted is about 20,000 per year, leaving a significant difference in needed organs (Department of Human and Health Services, 2011). Even with new advances in transplantation, primarily in surgical techniques, organ recovery, and anti-rejection medications, the frequency of organ donation has stayed the same. This may be due to the education lag regarding transplantation advances in the public discourse.

Many states have adopted laws to help facilitate organ donation, but their success rates have been marginal at best, leading to slight changes. National organizations, such as UNOS, have lobbied Congress for better laws to standardize the procurement process nationwide to increase the commitment to current policies. National policies have bridged the organ donation process to operationalize the challenges of this complex social notion (Sminoff et al., 1995), which is needed for social change.

Although this topic has been in public physics for several decades, researchers like Wagner and Manolis (2012) examined the idea that social fears associated with blood

and organ donation are a true phenomenon. Other researchers have provided insight into their ability to measure and understand the emotions regarding organ donation. For example, Wang (2012) investigated the intentions and influence of one's attitude to predict their intention of organ donation.

Researchers such as Harrison et al. (2008) evaluated the effective Department of Motor Vehicles and organ donor registries in informing the public regarding organ donation. Their role as boundary spanners depends on the public approach and their knowledge, and education regarding organ donation (Harrison et al., 2008). Although in some countries there is a slight increase in the donor registry, that does not mean there is an increase in organ transplants.

Likewise, social patterns are echoed in several other studies in an effort needed to encompass the influence needed to control this social problem of organ registration and donation (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Uncovering these social patterns provides a perspective that is unique to organ donation and not seen in other areas of health. Pitts et al. (2009) advanced the notion of mapping the processes and patterns of family attitudes toward organ donation which provides the baseline and catalyst to a donation that researchers suggest plays a crucial role in organ donation.

By its very nature, organ procurement is required. It adds a complex piece to the organ donation process, which can sometimes exclude eligible persons due to inequity in the equal distribution system. In general, inequities of services due to bureaucracy and personal bias due to wealth, power, race, and personal belief systems, are ethical

dilemmas surrounding organ transplantation in the same vein (Simmerling, 2007). Thus, equity in distribution and access is potentially the challenge that has driven the term coined “bioethics” in the mid-1970s, which emerged from the need to address modern clinical science (Daniels, 2001).

Fundamental and historical inequalities have contributed to damaging the idea of organ donation, which is an essential component of transplantation. Proponents of transplantation resist the notion of constraints and embrace distribution justice and the virtues of equal access. Svava and Brunet (2007) suggested in response to Rosenbloom’s operational definition of social justice that distribution and access are components that administrators should ensure that benefits be available to all equally when policies and principles are being adopted. This is critical when recourse is being used to assist the idea of social worthiness based on the standard notion of discrimination.

The moral imperative within this environment as researchers is to tear down any notions of discrimination that may contribute to setting boundaries relevant to our social justice system grounded in human rights, equality, liberty, and justice. As described by Fandi (2010), social justice concepts are fluid and often need to be attractively packaged when decisions are based on the notion of expected outcomes. This is so true when dealing with an organ shortage and the human factor involved, which is still relevant today.

Defining and Conceptualizing Organ Donation

The idea of organ donations brings out the passions of researchers and recipients alike to define the complexities of this social agenda. The dichotomy of actors that challenge yet add validity to this social problem is based on the common fundamental that brings real-life experiences to this mix of research and social patterns (Wagner & Manolis, 2012). Faced with public awareness, the understanding of social systems enables the role of researchers to capture the experiences of the ones in need which make this process work.

Conceptually, the understanding of what moves one to donate an organ is influenced by many social factors. Researchers such as Rosenstock et al. (1988) are provided long-standing relevant theories which have been used to identify motivations, attitudes, and behaviors instrumental to understanding individuals (Wang, 2012). Fundamentally, their approach examines the appropriateness of social behaviors attributed to social factors.

This systemic approach aims to understand communication altitudes and organ donation through several social cognitive models, such as the theory of reasoned action; the TPB, which has been the behavior model associated with combating low organ donation rates (Hyde & White, 2010). For example, Lazarus's (1991) theoretical conception of fear has been used to discover and support the concept of fear as it relates to blood and organ donation.

The underlying premise is geared to draw on this qualitative study, which adds value to the embedded analysis of the social focus of communication through mass media to influence personal decisions to advance the process of organ donation (Morgan, 2009). Hyde and White (2010) identified the benefits of which reason pathway to predicting communication decisions through the combination of perceived behavioral control and the TPB.

The relevance of this generic qualitative study is meant to capture the link between individuals and activity to focus and change social outcomes using social media and the communication platform. Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) spoke to the single case approach to focus on the intrinsic nature to measure a holistic analysis to support real-life social understanding.

The Scope of Mass Media and Communication

The phenomenon of mass media as a communication vehicle provides the basis for a qualitative theoretical and conceptual approach. As stated by researchers, this data source provides the basis for analyzing the elements of this form of communication (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). This communication approach is viewed through Morgan's (2009) case study, which was designed to unpack the understanding of mass media by providing a narrative to address the organ donor community and the community at large. The key to this analysis is the theoretical lens of the SRT to address and encourage the viewpoint of mass media.

The SRT nature of this study, along with the elements of mass media, is meant to address the lack of conversion rate from knowledge to action in the promise of increasing organ donation (Freeley & Moon, 2009). This is viewed through a meta-analytic review by the abovementioned researchers in which they cite the overall effect of education campaigns through mass media communication. Morgan et al. (2007) stated in their analysis the need for inaccurate depictions of the transplant process on television.

Overall, the research indicates that many factors influence the process of mass media and its effects on social space. These influences range from methods of dissemination which (Echabe & Castro, 1988; Flick, 1998) summarize in their study of the individual memory of facts in the process of relaying information along with their communication network. The main challenges to this approach are the reutilization steps needed to finalize an outcome.

Within the evolution of mass media, Morgan (2009) utilizes SRT as an instrument of communication that comes in many forms. However, many complexities are evident in the art of communication which involves beliefs, symbols, and sentiments that tend to drive the true nature of our experiences and misconceptions (Childress, 2001). These barriers must be addressed to bridge the social concerns that accompany knowledge and personal history, which bring a tribal nature to this process. Wagner and Manolis (2012) refer to their analysis of the concept that engaging in health-related behavior affects blood and organ donation respectively.

Fundamentally, the importance of the target audience regarding the media outlet is often the key to exposure promoting the messaging needed to capture the essence of organ donation. Bandura (1997) indicates this objective within the media campaign model to ensure the necessary standards are optimal for the intended communication medium. Veil et al. (2011), in their literature review, provide a premise by marrying literature and social media to summarize the usage and understanding of social media tools to communicate best practices.

One of the primary forms of technological changes has been the internet's advancement to capture and bring relevance to the dynamics of communications. For example, in China, microblogs have helped shape the method by which issues are discussed to enhance the battle of ideas in Chinese society (Svensson, 2014). This form of social media has helped shape sociocultural norms to force connectivity from top to bottom.

Although social media is dynamic in its evolution, the need for this form of communication-based on researchers like Castells (2012), Gerbaudo, (2012), Hands (2011), and Thorson et al. (2013) push the notion that social media gives voice to problems that provide a platform to examine social agendas. It allows for the scaling to disseminate and engage the public while adding value even to people at the margins of society.

The Social Aspect of Social Representation Theory

In general, Americans remain optimistic about the message of organ donation. Nevertheless, they still tend to gravitate to misconceptions that often accompany organ donation and appropriate behaviors (Snyder, 2004). Morgan explores the social element to understand the convergence of SRT, positioned to focus on communication and the human condition through the social continuity of mass media to solve a common social need. Understanding the central function of SRT was used to explore the relationship of mass media, which is summarized by Morgan's use of Moscovici's "system of values" to engage the realm of reality (1984). In practice, as we focus on SRT, social scientists utilize the process of a collective emergency regarding the social and individual viewpoints to transform this cognition-based theory to empower the mass media framework.

Morgan (2009) accounts for social representation as an individual within a natural pattern of development in one own community, which gives relevance to the usage of SRT to explore variances in groups and knowledge. Although the capacity of this theory is unfamiliar to many researchers, Harre (1998) and Moscovici (1998) shed light on the standards by which to frame experiences of interpersonal communication. Likewise, from a background perspective, Flick (1998) defines the increasing value of the social network to disseminate what is considered "everyday knowledge."

The resulting circumstances help break the isolation trend toward the betterment of cultural norms. Over the years, researchers have been in search of trying to define

through interpersonal and cognitive-based reasoning the factors which have plagued this social-related need. Stokols states, “A major motivation for these studies is the acknowledgment that if we are to change in a more pro-ecological way, the environmental worldviews that prevail in our societies should be better understood, as a relevant part of the circumstances under which individuals and groups make decisions and enact behaviors that affect levels of resource consumption and environmental pollution” (1995, p. 828).

Research surrounding environmental worldviews outlines the pragmatic approach, which often takes on the form of individuals and groups in their decision-making processes. Likewise, mass media has been shown to push the boundaries of behavioral norms to enhance or limit personal needs. Morgan et al.’s (2009) study draws on the narrative and effect of entertainment through the theories of social learning and social representation (2009). This social avenue, added by the storylines of television dramas such as CSI, House, and Grey’s Anatomy, instills an impression too explicit to the viewer, discerned by these researchers as more likely to become organ donors. Nevertheless, barriers persist due to the pragmatic lack of involvement needed to invoke the act of organ donation.

Empirically speaking, navigating the behavioral norms, although grounded in a theoretical framework of social learning, the attitudes of individuals are often unknown. This also gives credence to myths associated with organ transplantation. The technological levers enabling this organ donation process also to help drive the

advancement of social norms. As mentioned earlier, the radical dramatization of the storyline seen within entertainment often positions the mindset.

