

Mapping Social Media Use by the Non-profit Sector: A Bibliometric Analysis and Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Purpose-Social media has grown into an important tool for communication for many organizations, including non-profits. Though there have been multifarious attempts to synthesize the extant research on social media use by for-profit organizations, there is a lack of comprehensive mapping and analysis of studies that focus on social media use by non-profits. Using bibliometric analysis, this study traces the evolution of the knowledge base on the role of social media in the non-profit sector and identifies the emerging aspects and possible directions for future research in this area.

Design/ Methodology/Approach- Using relevant search terms, the study used the Scopus database to identify 129 documents on the use of social media by non-profits. Biblioshiny and VOS Viewer were employed to perform bibliometric analysis and visualize research trends within this field of study.

Findings- The analysis indicates a rising trend in the number of articles and citations related to social media and non-profits since the first paper published in the year 2009. The study identifies leading authors, institutes, countries, and journals. Additionally, techniques such as citation analysis, co-occurrence network, and thematic maps are used to understand the evolution of scientific research and identify patterns and relationships between various research themes and concepts.

Practical Implications- This study synthesizes the academic literature on social media in the non-profit sector by providing a comprehensive analysis of existing literature. It offers valuable insights to various stakeholders including non-profit organizations, government, public policymakers, academicians, and researchers.

Keywords- Social media, non-profit, non-government organizations, bibliometrics, Biblioshiny, VOS viewer

Introduction

As our societies face a multitude of challenges that cannot all be addressed by the government, non-profit organizations (NPOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and charities frequently play a vital role in supporting the community in handling these issues. The non-government sector has undergone substantial changes in recent years. India currently has over 233 thousand non-government organizations registered with NGO Darpan, a portal managed by NITI Aayog, Government of India (<https://ngodarpan.gov.in/>). These NGOs operate in a variety of sectors including women's development & empowerment, human rights, civic issues, aged/elderly, education & literacy among others.

Defined by Carr & Hayes (2015) as “Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others” (p. 50), social media is replacing traditional communication channels and enhancing the process of receiving and sharing information (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

The large user base and cost-effectiveness of social media platforms have created a major opportunity not only for for-profit organizations but also for NGOs. Due to the opportunities that social media platforms offer for fundraising, community engagement, and advocacy, they have become indispensable tools for NGOs (Suárez,

2009; Auger, 2013). By leveraging social media platforms, NGOs can reach geographically dispersed audiences, engage with stakeholders in real time and strengthen their community.

Social media is a valuable marketing tool that managers of non-profit organizations have been leveraging to increase public support and reach (Raman, 2015). The interactive nature of these platforms allows NGOs to disseminate information, mobilize support, and respond to a crisis quickly (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Social media also plays a pivotal role in advocacy. Campaigns that are launched on social media platforms help raise awareness about critical issues and bring about policy changes. Social media platforms facilitate direct donations, crowdfunding campaigns, and peer-to-peer fundraising. Through the platforms, NGOs can demonstrate the quality of their work and help potential donors know more about the NGOs' charitable causes (Raman, 2015). Well-established, large NGOs like the American Red Cross and Oxfam use social media platforms for raising funds (Grooters, 2011).

Despite the widespread growth in the use of social media, many non-government organizations continue to face challenges in incorporating social media platforms into their routine operations (Safko, 2011). Their ability to effectively leverage these platforms is constrained due to limited access to resources including expertise, time, funding, and personnel (Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Lord, 2009; Waters et al. 2009; Alexander et al., 2010; Water & Bortree, 2010; Young, 2010).

Research on social media and non-profits has increased significantly in the last few years, indicating the growing recognition of social media's potential benefits for non-profits. Bibliometric analysis has previously been applied to social media research across various fields including, the adoption of social media by politicians (Subekti et al., 2024), its application in general education (Luong et al. 2023), impact on hospitality and tourism research (Nusair et al., 2019), its integration into human resource management practices (Hosain, 2021) and its impact throughout the Covid-19 pandemic (Gan et al., 2021). Despite extensive research on social media in various fields, there is a significant gap in bibliometric studies that concentrate specifically on social media and non-profits. While some studies have explored related topics such as the accounting transparency of NGOs (Zhang et al, 2020) and its use by social enterprises (Ali et al, 2022), there remains a need for more focused research on social media and non-profits.

