



**SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AMONG
HEALTH-RELATED NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN THE WESTERN CAPE,
SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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ABSTRACT

South African non-profit organisations (NPOs), like those around the globe, are facing significant funding challenges due to declining financial resources, COVID-19 after-effects, and increased competition among NPOs. As a result, NPOs are struggling to keep up with their funding needs, and a funding crisis has been looming in the non-profit sector since the 2008 global economic crisis. NPOs need marketing and, more so, social media marketing to ensure their sustainability, as it is well-documented that marketing in general is essential for the success of any organisation, be it non-profit or for-profit. The goal of this dissertation was to determine the use of social media as a marketing communication (marketing communication) strategy among health-related NPOs in South Africa (Western Cape). A literature review was conducted to examine the size and scope of the NPO sector, social media marketing, the need for social media marketing, the important role social media plays in marketing health-related NPOs, and the funding challenges of health-related NPOs. The researcher identified 13 marketing professionals with experience in working with or for NPOs for this dissertation.

A qualitative approach was used to establish the perception of social media as a marketing communication strategy. Semi-structured, virtual, in-depth interviews were conducted with the respondents to gather data on their views on social media as a marketing communication strategy. The results of the dissertation confirmed that social media marketing is indispensable for health-related NPOs, and that the identified marketing principles that are linked to sustainability of an organisation are essential for their success, i.e., social media and the sustainability of an organisation are inextricably linked, if implemented correctly. It also became evident that health-related NPOs should become more market-oriented and implement marketing strategies to increase their income and fulfil their missions. From the participants' responses, it was also apparent that a lack of social media marketing expertise, as well as inadequate leadership and management skills, are prevalent in the health-related NPO sector. The dissertation therefore advises enhancing health-related NPOs' leadership, management and social media marketing capabilities.

Future research could explore NPO leadership accountability, establish a framework for market-oriented organisations and investigate marketing principles to devise non-profit marketing strategies. Further research is also suggested regarding more innovative business models for NPOs to ensure sustainability. The dissertation also made a connection between the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the motivation for utilising social media as a marketing communication strategy. It considered external variables, such as positive and negative influences, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, behavioural intention and factors promoting the actual use of social media within an NPO setting.

The five major themes elucidated in the dissertation that reflect the key findings include: the role of social media marketing in enhancing the sustainability of health-related NPOs; the importance of market orientation and the implementation of marketing strategies within the health-related NPO sector; the necessity for improved leadership, management, and social media expertise among health-related NPOs; the connection between the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the adoption of social media as a marketing communication strategy; and notably, the examination of the exacerbated funding challenges faced by health-related NPOs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, this dissertation advances knowledge and awareness of the relationship between South Africa's non-profit sector and social media marketing. Its contribution to the TAM and expansion of the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour, NPOs and digital marketing in South Africa has significant theoretical and practical significance. The dissertation highlights the importance of social media marketing for the sustainability of NPOs in South Africa and provides insights into the essential social media principles and findings required for their success. The dissertation's findings have practical implications for NPOs, marketing managers and policymakers and may aid in developing effective social media marketing strategies that could help NPOs overcome funding challenges and ensure their long-term sustainability.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19

Digital marketing

Healthcare

Healthcare promotion

Marketing communication

Non-profit organisation

Perceived ease of use

Perceived usefulness

Social media

Social media behavioural intentions

Technology Acceptance Model

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Keywords	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vii
List of figures	xv
List of tables	xvi
List of abbreviations	xvii
Key terms and concepts	xviii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the research problem	1
1.2.1 Research necessity	1
1.2.2 Research gaps	2
1.3 Problem statement	3
1.4 Overview of NPO marketing and social media	4
1.4.1 Background on South African NPOs	4
1.4.2 NPO sustainability issues	6
1.4.3 Social media as a marketing communication strategy	8
1.4.4 Technology Acceptance Model	9
1.5 Research objectives	10
1.6 Research questions	11
1.7 Research design and methodology	11
1.7.1 Research paradigm	11
1.7.2 Research approach	11
1.7.3 Research strategy and design	11
1.7.4 Sampling	12
1.7.4.1 Population and sample frame	12
1.7.4.2 Sample size	12
1.7.4.3 Sample unit	13
1.7.4.4 Sampling method	13
1.7.5 Data collection instruments	14
1.7.5.1 In-depth semi-structured interviews and interview guide	14
1.7.5.2 Data collection	14
1.7.6 Data coding and analysis	15
1.8 Trustworthiness and validity of the research	15
1.9 Delineation of the research	16
1.10 Ethical considerations	16
1.11 Significance of the research	16
1.12 Outline of dissertation	17
1.13 Summary	18

CHAPTER 2: THE NON-PROFIT ENVIRONMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA	20	
2.1	Introduction	20
2.2	Definition of NPOs	20
2.2.1	Goal-driven behaviour	21
2.2.2	Non-monetary gain	22
2.2.3	Public tasks	23
2.2.4	Stakeholders	23
2.2.5	Inter-organisational relationships between organisations	24
2.2.6	Reliance on donors	24
2.3	NPO types	25
2.3.1	Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	26
2.3.2	Community based organisations (CBOs)	27
2.3.3	Faith-based organisations	28
2.3.4	Section 21 companies	29
2.3.5	Trust	29
2.3.6	Voluntary association	30
2.4	The history of NPOs in South Africa	31
2.4.1	The important role of NPOs in society	32
2.4.2	The health NPO sector in South Africa	33
2.4.3	Importance of health NPOs	34
2.5	Funding challenges of NPOs	35
2.5.1	Capacity issues	36
2.5.2	Factors trends towards funding and sustainability of NPOs	37
2.5.3	The importance of marketing in the NPO sector	38
2.6	The economic impact of COVID-19 on NPOs	39
2.7	Marketing communication strategy of NPOs	41
2.7.1	Marketing communication strategies to build financial sustainability	42
2.7.2	Social media marketing for NPOs	43
2.7.3	Financial sustainability through social media marketing communication	44
2.8	Summary	45
CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA AND NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS	46	
3.1	Introduction	46
3.2	The concept of social media	47
3.2.1	Background of social media	47
3.2.2	South African social media situation	48
3.3	Social media marketing funnel	50
3.3.1	Awareness	52
3.3.2	Interest	52
3.3.3	Engagement	53
3.3.4	Action	54
3.4	Social media platforms	54
3.4.1	Social networking sites	55
3.4.1.1	Facebook	55

3.4.1.2	LinkedIn	57
3.4.1.3	Twitter	57
3.4.2	Instant messaging	58
3.4.2.1	WhatsApp	58
3.4.2.2	Telegram	59
3.4.3	Video sharing (YouTube)	60
3.4.4	Photo sharing (Instagram)	61
3.5	Social media marketing	62
3.5.1	Social media as a marketing communication strategy	63
3.5.2	Social media in strategic marketing	70
3.6	Social media usage within the NPO sector	71
3.6.1	The current status of social media and NPOs globally	71
3.6.2	The present status of social media and NPOs in South Africa	71
3.6.3	Rationale for using social media as a communication tool	73
3.6.4	Challenges of social media usage within the NPO sector	74
3.7	Variables that affect the use of social media as a communication strategy	76
3.7.1	Interactivity factors	76
3.7.2	Compatibility	77
3.7.3	Cost effectiveness	77
3.7.4	Trust	78
3.7.5	Technology and organisational acceptance	78
3.7.6	Capacity	79
3.8	Use of social media in the health NPO sector	80
3.8.1	Social media budget and paid advertising	81
3.8.2	Content published on social media	83
3.8.3	Scheduling content on social media	84
3.8.4	Content strategies: images and videos	85
3.8.5	Use of strategic hashtag marketing for brand awareness	86
3.8.6	Most effective social media platforms for NPOs	87
3.8.7	Social media posting frequency	88
3.8.8	Social media campaign measurement	89
3.9	NPOs engagement of social media during COVID-19	90
3.9.1	NPOs usage of social media during COVID-19	91
3.9.2	Opportunity for NPO social media marketing during COVID-19	91
3.10	Acceptance of new technology in social media adoption	91
3.11	Summary	93
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		95
4.1	Introduction	95
4.2	Philosophy and research paradigm	95
4.3	Orientation	95
4.3.1	Knowledge base	96
4.3.2	Nature of inquiry	97
4.3.3	Research philosophy	97
4.3.4	Research argument	98

4.3.5	Research strategy and time horizon	98
4.3.6	Research tactics	100
4.3.7	Data collection techniques and methods	100
4.4	Primary data: in-depth interviews	100
4.4.1	Secondary data: literature review	101
4.5	Sampling methodology	101
4.5.1	Sample size and population	102
4.5.2	Sample size	102
4.6	Interview guide and data collection	104
4.6.1	Interview guide	104
4.6.2	Data collection	107
4.7	Ensuring data trustworthiness	107
4.8	Coding and analysis of data	109
4.9	Limitations of research methodology	111
4.10	Ethics	112
4.11	Summary of research engagement	113
4.12	Summary	113
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS		115
5.1	Introduction	115
5.2	Themes	115
5.3	Theme one: motive for the use of social media	117
5.3.1	Awareness of organisation	117
5.3.2	Raising funds	118
5.3.3	Sharing services	119
5.3.4	Events	120
5.3.5	Connecting with the community	120
5.3.6	Summary of motives for using social media	121
5.4	Theme two: level of social media usage	122
5.4.1	Social media usage	123
5.4.2	Posting frequency	123
5.4.2.1	Weekly	124
5.4.2.2	Daily	124
5.4.3	Competition for income generation	125
5.5	Branding	126
5.5.1	Brand awareness	126
5.5.1.2	Impact of hashtags for brand recall and brand awareness	127
5.5.1.3	Advertising and branding activities	127
5.5.1.4	Brand emotions	128
5.5.1.5	Brand image	129
5.6	Budget	129
5.6.1	Social media budget	130
5.6.2	Budget: paid advertising	130
5.7	Content and guidelines	131
5.7.1	Content published	131

5.7.2	Content planning and scheduling	133
5.7.3	Content types	134
5.7.3.1	Images	134
5.7.3.2	Video	134
5.7.4	Social media guidelines	135
5.8	Measurement and assessment of social media	136
5.8.1	Most effective social media platform	136
5.8.1.1	Facebook	136
5.8.1.2	LinkedIn and Twitter	137
5.8.2	Social media campaign measurement	139
5.8.3	Summary of level of social media usage	140
5.9	Theme three: the use of social media as a marketing tactic and strategy	140
5.9.1	Social media strategy	140
5.9.2	Social media alignment with organisational marketing goals	142
5.9.3	Target audience	143
5.9.4	Social media goals	144
5.9.5	Best practise from other organisations - appealing strategies	145
5.9.6	Strategic usage of social media as a marketing communication strategy	147
5.10	Theme four: barriers that prevent strategic implementation of social media	147
5.10.1	Social media challenges	147
5.10.2	Lack of organisational understanding	150
5.10.3	Availability of data	152
5.10.4	Volunteers	152
5.10.5	Priority of social media within the organisation	153
5.10.6	Summary of barriers that prevent strategic implementation of social media	154
5.11	Theme five: COVID-19 impact on social media	154
5.11.1	COVID-19's impact on health NPOs	156
5.11.2	Content shared during COVID-19	157
5.11.3	Summary of social media usage during COVID-19	158
5.12	Summary	159
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS		160
6.1	Introduction	160
6.2	The extent to which respondent NPOs use social media	160
6.2.1	Social media channels used and reasons why	161
6.2.1.1	Awareness of organisation	161
6.2.1.2	Raising funds	162
6.2.1.3	Sharing services	163
6.2.1.4	Connecting with the community	163
6.3	Activity and frequency of social media use	164
6.3.1	Budget and paid advertising	165
6.3.2	Hashtags for brand awareness	166
6.4	Factors enabling the strategic use of social media	167
6.4.1	Cost effectiveness	167
6.4.2	Fundraising	168

6.4.3	Building donor relationships	168
6.4.4	Community connection	169
6.5	Impediments of using social media as a marketing communication strategy	170
6.5.1	Budget	171
6.5.2	Frequency of posting content	172
6.5.3	Resources	172
6.5.3.1	Lack of organisational understanding	173
6.5.3.2	Capacity constraints	174
6.6	Motivation for using social media as a marketing communication strategy	176
6.6.1	Organisational brand awareness	177
6.6.2	Donor relationships	177
6.6.3	Donation support and growth	178
6.7	Impact of social media – content preferences	179
6.8	Perspectives on social media as a marketing communication strategy	182
6.9	COVID-19	183
6.9.1	Social media during COVID-19	183
6.9.2	COVID-19 impact on social media by the health NPO sector	184
6.10	Conceptual framework	185
6.10.1	Key social media external variables	185
6.10.2	Perceived usefulness of social media	185
6.10.3	Social media perceived ease of use	186
6.10.4	Social media behavioural intentions	186
6.10.5	Factors promoting actual use of social media	186
6.11	Summary	188
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		189
7.1	Introduction	189
7.2	Key findings and recommendations	189
7.2.1	Motives for the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy	189
7.2.1.1	Brand awareness	189
7.2.2.2	Relationship building	190
7.2.2.3	Raising funds	191
7.3	Level of social media engagement	192
7.3.1	Social media platforms used	192
7.3.2	Most effective social media platforms for NPOs	192
7.3.3	Frequency of social media use	193
7.3.4	Advertising and branding activities	193
7.3.5	Hashtags for brand awareness	194
7.3.6	Engaging content that triggers an emotive reaction	194
7.4	Use of social media as a marketing tactic and strategy	195
7.4.1	Strategic use of social media marketing and communication	195
7.4.2	Social media alignment with organisational goals	196
7.4.3	Social media goals	196
7.5	Barriers that prevent the strategic implementation of social media	196

7.5.1	Social media challenges	197
7.5.2	Lack of organisational understanding	197
7.5.3	Capacity constraints	198
7.5.4	Insufficient marketing and fundraising expertise	198
7.6	Social media engagement during COVID-19	198
7.6.1	COVID-19 impact on social media	198
7.6.2	Adoption of social media during COVID-19	199
7.7	Theoretical implications	199
7.8	Managerial implications	202
7.9	Research limitations and future research	204
7.10	Concluding remarks	205

REFERENCE LIST	207
-----------------------	-----

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview guide questions	249
Appendix B: Ethics clearance certificate	252
Appendix C: Copy editor certificate	253
Appendix D: Turnitin originality report	254

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Thesis overview	17
Figure 2.1: NPO characteristics	25
Figure 2.2: The role of NPOs in multi-stakeholder cooperation	27
Figure 2.3: Breakdown of CBO structure	28
Figure 2.4: FBO relationships	29
Figure 2.5: The impact of COVID-19 on large and mid-sized NPOs	40
Figure 3.1: Most used social media platforms	49
Figure 3.2: Social media marketing funnel	51
Figure 3.3: World's most-used social media platforms	56
Figure 3.4: Telegram usage numbers in millions	60
Figure 3.5: Challenges influencing social media usage	75
Figure 3.6: Adoption of social image	80
Figure 3.7: Energy, emotion and content performance	83
Figure 3.8: Proposed model of social media marketing communication strategy	93
Figure 4.1: Research orientation selection	96
Figure 4.2: The sampling process	101
Figure 4.3: ATLAS.ti (version 9) software tool screenshot	110
Figure 4.4: ATLAS.ti (version 9) coding procedure	111
Figure 5.1: Word cloud on motive for social media usage	121
Figure 5.2: Motives for social media usage	122
Figure 5.3: Level of social media usage	122
Figure 5.4: Social media platform usage	123
Figure 5.5: Social media activity frequency	124
Figure 5.6: Word cloud on content types	135
Figure 5.7: Word cloud on the most effective platform	138
Figure 5.8: Word cloud on usage of social media	146
Figure 5.9: Social media challenges	150
Figure 5.10: Barriers that prevent the strategic implementation of social media	154
Figure 5.11: Word cloud on social media usage during COVID-19	158
Figure 6.1: Motivations for using social media	164
Figure 6.2: Elements enabling the strategic use of social media	170
Figure 6.3: Challenges to effective social media strategy	175
Figure 6.4: Factors motivating the use of social media	179
Figure 6.5: Social media content preferences	182
Figure 6.6: Key enablers and negative influences impacting health-related NPOs intention to adopt and use social media	187

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Characteristics of for-profit organisations and NPOs	21
Table 2.2: Social welfare service categories	30
Table 3.1: Research concentrating on how social media are used by NPOs	65
Table 3.2: Fundamental aspects of strategic marketing via social media	71
Table 3.3: Important aspects of strategic marketing through social media	82
Table 3.4: Social media posting frequency best practice	88
Table 4.1: Description of respective participants relating to the dissertation	103
Table 4.2: Relationship between interview and research questions	106
Table 4.3: Research engagement	113
Table 5.1: Integration of Interview Guide, research questions, objectives, themes, and categories	116

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community based organisation
COVID-19	Novel coronavirus
FBO	Faith-based organisation
ICT	Information and communications technology
NDP	National Development Plan
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
UGC	User-generated content
WHO	World Health Organisation

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Coronavirus (COVID-19)	A family of viruses that can cause respiratory illness in animals and humans. The COVID-19 virus, which first emerged in Wuhan, China in 2019, became a global pandemic affecting people worldwide (Segars et al., 2020; Zwanka & Buff, 2021; Betthäuser et al., 2023).
Digital marketing	The practice of promoting goods, services or brands via digital platforms and technologies. Search engine optimisation, social media marketing, email marketing and content marketing are a few of the digital marketing strategies used (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021; Meria et al., 2023).
Donors	Individuals, organisations or groups that contribute money, time or other resources to a non-profit or charitable organisation. Donors may give for a variety of reasons, including a desire to support a cause, to help others or to receive tax benefits (Porter & Kramer, 2002; Tury, 2020).
E-commerce	The online purchase and sale of products and services. A variety of activities are included in e-commerce, including electronic payments, online auctions and online shopping (Taneja, 2021; Sharma et al., 2022).
Ethics	Moral principles that govern behaviour and decision-making. In business, ethical considerations may include honesty, fairness, respect and social responsibility (Vitolla et al., 2021; Ayoko, 2022).
Marketing communication	A strategic process of developing and implementing promotional messages to communicate with a target audience to increase brand awareness, generate interest and ultimately drive sales (Rishi & Kuthuru, 2021; Park & Namkung, 2022)
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	The TAM was formulated to explain the way individuals react to new technology. A few critical factors exist that can forecast the adoption of new technology, such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, behavioural intention to use, attitude towards use and actual usage (Davis, 1989).
Perceived usefulness	A user's subjective perception of how a technology can improve their job performance or personal life (Davis, 1989).
Perceived ease of use	A user's subjective perception of how easy a technology is to use (Davis, 1989).

Social media	Online platforms and tools that enable users to create and share content, communicate and connect with others in a social context (Aichner et al., 2021; Rhee et al., 2021; dos Santos, 2022).
Social network platforms	Online platforms that enable users to create and share content, connect with other users and build online communities (Alhussain, 2020; Camacho et al., 2020; Asamoah & Sharda, 2021).
Volunteers	Individuals who provide their time, skills and energy for free to support a cause, organisation or community (Dempsey-Brench & Shantz, 2022; Overgaard & Kerlin, 2022)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to set out the framework and core ideas of the dissertation. First, a brief context is provided, followed by a statement of the problem and an acknowledgement of the gaps in the existing research. The goals of the dissertation and the specific questions are explored and detailed in this section. An introductory literature dissertation on the non-profit organisations (NPO) industry and the impact of social media on NPO marketing is also presented. The dissertation's scope, measurement instruments, outcomes and ethical considerations are addressed in subsequent parts. After outlining the various sections of the thesis, the dissertation's importance in terms of its contribution to the body of current knowledge is discussed.

1.2 Background to the research problem

Having established the background to the research problem, it's crucial to understand why this research is necessary and the gaps it aims to fill in our current knowledge.

1.2.1 Research necessity

South African NPOs, like those throughout the world, face substantial challenges, such as the rise of corporatisation and severe competition for financial support from other similar organisations (Maboya, 2016; Ngudu & Motala, 2020; Kew, 2021). NPOs represent entities that collaborate to address societal needs, aiming to contribute value to communities without the pursuit of financial gain (Choto et al., 2020; Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020). The term "non-profit" refers to the fact that these organisations do not generate profits (Suykens et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022; Alexander et al., 2023).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) views health as a fundamental human right and health promotion is defined as providing individuals with more control over their health and its determinants (Nutbeam & Muscat, 2021), therefore, the need for health promotion motivates this research to be focused on the health NPO sector and on what social media marketing methods are prevalently being used for.

As mentioned above, a fundamental human right of a society is healthcare; with the prevalence of illnesses, emergencies and accidents, which increases continuously, the need for healthcare facilities is important (Akkaş et al., 2020). Healthcare facilities are needed to address and facilitate treatment plans, diagnosis and management of the various types of diseases and illnesses (Lee et al., 2020). The current healthcare sector in South Africa is

under consistent criticism media and condemnation (Maphumulo & Bhengu, 2019; Lin, 2020). Maphumulo and Bhengu (2019) state that despite the fact that South Africa's underprivileged population has access to limited free and public clinic services, these public clinic services are often badly administered. The motivation for the establishment of NPOs came out of the dire need to provide essential public services that the government has been unable to attend to (Wyngaard, 2013; Choto et al., 2020; Wills et al., 2020; Scognamiglio et al., 2022). Therefore, NPOs are considered bodies that respond to needs in societies and communities that the government cannot (Honey, 2000; Council on Foundations, 2019).

Out of the 11 NPO categories, the health sector falls into the top five most registered sectors in South Africa (Maphumulo & Bhengu, 2019). Although there have been notable advancements in social media and marketing endeavours within NPOs, the dearth of research concerning health-related NPOs in South Africa is apparent (Zihindula et al., 2019; Barnabé et al., 2020; Sutherns & Olivier, 2022).

Given the necessity for healthcare services and the positive influence of health promotion on health-seeking behaviour, an assessment of health NPO marketing communication approaches, including participation in social (Tursunbayeva et al., 2017; Albanna et al.; Alexander et al., 2023), is essential, and therefore underpins the research necessity.

1.2.2 Research gaps

Following a significant surge in social media and NPO literature worldwide, several studies have primarily focused on NPO social media engagement globally (Cazorla Milla et al., 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019; Tharpe, 2019; Tonetti, 2019; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020a; Gartner et al., 2021). However, there is insufficient research on the use of social media by health-related NPOs, particularly in South Africa. Research on NPOs and social media has primarily concentrated on women and youth NPOs, with studies also having a strong international emphasis (Ali et al., 2022; Goodwin, 2022; Ihm, 2022; Ruggiero et al., 2022; Salte, 2022) but with very little focus on South African examples (Abubakar et al., 2017; Cazorla Milla et al., 2017; Tonetti, 2019; Ansari & Khan, 2020; Slatten et al., 2021; Giersemehl et al., 2022).

There has been general sentiment by various authors that future research is essential to investigate the significance of social media in various types of NPOs, as the sector is large and different themes have different needs (Goldkind, 2015; Kapoor et al., 2018). Pope et al. (2009) and Kapoor et al. (2018) mention that analysing the use of social media by health NPOs and NPOs in general can assist organisations in understanding the most successful ways to utilise social media to achieve their goals, reach their target audience and have a positive impact.

Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2022) recommend that future studies should investigate whether social media sites, apart from the popular ones like Facebook, are more efficient at influencing attitudes and behaviours of an intended target audience for NPOs. The dissertation suggests that further research should assess if social media have a positive impact on the overall perception of the NPO, and whether this results in additional income streams and a leg of sustainability on which these organisations can build (Zhang et al., 2022). Hence, the current research addresses the research gap and examines how other social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and Telegram are employed by the NPOs.

The dissertation also aims to emphasise the marketing challenges for NPOs in light of the economic slowdown and service failure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the lack of awareness of digital technology, which has exacerbated the situation, creating concerns about the survival of NPOs (Kumar et al., 2022, Alexander et al., 2023, Sánchez-Torné et al., 2023).

As a result, this investigation filled a research gap by investigating how social media platforms were modified and utilised during COVID-19, when digital platforms were critical for staying relevant.

1.3 Problem statement

Despite an increasing trend for international donors to direct a large portion of their aid financing to governments, the rise in funding does not trickle down to NPOs (Horne et al., 2005; Chaudhry & Heiss, 2021). The continuing growth of NPOs has caused “fierce competition” among these organisations to create awareness of their funding needs in a progressively decreasing target market.

Despite the obvious necessity to raise awareness and funds, it appears contradictory that of a sample size conducted, 90 percent of NPOs which believe marketing is crucial for raising funds and awareness and only 10 percent engage in any marketing communication activities and initiatives (Bezuidenhout, 2017; Severoni, 2021). Further examination of the results of Bezuidenhout’s inquiry showed that the majority of NPOs were subjected to an organisation-centred mind-set rather than a market-oriented mind-set (Bezuidenhout, 2017). The authors came to the conclusion that the NPOs sampled did not relate to or grasp the concept of marketing concepts, that is, what they are and how they may be employed to the organisation's advantage (Bryce, 2007; Chapleo, 2015; Yakın & Eru, 2017). Social media has emerged as a significant channel of communication for reaching out to an audience and spreading one's message around the world, while its user numbers are constantly increasing year on year (Briciu & Briciu, 2020; Ngai et al., 2020; Kemp, 2023). NPOs in general are increasingly using social media sites to assist in raising finances and visibility, as well as to accomplish their

public engagement goals (Xu & Saxton, 2019; Albanna et al., 2022). The adoption of social media by health NPOs is not universal due to various factors.

These can include a lack of information about the benefits and usage of social media, a shortage of personnel to manage these platforms, or insufficient funds to hire professionals with social media skills. Despite these challenges, there are health NPOs that have successfully incorporated social media into their operations. Their efficiency in using these platforms varies, with some managing to raise funds and increase awareness about their causes effectively.

NPOs in South Africa are experiencing a resource deficit (Sibisi & Makka, 2022). Choto (2019) reports that this can be partly explained by two primary factors, namely an increase in NPOs registering and a decrease in donations from institutional donors and the general public.

Research has found that NPOs do not prioritise the importance of marketing and the rise of social media as a marketing communication approach (Tharpe, 2019; Gartner et al., 2021; Maxhuni, 2021; Melirotra & Siraj, 2021). According to these authors' findings, NPOs are unaware of the primary roles of marketing and social media, as well as how to best utilise them to reach their target consumers. Given the foregoing, two possible outcomes are posited. The first being that health NPOs do not engage in social media as a key component of their marketing communication strategy, and if so, this dissertation seeks to establish why they are not engaging and what factors would favour them to engage. The second being that all health NPOs engage in social media, and if so, the dissertation seeks to determine what their means of engagement are and how it has influenced their overall marketing and communication strategy. The goal of this dissertation is to find out how health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa, advertise themselves and what the prevalent social media marketing communication tactics are among them, if any.

1.4 Overview of NPO marketing and social media

After understanding the general landscape of NPO marketing and social media, it is essential to delve deeper into the specific context of South African NPOs, which presents its own unique set of circumstances and challenges.

1.4.1 Background of South African NPOs

NPOs in South Africa, like those throughout the world, face substantial challenges, such as the rise of corporatisation and severe competition for financial support from other similar organisations (Maboya, 2016; Ngudu & Motala, 2020; Kew, 2021). NPOs are organisations which come together to address needs in communities with the goal of adding value to society without making a profit (Choto et al., 2020; Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020). The term "non-

profit" refers to the fact that these organisations do not generate profits (Alexander et al., 2023; Suykens et al., 2021). Most NPOs struggle with financial sustainability, which is essential for survival (Maboya, 2016; Maboya & McKay, 2019). Given the necessity for healthcare services and the positive influence of health promotion on health-seeking behaviour, an assessment of health NPO marketing communication approaches, including participation in social media, is essential.

The struggle is mostly with donors and the financial landscape (Ballesteros & Gatignon, 2019; Singh & Mthuli, 2021). NPOs depend on external funds and resources to stay afloat and continue their often-unique programmes (Bocquet et al., 2020). Thus, NPO executives must manage the financial ecosystem and its obstacles (Jensen, 2018). The economy and public and external stakeholders' willingness to fund NPOs determine funding (Shon et al., 2019). This research explores alternative funding strategies for NPOs to sustain their operations without relying on government support. The dissertation aims to identify effective funding models that can help NPOs achieve long-term financial stability and reduce their dependence on government funding. Thus, NPOs depend on corporate, foundation, trust and individual donations (Topaloglu et al., 2018). In low-income countries like South Africa, donors have fewer funds to invest in NPOs (Ballesteros & Gatignon, 2019; McIntyre, 2021). NPOs must compete with larger, better-known organisations for financing and resources. According to Findley et al. (2017), donors like bigger organisations because they have a stronger track record, a broader audience and a larger impact on the beneficiaries. Due to this inclination, not all NPOs are given the chance to prove themselves in this space, which is often linked to sustainability and funding issues (Alborough, 2017).

NPOs are often highly dependent on external funding. This funding primarily comes from donors who have their own strategic objectives and priorities that can change over time. These shifts in funding priorities can have significant implications for NPOs, as highlighted by AbouAssi and Tschirhart (2018).

Donor preferences can switch due to a variety of factors, including changing socio-political contexts, emerging crises, and evolving perceptions of which sectors or issues are most critical. For example, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically redirected the focus of many donors, who shifted resources towards organizations engaged in combating the virus and its effects (AbouAssi & Tschirhart, 2018).

The shift in funding priorities had significant implications for NPOs in South Africa, as noted by Johnson et al. (2021) and Mash et al. (2022). Many government-funded health NPOs that were not directly involved in the COVID-19 response found their funding reduced. However,

those that were engaged in COVID-19 response efforts received increased funding (Johnson et al., 2021; Mash et al., 2022).

While the increase in funding for COVID-19-related efforts was beneficial for those specific NPOs and for the broader public health effort, it may have had unintended negative effects on other organisations and the services they provide. NPOs not involved in the COVID-19 response had to deal with reduced funding, which might have led to diminished services in other important health areas (Johnson et al., 2021; Mash et al., 2022). This highlights the complexity and potential pitfalls of shifting donor priorities in the non-profit sector.

These shifts require NPOs to be adaptive and innovative, finding ways to maintain their services even in the face of changing funding landscapes. However, this also underscores the need for donors to consider the full range of impacts that their shifting priorities might have, particularly in contexts like South Africa, where NPOs play a critical role in delivering key services (AbouAssi & Tschirhart, 2018).