Although there has been a strong association between entertainment and social attitudes regarding organ donation, social research also documents the need for personal intervention through public conversations. Researchers such as Jones et al. (2009) suggest longitudinal studies to advance the transmission of marketing campaigns to address attitudes and myths to encourage families to state their wishes for the future. Also, there are no set standards for the role of mass media. Therefore, communication in various forms can only widen the net of understanding about organ donation.

Similarly, Morgan (2009) intended in this study to develop multiple methodologies approach through the convergence effect of mass media through SRT. Overall, the framework provided is intended to flush out the link between mass media and interpersonal communication of individual and group behaviors. Although this research is framed through the lens of SRT, it has been viewed as a loose theoretical framework, as stated by Morgan (2009); however, several examples demonstrate this model's usage. Researchers such as stem cell researchers (Jones & McMahon, 2004) and biotechnologist Gaskell (2001) used SRT to capture the whole nature of their research. Potter and Wetherell (1998) suggest that mass media creates a natural image that provides a realistic direction for social representation when confronted by unfamiliar situations.

Clearly, the idea of organ donation is radically different from most healthcare issues. Morgan (2009) promoted the understanding of organ donation as an altruistic

notion in which organ donors, in many cases, are unaware due to their mortality. The author states, “donating organs after death does not benefit the donor in any tangible way and further requires people to contemplate their mortality as a condition of engaging in the recommended behavior” (2009, p. 40). Using the SRT framework provides the components desired to address the individual cognitions that often contribute to the willingness and motivation highlighted in this turbulent environment. Therefore, different strategies are needed to encourage greater participation in the global community. In recent years social media has been a significant game changer gaining the public's attention as a source of communication to win the hearts and minds in many avenues of society.

The contextual context depicts that Castro's (2006) novel ideas can be intrapersonal and interpersonal by nature and can establish what one perceives in their community. Organ donation is one such topic that brings about attitudes and behaviors by its very nature and highlights the spirit of humankind. Naturally, the understanding of this topic is derived from many sources like religion, politics, and our choice of friends. The Organ Donation Willingness model speaks to the attitudes of individuals to influence and inform regarding organ donation, as suggested by Horton and Horton (1991).

The Social Aspect of the Organ Donation Willingness Model

As mentioned earlier, the aspects of this model propose the concept of one's individual knowledge. Horton and Horton (1991) were the first to suggest that individuals' willingness influences attitudes to organ donation. This model proposes the

concept of individual's knowledge that contributes to one's values, age, attitudes, and understanding of death. Horton and Horton's (1991) model positioned the information by Kopfman and Smith (1999), and Skumanich and Kintsfather (1996) not only fundamentally but to accommodate new psychological variables that impact organ donation willingness.

Morgan and Miller (2002) determined that factors such as knowledge, attitude, values such as altruism, and behavioral willingness intent, are fundamental in organ donation. Historically, theories such as the Organ Donation Willingness model have addressed the main issues of attitudes, knowledge, values, and perceived social norms to understand the complexities of organ donation (Horton & Horton, 1991). Other aspects of this model are elements of psychological variables, such as empathy (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1996), acceptance of mortality (Cleveland, 1975; Robbins, 1990; Sanner, 1994), humanitarian impulses (Cleveland, 1975; Steven, 1998), low death or body anxiety (Hodges, 1998; Kopfman et al., 1991, Robbins, 1990; Sanner, 1994), and rationality (Sanner, 1994) (Morgan & Miller, 2002). Researchers have provided the groundwork to understand the intent of an organ donor as purely altruistic for those needing an organ transplant.

Overall, the combination of these researchers and the constructs of this model advance predictive nature as a causal relationship to predict willingness behavior. As noted in the research by Kopfman (1994), the fear variable can be countered through education. Morgan's (2009) study regarding the intersection of the interrelationships

between interpersonal communication, cognition, and the mass media relies on organ donation as a social responsibility. Although this theory is behavioral, the components of SRT unpack the elements of the interpersonal communication phenomena, which are a part of the social cues of mass media.

Researchers have addressed this theory to establish one's willingness to contribute, by advancing the potential of personal attitudes and behavior that transform social norms (Gary et al, 2004). Recent empirical studies involving motivation suggest the idea of not only the precondition of organ donation but also communication methods that build relationships to foster the understanding of organ donation in the social context (Feely & Vincent, 2007).

Theory of Planned Behavior

Historically, attitudes and subjective norms were the sources of behavioral research to predict personal intentions (Hyde & White, 2009). Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB) is one such view. He postulated that attitudes, subjective norms, and the consideration of control factors aided in the predicting of intentions and behaviors. The theory is an extension of the theory of reasoned action which is intended to account for behaviors said not to be under the individual's cognitive control (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Hyde & White, 2009). In this context, this social psychological model of human behavior is the measure of altruistic behavior along with health-related behaviors (Choi, 2012).

Although TPB is advantageous in understanding the premise of an individual's attitudes and subjective norms, the basis of one's attitude can be based on other contributing factors (Huber & Kaiser, 2006). One example of TPB, Huber and Kaiser (2006) conducted a large study to demonstrate the relevance of TPB variables in the process with the willingness to communicate coincide with the elements of predictive behavior. Despite the potential influences of altruistic behaviors, social norms within the context of social science make up interdisciplinary examination and multiple methodologies; these elements help make up the landscape of the interpersonal effect of mass communication (Morgan, 2009). It is a theoretical framework used to lay the foundation that accounts for factors that contribute to attitudes and behaviors of the individual that can lead to psychological obstacles to organ donation (Hyde & White, 2009a).

The Role of Social Media in the Process of Social Representation

The application of SRT gives way to various channels of communication, Morgan (2009) states, but lacks the power of prediction like other cognition-based theories. However, SRT provides the basis for social and individual views, which build the bridge for social media framing regarding pragmatic communications. Therefore, the influence of social media can be a powerful means of persuasion regarding topics often unknown to individuals or social networks.

Conversely, in this interconnected digital humanistic age, we look to do a forensic breakdown to formulate and approach the understanding of human fears and attitudes to

predict the intentions of the human element (Wang, 2012). In the age of social media, we strive to understand the meaning through social psychology research, which has been the target of social scientists. Researchers such as (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) have framed the reasoned action theoretically and the sub-constructs to formulate the different facets of personal attitudes. The phenomenon of social media allows for the transference of critical mass to engage the public through social networking to facilitate the need for the unknown, which can be aided through education.

From a research point of view, this process can be understood through concentric circles that tend to flex as attitudes change. Snyder (1974) speaks to the role of self-monitoring of personality traits which refers to the tendencies and abilities of individuals. Through further examination and advancements, research indicates that things change with time and reliance on mass media, such as TV and radio to inform on general topics (Conesa, 2004).

This phenomenon has been observed and studied over time; nevertheless, findings suggest that mass media still lacks the persuasion needed to increase organ donation among the public. Overall, Morgan's case study review of the *Intersection of Conversation, Cognition, and Campaigns: The Social Representation of Organ Donation* pushed the notion of SRT to address the complex nature of individual cognition. The framework of this theory generates an extensive process in which to approach this dynamic interaction of the communication process, organ donation, and education (2009). Southwell and Yzer (2007) contribute to the dialog of mass media that lends validity to

the interpersonal discussion that without a social component, this process can lead to a lack of social change.

Social Media and Change

Although SRT has been leveraged to explore anchoring personal perceptions using mass media., Over the last few years, social media has become a formidable form of communication for young and old alike. Wehrli and Sazama (2010) speak of universal donor education and a consent system to ensure continuity in understanding. This is where the usage of electronic media intersects social media as an alternative to mass media to control the message. The literature regarding social media has increased due to its recent popularity. It provides an avenue in which information can be shared, and discussions can generate instant feedback for participants. The impact of this type of communication can be the cornerstone from which decisions are made (Wehrli & Sazama, 2010). Mazur (2008) deconstructs social media as a fascinator of “social human contact.” He extrapolates social media as creating or posting digital material. This idea of digital material is overlapped in many ways, such as photos, text, and online discussion groups. This form of communication is social networking which lays the foundation for social media. These types of social communities lend themselves to the marvel of online social networks that vary in types and content. Researchers such as Steinfield et al. (2008) have conducted a longitudinal study to determine the psychological development of “social capital.” In their research, social capital is described as relationships with others that lead to the fulfillment of one’s life.

Although the elements of social capital cannot predict behavior, understanding social order's aspects through social media engagement is necessary. This can be seen through the overwhelming usage of the internet and its outreach to formal and informal relationships as an accepted part of present-day society. A recent study conducted by Ying-Chao et al. (2012) worked with social media usage behavior and personal factors that explore validity and correlation. Their examination of social media introduces a quality aspect that provides a work-in-process adding to the multiple communication layers.

The connection of Facebook in this mix adds to the phenomenon that provides the background for the argument that Stefanone et al. (2010) examine within the research of the relationship between traditional mass media and social media. Morgan (2009) based their conceptual underpinning and analysis on the premise of SRT and social clues. Social clues are designated as inherent opportunities perceived as an informal part that is closely aligned. This communication platform expands the forum for two-way interaction of the masses, leaving room for the dynamic cognitive effects to form a behavioral aspect. Bandura (1986), in this regard, includes behavior components as an interracial part of an individual's process of environmental influence.

Currently, the catalytic for global-level discourse, although considered a virtual platform, is a form disruption from the current standard of mass media. To explore and evaluate the penetration of this platform Anderson et al. (2012) recently conducted an empirical psychological study of over 100 (primarily empirical, peer-reviewed journal

articles). In conjunction, these researchers used their research to answer popular questions. The questions were positioned in a group format to capture information on common themes. The integration of these questions and answered by research helped demystify the subject matter to leverage the prism of social media, which consisted of these three groups, “a) antecedents of Facebook use; (b) how individuals and major themes, namely: (c) psychological outcomes or effects of Facebook use.”

