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Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

**EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF SELECTED NGOS IN ETHIOPIA**

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Reg No: GSR/3236/15

A Thesis Submitted to Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Journalism and
Communication In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master Arts in
Journalism and Communication: Specialty in Public Relations And Strategic Communication

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Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Amanuel Woldearegay for all of his assistance, wisdom, and direction during my academic career. The quality of this thesis has improved and my comprehension has been shaped thanks to your coaching.

Abstract

The proliferation of social media presents opportunities and challenges for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to leverage these platforms for their missions. This study examines how NGOs in Ethiopia incorporate social media and explores the impacts on organizational performance aspects. Through a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative case studies and quantitative surveys, the research investigates social media strategies, platform usage patterns, and perceived effects across stakeholder engagement, advocacy, fundraising, and operational areas. The findings reveal Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp as the most prevalent platforms used for sharing updates, promoting initiatives, and volunteer mobilization. However, NGOs face significant challenges including limited budgets, staffing constraints, skills gaps, and difficulties measuring returns on social media investment. Despite these obstacles, the study indicates NGOs perceive social media as highly effective for raising public awareness, engaging existing supporters, and policy advocacy, though less impactful for audience growth and fundraising. Qualitative insights highlight the need for comprehensive strategies, formalized guidelines, dedicated personnel, and organizational culture shifts to optimize social media integration. The study contributes empirical Ethiopian NGO sector evidence on social media's multifaceted influences. Results inform capacity-building priorities, resource allocation, and strategic communications policies to empower NGOs in harnessing digital platforms' potential while navigating unique constraints. The results from the study shows that NGOs should emphasize investing in social media governance frameworks, professional development, and cross-sector collaboration to amplify civil society's voices and development impact through thoughtful technology adoption.

Keywords: Social media, NGOs, Ethiopia, organizational performance, stakeholder engagement, advocacy, fundraising, capacity building, digital strategy

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List of Acronyms

- **NGO** - Non-Governmental Organization
- **ROI** - Return on Investment
- **CCRDA** - Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations
- **CEWA** - Consortium of Ethiopian Women's Associations
- **ICRC** - International Committee of the Red Cross
- **ICT** - Information and Communication Technology

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The past two decades have witnessed an explosive rise in social media platforms, profoundly impacting communication, culture, and commerce worldwide. Following the launch of sites like Facebook, X (Twitter), and YouTube in the mid-2000s, global social media usage has climbed dramatically, with over 3.5 billion people now regularly using some form of social media (Bowden-Green et al., 2020). These technologies have enabled new forms of public discourse, activism, entertainment, and social interaction online. For organizations across sectors, the emergence of social media represents a seismic shift in how they connect with audiences, market their work, recruit talent, and operate internally. Harnessing these digital tools holds potential for nonprofit groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to amplify their missions and bolster organizational performance in impactful ways. On a basic level, social media provides NGOs with instant connectivity to share news, spread awareness, and mobilize action among vast global networks. Platforms like Facebook and X (Twitter) (X) offer new channels for NGOs to directly engage diverse audiences through sharing field stories, updates, infographics, and more (Chen Denq, 2023). This facilitates public education and grassroots advocacy around NGO issues from climate change to poverty reduction. Streaming video sites like YouTube and Vimeo further enable NGOs to create compelling digital media content that makes their work more visible and accessible worldwide.

Furthermore, social media presents opportunities for NGOs to build strategic partnerships, recruit volunteers, and deepen supporter engagement through interactive communication. Two-way dialogue via platforms like Facebook and X (Twitter) allows NGOs to

crowd-source ideas, solicit input, organize events, and foster vibrant communities of advocates beyond just broadcasting one-way messages (Mavrodieva & Shaw, 2021). Through social media, NGOs can maintain ongoing decentralized networks that fuel mobilization and collective action globally. Additionally, social media provides a vital space for NGOs to highlight urgent crises and raise funds in real time. When disasters strike or urgent needs arise, NGOs can immediately launch social media appeals, leveraging the power of viral sharing to quickly generate support. Web-based fundraising integrated with social media has already expanded NGO access to individual small donors worldwide. Nonprofits can now build donor relationships through regular social media updates and feedback. Internally, social media presents tools for improved information sharing, collaboration, and knowledge management within NGOs. Staff working across disparate geographic locations can communicate in real time via platforms like Slack or Yammer (Rysavy & Michalak, 2020). Document co-editing on cloud apps like Google Drive can enable rapid drafting and feedback. Such tools facilitate internal transparency, engagement, and coordination across projects. However, along with the enormous opportunities, social media also poses risks and challenges for NGOs. Concerns around privacy, information security, and staff media training must be addressed. Potential inaccuracies and misinformation on social media can jeopardize NGO reputations if not managed strategically. Furthermore, the sheer volume of platforms presents a challenge of capacity and target audience fragmentation. Determining which platforms to prioritize requires data analysis and thoughtful goal-setting. As social media continues evolving, its implications for the nonprofit sector remain varied and complex. While potentially transformative, fully leveraging these emerging tools to enhance NGO performance requires focused strategy, skill-building, and adaptation. Thoughtful integration of social media presents a key opportunity for NGOs to extend their reach and deepen their impact worldwide.

1.2 Defining and Categorizing NGOs

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are independent, non-profit entities that operate outside of governmental or commercial structures, typically aiming to serve social, environmental, or humanitarian causes (Lewis, 2014). These organizations are diverse and can be categorized based on their operational scope, focus areas, and organizational structures.

Charitable NGOs primarily focus on providing social services and aid in areas such as poverty alleviation, disaster relief, and healthcare. These organizations often rely on donations and volunteer work to support their activities and reach their target beneficiaries (GDRC, n.d.). Service NGOs, on the other hand, provide specific services such as legal aid, consumer protection, and support for marginalized groups. These NGOs often employ professionals and experts to deliver targeted services to those in need (GDRC, n.d.).

Participatory NGOs emphasize community empowerment and engage local populations in decision-making processes. These organizations work to ensure that community members have a say in the development and implementation of projects that affect their lives (Berkeley Library Guides, 2024). Environmental NGOs are dedicated to conservation efforts and sustainable development practices. They often work on issues such as climate change, wildlife protection, and environmental education, advocating for policies that promote ecological sustainability (Sharma, n.d.).

Advocacy NGOs aim to influence policies, laws, and public opinion on various social or human rights issues. These organizations engage in lobbying, public campaigns, and research to bring about legislative and societal changes (Sharma, n.d.). They play a crucial role in raising awareness and pushing for reforms that benefit disadvantaged or marginalized populations.

NGOs can adopt various legal structures based on their objectives and regulatory environments. Trusts are legal arrangements where assets are managed by trustees for charitable purposes, providing a structured way to support ongoing philanthropic efforts (Follan, 2021). Voluntary associations are membership-based organizations governed by an elected committee, promoting democratic decision-making within the organization (Pandiyan, 2023). Foundations are independent entities that distribute grants to support other organizations or initiatives, often established by individuals or corporations to further specific causes (Ji & Pang, 2021). Non-profit companies are legally constituted as separate entities with non-profit requirements, allowing them to engage in a variety of activities while adhering to regulatory standards (Narimanov, 2023).

Despite the diversity in their organizational models, all NGOs share a commitment to addressing critical issues and creating positive social impact. They play an essential role in global development by filling gaps left by governments and the private sector, advocating for change, and providing vital services to those in need (Yemata, 2021).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study was to:

1. Investigate the social media communication strategies employed by NGOs in Ethiopia.
2. Identify the social media management practices adopted by these organizations.
3. Determine the most commonly used social media platforms among Ethiopian NGOs.
4. Assess the impact of social media usage on NGO activities and performance.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of social media for intra-organizational public relations among Ethiopian NGOs.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What social media communication strategies do NGOs in Ethiopia employ?
2. What social media management strategies do NGOs in Ethiopia adopt?
3. Which social media platforms are commonly used by NGOs in Ethiopia?
4. How does social media usage affect NGOs' activities and performance in Ethiopia?
5. How effectively do NGOs in Ethiopia mobilize social media for intra-organizational public relations?

1.5 Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of social media presents both opportunities and challenges for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ethiopia seeking to leverage these technologies to further their missions. While the potential benefits of platforms like Facebook, X (Twitter), and YouTube are extensive, many NGOs lack strategies, capacity, and knowledge to effectively harness social media amid resource constraints. This study aimed to examine how selected NGOs operating in Ethiopia are incorporating social media into their work, and how their usage of these tools is impacting core aspects of organizational performance. Previous research on social media in the non-profit sector has largely focused on NGOs in Western institutional contexts. Far less attention has been paid to social media adoption and implementation among NGOs working in developing country contexts like Ethiopia, with differing technological infrastructures, capacity limitations, and stakeholder needs. While some advocate the potential of

social media to “leapfrog” development challenges, concrete evidence from Ethiopian NGOs is lacking (Zikargae et al., 2023). This study aimed to fill that knowledge gap by generating quantitative, qualitative, and context-specific data on how Ethiopia-based NGOs across diverse sectors are utilizing social media to enhance their programs and operations on the ground. In particular, this study explored the impacts of social media usage on key aspects of NGO performance vital to fulfilling their missions. These include community outreach, engagement and public awareness-raising, communication and relationships with donors, partners, and government stakeholders, and volunteer recruitment and coordination. Additionally, marketing, public relations, and fundraising, and their internal information exchange, knowledge sharing, and collaboration within the NGO. It identifies specific uses of platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube being applied toward these organizational functions, along with benefits and challenges encountered. Understanding social media’s impacts on NGOs has both theoretical and practical significance. The study findings generate much-needed evidence on how social media platforms influence NGOs’ on-the-ground work, community engagement, partnerships, and internal processes in an African developing country environment. It tests assumptions that such technologies automatically strengthen organizational capacity and performance in these contexts. The results can inform improved organizational practices and identify staff training needs for integrating social media strategies tailored to local circumstances.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study's investigation of how social media usage impacts NGO performance and operations on the ground in Ethiopia generates important insights both practically and theoretically. On a practical level, the research provides much-needed empirical evidence

directly from local NGOs to identify effective strategies and best practices for social media adoption. The qualitative findings reveal how these tools influence critical functions like community outreach, donor relations, volunteer engagement, fundraising, and internal information exchange. This helps NGOs understand social media's tangible impacts and returns on investment to inform strategic organizational decisions. Currently, many NGOs lack frameworks for implementing social media initiatives tailored to the Ethiopian context and integrating them with on-the-ground programming. This study's findings can guide organizations in developing specialized training and policies for social media use by staff. They can aid managers in setting social media objectives, allocating resources, and assessing results. The lessons learned are invaluable for the resource-constrained NGO field in Ethiopia seeking to take full advantage of these emerging technologies. More broadly, the research be useful for NGO umbrella networks, capacity-building organizations, and funders supporting the local NGO sector. The findings identify organizational needs, gaps in social media skills, and areas for technical support to better channel resources. This allows the development of contextualized training programs and investments based on empirical evidence directly from ground-level organizations.

Additionally, government agencies in Ethiopia developing policies and regulations surrounding social media and benefit from this data illuminating impacts and realities on the ground. Constructive policymaking be aided by insights on how social media tools stand to amplify civil society groups' contributions to Ethiopia's development. At a theoretical level, the research makes several important contributions. It provided some of the first in-depth data on social media utilization by NGOs operating in an African developing country context. Much existing literature focuses on Western or global North NGOs. Generating empirical evidence

from Ethiopian organizations working within local communities illuminates localized dynamics shaping social media's effectiveness for civic participation and social change. The study tests assumptions that social media technologies inherently strengthen organizational performance and networks. Its context-specific findings reveal the complex, nuanced influences of these tools on how NGOs enact their missions on the ground. This expands the theoretical understanding of the relationship between digital technologies and organizational capacity in developing countries. Additionally, the research elucidates the impacts of social media usage on constructs like social capital, community engagement, and collective action among marginalized populations in Ethiopia. It provides theoretical insights into how introductions of new media technologies interact with pre-existing social norms, structures, and cultural practices in local settings.

In summary, this study's investigation of social media and NGOs in Ethiopia generates actionable evidence to guide organizational practice and capacity building. It also fills theoretical gaps and provides analytical insights to enrich scholarly understanding of digital technology's impacts on development processes, civil society, and organizational change in understudied African contexts.

1.7 Brief overview of the NGO landscape in Ethiopia

Ethiopia, the capital of Ethiopia, is home to a vibrant and growing community of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that serve a range of humanitarian, development, advocacy, and social justice causes in the city and wider region. As a diplomatic hub for Africa and a base of the African Union, Ethiopia provides a strategic center for many international NGOs to coordinate operations across the continent. Meanwhile, a rise in domestic civil society groups addresses socioeconomic challenges within Ethiopia itself. The Agency for Civil Society

Organizations in Ethiopia has registered a total of 2,953 civil society organizations (CSOs). This total includes 2,460 local organizations and 422 foreign-funded CSOs, along with 61 consortiums and 10 committees (ICL, 2023). Key programmatic areas of focus include health, education, poverty alleviation, children/youth services, women's empowerment, disability rights, social welfare, human rights, environment, food security, and water access. International organizations like Save the Children, CARE, Amnesty International, and Oxfam maintain headquarters and substantial operations in Ethiopia to lead regional programming and influence policymakers. Ethiopian NGOs like the Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) and the Consortium of Ethiopian Women's Associations (CEWA) coordinate networks of hundreds of local member groups.