This dissertation aims to explore two key issues related to health-related NPOs. First, it investigates whether these organisations can overcome the aforementioned funding challenges without resorting to social media marketing for sustainability and fundraising. Second, it examines if these NPOs are incorporating social media marketing into a broader communication strategy. This strategy would aim to attract donors, expand their audience, and secure potential funds by showcasing their activities on social media.

1.4.2 NPO sustainability issues

A majority of NPOs are facing sustainability issues during this period of economic downturn (Choto, 2019). Many authors define sustainability in terms of potential future financing sources (Alshehhi et al., 2018; Brooks & Oikonomou, 2018). Luthra et al. (2020) assert that sustainability is defined as a continuous evaluation of the necessity to advance a cause, once it is confirmed, to successfully seek funding opportunities for that cause. NPOs should make sustainable investments so they are able to obtain financing to support their initiatives once donor financing runs out (Ayinkamiye & Spencer, 2021). Every organisation should have an internal and external communication strategy in place. NPOs should establish relations with radio stations, local newspapers, hospitals, social networks, law enforcement, schools, and the public while concurrently maintaining an online presence where they can provide updates on their fundraising campaigns and share the impact of their work (Jouany & Martic, 2020).

The market for NPOs is becoming increasingly congested (Paarlberg et al., 2018). Following several global instances of suffering and discomfort, the issues that require national and international attention and quick action tend to multiply daily (Aldashev & Navarra, 2018). Furthermore, the spread of COVID-19 has had a considerable impact on the marketing

strategies of charities and NPOs (Beaton & Hwang, 2017; Crick & Crick, 2020; Huang & Liu, 2020).

NPOs may be able to advance beyond single-touch (street or door-to-door) fundraising by eliminating or minimising in-person physical contact and focus on an offline-online campaign geared to generate qualified donors and create leads (Tonetti, 2019). While some sectors continue to benefit from existing channels, new strategies and initiatives are required to achieve greater personalisation and openness as a way to meet the needs, feelings and desires of varied donor pools (Eaves & Lombardo, 2021). When it comes to strategies to maintain sustainability, most NPOs have a to-do list that includes digital integration (Berrone et al., 2023). The pandemic has increased the importance of diversifying revenue streams and supporter categories (Johnson et al., 2021). It has also sped up procedures that had already started to upgrade organisations' communication networks, which are being forced to evolve toward an almost entirely digital environment (Dhawan, 2020). One of the dissertation's goals is to find out what marketing communication methods, if any, health NPOs employ to achieve sustainability and whether social media marketing communication strategies play a role in the quest for financial sustainability.

Concepts, ideas and opinions are easily exchanged, considering the open communication landscape and the global integration of mass media, particularly via social media platforms. social media has evolved enormously in the last five years, providing new methods to connect with people all over the world (Sharma & Kaur, 2017; Appel et al., 2020; Lipschultz, 2020). social media is commonly characterised as a system of online channels for community-based participation, interaction, content exchange and cooperation (Prajapati et al., 2020). Conversations, connections and connecting with people who share interests are all part of social media (Klassen et al., 2018). Social media allows a person to not only hear what others say about him or her, but also to respond, listen and speak (Jumin et al., 2017). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are all popular social media networks.

The primary purpose of NPOs is to change behaviour to accomplish a desired result (Alfes & Langner, 2017; Algharabat et al., 2018). NPOs rely on first-time and repeat contributors, as well as volunteers, to further their purposes (Reficco et al., 2021; Schetgen et al., 2021). The biggest issue is that it takes time and money, especially when using traditional methods of involvement. In terms of interacting with the general the public, an NPO can now employ several social media channels to ensure the broadest possible reach (Smith, 2018; Williams et al., 2018). Alalwan et al. (2017) state that 92 percent of NPOs already utilise Facebook, with a third spending money on Facebook advertising. Such success can be attributed to new thorough social media plans, emphasising the significance of ensuring that executive

management prioritises social media and assigns an existing or new job solely to social media responsibilities (Chirumalla et al., 2018; Ewing et al., 2019). The proliferation of media and communication tools, as well as social media, has altered the landscape of agenda setting theory and its application (Harder et al., 2017). Many organisations make the mistake of setting up profiles on each social media site and attempting to reach their target demographic across all of them. This almost always leads to a waste of time and a lack of outcomes (Newman et al., 2017). This differentiation in communication strategies occurs because each platform's audience has a separate set of personas. For instance, LinkedIn targets businesspeople and professionals, whereas Instagram targets young, visually-inclined people, and Facebook targets a larger, more general audience (Tonetti, 2019). Successful NPOs understand which platform to employ based on the audience they want to express their message to (Xiao et al., 2022). There is a dearth of research on how health-related NPOs employ social media marketing communication tactics for fundraising, particularly their benefits and limitations, as well as the best strategies for maximising the efficacy of such campaigns. One of the primary goals of this dissertation is to determine why it is critical for these organisations to grasp social media channels and how to use those most effectively to assure exposure, influence and eventually sustainability through donations.

Within NPOs, sustainability can relate to both the long-term viability of programmes and community development and the financial viability of the organisation (Ryser et al., 2020). Financial difficulties are a primary driver to NPO closure and downscaling (Kaye et al., 2021). NPOs serve a significant role in society, hence the decline in their number is concerning, since NPOs serve several susceptible communities, families and individuals (Chikoto-Schultz et al., 2019; Santos & Laureano, 2021). However, the main challenge for NPOs is that they typically lack the time, financial resources, and expertise needed to use social media successfully for financial sustainability (Cho et al., 2017).

According to research, the time necessary for social media adoption inside campaigns is a significant challenge for such organisations (Ahmad et al., 2018; Khoo, 2019). Another difficulty for NPOs is a lack of resources to learn about new technology devices or infrastructure, which may limit their ability to capitalise on social media (Nchabeleng et al., 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2022).

1.4.3 Social media as a marketing communication strategy

Social media has become an increasingly important tool for NPOs, particularly those in the health sector, to reach and engage with their target audience (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019; Xu & Saxton, 2019; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Stellefson et al., 2020). As the use of social media continues to grow, it has become a crucial marketing communication strategy for health

NPOs to promote their cause, raise awareness and ultimately drive donations and support for their programmes (Bakshy et al., 2012; Baker, 2021; Tabas, 2021). The bulk of social media networks are free to use, making them an ideal platform for NPOs (Armstrong & Butcher, 2018). However, the notion that social media marketing and networking are free or inexpensive for NPOs is a myth (Marwick, 2017). While the use of social media networks is free, there are hidden costs for NPOs in managing an effective social media presence (Oyewobi et al., 2022). These costs include time investment, content creation, advertising, training, monitoring and crisis management. As a result, the idea that social media marketing is free or inexpensive for NPOs is not true, as these hidden costs are relatively high and require resource allocation (Oyewobi et al., 2022).

New organisations might not have the resources to manage new technologies and buy computers and they may lack sufficient staff to manage this resource (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018). Therefore, a deeper comprehension of the function of social media in NPOs will lay the groundwork for future dissertation, define the many goals of employing social media and help NPOs perceive the real world and the value of social media in achieving their objectives.

The importance of social media marketing in the health-related NPO sector, as well as its relationship to possible financial sustainability, should be investigated further (Bhati & McDonnell, 2020; Lim et al., 2021; Van Steenburg et al., 2022). Through digital channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, NPOs have the opportunity to connect with a wider audience, build relationships and communicate their messages in a way that resonates with their target audience. In the dissertation, the ways in which health-related NPOs can effectively utilise social media as a marketing communication strategy to achieve their goals and make an impact in their field are explored.

1.4.4 Technology Acceptance Model

A theoretical framework that describes how and why people use and adopt technology is called the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Min et al., 2019) The theoretical framework was first proposed by Davis (1989) and since then it has been extensively utilised in many fields of dissertation such as information systems, marketing and management (Davis, 1989; Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017; Hansen et al., 2018). The model posits that two key factors determine an individual's acceptance and use of technology, namely perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) (Buabeng-Andoh, 2018; Natarajan et al., 2018).

PU describes a person's conviction that making use of a specific technology will improve their ability to accomplish their work or overall well-being. PEOU relates to how strongly a person thinks employing a certain technology would benefit them and is free of effort (Florenthal, 2019; Florenthal et al., 2020). According to the model, people are more likely to use and adopt

a technology if they believe it will be helpful and simple to use (Vahdat et al., 2021). The TAM model also includes two moderating variables, attitude towards using and behavioural intention to use. Attitude towards using is the overall evaluation of using a technology, whereas behavioural intention to use is the likelihood of using a technology in the future (Durodolu, 2016). Both variables are influenced by PU and PEOU.

The TAM model has been widely used in a variety of sectors and has proven to be a solid predictor of technological acceptance and usage. It is also a useful tool for practitioners in understanding the elements that influence technology acceptance and establishing strategies to promote new technology adoption. It also aids in understanding how to improve acceptance and usage of a product or service by highlighting crucial elements that must be addressed.

Owing to the degree of PU and PEOU as a source of information on health-related NPOs and their members, social media may be viewed as an effective means of interacting with their audiences by these organisations. Davis (1989) found a link between motivation and behavioural intent to use social media as a marketing communication approach and TAM. This dissertation's findings add to the current basis of TAM in social media and NPO environments. As a result, the present framework includes numerous components, including social media external factors, PU of social media, PEOU of social media and social media behavioural intentions, all of which are linked to characteristics that promote social media usage. It is important to highlight that the notions offered here are based on the TAM (Davis, 1989) and have been modified to fit to the current dissertation.

1.5 Research objectives

Having established the background of South African NPOs and their interaction with social media, we can now outline the specific research objectives that this dissertation aims to achieve.

- To identify whether health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa use social media.
- To assess the level to which health-related NPOs use social media platforms and establish the reason(s) for doing so.
- To determine the marketing communication strategies that health-related NPOs employ to promote their core business and to assess its effectiveness of each.
- To identify and assess the challenges that prevent the use of social media as a marketing communication conduit; and
- To examine the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy during COVID-19.

1.6 Research questions

The following research questions are addressed by the dissertation's objectives and goals:

- Do South African health-related NPOs use any social media channels as a component of their communication and marketing strategy? If so, for what reasons?
- To what extent is social media used as a marketing communication strategy by health-related NPOs?
- Which marketing communication strategies are used by health-related NPOs for promotion purposes?
- What are the challenges that inhibit health-related NPOs engagement in social media as a marketing communication conduit?
- How were social media marketing strategies adapted during COVID-19?

1.7 Research design and methodology

1.7.1 Research paradigm

The interpretivist approach was used in this dissertation, which encompassed individuals' beliefs, reasoning, attitudes and perceptions. This approach recognises the influence of perception on reality. This dissertation delved deeper into interpretivism since the researcher believes that the world should be seen through the eyes of its inhabitants. To achieve the dissertation's objectives, the interpretivist philosophy was chosen as the most effective method of obtaining rich empirical data and varied points of view from respondents on their relationship with their respective NPO and social media as a marketing communication approach.

1.7.2 Research approach

The conventional conception of qualitative research is that it is an inductive process that entails grouping findings into overarching themes or categories and then drawing conclusions about the relationships between those groups (Asenahabi, 2019). Given the importance of drawing on stakeholders' actual experiences and knowledge, this dissertation opted for qualitative research. In addition, the inquiry used a qualitative research strategy to be in line with the research goal, as well as to analyse and make sense of the participants' perspectives.

1.7.3 Research strategy and design

This dissertation employs two interconnected research designs, archival and exploratory research. Haydam and Steenkamp (2020) place a research design that is archival under the assumption of “science as a body or product of scientific knowledge”, which is supported by

the scientific edifice and encompasses all information, whether stored electronically or via paper. Exploratory research was deemed most suitable for the dissertation for several reasons. First, exploratory research allows for a better understanding of complex phenomena by investigating the research problem in depth (Gill et al., 2008; Thomas, 2011). This approach is particularly valuable when limited information or prior research is available on the topic, which provides an opportunity to gain insights and identify patterns, trends and relationships (Dudovski, 2012).

Second, exploratory research is flexible and adaptable, allowing the researcher to modify the research design or direction as new information emerges during the dissertation (Hollebeek, 2013). This flexibility facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and allows the researcher to consider unforeseen issues or questions that may arise.

Lastly, exploratory research can serve as a foundation for future research by identifying research gaps, generating hypotheses and establishing a basis for further investigation (Curran et al., 2012). By exploring the research problem thoroughly, the research adds to the corpus of existing knowledge and provides valuable insights that can guide subsequent research endeavours. Owing to the major aim of this inquiry was to gather insight and ideas into the research problem, an exploratory research technique was adopted. Furthermore, given there have been few studies on the usage of social media by South African health-related NPOs, (Maboya & McKay, 2019; Ceulemans et al., 2020; Mejova & Kalimeri, 2020), the chosen research technique will aid the development of new insights into the research topic.

1.7.4 Sampling

Once we have a clear understanding of the sampling process, we can further refine our focus to the specific population and sample frame that this dissertation will consider.

1.7.4.1 Population and sample frame

This dissertation focused on health-related NPOs and the social media channels they employed. Participants from these organisations who satisfied the criterion for social media use comprised the sample frame. Individuals chosen to participate in the dissertation had access to data and a level of comprehension of the issue and dissertation questions. The dissertation employed a data saturation technique to choose interviews based on the number of health-related NPOs active on social media networks. Saunders et al. (2018) mention that utilising a data saturation strategy is beneficial for data validity and ensuring the high quality of qualitative research.

1.7.4.2 Sample size

The size of the sample was established by collecting data until saturation was achieved, at which point no further data from interviews or analysis were included (Singh et al., 2014). Theoretical saturation occurs when no new data surfaces that can further develop the properties of a category (Saunders et al., 2018). In this research, saturation was attained when no more information emerged regarding health-related NPOs' adoption of social media as a marketing communication strategy. The researcher sought diverse groups to ensure the broadest possible range of data, confirming that saturation was based on a comprehensive array of data relevant to the category. Consequently, data saturation was achieved with thirteen interviews.

Swart et al. (2021) conducted ten semi-structured interviews, outlining important areas and subjects that organisations should consider when developing an integrated social media communication strategy as a substitute for content marketing used by NPOs. Additionally, Akatay, Hacıoğlu, and Özdemir (2017) sampled fifteen stakeholders to assess NGOs' social media usage in Turkey and communication managers' perceptions of social media. Considering these studies with smaller sample sizes, this investigation determined that a sample size of thirteen is suitable.

1.7.4.3. Sample unit

Sandelowski (1995) and Moyo et al. (2022) define sample units as individuals from the population who are examined during sampling. In addition, sample units are unique, non-overlapping entities. From the specified population, key stakeholders responsible for social media marketing operations at health-related NPOs were chosen as the sample unit for in-depth interviews. The dissertation was limited to health-related NPOs in South Africa's Western Cape province. Other non-health-related NPOs in the Western Cape were not examined. The interview sample units were chosen because they were directly involved in the operation of the NPO social media channels. These individuals were in the best position to provide insights on the dissertation's research topic.

1.7.4.4 Sampling method

The present inquiry utilised a non-probability judgmental method of sampling, grounded in the rationale to effectively address the research questions. Participants should be members of their respective organisations with involvement in marketing activities (Rahi, 2017).

This approach is supported by the theoretical underpinning that information-rich individuals can offer valuable insights into the research question (QuestionPro, 2020). Judgmental sampling enables the researcher to select participants owing to their expertise, experience

and knowledge on the topic, thereby increasing the depth and relevance of the data collected (Rahi, 2017).

1.7.5 Data collection instruments

Having discussed the general data collection instruments, we will now delve into the specifics of using in-depth semi-structured interviews and the accompanying interview guide as our primary tools for gathering information.

1.7.5.1 In-depth semi-structured interviews and interview guide

Semi-structured interviews are a data collection approach that allows the researcher to ask more open-ended questions of the participants (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Ruslin et al., 2022). Due to the need for relevant content on the participants' thoughts and opinions, as well as the need to go into uncharted areas, semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen for this dissertation (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Furthermore, open-ended questions were utilised in this dissertation, with an interview guide serving as a data collection instrument (Ruslin et al., 2022).

By employing this interview method for data collection, the investigator managed to gain insights into the viewpoints and perspectives of using social media as a marketing communication strategy. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with NPO marketing stakeholders to get their perspectives on social media deployment and usage. The interview guide helped ensure that questions were relevant and logically connected and the interviewer changed or rephrased questions in certain situations to ensure that participants understood them.

1.7.5.2 Data collection

Kallio et al. (2016) highlight that there are five main approaches to data collection, namely content analysis, participant observation, observation, questionnaires and interviews. These methodologies allow researchers to obtain relevant information about their target population and research methodology. A combination of methods was employed to gather information for the dissertation. Online in-depth interviews served as the primary source of data collection, while a literature review supplied the secondary. All thirteen interviews were conducted via the Internet video platforms, namely Google Meets and Zoom. Semi-structured interviews had to be conducted online due to the strict South African COVID-19 rules at the time of data collection. Prior to the interviews, participants granted their permission to record them. This dissertation used in-depth interviews as its primary data collection technique because they allowed the researcher to gain a holistic picture in an effort to answer the inquiry's research questions and objectives. An analysis of secondary sources was also performed to help frame

the dissertation question. Information was collected from both print and online journals, blogs, dissertations, books, annual reports and websites with analysed data.

1.7.6 Data coding and analysis

Data must be organised in a way that is simple to read and understand if it is to be processed and analysed effectively. Common themes pertaining to the research topic were identified and coded using the qualitative data analysis tool ATLAS.ti (version 9) in this dissertation. The classification strategy made use of predetermined categories that were developed to accommodate the aims of the dissertation and the research.

1.8 Trustworthiness and validity of the research

Any research dissertation needs to affirm the reliability of the data and the dependability of its conclusions. To achieve this, it is critical to address any potential difficulties of credibility that may arise during the course of the inquiry. The degree of confidence in the data acquired and the processes employed to obtain the data, including the analysis, establish the credibility of a research endeavour.

Trustworthiness procedures and standards vary by subject and research design. In the context of this investigation, data credibility, reliability, rigour and transferability were all regarded as relevant. Data credibility refers to the degree to which the data can be trusted and depends on the accuracy of the information collected and the research methods employed. Data reliability refers to the measures of how easily the data may be duplicated or replicated and it is closely related to the consistency of the research methods employed. Rigour refers to the degree of thoroughness, care and attention to detail in the research process. Finally, transferability refers to the extent to which the dissertation's findings can be applied to different populations, situations and settings.

To address credibility difficulties, several measures were taken in this dissertation. First, the research design was carefully developed and justified, ensuring that the methods and techniques used were appropriate for the research questions being asked. Second, data collection procedures were standardised and carefully documented to ensure that the same methods were used consistently throughout the dissertation. Third, a pilot investigation was performed to evaluate the research tools and find any potential issues before the main dissertation was carried out. Fourth, data analysis was conducted using a systematic approach. Finally, the dissertation's limitations were identified and discussed, and future research recommendations were made. Overall, by addressing credibility difficulties and ensuring the credibility of the data and the dependability of its conclusions, the comprehension

of this investigation is aided by this research subject and provides a solid foundation for future research in this area.

1.9 Delineation of the research

The information gathered for this dissertation was confined to the opinions, suggestions and actions of health-related NPOs at the time of the interviews. As a result, there were no longitudinal cohort quantitative follow-up interviews to assess consumption trends. The dissertation was limited to health-related NPOs in South Africa (Western Cape). Other industries and themes within NPO categories were not considered, limiting the population and sample unit. Furthermore, the results may not be applicable to other social media sites other than those used by the respondents. Owing to participation in the dissertation being voluntary, significant participants who chose not to take part may have impeded the researcher from obtaining more useful data. Despite this, the sample saturation strategy, which controlled the entrance of new data into the dissertation, may have alleviated the problem.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Before the primary data collection, participants were informed and gave their consent for data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted only after receiving permission letters or emailed confirmations from participating health-related NPOs, allowing access to the population sample. The project was authorised by the university's Research Ethics Committee and Faculty Higher Degree Committee (FHDC). To ensure confidentiality, participants were assured that their personal information would remain private throughout the dissertation and their names were not disclosed. Participants were also informed in advance about the data to be collected through the interview process.

The data collection was conducted with ethical and professional expertise to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information gathered. In addition, participants were made aware that taking part was completely optional and academic in nature. They were free to leave the research whenever they wanted and to decline to respond to any questions, and in this manner, thirteen participants were interviewed.

1.11 Significance of the research

The report addresses the marketing problems for NPOs in light of the economic slowdown and service failures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This dissertation investigates how NPOs' lack of grasp of digital technology has exacerbated the problem, raising questions about their survival and sustainability. At the same time, a crisis always presents an opportunity for innovation, as discussed in this dissertation. NPOs that have been resistant to digital technology have reorganised themselves to use such technologies for survival.

Furthermore, businesses have the option to remodel their organisational architecture to obtain money for resuming operations after the pandemic. NPOs face a challenging climate since they must serve to two distinct market segments, namely contributors and clients. The dissertation is significant because it provides marketing tactics for NPOs to publicise their prior work to recruit donors or funders, ensuring financial viability as well as social obligations to society.

1.12 Outline of dissertation

There are seven chapters in this research. Figure 1.1 depicts a summary of the dissertation's layout.

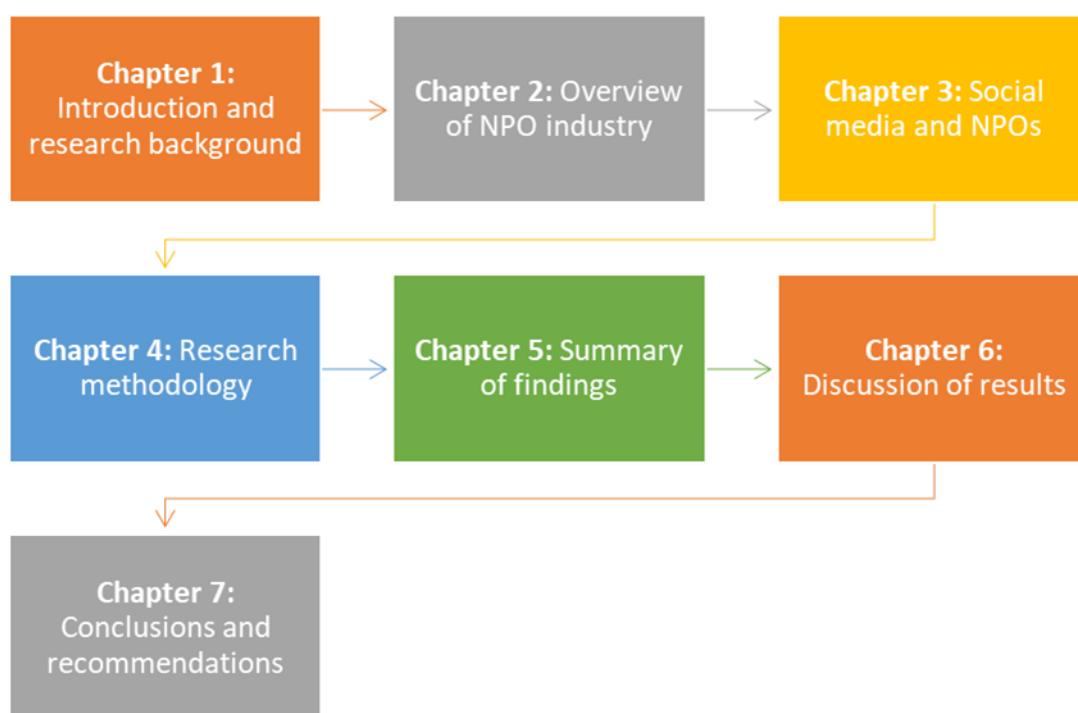


Figure 1.1: Thesis overview

Chapter 1: Research and Introduction context

This chapter introduces the research topic and provides an outline of the following chapters. This chapter focuses on the dissertation's background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions.

Chapter 2: Overview of NPO Industry

NPOs and the health-related sector were thoroughly examined from both a South African and a worldwide perspective. The influence of COVID-19 on global and South African NPOs during the outbreak concludes this chapter.

Chapter 3: Social media and NPOs

This chapter studied social media and NPO marketing in South Africa and around the world. It then discussed social media and NPO participation, as well as its impact on NPOs and their problems. This chapter also explored social media as a marketing communication technique, as well as the theoretical model adopted for this dissertation.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter introduces the research approach, paradigm and design, as well as data collection, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Summary of findings

This chapter contains a summary of the primary data that was collected, coded and analysed. The chapter thoroughly detailed the specifics of each code and category, as well as how they pertain to this dissertation.

Chapter 6: Discussion of results

In this chapter, the dissertation's data is assessed and contrasted with similar investigations in order to develop conclusions about the differences and similarities.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

The results are summarised in the conclusions and recommendations. The dissertation ends with discourse on the management implications, limitations and future research.

1.13 Summary

The first chapter offers an outline of the investigation and details the sequence of activities that were carried out in order to fulfil the goals that were determined from the research questions. The background information on the dissertation serves as a source of inspiration for the problem statement.

In the subsequent chapter, a literature review is conducted to investigate the NPO sector. The primary focus is on the growth and development of this industrial sub-segment as well as its use of social media as a conduit for marketing communication. The research techniques and design, as well as their rationale in connection to the significance of the dissertation are covered in this section of the thesis. This is accomplished via a description of the research gaps in existing research regarding the association that health-related NPOs have with social

media as elements of their marketing communication strategy, together with the practical and theoretical considerations of this study.

In other words, this dissertation fills in the knowledge gap regarding the relationship that health-related NPOs have with social media as components of their marketing communication strategy. In addition, the subject of whether or not the use of social media platforms constitutes an efficient component of marketing communication strategies is investigated in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THE NON-PROFIT ENVIRONMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 offers a summary of South African NPOs, with a focus on NPO definitions and types. To properly address the research objectives and questions, a thorough understanding of the current state of the healthcare sector is required. When analysing the issues confronting NPOs, it is critical to consider the macro- and micro-environments in the operations of these organisations. This technique is utilised to find the most efficient ways for these organisations to function or be supported in the long run. Following this, an exploration of the development and history of South African NPOs will be provided. Additionally, a discussion of the current state, challenges, and achievements of the South African healthcare sector will also be highlighted. To understand the significance of these NPOs, the function of NPOs in the healthcare industry will be explored in light of the present status of the South African healthcare sector. The chapter also analyses the influence of COVID-19 on NPOs in general, then on health-related NPOs, as well as the usage of social media during COVID-19.

As a prelude to Chapter 3, the chapter concludes with a discussion and analysis of current literature on marketing communication of health-related NPOs and on financial sustainability through the use of social media marketing and fundraising.

2.2 Definition of NPOs

Varying sources have different interpretations and descriptions of the term NPO (Maier et al., 2016). Organisational, functional and people-centric perspectives are frequently expressed in relation to NPOs (Maier et al., 2016). Besides the different interpretations and descriptions, it has also been documented that NPOs do a variety of tasks depending on their size and the type of benefit they provide to the community they serve (Choto et al., 2020). Nonetheless, they are founded with the primary goal of organising and supervising volunteer social activity that is primarily focused on humanitarian problem-solving (Nonprofit Expert, 2017). Their operations are conducted for non-financial goals, with the aim of improving a particular society or sector (Council of Europe, 2012; Twigg & Mosel, 2017).

Cooperatives, trusts, religious, charity, environmental and advocacy groups are all examples of NPOs (TechTarget Contributor, 2022). Most NPOs rely on volunteers, while not all employ salaried staff in managerial positions. NPOs do not receive earnings and anything left over after running costs is utilised to further the organisation's objectives rather than going to employees or members (TechTarget Contributor, 2022). Arvidson and Linde (2021) and

Slatten et al. (2021) agree that NPOs frequently dedicate themselves to a particular public goal or to the promotion of a particular point of view while receiving non-distributable money. The money they make is frequently put to good use in furthering their cause (Bossart, 2019). Thus, it can be concluded that NPOs redirect all revenue above and beyond what is necessary to maintain the organisation yet are driven not by greed but by dedication to the betterment of a specific cause or service that is lacking in a specific area or community. Table 2.1 shows the distinction between for-profit organisations and NPOs in terms of general overview and at the micro level.

Every individual NPOs serve, who has invested time, money and faith in them, is held as trustworthy, honest, open and accountable according to the people-centric perspective of such organisations (Becker, 2021). Relationships are more important to them than anything else. As Bezuidenhout (2017) emphasises, there is not a conventional description of an NPO, but there are several traits that separate NPOs from other types of businesses. These characteristics are equally important in understanding why NPOs operate in the manner in which they do and why they frequently face challenges that are distinct from those faced by for-profit organisations. There are several significant distinctions between an NPO and a for-profit organisation, which are outlined below.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of for-profit organisations and NPOs

Reference	Characteristics	NPOs	For profit organisations
General	Functions/objectives	Cultural, educational, political, social, non-paid	Paid
	Management system	Dual, outputs and inputs focused	Outputs focused
	Social legitimacy source	Social effectiveness, moral standards, ethical operation,	Economic success
Micro level	Values of organisation	Consensus, participation, loyalty, reciprocity, solidarity	Efficiency Obedience
	Structure of organisation	Formalisation, low hierarchy levels	Formalisation, hierarchy
	Management style determinants	Autonomous operations, democracy	Subordination, hierarchy
	Participation/membership	Principle of similarity, convergence of views, ideological affiliation, non-economic affiliation, voluntary	Hired employees, association for economic reasons, economically forced

Source: Adapted from Coombes et al. (2011)

2.2.1 Goal-driven behaviour

A mission specifies an organisation's scope and space. It explains what a business does. An NPO's mission is generally built around the service it provides, with a common aim to meet the social needs of disadvantaged communities (Ibrisevic, 2020). Their objectives are to fulfil a social purpose through a variety of activities and programs, where the goal cannot be

properly achieved without the engagement, enthusiasm and involvement of the NPOs recipients (Luman, 2022).

When defining the mission, six elements must be considered, namely the client, the need, how the need will be met, and by what skill, knowledge or special talents (Leduchowicz, 2014). The first three characteristics—the client, the need, and how the need will be met—are foundational to the mission of the NPO. These elements help to define the target population that the NPO serves, the social issues that the NPO aims to address, and the strategies or methods that the NPO will use to meet these needs.

To build these first three characteristics, marketing becomes a critical NPO function and hence one of the key reasons for the dissertation. Marketing can help NPOs better understand their target clients, identify their needs, and develop effective strategies for meeting these needs. This underscores the importance of marketing in shaping the mission and objectives of NPOs.