Although social media continues to evolve, the premise of this trend allows this communication channel to capture the act of “staying engaged.” Individuals and corporations daily use social media to shape their brand identity. Burns (2010) broadly speaks to the social cohesion needed to develop a connection to enable them to thrive. The crafting of the conceptual underpinning demonstrates the inherent opportunities and the benefits of a strong relationship which are viewed in some pragmatic ways.

Maia et al. (2008) further explores the template based on behavior in social media which is an accepted part of society. Fundamental, the concept of this social platform has become an intrinsic part of natural behavior patterns that are viewed as social norms. The creation of WEB 2.0 adds additional avenues of formal and informal lines of communication constructed through social networks (Lin et al., 2012). Nevertheless, with most technological advances, there are negative influences that are secondary to social progress. Likewise, creating interpersonal connection actions such as losing privacy and false information can corrupt this real-world interaction.

Social media platforms offer many forms of interaction to address and conduct research to harness social interaction. For example, Gary et al. (2004), Annabell and Kennedy (2010) conducted research from four case studies to support social dynamics using Facebook. In their study, 759 medical students in four groups were surveyed. This research aimed to “explore in-depth and conduct four Facebook study groups” (2010). The evidence suggested that 25% utilized Facebook for educational purposes, while 50% were open to engaging. In the final analysis, using Facebook, although useful, proved challenging to students and educators alike. However, a key research point showed that group dynamics were an additive factor.

Although social media has made significant strides in the social fabric, there are limits to this ubiquitous communication construct. For example, Facebook has provided a worldwide forum to generate, discuss, and build social networks while facilitating a valuable source to explore and define a pragmatic social culture. In one such qualitative study, Greene et al. (2010) evaluated the medical content related to diabetes through Facebook. In this study, 480 unique users were the focus of this study to measure the effectiveness of the social media platform Facebook. This study suggested that social media is ideal for sharing information; however, there are no checks and balances within this open-style type of forum.

Literature reveals a trend to improve organ transplantation due to the different avenues of communication that were not around in the last ten years. The popularity of social media, as evident using Facebook, shows no bounders allowing for the potential to

explore the nature of organ donation. This is key in describing the participant's experiences from an individual from a phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994). The increasing awareness of this subject is based on the healthcare professionals Oroy et al. (2013) and social media. In the past traditional campaigns depended on mass media which had a negligible effect on several meta-analyses based on organ registration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the purpose of this literature review is to analyze and synthesize recent studies and peer-reviewed journals to reveal as it relates to social media to compass a qualitative method of inquiry proposed for this study. Reviewed were theories on SRT, planned behavior, and organ donation willingness to build a psychological and social foundation giving perspective to the gap analysis. Understanding the phenomenon of mass media through SRT helped illuminate social media's premise. The literature examined provides the necessary fundamentals to investigate further the role of social media, which is expected to expand the social goal of increasing organ donation through education. Likewise, the use of the planned behavior and organ donation willingness theories pushes peripheral research that elaborates on underlying issues which anchor the understanding of organ donation.

The evidence in Veil et al. (2011) thesis regarding the process of communication through social media embraces the core element of social media and manages its transformative impact through many avenues providing a new standard to allow practitioners to stretch their understanding of social capital and the human experience.

Although several studies have regarded the understanding of social communication as mass media, the idea of social media pushes the rudiments of behaviors, personal beliefs, and attitudes to address media research portrayed by Singhal et al. (1993), Singhal and Rogers (2002), Slater and Rouner (2002). Within this process of embracing social media, not only are their benefits but barriers as well. The attribute of social media provides for understanding this concept; however, human experience varies from person to person, providing an opening for different levels of understanding and communication. From this premise, researchers advance the perceptions of how humans develop characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors that are used to accommodate their beliefs. The nexus of social media and organ donation pushes boundaries to address constraints commonly viewed as barriers within social connections. Morgan (2009) uses SRT through mass media as the conduit to position organ donation in the conversation of personal networks.

Likewise, SRT can increase the bandwidth to generate “social capital” in social media. Although problematic in many ways, the core issues of organ donation can be actively addressed by bridging the digital divide between communication and personal beliefs. Building on the narrative of Morgan’s research on mass media, common threads can be identified to help develop a holistic approach for SRT and social media. The impact of SRT on mass media, per Morgan (2009), depicts the full range of influences that often can be falsely framed. For example, robust literature searches to promote organ donor registration online using traditional mass media suggest that donation campaigns have minimal effect on organ donation (Stefanone et al., 2012). Nevertheless, mass media

has been the communication of choice for framing the understanding of organ donation. However, in the study mentioned above, they used online media to promote organ donor registration. Nevertheless, the use of seeder students demonstrated the effectiveness of this online method and the challenge of campaigns. Though online advertising added greater message exposure, the results of this study failed to increase donor registration (Stefanone et al., 2102). Additionally, Knight and Simon (2014) lead an extensive search regarding social media and other alternatives. Nevertheless, in a qualitative analysis of 6981 publications, topics related to transplantation were likely negative.

The social media platform is an open forum capable of disseminating information to a broad medium that often is missed (Hallahan, 2009). Embracing the complexities of social media often means the diffusion of one's personal views from many sources, such as friends, family, and people not known. There are many reasons why this form of media has accelerated in such a short period. The advantage of this communication is the two-way (feedback loop) like the human body in response to cold or heat. Hoijer (2011) argues the position of the SRT in the realm of a new research tool for media. This researcher suggests that social representations are not pattern-based but fragmented (Hoijer, 2011). The climate of this theory relates to and mirrors the many examples of social controversies.

The construct of social media is deeply anchored in how society understands and filters our social and political views. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) add structure to this discussion by defining social and individual interplay to traditional binding, which

directs us yet allows us to make choices. Social media has made significant inroads into today's society in all aspects of life. This communication platform has overthrown governing bodies of countries while placing the spotlight on others. Currently, many communication tools fall under this category, such as Twitter, Facebook, Linked-In, and blogs; however, this study's primary focus will be on social media.

Social Media

Socialization, from a research perspective, works in tandem to convey the fundamental elements which drive the notion of change. The increasing use of social media platforms has provided concepts and ideas that the mind can conjure up. Nevertheless, humanist tendencies are levers that researchers have been exploring for generations. Buggiey (2007) embraces the affinity of social media and its potential. Patel (2010) also positions the idea of social media through the usage of a study called "*Social Media Can Be a Learning Tool*," which was targeted to highlight (Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials) which unpacks the value of social media and technologies.

As mentioned earlier, many strategies are employed to capture the public's attention; however, with the social media event, the current trend is deemed transformational. The advancement of the many social media platforms provided the need to focus on a single approach to social media. This communication system allows us to connect social media through technology and help push change adoption within a pragmatic culture.

The Scope of Social Media

Social media, from its genesis in the early 2000s, from some estimates, has over two billion users and is growing (Facebook, 2012). Since its conception scholars have synthesized and analyzed this communication tool for its merit in social culture. Inherent is the amalgam of social science and communication theories that advance this social platform's conceptual underpinnings. Lipsman et al. (2012) establishes the premise of social media within the digital media landscape through a critical examination of social branding. These scholars and researchers explore the linkages of branded content on social media within the changing landscape. Integrating the additive value of social change brings to light the influences of behavioral profiles on different types of social branding.

Apart from the overall concept of social media, this generic qualitative study is grounded in SRT to ensure the core components are employed through this qualitative process (Farr & Moscovici, 1984). As mentioned above, this approach has been used to address the problem of organ donation. This approach uses the strengths of SRT to justify the use of education as a window to organ donation. The organ donation willingness model and theory of planned behavior model seek to predict behaviors regarding organ donation. Chapter 3 describes the qualitative research methodology, which will involve the qualitative view methodology and data collection procedures provided in this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Social media, from a research standpoint, has opportunities and challenges. This framework relies on human experiences to build social interaction and use knowledge and communication. Using an internet-based application serves as the underpinning to allow research opportunities. Ironically, this research aims to contribute to the scholarly and practitioners' concerns regarding organ donation through the complexities of the social media positioned by the following research questions to increase the supply of donor organs. Similarly, Chapter 1 speaks through the intricate details of organ donation and social media. This social premise is based on Morgan's (2009) study through mass media.

Research Questions

The study is directed by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do transplant doctors, transplant nurses, and transplant coordinators at Kansas University Medical Center depict the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ2. How do representatives from the transplant athletes' team in Kansas and Missouri describe the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ3. How do transplant healthcare personnel from Kansas University Medical Center in Overland Park, Kansas, and representatives from the transplant athletes' team in Kansas and Missouri perceive that organ donation can be enhanced via social media?

This chapter depicts the phases in this process: an approach, qualitative research paradigm, the role of the researcher, data collection procedures, data analysis, and interpretation processes, and rationale for appropriateness and justification of this qualitative. This study aims to leverage the participants' perspectives to gain a conceptual understanding of organ donation through the lens of social media while harnessing educational opportunities.

Research Design and Approach

This section describes the research method employed, which provides and invokes the qualitative research design (Creswell, 2009). As outlined by McNabb (2008), qualitative research uses non-statistical techniques and methods to gather data and information regarding simple observation of social facts or events. Each research approach contains its strengths and weakness driven by the research questions (Babbie, 2007). The approach should be philosophically and methodologically aligned with their information intent (Caelli et al., 2003). This phenomenon is based on whom to sample; however, this concept can be limiting due to the challenges surrounding the individual (Angrosino, 1994). The qualitative study approach provides the needed channels essential to the organic nature of this social science style familiar to social scientists. This approach aids in the understanding and education of social experiences to advance a pragmatic viewpoint to research that is relevant to the perspective of organ donation and, therefore, the choice of a qualitative method.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

The social research approach of a generic study places a humanistic social experience to this research process, accentuated by this narrative of the “coupling effect” that is necessary to understand the human experience through a real-world interaction that affects culture (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002). The phenomenon of organ donation is a human problem that plagues the construct of today’s society financially and medically due to diverse social issues.