The evolution of Ethiopia's NGO sector reflects Ethiopia's challenging political climate. Restrictions imposed by the government on foreign funding and activities created difficulties for NGOs since 2009 (Dupuy et al., 2014). This forced greater self-reliance among domestic groups, leading to a wave of grassroots NGO formation focused on building capacity rather than donor dependency. However, international NGOs maintain concentrated influence through their larger budgets and connections. Health-related NGOs have a strong presence in Ethiopia, from the pioneering medical provider the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to domestic anti-HIV/AIDS groups like the Ethiopian AIDS Resource Center. The prominence of development groups like Farm Africa and Mercy Corps underscores persistent needs in food security, agriculture, microfinance, and infrastructure among Ethiopia's rural poor. Ethiopia also hosts influential regional advocacy NGOs focused on conflict resolution, refugees, migration, and good governance such as InterAfrica Group and the Life and Peace Institute (Trust Fund for Africa, 2020). Expatriate NGO personnel comprise a small but influential expatriate community

in Ethiopia. The city's cosmopolitan makeup and position make it a hub for conferences, interagency cooperation, and NGO sector networking in Africa.

However, amid the sector's growth, some observers critique dependence on foreign donors and lack of financial transparency as persistent weaknesses among Ethiopia NGOs. Many smaller domestic groups still struggle with inadequate resources and organizational capacities. Ethiopia's tight restrictions on civil liberties force groups to align work with governmental development agendas, limiting advocacy. Nonetheless, Ethiopia associations remain instrumental in serving marginalized communities and providing essential services where public institutions are lacking (Wondimu, 2020). In summary, Ethiopia has emerged as a strategic convening point and operational base for a diverse NGO ecosystem spanning relief services, development initiatives, policy work, research, and activist networking across Africa. Both international and grassroots NGOs based in the city grapple with common issues of funding, government relations, organizational effectiveness, and sustainability. Yet they remain dedicated to mobilizing civil society to address urgent social needs. The vibrancy of the city's NGO sector attests to strong engagement between civic groups and communities in improving lives across one of Africa's fastest-growing urban regions.

1.8 Role and Impact of NGOs

Non-governmental organizations play vital roles in tackling a wide array of social, economic, and environmental challenges around the world. Their unique position allows NGOs to catalyze positive change through diverse strategies and initiatives that complement government efforts and market-based solutions. The impacts of NGOs are far-reaching across multiple spheres: NGO Contributions to Development NGOs have become indispensable partners in promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction globally (Banks, 2021).

They deliver essential services, build local capacities, and advocate for policies benefiting underserved communities. In areas with weak public infrastructure, NGOs step in to provide basic healthcare, education, clean water access, and economic empowerment programs for the poor. Groups like CARE, World Vision, and Heifer International have lifted millions out of poverty through integrated grassroots development approaches. NGOs work closely with communities to design culturally relevant solutions addressing their specific needs and contexts.

Additionally, NGOs increase government accountability and transparency through independent monitoring of development programs and funds (Putra, 2020). Their research informs smarter policymaking and more effective allocation of aid. NGOs promote inclusive participation of marginalized groups like women, indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities in development decision-making. At a macro level, NGOs significantly influence the global development agenda through advocacy at forums like the UN and World Bank. Overall, NGOs are indispensable development catalysts both practically implementing initiatives and reshaping systems to be more equitable and sustainable.

NGOs in Humanitarian Relief When natural disasters, conflicts, or other crises strike, NGOs are often among the first responders providing vital humanitarian relief services. Groups like the International Red Cross/Red Crescent, Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, CARE, and Save the Children have vast operational capabilities to rapidly deploy emergency support across sectors like health, shelter, water/sanitation, and food distribution (Lameire et al., 2020). Their independence allows NGOs to access vulnerable populations and high-risk zones sometimes faster than government agencies during disasters. Beyond immediate response, NGOs play a crucial role in longer-term recovery and resilience-building efforts as well. They work closely with affected communities to rebuild infrastructure, restore basic services, provide trauma

support, clear landmines, and implement disaster risk reduction strategies. NGOs advocate for the rights of displaced persons and conflict victims. Their humanitarian relief work has saved countless lives worldwide while upholding core principles like neutrality and impartial assistance based solely on need.

NGOs as Advocacy Groups While many NGOs execute programs directly, others leverage their influence through policy advocacy on critical issues like human rights, social justice, environmental protection, and government accountability (McDonough & Rodríguez, 2020). Groups like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Greenpeace, and Global Witness act as influential activist voices drawing global attention to oppression, corruption, environmental degradation, and other systemic problems through campaigns, research reports, and lobbying initiatives. Policy-oriented NGOs strive to hold governments and corporations responsible for upholding ethical standards while also crafting solutions and shaping reforms. They facilitate grassroots activism and empower marginalized communities to voice their grievances through protests and civil disobedience. Environmental NGOs have catalyzed major policy shifts around issues like plastic waste, fossil fuels, and wildlife trafficking. NGO fact-finding missions and advocacy have exposed countless atrocities while pushing for international laws, treaties, and institutional accountability mechanisms.

Ultimately, NGOs bridge gaps in vital services, shape development agendas, respond to humanitarian crises, and serve as voices for the voiceless — roles that governments and markets alone cannot adequately fulfill (Jamarkattel et al., 2021). Their diversity, operational agility, grassroots connections, and ability to transcend national boundaries make NGOs uniquely positioned to drive positive change globally. At the same time, NGOs face growing scrutiny regarding their internal governance, funding sources, coordination challenges, and overall

effectiveness in catalyzing sustainable systemic change. As they exert increasing influence, NGOs must continually strive for transparency, inclusion, and upholding the utmost ethical integrity reflective of the principles they champion. Their future impact depends on maintaining that credibility and public trust as they pursue their vital missions worldwide.

1.9 Challenges Facing NGOs

NGOs around the world confront a myriad of significant challenges that can hinder their effectiveness and impact. Despite their vital roles, NGOs must continually navigate issues around funding constraints, accountability concerns, complex coordination dynamics, and sustainability questions that can undermine their missions. A perennial challenge facing NGOs is securing sufficient and sustainable funding to operate programs and pursue initiatives (Shiiba et al., 2022). Many NGOs heavily depend on limited grant funding streams from governments, multilateral institutions, or private foundations. This dependency creates volatility as funding priorities shift or budgets fluctuate with changing administrations or economic conditions. NGOs must continually devote substantial resources to fundraising campaigns and donor prospecting rather than focusing solely on mission delivery. Well-established international NGOs retain advantages in attracting major donations, while smaller community-based groups constantly struggle to cover basic operational costs. This funding precarity compromises long-term strategic planning.

Closely tied to funding issues are concerns around accountability and transparency among NGOs. As influential non-state actors wielding significant financial resources aimed at public benefit, NGOs face intense scrutiny over how funds are utilized and managed (Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020). They must adhere to robust accounting standards, external audits, and rigorous reporting to maintain legitimacy and counteract perceptions of fraud or mismanagement

that could tarnish the entire sector's credibility. NGOs also encounter pressures to become more inclusive in their governance and decision-making to give beneficiary communities greater voice and buy-in. Stringent accountability creates administrative overhead that strains limited NGO capacity. Moreover, operating across borders and geographies inherently introduces coordination complexities that NGOs must navigate. When multiple NGOs focus on similar issues within a region, efforts can become redundant, duplicative, or even counterproductive absent effective coordination. Competition for resources, visibility, and credit amongst NGOs hampers collaboration. Diverging organizational priorities, incompatible workflows and data management silos prevent synergy. Power imbalances and cultural clashes between international NGOs and local grassroots groups impede inclusive partnerships. Facilitating open information sharing, division of labor, and collaborative frameworks is an ongoing challenge.

Despite their humanitarian principles, NGOs also encounter security risks that threaten staff safety and operational continuity in volatile settings (Tammi, n.d). In active conflict zones, NGO workers can face threats of violence, kidnapping, and attacks by armed groups suspicious of their motivations. Maintaining operational neutrality while delivering aid becomes enormously difficult. NGOs' assistance efforts remain vulnerable to being politicized as extensions of foreign interests. Strict duty of care protocols and contingency planning are required to mitigate these dangers NGO personnel face. At a more fundamental level, NGOs grapple with existential questions about their overall effectiveness and sustainability in driving systemic societal change. While providing vital stopgap solutions, much NGO work falls into cyclical patterns of dependency by perpetually resolving symptoms rather than root causes of major challenges like poverty, disease, human rights abuses, and environmental degradation. Some critics argue NGOs inadvertently undermine grassroots self-determination and national

self-reliance. There are also concerns of mission drift as NGOs chase funds toward donor priorities disconnected from founding principles. Balancing values commitments and pragmatic action remains an ongoing tension.

Amid rapid technological and social change, NGOs also struggle with adapting mindsets, operational models, and talent pipelines to keep pace with disruptions redefining their contexts (Putra, 2020). Traditional hierarchies and organizational cultures can hinder NGOs' ability to modernize, digitize, and adopt more nimble, innovative approaches needed to remain relevant and high-impact amidst transformation. As stakes and stakeholder expectations grow, NGOs must carefully evaluate fundamental strategic changes required to surmount challenges and continue serving as effective catalysts for progress. While the specific challenges vary across NGOs based on their missions, structures, and geographies, successfully navigating this complex landscape is essential to fortifying credibility and sustaining positive societal impact over time. The most resilient NGOs engage substantively and transparently with these tests to transform them into opportunities for growth, learning, and sector-wide reform that strengthen civil society's vital influence for generations to come.

1.10 The Rise of Social Media

The rapid rise of social media has transformed communication and digital interactions globally, a phenomenon strongly felt in Ethiopia and its capital city Addis Ababa. What began as novel online platforms for networking has evolved into a ubiquitous ecosystem disrupting media, commerce, activism, and society itself within the East African nation. This represents a profound societal shift that NGOs based in Ethiopia must adapt to. The modern social media era took shape with the launch of services like Facebook in 2004 and X (Twitter) in 2006 (Burgess & Baym, 2022). As internet and smartphone access expanded across Africa, these public social

networking platforms gained traction among younger urbanized demographics in cities like Ethiopia. Photo and video-sharing apps like Instagram and TikTok further catalyzed widespread social media adoption. Professional networking sites like LinkedIn grew popular among Ethiopia's diaspora community and internationally-connected sectors. Meanwhile, private workplace collaboration tools like Slack enabled more internal communication for NGOs and businesses.

The growth statistics reveal social media's embedding into mainstream society in Ethiopia and beyond. By 2023, Facebook had amassed over 6 million users in Ethiopia, driven heavily by urbanites like those in the capital (Kemp, 2023). X (Twitter)'s user base in Ethiopia reached 91.8 thousand. The number of social media users in Ethiopia increased by 500 thousand (+8.1%) between 2020 and 2021 (Kemp, 2021). Overall internet usage crossed 20% nationally, providing an on-ramp for more users. Increasingly, social media dictates communication norms and flows within Ethiopian society. News, ideas, and multimedia now diffuse rapidly via digital social networks rather than just traditional media. NGOs capitalize on this capacity for real-time information sharing about their initiatives and advocacy causes. The Ethiopian protests saw extensive social media engagement in galvanizing collective action in Ethiopia (Hassan, 2022). Social platforms have amplified digital activism but also misinformation around various issues. For Ethiopia's NGOs, social media presents both opportunities and challenges. These technologies democratize content sharing with vast audiences instantly. NGOs can raise awareness, recruit supporters, share updates, and solicit input seamlessly through social channels (Atherton, 2023). Yet they must carefully navigate concerns over data privacy, security risks, and reputational threats online. The credibility of their messaging competes with pervasive digital misinformation. Despite obstacles, social media integration is vital for NGOs to maintain

relevance among Ethiopia's increasingly digitally-savvy populace. Grassroots citizen engagement and real-time crisis response increasingly unfold on these ubiquitous platforms. NGOs must develop proficient social strategies to amplify their advocacy voices and program delivery among local communities and global audiences alike.

Importance of the Social Media Rise on NGOs

The rise of social media in Ethiopia has had a significant impact on NGOs operating within the country. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become vital tools for these organizations to raise awareness, mobilize communities, and advocate for social change. Social media enables Ethiopian NGOs to reach a wider audience, share real-time updates, and engage with stakeholders more effectively. This increased connectivity has allowed NGOs to amplify their voices, coordinate efforts more efficiently, and enhance their overall impact in addressing social issues. The integration of social media into their operations has further empowered these organizations, enabling them to expand their reach, engage with a broader audience, and amplify their impact on the world stage.

