# Audio file

Participant 2 3.m4a

# Transcript

Speaker 1

Hello. Sure. First and foremost, I'd like to thank you for taking your time aside. Out of your. Day for this interview before we begin the interview, I would like to thank you and I'd like to explain the nature of this interview and why I'm conducting the research. So I'm currently studying an MPhil in strategic communication management at the University of Pretoria. And as a communications student, I'm particularly interested in communications and how it is conducted and received, especially during times of crisis. The nature of my research is based on health crisis, communication during the pandemic and seeing as the pandemic affected everyone, I find that everyone has their own perceptions and opinions on how the COVID-19 health crisis could have been handled. So I want to interview you to understand your perception in implementing this type of communication. I'd like you to think of this really as not not just as an interview, but as a conversation between two people, where one educates the other. So and in this case, you're the educator. So our interview is confidential and for assurance purposes, I would like your permission to record our conversation, if that's OK.

Speaker 2

Yes, let's get started.

Speaker 1

How did you respond when you first heard about the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa?

Speaker 2

I think it was. Bit of denial. At first, which turned into shock, couldn't be. All that was happening at that time.

Speaker 1

what was your opinion of the COVID-19 information shared by the South African Government during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Speaker 2

In the beginning I would say everything. Was accurate because. They didn't expect the whole. Issue to just like blossom the. Weight. So I feel like in the beginning it was OK, but then it turned into a thing of. They were trying to. Hide. The number of deaths and number of people infected so that people don't go into a panic and stuff like that. So I feel like gradually everything just became. Inaccurate from their side.

Speaker 1

And did you find the information the COVID-19 information shared by the government easy to understand?

Speaker 2

I think it was pretty straightforward I think. In that regard, like everyone was able to access that information and understand, yeah. So I think it was, it was OK.

Speaker 1

Did you find the information accurate and why?

Speaker 2

I think. That kind of I I would. Have found it accurate because. I hate I have to understand that in situations of panic, it's quite easy to. I'm hoping people to. Come up with rumours and all those kind of things. So that's where I knew I can find the most accurate information. So yeah, that's why I was.

Speaker 1

What social media posts about COVID-19 caught your attention?

Speaker 2

UM. Honestly, it's. I'd say it's the the memes on spaces such as Twitter, so. Like in the beginning it's. All jokes and all that stuff until. You get you see a notice where you know from the government or the. You know, OK, this is real. I think it was filtered.

Speaker 1

what made those posts stick in your mind?

Speaker 2

I think it's because. It's it's a moment of when you read the messages, it doesn't feel real until you. You actually grasp that it doesn't feel real so. Yeah. It's.

Speaker 1

How did you respond to the COVID-19 messages you saw during the pandemic?

Speaker 2

I think. I reacted the same as any other person. Would you? You know, you have to filter out the real information from the fake information. So. Yeah, it was. There's a whole lot of that.

Speaker 1

Can you share any examples of any messages that change how people around you thought about COVID?

Speaker 2

That will have to. Do a lot of lot with. Conspiracy. Yeah, I think. Like it it. Peoples perspective on the thing changed. You know, people weren't getting enough information, maybe and then they start now trying to put the pieces together. Everyone goes into a spiral. So yeah. So that's how I saw people just.

Speaker 1

Did you find the way COVID-19 was communicated, influenced you and how you saw the pandemic? And if so, how?

Speaker 2

OK. I would say yes.In the sense that. You know the situation became more and more intense. And so. You kinda had to really. And just like understand the information being used by the government, like when you see it, you actually have to believe it because it is actually happening, it's actually true.

Speaker 1

What did you think about the governments WhatsApp hotline/ group on COVID-19 information?

Speaker 2

I think it was extremely helpful to people who don't know how to go and find information, you know, so there's old. Those old grandmas and grandpas daughter who only know how to use WhatsApp, so communicating that way for them, would be felt more comfortable, yeah.

Speaker 1

was it helpful, and if so, could you explain?

Speaker 2

I think it was helpful because you. It will. You were able to find information. Quickly because they showed you the option. So there were always parts for you to follow within the messaging so that you can get to the information that you were solely looking for.

Speaker 1

Do you think people in different parts of South Africa perceived COVID-19 differently based on the messages they receive?

Speaker 2

I would say yes, because I'm considering the rural part of South Africa. People don't have that much access to what everyone saw in terms.Of they might not have. The same Internet privileges or you know so. So I don't think the information got a bit late and a bit like filtered out when it got to them. So I feel like those kind of people didn't understand the intensity of the whole situation. So that's the difference.

Speaker 1

Can you think of any events during the COVID-19 pandemic that made people trust health authorities Less or more?

Speaker 2

I would say it I would talk about the list because. What happened was that. There was a lot of controversy in terms of the vaccine and all that stuff, so I think so people would have actually turned because it started. People started dying from it, you know, a whole lot of information or spirit about that to inaccurate, accurate. But it's still posed propaganda and still cause rumors amongst people. So I feel like at that point in time everything just turned out for the.

Speaker 1

what are your thoughts on fake news During the pandemic?.

Speaker 2

I believe that at tetime. They actually. I think the news. Caused a lot of panic. It influenced. A lot of decisions in terms of, I would say when people spread all the fake news it. In a way. Sort of slowed down. The the process like for for people to get healed if they were going to get healed. So I feel like if maybe these fake news didn't come out about like, let's say the vaccine killing people, a lot of a lot more people could have gotten the vaccine and, you know, actually been killed quicker, you know. So I feel like they took away a lot of things and.

Speaker

Yes.

Speaker 1

Do you think the spread of false news or false information made people trust health authorities less?

Speaker 2

UM. I would say no because it's, it's around that time. Where? If. There's a lot of. Like a a time when people believed, if there's a lot of information going on around, if I actually want to verify this, it has to be posted by a a page from the government that's actually verified, you know, information that's actually verified for people to actually believe because everything else. You know, fake news. So you have to go. There. And actually see that they posted this themselves. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

OK. Thank you very much for your meaningful responses and contributions to the study. We've ended the interview. I've covered all the questions I intended to ask. Is there anything else you'd like to add to our discussion? Thank you very much for your time and I've learned plenty from you and your experience.