

The Use of Social Media by New Zealand Non-profits for Community Engagement and Public Trust

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Abstract

Many studies showed that non-profits do not fully strategise social media for community engagement and enhance public trust. This research aimed to explore how non-profits use social media for community engagement and public trust in NZ. Plus, it discovered what the challenges and opportunities were. The Social Capital Theory is used as the theoretical foundation for this study, in relation to five dimensions: network, trust, reciprocity, social norms, and personal and collective efficacy. A literature and scoping review, followed by a qualitative approach that relied on relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology backed by a series of semi-structured interviews with social media representatives of non-profits was performed.

Research findings reflected a light and distant relationship with knowledge networks, compared to the closer groups in community engagement. There is a strong bond with the trust component, especially when non-profits hear the voices of beneficiaries, perceive transparency, and accountability. A weaker bond is displayed for reciprocity since social media use is for mutual support, goodwill, and recognition. However, non-profits showed a strong bond with social norms when communicating appropriate expected behaviour on social media, including donations, volunteering, or mobilising, suggesting that they are habitual and socially valued actions. Social media promotes personal and collective efficacy from a sense of visibility and mastery experiences from storytelling and testimonials.

Networking has a bond since the majority maintain consistent interactions and create authentic content that fosters interactions to create a space where the community feels heard and connected. Sharing thoughts, experiences, and vulnerabilities helped non-profits to build trust and create a deeper connection with the community, resulting in loyalty. The hesitancy to disclose financial information on social media to boost transparency and trust with donors and supporters resulted in a weaker bond in building and maintaining public trust. As a result, building and maintaining public trust on social media is reasonably low for the majority. The scarcity of resources, lack of training, technological advancements, rapid platform commercialisation, triggering tailored content strategies, privacy, and scam issues have posed significant challenges to non-profits in optimising social media use. However, the emergence of user-friendly digital tools has significantly increased technical and creative upskilling, with greater ease and efficiency for using social media to a notable extent.

Most of the non-profits have not introduced social media into their larger communication strategy, and the organisational brand was not included. The policies that operate within the strategic framework of the non-profits were not regular and consistent across. The theoretical and practical implications of this study were discussed, including the consequences of the above limitations. Research recommendations propose practical approaches based on the findings, followed by the potential areas for future studies. The researcher expected that this research would guide future studies, inform policy decisions, and advance knowledge.

Keywords: Social media, non-profits, community engagement, public trust

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgments), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated and referenced along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other higher learning institution of higher learning.

Signed: Manoja Prabhalini Siriwardhana

Date: 29/07/2025

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The effective use of social media has become a vital part of success for most organisations due to evolving digitalisation (Bürger, 2015; Campbell & Lambright, 2020; Cao et al., 2016; Guidry et al., 2017; Jue et al., 2010; Kanol & Nat, 2021; Leonardi, 2014; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Obermayer et al., 2021; Parveen et al., 2014; Rodriguez, 2016; Safko, 2009; Taylor, 2021; Tourani, 2022). Hence, non-profits are also quickly adapting to these widely accessible and interactive platforms to disseminate information, promote services, enhance transparency, perform market research, raise funds, and collaborate with influencers (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Sørensen et al., 2017; Sun & Asencio, 2018; Zhang et al., 2014). In their journey to use social media, almost all the non-profits face various challenges due to inherent limitations in their resource bases and capacity (Briones et al., 2011; Fischer-Preßler et al., 2023). Therefore, this research aims to explore the current situation of how New Zealand (NZ) non-profits use social media for community engagement and in gaining public trust, and what challenges and opportunities they may encounter in NZ.

In the context of academia, though non-profits significantly contribute to the national economy and social welfare, only one research study (Thompson, 2022) was published relating to social media use by non-profits in NZ. Therefore, this MBUS thesis aims to explore how NZ non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and strengthen public trust to fill this research gap in the existing literature. Social capital theory (SCT) is used as a theoretical lens in exploring engagement and trust-building with the community. Further, the findings of this study are twofold. From a practical point of view, this will contribute to developing a comprehensive social media strategy or communication strategy for non-profits. On the theoretical side, it will conceptualise the application of SCT in the digital environment.

1.2 Background and Motivation

Non-profits are mainly non-commercial institutions that invest social resources in pursuing happiness and the well-being of society as their primary focus (Robinson, 1996). With over 10 million non-profits operating worldwide, 1.3 million registered non-profits feed, heal, shelter, educate, inspire, enlighten, and nurture people, border to border and beyond in the United States (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). They provide essential social and health services and opportunities to experience arts and culture, in return, help to foster civic engagement and leadership, drive economic growth, and strengthen the communities. Non-profits also care for children or elderly parents, allowing family members to work outside and providing job training and placement services to reduce the

unemployment rate and spur economic activities into productive sources. According to the National Council of Nonprofits (2019), non-profits spent nearly \$1 trillion annually for goods and services, ranging from significant expenses in hospital medical equipment to everyday purchases for office supplies, food, utilities, and rent whereas much of their expense is on healthcare and higher education along in the United States. American non-profits employed 12.3 million out of a 164 million workforce (7.5%) at the beginning of 2020 in the United States of America. Further, these organisations spent roughly \$2 trillion in 2019, \$826 billion on payroll for salaries, benefits, and taxes (Moraczewski, 2024).

According to the annual reports by Inland Revenue (2020) in NZ, non-profits earned \$9.4 billion, representing 4.4% of NZ's total Gross Domestic Production (GDP), which includes volunteer labour of \$3.5 billion. Non-profits popular in NZ operate in diversified forms, from cultural societies, sports clubs, social service institutions, churches, environmental groups, trade unions, and political parties to charitable trusts with the intention of reducing poverty and domestic violence, providing housing, and improving mental health. Popular non-profits in NZ include KidsCan, Childfund, Whānau Āwhina Plunket, Oxfam, Greenpeace, and Cure Kids, mostly worrying about the well-being and education of children.

To embark on this non-profit motive, Inland Revenue also provides tax relief to recognise the contribution of non-profits and charities to society, and \$1.2b net surpluses were generated in 2018 from charities. A \$300m donation and gift tax concessions were granted (Inland Revenue, 2020) for \$2m Payroll giving tax credits, \$38m tax value of company gift deductions, and \$4m of Māori Authority gift deductions. On the other hand, with this growing financial contribution of non-profits to the national economies, non-profits also tend to expand their operating scale, which needs more guidance to help them meet community obligations (Inland Revenue, 2020).

In the non-profit literature, there are several terms used, such as non-profit or not-for-profit, voluntary, community, voluntary welfare, nongovernmental (NGO), third sector, and independent sector, which refer to organisations involved in social welfare. However, the author finds it hard to derive a globally acceptable definition that fully describes the motivations of the non-profits. Instead, several terms are interchangeably used to define the non-profit landscape. Applying these terms to organisations and operating space within the sector can overlap, and sometimes the application of terms is misleading. There are discussions about using all the terms, summarised in academic studies by Robinson (1996). While the Ministry of Health uses the term NGO to refer to all health groups that are non-statutory and non-profit making, some organisations operate in the same health sector in which they are a part, and prefer the terms community, voluntary, or non-profit. As a result of these

diversified terms, the author prefers the most widely used term in New Zealand (NZ) non-profits for this academic study.

Community engagement and public trust are critical for non-profits' sustainability and continued success (Bryce, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Edeigba & Singh, 2021; Head, 2007; Ilyas et al., 2020; Ki & Hon, 2007; Mwesigwa et al., 2024; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2023; Walsh et al., 2009; Werke & Bogale, 2023). Community engagement fosters a sense of belonging and connectedness among community members. Public trust improves corporate reputation, and in return, it will enhance customer loyalty, gain positive verbal recommendations, increase purchase intention, and achieve positive crisis management outcomes.

Both community engagement and public trust support non-profits in raising funds, promoting initiatives, reducing the crisis's impact, sharing information, engaging with social and community support groups, and so forth (Bryce, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Head, 2007; Ki & Hon, 2007; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Walsh et al., 2009; Werke & Bogale, 2023). Therefore, non-profits are constantly striving to improve community engagement and public trust. The growing economic contribution resulted in heightened expectations from the community to reach out to non-profits while non-profits also struggled to provide services and infrastructure.

This unprecedented pressure was noticeable to academics and caught enough attention to study how non-profits could add value to the community. Social media has become integral to daily life for about 15 years or more. It has revolutionised communicating, sharing information, and connecting with others (Carr & Hayes, 2015). In broader aspects, organisations use social media to engage with customers, generate leads, perform market research, analyse competitors, gain insights into their audiences, and collaborate with influencers (Alturas et al., 2018; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Go & You, 2016; Guo & Saxton, 2014; Hughes & Palen, 2009; Lea-Greenwood, 2012; Luke, 2009; Maxhuni, 2021; Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013; Spencer et al., 2012; Waters, 2010). Non-profits also quickly adapt these widely accessible and interactive platforms to boost their services.

The use of social media is widespread in NZ. According to statistics published by Digital 2024 in early January 2024, NZ had 4.13 million social media users, 78.7% of the total population, while X (formerly Twitter) had 782.6 thousand users, representing 14.9%. YouTube had 4.13 million users, representing 78.7% of the total population, whereas Instagram had 2.50 million users in early 2024, and its potential ad reach increased by 350,000 within a year. In NZ, TikTok had 1.93 million users aged 18 and above in early 2024, and TikTok ads reached 47.2% of all adults aged 18 and above. Facebook Messenger reached 2.90 million users, 55.2% of the population (Kemp, 2024). LinkedIn had 2.80 million members, and data published in LinkedIn's planning tools show that LinkedIn's

potential ad reach in NZ increased by 300,000 within a year, while Snapchat had 1.46 million users. Data published in Pinterest's advertising resources indicate that Pinterest has 1.03 million, representing 19.5% of the total population (Kemp, 2024).

However, social media representation by non-profits in NZ does not have a favourable trend (Thompson, 2022). For example, Instagram became the most widespread tool for non-profits aiming to reach the audience, while X remained famous for reaching out to politicians and corporate supporters (Thompson, 2022). According to Thompson (2022), the use of social media was mostly limited to fundraising, thanking corporate sponsors and supporters, promoting events, and publicising corporate news in NZ. Thompson (2022) interviewed and analysed five charities over three months to discover how charities use social media in NZ. The Hearing House, Orphans Aid International, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Starship Foundation, and Women's Refuge were participating charities in his study. However, Starship Foundation was the only non-profit out of five leading non-profits that use social media significantly for their service operations regularly in NZ and has a documented social media strategy (Thompson, 2022). Therefore, an evident gap in the use of social media by NZ non-profits will lead to the formulation of the problem statement in the next section. Further, this study proved that the social media strategy was more fluid and became an ongoing conversation for the Hearing House and Ronald McDonald House Charities. This is further evident when participants' perceptions of having a written social media strategy are drastically diverse. For instance, the Women's Refuge confirmed that their written social media strategy is more for regulating co-workers' use of social media than for plotting the charity's social media future.

1.3 Problem Statement and Research Objectives

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created a new social environment, enforcing physical distancing and stay-at-home orders to prevent the spread of the virus. People and organisations turned to social media for social connectivity during this time. Massive-scale lockdowns forced many people to stay home (Tull et al., 2020). As a result, organisations and people spent more time on social media during the COVID-19 lockdown (Gao, et al., 2020; Cho, 2023; Drouin et al., 2020), making social media mainstream channels that dominated information acquisition and social support (Cellini et al., 2020; Saud et al., 2020). Social media emerged as a powerful tool for non-profits, marking a transformative shift during COVID-19. Social media enables non-profits to respond quickly to urgent needs, amplify their causes, and connect with broader audiences (Maxhuni, 2021; Sánchez-Torné et al., 2023). Many moved to online platforms for fundraising and content dissemination as physical events became untenable (Intindola & Burke-Kolehmainen, 2023; Johnson et al., 2020; Waniak-Michalak et al., 2022).

Facebook is the dominant social media platform used by local governments in NZ, with some of the earliest introductions in 2008 by district councils in New Plymouth and the Whanganui (Alam et al., 2022) for citizen engagement. Non-profits adopt social media mostly for communication with donors and volunteers. They also use social media to disseminate campaigns more quickly and effectively since it enables direct, transparent communication with a broad audience, allowing them to share impact stories and respond to real concerns to foster a stronger connection and credibility with potential supporters. However, studies show that non-profits do not thoroughly strategise social media for community engagement and enhance public trust. For example, 93% of non-profits in Australia and NZ use social media only to engage their supporters and donors for online fundraising (Matthews, 2023).

Relationships are important for engaging with the community and building or maintaining public trust. Their co-existence is key in fostering enduring relationships between non-profits and donors (Lloyd & Breeze, 2013; Savanta, 2019) to operate legitimacy, effectiveness, and financial and non-financial patronage (Bryce, 2007). Social media helps maintain connections with strong relationships, known as **bonding social capital** (Williams, 2019), and weaker relationships, such as acquaintances, referred to as **bridging social capital** (Chen & Li, 2017). Furthermore, social media allows individuals and organisations to stay connected with social relationships that may have been physically severed offline or to maintain established relationships. As a result, non-profits can leverage social media to enhance community engagement and public trust significantly. Based on this, the following research objective was identified.

- i. Explore the current situation of how NZ non-profits use social media for community engagement and in gaining public trust

COVID-19 has posed challenges and hurdles for non-profits (Li & Feng, 2021; Ahmad & Murad, 2020), mainly due to reduced donations and community participation (Maher et al., 2020). As a result, the inability to cater to the increased demand from vulnerable populations hurt public trust. For instance, donation-based campaigns organised for refurbishing hospital wards, buying medical equipment, and supporting cost-intensive surgery for less privileged children had to be abandoned or limited due to inadequate donor funds (Nemţeanu et al., 2022). Further studies also show that despite satisfying public demand, most non-profits have limited or ceased their programs due to challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic (Deitrick et al., 2020). Therefore, regaining public trust is vital for developing long-term, positive relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders (Ki & Hon, 2007). It improves corporate reputation (Walsh et al., 2009), enhances loyalty (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002), gains positive verbal recommendations (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003), and

achieves positive crisis management outcomes (Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Graham, et al., 2015). Further, most importantly, public trust is necessary for non-profits to validate legitimacy, measure effectiveness, and get non-financial and financial support (Bryce, 2007). Therefore, social media is an influential tool for strengthening public trust through public relations for non-profits. Further, public trust highly impacts community engagement in contracting, particularly with other external community service providers, soliciting and receiving funds, exercising custody over assets for the benefit of society, investing the organisation's social capital, and finally, achieving organisational objectives (Bryce, 2007). Therefore, the following research objectives were identified.

- ii. Explore the challenges and opportunities of social media use for non-profits in NZ

This study will advance the information systems literature by applying SCT (Ellison et al., 2007; Woolcock, 1998) for social media use through empirical evidence in the context of non-profits, especially for enhancing community engagement and public trust. Further, this study will provide practical guidance for senior managers responsible for developing policies to promote strategic social media use at the non-profit organisational level.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions have been developed to achieve the above research objectives.

RQ1: How do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust?

RQ2: What opportunities and challenges do non-profits face when using social media?

The social media platforms heavily used by NZ non-profits include Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn (Carney, 2024; Kemp, 2024; Pacheco, 2022; Thompson, 2022). In the context of this research topic, the researcher will study how all potential social media platforms could impact a wider online community.

1.5 Theoretical Underpinnings: SCT

The researcher used SCT to explore how social media use improves community engagement and sustains public trust. The SCT is defined as "*norms and networks facilitating collective actions for mutual benefits*" (Woolcock, 1998, p. 155). It includes five (5) dimensions: networks, reciprocity, trust, social norms, and personal and collective efficacy (Bourdieu, 1986). These dimensions form and shape the interaction among the members of a group, organisation, community, or society, thereby strengthening community participation and building public trust. For instance, voluntary

participation by community members during a natural disaster can be evident using social capital theory.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The study consists of eight chapters. **Chapter 1 - Introduction** provides the rationale, background, and motivation for this study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and the theoretical background used to study the research questions. In this study, the literature review has been conducted in 2 phases and documented in Chapters 2 and 3. **Chapter 2 - Background and literature review** consists of existing literature on social media, non-profits, community engagement, public trust, and social media use. **Chapter 3 - Scoping Review** offers a comprehensive review of relevant literature, exploring the use of social media in relationship-building and trust formation while identifying gaps in current research. **Chapter 4 - Theoretical Framework** and the rationale for using SCT to examine how social media can enhance community engagement and public trust. **Chapter 5 - Methodology** describes the qualitative approach used in the study, detailing the research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques employed to understand how social media fosters community engagement and public trust. **Chapter 6 - Findings** presents the study's findings, and **Chapter 7 - Discussion** analyses how social media influences public trust and strengthens community engagement through the lens of SCT and the practical implications for non-profits. Finally, **Chapter 8 - Conclusion and Recommendations** summarises the key findings and contributions to the literature and offers recommendations for organisations seeking to use social media to enhance community ties and build public trust, along with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: Background Review

This section discusses the critical concepts and definitions in the existing literature on social media, community engagement, public trust, non-profits, and enablers as well as inhibitors of social media use at the organisational level. This background review of literature set the foundation for the scoping review presented in Chapter 3.

2.1 Social Media

Social media embraces web-based platforms and applications that allow users to create content, publish, share, and communicate (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), and they help build and maintain social relationships among users and groups (DiMicco et al., 2008; Scaife, 2014). Further, it provides access to users from different geographical locations (Kapoor et al., 2017) to share thoughts, ideas, and creations (Milla et al., 2018). These highly interactive platforms (Chen & Xiao, 2022) are very economical as they are primarily free of charge and enable users to access them anywhere at any time (Bernritter et al., 2016; Milla et al., 2018). Further, the predecessors, blogs, instant messaging, and Internet Relay Chats¹, caused a qualitative change in communication practices beyond traditional emails and websites due to their capabilities for collaboration, interactivity, and two-way communication (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Interestingly, social media fosters an integrated virtual environment by collapsing the boundaries between social and professional landscapes and facilitating continuous interactions (Carr & Hayes, 2015).

Creating a universally accepted definition of social media and its use is challenging in academic research (Leonardi et al., 2013) since it is defined based on how social media is used and its benefits. Further, based on the application of social media in different contexts, various terms are used by authors to explain it; for example, enterprise social media (ESM), which enables internal communication through social media, is explained as “digitally enabled social networks” (Koch et al., 2013) and “corporate social network services” (Behrendt et al., 2014) interchangeably.

The definition derived by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61), “*Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow creation and exchange of User Generated Content*” is the more comprehensive definition to date as it summarises all the characteristics of social media instead its usage. However, Johnathan Obar and Steve Wildman (2015) argued that this definition is based on commonalities in Web 2.0 internet-based applications, such as the ability to generate user content, create user-specific profiles,

¹ Internet Relay Chats - A text-based instant messaging application designed for group and private messages. It can be used for data transfers including file sharing.

and develop online social networks. Therefore, this definition will not reflect the evolving nature of technology, for example, how social media is used for video game applications.

Nevertheless, the researcher argues that the definition given by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) is suitable as it allows exploring diverse interactions created by internet-based applications through user-generated content.

2.2 Social Media Platforms

The revolution of the term “social media” began in early 2000 (2U WordPress, 2024; Go & You, 2016; Van Dijck, 2013). Previous studies define the phenomenon of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Zhu & Chen, 2015) by considering various dimensions. The typology Zhu and Chen (2015) proposed relies on two prominent social media features. These features include the nature of the connection and the extent to which it allows for the customisation of messages. Further, in their study, Zhu and Chen (2015) subdivide these two features into four categories of social media. The first categorisation is the relationship, where social media platforms are profile-based and consist mainly of customised messages, especially those related to Facebook and LinkedIn. The second category defines the self and is also related to profile-based platforms. However, it distinguishes itself from the first categorisation as it allows users to manage their social media communication channels, such as X. Creative outlet is the third categorisation and allows users to share their interests and creativity on YouTube and Instagram. The fourth category is the collaboration platforms, which are also content-based and allow people to ask questions, get advice, or find the most interesting news and content daily.

Kaplan’s and Haenlein’s (2010) perspectives are far different from Zhu’s and Chen’s (2015), where they argue that social presence (or media richness) and self-presentation (or self-disclosure) are the defining characteristics of social media. **Figure 2.2.1** depicts the suggested conceptual framework by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) in their study. This proposed categorisation was used to differentiate collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds.

Figure 2.2.1: Determinants of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self presentation/ Self disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

The revolutionary breakthrough in social media came from a study by Kietzmann and his colleagues in 2011. They proposed a set of seven functional building blocks in their conceptual framework. According to them, identity is the “*extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 243), and conversations are “*the extent to which users communicate with other users*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 244), while sharing is “*the extent to which users exchange distribute, and receive content*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 245). Meanwhile, presence is “*the extent to which users can know if other users are accessible*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 245), and relationships are “*the extent to which users can be related to other users*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246), and reputation is “*the extent to which users can identify the standing of others, including themselves*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 247). Finally, the groups are “*the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities*” (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 247).

Kietzmann and his colleagues (2011) claim that the extent to which social media focuses on some or all these blocks will differentiate social media platforms. In addition, they also confirm in their literature review that social media platforms can differ in many other characteristics, including modality, access to content, privacy, type of connections, and longevity of content accessibility. Therefore, it is likely that all these characteristics contribute to different engagement experiences on various social media platforms.

Cavazza, the French social media expert (2023), identified 20 different groups of social media services condensed into six main categories. They were publishing, sharing, messaging, discussing, collaborating, and networking in a complex social media landscape (**Figure 2.2.2**). This complex represents 325 diversified social media services grouped according to those six different social media categories and consists of many platforms and mobile applications.

for open communication where individuals can ask for the organisation's practices from virtual peers, which everyone can scrutinize. Additionally, blogs offer tactical and strategic communication tools for diverse non-profits since they allow them to respond directly to inquiries (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.5 Quora

Quora is a website for questions and answers launched in 2009, and it has more than 400 million unique monthly visitors (Creative Resound, 2023) to date. Quora has a high search prominence, making it attractive to increase company awareness. For the community passionate about sharing knowledge, Quora is known for providing high-quality answers. Users can follow topics or peers to stay updated on the latest discussions. Quora also has a blogging feature and a voting system for rating answers. Quora is an influential learning and knowledge-sharing tool for engaging in specific topics with users worldwide. Quora is mainly self-moderated, with excellent answers upvoted and spam replies being downvoted. It can also report abusive or spam responses to moderators who examine reported answers (Patil & Lee, 2015; Wang et al., 2013).

Digital social entrepreneurs can establish their brand name, lead the industry, and attract potential customers by answering questions based on their industry expertise. In addition, businesses can use the features in Quora to connect with like-minded individuals and gain insights for co-creating products and services (Maity et al., 2015; Patil & Lee, 2015; Wang et al., 2013). Standard academic research is limited in how non-profits use Quora daily.

2.6 Content Communities and Social Network Sites

Allow all users and organisations to share their content: photos on Flickr, videos on YouTube, texts, and presentations on SlideShare. Creating personal profile pages in content communities that have protected their materials with copyrights is unnecessary. However, many organisations believe that the high popularity of content communities creates a very attractive contact channel. Content communities are branded as the technology that became possible with the improvement of the Internet.

In 2007, Boyd and Ellison first used social network sites, virtual meetings frequently happen between “latent ties” (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. As a result of participants primarily communicating with those already a part of their extended social network in many large social network sites, the researchers preferred the term “social network sites” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The key feature aims to maintain profiles that display an articulated list of friends who are also users of the site/s. The rapid usage of social network sites causes a shift in the organisation of online

communities, but not around their common interests. Further, social network sites more accurately reflect the behaviour of unmediated social structures where “*the world is composed of networks, not groups*” (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988, p. 37).

Content communities are similar to social networking sites. However, users on social networking sites wish to create personal profiles and communicate with each other, which does not happen in content communities (Cross, 2014). **Table 2.6.1** summarises the popular social networking sites in the content communities that are more popular worldwide.

Table 2.6.1: Popular content communities and social networking sites

Channel	Purpose	Advantage
<p>YouTube</p> <p>The third most-visited website worldwide (Inglis, 2014) and reached 2.527 billion users in April 2023 (Kemp, 2024).</p>	<p>Repurposing podcasts, infographics, presentations, and video series includes closed captions in videos.</p> <p>For video businesses, Google AdWords offers laser-focused access to the audience by advertising videos and earning money via Google’s AdSense.</p>	<p>Video marketing (Tafesse, 2020; Brock, 2008)</p> <p>Creating a loyal list of different audiences (Brock, 2008)</p>
<p>Facebook</p> <p>The third most-visited website worldwide (Inglis, 2014), and reached 2.527 billion users in April 2023 (Kemp, 2024).</p> <p>However, accurate and real information is not validated on Facebook (Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013; Alturas et al., 2018), which can also be affected by the regulations in some countries (Chiu et al., 2012).</p>	<p>Offers various tools for building dialogue, interacting with a universal audience, and soliciting ongoing feedback (Farzan et al., 2018; Appleby, 2016; Bernardi & Alhamdan, 2022).</p>	<p>Hashtags and mentions - most appealing ways to share categorised information.</p> <p>Direct messages - useful for reaching out to individuals and groups. It can add hyperlinks to the posts, append multimedia files, reshare content others have published, and modify the original posts.</p> <p>Besides plain texts, Facebook posts with multimedia files and hyperlinks to external web pages (Shih, 2009).</p> <p>News feeds - development and sustainability of online relationships.</p>

Channel	Purpose	Advantage
<p>X (Twitter)</p> <p>Allows fast, direct, and high interaction between businesses and customers, with the average X user following five or more businesses (Soboleva et al., 2017).</p> <p>The communication typology is known as authentic communication (could increase identity and trust, and the final impression is perceived to be genuine and reliable by users).</p>	<p>The user-friendly layout encourages users to follow multiple businesses, and in turn, businesses can also seize numerous opportunities by engaging with consumers directly and actively (Sheikh, 2023).</p>	<p>280-character restriction helps conserve space for more pertinent information and attention-seeking headlines.</p> <p>Allows users to interact closely by connecting individuals and groups (Becker et al., 2011; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Smitko, 2012).</p> <p>Use for transferring, producing, simplifying, and exchanging cultural norms, ideologies, and values.</p>
<p>Pinterest</p> <p>A social curation tool that provides a visual content creation platform (Saxton & Ghosh, 2016) and can facilitate organising content on the Internet (Peters, 2009; Karl, 2024).</p>	<p>Users collaboratively create and manage tags, organise content, and pin information with their peers.</p>	<p>Pin individual ideas and for organisations to identify, filter, classify, archive, organise, and present the most relevant pieces of information on a given topic (Moore, 2014; Bercovici, 2014).</p>
<p>Instagram</p> <p>The main audience is the younger generation (Abbott et al., 2013; Salomon, 2013; Backlinko Team, 2024), which finds it much more convenient and fascinating than posting lengthy texts (Bakhshi et al., 2013)</p>	<p>A media-sharing and mobile-based application that allowed individuals to take and share photos and videos.</p>	<p>A powerful marketing tool for businesses looking to expand their presence and product visibility by adding visual posts (Kuligowski, 2023; Zote, 2019) with different rendering effects (Adam, 2024; Hiram et al., 2015).</p> <p>Businesses that advertise on Instagram are non-intrusive (Dwivedi et al., 2021).</p>

Channel	Purpose	Advantage
<p>LinkedIn</p> <p>An extensive user base of professionals and businesses to build awareness, generate leads, forge partnerships, manage reputation, and strengthen customer relationships.</p>	<p>Interacting with potential clients, partners, and customers strengthens relationships and can establish industry brand authority (Eval, 2024).</p>	<p>The company profile page lets businesses showcase their expertise and professional image and publish business developments, achievements, and offerings.</p> <p>Advanced search functionality allows businesses to target specific industries, job titles, or customer profiles. LinkedIn forges strategic partnerships, collaborations, and business alliances to expand reach, access new markets, and drive innovation through project collaboration.</p>
<p>TikTok</p> <p>Combines videos with different genres of music snippets, special effects, and filters (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024).</p>	<p>Creates a fun and interesting way for customers to interact with the products, advertising, and the fastest-growing social media platform with a wider reach (Karra, 2022).</p>	<p>Concentrating more on a mobile-first approach and being able to easily create content tailored to smartphone use increases the ability to interact quickly (Shop, 2021).</p> <p>“For You Page”, a home page that plays short videos automatically by projecting them, would love to see (Wiley et al., 2022; Schwedel, 2018).</p>

2.7 Virtual Worlds

Virtual worlds can be divided into two sections: visual game worlds and visual social worlds. However, both media share similar characteristics. Interestingly, VSW enables its users to interact in a three-dimensional environment where individuals can communicate and interact with each other in the form of personalized avatars. The anticipation will become an ultimate manifestation of social media since they offer an incredible level of social presence and media richness (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). **Table 2.7.1** summarises the virtual worlds more popular worldwide among game enthusiasts.

Table 2.7.1: Virtual worlds, purpose, and usages

Channel	Purpose	Usage
<p>Virtual Game Worlds (VGW)</p> <p>Massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), users have limited identity expression. This causes a limited degree of self-presentation and self-disclosure on VSG.</p>	<p>This media is uncommon among non-profit organisations (Kaplan et al., 2010).</p>	<p>Publishing in-game advertisements (similar in idea to product placement in blockbuster movies).</p>
<p>Virtual Social World (VSW)</p>	<p>Enforces fewer rules and allows users to select their behaviours more freely and essentially by simulating their real lives.</p>	<p>Allows users to create content and sell those creations to other avatars for virtual currency (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).</p>

2.8 Non-profits

A few decades ago, the public well-being and pursuit of society's happiness were considered government responsibilities (Marwell & Calabrese, 2014). However, researchers have now been trying to understand the influence of non-profits on social outcomes on a large scale (Yuan, 2019). Non-profits contribute to meaningful social causes and healthy communities through high social capital, social cohesion, and informal solid networks (Putnam, 1995; Sampson, 2003). Social capital is broadly classified into three important aspects: civic engagement, economic connectedness, and social cohesion (Larnyo et al., 2024). This concept was further encompassed by social networks and support (Chetty et al., 2022; Green et al., 2022). Civic engagement denotes personal involvement in community support and their rate of volunteering for social causes (Habib et al., 2023). In contrast, economic connectedness refers to personal connection relative to socioeconomic status (Chetty et al., 2022). Social cohesiveness discusses the strength of relationships an individual has within a community, whereas social networks represent a group of people and their interactions, which could affect an individual's life (Chetty et al., 2022; Green et al., 2022).

These entities play an important role in social cohesion since they focus on promoting social values and unique characteristics defining their existence, such as volunteering, providing almost free services, and containing aspects relevant to their development, mainly through donations. Broadly, their contributions can be divided into three types: economic, political, and social (Valentinov, 2006).

Social capital involvements lean towards improving the overall quality of life, reducing loneliness, promoting healthy lifestyles, and improving self-management of chronic illness among older adults, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic in China (Alias et al., 2021). With social support and social networks, individuals can protect against health issues (Alrasheed et al., 2022) and poverty (Achdut et al., 2021; Green et al., 2022). Other studies have also shown that social capital is a significant protective factor for mental and physical health and mortality (Coll-Planas et al., 2016; Nyqvist et al., 2013).

Non-profits are separately identifiable non-government organisations precluded from earning profits (Steinberg, 2003), and their memberships and member contributions are also not mandatory (Non-profit institutions Satellite Account: 2018, 2020). The concept of non-profits is oriented toward social ends and serves the common good of the community's needs with the least emphasis on earning profits (Barman, 2016; Sanger, 2003). Moreover, non-profits serve as advocacy channels between the public and the government (Chetkovich & Kunreuther, 2008; Taylor, 2010) by representing the needs of communities that go unmet and protecting fundamental civil rights (McCarthy & Castelli, 2002). Non-profits also connect residents to larger organisations and government agency networks by providing them access to external resources and sources of influence (Sampson, 2018).

Many different definitions are available in the literature to refer to a non-profit by several scholars. Sirisena and Shneor (2018) define a non-profit as an autonomous organisation since it works toward social and economic development and is restricted from distributing its earned profits to the people administering it. Another definition from Waters (2014) refers to a non-profit as a voluntary association where individuals organise together to achieve a shared mission and objectives. In the process of accomplishing this mission, non-profits generate social capital. The other motive would be individuals' willingness and attitude to engage and contribute to addressing the common causes they worry about, while at the same time reinforcing the commitment, trust, and confidence of all participants (Waters, 2014).

Herman (2005), non-profits operate as private, voluntary, and non-profits. They are legally bound to support and engage in public or private activities without having any commercial or monetary benefits. Non-profits intend to generate social benefits for the community (Soriano & Galindo, 2010). Defining non-profits as widely accepted means is yet to be developed. Hence, they are interchangeably known as voluntary, tax-exempt, non-governmental, and independent sectors (Edwards & Hulme, 1995; Salamon & Anheier, 1992a; Salamon & Anheier, 1992b). The popular domains non-profits operate in are humanitarian aid, education, animal protection, social issues, health care, politics, environment, and religious initiatives

In the same way, many global institutions have given diverse definitions. According to the United Nations, a voluntary non-profit can be developed in the national or international order (Blanco-Ariza et al., 2019). The United Nations Development Program determines that non-profits and institutions should rely on the contributions of their members to develop objectives in promoting development programs. Melles (2019) refers to non-profits with private ownership and a focus on calming distress, promoting socioeconomic welfare, protecting the environment while providing social services, and supporting community development. However, according to Duckworth and Moore (2010), non-profits act as civil society organisations with a legal background in which the national laws should bind their operations. They have the self-management ability to set missions and goals to achieve the public interest (Liao & Young, 2012). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) broadly define non-profits. The organisations are founded and governed by a group of independent citizens with philanthropic intentions and operate on individual contributions, known as non-profits (Lévesque, 2013).

According to Mannarini and associates (2018), non-profits run on designed operation methods to support and contribute to their decision-making processes. They hold themselves accountable to all their stakeholders and always strive for transparency and generate socially added value. This designed process further allows non-profits to provide necessary services for the community and allows them to be managed in a professional manner. However, the relevance of the social sector and non-profits has adapted well to the conditions and market scenarios. An important aspect of this type of organisation is its value based on the important social tasks it offers. As a result, they become a notable component of society (Macková & Dvořáková, 2017).

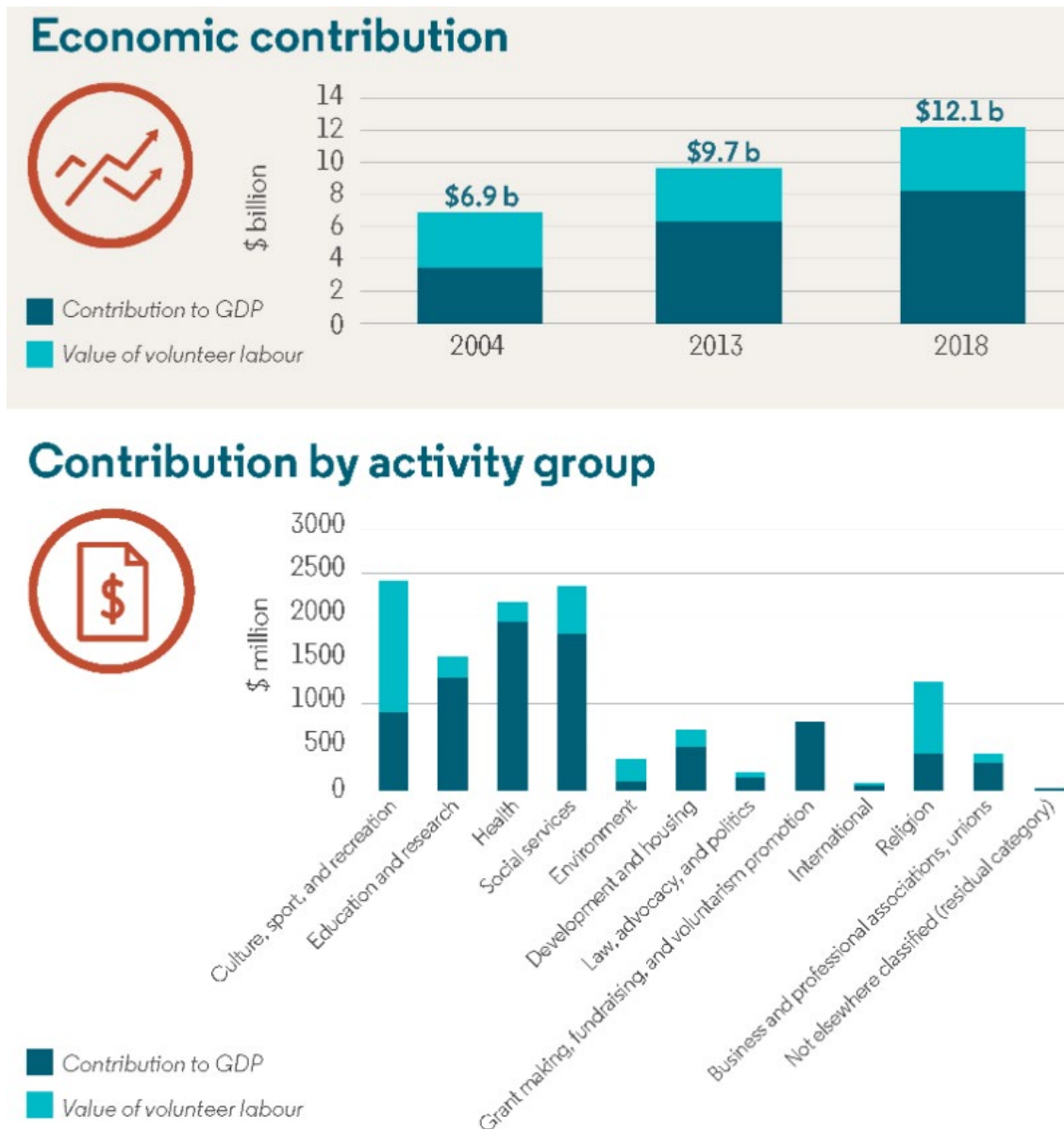
In NZ, non-profits are referred to as not-for-profit boards (NFPs). They are any society, association, or organisation (incorporated or not) and are generally established to benefit the community. They are not intended to carry on for the profit or gain of any member and whose rules do not allow money, property, or any other benefit to be distributed to any of its members (*Not-for-profit Boards | IoD NZ, 2023*). Statistics NZ uses several measures to identify NFPs based on common criteria. According to them, NFPs are organised to the extent that they can be separately identified when they are institutionally separate from the government. NFPs do not distribute any surplus, are self-governing and in control of their mission, and are non-compulsory in terms of both membership and members' contribution. Over 115,000 NFPs in NZ operate as incorporated societies or charitable trusts (*Not-for-profit Boards | IoD NZ, 2023*), while incorporation enjoys separate legal personality, perpetual succession, and the capability of holding real and personal property.

Cultural, sporting, educational, religious, business, and professional groups and social service providers are the prominently incorporated societies in NZ (**Figure 2.8.1**). The estimated count has over 23,000 incorporated societies governed by the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. Amendments to the 1908 Act were made to reflect governance structures and arrangements for incorporated societies (*Not-for-profit Boards* | *IoD NZ*, 2023). Charitable Trusts operate under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957. The law of trusts was reformed in NZ with the new Trusts Act 2019. This new act includes mandatory and default trustee duties and sets out trustees' obligations to retain records (*Not-for-profit Boards* | *IoD NZ*, 2023).

In summary, there is no consensus on a single definition of non-profits, and different alternative definitions are available in the literature based on the legal and economic backgrounds and purposes for which they exist. The legal definition is based on the country's law, which is widely regarded and straightforward for defining non-profits. The economic definition concentrates on the source of its income, while the functional definition emphasizes the activities these non-profits carry out (Salamon & Anheier, 1992a; Salamon & Anheier, 1992b). According to Martens (2002), there are two approaches to defining non-profits. In the juridical approach, emphasis is placed on the legal status based on national and international presence. From a sociological perspective, the functions of non-profits are considered. For this article, the author considers the legal definition since it is the most appropriate form for describing non-profits, *as it is easily identifiable and unambiguous*.

Table 2.8.1 depicts the number of non-profit institutions operated in 2018, where culture, sport, and recreation produced the most considerable contribution, with 4.6% compared to 2013. Social service became the second largest, with a 12.2% contribution. While international was the least focused, education, research, and social services sectors contributed moderately (Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account: 2018, 2020).

Figure 2.8.1: NFPs' contribution to the NZ economy and sector breakdown



Source: Non-profit institutions Satellite Account: 2018, 2020

Table 2.8.1: Number of non-profits in NZ

NPI ⁽¹⁾ activity group	Non-profit institutions			
	2013	2018	2013	2018
	Number		Percent	
1 Culture, sport, and recreation	50,380	51,820	44.2	44.8
2 Education and research	7,960	8,390	7.0	7.2
3 Health	3,010	2,920	2.6	2.5
4 Social services	14,810	14,130	13.0	12.2
5 Environment	1,850	2,060	1.6	1.8
6 Development and housing	9,680	8,860	8.5	7.7
7 Law, advocacy and politics	3,190	3,850	2.8	3.3
8 Grant making, fundraising and voluntarism	1,210	1,580	1.1	1.4
9 International	630	880	0.6	0.8
10 Religion	9,440	10,130	8.3	8.8
11 Business and professional associations, unions	3,110	3,690	2.7	3.2
12 Not elsewhere classified (residual category)	8,840	7,470	7.7	6.5
Total	114,110	115,770	100.0	100.0

1. Non-profit institutions.
Note: All count data is rounded to protect confidentiality.
Individual figures may not sum to the totals due to rounding.

Source: Non-profit institutions Satellite Account: 2018, 2020

2.9 Non-profits and Social Media

The benefits and outcomes derived from social media platforms will vary due to the differences in the nature, features, and functions of social media platforms (Tiwari & Tiwari., 2019). **Blogs** help non-profits to solidify relationships between an organisation and users. Consequently, if a non-profit deletes any comments from its blog or fails to respond, it increases the risk of damaging public trust (Waters, 2010). Nevertheless, Go and You (2016) express that blogs connect non-profits and their community. Even though the blog is very well designed and easily navigable, most non-profits use blogs to promote their services. This communication approach led to avoiding the real-time dialogue with their community. As a result, they argue that blogs have been listed as an unsuitable venue for open communication with the community (Go & You, 2016).

Facebook profiles of non-profits can be used to publish their vision and mission, and share and advertise their upcoming events. Facebook marketing allows non-profits to reach a broader audience and share their success stories, videos, articles, and podcasts (Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013). More interestingly, non-profits can also use Facebook as a one-to-one marketing tool to communicate with their audience (Lea-Greenwood, 2012) with a clear agenda to reach target segments. This approach will eliminate the limitations of other physical means of meetings, including phone calls and emails (Luke, 2009). Facebook allows non-profits to raise awareness and make them more visible

in the activities they organise (Alturas et al., 2018). The communication costs can fall drastically since Facebook offers a diverse audience to communicate directly, quickly, and consistently (Maxhuni, 2021; Ramsaran-Fowdar & Fowdar, 2013).

Non-profits use Facebook to publish their missions and events to accomplish three extents: information dissemination, organisational disclosure, and involvement (Waters et al., 2009). Information dissemination contains diverse news, videos and audio, photographs, discussion boards, advertisements and press releases, and summaries of the campaigns on the Facebook pages. Organisational disclosure includes viewing the services and programs, mission and history, information on the organisation's website, logo, and profile of administrators of the non-profit. At the involvement level, non-profits are measured against contact availability, calendar events, message boards, donations, volunteer opportunities, and e-commerce stores if available (Waters et al., 2009).

Facebook is determined to be an essential information dissemination tool that can be utilised effectively by non-profits. Facebook could make a huge impact on the reputation of non-profits. In addition, it is important to have a good relationship between the non-profits and social network platforms since it reflects the audience's behaviour. In this instance, Facebook non-profits must evaluate the real impacts of donor contributions and donation practices (Waters et al., 2009).

The use of X has noticeably and rapidly increased during the last few years by non-profits (Guo & Saxton, 2014). It has been determined to be an effective tool for informing the community of the mission of non-profits. X provides information about the activities and allows users to respond in real-time to their users' reactions. As a result, X is effective in transmitting credibility to their current and potential users (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Guo and Saxton, 2014) emphasised these aspects where non-profits should understand the effective usage of X rather than merely the adoption of it.

Further, X enables its users a platform to provide thoughts and opinions, resulting in a perfect source of information to predict social behaviours. As any business entity exists, identifying and predicting social behaviours is very important for non-profits as they give an ample opportunity to provide an innovative communication strategy for filtering relevant information through the comments, which can be used for improving the decision-making process and reinforcing loyalty and engagement of their followers (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016).