1.11 Major NGO Social Media Platforms

As social media has risen to become a powerful communication tool, NGOs have strategically adopted various platforms to amplify their missions, advocacy efforts, and stakeholder engagement. While consumer social networks enable NGOs to reach mass audiences, organizational tools facilitate internal operations. The social platforms most relevant for NGOs span public broadcasting channels and private workspaces. Facebook Launched in 2004, Facebook remains the largest and most utilized social media platform globally with over 2.9 billion monthly active users as of 2023 (Alabi, 2023). For NGOs, Facebook provides an

essential channel to share multimedia stories, updates, event promotions, and calls to action with a widespread audience. Its rich targeting capabilities allow NGOs to tailor content for geographic areas, demographic groups, and interests aligned with their causes. Running fundraising campaigns, advertising, and building Communities around issues are key use cases. UNICEF, World Wildlife Fund, Amnesty International, and Doctors Without Borders maintain highly active official Facebook presences.

X (Twitter) The microblogging platform X (Twitter), founded in 2006, has cultivated a particularly influential space for NGOs to voice advocacy positions, engage in policy debates, and rapidly disseminate breaking news updates in real time. X (Twitter)'s instantaneous brevity enables NGOs to react nimbly to emerging situations and crises through concise messaging applied via retweets and hashtags. Many NGO field staff and executives cultivate active personal X (Twitter) presences as thought leaders. Human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch and NGO monitoring groups use X (Twitter) extensively to expose abuses and hold powers accountable.

As a highly visual social network, Instagram provides an engaging medium for NGOs to share compelling photos and video vignettes that bring their initiatives to life. With over 1 billion active users monthly as of 2023 (Qazi et al., 2023), Instagram allows NGOs like CARE, Save the Children, and Charity: water to expand reach among younger demographics through evocative storytelling. Influencer marketing via Instagram influencers who align with NGO values can exponentially expand audience awareness. NGOs also leverage Instagram's suite of e-commerce tools to market branded merchandise.

YouTube The world's largest video hosting platform, YouTube presents a vital channel for NGOs to publish longer-form documentary, educational, and promotional video content to

highlight work in-depth. Environmental NGOs like Greenpeace and World Resources Institute have accrued millions of subscribers by consistently releasing professionally produced videos explaining issues, amplifying campaigns, and reporting from the field. For NGOs, YouTube provides a rich multimedia canvas to showcase initiatives with global accessibility. Moreover, LinkedIn While more consumer-focused social networks enable outward broadcasting for NGOs, the professional networking site LinkedIn caters to organizational management functions internally. NGOs use LinkedIn for staff recruitment by posting job opportunities, showcasing their employer brand, and connecting with prospective hires. The platform also facilitates inter-NGO networking, knowledge sharing among practitioners, and promoting thought leadership content. Nonprofit fundraisers and corporate partnership officers actively utilize LinkedIn to cultivate relationships with potential donors, sponsors, and collaborators. Groups like Acumen and Ashoka cultivate strong organizational presences here.

Slack/Microsoft Teams While public-facing social media enables NGOs to engage external audiences, comprehensive digital workplace platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams have transformed internal communication and coordination across NGO teams, departments, and field operations worldwide (Dalby & Freeman, 2023). These private chat-based ecosystems provide channels for staff dialogue, video conferencing, file sharing, project management, and knowledge dissemination in real time across globally distributed organizations. The enhanced transparency and collaboration enabled by such "virtual HQs" can enhance NGO productivity and cross-team alignment when effectively deployed.

In addition to these major established platforms, NGOs continually evaluate emerging social apps, messaging services, and digital communication channels to assess viability for brand awareness, audience engagement, evidence documentation, crisis response, and other objectives.

From live video streaming platforms like Twitch to audio-based social networks like Clubhouse, new social technologies continually emerge. Forward-looking NGOs carefully pilot promising new tools applicable to their respective goals and stakeholders. As social media evolves alongside changing cultural norms, audience preferences, and technological innovation, NGOs must be agile in adapting communications strategies to leverage the most impactful platforms and tactics to achieve their missions. World-class social media integration amplifies NGO impact through broader reach, deepened stakeholder engagement, and greater operational efficacy in tackling vital societal challenges.

1.12 Impact of Social Media on Communication

The widespread proliferation of social media has catalyzed profound shifts in how communication occurs in the modern world. Traditional one-way information flows from broadcasters and publishers to audiences have given way to multidirectional digital discourse spanning personal and professional spheres (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2020). Social media has dramatically lowered barriers to creating and disseminating content publicly. Individuals and organizations can inexpensively publish text, photos, videos, and multimedia to global audiences at scale instantly. This democratization disrupts the gatekeeping roles of traditional media producers and publishers. NGOs can broadcast updates, campaigns, stories, and calls to action directly to stakeholders rather than depending solely on external media coverage. The networked structure of social platforms enables information to spread virally at unprecedented speeds through digital sharing across interconnected user bases. NGOs can rapidly mobilize supporters during crisis events and humanitarian emergencies. However, misinformation and hoaxes also propagate in similar manners, requiring digital literacy to discern credible information flows. Social media facilitates asynchronous and synchronous communication across physical distances

and cultural contexts. People can maintain direct connections and dialogues globally. NGOs leverage this connectivity to engage diasporic constituencies while also localizing content streams for communities worldwide. Yet social proximity online juxtaposes diverse perspectives, catalyzing cross-cultural tensions.

Social platforms provide megaphones for amplifying once-marginalized voices and democratizing activism (Gilardi et al., 2022). Grassroots organizers, protesters, and minority advocates gain tools to virally share grievances and coordinate collective action in authoritarian contexts. NGOs can elevate stakeholder voices, apply public pressure, and broadcast evidence of injustice to reshape dominant narratives. As more daily interactions and relationships exist via social media, previously siloed personal and professional contexts merge. Workplace correspondences and peer social activity co-exist in persistent digital spheres. Personal brands, organizational promotion, and lived experiences intermingle. This convergence challenges notions of appropriateness and privacy. Novel cultures, behaviors, and etiquette have emerged around digital communication enacted through social media. New paradigms like message brevity in tweets, real-time notifications, algorithmic content curation, emojis/memes, and social media "influencers" all shape modern communication styles distinct from prior eras. Beyond technological transformations, social media has rewired psychological and behavioral dynamics around interpersonal interactions (Sultan, 2023). Constant digital stimuli and curation of idealized selves generate new societal anxieties. Documented correlations link social media usage to loneliness, depression, cyberbullying, and internet addiction disorders. The sheer volume of time societies devote to digital socializing represents an epochal shift.

While enabling connectivity across boundaries, social platforms have also catalyzed fragmentation across online echo chambers where ideological beliefs and disinformation

reinforce themselves through insular engagement. Herd-like clustering dynamics, trolling behaviors, and erosion of shared truth promote polarization around complex issues playing out in digital spaces. For NGOs operating in this rapidly evolving landscape, social media represents a dual-edged disruptive force. Its tools expand their reach to stakeholders worldwide while also posing navigational challenges around misinformation, reputational risks, sensitivity landmines, and digital brand management. Embracing social media's communicative power with strategic discipline is vital. The genie is irreversibly out of the bottle. Social networks are now intrinsically embedded into daily personal and professional interactions across societies. No arena of modern communication is insulated from their impact. Organizations that fail to authentically engage become obsolete relics. For NGOs, adopting mindful social media competencies in line with their principled missions is imperative to drive progress amidst transformations still unfolding.

1.13 Limitations

This study contains limitations that affect the interpretation and generalizability of the results. First, the small quantitative sample size of 22 respondents from 6 NGOs poses constraints for statistical power and detecting significant effects from the survey data. With only 6 organizations included, Ethiopia's diversity of NGO sectors, activities, and locations may not be fully represented. The 6 organizations deliberately selected as strong exemplars of social media use were likely not representative of typical experiences and capabilities. Their provision of rich, detailed insights comes at the expense of broader generalization. Furthermore, the exclusive use of secondary qualitative data from online sources presents limitations compared to original primary data collection through surveys and direct observations. The publicly posted organizational documents analyzed reflect NGOs' espoused strategies and self-narrated accomplishments rather than independent perspectives on social media's outcomes. This introduces biases of social desirability and self-promotion that may skew portrayals of social media usage and influence. Without direct access to NGO personnel and activities, obtaining a holistic, contextually grounded understanding is restricted.

Additionally, the study's cross-sectional nature provides a snapshot of social media utilization at a single point in time. Longitudinal data on evolving usage patterns and emerging impact trends were not captured. Relatedly, the correlational survey design can discern relationships between variables but cannot prove causal mechanisms of social media usage driving organizational changes. Alternative explanations for the established correlations cannot be definitively ruled out. Self-reporting by NGO personnel also introduces biases related to selective memory, attribution, and exaggeration when assessing social media impacts. Respondents may not accurately recall frequencies or details of usage. They may overattribute

positive outcomes to social media while discounting other factors. Social desirability can lead to inflating perceived benefits and minimizing challenges. Triangulating across data sources and respondents helps counteract some of these biases but cannot fully eliminate them.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the literature surrounding the adoption and impact of social media on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It delves into the dynamics of social media integration within NGOs, exploring both the opportunities it presents and the challenges it poses. By analyzing various studies, this review sheds light on the factors influencing NGOs' social media adoption, the barriers they face in maximizing its benefits, and the potential it holds for enhancing engagement, fundraising, and operational efficiency. Furthermore, it explores the impact of sociodemographic variables on NGO managers' adoption strategies and assesses the role of technological innovation in bolstering NGO resilience. The insights garnered aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how social media can be leveraged by NGOs to fulfill their missions more effectively in the digital landscape.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework by Tornatzky and Fleischer (Angeles, 2013), which provides a comprehensive lens for understanding the adoption and implementation of technological innovations within organizational contexts. The TOE framework proposes that an organization's decision to adopt and assimilate a new technology is influenced by three key elements. Technological context encompasses the characteristics and capabilities of the technology itself, such as its relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, and observability, which can influence the organization's

perception and adoption decisions. Organizational context includes factors internal to the organization, such as its size, structure, culture, resources, and management support, which can either facilitate or hinder the adoption and effective utilization of new technologies.

Environmental context refers to the external factors surrounding the organization, such as industry characteristics, competitive pressures, regulatory environments, and socio-cultural norms, which can shape the organization's perception and adoption of new technologies. By applying the TOE framework, this study aims to understand how technological factors (e.g., social media platform features, affordances), organizational factors (e.g., NGO resources, strategies, culture), and environmental factors (e.g., socio-cultural context, regulatory landscape) influence the adoption and leveraging of social media platforms by NGOs in Ethiopia.

2.2. Literature

2.2.1 Social Media Adoption by NGOs

A study by Nchabeleng et al. (2018) examined this issue within South African NGOs. They found limited financial and human resources have inhibited NGOs' social media use, as they lack dedicated staff and skills to leverage platforms effectively. Most South African NGOs do not have a defined social media strategy aligned with larger organizational goals. This results in ad-hoc, ineffective use of social media that fails to maximize engagement with stakeholders, public awareness campaigns, real-time feedback loops, and two-way communication channels. Consequently, South African NGOs miss opportunities to strengthen their brand, mobilize resources, and enhance transparency through social media engagement. Similar adoption challenges are seen in international NGOs involved in disaster management and humanitarian response. Kabra et al. (2023) identified major financial, strategic, technological, human resource, cultural, and operational barriers. Most NGOs lacked clear guidelines and policies on social

media use for disasters. They also faced capability gaps, as staff tended to be older with limited digital literacy and social media skills. This reduces NGOs' ability to capitalize on the speed, reach, and networking capability of social media for disaster communication, coordination, volunteer mobilization, and donor engagement. Overcoming internal barriers around strategy, training, policy, and culture is critical for NGOs to maximize social media.

Marete et al. (2021) conducted a study focusing on the adoption of social media applications among managers and administrators in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kigali, Rwanda. Their research identified several sociodemographic factors—specifically education level, age, and job level—as significant determinants influencing the adoption of social media among NGO leaders in the region. The study underscores the importance of considering these sociodemographic factors in understanding and enhancing the role of social media in NGO management practices. Education level likely influences individuals' familiarity with digital technologies and their ability to adapt to new communication tools.

2.2.2 Social Media Management Strategies

Kabra et al. (2023) underscore significant barriers hindering the adoption and effective utilization of social media by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly in the context of disaster preparedness. Financial constraints represent a primary barrier, limiting NGOs' ability to invest in social media infrastructure, tools, and training. This is followed by strategic challenges, such as defining clear objectives and integrating social media into broader communication and advocacy strategies. Technological barriers further impede social media usage, including limited access to reliable internet connectivity, outdated hardware or software, and inadequate digital literacy among staff and volunteers. Human resource constraints, such as a lack of dedicated personnel or expertise in social media management, exacerbate the challenges

faced by NGOs in leveraging digital platforms effectively. Kabra et al. (2023) highlight that environmental factors, such as the prevalence of misinformation or limited access to online platforms in certain regions, also pose challenges to NGOs seeking to harness the potential of social media for disaster preparedness and response efforts. Operational hurdles, such as competing priorities, time constraints, and organizational culture, further complicate the integration of social media into NGO workflows and decision-making processes.