The qualitative paradigm is frequently used to consider a humanistic problem in dealing with the views and experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2013). The objective of this study is not to classify or calculate variables or build a statistical model as described by Trochim and Donnelly (2007) but to explore the level of understanding relative to organ donation. Likewise, Burritt (1986, p.20) stated that the rationale is not the discovery of new elements, like a natural scientific study, but to heighten awareness and create a dialogue that can lead to a better understanding to fill the gap in the literature. Therefore, the qualitative approach is warranted to provide a reasonable approach to address the gap in education through social media to advance the social understanding of organ donation.

Justification of Generic Qualitative Study Research Approach

To design the research, researcher Creswell (2009) pointed out clearly that the five qualitative designs provide the fundamentals to tackle attributes of data. Faced with these five varieties, what is needed is a way to adopt a balanced approach to gather knowledge on the phenomenon of social media space while bridging the gap of

increasing organ donation education. This involved using multiple sources to study empirical data (Creswell, 2009). My epistemological position is that empirical data is needed to find the role social media influences and promotes organ donor education.

Based on the purpose of this study, this approach considers personal experiences along with prior theory positions as a premise creating a foundation for data collection and analysis to expand previous theory development done by Morgan (2009). This is especially beneficial in exploring a social phenomenon in real-world parameters and its dynamic nature. The attributes from a real-world context are necessary to construct and establish internal validity when multiple sources of evidence are utilized to establish patterns (Amerson, 2011).

The qualitative study approach provides roads to gaining in-depth interpretations and perspectives regarding human experience (Singleton & Straights, 2005; Willig, 2008). The main challenge to this approach is time factors, group learning, and crowdsourcing to build on beliefs and language which define interactions. Yin (2009) defined the case study method as a way of exploring cultural dynamics, which peers into individual life cycles, small groups, and real-life experiences. It is also beneficial to remember Merriam (1988), who stated, “There is no standard format for reporting case research” (p. 193).

Although the procedures for conducting this type of research may be multifaceted, many challenges should be managed to ensure that participants’ experiences are captured for targeted solutions. For example, social controls compounded through the researcher’s

use of qualitative study establish protocols tested empirically through social research (Amerson, 2011; Yin, 2003). These steps are critical to ensuring that the shelf life of human experience is not lost in the endeavor for social change and closing the knowledge gap in this research. Creswell (2009) also added texture to this study methodology by enlisting the understanding of their world life experiences. Engaging the qualitative study approach to explore the role of social media enables a credible reference framework for policymakers and practitioners to address organ donation education from a life-world experience.

The qualitative study approach in the natural setting intended to collect data through observation with interviews over a prolonged period. While grounded in cultural anthropology, by its sheer nature, this approach is sensitive to social-cultural systems; nevertheless, there are limits to the approach of this study. Part of the researcher's challenge is time and the factors that can feasibly compromise their research due to cultural interaction within the natural setting. This can lead to safety issues, and researchers completing the intended study, as Yin (2004) classified.

The main challenge to this approach is time factors, group learning, and crowdsourcing to build on beliefs and language which define interactions. Anderson and Spencer (2002) define the phenomenological method as exploring cultural dynamics, which peers into individual life cycles, small groups, and real-life experiences. It is also beneficial to remember Merriam (1988), who stated: "There is no standard format for

reporting case research” (p. 193). Because the organ donation phenomenon is not time content bounded, it is not an ideal research approach.

Participant Selection and Rationale

To address the phenomenon of social media and organ donation dictates the selection of persons needing organ donations because they constitute the population group with lived experience; from the transplant community, i.e., transplant physicians and personnel from the Kansas University Medical Center dealing with the transfer of live organs for transplantation as well as transplant recipients from the athletic transplant team Kansas and Missouri that received the “gift of life”. These groups were selected due to their vast knowledge regarding organ donation. The author gained access to the populace group through social media to interface with the transplant community through an online survey. The groups were contacted that met the prerequisites for this research, as viewed in Appendix A through D.

Sample Method and Population

The sampling process allows for selecting a population to explore. The sample population provides insight into a cohesive approach to the study (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). This comprehensive exploration is based on probability or nonprobability methods (Babbie, 2007). These comprehensive approaches aim to weigh the sampling technique’s factors depending on the research approach. As suggested, understanding the social factors in play is essential for the sample to represent the population (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007).

Patton (2002) postulates, “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 230, emphases in original). This is needed in the pursuit of understanding a pragmatic view of the relationship of individual components that are relevant to this study. Boblin et al. (2013) positioned the approach in the healthcare sector to research evidence-based practice through a single instrumental qualitative design implementing and evaluating a specific methodology.

Creswell and Brown (2009) indicated that data collection provided in a holistic account creates the lens through which information can be interrupted. The illumination of different layers adds to the level of social exploration addressed through the foundation of SRT. This is intended to advance evidence that taps the social representation through a sophisticated viewpoint of social media and the intersection of organ donation.

Further evaluation of this process suggests the mold described by Yin (2009), which is based on multiple sources of evidence to develop and analyze to triangulate and address the tents of the problems at hand; the key to understanding purposeful sampling while for researchers to conclude the subject matter being studied. Likewise, messaging is a part of the communication paradigm, which will provide the discourse needed to aid in developing attitudes toward the evidence being addressed. Sibley et al. (2006) affirmed their research regarding message framing in their qualitative analysis of the bi-cultural partnership frame to extend discourse. According to Morgan (2009), these researchers use the SRT to extend their argument regarding “thinking around issues” with social issues and aid in data collection.

Sampling Strategy and Participant Selection

Creswell (2009) approached the concept of sampling within the selection framework to reflect differences by the researcher regarding the central phenomenon to be studied. Purposeful sampling gives way to understanding the social culture and the form of sampling that will take place. Furthermore, a criterion-based sampling technique will be used to predetermine the requirement for participants (Babbie, 2007; Creswell, 2007). Given the importance of replication in conjunction with the scope of social representation, the intended population consisted of 50 to 75 people based on criterion-based sampling: (a) a person from the transplant community, male or female 18 years or older, (b) fluent in English, and (c) a member of the social media community.

Researchers have applied this situation awareness to advance the notion of bi-directional interaction to transmit ideas, knowledge, and new learning to promote and facilitate dialog.

The social impact through the social media platform will add a macro level of understanding to provide in-depth and rich-thick data to help formulate the pragmatic needed for organ donation. Finally, this component will consist of a person in the transplant community that utilizes the social media space as an outreach mechanism to educate and advance the arch of organ donation. In turn, this will serve as the basis to apply the needed flexibility of the conceptual framework of SRT within the methodology and the two other theories mentioned above to advance this framework.

This qualitative study framework consists of an online survey from the transplant social media community. Veil et al. (2011), in their literature review of social media as it pertains to risk and crisis communication, reshaped this position of this review as a “work-in-process” due to the nature and ability of society to embrace the evolution of social media. Although social media is a recent phenomenon, the focal point for this analysis is to render from multiple sources, such as Kansas University Medical Center, and athletics from the Kansas and Missouri transplant team that are familiar with social media, to triangulate and explore the boundaries of this phenomenon (Van Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

Babbie (2007) pushed the notion of judgmental sampling, which relies on knowledge and direction to manage this participant selection process. Under this qualitative study paradigm, it is critical that best practices in communication are continually developed to push continued learning as a part of the sampling process (Veil & Sellnow, 2008). As with every theory, external pressures provide openness and insights, which are monitored to ensure it is accepted in social science.

Sample Size

The process of understanding sample size specific to online surveys tends to be based on data saturation which Guest et al. (2006) related in their qualitative study dealing with the notion of how many interviewers are enough. However, it is well known generally to social researchers that there are no standard norms specific to sample size other than it is based on data saturation. I employed a sample size of 50 to 75 participants

by using criterion-based and purposeful nonprobability sampling techniques to gain this sample size. The goal is 50 participants, with 25 remaining as backup. The approach taken in this qualitative study ensures that this well-known research technique was used to address the sample size (Moustakas,1994). The sample size of participants for this study was determined by *data saturation* due to the lack of new research data (Guest et al., (2006)

Ethical Considerations

In this study, human participants bring a unique set of factors that influence the information gathered through empirical and human experiences which tell a story. Ethical standards provide the background in which social research is endorsed and conducted to protect the participants. The doctoral student will abide by the ethical standards required by Walden University. Researchers such as Lipson (2004), Glesne and Peshkin (1992) present a composite picture relative to the individual. The dynamic nature of the ethical picture brings into play biases that challenge the status quo. The more extended focus on ethical consideration creates the premise that balance is often hard to manage. Creswell (2009) introduces the need to advance the narrative of the personal variable without discounting the factors which influence the human experience.

Despite the inherent problem with this form of data gathering, such as problems of bias, lapses of memory, and inarticulate responses, as described by Yin (2009), it is a necessary part of this pragmatic approach in the qualitative process. Knapick (2006) points out the individual nature of this organic composition which utilizes the ethics and

techniques of this approach and its reliance on it. Hence as a researcher, we must be mindful to keep personal biases at bay to ensure the true nature of the study is clear and untainted. To ensure ethical standards were adhered to, the informed consent forms (Appendix B) explained the different aspects of this purpose study following Walden Institutional Review Board research protocols. In keeping with traditional ethical standards, the participants regarding purpose, nature, risk, and benefits. A copy of the participants of a consent form. Permission was received for the informed consent approval before the interview (Creswell, 2007) under Walden University protocol. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw if they changed their minds.