Most organisations consider X as the principal communication tool. However, X went beyond this role when contributing to stakeholder engagement and organisational research. In a tweet with the “@” symbol followed by the username, a user can direct the message to another user. In the same way, users can mention the non-profits. Non-profits would trigger that a user mentioned them and

can respond to the inquiry, but every tweet does not guarantee a response. These public messages create a dialog between the organisation and the user, and tweets are also viewable by anyone following the organisation or the individual. Public tweets demonstrate high responsiveness and establish a meaningful dialogue between users and the organisation. Public tweets help to reduce the redundancy of answering the same questions repeatedly in direct private messages. This is evident when one-way information-sharing activities increase, and the percentage of public messages drops significantly during major events and crises (Hughes & Palen, 2009).

Retweet allows one user to repost a tweet from another user while giving acknowledgment of the user by adding “RT@” to the beginning of the message, followed by the username. Non-profits can use retweets to highlight involvement with another organisation or to share information that the organisation finds relevant. Due to the extendibility of this feature, non-profits can jointly answer public inquiries together to keep the full dialog with a pound sign (#), which denotes that a message is relevant to a particular topic. In return, Hashtags also make searching for information easier. As a caution, the organisation needs to recommend a specific hashtag to be used by those interested in an event or conversation. For instance, the American Red Cross recommended that individuals use the #Haiti hashtag to ask questions and update news about their relief efforts.

Hyperlinks within tweets have been created to help users share information on X. More popular media storage sites are Twitpic.com and TwitVid.com. Sharing informative links with tweets can get followers interested in the story. Organisations encourage followers to read the story by following website links, and many organisations use URL-shortening services to tweet hyperlinks (Hughes & Palen, 2009). URL-shortening services help foster high interactivity and engagement with their users. For researchers, URL-shortening services are beneficial since they provide metrics. For example, counting the number of times the link has been clicked allows them to analyse the usage of links.

Katai (2019) suggested what types of Instagram advertisements would attract audiences to non-profits. Using Photo Ads, non-profits can publish success stories and promote their services online with visual images and, as a result, extend their reach to a broader audience, or they may only target the local audience by choosing the demographics. The Instagram Video Ads feature allows non-profits to create video ads for up to 60 seconds and post them to be delivered to their targeted audience. Shorter videos are preferable since users are more concerned about spending their time wisely on online resources (i.e., network bandwidth). Short and attractive videos will get the most attention and will have responses that might be overwhelming from a potential audience (Katai, 2019). Instagram Carousel Ads lets users take action, continue to the non-profit website, and learn more about their services. This kind of marketing may be compared to content marketing since it

delivers more valuable information to the audience. The repetitive audience is the ultimate anticipation of the Instagram Carousel ads. Additionally, non-profits could open the passage using Instagram Stories, which can easily advertise and tap into their target audience (Katai, 2019).

Non-profits have adopted **YouTube** for documentary purposes since documentary-style videos enhance the identity of non-profits and help them to increase accountability (Shiau, 2011). The popular forms of video publishing by non-profits extend to staff-produced videos with webcams to show the behind-the-scenes of their success stories, live streaming of the events, and other diverse personalized videos to benefit from social networking and peer-to-peer sharing.

Additionally, non-profits produce diverse public announcements on YouTube that have longer durability when compared to the broadcasts on television. They also utilise this extensive range of videos in their communication campaigns to express their stories emotionally, which could help strengthen their unengaged community. However, almost all the videos of large non-profits are published to increase their mission awareness and spread the word about education campaigns. Moreover, videos have been used to relay programmatic success stories and fundraising needs (Waters & Jones, 2011). Hence, non-profits can use YouTube to be involved in advocacy, fundraising, and volunteering as they try to include contact information and make calls for action in the video content (Waters & Jones, 2011).

Businesses can benefit from **VGW** by putting in-game advertisements on their websites, which is uncommon among non-profits (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Compared to TikTok, content posted by non-profits on Facebook or X often limits their followers on the non-profit's account. In contrast, TikTok allows non-profits to exhibit creativity with unique features and engage users more successfully. Further, TikTok verifies authentic, unique, and active accounts that adhere to the Community Guidelines (Community Guidelines, 2024). This verification process helps build trust between content creators and their followers, hence the fledgling non-profits. Growth of TikTok was substantial at the beginning of the lockdown resulting from the pandemic in the United States, with two million users downloading the application during March alone, contributing a 27% increase in usage in March 2020 (Feldkamp, 2021). Despite an extensive search, the researcher could not identify strong evidence on how non-profits use TikTok successfully to date.

Non-profits can benefit from **Quora** once they research statistics related to the causes they support and query the attitudes and beliefs of the people about the initiatives and campaigns. Further, non-profits can learn more about the resources people rely on to get the information on which their beliefs and attitudes are built. Quora would be an effective tool for recruiting supporters who are passionate about causes. Besides networking with other organisations and collaborating on issues, the Quora

voting system will help non-profits to learn more about which answers to questions are valued most by the community. Then, non-profits can refine messages and statements based on the feedback.

Non-profits have distinctive advantages when using **LinkedIn**. For example, non-profits experienced dramatic increases in donations made online. Their donors are strong users of social networking sites (Pentecost & Andrews, 2009). LinkedIn profiles represent professionals with both online capability and financial resources, and non-profits should desire to tap LinkedIn as a targeting tool for fundraising, cause engagement, and building public trust. LinkedIn has special tools available to teach non-profits how to use them. Irrespective of the low cost and the specific advantages offered to non-profits, they are not taking full or intense advantage of the inbound tools available to them (Spencer et al., 2012).

Knowing the number of online communities for non-profits is vital for crafting their marketing strategies. As a result, non-profits can more easily identify the tastes and likes of their audience, which could help build a strong strategy for market segmentation, targeting, and positioning. For instance, an informative statement posted in the news feed by a community member can be used for direct marketing purposes.

TikTok encourages non-profits to interact bi-directionally with users via their features. Duetting videos to collaborate with other users, replying to user comments, and the donation tool are the most common. The Donation Sticker is designed to lift user engagement and donations for non-profits. TikTok “trends” are also made popular among users, and they often lip-sync audio clips or add them to choreographed dances (Wiley et al., 2022).

2.10 Community Engagement

Community engagement is critical for non-profits to succeed, accomplish their mission, vision, and goals (Werke & Bogale, 2023), and build social capital (Head, 2007). This concept helps foster a sense of belonging and connectedness among community members, which can lead to more collaborative and cooperative behaviour (Du and Chu, 2022). Kennedy and others (2022) demonstrate that community engagement was associated with higher levels of pro-social behaviour.

A community consists of participants who share a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and caring for each other. It can be a social group where people share common interests (Crane et al., 2008). For instance, they live in the same or nearby geographic location/s and share culture or heritage, values, identity, or other common interests. The members enjoy a sense of belonging, feel personal satisfaction, and engage with other members over time. Communities are formed by associations among people (Thomas et al., 2013) from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

When reviewing the definitions derived from different schools of thought, the researcher noticed that most scholars agreed on a standard definition. In general, communities can be categorised by geography, interaction, and identity (Lee & Newby, 1990). Their interactions can occur regularly or non-regularly based on the causes they are worried about but not driven by the places they live. Identity characterisation represents a group of people who share a sense of belonging, generally built upon a shared set of beliefs, values, or experiences. They need not live within the same physical locality. Even though different communities may interact with each other (Neville & Menguc, 2006; Unerman & Bennett, 2004), it may be unclear who in the community has formal or informal authority to facilitate such interactions (Vredenburg & Hall, 2005; Hardy & Phillips, 1998).

Johnston (2018) defines engagement as multidimensional, psychological, and behavioural aspects that connect, interact, collaborate, and participate in a structurally designed way to achieve individual, organisational, and societal goals. According to Tindana and others (2007), the boundaries of community engagement exceed the activities beyond community participation. This consists of building authentic relationships based on mutual respect, frequent participation, power sharing, and mutual benefits. Further, according to Fredricks and others (2004), engagement creates a communication process encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions.

For our knowledge synthesis, the researcher looks for a broad approach to define community within the boundary definition of individuals sharing social well-being, irrespective of the facts concerning whether to focus on an individual citizen-based notion or focus on community groups. Therefore, combining the above definitions, community engagement is a cognitive, affective, and behavioural process that involves participation, connection, and collaboration amongst stakeholders to accomplish non-profit organisational goals.

2.11 Public Trust

Trust is the most crucial asset in cultivating long-term, positive relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders (Ki & Hon, 2007). It improves corporate reputation (Walsh et al., 2009), enhances customer loyalty (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002), gains positive verbal recommendations (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003), increases purchase intention (Walsh et al., 2009), and achieves positive crisis management outcomes (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Public trust is necessary for non-profits to validate legitimacy, measure effectiveness, and get non-financial and financial support (Bryce, 2007).

Trust has many definitions across disciplines. Mayer and others (1995, p. 712) define trust as “*the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that*

the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party". They further illustrate that it is a belief exhibited by the trusting and trusted parties to work on doing the correct thing and maintaining integrity and generosity while satisfying expectations.

According to Poppo and Schepker (2010), the term "public trust" is defined as the extent to which the general public or society has trust in business, while Bryce (2007, p. 112) argues, "*the public's positive or negative experiences in core transactions with an organization may be the principal bases for the impairment or improvement of the public trust*" in the context of non-profits. Mayer's and others' (1995) definition has been widely regarded and used in public relations research. Integrity, expertise, and social benevolence are three dimensions of trust. Their definition is validated for interpersonal, intergroup, or inter-organisational levels (Schoorman et al., 2007). The researcher sticks with Bryce's more practical and broader definition of trust to study public trust's role for non-profits using social media.

Ki and Hon (2007) define trust as "*a belief by publics that an organization is reliable, honest, and stands by its words as well as accomplishes its promised obligations*" (p. 422). Their follow-up study in 2012 found that trust leads to behavioural intentions. Behaviour intentions targeted by any organisation to act towards their followers in a supportive, positive way. However, according to Ki and Hon (2007), members of society subconsciously weigh the effort required for any relationship to be maintained and will do what is necessary to maintain that relationship. This only happens when the society believes in subsequent trust in the relationship. Further, trust is also an antecedent to engagement, which leads to behaviour intentions (Kang, 2014; Smith & Gallicano, 2015).

Trust has many forms defined by academics, and they studied them for charities. Since charities and non-profits operate in the same sector and share many common attributes, the author made a significant effort to analyse them judiciously. Cognitive trust is the rationale attribute that comprehensively describes trust (Burt, 2014). Donors believe in a charity organisation, benevolence, reliability, and predictability, the core values for which the non-profits exist, choice of evaluation, and anticipation of behavioural integrity are the core components (Mayer et al., 1995). In simple terms, the amount of knowledge and nature that donors have about non-profits is referred to as cognitive trust. Cognitive trust collectively could help in making a judgment of trustworthiness (Barney & Hansen, 1994). According to them, donors' evaluation of trustworthiness is important for developing a trust relationship between a donor and the charity or non-profit. Therefore, when considering cognitive and rationale decision-making aspects, trust between donors and non-profits could significantly impact many dramatic relationships (Yakovleva et al., 2010).

According to McAllister (1995), the emotional element of trust is reciprocal to care and concern, which is defined as care and concern by the donors towards the focus of the charity and the perceived care and concern that the charity receives towards commitment to that focus. Therefore, emotions-based trust can be seen as perceived in a donor's motives to follow the charity's behaviors. Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's campaign to 'save the whales' was a famous example of research on how emotions-based trust would behave for a worthy cause. Donors were well-motivated to support this campaign because they felt so empathetic about whales being killed, and they also felt that the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society shares the same level of emotions and concerns as the donors. As a result, donors' perceptions of trustworthiness may be partly influenced by their belief in shared care and concern for a common goal.

Rotter (1980) conducted a study on how charities position the trust. This study is a landmark for this research since the circumstances, environment, and stakeholder involvement are more similar to non-profits. By providing the expected level of information to the donors, non-profits can accelerate cognitive and affect-based trust processes. Developing trust in a charity can also be influenced by the donor's personality (Rotter, 1980). He states that dispositional trust develops from early trust-related experiences, forming a generalised belief about the organisation and people involved and eventually developing a relatively stable personality trait. Charities, or non-profits, cannot control dispositional trust and vary at different levels from very trusting to untrusting. As a result, charities, hence the non-profits, should carefully handle individuals with a general disposition towards not being trusting (Rotter, 1980).

Developing an individual's trust is more likely to go with dispositional and societal trust, where trust is directed toward persons, organisations, and entities. By disposition, trusting, one who lives in a trusting society is perhaps more likely to be trusting of charities. However, their approach to developing a trusting relationship with the public can not only focus on those predisposed to be trusting but also on convincing others to be trusted to increase the donor population (Rotter, 1980).

Rotter (1980) also discusses the several approaches that charities could consider in developing trust, ranging from category-based, rule-based, role-based, system-dependent, and transactional. He proposes to use an online platform as the primary trust development tool due to the growing development of online donating. Further, he says charities should be mindful of the determinants of trust related to their specific activities. For example, streamlining information delivery will enhance the chances of developing a trusting relationship with the community and increase the donor base. Category-based trust is anticipated based on information regarding a trustee's membership with the sector category. The subordinate level defines it by the type of charity work they conduct. Category-

based trust is a depersonalised trust based on assumptions about a charity's trustworthiness. However, category-based trust can form a base level of trust that a charity can rely on. If a charity engages with trust-building processes and identifies and communicates its unique category features, this should allow donors to build on using history-dependent processes. The provision of history-dependent information should allow donors to understand and assess a charity's unique features and reasons why it might be trusted beyond the level of trust that is usually attributable to typical members.

Role-based trust depends on an expectation about a role instead of the person in the role (Kramer, 1999). For charities, this applies when a collector solicits donations directly from the public, and donors generally have no knowledge of an individual undertaking the collector role. Donors may attribute role-based trust to the collector based on their generalised trust in the role of collectors. Role-based trust is functionally helpful for collecting donations, even if the necessary information is absent for the person performing that role. However, little research has examined how role-based trust can be influenced in collecting donations (Kramer, 1999).

An individual's belief in the transaction and how they expect others involved in the transaction to behave (Kaluscha & Grabner-Krauter, 2003; Wang & Emurian, 2004) is known as the transactional trust. The importance of this concept was discussed in numerous academic studies related to donations for non-profits by Drucker (1990), Andreasen and Kotler (2017), Bryce (2007), Speckbacher (2008), and Sargeant and Lee (2004). Since donors do not have the legal right to know what happens to their donations, it can go a long way toward facilitating transactional trust and ensuring that donors will engage in future donor activities. Without the information necessary for developing transactional trust, a donor blindly gives to the charity rather than to a known cause. Transactional trust plays a part in our lives, becoming a somewhat 'normal' and expected aspect of relationship interactions (Burt, 2014).

Opposed to the monitoring capabilities presented in normal day-to-day life for us to track and control our transactions, donors face a unique situation when they cannot monitor or control their donation organisation. The brand and reputation of the charities are greatly influenced by transactional trust (MacLachlan, 2016). Non-profits can earn transactional trust when they disclose what happening to donations. Once the transactional trust has been breached or the donors are uncertain about the charity's financial conduct, they lose trust and may not donate again.

2.12 Enablers and Inhibitors

The study by Namisango and others (2019a) lists factors that promote the strategic and productive use of social media as enablers, while inhibitors refer to factors that constrain the strategic and productive use of social media among non-profits. Before their study, the available literature concentrated more on social media functions while ignoring enablers and inhibitors of the productive use of social media. Namisango and others (2019a) found that adopting an appropriate communication style concerning the direction of communication, social media post content, and tone is a vital driver for the productive use of social media. Also, visibility in mainstream media, the organisation's relationship, and interaction capabilities are vital enablers. Enablers and inhibitors are further sub-categorised into organisation-related, relational, environment-related, and technology-related (**Table 2.13.1 and Table 2.13.2**).

Table 2.13.1: Enablers of social media use (Namisango and others, 2019a)

Enablers of social media use among non-profits		Representative sources (2010-2018)
Organisation related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social media policy and strategy ▪ Organisational capabilities and resources ▪ Management support, leadership, and governance ▪ Organisation type, size, age ▪ Employee experience in social media communication 	Adjei et al., 2016; Gálvez Rodríguez et al., 2014; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Nah & Saxton, 2012; Zerfass & Schramm, 2014)
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nature of engagement activities on social media ▪ Characteristics of the organisation's social media network ▪ Communication style, particularly tone and language used in posts ▪ Relationship management abilities 	(Farrow & Yuan, 2011; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016)
Environment-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental pressure and social influence ▪ Organisational visibility in mainstream media ▪ Market segment, or community orientation 	(Curtis et al., 2009; Nah & Saxton, 2012; Yang & Kent, 2014; Zerfass & Schramm, 2014)
Technology-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running an organisational website ▪ Perceived usefulness of social media ▪ Effort expectancy, performance expectancy, and self-efficacy ▪ Attitude and behavioural intention toward social media 	(Adjei et al., 2016; Curtis et al., 2009; Raman, 2015; Zorn et al., 2012)

Table 2.13.2: Inhibitors of social media use (Namisango and others, 2019a)

Inhibitors of social media use among non-profits	Representative sources (2010-2018)	
Organisation related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focusing on one-way communication ▪ Lack of organisation social media policy, communication strategy, and implementation plan ▪ Lack of long-term vision for social media activities ▪ Applying a one-size-fits-all approach ▪ Limited resources and time commitments to social media activities ▪ Unclear social media benefits and ways to commercialisation ▪ Lack of a measure of social media performance 	(Campbell et al., 2014; McCarthy et al., 2014; Naraine & Parent 2016; Neiger et al., 2013)
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of network awareness ▪ Failure to listen to the social media audience ▪ Failure to connect with the community ▪ Lack of consistent power users ▪ Difficulties in managing social media conversation ▪ Minimal interaction, short-lived dialogue, and abandoning the social media page 	(Anagnostopoulos et al., 2017; Bürger 2015; Davis et al., 2016; Madden et al., 2016; Naraine & Parent 2016; Wyllie et al., 2016)
Technology-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceived irrelevance of social media ▪ Lack of knowledge and experience in social media ▪ The unpredictable social media environment ▪ Information inaccuracy and information overload ▪ Distrust of social media ▪ Fear of a legitimacy and organisational image crisis ▪ Privacy & security concerns about social media 	(Guidry et al., 2017; Madden et al., 2016; Ventola 2014; Yates & Paquette 2011)

Namisango and others (2019b) stated that one-way communication is the most common inhibitor of the productive use of social media in non-profits since that communication approach limits community interaction, engagement, and collaboration. Next, the key inhibitor is non-profits' attempt to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, which greatly limits the opportunity to harness the advantages of social media interactions.

However, another essential part of social media for non-profits is collecting and analysing content data. This data analytics can help drive decisions about the most effective content to the appropriate audience. Therefore, adjusting the calendar to post content is important when the community most likely engages with. Moreover, creating content that matches community interests or what they interact with most will increase community engagement. On the other hand, seeing the activities and effort put in by non-profits to make the community a pleasant place would enhance public trust.

2.13 Summary

Social media use by non-profits helps build or expand networks, which influences community engagement and public trust since networks often serve as sources of credibility and validation. Open and two-way communication via social media also helps non-profits engage more in their community activities with the presence of a wider audience. Through reciprocity on social media, non-profits can create a sense of mutuality and a mutual exchange of information that positively influences community engagement. Social norms via social media reinforce social norms, encouraging greater community engagement. Social media use can foster a sense of personal and collective efficacy, meaning individuals and groups feel empowered to act for causes about which non-profits are concerned. The volume of information being shared in open discussions in wider social media platforms, posts and likes, and the attractiveness of media content will lead to higher community engagement. Further, reciprocity, social norms, and efficacy directly feed into community engagement, resulting in people feeling mutual support, being aligned with social norms, and being empowered to act; they are likelier to engage with the non-profit's activities. As a result, providing trust in financial transparency among the community and stakeholders resulted in enhancing public trust and mutual understanding of where the non-profit's vision is heading.

CHAPTER 3: Scoping Review

3.1 Overview

This scoping is presented as a part of the literature review and comprehensively explains how non-profits can leverage social media to build public trust, foster community engagement, and achieve their objectives (Choi et al., 2023; Ki & Hon, 2007; Lee & Shon, 2021; White, 2002; Yan et al., 2023). The insights gained from this study will offer clear direction for further research on the same topic.

The following questions guided the planning of the non-profit social media scoping review.

1. How do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement?
2. How do social media enhance the public trust of non-profits?

3.2 Method

Scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Cacchione, 2016; Levac et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2020) is a popular method when a study under the topic of inquiry is relatively broad, and many different study designs have been used to review evidence. According to Paré and others (2015), the scoping review is the most preferred method for information systems research in their typology of reviews. The present literature is absent in defining a consensus definition of the purpose of a scoping review. The generic acceptability for the scoping review is defined as a research process with the specific objective of summarising evidence to elaborate the breadth and depth of a field (Levac et al., 2010).

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) proposed a five-step framework for scoping a study that needs to be followed sequentially from identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, selecting studies, charting the data, and collating, summarising, and reporting the findings. The researcher favours more recent updates for scoping studies proposed by Peters and others (2020). He suggested that the sources used in scoping reviews are unlikely to lend themselves to meta-analysis, whereas a descriptive approach to reporting is preferable. Further, basic data coding for categorising may be helpful, especially when *“the purpose is to identify or clarify concepts or definitions within a field or to identify key characteristics related to a concept”* (Peters et al., 2020, p. 2125).

3.2.1 Search Strategy

Scientific databases, mainly Scopus and Science Direct, along with Google Scholar, were used for a comprehensive search to follow the steps of the framework laid out by Peters and others (2020). These three databases are commonly used as they offer wide content coverage in the social sciences. As a result, the researcher strongly believed that the most appropriate, recent, and highly cited studies

would be available for the scoping review. The researcher is keen on searching peer-reviewed papers published in international journals written in English.

Search strings were developed to filter out studies based on the research questions mentioned in the introduction section in **Table 3.2.1.1**. The final search terms were developed from an iterative process due to different combinations of terms refining the search to eliminate broad or too narrow terms.

Table 3.2.1.1: Search strings

Concept	Search Terms
Context	nonprofit* OR non-profit* OR non profit* OR not-for-profit* OR not for profit* OR NPO* OR nonprofit organization* OR non-profit organization* AND social media OR social network* OR Facebook OR Twitter OR tweet
Community engagement	Community engagement* OR community building*
Public trust	OR public trust* OR trust*

3.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

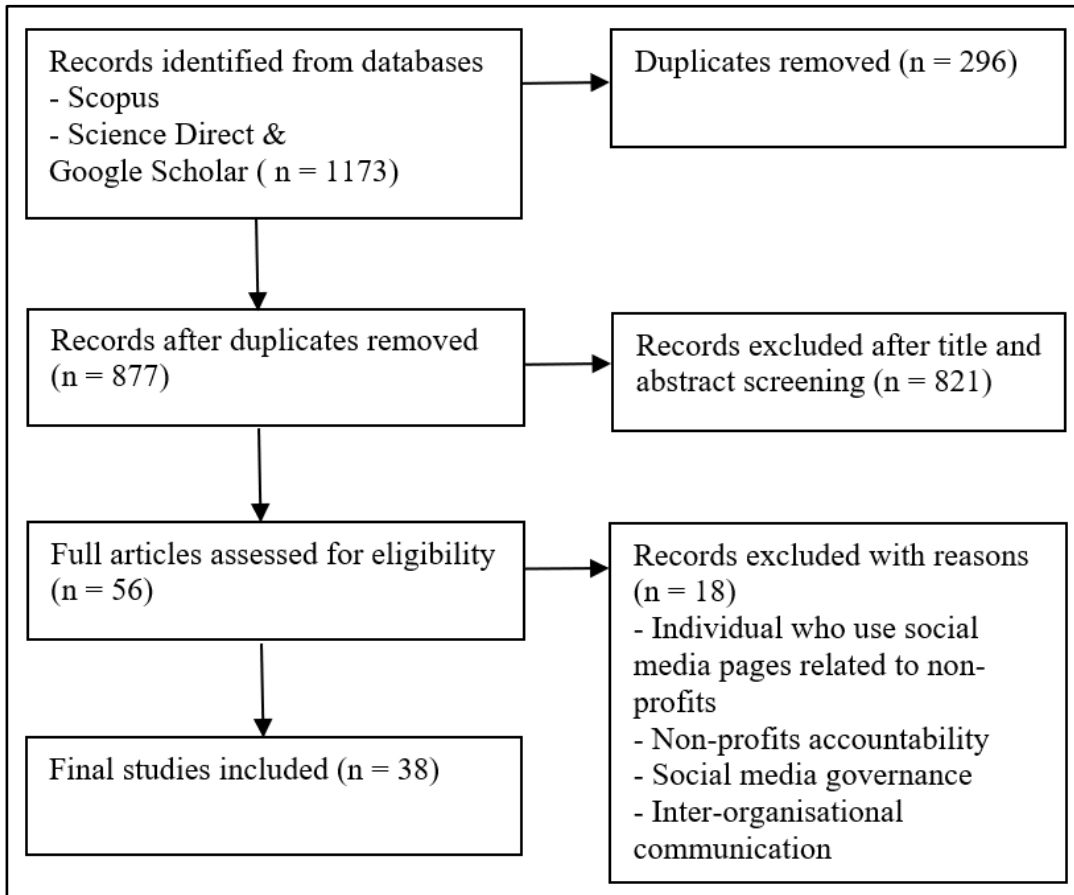
An array of research conditions was established to ensure the maximum number of potentially relevant studies directly connected to the research questions was retrieved. These searches are restricted to social science-related research disciplines, including public relations, information management, and communication. Further, the search terms have limited the search to the 2004-2024 period due to the emergence of Facebook in 2004. Facebook made a breakthrough, emerging from a Harvard-only network to hit the mainstream by gaining popularity beyond niche communities. In 2006, Twitter was introduced, and later, YouTube was acquired by Google Inc. Social networking sites were converted into social media, which help connect people and share content virtually beyond geographical boundaries. This development has dynamically impacted human communications, dramatically changing how businesses and other organisations communicate (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

3.2.3 Study Selection

The initial search returned 1173 studies, reduced to 877 after removing duplicates. After reviewing keywords and abstracts, 848 were removed by taking the inclusion criteria into account. The abstract screening process resulted in 56 studies being selected for full-text assessment. Out of 56 articles selected, 18 were excluded because some were incomplete, and some did not directly focus on community engagement and public trust. However, it centred on individuals who use social media pages related to non-profits, non-profit organisational accountability, social media governance, social media, and social media for fundraising, and inter-organisational communication. **Figure 3.2.3.1** below illustrates the search process in a PRISMA flowchart.

Additionally, forward and backward secondary searching was conducted to find further relevant articles. Due to the above additional step, the primary study result of this step, the study by Lucas (2017) was included as it was cited by Mato-Santiso and others (2021).

Figure 3.2.3.1: Prisma flowchart of the search process



3.2.4 Charting

The primary studies were analysed using a charting method to address the research questions. **Appendix E** shows the data charted for one study as an example against the CIMO-based schema. Charting helped create an analytical summary of the results that addressed the scoping review's objectives and answered the review's research question(s).

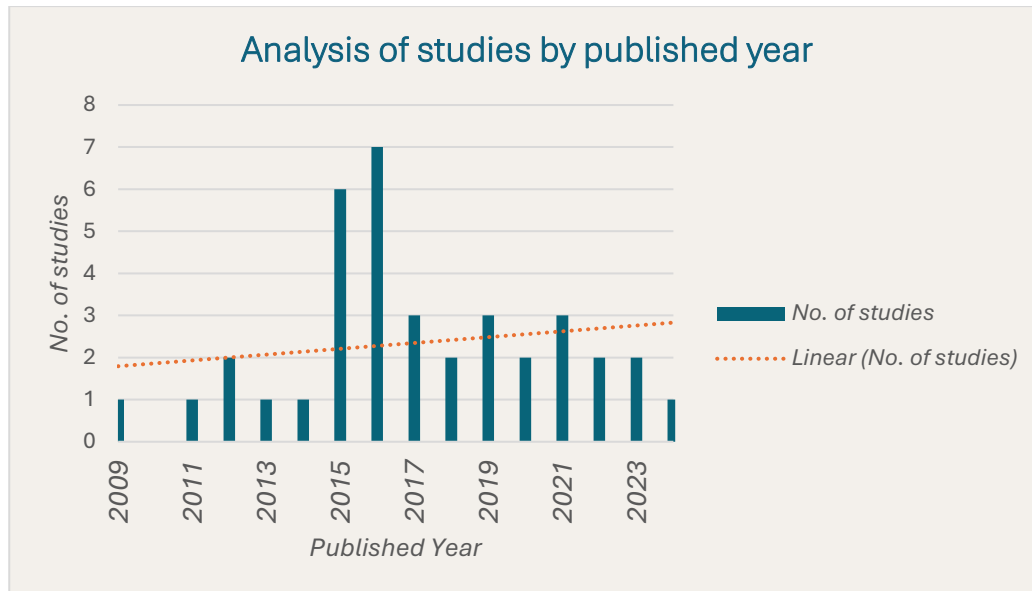
3.2.5 Descriptive Analytics

The search identified 38 articles published between 2004 and 2024, including 1 review and 37 primary studies. **Appendix F** gives an overview of the review study selected, while **Appendix G** shows the primary studies. Further analysis of the primary studies is provided in the following section.

3.2.5.1 Articles by Published Year

Studies published between 2004 and 2024 were used for this scoping review and selected from a sample of 38 (Figure 3.2.5.1.1).

Figure 3.2.5.1.1: Articles by published year



3.2.5.2 Articles by Research Approach

This overview shows (Figure 3.2.5.2.1) that studies with varying research methodologies have appeared since 2003. The majority of studies are done using the qualitative approach, recording 20 studies. Whereas 11 studies are performed based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. However, six studies have used the quantitative approach.

Figure 3.2.5.2.1: Articles by research approach

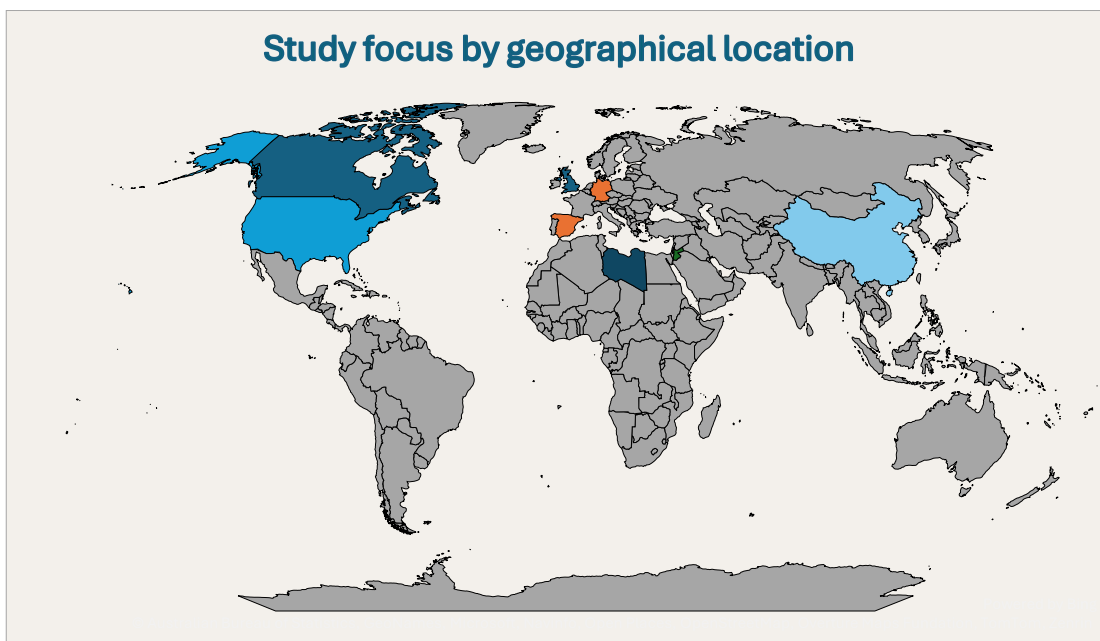


All these empirical studies are cross-sectional, and nearly 50% of the studies were solely performed based on content analysis to analyse data either qualitatively or quantitatively. Where are 40% of the studies used a combination of content analysis, sentiment analysis, thematic analysis, and statistical measures such as one-way Anova, two-level regression. The balance studies used factorial experiments, fixed effect models, Krippendorff's alpha, univariate descriptives, and bivariate correlation and social network analysis methods to analyse the data.

3.2.5.3 Articles by Geographical Locations

Considering the scoping of the locations carried out for that research, 18 studies were conducted in the United States, the rest were conducted in **Germany, Portugal, Spain, China, Jordan, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Libya.**

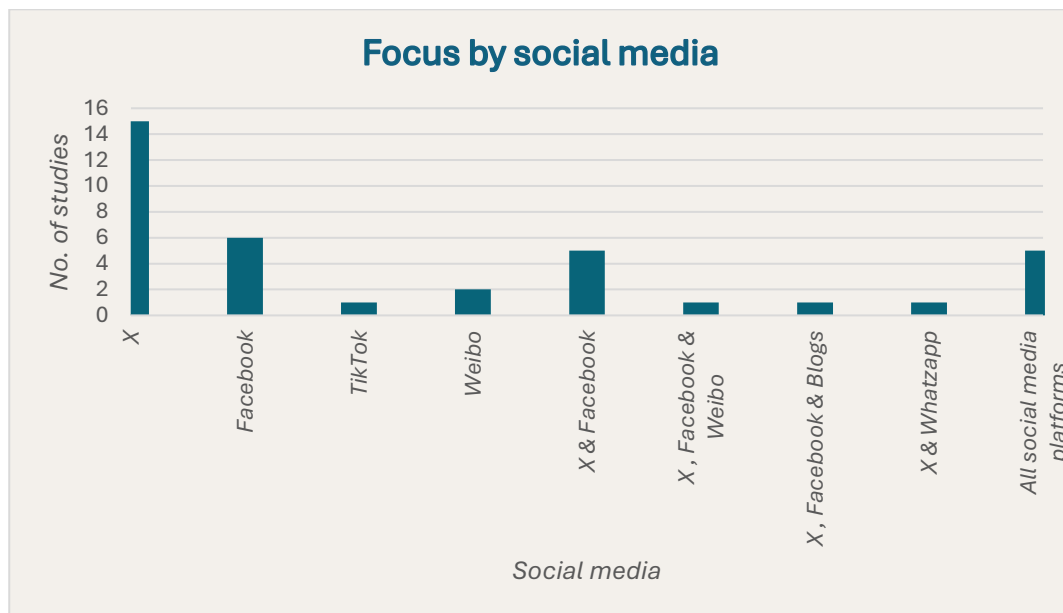
Figure 3.2.5.3.1: Articles by geographical locations



3.2.5.4 Articles by Focus

Considering the focus of the social media, **15** articles were for X, the rest were for Facebook, TikTok, Weibo, Blogs, WhatsApp, and all (5).

Figure 3.2.5.4.1: Articles by social media



3.2.6 Thematic Description

This section synthesises the findings gathered from 38 studies to illuminate the various roles that social media play in strengthening community engagement and enhancing public trust. The basic functionality of social media in the non-profit context is categorised into information, community, and actions to be aligned with the typology of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). Further, the strategic use of social media, significant barriers to successful utilisation, and gaps in the literature are discussed.

3.2.6.1 Social Media Functions in Community Engagement

Interestingly, social media has become a crucial channel that provides community engagement for non-profits for organising events and donations, fundraising, social justice (Anduiza et al., 2013) and democracy (Boris et al., 2021), building powerful communities, and improving brand awareness (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Sørensen et al., 2017; Sun & Asencio, 2018; Zhang et al., 2014). Non-profits have widely used social media to build and maintain relationships and mobilise with the community (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), to influence the volunteering decisions of individuals (Connolly & Judge, 2016), reduce the impact of crises (Albanna et al., 2022), and engage with both social and community support groups (Gillen et al., 2023). However, the primary intention of adopting social media for non-profits was to share knowledge (Su & Chan, 2017) and create a dialogue with stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

In recent years, social media transformed into a fundraising tool (Nah & Saxton, 2012; Saxton & Wang, 2013) for large non-profits to get financial support. The new tool was a huge success, and some studies found a positive relationship between the adoption of social media and increased

donations (Bhati & McDonnell, 2019; Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Harris et al., 2021; Lee & Shon, 2021; Saxton & Wang, 2013; Tian et al., 2019). Small and medium-scale non-profits also engage their community in two-way dialogue and foster better connections with them (Hu & Shi, 2017; Nemenoff & Schenk, 2015).

Further, to raise awareness of the initiatives and activities aligned with their mission (Harris et al., 2021), non-profits have started reaching out to the audience directly through social media to encourage them to participate and organise online donation campaigns, attend events, and advocate for a cause (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Non-profits have led to improvements in terms of faster service delivery and high media coverage, boosted stakeholder feedback (Briones et al., 2011), and increased organisational capacity due to the adoption of social media.

According to Sun and Asencio (2018), frequent posts on social media sites are expected to lead to an increase in organisational capacity of non-profits. The organisational capacity of leadership, management commitment, planning, operations, and resources significantly affect social media use (Eisinger, 2002). In addition, strengths in individuals and networks also play a vital role (Chaskin, 2001). A variety of services offered by non-profits allow the community to divert more resources to achieve community goals while providing enjoyable experiences that elicit positive feelings and form positive relationships (Ressler et al., 2021). For instance, their direct and tangible benefit offerings to improve the quality of life (Cheng & Shiu, 2019) and promote positive outcomes for disadvantaged groups (Marwell & Calabrese, 2014; Mosley & Grogan, 2012) by helping residents find jobs, accessing educational resources, and providing health care services will add social value and sometimes favoured tax returns (Hopkins, 2000).

Due to its low cost (Bernritter et al., 2016; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Milla et al., 2018), ability to access a broad audience (Nah & Saxton, 2012; Saxton & Wang, 2013), rapid information dissemination capacity with unlimited access (Albanna et al., 2022; Allen, 2019; Chen & Xiao, 2022; Namisango et al., 2019a; Ngai et al., 2015), and rich interactive content appeal (Auger, 2014; Young, 2016), social media has become a valuable and affordable tool for community engagement.

Compared to other traditional media, social media provides more fluid and dynamic communication (Auger, 2014; Young, 2016) that encourages information exchange (Alonso-Cañadas et al., 2019) and starts a dialogue with users (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). For instance, traditional websites promote one-way sharing of web content. However, social media allows users to communicate quickly and instantly (Chun et al., 2010) through two-way communication.

Now, social media is pivotal in community engagement when facilitating interactions, sharing, and conversation. This interaction builds online communities and strengthens members' ties, fostering a productive and healthy community. A social media campaign conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) is a worthy source for studying and analysing how social media influences raising funds. WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting against hunger. They posted a photo on Facebook with the caption, *"This is our web editor, Martin. He's about to go shopping in a food market in Pakistan. He's got 100 rupees (US \$1.00) to spend. How much food do you think he'll be able to buy?"*. Over 80 comments and 140 Likes were received for this post on Facebook, while YouTube raised \$36,000 for a video posted on World Food Day. It has helped feed over 650,000 children (Petersen, 2012).

Another social media initiative the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) successfully concluded is Earth Hour, an event to generate awareness of wildlife conservation and endangered species (Petersen, 2012). When WWF's official Earth Hour began, the posted video was viewed every 4 seconds. The topic appeared 56.1 million times on Google within a 24-hour. The tag #Earthhour was amongst the top three X trends. The Earth Hour Canada group on Facebook had more than 100,000 people participating, and Earth Hour Canada created a Facebook application to remind their friends to turn off the lights (Petersen, 2012). This was a significant milestone in illustrating how effectively social media can raise awareness.

Non-profits heavily use social media for catering to basic purposes (Mato-Santiso et al., 2021) in line with argument by Xue and others (2024) non-profits use primarily for administration, public awareness, and appreciation. Nevertheless, Rodriguez (2016) claims the extent of social media messages ranges from simple fundraising appeals to mobilising communities against human rights violations. These movements go beyond the literal means of information function suggested by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) in their typology contains three (3) key functions of social media use: information, community, and action.

a) Information Function

The **information function** is vital for disseminating information among the communities. It ranges from disseminating information about the activities, events highlights, or any other means, including news, facts, reports, or information related to partner organisations. This disclosure provides one-way interaction with the community. The core difference between this category compared to the other two is the primary focus. The information function has no explicit secondary agenda to essentially serve to promote an event, mobilise supporters to take actions, foster dialogue, or build a community (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Disseminating information - One could not underestimate the power of information, especially during crises (Macias et al., 2009), and in further means it describes the history, vision, or objectives of non-profits (Waters et al., 2009). Disseminating detailed information on finances, performance, governance policies, or ethical standards can connect the community to non-profits' mission and help to boost accountability and public trust. Further, dissemination practices can also help connect constituents of non-profits to the relevant knowledge resources (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). This behaviour is visible when the administrators list essential details in their Facebook profile, and the members of the community try to link back to the non-profit website from the Facebook page. For example, Waters and others (2009) raise awareness of how funds would be distributed to aid fire victims (Brengrath & Mujkic, 2015). In line with these findings, Luke (2009) states that Facebook pages provide the opportunity to obtain up-to-date information about the charity and issues the community is concerned about.

Further, according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), non-profits successfully disseminated more critical information through hyperlinks to demonstrate responsiveness in replying to public messages, sharing information with retweets, and building information communities through hashtags. This approach led to one-way information dissemination on Twitter, and it was the most dominant communication tool used by the sampled non-profits selected for the study.

Public awareness - Rodriguez (2016) further expanded the information function to informing stakeholders about human rights, effective personal stories, government and legislation, or about a report release related to LGBTI refugees and asylum seekers. The human rights messages helped to inform of any human rights violation, such as physical violence, imprisonment, or death. In contrast, Nau and others (2023) use information function, making public awareness on staying healthy while avoiding contamination, sex education, broadly raising awareness of women's experiences and the role of gender, and informing about organisational initiatives during the pandemic. Advocate for survivors, address issues surrounding gender-based violence, initiatives taken by the organisation, including awareness months, support services, survivor empowerment, and the importance of ending sexual violence are the central focus of the study by Xue and others (2024).

Another initiative by cancer-concerned charities uses Twitter to raise awareness, provide future-focused guidance, and share stories to educate the public. However, they paid a little attention to promoting scientific and research advances, building 'political' support, and projecting a future without cancer (Ure et al., 2017).

Organisation administration - In their study, Xue and others (2024) identified *sexual assault support services, helplines, along with support groups and emotional support* use for administrative

purposes. The first topic provides information about services and support for sexual assault survivors. Helpline tweets contain information about available services and crisis lines, promote helpline numbers, and emphasise the availability of support services. The third topic discusses the importance of support networks, motivating individuals to join support groups while highlighting the emotional support available.

According to the results of the studies mentioned by Rodriguez (2016), the information function is most closely used in cognitive learning. Information posts seek affective responses from the community. The non-profits utilised expressive tweets/posts to invoke feelings of empathy and sympathy for victims, thereby encouraging people to identify and relate to these individuals. According to him, these affective posts are a vital strategy for advocacy non-profits and are part of social movements. At the same time, informational tweets serve as an essential base for more complex functions, including creating dialogue and mobilisation.

b) Community Function

The second function that non-profits use social media is the **community function** (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), where tweets are used to interact, share, and converse with followers, which ultimately facilitates building relationship with the public (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Briones et al., 2011; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Waters & Jamal, 2011). Two aspects trying to be achieved from the community function were to encourage dialogue and community-building through the direct interactive conversations between organisations and their publics, and secondly to strengthen ties to the online community without involving an expectation of interactive conversation. These dual perspectives relate to the social capital and network-building functions that Nah (2009) makes possible through organisational websites (Baird et al., 2012). Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) have identified four categories of tweets that contain the community function to achieve the goal of building and engaging with a productive online community. Out of four, *giving recognition and thanks, and acknowledgment of current and local events* are primarily related to community-building, while *responding to the public, replying to messages and responding to solicitations* are more directly associated with the dialogue creation.

Congratulations and recognition - In the congratulations and recognition category, non-profits would highlight individuals across the globe to celebrate their contributions, resulting in non-profits retweeting activists, celebrities, and everyday citizens to create one giant community group online. These celebrations trigger a motivation for other stakeholders and the public to engage with the social movement to be publicly identified and acknowledged (Rodriguez, 2016). Further, giving recognition is the basic tenet of non-profit management, acknowledging and thanking donors, supporters, and

volunteers who have retweeted the organisation's messages or mentioned the organisation in their tweets (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

For example, one non-profit organization recognised the efforts and thanked volunteers for their commitment in exposing the gender inequalities during the pandemic, which were shared in many community-oriented tweets. Regularly, that non-profit published stories about individual activists, volunteers, authors, healthcare workers, political leaders, or celebrities and their initiatives. These initiatives include sewing masks for a women's shelter, introducing women entrepreneurs who rose during the pandemic, collecting donations, and offering girls online workouts (Nau et al., 2023).

