# Audio file

Participant 12.m4a

# Transcript

Speaker 1

Hello first and foremost, I'd like to thank you for taking your time inside and every day to do this interview before we begin the interview, I would like to explain the nature of this interview and why I'm conducting the research. So I'm currently studying an MPhil degree in strategic communications at the University of Pretoria, and there's a communication student I'm particularly interested in communications. And how it is conducted and received during times of? Crisis. The nature of my research is based on Health Communication on health crisis communication during the COVID-19 pandemic and seeing as the pandemic affected everyone and find that everyone has their own opinions and perceptions of how the health crisis communication could have been handled. I want to interview you to understand your perception of implementing this type of communication, and I would like you to think of this not merely as an interview, but as a conversation between two people where one educates the other, and in this instance you're the educator. Our interview is confidential and for assurance purposes I would like to ask your permission to record this. Conversation, if that's OK, that's OK.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 1

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

Speaker 2

Obviously it doesn't shock for everybody. There was a big adjustment, so basically not being able to be in social spaces, not only for the purpose of seeing friends and family, but also for other things like your education and. How you're gonna manage everything was a big problem. At the time, so obviously being communicated that you can't go out and can't go. Out. And see and do the things that you needed to do. It was quite difficult, quite challenging for me to process it.

Speaker 1

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

Speaker 2

I think it was quite accurate they. Period, efficiently. So everybody understood what was going on. We were able to act on the information that was sent out and we were able to protect ourselves and put ourselves in the best possible situation to protect our family members and people that they help the others to us. So I think the. Communication was quite.

Speaker 1

Good. Did you find the COVID-19 Information shared by the government easy to understand?

Speaker 2

It was quite easy to understand for me. I think just because I'm at the time I was doing my first year in varsity so. They they articulated themselves well enough to the point we. I was able to comprehend everything quite well, so there wasn't any blurred lines. Yes. And if even if. There were blurred lines. If there were some spacious we. I didn't understand. Of course, there were quite a few people talking about it, so the conversations. That were had at the time was. Was well enough, I. Guess.

Speaker 1

Did you find the information accurate?

Speaker 2

Like I said, yeah, it was. It was accurate. Most of us were able to. To navigate around it, we were able to receive that information. Take it in and. Find our own approach and. Just adapt to. The crisis at the time, I guess.

Speaker 1

what social media posts about COVID caught your attention?

Speaker 2

Social media post about COVID. I think the the first one was the first person to have received it in South Africa. Obviously it was. Global at the time. The fact that we on social media made it easier for us to expect because of the fact that. Everybody, all all countries neighbouring South Africa, had received it by that time. So when we received it wasn't really that big of a. I guess just scare for for me personally. But. South Africa, I think with, with, with, with regards to communication, they've made it quite clear. To everybody, what was happening and what needed to be done for us to make sure that we were safe, I guess.

Speaker 1

what made those posts stick in your mind?

Speaker 2

The reason it's sticking my mind is obviously my my safety at the time or the safety of your loved ones and your friends and so forth. So you just wanna make. Sure that you. We were safe and protected and avoided disease. I guess at all times.

Speaker 1

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

Speaker 2

So the way I responded to it was. I simply just took it as it is. Because I knew that if I had gone against it, it would have been a problem. Many people, I feel like they struggle to adapt to the new way of living, not being able to see their friends and not being being able to be in social spaces like for example. There were issues such as. People who consume. Nicotine or people that smoke, people that drink and so forth. So they were they found it quite hard to adapt to a new lifestyle where they couldn't get access to those products. But for myself, I felt like it was quite. Quite easy because I had all the necessities and I didn't really need anything outside of my home at the Time.

Speaker 1

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

Speaker 2

Of how people around me so COVID. A lot of people. Saw it as I can say a lot of people saw it as a. As a scam, as they can lie, I think against people who aren't really open. About the whole thing, we thought it was somewhat. Set up. And it wasn't really a crisis that was spreading at the numbers. It was. It was quite scary. So not a lot of people could accept it. A lot of people thought it was something that the government was trying to impose on us or they were trying to do something or they had something that we didn't really. Know about but with a few of my I think friends and family members and wife, I was quickly able to come to the realization that.

Speaker 1

Did the way COVID-19 has communicated influence how you saw the pandemic?

Speaker 2

The word COVID-19 in itself.

Speaker 1

No, the way COVID-19 was communicated, did it influence how you saw the pandemic, like as the virus on its own?