2.2.2 Non-monetary gain

NPOs are driven by a higher purpose rather than monetary gain, where revenues are not distributed among employees or other stakeholders (Choto et al., 2020). While NPOs are not intended to make money, when a business or company makes an investment in an NPO, it is done with the highest level of accounting integrity (Hariyati et al., 2019), which means that NPOs must be competent when monitoring their work (Atan et al., 2017) and reporting the positive returns of the financial impact that business has on NPOs (Kozlovska, 2015). The decision-making process for these investments often involves the use of conventional and emergent analysis techniques (Alkaraan, 2020).

An investment in finance and business is not just "giving money away", rather, it is an expectation that the money will generate a financial return on the initial investment (Bezuidenhout, 2017). Donors would also like assurance that the organisation is being run honestly and that the funding is being spent responsibly and in a transparent manner (Tsiatis & Council, 2018). In light of the rise of social media and marketing efforts, the dissertation also seeks to determine whether health-related NPOs make use of these channels in order to demonstrate to donors and businesses who provide financial support where their money has been invested and that it has been put to good use.

2.2.3 Public tasks

It is well documented that at every stage of a nation's development, particularly in developing countries, the NPO sector has been able to fill in the gaps left by the government's inability to reach the population on the ground (Carrim, 2001; Pettijohn, 2013; Lubner, 2021). Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) agree that NPOs exist to serve a public purpose and meet a societal need. As mentioned above, it is imperative to observe that the South African NPO sector contributes significantly to the fulfilment of the South African government's constitutional mandate (Wyngaard, 2013). In its Bill of Rights, the South African Constitution enshrined several socioeconomic rights that were previously unprotected. As stated in the Preamble of the Constitution, these rights are intended to raise everyone's quality of life while also enabling each individual to realise his or her full potential (Carrim, 2001). It is unlikely that the majority of South Africans would be able to exercise their socioeconomic rights if there were no active NPO sector (Carrim, 2001; Wyngaard, 2013; Bizcommunity, 2023). Knowing this information, further justifies the important need for this dissertation and sheds more light on the sector as it is well documented how important NPOs are to South Africa in filling the gaps which government has not been able to fulfil.

2.2.4 Stakeholders

NPOs are voluntary associations of individuals with common interests that exists between the economic system, the state and households (Choto et al., 2020). Many stakeholders interact with NPOs due to the nature of their work and the communities they serve (Castillo, 2020). Stakeholders and volunteers are critical to the success of NPOs and they are frequently the lifeblood of these organisations because the overhead cost of their labour is typically zero (Leduchowicz, 2014; Ilyas et al., 2020). Volunteering provides value to organisations and assists them in achieving their objectives (Farooq et al., 2020). Some ways that volunteers can help organisations include hiring individuals with a wider range of skills, experiences and knowledge, expanding the organisation's reach and promoting the organisation's mission, profile and activities (Nesbit et al., 2018).

Volunteers provide services or projects more effectively and efficiently, saving money and resources. For this to work, literature suggests that organisations must invest in volunteer support. One of the important aspects of this dissertation is to find out whether NPOs are engaging with volunteers and if they benefit the organisations.

2.2.5 Inter-organisational relationships between organisations

NPOs are generally linked to and in contact with others engaged in similar activities. Ilyas et al. (2020) indicate that NPOs place a premium on informal interactions and volunteerism. The assumption is that NPOs work collaboratively, which is generally true. However, as resources and funding become increasingly scarce and competition in the sector intensifies, this dynamic can change. The dissertation aims to explore how NPOs distinguish themselves from each other in such a competitive environment. It further investigates whether social media marketing is utilised as a tool for differentiation. The ultimate goal is to understand if this strategy can enhance brand awareness and consequently increase donations.

2.2.6 Reliance on donors

Many NPOs rely on donations and grants to pay their operating expenses; the majority of NPOs rely on donations from businesses (e.g. corporate social investments), foundations, individuals, foreign and local governments (Folger, 2020). The resource dependence theory proposes that organisations cannot produce all of their own resources and must rely on external relationships (Folger, 2020).

Although the global number of NPOs has increased, so has the demand for donor support (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009; Kilonda, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2017). However, the resources available to NPOs have not increased proportionally (Greggory & Howard, 2009; de los Mozos et al., 2016). As a result, many NPOs face varying degrees of resource scarcity (Bose, 2012).

The pursuit of long-term development and service enhancement by NPOs often faces significant challenges (Ilyas et al., 2020). At present, the acquisition of resources hinges on an NPO's capacity to compete with other organisations and tap into alternative opportunities (Ilyas et al., 2020). Given the focus of this inquiry on how different NPOs deploy social media marketing and communication strategies at various levels, an initial exploration of existing literature regarding competition among NPOs and dependency on donor funding is essential. Figure 2.1 below provides a summary of the key characteristics of an NPO, details of which will be further elaborated as the chapter unfolds.

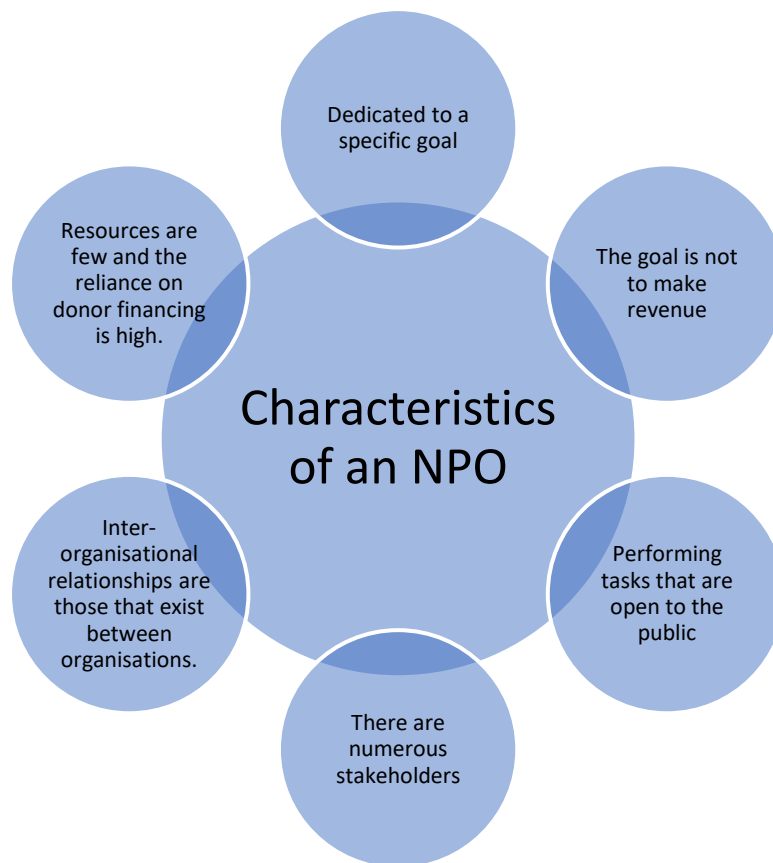


Figure 2.1: NPO characteristics

Source: Tabaku and Mersini (2013)

2.3 Non-profit organisation types

In addition to the features listed in Figure 2.1 that separate other organisations from NPOs, they can also be classified according to size and legal structure (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020; Western Cape Provincial Parliament, 2020). The size and legal structure could have an impact on their style of doing business and have the potential to become more marketing-directed in general.

In South Africa, there are an estimated 230 000 NPOs, and in 2015, there were slightly more than 140 000 registered NPOs. According to a Kagiso Trust dissertation, the number of NPOs has increased by over 200 percent in the last decade (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020; Western Cape Provincial Parliament, 2020).

For the dissertation to make sense, it is critical to understand the various NPO types, their legal structures and sizes, which will be highlighted below.

2.3.1 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

The spread of a new industry among the numerous governmental departments and agencies involved in public service began in the 1990s and has continued to this day. These were NPOs or NGOs that sprouted up all over the world to bridge the gap between government institutions and the general public (Carrim, 2001; Wyngaard, 2013; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020; Lubner, 2021). NGOs were established with the purpose of stepping into areas where the government's performance was deemed inadequate or lacking in service delivery, or in instances where the government was unable to achieve its objectives. In these circumstances, NGOs serve as a conduit between the governmental and formal sectors and the broader public (Carrim, 2001; Tortajada, 2016).

As a result, the term NGOs was established to refer to these organisations. The reality that problems were becoming increasingly complex and numerous in response to the growing multiplicity and complexity of challenges facing the global meant that a quasi-autonomous NGO was required to intervene and assist both society and the government (Gooding, 2017). The growth of NGOs corresponded with the realisation among governments and multilateral organisations such as the United Nations that the challenges of the of the 20th and 21st centuries were too complicated and diverse for governments to deal with on their own (Lage & Brant, 1998; Raju, 2009). A government cannot solve insurmountable challenges due to red tape and the reality that many government personnel are administrators' first and expert specialists second, but NGOs made up of professionals in particular fields are able to commit their skills and energies to doing so. This was the driving force behind NGOs achieving prominence in the framework of organisations responsible with resolving global issues (Delisle et al., 2005; Karns, 2020; Candid Learning, 2021).

NGOs can serve as focus groups that do not engage in on-the-ground operations but rather provide advisory services (Ulleberg, 2009; Volmink & van der Elst, 2017). The non-governmental organisation sector is valuable in its ability to serve as a watchdog, scrutinising government-led initiatives and evaluating the success of authorities in tackling these initiatives effectively. These are some of the ways in which NGOs serves as a link between the government and the general public. The sections below will examine the numerous categories of NPOs and their main structures, and ways of working and the differences between them all as they relate to this dissertation.



Figure 2.2: The role of NGOs in multi-stakeholder cooperation

Source: Adapted from Shaw (2003)

2.3.2 Community-based organisations (CBOs)

CBOs are formal organisations that operate locally to enhance communities (Wilson et al., 2012; Bezuidenhout, 2017; Rafique & Khoo, 2018). These organisations are generally staffed and established locally to address location-specific issues (Wilson et al., 2012). Most CBOs are volunteer-run and rely on limited resources due to their local focus (Martin-Howard, 2019; Wilson et al., 2012).

Although CBOs primarily focus on issues within their community, they may work with other CBOs on shared interests (Pixley et al., 2022), and are free to explore issues beyond their community but within their scope of interest (Arts & Studies, 2008; Cooper, 2019). CBOs are generally limited in scope and typically handle only one project related to a specific community focus area (Rafique & Khoo, 2018). CBOs do not operate outside the community in which they are established, except for collaborations with other organisations (Wilson et al., 2012).

CBOs seek to achieve equality in all aspects of society and governments increasingly rely on NGOs, including CBOs, to address local concerns (Cooper, 2018; Rafique & Khoo, 2018). Although this dissertation focuses on the health-related NPO sector, it is essential to remember that NPOs have different classifications and operate differently in various contexts (Wilson et al., 2012). Figure 2.3 provides a typical CBO structure in the South African context.

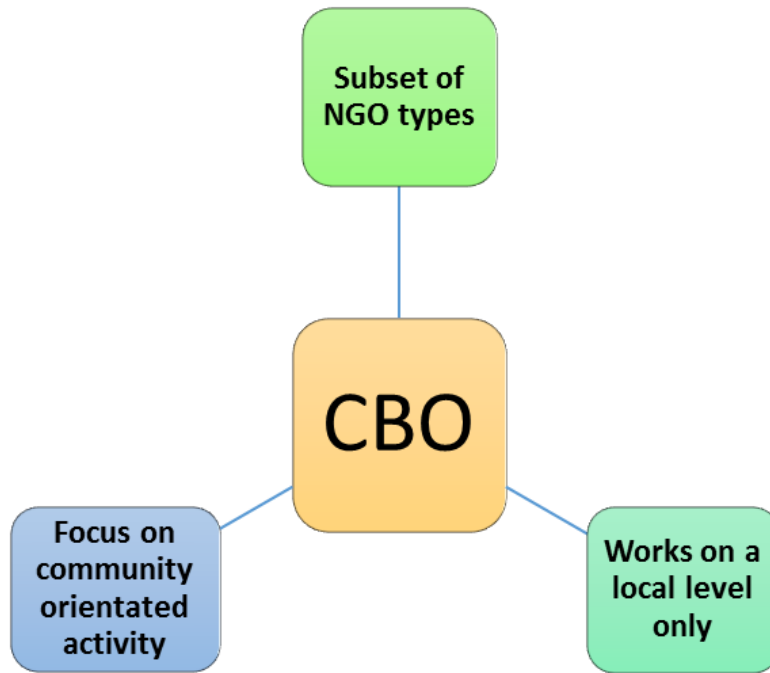


Figure 2.3: Breakdown of CBO structure

Source: Adapted from Tyagi (2020)

2.3.3 Faith-based organisations (FBOs)

Van Wees et al. (2021) mention that defining faith-based organisations (FBOs) can be challenging due to their diverse composition, objectives and intentions, as they encompass a broad spectrum of organisations. To better understand FBOs, various scholars have proposed definitions, such as those associated with a mandate to seek missions that lead to both worldly good and spiritual progress, and with a denomination of faith and religious faith (Fountain, 2010). FBOs draw inspiration from the ideologies of their faith, and they play a vital role in providing public services, such as taking care of the ill, the old and promoting justice (Clarke & Ware, 2015).

FBOs have the potential to provide efficient development services, reach the poorest at the grassroots, maintain a long-term, sustainable presence and encourage civil society advocacy (Fountain, 2010). They differ from NGOs and civil society organisations, but share common functions, making them Frankenstein creatures that exist in their own right while drawing on features and aspects from other stakeholders (Clarke & Ware, 2015). FBOs are subjectively influenced in their development work by the beliefs and values of their supporting religious organisations (Jackson-Elmoore et al., 2014).

The dissertation of NPOs, particularly FBOs, is significant as these organisations are established on the idea that alternative providers, like FBOs, have responsibility for serving the needs of those in need because the state is unable to do so. As such, understanding the role of NPOs in society is crucial for a country's well-being.



Figure 2.4: FBO relationships

Source: Adapted from Clarke and Ware (2015)

2.3.4 Section 21 companies

Section 21 organisations are NPOs that are registered to provide services both for free and for a fee. They do not distribute any of the company's profits to its shareholders or directors (Honey, 2001; Claeyé, 2017). All proceeds and income belong to the company and are used to empower those who are helpless and desperate, such as the poor (Neftaly, 2022). Section 21 corporations are registered as NPOs with the goal of changing the world and positively impacting the lives of the poor, animals and those in need (Nortje, 2017).

2.3.5 Trust

A trust is essentially an agreement between two parties, the settlor, and the trustee, and it does not have to be registered to be valid (Kagan, 2021; SARS, n.d.). A trust deed requires the settlor to transfer his properties to the trustee, who will then hold on to all the properties for the sole benefit of the beneficiaries, who will be named in the trust deed (Kagan, 2021). A trust is extremely adaptable and can accommodate a wide range of NPOs. A trust lacks legal

standing and cannot be sued in its own right; instead, the trust's trustees must be sued on its behalf (Rutledge & Schaefer, 2013).

The structure of all types of NPOs plays a critical role in the NPO sector, and while the focus of this dissertation is not solely on South African trust organisations, a brief breakdown of what they do and how they operate is essential.

2.3.6 Voluntary association

Voluntary associations of individuals are useful entities for those who want to run a businesses for the benefit of the public, because it is simple and inexpensive to use. These are typically organisations that are informal in nature and offer services in the areas in which they are located, created voluntarily with no legal rules or laws requiring or prohibiting their formation (Small, 2020). Equally, they are distinguished by voluntary involvement, a limited number of members in their boards and benefactors who volunteer their time (Khan, 2013). It is one of the most often utilised legal structures for establishing NPOs since it is simple, affordable and fast to establish (Small, 2020). The NPO Directorate reveals that voluntary associations account for around 95 percent of the organisations identified and registered under the NPO Act (Department of Social Development, 2019). Voluntary associations account for nearly 80 percent of all registered organisations, and importantly, there are about 8 000 health-related NPOs under the category of voluntary association as indicated in Table 2.2, which is the focus of this dissertation.

Table 2.2: Social welfare service categories

Objective	Non-profit trust	Non-profit company	Voluntary association
Unions, professional and business and associations	10	49	442
Recreation and culture	88	158	4 231
Housing and development	294	644	17 998
Education	342	344	6 472
Environment	78	70	936
Health	112	164	8 106
International	2	5	52
Politics, advocacy and law	42	92	1 817
Volunteering and philanthropic intermediaries	528	89	391
Religion	154	295	9 640
Social services	235	351	33 386
Total	1 885	2 261	83 471

Source: Social Development Department (2019)

2.4 The history of NPOs in South Africa

In South Africa, the history of NPOs has been turbulent (Mangaba, 2017; Mofokeng, 2017; Kanyaneet al., 2021). The apartheid state responded unfavourably to most of the foreign donor funding that came into the nation in the 1980s and 1990s in aid of the anti-apartheid campaign, leading to the demise of the movement. However, because of this funding, the NPO sector grew.

About 98 920 NPOs existed towards the end of the 1990s, as mentioned by Hamunakwadi (2021). The majority of NPOs worked to combat Black people's inequality and poverty since the former apartheid government delivered social services that were inadequate for the poor Black majority, many of whom were – and continue to be – impoverished (Dladla, 2023).

International donor assistance grew dramatically in the early post-apartheid years, between 1994 and 1998, and accounted for 2.2 percent and 2.5 percent of the South African state budget (Coger et al., 2002). Consequently, numerous NPOs in South Africa, especially those that prioritise social justice and human rights, have completely depended on foreign finance (Lewis & Kanji, 2009).

While, as previously stated, reliance on foreign funding became increasingly prevalent, legislation was enacted to allocate money from international donors to the Reconstruction and Development Programme and a number of other state causes (Maboya & McKay, 2019). Habib and Taylor (1999) revealed that in 1996, the new democratically elected government in South Africa formed the Transitional National Development Trust as part of this cooperation. The South African government has urged international donors to change their priorities in this area, i.e., away from traditional aid programmes and toward government-to-government initiatives through bilateral agreements (Rampa et al., 2012; den Heyer & Johnson, 2020). The “Non-Profit Organisations Act No. 71 of 1997” was then enacted to formalise control over the flow of funds to NPOs. This legislation imposed substantially more governmental supervision over NPOs, including requirements that organisations should be created for the good of the public and that the organisation's money should be distributed only as appropriate remuneration for services done (Van Pletzen et al., 2014).

NPOs are crucial to employment generation and the economy in South Africa (Choto et al., 2020). As stated by Mpanza & Mashau (2019) the NPO industry employed over 600 000 full- and part-time workers, as well as full-time volunteers. In South Africa, there are an estimated 230 000 NPOs, and in 2015, there were slightly more than 140 000 registered NGOs (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020). It is evident from these numbers that the NPO sector in South Africa is rapidly developing (Zulu et al., 2017). Mpanza & Mashau (2019) state that citizen needs that

are not being met by the government have also led an increase South African NPOs and across the globe, especially in poor countries.

Approximately 230 000 NPOs in South Africa fought for donations between 2017-2019 (Choto, 2019; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020), which is a significant finding in terms of this dissertation. Numerous of these organisations lacked the necessary administration and fundraising abilities to succeed and were more informal, regional, and community-focused. Sources of financing allow NPOs to be distinguished from one another, and broken down into three sorts (Yu, 2018). The first group includes those who offer professional services and are predominantly sponsored by the government. They are official, recognised organisations that are largely supported by the government. Donors finance type two NPOs, whereas religious institutions fund type three NPOs (WHO & World Bank Group, 2018).

Although assessing the history of NPOs around the world is important, the current dissertation focused on South African NPOs, where the research was conducted. As mentioned in the preceding section, it is worth noting that NPOs operate in communities where government and businesses are unable to reach, thus emphasising the significance of the dissertation.

2.4.1 The important role of NPOs in society

NPOs have made significant contributions to societal reform (Camper, 2016; Arkansas State University, 2017; Bizcommunity, 2023). Internationally, NPOs serve a significant purpose, with the capacity to provide public services and rectify different failures in the market that the state does not give, and locally, on an elementary level, NPOs recognise and solve the general needs of the community. They accomplish this inside a bureaucratic structure that allows them to respond to problems more quickly and more innovatively than the government (Carrim, 2001; Carman & Fredericks, 2010; Camper, 2016).

NPOs are often regarded as primary social service providers and advocates for ethical conduct in society. NPOs offer important services and benefit society by generating social value; they concentrate on societal gaps that governmental or corporate sectors are unable to deliver (Becker, 2021; Candid Learning, 2021).

The growth of NPOs, as well as people banding together in communities to meet their own needs, is the result of a failing or weak state (Maboya & McKay, 2019). NPOs provide crucial activities that improve economic mobility and stability, which are essential for the growth of healthy communities; but, in an unstable economy like South Africa's, they face an uncertain future with declining support and funding (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020). 467 NPOs reported cutbacks in funding across a number of sources, with the National Lotteries Board and departments in charge of corporate social investment leading the way. 38 percent of NPOs

reported being forced to cut essential services due to an average drop of R4 million per organisation (Safkaur & Sagrim, 2019).

Besides what has been mentioned above, NPOs equally play an essential role in enhancing economic outcomes and assisting civic leaders, governments, and companies in making decisions in South Africa (Wyngaard, 2013). NPOs assist in the resolution of important problems including job creation, poverty reduction, victim assistance, developmental and social obstacles, and violence, to mention a few (Weaver, 2021). Additionally, NPOs can only play an important role in community and social services if management, leadership, governance, and other organisational capacity elements are well developed and continually strengthened (Wagner, 2019).

Thus, the dissertation fits well in terms of supplementing existing research and addressing any gaps within this critical area, particularly when it comes to social media marketing communication and whether health NPOs have any form of engagement with these platforms to benefit their organisation.

2.4.2 The health non-profit sector in South Africa

Often, the South African health NPO sector has been deemed as crucial and if anything, has been seen as agents of change, assisting the government in fulfilling its constitutional responsibility by delivering roughly 70 percent of all social services in South Africa (Bizcommunity, 2023). Health is a basic human right, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the promotion of health is described as "the process of allowing individuals to gain more control over their health and its determinants, and so enhance their health" (Ghebreyesus, 2017). Thus, the importance of the promotion of health encourages the dissertation's emphasis on the health NPO sector and the prevalence of whatever social media marketing tactics, if any, are employed.

In South Africa, health NPOs are organisations that advocate for health equality, or universal access to healthcare (Republic of South Africa, 2020). To reach this goal, these organisations must recognise socioeconomic variables that are outside of an individual's power – such as , housing conditions, violent crime levels, vaccine and nutritious food access, and income levels – that contribute to group risk (World Health Organisation, 2013).

Health NPOs also play a significant role in advancing public health in South Africa; for example, they seek to provide equitable treatment for all residents, with a particular emphasis on achieving social justice and real change for marginalised communities (Lombard & Twikirize, 2014; Health Systems Trust & Trust, 2017). South African health NPOs often serve a critical function in essential components, notably epidemiology and research. When new

illnesses develop, health NPOs are generally among the first on the scene. These institutions do research into the propagation of novel viruses and the areas where they might cause major public damage (Delisle et al., 2005; Bloom & Cadarette, 2019; OECD, 2020)

When a disease pandemic erupts into a public health catastrophe, NPOs respond, whether directly by providing treatment or by providing data analysis and disease management consulting services (Bloom & Cadarette, 2019)

Another critical job of health NPOs in South Africa is to inspire and empower individuals to make better choices by means of providing a variety of instructional programmes on how to prevent or stop harmful behaviours such as substance, alcohol, and cigarette use (Setlalentoa et al., 2015).

Additionally, health NPOs also aid the promotion of healthy behaviours such as eating nutritious meals and exercising regularly (Freeman et al., 2020). Adopting healthy behaviours contributes to the reduction of common illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS, which has wreaked havoc on the South African population and led to spiralling health costs and an overload on public resources (Mendenhall & Norris, 2015).

The significance of South African health NPOs is apparent, and it fits well with the dissertation because it examines how these NPOs use social media to advance their mission and further educate the public, as well as examine how social media are used to raise awareness and educate.

2.4.3 Importance of health NPOs

South African NPOs continue to be in high demand. Accordingly, there is a significant presence of NPOs in South Africa, which have been instrumental in encouraging development across the nation (Stuart, 2013). South African NPOs have a long history of acting as change agents, frequently taking on duties that the country's authorities should be held accountable for (Matthews, 2017; Waddell, 2017). NPOs have contributed to the alleviation of hardship for millions of South Africans. Even when their activities go unrecognised, the approximately 230 000 registered NPOs contribute significantly to a variety of businesses and communities, often stepping in where Government has failed or not been able to deliver on their services, especially regarding healthcare (Berning, 2020a; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020).

Given that healthcare is a fundamental human right (Ghebreyesus, 2017), governments have the responsibility of ensuring that citizens have access to healthcare (WHO & World Bank Group, 2018). However, the healthcare needs of society are met through a multi-sectoral approach, involving government, the private healthcare sector, and NPOs (Schelly & Banerjee, 2018; Johnston et al., 2020).

The primary responsibilities of NPOs play two key roles in the health system: service delivery (social, medical, and psychological services) and health advocacy (integration activities). Informational, educational, financial aid, material, nursing and care services, and training are also included (Lim et al., 2019). In order to achieve social acceptance, policy backing, political commitment, and systemic support for a certain health objective or program, advocacy for health is a collection of group and individual and initiatives. Participation in the formulation of health policy is a critical function of NPOs (Chandra et al., 2022).

There has never been a greater need for organisations dedicated to promoting health, safeguarding, and enhancing the quality of life in communities (Edelman & Kudzma, 2021). However, according to Maboya (2016), these organisations' ability to continue making decisions and operating in ways that are consistent with their values is gravely threatened. Many NPOs are struggling to fulfil their role as safety nets because of the growing commercialisation of healthcare, intense competition, and diminished support from government and, to a lesser extent, business (Buheji et al., 2020). Furthermore, the public, as well as many decision-makers in industry, government, the financial community, and the healthcare are not aware of the special function and significance of NPOs (Shin et al., 2018). With the importance of health NPOs clear, the dissertation aims to unpack the extent to which these NPOs operate within South Africa and the Western Cape in particular, focusing on the extent to which they engage with social media.

2.5 Funding challenges of NPOs

The majority of NPOs struggle with financial stability, which is fundamentally a crucial success criterion because the NPOs will not be able to survive if they do not have financial stability (Maboya, 2016; Maboya & McKay, 2019). Donors and the funding landscape have a significant impact on this, and often these two aspects pose the biggest challenge to most NPOs (Ballesteros & Gatignon, 2019; Singh & Mthuli, 2021).

To maintain financial stability while continuing to offer the often-unique services that they do, NPOs require consistent funding and as a result they are heavily reliant on external funding and resources in this regard (Bocquet et al., 2020). As a result, it is important for the leadership teams of NPOs must negotiate the financial environment and its difficulties that come with it (Jensen, 2018).

The state of the economy will determine how much funding can be raised, and the public and external stakeholders' willingness to invest in the NPO (Shon et al., 2019). Government funding intended to support the NPO sector is nearly impossible for all NPOs to obtain, raising

the question of how NPOs can obtain funding without relying solely on the government. As a result, NPOs often rely heavily on corporate, foundation, trust, and individual donors (Topaloglu et al., 2018). If a nation is experiencing slow economic growth, as South Africa is, NPOs often suffer as a result of donors having less money to contribute (Ballesteros & Gatignon, 2019; McIntyre, 2021). Another significant challenge for NPOs is competing for funding and resources with larger, more well-known organisations.

Findley et al. (2017) found that funders like bigger organisations because they have a track record, a higher influence on the recipients, and a wider audience. As a result of this choice, not all NPOs have the chance to establish themselves as strong competitors in this market., which is frequently linked to issues of sustainability and funding (Alborough, 2017). Furthermore, NPOs encounter issues with funding priorities and the impact of shifting importance (AbouAssi & Tschirhart, 2018). This happens when donors shift their focus from one sector to another, causing their funding to change direction. Funding has been directed toward NPOs in South Africa that have been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and away from those that have not, and in this case, most of the health NPOs that receive government funding have been impacted, albeit in a favourable manner (Hutton et al., 2021; Mash et al., 2022).

One of the primary goals of this dissertation is to understand if health-related NPOs can withstand the funding challenges mentioned above without resorting to alternative methods such as social media marketing for sustainability and fundraising, and, more importantly, if they are using these platforms as part of a larger overall communication strategy to attract donors, a larger audience, and potential funds by showcasing their activities on the various social media platforms.

2.5.1 Capacity issues

South Africa is still a very unequal nation, riddled with poverty and hardship, and still bearing the scars of its authoritarian past. Due to this, NPOs are very prevalent in South Africa and have been important in advancing the nation's growth (Cheteni et al., 2019). Since 2010, NPOs have grown into advocates for national development priorities as well as defenders of South Africans' constitutional rights (Mash et al., 2020). Furthermore, NPOs are now essential to South African society as a means of the delivery of social services, development, improvement, and mobilisation for social change (Mosley et al., 2020). NPOs, however do not receive the help they need to sustain themselves (Mash et al., 2020). While South Africa may have a high number of NPOs, this does not necessarily equate to NPO sustainability and success because the country also has a large number of NPOs that are not sustainable. Much

of this is due to capacity issues, with NPOs frequently lacking the resources needed to succeed (Shon et al., 2019; McIntyre, 2021).

This opinion is endorsed by Kreuzsch (2015), who noted that between 2011 and 2012, 80 percent of NPOs experienced a considerable reduction in financing, with the National Lottery, corporations, individual, and international donors accounting for the majority of the reductions. This effect on long-term financial viability also has an impact on NPOs' organisational capacity, as they were required to retrench staff, reduce programmes, cut service delivery, and members, which is a constant source of concern for most people who work in the sector (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Minzner et al., 2014). NPOs are obliged to prioritise the delivery of services over other important duties due to capacity and time limitations (Evans et al., 2005; Skhosana, 2020). When it comes to fundraising and attracting funding, specialised skills are required, which often take a back seat in NPOs due to capacity issues (Bray, 2017).

Fundraising strategy development, proposal writing, branding, marketing, the establishment and/or maintenance of donor relationships, and networking are examples of these skills, that often do not get the attention they need (Young, 2017). Additionally, there are NPOs that lack knowledge and experience in this area, with capacity being the most significant limitation. Another capacity challenge is related to donors and, at times, their unwillingness to pledge long-term financial commitments (Clark et al., 2018). A number of these donors are unwilling to provide multi-year support, which restricts NPO capacity and puts pressure on them to provide positive outcomes in a short period of time, resulting in high levels of stress and turnover (Skhosana, 2020). The current dissertation seeks to understand how health NPOs operate in the context of these very prevalent capacity constraints in South Africa, and how, if applicable, these constraints are managed within the health NPO sector.