Acknowledgement of current and local events - So often, community-based small non-profits acknowledge noteworthy events, including holiday greetings, support of community events, and their sports teams. This is a useful way to show that the non-profit is a part of the community and works as an easy way to spark conversation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Unlike the traditional media, non-profits that handle social media effectively can post pictures, live updates, and stories during and after the event. These posts would guarantee non-attendees of the event in person a chance to transcend physical limitations and partake in the event through a virtual presence. Live posting enables fostering a sense of community between attendees and non-attendees, which in turn fosters advocacy without direct participation (Rodriguez, 2016).

Response to public and reply to messages - Twitter facilitates sending *direct and private messages* and allows users to post a tweet with the "@" symbol before the name of the user or the organisation. By tweeting @Redcross, Red Cross will be able to see that a user has posted about them in their sidebar, and they can also reply in the same manner using the @ sign with the user's name, even though Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) preferred the term *public reply messages*.

Response solicitation - Non-profit used tweets that solicit a conversational response from stakeholders to create dialogue with the intention of sparking a conversation, explicitly seek an action response, including polls, surveys, contests, direct questions to followers, and requests to retweet (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). In addition, non-profits use social media to understand the feedback from the public on the services they deliver and their moral obligation. This was evident in Briones and colleagues' (2011) statement that a primary reason for fostering two-way communication by non-profits was to find out how the organisation can be improved by resonating with public feedback.

Therefore, the above examples show how social media provides more opportunities for non-profits in direct interaction, two-way exchange of information, creation of a network, and open dialogue.

c) Action Function

The **action** is the third primary function where the messages persuade followers to act in favour of non-profits. It can be anything from donating money to attending events and engaging in advocacy campaigns that involve the promotional and mobilisational uses of social media to help the non-profit accomplish its mission (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). As a result, non-profits were able to transfer their followers from informed individuals to members of a community to activists and donors while realising their financial and strategic goals in the long run (Rodriguez, 2016). Further, he claims that action inspires individuals to join the social movement through synergy. For example, a post by the Red Cross read, *“If today’s news about LGBT activists being arrested in Moscow and St. Petersburg has you wondering what you can do to help, here are 5 actions you can take. Please share!”* (Rodriguez, 2016). This post summons brand ambassadors for the organisation. These appeals ask the public involved to become members of the social movement, and emotional posts also help add legitimacy and build trust with a snowball effect to grow larger.

Promote an event - The foremost reason for using social media by most non-profits was to promote or advertise their services or events (Young, 2016). In fact, this was by far the most common type of action tweets in a study, comprising 50% compared to 7.8% in the information category with a date, time, or price. Promotion was explicit and the primary purpose of the tweet (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Another instance noticeable during the pandemic was that virtual event promotion was almost popular. A series of webinars or live-streamed meetings was conducted by leaders, guest speakers, expert activists, and journalists to discuss pandemic response plans. In addition, live discussions with experts or support staff on Twitter and Facebook also grabbed attention. Nau and others (2023).

Donation appeal - To raise a donation, make an ask on Twitter either directly or ask followers to support companies that were donating a percentage of their sales, which was more pleasing according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). Specifically, donation appeals to followers on how to help were insignificant during the pandemic. The most notable donation campaign organised virtually was the Canadian Women’s Foundation’s call to donate to their Tireless Together Fund, which was intended to support women and girls affected by the pandemic (Nau et al., 2023). In addition, non-profits were able to successfully access financial and supportive resources for victims of the wildfire event, coordinate relief efforts in terms of allowing immediate calls for critical resources to assist in sorting through the rubble of destroyed homes on social media (Brengharh & Mujkic, 2015).

However, Albanna and others (2022) identified that no significant relationship between social media use and fundraising. Thus, it seems that some non-profits have not realised the significant benefits of social media in fundraising and possess a minimal instinctual understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of these social media applications. To make things worse, in their study, Tempel, Seiler, Aldrich and Rosso (2011) suggested that the central challenge for non-profits engaging in fundraising activities was to develop and maintain a trust-based relationship.

Selling a product - Direct selling on Twitter is popular (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), even though this movement was very uncommon among non-profits. However, when considering the space of Hospice where the second-hand items are sold, the author has experienced a few Facebook pages advertising their vintage items.

Call for volunteers and employees - Rather than confining to recruiting volunteers, social media is used to coordinate volunteers and secure resources during a wildfire crisis while lessening the burden on victims (Brengharh & Mujkic, 2015). In the same way, according to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), calling for employees or volunteers for an online communications coordinator to help a hospital was another example.

Political advocacy - Xue and others (2024) discuss signing petitions and calling for justice for marginalised communities (e.g., Francophone women) in advocacy and policy work on Twitter. In their study, Topic 1 revolves around advocacy discussions related to survivors who are seeking justice. Domestic violence, support for survivors, legal cases, and the need for systemic change in addressing violence against women were the most popular themes. Topic 2 provides the details on support services and resources available for survivors. The tweets include the centres providing aid and legal assistance, justice systems, and confidential services. Topic 3 focuses on indigenous rights, reconciliation, and addressing violence within indigenous communities. Further, their tweets may emphasise actions for the need for systemic change to fight against violence and gender inequality. Topic 4 addresses sexual violence and violence against women, and tweets focus on the need for action, standing against violence, systemic change, and the role of government. ***Support for Others*** theme highlights the importance of community involvement and collective efforts to combat violence and abuse.

According to Nau and others (2023), the advocacy function also added hyperlinks to petitions and encouraged followers to report gender-oriented concerns to local political representatives. In the United States, the non-profit NOW initiated a tweet campaign by asking their followers to tweet to members of the Senate and demand funding for COVID-19 relief.

Join another site or vote for organisations - This category involves asking followers to join another social media site or vote for another organisation, mostly on Twitter. The example suggested a frequent cross-promotion across social networking sites for @CatholicRelief, which helps nominate for “Best Nonprofit Use of Social Media” (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Learn how to help - The final category is *learn how to help* sets up a two-step process. First, learn how to help and then help. Indirect requests for a donation or other form of support focus on this category. *Happy Wednesday! Not feeling like you've been active enough this week? Take an action to #StopDiabetes!* was an example tweet (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). According to Xue and others (2024), state about tweets that mention initiatives, institutions, and individuals working to support and address mental health by highlighting the importance of community efforts in making a positive difference (Brailovskaia et al., 2021). They studied various tweets, ranging from sharing information and promoting community campaigns to wearing purple to demonstrate support.

Regularly, non-profits directly ask for money or advertise specific events in action tweets. Many organisations also intermittently use Twitter to post job ads, calls for volunteers, and address issues generally through *learn how you can help* messages. Less frequently, they sell direct products and mobilise supporters for lobbying and advocacy campaigns on Twitter (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Build partnerships – Most immigrant welfare-focused non-profits use social media to engage with various stakeholders to raise awareness of the existence of problems and negotiate a common goal through community empowerment. Li and colleagues (2018) found that non-profits acting as proxies for immigrants leverage the at-mentioning, replying, and retweeting features on Twitter to initiate interactions and develop connections with fellow organisations and outside agents. Therefore, social media allows non-profits to call for recognition of the issues and attract potential social resources to benefit their communities. Homeless networks utilised social media to engage external stakeholders who have a stake in homelessness problems (Jung & Valero, 2015; Maxwell & Carboni, 2014). They found that individuals and organisations have become aware of and interested in maintaining contact with the homeless network's efforts via Facebook over time. The growth of mutual interaction between users is evident in reciprocal ties on social media when more users find social media helpful for communicating via homeless networks. In addition, their motivation to interact on social media could be multidimensional, as suggested by the literature (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Guo & Acar, 2005). This finding also indicates the homeless network's commitment to being active on social media and engaging in reciprocal relationships with users due to external pressure from stakeholders who demand more transparency and communication (Li & Feeney, 2014).

For most non-profits studied for this scoping review, Twitter is being used as a platform for substantive information since it is an open dialogic communication tool that creates a forum for rapidly spreading messages. For instance, the American Red Cross directly contacted organisations to tweet success stories (Hallahan, 2008). Although Twitter became the forerunner for non-profits to disseminate information (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011), non-profits are missing the overall vision for using Twitter as an effective community-building and mobilisation tool. Except for an important minority that fully engages their constituents through Twitter with the 140-character restriction to disseminate substantive information, while others need to follow their lead (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Therefore, most non-profits employ one-way communication to describe their mission and tweet their website address in their Twitter profile. These findings align with those of Rybalko and Seltzer's (2010) study of the corporate sector and partially agree with Kim and others (2014), who observe that it is common for environmental non-profits to use social media to disseminate information.

Bellucci and Manetti (2017) found that a minority of the United States-based foundations rely on social media as a platform to collect feedback and interact with stakeholders. At the same time, very few deployed a dedicated staff to interact with Facebook users on their official pages through "Question and Answer" sessions. As a result, 15% used Facebook as a two-way, dialogic communication tool to strategise future fit (Bellucci & Manetti, 2017). Social media became a dialogic tool for some that can help them gather information and feedback. According to Gálvez-Rodríguez and colleagues (2016), fewer than 20% of the non-profits provided an administrator's address and a link for users to participate in other non-profits' social media accounts.

Among the three, the information function plays a key role in disseminating information among the communities. Most studies state that approximately 50% of the messages are to share information, which in turn helps relationship-building and community engagement (Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Bürger, 2015; Campbell & Lambright, 2020; Guidry et al., 2017; Guo & Saxton, 2012; Hou & Lampe, 2015; Kanol & Nat, 2021; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Rodriguez, 2016; Taylor, 2021). Irrespective of the service domain, size, country, and social causes, non-profits operate on and care about Nau and others (2023) found that the information function allows non-profits to communicate quickly and effectively to a broader audience. Also, keeping their followers in the loop about what they are up to, sharing event highlights, or passing along any other relevant info (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012) extends the information function. Whereas the community function remains a deeper form of social media engagement and aims to create connectivity, and a sense of belongingness (Nau et al., 2023), and fostering two-way communication (Campbell & Lambright, 2020). In contrast, action covers a wide range of requests, for instance, non-profits might ask people

to show up at events, make donations, buy products, volunteer, apply for jobs, or even advocate on their behalf (Campbell & Lambright, 2020). Consequently, the action function is broader in scope and encompasses marketing, promotion, and collective tasks (Nau et al., 2023). Moreover, Hallahan (2008) argued that the action function is critical for non-profits to be visible to their community and encourages them regarding donations, volunteering, employment, and advocating the goals and mission, as almost all social media directly facilitates the action function through a simple click to share a post, or a retweet can disseminate information.

The researcher believes that the informational tweets can serve to build a foundation that produces further action/s. However, engagement should be better reflected by a continuing conversation with a specific social media community than by individual moments of interaction with the undifferentiated masses. This undifferentiated mass engagement can occur in general ways, such as thanking specific users and acknowledging local events, which is a basic function to build the community. In addition, the researcher did not come across strong evidence in the review literature on how non-profits develop a social media strategy to reach virtual communities, except that a few non-profits have used social media for community and relationship building.

The researchers' observation, guided by the study of Xue and others (2024). They found that human services organisations in Canada have used tweets to engage with their community beyond the information function. Consistent with existing literature, their findings align with the view that social media offers an avenue for powerful participation and community engagement (Ross et al., 2015). This was also evident in the study of Rodriguez (2016), creating original tweets and posts, retweeting/reposting, and linking to more external sites (rather than their own website). According to him, participatory non-profits created a community of news sources, activists, citizens, and other non-profits. Additionally, once the non-profits are linked to more LGBTI-specific websites and advocacy groups, it will result in creating queer social capital (Rodriguez, 2016). This observation is similar to the findings of Cronin and King (2012), where the use of mediated messages on social networks helps forge bonds of reciprocity and trust within specific communities. Queering of social capital can be achieved through the community function to foster feelings of bonding, communal support, and belonging. From the current findings of Nah (2009), the Internet and social networking use created e-social capital for non-profits, particularly in the United States. The findings also build on Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007), who found a strong association between the use of Facebook and three forms of social capital: bridging, bonding, and maintaining. Thus, the implications of their study were not limited to the queer or specific communities, but also for assessing the use of social networking and new media at large.

A study by Taylor (2021) supports the findings of Xue and others (2024) further. He found that nearly 50% of the tweets were on community messages, while information messages accounted for 44% of the overall count. Meanwhile, action messages accounted for 5% of the total tweets. In general, in a community-focused digital eco-system, it was noted that information tweets are very common, and this was proved in the study when it has 50% of related tweets. This gives greater height to the assumption that Twitter offers a relationship-building platform that helps with community engagement. Tweets also strategically and proactively help extend non-profits' presence in an online environment while meeting the ever-present demands in terms of monitoring accounts, responding to comments, and engaging with users.

A recent study by Wiley and others (2022) noted the key difference in the hierarchy of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) over microvlogging. Twitter and Facebook empirically support Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) framework, whereas the focus of microvlogging is on building community. Building community is at the top of the hierarchy in microvlogging since the features presented on Twitter and Facebook enable and encourage dialogic communities much more effectively. Primary engagement in community building was (46%) in microvlogs. Mean comments (115.94) and shares (349.34) on community-building microvlogs are considerably higher than the action function. The action function received an average of 56.91 comments and 71.24 shares per microvlogs, followed by the information function with 51.65 and 65.12, respectively.

Based on the segment in which they operate, non-profits use social media functions differently for community building. In contrast, human services non-profits use only 37.5% of their posts, while environmental non-profits heavily use social media at 75% for community building. Human services non-profits' central focus is sharing information (44%) on their initiatives, event highlights, and other non-classified information useful to the community. Therefore, the authors suggest that non-profits aiming to engage the community regardless of the segment they operate in may find microvlogging to be a better communication instrument (Wiley et al., 2022).

3.2.6.2 Social Media Functions in Improving Public Trust

Trust is critical for interacting, networking, and information sharing on social media (Ulusu et al., 2011; Ulusu et al., 2014). At the same time, non-profits face many challenges when they use an online platform to secure the operating system and its transactional features, especially when fundraising. Researchers often quote this as system-dependent trust, and it is related to the specific features of the technological system that is being offered for sharing information and raising donations (Cho, 2006; Kaluscha & Grabner-Krauter, 2003; Salo & Karjaluo, 2007; Sillence et al., 2007; Wang & Emurian, 2004). However, most research on system-dependent trust has been concerned with e-commerce, and

limited studies have examined it within the scope of managing and controlling donations (Chen et al., 2022). Shier and Handy (2012) found that trust in a particular online platform significantly predicts willingness to donate online, but trust on the Internet was not a significant predictor. As a result, any technological uncertainty, including technological errors and security gaps associated with the online donating framework, may reduce the user's trust in the system and decrease their likelihood of using it to donate online.

Social interactions formed the basis for building trust (Gulati, 1995). According to him, interaction is how an organisation allows users to interact with it and other users on social media. Social media facilitates non-profits to generate dialogues and motivate potential donors to learn more about social causes they care about (Raman, 2015). According to him, trust evolves from social interactions. The same as mentioned by Yang & Lim (2009); users perceive high interactivity with an organisation, and they tend to develop higher trust. For non-profits, online interactions provide additional opportunities to demonstrate the quality of the work and help potential donors learn more about the mission and vision.

Waters and others (2009) suggested three (3) dimensions for gaining trust: authentic content, disclosure, and dissemination. **Authentic content** refers to credible financial information and clear information about the charitable cause being presented by the non-profits on social media. **Disclosure** is the extent to which non-profits' social media make it transparent to social networking users. In return, disclosure positively influences users' trust in highlighting non-profits' performance and ability to help the community achieve their charitable goals. Through social media, non-profits can present financial and non-financial information, including the voluntary nature of the organisation. Social media also gives them a chance to demonstrate how they can use donations, and as a result, disclosure can positively influence public trust (Feng et al., 2017).

Dissemination is defined as the extent to which non-profits use social media to provide useful and educational information to users (Sargeant et al., 2006; Waters et al., 2009). This information helps users to familiarise themselves with the charity process and outcomes of the charitable cause. Thus, the capabilities of non-profits to provide benefits to the community tend to build trust, and dissemination would positively influence trust. According to the social exchange theory, the intention of giving is a determinant of motivation that triggers consumer attitudes toward charitable causes and shapes their giving behavior (Krebs, 1982). Therefore, non-profits should disseminate useful educational information through social media (Carrera et al., 2008; Sargeant et al., 2006; Waters et al., 2009). This information can help consumers become familiar with the process and results of charitable causes. Further, they will be inspired by the stories of people who have been helped. Thus,

the ability of the non-profits to use social media to benefit the community would build trust in the organisation.

Social media is an influential tool for strengthening public trust through public relations for non-profits. Public trust highly impacts community engagement in contracting, particularly with other external community service providers, soliciting and receiving funds, exercising custody over assets for the benefit of society, investing the organisation's SC, and finally, achieving mission commitments (Bryce, 2007). However, minimal studies are available in this space, and the author evaluates the potential of employing the SCT to study the research question: "How do non-profits use social media to enhance public trust?".

In their study, Fischer-Preßler and her colleagues (2023) have investigated how social media are governed and utilised at multi-organisational levels. This study focuses on how organisations acquire and sustain a network of voters and communities extended to other organisations to build relationships and calls for collective action. The researchers have acknowledged 8 important social media information governance areas in building, developing, and maintaining SC. Network retention, expansion, and resource pooling are vital facilitators for organisational social capital when considering the structural aspect. Factors such as establishing trust, community management, and brokerage are crucial regarding the relational aspect. Emotional empathy and building a common identity are valid influencers regarding the cognitive aspect. However, they have identified social media information governance tensions between and within organisations. Therefore, they have proposed a dynamic and co-evolutionary process management to alleviate those tensions.

This research has key takeaways for the notion of trust building. The researchers define trust building as the development of confidence in the organisation and its members to use social media content as a reliable source of information. For example, organisations can use social media as a direct communication channel to build trust through stories of how members and the organisation work for the common good. Researchers also proposed an approach to how social media can provide transparency and show what activities public resources are used for. This study demonstrates that, consistent with the dimension of SC, community engagement could be enhanced using social media. For example, using the network retention, non-profits can inform the community about the organisation's operations and activities through relevant and regular updates. On the other hand, via network expansion, the organisations can connect with new volunteers on established platforms. Fischer-Preßler and her colleagues (2023) have investigated how social media are governed and utilised at multi-organisational levels to acquire and sustain a network of voters and communities extended to other organisations to build relationships and calls for collective action. This research has

key takeaways for the notion of trust building. Researchers proposed an approach to how social media can provide transparency and show what activities public resources are used for. This study demonstrates that, consistent with SC, community engagement can be enhanced using social media.

The scoping review discloses that non-profits predominantly use social media for information dissemination, community building, and action mobilisation. Studies such as those by Bürger (2015), Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), Taylor (2021) and Rodriguez (2016), emphasise the importance of these functions, with a significant focus on information sharing. For instance, Hou and Lampe (2015), and Taylor (2021) found that community-oriented messages are prevalent, yet the depth of engagement remains limited. According to Young (2016), the least identified reason for using social media was to demonstrate transparency or accountability. This suggests that non-profits must develop more interactive and dialogic communication strategies to build trust with their audiences.

3.2.6.3 Different Social Media Strategies and Practices

The extent of social media utilisation will depend on certain influences, including the situation to be dealt with, their communication practices, and the goals set to be achieved (Lozano et al., 2020; Wiley et al., 2022). **Table 3.2.6.3.1** presents an overview of the different strategies and practices prescribed by different scholars. The author objectively assesses these findings for mapping the existing literature on a topic, identifying knowledge gaps, and clarifying concepts.

Table 3.2.6.3.1: Different social media strategies

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Lozano et al., 2020)	Use of storytelling to enhance emotional engagement, customisation of social media content to increase impact, focus on the viral effect to reach targets, use of influencers to enhance engagement, establishing the safety nets with the community to promote activism and brand loyalty, exploring media visibility, and the development of creative ideas to stimulate awareness are the common identifiers.
(Namisango et al., 2021)	<p>Identified seven forms of co-creation service on social media, using creative ideas and feasible solutions from audience comments and messages. Co-advocating activities through the virality of campaigns enabled by the share function and mission-based hashtags. Similarly, Sørensen and others (2017) highlighted that social media propagates advocacy initiatives by calling for social justice through shout-outs and thunderclaps. Co-diagnose can serve as a feedback system, enabling the offering of services that non-profits would otherwise ignore. Constructive criticism is an ample example that could drive service developments, improvements, and transformations to boost service relevancy. Consumer engagement on social media facilitates the co-development of a wide spectrum of services that non-profits offer. Social media feedback leads to the co-transformation of services that align with emerging community needs and the design of value-added services targeted to specific communities. Co-resourcing urges volunteers to participate in social initiatives, appeals for donations and partnerships in service delivery, and hosts events while co-delivering facilities by engaging the community in shared activities to improve service quality and efficiency. However, non-profits are keen on social media-supported activities that gather and mobilise resources. Reviews, comments, votes, and likes have become critical evaluation mechanisms for the online community to participate in co-assessing. The community can use that evaluation mechanism to acknowledge, recognise, and appreciate non-profit services.</p> <p>The effect of communication function on customer engagement has a significant positive effect, while promoting actions has a significant negative effect. The interaction effect of communication function and style on customer engagement indicates a non-significant, two-way interaction effect except for the interaction of the friend-alike style and promoting actions on liking. In this case, the friend-alike style negatively moderates the effect of promoting actions on liking.</p>
(Wu et al., 2019)	The effect of communication style has a positive relationship with customer engagement. For example, the friend-alike style has a significant positive effect both in terms of commenting and positive commenting. These connections create a formal, typically reciprocal connection between two users in a non-profit (Guo & Saxton, 2012). However, there was an irrelevant effect on message liking, sharing, and negative commenting. The authoritative style had insignificant positive and negative effects on message liking, sharing, and commenting.

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Watkins, 2017)	As suggested by the useful information principle, organisations should communicate information that satisfies the public's need for information or creates value for the public. For example, share the information on how the organisations addressed the matters highlighted by the public, links to annual reports, photos, videos, audio, and announcements, links to discussion forums, and FAQs that make them appeal to repeat visits as well, which is another principle of the dialogic theory. To generate return visits, non-profits should regularly update the information available on their sites.
(Tao et al., 2021)	Making social media messages viral requires considering the balancing act between the message's functional interactivity and content appeal. To satisfy the community's information-seeking intention, priority should be given to emotional content over information content. It is predominantly important to reach out to audiences who may not be deeply connected with the social cause but still need to raise awareness. The approach would be different when communicating with those connected with the cause. Non-profits can add more weight to functional interactivity while using dialogic features on social media. To increase fundraising, the researchers recommend designing and distributing highly interactive social media messages to the connected community, as these trends are more effective in eliciting donations from the highly involved community.
(Alonso-Cañadas et al., 2019)	In line with the results of Cvijiki and Michahelles (2013), which shows that images are the most appealing format for achieving online engagement, specifically, for attaining a more significant number of likes and shares, though the behaviour of the organisations studied for their research differs. Cvijiki and Michahelles (2013) recommend publishing posts during low peak hours to increase the number of comments received on their Facebook pages to gain greater visibility and a higher likelihood of engagement, study results of Alonso-Cañadas and others (2019) show that to get the highest level of engagement through the post published at night are made during the afternoon hours.

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2014)	<p>Hyperlinks are mainly implemented to provide more detailed information about their programs, while retweeting is used to disclose information about the organisation. The most popular retweeting mechanism is to copy the message with the picture of the user. The least often used mechanism is the third-party website Twitvid.com, which provides multimedia content. These results coincide with Lovejoy and his colleagues (2012), who note that non-profits rarely use retweets and hashtags in their tweets.</p> <p>However, regarding two-way communication, fewer than 20% of the non-profits provided an administrator's address and a link for users to participate in other non-profits' social media accounts. At the same time, non-profits mainly send public messages to thank stakeholders for financial support, inform them about events, or disclose positive opinions about the organisation's activities. Non-profits are very reluctant to send public messages in support of the activities of other organisations or to express their opinion about the information disclosed by their stakeholders.</p>
(Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).	<p>The principle of dialogic theory applies to the contextual use of social media as it is a most revolutionised version of the traditional websites (Lovejoy et al, 2012; Flisfeder, 2022; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). This theory is governed by five (5) principles: dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of return visits, the intuitiveness/ease of interface, and conservation of visitors (Kent & Taylor, 1998). The application of the above principles can result in positive outcomes, such as trust, mutuality, and empathy (Soon & Soh, 2014; Yang et al., 2021), which are the core principles that non-profits govern.</p> <p>Rybalko & Seltzer (2010) applied the principle of dialogic theory to their study. To implement a dialogic loop, the non-profits can post questions to the public, encouraging the community to share their experiences and thoughts, and respond to their questions on time. Most importantly, they can host sessions where the public can resolve issues and communicate with leaders of non-profits. As suggested by the useful information principle, organisations should communicate information that satisfies the public's need for information or creates value for the public (Watkins, 2017). For example, share the information on how the organisations addressed the matters highlighted by the public, links to annual reports, photos, videos, audio, and announcements, links to discussion forums, and FAQs that make them appeal to repeat visits as well, which is another principle of the dialogic theory. To generate return visits, non-profits should regularly update the information available on their sites. Conservation of visitors is encouraged by posting essential details on fund utilisations, upcoming events, benefits of the projects that they have done or are planning to do, communicating their mission, and requesting any suggestions from the public, links to media rooms also indicate visitors' conservation.</p>

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Smith, 2018)	<p>Communication type is more important for user engagement on Facebook, while post type is more important concerning the impact of individual posts. These two implications imply two user behaviours. First, when using Facebook to engage, groups would be advised to consider what they are communicating with users, which results in much more effective dialogue generation on Facebook than on X. Second, when using X and considering the impact of single posts, groups should consider how they communicate with users. This finding is also contrary to what Campbell and Lambright (2020). Rodriguez and colleagues (2016) found X was the most popular social media among non-profits in the United States.</p> <p>Smith (2018) also suggested that a single visual stimulus increases engagement on X and is more impactful than on Facebook. Therefore, his suggestion goes well with what Guo and Saxton (2014) suggested: practitioners would do well to increase the number of visual stimuli on either platform to help them meet their key online and offline user engagement goals.</p>
(Zhou & Pan, 2016)	<p>Community-building posts for greeting newly acquainted peers, showing their support for events organised by fellow non-profits, giving thanks to donors and volunteers, soliciting stakeholder opinions, and responding to questions raised by the stakeholders and the public. However, the tone of the posts can be very casual and full of slang and emojis. This casual behaviour reflects the blogging habits as opposed to what was observed by Pullman (2013), where accommodative code-switching is performed to identify their target audience and build credibility. Surprisingly, these posts can still help organisations build relationships with the Weibo community.</p>
(Chen & Fu, 2015)	<p>Weibo posts that meet individuals' informational needs or gratify multiple motivations of the post audience are highly shareable on Weibo. These posts, including leaders' opinions and endorsed by influential Weibo users, will likely generate retweets. However, the entertainment and value-added content posts, namely free access to museum exhibitions, free books, and rewards for participation in online polls, etc., did not have a significant impact on retweeting.</p>
(Bürger, 2015)	<p>When it comes to social media interaction features, compared to sharing ($r=.522, p=.01$) and comments ($r=.069, p=.05$), likes ($r=.563, p=.01$) are the most used feature. Surprisingly, videos, links, and hashtags did not show a significant impact. The author argued that though social media offers numerous features for interaction, the followers have hardly commented on the posts, enabling one-way communication. Lam and Nie (2019) suggested that community and action posts have different potentials for attracting public attention, building community, and mobilising. Further, their study proves that information posts generate the most "likes" whereas action posts are more likely to be diffused through shares.</p>

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Waters et al., 2009).	<p>The most often used message dissemination strategy was Facebook discussion boards. Very few took advantage of the multimedia capabilities of the Internet, and overall, non-profits failed to publicise their public relations efforts. The most common strategy to involve the supporters was providing e-mail addresses to organisational representatives. Implemented additional strategies for community engagement, including message boards, providing an outlet to make charitable donations, listing current volunteer opportunities, providing contact numbers, providing a calendar of events, and providing an e-commerce store on their profile. They rarely provide information in forms other than external links to news stories, photographs, and discussion board posts, and they only attempt to get interested parties involved by providing them with a contact e-mail address to obtain more information. Further, non-profits rarely post multimedia, press releases, or summaries of their campaigns, even though these items can help detail the organisation's successes to those highly involved in social networking</p>
(Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016)	<p>In the context of community sports foundations, organisational capacity impacts X content. The lower capacity produces a predominance of informational content. In comparison, the greater capacity devotes more resources to their social media activities, proving that they engage in a broader range of communication strategies.</p>
(Bellucci & Manetti, 2017)	<p>The study results revealed that 59 of the 100 biggest foundations have an official Facebook page, and only 15 had an average number of comments on their posts that were higher than 2. Only a minority of these foundations rely on social media as a platform to collect feedback and interact with stakeholders. At the same time, very few deployed a dedicated staff to interact with Facebook users on their official pages through “Question and Answer” sessions.</p> <p>As a result, 15% used Facebook as a two-way, dialogic communication tool to strategise their future use. They consider social media as a tool of dialogic accounting that can help them gather information and feedback. Further, their content analysis found that posts that describe the mission and their activities and provide information and news concerning social, economic, political, or environmental topics are most prevalent.</p>

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Saxton et al., 2015)	<p>The most prevalent category is public education hashtags, which include three subtypes: medical condition, knowledge base, and policy. The second type is the event hashtags: they reflect fundraising and awareness-raising. The third type is the call-to-action: it can mobilise audiences for collective action. The fourth type of hashtag helps non-profits to differentiate themselves from others by their brand. The fifth category of hashtags is branding: it helps popularise programs and slogans. Dialogic hashtags foster dialogue with the audience, and chat-focused hashtags are for regularly scheduled chats with constituents, helping the relationship-building role (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). The emphasis is not specifically on informing or mobilising the audience but rather on building a community of like-minded constituents who can help in the advocacy mission. The final two types of hashtags are more descriptive of time, place, and business. The importance of disclosing the cause of the worry in their profiles is well understood by legally incorporated non-profits (Waters et al., 2009).</p> <p>All the non-profits listed the administrators of their Facebook profiles and provided a description of the organisation. However, 81% of the legally incorporated non-profits linked back to their website from Facebook and used their logo. Fewer than half of non-profits disclosed their mission statement, and less than one-quarter provided their history. The most often used message dissemination strategy was Facebook discussion boards. Very few took advantage of the multimedia capabilities of the Internet, and overall, non-profits failed to publicise their public relations efforts. The most common strategy to involve the supporters was providing e-mail addresses to organisational representatives. Additional strategies include message boards, providing an outlet to make charitable donations, listing current volunteer opportunities, providing contact numbers and a calendar of events, and providing an e-commerce store. They rarely provide information in forms other than external links to news stories, photographs, and discussion board posts.</p>

Reference	Findings and strategies
(Li et al., 2019)	<p>To share their analysis of policies and issues, including causes of problems and corresponding solutions, to keep their audiences well-informed of the latest news, policy changes, and corresponding coping mechanisms. For example, immigrant-focused non-profits encourage their audiences to take specific civic actions to influence ongoing political conflicts. They encourage specific calls to action during politically contentious times while providing general suggestions and guidance for the public to initiate specific actions through social media.</p> <p>To engage with various stakeholders to facilitate community empowerment by raising awareness of a problem's existence and negotiating a common goal. Non-profits acting as proxies for immigrants leverage the at-mentioning, replying, and retweeting features on X to initiate interactions and develop connections with fellow organisations and outside agents. Therefore, social media allows non-profits to call for recognition of the issues and attract potential social resources to benefit their communities.</p>
(Saxton et al., 2015)	<p>The most prevalent category is public education hashtags, which include three subtypes: medical condition, knowledge base, and policy. The second type is the event hashtags: they reflect fundraising and awareness-raising. The third type is the call-to-action: it can mobilise audiences for collective action. The fourth type of hashtag helps non-profits to differentiate themselves from others by their brand. The fifth category of hashtags is branding: it helps popularise programs and slogans. Dialogic hashtags foster dialogue with the audience, and chat-focused hashtags are for regularly scheduled chats with constituents, helping the relationship-building role (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). The emphasis is not specifically on informing or mobilising the audience but rather on building a community of like-minded constituents who can help in the advocacy mission. The final two types of hashtags are more descriptive of time, place, and business. The importance of disclosing the cause of the worry in their profiles is well understood by legally incorporated non-profits (Waters et al., 2009).</p> <p>All the non-profits listed the administrators of their Facebook profiles and provided a description of the organisation. However, 81% of the legally incorporated non-profits linked back to their website from Facebook and used their logo. Fewer than half of non-profits disclosed their mission statement, and less than one-quarter provided their history. The most often used message dissemination strategy was Facebook discussion boards. Very few took advantage of the multimedia capabilities of the Internet, and overall, non-profits failed to publicise their public relations efforts. The most common strategy to involve the supporters was providing e-mail addresses to organisational representatives. Additional strategies include message boards, providing an outlet to make charitable donations, listing current volunteer opportunities, providing contact numbers and a calendar of events, and providing an e-commerce store. They rarely provide information in forms other than external links to news stories, photographs, and discussion board posts.</p>

3.2.6.4 Study Gaps

Community engagement through social media remains an opportunity for non-profits to connect with their communities and make the community aware of their services. However, the above findings indicate that its potential is not fully realised for non-profits. Therefore, further research should delve into the effectiveness of engagement across all aspects of strategy design, delivery, and evaluation, and of using social media by non-profits in NZ. In the same way, very limited studies have been conducted on a global scale on social media to validate how social media can be used in building and maintaining public trust, and hence, no studies are available for NZ. Therefore, there is a notable gap in the use of social media solely focused on community engagement and public trust, which are crucial for fostering long-term community support.

3.3 Summary

This scoping review underscores the significant role of social media in enhancing community engagement in non-profits guided by the typology of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012). Most studies state that social media posts are to share information (Bürger, 2015; Campbell & Lambricht, 2020; Guidry et al., 2017; Kanol & Nat, 2021; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Rodriguez, 2016; Taylor, 2021) irrespective of the service domain, size, country, and social causes they operate on and care about. On the contrary, Wiley and others (2022) noted the key difference in the hierarchy of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) regarding microvlogging since it focuses on building community, the features presented on X and Facebook. Still, the test results tally with Taylor (2021), and Xue and others (2024) where engagement in community building is the highest focus in microblogs, and the action function is the least priority. Several studies, including those by Briones and others (2011) and Fischer-Preßler and colleagues (2023), identify challenges such as limited human resources, lack of expertise, and organisational constraints hindering effective social media use. These barriers highlight the need for capacity-building within non-profits to leverage social media more effectively. However, to fully harness its potential, non-profits must overcome existing challenges and adopt more strategic and interactive approaches. Moreover, based on the evidence provided above, the researcher clearly sees a research gap in the effective use of social media by non-profits for building and maintaining public trust in both the global and NZ context. Therefore, this research focuses on developing approaches that address these gaps to further explore the impact of social media on non-profits in NZ.

CHAPTER 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

The concept of social capital has evolved over three eras. The first era was the beginning of the 1900s and spanned until 1980. The second era started in the '80s and lasted in the '90s when foremost theorists Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988), and Robert Putnam (1995) developed the construct. Finally, from the 90s onward, several academics have developed a strong interest in the construct, aiming to delimit the content, investigate its role in several scientific fields, and expand from economics, psychology, and health to education and measuring it.

Lyda Judson Hanifan (1916) was the first to use social capital to describe goodwill, friendliness, mutual sympathy, and the extent of social contacts. In 1961, Jane Jacobs defined social capital as the existence and function of social networks in big cities concerning economic development. Glenn Loury (1977) used the term in his study of social inequalities across various ethno-racial groups, defining it as the networks of family and social relations that can promote the knowledge and abilities of a person to determine their access to education, work, and other social benefits.

However, SCT was grounded during the 80s and 90s. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) systematically introduced social capital and approached it as individuals' access to a collective resource. Bourdieu distinguished between four forms of capital: economic, cultural, symbolic, and social. According to him, economic capital lays the basis, and all other types of capital stem from this through a series of complex and non-automated transformative processes (Bourdieu, 1986). James Coleman (1988), who was primarily interested in the sociology of education, distinguished between physical, human, and social capital, and he highlighted the role of social capital in creating human capital. Finally, Robert Putnam (1995) proposed the collective approach that defines it as a public good. According to him, social capital is concerned with the amount of trust and civic participation available in a community, a city, or a state. It may facilitate interpersonal cooperation, from which all community members may benefit, irrespective of their unique investment in social networks.

From the 90s onwards, the SCT gained motion. Several scholars from different scientific fields, such as economics (Schiff, 1992; Ostrom, 2005), sociology (Carpiano, 2006; Portes, 1998), psychology (Lin, 2002), and educational studies (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004), attempted to

conceptualise and understand the construct. At the same time, international organisations (OECD, 2001; World Bank, 1998) provided a framework regarding SC's definition and dimensions. Despite these developments, Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1995) are still considered the foremost theorists of the social capital theory.

To build relationships through community engagement also maintain public trust, non-profits must adopt social media channels. According to Kang and Yang (2011), interactive blogs can create a personal connection with users, facilitate positive attitudes toward the organisation, and encourage word-of-mouth intentions. Further, interactive users perceive blogs as stimulating dialogue and building trust and satisfaction (Kelleher, 2009). Trust matters when users communicate with larger audiences with whom they do not necessarily have close offline interactions. They will probably rely increasingly on weak ties, resulting in bridging social capital (Jin & Phua, 2014; Shane-Simpson et al., 2018). Social media also allows individuals to make many connections online, which creates a bond of social capital (Phua et al., 2017). In addition, using social media allows individuals to connect and stay connected with established relationships that had become physically distant otherwise. This online presence results in increased levels of maintained social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). Therefore, this study uses SCT to explore how social media strengthens community engagement and public trust.

4.2 SCT

The broad definition of the SCT makes it susceptible to multiple interpretations and allows for different schools of thought (Greeley, 1997; Portes, 1998). In order to gain accrued economic or non-economic benefits to the individuals, relationships are vital (White, 2002), while others argue that social capital can be seen in residing in the relations and not in the individuals themselves (Coleman, 1988). Further, SCT is a context-dependent theory that takes many different interrelated forms. For example, the relationships form a complex web of interactions and communications (Fukuyama, 2000; Lin, 1999; Putnam et al., 1993; White, 2002).

The SCT is composed of five (5) dimensions: networks, reciprocity, trust, social norms, and personal and collective efficacy (Bourdieu, 1986). The **network** component in SCT is the close ally between individuals and groups beyond geographical boundaries (Anheier et al., 1995). Social media preserves the ability to connect people virtually and create a two-way dialogue in building strong networks. Fundamentally, these networks provide the basis for social interactions, sharing information, connectivity, and collaboration with the community. Consequently, resource sharing and collaborative actions will be increased, which is vital to

community engagement. According to Sethi and Somanathan (2002), **reciprocity** means the community will receive services and kindness in return. Social media encourages reciprocal interactions with users through likes, shares, comments, tweets, re-tweets, and direct messaging. On the other hand, increased community engagement is susceptible to building and maintaining trust. Increased community engagement lets the community know how their donations are utilised; they tend to believe in the non-profits and causes they care about. In return, the potential community may also get involved and help expand the donor base.

Trust refers to a readiness to look after the initiative already formed by the associations, and social norms focus on common and shared values which guide behaviour and interactions (Anheier et al., 1995; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Kalkstein et al., 2022). Regularly posting organisational information and plans through social media enhances transparency and public trust for non-profits. Once trust is established, perceived risk and relationship uncertainties will be reduced. As a result, participation is encouraged. This leads to strong social bonds and commitment to community initiatives. Non-profits should be able to be transparent in disclosing social accounts, budgets, and sponsorship details on request, and issue payment invoices for each transaction. Non-profits' willingness to accept failure and take remedial actions is a win-win for them in engaging more closely with the community.

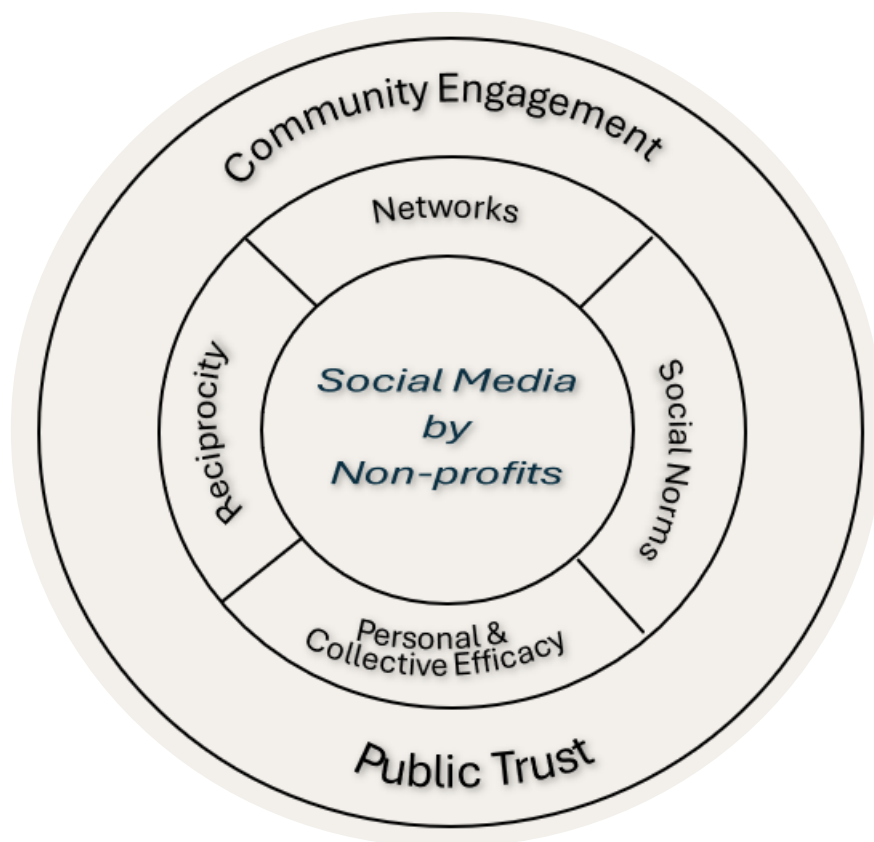
Social norms represent the guiding principles and shared standards of acceptable behaviours of communities. Social media is a powerful tool in guiding and shaping community behaviours for good causes. For example, propagating campaigns for recycling and animal rights will positively influence the humane standards of the community. Creating open dialogues with the community can enforce or reinforce social norms (Anheier et al., 1995; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Kalkstein et al., 2022).

The last dimension of social capital theory, **personal and collective self-efficacy**, is regular participation and willingness to participate in community activities (Fernández-Ballesteros et al., 2002). Social media can motivate individuals and groups through posts, stories, and updates, which enhance their sense of belongingness and empathy. It motivates individuals to participate actively in events, leading to the achievement of the mission of non-profits.

Based on the preceding discussion of SCT, this research conceptualises how social media use by non-profits to supports community engagement and public trust in related to five (5) dimensions. SCT provides a theoretical lens to understand how online interactions create and

tighten network bonds, foster trust, encourage reciprocity, shape social norms, and promote both personal and collective efficacy. These dimensions not treated as interconnected social processes that evolve through continuous communication and participation. In this context, social media operates as a socio-technical eco-system where online connection and collaboration are the basics for driving non-profits. The following conceptual model (**Figure 4.2.1**) synthesises these theoretical insights into a holistic representation of the context-dependent processes through which non-profits build and sustain community engagement and public trust.

Figure 4.2.1: Proposed conceptual model



Source: Developed by the Researcher

Figure 4.2.1 demonstrates how social media use by non-profits for community engagement and public trust through interconnected social processes framed by the SCT. The innermost circle represents social media use as the central phenomenon through which non-profits initiate communication, share organisational values, and create a platform for online interactions. Surrounding middle circle symbolises the five dimensions of social capital; networks, trust, reciprocity, social norms, and personal and collective efficacy which together form the relational foundation of community engagement. These dimensions are mutually reinforcing

where networks facilitate dialogue, trust and reciprocity strengthen relationships, social norms guide collective behaviour, while efficacy motivates individuals and communities to act. The outermost circle, representing community engagement and public trust, emerges organically from these continuous social exchanges. The model therefore portrays social media as an enabler of online connectivity where engagement and trust are co-created through transparency, collaboration, and ongoing interactions. In addressing RQ1, this framework demonstrates that social media assists non-profits to cultivate enduring, trust-based relationships that enhance their community presence and collective action. The proposed conceptual framework will guide the finding of answers to RQ1 and explain the core arguments on how it will contribute to understanding the research phenomenon.