Data Collection Procedures

An online survey (Appendix C) will be used to capture data to explore and develop the context of this study. An eight-questionnaire survey process consists of a collection of raw data to be considered in the context of understanding (Babbie, 2007). Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of each participant. This will be done with the use of pseudonyms and password-protected electronically. Data gathered will be saved for a period of five years on a USB drive to ensure the data is kept per Walden University requirements for replication, which will then be destroyed. To gather the data needed for this study, voluntary participants were used. As stated by Babbie (2007), the principle of voluntary participation necessitates that people are not pressured

into participation. Likewise, researchers should be conscious of the influence of participants' sociocultural and economic positions (Willig, 2008).

Online Surveys

It should be noted that the interview process is considered an essential collection technique for qualitative research (Babbie, 2007; Creswell, 2007). Because a qualitative online survey is a conversation between the interviewer and respondent. Likewise, social media brings a pragmatic viewpoint by capturing the synergies of knowledge and social attitudes to provide a structure that often social media can deliver. Rubin and Rubin (2005) contended this process is essential in a social context to develop a thoughtful understanding of the problem being examined. One example of this social capture is presented by Fogg (1997), a noted psychologist at Stanford University who demonstrated the association of technology and its influence on behavior.

As addressed earlier, the interviews will be online through a survey format to capture the narrative and bridge their level of understanding of social media and expectations of giving voice to organ donation. This process aims to gather a personal view that can go untold. Creswell (2009) speaks to the same social networks that researchers such as Ladin and Hanto (2010) referred to in their research regarding disparities in transplantation and missed clues.

Similarly, approaching the Kansas University Medical Center and transplant athletes from Kansas and Missouri for their input regarding social media can provide an enlightening view from an organizational perspective. The hope is to gather formal and

informal perspectives to interpret and identify organ-related observations to provide ladders of change that allow for the unscripted nature of these challenges to be discussed. The online-structured surveys are a suitable technique, supported by Charmaz (2006), in general for a qualitative study to ensure that maximum participants' experiences are reflected in the researchers' findings.

Documents and Data Analysis

Documents and data analysis involves a synergistic approach to internal and external data. This theme adds balance to the researcher in the aim to gather evidence from the interview and observation platform, as detailed by McNabb (2008). The qualitative study approach uses several types of document collections, such as reports, articles, and personal documentation. As a part of the data evidence documentation, and observation process the evidence should be captured through a recording device as part of the interviewing protocol (Creswell, 2007). Although this slant of data collection varies within the five approaches Creswell describes, the interview process is the tool of choice to build relationships within the qualitative study framework. Data analysis and interpretation vary on the model; however, Babbie (2007) builds on the components a researcher uses to retrieve and compare data for interpretation.

Finally, the online survey with each group captures the limits, impacts, and understanding. This position is reiterated by researchers who address the challenges of interviewing (Creswell, 2009; Kvale, 2006; Nunkoosing, 2005; Weis & Fine, 2009). Questions regarding caring and empowering dialogues are examples of the hierarchical

relationship, as stated by Kvale (2006). The interviewing process lies between empowerment and bi-directional conversation, appealing to the needs of everyone.

Data Coding and Categorization

Qualitative data coding requires sorting the individual parts of the data (Babbie, 2007). The doctoral student hired a statistician to transcribe keywords and phrases that involve the research questions that adhere to this study. Part of this process will be using the software IBM SPSS to code the data. The use of this software is to find patterns and connections among participants' responses. As Daly (2007) suggested, aggregating reoccurring patterns provides clues in analyzing online data.

The Researcher's Role

Against the background of the qualitative study approach, the process of decoding the essential elements suggests the approach in which the researcher's role applies the information gathered. Collective thinking adds to the foundation of this communication channel between the researcher and the sample population. This will be accomplished by addressing the dynamic nature of online surveys to bridge the gap between the subject matter. A sample population was achieved through a letter of invitation to capture objective and participant data. Stake (1995) adds to this concept of the "bounded system" as a process diverse in data collection necessary to capture a cross-analysis of the aggregating literature and external factors. One element that does not address is the socioeconomic status of this survey process. This is due to the subject matter being addressed in this study.

Ethical standards must be utilized to ensure this study is honest and open. As a liver transplant recipient going on 33 years, the doctoral student has had a personal interest in organic process organ transplant. Babbie (2007) also reminds us as researchers of the many layers that need to be addressed from an ethical perspective. Being a transplant recipient brings a sense of purpose without adding bias because of significant changes in the process of organ donation over the years. As expected, the ethical process of this qualitative study will adhere to the requirements contained in Walden's IRB form, which will be provided to willing participants.

Summary

This chapter examined the rationale for a generic qualitative research approach for this study. Participant sampling and gathering procedure information will be reviewed as data collection techniques and analysis. This chapter discussed data participant protection and the trustworthiness of research to describe education. The following chapter will provide the results produced and illuminate the consequence of the results of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

This study aimed to improve the human condition and defend why organ donation and education are essential for people to receive the gift of life. The study examined whether social media could be used as a prospective remedial tool to reverse the phenomenon of too few organs available for donation. Chapters 1 through 3 explored the current understanding and method of mass media and social media and perceptions regarding organ donation. The objective of this research study was to understand the different examples of mass media versus social media.

The prospect of a terminally ill child who needs a new heart and is put on a waiting list due to a lack of available solid donor organs is not an uncommon story in social or mass media like television, newspapers, radio, and the internet. Although such stories are often seen, the list of patients awaiting a donor organ continues to increase. In 2020, almost 120,000 people were waiting for a solid organ transplant, and approximately 6,000 persons lost their battle awaiting the gift of life (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). As the shortage of donor organs increases annually, outrage continues to grow among patients and families, and the challenges seem to outweigh progress (Cantarovich, 2005). Overall, economic, social, and emotional costs plague solid organ donations researchers such as Morgan (2009) and Movius and Cody (2009), suggested. The public understands the urgent need for organ donors; approaches are needed to influence public thinking.

Morgan (2009) suggested that the art of communication can ensure that we all become a part of the narrative in creating social messages that are strong and powerful to promote organ donation education. There is a need for a pragmatic approach to face the problematic experiences compared to organ procurement, which can be captured in social media and social networks (Steinfeld et al., 2008). Waterman et al. (2009) offered a new model to address organ donation learning through multiple communication channels. This model presents a compelling way to assess the extent of understanding the characteristics of social behaviors affecting organ donation within a contextual and social networks perspective (Ladin & Hanto, 2010).

This unique system offers a theoretical perspective on how groups of people communicate on emerging and novel phenomena regarding the social aspect and social representation of organ donation. This process helps to shape the “behaviors of individuals who belong to these social groups” (Markus & Plaut, 2001, pg. 12). Social media supplies an avenue to understand and address organ donation issues. It could also highlight the need for donor organs while enhancing public morale (Siegel et al., 2008). For example, D’Alessandro et al. (2012) conducted a study to explore the viral nature of social media to diffuse organ donor-related information. The results of this study showed how social media could improve individuals’ understanding and willingness to make a difference by becoming an organ donor. This theory, based on the intersection of conversation, supplies the gateway to the social representation of organ donation defined through the SRT (Morgan, 2009).

Social media strategies can bring awareness to the global digital divide, shedding light and increasing public awareness about organ donation models compared to standard multimedia (Hutton & Fosdick, 2011). Since the passage of time is critical for those waiting for the gift of life, this study explored the purpose of social media and organ donation using an online perspective. The internet has become the tool of choice to impact the fight for social justice. Since education is the key, society needs to advance the conversation about organ donation in the public sphere through social media.

Kansas Medical Center Hospital and the Mo-Kan Transplant Team athletes were used to collect data for this study and increased the sample size to 50 to 75 participants to ensure that data saturation was achieved as suggested by Guest et al. (2006). This process was approved by Walden University IRB. To understand how the internet can help in the understanding of the use of this social media tool, a survey model was used to explore how social media and organ donation education increase the availability of organs. Survey Monkey was used to disseminate the survey and capture data exploring how the internet and social media affects organ donations. Three research questions guided this study:

The study is directed by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do transplant doctors, transplant nurses, and transplant coordinators at Kansas University Medical Center depict the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ2. How do representatives from the transplant athletes' team in Kansas and Missouri describe the relationship between social media and organ donation?

RQ3. How do transplant healthcare personnel from Kansas University Medical Center in Overland Park, Kansas, and representatives from the transplant athletes' team in Kansas and Missouri perceive that organ donation can be enhanced via social media?

The breadth of this study involves understanding how social media usage and organ donation education interact to affect the shortage of organ donors. Participants were asked through an online survey to address their personal beliefs about social media and organ donation. The participants included doctors, nurses, transplant coordinators, transplant recipients, transplant athletes. The preceding research question were formulated to guide this study because scholars and practitioners recognize the effectiveness of social media, however by exploring this medium the hope is it could lead to a solution to aid in the shortage of donor organs.

Content of the Study

This chapter presents the results of data collection and analysis to answer the study's research questions. This chapter shows the context of this study, descriptive of the research participants, data coding, and analysis of the research results. Permission was received from Walden University IRB to conduct the study. On September 21, 2022, a developed survey-based sampling approach was used to capture the perceptions of the transplant community at Kansas Medical Center Hospital and within the Mo-Kan

Transplant Team. The online survey was conducted between September 25 and October 17, 2022. Sixty responses were received out of 75 (80% response rate).

Data Coding

Following a qualitative inquiry, the relevant empirical information was collected through Survey Monkey. The survey questions were asked in a multiple-answer format to understand the feelings and attitudes of the participants. This process enabled direct coding to be precise to capture the core meaning. The first five questions dealt with the core understanding of social media to influence organ donation. The other three items described gender, age, and race to ensure there was transparency in the sampling process. All participants were asked the same eight questions to ensure and identify recurrent patterns needed for this qualitative study.