Given the growing importance of social media for non-profits and the lack of bibliometric studies in this area, the present study seeks to address this gap. This study will provide useful insights to scholars and practitioners by providing a comprehensive current research landscape of the domain. Thus, the study has the following objectives

1. To examine the trend in the number of publications concerning social media and the non-profit sector
2. To identify the most relevant authors, affiliated institutions, journals, and countries concerning non-profits and social media.
3. To examine the emerging topics of research on the use of social media by non-profits.

Literature Review

Considered a contemporary form of information technology, social media supports interpersonal communication and collaboration (Kane et al. 2014). It encompasses various online platforms that allow users to create and share content in online communities and networks (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). It is increasingly becoming an effective instrument for strategic communication for the private, government, and non-profit sectors.

Social media, characterized by its interactive, dynamic, and decentralized nature, as well as cost-effectiveness and ease of use has been adopted by several non-profit organizations (Young, 2010; Safko, 2010; Mansfield, 2011). Its attributes such as low infrastructure requirements and simplicity of use, make it a more appealing tool to non-profits in comparison to traditional media (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Waters, et. al., 2011).

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn provide organizations with innovative ways to build relationships and engage with their stakeholders (Curtis et al., 2010; Briones et al., 2011; Auger, 2013). These platforms enable real-time interaction with both existing and potential stakeholders and donors by facilitating the sharing of information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kanter & Fine, 2010). In particular, social media provides organizations with cost-effective means of engaging in interactive dialogue and quickly mobilizing supporters (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2014).

Advocacy plays a significant role in driving the adoption of social media by non-profit organizations. Through social media platforms, non-profits can create awareness about issues relevant to their mission and generate support for national and local concerns. A study by Bortree & Seltzer (2009) examining 50 environmental

advocacy groups found that Facebook was employed to promote environmental causes and rally support from other non-profits and interest groups, even those that are not primarily focused on environmental issues. Similarly, Greenberg & MacAulay (2009) concluded that Canadian environmental non-profits use social media platforms to share information about environmental issues.

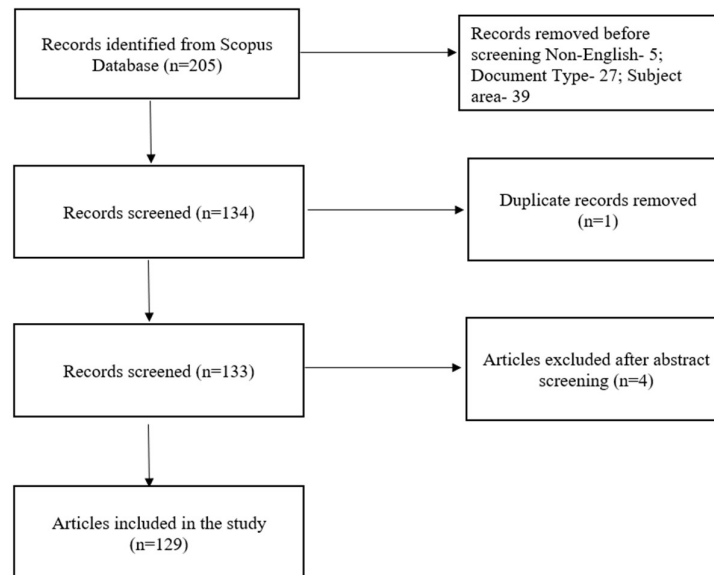
Many non-profit organizations have difficulty in raising funds to sustain their philanthropic efforts (Chin, 2011). Social media platforms have easy-to-use tools that simplify the process for donors to contribute to non-profits. Features like the 'Donate Now' buttons integrated into the social media pages facilitate the process of charitable giving (Goecks et al., 2008). Moreover, social media campaigns can lead to a substantial increase in donations (Saxton & wang, 2014). Due to the widespread and rapid sharing capabilities of social media, fundraising appeals reach a wider audience which often leads to spontaneous and larger donations. For instance, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge in 2014, resulted in more than \$115 million being raised by the non-profit (The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge: 10th Anniversary) demonstrating the power of social-media-driven campaigns. Additionally, social media platforms offer access to information about the organization. Non-profits can effectively communicate their activities, and financials and share the impact they are making in society through social media thereby increasing donor trust and support (Waters & Jamal, 2011).