2.5.2 Factors and trends towards funding and sustainability of NPOs

NPOs have emerged as key players in international development over the last several decades; Since the middle of the 1970s, both developing and developed nations' NPO sectors have grown at an exponential rate (Baric, 2017; Matthews, 2017; Horner, 2020). NPOs were said to be the conduit for 15 percent of the total development aid. NPOs' strengths were a commitment to enduring involvement, strong ties to the community, field-based expertise, adaptability, ingenuity, and process oriented strategies using participatory tools and procedures, and a focus on cost and sustainability performance (Trott et al., 2018).

Ilyas et al. (2020) reveal major monetary stability concerns for NPOs that include: partnership management; capitalising on impact with inadequate resources; encouraging community leadership and engagement while retaining integrity; demonstrating value and accountability

to donors; reporting the results of consistent evaluations; and dependence on outside donor streams and source.

Financial sustainability is a major concern for the communities served by NPOs, possible and present funders, and NPO leaders (Maboya & McKay, 2019). Wiltshire et al. (2018) adds that sustainability entails the management of financial feasibility in a funding environment that is changing, proving value and responsibility to supporters and donors, developing cooperative alliances, competing with other NPOs, and maximising leadership contributions within the community are some of the challenges that organisations face today in pursuit of the organisation's objective and the long-term preservation of continuous and high-quality programming is a major problem for most NPOs (Abiddin et al., 2022). Financial sustainability primarily relates to the financial well-being of NPOs, and furthermore, it refers to an NPO's capacity to sustain a consistent and steady flow of income to cover its expenses to continue operating in the future (Kim, 2017). When it comes to fundraising and attracting funds, specialised skills are required, and this appears to be a key trend among the majority of NPOs, particularly health NPOs (Salido-Andres et al., 2021). Networking, building, or the maintenance of funder relationships, fundraising plan development, proposal writing, branding, and marketing are examples of these talents. However, NPOs who lack experience and knowledge in these areas, and have capacity and time limitations, will most likely experience a curtailment of funding (Silva et al., 2018).

2.5.3 The importance of marketing in the NPO sector

While an NPO has a mission, it is still a business in the sense that it relies on revenue in the form of donations (and in some cases, fees) (Jeter, 2017). While many in the industry dislike terms like marketing that are used by for-profit organisations, they are exactly what is required (Hannagan, 1992). Donating to an NPO has many similarities to buying something: people donate to make themselves feel better, and in essence, it all boils down to emotion. Marketing is the only way for an NPO to ensure that people understand their mission, believe the organisation can carry out the mission, and, most importantly, feel good about what they are doing (Sargeant, 1999; Bray, 2017). Donors, like buyers, come in many shapes and sizes and knowing the characteristics of one's ideal donors will reduce marketing costs while increasing average donations (Bradford & Boyd, 2020). While word-of-mouth (WOM) (which is not marketing) may be some people's hope, it is a poor way to raise money, build an NPO donor base, and achieve better results, and that is why marketing is important (Blouin et al., 2018).

One of the strongest and most beneficial ways to help an NPO consistently achieve its goals is through marketing (Young, 2017). NPOs face the same marketing challenges as for-profit companies, but the audience they are trying to reach is made up of donors and volunteers,

not customers (Ferrucci, 2017). The challenge lies in trying to persuade the target market to provide funds without providing anything in return (Paschen, 2017).

The marketing function is thus an important component of corporate strategy, and a marketing focus should be communicated throughout the company through marketing planning. NPOs work hard to help their communities by raising funds, volunteering, and addressing social issues (Roza et al., 2017) and often NPOs run out of time for marketing because they have so many donors to contact and programmes to run, and administrative issues to deal with, so the priority of marketing often is pushed aside for other tasks (Lee et al., 2017).

Although social media marketing will never completely meet the needs of NPO marketing, it is an excellent place to start (Curtis et al., 2010). Organisations that do not have a strategy simply adapt as they go, and the issue is that marketing takes a back seat to everything else that needs to be accomplished. However, through research it has been found that NPOs must maintain constant communication with donors and the community to attract and maintain support (Holland, 2017), otherwise, their message may be ignored. It is not about selling a product; it is about selling a cause. It conveys the need for assistance to solve real-world issues (Spiller, 2018).

NPOs must be well known to retain volunteers, members, sponsors, donors, and other supporters (Cruickshank, 2017) and to achieve that goal, marketing is really important. NPOs can combat declining donations and a lack of volunteers by ensuring that the public is aware of their existence and mission (Brink et al., 2020). With the outbreak of COVID-19, marketing has been looked at as a critical element of sustainability for NPOs and especially social media marketing because now, more than ever, more people engage online due to the lockdown restrictions and lack of in-person engagement (Chikwanda, 2020; DiResta et al., 2020). The following section discusses the impact of COVID-19 on NPOs, in an economic and marketing context as well.

2.6 The economic impact of COVID-19 on NPOs

NPOs faced a challenging time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased demand for services and decreased revenue, leading to difficult decisions (Toccalino et al., 2022). The pandemic also caused a career shock for NPO workers, potentially changing their career intentions and commitment to the sector (Grønbjerg et al., 2021; van der Merwe et al., 2021). While NPOs are frequently called upon to play critical roles during times of crisis, the pandemic made it difficult for them to survive while helping their communities (Ettetal & Agans, 2020; Gneiting et al., 2022). South African President Cyril Ramaphosa recognised the crucial role of NPOs in tackling social problems, but not enough financial relief was provided for these NPOs to continue their operations (Mohamed, 2020; Schneider, 2020).

The economic impact of the pandemic on NPOs forced them to limit services, reduce pay and benefits for employees, and furlough or lay off staff (Independent Sector, 2020). The South African NPO sector, including health-related NPOs, was expected to experience cutbacks in donations and other sources of income, leading to a negative impact on the sector and the economy (Berning, 2020b; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020; van der Merwe et al., 2020).

Government intervention, such as additional grant, loan, or payroll tax relief programmes, are necessary to assist NPOs to keep delivering crucial assistance to communities and are working to re-establish their employment and operation levels (Independent Sector, 2020).

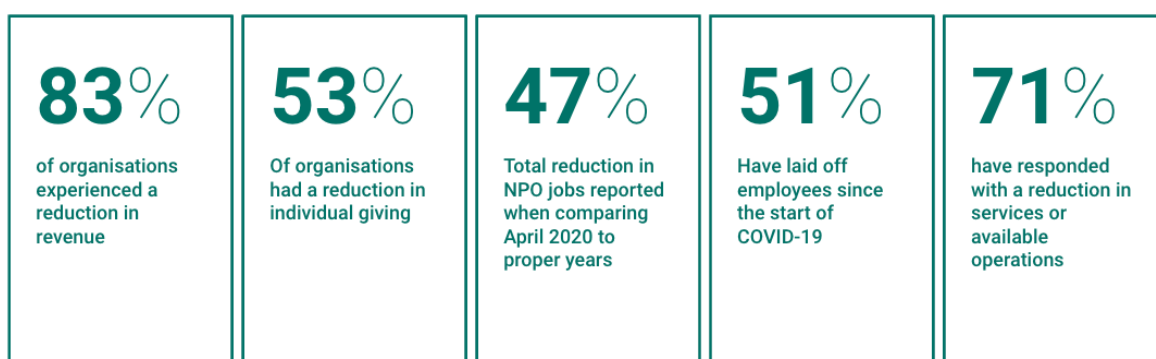


Figure 2.5: The impact of COVID-19 on large and mid-sized NPOs

Source: Adapted from Independent Sector (2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak had and continues to have an impact on the NPO sector in South Africa and in particular the health-related NPOs. South Africa, like the majority of countries around the world, had to deal with the numerous consequences of the pandemic (Ramaphosa, 2020; Greyling et al., 2021). One of the most economically and racially unequal nations worldwide is South Africa because of its history of apartheid (McKeever, 2017; Hino et al., 2019). The health-care system reflects existing inequalities, which are marked by deep divisions and polarisation as a result of social landscape fractures (Neely & Ponshunmugam, 2019).

Nation Builder conducted a survey to better understand the challenges that South African health NPOs face. In response to increased demand for services, 61 percent of the 733 respondents from 717 organisations reported reducing staff, 25 percent increasing staff, and 61 percent reporting increased overheads (Nation Builder, 2020). 72 percent of respondents said their services were in higher demand, 22 percent said they were in lower demand, and 7 percent said they were unaffected. Only 22 percent of respondents said their funding had increased, while 72 percent said it had decreased. Despite these challenges, 61 percent of those polled said they had received no government assistance (Nation Builder, 2020).

A survey of NPO responses to COVID-19 was also conducted by the corporate responsibility consultancy Trialogue; shockingly, it was revealed that 24 percent of the 110+ NPO claimed that their financing had been suspended or placed on hold, and nearly 20 percent said it had been reduced (Tyolwana, 2020). Around 38 percent of NPOs had to make changes to their existing programmes to accommodate COVID-19, with a quarter having to reduce their offerings (Tyolwana, 2020). Lack of funding and increased pressure on health NPOs to respond during the pandemic influenced how they worked, particularly in South Africa (Burger & Mchenga, 2021).

The data analysis in Chapter 5 below discusses the impact of COVID-19 on health NPOs in more detail in the light of how the literature reviewed supports the findings of those interviewed.

2.7 Marketing communication strategy of NPOs

Marketing is defined as the "process by which firms create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return" (Mouton, 2018). The following section will discuss NPO marketing and communication, as well as the importance of marketing communication within the NPO sector. NPOs frequently believe that marketing communication is inappropriate for their needs (Šebestová & Šebestová, 2020) and if marketing is simply considered in the transactional and traditional and sense, this might be the case. However, relationship marketing, which puts more of an emphasis on interactions than transactions, may be able to address the unique requirements of NPOs (Powell & Osborne, 2020).

Many NPOs misunderstand the nature and scope of marketing communication strategies as an academic field since they think that rather than using the marketing mix to meet wants and needs, these strategies only occasionally involve selling, advertising, and promotion (Hollen, 2018; Kotler & Lee, 2019). This misunderstanding has also been confirmed by Tharpe (2019), whose research found that many NPOs still show a fundamental ignorance of marketing communication strategies and instead, they concentrate their resources mostly on promotions and sales initiatives. Organisations should be aware that marketing aims to satisfy donor and customer demands and is more than just a means of generating sales or donations, and behind that is a strategy which if implemented correctly could help the organisation immensely.

Though there are still a few reservations and misgivings, marketing has recently gained respect and popularity as a field pertinent to NPOs (Renjini, 2020). It has been established by van Wissen and Wonneberger (2017) and Mitchell and Clark (2021) that marketing communication strategies can be useful to NPOs in four ways: 1) It has the potential to increase customer and donor satisfaction. 2) It can help with resource attraction. 3) By taking

into account what it can provide society that other organisations cannot, it can assist an organisation establish its competencies, and 4) it can offer organisations a structure under which to operate. Marketing is a methodical technique to identifying requirements, establishing goals, and organising activities to achieve those goals and produce pertinent results for a service that is affordable (Moisander et al., 2020).

Despite the benefits of marketing communication strategies, some NPOs object, claiming that marketing is unnecessary (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009; Mahmoud & Yusif, 2012). NPOs are doing important work and should be supported for that reason and their opinion is that marketing intrudes on a person's privacy. Some people consider marketing to be intrusive (Nowak & Phelps, 1995) because market research and other forms of promotion (such as telemarketing, direct mail, and advertising) are violations of a person's right to privacy. Because the marketing concept is misunderstood and viewed as sales by NPOs, marketing is thought to be the art of deceiving consumers into buying services and products (Berglind & Nakata, 2005; Melero & Montaner, 2016).

By emphasising targeted mailings, some NPOs contend that fundraiser departments have advanced to the point where they are as sophisticated as marketing divisions in the corporate sector (Pallotta, 2009). Donor behaviour dissertation informs how direct charity marketers connect with their intended market (Pallotta, 2009; Josef et al., 2022). Very little has been learned regarding the perception of marketing communication strategies within the health NPO sector, so this dissertation will provide valuable insights that could serve as the foundation for future recommendations and strategies for health-related and general NPOs as a whole.

2.7.1 Marketing communication strategies to build financial sustainability

The sustainability of NPOs has become a significant challenge in recent times (Iwu, 2019). The concept of sustainability is often discussed in terms of future funding possibilities, with a focus on the need for continuous assessment of the organisation's cause and exploration of funding opportunities for that cause (Alshehhi et al., 2018; Brooks & Oikonomou, 2018; Luthra et al., 2020). NPOs must develop sustainable strategies that enable them to raise funds easily and continue their programmes beyond donor funding (Ayinkamiye & Spencer, 2021). To achieve this, NPOs must prioritise the development of internal and external communication strategies to build relationships with the community and stakeholders, such as the police, local media, hospitals, and schools. Building an online presence whereby the organisation can post results and news is also important in improving visibility and legitimacy (Valène Jouany & Martic, 2020).

However, NPOs face increasing competition in the market for social causes and must find new ways to gain donors' trust and attract supporters (Paarlberg et al., 2018; Aldashev & Navarra, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the situation, affecting the ability of NPOs to implement their traditional sales and marketing techniques. Face-to-face collections, for instance, may not be feasible or safe. Therefore, NPOs must consider a variety of new strategies and initiatives to generate leads and reach different donor pools (Tonetti, 2019; Long, 2004; Eaves & Lombardo, 2021). The use of digital integration, which has already gained traction, is among the most efficient ways to accomplish greater transparency and personalisation in donor outreach (Corsini & Moultrie, 2019). The pandemic has also accelerated the need for NPOs to diversify their revenue streams and supporter segments, as well as modernise their communication methods, moving to a scenario that is almost entirely digital (Bin-Nashwan & Al-Daihani, 2020; Dhawan, 2020).

This dissertation aims to explore what marketing communication strategies are employed by health NPOs to achieve sustainability and whether social media marketing communication strategies play a significant role in financial sustainability. Therefore, it is critical for NPOs to develop effective and sustainable marketing communication strategies to remain visible and relevant in the long term.

2.7.2 Social media marketing for NPOs

In light of the open communication landscape and the globalisation of mass media, opinions, thoughts, and ideas are quickly exchanged, particularly via social media platforms. In the last five years, social media have grown tremendously and provided new ways to connect with people around the world (Sharma & Kaur, 2017; Appel et al., 2020; Lipschultz, 2020).

Social media is defined broadly as an assortment of web-based communication tools dedicated to collaboration, content sharing, and input from local communities (Prajapati et al., 2020). Social media are about having conversations, building relationships, and connecting with people who share your interests (Klassen et al., 2018). Social media not only allow a person to hear what others say about him/her, but it also allows the person to respond, listen, and speak (Jumin et al., 2017). Popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

The primary goal of NPOs is to influence behaviour in order to achieve a specific outcome (Alfes & Langner, 2017; Algharabat et al., 2018). NPOs rely on existing and new donors to further their purpose, they should rely on more generous new funders and volunteers (Reficco et al., 2021; Schetgen et al., 2021). The main issue is that it is time consuming and costly, especially through traditional means of engagement.

A number of social media channels can now be used by NPOs to communicate with the public to ensure the greatest possible reach (Smith, 2018; Williams et al., 2018). Alalwan et al. (2017) believe that over 92 percent of NPOs currently utilise Facebook, and over a third spend money on Facebook marketing communication.

Such success can be attributed to the implementation of detailed social media strategies. This underscores the importance of ensuring that top management prioritises social media in their strategic planning (Ewing et al., 2019). It also highlights the potential benefits of creating a dedicated role or position for managing social media within the organisation (Muninger et al., 2019). This approach can help ensure that social media strategies are effectively developed and implemented, thereby enhancing the organisation's online presence and engagement with its audience. The availability of marketing, media and communication tools, as well as social media, have altered the landscape of agenda setting theory and its relevance (Harder et al., 2017).

2.7.3 Financial sustainability through social media marketing communication

Sustainability in NPOs often encompasses long-term program and community development viability, as well as financial stability (Ryser et al., 2020). Financial difficulties significantly contribute to NPOs' downsizing and eventual shutdown (Kaye et al., 2021). The decreasing number of NPOs is worrying, as these organisations serve a crucial function in society by supporting vulnerable individuals, families, and communities (Chikoto-Schultz et al., 2019; Santos & Laureano, 2021). social media has been suggested as a potential tool to enhance financial sustainability (Zhang & Gupta, 2018), but NPOs commonly face challenges such as limited resources, inadequate information, and time constraints in effectively utilising social media (Cho et al., 2017). Research indicates that extensive time commitment is needed for incorporating social media into campaigns, and also poses a significant obstacle for these organisations (Ahmad et al., 2018; Khoo, 2019). Additionally, NPOs may struggle with insufficient resources to comprehend new technology or infrastructure, which hinders their ability to fully leverage social media (Nchabeleng et al., 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2022).

Most social media networks are freely available to use, which gives NPOs great opportunity to use them (Armstrong & Butcher, 2018). On the other hand, the view that it is a fallacy that social media communication and promotion are free or affordable for NPOs (Marwick, 2017) due to organisations that are just getting started that might not have the resources to manage current technology, such as computers, and they might not have enough employees to do so (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018). As a result, greater knowledge of the function of social media in NPOs will lay the groundwork for future research, aid in identifying the many uses of social media, and help NPOs recognise the practicality of social media in achieving their objectives.

The role of social media marketing in the health-related NPO sector and its relationship to potential financial sustainability require further examination.

2.8 Summary

The chapter began by introducing the concept of NPOs and continued with a global overview of NPOs, describing many formats according to theme, scope and size, as well as an overview of the key aspects of various NPOs and the important role that health-related NPOs play in society, particularly with regard to supplementing government services.

According to the literature, NPOs play an important role in society by filling gaps that the government has missed or lacks the capacity to fill. The South African health-related NPO sector has grown in recent years, owing primarily to significant disparities in government resources to assist those in need, and it was necessary to learn more about the NPO sector's rich history to understand how it has grown from apartheid to post-apartheid, but frequently lacks the support needed to sustain these organisations.

The chapter also discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the NPO sector. Maintaining service delivery, while remaining sustainable, was one of the most difficult challenges for these organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the lack of physical door-to-door services and events that aid fundraising initiatives created an opportunity for virtual technologies to develop and present a new method for raising brand awareness and revenue for these organisations. Furthermore, the research objective of this inquiry is to examine how social media was used as a marketing communication strategy during COVID-19, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters. The chapter concluded with a summary of NPO marketing communication strategies, social media marketing for NPOs, and the potential for financial sustainability through social media marketing communication. The chapter that follows delves deeper into social media and NPOs, as well as its use as a marketing communication strategy within the sector, with a focus on health-related NPOs.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL MEDIA AND NPOs

3.1 Introduction

Social media networking platforms have become effective channels for NPOs to reach stakeholders in the global communication landscape (Rathi & Given, 2017; Maxhuni, 2021). Despite extensive research on the use of social media by NPOs, there is a scarcity of evidence addressing social media marketing as a communication strategy (Curtis et al., 2010; Hou & Lampe, 2015; Tursunbayeva et al., 2017). Furthermore, despite the importance of social media in attracting a target audience, the incorporation of social media marketing communication for greater impact on an organisation has garnered little attention in the research literature, particularly in the South African NPO sector, and in specific health-related NPOs (Roberts, 2014; Lai et al., 2017; Vrontis et al., 2020). It is also unknown whether South African NPOs value a communication strategy when creating and sharing content for their social media channels.

In this regard, a marketing communication strategy seeks to regularly produce and organise important information that is meaningful on a strategic basis (Vrontis et al., 2020) with the goal of altering or improving the behaviour of consumers and, ultimately, building favourable customer relations (Blakeman, 2018; Kruger, 2021). Furthermore, it is defined as increasing audience engagement through the enhancement and advancement of brand content shared on social media (Gwena et al., 2018). When the fundamental goals of implementing a marketing communication strategy are considered, the potential benefit to NPOs becomes clear (Krizanova et al., 2019). Sharing brand information is critical for NPOs because it serves as a vehicle for fundraising, corporate support, image and identity building (Wheeler, 2017; Santos et al., 2020).

Many organisations are unfamiliar with social media marketing communication strategies, and if organisations fail to participate part in a strategic and integrated way, they "may find themselves joining in with too little too late in a never-ending game of catch up" (Swart et al., 2021). This chapter investigates the growth and evolution of social media and social network platforms. For the purposes of the inquiry, the elements that affect these platforms' adoption and deployment in NPOs are researched, as well as their application as part of a larger marketing communication strategy, with special focus on the health-related sector.

3.2 The concept of social media

After introducing the concept of social media, it's important to delve into the background of social media to understand its evolution.

3.2.1 Background of social media

Authors' definitions of social media differ. Some look at it from a technological standpoint, while others look at it in terms of functionality and type (Alalwan, 2018; Arora et al., 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Aichner et al. (2021) define social media as software available on the internet that enables users to share and produce content with other individuals, whereas Quan-Haase and Sloan (2022) define social media as an umbrella term for internet-based services and applications that allow individuals to communicate with other people for the purpose to take part in social activities. The term "social media" refers to electronically facilitated platforms (like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) that allow for and encourage the generation and dissemination content among users of technical platforms and gadgets that are interconnected to electronic systems (Bossetta, 2018; Agnihotri, 2020; Greenhow & Chapman, 2020). People on social media, in particular, can create and share information including comments, likes, and emojis, as well as opinions, stories, concepts, and facts (Georgakopoulou, 2017). Desktops, laptops, smartphones, and tablets that people use to access social media are typically connected to the internet (Kross et al., 2021). More importantly, social media have expanded the degree to which individuals are interconnected to one another and have access to the most recent events and news, which ironically breeds its own issues in terms of misinformation, especially as seen while COVID-19 was widespread (Kapoor et al., 2018; Allcott et al., 2019; Islam et al., 2020).

Many organisations are now adopting strategies to create substantial visibility on social media in order to connect with their chosen target market more efficiently and engage with them about activities, initiatives and products. This is because of the critical mass and strength of social media in terms of connectivity and reach (Lee et al., 2013; Duffett, 2015; Wong et al., 2020). However, most social media research has focused on commercial organisations, particularly those aimed at urban areas and communities and as a result, little is understood about how other kinds of community groups and organisations, such as NPOs, might profit from utilising social media if the correct strategy is followed. The social media techniques that are successful for non-profits are likely to be different from those employed by urban communities and commercial organisations due to the intrinsic variances in focus (for example, non-profit as opposed to profit aims) and user characteristics (Lim et al., 2019;

Hosen et al., 2021). In order to further the understanding of this topic, this dissertation aims to offer new perspectives on how individuals and organisations view the usage of social media for information and communication pertaining to NPO endeavours. social media currently play a significant part in the corporate world and other associated commercial sectors. It serves as a channel of communication for employers, job seekers, customers, entrepreneurs and numerous other parties looking for a forum to interact. It is a digital conduit created principally for connecting with others and has developed into a crucial component of company operations for a number of reasons, some of which involve the reality that it is a more affordable means of communication and reaching the marketplace than conventional modes. Furthermore, social media can reach a big audience, such as 3.96 billion individuals worldwide use social media for a variety of purposes (Mayat et al., 2022; Tanko et al., 2022).

The economic and marketing potential offered by social media, in addition to the variables influencing its uptake, have been the subject of an expanding body of literature (Chong et al., 2012; Alalwan et al., 2017). Because of the interactive nature and pervasiveness of social media, they have become an important component of corporate communication strategies as they diversify from traditional media (Gbadeyan & Mensah, 2016; Philip & Kannan, 2019). Their use is motivated by a variety of factors, including sales growth, brand building, information provision, and customer relationship strengthening. The dissertation aims to shed light on the degree that social media platforms are utilised for marketing communication channels and the degree of success they achieve as components of a marketing communication strategy in the health-related NPO sector.

3.2.2 South African social media situation

South Africans, like the rest of the world, have had to adopt new strategies for staying connected while remaining apart. The *SA Social Media Landscape Report* of 2021 noted that South Africa has 25 million active social media users, representing a 12.6 percent annual increase in the number of social media users year-on-year (Petousis & Holmes, 2021). Overall, this equates to 41.9 percent of South Africa's total population who are active on social media. It is interesting to note that of the 25 million active users, 98.5 percent access social media platforms via their mobile device (Petousis & Holmes, 2021).

Social media channels such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and have experienced rapid growth in the last five years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Katz & Nandi, 2021). As of the first quarter of 2022, Facebook had over 2.9 billion active monthly members, making it the most widely used online social network (Dixon, 2022). The social media landscape report

highlights the fact that the majority of South African users are engaged on WhatsApp and YouTube, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Figure 3.1 show the breakdown by percentage of internet users aged 16 to 64 in South Africa, who used each platform in a given month.

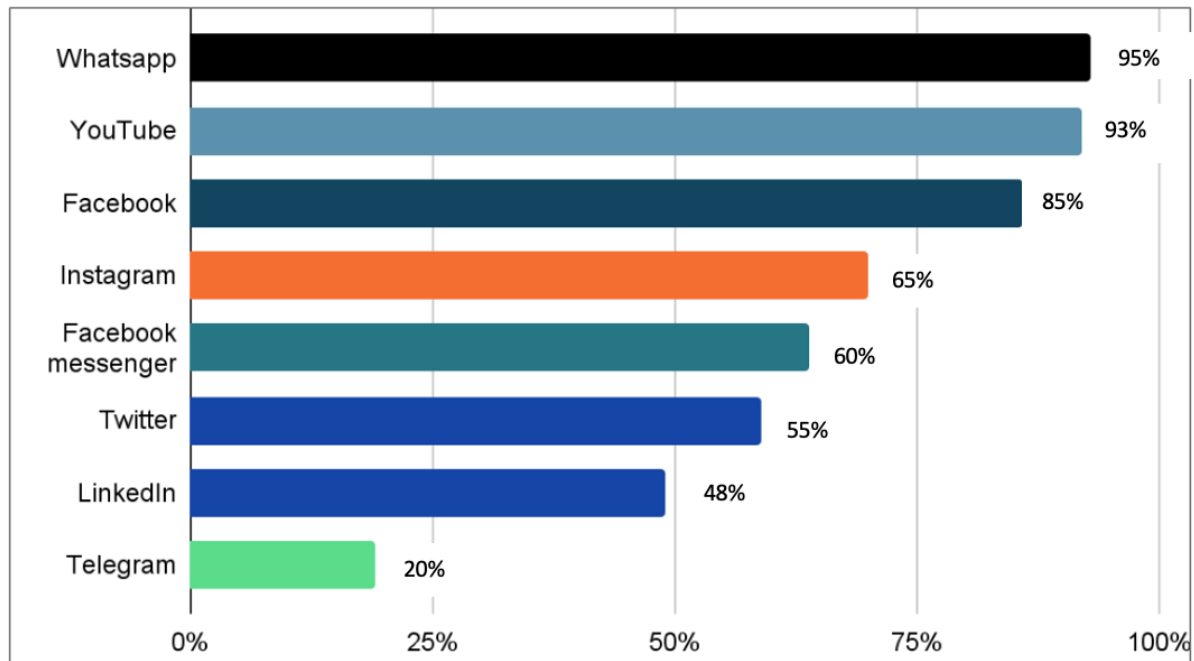


Figure 3.1: Most used social media platforms

Source: Adapted from Petousis and Holmes (2021)

In light of the aforementioned growth statistics, it is necessary to take a step back in order to comprehend South Africa's unique journey in terms of internet access. In order to establish South Africa as a major actor in the advancement of technology for communication and information, the country introduced a National e-Strategy in 2018 (Manda & Dhaou, 2019). A single, cohesive national e-strategy is necessary to promote ICT development in all economic sectors, according to South Africa's National Development Plan Vision 2030 (Manda & Dhaou, 2019). It is widely acknowledged that ICT development is essential in modern society and that it is an important component of South Africa's economic growth (Abisuga-Oyekunle et al., 2020). Almost every aspect of the economy makes use of digital technology. The United Nations and the Department of Communication in South Africa concur that the country should provide broadband connectivity to the general South African public because many lack access to the internet, and since they are unable to use the internet without access, they are unable to take advantage of its potential for economic growth (BusinessTech, 2021).

Tsetsi and Rains (2017) believe that smartphones significantly extended the 25 million active users in the South African internet market, but the prohibitive price of data continues to be a barrier to growth. In this regard, the National Development Plan's stated goal is to provide sustainable connectivity through a central broadband internet infrastructure as a top priority in the effort to reduce current socioeconomic disparities like access to services, unemployment, and poverty (Mitrovic et al., 2014).

The true problem for the government, however, is to ensure that the ICT targets are met. One goal of the National Broadband Policy is to mobilise the energies resources, and capabilities of both the private and public segments, as well as civil society that should provide internet access to all South Africans, enabling people to communicate not just within South Africa but also throughout the rest of the African continent and the globe (Gillwald, 2020).

The goal of this policy is to develop a long-term vision and plan that will act as a driving force for broadband connectivity in South Africa. The public sector will face considerable challenges as a result of this plan, and the government in South Africa will play a key role in deploying national broadband networks (Gillwald, 2020). When it comes to the South African social media climate, it is clear that two things are at work. For starters, active users are increasing significantly (Petousis & Holmes, 2021) while data expenses are also increasing (Mwaura et al., 2020). As a result, the policies described in the preceding research are crucial in ensuring that all South Africans have access to the internet and reap the benefits.

While the use of social media for NPOs has been extensively investigated both globally and locally, few studies have looked into the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy among health-related NPOs in South Africa, which is what this dissertation attempts to do.

3.3 Social media marketing funnel

The social media marketing funnel is a strategic model that reflects the entire buying experience of a given persona, beginning with the moment they recognise or become aware of a brand and continuing until they become customers (Colicev et al., 2019; Vieira et al., 2019). This concept is commonly used by salespeople, but it has also evolved into an important resource for meeting marketing objectives (Homburg et al., 2017). There are numerous ways to conceptualise a funnel, but the model described in the following research is divided into four distinct stages: awareness, interest, engagement, and action. The funnel's purpose is to help marketing professionals understand what they should provide end customers at each stage of the overall persuasion process (Vieira et al., 2019). Due to the intense competition between businesses for the attention and resources of customers, it is critical for businesses to plan and, as a result of this planning, improve their communication

actions to have an impact on the individuals who are significant at each stage of the journey (Homburg et al., 2017).