First Cycle Coding

Data were exported from Survey Monkey into an Microsoft Excel (2018) file with raw numeric data values which began the first step to analyzing the data. The raw numeric data values captured the beginning step of interpretation of the multiple-answer format. Because the questions had a three-choice selection, the responses were direct and purposeful.

Second Cycle Coding

From the initial excel file exported from Survey Monkey, the files were imported to IBM SPSS for data analysis. Data were checked for missing data and errors using frequency counts and range scores. Descriptive statistics (*n*, %) were computed for

demographic variables and survey questions to address the project's aims. Results are presented in narrative and table format.

Participants

Demographics for gender, age, and race are displayed in Table 1. The sample was 61.67% female ($n = 37$) and 38.33% male ($n = 23$). The age was reported as 25 to 34 for 10 (16.675%) participants, 35 to 44 for 13 (21.67%) participants, 45 to 54 for 11 (18.33%) participants, 55 to 64 for 18 (30.00%) participants, 65 to 74 for seven (11.67%) participants, and 75 or older for one (1.67%) participant. Race was also reported. A total of 1.67% of the sample identified as Asian ($n = 1$), 36.67% identified as Black ($n = 22$), 5.00% identified as Hispanic ($n = 3$), 46.67% identified as White ($n = 28$) and 10.00% identified as Other ($n = 6$).

Table 1*Descriptive Data for Sample*

Variable	Descriptive data	
Gender	n	%
Female	37	61.67%
Male	23	38.33%
Age		
25 to 34	10	16.67%
35 to 44	13	21.67%
45 to 54	11	18.33%
55 to 64	18	30.00%
65 to 74	7	11.67%
75 or older	1	1.67%
Race		
Asian	1	1.67%
Black	22	36.67%
Hispanic	3	5.00%
Other	6	10.00%
White	28	46.67%

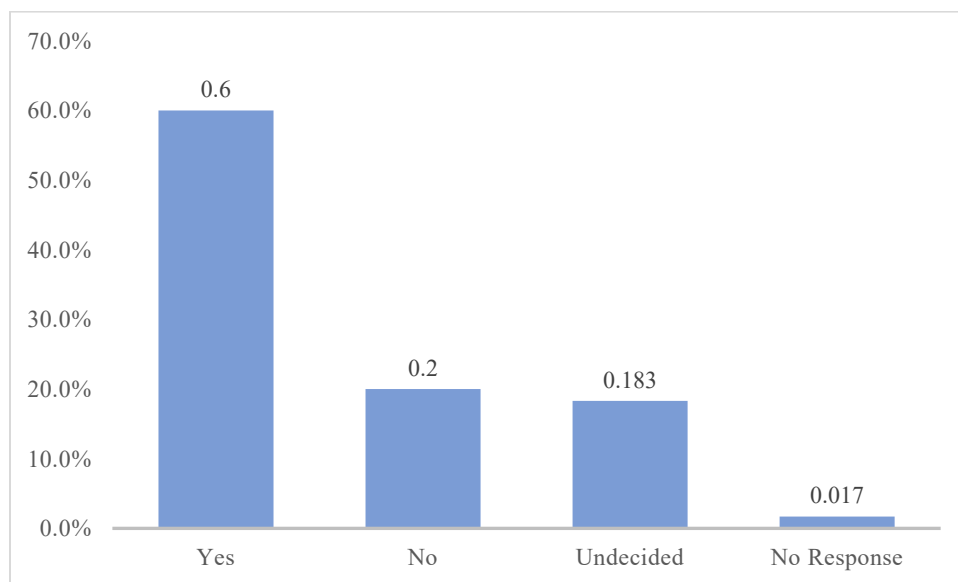
Results

The survey included five items with three response choices. Descriptive statistics (n , %) were computed for each item. For Item 1, “*From your perception does social media help by increasing access to organ donors within the United States?*” there were

36 (60.0%) participants responded “yes,” 12 (20.0%) responded “no,” 11 (178.3%) were undecided, and one (1.7%) did not respond (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

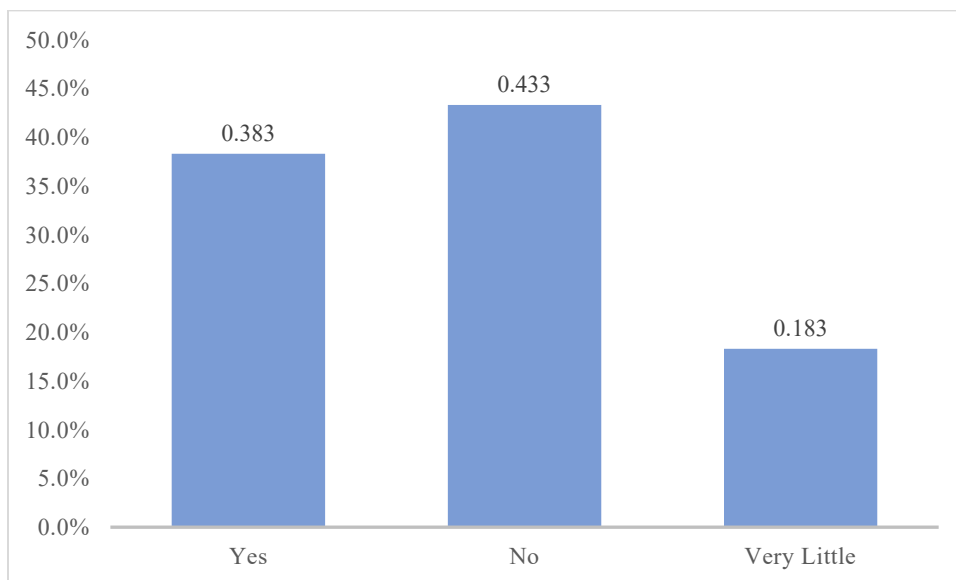
Responses for “Does social media help by increasing access to organ donors within the United States?”



The second question asked, “*Has social media played any part in your knowledge of organ donor experience?*” Twenty-three (38.3%) participants responded “yes,” 11 (18.3%) responded “very little,” and 26 (43.3%) responded “no” (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

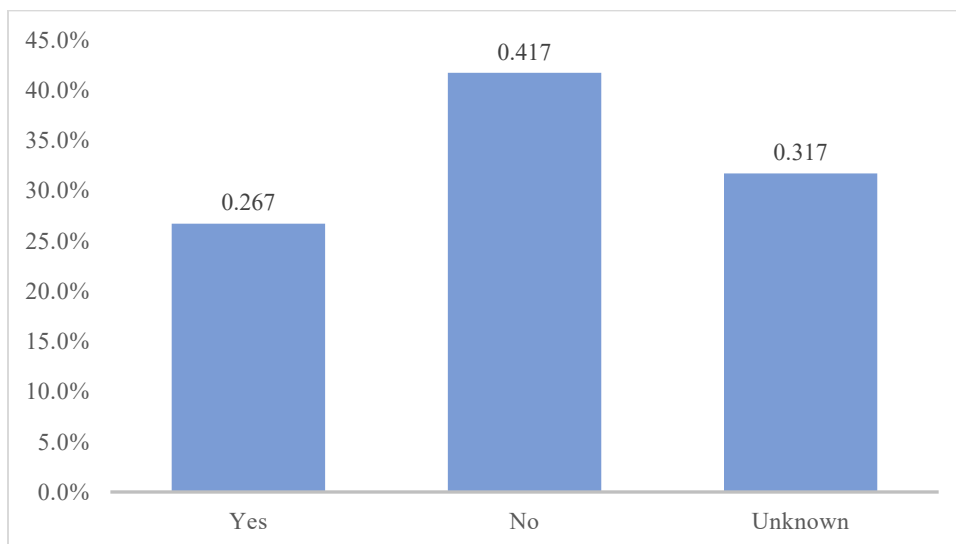
Responses for “Has social media played any part in your knowledge of organ donor experience?”



The next question asked, “*With the advent of social media, has it been a valuable tool in your day-to-day activities to advance access to organ donation?*” Sixteen (26.7%) participants responded “yes,” 25 (41.7%) responded “no,” and 19 (31.7%) responded “unknown” (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

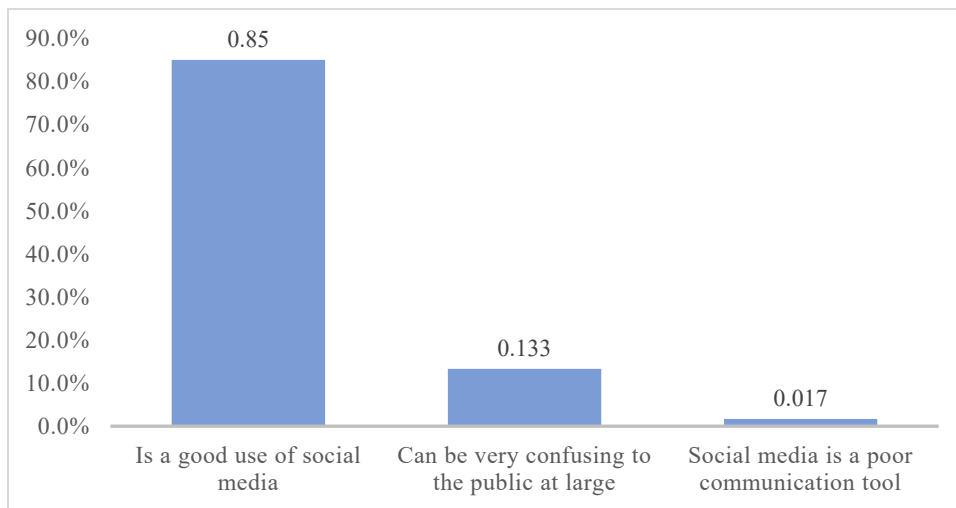
Responses for “With the advent of social media, has it been a valuable tool in your day-to-day activities to advance access to organ donation?”