Speaker 2

Yeah. Yes, the reason why I would say. Influenced my way of of being. Serious about it, of taking the the situation head on and making sure that I do not lag in. In the in, lacking any of the strategies that they set out. So they give us permission saying don't do this. Don't do this to do this, to wear your mask and all the strategies that prevented us from getting covered at that time. I used that strategy because of the fact that it was constantly. They communicated over social media over powerboards over television over every stream of.

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Media that was forecasted so we they put us in a state of fear, I guess. So that's my experience.

Speaker 1

OK. What do you think about the governments WhatsApp hotline slash group for COVID-19 information?

Speaker 2

I think it it was effective enough. I just think that the only thing was the numbers that we had was COVID and the amount of. People that. And experienced it. For you to hit like, hit on weren’t really able to get the necessary attention of of just whatever I feel like we could have done better in terms of creating more. Hotlines creating more, giving more platforms for people to communicate the issues and what was done. Obviously there was this the basis of what to do and what to expect and what was needed in case you were in a specific crisis that was broadcasted over media or television but. They could have been, yeah, definitely. More help? With regards to their communication and so forth, more platforms available for everybody to have access and have the immediate feedback that was needed at the Time.

Speaker 1

Was it helpful?

Speaker 2

Yeah, it was helpful to an extent, for example with. I remember one example was registering for COVID vaccination. COVID vaccination was quite easy to navigate, WhatsApp register and then move forward from there.

Speaker 1

Was it trustworthy?

Speaker 2

Trustworthy. Yes. Dates that I received as accurate times. Regarding that. The vaccinations as well, what it would cause the effects of it, what was needed for where it came from. All of the information was provided at the time and you could. Yeah, you could move from the from the information that you receive.

Speaker 1

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

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, of course. There's a lot of people depending on on other platform, you've received the information that you could have a different opinion or perspective, for example by why sit on, watch them on national television or will be a different experience with someone that's watching someone or something, somebody that's watching or receiving it on Twitter. Because a lot of the the comments made on two others were skewed, was the thing of. Maybe there is a possibility that this virus is just like like I said, maybe it's just a scam. Maybe it's just something that government is trying to pose us. Maybe it's like, I don't know, something. There was always this fear put out on certain certain platforms, certain. Social media platforms that may be the other chance that we were being lied to by. Officials and the globe? I guess so, yeah. Depending on where you receive your information from there, you would have a specific. Perception of what was going on and what you needed to do for yourself at the. Time.

Speaker 1

Can you think of any events during the pandemic that made people trust health authorities more or less?

Speaker 2

More or less. I know one incident or with the were not enough. Hospital. Facility facilities, I don't think there are enough facilities for to cater for everybody. So there was somewhat an import, there was somewhat reliance on yourself to.

Speaker 1

Hmm.

Speaker 2

To make sure that you could, I guess, cope with the situation. So it's like a lot of the people didn't really receive the necessary medical attention. Resort to self-medication. For example, according to pharmacy, doing something for themselves that would. And benefit them and I guess save them in the sense.

Speaker 1

What are your thoughts on the fake news that spread during COVID-19?

Speaker

Well.

Speaker 2

I don't my thoughts on the fake news, I feel like. It's it's very dangerous depending on like who receives the information. Not everybody's able to fault the the information that they receive. They're not able to differentiate the the false from the real the real from the fact so. Depending on who it is, really. It is. It can be quite dangerous for for young people to receive that information, that false information and. Not take on the safety precautions and take on the safety. The safety whatever was given to the safety, basically just the precautions that were given to them because of the fact they don't see it as a risk or they don't see it as important as the as it was.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Seen on national television compared to like, like I said with the.

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Platform. For example, we people posted fake. Fake news, I.

Speaker 1

Guess do you think the spread of false information made people trust health authorities less?

Speaker 2

Yeah. Because like I said, with for example with. What the vaccinations were available, so a lot of people felt like they didn't want the vaccination because like I said, it could be a scam. It could be a lie. Like all government officials actually telling the truth. And because of the fact that you have received your information from a source where. You haven't really filtered it. You've just seen this information that could put a fear in your heart that maybe this. Vaccination wouldn't really be a banner of the best benefit for yourself, so a lot of people, for example, didn't end up taking vaccinations. Why? Because they were scared. They were scared that government was maybe trying to do something to them, or tried to cause harm. You know, there was information put out, for example, like there were people. Or some countries are too overpopulated, so that would help decrease the population. So a lot of people were scared of the innovation nation. So depending on the information and where they. Received it from. How would create a certain perspective and they would? Move according to that.

Speaker 1

Thank you very much for your meaningful responses and contributions to the study. We have ended the interview and have covered all the questions and intending to ask is there anything else you'd like to add? To our discussion.

Speaker 2

No, not really.

Speaker 1

Thank you for your time and I've learned plenty. From you and your experience.