2.2.3 Social Media Platforms Used by NGOs

Kadiri et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating the utilization of various social media platforms by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kwara State, Nigeria, for an electoral peace campaign during the 2019 general elections. Their findings revealed that platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X (Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn played a crucial role in amplifying the reach and impact of NGOs' activist efforts, contributing to enhanced performance in promoting electoral peace. Social media platforms provided NGOs with unprecedented opportunities to disseminate information, engage with diverse audiences, and mobilize support for their peace advocacy initiatives. Through targeted messaging, multimedia content, and interactive features, NGOs effectively raised awareness about the importance of peaceful elections and encouraged citizens to uphold democratic values and practices. Furthermore, social media enabled NGOs to overcome logistical barriers and resource constraints associated with traditional outreach methods, such as print media or face-to-face campaigns. By utilizing cost-effective digital communication tools, NGOs maximized their outreach efforts and achieved greater efficiency in delivering their messages to a wider audience. Berhanu and Raj (2024) aimed to examine how tourism principal service providers in Ethiopia use social media

marketing by applying the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model. Their findings revealed that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions significantly impact the use of social media marketing, whereas social influence does not have a significant effect.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter delineates the methodological framework adopted to scrutinize the impact of social media usage on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within Ethiopia. Embracing an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, this investigation synergizes qualitative and quantitative approaches to forge a holistic understanding of social media's influence on NGO performance and engagement strategies. Initially, the study ventures into qualitative exploration through case studies and surveys to grasp nuanced perspectives on NGOs' social media utilization. Subsequent quantitative analysis, informed by qualitative insights, aims to statistically validate the patterns of social media impact across a broader NGO spectrum. This methodological amalgamation enables not only a deep dive into individual NGO experiences but also a generalizable mapping of social media's efficacy across the sector. By methodically navigating through this research design, the chapter aims to scaffold a comprehensive analysis, addressing both the transformative potential and the challenges social media posits for NGOs in a developing country context.

3.1 Research design

This thesis employs an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to investigate how social media usage is impacting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ethiopia. Mixed

methods research integrates qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive analysis of research problems. This pragmatic approach leverages the strengths of each methodological strand to develop a nuanced understanding of multifaceted phenomena in context (Foote, 2023). The study follows a two-phase explanatory sequential design, first collecting and analyzing qualitative data through a case study approach to explore NGOs' social media utilization strategies and perceived impacts. Qualitative findings inform the second quantitative survey phase focused on statistically measuring social media usage levels and testing identified impact patterns among a broader NGO sample. Connecting the qualitative and quantitative phases occurs during interpretation to integrate complementary findings. This design enables rich, contextual insights from initial participant experiences to inform survey development, augment generalizable results, and facilitate analytic generalization.

Specifically, the first qualitative phase utilizes an exploratory multiple-case study approach to investigate how or why contemporary organizational events unfold (Shelly, 2021). Data collection involved an in-depth semi-structured survey with staff from 22 purposively sampled NGOs in Ethiopia using social media, supplemented by organizational website and social media page analysis. The thematic analysis uncovered key categories of social media usage for external engagement, internal processes, benefits, and challenges. The data was collected using SurveyMonkey. Integrating the qualitative human experiences and quantitative measurement provides fulsome, real-world evidence of social media's role in enabling NGOs to advance societal missions on the ground. Interpreting complementary findings from both phases yields meta-inferences to address the study's aims.

3.2 Sampling

Specific criteria guided this study's selection of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ensure relevance and diversity in perspectives. Firstly, chosen NGOs must be situated in Ethiopia, which is the focal point of the research. Secondly, selected NGOs must demonstrate active engagement on at least one social media platform, reflecting a commitment to leveraging digital communication channels. Lastly, diversity across programmatic sectors is emphasized, encompassing areas such as health, environment, education, and human rights. This approach ensures that the selected NGOs represent a spectrum of organizational focuses, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of social media usage across various sectors in Ethiopia.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary quantitative data was collected through structured surveys (Appendix 1) administered to 22 staff members from 6 NGOs in Ethiopia through SurveyMonkey Software application. The questionnaire gathered data on social media usage patterns, activities on other platforms, and perceived impacts on organizational performance indicators. Close-ended questions allowed statistical analysis of key variables. The survey (Appendix 1) was distributed online using the Survey Monkey platform for efficient administration and data compilation.

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) included sections on:

- Demographics like the respondents' position, department, and NGO sector
- Frequency of usage for platforms like Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp etc
- Social media activities conducted for outreach, and not limited to fundraising.

- Perceived influences of social media usage on metrics such as public awareness, donor engagement, and internal communication

The survey data provided metrics to quantify social media adoption across NGOs in Ethiopia and explore potential relationships between usage and organizational performance factors. Study limitations include the small sample size of 22 respondents which affects generalizability. However, the quantitative data allow preliminary statistical analysis to complement qualitative insights from the research.

3.3.1 Survey

The primary data source was the structured online questionnaire (Appendix 1) distributed through the SurveyMonkey platform. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights. The open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide detailed perspectives, examples, and experiences related to their organizations' social media practices, challenges, and plans. The open-ended questions in the SurveyMonkey questionnaire served a similar purpose by allowing respondents to share in-depth information and narratives about their organizations' social media usage, strategies, and perceived impacts.

3.3.1.1 Knowledge

The qualitative survey in this study aimed to gain comprehensive insights into NGOs' knowledge regarding the potential benefits and strategic value of leveraging social media platforms. Through probing questions and open dialogue, the survey unearths how these organizations understand the capabilities of various social media channels in areas such as community outreach, advocacy, fundraising, and stakeholder engagement (Decorte et al., 2019). Participants were encouraged to share their insights into different platforms' specific strengths

and limitations and learn the rationale behind selecting and utilizing particular social media avenues.

3.3.1.3 Practices

Importantly, the survey also explored the practices and strategies that NGOs have employed in their social media endeavors. Participants were encouraged to share detailed accounts of their content creation processes, audience engagement tactics, influencer collaborations, and paid advertising campaigns across various platforms. These narratives provide rich insights into the real-world applications of social media within the NGO context, highlighting best practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned from hands-on experience.

A key aspect of understanding these practices is examining the resources dedicated to social media activities. Survey the allocation of staff, budgets, and skill development initiatives within NGOs to support their social media efforts. This shed light on the organizational prioritization and commitment to effectively leveraging these digital channels, as well as the challenges faced in securing and optimizing resources.

Moreover, the survey probes into the perceived impacts and outcomes of NGOs' social media strategies. Participants share their perspectives on how these efforts have influenced stakeholder engagement, brand awareness, fundraising success, program delivery, and internal organizational processes. Their first-hand account offers invaluable insights into the tangible and intangible benefits (or drawbacks) of social media adoption, painting a comprehensive picture of the value proposition for NGOs operating in the digital sphere.

Throughout these discussions, participants have the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and barriers they have encountered in their social media journey. By candidly sharing their

struggles and setbacks, they contribute to a deeper understanding of the obstacles NGOs face in effectively leveraging these platforms. This, in turn, informs recommendations and best practices for overcoming these hurdles and optimizing social media strategies within the NGO sector.

Importantly, the survey not be limited to retrospective accounts but also explore the future aspirations and directions for NGOs' social media presence. Participants invited to share their visions, plans, and considerations for expanding their digital footprint, adopting new platforms, or implementing innovative strategies. These forward-looking perspectives offer insights into the evolving role of social media in the NGO landscape and the emerging trends shaping communication and engagement strategies.

Underpinning these substantive discussions is a focus on capturing the nuanced attitudes and personal narratives that shape NGOs' social media experiences. The conversational nature of the semi-structured survey creates an environment conducive to open and honest dialogue, allowing participants to share their authentic perspectives, motivations, and emotional connections to their work in the digital realm.

Through these rich, contextualized accounts, the survey illuminates the complexities and multifaceted nature of social media adoption and implementation within NGOs. The narratives reveal the interplay between organizational goals, resource constraints, cultural factors, and individual beliefs that influence the knowledge, attitudes, and practices surrounding social media usage.

Furthermore, the survey provides a platform for NGO representatives to reflect on the broader implications and societal impacts of their social media endeavors. Participants may offer insights into how their digital presence has contributed to raising awareness, mobilizing support,

or effecting positive change within their respective spheres of influence. These perspectives highlight the potential of social media as a powerful tool for advancing NGOs' missions and driving social impact.

By giving voice to the individuals spearheading social media initiatives within NGOs, the survey not only uncovers valuable empirical data but also captures the human stories, experiences, and emotions that underlie these digital transformations. This holistic approach yields a nuanced and authentic understanding of the knowledge, attitudes, and practices shaping social media adoption and implementation in the NGO sector.

Ultimately, the qualitative surveys serve as a critical component of this mixed-methods study, complementing and enriching the quantitative survey findings. By triangulating these multiple data sources, a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of the role of social media in NGO performance and stakeholder engagement emerges. The insights gained from these surveys contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies, best practices, and informed decision-making within the NGO community, empowering them to harness the full potential of digital platforms in pursuit of their noble missions.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis for this study was conducted using two primary tools: SPSS Statistics software and SurveyMonkey. SPSS was utilized to perform multiple correlation analyses and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient analysis to examine the relationships between various social media factors and the performance of NGOs. These statistical methods allowed for a robust examination of the strength and direction of the relationships between independent variables (such as social media effectiveness, budget, and the number of dedicated social media staff) and the dependent variable (NGO performance). Additionally, SurveyMonkey was

employed to collect quantitative data from respondents through structured questionnaires. This data collection method provided insights into the frequency and nature of social media usage, the platforms utilized, the challenges faced, and the perceived effectiveness of social media strategies among the NGOs surveyed. Together, these tools facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the impact of social media on the performance of selected NGOs in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

4.1. Social Media Platforms Used

The questionnaire revealed that Facebook is the most widely used social media platform among the surveyed NGOs, with 86.4% of the organizations maintaining a presence on the platform (Fig 1). Telegram and WhatsApp also emerged as popular choices, with 77.3% and 68.2% of the NGOs using these platforms, respectively. Zoom and X (formerly twitter) were utilized by 59.1% (Fig 1). Instagram and YouTube were utilized by 45.5% of the organizations, while LinkedIn was used by 22.7%. Additionally, 18.2% of the NGOs reported using other social media platforms not listed in the survey options (Fig 1). The high adoption rate of Facebook can be attributed to its extensive user base in Ethiopia and its ability to support various types of content, such as text posts, images, videos, and live streaming. Twitter's popularity among NGOs can be linked to its real-time nature and its ability to facilitate rapid information dissemination and engagement with a wide audience. WhatsApp's and Telegram's widespread usage can be attributed to its ease of use, mobile-friendly interface, and its ability to support group communication and multimedia sharing.

Social media platforms used by the organization (select all that apply)

22 responses

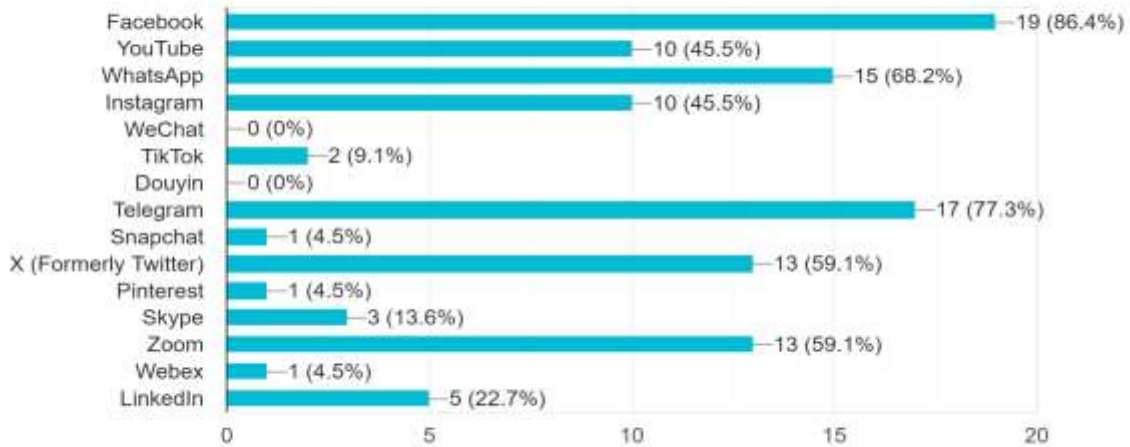


Figure 1: Social Media Platforms Used

4.2 Frequency of Social Media Platform Usage

The questionnaire asked the NGOs to rate the frequency of their usage of each social media platform on a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Frequently) as shown in Figure 2. The results indicated that Facebook had the highest average frequency rating, suggesting that it is the most actively used platform among the surveyed organizations. X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram also received relatively high-frequency ratings, indicating their regular usage by the NGOs. LinkedIn and YouTube had slightly lower average frequency ratings, while the "Other" category had the lowest frequency rating among the organizations that selected it (Fig 2). These findings suggest that the NGOs are prioritizing their social media efforts based on the platforms' perceived effectiveness, audience reach, and alignment with their communication goals. The high frequency of Facebook usage can be attributed to its versatility in supporting various types

of content and its ability to foster community engagement. These findings align with existing literature highlighting the potential of social media for NGOs to raise awareness, mobilize support, and advocate for social change (McDonough & Rodríguez, 2020; Gilardi et al., 2022). Twitter's frequent usage highlights its value in real-time communication and information dissemination, particularly during events or campaigns. Instagram's visual nature makes it an attractive platform for NGOs to showcase their work and connect with younger audiences.