Effective use of social media by non-profits is not without challenges. Smaller NPOs often face resource constraints and lack the time and expertise required to consistently post engaging content on social media (Nah & Saxton, 2013). Moreover, the potential for negative feedback and scrutiny by the general public poses risks for non-profits. The digital divide is another significant barrier, as non-profits that serve marginalized communities may struggle to engage with their beneficiaries if those communities have limited access to digital technology (Briones et al., 2011). The effective utilization of social media requires a strategic approach. Simply having a presence on social media platforms is not sufficient, non-profits need to adopt strategic communication practices that are tailored to their organizational goals and stakeholders.

Past studies have demonstrated the profound influence of social media on non-profits, however, significant gaps remain in understanding the comprehensive landscape of research in this area. This bibliometric analysis purposes to provide an in-depth examination of social media and the non-profit sector. Through an extensive analysis of citations, co-citations, and co-occurrence networks the study will lay the groundwork for future research.

Research Methodology

A data mining exercise was performed on 23rd July 2024, using Scopus, with a focus on the focal theme of "Social Media and Non-profit organizations". The search query used was ("nonprofit" OR "non profit" OR "non government" OR "NPO" OR "NGO" OR "Not for Profit" OR "third sector" OR "voluntary sector" OR "voluntary organization" OR "charities" OR "charity" OR "charitable organization") AND ("Social Media" OR "Facebook" OR "Twitter" OR "Instagram" OR "YouTube" OR "TikTok" OR "Pinterest" OR "Threads" OR "LinkedIn" OR "Snapchat"). The query was applied to the titles of articles to ensure the selection of studies that specifically address social media and the non-government sector. The initial search resulted in 205 papers. Five non-English articles were removed in the preliminary screening using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The document type was narrowed down to articles and conference papers and the subject areas were confined to Social Sciences and Business, Management, and Accounting. One paper was removed due to duplication. Additionally, four papers were excluded from the study after examining their abstracts to ensure relevance and quality. The stages involved in the identification of studies are presented in Figure 1. Finally, 129 relevant articles were subjected to bibliometric analysis. The web-based application- Biblioshiny, a component of Bibliometrix R-package, which is an R-tool that has been designed for comprehensive science mapping (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) was used to assess the importance and influence of the area of interest. Additionally, VOS viewer was employed to visualize the co-occurrence network and identify key themes and interconnections within the data

Figure 1: Stages involved in the identification of studies

Findings

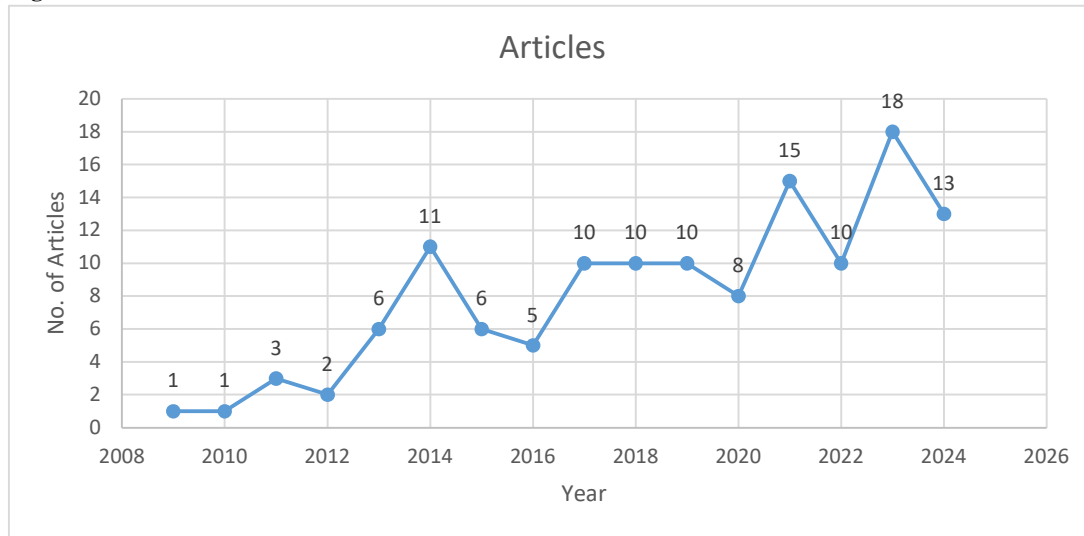
Performance Analysis

In this study, performance metrics such as publication trends, author metrics, institution and country dissemination of publications, and the influence of journals have been used to assess productivity, impact, and collaboration in the area of social media and non-profits. The following sections present the key performance metrics that have been observed