Finally, the funnel should serve as a guide for all of the methods that an organisation should implement in order to increase conversion rates (Sanchez, 2022). What are some of the benefits of using a funnel like this? The first and most important advantage is that marketers will be able to segment their marketing actions more effectively (Weiner, 2022). This allows one to target content, advertisements, and other methods with messages that are relevant to the audiences at each stage of the buyer's journey (Weiner, 2022). As a result, lead generation becomes more efficient, providing a company's sales team with more qualified leads and making the issue of conversion somewhat less difficult (Ancillai et al., 2019). In terms of NPOs, little is known about whether a strategic approach to the funnel is taken or whether this is included as part of a larger communications and marketing strategy (Young, 2017). On their way to becoming a supporter or making a donation, new contacts are likely to learn about and interact with an organisation in a variety of ways, and just as a funnel can help businesses clarify those journeys, it can also help NPOs clarify those journeys (Young, 2017; Wafa'a, 2019; Tian et al., 2021; Sánchez-Torné et al., 2023), allowing organisation to focus on strategies that move them closer to achieving their most important goals. The four discussed stages are further elaborated in terms of the stages below.

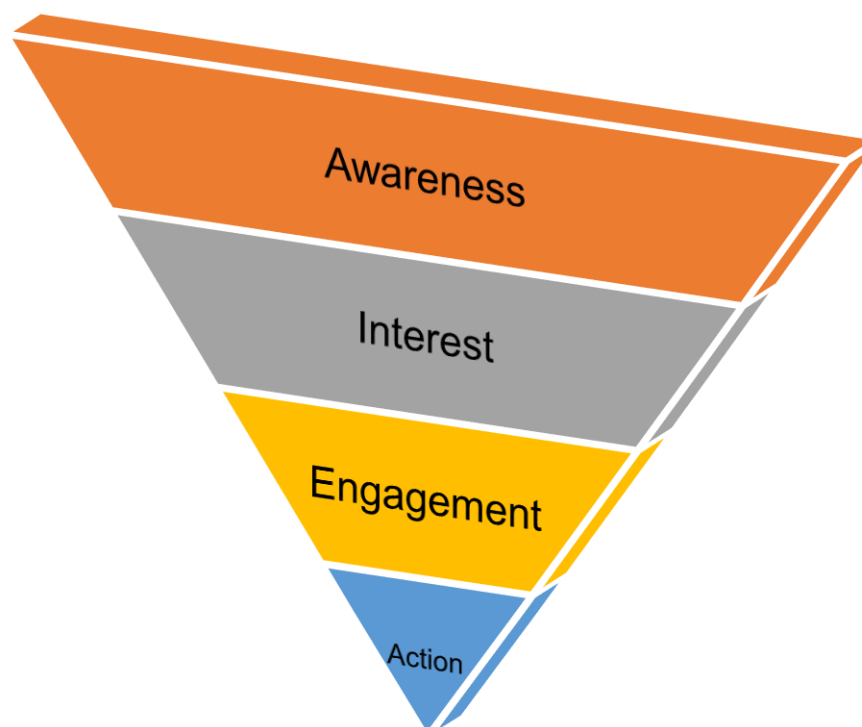


Figure 3.2: Social media marketing funnel

Source: Adapted from Weiner (2022)

3.3.1 Awareness

During the first stage, which is awareness, supporters discover an organisation, which can come from a variety of channels, including social media, search engines, friends, and partner organisations (Sanchez, 2022). Before proceeding to the next stage of the funnel, a user must demonstrate their interest in a cause or objective by taking action. This might be as simple as following an organisation on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, or signing up for an email newsletter (Sanchez, 2022). During the awareness stage, potential consumers, leads, or donors learn about the brand as they become interested in knowing more about the organisation and its mission. Creating content that covers the problems and obstacles that potential consumers encounter in their personal lives or professional jobs is a wonderful method to attract people's attention to the organisation's unique material (Dwivedi et al., 2021), as is displaying the good work an organisation is doing for people in a community. Users usually travel farther down the funnel as they get more interested in an organisation's content and positioning as a solution provider (Tucker, 2020). social media are an effective method for delivering content to a large audience, especially for NPOs with limited funds (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). All social media platforms include tools (the majority, if not all, are free) for creating valuable and engaging content, and unless an NPO is addressing a problem that has recently received widespread media attention (Amelia & Dewi, 2021), the majority of the world's population is unaware of the issue it is attempting to address as an NPO organisation. Awareness is a vital stage of the funnel, and literature has shown that the majority of NPOs participate during this stage (Bin-Nashwan & Al-Daihani, 2020; Amelia & Dewi, 2021; Choi & McKeever, 2022) but little is known if a strategic approach is used, which is one of the key objectives the dissertation attempts to address.

3.3.2 Interest

In order to reach the third level of the funnel, an important aspect of interest needs to be addressed. People must first become interested in an organisation before they can make a concrete decision on the actual organisation, and start to develop perceptions (Meyer, 2019). In the second stage, most people will have found out what the organisation is and what it stands for. Participating in a community event, expressing interest in one of their programmes, or signing a petition are a few possibilities for users engaging in the "interested" part of the funnel (Dolega et al., 2021).

During this stage, all of the content created by an organisation is centred on delivering extensive information about products and features, or the good work/impact the organisations have been doing in the communities that they serve. Examples of valuable and educational material include webinars, social media testimonials, success stories, case studies, and

testimonials (Asghar et al., 2022). Strategic social media engagement can promote registrations, downloads, donations, sign-ups and other critical indicators of interest by connecting directly with an audience (Biligin, 2018). While the posts of an organisation may connect to a landing page with more thorough information, organisations should strive to describe the content assets in a short manner on social media by addressing a problem and offering a solution in a compelling call to action. If a prospective donor has given their contact information, one can safely assume they have seen the organisation's marketing materials. The manner in which they have done this may have been through viewing the website, brochure, presentation, referral, or social media item, but something specific has caused them to provide their contact information. Once this information has been gathered, often the worst thing an organisation can do at this moment is nothing.

Leads should now be pursued and educated on the complexities of the problem the organisation is trying to solve, and offer an opportunity to form a partnership to solve it (Buzeta et al., 2020). Just because a lead understands the problem does not mean they care; they do not care enough to give just yet, therefore all messages should seek to persuade them (Colicev et al., 2019) to take some modest move that demonstrates they understand the problem well enough to care; this leads to the next level, which is engaged. One of the dissertation's goals is to uncover how health-related NPOs embrace the interested stage of the funnel, as well as whether any interested approaches are used.

3.3.3 Engagement

As one moves down the funnel, the third stage is referred to as "engaged". Participating in a community event, expressing interest in a specific set of programmes, or signing a petition are some ways to be actively connected with an organisation or business (Curtis et al., 2010).

Organisations and businesses frequently forget about their customers during the engagement period, which inhibits retention and diminishes first-time purchases, or in the case of NPOs, donations (Di Lauro et al., 2019; Giersemehl et al., 2022).

It is critical at this stage to engage in either branded hashtag campaigns or user-generated content (UGC) to encourage interaction and engagement (Maxhuni, 2021). This both reassures customers about their recent purchases or in an NPO's case, donations, and allows them to share their experience with their peers. For less visual strategies, hashtag discussions on Twitter can give a similar sense of community (Bernardi & Alhamdan, 2022). Both of these strategies enable potential buyers or donors to feel heard and interact with others at a similar stage of the funnel (Weiner, 2022). The literature reveals that an engaged lead is someone one knows is concerned about the issue at hand (Swart et al., 2021). The prospective contributor/donor has now taken action (however modest), indicating that they understand and

care about the issue at stake (Tao et al., 2021). They are now accepting donation requests. Most NPOs make the mistake of sending out solicitations to everyone in their database, which is not only ineffective but also offensive to some prospective donors (Torluk, 2019). One of the dissertation's goals is to learn how health-related NPOs interact with potential donors and whether the methods indicated above, such as the usage of hashtags or community conversations on Twitter, are intended to bring potential donors further down the funnel.

3.3.4 Action

The final level of the funnel is the action stage, which is often the most difficult to achieve (Todri et al., 2020) and often pulls in the fewest people, but it is also the most fulfilling phase of the funnel because an individual has now made an actual contribution to the organisation or cause (Melirotra & Siraj, 2021). Donors have now made some form of donation; the amount is not important, but the action is, and these audiences should never be taken for granted. Through their actions they have shown their dedication to an organisation by contributing.

When someone supports an organisation through monetary means, it shows true appreciation; the contribution could also take the shape of time, as with a volunteer, or money, as with a contributor (Roberts, 2014). After the first investment, organisations must make sure that those supporters remain engaged with the product or brand in order to keep or draw them back for additional donations, time, and support, which takes time and attention (Torluk, 2019; Tian et al., 2021).

These individuals should be recognised and appreciated for their contributions. Organisations should consider how few people make it thus far because convincing a one-time donor to contribute again is far easier than convincing a prospective donor to give once. Time and marketing resources, if any, are better spent convincing this donor to donate again (Ibrisevic, 2019). There are many means to do this, but the most important one is telling them about how their donation was used to make a difference (Wegner, 2020).

In summary, it appears that putting such a funnel in place with both enterprises and NPOs is crucial. This dissertation aims to offer insight into whether a strategy similar to the one described above is being implemented by health-related NPOs, or whether certain components of a funnel are in operation but are not being strategically emphasised.

3.4 Social media platforms

Social media channels have become among the most widely used information sources in worldwide; quick and inexpensive internet connectivity, along with a sizable user base, make them one of the easiest and most efficient methods to disseminate information.

An analysis by Chaffey (2022) highlighted some of the significant takeaways from a January 2022 global review, namely that over 50 percent of the worldwide populace now utilises social media. This translates to more than four billion users around the world, with over 420 million new members joining in the past year. Additionally, users spend an average of two and a half hours per day on social media (Chaffey, 2022).

There were 4.6 billion social media users worldwide in January 2022, up from 4.2 billion in January 2021 (Su, 2022), which equates to a rise in worldwide social media use of 10 percent year on year. In contrast to the pre-pandemic reduction observed in 2018–2020, social media expansion in 2021–22 was in the double digits, with new innovations and channels contributing to the upward trajectory (Chinoy & Jain, 2021; Su, 2022).

The continued rise of social media provides digital marketers, organisations and businesses alike with even more opportunities to interact with consumers in novel ways. The section below classifies the various social networking sites and their statistics and provides commentary on how they could possibly be beneficial for NPOs in relation to the dissertation.

3.4.1 Social networking sites

Among the various types of social media platforms, social networking sites hold a significant place. One of the most prominent examples of this is Facebook.

3.4.1.1 Facebook

When it first launched in 2004, Facebook was an exclusive social network available only to Harvard students. Later, it was made available to high school learners and, finally, to everyone over the age of thirteen (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Users of the platform can establish profile pages to share information with friends. Facebook was seen as a network site of social utility that allowed for both real-time and delayed interactions. Images, video, music, games, and software are all examples of multimedia forms that can be shared on this platform (Brügger, 2015; Larson & Vieregger, 2019).

With 2.93 billion users (Chaffey, 2022) Facebook has the most monthly traffic worldwide, with males aged 25-34 making up the largest population on Facebook, and females in the same age range also making up the greatest user pool (Frery, 2022). South Africa has 25 million active users (Petousis & Holmes, 2021) making it the most popular platform in terms of numbers. 98 percent of South Africans use mobile devices to access this portal (De Doncker & McLean, 2022). Facebook holds the top spot as the leading social networking platform in South Africa, with a user base of 22.15 million in 2023 (Kemp, 2023). Millions of everyday users use Facebook to communicate with friends and family and post about their interests and

personal life (Berriche & Altay, 2020). Businesses see Facebook's customer focus and broad reach as factors in adopting it as an alternative or additional channel to interact with consumers (Wong et al., 2020). Cheung et al. (2020) are of the opinion that social media platforms such as Facebook have the capacity to influence brand awareness, with intention to purchase a key driver. In October 2021, in an ambiguous move, Facebook changed its name to Meta, heralding in the next phase of interpersonal communication fuelled by Metaverse technology. This fresh social engagement period is anticipated to serve as the next focal point for social interaction online (Kraus et al., 2022). At first look, the stated change seems to be a brand-new business model built on a previously unheard-of mixture of the three elements indicated as follows: value capture, value proposition, and value creation (Kraus et al., 2022).

Figure 3.3 depicts the number of global Facebook users and in January 2022, 2.93 billion users worldwide were engaging on Facebook. Notably, Meta owns three of the top four social media networks, with Facebook being the most popular overall.

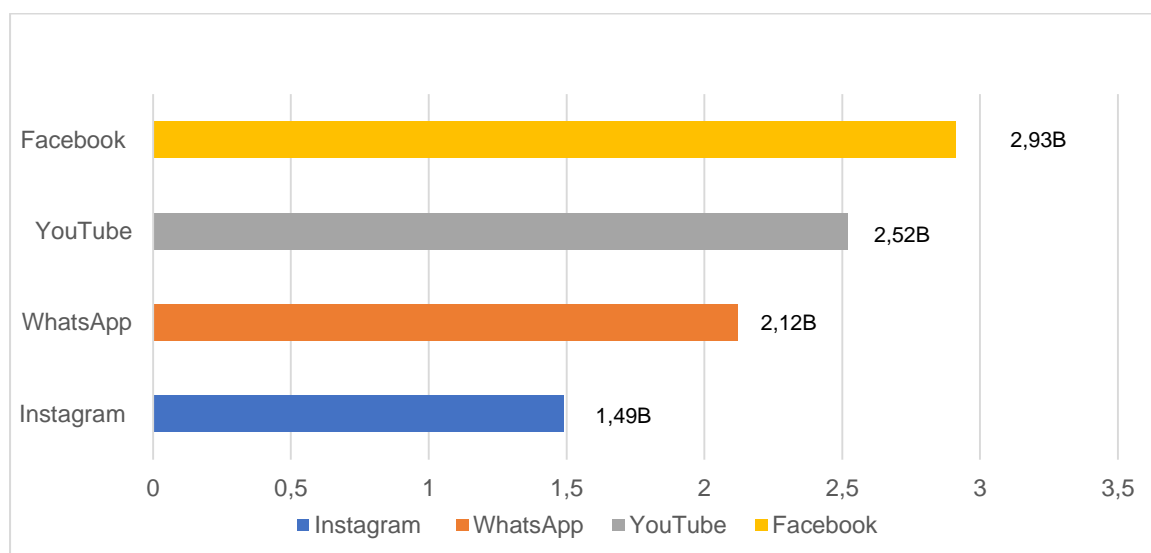


Figure 3.3: World's most-used social media platforms

Source: Adapted from Chaffey (2022)

As a result of the increased use of Facebook, many NPOs are developing a social media presence (Sun & Asencio, 2019). Facebook was explored as a social media usage platform among health-related NPOs in this dissertation. Prior research has considered how NPOs use Facebook and social media in general to communicate and engage. For example, Albanna et al. (2022) examined an integrated model for using social media applications in NPOs, while Amelia and Dewi (2021) described how NPOs deliver online accountability through social media. In addition, Swart, du Plessis & Greeff (2021) studied integrated social media communication views regarding the use of content marketing by South African NPOs. This

dissertation aims to shed light on Facebook usage among health-related NPOs, as well as the role it plays inside these organisations as part of a broader communication strategy or potentially as a single use strategy and platform.

3.4.1.2 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is sometimes referred to as "the world's largest professional network on the Internet", and it is currently one of the fastest-growing social media platforms (Garbuzova, 2021). The social network today has about 740 million members and over 55 million registered businesses; 40 percent of users visit the site daily (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020). Kemp (2023) reported that LinkedIn had 11 million users in South Africa in 2023, which accounts for 18.3 percent of the nation's total population.

Garbuzova (2021) mentioned that college students use LinkedIn more actively than those of the same age without schooling. This provides good potential for a given company to contact the desired audience; nevertheless, the special nature of this social network should be considered (Jordan, 2019). In the case of health-related NPOs, little is known about their involvement with the platform, and this dissertation aims to shed light on whether these organisations engage on the platform and, if so, what kind of strategy they use.

3.4.1.3 Twitter

Twitter is a form of microblogging network that allows members to generate 280-character maximum posts, which currently has about 353 million active users per month (Luo et al., 2019). It is frequently used for quick sharing, chats, and as an instrument for monitoring the most recent events in the chosen interest area (Luo et al., 2019; Shaw et al., 2019). Twitter has emerged as a significant platform for shaping public opinion, which enables the rapid dissemination of information and fosters discussion on various topics (Kwak et al., 2010). It serves as a digital arena for individuals, organisations, and influencers to share their views, engage with others, and even alter public opinion (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012). Research suggests that Twitter has the power to influence political discourse, consumer behaviour, social movements, and among other areas (Jungherr, 2016). Research conducted by Cole-Lewis et al. (2015) revealed that 10 percent of Twitter users are responsible for 80 percent of tweets, and the greatest age group is between 30 and 49. Twitter is an excellent forum for discussing current events and breaking news (Dommett, 2019; Xue et al., 2020).

Since its inception in October 2006, Twitter has attracted more than 330 million unique users, with 7.7 million of those coming from South Africa (Tshabalala, 2022). Twitter's global expansion has slowed, but in South Africa it appears to remain the favoured medium for engaging in public discourse (Okoliko & de Wit, 2020). In South Africa, mobile devices play a

significant role in social media usage, with 85 percent of Twitter users accessing the platform through smartphones or tablets (Bosch, 2021). Twitter's user base in the country reached 3.65 million in 2023, with about 6.1 percent of South African internet users being exposed to Twitter adverts (Kemp, 2023). Twitter, which was created as a communication medium for individuals, has turned into a crucial marketing resource for businesses and brands across all industries. Within the NPO environment, Twitter has evolved as a rather crucial marketing communication tool for organisations across all subjects (Nau et al., 2023), particularly in terms of raising awareness, donations, and funding. Recent NPO-related Twitter studies examined Twitter's user engagement (Choi & McKeever, 2022), effect on donations (Melirotra & Siraj, 2021), as an important component within a broader strategy relating to down syndrome (Bernardi & Alhamdan, 2022), and its impact, as a platform, on NPOs during COVID-19 (Rashid et al., 2021). A dissertation by Alakhrass (2020) evaluated the impact of health-related Twitter messages on rates of diabetes; a dissertation by Vu et al. (2020) focused on who leads the conversation on climate change, which further highlighted the global network of NPOs on Twitter. As discussed above, the dissertation also investigated whether health-related NPOs in South Africa are active on Twitter and what kinds of strategies they use.

3.4.2 Instant messaging

Beyond social networking sites, instant messaging platforms also play a crucial role in social media. A prime example of this is WhatsApp.

3.4.2.1 WhatsApp

WhatsApp Messenger, also known simply as WhatsApp, is a messaging service that works across multiple platforms and enables users to send and receive photo, video, text, and voice messages (Church & De Oliveira, 2013; Koparal et al., 2019; Stephen, 2019). In 2009, Brian Acton and Jan Koum established the messaging platform WhatsApp with the intention of simplifying and accelerating the process of communicating through the exchange of multimedia messages (Nyamai, 2021). Natarajan et al. (2018) suggest that the application (app) has significantly transformed the consumers' experience in mobile commerce, while also affording a flexible and convenient communication method.

The primary purpose of this application is to supplement SMS messages with a mobile messenger that is compatible with various platforms and can be accessed via the internet (Tang & Hew, 2017). Despite the fact that WhatsApp has been in use since 2009, it is important to note that the platform has been subjected to a number of updates designed to enhance the platform's overall user experience and functionality (Bruns, 2019) which have helped it become one of the globe's most commonly utilised instant messaging services (Evangelista & Bruno, 2019).

WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app in the world (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014; Klein et al., 2018) with more than two billion users and a user base that spans 180 countries, making it more popular than both Facebook Messenger and WeChat (McIntyre & Sobel, 2019; Vermeer et al., 2021). What started out as a straightforward messaging app has since evolved into a multimedia platform that enables users to send each other videos and voice messages, make payments (in certain countries), share photos and videos, and create business accounts (Puthussery, 2020). The platform satisfies the users' desire to interact with other people in an effective manner, as it makes the users' interactions with one another more personal (Chan, 2018). People's ability to maintain close relationships with their friends and family has been greatly facilitated by the proliferation of private communication channels, particularly WhatsApp (Yus, 2017). Chan (2018) and Milner (2021) believe it is reasonable to assert that technology is the answer to the challenges posed by time and touch now that the world has experienced a global pandemic that weakened even the most powerful economies in the world.

Within the NPO context, the impact of WhatsApp has been researched by various authors and publications highlighting interesting insights. Weni (2022) reported on the impact of using WhatsApp and chatbots to impact the communication with donors and investors, creating a good audience, and significantly helping social projects. The degree to which brand trust and the intention to share information with brands on the platform are related to perceptions of WhatsApp (i.e., privacy, security, and perceived socialness) was researched by Zarouali et al. (2021). An article published by Mission Box highlighted the general insights in terms of how WhatsApp was being used to manage NPOs and the communication strategies regarding the various organisations involved (Staff, 2021). The dissertation investigated whether WhatsApp is used as part of a communication strategy by health-related NPOs to communicate with staff, donors, and communities, as well as the impact of doing so.

3.4.2.2 Telegram

A cross-platform and freeware cloud-based instant messaging (IM) service known as Telegram was launched in August and October 2013 for iOS and Android, respectively. File sharing, VoIP, and video calling, and other capabilities are all available on Telegram (Jannati et al., 2021; Chaudhari et al., 2022).

Telegram has been in use since 2013, but has gained momentum following a WhatsApp controversy regarding data protection and safety (Conde et al., 2021; Heda & Shah, 2021). Daffalla et al. (2021) reveals that Telegram markets the platform as a privacy-focused application that provides both group conversations and individual secure communications. It

announced that in the middle of January 2021, it added 25 million members in a matter of 72 hours (Scrivens, 2021) and currently has 500 million active users (Iqbal, 2022).

In terms of timelines, Telegram gained 70 million users due to a Facebook outage on 5 October 2021 (Reuters, 2021). Telegram overtook WhatsApp (32 percent) usage share in March 2022, increasing its user percentage to 63 percent. Figure 3.4 below shows the growth of Telegram users between August 2013 and January 2021. Telegram announced that "Telegram has reached 400,000,000 monthly users, up from 300 million a year ago" in April 2020 (Durov, 2020). Telegram's website mentions that it has more than 500 million members and is among the ten highest downloaded applications worldwide (Clement, 2022).

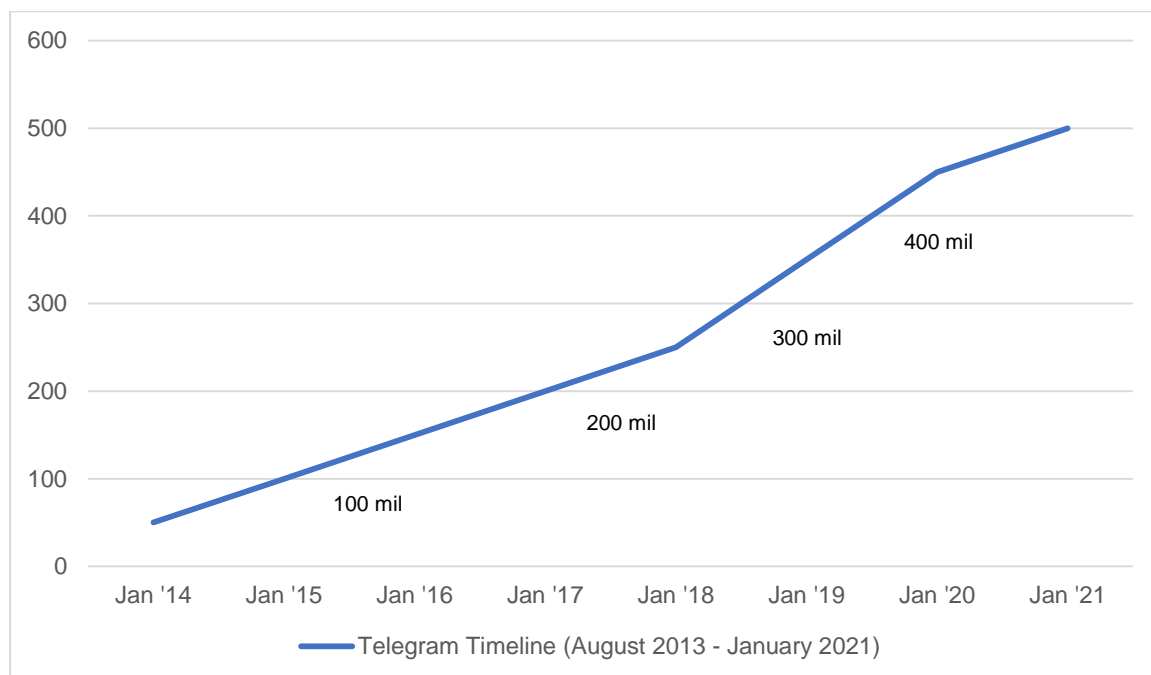


Figure 3.4: Telegram usage numbers in millions

Source: Adapted from Clement (2022)

As previously stated, Telegram has recently experienced a massive growth wave; this dissertation also investigated whether NPOs are using Telegram more than its competitor, WhatsApp, and why this may be the case as discussed in the section above.

3.4.3 Video sharing (YouTube)

YouTube, a video-sharing platform, has evolved significantly since its inception in 2005. In 2006, YouTube presented several advertising concepts to businesses so that they could use the platform as a marketing tool (Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018). YouTube has evolved in recent years from a digital video channel for entertainment and information to a key marketing

platform that includes channels, celebrity brand ambassadors and influencers, promotions, and advertising (Duffett et al., 2020).

Marketers are increasingly resorting to YouTube as a platform for addressing the generation of YouTube users and social media enthusiasts in today's competitive video advertising sector (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). The purchase of YouTube by Google in October 2006 accelerated this transition from an ad-supported service to a revenue-generating enterprise (Yovanof & Hazapis, 2008). Making, posting, and sharing content pertaining to one's hobbies on YouTube has enabled people to interact with a global audience while also exchanging ideas (Lange, 2018). Businesses and organisations can make both new and old video content available to their clients by using video-sharing websites such as YouTube (Duffett et al., 2019). There have been a couple of studies and articles published pertinent to the current investigation. Franklin (2018) highlighted how NPOs can make use of YouTube, with videos on virtually every topic imaginable being uploaded to the platform on a daily basis. The video platform is a haven for entertainment and sharing knowledge, and more importantly, for NPOs to create social impact. Soboh (2019) researched the impact of social media and of YouTube in particular on NPOs with regard to fundraising.

A YouTube channel can help an NPO by spreading its message to the world's largest online video community (Foronda-Robles & Galindo-Pérez-de-Azpillaga, 2021). Videos help to shape the public's opinion of a company's products or services and help to establish its brand; it combines the three V's of communication – verbal, vocal, and visual – to make the issue more compelling and realistic (Duffett et al., 2019; Nediger, 2020).

3.4.4 Photo sharing (Instagram)

Instagram, often referred to as the most organically eye-catching social media available and was acquired by Facebook in 2016 (Pavlova, 2018; Astuti et al., 2020). The Facebook family allowed competing digital channels to collect user data across its various platforms in order to create detailed profiles of every individual's behaviour online that could be used for targeted advertisements. Instagram, in addition to its photo-sharing service, enables users to post both private and public photographs and videos through social networking sites like Facebook in addition to its native platform (Tonetti, 2019). As mentioned above, Instagram is focused on photo and video sharing, although there has been a bias towards promoting video content of late due to the threat of TikTok (a video-sharing platform) (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). As a result, businesses who invested in eye-catching visual content were able to create successive

marketing campaigns; due to recent updates, Instagram is now the ideal real-time updating channel (Gretzel, 2017; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018).

Instagram Stories, which allow users to post short videos or photographs with their followers for up to 24 hours, have the potential to offer a new, more immediate, ephemeral way to interact with their fan base (Gretzel, 2017; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018). Instagram currently has over 1.3 billion active users (Statista, 2023), making it three times the size of Twitter, and perhaps the most effective platform for companies/brands since its start in October 2010.

Instagram has undeniably become one of the most powerful social media platforms, which explains why more individuals are becoming engaged in advertising themselves or their companies on this site (Mulyana et al., 2020). Chaffey (2022) claims that South Africa has 6.2 million Instagram users (January 2022). It is worth mentioning that Instagram's advertising audience in South Africa was 46.7 percent male and 53.3 percent female. However, Kemp (2023) mentions that Instagram had 5.65 million users in South Africa in 2023. Notably, the platform's advertising audience comprised 46 percent male and 54 percent female users during the same period.

A dissertation by Gartner et al. (2021) found that NPOs that use Instagram favourably influence the association between brand trust and process quality of the particular NPO via visually captivating and useful material. Further, Giersemehl et al. (2022) found that not only is Instagram a valuable tool for establishing connections and strengthening one's own employer brand (employer branding), but the network also attracts individuals eager to donate. Another dissertation by Southerland and Baker (2019) found Instagram to be the ideal tool for rapid growth and social media perception/brand awareness for NPOs in rural Appalachia.

Previous research studies have stated that NPOs can use Instagram to reach out to current and new consumers, enhance involvement with the NPO's purpose, vision, and services, and cultivate positive brand connotations, which can lead to increased donations (Gunawan, 2021; Albanna et al., 2022). The current dissertation examines the motivation for Instagram usage by health-related NPOs in South Africa, with the goal of shedding light on how these organisations use the site solely for brand awareness or to encourage donations.

3.5 Social media marketing

As we explore the realm of social media marketing, it is important to understand the role of social media as a powerful marketing communication strategy.

3.5.1 Social media as a marketing communication strategy

In terms of targeting the general public, an NPO can employ a range of social media channels to ensure the greatest potential reach (Young, 2017; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020; Swart et al., 2021). Han (2021) is of the opinion that 34 percent of NPOs presently utilise Facebook, and a little over nine out of ten of them expend funds on marketing on this digital conduit.

Social media as a marketing communication strategy are essential when connecting with all of the numerous social media channels available so that one is aware of why particular platforms are vital and, more importantly, how to utilise these to ensure impact and awareness in the most effective manner (Barreto & Whitehair, 2017; Clark et al., 2017; Johnson, 2017; Giersemehl et al., 2022). Numerous companies and organisations often adopt the misguided approach of establishing accounts across various social media channels to attempt to engage audiences through all platforms (Geysler, 2021). This approach typically leads to wasted efforts and limited results (Geysler, 2021). This is because each platform caters to a unique set of user personas. As previously mentioned, LinkedIn is aimed toward professionals and business owners, Instagram appeals to a younger and visually-oriented demographic, and Facebook targets a broader audience (Expert Commentator, 2018; Ali et al., 2022; Bushell, 2022). NPOs that are successful in communicating through social media know which channels to use depending on what information they want to transmit to their target market (Park & Loo, 2022).