4.3 Theoretical Reflection on the Application of the SCT in Online Communities

The SCT was originally developed to explain the role within offline, community-based environments (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995). Applying this theory to digital and social media contexts therefore requires careful consideration of both its relevance and limitations. It is all evident that the five (5) dimensions of social capital continue to operate though online and their manifestations are mediated through digital interactions. Further, the SCT provides a relational lens to interpret how non-profits use social media to engage with online communities and build public trust. As a result, despite of the SCT's offline origination, it remains a valuable framework for this study.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the existing literature, which laid the foundation to construct the conceptual framework derived from the SCT to study the research question, ***RQ1: How do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust?*** And ***RQ2: What opportunities and challenges do non-profits face when using social media?*** The chapter flows from the evolution of the SCT, the different schools of thought in different disciplines, and the generalised definition, and how SCT is linked with social media implications. The last section highlights the theoretical reflection and relevance on how SCT can utilise for explaining online social interactions, rationalise how SCT can be adaptable to demonstrate community engagement and public trust.

CHAPTER 5: Methodology

The research methodology of this study covers the research philosophy and the approach for this study. In addition, the qualitative approach is also detailed, explaining sample selection, data collection, analysis, reliability, and validity measurements.

5.1 Research Philosophy

Every researcher should understand the importance of the research philosophy. Research philosophy is the underlying belief system that influences how the researcher sees and engages with the world. Therefore, a sound methodological design is not merely a technical framework but also the backbone of any successful research project, influencing every stage, guiding the entire research process from data collection to analysis, and even how findings are reported. In the humanities and social sciences, this process requires researchers to select appropriate methods and articulate the philosophical foundations that guide their topic under investigation (Pretorius, 2024). According to Saunders and his colleagues (2009), “*research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge*” (p. 107). Further, the research philosophy involves “*examining the nature of knowledge itself, how it comes into being and is transmitted through language*” (Patton, 2002, p. 92).

This research is based on ontology, where the researcher sees that reality can be socially constructed through human experience and interaction. Ontology traces its meaning from the ancient Greek present participle *ὄν/ον/*, which means ‘to exist’. Guba (1990) refers to ontology as the nature of the ‘knowable’ or the nature of ‘reality’.

According to Willis (2007), ontology understands the nature of existence or what reality is and can be realist or relativist. In contrast, realist ontology concentrates on the existence of one truth attributed to unchanging and factual (Bhaskar, 2013), while relativists believe that multiple realities may change within and between people and time. This relativist assumption resulted in multiple and different ways of studying those realities (Gray, 2022). Also, Bryman’s (2004) two ontological positions concerning social research, ‘objectivism’ and ‘constructionism’, are highly regarded as an ontology breakthrough. According to him, the core question is measuring whether these entities exist objectively, independent of human actors, or are socially constructed through the perceptions and actions of people within a society. These divergent viewpoints are known as objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism entails the social entity adheres to an external objective reality independent of the researcher’s awareness.

At the same time, constructionism implies that social entities can and should be considered built upon the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2004).

The researcher believes that the extent of social media use by non-profits will depend on the values and beliefs of the non-profit management, the availability of resources and tools, and the fact that non-profits are in volatile socio-economic and political environments (Christensen, 2011). Therefore, the researcher selects the relativist approach and assumes multiple realities can exist; they are relatively context-dependent and constructed through employees' actions for non-profits.

Bryman (2004) further dives into epistemology, an issue that concerns the question of what is regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. According to Gray (2022), epistemology focuses on understanding what and how to know reality. Epistemology is vitality is two-folded. Firstly, it assists in research designing on what research evidence should be gathered, from where, and how they should be interpreted. Secondly, it validates the accuracy of the correct design (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000). Understanding of reality can be gained through objectivism, subjectivism, and constructivism (Mathison, 2005). Knowledge can be acquired mainly through two extremes: positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2004) and “*positivism is an epistemological position that advocated the application of methods of natural sciences to study the reality and beyond.*” (Bryman, 2004, p. 24). However, “*interpretivism is founded upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between the people and objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meanings of social action*” (Bryman, 2004, p. 26).

On the other hand, objectivism believes that reality exists independently of the human mind and may be known by the researcher (Brem, 2010) through the rigorous process of scientific inquiry (Gray, 2022); opposingly, subjectivism believes that once reality is created by perception, perception does not exist independently without reality (Mathison, 2005), and the truth can only be evaluated using their claims (Olsen, 2012).

Instead, constructivism believes in socially constructed reality (Fox et al., 2016), where the knowledge is created as part of the researcher's interactions with society (Jackson et al., 2018) and that perceptions are hard to describe as reality (Carson et al., 2001; Jackson et al., 2018). Although subjectivism and objectivism are two extremes of a spectrum, constructivism sits between them but is closer to subjectivism.

The researcher has chosen constructivism in this research as it aligns well with my ontological assumptions. The researcher believes that engagement and trust are co-constructed through the non-profit organisations' reciprocal interactions and experiences with the online community. Moreover, non-profit organisations can construct community needs and preferences through social media. Further, the reality is socially constructed when building connectedness is perceived through the interactions between non-profit organisations and the local community. On the other hand, there are multiple realities as the way of interpreting and responding to social media interactions are based on organisational context and previous experiences. For instance, an organisation can use a negative comment to educate the community on a particular issue or delete or block it. Therefore, the researcher believes the understanding of these research questions emerges through interpretation and dialogue with the representatives of the non-profit organisations.

5.2 Research Approach

Ontological and epistemological considerations can lead to two different research approaches: qualitative and quantitative (Bryman, 2004). The research approach is “*a general orientation to the conduct of social research*” (Bryman, 2004, p. 32) and considers systematic processes to gather data and interpret the findings. A researcher can enhance knowledge on a particular issue and make reliable decisions using an established research approach. Two significant phrases when conducting research are “systematic way” and “to find out things”. The systematic way focuses on building logical relationships rather than on beliefs, while finding out things and concentrates on a range of possible purposes for research (Saunders et al., 2007).

The quantitative method focuses on numeric analysis (Saunders et al., 2009), which aligns with positivism (Bryman, 2004). In contrast, the qualitative research method utilises data collection techniques not limited to questionnaires, statistics, or graphs. It is connected with a deductive approach to testing theory by using facts and numbers in the research (Greener, 2008). The focus is on non-numerical data (Saunders et al., 2007) or words rather than measuring in the collection and data analysis (Bryman, 2004) in the qualitative research method. The qualitative method uses data collection techniques or analysis procedures, including interviews, categorising data, pictures, or videos. This approach was further illustrated by the “*qualitative method emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which an emphasis is placed on the generation of theories*” (Bryman, 2004, p.32).

From a different perspective, qualitative research aims to understand people's constructed knowledge and how they make sense of the world and their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). According to Braun and Clarke (2013), the qualitative approach as seeing that reality and meaning is subjective. Stacks (2011) mentioned that the qualitative approach illustrates a specific issue and delivers an in-depth understanding. Therefore, qualitative research can assist in describing complex problems and discovering local and personal meanings and intentions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Also, qualitative research is suitable for a detailed analysis of how organisations react to a specific public relations issue (Stacks, 2011). However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argued that research findings might not be generalisable and could have impractical predictions. They also argued that qualitative research methods were time-consuming and susceptible to researcher bias (Leavy, 2020).

The research approach guides the selection of appropriate research methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2017). According to Crotty (1998), research methodology covers all integral aspects of the research design, data gathering, and overall framework. The techniques and tools associated with the research methodology explain and help to identify and analyse data gathered for interpreting the selected research topic under study.

For this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach to understand the experiences, views, or perspectives, behaviours, values, beliefs, and so forth in the research context (Bell et al., 2022). Therefore, the qualitative inquiry approach gives context-sensitivity and in-depth explanations or answers to the research questions. Therefore, the proposed research methodology, semi-structured in-person interviews (Flick et al., 2004) with social media managers/coordinators who work in non-profits, the researcher believes that she would get a chance to understand how particular institutions use social media to engage with local community and to enhance public trust.

5.3 Methods of Data Collection

Academics presented diverse approaches to gathering data for analysing the results of the desired study. However, the chosen data collection method should efficiently achieve the research aim and respond to the research questions (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). As a result, the data collection method is considered a crucial aspect of research design, and to conduct a comprehensive analysis, cautious observation, and thorough planning are necessary (Adams et al., 2014). This thesis chose the semi-structured interview as the data collection method. This selection is because semi-structured interviews are more open-ended and flexible, allowing

participants to voice their experiences naturally (Tracy, 2025). Further, research participants can reveal their perspectives about the phenomenon under investigation without exposing the researcher's predetermined concepts and opinions (Legard et al., 2003).

The researcher developed an interview guide for based on the research questions to ensure consistency (Brewster et al., 2015). This guide guarantees the themes identified in the literature in advance since it is crucial to address research questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 1996; Mason, 2004). Additionally, semi-structured interviews provide a relatively more flexible structure (Patton, 2015) while facilitating the management and analysis of the interview results (Bowen, 2009) without much effort.

Another influential attribute of semi-structured interviews is that the interviewee has fair freedom to express their opinion without exaggerating (Rowley, 2012). Moreover, a semi-structured interview gives an ample opportunity to express participants a vivid description of their feelings, experiences, and views about the importance of the topic under study. Also, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to approach different interviewees in varied ways while getting the responses to the same questions.

Also, semi-structured interviews correspond with answering "how" and "why" research questions. They are associated with the ontological and epistemological stance that reality is socially constructed and interpreted consistently with the worldviews of participants (Mason, 2004), which can apply to managers and employees working even in the same organisation (Heintz, 2002). Further, their flexibility allows for cross-checking and validating information from previous interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2015). By considering the arguments of Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), and Boyce and Neale (2006), conducting in-depth interviews, transcribing and analysing the findings were time-consuming, which posed a challenge for the research timeframe, the sample size was limited to fifteen (15) practitioners. This number was considered enough to validate and discover patterns across the data (Malterud et al., 2015; Terry et al., 2017; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Interviews can be "*face-to-face interactions in which researchers typically pose questions that respondents answer*" (Gephart, 2004, p. 458). Furthermore, interviews help reveal multiple realities (Stake, 2010). As Simons (2009, p. 43) mentioned, interviews "*reveal more than can be detected or reliably assumed from observing a situation*". This was evident further in Kvale (1983), who explained that qualitative researchers "*gather descriptions of the life-world of the*

interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale (1983, p. 174). Also, interviews are a *“construction site for knowledge with mutual learning simultaneously taking place between the interviewee(s) and the interviewer”* (Kvale & Brinkmann, 1996, p. 14).

This research focuses on non-profits in NZ because there has been a lack of research on social media usage and adoption in recent years. The researcher adopted purposeful sampling to recruit the research participants or individuals. The unit of analysis for this research is the individuals not the organisations as the research focuses on participants’ personal experiences and perceptions regarding the use of social media in non-profit contexts. Purposive sampling assists in obtaining a sufficient sample that could produce significant results in a reasonable timeframe and condition to achieve the aim and objectives of the study (Rubin & Babbie, 2006). The inclusion criteria selected were participants' position in the organisation, personal experience with social media, and strategic communication. Some of the participants were non-profit employees. At the same time, a few of them work as consultants in non-profits, as these organisations do not have the internal resources to handle social media activities independently. This variation of interviewee types was invaluable in bringing a broad range of opinions to light, as Taylor and others (2023) recommended. More experienced participants were chosen as they were likely to provide more valuable insights openly into the changes in the adoption and application of social media over time. Their demographics are shown below (**Table 5.3.1**).

5.4 Ethics Standards

Daymon and Holloway (2010) contended that each research project needs to follow high ethical standards. Ethics approval sign-off from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) - Ethics Committee for semi-structured interviews was attained on 17th October 2024, AUTECE Reference number 24/265 (see **Appendix A and C**), and the application number is 19/326. This research adhered to its formulated ethical principles by guaranteeing the participants’ voluntary consent to participate before the interviews and answering questions during the interviews. The participants’ privacy was secured by anonymising their data as pseudonyms in the interview transcripts and respecting confidentiality.

Table 5.3.1: Profiles of participants

Participant ID	Sector	Position	Social media experience
Participant 1	Environment	Founder Trustee	15 years
Participant 2	Environment	Communication and Education Lead	2 years
Participant 3	Social services (Startup organisation)	CEO	9 months
Participant 4 (2 employees joined)	Health	1. Communication Manager 2. Digital Content Creator	5 years 1 month
Participant 5	Volunteering	Communications Manager	3 and ½ years
Participant 6	Animal welfare	Executive Director and the Founder	4 years
Participant 7	Environment	Lead Advocate	5 years
Participant 8	Animal welfare	Communication and Marketing Manager	5 years
Participant 9	Animal welfare	Fundraising Content Specialist	3 and 1/2 years
Participant 10	Environmental conservation	Director of Communication and Marketing	3 years
Participant 11	Culture and recreation	Marketing Consultant	7 years
Participant 12	Sports	Content Creator	5 years
Participant 13	Social	Fundraising and Communication Advisor	1 year 7 months
Participant 14	Social	Community Coordinator	5 years

5.5 Sample Selection

The selected sample of non-profits for this thesis is registered charities and trusts. Trusts are registered as charitable trust boards under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 and with the new Trusts Act 2019 or Charity under the Charities Act 2005, and incorporations registered under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. At the screening stage, participant organisations were identified through online databases, including <https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz> and <https://app.businessregisters.govt.nz>. Then, the researcher reviewed their websites to ensure that those non-profits actively use at least two social media applications, thereby selecting them.

In the second stage, potential participants were contacted via an initial invitation email, inviting them to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. An information sheet (see **Appendix B**) containing all relevant information detailing the study's purpose and interview process was attached to this email. Participants who expressed interest in participating were then contacted via email or phone to arrange a time for the online interviews.

After sending the initial participant recruitment invitation, the first reminder was sent in one week later, gently reminding participants of the study and encouraging them to contact us if they have any questions or require further information.

For some organisations, final reminders were sent three days before the end of the two-week period as no response was received after the first reminder to seek a final opportunity for participants to confirm their interest or ask any remaining questions before the invitation closed. Interview invitations were sent in two phases. The first batch of research invitations contacted 22 non-profits concerned about environmental protection, health, and animal and child welfare in October 2024 via emails. Five participants were recruited based on consent, achieving a 22% success rate. After a temporary pause for the Christmas and year-end business closures till mid-January, another 35 email invitations were sent to the non-profits working in leisure, sports, arts, culture, volunteering, and social welfare.

In addition, the participants were encouraged to forward the contact details of their fellow non-profits to seek the potential opportunity for the researcher to conduct interviews with the recommended non-profits. As a result, 11 positive responses were received, and 9 recruitments were done based on the participants' experiences and their working roles. The success rate in the section phase of the participant recruitment was 31%, whereas the overall success rate was increased to 28%. Interviews were conducted from November 2024 to February 2025. It was challenging to find interview participants; many organisations declined to participate in this research study due to several factors, including staff unavailability, limited organisational capacity, preference to focus on mission-oriented activities rather than research participation, and ongoing revisions to their social media strategies. Interviews were conducted and recorded via Microsoft Teams after considering the participants' online presence, tech-savvy, and flexibility.

The demographic range of the participants varies drastically. In the sample, participants have different levels of experience in handling social media for their respective organisations, ranging from 9 months to 15 years. They hold various positions in non-profits and have the decision-making power and experience to manage and control the organisation's social media strategy, content, and audience. They often liaise with the community and are aware of local community developments. The pseudonyms were given to Participants 1 to 14 to maintain anonymity.

In collecting qualitative data, the researcher must decide whether the data have been collected sufficiently. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), this is the question of data saturation, which determines the achievement of intended research objectives. Qualitative studies rely heavily on the adequacy of data collected to answer research questions and the validity of findings (Hennink & Kaiser, 2021). Saturation signifies that a researcher must stop collecting more data for a particular study. Data saturation has been widely used in social science studies. It has become a critical consideration of the qualitative approach, which has its roots in grounded theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and saves the time and energy of the researcher. An interview is considered as the most common method of collecting qualitative data and involves conversations with participants (Mwita, 2022).

Saturation is reached when an interviewer finds repetition of the same information from the subjects (Saunders et al., 2009). Hennink and Kaiser (2021) argue that saturation often reaches between the 9th and 17th interviews and indicates an average saturation point in the 13th interview. Using purposive sampling increases the chances of a researcher reaching saturation because the subjects obtained through the technique have rich information on the issue that a particular qualitative study intends to address (Hennink et al., 2019; Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, fourteen (14) semi-structured interviews were conducted for this research, constrained by the participants' time, effort, and availability. In addition, the researcher noticed that no new keywords, codes, or themes were emerging from the last few transcripts. Further, this qualitative analysis reached the point where the researcher realised that data had been fully explored, understood, and used to their full potential to achieve the required aim of the research.

5.6 Interview Process

The researcher adopted the funnel approach of interviewing to build trust and rapport. All interviews were recorded via Microsoft Teams with the consent of the participants. The researcher presented questions unbiasedly to curtail the interviewer's and interviewee's biases (Collins et al., 2005). Each interview lasted about 45 to 60 minutes and began with an introduction, including study purpose, nature of the interview, privacy measures, and emphasis that they can the answers to the questions based on their experience. Interview questions followed a semi-structured design, and the sequence of the questions was adapted to each conversation. Open questions guided the interviews and were intended to invite practitioners to present their viewpoints extensively. This allowed the collection of complex and rich data to answer the research questions and to give further explanations for the findings of the

campaign analysis. Further explanations of the questions were provided when needed, and interviewees were asked to clarify their answers if they were indistinct to ensure data quality (Terry et al., 2017).

Sixteen major questions and relevant sub-questions were formulated in response to the literature review (see **Appendix D**). Following Roulston and Choi's (2018) recommendation, these open-ended questions aimed to elicit answers to the research questions, starting with broad questions and changing to more specific questions. First, two were screening questions to gather data relating to their role, experience, and how their role connected with the social media handling of the organisation. The interviewees were then asked to articulate their views on how social media has been used for connecting and building networks, fostering community ties, promoting events, and enhancing trust relationships. Then, they prompted the reasoning for using various social media platforms, which platforms they applied to, and how often (RQ1).

These insights allowed a deeper understanding of the existing usage of social media in the organisation for community engagement and public trust. In addition, participants were questioned on their social media strategy, the content they share on each platform, the use of different tools available on each platform, how they handle feedback, and how they use social media to build social capital. In addition, the challenges they encounter when using social media and the opportunities they can enjoy using social media were asked about (RQ2).

After the interviews, the transcripts were circulated among the participants, allowing them to review and suggest amendments to the transcripts if they wished. Academically, this member-checking technique (Birt et al., 2016) is vital to explore the credibility of the results. The interview questions have been sent to one interviewee via e-mail as an attachment based on her request. This approach helped her respond to the set of questions without any hurry. Also, it allowed her to come back and forth within the document by accumulating more in-depth information regarding social media use by her organisation.

5.7 Data Analysis

It is often argued that qualitative data analysis is complex, requires much analytical effort, is time-consuming, and has limited theoretical attention. According to some scholars, this analytical process can be frustrating, primarily for novice researchers without clear-cut guidelines on analysing qualitative data using specific analytical methods (De Casterlé et al.,

2011). For this study, the researcher used an inductive research approach. The theory will be developed using the inductive research approach based on the collected results. According to Thomas (2006, p. 238), inductive analysis refers to “*approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts and themes*”. It entails going through row by row thoroughly and assigning codes to paragraphs or segments of texts as concepts unfold (Bradley et al., 2007; Curry et al., 2009) relevant to the research questions (Thomas, 2006). However, in the deductive research approach, the researcher formulates a theory, and then hypotheses are developed; after that, the identified hypotheses are tested using a structured research strategy.

According to Saunders and others (2007) and Greener (2008), research philosophy constructivism is more likely to own the inductive research approach. The research approach for this study is inductive since the study aims to create a deeper understanding of how NZ non-profits use the different types of social media platforms for community engagement and public trust in exploring barriers and opportunities. The data analysis process started with the data reading and digesting. These steps help make sense of the whole data set and understand “*what is going on*” (Morse, 1999, p. 404) through reflexivity and open-mindedness using the narratives. After several readings of the transcripts, the process was initiated to identify key concepts and themes using the research questions as the lenses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elo et al., 2014).

For this research, a thematic analysis was applied to analyse the interview findings. Thematic analysis is “*the method for identifying, analyzing patterns (themes) within data*” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). According to Ayres (2007 and 2007b), thematic analysis is the most appropriate method for answering questions such as “What opportunities and challenges do non-profits face when using social media?”. Further, this method is a flexible yet valuable tool that can provide rich, detailed, complex nature of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, thematic analysis assists in identifying common trends in the interviews (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000), discovering the attitudes, underlying real reasons, and behaviours of the people under study, and investigating what has happened (Have, 2004). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this method gives a minimal description of the interview transcripts but helps interpret numerous aspects of the research questions. **Table 5.7.1** summarises the phases of thematic analysis adopted and followed in data analysis for this research.

Table 5.7.1: Phases of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading data, and noting initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire dataset, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire dataset (Level 2), generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	An ongoing analysis is needed to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis, selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts, relating back the analysis to the research questions and literature, and producing a scholarly analysis report.

From the researcher’s point of view, subjectivity is an important factor for reflexive thematic analysis. It aims to provide “*a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in the data*” (Braun et al., 2019, p. 848). The researcher is a storyteller, actively interpreting data through the lens of their own cultural affiliation and social positionings, theoretical assumptions, ideology, and academic knowledge (Braun et al., 2019).

In line with the researcher's reflexivity to increase the research quality, thematic analysis is proposed as a suitable method to analyse various data types, including the interview findings (Terry et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is therefore considered invaluable for analysing the findings of the semi-structured in-depth interviews to develop a comprehensive understanding of the opinion of public relations practitioners concerning the role of social media in contemporary public relations. Therefore, the aforementioned reasons necessitated the researcher to use thematic analysis for this research.

5.8 Data Coding and Themes

Before developing codes, the researcher iteratively read the transcripts to understand the data, including latent and manifest content, and noted initial ideas on a paper. Then, by using Microsoft Word, open codes were highlighted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thereby, the researcher reduced and organised the dataset into codes. According to Kelle & Bird (1995), coding can be done either with the help of computer software or manually. The researcher used a mixed approach, using both computer software and manual. Data relevant to answering the research questions were identified and summarised. Different codes were highlighted in different

colours, and notes were entered using Microsoft Word's comment function. These open codes are the initial coding level that aims to explain the data and phenomena in concept form. Therefore, some can be classified as a concept-indicator model (Saldaña, 2021). Open coding is derived from the raw data of transcripts and is later added to the themes. In this study, 69 codes were identified (see **Appendix H**) with a brief description to explain the meaning of the code. In the second cycle of open coding, the initial open codes were carefully studied and reviewed to identify the overlapping, repetitive, or unnecessary codes. This iterative process reduced the number of codes to 68.

In the next step, themes are identified based on codes. A theme rationally amalgamates essential data that could help to organise findings (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012). Further, it summarises ideas and concepts important for the research questions and shows a certain level of response pattern within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These identified themes were reviewed with codes extracted and transcripts given to ensure appropriateness and sufficiency. Then, NVivo 14 is used to organise the codes and themes for reporting. With the help of NVivo 14, thematic maps were developed to enhance readability (Terry et al., 2017). Even preliminary themes were defined and refined to identify the exact meaning of the theme; finally, 13 themes were identified. The most important themes were **social media analytics, social media strategy, challenges, opportunities**, and relation to the Social Capital Theory. The themes, like social media platforms used, succession plan, and organisations' experience with social media, were less central and served the purpose of collecting additional information that could help interpret the information coded under the themes.

5.9 Reliability and Validity of the Study

Reliability and validity are the two most important concepts in the research design that define and examine the quality of the study. Reliability expresses the trustworthiness and coherence of the thesis, while validity refers to how well the results among the study participants represent true findings among similar individuals outside (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). As Easterby-Smith and others (2000) ask, reliability should be able to address concerns about other occurrences, including whether the measures will be the same. These questions may include: Are similar observations possible for other observers in the future, and is data transparency guaranteed by tracing the raw data for the study? Several vulnerabilities affecting reliability measures were identified, including participant error, participant biases, and observer error (Saunders et al., 2007), and the researcher considered adequate mitigation steps.

To overcome the participant error, the researcher recruited participants with adequate work experience with social media, intending to gather accurate and reliable answers to the research questions. Participants' responses were compared with other participants' responses. In addition to that, the interviews were scheduled at their convenience to avoid unnecessary rushes and conflicts, allowing them adequate time to recall and give appropriate examples if they were not comfortable with the questions. The researcher actively listened and analysed the logical flow of the given answers when conducting interviews. In order to avoid participant biases, the researcher built a good rapport with the participants by clarifying the research purpose, ensuring the confidentiality of the participants and data by highlighting that all respondents were informed that the data collected were treated anonymously, allowing the participants to ask questions about this research before the commencement of the interview.

This thesis has given great attention to identifying and generating the interview questions, and sample bias was eliminated without sharing the questionnaires prior to the interviews. Moreover, the researcher focused on generating all the interview questions for each participant, confirmed that all the interviewees had been presented the same questionnaire, and ensured that participants similarly understood the questions by avoiding technical terms, double-barrelled questions, and verbal probing or emailing it beforehand for one participant at her request. If the respondents had difficulties understanding the interview question, the researcher was fully involved in clarifying the issue to ensure the interviewee could fully understand the question. Also, the researcher strictly focused on the research questions, and the objectives were fully addressed when generating the interview questionnaire.

Validity also refers to whether the data collected and analysed reflect what they appear to be about and whether appropriate attention was given (Saunders et al., 2007). In similar terms, the degree to which the researcher is examining what is supposed, the precision of the examination, and the measurement of the study (Adams et al., 2014) were also considered when designing the interview questionnaire and analysing the interview transcripts. To receive the most accurate and relevant responses from the interviewees, the researcher focuses on selecting respondents who work with social media and actively play the role of handling social media for their organisation. This way, the researcher guaranteed that the responses were reliable and competent. As a result, the research aim was fulfilled to explore how non-profits use social media for community engagement and public trust.

Furthermore, to achieve the validity of this study, the interview questions have been generated based on the existing literature on how non-profits use social media. In addition, the theoretical background and findings presented in the literature and scoping review also increase the validity. Interview questions have been developed carefully, and additional clarifications have been provided by the researcher so that participants have an idea of the most important and relevant information the researcher is seeking. In addition, the transcriptions were emailed after the interviews to let the participant validate their responses independently. However, it is important to understand that we lack research on this subject; therefore, the data cannot be generalised. The researcher also considered theoretical saturation to ensure an adequate sample of participants was recruited for this study.

Conclusion, this study is grounded in the SCT that emphasises the value of social networks, trust, and reciprocal relationships in facilitating collective action and community cohesion. It also provides a conceptual foundation for examining how non-profits can use social media to build and maintain trust through community engagement. In addition, by confirming the online engagement as a form of social capital manifested through digital interactions, shared norms, and mutual support, this framework directly shapes the methodological approach of this study.

5.10 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher explored the research philosophy guiding the proposed research approach, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, ensuring the study's validity and reliability. It begins by restating the research philosophy, providing background information and the context. Then, outlines the qualitative method and the sample selection, along with justifications for the chosen methods. Further, data collection methods detailed including the tools and instruments used, sampling techniques, and the data gathering process. Data analysis methods explained how the collected data was analysed manually, fed into Microsoft Word, and finally with NVivo 14. In getting the pre-approved questionnaire by the AUT, informed voluntary consent, maintaining anonymity, and using pseudonyms in the interview transcripts were the strategies thoroughly considered to adhere to ethical considerations. Limitations in the qualitative method were acknowledged in the later sections. To guarantee reliability and validity, the researcher considered adequate mitigation steps to overcome participant error, participant biases, and observer error to uphold the quality and trustworthiness of the research findings.

CHAPTER 6: Findings

This section interprets and contextualises key findings under 13 themes and 68 related codes to answer the following two research questions,

RQ1: How do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust?

RQ2: What opportunities and challenges do non-profits face when using social media?

Sections 6.1 to 6.4 provide the contextual foundation for understanding how non-profits in NZ utilise social media in their everyday operations. These sections introduce the backgrounds of the participants, the administrative structures governing social media, the platforms most frequently used, and the emerging engagement trends across non-profits. This contextual insight helps explain the degree of organisational emphasis placed on social media and the digital readiness of non-profits to engage with their communities. These findings set the stage for addressing the RQ1, which explores how non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust and the RQ2 which examines the opportunities and challenges they encounter in the social media adaptation. Understanding the participants' experience, organisational priorities, and patterns of platform use allows the researcher to interpret later thematic findings considering the practical realities shaping social media engagement within the non-profit sector.

6.1 Demographics: Experience, Role, and Training

In the sample, participants have different levels of experience handling social media for their respective organisations, from 9 months to 15 years. They hold various positions in non-profits, diversified from Founder Trustee, Education Lead CEO, Communication Manager, Digital Content Creator, Founder Lead Advocate, Fundraising Content Specialist/Advisor, Marketing Consultant, and Community Coordinator with appropriate decision-making power in social media advocacy.

None of the employees had received formal training on social media. However, a few have attended webinars and Zoom discussions, learned at the university as a part of their academic curriculum, or explored their previous employers. The researcher noticed this as a significant drawback that prevents effective and efficient use of social media by non-profits. The participants were very sceptical about the long-term effectiveness of social media in some cases. This lack of knowledge severely impacts the technical understanding of how social

media analytics would consider conventional measures, including engagement (likes, shares, comments), reach, website traffic, and conversions in understanding audience behaviour, campaign performance, and making informed business decisions. Further, non-profits can optimise their social media efforts to get a better return on investment (ROI) by understanding what works and what does not, while allowing them to identify opportunities for improvement, such as emerging trends and cultural shifts.

6.2 Social Media Administration

Most of the non-profits under this study are operated by the head office and have several divisions. As a result, social media operations often require a coordinated and decentralised approach. The social media manager at the head office plays a strategic leadership role in liaising with individuals and communication managers to drive social media for the key non-profit, and they govern core communication strategy at the execution of divisional level.

Social media managers are responsible for setting overarching guidelines, developing brand-aligned content frameworks, and ensuring messaging consistency across all social media platforms. Meanwhile, individual communication managers at the division level are responsible for customising the content and managing social media platforms tailored to their specific audiences based on the causes they plead for community engagement. Regular communication between the head office and divisions via meetings and performance reviews ensures alignment with the social media goals of the non-profits. This decentralised approach also leads to flexibility in making decisions and achieving contextual relevance at the division level. Further, this operating model fosters cohesion and adaptability, enabling the non-profits to maintain a unified brand identity while responding dynamically to the needs and nuances of the target audience.

[Participant 4](#)

And I also liaise with the social media managers across our divisions that we have. So, we have divisions across the country, and each of those divisions has its own social media managers or comms managers. I get some support from and other comms team members. And then across the divisions.

A lot of them are solely social-focused, like a lot of them are Broadcom specialists.

Two non-profits in this study adopted a collaborative volunteer-led model to address the typical resource constraints, mainly the limited staff and technical competence to use social media. They have recruited voluntary university students to support social media activities under the

guidance of a designated manager. The manager and the volunteer are jointly responsible for digital engagement with the community. This model mitigates resource challenges and enables non-profits to harness fresh perspectives with digital fluency. The manager is accountable for the content's quality, strategic alignment, and compliance with the brand guidelines established. The volunteers will create posts, engage with followers, and monitor trends. This volunteer-led model nurtures community involvement while addressing resource constraints by distributing workload cost-effectively and helps foster greater visibility and engagement.

Social media management is shared across multiple teams with a social media manager for the two non-profits studied. This collaborative and inclusive approach oversees content creation, platform management, and audience engagement for these two non-profits, with support and feedback received from staff playing various roles. This collective ownership allows social media activities to reflect broader perspectives and expertise. They contributed content ideas, program updates, and visual media, and assisted in responding to public inquiries online. This inclusive collaboration also fosters transparency and depth of storytelling from real-time experiences within the organisation. While the designated managers ensure consistency and adherence to communication standards, the involvement of broader staff helps overcome silos and reinforces the strategic alignment of social media for everyday operations and ultimately achieves their mission.

6.3 Popular and Least Popular Social Media

When selecting social media platforms, non-profits in the nominated sample were most concerned with a few simple parameters, including organisations' requirements to present online, platform popularity among targeted age groups, facilities, and user friendliness of each platform, and the number of reaches, though they have accounts on various social media platforms. The organisational requirements merely include understanding their target audience, community goals, and the type of content they want to share. In this sample, popularity gained by social media is categorised based on the frequency of use. There is no evidence that the selection of social media was a strategic business decision after evaluating each platform based on key performance indicators and calculating the return on investment by all non-profits in the sample. **Table 6.3.1** summarises the popular and least popular social media platforms for all 14 participant non-profits.

Without a surprise, Facebook and Instagram (both 71.42%) became the most favoured social media platforms among non-profits, while X, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn became the

least. According to respondents, Facebook provides more user-friendly features that are easy to use when organising events and event pages. Facebook also offers a powerful platform for raising awareness, engaging the community, and fundraising. Different demographics represent more followers for non-profits and allow them to share their mission, impact, and stories with a broad audience quickly and easily. In return, increased awareness of the non-profits and their cause/s, potentially attracting more donors, volunteers, and supporters. According to participant feedback, 87% agreed that Facebook provides a space for non-profits to build and engage with their community by sharing updates, running events, and fostering conversations around the non-profit's work. The anticipated end goal is strong community engagement, which could lead to greater loyalty and support for the non-profits.

[Participant 13](#)

And I think because of our demographic, the client, the community we work with as well, they use Facebook the most. We get a lot of, you know, feedback from them through Facebook.

Because, you know, I guess if it's a different organization. Instagram probably would be.

Something that they would be interested in, but for us, we've noticed that Facebook is one that they reply to a lot, engage with a lot. So that's why we use that.

X has become the least preferred social media amongst non-profits, primarily due to the recent political unrest situation on the global stage. Non-profits expressed their desire to avoid political mediation. Malformation and reduced content moderation make it riskier for non-profits to rely on trust and credibility. In most cases, YouTube and TikTok have not been used extensively due to a lack of staff with specialised skills to produce engaging, well-edited videos, and an inability to fund suitable content. The other limitation was that, unlike image-based content (Facebook, Instagram), creating high-quality videos takes more effort and is not feasible with limited resources, making it difficult to invest in video production, editing, and storytelling by the non-profits.

Table 6.3.1: Popular and least popular social media platforms

Name of the non-profit	Social media platforms use	Popular platforms	Least popular platforms	No. of years on social media
Participant 1	Facebook, Instagram & TikTok	Facebook	Instagram & TikTok	20 years
Participant 2	Instagram, Facebook & LinkedIn	Instagram & Facebook	LinkedIn	Not sure
Participant 3	Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram & YouTube	LinkedIn	YouTube, Facebook & Instagram	10 years ago
Participant 4	Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn & TikTok	Instagram & LinkedIn	TikTok	Nearly 20 years
Participant 5	Facebook, LinkedIn Instagram & X	Facebook & LinkedIn	X	Not sure
Participant 6	X, Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn	Facebook & Instagram	YouTube & X	From the inception of the organisation in 2021
Participant 7	Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn	Instagram	Facebook & LinkedIn	From the inception of the organisation in 2019
Participant 8	Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn & X	Facebook & Instagram	TikTok, X & YouTube	10 years
Participant 9	Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn & TikTok	Instagram, LinkedIn & Facebook	TikTok & YouTube	Not sure
Participant 10	TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn & Threads	TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn & Threads	-	Since its Inception 2012

Name of the non-profit	Social media platforms use	Popular platforms	Least popular platforms	No. of years on social media
Participant 11	LinkedIn, Instagram & Facebook	Instagram & Facebook	LinkedIn, YouTube & TikTok	20 years
Participant 12	Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube & X	Facebook & Instagram	YouTube, X, TikTok & LinkedIn	20 years
Participant 13	LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram & YouTube	Facebook	LinkedIn & YouTube X	5 years
Participant 14	Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube & LinkedIn	Instagram	YouTube	Not sure

6.4 Engagement Trends and Strategies

Non-profits see engagement spikes in their social media posts around certain times of the year, for instance, Daffodil Day, or for doing a big campaign. They noticed a consistent growth in spikes. However, some unpopular topics related to animal welfare still grow slowly because of the social cause they worry about, which is not catching enough attention from the community

The distinguishing social media strategies non-profits use to serve the audience are looking for different content. Instagram appeals to younger audiences and is ideal for visual storytelling, while X is convenient for advocacy, quick updates, and trending discussions. The exact strategies tally with Facebook, which has a diverse age range and is excellent for community engagement. The newest addition to social media, TikTok, attracts Gen Z and is powerful for viral campaigns and awareness. LinkedIn provides a sophisticated professional platform for connecting with professionals and potential donors or corporate sponsors. This allows non-profits to tailor their message to reach different segments of their fan base. For instance, short videos and visual content for Instagram and TikTok.

[Participant 10](#)

And we do that across all the platforms. So, Instagram is very important for young people. Facebook, much older audience, but we have a much older audience so that we're trying to reach a lot of people who are probably retirees and they tend to be volunteering and they want a different kind of content.

Non-profits customise the content considering the audience while sharing the same core message across multiple platforms. Consequently, all non-profits were well aware of the different purposes for which each platform was designed. However, due to the limitations in their social talent, they sought the minimum-suited solution with the least possible time and human resource investments. As a result, the researcher noticed that customising content is not a regular practice among all non-profits. Further, they are forced to manage social media even minimally to maintain a wider reach with the online community, including other non-profits, corporate sponsors, supporters, and to connect with the community that the organisations could not reach through newsletters and e-mails.

Most non-profits were trying to use well-planned content types or formats by combining images, videos, and text to make the content engaging whenever they can, while some non-profits prefer to use images and text due to a lack of resources and time constraints. For the posts, they chose multiple images unless it was a real or a casual post, where there are quite a few posts for trying to tell a story. Fans can slide through at least one or two photos in all other

circumstances. However, one participant used reels frequently as he believes the algorithm favours videos.

Participant 10

*We, I think we do all that we, you know, we've created some videos that we mostly put onto YouTube. We make reels. A lot of reels are very short-form video content that typically goes to Instagram or TikTok. And then we want really good photos. I think photos we care a lot about. And then photos on Facebook really matter. So, we're writing stories to try and get good photos. Most photos are pretty *****.*

And but it's kind of, you know, it should do our best to get good images to go with the stories we're telling. I think images are storytelling in and of themselves. We also, you know, if we post up a short video of a Kiwi, we did one a couple of months ago of a Kiwi on Makara Trail.

Non-profits (21.42%) use Canva and CapCut to quickly create high-quality content and save money to engage their audience effectively with eye-catching visuals and emotional storytelling with pre-defined templates. These tools help increase awareness, drive donations, and boost engagement skills without requiring advanced design.

Non-profits also tend to use hashtags, but it seems they are not as effective as they used to be or are not used as anymore. Some think that hashtags are an outdated tool people use to search on the Internet and are less crucial for driving reach and engagement compared to the past. As a result, two non-profits stated they used a limited number of hashtags, probably two, in a sporadic way to get the reach. Out of the interviewed sample, 57.14% confirmed that hashtags did not work for them due to algorithm changes, increased prominence on content quality and engagement, and the rise of AI-powered search features.

Those participants always use smart messages for specific campaigns and community discussions. For instance, for cervical cancer awareness, we used the #cervicalcancer, and that particular non-profit noticed that multiple different communities were posting particular influencers. Therefore, the hashtags helped to track differently in a responsive way. Non-profits aim to use hashtags more to reach out to influencers. Another non-profit said multiethnic hashtags were very effective when hashtags are used to find support on search engines. Sometimes, non-profits use hashtags in their comments that go hand in hand with their international campaigns since they are a part of a coalition. One non-profit used hashtags on LinkedIn to do things like tagging different organisations or tagging different people. However, non-profits prefer writing a post over adding links because their posts relate to a blog or an event. In addition, non-profits have the impression that the algorithm or Instagram will not pick up hashtags compared to an actual post.

Live Q&A sessions and online surveys are less popular among non-profits, and only 7.14% use social media for surveys, while 21.42% use them for live Q&A sessions. Primarily, it happened because the resource constraints imposed by non-profits did not align with discussions about the actual postings. Some non-profits have tried and experienced a few social media platforms for Q&A sessions, but have not utilised them, and they are not very user-friendly. One stated that they occasionally do surveys but prefer to use Google Forms, as any invitee can access it. Moreover, publishing a survey or a Q&A on Facebook can be accessible to people with Facebook accounts. Another said they do not rely on polls and surveys on social media; therefore, they prefer to use outside surveys. Another interesting finding was that some participants think social media is an instant, casual knowledge base that does not carry a message over the long run. Thus, conducting Live Q&A sessions and online surveys will not be outcome-driven.

Most of the organisations are now using stories to get people on board, which will be a growing trend as more people are engaged. In addition, participants sensed that writing a story was easier than doing a live Q&A. Another prefers webinars over Q&A sessions through Zoom. Since webinars typically get a couple of hundred people engaged, and later webinars can be added on YouTube, they might get a few thousand people on YouTube, and they prefer it over Q&A. Two non-profits had favourable opinions about using social media for Q&A.

The frequency of social media communication for non-profits depends on the platform, audience, and initiatives that they are involved in. One participant confirmed that they laid out a plan ahead of the week and prepared posting materials, aiming for two posts a week on each platform. More interesting, one participant stated that they do educational posts on Tuesdays and entertainment material on Thursdays across all the platforms to keep the community engaged and alive. In an extreme situation, only one respondent stated that they do not do it regularly. At most, it would be a couple of posts for days or once every two weeks. On average, on Instagram and Facebook, they try to do each twice a week at a minimum, whereas on LinkedIn, they are probably aiming for once a month.

Most importantly, the majority of organisations seem to be more active on social media when closer to the campaign, and they used to post twice a day; otherwise, the frequency is posted twice a week. Sports and recreation non-profits tend to be more active during the summer season. It will be up to four or five times daily, usually at least once or twice. The highlighting point of observation was that the posting frequency significantly depends on the types of

channels on which non-profits are more active. For example, Facebook and Instagram have more frequent posts (average two to three times a week), while LinkedIn has one post a week.

Participant 6

Our aim is to post three times a week on Facebook and Instagram.

And we do LinkedIn a bit less frequently. We will put the same posts on LinkedIn where they're relevant, and we sometimes do separate posts on LinkedIn. We'll usually post at least once a week on LinkedIn, but sometimes it depends on what we're posting about.

Participant 7

We try to post on Instagram twice a week.

LinkedIn, we don't post on very often.

And we do LinkedIn a bit less frequently. We will put the same posts on LinkedIn where they're relevant, and we sometimes do separate posts on LinkedIn...

A single charity in the group stated that they used to post at peak hours, two posts every week, between 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm on Facebook and Instagram. It is also very concerned about the availability of the community's online presence, especially during the summer, since people have been on leave and know that people who are on holiday are not engaging on social media as much as they might, and then, LinkedIn is probably two to four a week. However, this study can confirm that non-profits increasingly rely on Facebook and Instagram advertising (including WhatsApp) as part of their social media strategies to foster community engagement and maximise outreach impact.

A few non-profits use several Facebook pages to manage and build relationships with the community. According to those non-profits, having multiple pages helps them to reach different audiences effectively, improve engagement experience by keeping content relevant, and enhance regional and local impact. This approach further functions better for campaign organising, where it keeps the messaging clear, mainly since a particular non-profit operates across several territories. Moreover, multiple pages boost visibility and ad targeting through Facebook's algorithm. However, this multiple-page approach can be overwhelming, especially for small and medium-sized non-profits, due to continuous challenges in utilising limited resources.

6.5 Use for Community Engagement

Non-profits connect with their supporters, volunteers, and potential donors, fostering a sense of community and building relationships. They leverage these platforms for fundraising, audience engagement, community building, and promoting their causes. Built-in fundraising tools in social media allow non-profits to create personalised campaigns, share their mission,

highlight their programs, and raise awareness about important issues they try to address. This research comprehensively analyses how non-profits use social media to improve community engagement to answer the first part of the research question, **RQ1: How do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust?**

Subsections will highlight ways non-profits use social media to improve community engagement by summarising study findings.