Publication Metrics

As presented in Figure 2, the number of publications on non-profits and social media have significantly increased with a notable rise from 1 article in 2009 to 18 articles in 2023, and 13 articles in the first half of 2024. This suggests the increasing relevance of social media in increasing engagement, outreach, and efficacy of non-government organizations. This upward trend reflects a growing academic interest in exploring how NPOs can utilize social media platforms to expand their reach, increase visibility, rally support, and seek donations.

Table 1 presents an overview of the descriptive summary of the documents reviewed. The study includes 129 documents, comprising 124 articles and 5 conference papers, published in 77 sources (Journals) by 274 authors between 2009 to 2024 have been included in the study. The annual growth rate in the number of publications is 18.65% indicating a rapidly expanding interest in the social media and non-profit sector.

Figure 2: Annual Trend in Publication of Articles Reviewed**Table 1: Descriptive Summary of Documents Reviewed**

Description	Results	Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA		DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Timespan	2009:2024	Keywords Plus (ID)	158
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	77	Author's Keywords (DE)	381
Documents	129	AUTHORS	
Annual Growth Rate %	18.65	Authors	274
Document Average Age	5.09	Authors of single-authored docs	28
Average citations per doc	38.9	AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
References	6201	Single-authored docs	31
DOCUMENT TYPES		Co-Authors per Doc	2.41
Article	124	International co-authorships %	20.93
Conference paper	5		

Author Metrics

A total of 31 documents are single-authored, while the average number of co-authors per document is 2.41, underscoring the collaborative approach to research in this field (Table 1). The international co-authorship rate is 20.93% (Table 1) implying significant global collaboration.

Table 2 provides a detailed summary of the leading authors in the field of social media and NGO research. Gregory D. Saxton is the most popular author in this area of research with 7 articles contributing 5.5 percent of the total publication. Richard D Waters is another influential author with 6 papers in the area of interest. Chuqing Dong and Kimberly Wiley are also prominent authors with 3 publications each. Gregory D. Saxton has a total of 1,600 citations and an h-index of 6 while Richard D Waters has 1,868 citations and a h-index of 6 indicating their substantial impact in the research area concerning social media and non-profits.

Table 2: Leading authors in social media and non-profit research

Author	No. of publications	h_index	Total citations	Publication starts	year
Saxton GD	7	6	1600	2012	
Waters RD	6	6	1868	2009	
Dong C	3	3	41	2019	
Wiley K	3	1	9	2021	
Auger GA	2	2	130	2013	
Campbell DA	2	2	159	2014	
Chen ZF	2	2	19	2021	
Demasters C	2	1	1	2021	
Guo C	2	2	542	2014	
Ihm J	2	2	29	2019	
Ji YG	2	2	18	2021	
Lambright KT	2	2	159	2014	
Li Y	2	1	5	2023	
Li ZC	2	2	19	2014	
López-Godoy M	2	2	54	2014	
Men LR	2	2	16	2021	
Morgan K	2	1	1	2021	
Schwoerer K	2	1	9	2021	
Tao W	2	2	19	2021	
Taylor MP	2	2	4	2023	
Yue CA	2	2	16	2021	
Zhang Y	2	2	13	2023	

Institution and country dissemination of publications

The institutional affiliation analysis (Table 3) highlights that the most prominent institutions are the University of Florida with 11 publications, and the University of Georgia and the University of San Francisco with 7 publications each. Among the top 10 affiliated institutions, seven are based in the United States indicating the country's dominance in this area of research. The analysis of the corresponding author's country highlights a notable number of publications from the United States with 51 publications which are significantly higher than other countries. The United States also has a significant number of single-country publications. In Contrast, Australia and Canada have exhibited a high percentage of multi-country papers with 100% and 66.7 % respectively, which suggests a strong trend toward international collaborations. The analysis of the most cited countries (Table 4) indicates that the United States leads with a total of 3,630 citations indicating a significant volume of influential research. Notably, despite having fewer total citations, Georgia has the highest average citation (278) indicating exceptional research impact.