The fourth question asked, *“In your role within the transplant community do you perceive that your knowledge and experience can help educate the public in using social media to increase awareness of organ donation?”* One (1.7%) participant said social media is a “poor communication tool,” eight (13.3%) said it “can be very confusing to the public at large,” and 51 (85%) said it “is a good use of social media” (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

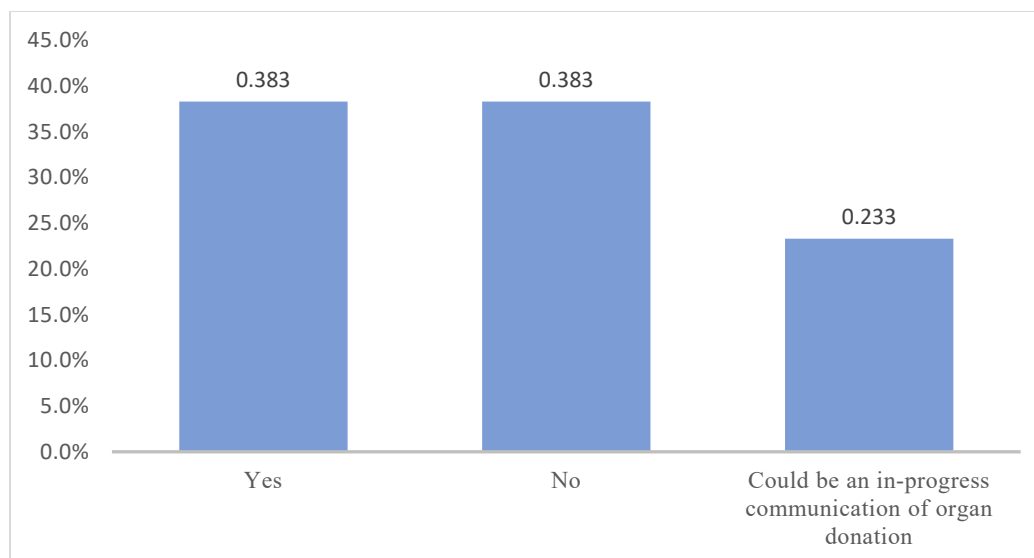
Responses to “In your role within the transplant community do you perceive that your knowledge and experience can help educate the public in using social media to increase awareness of organ donation?”



The final question asked, “*Since social media allows for real-time data collection, have you noticed more opportunities in your day-to-day activities to encourage those in the transplant community to consider organ donation?*” For this question, 23 (38.3%) participants responded “yes,” 23 (38.3%) responded “no,” and 14 (23.3%) noted it could be an “in-progress communication of organ donation” (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Responses to “Since social media allows for real-time data collection, have you noticed more opportunities in your day-to-day activities to encourage those in the transplant community to consider organ donation?”



To the first survey question, there was an overwhelming response to the idea that social media helps advance the knowledge of organ donation in the public sector, validating the inference that social media can push the envelope regarding public access. Markus and Plaut (2001). This one metric led to the understanding that social media is a reliable tool that the transplant community can use this tool to advance the need for donor organs. The nexus between social media and organ donation is needed to validate the notion the social media is a tool that can be used to push the public sector to understand the needs in the transplant community. As stated earlier, social media is dynamic in its evolution, which addresses the notion that social media gives voice to problems that

provides a platform to examine social agendas, Thorson et al. (2013). The response to this question is in lock step with the first overarching research question the role social media plays in the overall insight in organ donation.

The second survey question served to understand if social media, as a medium, can provide an understanding of the notion of organ donation. Among the participants, 43.3% said no, social media was not, 38.3% said yes, and 18.3 were unsure. Bais et al. (2022) indicated that survey responses are limited regarding age and education, which might have accounted for these findings. This discussion of social media as a medium can elicit notions of a lack of understanding of the purpose of social media. This may be due to many variables, such as age and type of profession in dealing with everyday life. Likewise, worldviews outline the pragmatic approach, which often involves individuals and groups in decision-making processes. This also takes place in mass media such as TV and radio. Empirically speaking, navigating the behavioral norms, although grounded in a theoretical framework of social learning, the attitudes of individuals are often unknown.

Survey question three provided answers to the perception that social media plays a role in day-to-day activities to access organ donation. The objective was to determine if social interactions on social media could increase organ donors. Only 26.7% of participants agreed that social media plays a role in access to organ donation, and 41.7% answered “no.” A large portion of participants were unsure (31.7%). In general, it can be conjectured that most people do not feel that social media is involved with occupation depending on their daily roles. Once again, this question is relevant to the third research

question dealing with the purpose of social media. This tool social media is used in every facet of life to explore and gain knowledge in the real world. The literature regarding social media has increased due to its recent popularity. It provides an avenue in which information can be shared, and discussions can generate instant feedback for participants. The impact of this type of communication can be the cornerstone from which decisions are made (Wehrli & Sazama, 2010). Mazur (2008) deconstructs social media as a fascinator of “social human contact.” He extrapolates social media as creating or posting digital material. The phenomenon of social media allows for the transference of critical mass to engage the public through social networking to facilitate the need for the unknown, which can be aided through education.

The fourth survey question, likewise, attempted to determine the role of social media impacts the general public’s understanding of their education and experience. Eighty-five percent of the participants said it was a good use of the social media tool. However, a small number of participants also felt social media was poor (1.7%) or confusing (13.3%) for disseminating education about organ donation, this is understandable due to the organic nature of a one-to-one communication tool. In the context of this study, we see that social media is perceived as a helpful tool. One’s lived experience seems to influence the role social media can play in general as seen by the participants responses. Although the elements of social capital cannot predict behavior, understanding social order's aspects through social media engagement is necessary.

Finally, survey question five explored the real-time dissemination of information through social media. Of the sample, 38.3% said yes, social media is a good method of real-time information dissemination, while 38.3% said no. The remaining 23.3% addressed the progression of communication as part of the process. This question seemed to strike a balance in the understanding of the need of social media to reach the public. In our daily lives we see this played out in many aspects of our lives, from politics to health decisions we are influenced to act. Sociocultural can play a role in how we as humans internalize information. Social media, from different factors plays to one's environment. This communication platform expands the forum for two-way interaction of the masses, leaving room for the dynamic cognitive effects to form a behavioral aspect. Bandura (1986), in this regard, includes behavior components as an interracial part of an individual's process of environmental influence.

The Impact of Social Media on Organ Donation Decision

Many measures have been proposed as a solution to the limited availability of donor organs. As Surg (2011) suggested, the national narrative and ethical rules are needed within the transplant community to address social justice concerns. The notion that social media can play an active role in the advancement of donor organs was examined in this study. This study explored this social problem of "the lack of donor organs" and referred to as the "gift of life." Morgan (2009) suggested the need for new narratives and social messages to create, which can be accomplished using social media

as a communication tool to educate the public on this topic. Throughout this study, a pragmatic approach was used to address the difficult experience of organ procurement.

Currently, the catalytic for global-level discourse, although considered a virtual platform, is a form disruption from the current standard of mass media. The unique system of social media has shifted how people communicate. Markus and Plaut (2001) asserted that the behaviors of individuals who belong to different social groups can be used to tackle complex problems. This conceptualization was used throughout this qualitative study to determine if social media is a useful communication tool for improving organ donation. Based on the responses to an online survey, it was determined that social media can assist in understanding and advancing organ donation awareness. This conclusion is explored in more depth in the following chapter.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of how the research was conducted and presented the finding as gathered from the data analysis and that addressed the research questions. Summary of the findings in from this analysis and findings demonstrates the purpose of social media as tool to address the shortage of donor organs. In the next chapter, I restated the research questions and expand on my findings relative to how each survey question was addressed, and how it relates to the research questions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study aimed to explore the correlation between social media and organ donation using an online perceptive. The internet has become the tool of choice to address the public with the hope of evening the fight for social justice. Because education is the key, society needs to advance in the conversation about organ donation in the public sphere. The idea of social media is pushing the understanding of the world at large.

Social tools such as Facebook, Instagram, etc., have advanced social trends that drive communication to address masses of social agendas. However, more information is needed regarding the potential effects of social media space to address the organ donation shortage. The purpose of this study was to bridge the gap in organ donation through social media by exploring the inequality of donor organs and the strong relationships of the interrelationship between interpersonal communication needed to address current shortages.

The holistic approach of organ donation is intended to capture organ procurement's true nature, which adds to the foundation needed to bring this problem to the social forefront. As mentioned, about 120,000 people are waiting for organ transplants of some type; however, on average, the availability of organs to be transplanted is about 20,000 per year, leaving a significant difference in needed organs (Department of Human and Health Services, 2011). Even with new advances in transplantation, primarily in surgical techniques, organ recovery, and anti-rejection medications, the frequency of

organ donation has remained the same. This may be due to the education lag regarding transplantation advances in the public discourse.

Although the shortage of donor organs has increased annually, researchers such as Morgan (2009) and Movius and Cody (2009) suggested that the need for public awareness, attitudes, and knowledge for organ donors is geared toward mass media. This framework has been used to anchor the social discourse regarding organ donation. Due to changing means of social communication, social media is becoming the framework of choice. Mass media has been the standard used to promote organ donation, and the missing link of scholarly literature has been based on media campaigns, which demonstrates the need for additional pathways to enhance the process of education and organ donation social awareness. The use of social media offers an element regarding social networks as a model to address knowledge regarding organ donation through multiple channels of communication (Steinfeld et al., 2008; Waterman et al., 2009). These models present a compelling way to assess the magnitude of characteristics to approach social behaviors affecting organ donation within a contextual and social networks perspective (Ladin & Hanto, 2010).