6.5.1 Extending the Audience

Non-profits also use social media to reach out to a broad audience who support them, including their partners or trustees, sponsors, and followers with collegial relationships. Some said they have used social media more as a way of reaching out to influencers and the community, and they also want to get involved in the campaigns more with other non-profits that have the same shared vision. One non-profit clearly showed interest on Instagram over others, which will start with tapping into volunteering.

All the non-profits experienced intensely how social media facilitates rapid communication, allows for targeted messaging, and enables real-time engagement with supporters, fostering a sense of belonging and advocacy. The most significant achievement they attained through social media was reaching potential supporters who might not have been reached through traditional media. Their preference is for the content to be shared quickly and virally, amplifying the message and raising awareness about the cause, which is also apparent during the interviews.

From another perspective, engaging content, including stories, images, and videos, helped spark discussions and encouraged supporters to share their experiences and perspectives through real-time interaction. The quick responses to questions or concerns are also a significant influencer for non-profits staying on social media. Subsequently, Facebook and X allow instant updates and announcements to inform supporters about developments and activities, urging non-profits to use them to reach out to the community more.

Social media is a powerful platform for fostering two-way dialogue by facilitating direct interaction for a more conversational and engaging experience through comments, likes, shares, and direct messages, and receiving immediate feedback on content and initiatives, enabling non-profits to amend their strategies based on user insights. Even non-profits posted anonymously on Reddit to get into interesting discussions around the HPV vaccine and

evaluate the feedback. The following snippet shows how rapidly one can get a response and redirection from social media, even for a minor inquiry.

[Participant 1](#)

Well, this morning I got a post from somebody who found a moth outside their workplace, and they wanted to know what the moth was. In this particular instance, I just said, try another Facebook group to find out what it is, because I don't know, or recently we asked them to get them involved. We asked them what's their favourite nectar flower for butterflies. So, right now we've got flowering plants out there and the butterflies come and use get nectar from the flowers. So, we said, what's your favourite one? What's the most popular one flowering in your garden right now?

The following comments show the extent of bravery that non-profits show in receiving negative feedback. Irrespective of the sentiment, they love to engage with the community, which reflects the organisation's maturity.

[Participant 14](#)

*I think it's a good thing. I think it's a good thing for us to kind of see how people want to communicate with us. Again, I think it makes us more relatable to be able to interact with our audience and to give them the comments.
Some are just, I don't know. They're really anything. So, it's not.
I think it's good that they want to engage with us.*

According to one participant, non-profits must be in online conversations to build transparency and public sentiment. However, some non-profits feel that face-to-face, it is much harder to be a bully, but cyber-bullying is possible. The debate on the Internet is good for seeing that information, truth, and actual science-based knowledge are put out to connect with people. The same approach should be maintained to ensure species conservation in NZ, which is a lot about removing possums, rats, stoats, weasels, and ferrets from the landscape, even though these discussions seem very cruel, that discourse or discussion needs to happen to eradicate misinformation. New emerging technology and these discussions are the most important on Facebook, whereas Instagram or TikTok do not have tools to facilitate such discussions.

All non-profits stated they interact as much as possible to answer questions and correct misunderstandings. They always try to reply to comments, interact with them, and answer questions in general. Animal conservation non-profits do posts asking people to put a picture of their animal to make that interaction effective and live. However, those non-profits cannot restrict people from spreading misinformation on social media. Some non-profits moderate comments and messages, which results in them getting many questions. Social media helps people feel like they are still a part of that community engagement, and they can see what is

going on behind the scenes. Engaging with the community will remind them that non-profits exist and work towards social welfare.

6.5.2 Raising Awareness

Social media offers many possibilities for raising awareness of preventing non-communicable diseases and creating an interactive learning environment. This study proves a favourable trend among social media users, like the recent campaign on cervical cancer, whereby once someone comments on someone, another person comes in and says she appreciates others' opinions and who has gone through the same experiences. Moreover, the free flow of information can spark group conversations, and community members often correct misunderstandings around the fear.

In the sample, social media helps to stop the spreading of misinformation about the activities carried out by some non-profits. When they have complex topics related to predator-free, one of the ways to make islands predator-free is to drop the toxins from special pellets. Possums and rats have eaten those pellets, and then those animals died. It became very controversial, making people freak out, and there was much misinformation. The non-profit had to spend much time trying to talk about the positive benefits through social media.

Opposed to what is stopping misinformation, one of the leading non-profits shares posts as a wake-up call to ask the community to react to false facts. They quickly responded to the feedback and deleted the content later. Non-profits share all positive and negative news, which impacts balancing social media use. This appreciative motive stems from reality and is closer to the truth. One prominent non-profit in the sample uses a mixed approach, as some of the posts are more for entertainment while others are for learning about what lives in the lakes and rivers. Even though posts are not directly related to their mission, they tried to build a connection between the community and the water. They attempted to make content that gets people to think deeper about their actions and how they impact the water. Non-profits share stories about good versus bad all the time. They educate the community and show them the research on the lake by publishing photos of the lake's pollution. Furthermore, the hardest thing about working around the waterways is that many issues are below the surface, and lakes are under much pressure due to human activities.

According to a conservation non-profit, conservation initiatives functioned successfully on social media. Occasionally, they received negative feedback, claiming it is an opportunity to

engage with people more and hopefully change their perception of things. They have posted face value facts about Kiwi and Kiwi conservation, with a lot around what people can do to help save the Kiwis, predator control, dog control, and donations are helping their cause. These posts helped them in reforestation, and much of the work was for Kiwi conservation. Later, Kiwi conservation had flow-on effects on other species and the broader environment. Then, they also share those bigger stories, including picking up rubbish and keeping cats inside, even though these actions do not necessarily impact Kiwis. According to them, education is followed by taking action.

Participant 8

One example actually is XXX is working with forestry or some forestry organisations because Pine Plantation Forest has been identified as a really good habitat for Kiwi and so we're looking at going well. There are all these thousands and thousands of acres of Pine forests around. Why can't Kiwis live in these areas? And so, we've started, you know, engaging with people, engaging with forestry owners. Kind of educating some of these people who want to be able to help conservation, and so we shared a post about this, you know, conservation of New Zealand. And so that was a really good opportunity for us to educate people around like actually keyword can live in pine. It's a really good habitat when you're working with people who actually want to make a difference. A lot of these organisations understand the impact that they are having on conservation.

Another example the researcher encountered was how a non-profit timed an important event every June, such as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. They designed tiles for that and then published more content around awareness during June by sharing with the community how individuals can help. The volume of information sharing grows rapidly, including why staying safe is important, why you know you must be mindful of falls, what exercise is important, etc. It was a big campaign that they do mid-year, so that one does not just target the elderly, but it also targets younger people, because it is also like telling them these are the signs that someone close to you might be experiencing this.

However, educating individuals on social media is challenging for some non-profits, primarily due to distractions, security and privacy risks, and the potential for superficial interactions and misinformation. According to the study results, even non-profits that share facts, people tend to see them as misinformation, especially when having superficial interactions with others. Consequently, social media has become a breeding ground for spreading misinformation and fake news, making evaluating online information and critically identifying credible sources essential.

In general, the educational function is utilised as an opportunity for non-profits to plug into the community. For one creative writing competition, writings come from all over and have been

altered. The original writings were left on social media so that people could see them because others thought the book was rich and worth paying for. Again, non-profits use social media to tell a good story and to get their programs out. Education does it in terms of showing physical activities in Prepare to Perform, which is a hydration, sleep, and nutrition program. Non-profit might advertise that their prepared performance program focuses on what the school is next, without doing much about the actual education in the future.

6.5.3 Fundraising

Most non-profits in the sample use social media for fundraising in varying degrees. Since Facebook has all the dedicated built-in tools, it is favoured among others for raising funds. The volume of posts for fundraising has an exponential growth when organising events. On the other hand, the availability of social networks 24x7x2365 makes it a popular platform for non-profits. The embedded security and privacy features make it less complicated to implement additional payment gateways to secure financial transactions (donations) or to protect personal details.

Non-profits encourage certainty of constant support from regular donors, including three to four specific fundraisers rather than a few one-offs. They also prefer collective fundraising, engaging a more extensive fan base. Anyway, unlike other initiatives, all non-profits have a mission and a well-designed plan to be executed to collect from the public. For that reason, non-profits broadly speak to the nature of the collective to plead for support from everyone working together.

Planning goes through a thorough review of the content creation for fundraising for some non-profits. They customise the content to appeal quite differently on social media when addressing different types of audiences. For example, a non-profit did a regular monthly fundraiser mapped along with an incredible animal story. An animal story of a kitten who had been burned and urgently needed care. The series of photos made this appealing, emotional, and the campaign did so much better than most of the other fundraisers. It got shared so far and wide, raising much more than expected.

Online fundraising played a more significant role in NZ during the COVID-19 lockdowns. In 2021, the same non-profit had to cancel a big trade appeal fundraiser at the last minute because of lockdowns. They put the posting on social media. With a punchline, “*we cannot hit the streets. Can you help us fundraise?*” They stand to lose \$300,000 otherwise, which an average

day would usually raise. They were able to raise over \$300,000 in a day. Auctions are popular among non-profits in terms of raising funds.

Three charities out of the study sample chose to support certain causes to fundraise on social media. For the floods in a different country, a non-profit put it as their event on behalf of the affected community, and the event management was very intact. The receipt is a partnership creation that is more than a post on Facebook. When writing a letter to ask for sponsorship, sometimes use a link to refer to the non-profit's social media or event photographs. Nevertheless, they do not openly ask for sponsorship on social media.

Also, some organisations do not use social media to raise funds due to their ongoing experiences and anticipated financial limitations of the targeted audience.

Participant 2

I do struggle with fundraising stuff on social media. Well, it's just on Instagram. I'm aware that our primary audience on Instagram doesn't really have the money to give necessarily.

I would cater that a bit more on Facebook because knowing that the older generation isn't a bit better of a place to give and we also don't want people to feel guilty that if they're not donating to us, they're not helping or you know what I mean? B'cause there are other ways to help, so.

But another thing that we try to do is promote if businesses support us, then we'll showcase them or we'll give them a shout out and hopefully...

Key strategies for successfully raising funds on social media are creating compelling content, sharing stories, and fostering relationships with supporters. Also, partnering with influencers can expand reach and credibility. Consistency is key to keeping the audience engaged, and as a result, creating a posting schedule is important.

6.5.4 Organising or Promoting Events

By leveraging platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, non-profits reach a wider audience, engage with potential supporters, and generate buzz around their events. Usually, non-profits create dedicated event pages on Facebook to share details and updates and encourage RSVPs when physical attendance is required. Employ polls, quizzes, and live Q&A sessions for virtual events to encourage audience participation and foster a sense of community. Also, invite and encourage followers to share their experiences using the event hashtag, and allow for organic content creation. Non-profits rarely promote early bird registration, contests, and giveaways to build anticipation and incentivise early engagement.

Facebook is favoured among other social media platforms for organising and promoting events because of its event management tool. Even though Instagram is popular among the younger

generation, it cannot effectively manage events. Facilities are different for LinkedIn. It has a certain array of event management capabilities but is not as hugely engaged a platform for non-profits, and maybe the case is that non-profits are underutilised.

[Participant 11](#)

Like for example the methods, the tools that set up for events in Facebook for example, is really cool and it can help you to control a lot of things about the event.

We could have community event just to catch up. We put up an event if there is event that is similar in our in the ethos and in purpose to what we have, we share it.

Out of 35.71% of the sample, use their home Facebook page to advertise events without creating an event-specific one. To reach out to young people, a few non-profits make funny posts to attract them more frequently and ensure that young people are shown in the event information. Non-profit's impulse individuals show interest in the event, then their friends will get a notification on Facebook. Most of the time, they would link event information to social media for registration or put all the information about the event in the caption. Whereas for the older audience to get them to come, some non-profits focus more on newspaper articles to get their event information. A single charity uses LinkedIn to promote its events and has received overwhelming support from similar organisations. During the post-campaign period, two non-profits confirmed that they post key moments and positive feedback from the event to generate further buzz and encourage future participation. However, none of the non-profits stated that they would consider feedback, identify areas for improvement, or inform future event planning.

6.5.5 Giving Shout-outs

Non-profits extensively use social media to thank their funders and supporters. For instance, one non-profit recently thanked its sponsors for helping run a big school session where 100 kids can come out and explore the waterways. That non-profit showed the good work the sponsors did to inspire other groups with the same potential to assist their social causes.

Even though almost all non-profits use social media to thank sponsors, donors, and supporters, some would like to encourage people to thank volunteers using social media. National Volunteer Week, for example, has many posts thanking volunteers, particularly those that happen in, and non-profits amplify that by sharing many posts. One non-profit had a campaign during the National Volunteer Week. Then, a month-long thanking volunteers campaign started in the last two years, called the Big Shout Out, and lasted for a whole month during June,

incorporating national volunteering. That particular non-profit was trying to encourage people to thank volunteers. Over half of the sample uses Facebook to thank their stakeholders, while 35.71% use Instagram more for more light-hearted purposes.

6.5.6 Encouraging Volunteerism

Promoting volunteerism (Farrow & Yuan, 2011) is not a favourite movement among non-profits in this selected sample, maybe because most non-profits operate in a hybrid environment after COVID-19. A few non-profits promote online volunteering opportunities, making volunteering more accessible for those with limited time or mobility. In addition, some stated that their experience called attention to collaborative resilience by fostering alliances during disasters (Acar & Muraki, 2011). The use of X and Facebook during the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Gabrielle was significant. Virtual volunteering seems to form and collaborate easily, and it acts as an alternative to the decreasing engagement of real volunteers.

Another motive was to use social media for volunteering to reduce the communication overhead associated with real volunteerism in recruiting, expanding the reach of volunteer opportunities, and retaining volunteers. The broader reach of social media also increases the chances of finding volunteers with the right skills and interests. However, 28.57% of non-profits actively show their interest in using social media to promote virtual volunteers.

6.5.7 Calling for Action

Primarily, non-profits call for actions to encourage engagement, donations, and volunteering by utilising compelling visuals, timely information, and personalised messages to connect with their audience and motivate participation. A prompt encourages the audience to take a specific action, such as liking, commenting, or sharing a post. Calling for action can be simple or more involved and can be presented in various forms to convert potential leads into support for the desired outcomes.

One non-profit gave an example of getting people to sign a petition for microchipping cats by collaborating with the government. A piece of legislation that goes into the biscuit tin at Parliament, and then they work with the community to write letters to all their ministers. They constantly drive the community towards achieving a goal where thousands have written those letters, while the non-profit shares hundreds of stories about cats on social media. Another way to promote cat welfare was to post stories about cats, conservationist cat owners, and the devastation of feral cats. The punchline should have much good storytelling, appealing to the

audience. Then, ask the community if you like this story or want to learn more, or if you want to advocate for microchipping in your community, fill out this petition. This posting strategy blended well with a strong use of social media to drive a community, and it works. However, telling the stories that resemble the exact cause of the issue in a comprehensive manner, including why this is an issue, and what it means to an individual who lives in a rural setting, an urban setting, a farm setting, a lifestyle block etc. needed for a call for action every time.

According to another, a successful call for action on social media requires that every communication have action attached to it and will not be considered seriously otherwise. This approach works very well with most of the polls. Another example was pleading with volunteers to perform a sharing action, this non-profit had to attach that sharing request to the related story. In case of egregious and systematic human rights violations, non-profits tend to directly ask the community to take a stand against or a stand against them.

The extent of calling for action varies from signing a petition to organising a protest. Nevertheless, the most successful call for action with the paid ads is getting petition signatures and many people to write. For example, in a recent campaign to get one of the leading meat consumer organisations to sign the Better Chicken Commitment, thousands of individuals wrote emails directed to the non-profit's website. Later, the same individuals emailed that meat consumer to raise their standards to the Better Chicken Commitment. Rarely, non-profits make more complex appeals, such as leaving a comment on company websites that refuse to raise welfare standards and then emailing for a call to action to a separate e-mail list of individuals. In order to launch a campaign, the first step will be posting a video that explains the issue. In some instances, the campaign video is very much around the company logo against the call for action, with an appealing animation that changes their logo into a collapsed animal. It shows some footage of the actual conditions of the meat the company consumes. Then, the individuals will be asked to email the company that violates animal welfare. The company's logo was used as an emotional appeal to stop animal rights violations that could cause heart disease on the shed's floor.

To call for action addressing transport issues and minimise the harm that could be caused by vehicles to the environment, one charity asked the community to share photos of biking, walking, or cycling 42 miles between Wanaka and Queenstown. Also, they encourage citizens to vote to make a difference in making policy changes that will reduce emissions and ask people

to contact local councillors to start a discussion on how to solve the transport issue by considering environmental sustainability. However, the story went far beyond getting viral, beyond the non-profit's reach and audience. If the audience loves and engages with the content, they will share it on other platforms. One of the recent successful stories of banning greyhound racing in NZ, which followed about a decade of work from charities. Nevertheless, in terms of mobilising people, charities usually ask the community to take action themselves, whether by writing a letter to a Member of Parliament or signing a petition.

The next example was putting forward some of their skilled individuals as thought leaders and using them to mediate with the government and advocacy team to lobby for causes that need changing. These highly skilled community leaders can see the journey from beginning to end and the result of what a signature can achieve. The National Travel Assistance Scheme, which supports those traveling outside their hometown to get treatment, has not been updated for years and was woefully inadequate. A non-profit partnered with other charities and partners by promoting heavily on social media through their and partner channels, and getting people to sign up. When the campaign closes, more than 1000 people and 30 organisations sign up to share their perspectives on the cause. Then, that non-profit uses these "whys" to create more posts to engage people. Moreover, it telecasts quality media on television to announce an \$18 million boost from the government. Lastly, they created a video to celebrate with the community and reflect on how their social contribution can lead to an impactful action. However, this movement is still ongoing with follow-up steps since there were promises from the government to make more changes, which have not been successful yet.

In the ongoing cervical cancer campaign, the respective non-profit is urging the community to sign, and they can be a hero in a book by revealing their heroic story of helping others to beat cancer. An instructive book published online will then be printed off for the minister. For now, that non-profit uses social media extensively to reach out to influencers and get book talkers to promote this initiative as an influential strategy for people to sign up. Non-profits can enhance user experiences by getting social media users to click a link or take a quick one-minute action to be a part of a powerful campaign. Further, non-profits refrain from breaking laws but encourage the enforcement of laws or changes through social media. However, a call for action can only be achieved when the community unites. Therefore, almost every post-non-profit share will return to what people can do to help social wellbeing.

6.5.8 Provision of Personal Assistance

Social media is a good platform for people to feel directly involved with non-profits. It facilitates directly asking if they have any issues or problems, and those who seek advice. However, due to privacy concerns, seeking personal assistance on social media was not popular among the participants in the chosen sample. People will not openly ask for advice, especially when they go through health issues, since many people do not feel like calling someone and want to see the message on Facebook or Instagram to validate that they are in the right direction. Contrary to what individuals refrain from discussing personal struggles they go through openly on social media, one charity quoted that they seek advice and help for fixing minor day-to-day dwelling issues. For instance, rats in their roof, stoats in their chicken coops, or whatever it might be. If the non-profit has no idea, it might contact the community and call experts to answer those questions as a third party to create a social bridge among isolated individuals.

Interestingly, non-profits see a brighter side of social media use by the community, relatively with much more trouble in communication because people now are less likely to write direct emails to non-profits and go through an email service provider. Plus, people do not like to take the pain of remembering the email addresses of others, hence of the non-profits. Another reason social media is preferred over direct emailing is that writing a formal email design needs a thoughtful process, where a descriptive subject line, a formal salutation, a comprehensive body, a closure, and a signature are required. Without the mentioned components planned correctly in an email, it does not come across as professional and may be interpreted as rude.

Alternatively, individuals come to non-profits through “Groups”. Non-profits answer quite a lot, and sometimes people say that they are going abroad and need some consultation on the particular culture of the country where they plan to meet with some delegations. They do not want to look like they are unknowledgeable during their first business meeting. Non-profits confirmed that most inquiries come through social media on such a magnitude. However, they would like to see that momentum continue to improve community engagement more lightly.

6.5.9 Social Diffusion

Unfortunately, understanding the real impact that non-profits could bring in social changes by encouraging innovation, practice, or idea across the community was not satisfactory among the non-profits studied. Among the non-profits, adopting a new idea or behaviour after observing others on social networks was not observable except in a single organisation.

[Participant 2](#)

And the idea that people are more likely to participate if they see other people doing it. So for instance, we have an adopted drain programme that we try. I try to always show everyone that's been adopting their drains and showing that like more people in the community are getting involved, almost like a FOMO, like you're going to miss out if you don't get involved. And yeah, trying to...

A well-designed adoption process is required for social diffusion to be efficient, which was absent for all non-profits in the sample. The knowledge vacuum among non-profits or across different departments might also delay this adoption.

6.6 Use for Building and Maintaining Public Trust

For all organisations, trust is crucial to operating and achieving social outcomes. Without trust, non-profits struggle to secure funding, attract volunteers, and gain support from the communities they serve. Financial transparency and accountability are key to building public trust, showing the public that their money is being used effectively and ethically. This research comprehensively analyses how non-profits build and maintain public trust on social media to answer the second part of the first research question, **RQ1: How do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust?** Subsections will highlight ways non-profits use social media to build and maintain public trust, aligning with study findings.

6.6.1 Creating Strong Bonds and Networks

Creating bonds would last a lifetime, and it is the pillar of social media that allows non-profits to gain trust and a loyal fan base. Many non-profits maintain consistent interactions and create authentic content that fosters interactions to create a space where the community feels heard and connected. Cultivating genuine relationships and offering support are crucial for building a fulfilling and supportive social network. This is beyond posting the content and actively replying to the comments. Non-profits share their thoughts, experiences, and even their vulnerabilities. This builds trust and creates a deeper connection to develop loyalty. One of the key components is being transparent about every activity that non-profits are involved in, whether it is a failure; they should not hide that from the public. However, examples showed that if the non-profit consistently makes failure a habit, things may not always work for them.

Once the bond has been created, the loyal followers may come back to send through direct messaging by asking for guidance on personal grievances, and paying necessary attention and

priority to those inquiries will help to maintain the connections with loyal followers. It is all about honesty and seeing the real brand behind the posts. Once a non-profit discloses more about itself, the community will return more. According to one non-profit, valuing community feedback and inviting the public to get involved in further discussions, or even having face-to-face discussions, would foster bonds. The following extract provides a great example.

[Participant 2](#)

And if it's something major that's or they need something bigger, then maybe we'd give them a small response. But ask them to DM US, or just give us their e-mail and then maybe we could have a further discussion. Yeah. So we don't necessarily always explain in detail what people can do. Instead, we try to get them to sign up so that we can come and have a face to face conversation about things that they can do or promote little actions, but it's all about the main thing on socials is that is just trying to instil the idea that what we do on our roads and lay on our roads and driveways and roads is going into the lake and highlighting some of that pollution and then the action would be adopted, drain with us and we'll give you the tools to stop that from happening.

Some non-profits use these tied bonds to accelerate their fundraising activities, especially on LinkedIn, by tapping into a higher net worth audience and more professionals who might be available to sponsor them or donate. For one non-profit, closed Facebook groups and niche communities help them achieve their conservation initiatives by sharing news updates, jobs, findings, and concerns on ongoing conservation.

6.6.2 Enhancing Transparency

When public sentiment becomes polarised, the challenge is how non-profits ensure good engagement and share transparent information without polarising or pushing people apart. If non-profits want to build public trust, transparency is critical, especially when an important issue exists. However, if non-profits are not interesting or engaging, that may lead to less connection with the community. One non-profit quoted that anytime there is a fight or negative comments, it is a chance for them to go back in and correct the audience. Unfortunately, one non-profit confirmed their limitations in using social media to achieve greater transparency, and still, they hold up a mailing list for communication.

[Participant 3](#)

When we were going through a really difficult time where we needed to close, we were quite open about that, particularly through our mailing list.

A little bit on social, but it's difficult on social because it's so short.

So we shared more about that through our mailing list.

What is nice about social media is that it is a window into that organisation. This is valid even if you are a tiny non-profit, and trying to build an audience, you can do it. As one stated, social

media is both a blessing and a curse. Once a non-profit is more into social media, the community can genuinely see what they are doing in a more relatable manner. Merely, it is not just words on a post; they get to see where their money is going, and the smiling faces of the kids are pretty consistent in posts. With the sponsorship and funders, they get to see what non-profits do, and the funding opportunities come through social media more from those who already have connections and those who want to help initiatives in their regions.

Undoubtedly, transparency increases public trust when addressing the mistakes by non-profits openly. A public apology by a non-profit on social media should be swift, sincere, and demonstrate a commitment to making amends. The following is a good example of how a non-profit demonstrated a commitment to rebuilding trust and avoiding future mistakes.

Participant 8

If they did post something, or once, for example, I posted a photo of a dead ferret or a deadest, or a dead animal. Because with conservation you have to kill animals to protect others. And I posted something on it on Instagram and we got feedback around oh, there should have been like a warning that these photos were graphic or they weren't that graphic. But, you know, I can understand that people might have been shocked by.

And so, we apologised and took the post down and then put it back up again with the first image blurred so that people could see it blurred. So, you know, in that instance we were, we accepted that, you know, we apologise and fixed it, you know. So, I think that's really important for any organisation to admit fault and fix it.

Additionally, live videos, stories, and infographics help explain complex issues, making internal communication policies more practical and understandable to the public. When used strategically, social media platforms also allow for the publication of annual reports, donor acknowledgements, and responses to public concerns, demonstrating commitment to integrity. Since high digital scrutiny and donor expectations are evolving, non-profits that actively use social media to document and disclose their financial activities distinguish themselves as trustworthy and ethically responsible entities. Interestingly, during this study, only 47.14% of non-profits use social media to disseminate financial information, while the majority believe it might not interest the audience. Plus, claiming that other channels grab the appropriate audience to validate financials.

[Participant 7](#)

*I don't think we have the financial reports on the website either it's we send them to the charity organise the New Zealand Charities Register and, it is publicly available there.
But I don't think we don't put it on the website, we'll share it on social media.*

[Participant 8](#)

No, no, we do. I mean, we produce an annual report every year and so that will outline everything that we do with our money by dollars and we share that on social media.

[Participant 12](#)

I would strongly stand against it because it's boring.

I would say that these other channels, if you're going to, if you're in a point where as a community organisation, you need to talk about your financials, there are other ways of doing that like your annual report or which will obviously will probably end up online.

You are an Admin, you'd probably do that. Hide it on your website somewhere. Just do it like a news article on your website, if you needed to share stuff like that.

I would strongly use social media for something more interesting than financials you know.

Opposed to the above views, a few non-profits believe that social media is an appropriate channel to publish their finances since they want to build trust and transparency with their supporters, proving how funds are used and demonstrating accountability. Furthermore, this will help to grow the donor base and build stronger relationships with donors. Additionally, social media provides a quick and effective way to reach a broad audience, raise awareness about the mission and impact, and foster community. Finally, this would motivate the volunteers to join a reputable institution that adheres to all financial obligations. While a few non-profits published their annual reports on social media, some published limited financial information, especially details of the donations. LinkedIn was the favourite social platform for a non-profit that published an end-of-the-year post; how many kids have we been able to support financially? Sometimes, non-profits conduct fundraising appeals with specific targets. They publicly announced that they would raise 100,000 and then report back to the community. Thanks to the fantastic support, we have raised this much, and this money will go towards XYZ.

If more than the number of dollars is raised, non-profits will focus on the outcomes instead. For example, suppose an appeal has been made to raise money to help kittens. In that case, the non-profit will discuss how many lives have been impacted and avoid talking too much about specific dollar amounts because it does not resonate with the cat lover community. These non-profits are adapting proactive social media strategies, letting individuals check the non-profit's finances on the annual reports. Another stated that they always acknowledged when a grant donation from an organisation was made to show gratitude and build and maintain goodwill, without going into detail about financial and sensitive information.

6.6.3 Enhancing Organisational Disclosure or Visibility

Non-profits build trust by being transparent about their operations, values, and relevant information, while maintaining a concise definition for professional posts. Disclosure of non-profit activities can be many-fold, from sharing information about the organisation, its services, and any relevant news or updates. Samples in this study's non-profits employed many strategies to gain high visibility and increase engagement and public trust.

One stated that posting articles on Facebook related to the services they provide and highlighting how they support and why they support the cause. Their website usually has a detailed description of who they are, so the community knows where to refer. For example, if individuals post about getting active or staying safe when driving, non-profits said they connect those posts to our website to make others aware of good habits and thoughts. Sometimes, non-profits tried to be visible by disclosing their initiatives from the narrow perspective of expanding donor contributions.

However, disclosure and visibility on social media abide by the strategies of how a non-profit presents online, including what information it shares and how prominently it appears. In that aspect, the studied sample had a non-profit classification of information to be shared on social media, and specified information was shared on different platforms. For example, the impact of community engagement and how many events were conducted was on Facebook and Instagram, while awareness programs were on LinkedIn.

[Participant 2](#)

So, there's only certain things we'd share on there, not so much about engagement, more about organisation I feel like Facebook and Instagram, our content is more about the messaging and the mission whereas LinkedIn it's more about why Wanaka and who we are as an organisation. Sometimes impact can be hard. Like we can show our impact in terms of community engagement and how many events we've done and things like that. But in terms of actually improving the health of the water, that takes a really long time to see actual change whereas in the past, we used to talk a lot just about ourselves is why and what does? Why do and here and instead we try to show that with our support, what the community's doing and that we are a part of the community.

But we're also happy that they know who we were and came to us, and then we're happy to direct them elsewhere if we need to, yeah.

Another non-profit made motivational posts about sports training camps conducted for refugees to engage the kids and uplift their morale. According to feedback received, this initiation helped immensely in promoting physical and mental well-being, fostering social skills, and providing a sense of normalcy and belonging. Specifically, reduce stress and anxiety,

which are commonly seen among refugees who have experienced trauma and displacement (Koopmans & Doidge, 2021).

Most of the other non-profits in the sample share heaps of content about their charity work and the reflection on how they were helping the community by anticipating posts will help to build public trust with the supporters who follow social media pages, but people who do not follow these pages, who are hearing these initiatives through other's noise.

An animal welfare non-profit used social media to give visibility to various services. Their services include, adoptions and running adaption centres, rescue animals who are abused, take people to court if they have abused animals, certification of animal products sell in supermarkets, conducting an education programme in schools, have a science team who works with government to improve animal welfare and animal welfare laws, and finally use social media to try and reinforce individuals who is lacking good judgment. Disclosing each other on social media was habitual among non-profits to build alliances, address concerns, or even initiate collaborations. This friendly gesture will help to create a sense of community and foster dialogue about common work.

[Participant 14](#)

What are we doing in the community so to be able to utilise social media and show people what we're doing in the community. I think that builds that trust back up.

It shows that we do care about the community and we do want to be out there helping and yeah, I think it gives us a real authentic side of being a rugby league club.

They get that visibility and we get that visibility, and it's the same with other big events.

We might be with X?

X will be doing a disability event, and we'll do the same thing. We'll post with them or reshare what they've said about us.

Visibility goes beyond mere views; it creates a consistent brand perception and fosters audience interaction. Effective disclosure practices on social media require clear and prominent language, consistent and honest communication, and disclosures that comply with relevant platform guidelines and legal requirements. This future research area needs to be comprehensively evaluated to determine how platform guidelines and legal requirements comply with non-profits in NZ.

6.7 Challenges

Technological developments have posed numerous challenges for non-profits. From an inclusive perspective, these challenges can be internal and external, including increasing service demand, difficulties securing funding, staffing shortages, and rising operational costs. Non-profits adapt to digital landscapes to engage the community and effectively build and maintain public trust with their stakeholders. This section describes the challenges non-profits encounter when using social media for community engagement and public trust to answer the research question by summarising study findings. **RQ2: What challenges do non-profits face when using social media?**

6.7.1 Funding

Non-profits rely on various funding sources, including donations, grants, government funding, and earned income from running businesses or providing services. Almost all non-profits (85.71%) studied for this research operate with public funds and donations, and funding directly impacts their ability to fulfil their missions and provide essential services to their communities. They may struggle to operate without funding, potentially leading to reduced or discontinued programs or closure. Public interests also set different priorities for non-profits to initiate various community programs, other than dealing with technological developments. Also, stable and sufficient funding ensures that charities can operate effectively and provide ongoing support. To make matters worse, most NZ non-profits operate on a small and medium scale, limited by tight budgets. They limit investment in technology and face the constant threat of financial instability. As a result, non-profits encounter continuous challenges when investing in social media, which restricts them from exploring new approaches, expanding their services, and addressing emerging needs within their communities.

[Participant 2](#)

We're limited by budget and funds. We can't spend a heap of money on marketing campaigns and things like that...

[Participant 5](#)

*Budget to some extent, that we and when we do boost parts and things.
And have a limited budget for that.*

[Participant 6](#)

So yes, so it has the benefit of that, but also it has the challenge that there's so much competition. I mean, the one thing that we use that is successful is paid ads on Facebook and Instagram. And we've done it a couple of times on LinkedIn, but it's very expensive. And so, in terms of effectiveness for a campaign, we have to use paid ads to actually get a reasonable reach for people. So, that's a big cost.

Participant 12

Mostly the same, because it's a cost thing. It's a resourcing thing, like I don't have time to put out content, you know, consistently different content on different platforms.

Another limitation that prevents non-profits from investing in social media is the expected outcomes, which are not easily tangible or valued by the general public, plus these intangible assets, including a rise in community engagement, public trust, and loyalty, need a long time to get a return on investment. Generally, suppose the returns are explained in simple financial terms, they can be easily understood, whereas measuring intangible assets is difficult, needs expertise to be valued, and is even harder to demonstrate to a novice using general terms. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, world economies are still facing recessions, resulting in the cost-of-living crisis, which has reduced the capacity of many individuals to donate, making it harder for charities to raise funds. Subsequently, increased running costs, higher demand for services, and reduced income create a triple threat for non-profits to deal with daily.

The next challenge related to funding pressure is increased competition from similar organisations, including government grants and private sector donors, since the number of registered charities has grown in NZ over the last few years, increasing competition for limited funding resources. In parallel, accepting funding from sources with conflicting values can pose ethical dilemmas for charities when considering the rate of money laundering and scams in NZ in the past two years. Validating the authentic funding sources is beyond all the charities studied; they rely on financial institutions and instruments with limited access.

Limiting investment in social media had repercussions for non-profits in raising funds and building and maintaining trust with donors, ensuring their money is used effectively. As mentioned earlier, non-profits were not persuading the idea of promoting financial transparency and accountability on social media for several reasons. This digital lag made the community unknowledgeable and unattractive to the non-profit's financial conduct, making funding unpredictable and challenging to secure. A few small charities in the study said they face significant workload pressures, which can hinder their ability to manage their financial operations effectively. Even though non-profits have limited budgets, the risks posed by technological advancement may require charities to be aware of and address internal and external risks that could impact their operations and financial health, including data security and cyber threats, which have yet to be addressed for all the non-profits studied.

The researcher has hinted at several occasions where constant appeals for donations can make donors feel overwhelmed and less likely to give. This is less appealing due to the limitations in content creation, low social media literacy, and the inadequate attention given to educating the community in new initiatives, with a clear layout of desired outcomes that non-profits struggle to deliver. None of the non-profits studied showed a strategic plan to communicate their mission, impact, and fundraising goals to raise funds by tapping new donors or retaining existing donors, which made it harder for them to build a sustainable donor base. The minority tried to cut down operations costs, which was not entirely successful as they expected due to limited staff and resources, making it challenging to execute effective campaigns. In addition, some old fundraising ideas made the new generation less engaged in raising funds, especially when Gen-Z rejects engaging in physical activities for charity campaigns. However, the researcher did not encounter a single instance where non-profits revamped their financial prospects to donor-advised funds or crowdsourcing to address shortcomings in traditional fundraising instruments.

6.7.2 Resources and Tools

Economic resources are scarce. Access to those scarce resources, including staff, knowledge workers, volunteers, and technology, prevents non-profits from reflecting their full potential. Non-profits heavily rely on volunteers to operate their branches and drive program initiatives. The main pain point is recruiting staff to conduct program initiatives while keeping up with the latest technologies, which resulted in one non-profit closing some of their channels when staff left.

[Participant 6](#)

We had one right at the beginning when we started, but we closed that down because we didn't have the capacity to put sort of suitable content, it was just too much to do because we're a very small team and we also with Twitter or X we still have an account, but we don't really use it.

Most of the volunteers they already have were novices to social media and less experienced, preventing them from using social media effectively to promote community engagement in digital space by reaching out to a broader audience. In addition, their traditional thinking limits their belief that disclosing finances would boost their credibility in building public trust, hence the loyalty resulted in stakeholder retention in the long run.

Creating content that resonates with the target audience and encourages interaction is decisive for launching successful social media campaigns. This can require creativity and understanding

of different social media platforms. Most seniors sought help from relatively social media-savvy juniors to create emotionally appealing content and be consistent with posts. On the other hand, the limited resources shared over other tangible priorities also did not allow non-profits to provide strategic education and reverse mentoring, while establishing clear guidelines and policies to ensure responsible use of social media.

In addition, a particular set of unique challenges made social media less effective for elderly volunteers. For instance, the researcher noticed that elderly volunteers who worked as permanent staff struggled to understand the nuances of online communication and how to adapt their style for social media.

[Participant 1](#)

I would be much better at my job if I had 10 people helping. I have had a very good friend here for the last three weeks helping me in my garden, and I realised that, you know, when she leaves. We're just getting, you know, we're too old to be understanding how these things are moving. So that's a big challenge, yes.

Their fear of making errors or causing reputational damage can be a deterrent, especially for those with limited experience. Even though the staff understood how critical it was to use social media for social engagement, they were afraid to take responsibility for being fluent with it. This passive mindset made them push them further, at least give a try to use social media at an optimum level to reach out to a bigger audience and make their online presence visible.

[Participant 10](#)

The downside of the decentralisation of media is that we all have a responsibility to be fluent with it, and so I don't think you get to a place anymore where you can say, oh, that's for this person over here. I think the President of any company, big or small, if they don't know about posting something on Facebook, if they've never done that themselves, I think they're really missing an opportunity and a responsibility to connect.

The feasible solution was to invest in human capital with social media expertise. Unfortunately, the operating scale does not allow non-profits to recruit content creators who understand their audience well to stay up to date with platform algorithms and trends.

Non-profits face continuous challenges in posting on social media while managing other events since staff are required to perform multiple roles, maintaining the proper balances between education, outreach, and events. Therefore, one quoted that about three days a week on communications, maybe half a day would be spent on socials for him. For other days, it is taking him ages to solidify the captions. Due to the time pressure, most posts were not appropriately tailored, just a few shifts in the language, and that is also based on time and his

capacity. Getting people on camera was another challenge, getting the staff at Y to let film them and be on social media.

Another stated that he had to put a significant effort into validating the suitability of the content and the accuracy of the facts he would put up. The validity of facts is very relevant since social media posts aim to be sources of truth for non-profits. Further, they influence and gain publicity from conversations on trending issues and events. Because many studied non-profits did not have a laid-out social media strategy, many doubted what they needed to share, what others needed to know, and what the next stage would be. This knowledge vacuum made non-profits further deviate from using effectively and neglecting their responsibility to drive social causes with a mission and achieve desired outcomes with a greater acceptance by the community. Further, the limitations in tools built into some platforms caused difficulty directing social media followers to their websites or other essential resources. For example, character limitations on X's 280-character cap and Instagram's caption constraints pose a significant challenge for non-profits aiming to communicate complex messages. These limitations force organisations to condense multifaceted issues into oversimplified messages, often stripping away necessary context, nuance, or emotion in addressing topics such as inequality, climate change, health disparities, or humanitarian crises, where the need for depth and clarity is essential. Fundamentally, character limitations restrict storytelling capacity, hinder outreach, and challenge non-profits' ability to maintain consistent dialogue with their digital community.

The other challenge is how non-profits manage a cohesive approach across all platforms when they do not have the same staff working all the time. Maintaining cohesiveness involves a consistent brand voice, tone, visual identity, and messaging strategy in every post and interaction, especially to boost public trust and loyalty (Kim et al., 2016). For example, a lack of cohesion could inevitably damage the reputation of non-profits by a single act of violating copyright issues when creating content by an inexperienced staff member.

[Participant 9](#)

At the moment, we don't use them as separately as we could. We need a bit more resources on the team.

The team is very busy all the time and would love to develop. We have plans for developing more specific content per platform, but at the moment, it's, yeah, it's just not doable, unfortunately.

Surprisingly, personal conflicts of interest in using different social media platforms also influence the selection of channels. However, the reasons they opt out of specific channels were not explained in depth to have a comprehensive idea to analyse further, other than discussion, which was summarised due to insufficient time, resource demand, and not a priority for non-

profits to consider. The following snapshot states one participant's hatred towards using Facebook, and it was a total puzzle for the researcher. However, to adhere to the ethical standards, she was not in a position to prompt further questions.

6.7.3 Content Quality

Competing for attention and channel-agnostic communication deeply influence how non-profits strategise and use social media for outreach, engagement, and trust-building. Unlike in the past, audiences' attention is overwhelmed by continuous content flow from commercial brands, influencers, and other organisations. This competition forces non-profits to develop informative, visually compelling, and emotionally engaging content, often within seconds, to capture user interest amid the noise to drive their mission.

Simultaneously, the shift towards a channel-agnostic approach means that non-profits can no longer afford to tailor their messages exclusively for a single platform. Instead, they must design flexible, consistent, and adaptable content across various digital channels, such as Instagram, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and blogs, to maintain a unified brand voice and messaging strategy. This requires a deeper understanding of each platform's strengths and user behaviour while ensuring the core message remains clear regardless of format or medium.

Vying for limited attention and adopting a channel-agnostic approach demands a strategic balance. Non-profits must produce agile, engaging content that stands out across platforms while remaining authentic and aligned with their values.

Participant 10

I think it's sort of in our content strategy, right. So, like we want to, if you, if we write with integrity and we do good stories about those things we care about and we and we think about them not in a literal sense, but in a sort of like thematic way. So I think it's I think we are always writing about biodiversity outcomes and new technologies and how important it is, but you also want to write stories that are actually interesting to people, so that tends to be something that's like engaging or fun or curious, or has a mystery to it as opposed to something that is hard science or sort of like just straight facts, I think we are always trying to just be as editorial as possible.

These challenges stretch the capabilities of communication teams with limited resources and a growing need for integrated content planning, cross-platform storytelling, and audience-centric design. However, when leveraging social media for community engagement and public trust, identifying and curating an appropriate content strategy presents a multifaceted challenge since many non-profits operate within sensitive thematic areas. Therefore, content must be impactful

and ethically sensitive to avoid perceptions of exploitation or insensitivity in poverty, human rights, health, or environmental advocacy.

Participant 4

So, we need to create and showcase that so people see themselves with their stories, or even trying to get stories about people who have cancers that are rarer because people you know, lots of people who've got breast cancer or this cancer but they want to hear that someone who's had their situation.

Sometimes it can be hard because it feels like we're very repetitive and sticking to these words, but it's just making them feel like they're actually they are not cancer, it doesn't define them. So, it's trying to get those messages across and the story too, so.

Trying to make trying to bring hope and uplifting things through the story because the last thing they need is someone to share a story with. You know, like people Google or type, and they find a story that doesn't offer them hope. So, it's sometimes it's picking and choosing to if someone wants to see the story going, it's lovely that that's your story. But will that help others?

For instance, posting images that the community is participating in environmental conservation campaigns, donating, volunteering, or supporting equity campaigns, non-profits acknowledge that they are common and socially valued behaviours. This triggers descriptive and injunctive norms, influencing peer reinforcement and perceived social pressure. In wider acceptance, non-profits can shift public perceptions, influence behaviour, and cultivate new civic engagement, sustainability, health, inclusion, and justice through cultural changes.

The operating landscape of conservation non-profits highly influences the content quality and post volume. Conservation non-profits that involve more field work rely on the teams to find content from the field, especially those who wear gumboots and are out in the bush, capturing content in real-time. This needed a tedious effort, patience, and time. On the other hand, technology limits field staff from capturing content, taking photos, and sharing high-quality videos in real-time. For example, finding enough content to share on social media in June and July is challenging because some native birds are not hatching or being released at that time of year.

The diversity of their target audiences, often spanning different cultural, socio-economic, and ideological backgrounds, further complicates content creation. Since messaging must resonate across segments without alienating any group, non-profits encounter a massive challenge in tailoring content. At the same time, authenticity must be balanced with the demand for consistent, proficient communication across various channels. Limited staffing and technical expertise constrain many non-profits from maintaining a robust and adaptive content strategy.