Table 3: Institutional Affiliation & Corresponding Author's Country

Institutional Affiliation				Corresponding Author's Country					
Rank	Institutional Affiliations	No. of Publications	Country	Rank	Country	No. of Publications	SCP	MCP	MCP%
1	University of Florida	11	USA	1	USA	51	45	6	11.8
2	University of Georgia	7	USA	2	United Kingdom	8	6	2	25
3	University of San Francisco	7	USA	3	Korea	4	3	1	25

4	North Carolina State University	6	USA	4	South Africa	4	4	0	0
5	University at Buffalo	5	USA	5	Spain	4	3	1	25
6	Pepperdine University	4	USA	6	Canada	3	1	2	66.7
7	Technological Educational Institute of Central Macedonia	4	Greece	7	China	3	2	1	33.3
8	University of Burgos	4	Spain	8	Australia	2	0	2	100
9	Ghent University	3	Belgium	9	Germany	2	2	0	0
10	Michigan State University	3	USA	10	Greece	2	2	0	0

SCP-Single Country Publication; MCP- Multiple Country Publication; MPC%- Multiple Country Publication Percentage

Table 4: Leading countries on the basis of citation count

Rank	Country	Total Citations	Average Citations
1	USA	3630	71.20
2	Georgia	278	278.00
3	Netherlands	110	110.00
4	United Kingdom	93	11.60
5	China	64	21.30
6	Ireland	60	30.00
7	United Arab Emirates	57	57.00
8	Spain	53	13.20
9	Hong Kong	39	19.50
10	Austria	36	36.00

Journal Metrics

Table 5 details the most popular sources publishing articles on social media and the non-profit sector. Public Sector Review leads with 13 articles representing 10.08 percent of the total publications. The h-index of the journal is 10, the g-index is 13, and a substantial total citation count of 2145 indicating an extensive citation history in the field. The Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly with 10 publications has a share of 7.75 percent of the total number of articles. Further, other leading journals in the area include the Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing, Voluntas, and Social Science Computer Review with 9, 5, and 4 articles respectively. As the list indicates, the majority of the top publishing journals focus on the non-government/voluntary sector.

Table 5: Key journals in the area of social media and non-profits

Sources	Articles	h_index	g_index	m_index	Total citations
Public Relations Review	13	10	13	0.625	2145
Nonprofit And Voluntary Sector Quarterly	10	5	10	0.455	656
Journal of Nonprofit And Public Sector Marketing	9	4	9	0.286	155
Voluntas	5	4	5	0.333	86
Social Science Computer Review	4	4	4	0.364	85

Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs	3	2	3	0.2	61
New Media and Society	3	3	3	0.25	322
Nonprofit Management and Leadership	3	3	3	0.6	61

Science Mapping

In this study, science mapping techniques such as citation analysis, co-occurrence network, and thematic maps have been used to understand the evolution of scientific research and identify patterns and relationships between various research themes and concepts. The following sections present the key insights derived from science mapping