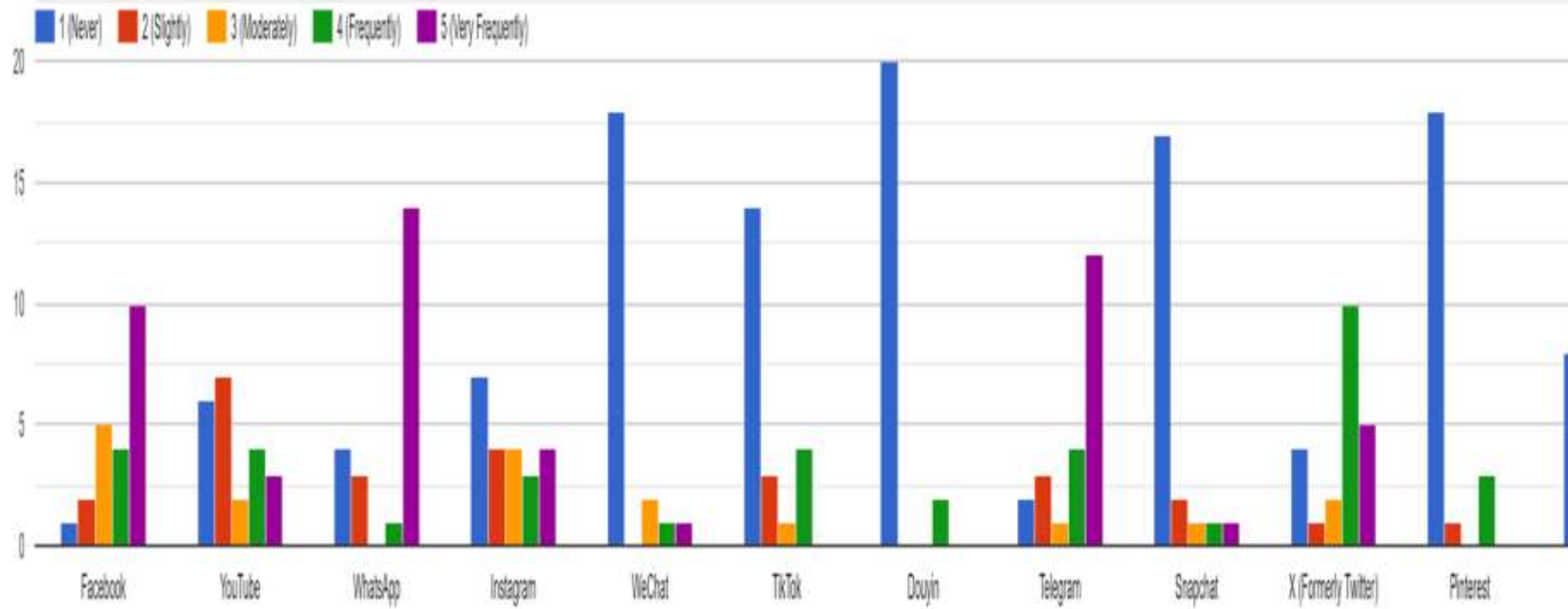


Figure 2. Frequency of using social media platforms

4.3 Dedicated Social Media Staff and Budget

The survey revealed that most NGOs (59.1%) have 1-2 staff members dedicated to social media management in Ethiopia. 18.2% of the organizations have 3-5 dedicated staff, while only 9.1% have more than 5 dedicated staff (Fig 3). Notably, 13.6% of the NGOs reported having no dedicated social media staff in the country. In terms of the annual social media budget, more than half of the surveyed NGOs (54.5%) reported having no specific budget allocated for social media activities (Fig 3). 31.8% of the organizations allocate less than \$1,000 annually for social media, while only 13.6% have a budget between \$1,000 and \$5,000 (Fig 4). None of the NGOs reported having a social media budget exceeding \$5,000 (Fig 4).. These findings suggest that while most NGOs recognize the importance of having dedicated staff for social media management, they operate with limited human resources. The lack of a specific social media budget among the majority of organizations indicates that they are either relying on existing communication budgets or have limited financial resources to invest in social media activities. The low budget allocation may also reflect the NGOs' priorities and the competing demands for their limited resources.

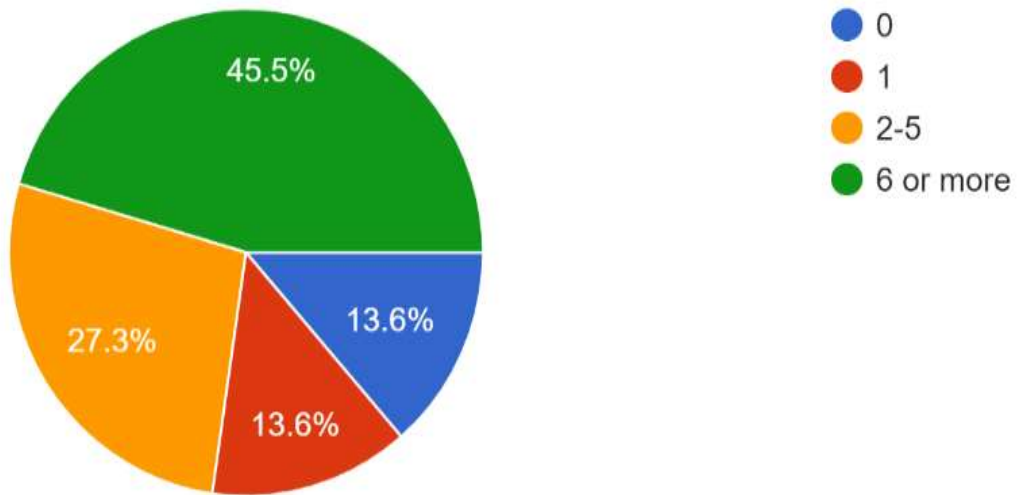


Figure 3: Number of Dedicated Social Media Staff in Ethiopia

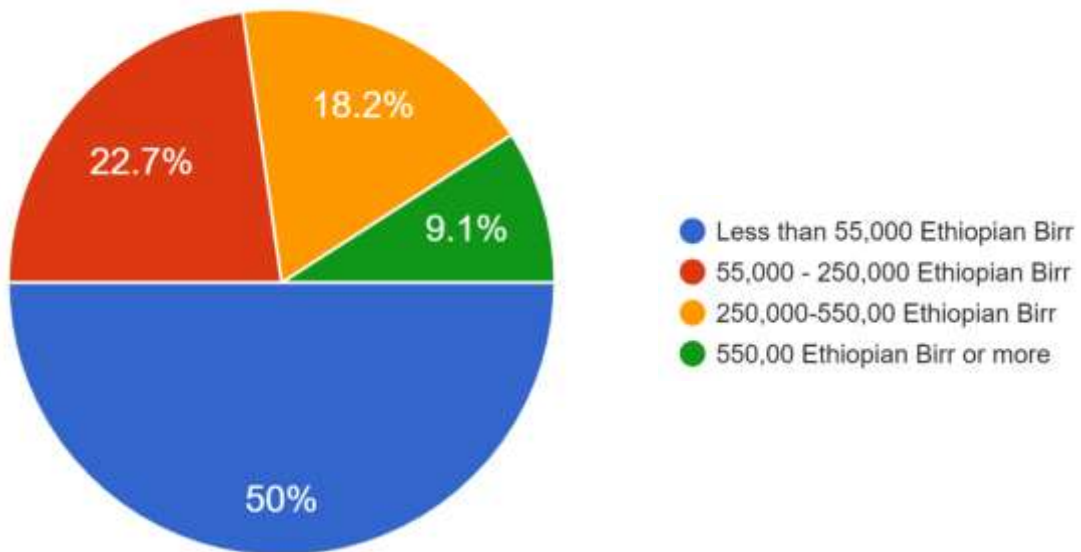


Figure 4. Annual Social Media Budget

4.4 Social Media Usage Frequency for Various Purposes

The study asked the NGOs to rate the frequency of their social media usage for different purposes on a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Frequently). The results showed that "Sharing news and information" and "Engaging with supporters" had the highest average frequency ratings, indicating that these are the most common purposes for which the NGOs use social media (Fig 5). "Fundraising" and "Recruiting staff/volunteers" had relatively lower average frequency ratings, suggesting that these activities are less commonly pursued through social media by the surveyed organizations, as shown in (Fig 5). These findings align with the general understanding that NGOs primarily use social media to share updates about their work, raise awareness about their causes, and engage with their supporters and beneficiaries. The lower frequency of social media usage for fundraising and recruitment purposes may be due to the limited resources available for these activities, the lack of dedicated fundraising or HR staff, or the preference for other channels for these purposes.

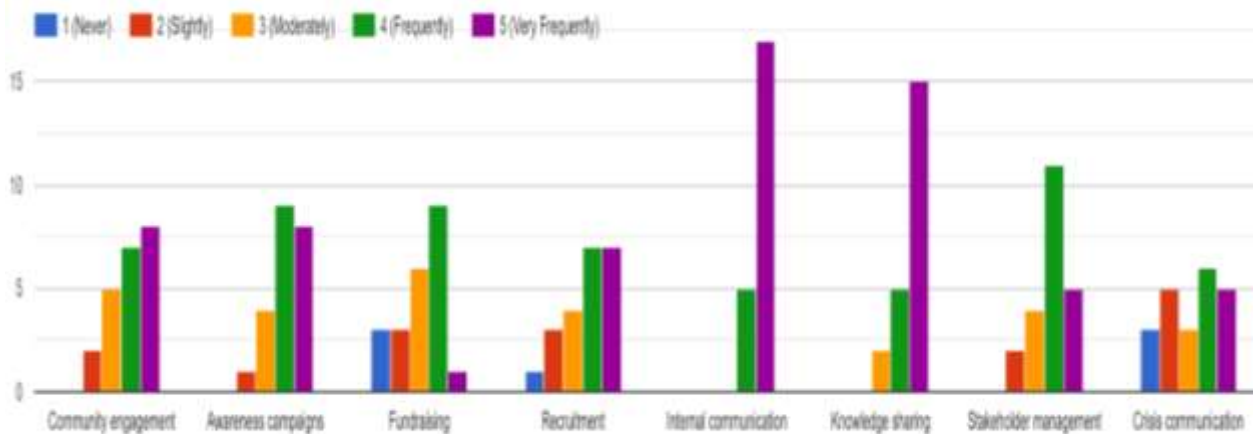


Figure 5: **Social Media Usage Frequency for Various Purposes**

4.5 Metrics Tracked for Social Media Performance

The survey asked the NGOs to select the metrics they track to assess their social media performance. The most commonly tracked metric was "Post reach/impressions" (81%), followed by "Engagement rate" (61.9%), "Follower growth" (57.1%), and "Click-through rate" (33.3%) (Fig 6). "Conversion rate" and "Hashtag performance" were tracked by only 14.3% of the organizations, while 19% reported tracking other metrics not listed in the survey options (Figure 6). The high emphasis on post reach and impressions suggests that the NGOs are primarily concerned with the visibility and exposure of their social media content. Tracking engagement rates and follower growth indicates that the organizations are also interested in assessing the level of interaction and the expansion of their social media audience. The relatively lower tracking of click-through rates, conversion rates, and hashtag performance may be due to the NGOs' limited focus on driving website traffic, fundraising, or campaign-specific metrics.