To boost brand exposure, business communication techniques have significantly evolved in tandem with the emergence of social media marketing communication (Wibawa et al., 2022). Organisations are recognising the need to design their social media presence in order to control their brand marketing and gain insights into consumer-generated material about their business (Pütter, 2017; Hu et al., 2019; Cattrall & Castello, 2022).

Silva et al. (2020) claim that social media allow firms to communicate with customers more quickly, cheaply, and interactively. As social media marketing has grown in popularity, many businesses are allocating a significant portion of their marketing resources to it (Al-azzam & Al-mizeed, 2021). With increasing consumer knowledge and impatience, increased competition, and rising costs, social media communication is a new field with new rules, and an appropriate plan becomes vital in assuring a favourable long-term impact of social media activities (Blue Fountain Media, 2016).

Actual advantages and real benefits are acquired by organisations due to successful social media utilisation. Albanna et al. (2022) confirmed that using social media effectively as a

marketing communication strategy within businesses gives interactional and transactional benefits. Borah et al. (2022) agree that efficient social media use increases revenue and efficiency as well as aiding in the strengthening of customer ties. Li et al. (2021) assert that efficient usage of social media improves activity performance and strengthens the brand, company or organisation, hence boosting brand equity, relationships, and values. As previously said, social media marketing is used in a variety of industries and sectors, yet there appear to be gaps in the NPO sector. Thus, the dissertation aimed to determine whether social media are employed as a communication strategy within NPOs, as well as the success of that strategy, if one exists at all. The table below shows a few instances of studies that looked at the impact of social media usage by NPOs.

Table 3.1: Research concentrating on how social media are used by NPOs

Author	Topic	Location	Methodology	Key findings
Feng et al., 2017	How social media strategies of NPOs affect consumer donation intention and WOM	China	Quantitative method	The findings demonstrated that an NPO's social media promotion and interaction had a significant favourable effect on consumers' perceived pleasure and trust, which affected their propensity to donate as well as WOM.
Di Lauro et al., 2019	A systematic literature assessment of how NPOs use social media for fundraising	Italy	Systematic literature review	Numerous research found that social media are advantageous for NPO fundraising efforts, as long that those social media efforts have clear engagement tactics, transparency in terms of where the funds/donations are used, and accountability.
Ihm, 2019	Communicating without NPOs on non-profits' social media: Three different organisational ties and the independent networks of stakeholders	Korea	Quantitative dissertation with content analysis of Twitter engagement	NPOs' original tweets (rather than simply retweeting or liking another tweet) appear to contribute to stakeholders' autonomous networks by expanding opportunities for NPOs to publicise themselves and raising the likelihood that stakeholders become aware of NPOs. Overall, it was found that NPOs who engaged on Twitter, and especially responded to users by mentioning their @, built a favourable association between the user and the NPO brand presence on Twitter.
Seelig et al., 2019	An exploratory investigation of social activity on social media and the web on a novel culture of advocacy	USA	Exploratory mixed-method	Content analysis and virtual ethnography both showed that NPOs considerably changed the organisation of online material. The process of activism have been considerably changed by the shift in focus of online platforms and social media from a one- way exchange of information to participatory dialogue, which also encourages new types of involvement between supporters and non-profits. These findings indicated that, when used to their full potential, the web and social media played an important role in fostering connection and dialogue between people both online and offline.
Dineva et al., 2020	Consumer reactions to conflict resolution techniques used on NPO social media fan websites	UK	Mixed-method approach (Netnography, content sentiment analysis)	Consumers debate topics relevant to an NPO's cause, which is positively received when NPOs comment as the brand rather than letting negative sentiment be unanswered.
Chen & Wang, 2021	social media use for health purposes: systematic review	USA	Qualitative method	To use social media effectively, NPOs must have dedicated and well-trained staff, PR support, a social media plan, and tracking of fundraising. Employees and patients of NPOs can benefit from social media. The findings add to the literature while also assisting NPO practitioners in implementing social media initiatives and improving performance.
Gartner et al., 2021	Service quality level in NPOs' social media communications: The moderating role of platform preference	Austria	Quantitative analysis self-administrated online survey	The dissertation found that the established model of service quality applies to the social media era as well. The perception of the quality of the service provided is influenced by trust in a brand. This implies that once firms

				provide their services through social media channels, the marketing tool kit does not need to be redefined.
Ihm & Kim, 2021	How organisational culture affects the usage of conventional, digital, and shared media when NPOs and communication and information technology combine	Korea	Quantitative analysis Self-administrated online survey	The dissertation revealed that NPOs' use of shared, digital, and traditional media, for various communication objectives is influenced differently by cultural values and communication practises. To improve their performance, authoritarian NPOs used available media for internal communication, there were several options, including traditional media, but family-oriented NPOs declined in their use of new communication and information technology. Transparent information practises predicted increased use of ICTs, but collaborative and democratic communication practises did not.
Lim et al., 2021	NPO advertising on social media: The role of bandwagon effects, advertising appeals, and personality	Texas	Quantitative method	Personality traits affect how consumers view non-profit adverts and donate. Consumer perceptions of the advertisement were positively impacted by the HEXACO personality traits, but agreeableness, emotionality, and humility/honesty did not. This indicates the influence of personality on consumer behaviour and advertising outcomes. Many Facebook users "like" and promote causes without donating. NPOs should target donors. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and experience openness may increase NPO donations.
Namisango et al., 2021	An investigation of service co-creation in NPOs illustrates how the structures given by social media promote collaborative outputs	Uganda	Quantitative method	The dissertation explained the ways in which the structures implemented in the use of social media support service co-creation in NPOs. The results build on earlier studies on the architectures of collaborative and social technology (for example, social media) and how they influence organisational outcomes.
Swart et al., 2021	A comprehensive social media communication outline on content marketing of NPOs in South Africa	South Africa	Qualitative method	The dissertation's findings enumerate a number of crucial subjects and areas that organisations should think about as a substitute for content marketing among NPOs in terms of integrated social media communication.
Tao et al., 2021	The roles of message components and cause involvement in the public's reactions to NPO social media communications	USA	Experimental	Cause engagement, message appeal functional interactivity, and message appeal, and functional interactivity and cause involvement all showed substantial two-way interactions on several behavioural outcomes in an online experiment. These findings offer unique practical and theoretical insights into the circumstances under which, and the means by which, NPO social media communication is successful.
Albanna et al., 2022	A holistic framework for utilising social media technologies for NPOs	UK	Quantitative method	Key determinants of social media use include UTAUT variables (facilitating conditions, social influence, effort expectancy, and performance expectancy) and management commitment. The dissertation examined how social media affect NPO fundraising, awareness, and community

				engagement. SEM supported the predictive validity of the dissertation model due to social media's significant variance in positive NPO social media usage, which is predicted by favourable management, social influence, performance, effort, circumstances, and commitment.
Ali et al., 2022b	social media platforms and social enterprise: Bibliometric analysis and systematic review	Australia	Quantitative method	The dissertation found that there is a rising body of research on the usage of social media by social enterprises, with a focus on how social media can be utilised to enhance social impact, foster relations with stakeholders, and increase visibility and engagement. The dissertation identified a number of challenges and opportunities associated with social media use, including issues related to privacy and data security, the need for effective content and community management, and the potential for social media to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among social enterprises. The authors suggest that social media platforms have the potential to facilitate the growth and impact of social enterprises, and that further investigation is necessary to explore the dynamics of this relationship and identify best practices for social media use in the social enterprise sector.
Goodwin, 2022	The inability of public supervision, automated challenges to regulation, and algorithms in programmatic alcohol promotion impact on public health failure	New Zealand	Quantitative dissertation	Programmatic advertising, which uses algorithms to target specific audiences with personalised adverts, has made it difficult for traditional regulatory mechanisms to keep up with the scale and complexity of alcohol advertising on social media. The dissertation analyses the impact of programmatic alcohol advertising on various aspects of public health, including alcohol consumption, alcohol-related harms, and underage drinking, and finds that the automated nature of these adverts makes it difficult to regulate and enforce existing regulations. Failure of public oversight and regulation has resulted in an uneven playing field that favours the interests of the alcohol industry over public health concerns. The dissertation concludes by calling for a more robust and innovative approach to regulating programmatic alcohol advertising on social media, including the development of new tools and strategies to protect public health and safety.
Hermida et al., 2022	A "giant newsroom" within the university: COVID-19's non-profit explanatory journalism	Canada	Exploratory mixed-method	Universities can act as "giant newsrooms" by leveraging their academic expertise and resources to produce high-quality, not-for-profit journalism that helps to inform and educate the public. The study analyses the experiences of two universities in creating and disseminating explanatory journalism about the COVID-19 pandemic. Universities were able to provide valuable insights and analysis that complemented traditional news reporting, and they were able to reach diverse audiences through a variety of digital platforms. The study suggests that universities have a unique opportunity to contribute to public discourse and promote the public good through not-for-profit journalism, and that such initiatives can help to bridge the gap between academic research and public engagement.

Ihm, 2022	Understanding the roles of and connections from individual postings for societal transformation through the usage of social media by individuals for NPOs	Korea	Exploratory mixed-method	The dissertation reveals that individual posts on non-profit social media pages serve a range of functions, including information sharing, mobilisation, and community building. Several types of networks are activated by these posts, including personal, organisational, and issue-based networks. social media can facilitate a more democratic and participatory approach to social change by providing individuals with opportunities to engage with NPOs and to share their own perspectives and experiences. The authors conclude by calling for further research on the dynamics of social media use by NPOs and individuals, and for the development of new strategies to harness the potential of social media for social change.
Salte, 2022	The public sphere, the non-profit influencer, and the political, cultural, and visual realm	Norway	Qualitative method	The study found that non-profit influencers, who are individuals with significant social media followings and a commitment to social causes, have emerged as key actors in the public sphere by using visual and popular forms of expression to engage diverse audiences and generate public support for social and political issues. The study analyses the content and strategies of several non-profit influencers, such as Instagram users and YouTube vloggers, and finds that they employ a range of tactics, including personal storytelling, humour, and aesthetic appeal, to convey complex social and political messages in a compelling and accessible way. The authors suggest that non-profit influencers have the potential to democratise public discourse and bridge the gap between traditional forms of activism and new modes of communication and cultural expression.
Zhang et al., 2022	How can NPOs interact with the general population on social media in an effective way? Exploring how emotion and interaction interplay on Twitter	USA	Quantitative method	Functional interactivity negatively affected likes and retweets, but contingency interactivity positively affected retweets. Likes and retweets dropped with emotion valence but increased with emotion strength. Service-oriented and other NPOs had distinct effects of interaction and emotion on public participation.
Alexander et al., 2023	Do corporate donors prioritise social media engagement and activity? Evidence from the non-profit grantees in Italy	Italy	Quantitative method	The research reveals that social media engagement and activity are favourably correlated with institutional donor support, suggesting that donors value the visibility and engagement that NPOs achieve through social media. The dissertation also identifies several factors that can enhance the effectiveness of social media use by NPOs, including the development of clear and consistent messaging, the use of multimedia content, and the cultivation of a strong and engaged community of supporters. The research concludes by calling for further research on the relationship between social media use and donor support in the NP sector, and for the development of new tools and strategies to help NPOs leverage social media for greater impact and visibility.

Nau et al., 2023	Identifying a gendered a global epidemic through action, community, and information: Women-focused non-profit organisations' utilisation of Twitter in the COVID-19 pandemic	United Kingdom	Quantitative method	The investigation authors conducted a content analysis of tweets from 30 NPOs and found that they primarily shared information related to health and safety, economic and financial issues, and social justice concerns. The organisations also used Twitter to build and strengthen their communities by fostering engagement and support, as well as advocating for policy changes and providing direct assistance to those in need. The dissertation suggests that women-focused NPOs played a crucial role in responding to the pandemic by providing gender-sensitive support and highlighting the gendered impacts of the crisis.
Sánchez-Torné et al., 2023	A non-profit's digital media strategy must prioritisation of content	Spain	Quantitative method	The dissertation analyses the digital media strategies of several NPOs and identifies key factors that contribute to their success, with a focus on the role of content. The authors find that effective digital media strategies require a clear and compelling message that resonates with the organisation's target audience. They also find that successful non-profits tailor their content to different platforms, making use of multimedia and interactive elements to engage their audience. The dissertation also identifies several challenges that non-profits face in implementing effective digital media strategies, including the need for consistent messaging across different channels, the need for sufficient resources and expertise, and the challenge of measuring the impact of digital media efforts. The dissertation concludes by emphasising the critical role of content in non-profit digital media strategies and calling for continued investment in this area to maximise the impact and reach of NPOs.
Yue et al., 2023	"Chief engagement officers?" A comparison of the social media communication tactics used by executives in US corporations and non-profits	USA	Quantitative method	The dissertation examines the communication behaviours and strategies of "chief engagement officers" (CEOs), or executives who are responsible for engagement and communication activities on behalf of their organisations. The dissertation reveals that while there are similarities in the social media strategies of corporate and non-profit CEOs, there are also significant differences. For example, non-profit CEOs tend to use social media to build stronger relationships with their constituents and to promote social causes, while corporate CEOs tend to focus more on brand awareness and product promotion. The dissertation also finds that non-profit CEOs are more likely to engage in two-way communication on social media, responding to comments and questions from their followers, while corporate CEOs tend to use social media as a one-way broadcast channel. The dissertation concludes by calling for further research on the role of executive leaders in social media communication and the impact of their strategies on organisational outcomes.

It is worth noting that a large majority (20 out of 24) of the aforementioned studies found a positive link between the strategic use of social media for an NPO and general positive sentiment, increased brand awareness, and donations. In addition, these studies show that there may be a causal relationship between an NPO's strategic use of social media and an increase in positive brand sentiment. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to ascertain if and to what extent these findings are replicated in the South African NPO healthcare sector.

3.5.2 Social media in strategic marketing

Veldeman et al. (2017) contend that, regardless of the sorts of products and services offered by a company, a strong social media marketing communication plan, with a strategic angle, can favourably impact sales. The authors argue that efficient social media usage has essentially become a marketing method or tactic that allows salespeople to communicate with a larger and more connected network (Veldeman et al., 2017).

Unsurprisingly, many businesses increasingly use social media to while maintaining cost-effectiveness in their daily operations, increase their communication networks and boost their public relations and marketing initiatives (Mohammedhussen & Abdulnasir, 2020). While there is agreement on the beneficial results of a strong social media marketing communication plan, there is disagreement on how to quantify its efficacy (Yadav & Rahman, 2017; Ebrahim, 2020). Researchers approached this difficulty by measuring the effectiveness of various system views. In some ways, Li et al. (2021) believe that they are based on decision-making improvement benefit/cost analysis, satisfaction, or system usage.

The dissertation looked at aspects of social media effectiveness, within a strategic view regarding funding, community participation, and awareness regarding health-related NPOs. Previously, these factors were utilised to investigate the usage of social media in the NPO sector, and through the current dissertation more research is added in terms of how social media are used within health-related NPOs through strategic marketing.

Literature found formulates that there is a link between social media use in strategic marketing, awareness, and consumer engagement and overall sustainability aspects of an NPO (Dessart et al., 2015; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). Researchers propose many methods for implementing strategic social media marketing (Gartner et al., 2021; Giersemehl et al., 2022) within enterprises. These measurements are determined by the research's aims and focus. Among these steps, strategic usage is the most commonly used indicator of actual social media effectiveness (Charoensukmongkol & Sasatanun, 2017; Wang & Kim, 2017).

Table 3.2: Fundamental aspects of strategic marketing via social media

Fundamental aspects	Technical/strategic phases	Topics
Fundamental aspects 1: The basics of incorporating strategic social media content		
social media presence	Strategic phase	Values, basic requirements, challenges,
Fundamental aspects 2: Brand contact points for strategic social media content integration at various levels		
Integration of stakeholders (dialogue/discussion) social media content (timing, post schedule, and content sourcing) Convergence of content across several social media platforms	Technical phase	Database, dialogue, conversation Timing, scheduling, planning Synchronising social media with traditional media, sourcing content, interaction through media convergence
Fundamental aspects 3: Sustaining strategic social media integration		
Evaluation	Strategic phase	Evaluation of social media endeavours/efforts through monitoring and evaluation

Source: Adapted from Swart et al. (2021)

The table is an excerpt from a dissertation that focuses on three essential aspects of strategic marketing through the use of social media. Each key area in the table above focuses on a distinct topic, and there are levels and topics connected to each of these areas. The results of the investigation can only be extrapolated to the sample, but when viewed through a strategic lens, they provide important insights on the social media marketing techniques used by South African NPOs. In the table above, strategic and tactical points to integrate a comprehensive social media marketing communication on content marketing are identified.

3.6 Social media usage within the NPO sector

Shifting our focus towards the NPO sector, it is essential to examine the current status of social media usage within NPOs globally to gain insights into their engagement and utilisation of these platforms.

3.6.1 The current status of social media and NPOs globally

Due to an NPO's business model being largely based on people's willingness to offer time and money (Wilson & Post, 2013), NPOs make a concerted effort to connect with a number of prospective donors as they can to strengthen connections with these potential funders (Reficco et al., 2021). This concept is known as fundraising, which often forms part of a larger marketing communication plan (Liu & Ko, 2011). NPOs have started to use online platforms and related inexpensive internet-based tools like social media for fundraising in order to transition from conventional to electronic donations that provide easy, direct, quick, and

efficient transfer of money, and with the global COVID-19 pandemic, this became critical for almost all NPOs that wanted to survive (Maxhuni, 2021, Getto & Flanagan, 2022). Numerous NPOs also use social media accounts and blogs as advocacy and public relations instruments as opposed to having websites (Bashir & Aldaihani, 2017; Tran, 2019). Through social media campaigns, more and more NPOs are using social media to raise money and spread awareness online (Tugrul & Lee, 2018). This is because social media enables NPOs not only inexpensively, easily, and quickly spread fundraising correspondence to the target audience but also to receive donations, frequently doing both simultaneously (Xiao et al., 2022).

Indeed, one of the quickest-developing ways for NPOs to solicit donations from individuals is through social media (Renko et al., 2019; Wiley et al., 2022). Over 70 percent of NPOs in 2017 revealed that social media platforms were beneficial for raising funds (Di Lauro et al., 2019). Despite the widespread adoption of social media fundraising practises and the usage of social media as part of a broader marketing communication plan, research in this field is still in its early stages (Torres et al., 2020).

Although some studies have been conducted to investigate the part that social media plays in raising money, specifically how it has impacted NPOs' business models or fundraising efforts (Sanderse et al., 2020; Albanna et al., 2022), industry experts have an in-depth understanding of the most suitable practices in harnessing social media for marketing communication and fundraising, with academic research dispersed across various fields.

One goal of the current dissertation was to perform a systematically assessment of literature to examine and synthesise what is understood about social media's possible role as a marketing communication strategy for larger brand awareness and ultimately sustainability through donations and fundraisers within the South African health-related NPO sector.

3.6.2 The present status of social media and NPOs in South Africa

The dissertation's focus is not primarily whether or not participants had access to social media platforms, but it did acknowledge the significance thereof. The most recent statistics provide a comprehensive picture in this regard. At present, there is insufficient research in South Africa to investigate the access that NPOs or their stakeholders have to social media platforms.

On the other hand, Poushter et al. (2018) found social media usage in this African nation has substantially increased in recent years. According to statistics gathered from the social media platforms that are pertinent to this investigation, the platform with the most users is Facebook, followed by Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube (Albanna et al., 2022).

These statistics lend support to the idea that the difficulty with regard to the availability of social media are, for the most part, being substantially mitigated. In spite of the fact that the preceding debate emphasised the importance and urgency of the investigation, more specific justifications for this endeavour are provided in the following part, which touches on the rationale for the use of social media as a tool for communication.

3.6.3 Rationale for using social media as a communication tool

Various authors (Florenthal, 2019; Liu & Bakici, 2019; Wardati & Er, 2019; Buzeta et al., 2020; Duffett, 2020) have investigated the importance and benefits of utilising social media as a communication medium, but little research has been undertaken within the NPO sector, particularly with regard to health-related organisations in South Africa.

People who communicate with one another through the use of technological devices that are connected to digital networks are referred to as engaging in social media (Gleason & von Gillern, 2018; Appel et al., 2020). Internet connectivity is typically required for people's electronic devices, such as tablets, smart phones, laptops, and desktop computers in order for them to access social networking websites (Newman et al., 2017). Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms enable and facilitate the creation of new content as well as the sharing of existing content among users (Papa et al., 2018). To be more specific, users of social media platforms have the ability to generate and distribute information, including expressions (such as emoticons and likes) and comments, both on an individual and a group level (e.g. facts, ideas, narratives, opinions) (Kitsios et al., 2022).

More significantly, the proliferation of social media has greatly increased the extent to which people can now connect with others and stay up to date with the most recent news and events (Hall et al., 2019). With regard to South Africa, Facebook remains the leading social networking platform with around 22.15 million users (Kemp, 2023). LinkedIn is utilised by 11 million South Africans, and TikTok has a user base of 11.83 million (Kemp, 2023). Additionally, Instagram and Snapchat rank among the most popular social media platforms, with 5.65 million and 5.85 million active users respectively (Kemp, 2023). Many organisations are now adopting strategies to create a significant presence on social media with the purpose to connect with their chosen target market more effectively and engage with them regarding services, products and other activities. This is because of the strength and critical mass of social media in terms of reach and connectivity (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

However, most social media research has focused on commercial organisations, particularly those targeting urban areas and communities, and as a result, there is little insight of how non-

urban and NPOs populations, for example, may gain from employing social media if the correct strategy is taken as a communication medium (Lim et al., 2019; Albanna et al., 2022).

Lim et al. (2019) hold that social media techniques are effective for non-urban and NPOs populations are likely to be different from those used by urban communities (e.g. digital natives versus digital immigrants) and commercial organisations because of inherent differences in focus (e.g., profit versus non-profit purposes) and user characteristics.

A more detailed discussion regarding the most popular social media platforms that are leveraged by health-related NPOs is provided below in the dissertation, which explores these digital platforms' effectiveness, strategies, and potential impact on the organisations' mission and outreach.

Thus, the dissertation's goal is to help further knowledge in this field, particularly by seeking fresh perspectives on how NPOs in South Africa perceive the use of social media for communication, and, more importantly, investigating the drivers for motivation and implementation of social media as a communication medium.

3.6.4 Challenges of social media usage within the NPO sector

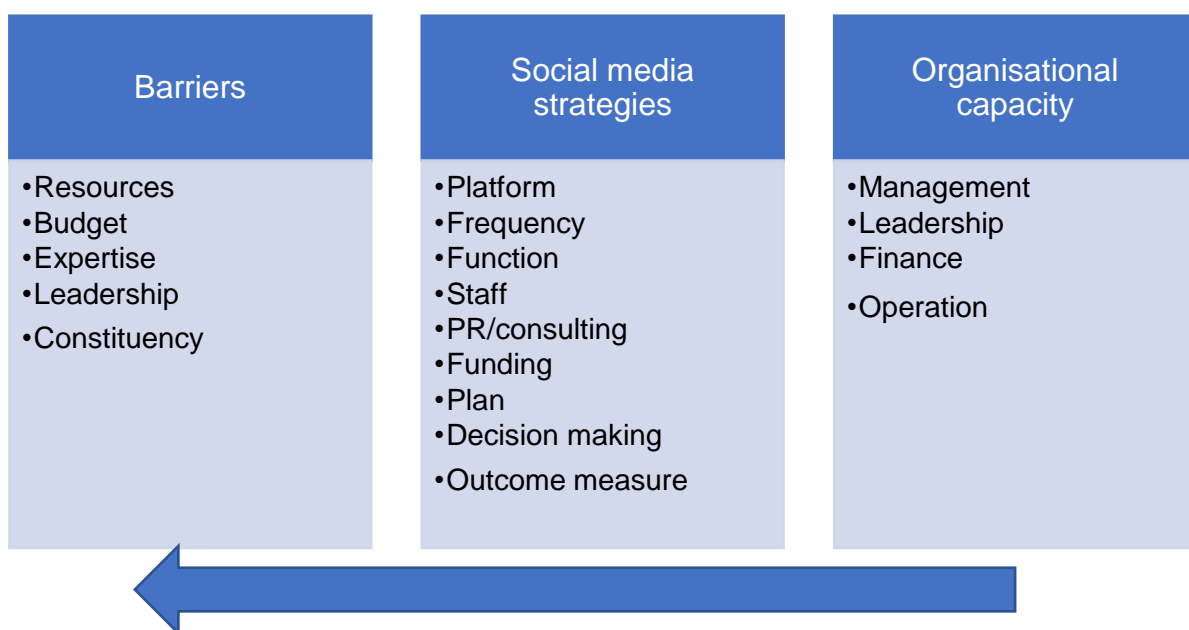
There are various hurdles to NPOs' use of social media (Feng et al., 2017; Maxhuni, 2021; Albanna et al., 2022). To begin with, many NPOs lack resources for social media engagement. Sun and Asencio (2019) found that in government institutions, a lack of resources and dedicated full-time workers poses impediments to social media use. Research done by Vogelsang et al. (2021) highlights mainly lack of staff or budget which are also key impediments to social media use among NPOs. Secondly, a lack of social media skills among employees, as well as a lack of leadership, might limit the efficacy of social media. Leidner et al. (2020) found that NPOs lack expertise, abilities, and training in social media use, and that leadership does not pay enough attention to or give adequate support for social media use. Forsgren and Byström (2018) report that many NPOs did not use, or were hesitant to use, social media because they had a limited understanding of social media. Third, constituency issues complicate NPOs' use of social media as well as concerns regarding confidentiality and the appropriateness of social media given an organisation's target market are impediments to social media use for many NPOs (Mahama, 2020; Vafeiadis et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Sun and Asencio (2019) found significant managerial implications for NPO professionals. First, NPO board members and executive directors should think about implementing innovative social media technologies and making the use of social media one of their organisations' top priorities. NPOs should develop corporate visions for using social media to accomplish organisational goals. Senior leaders should familiarise themselves with

social media in order to motivate their employees to use the platforms more effectively. NPOs should use the expansive digital social media training opportunities available to them to learn best practices if they lack sufficient financial means, human resources, and social media expertise (Sun & Asencio, 2019). Rushing into the use of social media without fully comprehending and being familiar with how to utilise it, such as video posts and other social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook), could harm an NPO's brand image, purpose, and mission (He et al., 2017).

This dissertation largely corroborated the unique challenges that NPOs face in general, as well as their distinctive characteristics when utilising social media to engage with stakeholders. Swart (2018) found that NPOs in South Africa lack resources, primarily due to budgetary constraints, the fact that there are not enough communication specialists and that those who do often fill several responsibilities in non-traditional communication roles. The management and use of social media marketing communication in these organisations are likewise believed to suffer from the aforementioned difficulties.

Figure 3.5: Challenges influencing social media usage



Source: Adapted from Sun and Asencio (2019)

As seen in Figure 3.5, NPOs' usage of diverse social media methods is hampered by inadequate finances, technical knowledge, leadership, and constituency. This dissertation looked at the primary challenges that health-related NPOs confront when it comes to social media promotion and usage. The dissertation also examined whether there is any overlap in the challenges experienced by and the potential lack of social media adoptions within the organisation.

3.7 Variables that affect the use of social media as a communication strategy

While social media is becoming more popular in the developed world (Akram & Kumar, 2017; Andreassen et al., 2017; González-Padilla & Tortolero-Blanco, 2020) they are yet to be widely adopted in many organisations in developing countries, and very little empirical research concentrating on health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa, has been undertaken to date.

One of the purposes of the dissertation is to fill the information gap by investigating the factors influencing social media marketing communication strategy adoption by NPOs. As stated in the opening of this subsection, understanding the elements that have an impact on how social media as a communication strategy is important for the dissertation.

The most prevalent elements impacting an organisation's adoption of social media as a communication strategy are interaction, compatibility, cost effectiveness, perceived trust, technical & organisational acceptance, and capacity (Museli & Jafari Navimipour, 2018; Tajudeen et al., 2018; Qalati et al., 2021).

Each facet will be briefly discussed below, which will serve as a foundation for determining whether these factors are truly relevant in the South African context once all data has been collected and analysed. The results of the collection of data will cast light on the significance and importance of these elements.

3.7.1 Interactivity factors

It was suggested by Frasquet et al. (2017) that trust develops through interactions with other people. Within the realm of social media, the term "interactivity" refers to the degree to which a company's social media platforms make it possible for customers to engage in two-way communication with the company as well as with other customers (Majid et al., 2019; Lew & Stohl, 2022). Online engagement in the context of NPOs gives organisations more chances to exhibit their calibre and quality.

Additionally, the two-way communication made possible by online interaction helps provides information regarding the altruistic activities being supported by the NPO to prospective donors (Behl et al., 2023). Haro-de-Rosario et al. (2018) observed that organisations' relational trust in social media increased when there was increased interactivity.

As a result, it has been argued that the level of trust that consumers perceive will be more highly proportionate to the level of interactivity that they feel they receive from a business. The

aim of the dissertation is to provide additional details on this particular facet by highlighting the breadth in which interaction elements play a role within health-related NPOs.

3.7.2 Compatibility

Technological issues such as relative advantage, complexity, and compatibility have a substantial impact on innovation adoption (Min et al., 2019). The extent to which an innovation is perceived to be superior to the idea it replaces is described as relative advantage (Leckie et al., 2018). Xu et al. (2020) believe that the perception of an innovation as beneficial and compatible determines its adoption. Compatibility is defined as the extent to which a new technology is viewed as being compatible with a current system (Lee & Blouin, 2019).

Previous research on innovation adoption specifies that compatibility has a significant and positive effect on organisational innovation adoption (Lee & Blouin, 2019). Compatibility with users' values, beliefs, and past experiences in their social system are factors influencing innovation acceptance (Yuen et al., 2021). A high level of perceived complexity will have a negative influence on innovation, such as social media adoption (Yoo et al., 2018).

Innovations that are easier to understand and use are embraced faster than those that require the acquisition of new skills and understanding (Urbinati et al., 2020).

3.7.3 Cost effectiveness

social media platforms have attracted widespread interest in the for-profit and NPO sectors as a cost-effective means to reach out to individuals (Arigo et al., 2018; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). In general, social media business pages/profiles are simple to manage and usually free to set up (Shaltoni, 2017; Sponder & Khan, 2019; Wilson, 2019). On the other hand, creating and managing a website takes time and money, although this has been reduced by advancements in content management systems (CMS) such as Joomla, Drupal and WordPress (Ab Ghani et al., 2020; Louraço & Marques, 2022).