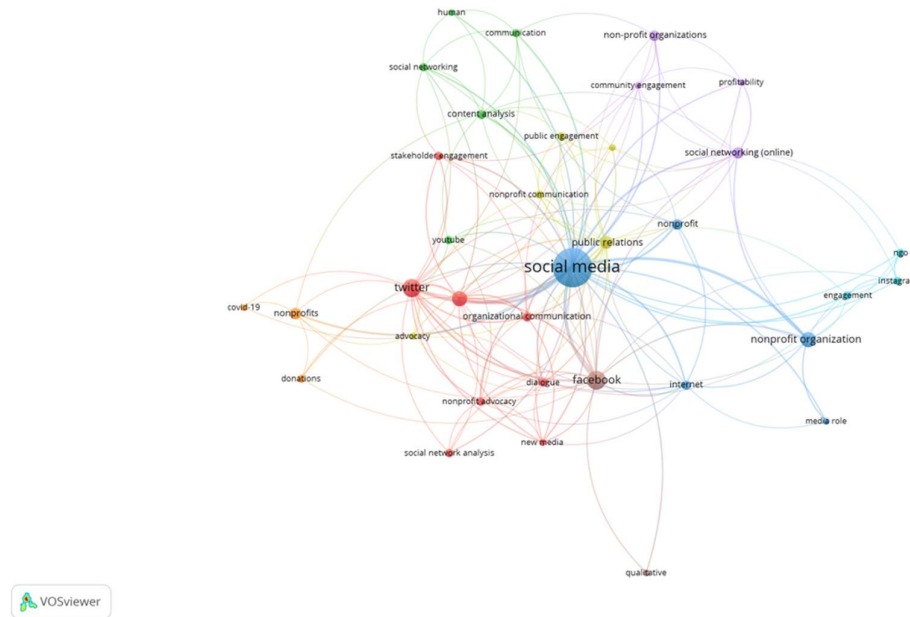
Citation Analysis

The average citation per document is 38.9 (Table 1) with the total number of references exceeding 6,200 (Table 1) indicating extensive literature engagement. The analysis of both most globally and locally cited references (Table 6) highlights the noteworthy role played by social media in non-profit organizations. With the highest global (741) and local (45) citations Waters et al. (2009) is the most influential paper forming a theoretical foundation for examining how non-profits use Facebook to engage with stakeholders. Lovejoy et. al (2012) with the second most global citations (478) and many local citations (33), focuses on the strategic role of Twitter in stakeholder engagement. Similarly, Guo & Saxton (2014) with 400 global citations and 21 local citations explores the power of Twitter in impacting non-profit advocacy. The common theme among these top-cited papers is understanding how non-profits use social media to engage with stakeholders, advocate for issues, and manage their online communication.

Table 6: Global & Local Citations

Document	Paper Title	Local Citations	Global Citations	LC/GC Ratio (%)
Waters RD, 2009, Public Relations Review	“Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How Nonprofit organizations are using Facebook”	45	741	6.07
Guo C, 2014, Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly	“Tweeting Social Change: How Social Media Are Changing Nonprofit Advocacy”	36	400	9.00
Lovejoy K, 2012, Public Relations Review	“Engaging stakeholders through Twitter: How Nonprofit organizations are getting more out of 140 characters or less”	33	478	6.90
Nah S, 2013, New Media and Society	“Modelling the adoption and use of social media by non-profit organizations”	30	290	10.34
Waters RD, 2011, Public Relations Review	“Tweet, tweet, tweet: A content analysis of non-profit organizations' Twitter updates”	29	258	11.24
Saxton GD, 2014, Journal of Public Relations Research	“What do Stakeholders Like on Facebook? Examining Public Reactions to Nonprofit Organizations' Informational, Promotional, and Community-Building Messages”	27	254	10.63
Guo C, 2018, Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Quarterly	“Speaking and Being Heard: How Nonprofit Advocacy Organizations Gain Attention on Social Media”	21	142	14.79
Campbell DA, 2014, Public Administration Review	“Looking for friends, fans, and followers? Social media use in public and non-profit human services”	18	121	14.88
Curtis L, 2010, Public Relations Review	“Adoption of social media for public relations by non-profit organizations”	18	278	6.47

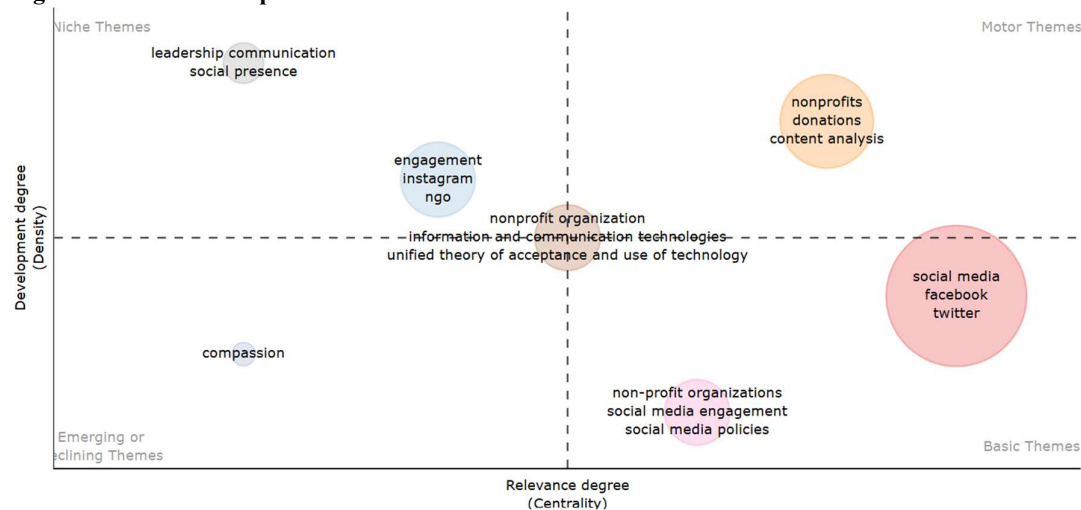
Cho M, 2014, Public Relations Review	“Public engagement with non-profit organizations on Facebook”	16	192	8.33
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Figure 3: Co-occurrence Network