Additionally, algorithmic biases on social media tend to neglect viral or emotionally charged content, which may conflict with the complex, informative messaging that non-profits aim to disseminate. This has created tension in visibility, authenticity, relatability, and value-driven communication. Consequently, the increasing prevalence of misinformation and online polarisation, even well-intentioned content, may provoke controversy or distrust, which may lead to non-profits risking reputational damage or disengagement from their communities. Together, these challenges underscore maintaining public trust through social media, highlighting the strategic importance of thoughtful content planning and resource allocation in digital engagement.

6.7.4 Cultural Implications

A culture that values open digital communication and collaboration is likely to see greater adoption of social media for creating two-way dialogue, while a more structured culture might restrict its use to specific channels. However, this study received limited responses to analyse how organisational culture impacts the effective and efficient use of social media. The first non-profit believes that cultural implications flow from the top down and are driven by the top management. As a result, that non-profit used to recruit a senior person to drive critical projects on social media when they felt the content creators were not doing a good enough job of promoting their brand.

[Participant 14](#)

Understand that you know when we need to bring someone in for a bigger project to do it and has been heavily involved in making sure that, you know, we get the right person in and that some of the content creators aren't doing a good enough job for we need, we have a brand and our board of trustees, we do have someone who does marketing.

And so, they kind of are making sure that we stay on top of growing our visibility and who we are and the stories that we tell, which is good, keeps us on our toes. But yeah, so it is driven from the top.

The way of responding to socio-economic changes also reflects how quickly non-profits can adapt with technology. For example, the second participant organisation commented that they are slow in responding to inquiries raised by the public since they have many stakeholders to keep happy and prevent them from hurriedly triggering misinformation.

More research is guaranteed to validate how a corporate and supportive culture can lead to various benefits. In contrast, a hostile or restrictive culture can lead to risks and challenges. Further, future research would be preferred to analyse how social media can be a powerful tool for non-profits seeking to change their culture by communicating their new values and vision,

engaging the community, and promoting diversity and inclusion, ultimately leading to increased public trust.

6.7.5 Online Engagement

The narrow margin of majority, 57.14%, expressed their disappointment with the growth of engagement shown by the online community in responding to their posts, irrespective of the amount of effort they put into creating appealing posts. One confessed that they have probably fallen because they have been sharing information for others to share rather than starting a conversation. Another claimed that acting by going to their website redirection posts was useful, and other measures were not calculated. Another complained that this low engagement was caused by rapid algorithm evolution, especially with Meta, where individuals tend to connect online more with friends than with organisations using the “highlight” feature.

[Participant 6](#)

... mean the trouble with social media is because, I mean, compared with how it was, say, six years ago, it's very hard to get engagement. It used to be so different, but now the Meta algorithms have changed. Highlights connection with like friends rather than like an organisation or business page. It is really a low engagement.

The researcher noticed that different non-profits have different perceptions of online engagement. For example, one said they consider actual engagement only when donating, joining a community group, or even going to a website.

[Participant 14](#)

TikTok is gotten really high really quickly, however I don't consider that as engaging as those that follow Instagram.

Otherwise, most people scroll, stop for a second, like a post, share it, and keep scrolling. This behaviour and anticipation have answered the exact cause to a certain extent. Moreover, they believe that liking and sharing helped build the community, but they do not think it necessarily builds the community overtly.

Some participant non-profits encourage their supporters to follow and unfollow them occasionally. This was acceptable to them because those two non-profits were also manipulating the same action, especially when following people for a competition and then unfollowing them later. For another, online community engagement is about the number of followers for a particular post.

Participant 8

It's list about number of followers these days, because I mean, I know I follow pages but I'm not engaged with those pages. You know, it's more about the engagement on particular posts and being able to see, OK, this post performed really well compared to others and this one didn't.

Therefore, these prejudiced perspectives made it challenging to streamline how non-profits perceive the impact of online community engagement using social media. However, in certain instances, non-profits do not allow the general public to share their photos or videos through their social media channels, which may also contribute to low community engagement. For example, one non-profit resorted to posting photos of their jerseys as they were off brand. Plus, this non-profit complained that their associated societies do not have the organisational understanding of the mission and why they exist, making it riskier to allow them to manage social media posts. Another reason for restricting post content is that they were afraid of what kind of questions individuals put out there, especially if they are experience-related, could trigger viral responses.

6.7.6 Abrasive Behaviours

The abrasive behaviours of online communities have arisen as a significant challenge for non-profits exploiting social media for community engagement and outreach. As digital spaces become increasingly polarised and emotionally charged, non-profits often face hostile interactions, including trolling, aggressive criticism, and bad-faith arguments that can derail constructive dialogue. Unlike corporate entities with dedicated public relations teams and limited resources, they cannot moderate discussions effectively or respond to negative feedback in real time. This makes non-profits particularly vulnerable to abrasive behaviours.

The foremost step is what one of the non-profits once acted on, which was to tell the intruders that the non-profit will not accept that behaviour, and block intruders to stop particular discussions from being dragged on, boosting trust by doing the right thing. For example, one participant confirmed that he had to have a face-to-face conversation with an individual who was rude and unnecessary, and that maybe he had his facts wrong. However, he has gotten back to the participant being negative. The end resolution was not to engage with him from an organisational point of view, and that participant had to rebuke him personally.

The most feasible way to avoid abrasive behaviours is to hide comments, a favoured practice among non-profits in the studied sample. For instance, once a non-profit noticed that drawing the line at comments breaks page guidelines that are abusive or personal attacks, many comments about that were very anti-max and quite abusive and quite harmful, non-profits used

to hide or delete those comments, blocked users, and non-profits acted with zero tolerance against racism, xenophobia, aggression or cyber-bullying.

[Participant 3](#)

It's very difficult to have a nuanced, good discussion on social media, and I've experienced it more in other organisations rather than this one, but it can be.

Challenging when if people share hateful material on your posts, then you have a responsibility to remove it. But you also don't want to be seen to be pretending that it doesn't exist. But you have to protect the people, the other people, the other people who might read it and would be impacted by what they read.

[Participant 5](#)

That's a difficult one, you can certainly share what we do, what we do.

There's a bit of pushback often, you know. Well, not often, but we do get a bit of pushback about it and you know, sometimes you have to block posts and things like that if it's getting discriminatory or nasty?

However, most non-profits agreed that sometimes they had to deal with abrasive behaviours, which could be a negative response if the community does not get what they want to hear from non-profits, although the majority of online conversations are positive and welcoming. Another used the same hide and blocking strategy for managing digitalised community groups. There is a high likelihood that someone would be saying something inappropriate or selling a product that should not be sold, a non-profit used to hide the comments, or block involved users.

Unfortunately, one prominent non-profit in the sample experienced growing hatred toward women when they did not reach a desired level of performance. It is very regrettable to see such intensity of cyberbullying, but this is the reality that non-profits have to deal with in their day-to-day operations in using social media.

[Participant 12](#)

They're really mean to the players.

And, you know, armchair experts say that players shouldn't be on a team or are performing badly. We also have like a real problem with people who beat on our games being really upset at the end of a game because the game didn't work out the way that they bid. And it can be really negative, particularly to women. The women players cop a lot of hateful comments from our community, our followers.

Yeah, in a way that significantly outweighs the amount that men cop, which has been really sort of eye-opening for me as a man, obviously, how awful that is, and yeah, it can. And yeah, so you sort of have to curate that...

6.7.7 Changes to Algorithms

Recent changes to social media algorithms have disrupted how non-profits engage with online communities and maintain public trust. According to 64.28% of the participants, these shifts often favour paid content, viral trends, or highly engaging posts. They have deprioritised organic reach, making it more difficult to disseminate educational and authentic philanthropic

content without investing in sponsored promotions. As a result, non-profits with limited financial assets and staff face diminishing visibility, regardless of the relevance or quality of their message integrity. Furthermore, algorithms increasingly reward content that evokes strong emotional reactions, often privileging sensationalism or controversy over nuanced discourse.

Furthermore, as user behaviour becomes increasingly platform-centric, many audiences prefer to consume content within the app rather than navigate to external links, making it harder for non-profits to guide followers toward donation pages, detailed reports, or campaign updates hosted on their websites. According to the study results, changes to the algorithms for Facebook strive more to put effort into reaching the community. Another stated that Facebook is limited in promoting reels or videos over text posts. Opposingly, Instagram is tricky with the links and does not have to put a link, so it often goes beyond the reach. Instead, Instagram lets you put it in the caption or write up or have a link in the profile that people can go to, click, and see if a link is related to the post. One charity showed interest in Facebook over LinkedIn, probably the most consistent for them.

Understanding algorithms is essential when seeing posts that are emotionally appealing and awesome but did not reach the audience as expected. Non-profits thought that posts were attractive, but for some unknown reason, they did not appear in the feeds. Undeniably, non-profits do not have a rationale for how algorithms work beyond reach. Some were in confusion that mixed messages would work better with algorithms, while others confirmed that if they pay for Facebook ads, it does get boosted, and Facebook wants them to keep paying for boosting posts.

[Participant 10](#)

... and some of that is related to algorithms, right? So, it's not always. It's not about the content.

Sometimes the algorithm is really not working in your favour or we had a huge post on Facebook last week, maybe on Friday.

And that had, I don't know, thousands of people shared it, and we're really into it. The post immediately afterwards knows it has no interest at all. So, what meta or some of these companies do is when you have a big post and lots of people are excited, the next one, they throttle it down and so you wind up sort of being like, OK, well, the after we do this one, we know the next two are going to be really not much more engagement. You have to just keep going.

These dynamic changes can pressure non-profits to dilute their messaging or resort to more provocative tactics to remain visible, potentially compromising the authenticity and ethical standards essential to public trust. Algorithmic changes caused fragmented audiences, making it harder for non-profits to maintain consistent engagement across diverse demographic groups.

Consequently, the reliance on algorithm-governed platforms for outreach has been intruded by unpredictability and inequity, compelling non-profits to continuously adapt their digital strategies to preserve community engagement, uphold their reputational integrity, and boost public trust.

6.7.8 Attitudes

Moreover, evaluations in social media encourage a culture of instant gratification and transactional engagement, where success is measured in clicks, likes, and conversions rather than meaningful dialogue or long-term relationship-building. This environment can be counterproductive for non-profits focusing on education, advocacy, and systemic change. Further, this pressure, manipulative to marketing-style content formats, forces non-profits to adjust their tone, aesthetics, and messaging, which may dilute their mission or compromise authenticity.

Entertainment-driven attitudes of the followers also significantly influence how non-profits approach digital engagement, often creating a mismatch between platform behaviour and the mission-driven intent of non-profits. Digital audiences typically engage with social media in a fast-paced, passive, and distraction-prone manner, prioritising visually stimulating, humorous, or emotionally exciting content through infinite scrolling. This behaviour challenges non-profits, whose messages are often complex, educational, or emotionally nuanced, requiring more user attention and reflection, resulting in reduced visibility and impact of non-profit campaigns.

To retain audience engagement, non-profits are often compelled to adapt their content to fit entertainment-oriented formats, such as short-form videos, memos, or trending audio, which may risk diluting their message or compromising their tone. Additionally, the demand for quick, visually engaging content places extra pressure on already resource-strapped teams to produce multimedia publications that compete in algorithm-driven feeds. This dynamic affects content strategy and leads to ethical dilemmas, as storytelling with sensitivity and avoiding trivialising content against serious issues to gain attention.

[Participant 4](#)

I would say is the biggest challenge for us and then probably a lot of other organisations as well when so many people are going to social media just to like scroll and be entertained. Our topic isn't particularly entertaining for people, but it might be interesting to people, but we can't be like these very rare moments where we can provide funniness, because it's not a funny topic!!

Non-profits strived to navigate the promotions without breaching trust, especially when dealing with vulnerable demographics. This complexity and off-strike demands that non-profits compete in a crowded digital marketplace amidst maintaining community engagement, public trust, and message clarity, despite being structurally disadvantaged in a space increasingly driven by profit motives and often threatened by violation of ethical standards.

6.7.9 Emerging New Platforms and Commercialisation

The emergence of new social media alongside the declining effectiveness of existing platforms poses a deliberate challenge for non-profits seeking to improve online engagement and public trust. TikTok has gained popularity among younger audiences while non-profits struggle to adapt to shifting digital environments, often with limited resources and expertise. Knowledge of creating different content formats, faster response times, and novel engagement styles is also demanded without breaching message integrity for these emergent platforms.

[Participant 6](#)

I mean, there are new platforms, but they're not very big at the moment. Things like Blue Sky Mastodon, but I don't think many people are on there yet, and so.

I'm hoping things will change to people will shift away from meta so that it makes it worthwhile to shift to those platforms, but I don't think we're there yet. I mean, there's certainly a lot of discussions internationally that shouldn't be supporting.

Simultaneously, Facebook and X were central to communication strategies for non-profits in the past and have seen a decline in reach, public trust, and engagement due to algorithmic changes, increased commercialisation, and content saturation. As a result, non-profits find it more challenging to reach their intended audience without paying for visibility. Furthermore, fragmentation across many platforms makes maintaining a consistent narrative and building long-term relationships harder, forcing non-profits to decide which platform to invest their time and resources. Thus, to keep up with evolving platforms, non-profits must be more agile, data-informed, and audience-aware.

The commercialisation of social media has significantly reshaped how non-profits can use them, introducing structural limitations and ethical tensions affecting their reach and visibility. As social media increasingly prioritise generating revenue through advertising, paid promotions, and influencer partnerships, they become less hospitable to authentic content. Algorithms are optimised to favour paid content and highly engaging, consumer-oriented posts, forcing non-profits to invest in paid advertising or risk their content being buried under sponsored posts. This shift disadvantages smaller non-profits with limited budgets, effectively reducing equitable access to public attention in the digital community.

[Participant 10](#)

I think once you start it, you have to really keep going. It's sort of like feeding a machine, and I think that it's also potentially. I think it's monetised by places like Meta so that, like it, you know, I think it's not a pure communication tool, it's not because most nonprofits are not. You know, we're not selling a product.

And yet it's built around people who are selling iPhones or T-shirts or whatever, and so in that way, as a nonprofit, I think we really struggle with the fact that we need this to reach our audience, to build social licence into a kind of connect around things. But we're not commercial. And once you start to get into a sort of commercial ideology with platforms.

Rapid evolution along with ideology on the commercialisation of social media caused a significant deviation in their use for non-commercial service providers, hence for the non-profits, where emotionally appealing, message integrity, and reliability are vital for them to reach out to a broader community to build and maintain public trust in the long term.

6.7.10 Decaying Trust

The decline in public trust in social media due to the misinformation, data privacy breaches, algorithmic manipulation, political polarisation, and platform accountability has led to a significant erosion of user confidence in the integrity of social media ecosystems. This shifting perception poses serious risks for non-profits whose credibility and mission often rest on principles of transparency, authenticity, and ethical communication.

[Participant 10](#)

I think what you've seen happen with social media, probably in the last few years, has been about divisiveness and public misinformation. So, that's one challenge. The other challenge maybe is what you're talking about is that people increasingly don't trust social media, and they're opting out as people opt out. Where do they get their information, and how do we continue to work with them? And so, how do we build knowledge bases? And then that's that is a huge challenge.

However, according to many participants, the professional code of ethics will ensure that public liability covers all the communication for non-profits for public events, unlike other business entities present on social media. Moreover, many emphasised their disappointment in using X as the base channel for community engagement. They discontinued using it when they noticed the recent politicised usage of X for forcing followers to accept unpopular political agendas. Some even criticised the effective use of Facebook since they have seen a growing trend in the humorous memes getting more attention.

According to another, the misinformation trap can lead to binary thinking, avoiding discussing complicated topics. One stated that social media should not make false claims and promote outrageous material, which feeds into the algorithm and gets the most posts. Users becoming increasingly suspicious of what they see online may be less likely to trust social media content,

even if another organisation criticises posts of non-profits. Reverting the media attention to factual information may require mammoth effort and time, and it would interrupt the initial purpose of the causes they worry about.

Participant 9

It's a constant challenge for the communications team and the social media space, and they can't. There can be some days when another organization will post something about us, and it can. It can become our whole job for a week trying to deal with all of the messages that come in about that. All of the activity on social media, media interests as well. We get, you know, TV and radio calling us and asking us to explain those posts like that. So yeah, definitely a challenge, yes!

Campaigns that would have previously gained traction may now be met with doubt, hesitation, or disengagement, especially when asking for donations or advocating for controversial causes. This can lead to reduced campaign participation, lower click-through rates to external resources, and fewer conversions regarding donations, volunteer sign-ups, or community support.

Moreover, this general suspicion undermines building authentic, community-driven relationships. When audiences question the legitimacy of content or fear being misled, it becomes harder for non-profits to foster dialogue, mobilise supporters, or generate emotional resonance. This affects campaign performance and the strategic goal of building long-term public trust, hence the loyalty.

6.7.11 Privacy and Scams

Privacy is crucial for non-profits on social media to maintain donor trust, avoid legal battles, and guarantee ethical practices. Non-profits often handle sensitive personal information, including donors' financial details, addresses, and health information. Protecting this data is crucial to avoid data breaches and protect the rights of individuals. By implementing appropriate measures for data privacy, non-profits can build stronger relationships with their audiences and protect sensitive information. All non-profits studied expressed dissatisfaction with the procedures laid out for each channel, since these privacy protection procedures were not transparent and comprehensible to them as novice users. Moreover, one non-profit said they would not believe that one particular channel is not even abiding by the international privacy guidelines, resulting in not being used by them, even though that channel gets immediate attention from the younger population.

Another complaint is that Facebook promotes a lot more negativity and comment trolling, and causes tension for a non-profit, creating anxiety when they are more exposed to the community.

For another, less coordination between government agencies and non-profits made their effort vocal on social media a waste, since other parties strongly used traditional mass media to express their opinion.

The rise of scams and fraudulent activities on social media has become a serious challenge for non-profits, undermining their efforts to build trust, engage authentically, and drive fundraising. Fake donation pages, cloned accounts, phishing attempts, and fraudulent campaigns have become more widespread, and non-profits strive to protect their brand integrity and safeguard followers from exploitation. Scammers often impersonate legitimate non-profits or create deceptive campaigns that closely mimic real ones, tricking well-meaning supporters into donating to fake causes.

Participant 6

So yeah, there's a mixture of things we'll do.

We also have to keep an eye out in case people post one of the problems we've had over the last few months. There's somebody that's been posting a spam link which purports to be an animal rescue group, and they say, Oh, if you like, if you like animals, follow our page. And it's definitely trolls, and it will no doubt sort of be, if you click on it, it'll be because I've looked up the name that they say, and it doesn't exist. So, I mean, we still haven't recovered from it, which was over a year ago, our Facebook page got hacked, and there was a whole load of money spent by the hackers.

They ran paid ads on our page, and that got shut down. Luckily, somebody overseas who's an admin saw it quickly. So, it was only about \$6000.

Non-profits used to delete or remove the communication, especially close to the event, to avoid scammers. At the same time, the community helped a few times by reporting or deleting comments or bringing them to the admin's attention. Scammers cause the second problem with social media: less trust and less belief, because sometimes they look like they come from a reputable source. For smaller non-profits, a single instance of this impersonation or fraud can have long-term reputational consequences and deter future engagement. Conveying the fraud activities back to the older community was difficult for a non-profit due to the age differences and different things that drive them; the elderly community does not believe in the social media handler, who was relatively young and inexperienced, according to the elderly supporters.

Fraudulent activities not only divert funds away from genuine initiatives but also damage public trust, even if the legitimate non-profit is not involved. Potential supporters may hesitate to donate online, share fundraising posts, or even follow non-profit accounts, fearing they could fall victim to a scam.

6.8 Opportunities

Social media have presented countless opportunities for non-profits to enhance reach, networking, event promotion, information sharing, and community building, as well as boost public trust through greater transparency. Non-profits adapt to digital platforms to engage with the community, access a vast amount of information, and could learn from others through online forums, sharing documents, group chats, or how-to videos. This section describes social media's extended opportunities for non-profits to improve community engagement and build and maintain public trust to answer the research question **RQ2: What opportunities do non-profits offer when using social media?**

6.8.1 Extended and Direct Communications

The ability to connect instantaneously through social media offers a significant opportunity for non-profits to deepen community engagement and enhance public trust, with a momentous impact possible from minimal investment. Real-time communication fosters transparency, as non-profits can promptly share updates, success stories, and operational insights, or personally interact with existing and potential donors. A clever mix of engaging content and a friendly and responsive “persona” can grow a focused community. In the same way, social media posts allow the community to witness the immediate impact of their contributions to the non-profit, and their loyalty could lift confidence in peers to join for good causes.

[Participant 12](#)

What I like about social media is that it provides an opportunity to have people. If you engage them for more than three seconds, it's huge. You know, like you've done an incredible job. So, you've got moments to give people an insight into what you're trying to achieve as a brand, and the great opportunity there is that you can test really quickly.

Further, the level of openness and transparency that social media provides reinforces organisational credibility and accountability. Creating an instantaneous two-way dialogue via social media and messaging tools enables non-profits to respond to inquiries, address concerns, and demonstrate attentiveness, fostering a sense of inclusion and trust within the community. Surprisingly for a non-profit, social media was not effective in raising funds, and this warrants further investigation, possibly due to the lack of clear goals, unclear messaging, poor audience engagement, and not utilising the proper channels.

Although funds are collected through social media, some non-profits are still doubtful about how it could streamline and rely on fundraising activities on less regulated platforms governed

by the originating country's laws. According to them, the reputation damage cannot be recovered easily and could lead to a moral dilemma if something goes wrong.

[Participant 5](#)

Advertising money, but it's it is cost effective, yeah, except for the sort of moral dilemma of spinning, you know, putting all this money into foreign social media companies to the detriment of their own homegrown organisations. But anyway, yeah.

One could not neglect the power of social media involvement in social advocacy in the Hīkoi movement against the proposed treaty principles bill. One prominent charity in this study utilised digital channels immensely in coordinating organisations, information sharing, and mobilisation for protests. Additionally, they used to announce Hīkoi dates and times, and share updates and reflections on the journey through emotionally appealing pictures and video series. Additionally, social media has been used to raise political awareness, share stories of activism, and connect with others involved in the movement.

6.8.2 Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing delivers a strategic opportunity for non-profits to enhance community engagement and foster public trust by facilitating participatory, collaborative approaches to promote campaigns, awareness, and social advocacy. Crowdsourcing initiatives, ranging from idea generation and volunteer coordination to fundraising campaigns, non-profits empower individuals to actively contribute their skills, insights, and resources toward shared goals. Crowdsourcing is an excellent way to reach out to existing and potential supporters and utilise their creativity. To date, a single charity in this study has used crowdsourcing to collect content from its audience.

[Participant 4](#)

We also get a lot of like crowdsourcing. So, through people sending us their own content. So, like we see with people who are sharing the stories, often just filming it themselves and then sending it through us to eat it, or sending in their own photos. We've obviously got all our divisions as well. We're very lucky that we do have lots of people on the ground in lots of different places that we can get content from.

This inclusive model broadens the base of stakeholder involvement and strengthens the community's sense of ownership and emotional investment in the organisation's mission. By engaging diverse perspectives and tapping into collective intelligence, non-profits can uncover innovative solutions while demonstrating transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. For example, crowdsourcing enables people to work together on a massive scale and share the wisdom and creativity of people outside the workforce. This presents an ample

opportunity to get voluntary expertise for streamlining content strategies. It is often a struggle for non-profits, especially balancing specialised labour and their productive contribution in regular terms to promote competitive ideas and inventions.

The other advantage would be to increase the likelihood of the potential individuals picking up on and developing innovative ideas that the non-profit might otherwise go unrecognised by their own. The outside perspective of the community may see issues and opportunities that a non-profit is unaware of, and once the due recognition is given, it will increase supporter loyalty and brand advocacy that comes at lower costs when designing new campaigns or enhancements, and more certain success for them. As a result of the visibility of these contributions, along with real-time feedback mechanisms, organisational responsiveness and credibility are reinforced. Ultimately, crowdsourcing shifts the non-profit from being a sole actor to a facilitator of collective impact, thereby deepening public trust and fostering long-term, meaningful engagement with the communities they serve.

6.8.3 Connecting with Ambassadors

Leveraging the influence of public figures, including celebrities, social media influencers, or thought leaders, presents a significant opportunity for non-profits to amplify their message and enhance public engagement. Non-profits can remarkably expand their visibility and reach new audiences beyond their existing supporter base by inviting individuals with a large fan base to share posts, campaigns, or mission-driven content. These influencers often command high levels of trust and engagement within their communities, and their endorsement can lend credibility to the causes that non-profits care about.

[Participant 2](#)

Another thing we'd like to do that we haven't really yet, we have a little bit, is try to get maybe ambassadors in town, so people in town that already have a large following to share our messages. There are a lot of athletes who live in Wanaka, like ski professionals. Swimmers and rowers, and so maybe getting those people that have, you know, triple 10 times the followers of us to spread some of our messages, especially if they care about the water as well. We worked recently with the scientist Marine scientist, and she's got quite a following because she's younger, she's very beautiful, and charismatic. She's not like what you would think of as a normal lab scientist. So, she's been really good at sharing our messages, and that's helped to get our name out in the community as well.

Moreover, such collaborations can stimulate online conversations, attract media attention, and increase participation in fundraising or advocacy efforts. When the association between the non-profit and the influencer is seen as authentic and value-aligned, it fosters emotional resonance and increases the likelihood of public support. Thus, influencer engagement

becomes a marketing tactic and a strategic method for building awareness, trust, and community involvement on a larger scale.

[Participant 9](#)

We have really wonderful ambassadors, so we have, you know, X ambassadors who are very caring individuals who just help us, you know because they care about the work and they help, I think share our messages and build trust. You know, when these well-known and well-loved New Zealanders are doing content for x, it really helps.

However, this movement was not favourable among participant non-profits, preventing a surge in public trust, as demonstrated by high-profile campaigns addressing social issues.

6.8.4 A Marketing Mix

Social media has become an indispensable tool within the marketing mix for non-profits, serving as an inexpensive channel for event promotion and a strategic platform to cultivate public trust and strengthen community engagement. Traditionally, the marketing mix comprising product, price, place, and promotion was applied primarily to commercial contexts. However, non-profits have adapted this framework to serve mission-driven objectives. Social media amplifies the "promotion" component by enabling non-profits to communicate their mission, showcase their impact, and share compelling stories with broad, diverse audiences in real time. Unfortunately, minorities in the sample have released these marketing capabilities on social media and are using them and have been allocated a role in marketing strategy.

[Participant 11](#)

Social media works really well with combination with other things like for example, if you put posters and write on social media about posters, then suddenly the visibility is increased and we also do advertising on the radio. So, radio advertising just before the event is really cool, especially if it follows up with several social media posts with people who interviewed like appear on social media, on social media and things like that. So, it's not the answer to all the needs of social media. It is a good part of the marketing mix and the whole marketing strategy. People need to realise that it wouldn't solve all the problems.

Social media fosters an inclusive space where individuals can participate in discussions, campaigns, and cause-driven movements, turning passive followers into active stakeholders for increasing social engagement. The preferred approach among participant non-profits was hashtags, live events, story sharing, and polls that empower communities to contribute their voices and co-create solutions. As a result, social media becomes a trust-building mechanism and a community engagement engine to expand reach, personalise outreach, and maintain transparency, all of which are critical for sustaining public confidence and long-term support.

Also, it resulted in enhanced visibility, deeper stakeholder relationships, and accomplished their mission with greater public legitimacy and communal collaboration.

Also, two-way communication allows stakeholders to respond, ask questions, and engage directly with non-profits, creating transparency and fostering deeper trust. It is also a digital hub where supporters can learn more, take action, donate, or instantly test the effectiveness of their posts.

[Participant 12](#)

Umm they do a lot of AB testing and it's like an option that you can use when you're advertising with them. You know you can use like different thumbnails and stuff to figure out what's more engaging and getting people to click. So, I think the opportunity is that as a marketer, you've got a lot more options if your idea fails.

Furthermore, social media supports trust-building by allowing non-profits to demonstrate accountability by posting real-time updates, donor appreciation, impact metrics, and content from behind the scenes. Participant non-profits (85.71%) were mindful in offering a consistent stream of honest, mission-aligned content to humanise their work and emotionally connect with audiences. This regular and open communication builds credibility and reinforces integrity.

6.8.5 Upskilling

The emergence of user-friendly digital tools has significantly reduced technical and creative upskilling with greater ease and efficiency, which is traditionally associated with producing high-quality social media content.

[Participant 4](#)

Now that's come on the scene with TikTok for video editing. So, there's so many different tools that are available to organisations to help social media managers that aren't, we're not all trained designers, I would say billion of us are trained designers. We're not all trained photographers. We're not all videographers or editors. A lot of us are just like all-rounders who are passionate about social media and we've kind of had to learn those skills on the job. So having those platforms that are easy to use and easy to learn.

Canva, with its drag-and-drop design interface and pre-built templates, allows users without graphic design expertise to create professional-looking visuals, infographics, and promotional materials aligned with their brand identity. Similarly, CapCut offers intuitive video editing capabilities, including transitions, subtitles, and audio overlays that previously required advanced editing proficiency.

6.8.6 Medium of Privacy

Ability to establish direct and personalised contact with their stakeholders, ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Through direct messaging (DMs), private groups, or encrypted chats, non-profits can engage in one-on-one conversations with donors, beneficiaries, volunteers, and partners in a secure and controlled environment. These private channels are especially valuable for addressing sensitive matters, responding to personal inquiries, or providing tailored assistance without exposing individuals' information.

[Participant 4](#)

Social media is such a good platform for people to feel directly involved with an organisation. Just directly ask if they have any issues or problems or if they want advice. But you know to go, or a lot of people don't feel like calling someone like they want to just like see the message on Facebook or Instagram, be like hey, like I'm going through this. Can you send me in the right direction? So, I think that's a really good resource for people. It's also a great way for people directly engaged with us in terms of like, if they're fundraising, they'll send us their stories of in fundraising.

Furthermore, sophisticated data protection protocols, customisable privacy settings, and consent-based communication allow non-profits to maintain compliance with privacy with a minimum cost. By creating safe spaces for dialogue and support, social media facilitates efficient and discrete communication, strengthens trust between non-profits and the community, and reinforces the commitment to ethical engagement and data responsibility.

6.9 Summary

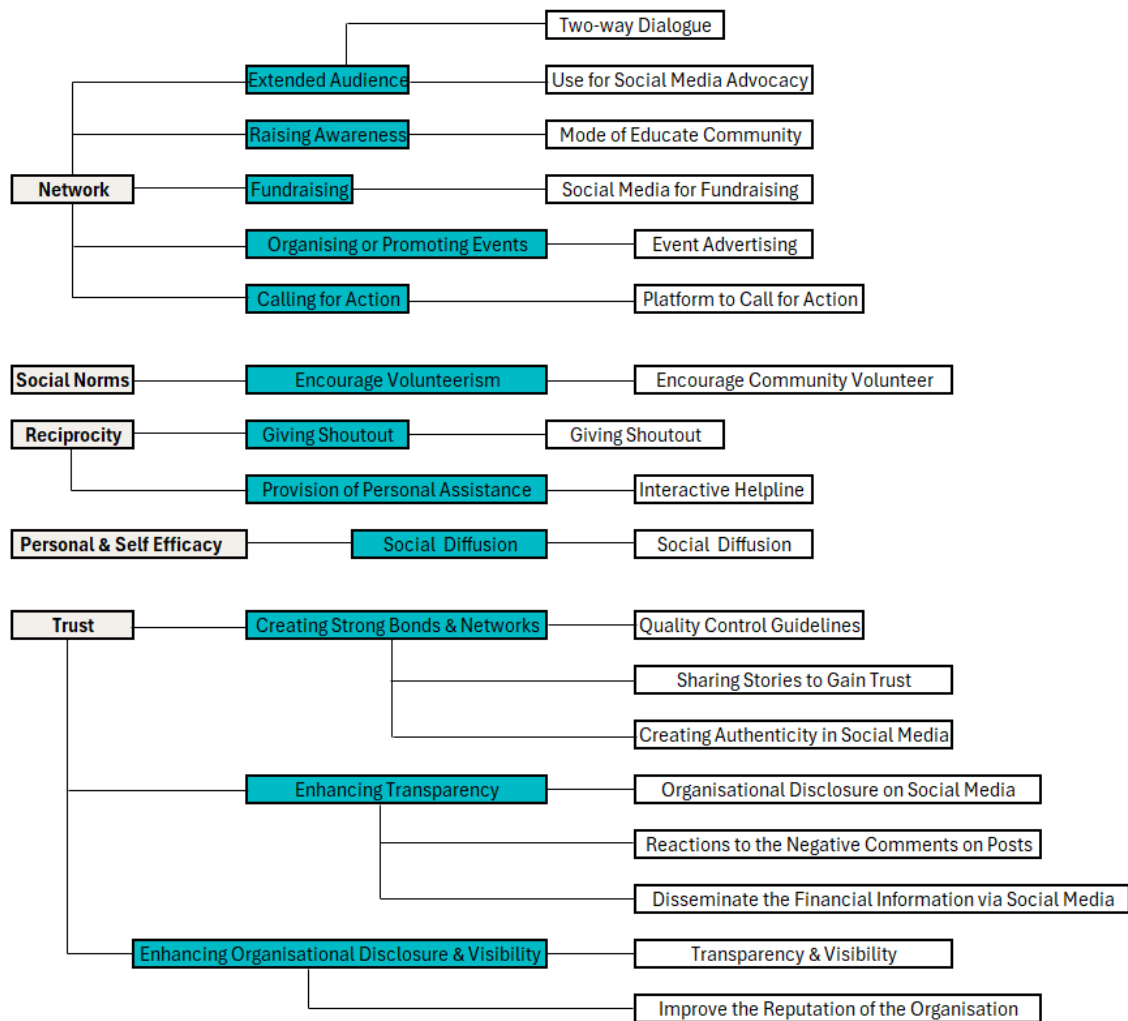
The findings summarised the impact of social media on community engagement and public trust, along with the challenges encountered and opportunities offered to answer two research questions. Key findings revealed a significant influence of social media usage on community engagement, suggesting that social media can be a valuable tool for allowing non-profits to disseminate information and foster community engagement. Building and maintaining public trust was not a high priority for the majority. Their belief in public trust is limited to consistent interactions, creating authentic content, and facilitating discussions. In the exercise of building and maintaining public trust, proper attention was not given to disclose the financial transparency and accountability. For the second research question, significant challenges posed to non-profits prevent them from optimising the service demand due to scarce resources, training, and technological advancements, together with rapid platform commercialisation, triggering tailored content strategies, privacy, scam issues, and, unfortunately, the passive mindset. The emergence of user-friendly digital tools has significantly increased technical and creative upskilling, with greater ease and efficiency in using social media to a notable extent.

CHAPTER 7: Discussion

This chapter critically interprets the research findings through the lens of the conceptual framework grounded in the SCT by explaining why and how the results matter in relation to the two research questions: (RQ1) how do non-profits use social media to improve community engagement and public trust? and (RQ2) what opportunities and challenges do non-profits face when using social media? Further, these RQs links to the dimensions of the SCT with the empirical findings on how online interactions foster community relationships, transparency, and participation while revealing contextual barriers that limit their effectiveness and challenges encountered. This interpretive analysis integrates theory, literature and data to illuminate how social media contributes to and at times hinders the formation of social capital in non-profit sector within NZ.

The thematic map (**Figure 7.1**) illustrates a three-tier hierarchy within the coding scheme of this study that links specific codes to themes and dimensions of the SCT. Further, this layout reflects the rationale behind the analytical framework. The related codes are clustered under meaningful sub-themes, which are further grouped under their respective main themes. As a result, this map provides a clear visualisation of how initial codes coalesce into themes and ultimately into broad themes, underscoring how each level of the coding process contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the data.

Figure 7.1: Thematic map



Source: Developed by the Researcher

7.1 Networks

The network dimension refers to interwoven social relationships and connections among individuals, groups, and organisations that enable collective access to resources, information, opportunities, and mutual support (Woolcock, 1998). The interpersonal ties are based on strong and weak distant contacts, which uniquely emphasise connectivity and access to people, organisations, and information. Research in social networks has stressed the importance of bridges in networks (Granovetter, 1973; Lazega & Burt, 1995) in facilitating information flows. In this study, the different social behaviours explained by non-profits when using social media are related to the network dimension.

Even though they adopted similar features from their competitors, some distinctive differences still set each platform apart from others (Phua et al., 2017). In this study, Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn proved low-cost, real-time channels for building and maintaining relationships, allowing non-profits and community groups to expand their reach, mobilise supporters, and connect otherwise dispersed stakeholders with strong ties. Diversified features, including liking, sharing, tagging, commenting, and webinars, allowed non-profits to reach a broader audience without centralised attention on empathetic and sympathetic feelings (Rodriguez, 2016). Social media has helped them create viral pathways for organising and promoting events, raising awareness and funds, and advocacy (Mato-Santiso et al., 2021; Xue et al., 2024). This proves that information was the preliminary function that most non-profits revolved around (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

Bridging and bonding social capital with knowledge networks, special interest groups, and learning networks are essential for some non-profits to deal with ongoing causes that need expertise. Since most of those specialists are working professionals, their bonds with studied non-profits are light and distant (Granovetter, 1973; Lazega & Burt, 1995), which is opposed to the closer groups. When considering all the non-profits in the sample, the researchers noticed that conservation organisations work closely with experts on an ad hoc basis. Frequent interactions by closed groups were able to foster trust to a certain extent for activity-based non-profits. The alternative is to promote one-on-one communication on public platforms to solidify these social ties that were not observable.

Digital interactions help foster bridging social capital across diverse groups, bonding social capital, and deepening ties within a group, which are crucial for cohesive, action-oriented communities (Fukuyama, 2000; Lin, 1999; Putnam et al., 1993; White, 2002), hence for building and maintaining public trust. For example, a charity quoted that with their celebrities, named Celebrity Twitter Island, they keep in contact through social media and use them for further campaigns. Virtual networking paid off immensely for one charity, as it was an efficient way to reach influencers through Instagram and direct email to everyone involved in the survival campaign. Moreover, active and visible engagement on social media enhances transparency and responsiveness, two key elements reinforcing trust and legitimacy. When non-profits use social media to consistently communicate, respond to feedback, and share community narratives, they create a sense of shared ownership irrespective of geographical boundaries, resulting from virtual networking (Anheier et al., 1995). Virtual networking was a

favourite trend among non-profits in amplifying messages through faster feedback loops, answering questions, and correcting misunderstandings as soon as possible.

In parallel, untruthful facts forced non-profits to make a public apology, which, in essence, will affect the credibility and trust of the organisation (Putnam et al., 1993; White, 2002), as the audience can negatively impact their understanding of specific topics. Interestingly, non-profits post about other movements and uplift others by ensuring that your non-profit is not silent on the things that matter to the community. The recent example they stated was the rising effect on the hikoi movement, strongly rallied around all 115,000 community organisations across NZ against the controversial bill seeking to reinterpret the country's founding document between British colonisers and Māori people. Moreover, toll-free helpline numbers also played a role in tightening the social networking with charities and individuals to get connected, which was seen in a few participants.

One non-profit stated that better awareness makes for better engagement. Growth in engagement would make sense of belongingness and care. This sense of belonging motivates individuals to observe and participate by donating, volunteering, attending events, or spreading the message. No strong evidence has been found to reflect how social media transforms passive followers into active community members, converting digital connections into tangible community engagement and civic participation as prescribed in community function (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

An individual thought leader who is a leading charity lawyer always shares thoughts about causes that need quick attention from the community, and it is an excellent example of philanthropic funding. The social networking and collaboration with a group of about 25 different peak body organisations enable one non-profit to expand its virtual network, which would not be possible otherwise. Another was very honest and stated that they did not experience much success on social media in increasing event participation or disseminating information about the causes they are trying to address, which proves the less importance of the action function, which matched with Lovejoy and Saxton's study in 2012. However, they are still satisfied with the followers' engagement on Instagram. Another charity found out that social media is an alternative to replacing media coverage to make the community aware of an important matter, which is very complex and not affordable for them as a small-scale organisation.

Contrary to what non-profits consistently try to network with the community, one organisation experienced how the community helped them reach out to the school that needed advocacy. Unfortunately, any cyberbullying can lead to network challenges since the bullied person or organisation feels deeply distressed, scared, angry, or ashamed, since potentially thousands of people witness it (Giumetti & Kowalski, 2022; Whittaker & Kowalski, 2014), which could result in leaving. It can take a heavy toll on their self-esteem and trigger depression, anxiety, and reputational damages, leaving community engagement less or even permanently damaging public trust for non-profits. Therefore, reporting threats of harm and inappropriate messages to the appropriate local authorities and social media channels is highly recommended, as cyberbullying can be prosecuted by law.

However, the researcher did not encounter any examples illustrating strong networking with non-profits and their followers. All the circumstances she analysed were weaker, distant, or acquaintance relationships. The study results proved that networks do not strategically mature to form bonding or bridging social capital. The researcher is confident in ruling out social media usage by non-profits for live Q&A sessions and online surveys. At the same time, posts, comments, hashtags, and resharing were much more appreciated for community reach and engagement. However, for building and maintaining public trust, she still feels that live Q&A sessions and online surveys can significantly promote transparency. Therefore, non-profits must wait for the network component to be strategically cultivated through social media, which becomes a powerful driver for non-profits to have a web of active relationships. Further, it enables non-profits to mobilise resources and scale impact, reinforcing trust and connectivity in digital economies.

7.2 Trust

Transparency is key to building trust with donors and the public, and sharing financial information on social media demonstrates that the non-profit is accountable and open about its finances. Also, by demonstrating accountability and transparency, non-profits can increase donor confidence, attract more donations, build stronger relationships, foster a sense of community around their cause, and increase the visibility of their work and mission (Ki & Hon, 2007; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Walsh et al., 2009) which leads to behaviour intentions (Kang, 2014; Smith & Gallicano, 2015) and transactional trust (Andreasen & Kotler, 2017; Bryce, 2007; Drucker, 1990; Sargeant & Lee, 2004; Speckbacher, 2008).

Transactional trust is particularly important in the current climate, where donors are increasingly concerned about how their money is used (Breeze, 2013). Plus, these disclosures ensure transparency and protect supporters from misleading endorsements. Public trust is about ensuring a non-profit's content stands out, sparks discussion, and builds a strong online identity (Yang & Kent, 2014), and a buffer against potential adverse publicity and helps a non-profit withstand scrutiny. However, financial transparency on social media was the least popular among participants due to several factors, including the format, length of information, being more technical to digest, and less appealing to the public.

Regularly posting updates on social media enhances transparency and cognitive trust (Barney & Hansen, 1994; Burt, 2014). Once cognitive trust is established, perceived risk and relationship uncertainties will be reduced, ultimately enhancing community engagement (Yakovleva et al., 2010) and dispositional and societal trust (Rotter, 1980). Authentic content is key to building trust and engagement for non-profits. Messages resonate more with real stories because people connect deeply with emotions, making storytelling a powerful tool for driving action. This was more evident among social and animal welfare non-profits in the sample. Social media also introduces significant risks related to misinformation, reputational damage, and misaligned messaging (Cinelli et al., 2022). A tailored approach is effective for consistency to disseminate the core message since each platform has self-driven audience behaviour, content style (Lozano et al., 2020; Namisango et al., 2019a), and engagement preferences. Consistently told stories that align with the mission of the non-profit, increase integrity, and authenticity. Thus, storytelling is a strategic trust-building mechanism that reinforces credibility, mission, and a long-term support base for future movements. Moreover, stories are social proof, demonstrating effectiveness, building legitimacy, and reducing scepticism. However, the consistent messaging and a professional style were not always feasible among the studied non-profits to foster trust and credibility, contrary to what Namisango and others (2019a) prescribed.

Quality control guidelines were implemented for social media communication to mitigate these risks and sustain public trust. These internal protocols are a governing framework for ensuring transparency, consistency, and ethical community engagement (Xu & Saxton, 2018). Formalised quality control procedures signal strong internal governance and transparency to donors, supporters, and other stakeholders (Mergel & Greeves, 2012; Rojas-Martín, 2013). Further, getting consultancy from experts would gain stakeholder confidence as they are more

likely to trust non-profits that exhibit structured communication practices (Williams et al., 2017). These two alternatives were not practiced consistently among the participant non-profits.

Information verification and validations occur at different levels of approvals for different non-profits. However, 14.28% did not implement quality control and fact-checking when publishing content on social media. This vacuum made them an extra burden that required amending or deleting false information later, significantly undermining trust and stakeholder engagement. To make things worse, one participant believed that the policies did not apply to him since he already knew what he was doing in terms of the business. Some participants are still complaining that they do not have a precise understanding of how guidelines should cope with the speed at which social media is evolving. As a result, they must rely more on their graphics and wording to reflect what they care about.