Decision-makers may therefore favour using social networking over establishing a specific website for their business, especially in small businesses. However, because deployment requires a defined strategy to produce the desired outcomes, social media accounts may not completely guarantee marketing success (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

NPOs are frequently in a situation where the most cost-effective methods of marketing are critical to the long-term viability of their organisations (Bandyopadhyay & Ray, 2020; Polivka & Polivka-West, 2020) and with social media providing a clear path for this, the dissertation

aimed to discover whether these cost-effective platforms are being used to their full potential within South African health-related NPOs.

3.7.4 Trust

An example of trust can be seen when one party firmly believes that another party, whom they trust, will act in a manner that meets their expectations. These expectations typically involve the trusted party behaving with honour, integrity, and good intentions. In essence, the trusting party is confident that the trusted party will uphold these values in their actions (Fawcett et al., 2017). Trust is an essential component of a fruitful association between an organisation and a consumer, and it has a favourable impact on the consumer's intention to purchase or donate (Konuk, 2018; Thomas & Jadeja, 2021).

In the context of social media, trust is an essential component for completing online interactions, as well as for influencing the level of activity involved in networking and the exchange of information (Hansen et al., 2018; Pentina et al., 2018). NPOs have always relied on personal ties as part of their primary fundraising approach (Eng et al., 2020).

This can be a difficulty for the social media sector, as online groups are easy to build but may lack substance and ultimately trust (Deibert, 2019). Researchers examined supporters' social media activity and found no link between social media use and the chance of making an online donation to an NPO (Feng et al., 2017). Active supporters of an NPO on the other hand, show a favourable association between their use of social media and their desire to provide money (Young, 2017). NPOs are frequently in a situation where the most cost-effective methods of marketing are critical to the long-term viability of their organisations (Sorensen et al., 2017).

3.7.5 Technology and organisational acceptance

The organisational and technology context describes the internal elements that influence the acceptance of innovation in a company (Awa et al., 2017). Executive support is an essential aspect in determining an organisation's readiness to accept and adopt social media as a marketing communication strategy (Chung et al., 2017; Matikiti et al., 2018).

Nisar et al. (2019) argue that in the context of social media, members of an organisation require the support of their top managers in order to successfully engage with social media. This assistance may require significant investments in IT infrastructure such as hardware and software deployment and maintenance (Fagerholm et al., 2017). Financial resources have a strong impact on how organisations operate (Popovič et al., 2018).

Oji et al. (2017) state that financial resource allocation is a vital component of successful social media adoption. Khan and Khan (2019) believe that the availability of resources, including personnel, to engage in social media communications, as well as the availability of social media training, has a substantial relationship with an organisation's innovativeness. Various NPOs are at different parts of their journey when it comes to social media integration and adoption, with organisational acceptance often playing a huge role in terms of their success (Oeij et al., 2019).

3.7.6 Capacity

When it comes to building a social media strategy for an NPO, there are numerous obstacles to overcome (Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Stieglitz et al., 2018). A very commonly stated obstacle is a lack of resources and capacity, typically in terms of personnel and time to create and implement the strategy (Meyer & Xin, 2018). NPOs may also have difficulty obtaining support from their board of directors to implement an social media strategy (Meyer & Xin, 2018; Sun & Asencio, 2019). Due to the increasing use of social media, there are generational disparities in how to best engage supporters. As the usage of social media becomes more widespread, it is suggested that these difficulties—resource constraints, lack of board support, and generational disparities in social media usage—may lessen (Martí et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2019). This could be due to increased familiarity and comfort with social media across all age groups, as well as a growing recognition of the importance of social media in the non-profit sector, which could lead to more resources being allocated to this area. Often in the NPO landscape, resources are minimal and reliance on volunteers is of utmost important to keep overheads at a minimum (Bance, 2018).

Marketing, unfortunately, takes the back seat in NPOs as capacity is flagged and other projects are deemed more important for the sustainability of an NPO (Walters, 2021). For an NPO, it is critical to prioritise marketing, and if capacity is an issue, the involvement of skilled volunteers should be considered (Golensky & Hager, 2021).

Figure 3.6 depicts the findings of the determinants of the use of social media as a means of communication.

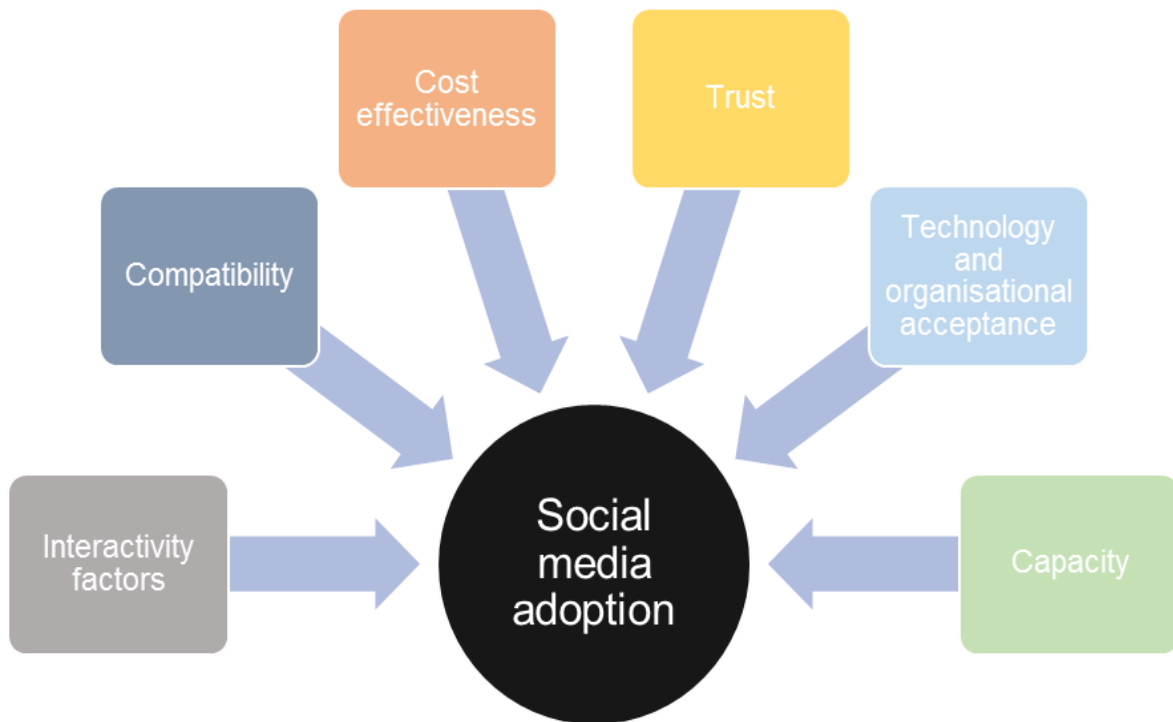


Figure 3.6: Adoption of social media

Source: Adapted from Abubakar et al. (2017)

3.8 Use of social media in the health NPO sector

NPOs are critical delivery channels for health promotion programmes (Zeimers et al., 2019; Gartner et al., 2021). NPOs may be able to implement social media techniques to establish and maintain the relationships they need with community members and other important stakeholders, which are a major source of their influence (Given et al., 2013; Rathi et al., 2014; Albanna et al., 2022). There is limited data describing whether and how NPOs use social media, and the dissertation aims to assess the extent to which NPOs engage in social media marketing communication strategies, use popular social media channels, the kinds of content that are commonly shared, and how much interactive social media tool functionality is employed.

A dissertation that measured social media use by community-based organisations participated in healthcare advancement found that 42 percent of the 166 organisations included in the census used at least one of the channels of interest (Tursunbayeva et al., 2017). The content's most frequent theme across the three channels was organisation promotion (93 percent of videos, 63 percent of tweets, and 66 percent of posts) (Tursunbayeva et al., 2017). The majority of organisations updated their Facebook and Twitter content regularly, but what was surprising was the lack of interaction/engagement with audience members.

Additionally, what was revealing about the dissertation is that all 24 qualifying articles were published within a period of five years (between 2011 and 2015), with a high of nine published in 2014. It was found that, on average, nearly two years elapse between the time of data collection and the publication of results, despite the fact that social media research is a "rapidly changing landscape" (Given et al., 2013; Albanna et al., 2022), which implies that the traditional academic literature may be lagging in the capacity of a source of necessary information on social media in the health NPO sector.

One of the current inquiry's objectives is to scrutinise whether the use of social media in the South African health-related NPO sector is consistent with the literature, as well as whether NPOs are engaging with social media and to what extent.

3.8.1 Social media budget and paid advertising

Both paid and unpaid material can be found on social media (Cahill et al., 2019). In the event of a sponsored post, the sponsor has paid for their brand to be strategically put on a user's newsfeed through interest targeting, which should ideally correlate with something users are interested in buying, supporting, or engaging with (Liu et al., 2018; Appel et al., 2020). An organic post, on the other hand, is one in which the logo or product is clearly featured but is not the primary centre of attention, and which only appears on one's feed as a result of previous engagement with the company or brand (liking the page) (DeVito, 2017; Gavilanes et al., 2018).

NPOs are increasingly turning to social media platforms to assist them reach their public engagement goals (Albanna et al., 2022). However, certain aspects of these organisations make successful use of social media platforms challenging in particular the concept of paid advertising (Sun & Asencio, 2019; Haenlein et al., 2020). Several obstacles in NPOs, such as a lack of awareness, inefficient social media performance measurement, insufficient organisational resources, and a lack of financial resources, are reasons why many NPOs do not engage in or offer budgets for paid advertising (Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020).

Thornhill et al. (2017) proposes that social media can be classified as either earned, paid, or owned, media, focusing regarding the question of who owns an organisation's media outlets or other channels. Thornhill et al. (2017) argues that social media can be divided into owned, paid or earned media depending on the ownership of the channels/media activities of a

business. Owned media refers to media kinds produced or developed by channels controlled by the organisation, e.g., a company's Facebook page, Twitter account, or website.

Childers et al. (2019) believe that paid media refers to instances in which an organisation generates and pays for adverts. Advertising is the use of media that includes Google AdWords, Facebook advertising and sponsored posts, and display adverts. Carboni & Maxwell (2015) and Childers et al. (2019) state that these media can help develop both owned and earned media. On the other hand, not all businesses may use paid advertising. This may be because of budgetary restrictions, as it is with NPOs. In contrast to the previous two types, earned media refers to channels or media that are regarded as unregulated and unpaid for by the organisation (Bell, 2019). These activities or channels are not generated by the organisation directly, but rather are the result of stakeholder dialogues, such as WOM (Bell, 2019). Earned media can also be classified as social or conventional media, depending on whether it is generated through online or offline relationships, as well as traditional or print marketing, public relations, and/or advertising (Kang & Kim, 2017; Bell, 2019; Lies, 2019).

Social media adverts have the ability to be utilised for a multitude of purposes in the NPO market, including expanding their audience base, raising funds, driving awareness of their cause, and even recruiting members of the organisation. There is little research on South African health-related paid advertising methods. However, the dissertation does shed further light on how health-related NPOs perceive sponsored social media advertising and whether or not they are engaging in Chapter 6.

Table 3.3: Important aspects of strategic marketing through social media

Type of media	Characteristics and roles	Examples
Earned	Consumer-created content, media or channels that are not owned or paid for by the business, and transparency and permanence as a result of effectively used sponsored and owned media, and the ability to listen to and respond to eWOM or WOM.	Social tagging, sharing, comments, reposts, retweets, online mentions of traditional publicity, social interactions on social media channels, and face to face dialogues.
Paid	To ensure immediateness and serve as an amplifier for earned and owned media, the brand invests to capitalise on the media or channel.	Instagram sponsored posts, Twitter sponsored tweets, and Facebook paid advertising.
Owned	The media or conduit is owned by the brand, extending its reach and fostering enduring connections.	Blog or website (completely controlled), Twitter and Facebook account (partly controlled), LinkedIn and Facebook publishing tools.

Source: Adapted from Thornhill et al. (2017)

3.8.2 Content published on social media

Businesses must create content that engages with customers, generates dialogue, and establishes a line of connection with them (Andriof et al., 2017; Brubaker & Wilson, 2018). Increased exposure and brand image of an organisation through active content engagement and publishing can lead to a positive or negative perception through social media for the respective organisation (Na et al., 2020). When an NPO organisation utilises social media, the primary objective should be to connect with individuals who have a need for the organisation's services or who are unfamiliar with the organisation's offers but would like to support it financially or by donating their time (Roberts et al., 2017). Many NPOs are increasingly implementing marketing principles and practises, and social media now provides a platform to share one's content widely (Bezuidenhout, 2017).

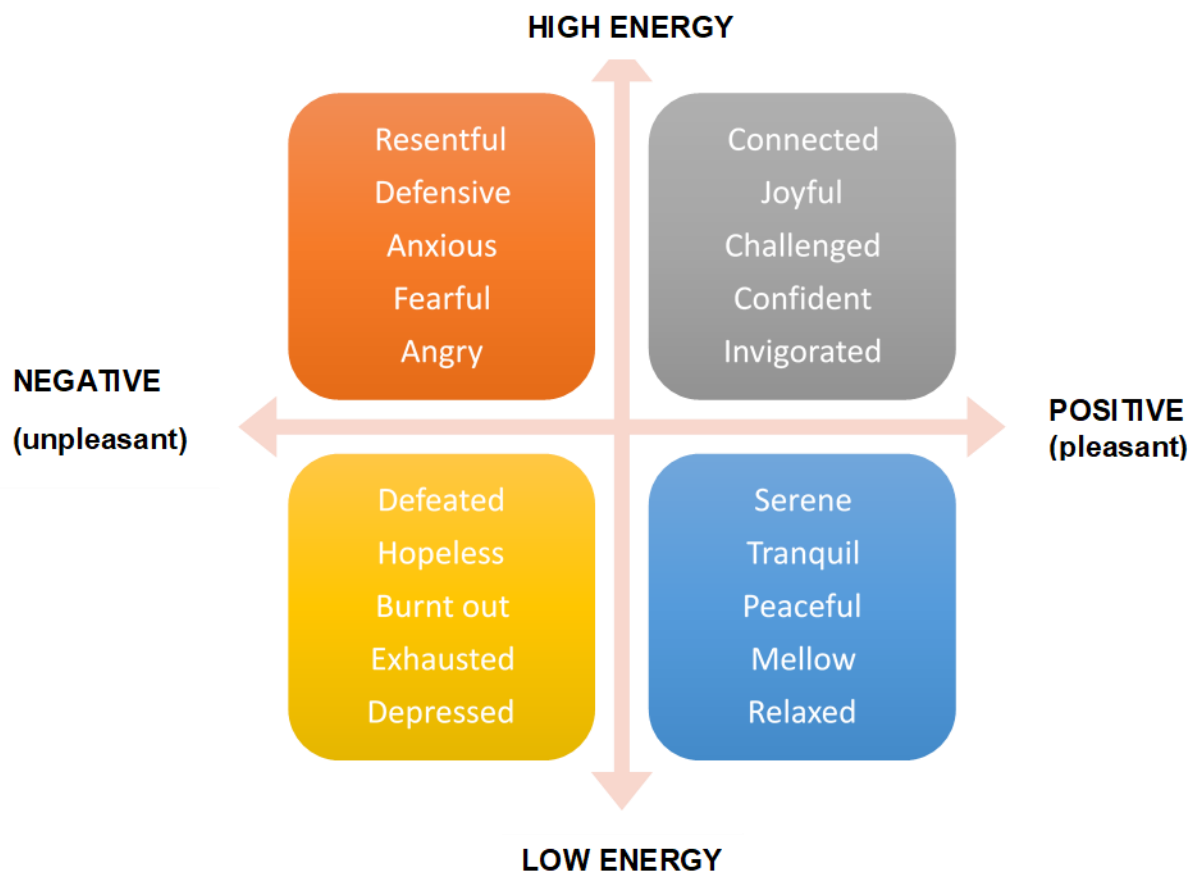


Figure 3.7: Energy, emotion and content performance

Source: Adapted from Leary (2022)

Figure 3.7 above discusses the various energy engagement levels of social media content that are relevant to NPOs. It is suggested that NPOs consider the emotion that the post is intended to evoke in their respective target audiences. Leary (2022) pointed out that by aiming

for high-energy emotions, one can increase the likelihood of people sharing or acting on the content. For example, an audience may respond strongly to an image or video that an NPO has shared about the impact of their organisation's work/services in a specific community or for a specific individual. These images or stories are typically uplifting and elicit a very positive response from the audience, which frequently results in a post having the potential to go viral due to the uplifting nature it portrays. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio discovered several years ago that patients whose brain injury rendered them emotionally insensitive were unable to make even the most basic decisions (Vaccaro et al., 2020). As a result, he exemplified the significance of emotions in decision making. It is critical to use people's emotions in marketing; various techniques can be employed to tap into individuals unconscious, target their points of pain, emotional side, and encourage them to behave without giving it much thought when considering the desired message for an audience (Decker, 2018; Nanavati, 2022).

Seelig et al. (2019) published a dissertation that highlighted how critical it is for NPOs to maximise visual presence when sharing content on social media. The dissertation looked at the importance of creating a strong presence through a straightforward layout that makes use of both text and images to clearly convey an organisation's mission and values to potential supporters. Since social media are typically the initial point to reach for the general population, it is assumed that they will give a brief overview of who they are (Seelig et al., 2019). Blog entries are updated, videos and photos are shown, informative facts are posted, stories and profiles are often refreshed. NPOs vary the tone of messages in content posted (Leary, 2022). As a result, the NPO has a visually distinct presence that expresses its personality and across all media channels, has a uniform look and feel (Seelig et al., 2019; Leary, 2022).

It was also suggested that NPOs use unique images rather than generic images to maximise visual presence. Seelig et al. (2019) found that organisations that used individual pictures rather than groups of photos and images elicited emotions, and that success stories that demonstrated how actions resulted in positive outcomes were highlighted. Rather than selecting the most aesthetic image, organisations should select the best illustration to convey to help the target market understand the NPO's objectives. This research considered the types of content that health-related NPOs post on their various social media platforms.

3.8.3 Scheduling content on social media

Building a following on social media enables content channels to increase online marketing communication income from impressions generated by clicks on social media post links and drive visitors to their own websites (Kanuri et al., 2018). Content platforms, on the other hand,

struggle to create profitable social media schedules in order to maximise website traffic stemming from their social media pages (Dolega et al., 2021). According to Kanuri et al. (2018), to create a profitable social media programme, a content conduit must first answer the following, "When is the best time to post content on social media?"

By publishing articles, content platforms can increase their social media viewership while also receiving income from impressions brought on by clicks on social media post links (Ayodeji & Kumar, 2019). However, optimal social media post scheduling is difficult, venues for content must choose when and what to post (Puomisto, 2020). social media managers bemoan this complication, and academic literature and research provides little direction, particularly on the involvement of health NPOs in this area.

This may imply that those working in social media should look for a scheduling solution that not only tells them when to publish (at what time of day), but also tells them what kind of content they should post and when (Cooper, 2021). Establishing the best time to post meaningful content on social media platforms is the first step in developing a social media posting schedule that will be successful. Existing social media management software platforms are available for scheduling content, namely Sprout Social, Post Planner, Tailwind, Buffer, CoSchedule, and Hootsuite.

3.8.4 Content strategies: images and videos

The more popular social media platforms enable businesses to disseminate their communiqué and market themselves (Qualman, 2012), the greater the competition becomes, and the more questions arise about the best content strategy and mix of image and video for maximum engagement (Syrdal & Briggs, 2018). All posts scheduled by an organisation's blog, website, or social media page should be consistently circulated across the aforesaid categories (Garg & Pahuja, 2020). The following flow is suggested: 1) Content about the organisation, news, accomplishments, and updated information on the progress of different initiatives; 2) content created by others or organisations that is relevant to the topic and stimulates participation; and 3) posts that stimulate viewers participation, such as discussions, questions, surveys, and polls regarding delicate subjects (Clauss et al., 2020; Diefenbach, 2022).

The 80/20 rule is the second approach, which is based on the sociologist Pareto's economic philosophy (Nar, 2021). At least 80 percent of the information should be educational, informative, valuable, non-promotional, and useful to the recipient (Nar, 2021). The remaining 20 percent should be unequivocally promotional, and by observing this guideline, an

organisation should ideally maintain a good balance of content and promotion, and avoid giving users the impression of a brand or organisation that is overly promotional (Nar, 2021).

People are enthralled by stories. Many studies and studies have shown that telling a story aids its audience in remembering the story's meaning (Crowther et al., 2017; Berends & Deken, 2021). Over three quarters of individuals believe that stories are essential for getting points across, particularly when dealing with delicate and complex issues (Di Lauro et al., 2019). It is often fairly simple to find sensitive stories to share with the audience in order to raise awareness when promoting a cause (Di Lauro et al., 2019). It has been proposed that images and videos are simpler for people to process than text; therefore, as an NPO, creating compelling visual content is essential for capturing users' attention, appealing to them, and prompting them to pause their news stream scrolling (Harman, 2017; Nuckols, 2020).

Tonetti (2019) is of the opinion that positive testimonials, content, images, videos and reviews attract donations like a magnet. New donors will be more easily attracted if evidence is provided that they will be pleased with their donation and that the outcome is real and measurable (Tonetti, 2019).

3.8.5 Use of strategic hashtag marketing for brand awareness

A crucial tool for establishing a small business' brand is hashtag marketing. Holt (2022) states that 92 percent of small businesses experienced an increase in online sales by using hashtags strategically.

Hashtags (marked by the sign #) show that a message is about a certain subject (Potnis & Tahamtan, 2021). Hashtags have commonly been referred to as an easier way to find information. For instance, a search for "healthcare" would yield results if an individual wanted to learn more about the subject, but a search for "#healthcare" would guarantee that all hits were related to the subject (Bush, 2016; Sharma et al., 2020). When hashtags are established and widely used, they function optimally. This frequently occurs when an organisation suggests that people keened in a conversation or event use a certain hashtag (Buarki & Alkhateeb, 2018; Rauschnabel et al., 2019). For example, after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the American Red Cross asked people to utilise the hashtag #Haiti to communicate inquiries and disseminate information about their humanitarian operations (Schmidt et al., 2018).

It has become an essential tactic in digital marketing to make use of hashtags because they serve as the backbone of online conversations (Digital Marketing Institute, 2022). These conversations that are sparked as a result of the use of hashtags can include both meaningful dialogue between users and brands, as well as sporadic, unplanned sentiments (Willemsen

et al., 2019). As a result of this, hashtags have the potential to assist in the formation of an online brand community for an organisation and have the potential to be useful in understanding and targeting important segments of users or raising awareness of important topics relevant to the organisation (Naraine et al., 2021).

Despite the growing interest in social media strategies for non-profit organisations, there is limited academic research specifically on the value of using hashtags for South African health-related NPOs (Healthcare Social Media South Africa, n.d.; Padayachee, 2023). Thus this dissertation determined if health-related NPOs find value in using hashtags as part of brand awareness and if it forms part of an overall social media marketing communication strategy.

3.8.6 Most effective social media platforms for NPOs

The rise of social media as a force in modern marketing has been game-changing, and this is true for NPOs as well (Lock & Seele, 2017). A smart and targeted approach to social media can be a critical cornerstone of a company's or organisations modern marketing strategy, rather than just a creative way to supplement old-school tactics (Newlands, 2017; Zafari, 2017).

For NPOs, the right social media strategy can mean the difference between achieving important fundraising and organising goals and falling short. With so many social media platforms to choose from, it can be difficult to determine which is the best fit for an organisation's needs (Kane, 2017) and which are the most effective, especially when resources are often limited. There are usually four legacy social media channels that predominately are marketed as the most effective social media platforms, and they are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Rosie's Creative LLC (2020) report states that Facebook remains the uncontested king of social media as it is more than simply an excellent tool to increase the visibility of an organisation. Furthermore, Dwivedi et al. (2021) believe that Facebook is equally an excellent platform for storytelling and community development, and it also provides tools to promote charitable giving, crisis response, and other activities of particular importance to organisations; and that any NPO looking to establish a presence on the social web should start with Facebook.

The second channel, Twitter, provides value in its capacity to promote open, real-time dialogue with followers, especially if the intention is to establish a community around the organisation and keep supporters up to date (Abeza et al., 2020; Drummond et al., 2020). Following on from Twitter is LinkedIn, which is an excellent platform to demonstrate NPOs commercial side and create a credible image to an educated, professional audience. It has often been

described as an excellent place to locate new employees, volunteers, or investors, as well as to connect with other groups and businesses whose goals may overlap with one’s own organisation (Prunty, 2021). The last of the legacy group is Instagram. It has been said that emotional marketing is critical for organisations, and through powerful images and narrowly targeted storytelling, there is no greater approach to emotionally engage fans, and Instagram excels at this (Michail, 2016; Kim & Sullivan, 2019). A photo-sharing website with a great deal of user interaction is ideal for organisations that want to tell a story with photographs.

3.8.7 Social media posting frequency

Like all other forms of marketing, social media marketing is about seizing the interest of current and potential customers (Keutelian, 2022). However, creating and disseminating engaging and excellent postings is only the beginning of social media marketing success (Keutelian, 2022). Knowing the best time to post something on social media are critical for reaching the right people at the right time. Ferreira (2021) posited the question of how often should companies post on social media. Ferreira (2021) and Keutelian (2022) concur that a company’s ability to engage with followers and increase positive brand mentions may be improved by posting more frequently on social media. However, according to Salazar (2017), over-posting will overwhelm followers, and Djafarova and Bowes (2021) state that to increase follower engagement and positive brand mentions, determining the optimal posting frequency for social media content is crucial. Table 3.4 below draws on recent industry data by Keutelian (2022) to determine the best time to post on various social media platforms, the frequency of posting, and the worst time to publish in terms of engagement rates.

Table 3.4: Social media posting frequency best practice

social media platform	Posting frequency	Best times to publish	Worst times for publishing
Facebook	Minimum of two posts daily	Wednesday 3pm, Thursday & Friday 1pm – 4pm, Saturday and Sunday 12pm – 1pm.	Monday – Sunday, between 8pm – 8am.
Instagram	Minimum of three posts daily	Monday – Friday between 6am – 9am, 12pm – 2pm and 5pm – 6pm.	Monday – Sunday, between 3pm to 4pm.
Twitter	Three times as a minimum	Monday – Friday, between 9am – 3pm and Wednesday 5pm – 6pm.	Monday – Friday, between 8pm to 9am.
LinkedIn	Twice a day maximum	Tuesdays – Wednesdays, between 7:30am – 8:30am, 12pm, 5pm – 6pm.	Monday – Sunday, between 10pm – 6am.

Source: Adapted from Ferreira (2021) and Keutelian (2022)

Although engagement on each social network increases at different times and days of the week, an organisation must still tailor its approach to its audience. Certain types of content

may perform better at specific times (McLachlan, 2020). For example, videos may perform well in the morning while images perform better in the late afternoon, or certain posting frequencies may not align with how a given organisation operates, necessitating an ad hoc strategy of posting content when possible and appropriate (Lilach, 2022). This dissertation aimed to uncover how health-related NPOs in South Africa engage with the topic, and whether the literature reviewed above corresponds to what this research indicates within the organisations studied.

3.8.8 Social media campaign measurement

Measuring results is an excellent way to find out how social media fit into an organisation and which medium works best for the respective objectives. Therefore, this study needs to ascertain dissertation to ascertain how social media usage is measured by South African health-related NPOs and how it relates to those organisations' overarching objectives.

Members of these organisations can ascertain how helpful the various social media platforms are for them by experimenting with and analysing them. While there are numerous claims that social media promotions have a positive influence on the impact on outcomes of businesses, social media differ from conventional media and necessitate unique measurement metrics (Colicev et al., 2018; Li et al., 2021). Researchers from a variety of fields have made an attempt to create social media measurement instruments and a number of these instruments focus on attitude-based engagement indicators (Sugimoto et al., 2017; Ansari & Khan, 2020).

Harrigan et al. (2017) for example, defined social media engagement via the following scales: dedication (platform challenges, inspiration, enthusiasm, pride, and a sense of importance), absorption (totally engrossed and concentrated), and vigour (readiness to devote time and energy).

The authors recommended using these constructs in studies by other investigators to examine involvement and engagement of customers. Lee et al. (2019) also developed an attitudinal scale to assess social media marketing activities based on five constructs: customisation, trendiness, interaction, entertainment, and WOM. Gautam and Sharma (2017) and Yoong and Lian (2019) used structural equation modelling in the tourism industry to investigate how customers' interactions with organisational social media pages, such as Facebook and Twitter, influenced purchase and referral intentions. Furthermore, academic literature covers a wide range of similar engagement indicators such as the number of followers, page views, website traffic, time spent on pages, comments posted, and information sharing (Camarero et al.,

2018; Tiago et al., 2018; Lal et al., 2020; Boujena et al., 2021; Marques et al., 2021). This dissertation will look at how health-related NPOs measure the success of their social media activities and campaigns.

3.9 NPO engagement of social media during COVID-19

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to explore how NPOs have adapted their usage of social media to navigate the challenges and seize opportunities during this unprecedented time.

3.9.1 NPOs usage of social media during COVID-19

The significance of NPOs in our society and the critical role they played during the COVID-19 pandemic, not only in terms of service but also in terms of advocacy for the marginalised, cannot be overstated (Akingbola, 2020; Martins et al., 2021).

NPOs can use social media marketing to promptly respond to emergencies and to connect with targeted audiences both locally and worldwide (Abbasi et al., 2018; Luna & Pennock, 2018). Seelig et al. (2019) agree that NPOs can use social media to convey their mission, raise awareness, and new issues, campaigns, and initiatives, and reach out to people who need help. When things return to a supposed "normal", Singhal (2020) mentioned that three-quarters of users who had gone online in the recent months of social distancing and lockdown would almost certainly keep using the new technologies and that offline consumption, on the other hand, appeared unlikely to return to pre-COVID-19 levels (Kulkarni, 2020).

Many NPO professionals see digital channels as merely a supplement to traditional channels; however, incorporating digital into a marketing and communications strategy can help other channels reach their full potential within a multi-touchpoint fundraising funnel (Arora, 2021).