Interpretation of the Findings

Discussion of Findings for Survey Question 1

Women in this study constituted a larger percentage (60%) of the targeted participant pool in described data sampled. In Question 1, it was notable there was an overwhelming response to the idea that social media helps advance the knowledge of

organ donation in the public sector, leading to validation of the inference that social media can push the envelope regarding public access (Markus & Plaut, 2001). This one metric led to the understanding that social media is a reliable tool that the transplant community can use this tool to advance the need for donor organs. This survey question is linked to the first research question, which one of the main premises to is based.

Discussion of Findings for Survey Question 2

The second survey question serves to understand the idea that social media, as a medium, can provide an understanding of the notion of organ donation. At best, this idea has some faults noting that 43.3% said no; however, 38.3% said yes, while 18.3 were unsure. Bais et al. (June 2022) spoke to the idea of understanding the role of surveys having their limits when it comes to age and education. The idea of social media is still a method of communication, being a one-to-one tool can over time bring understanding to the public. This is a theme that this qualitative study is based on to explore the junction of social media and the role it can play in shortage of donor organs.

Discussion of Findings for Survey Question 3

Survey Question 3 works to provide answers to the perception that social media play a role in one's day-to-day activities to access organ donation. This concept attempts to question the understanding that could advance the possibility that social interaction may produce an increase in donor organs. However, the results of this question show that only 26.7% would say this is the case, while 41.7% answered no. Conversely, a substantial portion of participants were unsure (31.7). In general, most people do not feel

that social media is involved with occupation, depending on their daily roles. This is the feeling of the medical community from this survey. Likewise, the information gleaned from this survey question is linked to research the third research question, which canvases the need to understand how organ donation could be enhanced by social media. This objective has been reviewed through the usage of mass media over the years.

Discussion of Findings for Survey Question 4

This leads to the fourth survey question, which likewise relates to the role that determines the understanding based on their education and experience regarding social media in the public sphere. With this in context (85%) of the participants said it was a good use of the social media tool. However, a small number of participants also felt social media was poor or confusing when using social media about organ donation. (1.7%) and (13.3%), respectively. This is understandable due to the organic nature of being a one-to-one communication tool. The online-structured surveys are a suitable technique, supported by Charmaz (2006), in general for a qualitative study to ensure that maximum participants' experiences are reflected in the researchers' findings. Nevertheless, the use of social media allows the user to lend this tool to provide information to the masses.

Discussion of Findings for Survey Question 5

Finally, Survey Question 5 relies on the concept that this is a real-time data collection tool. Therefore, because of the challenging environment of supplying information within the transplant community, it depends on people to get the job done.

That said, it is understandable that there is a 50/50 ratio in the progression of communication. It is noted that 38.3% said yes, and 38.3% said no, leaving 23.3% specifically addressing the progression of communication as part of the process. Currently, social media, though widely available, is not the tool of choice in medial organization as seen in this survey. This needs to change to ensure and enhance the need for donor organs.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are based on the understanding of social media; however, the potential limiting factors are as follows: the ability to capture the data from the underlying three parts of this study, prospective organ recipients that are members of the social media community, practitioners from the Kansas University Medical Center, and the Transplant Athletes in Kansas-Missouri. This process of data collection could be costly due to time and money. Other limitations in receiving sufficient information from the participants are due to time factors due to their roles and busy schedules. Finally, this study employs a qualitative approach to collect, analyze, and address the interpretations gathered. Creswell (2009) wrote of bias as a possible limitation of this type of study. To minimize the potential internal and external biases, steps were taken, such as data quality techniques to ensure that research used was from quality sources devoid of missing data, and missing variables, as suggested by Babbie (2013), Creswell (2009), and Merriam (2002).

Recommendations

Conceptually, the understanding of what moves one to donate an organ is influenced by many social factors. Researchers such as Rosenstock et al. (1988) are provided long-standing relevant theories which have been used to identify motivations, attitudes, and behaviors instrumental to understanding individuals (Wang, 2012). Fundamentally, their approach examines the appropriateness of social behaviors attributed to social factors. In this interconnected digital humanistic age, we look to do a forensic breakdown to formulate and approach the understanding of human fears and attitudes to predict the intentions of the human element (Wang, 2012). In the age of social media, we strive to understand the meaning through social psychology research, which has been social scientists' target. Researchers such as Ajzen (1991), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) have framed the reasoned action theoretically and the sub-constructs to formulate the different facets of personal attitudes. The phenomenon of social media allows for the transference of critical mass to engage the public through social networking to facilitate the need for the unknown, which can be aided through education.

The idea of organ donation is radically different from most healthcare issues. Morgan (2009) promoted the understanding of organ donation as an altruistic notion in which organ donors, in many cases, are unaware due to their mortality. The author further states, "donating organs after death does not benefit the donor in any tangible way and requires people to contemplate their mortality as a condition of engaging in the

recommended behavior” (2009, p. 40). This study explored the role of social media in engaging and advancing the conversation about the need to increase organ donation.

Implications

As stated in Chapter 1, many measures have been proposed to solve today’s crisis of available donor organs. Surg (2011) suggested that the influence of information with a national narrative and ethical rules is needed within the transplant community to address social justice concerns. The premise of this qualitative study is that social media can play an active role in increasing the availability of donor organs. As I navigated this study, it was intended to understand this social problem, “the lack of donor organs” referred to as the “Gift of life.” Using the SRT, Morgan (2009) suggested the need for the narrative to create and social message, which was used to highlight and promote social media as a communication tool to address the problem of this study. Throughout this study, a pragmatic approach is used to address the problematic experience of organ procurement. These findings demonstrate the phenomenon of social media is more nuance in nature. Organ donation is a social challenge that has been overwhelming for many years, and the solution is at best in the distant future.

Conclusion

Based on the overall results of this study, it can be determined that social media could have a corrective effect on the trends of needed donor organs in the United States. The results from Question 1 of the surveys identified delineated the perceptions of social media to help increase access to organ donors. From their response, 60% agreed that

social media was helpful in accessing organ donors. This is critical to address the current environment within the transplant community. Understanding organ donors through social media is somewhat defensible; although 43.3% said no, 38.3% said yes, leaving 18.3% unsure.

The idea of social media as a source of communication can be a learning experience but it becomes normal as time goes on. The perception is that social media plays a role in one's day-to-day activities to access organ donation. This concept attempts to question the understanding that could advance the possibility that social interaction may produce an increase in donor organs. However, the results of Survey Question 3 show that only 26.7% would say this is the case, while 41.7% answered no. Conversely, a large portion of participants were unsure (31.7). It seems that social media is second nature for most in the medical community because most inaction is face-to-face in general.

Survey Question 4, likewise, relates to the role that determines the understanding based on their education and experience regarding social media in the public sphere. With this in context (85%) of the participants said it was a good use of the social media tool. However, a few participants also felt social media was poor or confusing when using social media concerning organ donation. (1.7%) and (13.3%), respectively. This is understandable due to the organic nature of being a one-to-one communication tool.

Finally, Survey Question 5 relies on the concept that this is a real-time data collection tool. Therefore, because of the challenging environment of supplying

information within the transplant community, it depends on people to get the job done. That said, it is understandable that there is a 50/50 ratio in the progression of communication. It is noted that 38.3% said yes, and 38.3% said no, leaving 23.3% specifically addressing the progression of communication as part of the process. A review of all the related data would suggest that social media can be a tool to move the needle forward in increasing the availability of donor organs. Education on the use of this tool is key to being the tool of choice moving forward. Additional new tools from the video side of social media, such as TikTok and Snapchat, can help understand the need for donor organs.

Implications for Social Change

I sought to explore the potential remedial impact of social media on the shortage of donor organs. The results of this study are the starting point to advance the understanding of needed changes in the transplant community. Based on the results of this study and recommendations, the empirical correlation between social media and the need for donor organs provides consideration for the potential to empower the transplant community and the public to address the shortage of donor organs head-on.

In conclusion, society witnesses tragic daily events due to the lack of donor organs. The likelihood of a terminally ill child who requires a new heart and is placed on a waiting list due to a lack of available solid donor organs is not an uncommon story in mass media. While such stories are often seen, the list of patients awaiting a donor organ has increased since the early eighties (Bread, 2013). As of 2020, almost 120,000 people

were on the waiting list for a solid organ transplant; sadly, approximately 22 people per day have lost their battle awaiting the gift of life yearly (United Network for Organ Sharing, 2021).

Recommendations for Future Study

This study has some limitations that should be avoided in future research. First, the sample size was limited to 61 participants within the Kansas and Missouri area due to pace and outlay. Although this strategy worked well for this study and helped with the limited time and attention needed, a longitudinal study of a large sample within the transplant community may produce more significant and broader results. Secondly, the basis of this study was regionally based, thereby limiting the total understanding of the effects of social media and the shortage of donor organs. Therefore, the location could be a limiting factor due to the survey questions. Finally, the study provides a new empirical foundation for the potential corrective effect of organ donation to be addressed in the future. The groundwork has been laid for testing social media to be the background of the solution going forward.

Personal Reflections

The most gratifying aspect of conducting this study is being a member of the transplant community and being able to understand from a personal basis the need to increase the availability of donor organs. Having been in this situation twice, once in May 1988 and April 2021, and receiving a liver transplant twice, I felt burdened to give back. The idea of waiting for someone to lose their life is possibly daunting. Therefore,

receiving this Ph.D. degree will be very rewarding and beneficial in helping to make policy changes for organ donors and transplant patients. I plan to open a Kidney Transplant Center in the British Virgin Islands that will service 21 other Islands in the Caribbean in the Fall of 2024. This Kidney transplant center is based on a three-prong approach to bring Doctor's over, borders, the BVI health department, and the local community together in a single approach to accomplish this objective. My goal is to give back to the transplant community and pay forward to others needing an organ within the transplant public.

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