Co-occurrence network analysis has been used to visualize and understand the relationship between keywords and themes. By examining the co-occurrence of keywords across publications under consideration, the co-occurrence network highlights how different concepts are interrelated. In our analysis, a minimum occurrence threshold of three has been set. The analysis identified 35 key keywords from a total of 511, illustrating the central concepts and their interconnections. “Social media” is central to the network with numerous connections to related terms such as “public relations”, “nonprofit communication”, “organizational communication” and “community engagement” (Figure 3). Theme 1 in the co-occurrence network focuses on the use of social media for organizational communication by non-profits. This theme includes terms such as “dialogue”, “new media”, “nonprofit advocacy”, “nonprofit organization”, “organizational communication”, “social network analysis”, “stakeholder engagement”, and “Twitter”. The occurrence of these terms suggests a focus on how the non-profit sector uses social media platforms especially Twitter to connect with stakeholders and advocate for causes they support. Theme 2 includes keywords such as “communication,” “content analysis,” “social networking,” and “YouTube”. The studies included in the theme focus on analysing content posted on social networks, particularly YouTube for communicating with the audience. Theme 3 encompasses the keywords “internet,” “media role,” “nonprofit,” “nonprofit organization,” and “social media” and includes studies focusing on the strategic role media and social media play within non-profit organizations. With keywords such as “advocacy,” “dialogic communication,” “nonprofit communication,” “public engagement,” and “public relations” theme 4 concentrates on the multifaceted role that social media plays within the non-profit sector. Theme 5 features keywords like “community engagement,” “nonprofit organization,” “profitability”, and “social networking (online)”. The studies included under the theme highlight how non-profits use social networking sites to foster community involvement and assess the financial impact of their digital engagement strategies. Theme 6 with a focus on “NGO”, “engagement” and “Instagram” represents a less covered area in comparison to other general themes. In theme 7, the occurrence of keywords “COVID-19”, “donation” and “nonprofits” indicates a significant interest in how the pandemic has influenced donation behaviour and operations of non-profits. Given the recency of the pandemic, this appears to be an emergent area of research. Theme 8 with two keywords “Facebook” and

“qualitative” combines a major social media platform with a research methodology. Although Facebook is well explored in the context of non-profits, qualitative research in this context might be less so.

Figure 4: Thematic Map



Thematic maps are graphical representations, presented as two-dimensional plots used to categorize the typology of topics (Abbas et al., 2022). In the present study, the map helps in identifying the themes within the “non-profit organizations and social media” research area. Based on their density and centrality, the themes have been mapped into four quadrants (Q1-Q4). The thematic map (Figure 4) has been created using bibliometrix R-package Biblioshiny, and seven themes in the four quadrants have been identified.

The lower-right quadrant of the thematic map indicates two basic themes namely “social media” and “non-profit organizations”. The “social media” theme is the largest with the highest cluster frequency of 231. It exhibits a high Callon’s density of 50.54 and a low Callon’s centrality of 2.699. Keywords included in the theme are “social media”, “Facebook”, “Twitter”, “public relations”, “dialogue”, “YouTube” “stakeholder engagement”, “communication”, “community engagement”, and “public engagement”. Studies within this theme focus on the use of social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, to engage and communicate with the stakeholders and the general community. The second basic theme is “non-profit organizations” comprised of keywords “non-profit organizations”, “social media engagement” and “social media policies”. This theme explores how social media policies are formulated by non-profit organizations to enhance stakeholder engagement. These two categories of themes have a high degree of domain relevance and require further investigation.