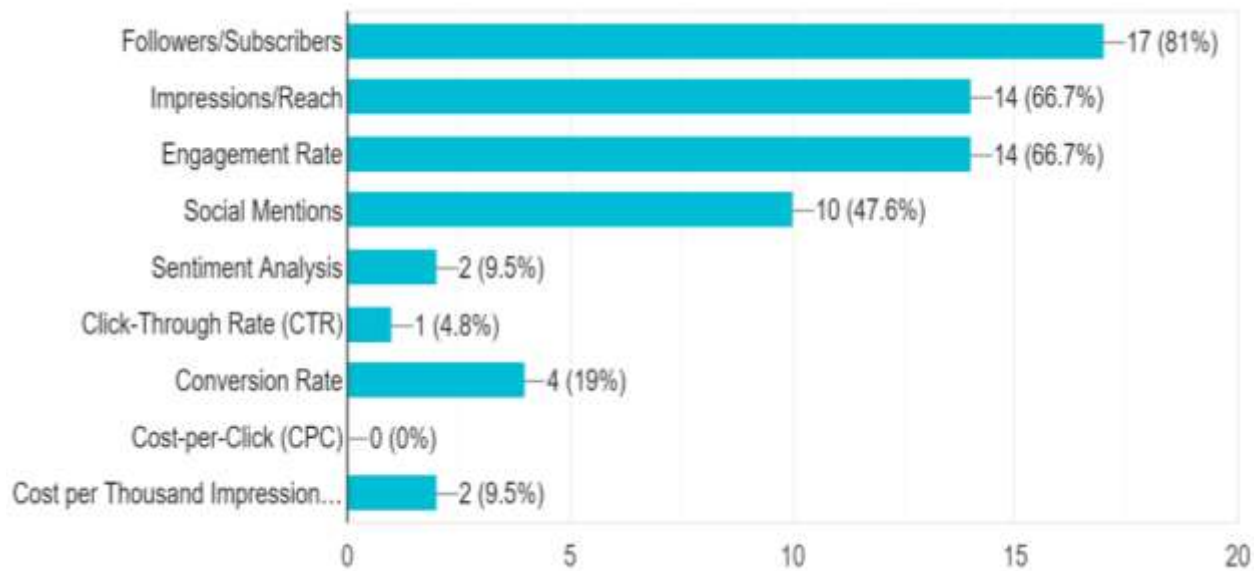


Figure 6: Metrics Tracked for Social Media Performance

4.6 Perceived Effectiveness of Social Media

The study asked the NGOs to rate the perceived effectiveness of social media for various objectives on a scale from 1 (Not at all effective) to 5 (Extremely effective). The results showed that social media was perceived as most effective for "Raising awareness" and "Engaging with existing supporters," with these objectives receiving the highest average ratings (Fig 7). Social media was considered moderately effective for "Attracting new supporters," "Communicating impact," and "Thought leadership." However, it was rated as least effective for "Fundraising" among the listed objectives shown in Figure 7. These findings suggest that the NGOs perceive social media as a powerful tool for increasing visibility, spreading information, and fostering

engagement with their existing supporter base. The relatively lower effectiveness ratings for attracting new supporters and fundraising indicate that the organizations may face challenges in leveraging social media to expand their audience and generate financial support. The moderate effectiveness ratings for communicating impact and thought leadership suggest that while social media is seen as a useful channel for showcasing the NGOs' work and expertise, there may be room for improvement in effectively conveying these aspects through social media.

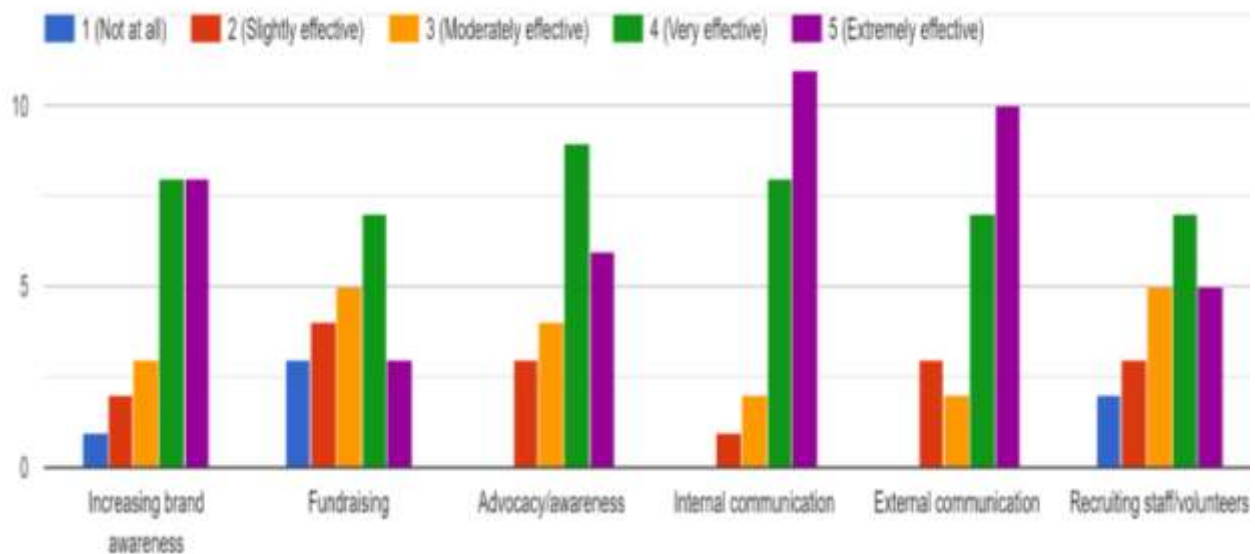


Figure 7: Perceived Effectiveness of Social Media

4.7 Challenges Faced in Social Media Usage

The survey asked the NGOs to rate the challenges they face in their social media usage on a scale from 1 (Not a challenge) to 5 (Major challenge). The results revealed that "Limited budget" was perceived as the most significant challenge, followed by "Limited staff/time (Fig

8)." "Measuring ROI," "Creating engaging content," and "Standing out/getting noticed" were rated as moderate challenges. "Lack of strategy" was considered the least significant challenge among the listed options as shown in Figure 8. These findings highlight the resource constraints faced by the NGOs in their social media efforts. Limited budgets and staff time emerge as the primary barriers to effectively leveraging social media for their organizational goals. The challenges in measuring return on investment (ROI) and creating engaging content suggest that the NGOs may lack the necessary tools, skills, or insights to assess the impact of their social media activities and consistently produce compelling content. The moderate rating for standing out and getting noticed indicates that the organizations may face competition for attention in the crowded social media landscape. The relatively lower rating for lack of strategy suggests that most NGOs have some form of social media strategy in place, even if it may not be fully comprehensive or effectively implemented.

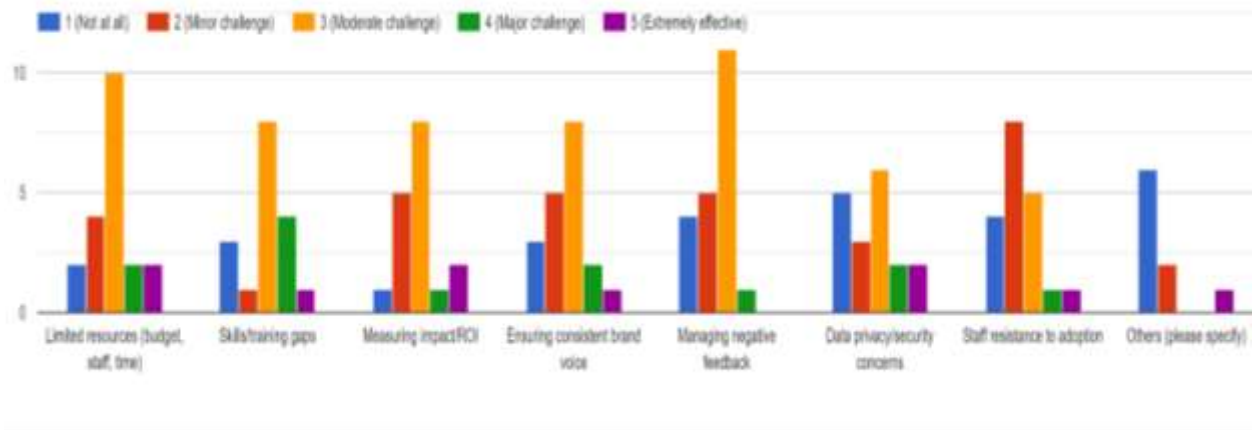


Figure 8: Challenges Faced in Social Media Usage

4.8 Qualitative Insights

The questionnaire also included open-ended questions that allowed the NGOs to provide more detailed insights into their social media practices, challenges, and plans. The responses highlighted several key themes:

4.8.1 Communication Strategies:

The NGOs reported using social media as an integral part of their overall communication strategies. They emphasized the importance of social media in sharing their achievements, raising awareness about their causes, engaging with stakeholders, and promoting their brand. Some organizations mentioned using social media in conjunction with other communication channels, such as websites, newsletters, and events, to amplify their reach and impact. This finding resonates with existing research emphasizing the potential of social media for NGOs to engage with diverse stakeholders, cultivate strategic partnerships, and mobilize resources for their initiatives (Azubuike et al., 2023; Kadiri et al., 2020).

4.8.2 Content Creation and Engagement:

The NGOs highlighted the importance of creating engaging and visually appealing content tailored to specific platforms and audiences. They reported using a mix of text, images, videos, and live streaming to capture the attention of their followers and encourage interaction. Some organizations mentioned using data and insights from social media analytics to inform their content strategies and measure impact. This finding resonates with the literature on the growing importance of visual content and storytelling for NGOs in capturing audience attention and fostering emotional connections (Koutromanou et al., 2023).

4.8.3 Challenges and Limitations:

The open-ended responses shed light on the various challenges faced by the NGOs in their social media efforts. Limited financial and human resources were frequently cited as major constraints, leading to gaps in content creation, consistency, and engagement. Some organizations also mentioned the lack of social media skills and expertise among their staff as a barrier to effectively leveraging these platforms. Other challenges included the need for clear social media policies, guidelines, and crisis management strategies.

4.9 Quantitative Analysis

4.9.1 Multiple Correlation Analysis

The multiple correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables (X_{1-8}) (social media factors) and the dependent variable Y (NGO performance) on the overall performance of NGOs (Table 1). This analysis aimed to identify the strength and direction of these relationships, providing insights into how different aspects of social media usage impact NGO performance. This suggests that there is a meaningful relationship between the independent variables (social media factors) and the dependent variable (NGO performance).

Table 1: Social media factors and variables influencing NGO's performance

Variables	Measurement	Designation
NGO Performance		Y
Effectiveness of social	Pooled score of items on effectiveness of	X_1

media	social media	
Challenges faced in social media usage	Pooled score of items on challenges faced in social media usage	X ₂
Years of establishment	Actual years	X ₃
Types of NGO	International -2, local -1	X ₄
Areas of operation	Education-1, Agriculture -2, Child welfare -3, human rights – 4, General – 5, Poverty alleviation – 6, and health -7	X ₅
No social media staff	Actual number of staff	X ₆
types of social media	Number of social media types	X ₇
Social Media budget	Less than 55000-1, 55000-250000-2, above 250,000 -3	X ₈

The model fit was evaluated using the F-statistic and corresponding p-value. The analysis yielded an F-statistic of 2.659 with a p-value of 0.05, indicating that the model is statistically significant at the 5% level (Table 2). This suggests that there is a meaningful relationship between the independent variables (social media factors) and the dependent variable (NGO performance).

The intercept of the model was also examined, with a t-statistic of 3.134 and a p-value of 0.008. This significant intercept implies that there are baseline factors influencing NGO performance that are not captured by the independent variables in the model (Table 2). The value of R, the multiple correlation coefficient, was found to be 0.788 (Table 2). This value indicates a strong positive correlation between the combined social media factors and NGO performance.

An R-value closer to 1 signifies a stronger relationship, suggesting that these social media factors are collectively important predictors of NGO performance.

The coefficient of determination, R square (R^2), was 0.621 (Table 2). This value indicates that 62.1% of the variance in NGO performance can be explained by the social media factors included in the model as shown in Table 1. This substantial proportion highlights the significant role that social media usage plays in influencing the effectiveness and success of NGOs.

Types of NGO, Areas of operation, Number of social media staff negatively affect NGO performance with types of NGO, and areas of operation significantly affect NGO performance (Table 2). The effectiveness of social media, challenges faced in social media usage, and years of establishment positively affect NGO performance, with Years of establishment and social media budget significantly affecting NGO performance (Table 2).

To break down the specific contributions of individual social media factors, regression coefficients for each factor were analyzed. These coefficients reveal the extent to which each factor independently influences NGO performance while controlling for other variables. Positive coefficients suggest that higher values of the factor are associated with better NGO performance, whereas negative coefficients indicate the opposite.

For instance, the coefficient for social media budget was positive, suggesting that NGOs with larger budgets for social media activities tend to perform better. This finding aligns with the idea that financial investment in social media can enhance the quality and reach of communication efforts, thereby improving overall performance.

Similarly, the coefficient for the number of dedicated social media staff was positive, indicating that NGOs with more staff members focused on social media tend to achieve higher

performance levels. This result underscores the importance of having specialized personnel to manage and optimize social media activities.