Another non-profit stated they have three quality gate checks: one with a peer, a second with their manager, and a third with a medical director, before posting information on social media for the community to see. This extended review process helped the non-profit standardise communication tone, narrative, and branding across all social media platforms (Cinelli et al., 2022). Further, it facilitated the spread of a coherent message that aligns with the mission, reinforces credibility, and instilled confidence in the integrity. The third quality gate helped disseminate accurate and verified information, which is dominant in fostering public trust (Campbell et al., 2014; McCarthy et al., 2014; Naraine & Parent, 2016; Neiger et al., 2012).

One participant confirmed that he uses ChatGPT to design the content. This is a good move, but it is not always feasible, as the content reliability, appeal, and fact-checking may depend on the version and the type of chatbot he uses. None of the entities mentioned above has quality guidelines for responding to community feedback on social media. Responsiveness to community concerns, clarification of misunderstandings, and active dialogue signal how an organisation values public opinion in two-way communication.

Also, testimonials on social media significantly boost trust by providing social proof and building credibility since they demonstrate real-world experiences and outcomes. It is a trustworthy source of information added to a public platform, believed by many as a non-profit's involvement is transparent. Further, it boosts persuasion and confidence in the

individuals, and the community goes through the same experience. Therefore, seeing positive feedback and success stories can convince potential supporters to take engagement actions.

Negative comments on social media can be difficult, but effective strategies must be in place to manage them. Responding promptly, showing empathy, and offering solutions can help turn negative feedback into an opportunity for improvement. When criticism is valid, admitting shortcomings and taking corrective actions fosters a perception of accountability. For sensitive issues, inviting private conversations demonstrates a commitment to individualised attention while minimising public interruptions. On the other hand, being transparent about negative feedback will boost public trust and confidence in the non-profit. In this study, the researcher was able to experience a few instances of how non-profit participants dealt with negative feedback by deleting negative feedback to eliminate negativity or harmfulness spreading, or the comments were unproductive or unrelated to the ongoing topic.

In rare situations, to avoid adding further interference and confusion, some non-profits stay away and remain silent or neutral from the discussion. This is an escaping strategy, but the researcher feels good in a way that signals institutional integrity and maturity. Encouraging community participation in these discussions also allows for peer-to-peer validation and strengthens collective trust. Responding to negative feedback makes people feel heard and that their opinion matters. All non-profits demonstrate that they care about the feedback and are taking it seriously. At least the majority agreed they did not hide mistakes or avoid responsibility and were open and transparent. However, if the negative comments are repetitive and offensive, non-profits hide negative comments or even do not hesitate to block the users.

For instance, a non-profit mentioned they would delete the comments that are derogatory or racist or delete the comments when they see their supporters attacking each other on social platforms. In a couple of instances, one non-profit offered to move the conversation to a private message or email since the matters were complex and very personal. A proactive and sincere response to negative comments transforms a potential reputational risk into a strategic opportunity for engagement, gaining public trust, and organisational growth.

The speed of response to public inquiries has become crucial to building role-based trust and satisfaction. Prompt engagement demonstrates attentiveness, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to facilitating two-way dialogue and reinforces credibility. Response delays beyond a reasonable timeframe can significantly reduce perceived reliability and lower the

likelihood of continued engagement. The response time among participating non-profits varies from one day to a week on average. This variation happens due to more attention being needed for their initiatives and events, work overload, waiting for expertise to reply, technical issues, or inadequate staffing. For large-scale non-profits, shared responsibility dividends are distributed across different teams for replying. These departments monitor and moderate comments twice daily to improve the engagement and confidence that stakeholders' voices are being heard. However, special attention will be given to fundraising posts as donations are crucial to the ongoing concern of non-profits. Out of the interviewed sample, only a minority of non-profits, which are also medium scale, responded that they try to respond as soon as they can or at most within a week. Occasionally, comments were ignored if the audience asked something inappropriate or the non-profit felt it was. Nevertheless, they answered it if the individuals had a specific question. Meanwhile, email responses were answered duly and were more service-focused.

When the community sees the collaborative effort behind the initiatives through the voices of beneficiaries or volunteers, they are more likely to perceive that the non-profit is transparent, accountable, and ethically grounded. Non-profits use various methods to gain public trust via social media, including authenticity, consistency, accuracy, and being factual. The respondents emphasised that overly polished or curated content feels like an advertisement, which can be boring and easily dismissed. They argue that authenticity is key in building public trust, particularly in the digital space. They describe trust-building as a cyclic process, while non-profit activities must look legitimate and professional, trust comes from more than appealing. It requires being closer to the community and needing relatable, authentic, and factual social media engagement.

7.3 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is an essential pillar of social capital that involves the expectation of mutual support, goodwill, and recognition (Sethi & Somanathan, 2002). Non-profits facilitate dialogue, recognition, and co-creation spaces, where stakeholders feel valued and empowered (Lapinski et al., 2014).

Reflection of reciprocity by non-profits is very limited among the studied sample, since for most non-profits, social media management assigns broader responsibilities to a single individual. Often, this role is assumed by a communications manager, marketing officer, or the CEO. This multitasking arrangement reflects the resource constraints typical of smaller,

mission-focused non-profits where digital communication is not fully institutionalised. Even though their presence on key social media platforms is observable, it may limit their operational efficiency in strategic planning, content diversity, and community engagement promptly. Further, juggling multiple roles makes it challenging for an individual to dedicate focused attention to digital growth and analytics. As a result, role efficiency was vastly limited to providing services in return for the community. However, this model can still produce authentic and community-rooted content even with limited scalability when the individual's competencies are aligned with mission clarity.

It can be emphasised that the lack of training is a prevailing influencer that fuels the deficiency of social media use by non-profits in the studied sample. This deficiency is also linked to the non-existence of a digital media strategy for non-profits, which should provide direction to connect with the audience and drive measurable results, ultimately leading to increased brand visibility, engagement, and conversions. A social media strategy for non-profits outlines how a business will use social media platforms to achieve specific goals, including increasing visibility, generating leads, or driving initiatives. It encompasses content creation, audience engagement, and performance tracking. However, 92.85% of the participants' non-profits do not have a well-documented social media strategy. A few non-profits are unaware of whether they have the social media to manage their social media. One of the non-profits has an all-in-one document covering education, research-focused, community well-being, and people. Moreover, they create posts to ensure their followers touch all those at different times.

In leveraging social media platforms for communication and outreach, it is essential to recognise the distinct user expectations and engagement behaviours specific to each platform. For instance, Instagram functions poorly as a noticeboard for participant12. According to him, promotional or informational content tends to receive minimal engagement as users are drawn more to emotionally resonant, humorous, and visually compelling content for quick, entertaining experiences.

TikTok operates under similar principles, emphasising fast-paced, bite-sized entertainment. Conversely, Facebook, with its older demographic, is more receptive to event-based or informational posts, which align more with the browsing habits of the users. This highlights the importance of tailoring content to the platform and the motivations of the audience for using entertainment over advertisement. Content that prioritises emotional connection is more likely

to perform well in platform algorithms, whereas overtly promotional posts risk reduced visibility and engagement, ultimately undermining overall communication goals.

A documented social media strategy is rooted in a structured storytelling approach that revolves around three key themes: people, momentum, and innovation. By producing one to two narrative-driven stories per week, the team ensures that each piece aligns with these strategic pillars, aiming to build audience understanding, emotional engagement, and long-term alignment with their mission. Complementing a platform-specific social media strategy that begins with a clear understanding of the target audience across different channels rather than duplicating content. The social media team repurposes posts to suit the tone and expectations of each platform, with humour as a priority on Instagram and educational messaging on Facebook. As a result, this non-profit has seen exponential traffic and community connection growth by prioritising relevance, authenticity, and audience engagement. This adaptive approach contrasts sharply with other non-profits that treat social media as an extension of internal communications, often posting institutional content disconnected from the audience.

Another non-profit that embedded its social media strategy with the communication strategy without disguising the social media goals. They encounter difficulty updating a well-rounded social strategy that goes on par with the pace of technological development of social media. The key impediment to regulating their social media strategy was the lack of technical knowledge of emerging trends on social media.

Out of 14, 4 non-profits are still in the process of developing a social media strategy. One non-profit mentioned that they used to make a calendar of all the significant events. Further, they selected suitable posts for publishing as stories they wanted to tell and where they felt gaps needed to be addressed. In addition, they targeted different programs to be posted about in terms of how and what they wanted to post.

Another non-profit stated that they are broad in terms of what they want to post on average, and it took a quarter of them to get a rough estimate. They posted all the time in peak weeks, while in other weeks, they did not. The volume of postings constantly depends on the message they need to spread or the key messages they are trying to communicate. This ad-hoc approach shows the absence of any specific strategy around community engagement since they see all the social media platforms as communities. Another stressed the importance of having a social media strategy for the fundraising space since social media offers tools for creating campaigns,

sharing stories, and engaging with potential donors, making it a cost-effective and prevalent way to reach a large audience.

One said they are unsure what the strategy would say about community engagement. However, they have guidelines about the different ways of engaging with comments and messages, but they were not familiar enough to analyse the feedback further. The most generic way that non-profits facilitate a two-way dialogue is by publicly acknowledging contributions by reposting donors' comments, highlighting volunteers' efforts, or appreciating community-driven initiatives. These visible acts of appreciation demonstrate that support is received and reciprocated, reinforcing a cycle of mutual commitment.

Non-profits highly reciprocate volunteerism on social media via liking, sharing, commenting on posts, and providing feedback to show appreciation for volunteer commitment. This will lead to volunteer satisfaction and volunteer retention. In return, reciprocating volunteerism on social media will help improve the reputation of non-profits. However, the community has not always appreciated volunteer engagement through social media, which might be because some peers hesitate to share their positive experiences publicly on social media due to privacy concerns or a fear of negative reactions from others. Further studies are preferred to investigate the exact causes for low engagement of appreciative volunteers, including the fact that charities may not have a consistent strategy for sharing volunteer appreciation on social media, leading to a lack of engagement and a perception that volunteering work does not need to be adequately valued. On the contrary, one non-profit appreciates every small achievement of their clubs to bring light to who they are and hopefully drive their engagement and boost them by tagging or using their club logos on the back end of reels, since many clubs have limited presence on social media.

Besides volunteerism, all non-profits appreciate and thank their sponsors, and most responses collected in this study proved that they were in par with previous research (Thompson, 2022). Nevertheless, non-profits liking, sharing, providing thoughtful comments, and following all valuable posts and vice versa can lead to a back-and-forth conversation and build a sense of community. As a result, it helps build and maintain relationships with the community, fostering connections. A connection is created among non-profits, and individuals or groups benefit from the exchange through increased engagement, recognition, or sharing of new knowledge.

Furthermore, when non-profits share results, impediments, and lessons learned, they strengthen social bonds and inspire reciprocal loyalty and further engagement. Over time, giving, acknowledging, and listening through social media fosters a reciprocal ecosystem in which supporters feel emotionally invested and practically involved in achieving the mission of the non-profit they engaged with. The researcher noticed that non-profits understood the criticality of promoting reciprocity and consistently paid an acceptable level of attention.

7.4 Social Norms

Non-profits strategically harness social media to promote and normalise pro-social behaviours, values, and beliefs to shape social norms effectively. Social norms are shared expectations about how individuals think and act within a group or society (Anheier et al., 1995; Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Kalkstein et al., 2022). Social media enables non-profits to influence desired social behaviours in a highly transparent and socially endorsed way. The causes those non-profits support, such as animal and environment conservation, sports and recreation, or supporting equity campaigns, etc., non-profits communicate appropriate expected behaviours, including donating, volunteering, or even mobilising, hinting that they are habitual and socially valued actions.

In social media, user-generated content, testimonials, and hashtags primarily encourage the community to align with these norms by publicly acknowledging them. Social media influences individual behaviours through peer reinforcement and perceived social pressure, making peers more likely to imitate and internalise. This imitation and internalisation could lead to a desire to belong and to gain social approval (Lapinski et al., 2014).

Approving and sharing awareness posts like that above would ripple effect on the community, and the individual would get a sense of how impactful their little caution is in protecting the environment (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Non-profits often value social norms related to volunteerism as a free, paid human resource, which is a crucial resource for carrying out their missions and expanding their reach. On the other hand, volunteers can fill roles that would otherwise require paid staff, freeing up budget for other priorities. Above all, volunteering is the true example of showcasing social norms to gain social acceptance, building networks, and facilitating collaboration.

To minimise the brutality on animals, appropriate language is also important to make it appealing and emotional. For example, a non-profit addressing the related cause, trying to

create content that shapes how individuals perceive and interact with animals, influences public attitudes, and ultimately gets the community's approval to protect them (Cialdini et al., 1990). The degrees of acknowledging and appreciating normative behaviours on digital platforms by non-profits in the studied sample vary from a simple appreciation post to asking citizens to fulfil a civic duty, such as voting. However, observing non-profits' direct involvement in motivating the community to perform civic engagements is very pleasing.

Promoting social norms supporting equity campaigns was very rare among non-profits in NZ. This limitation is twofold: either do not have equity issues to be addressed in the NZ society, or issues are hidden and have not received enough social attention. This is a future research area, and a multi-dimensional sociological lens might be needed to study further.

Some responses show that non-profits are myopic about the outcomes of the initiatives they conducted. Collecting feedback after running initiatives is not impossible, given the wide range of analytics available on social media, and it seems that non-profits do not have proper concerns about it. Another limitation observed in this study for promoting social norms was the limited adaptation of some of the non-profits over the evolution of civic society. For example, one non-profit did not amend its motto, which was created 30 years ago. This non-profit facilitates a special language-speaking community to build a bridge of friendship, through which it conducts the native language speech competition and shares at an ethnic council event connected to preserving culture, language, and values.

Additionally, social media facilitates normative feedback loops, where expected behaviours are celebrated, reinforced, and modelled through likes, shares, and comments. On the global stage, non-profits amplify these expected behaviours by partnering with influencers, community leaders, and micro-celebrities who serve as credible norm-setters. However, in this study, the researcher can only observe non-profits with influencers and community leaders who voluntarily engage to make the desired behaviours more aspirational and socially validated. From a sociological perspective, norms are based on cultural dynamics (Chung & Rimal, 2016). Therefore, adequate attention and investigation were not given to this study on how cultural aspects shaped social norms on social media.

7.5 Personal and Collective Efficacy

Social media are robust ecosystems for enhancing personal and collective self-efficacy in achieving common goals. At the personal level, users gain confidence through opportunities to share success stories, receive feedback, witness peer accomplishments, and access skill-building resources. These activities activate key sources of superior experiences, vicarious learning, and social encouragement. For instance, a non-profit posted an individual story of social transformation, and a youth advocate ran a fundraising campaign as a model of achievable success that others can replicate.

For a sports charity, they ask to share a photo of junior players when they play in inter-club tournaments to boost confidence in young players and showcase their unique skills and values for inspiring others. Simultaneously, seeing their content acknowledged by non-profit pages provides social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) in their ability to make a meaningful contribution. At the same time, this participatory approach turns passive supporters into active storytellers, empowering individuals to see themselves as agents of change within their communities.

Moreover, user-generated content (UGC) nurtures a sense of visibility and mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986), empowering marginalised individuals who may not typically be reflected in official narratives. Sharing personal stories invites vicarious learning (Bandura, 1986), as peers observe achievers engaging successfully with a cause, leading to a ripple effect of inspiration and engagement. Another said that they consistently asked the community to share videos or photos of the event, which the non-profit conducted, to get more future regular participation and willingness to participate in community activities (Fernández-Ballesteros et al., 2002) from the youth community, even though they did not get massive uptake.

However, the study results showed that non-profits have focused more on collective efficacy as they can reach the broadest audience and have more exposure. At the collective level, social media enables decentralised groups to connect, communicate, coordinate, and learn through hashtags, campaign pages, and collaborative storytelling. Specifically, some non-profits use social media effectively to mobilise the community towards a social cause. Collective efficacy proficient in signing petitions, organising fundraisers, and responding to crises. Social media allows for the rapid spread of successful stories, mutual support, and collective reflection that helps communities see themselves as capable of social change since non-profits can amplify community voices and build a sense of togetherness.

Social media becomes a virtual incubator for empowered individuals and organisations, reinforcing the psychological and strategic foundations for a sustainable environment by offering spaces for organisational interactions, collaborations, public accountability, and specialised contribution. Multiculturalism and respecting religions play a restrictive role when achieving personal and collective self-efficacy, sometimes for non-profits. However, one non-profit confirmed that collective efficacy was one of the biggest reasons for their success because non-profits do not exist in a vacuum. Since moderators control their Facebook page, it does not affect letting people post anything related to ongoing topics if they do not offend anyone or are connected to different ethnic groups. However, drawing a clear line between what is valid and invalid in receptive ethnic content is blurry because everyone belongs to some ethnic group. Importantly, personal and collaborative efficacy on social media can promote emotional connection and increase commitment towards loyalty. For the non-profit, facilitating these contributions signals openness and inclusivity, creating an environment that nurtures confidence, leadership, and ownership.

7.6 Summary

This chapter analysed how social media strengthens community engagement and influences public trust through the lens of social capital theory, and findings were evaluated against the existing literature. Network component shows bridging social capital with knowledge networks, which were light and distant, compared to the closer groups. The research findings have a strong bond with the trust component, especially when non-profits hear the voices of beneficiaries; they are more likely to perceive that the non-profit is transparent, accountable, and ethically grounded, provided that their messages are authentic, consistent, accurate, and factual. However, the hesitancy to post financial information on social media to boost transparency and trust with donors and supporters resulted in a weaker bond in building and maintaining public trust. Non-profits also displayed a weaker bond for reciprocity by fulfilling the expectation of mutual support, goodwill, and recognition. Nevertheless, visible acts of appreciation demonstrate that support is received and reciprocated, reinforcing a cycle of mutual commitment in the community engagements. Non-profits showed a strong bond with social norms when communicating appropriate expected behaviour on social media, including donating, volunteering, or even mobilising, hinting that they are habitual and socially valued actions. Moreover, social media promotes personal and collective efficacy from a sense of visibility and mastery experiences from storytelling and testimonials.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

The present study has some implications for the current literature and practice. The first research question did not align with research findings. Participant non-profits use social media extensively for information dissemination through raising awareness rather than reaching out to a broader audience for increased community engagement and building and maintaining public trust. However, the challenges posed by spreading misinformation rapidly became a very controversial topic, making people freak out; non-profits had to spend much time trying to fix their reputational problems caused by misinformation.

Secondly, the results of this study show that non-profits favoured using social media for promoting events to encourage audience participation and foster a sense of community, and rarely promote early bird registration, contests, and giveaways to build anticipation and incentivise early engagement. Two-way communication is less popular among non-profits, as some perceive that increased cyber-bullying is harder to deal with. Promoting volunteerism is the least favourite among non-profits, while non-profits extensively use social media to thank their funders and supporters. The extent of calling for action varies from signing a petition to organising a protest by using social media, and the most successful call for action is getting petition signatures. Due to privacy concerns, seeking personal assistance on social media was not popular among the participants since people were reluctant to openly ask for advice. In the same way, bringing social changes by innovation, practice, or ideas across the community was not satisfactory among the non-profits. Among the non-profits, adopting a new idea or behaviour after observing others on social networks was not observable.

Facebook is an imperative social media tool that has multiple implications for non-profits compared to the remaining. When used strategically, Facebook gives greater visibility, a vast audience, and drives traffic to their websites or services to increase the number of engaged stakeholders, hence the public trust. Specifically, Facebook use has the potential to increase dialogic communication with stakeholders in a low-cost, semi-public landscape. Researchers recommended that online communication adhere to the same protocol standards as face-to-face communication for non-profits (Mergel & Greeves, 2012). Next, Instagram is favoured among non-profits because of the capability of visual nature, diverse younger audience, and features like stories and reels that facilitate engaging and impactful storytelling. In addition, donation

stickers allow non-profits to easily share fundraising campaigns and encourage donations directly from their followers. However, many non-profits employ social media for information dissemination without understanding how to effectively engage stakeholders in two-way dialogue.

Opposed to what is suggested by several scholars (Karra, 2022; Schwedel, 2018; Wiley et al., 2022), TikTok (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024) became the least favoured social media among non-profits, basically because of the resources they face for creating appealing video content. The recent political debates happening on the global stage have lost faith in using X as an unbiased platform. LinkedIn is more classified as a professional platform where some non-profits prefer to tap the high-income donors and industry experts for fundraising and to empower online learning.

To effectively use social media for community engagement, non-profits did not introduce social media into their larger communication strategy as part of the strategic planning process. This resulted in a lack of resources devoted to developing social media platforms. Staff with communications responsibilities in overseeing social media messaging as part of the larger communication strategy, which was absent for most of the non-profits in the sample. Furthermore, the organisational brand was not included in the communication strategies, which were not consistent across social media, and the desired advantages were hindered from being delivered on each platform. Plus, the policies that operate within the strategic framework of the non-profits, which allow creativity while simultaneously creating a professional environment that prevents personal use or inappropriate posts, were not regular and consistent across the studied sample.

Non-profits also have the ability to effectively gather their own Facebook, X, and overall analytics to inform their future decision-making through Simply Measured. All targeted approaches to social media use, including donor cultivation, event announcements, and youth recruitment to new programs, were the priorities. Even though these can be measured quickly and easily, including who and what type of posts result in the intended audience responding, was not an inspiring movement among the non-profits. Understanding where different connect strategies fit for the use of differing media platforms is most beneficial for an organisation and is key to improving two-way communication. Except for a couple of non-profits, content/digital or communication strategies were not present, and they lacked foundational

elements and a clear plan for creating and distributing content, resulting in ineffective achievement of marketing goals and reputation, hence the public trust.

Furthermore, reluctance to share financial information and being transparent on how public money has been invested on social media negatively affected the non-profits in the sample in building and maintaining public trust and loyalty. Personal preferences and cultural implications also played a significant role in selecting channels. However, identifying these exact causes and preferences was not feasible during this study, and the researcher recommends that this study unveils the cultural implications as a potential area of future studies.

Cultivating genuine relationships and offering support are crucial for building a fulfilling and supportive social network, which was the least concern, even though a few non-profits show the bravery to engage in face-to-face conversations on controversial matters. Out of 14.28% have not implemented quality control and fact-checking when publishing content on social media, making them an extra burden that requires amending or deleting false information, resulting in undermining trust and stakeholder engagement. Non-profits excelled at admitting mistakes in social media by publicly acknowledging them, which fosters a perception of accountability and raises public trust. To enhance visibility and disclosure, posting articles on Facebook and the website is mostly preferred. Medium-sized non-profits responded to queries as soon as they could or at most within a week. Occasionally, comments were ignored if the audience asked something inappropriate, and non-profits answered the specific question immediately. Opposed to using conventional social media, some still prefer to email responses, which were answered duly and were more customer service-focused. Opposed to the majority of views, a few non-profits believe that social media is an appropriate channel to publish their finances, proving how funds are used. This openness demonstrates accountability and builds trust.

The research implications tally with the existing literature of challenges and opportunities raised by social media use by non-profits. This study revealed a few critical challenges faced by non-profits in their operational upfront, including funding, constraints in resources and tooling, abrasive behaviours, lack of knowledge in algorithms, commercialisation, and negative attitudes that prevailed using social media by non-profits, besides content quality, less online engagement, privacy scams, and threats.

Amongst all challenges, privacy scams and threats posed significant challenges to non-profits, making it difficult to deal with on a regular basis. This is dual when non-profits perceive that some social media promotes a lot more negativity and comment trolling and causes tension and creates anxiety when they are more exposed to the community. Non-profits strive to protect their brand integrity and safeguard followers from exploitation when scammers impersonate or create deceptive campaigns that closely mimic real ones. Besides, a polarised and emotionally charged digital space triggers hostile interactions, including trolling, aggressive criticism, and bad-faith arguments, derailing constructive dialogue encouraged by non-profits.

Their technical difficulties are easy to overcome when peer networking with partner agencies. On the other hand, privacy and management concerns can be a potentially useful opportunity for non-profits to think through individual challenges and craft mitigation strategies (Maxwell & Carboni, 2014; Mergel & Greeves, 2012). The opportunities presented in this study mostly revolve around the content strategies, switching to alternatives such as crowdsourcing, upskilling staff, and engaging with celebrities, to amplify their message and enhance public engagement. One should not neglect the power of extended and direct communication, which social media is very capable of deepening community engagement and enhancing public trust.

Network dimension in the SCT showed a tight link with the use of social media by non-profits with closer groups for engagement, while it has a loose bond with building and maintaining public trust. In this study, Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn proved low-cost, real-time channels for building and maintaining relationships, allowing non-profits and community groups to expand their reach, mobilise supporters, and connect otherwise dispersed stakeholders. Plus, social media has helped non-profits create viral pathways for organising and promoting events, raising awareness and funds, and advocacy, which in return facilitates extensive community engagement, building and maintaining public trust.

The research findings have a strong bond with the trust component of the SCT when they hear the voices of beneficiaries or volunteers, they are more likely to perceive that the non-profit is transparent, accountable, and ethically grounded, provided that their messages are authentic, consistent, accurate, and factual. Non-profits displayed a loose bond for reciprocity by publicly acknowledging contributions by reposting donors' comments, highlighting volunteers' efforts, or appreciating community-driven initiatives. These visible acts of appreciation demonstrate that support is received and reciprocated, reinforcing a cycle of mutual commitment in the community engagements. However, their hesitancy to post financial information on social

media to boost transparency and trust with donors and supporters resulted in a weaker bond in building and maintaining public trust.

Non-profits showed a strong bond with social norms when communicating appropriate expected behaviour on social media, including donating, volunteering, or even mobilising, hinting that they are habitual and socially valued actions. Social media from user-generated content, testimonials, and hashtags encourages the community to align with these norms by publicly acknowledging them. Further, study results were limited to show how social media influences individual behaviours through peer reinforcement and perceived social pressure, making peers more likely to imitate and internalise, positively influencing community engagement. Moreover, social media promotes personal and collective efficacy from a sense of visibility and mastery experiences from storytelling and testimonials, which empower marginalised individuals by inviting vicarious learning. Since peers observe achievers engaging successfully with a cause, it has led to high community engagement.

The researcher concluded that social media attributed strong bonds with the dimensions of SCT when used by non-profits for community engagement. Nevertheless, for the trust dimension, it has a weaker relationship with public trust with knowledge networks, even though the network dimension clearly shows a direct and strong association with closer groups. Since the grounded theory of the SCT, where norms and networks facilitate collective actions for mutual benefits (Woolcock, 1998), these study findings remained unchanged, and the core learning of the SCT was reaffirmed by the study results. However, there are many potential research areas guaranteed to generalise these study findings.

8.2 Implications

The following section recaps the theoretical and practical implications of social media use by non-profits, which is expected to guide future studies, inform policy decisions, and advance knowledge.

8.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes several theoretical concepts by applying and extending SCT to the use of social media by non-profits in NZ. The SCT has traditionally focused on the development of networks, norms, and trust within physical communities. However, this research demonstrates how the SCT can also be cultivated and sustained through social media platforms, thereby offering a nuanced understanding of the theory in the non-profit context.

First, the findings validate SCT's assertion that reciprocal communication and network-building are critical to fostering social capital in a relational space that supports ongoing interaction, responsiveness, and community engagement. This reinforces Putnam's (1995) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, while also showing how digital tools enable organisations to do both simultaneously, connecting closely with existing supporters and reaching new audiences beyond traditional boundaries.

Second, the research contributes to theoretical discussions by revealing how trust, which is a core component of the SCT, can be earned through online community engagement by identifying specific content strategies (e.g., storytelling, etc). This study enriches the SCT by illuminating the mechanisms through which trust is operationalised on social media. This adds empirical weight to more recent theorising where trust is a dynamic and dialogical outcome of engagement.

Third, this study contributes a geo-cultural dimension to the SCT applications in NZ. The emphasis on multicultural values, community inclusion, and accountability to both trustees and indigenous communities provides a localised perspective on how social capital must be ethically maintained. This points to the importance of contextualising the SCT in societies with unique social obligations and histories. Further, it suggests directions for refining the theory to better account for colonial and postcolonial dynamics.

However, the digital environment introduces complexities that challenge traditional SCT assumptions. Online networks often blur the boundaries between strong and weak ties, creating broad but sometimes superficial connections that may lack the emotional depth or durability of offline relationships. Algorithmic systems within social media platforms also shape visibility and engagement, which can privilege certain narratives while marginalising others, thereby influencing how social capital is distributed and sustained. Moreover, the transient and fast-paced nature of online communication can constrain the development of stable trust and long-term reciprocity. Acknowledging these limitations does not diminish the SCT's utility but they demonstrate the SCT's adaptability to online social interactions. By situating the SCT within a digital context, this study extends its conceptual boundaries and illustrates how social capital continues to underpin community engagement and public trust, even as these processes evolve within heavily digitalised eco-systems.

Finally, the study bridges a gap in the literature by connecting the SCT more explicitly to the communication strategy of non-profits. While the SCT has often been explored in sociological domains, this research demonstrates its utility in analysing the practical communicative functions of non-profits seeking legitimacy, visibility, and sustained support through social media by extending contemporary understanding of how social capital is generated and challenged in networked environments, particularly in culturally rich country like NZ.

8.2.2 Practical Implications and Recommendations

This section summarises the practical implications that would guide social media managers/coordinators to understand how particular institutions use social media to engage with the local community and to enhance public trust.

8.2.2.1 Inconsistent communication

Strategy-focused brands perform better with compelling narratives and rich content experiences that could inform, engage, and inspire the audience. This is the same with non-profits. This study shows how often non-profits are challenged by a lack of content strategies due to the absence of in-depth research capabilities to make data-driven decisions. This lack of focus on clear direction or purpose mainly resulted in non-profits disseminating inconsistent messages or communication. In addition to this, under-utilising human and digital resources results in missing opportunities. Moreover, a lack of alignment between content and the overall goals of the non-profits can also lead to a decline in community confidence in the services they offer. Finally, this ad-hoc content creation can be a drain on resources, with efforts yielding minimal results in terms of investing in the wrong channels and creating content that does not resonate with the target audience.

Recommendation

Non-profits need to develop a content strategy to become more mission-driven and community-oriented (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Nah & Saxton, 2012), with structured digital strategies that could generate higher levels of community engagement and public trust. Together, the public relations literature (Curtis et al., 2009; Dhanesh, 2017) also strongly indicates that social media users prefer more interactive, dialogic content (Saxton & Waters, 2014). However, creating a content strategy is a progressive exercise that needs a lot of planning and careful thought. The first step would be to segment the target audience that likely has some shared characteristics. The popular approach would be to create a persona, which is

an individual fictional representation of the target audience that is used to guide the content creation process, and developing personas can make it easier to reflect on target customers' needs and how the content can meet them.

Further, the content audit can be performed to assess the existing content library to gather evidence about the most popular channels, types of content that the target audience liked or disliked, and to guide content plans. Leveraging the content across different platforms is a strategic approach to content customisation to serve different communication expectations across different channels, and to address technological and content-type differences. Laying out a detailed content calendar is always necessary to streamline content creation and distribution by providing a centralised planning tool that maps out content topics, deadlines, and publication channels to grow community engagement. Additionally, it ensures regular content production and distribution for building an audience and maintaining engagement. Additionally, it provides a central hub for staff to collaborate on content creation, share ideas, and track progress, fostering better teamwork. Specifically, by planning content around seasonal events and relevant keywords, content calendars can help improve search engine optimisation (SEO) and website visibility. Additional research on the timeframes that gave the maximum engagement, hit in peak hours to gain maximum reach.

8.2.2.2 Unproductive Use of Scarce Resources

Measuring ROI enables non-profit organisations (NPOs) to assess the effectiveness of their social media initiatives in achieving key objectives such as community engagement and public trust building. The most generalised approach to measure social media ROI at non-profits is engagement, which was not assessed by many of the non-profits studied. This vacuum resulted in no clue in how financial and other resources are spent on social media generating appropriate value in return, though it is critical for non-profits since social media is of the least priority for most of them. Hence, making a strategic decision whether to invest more in social media or not is very subjective without a proper judgmental analysis. Further, communicating ROI results to key stakeholders and executives is vital for non-profits to get approvals. Lack of ROI also affects optimising campaigns, driving donations and support, and non-profits could end up pouring limited resources into ineffective social media activities. Therefore, in terms of bridging the gap between social media activities and business outcomes, the significance of ROI could not be underestimated.

Recommendation

Tracking ROI is a best practice for digital strategy (Kaske et al., 2012), and these measurement helps build knowledge and achieve mission-driven goals with the support of digital platforms. There are several simple forms that the non-profits can use to measure ROI. The most feasible approach to measure the ROI of social media for non-profits is to set campaign-specific goals and measure them using social media analytics. To increase community engagement and ramp up the visibility, posting new content regularly is necessary. Furthermore, the researcher listed out a few simplified metrics that non-profits can use manually to measure the ROI as a starting point. The engagement metric includes likes, shares, comments, and retweets, and can be found in the admin console. The next significant metric is the reach, which refers to how many views a post received, even if the user took no action. Referral traffic to your website explains the sources of visitors to the website, like social or organic search, and can be found those related statistics in the admin console or in Google Analytics. The email subscriber metric is measured by the number of newsletter signups a non-profit received on social platforms. Non-profits can also consider using Facebook Analytics and Insights to help determine their ROI. These tools can reflect much about the types of individuals that interact with the website and the content they find engaging. Once armed with this knowledge, non-profits will also be able to make better decisions about how to target any Facebook ad campaigns, in case they can afford it.

8.2.2.3 Weak Networking Ties with External Organisations

Non-profits need to effectively utilise technology to operate efficiently. However, getting access to and using technology was challenging for most non-profits due to limited resources and technical expertise. Even though peer networking creates opportunities for interactions, provides recognition for efforts, fosters a culture of collaboration and support, non-profits showed less favouritism. Interestingly, the peer networking concept goes well together with SCT, where collective actions enable mutual benefits (Woolcock, 1998).

Recommendation

Social media facilitates finding potential partners, getting informal mentoring, and accessing valuable knowledge to navigate resource challenges. Non-profits can gain access to training and support to enhance their technological skills, staff, and volunteers through partnering with technology professionals or other non-profits that offer pro bono services. There are networks and government associations that exist specifically in the non-

profit sector that provide opportunities for sharing technology guidelines, frameworks, and best practices. Therefore, collaboration with them can help non-profits to stay informed about emerging technologies and leverage shared resources.

Sharing best practices and resources with others will foster a collaborative environment to learn from each other's experiences. This can help streamline internal processes and reduce individual organisational resource burdens. Social media facilitates online workshops and networking, establishes a culture and norms that foster respect, trust, and openness among peers, which will help to build cohesion. Further, real-time feedback and recognition will help to motivate the peers and sustain their engagement toward achieving a common goal.

Peer networking greatly supports recruiting new volunteers and is popular among youths. Additionally, the non-profits can absorb the vibes of young volunteers, their attitude, taste, and working style to filter out effective ways to increase the youth community engagement. In fact, demonstrating a shared commitment to a cause can potentially attract more funding, making others more likely to imitate and participate to gain social approval (Lapinski et al., 2014). Collaborating with local businesses, schools, and universities to establish volunteer programs can create a pipeline of volunteers and gain access to specific skills. Staff also give a sense of community and camaraderie, fostering a positive and supportive working environment and inspiring career growth with training received or through contacts from networking. The long-term collaborations could form coalitions that amplify the impact of advocacy efforts and community attention by bringing together diverse groups with shared goals by pooling resources.

8.2.2.4 Limited Fundraising and Content Distribution Efforts

Although there are various free online tools available to enhance fundraising capabilities and operational efficiencies, such as crowdfunding, Canva, TweetDeck, Meta Business Suite, and Followerwonk, most of the non-profits have not used them effectively. Crowdfunding has emerged as a community-driven fundraising tool, enabling non-profits to solicit small donations from many individuals via social media while cultivating engagement and public trust. However, many small non-profits in the studied sample were reluctant to blend crowdfunding with online tools, which limited them in emotionally connecting with a larger audience at a reasonable rate or for no fee. This restriction led to a simple content distribution and created a participatory environment that is limited and does not allow individuals to interact with campaigns, share stories, and amplify collective action. Unfortunately, this negligence

ignores the network effects, immediacy, and interactive nature of social media, which non-profits can significantly enhance both the reach and impact of their fundraising efforts on crowdfunding.

Recommendation

To maintain a responsible ownership of public resources and in the mission progression (Milde & Yawson, 2017), crowdfunding can be beneficial. Strategic use of crowdfunding helps non-profits to build meaningful engagement, inform and spread messages, and expand donor base (Gore & DiGiammarino, 2014). Four popular crowdfunding models can be seen on social media, which enable non-profits to tailor fundraising campaigns. Donation-based models enable one-off contributions with no expectation of return. Reward-based models provide donors with non-financial tokens of appreciation. Opposed to the two models above, individuals can raise funds on behalf of a non-profit through personal social media pages using Classy, JustGiving, and Facebook. Patreon and Facebook Monthly Donations can help non-profits to integrate social media for monthly recurring or subscription-based support. Further, the facilities given by crowdfunding, such as regular updates, real-time donor acknowledgments, and open comment threads, also foster the credibility.

Canva and Adobe Express enable the creation of visual content for storytelling, with professional templates and design resources, allowing non-designers to create compelling visuals (Marsh et al., 2021). TweetDeck, Meta Business Suite, and Followerwonk help in monitoring social listening and analytics and respond to public queries in real time to increase perceived transparency and responsiveness (Mergel, 2013). For collecting surveys and feedback, Google Forms, Typeform, and SurveyMonkey (basic) would be useful. Facebook Live, YouTube Live, and StreamYard are helpful in live streaming and broadcasting, while Airtable (free base) and Asana (basic plan) help manage social media initiatives and timelines.

8.2.2.5 Lack of Financial Transparency

Public disclosure of financial information is vital to enhancing financial transparency, which ultimately enhances public confidence and credibility with donors by showing that a non-profit is using financial resources efficiently (Li et al., 2019; Pressgrove, 2016; Pressgrove & McKeever, 2016; Olinski & Szamrowski, 2021). These disclosures are vital in building public trust and loyalty in the long run. However, financial transparency on social media was the least popular among participant non-profits due to the format, length of information, being more technical, and less appealing.

Recommendation

Financial disclosure strategy offers donors an understanding of whether the non-profit has channelled its donations appropriately and effectively (Crawford et al., 2017; Dhanani & Connolly, 2012). How much money has been raised, how the funds have been spent in various projects, along with an overhead costs breakdown of fundraising and administrative expenses, are recommended (Atan et al., 2012; Blouin et al., 2018; Gandía, 2009; Rossi et al., 2022; Saxton & Guo, 2009; Saxton et al., 2014; Saxton et al., 2015). Providing feedback about contributing donors and the progress of campaigns can also moderate donor behaviour and predisposition to be involved in supporting (Kim et al., 2021).

8.2.2.6 Insecure Social Media Channels

Commercialisation poses financial, ethical, and strategic challenges for non-profits for safeguarding their digital resources. To use them as channels for secure social impact, social effort is diverted to paid security tools, which are beyond the non-profit's reach. As a result, many non-profits are hesitant to use social media in favour of other channels for their community engagement. This reluctance reduces the effectiveness of social media campaigns and weakens the digital presence for outreach and visibility.

Recommendation

Even though organisations are vigilant, the rate of fraud or scams happening is high (Serious Fraud Office New Zealand, 2024). Non-profits should train their staff in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) on identifying scams, following secure financial protocols, encouraging whistleblowing, and creating a culture where employees feel safe reporting misconduct without fear of retaliation. Once scammed, need to immediately end all contact with the scammer, report to the bank and to the legitimate organisation they impersonate, and contact Netsafe for advice and guidance. Change passwords, scan devices for malware, and take it to an authorised technician for cleaning are the necessary steps to minimise further financial damages and data leaks.

Most of the solutions described earlier are less expensive than the sophisticated security applications in the market. Further, the operating system and software updates provide complex security protections by providing patches that fix vulnerabilities and improve security features, which are license-bound. These patches block potential entry points for cybercriminals, reducing the risk of malware, data breaches, and other cyberattacks.

8.3 Limitations and Future Directions

There would be many limitations to generalising these study findings in the context of reciprocity and social norms, since supporting evidence on equity campaigns was very rare among non-profits in NZ. This study did not assess how platform guidelines and legal requirements comply with non-profits in NZ. Also, absent in the analysis is how social media can be a powerful tool for changing the culture of communicating values and vision, and promoting diversity and inclusion, resulting a study with a multi-dimensional sociological lens.

The popularity of social media among non-profits is based on several internal and external factors. Internally, it is decided by the resources, audience, demographics, and familiarity with the technology, while externally driven by facilities provided by social media platforms and socio-economic settings. Therefore, to generalise the results, the researcher recommends future research on a wider scope with a relatively large sample size, with follow-up research with the objective to provide clarity and help establish best practices. Personal traits, including conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism, can also influence the selection of social media (Lampropoulos et al., 2022), and cultural implications were not feasible during this study; the researcher recommends that these topics would be potential areas of future studies.

8.4 Summary

This chapter summarises how research findings imply the current literature and practice. While Facebook and Instagram are the most favourite social media for non-profits, most use social media for information dissemination, which deviates from the RQ1. Most of the non-profits have not introduced social media into their larger communication strategy, and the organisational brand was not included. The policies that operate within the strategic framework were not regular and consistent across. Basic data analytics for measuring the engagement and impact of social media were also not observable in general. For the majority, content strategies were not presented, resulting in reduced engagement and reputation, hence the public trust. Hesitancy in sharing financial information on social media negatively affects building and maintaining public trust. Hence, the existing literature and research findings align with the RQ2. A list of challenges posed by the triple constraints, resource, knowledge, and technology. Research recommendations propose practical approaches for changes in the process based on the findings. The later section follows the potential areas for future studies would guide by this research, inform policy decisions, and advance knowledge.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter



**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
(AUTEK)**

17 October 2024

Kasuni Weerasinghe
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Kasuni

Re Ethics Application: **24/265 Exploring the use of social media by New Zealand Non-Profit Organisations for Community Engagement and Public Trust**

Thank you for your responses to AUTEK's conditions.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 17 October 2027.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEK.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTEK approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEK prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTEK, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTEK grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact the Secretariat at ethics@aut.ac.nz
(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEK Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: enr7793@aut.ac.nz

Auckland University of Technology, D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, New Zealand.
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316; E: ethics@aut.ac.nz; www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. The recordings will be transcribed, and any personal details will be removed. After the interview, I will share the transcripts to ensure your expressed views are captured accurately.

The data collected during the interview will be used solely for the purposes of this research project. You will only be able to participate after signing the Consent Form, which is designed to ensure that your participation is based on a clear and comprehensive understanding of the research.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no physical risks associated with this research as the research methodology involves only a conversation. You are encouraged to share only what you feel comfortable discussing. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, you can skip a question or take a break. I value your expertise and want to ensure the discussion remains relevant and engaging. If certain topics are less applicable to your experience, please share your perspective, and I will adjust the conversation accordingly to ensure we stay aligned with the research objectives. I am aware that your time is valuable. Hence, I will try to complete this discussion during the agreed time. If you feel nervous or anxious about the questions that will be asked, please let me know so I can share the interview questions; then, you may be able to gather relevant and appropriate information and be prepared.

What are the benefits?

The findings of this research will assist in strategising effective social media practices in non-profits, which would be resulted in stronger community engagement, increased public trust, and more effective organizational strategies. Discovery of opportunities available through social media, the non-profits, and the wider community may benefit from more transparent, engaged, and effective communication, leading to stronger community networks and support systems.

Your involvement is vital for completing my master's degree qualification. Therefore, your contribution will support my academic progress.

How will my privacy be protected?

The confidentiality of the information you provide will be ensured; for example, information linked to your identity in any reports, publications, or presentations will be removed. Unlike your real name, a pseudonym (a false name) will protect your identity in the interview transcripts. This ensures that your real name is not connected to the information provided. Your responses will be treated with the highest level of care to ensure your privacy is protected. All digital recordings, transcripts, and any other materials related to the research will be stored on a password-protected device and backed up in a secure and encrypted format. Physical documents, if any, will be stored in a locked place. The data collected will be accessible to the researcher and her supervisor only; if additional researchers or assistants need to view the data, I will obtain your consent.