The theme “nonprofits”, positioned in the top right quadrant of the thematic map, is identified as a motor theme. It encompasses the keywords “nonprofits”, “donation”, “content analysis”, “charities”, “altruism” and “fundraising”. With a Callon’s density of 61.372 and Callon’s centrality of 0.604, the theme is of critical importance and is fairly researched within the area of research. The studies included in this theme focus on how nonprofits can maximize fundraising and donations through social media platforms.

In the upper left quadrant, two niche themes appear: “engagement” and “leadership communication”. The theme “engagement” is characterized by the keywords “engagement”, “Instagram”, “ngo”, “social networks” and “third sector”. This theme includes studies that explore how posts made on social networks by the third sector, particularly on Instagram, influence the engagement level. The theme “leadership communication”, including keywords “leadership communication” and “social presence”, focuses on the evolving role of leadership in the digital era. The studies included under the theme focus on how non-profit leaders communicate with stakeholders on social networking platforms.

The lower left quadrant includes a key theme namely “compassion”. The studies included under this theme have been published recently suggesting it is an emerging theme. The studies included under the theme focus on the use of social media in fostering empathy and mobilizing support during a crisis.

The theme “nonprofit organization” with the keywords “information and communication technologies” and “unified theory of acceptance and use of technology” emerged as a universal theme. The studies included in the

theme focus on using social media and ICTs for stakeholder engagement, advocacy, donations, and resource mobilization.

Conclusion

The study seeks to develop a detailed framework for academicians and professionals to understand how research has evolved in the social media and non-profit context. A review of performance indicators such as publication metrics, author metrics, institution and country analysis, journal metrics, and scientific mapping techniques such as citation metrics, co-occurrence networks, and thematic maps was done using bibliometric analysis tools Biblioshiny and VOS Viewer.

A total of 129 documents, including articles and conference papers were analyzed. With an annual growth rate of 18.65%, there is a significant rise in publications suggesting a growing interest in the area of research. The leading journals in the field of study are Public Sector Review and Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly. Gregory D. Saxton and Richard D. Waters are the authors who have made significant contributions to this area and have high citation counts and substantial h-index values. According to the institutional affiliations, American universities like the University of Florida and the University of Georgia dominate the research landscape. The United States is also a leader in the number of publications and citations highlighting its central role in promoting research in this field of study. There is a clear trend toward international collaboration in nations like Australia and Canada.

The examination of themes that surface from co-occurrence networks and thematic maps points to several pertinent areas for further investigation. Firstly, the impact of social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube on non-profit communication and engagement can be studied along with emerging platforms like Threads and TikTok. Secondly, studies can look into the financial aspects of digital engagement. Thirdly, as the COVID-19 pandemic presented the non-profit sector with unique challenges and opportunities, researchers can examine how the pandemic has affected donation behaviour and the role of social media in facilitating donation during and post the pandemic. Fourthly, qualitative research techniques can be applied to analyze social media interactions and the impact of these interactions on non-profit's ability to achieve their mission. Additionally, the emergence of themes such as "compassion" suggests that subsequent research may explore the use of social media platforms in promoting empathy and rallying support during a crisis. Finally, studies can be conducted to evaluate how the designing and implementing of social media policies influence non-profit's ability to achieve their objectives.

The bibliometric study on NPOs and social media has the following limitations. The study employs only the Scopus database to identify relevant publications. Despite, being one of the largest indexing and abstracting databases, Scopus might not include all the pertinent papers in the area of research. Moreover, the search in Scopus was limited to titles only which might exclude relevant papers that discuss social media and non-profits but do not explicitly include these terms in their titles.

The findings of this bibliometric analysis have significant implications for various stakeholders such as non-profit organizations, public policymakers, government, academicians, and researchers. For non-profit organizations, this study offers insights into social media trends and strategies that can help them enhance their engagement and outreach. Public policymakers and government can get insights into the benefits accruing to non-profits by using social media, which will help them formulate support initiatives accordingly. For academicians and researchers, the study provides a comprehensive view of emerging and well-established research areas, which can guide future studies. Additionally, this study reveals patterns of international collaboration and prominent institutions involved in social media research. This information can help non-profits seek partnerships and collaborations with academic institutions and other organizations working on similar issues, fostering shared knowledge and joint initiatives.

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