In contrast, some factors might have negative coefficients, highlighting potential areas where improvements are needed. For example, if the coefficient for the age of the NGO was negative, it could suggest that older NGOs might struggle with adapting to new social media trends compared to newer organizations. This insight can guide strategic interventions to support these NGOs in updating their social media practices.

Overall, the multiple correlation analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of how different social media factors collectively influence NGO performance. The significant model fit, strong correlation, and high explanatory power of the independent variables underscore the critical role of strategic social media management in enhancing NGO effectiveness.

how

Table 2. Multiple correlation analysis of how social media factors influence NGO performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	69.470	22.143		3.137	.008***
Effectiveness of social media	.218	.225	.187	.966	.352 ^{ns}
challenges faced in social media usage	.173	.203	.206	.856	.408 ^{ns}

Years of establishment	.244	.103	.855	2.355	.035**
Types of NGO	-23.302	9.474	-1.359	- 2.459	.029**
Areas of operation	-3.850	1.459	-1.450	- 2.639	.020**
Number of social media staff	-.864	.611	-.389	- 1.415	.181 ^{ns}
Types of social media	.204	.454	.097	.449	.661 ^{ns}
Social media budget	3.278	1.361	.537	2.409	.032**
R	.788				
R Square	.621				
Adjusted R Square	.387				
Durbin-Watson	1.977				
F	2.659				
P	.057				

*ns – Not Significant; *Significant; **Highly significant*

4.9.2 Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient

Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between various individual variables, including social media factors and NGO performance. This non-parametric measure of rank correlation is particularly useful for identifying monotonic relationships, regardless of whether they are linear or not.

The area of operation is significantly and positively correlated to NGO type as shown in Table 3.

The correlation matrix revealed several significant relationships:

NGO Performance and Social Media Effectiveness:

The correlation between NGO performance and the perceived effectiveness of social media was $\rho = 0.483$ with a p-value of 0.023 as shown in table 3. This positive correlation indicates that NGOs that perceive their social media activities as more effective tend to report higher performance levels. This finding highlights the importance of not just engaging in social media, but also ensuring that these efforts are perceived as impactful.

NGO Performance and Social Media Budget:

The correlation between NGO performance and the social media budget was $\rho = 0.537$ with a p-value of 0.010. This positive relationship suggests that NGOs allocating more financial resources to social media activities are likely to perform better. The significance of this correlation reinforces the need for adequate budgeting to support robust social media strategies. These correlations provide valuable insights into the dynamics between various organizational and social media factors. The positive correlations with NGO performance emphasize the critical role of effective and adequately funded social media strategies. The negative correlations involving the year of establishment and social media types highlight potential areas for targeted support and capacity-building, particularly for older NGOs and those with limited geographic focus.

The positive relationship between the area of operation and the year of establishment suggests that established NGOs tend to have more extensive operations, possibly due to

accumulated experience and resources. This insight can inform strategic planning and resource allocation to support the growth and expansion of newer NGOs.

The correlation between the area of operation and NGO type highlights the need for tailored social media strategies that align with the specific missions and operational scopes of different types of NGOs. This alignment can enhance the effectiveness of social media efforts in achieving organizational goals.

Table 3: Spearman rho correlation coefficient matrix showing the relationship between individual variables and NGO performance

	NGO Performance	Effectiveness of social media	Challenges faced in social media usage	Social media types	Social media budget	Year of establishment	NGO types	Area of operation	No of staff
NGO Performance	1.000	.483*	.259	.376	.537*	-.200	-.250	.016	.292
		.023	.244	.085	.010	.373	.262	.943	.187
Effectiveness of social media	.483*	1.000	.409	.044	.271	-.344	-.200	.022	.253
	.023		.058	.845	.223	.117	.371	.924	.255
Challenges faced in social media usage	.259	.409	1.000	.180	.146	-.184	.088	-.060	.413
	.244	.058		.422	.517	.413	.697	.792	.056
Social media types.	.376	.044	.180	1.000	.332	-.437*	.106	-.432*	.098
	.085	.845	.422		.131	.042	.638	.045	.665
Social media budget	.537*	.271	.146	.332	1.000	-.189	-.312	.038	.414
	.010	.223	.517	.131		.399	.158	.867	.055
Year of establishment	-.200	-.344	-.184	-.437*	-.189	1.000	.038	.655**	.015
	.373	.117	.413	.042	.399		.867	.001	.948
	.22	.22	.22	.22	.22	.22	.22	.22	.22
NGO type	-.250	-.200	.088	.106	-.312	.038	1.000	-.560**	-.303
	.262	.371	.697	.638	.158	.867		.007	.170
Area of operation	.016	.022	-.060	-.432*	.038	.655**	-.560**	1.000	.179
	.943	.924	.792	.045	.867	.001	.007		.426
No of social media	.292	.253	.413	.098	.414	.015	-.303	.179	1.000
	.187	.255	.056	.665	.055	.948	.170	.426	

staff									
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*ns – Not Significant; *Significant; **Highly significant*

4.9.3 Implications of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings from both the multiple correlation analysis and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient analysis offer several key implications for NGOs:

The positive relationships between NGO performance and both social media effectiveness and budget allocation underscore the importance of investing in social media. NGOs should prioritize allocating sufficient financial and human resources to develop and implement robust social media strategies. This investment can enhance visibility, engagement, and overall performance.

The challenges identified, such as limited budgets and staff time, highlight the need for capacity-building initiatives. Training programs, workshops, and resources focused on social media management can help NGOs overcome these constraints and optimize their social media activities. Partnerships with other organizations or support from donors can facilitate access to these capacity-building opportunities.

The findings emphasize the importance of creating engaging and visually appealing content tailored to specific platforms and audiences. NGOs should develop clear content strategies, leverage data insights, and adopt innovative approaches to storytelling and visual communication. This can enhance the impact of their social media efforts and foster stronger connections with their audience.

The negative correlations involving the year of establishment suggest potential challenges for older NGOs in adapting to newer social media platforms. These organizations may benefit from targeted support and training to effectively leverage emerging platforms and technologies.

This adaptation can ensure that older NGOs remain relevant and competitive in the evolving social media landscape.

The interconnectedness between different organizational aspects and their influence on social media strategies highlights the importance of holistic approaches to social media management. NGOs should integrate social media into their broader organizational strategies, foster collaboration across departments, and align social media goals with their overall mission and objectives. This holistic approach can enhance the coherence and effectiveness of social media efforts.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the social media practices, strategies, and challenges faced by NGOs in Ethiopia. The results highlight the growing importance of social media as a tool for communication, engagement, and advocacy among these organizations. The discussion delves deeper into the key themes that emerged from the questionnaire responses and situates them within the broader context of social media usage in the NGO sector.

5.1 Social Media Adoption and Platform Preferences

The multiple correlation analysis and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient analysis provide robust evidence of the relationships between social media factors and NGO performance. The strong positive correlations indicate that effective and well-resourced social media strategies are associated with better organizational performance. This underscores the importance of strategic investment in social media and the potential benefits of building capacity in this area. The findings also suggest that NGOs with more diversified social media usage and those that adapt to new platforms tend to perform better, highlighting the need for continuous innovation and adaptation in social media practices. The study's findings regarding the high adoption rate of social media among NGOs in Ethiopia, with a particular preference for platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, align with several previous research studies on social media usage by NGOs in various contexts. The dominance of Facebook as the most widely adopted platform among NGOs in Ethiopia resonates with the findings of Nchabeleng et al. (2018), who observed a similar trend in their study of South African NGOs. Their research

highlighted the popularity of Facebook among NGOs due to its large user base, versatility in supporting multiple content formats, and ability to foster community engagement. Additionally, the popularity of WhatsApp among NGOs in Ethiopia is consistent with the observations made by Mavrodieva and Shaw (2021) in their study on social media usage in disaster management. They noted the importance of mobile-friendly communication channels like WhatsApp, particularly in developing countries, where mobile phone usage is high. The group chat and multimedia-sharing capabilities of WhatsApp make it a valuable tool for NGOs to facilitate direct and personalized communication with stakeholders. The adoption of Twitter by NGOs in Ethiopia aligns with the findings of Kadiri et al. (2020), who highlighted the platform's value in real-time communication, news dissemination, and public engagement during electoral peace campaigns. The ability of Twitter to facilitate conversations through hashtags and mentions makes it a useful tool for NGOs to participate in broader discussions, advocate for their causes, and connect with influencers and decision-makers. However, the study's findings regarding the relatively lower adoption rates of platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube among NGOs in Ethiopia contrast with the emphasis placed on visual storytelling and professional networking in some existing literature. For instance, Koutromanou et al. (2023) and Chen Deng (2023) have highlighted the potential of visual content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube in capturing audience attention, fostering emotional connections, and amplifying NGO advocacy efforts.

5.2 Social Media Strategies and Objectives

The emphasis on using social media for sharing news, engaging with supporters, and promoting events aligns with the findings of several previous studies that have explored the

strategic objectives of NGOs in leveraging social media platforms. Azubuike et al. (2023) and Kadiri et al. (2020) highlighted social media's pivotal role in amplifying NGO messages, engaging with diverse stakeholders, and mobilizing support for advocacy initiatives. The ability of social media to facilitate real-time communication, disseminate information, and foster dialogue with supporters resonates with the findings of this study, which identified these objectives as key drivers for NGOs' social media usage. Furthermore, the study's findings on promoting events through social media platforms align with the observations made by Mavrodieva and Shaw (2021) in their research on social media usage in disaster management. They noted that social media platforms provide NGOs with valuable channels to generate interest, drive participation, and create buzz around specific initiatives and events, amplifying their offline activities and engaging with local communities. However, the relatively lower emphasis on fundraising and recruitment through social media contrasts with the findings of some other studies. For instance, Chen Denq (2023) and Rysavy and Michalak (2020) have underscored the potential of social media platforms for resource mobilization, donor engagement, and talent acquisition within the NGO sector. This discrepancy may be attributed to the specific context of NGOs in Ethiopia, which potentially face unique challenges or prioritize different objectives in their social media strategies.

5.3 Metrics and Measurement

The study's findings regarding the metrics tracked by NGOs in Ethiopia for assessing their social media performance, such as reach, engagement rates, and follower growth, align with the observations made in previous research on NGO social media analytics and measurement. Koutromanou et al. (2023) have highlighted the importance of monitoring metrics like post reach, impressions, and engagement rates for NGOs to gauge their social media presence's

visibility, interaction, and growth. These metrics provide insights into the effectiveness of content strategies and help identify the types of posts that resonate most with the target audience, aligning with the practices observed among NGOs in Ethiopia. However, the limited emphasis on conversion rates, campaign-specific metrics, and hashtag performance observed in this study resonates with the challenges identified by Kabra et al. (2023). Their research noted the difficulty NGOs face in attributing direct outcomes, such as fundraising results or program impact, directly to social media activities. This challenge in measuring the return on investment (ROI) of social media efforts can hinder NGOs' ability to justify investments and demonstrate the value of these platforms to stakeholders.

5.4 Challenges and Barriers

The study reveals several challenges and barriers NGOs in Ethiopia face in their social media usage. Limited budget and staff/time emerge as the most significant challenges, highlighting these organizations' resource constraints. Social media management requires dedicated resources, both financial and human, to create and curate content, engage with audiences, and monitor performance. The lack of adequate budgets for social media activities limits the NGOs' ability to invest in paid advertising, boosted posts, or sponsored content, which can help expand their reach and target specific audiences. It also restricts their capacity to acquire advanced social media management tools, analytics platforms, or professional services that can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their efforts. Limited staff time is another critical challenge, as social media management often competes with other organizational priorities and responsibilities. The study's findings regarding the challenges faced by NGOs in Ethiopia in their social media usage, particularly limited budgets, staff constraints, and skill gaps, align with the barriers identified in several previous research studies on NGOs and social media

adoption. Nchabeleng et al. (2018) and Kabra et al. (2023) both highlighted the significant challenges posed by limited financial and human resources, which inhibit NGOs' ability to leverage social media platforms effectively. These resource constraints limit investments in social media infrastructure, tools, training, and dedicated personnel, thereby hindering consistent content creation, engagement, and performance monitoring.

Furthermore, the challenge of creating engaging content and standing out in a crowded social media landscape, as identified in this study, resonates with the findings of Permana et al. (2023) and Koutromanou et al. (2023). These studies emphasized the importance of visual storytelling, content optimization, and innovative approaches to capture audience attention and differentiate NGOs from the plethora of competing voices on social media platforms.