Further, I will ensure that your organization's name will not be disclosed in any reports, publications, or presentations unless explicit permission is granted. If you are comfortable with your organisation being named, I will seek your written consent. Otherwise, all references to your organisation will be anonymised to protect its identity. This approach helps maintain confidentiality while ensuring the data remains useful for the research objectives. If you have concerns regarding using your organisation's name, please discuss them with me, and we will ensure your preferences are respected.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The primary cost will be the time spent participating in the interview. The interview is expected to take approximately 45 - 60 minutes. The interview time will be fixed at your convenience. No extensive preparation is required for the interview as most of the questions will be familiar with your tasks and responsibilities.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

There are two weeks from the date you receive this information to decide whether to participate in this research. During this time, feel free to ask questions to determine whether this study aligns with your availability and interests.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive a summary of the key findings upon completing this research. This summary will highlight the main insights and conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations, particularly those related to how non-profit organisations.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor,

Dr Kasuni Weerasinghe via email kasuni.weerasinghe@aut.ac.nz or phone (+649) 921 9999 ext 31876

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Primary research supervisor – Dr. Kasuni Weerasinghe via email kasuni.weerasinghe@aut.ac.nz or phone (+649) 921 9999 ext 31876

Primary Researcher – Manoja Prabhalingi Siriwardhana, Email - cnr7793@autuni.ac.nz

Researcher Contact Details:

Manoja Prabhalingi Siriwardhana


Email - cnr7793@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Kasuni Weerasinghe via email kasuni.weerasinghe@aut.ac.nz or phone (+649) 921 9999 ext 31876

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17th October 2024, AUTEK Reference number 24/265.

Appendix C: Consent Form



TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Consent Form

Project title: Exploring Social Media Use in Non-Profit Organisations for Community Engagement and Public Trust

Project Supervisor: Kasuni Weerasinghe

Researcher: Manoja Prabhalini Siriwardhana

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 31st October 2024.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study, then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):
.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17th October 2024 AUTEK Reference number 24/265.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D: Interview Questionnaire

Sample Interview questions for semi-structured interviews

General questions

1. Could you please explain your role within the organisation and how it relates to the organization's social media communication?

-How long you have been handling social media activities of the organisation?

-Have you given special training to handle social media activities? If not do you consider such training is necessary?

2. Do you have a dedicated team to handle social media activities, or how is it administered in your organisation?

-How many employees in the social media dedicated team?

-Is there any succession plan if you decided to leave the organisation to carry out social media activities?

Core interview Questions

3. What factors inspired your organisation to use social media? How long has your organisation been using social media?

-I noticed that your organisation uses several social media platforms, which social media platform is used more frequently?

- What is the aim of using different social media platforms?

- Do you share different content in each platform?

- How often do you interact with SM followers, e.g publishing posts, Q & A sessions, surveys, etc...? Which method is used often?

- what do you have quality controls guidelines to do standard of quality?

- Which design content (pictures, videos, @, links, etc.) do you use most frequently in Facebook, Twitter YouTube, Instagram? And why?

4. According to your experience, do you think that social media assists in **building networks, fostering community ties**, promoting events, and impacting society? Why?

5. In your experience, do you think that SM can be used to **build and sustain public trust**? How SM assist in building public trust?

6. Can you share specific social media strategies that have effectively built strong relationships?

-I am interested to know how your posting practices aim to strengthen bonds with the community.

- Do you have a documented SM strategy for your organisation?

7. What are the major achievements your organisation experienced during the last few years using social media to engage with the community?

8. How does your organisation handle feedback from the community on social media posts? Especially negative comments? Do you think that getting input from the followers/members is important?

-What is your average response time?

-Does your organization encourage community members to share their own content (photos, videos) or experiences on social media?

10. How do you use social media to appreciate the community/volunteer support?

11. How does your organization use social media to promote and reinforce the values and norms important to the community? Such as biodiversity

12. Do you encourage individual community members to take action through social media? How do they feel they can make a difference?

13. Have you used social media to achieve collective goals or mobilize collective action? Could you please give any examples?

Do you use a specific hash tag or other code word in social media that stands for your community?

14. How does your organisation measure the effectiveness of social media?

15. What challenges do you face using social media in terms of human, financial, technical resources, and community attitudes?

16. Do you think social media has provided new opportunities, especially in reaching out to the community and obtaining resources?

17. Can you please provide me with contacts of non-profit organisations you may know who use social media for community engagement and public trust

Appendix E: Example Showing Charting for A Primary Study

Description	Data Extracted
Title	A Typology of Social Media Use by Human Service Non-profits: Mixed Methods Study
Year of Publication	2024
Discipline Area	Social Work, Communication, Data Science
Type of Study	Primary
Country of Origin: Canada	Canada
Context: Study of social media use by human service non-profits, specifically Sexual Assault (SA) centres in Canada	<p>Study of social media use by human service non-profits, specifically Sexual Assault (SA) centres in Canada</p> <p>Focused Organisation Type: Human Service Non-profits, specifically Sexual Assault (SA) centres</p> <p>Social Media Platform: Twitter (rebranded as X)</p> <p>Study Population/Sample Size: 133 Sexual Assault Centres; 297,360 tweets analysed</p> <p>Methodology: Mixed Methods Study: Qualitative content analysis, supervised and unsupervised machine learning, thematic and sentiment analysis</p> <p>Type of Social Media Platform Under Study: Twitter (X)</p> <p>Theories/Concepts Used: Typology of social media use, Sentiment Analysis, Emotion Analysis</p>
Intervention	Intervention: Use of social media for communication objectives such as community engagement, public awareness, and advocacy
Mechanism	Classification of tweets into seven thematic categories to understand the contribution to engagement and communication outcomes
Outcome	Enhanced public engagement, increased awareness of sexual violence issues, support for survivors, and effective communication strategies

Appendix F: An Overview of the Review Study

Reference: Mato-Santiso, V., Rey-García, M., & Sanzo-Pérez, M. J. (2021). <i>Managing multi-stakeholder relationships in nonprofit organizations through multiple channels: A systematic review and research agenda for enhancing stakeholder relationship marketing</i> . <i>Public Relations Review</i> , 47(4), 102074. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102074				
No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
1	Investigated the advantages and disadvantages of using online channels/tools compared to traditional offline channels/tools by non-profits for stakeholders to build and improve engagement.	Not mentioned	<p>This systematic literature review analyses 169 peer-reviewed articles published in international journals and written in English by searching in the scientific databases Scopus and Web of Science.</p> <p>The systematic literature established the following theme labels based on their key content,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Social media 2) Advocacy 3) Fundraising and 4) Stakeholder engagement 	<p><i>“Regarding the potential benefits of using online channels with respect to offline ones, the literature consensually highlights social media’s cost-effectiveness and interactivity, facilitating two-way dialogue with several stakeholders.” (P. 7)</i></p> <p><i>“Based on the thematic analysis we carried out, evidence supports that nonprofits mainly use these channels for advocacy and fundraising due to the relative difficulty, effort, and high cost of carrying out these tasks through traditional channels. Almost no organizations utilize the technology for horizontal or vertical communication flows, interactivity, engaged participation or data communality” (P 7)</i></p> <p><i>“The ideal combination of multiple channels/tools to increase key stakeholder engagement has not been explored yet.” (P. 9)</i></p>

Appendix G: Results of the Primary Studies

Reference: <i>Waters, R. D., Burnett, E., Lamm, A., & Lucas, J. (2009). Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using Facebook. Public Relations Review, 35(2), 102–106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.01.006</i>				
No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
1	Answered the research question, How these new social networking sites are being used by the organisations to advance their organisation’s mission and programs?	United States	Qualitative content analysis on FB Profiles to determine how non-profits were using Facebook, a content analysis of 275 randomly sampled legally incorporated profiles were analysed.	<i>“This study found that nonprofits have not incorporated the vast majority of the Facebook applications available to them into their social networking presence. Examining 275 nonprofit organization profiles for incorporation of disclosure, information dissemination, and involvement revealed that disclosure was the most often used strategy. Though components of dissemination and involvement were used differently by the nonprofit subsectors, overall they were largely ignored by the organizations.”</i> (P. 105)

Reference: Briones, R. L., Kuch, B., Liu, B. F., & Jin, Y. (2011). *Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships. Public Relations Review, 37(1), 37–43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.12.006>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
2	Examining how social media could be used to build relationships with the public is based on Hallahan's (2008) five relationship management concepts, including commitment, control, mutuality, commonality, trust, and satisfaction.	United States	Qualitative research methods: 40 in-depth interviews with American Red Cross employees.	<i>"The American Red Cross is using a wide variety of tools such as websites, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook to develop relationships focused on recruiting and maintaining volunteers, updating the community on disaster preparedness and response, and engaging the media. By having a two-way dialogue through social media, the American Red Cross reports providing faster service for the community, generating more media coverage, and receiving positive and negative feedback from stakeholders to improve the organization."</i> (P. 41)

Reference: Lovejoy, K., Waters, R. D., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). *Engaging stakeholders through Twitter: How nonprofit organizations are getting more out of 140 characters or less. Public Relations Review, 38(2), 313–318. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.01.005>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
3	Investigated how non-profits use Twitter to engage stakeholders. Their analysis also includes other communication methods used on Twitter, such as hyperlinks, hashtags, public messages, retweets, and multimedia files.	United States	Analysed content analysis of tweets of 100 largest non-university affiliated non-profits in the United States.	<i>"Organizations develop a social media strategy to grow virtual communities with stakeholders however, there have been only minimal results that indicate social media results in conversation and community building"</i> (P. 316)

Reference: Lovejoy, K., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). *Information, Community, and Action: How nonprofit organizations use social media**. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17(3), 337–353. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01576.x>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
4	Answered how non-profits use microblogging applications to communicate with the public. They have identified three functions, information, community, and action, by examining Twitter utilisation practices.	United States	The study used qualitative and quantitative methods by analysing Twitter. Qualitative analysis is based on 12 themes, and quantitative analysis is done by collecting and analysing numerical data.	<i>"The Information-Community-Action scheme might represent a "ladder" of organizational communication functions that would conform to the expectations of the resource mobilization perspective (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Information could be seen as a core activity to attract followers, Community-focused messages serve to bind and engage a following of users, and Action-oriented messages serve to mobilize the resource—that is, the community—that has been developed through informational and community-oriented communication."</i> (P. 350)

Reference: Guo, C., & Saxton, G. D. (2014). *Tweeting Social Change: How Social Media Are Changing Nonprofit Advocacy*. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(1), 57–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012471585>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
5	Their research question is straightforward: How are non-profits using social media to engage in advocacy work?	United States	The mixed method approach includes quantitative examination using content analysis and qualitative examination using inductive analysis.	<i>"Our analysis suggests that Twitter is a powerful communication tool—and an especially formidable tool for "public education" approaches. It is less prevalent in its role as a mobilization tool, with the organizations' tweets being used to facilitate public events, direct action, and grassroots lobbying less frequently than might be expected."</i> (P. 73)

Reference: Abeza, G., & O'Reilly, N. (2014). *Social media platforms' use in building stakeholder relationships: the case of national sport organizations. Journal of Applied Sport Management, 6(3), 10.* <https://js.sagamorepub.com/jasm/article/view/4300>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
6	Investigated how National Sport Organisations (NSOs) use their official Facebook and Twitter pages to create relationship dialogue with their stakeholders.	Canada	A qualitative study: A content analysis was conducted on the official Twitter and Facebook pages of 24 Canadian NSOs.	<i>“The findings of the descriptive analysis show that both SM platforms (i.e., Facebook and Twitter) have been mostly used by NSOs for communication purposes; the interaction element scored very poorly on both platforms. interaction. NSOs use Facebook pages in relatively preferable way than Twitter pages in interacting with their stakeholders.” (P. 119)</i>

Reference: Hou, Y., & Lampe, C. (2015). *Social Media Effectiveness for Public Engagement*. ACM Digital Library. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702557>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
7	<p>Answered four research questions on how social media is used for public engagement by small organisations. Research questions include,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Factors influencing small NPOs' social media adoption. 2) How do small NPOs use various social media sites to achieve different public engagement goals? 3) How do small NPOs assess the effectiveness of different social media for public engagement? 4) What organisational-level challenges influence social media support on public engagement goals? 	United States	A qualitative study: semi-structured interviews via phone with NPO social media point personnel. Followed by a content analysis of NPOs' Facebook public pages and Twitter accounts.	<p><i>"The small NPOs we examined sought to leverage the availability of multiple social media sites to disseminate information to new audiences, build community with different stakeholders, and mobilize people into action related to advocacy missions. We found that the NPOs' efforts to use social media sites were not fully successful in initiating conversations and mobilizing actions."</i> (P. 3115)</p>

Reference: Bürger, T. (2015). *Use of digital advocacy by German nonprofit foundations on Facebook. Public Relations Review, 41(4), 523–525.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.07.007>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
8	Investigated how German foundations use social media, especially Facebook, to engage with the public and advocate for their topics.	Germany	A qualitative study: A content analysis of NPOs' Facebook public pages and Twitter accounts.	<i>"Although foundations offer ways for interacting, those were seldomly picked up: fans rarely commented on posts-thereby making one-way communication the dominant paradigm."</i> (P. 524)

Reference: Chen, Y. R., & Fu, J. S. (2015). *How to be heard on microblogs? Nonprofit organizations' follower networks and post features for information diffusion in China. Information Communication & Society, 19(7), 978–993.* <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2015.1086013>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
9	Examined the following research question, how to be heard on microblogs? Non-profits' follower networks and post features for information diffusion in China.	China	A quantitative study: A content analysis of the archival data of 95 NPO Weibo.	<i>"To effectively employ Weibo for communication and networking with stakeholders, NPOs must build a large follower network and disseminate posts that generate numerous retweets. They can achieve these objectives by first recruiting Weibo followers through strategic following behaviors and highly retweetable posts. Retweets by numerous followers trigger comments and discussions among Weibo users that result in issue salience and visibility of the NPOs in the public sphere. Issue salience and visibility translate into the NPOs' accumulative Weibo status that further increases their number of followers and retweets. Only when NPOs establish a powerful Weibo presence can they pursue the high-level objectives of Weibo communication, such as dialogical engagement, community building, OPR cultivation, and action mobilization. And Weibo has the great potential for NPOs to achieve these objectives."</i> (P. 989)

Reference: Gurman, T. A., & Ellenberger, N. (2015). Reaching the global community during disasters: Findings from a content analysis of the organizational use of Twitter after the 2010 Haiti earthquake. *Journal of Health Communication, 20(6)*, 687–696. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2015.1018566>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
10	<p>Research questions included,</p> <p>1) Did tweet content posted by global health and development organisations differ 3 months before compared with 3 months after the 2010 Haiti earthquake?</p> <p>2) Differences in tweet content before and after the earthquake would provide evidence of a shift in how organisations communicate during the crisis and build relationships with an external audience.</p>	Not mentioned	A qualitative content analysis for tweet message.	<p><i>“Organizations did not change in their use of techniques to involve users (e.g., retweet, call to action), with the exception of using tweets as a fundraising mechanism. Study findings highlight missed opportunities among organizations to maximize Twitter in order to encourage more interactive and immediate communication with the global community.”</i></p> <p>(P. 687)</p>

Reference: Jung, K., & Valero, J. N. (2015). *Assessing the evolutionary structure of homeless network: Social media use, keywords, and influential stakeholders. Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 110, 51–60.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2015.07.015>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
11	Answered the following research questions, 1) How does a network of organisations use social media over time? and 2) What is the social media network structure that develops over time?	United States	A qualitative study: Social network analysis methods to explore the homeless network's social media use and network from 2009 to 2013.	<i>"Our findings confirm that over time, the homeless network tends to use social media to raise awareness of homelessness issues, soliciting the support of stakeholders in general and engaging external stakeholders. In addition, results indicate that the social media network structure evolves over time, with a significant growth in reciprocal relationships between Facebook users. This finding differs from previous research, which finds that nonprofit organizations use social media for one-way communication (Waters & Jones, 2011)." (P. 59)</i>

Reference: Saxton, G. D., Niyirora, J. N., Guo, C., & Waters, R. D. (2015). #AdvocatingForChange: The strategic use of hashtags in social media advocacy. *Advances in Social Work, 16*(1), 154–169. <https://doi.org/10.18060/17952>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
12	Determined how advocacy organisations use hashtags on Twitter, what types of hashtags are being used, and whether using hashtags increases the level of engagement by those following advocacy efforts.	United States	<p>A two-stage, mixed-methods approach combines quantitative and qualitative content analyses.</p> <p>Stage 1 Involved an inductive analysis of the hashtags used in each tweet to identify communication strategies unique to social media innovation.</p> <p>Stage 2 A series of regressions were used to determine the relationship between hashtag utilization and the effectiveness of organisational messaging 105 constituent members of the National Health Council, a national US-based patient/health advocacy coalition.</p>	<p><i>“Out of the eight categories of hashtags, public education hashtags are far more frequently used than any other. Such hashtags focus on educating the public, a key, long-term advocacy tactic and one for which social media is particularly well suited (Guo & Saxton, 2014). However, some of the less-frequently-used hashtag types deserve special attention, as they suggest interesting potential for the organization. Values and Branding hashtags, for example, help the organization differentiate itself from others in a way that helps to strengthen understanding of the organization.”</i></p> <p>(P. 165 & 166)</p>

Reference: Aabeid, M., Mustaffa, C. S., & Budiman, A. (2016). Impacts of Facebook usage on Non-Profits and Donors Relationship building and Maintenance. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 46, 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.7176/nmmc.vol4613-20>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
13	This paper explores the perceptions of the managers and donors of non-profit organizations on how Facebook can take care of the difficulties of building trust and maintaining relationship which are the bedrock of fundraising and donation.	Libya	Qualitative method with in-depth interviews through a purposive sampling was adopted to probe into the impact of building and maintaining relationships.	<i>"The finding revealed that mostly, Facebook is mostly used by non profit organization to build and maintain relationship with donors and the public. the findings have shown that in achieving this Facebook has been used significantly. Similar to this discovery, Rosen (2015) described that with Facebook, it's a great way to nurture relationship without having to employ any further time, energy, or money."</i> (Page 7)

Reference: Anagnostopoulos, C., Gillooly, L., Cook, D., Parganas, P., & Chadwick, S. (2016). Stakeholder Communication in 140 characters or less: A study of community sport Foundations. *VOLUNTAS International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 28(5), 2224–2250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9802-4>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
14	Examined the extent to which core themes of CSFs' (Community Sport Foundations) social agendas are being communicated through Twitter within the English football industry.	United Kingdom	The mixed-method approach used for Twitter quantitative content analysis and structured interviews.	<i>"Consistent with previous research that has examined the way Twitter is used for communication in both the non-profit (Auger 2014; Guo and Saxton 2014; Svensson et al. 2015) and commercial (Etter 2014) sectors, the information category accounted for the largest share of tweets by CSFs in our study (53 %)."</i> (P. 2239)

Reference: *Brengarth, L. B., & Mujkic, E. (2015). WEB 2.0: How social media applications leverage nonprofit responses during a wildfire crisis. Computers in Human Behavior, 54, 589–596. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.010>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
15	Examined how Web 2.0 applications were used as a tool to transmit information while the disaster unfolded.	United States	A qualitative study - Case study and in-depth interviews.	<i>“Web 2.0 applications served as a bridge between first responders, the population in immediate wildfire danger, and the citizens who were trying to help, resulting in saved lives, property, and natural resources. By combining existing literature and collected qualitative data, the researchers argue that Web 2.0 applications represent flexible communication tools for transmission of timely information during a crisis situation.”</i> (P. 589)

Reference: *Gálvez-Rodríguez, M. del M, Caba-Pérez, C., & López-Godoy, M. (2016). Drivers of Twitter as a strategic communication tool for non-profit organizations. Internet Research, 26(5), 1052–1071. <https://doi.org/10.1108/intr-07-2014-0188>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
16	Analysed the influence of factors on the use of Twitter by non-profits as a mechanism for disclosing information and dialogue with their stakeholders, in particular on donor dependence, fundraising expenses, organisational age, organisational size, online community size, network activity and board size.	Spain	Quantitative approach - A content analysis of Twitter messages through a multivariable linear regression analysis was performed.	<i>“The findings show an advance in the use of tweets that foster online fundraising, online engagement in NPO activities and, in the stakeholders’ participation with other social media of the organization. However, coinciding with Guo and Saxton (2014), the use of public messages is still very low. In this respect, it is observed that a low level of interest in the use of public messages as a way to obtain feedback regarding the effectiveness of the NPO’s activities.”</i> (P. 1066)

Reference: Rodriguez, N. S. (2016). *Communicating global inequalities: How LGBTI asylum-specific NGOs use social media as public relations*. *Public Relations Review*, 42(2), 322–332. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.12.002>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
17	Answered research question on how LGBTI asylum-specific NGOs use social media messages (tweets/posts) to communicate and support the LGBTI community.	United States	An inductive, qualitative textual analysis was performed on all 771 tweets and posts.	"Consistent with the findings of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) LGBTI asylum specific NGOs used the information function more frequently than community and action functions. Both ORAM and IGLHRC use social media to disseminate information about human rights and legislation in other countries more than any function." (P. 329)

Reference: Young, J. A. (2016). *Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs: The adoption and utilization of social media in nonprofit human service organizations*. *Human Services Organizations Management Leadership & Governance*, 41(1), 44–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1192574>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
18	Examined the adoption and utilisation of social media among non-profit human service organisations to understand why and how HSOs (Human Service Organisations) use these new forums.	United States	Quantitative approach - univariate descriptives and bivariate correlation analyses of cross-sectional survey data.	"The adoption and utilization of social media among nonprofit human service organizations indicates that HSOs initially adopted social media to engage with the community. Although many HSOs continue to do this, promoting the HSO's programs and services has also become a top priority." (P. 9)

Reference: Zhou, H., & Pan, Q. (2016). *Information, community, and action on Sina-Weibo: How Chinese philanthropic NGOs use social media.* *VOLUNTAS International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 27(5), 2433–2457. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9685-4>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
19	Explored Chinese NGOs' behaviour on domestic social media platforms.	China	A quantitative approach using Krippendorff's alpha for analysing Sina-Weibo posts of 155 rural education NGOs.	<i>"When it comes to which functions of social media (information, community, or action) the NGOs use most, it seems that Chinese NGOs, like their Western counterparts, are mostly using social media as a one-way information dissemination channel, and that they rely on the information function more than their Western counterparts (63.7 % informational posts in our sample vs. 58.6 % in Lovejoy and Saxton's sample vs. 47.8 % in Svensson et al.'s sample)."</i> (P. 2451 & 2452)

Reference: Bellucci, M., & Manetti, G. (2017). Facebook as a tool for supporting dialogic accounting? Evidence from large philanthropic foundations in the United States. *Accounting Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 30(4), 874–905. <https://doi.org/10.1108/aaaj-07-2015-2122>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
20	Explored the utilisation of Facebook, as a tool for stakeholder engagement and dialogic accounting in American charitable foundations, specifically, non-profits that are dedicated to philanthropy.	United States	Mixed methods – Content analysis that takes into account the Facebook pages of the 100 largest American philanthropic foundations.	<p><i>“It should also be noted that there some types of posts – especially those that aim to engage users – in which foundations accept the risk of exposing themselves to negative feedback while still managing to create a dialogic communication. However, many foundations are happy to simply disseminate information on their activities by adopting a cautious, monologic outlook social media offers a unique opportunity for further development. In spite of the enormous potential of social media, these online tools tend to be used asymmetrically. Although one-way communication is still the most common form of strategy adopted by organizations on social media (Waters and Jamal, 2011; Xifra and Grau, 2010), attempts to develop interactions among corporations and users are becoming increasingly popular (Rybako and Seltzer, 2010).” (P. 897)</i></p>

Reference: Lucas, E. (2017). *Reinventing the rattling tin: How UK charities use Facebook in fundraising*. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1576>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
21	Answered the research questions on, 1) How are UK charities using Facebook in their fundraising efforts? and 2) What works and what is counterproductive in Facebook fundraising and why?	United Kingdom	A qualitative approach, including focused interviews, webometrics, and an online survey, was combined within a multiple case study approach that examined the use of Facebook fundraising by Cancer Research UK (CRUK), Macmillan Cancer Support, and Marie Curie Cancer Care; the UK's three largest cancer charities by fundraised revenue (Rogers, 2012).	<i>“The analysis reveals that Facebook is primarily used to strengthen relationships with supporters, mainly via humanising the brand, fostering obligations, and encouraging social interaction. The mobilization of these relationships in fundraising is facilitated by persuasive strategies, including public recognition, authority, and the fostering of a sense of efficacy among fans, and the most common outcome of this mobilization is public endorsement of charities' fundraising campaigns via sharing” (P. 1)</i>

Reference: Ure, C., Galpin, A., Cooper-Ryan, A. M., & Condie, J. (2017). *Charities' use of Twitter: exploring social support for women living with and beyond breast cancer. Information Communication & Society, 22(8), 1062–1079. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2017.1402943>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
22	Concentrates on how UK based charities collectively represent themselves on Twitter by considering tweets for social support. Research questions explored, 1) What type of social support is positioned by cancer charities on Twitter for women LWBBC? 2) What themes emerge from tweet content on supporting women LWBBC?	United Kingdom	Qualitative: A content analysis and thematic analysis methodologies.	<i>"With 74.3% of tweets not being related to social support, charities demonstrate Twitter use to primarily connect with wider audiences. This is in line with the digital fundraising and awareness benefits digital technologies and social media are seen to provide for the charitable sector (House of Lords, 2017). Where social support is demonstrated in tweets, it is principally providing information (56%) or related to instrumental support (27%). The small number of tweets providing emotional support to women was an unexpected finding (18%). Consequently, Twitter may not be seen by this sector to be a platform to support emotional needs through the use of empathic, dialogic communication with those living post diagnosis and treatment."</i> (P. 1073 & 1074)

Reference: Li, H., Dombrowski, L., & Brady, E. (2018). *Working toward Empowering a Community. In GROUP '18: Proceedings of the 2018 ACM International Conference on Supporting Group Work (pp. 335–346). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3148330.3148336>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
23	Immigrant-focused NPOs to understand how they use social media in public engagement and supporting immigrant communities.	United States	Mixed method - Inductive coding of interview transcripts and content analysis of a subset of social media data.	<i>"Social media becomes a venue where NPOs work toward empowering their communities through disseminating information, calling for civic participation, and drawing attention from outside agents."</i> (P. 10)

Reference: Smith, J. N. (2018). *The social network? nonprofit constituent engagement through social media. Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, 30(3), 294–316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2018.1452821>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
24	Investigated how non-profits use social media to engage their followers by examining Facebook and Twitter.	United States	A quantitative approach on Twitter and Facebook posts using fixed effects models.	<i>“For Facebook, communication type is more important than post type when considering the impact of individual posts and user engagement. For Twitter, on the other hand, post type is more important than communication type with respect to the impact of individual posts. These findings suggest that it is time to stop talking about social media as a monolithic entity, to stop talking about Twitter and Facebook as the same mechanism simply because they are similar and popular. The fact that groups use these platforms differently seems to indicate that nonprofit groups see different values in the platforms and use different strategies to make the most of these potentially powerful media.” (P. 311 & 312)</i>

Reference: *Alonso-Cañadas, J., Galán-Valdivieso, F., Saraite-Sariene, L., & Del Carmen Caba-Perez, M. (2019). Unpacking the drivers of stakeholder engagement in sustainable water management: NGOs and the use of Facebook. Water, 11(4), 775. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w11040775>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
25	Analysed how organisational structure, resource allocation, and communication policies of non-government organisations helped in stakeholder engagement for sustainable water management.	Not mentioned	Qualitative content analysis for Facebook messages.	<p><i>"Stakeholders are willing to engage with WNGOs through actions that involve little effort, such as clicking on "like". Knowing this, these organizations can quickly involve users by getting their attention through such simple marketing actions as "one like = one drop". Nonetheless, it is not only necessary to encourage quick and easy participation, but also maintain the attention of the followers, which means it is important that WNGOs match their projected image with the actions taken. Only through a true dialogue with its stakeholders, will WNGOs get a real, long-lasting commitment. Similarly, the publication of images is significant, but the opportunities offered by Facebook to encourage online interaction through the use of other formats, such as video, is squandered. WNGOs should take this point into account, since they may be missing out on the potential of the video-format posts to involve stakeholders. Likewise, "when" a post is published is an equally important aspect of the online communication strategy. According to the results, WNGOs publish mainly on weekdays (particularly on Thursday) and in the afternoon. However, it would be advisable that they do it on weekends (Saturday) and at night, given the levels of engagement for the posts they publish in these days and time zones."</i></p> <p>(P. 13)</p>

Reference: Wu, J., Chen, J., Chen, H., Dou, W., & Shao, D. (2019). What to say on social media and how. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 29(5/6), 691–707. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jstp-11-2018-0243>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
26	Investigated how non-profits engage with customers through online communication. The researchers have identified two communication styles and three communication-functions to examine their impact on customer commenting, liking, and sharing.	China	Mixed study: Content analysis of Sina Weibo messages from 34 universities in China, and two-level regression content analysis of NPOs' Facebook public pages and Twitter accounts.	<i>"The results showed that the friend-like style leads to a higher level of customer engagement in the form of commenting; the authoritative style, however, does not prompt any form of customer engagement. In a service exchange, the communication function of messages can result in a lower level of customer engagement, in the form of liking and sharing. In particular, building community can potentially engage more customers than spreading information, but promoting actions has less influence on customer engagement than does spreading information."</i> (P. 707)

Reference: Lam, W. F., & Nie, L. (2019). Online or offline? Nonprofits' choice and use of social media in Hong Kong. *VOLUNTAS International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31(1), 111–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00128-1>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
27	Answered the research questions on, 1) What is the extent to which non-profits use social media in their work? 2) What are the primary purposes of their use of social media? 3) How effective is the use of social media in helping non-profits achieve their purposes?	Hong Kong	A qualitative study - interviews with select non-profit managers and government officials.	<i>"Information posts are effective in generating audiences' favorability, and action posts are effective in generating audiences' willingness to promote the message."</i> (P. 126)

Reference: Campbell, D. A., & Lambricht, K. T. (2020). *Terms of engagement: Facebook and Twitter use among nonprofit human service organizations. Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 30(4), 545–568. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21403>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
28	<p>Answered the research questions on,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How are non-profit human service organisations engaging stakeholders through Facebook and Twitter? 2) Are these organisations using the two platforms differently? 3) To what extent do resource dependence theory, stewardship theory, and/or organisational capacity help explain the modes of engagement they emphasise? 	United States	A qualitative approach - content analysis on Twitter and Facebook.	<p><i>“Consistent with resource dependence theory, we found higher levels of action-related content on both Facebook and Twitter for organizations reliant on program service fees and government grants, as well as higher levels of action tweets among public charity funders and more action-oriented posts from organizations dependent on fundraising. Our results offer mixed support for the idea that human service organizations that emphasize relationship building with stakeholders, or stewardship, use information as a primary mode of engagement. Those working with vulnerable populations as well as those with human services NTEE codes utilized information more than other forms of engagement, suggesting these organizations prioritize information provision as a way to foster connections with their stakeholders.”</i> (P. 565)</p>

Reference: Lozano, E. S., Balonas, S., & Ruão, T. (2020). *Public relations strategies in social media: analysis of campaigns for social change in the education sector in Spain and Portugal. Comunicação E Sociedade, 175–196.* [https://doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.0\(2020\).2746](https://doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.0(2020).2746)

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
29	Discussed the social media strategies developed by non-profits in Spain and Portugal for social change in education. The researchers have also analysed innovative communication approaches through Twitter and WhatsApp.	Spain and Portugal	Used a qualitative approach, the case study of Fundación (Secretariado Gitano from Spain and Bagos d'Ouro from Portugal) and integrated with several data-gathering techniques, combining interpretative hermeneutics, web mining, non-participative observation, and content analysis. This study has analysed WhatsApp and Twitter messages.	<i>"In both cases, social media made possible a more direct or personalised interaction with those participating in the campaign, via content and direct communication. As such, the advocacy effect and the action on social causes were fomented."</i> (P. 193)

Reference: Taylor, M. P. (2021). *All talk and no action? A comparative analysis of nonprofit Twitter chats. Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, 35(1), 65–80.* <https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2021.1953668>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
30	Examined the types of messages that appeared most often on Twitter and categorised them into information, community, or action messages.	United States	A comparative quantitative content analysis of multiple Twitter chats.	<i>"Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that Twitter chats can serve as a strategic resource for nonprofit practitioners seeking to build relationships with key stakeholders."</i> (P. 76)

Reference: Tao, W., Li, Z. C., Chen, Z. F., & Ji, Y. G. (2021). *Public responses to nonprofit social media messages: The roles of message features and cause involvement. Public Relations Review, 47(2), 102038. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102038>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
31	Investigated if and how NPOs' social media content and interactivity drive outcomes from the public. Further examined how social media could be used to create a deep connection and engagement with non-profits for the cause they support.	United States	Quantitative approach: A 2 (message appeal: informational vs. emotional) x 2 (functional interactivity: high vs. low) x 2 (cause involvement: high vs. low) factorial experiment was conducted online with 294 participants.	<i>"Our study reveals that increasing publics' cause involvement may help simultaneously achieve the aforementioned three goals in nonprofit social media practice. Therefore, nonprofit public relations professionals should purposefully highlight messages that may work to enhance publics' awareness of and involvement with the advocated cause in their social media campaigns."</i> (P. 47)

Reference: Namisango, F., Kang, K., & Rehman, J. (2021). *Service co-creation on social media: varieties and measures among nonprofit organizations. Journal of Service Theory and Practice, 31(5), 783–820. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jstp-07-2020-0146>*

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
32	Investigated how social media could be used for service co-creation in non-profits and how the outcome of service co-creation could be measured.	Not mentioned	Mixed method approach: a qualitative exploration and content-based validity conducted through semi-structured interviews with 19 non-profit practitioners, followed by a quantitative approach via a survey among non-profits.	<i>"From our observations, a model of nonprofit service co-creation includes co-ideating, co-diagnosing and co-assessing as linking practices; co-transforming and co-advocating as a materializing practice; and co-resourcing and co-experiencing as institutionalizing practices."</i> (P. 811)

Reference: Wiley, K., Schwoerer, K., Richardson, M., & Espinosa, M. B. (2022). *Engaging stakeholders on TikTok: A multi-level social media analysis of nonprofit Microvlogging*. *Public Administration*, 101(3), 822–842. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12851>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
33	Researched on, 1) How microblogs support traditional social media functions offered by Facebook and Twitter, 2) Ways non-profits use microvlogs to engage with stakeholders 3) Which social media function (lens of the hierarchy of engagement framework developed by Lovejoy & Saxton (2012) more effectively engage stakeholders on TikTok	United States	Mixed method 1) Textually analysed 1160 microvlogs on TikTok to interpret and categorise the social media approach 2) Quantitatively analysed the data collected from TikTok to understand user engagement with the microvlogs and determine if the differences observed were statistically significant using the one-way ANOVA 3) Case-level (non-profit) and social media post-level (microvlog) interpretive analyses using attribute and theoretical coding	<i>"In all, the analysis and findings of this study suggest that there may be a "new hierarchy" of engagement when it comes to microvlogging platforms. In contrast to microblogging, the focus of most social media research to date, microvlogging spaces are more conducive to dialogic communication and, as a result, facilitate community building much more effectively. On TikTok, community building is at the top of the hierarchy because the platform's features enable, and even encourage, this strategy. " (P. 839)</i>

Reference: Albanna, H., Alalwan, A. A., & Al-Emran, M. (2022). An integrated model for using social media applications in non-profit organizations. *International Journal of Information Management*, 63, 102452. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2021.102452>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
34	Primarily examined, 1) Contemporary use of social media 2) Factors that affect the use of social media applications and their effectiveness in Jordanian NPOs. 3) How the use of social media by NPOs in Jordan can impact public awareness, community engagement, and fundraising? 4) Valuable guidelines that could be considered when designing and implementing social media applications for the marketing requirements of Jordanian NPOs.	Jordan	Quantitative study: Questionnaires were distributed to public relations practitioners in 325 NPOs in Jordan, and the survey results were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM).	<i>“The quantitative results showed that social media applications were extensively used in communication, community engagement, and raising awareness, with usage rates of 86%, 85%, and 80%, respectively. These results align with those of previous research, which have concentrated on the benefits of social media to help organizations engage with the public (Alalwan et al., 2017; Jdaitawi et al., 2018), allow individuals to network and share information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), build strategic partnerships, and increase collaborations (Kanter & Fine, 2010).” (P. 9)</i>

Reference: Nau, C., Quan-Haase, A., & McLaughlin, R. (2023). *Women-Focused nonprofit organizations and their use of Twitter during the COVID-19 pandemic: Characterizing a gendered pandemic through information, community, and action.* *Social Media + Society*, 9(1), 205630512211464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221146489>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
35	Concentrated on how woman-focused non-profits used Twitter to advocate on behalf of women and girls during the initial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Canada	Mixed method approach, a thematic analysis with a quantitative content analysis of 6,642 tweets from 5 organisations	<i>"Most notably, there were fewer community-oriented tweets in total in our sample compared to Lovejoy and Saxton's, and most of the community-oriented subfunctions occurred less frequently. One possible explanation is that the crisis moment of the pandemic, marked by political and health-related uncertainties, caused the nonprofits to shift their focus onto an awareness- and information-focused tactic of communication with less attention paid to community-oriented social media use."</i> (P. 12)

Reference: Fischer-Preßler, D., Marx, J., Bunker, D., Stieglitz, S., & Fischbach, K. (2023). *Social media information governance in multi-level organizations: How humanitarian organizations accrue social capital.* *Information & Management*, 60(7), 103838. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2023.103838>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
36	Explored how Human Non-profits or non-governmental organisations use and govern social media to generate, develop and maintain SC.	Germany	Qualitative approach: Semi-structured interview data gathered from social media experts in Germany	<i>"Showcasing services and activities and leveraging their impact through meaningful multimedia representations (images, videos, live streams) can help build trust, as it shows what HNGOs do for the common good. Open communication and visibility of activities, mission, and objectives also legitimate an HNGO's initiatives to the public."</i> (P. 8)

Reference: Xue, J., Shier, M. L., Chen, J., Wang, Y., Zheng, C., & Chen, C. (2024). *A Typology of Social media use by Human service Nonprofits: Mixed Methods study*. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 26, e51698. <https://doi.org/10.2196/51698>

No	Study aim	Region	Type of evaluation	Indicative results
37	Focused on why non-profit human service organisations use social media and discussed various reasons.	Canada	A mixed approach to qualitative and quantitative research methods, including qualitative content analysis, supervised and unsupervised machine learning, and thematic and sentiment analysis of Twitter-based data.	<i>"Approximately 20% of the tweets in the data set contained themes related to community engagement, generating 3 topics: "experience and awareness of abuse," "support and information," and "social media engagement." (P. 11)</i>

Appendix H: Sample Codes and Themes

Use of social media for community engagement

Participants' Details (Background details)	This discusses the participants' details, including role, experiences, training received, and their perceptions of social media training
Experiences	Number of years of experience using social media at the organisational level
Perception of training	Details of participants' views about receiving formal training on social media
Role	Participant's role within the organisation
Training	Details of training received from the organisation to handle social media activities
Organisations' experiences with social media (RQ1)	Details of the social media team, including when the organisation started using social media platforms, and succession plans for the social media crew.
Commencement of social media use	Number of years the organisation has been using social media
Motivation to use social media	Influential factors for the use of social media
Social media team	Details of the number of members in the social media team and how the social media activities are organised within the organisation
Succession plan	Details about the succession plans to carry out the social media activities

Social Media Strategy (RQ1)	Describes whether the organisation has a documented social media strategy; what are strategies are used for community and trust-building activities
Social media analytics (RQ1)	How do organisations measure the effectiveness of social media use
Social media platforms (RQ1)	This theme describes details of social media platforms used by the organisations, including popular ones, not-so-popular ones, content shared, organisation of social media pages
Aims of using different social media platforms	Reasons why organisations use various social media platforms
Contents on each platform	Details of how the organisations create content according to the audience's likes
Decentralised pages	Strategies of how the organisation handles social media pages
Design content	Details relating to various design contents used by the organisations
Different Social media platforms	Details about different social media platforms and the purposes of using them
Engagement Trends	Trends or patterns in social media engagement
Popular platforms	Details of the most popular social media platforms
Unpopular social media platforms	Details of unused and unpopular platforms
Use of different social media tools	Tools and facilities offered by social media platforms to interact with the community

Use of social media to engage with the community (RQ1)	This code describes how the individual components of social capital theory, such as Networks, Social Norms, Reciprocity, Personal and Collective Efficacy, impact on strengthening community engagement
Networks	How to create close allies between individuals and groups beyond geographical boundaries with the help of social media
Create strong ties with the community - Networking	How can social media be used to create bonding relationships?
Create weak ties	Social will not build community overtly
Events advertising	How social media is used to organise and promote events
Reaching out to the supporters, partners, and people	How do organisations use social media to make connections with various stakeholders?
Social media for fundraising	How social media helps to raise funds
Two-way dialogue	How do non-profits use social media to create a dialogue with community members?
Mode for educating the community	How non-profits use social media to educate people
Platform to call for action	How social media helps organisations to call for action
Use of social media for Advocacy	Ways and instances that organisations use social media for social change

Personal and collective self-efficacy	How are regular participation and willingness to participate promoted through social media?
Encourage the community to volunteer	How social media is used to encourage volunteerism
Social diffusion	How social media is used to encourage the community through showcasing other people's work
Giving shout out	How social media is used to appreciate the support from the community, volunteers, and donors
Helpline	How organisations use social media to advise on personal issues
Social Norms	How social media assists in building common and shared values that guide behaviour and interactions

Use of social media to enhance public trust (RQ1)	This theme explores the ways social media has been utilised to enhance public trust
Creating authenticity in social media	How authentic or genuine content enhances public trust
Disseminate the financial information via social media	How are financial details being shared through social media?
Improve the reputation of the organisation	Ways to improve the reputation of the organisation through social media
Interacting frequency	Details, including the frequency of interactions with social media followers
Organisational disclosure on social media	How social media is used to disclose organisational details such as mission, vision, and governance details
Quality control guidelines	Details of quality control guidelines/ procedures being used to ensure the quality of social media communication
Reactions to the negative comments on posts	How organisations react to negative comments on their posts
Response time	How quickly the organisation responds to the questions and comments raised via social media
Sharing of stories to gain trust	How do the stories help to build trust?
Transparency and visibility	How social media assists organisations in becoming transparent and improving visibility

Challenges – Organisational (RQ2)	This identifies the codes related to internal challenges, i.e., challenges encountered within the organisation’s internal matters.	
Challenges - Finding the content	Difficulties faced by the organisations in finding the appropriate resources, balancing the quality and attractiveness of the posts	Network
Challenges - Limited funding	How budgetary constraints impact social media use	Network
Challenges - Organisation’s culture	How organisation's attitudes toward change in existing social media use	Network
Challenges - Cost, benefits and lack of human resources	How cost, associated benefits, and time constraints of the staff affect social media use	Network
Challenges faced - Equipment	Challenges of not having the appropriate equipment to create contents	Network

Challenges – External (RQ2)	This describes the challenges posed by the external environment, such as social media platforms, online community attitudes, behaviours, etc	
Challenges - Abrasive behaviours	How do discourteous and abrasive behaviours of the community impact social media use?	Network Trust
Challenges - Algorithms	Challenges faced by organisations due to frequent changes in social media algorithms	Network
Challenges - Character limitations	How character limitations present a challenge in communicating complex financial information	Trust
Challenges - Community motive	How the entertainment-seeking behaviours of social media users have caused challenges in organisational communication	Network Trust
Challenges - Less effective platforms	Certain platforms are less interesting to the public	Network
Challenges - Mobilising social media followers to action-takers	Difficulties in mobilising social media followers to increase engagement via the website and other online sources	Personal and collective self-efficacy
Challenges - Privacy	How privacy is becoming a challenge to social media use	Trust
Challenges - Scams	How scams affect the use of social media	
Challenges - Trust on social media	Trust perception of people when using social media and how it becomes a challenge for organisations	Trust
Challenges - Commercialisation and advertising focus	Although the initial purpose of social media is to create social connections, it has been gradually focused more on commercialisation. E.g. paid ads	Network

Opportunities (RQ2)	This Theme discusses the diverse opportunities enabled by social media	
Opportunities - Ability to get instantaneous engagement	How quickly the messages could be shared among the community through social media	Network
Opportunities - Crowdsourcing	Benefits of receiving consent from the online community	Personal and collective self-efficacy
Opportunities - Discussion room	How social media assists in debating and discussing important socio-economic issues	Network Trust
Opportunities - Fewer skills and technical knowledge	How the advancements in social media, coupled with other technologies, have made lives easier for Social Media Managers	Network
Opportunities - Marketing mix	How social media is used along with other traditional media to create more engagement	Network
Opportunities - Networking with Ambassadors	How social media helps expand the follower base through role models and celebrities	Network
Opportunities - Direct contacts	New opportunities to contact people directly	Network Trust