5.5 Effectiveness and Impact

Despite the challenges, the questionnaire results indicate that NGOs in Ethiopia perceive social media as an effective tool for various organizational objectives. Raising awareness and engaging with existing supporters emerge as the areas where social media is considered most effective. The study's findings regarding the perceived effectiveness of social media for raising awareness and engaging with existing supporters align with the observations made in several previous research studies exploring the impact of social media on NGO performance and stakeholder engagement. Shim (2014), in their study on health activism and public engagement by the Korea Leukemia Patient Group (KLPG), found that leveraging social media platforms like Facebook enhanced the organization's legitimacy and representativeness by allowing them to garner support from a wider segment of the general public. The ability of social media to amplify messages, reach new audiences, and generate conversations around important issues resonates

with the findings of this study, which identified awareness-raising and supporter engagement as areas where social media is perceived as highly effective. Additionally, Gilardi et al. (2022) and McDonough and Rodríguez (2020) have highlighted the potential of social media platforms for NGOs to amplify their advocacy voices, shape public discourse, and mobilize grassroots support for social change. The perceived effectiveness of social media for engaging with existing supporters, as observed in this study, aligns with these findings, underscoring the value of these platforms in fostering relationships, maintaining transparency, and encouraging continuous involvement from stakeholders. However, the lower perceived effectiveness of social media for fundraising and attracting new supporters, as observed in this study, contrasts with the potential highlighted in some existing literature. For instance, Chen Denq (2023) and Rysavy and Michalak (2020) have emphasized the opportunities presented by social media for NGOs to expand their audience, cultivate new donor relationships, and diversify their funding sources through digital campaigns and engagement strategies.

5.6 Future Plans and Aspirations

The open-ended responses in the questionnaire shed light on the plans and aspirations of NGOs in Ethiopia regarding their social media presence. Several organizations expressed their desire to expand their social media reach, explore new platforms, and improve their content strategies. This indicates a growing recognition of the potential of social media to amplify their impact and engage with wider audiences. Some NGOs mentioned plans to invest in staff training and capacity building to enhance their social media skills and effectiveness. This highlights the need for continuous learning and development to keep pace with the evolving social media landscape and best practices. Providing staff with the necessary knowledge, tools, and resources can help NGOs optimize their social media strategies and achieve better results. Other

organizations emphasized the importance of developing more interactive and engaging content formats, such as live streaming and virtual events, to foster community building and stakeholder engagement. This reflects a shift towards more immersive and participatory forms of digital communication, where audiences are not just passive consumers but active participants in the conversation. The plans and aspirations expressed by the NGOs also underscore the need for strategic planning and resource allocation. Developing clear social media strategies, setting measurable goals, and aligning them with overall organizational objectives can help NGOs maximize the impact of their social media efforts. Allocating adequate resources, both financial and human, is crucial to support the implementation and sustainability of these strategies.

5.7 Implications for NGO Social Media Practice

The findings of this study have several implications for NGO social media practice in Ethiopia and beyond. First, it highlights the importance of social media as a strategic communication tool for NGOs to achieve their organizational goals. NGOs should recognize the potential of social media to amplify their message, engage with stakeholders, and drive social change. This requires a shift from viewing social media as a mere promotional channel to a strategic asset that can support various organizational functions, such as advocacy, community building, and resource mobilization. Second, the study emphasizes the need for NGOs to develop comprehensive social media strategies that align with their overall communication and organizational objectives. These strategies should define clear goals, target audiences, content themes, and measurement metrics. They should also consider the unique characteristics and strengths of different social media platforms and tailor the content and engagement approaches accordingly. Third, the findings underscore the importance of building social media capacity within NGOs. This includes investing in staff training and development to enhance their social

media skills, knowledge, and expertise. NGOs should also consider establishing dedicated social media roles or teams to ensure consistent and effective management of their social media presence. Collaboration and knowledge sharing among NGOs can also help in identifying best practices, overcoming common challenges, and leveraging collective resources. Fourth, the study highlights the need for NGOs to allocate adequate resources for social media management. This includes budgeting for paid advertising, content creation, and social media management tools. NGOs should also consider exploring partnerships with corporate sponsors, media organizations, or social media influencers to expand their reach and resources. Finally, the findings emphasize the importance of continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of social media strategies. NGOs should establish regular processes to track and analyze their social media performance, using relevant metrics and tools. They should also be open to experimenting with new platforms, content formats, and engagement approaches based on audience feedback and changing trends. Continuously learning from their own experiences and those of other organizations can help NGOs refine their social media strategies and maximize their impact.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the social media practices, strategies, and challenges of NGOs in Ethiopia. This study has provided valuable insights into the social media practices, strategies, and challenges faced by NGOs in Ethiopia. The findings underscore the growing importance of social media as a strategic communication tool for these organizations to achieve their goals, engage with stakeholders, and drive social change. However, the study also reveals the significant resource constraints, skill gaps, and measurement challenges that hinder the effective utilization of social media by NGOs. The high adoption rates of platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter reflect the increasing digital connectivity and the potential for NGOs to reach wider audiences and amplify their impact. These platforms have become integral to the communication strategies of NGOs, enabling them to share news, engage with supporters, promote events, and raise awareness about their causes.

However, the study also highlights the limited utilization of platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, which offer unique opportunities for visual storytelling, professional networking, and engaging with specific target audiences. Despite recognizing the value of social media, the NGOs face significant challenges in their social media efforts. Limited budgets and staff time emerge as the most significant barriers, hindering consistent content creation, engagement, and performance monitoring. The lack of dedicated social media roles or teams further exacerbates these resource constraints. Additionally, organizations struggle with creating engaging content, standing out in a crowded social media landscape, and measuring the return on investment (ROI) of their social media activities. Despite these challenges, the perceived

effectiveness of social media for raising awareness, engaging with existing supporters, and promoting events suggests that NGOs recognize the value of these platforms in amplifying their impact. However, the lower perceived effectiveness of social media for fundraising, attracting new supporters, and thought leadership indicates potential areas for improvement. The plans and aspirations expressed by the organizations indicate a growing commitment to expanding their social media presence, building staff capacity, and exploring new platforms and content formats. However, realizing these aspirations will require a strategic and coordinated approach, involving capacity building, resource allocation, and continuous learning and adaptation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for NGOs, policymakers, researchers, and funders to support the effective utilization of social media by NGOs in Ethiopia and beyond:

NGOs should develop comprehensive social media strategies aligned with organizational objectives, defining clear goals, target audiences, content themes, and measurement metrics tailored to different social media platforms. Furthermore, consider the unique characteristics and strengths of each platform when planning content and engagement approaches. Build social media capacity within NGOs by establishing dedicated social media roles or teams. Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to enhance staff's social media skills, knowledge, and expertise. Collaborate and share best practices with other NGOs to facilitate learning and leverage collective resources. Secondly, allocate adequate financial and human resources for effective social media management. This includes budgeting for paid

advertising, content creation, acquiring social media management tools and analytics platforms, and utilizing professional services when needed.

They should foster meaningful stakeholder engagement and community building through social media platforms. Encourage two-way communication and dialogue by actively responding to comments, mentions, and direct messages. Facilitate online communities and interest groups around specific causes or initiatives. Explore interactive and immersive content formats, such as live streaming, virtual events, and user-generated content campaigns. Lastly, continuously monitor, evaluate, and adapt social media strategies based on performance data, audience insights, and emerging trends in the digital landscape. Establish regular processes to track relevant metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), conduct audience research, and gather feedback to understand preferences and engagement drivers.

Future research should explore context-specific social media practices of NGOs in different regions, sectors, or organizational sizes to provide insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by diverse NGOs. This can inform the development of tailored support mechanisms. Investigate the direct and indirect impacts of social media usage on various aspects of NGO performance, such as resource mobilization, program effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy efforts. This can help build a stronger business case for social media investment and adoption within the NGO sector. Secondly, develop comprehensive measurement frameworks and methodologies to assess the return on investment (ROI) of social media activities for NGOs. These frameworks should include metrics related to awareness, reputation, stakeholder engagement, organizational impact, and financial metrics such as fundraising and cost savings.

Researchers should explore emerging social media trends and technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, influencer marketing, and AI-powered content creation, to understand their potential implications and applications for NGOs and their communication strategies. Lastly, foster interdisciplinary collaborations by working with practitioners, policymakers, and experts from various disciplines, including communication, technology, social sciences, and development studies, to gain a holistic understanding of the role of social media in the NGO sector and develop comprehensive solutions.

Policy-makers should support capacity-building initiatives that aim to enhance the social media skills and capabilities of NGOs. This can include funding for training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities that equip NGO staff with the necessary knowledge and expertise to leverage social media effectively. Promote digital inclusion and accessibility by supporting initiatives that ensure NGOs and their stakeholders have access to affordable and reliable internet and digital technologies. This can involve supporting infrastructure development, subsidizing internet access, and providing digital literacy programs. Secondly, facilitate cross-sector collaborations between NGOs, private companies, academic institutions, and government agencies. These collaborations can foster knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and the development of innovative solutions that leverage social media for social impact. Develop regulatory frameworks and guidelines to ensure responsible and ethical use of social media by NGOs. These frameworks should address issues such as data privacy, content moderation, and transparency, while still allowing NGOs the flexibility to effectively utilize social media for their missions. Lastly, provide dedicated funding opportunities to support the development and implementation of social media strategies by NGOs. This can include grants for social media campaigns, content creation, analytics tools, and capacity-building initiatives.

By implementing these recommendations, NGOs in Ethiopia and beyond can optimize their social media strategies, build the necessary capacity, and leverage the full potential of these platforms to drive social change, engage stakeholders, and amplify their impact. Policymakers, funders, and researchers play crucial roles in creating an enabling environment that supports NGOs in their digital communication efforts, advancing knowledge in this domain, and fostering collaborations for sustainable solutions. As social media continues to evolve and new platforms and technologies emerge, NGOs must remain agile and proactive in their approach to digital engagement. Continuous learning, adaptation, and innovation are essential to stay relevant and maximize the impact of social media on achieving organizational goals and creating positive change in communities.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE



Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Note to the Participant:

This study is commissioned by the Department of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University as part of a Graduate Research Study. Thank you for agreeing to participate in our research study, "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Non-Governmental Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Selected NGOs in Ethiopia." Your insights are crucial to understanding the role of social media in the operations of non-profit organizations. Please read each question carefully and provide your honest and thoughtful responses. Your input remain confidential and only be used for research purposes. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your opinions and experiences. The success of this study relies on your valuable contributions. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or

concerns during the survey, please feel free to reach out to Rehema Evelyn through the email: rehemaogweno9@gmail.com

Questionnaire Identification and Respondents Profile:

1. Date (DD/MM/YYYY)
2. Name of the participant: _____
3. Name of the organization: _____
4. Year of establishment: _____
5. Type of NGO (Local/International): _____
6. Primary area(s) of operation: _____
7. Number of social media staff: _____

Social Media Usage:

8. Social media platforms used by the organization (select all that apply):

Facebook

YouTube

WhatsApp

Instagram

WeChat

TikTok

Facebook Messenger

Douyin

Telegram

Snapchat

Twitter (X)

Pinterest

Skype

Webex

LinkedIn

9. Number of dedicated social media staff:

0

1

2-5

6 or more

10. Annual social media budget:

Less than \$1,000

\$1,000-\$5,000

\$5,000-\$10,000

\$10,000 or more

11. Rate the frequency of using social media for the following (1=Never to 5=Very

Frequently):

Activity	1 (Never)	2 (Slightly)	3 (Moderately)	4 (Frequently)	5 (Very Frequently)
Community outreach/engagement					
Advocacy/awareness campaigns					
Fundraising					
Recruitment					
Internal communication					
Knowledge sharing					
Stakeholder management					
Crisis communication					

12. Metrics tracked for social media performance (select all that apply):

Likes

Shares

Comments

Website Traffic

Fundraising

Others (please specify)

Perceived Effectiveness:

13. Rate the effectiveness of social media for the following (1=Not at all to 5=Extremely effective):

Activity	1 (Not at all)	2 (Minor challenge)	3 (Moderate challenge)	4 (Major challenge)	5 (Extremely effective)
Increasing brand awareness					
Fundraising					
Community engagement					
Advocacy/awareness					
Internal communication					
External communication					

Recruiting staff/volunteers					
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14. Rate the challenges faced in social media usage (1=Not a challenge to 5=Major challenge):

Challenge	1 (Not at all)	2 (Minor challenge)	3 (Moderate challenge)	4 (Major challenge)	5 (Extremely effective)
Limited resources (budget, staff, time)					
Skills/training gaps					
Measuring impact/ROI					
Ensuring consistent brand voice					
Managing negative feedback					
Data					

privacy/security concerns					
Staff resistance to adoption					
Others (please specify)					

Qualitative Section:

1. Describe your organization's overall communication strategy and how social media fits into it.

2. Does your organization have a dedicated social media policy/guidelines? If yes, briefly explain.

3. How does your organization decide which social media platforms to use for different purposes?

9. How does your organization integrate social media with other communication channels?

10. What role does social media play in your organization's internal communication and knowledge sharing?

11. Describe social media training/skill development initiatives for staff in your organization.

12. What are the future plans for expanding or improving your organization's social media presence?

13. Can you share any best practices, innovative ideas or lessons learned regarding social media usage?

14. Any other comments/insights regarding social media usage and its impact on NGO performance

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your valuable insights contribute significantly to our understanding of the relationship between social media usage and the performance of non-governmental organizations.