The pandemic pushed most NPOs to diversify their revenue streams and supporter segments (Wheeler, 2021), while also speeding the procedures that were beginning to upgrade organisations' communication methods since they were being compelled to work in a world that was virtually fully digital (Blackburn et al., 2020). NPOs use social media extensively, but not much is understood as to how these online communication methods were utilised for fundraising, in particular regarding the benefits and drawbacks and the best methods for getting the most out of such initiatives, particularly during COVID-19 (Albanna et al., 2022). One of the dissertation's objectives was to close that gap by gathering, analysing, and synthesising the data.

3.9.2 Opportunity for NPO social media marketing during COVID-19

NPOs have always played an essential function in promoting health, and in health promotion efforts, social media is widely used (Di Lauro et al., 2019). However, there is a lack of evidence on how NPOs that want to increase their impact in terms of health promotion used social media, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figueroa & Aguilera, 2020). The global pandemic and its far-reaching consequences caused widespread uncertainty and stress (Figueroa & Aguilera, 2020). The NPO sector, like individuals attempting to plan their next steps, grappled with how to manage reactions to the crisis. Many NPOs were on the front lines of the pandemic response and often they lacked the resources to make significant changes to their marketing strategies and budgets (Berenguer & Shen, 2020). There were numerous new environments, channels, and opportunities. Smart, targeted marketing that struck the right tone could assist NPOs in overcoming the crisis, stretching their budgets, reaching new audiences, and even growing (Waniak-Michalak et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic continued to wreak havoc around the world, and NPOs did everything they could to adapt during this trying time (Clampit et al., 2021). As the demand for their services grew, so did the demand for funds, and there was a source of revenue that many of these NPOs overlooked, namely social media marketing (Cazorla Milla et al., 2017; Kaul & Luo, 2018).

It has been found that donors' devotion to the causes they support has not waned; they continue to have a need and desire to give, and NPOs continue to have a need to receive in order to fund programmes during this period of uncertainty. social media marketing is an important component of any omni-channel fundraising strategy, but it should not be viewed as a transaction (Cakir et al., 2021; Ngubelanga & Duffett, 2021). NPOs currently have a strong opportunity to use digital advertising to drive long-term growth for their organisations (Tonetti, 2019). It is essential to keep in front of one's audience and share one's mission and impact through social media marketing. Equally so, this is also an opportunity to reach out to a new audience and raise brand awareness. Research showed an increase in online fundraising revenue from NPOs who fought the COVID-19 pandemic (Sarea & Bin-Nashwan, 2021). It remains unclear what the long-term effects of the coronavirus will be on the economy and the NPO community as a whole, and this inquiry intends to highlight the sector and their social media efforts during the pandemic through the dissertation.

3.10 Acceptance of new technology in social media adoption

Social media sites, which reach billions of people worldwide, offer businesses an effective way to communicate with potential customers (Saurel, 2020). By strategically adopting and utilising

social media as a marketing communication strategy, NPOs can foster public involvement and attract donors by creating a supportive online community through their digital presence (Albanna et al., 2022; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020). Over 67 percent of NPOs worldwide accept online donations, and online giving is growing at a rate of about 7 percent per year (NonProfit Source, 2022). Unfortunately, NPOs do not use online exposure effectively to influence stakeholder behaviour (Florenthal et al., 2020). They are more concerned with informing their online followers about NPO aspects rather than income-related campaigns or issues for an audience made up primarily of technologically sophisticated users who want to be socially conscious (Florenthal et al., 2020). The TAM model is used in this dissertation to investigate social media preferences and motivations within South African health-related NPOs. The TAM was first put forth by Davis in 1989, which has since grown to be the most popular model for analysing how users accept new technology (Davis, 1989). TAM, which developed from the TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action), is used to dissertation how environmental factors affect people's attitudes, intentions, and beliefs about how to use new technology (Buabeng-Andoh, 2018).

TAM reflects the fact that a new technology's actual use depends on the attitude of the user toward it, i.e., its PEOU, and the perceived advantages that are associated with utilising it (which are depicted in Figure 3.8 below).

As a result, the two variables of PEOU and PU are used to forecast behaviour. According to this model, if a person believes that using a particular technology will help improve productivity or provide some advantages for the business, they will be willing to do so (Shaw & Sergueeva, 2019). People will not be hesitant to adopt new technology if they believe it will be simple to implement. According to the dissertation, if NPOs understand the benefits of using social media marketing and can use it easily, they will be more willing to accept it.

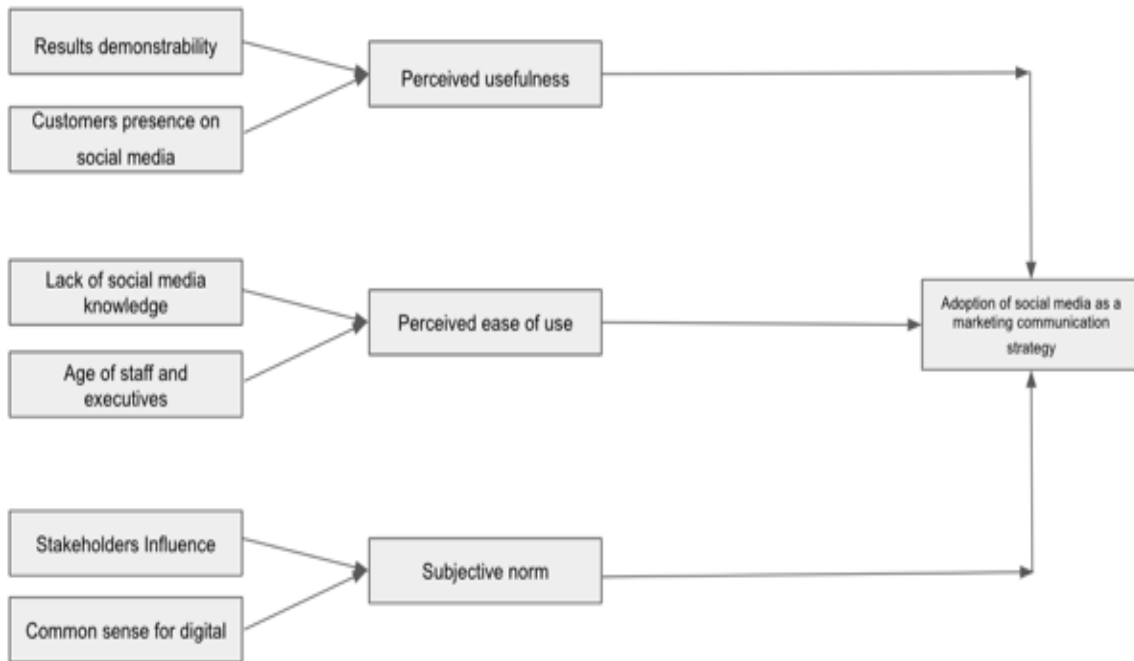


Figure 3.8: Proposed model of social media marketing communication strategy

Source: Adapted from Bogeia and Brito (2018)

The current dissertation's primary goals are to determine whether South African health-related NPOs use social media and to assess the extent to which they do. The popularity of social media may be perceived as an effective means of communicating with their audience by health non-profits, particularly in terms of raising awareness and, ultimately, donations through these platforms.

3.11 Summary

To begin the chapter, there was a concise discussion of social networks and various forms of social media. An effort was made, using categorisation and functionality, to illustrate the differences that exist among the various kinds of social networks. In the course of this research, a comprehensive look was taken at particular social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube; however, references were also made to a number of other platforms. Within the context of both for-profit organisations and NPOs, research was conducted to investigate and contextualise the use of social media as a communication strategy. An investigation into the use of social media among such organisations was conducted after the variables that either encourage or restrict its use, e.g., resource and organisational considerations were explored. The advantages of utilising this communication channel and the potential effects it might have on an organisation that has adopted it were examined using a dissertation of the literature from previous and recent studies. The investigation focused on determining the impact it might have on organisations. The chapter came to a close with a discussion on the utilisation of social media by NPOs during COVID-

19 as well as the presentation of TAM as the theoretical model for this research endeavour. The following chapter takes a look at the research methodology and design that was chosen as being the most appropriate for this research, which investigates the social media utilisation as a marketing communication strategic tool among health-related NPOs in the Western Cape of South Africa.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

A comprehensive dissertation of NPOs was conducted, which examined the history of NPOs both globally and in South Africa, as well as numerous variables influencing the sector was outlined in the second chapter. The third chapter centred on how the internet connectivity has developed and the innovations in technology that have transformed how users interact with brands, businesses, and NPOs. Furthermore, the chapter concentrated on the adaptation and adoption of social media channel for transferring information and connecting with users, which is frequently impacted by a variety of variables that may limit or stimulate its usage.

The earlier chapters make up the secondary research that was employed to supplement the investigation and help it achieve its intended goals. The chapter's primary goal is to outline the dissertation's research approach and methods. This is accomplished by first reviewing the dissertation objectives, then the research perspective and approach. The procedure used to recruit respondents, gathering data, processing it, reducing it, and interpreting it that are all part of the research process. The measures required to ensure the dissertation's validity and dependability are described in detail.

4.2 Philosophy and research paradigm

This dissertation adopts a bottom-up interpretivist approach, which emphasises the importance of understanding the beliefs, reasons, attitudes, and perceptions of the subjects (Scotland, 2012). Such an approach recognises that reality may be influenced by one's frame of reference. The researcher acknowledges that science alone may not be sufficient to discover the truth, as knowledge may also be acquired through the dissertation of logic, philosophy, and theology. Given this perspective, this investigation is grounded in the interpretivist epistemology, as it is believed that the world should be viewed through the perspective of its people (Firestone, 1987). The inductive interpretivist school of thought was chosen as the best method to gain rich views and details from the respondents in order to achieve the research objectives regarding their respective NPOs and their use of social media as a marketing communication strategy. The interpretivist paradigm is well-suited for interpreting social media usage as a marketing communication strategy, as these dimensions are fundamental theoretical foundations of the present investigation.

4.3 Orientation

Haydam and Steenkamp's (2020) revised interpretation of Saunders et al. (2009) research onion model guides the chapter. Concurring with this model, the process begins with

determining the dissertation's base of knowledge and proceeds in nine steps, the final of which is data gathering and analysis (Saunders et al., 2009; Haydam & Steenkamp, 2020). In this regard, see Figure 4.1. The new research onion technique as applied to the dissertation's nine interconnected stages is presented below.

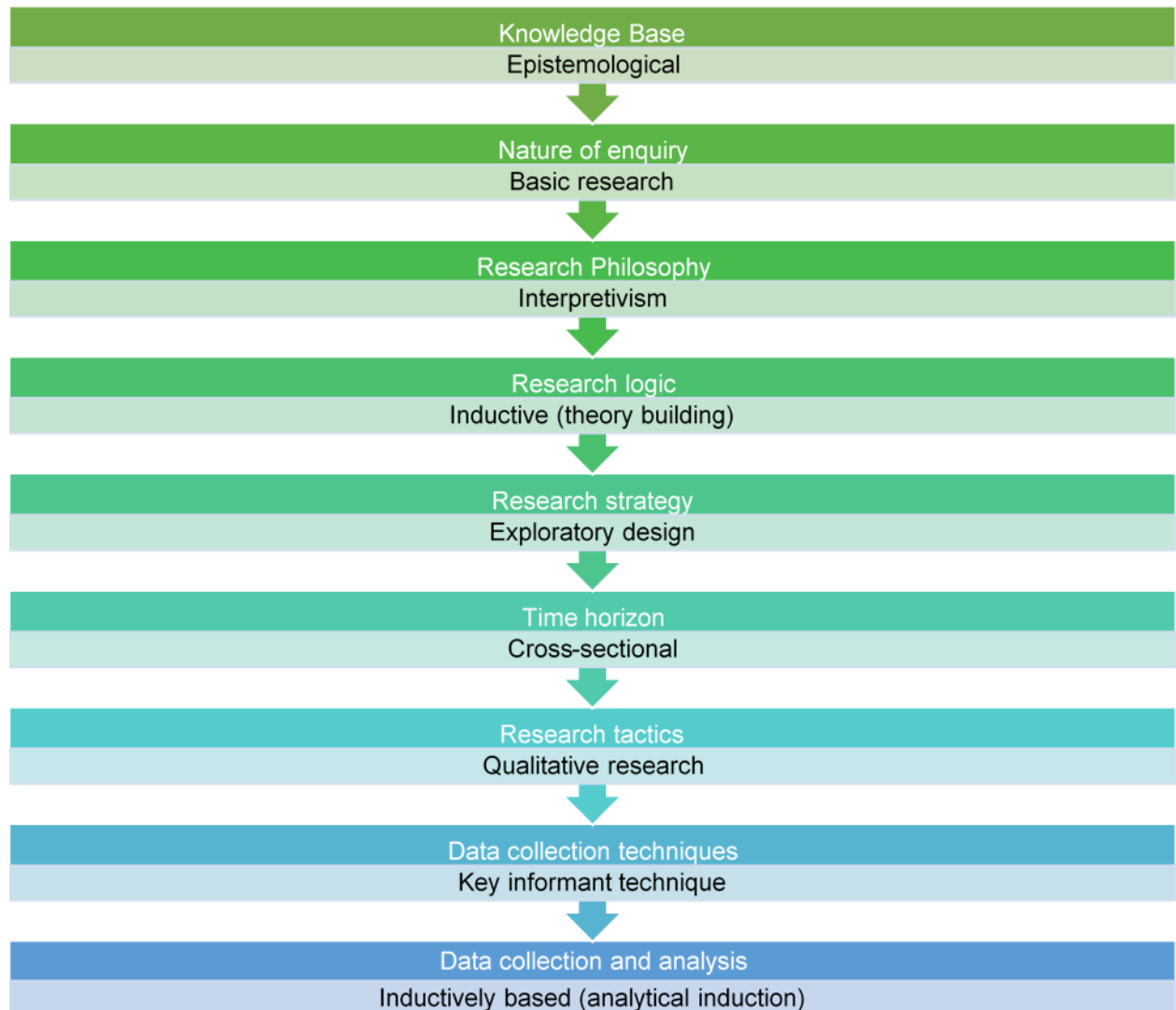


Figure 4.1: Research orientation selection

Source: Adapted from Haydam and Steenkamp (2020)

4.3.1 Knowledge base

The pursuit of knowledge is the cornerstone for all research dissertation and the source of all scientific interactions. For example, Al-Amoudi and Willmott (2011) and Goldman et al. (2018) divide these engagements into four fundamental elements of scientific inquiry: (i) epistemological dimensions, (ii) methodological dimensions, (iii) social dimensions, and (iv) ontological dimensions. Given the foregoing, this dissertation employs a qualitative ontological research methodology and process. Through scientific knowledge, it depicts the social environment as 'reality' and defines its fundamental reality, i.e. the 'unit of analysis', as 'formal

health organisations'. As a result, it conducts a corporate research dissertation among a chosen group of Western Cape health NPOs. This participation not only drives the used methodology, namely corporate research, but it also directs the qualitative data analysis process of social media practices among these health practitioners.

4.3.2 Nature of inquiry

Due to the nature of the inquiry, applied research is required, as opposed to basic research, which would have been the alternative option (Formplus Blog, 2020). The inquiry focuses on determining whether selected health NPOs in the Western Cape use social media as a marketing communication strategy. In-depth interviews served as the major method of qualitative data gathering used in this process, which enables it to accomplish this goal. In this regard, thirteen interviews were conducted with individuals working in various health-related fields in the Western Cape, South Africa, which can be viewed in more detail in Table 4.1.

4.3.3 Research philosophy

After the knowledge base has been defined in accordance with Figure 4.1, the research philosophy can next be described. Saunders et al. (2009) are of the belief that a researcher's perspective on how the world should be viewed is heavily influenced by the research philosophy that they choose. On the other hand, this enables researchers working within the chosen paradigm to defend the major assertions that are the focus of the investigation in a manner that is both structured and conclusive.

Haydam and Steenkamp (2020) believe that the most common research philosophical groupings can be classified in terms of the orientation that they take toward either the subjective or the objective aspects of scientific investigation. Positivism is the most objective of these philosophical views; on the other, social constructivism is seen as the most subjective. These philosophical systems can be categorised according to the extreme they fall into. The latter form of involvement describes the circumstances that a researcher participates in the process of data gathering while simultaneously sharing his or her own perspectives when reporting on the findings. This study makes use of the subjectivist philosophical orientation of interpretivism in its attempt to comprehend the reality that is the subject of the investigation, namely the implementation of social marketing in the health industry (Al-Amoudi & Willmott, 2011).

This investigation branched out into interpretivist epistemology because the researcher believes that the world should be seen through the eyes of its people. To achieve the research

objectives, the inductive interpretivism philosophy was chosen as the best approach for gathering rich detail and perspectives from respondents and their relationships with their respective NPOs, as well as social media as a marketing communication strategy. Furthermore, because these dimensions are influential theoretical foundations of the current investigation, the interpretivist paradigm is appropriate for interpreting social media usage as a marketing communication strategy.

4.3.4 Research argument

The rationale of research is ultimately determined by whether science is viewed in a subjective or objective manner. For example, a deductive approach to an objective perspective and subjective involvement, the logical arguments put forward would be inductive (De Vos, 2011). Being interpretive in nature, an *inductive engagement* is applied in seeking answers among health NPOs in the Western Cape. Inductive reasoning is used to categorise data into themes/categories and detect relationships between those themes/categories in qualitative research (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). It was critical for this dissertation to collect meaningful data from stakeholders' experiences and expertise; thus, the dissertation employed a qualitative research approach. Furthermore, the inquiry chose the qualitative research approach to be consistent with the research purpose and to observe and comprehend the participants' insights. Qualitative methods seek to comprehend people's or communities' experiences and attitudes (Pope & Mays, 1995).

Pope and Mays (1995) further elaborate that qualitative research allows researchers to interact intimately with participants and acquire further insight into the variable being studied, whereas Baxter and Jack (2015) believe that these methods try and address 'how', 'why', or 'what' questions. The primary aim of this investigation is to ascertain why, how, and whether health-related NPOs in the WC use social media, as well as whether they are used as a marketing communication strategy within the organisation. NPO-related studies by Park and Loo (2022), Su (2022), Weni (2022) and Zhang et al. (2022) also used qualitative research when examining the various facets of NPO engagement with social media; whether as a standalone platform or as a component of a larger marketing communication strategy, researchers also used qualitative research.

4.3.5 Research strategy and time horizon

The fifth step of Haydam and Steenkamp's (2020) revised research onion approach deals with research strategy. A research strategy, according to Saunders et al. (2009:106-109), is an

overall strategy for how an investigator would approach addressing the research questions. It covers the entire spectrum of scientific research in terms of content, including research questions and objectives, knowledge of the field as it currently stands, philosophical underpinnings, and research methodologies and procedures of the research approach. Haydam and Steenkamp (2020) group various strategies of research into five essential research designs, including (i) causal research design, (ii) observational, (iii) descriptive, (iv) exploratory, and (v) archival.

This dissertation applies two interlinked research designs, namely the *archival* and *exploratory research* designs. According to Haydam and Steenkamp (2020), the scientific premise that "science is a body or product of scientific knowledge" encompasses all information, whether it is kept on paper or electronically, and is backed by the documented framework of science.

The exploratory research design conversely postulates the proposition of "science as an ongoing practice of data collection" and falls in the premise of primary research (Dudovskiy, 2012). The research design (exploratory in nature) incorporates the data collection methods that supply this information to provide a more in-depth understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community, or individual. Exploratory research is a type of research that focuses on perplexing phenomena and serves as the foundation for subsequent descriptive or explanatory studies (Gill et al., 2008; Thomas, 2011).

Exploratory investigations are designed to generate preliminary ideas about areas with limited information. After identifying a research problem, a researcher can conduct exploratory research to see if there are any links between the problem and certain factors. Hollebeek (2013) notes that exploratory research investigates a problem in depth to identify perceptions, ideas, and insights. Implementing an exploratory research strategy yields rich data that aids in addressing the objectives of a dissertation's research questions (Curran et al., 2012). The primary goal of this inquiry was to gain ideas and understanding into the research problem, so it used an exploratory research strategy. Furthermore, because there are few studies on South African health-related NPOs' use of social media, the chosen research strategy aided in gathering new insights into the research topic. Being a once-off dissertation, in terms of the time horizon, the investigation is cross-sectional in design for both the archival and exploratory research designs (Saunders et al., 2009). This Haydam and Steenkamp (2020) see as the sixth step of the revised research onion process.

4.3.6 Research tactics

Step seven of Haydam and Steenkamp's revised research onion approach requires a suitable strategy or plan of action, as well as approaches and procedures for conducting research, for both archival and exploratory research designs. A literature review is required for the archival research design, and (basic) qualitative research is required for the exploratory research design. In addition, each research tactic is accompanied by data collection technique(s) and method(s), which form part of step eight of the revised research process.

4.3.7 Data collection techniques and methods

Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2013) both believe that data collection is an essential component of the research process. Data collection techniques enable researchers to collect information in a methodical manner regarding their population and the environment in which they are conducting their research (Obioma Ejimabo, 2015). Data collection for the dissertation was conducted using two different methods. The primary data came from in-depth online zoom interviews, and the secondary data came from a literature review. In this inquiry, both kinds of data were utilised.

4.4 Primary data: in-depth interviews

The COVID-19 pandemic caused several changes to standard research procedures, most notably data collection. The introduction of new video conferencing tools provided qualitative researchers with new opportunities to collect real-time data (Torrentira, 2020). Lobe et al. (2020) note that video conferencing tools are now commonly used to save money, gain access to larger and more diverse audiences, and conduct interviews with more participants in less time by eliminating travel.

Online interviews are cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and secure, all of which are important characteristics today with their environmental challenges, and particularly so at the time of the pandemic (Singh et al., 2021; Varma et al., 2021). In terms of topic relevant data, available research suggests that interviews conducted via the telephone produce the similar levels of richness of the data as in-person interviews (Lechuga, 2012; Johnson et al., 2021) except for not being able to assess body language (Seitz, 2016). All thirteen of the in-depth interviews were conducted using the online video application Zoom. Due to the stringent COVID-19 regulations in South Africa at the time of data collection, the use of online interviews was the preferred and most appropriate method for conducting the in-depth interviews that were semi-structured.

The online interviews were both audio and video captured on an additional device, allowing the researcher to listen to the interviews repeatedly to ensure data validity and reliability, which is critical when analysing and coding the data (Tessier, 2012). Prior to the interview, participants granted their consent for the recording of the interview. The use of in-depth interviews as a data collection method for the dissertation aided the researcher in gaining a holistic outline of the dissertation's research objectives and questions. Preparation for in-depth interviews is essential for a successful interview. Because the interview was conducted online, it was critical that both the researcher and participants had access to a stable internet and/or mobile network connection to avoid signal issues and wasting time.

4.4.1 Secondary data: literature review

Secondary data research was carried out to conceptualise the research topic, with data collected from published and unpublished journal sources, blogs, dissertations, books, annual reports, and analysed information available on relevant websites. Secondary data pertaining to marketing communication strategies, social media marketing, NPO marketing, brand literature, and the challenges encountered by NPOs, and the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy were obtained through the literature review. There was literature on social media and involvement, the influence of social media influence on NPO marketing, and obstacles. Furthermore, data was gathered on how NPO teams used social media locally and globally during COVID-19. The sampling methodology is thoroughly discussed in the following section.

4.5 Sampling methodology

A sample is an appropriate population subset based on which numerical conclusions can be made. The overall group from which data is gathered in this setting is the census or population (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). Data collection stemming from the sample element concludes the sampling procedure, which is represented as a sequence of phases that start with determining the population of interest. The six stages in this process are shown in the diagram below.

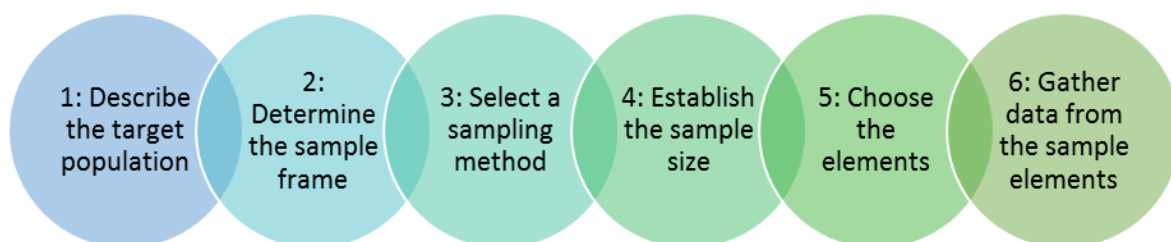


Figure 4.2: The sampling process

Source: Adapted by Veras et al. (2019)

4.5.1 Sample size and population

Investigators only select samples for the judgemental sampling method based purely on their credibility and expertise. In simple terms, only those respondents are chosen for the investigation's participation that the investigators deem to be qualified (QuestionPro, 2020). Purposive or judgmental sampling is not a probability sampling statistical method, and it has the drawback of allowing the investigator's preconceptions to impact the findings (Alchemer, 2018). A non-probability judgmental sample was used in the current dissertation because the investigator believed that in order to fully respond to the research questions, a member of the respective organisation needed to be involved in some aspect of the organisation's marketing because knowledgeable people could shed light on the dissertation objectives in a meaningful way.

The emergence of data largely determined the sample size. Tansey (2009) discusses the challenge of determining an appropriate a value for the size of samples that are non-probability in nature, 20 was deemed as an appropriate number for the sample size. However, Guest et al. (2006), Fugard and Potts (2015), and Vasileiou et al. (2018) reveal that a maximum sample size of 12 is recommended. This recommendation is predicated on the idea that participants above this value would not result in any additional or new data, which is also referred to as the saturation point (Guest et al., 2006; Singh et al., 2014; Fugard & Potts, 2015). With regards to the current dissertation, the saturation point was considered to have been reached when no new data was added by the interviews. However, because each dissertation respondent's experience is unique, therefore the findings cannot be generalised a bigger group from this sort of sample. One goal of this dissertation was to find out how health-related NPOs in the Western Cape use social media platforms. Location, price, and product are further components of the marketing mix, which were not included in this inquiry because the dissertation's focus was on the utilisation of this channel as a marketing communication strategy. Initially, a literature review on this subject generated limited findings, but research exploring social media in relation to small and medium-sized firms have since produced more information, as well as non-health-related NPOs, have become available. The qualitative research methodology is thought to be the best option because it allows the investigator to acquire a full comprehension of the respondents' utilisation of social media channels as an element of their marketing communication strategy.

4.5.2 Sample size

The dissertation applied judgmental sampling to yield 13 corporate interviews. The sample units are listed in Table 4.1 below. The selected sample of 13 respondents was based in areas around the Western Cape and the interview process lasted approximately between 25 to 60

minutes. Swart et al. (2021) carried out an insightful dissertation consisting of ten semi-structured interviews, with the primary aim of analysing crucial aspects and themes that organisations need to take into account while adopting an integrated social media communication strategy. This alternative approach to content marketing is particularly relevant for NPOs in today's digital age. In a similar vein, Akatay et al. (2017) conducted research that involved surveying 15 stakeholders in order to evaluate the extent of social media usage by NGOs in Turkey. The latter dissertation also explored communication managers' perspectives on the role and importance of social media in their organisations' communication strategies.

Taking into consideration the findings from these studies, which employed relatively smaller sample sizes, the current investigation has determined that a sample size of thirteen is adequate for achieving meaningful results. By utilising this sample size, the present research aimed to further our understanding of social media's impact on the non-profit sector and offer valuable insights for organisations looking to enhance their communication strategies.

Table 4.1: Description of respective participants relating to the dissertation

Respondents	Job title of incumbent	Region	Time of interview	Duration of interview
Respondent 1	Marketing director	Plumstead, Western Cape	9:30	30 minutes
Respondent 2	social media coordinator	Kenilworth, Western Cape	8:00	40 minutes
Respondent 3	Head of communications and marketing	Milnerton, Western Cape	13:00	40 minutes
Respondent 4	social media coordinator	Franschhoek, Western Cape	16:00	45 minutes
Respondent 5	Executive director, Marketing	Grassy Park, Western Cape	11:00	33 minutes
Respondent 6	social media coordinator	Tygerberg, Western Cape	10:00	35 minutes
Respondent 7	Marketing manager & trustee of organisation	Knysna, Western Cape	14:00	31 minutes
Respondent 8	Chief operating officer	Mowbray, Western Cape	15:00	51 minutes
Respondent 9	Media manager	Durbanville, Western Cape	10:00	30 minutes
Respondent 10	Marketing coordinator	Bergvliet, Western Cape	10:00	25 minutes
Respondent 11	Marketing manager	Salt River, Western Cape	14:30	35 minutes
Respondent 12	General manager	Plettenberg Bay, Western Cape	8:30	60 minutes
Respondent 13	Marketing manager	Observatory, Western Cape	13:00	43 minutes

Source: Author (2022)

The interviewees were chosen based on the recommendation of the organisation as well as their positions. The investigator was able to make sure that the appropriate individuals were interviewed thanks to the screening and introduction phases of the interview. The researcher documented all of the interviews with the participants' permission and later transcribed them verbatim. R1-R13 were assigned pseudonyms and were referred to as such throughout the dissertation. The information gathered was stored on the cloud and saved on a laptop with a password. To preserve the privacy of the respondents, only the investigator had access to the information that was collected. The interview transcriptions were safely filed away. Because this was a judgmental sample, the criteria for including sample elements included:

- Marketing knowledge and social media experience within the organisation;
- Directly managing/co-ordinating organisations' social media efforts;
- Having worked or been involved with the organisation for at least one year.

The above-mentioned criteria for the inclusion to the dissertation acted at the same time as qualifying screening questions.

4.6 Interview guide and data collection

In order to collect data for this study, an interview guide was developed to facilitate structured and insightful discussions with participants. This section provides an overview of the interview guide and its key components.

4.6.1 Interview guide

In many respects, developing an interview guide can aid interview-based research. A simple summary of the complex themes expected to be covered in an interview and the multifaceted questions the investigator hopes to address under each topic of the interview guide (DeCarlo, 2018). Usually, interview guides are only one page long to make them simple to refer to during interviews. Additionally, the process of developing such interview guidelines can help to organise and focus the stream of thinking, and subsequently the questioning (Bird, 2016).

In interview guide, topics that an investigator thinks has the potential to be significant should be listed. Every interview will probably to be slightly different because participants are invited to respond in their own terms and to bring up issues they feel are relevant (Bird, 2016; DeCarlo, 2018). The interview guide was created to provide a more in-depth comprehension of the association that health-related NPOs (in the Western Cape) have with social media, as well as their attitude toward it as a marketing communication channel and strategy. The

outcomes produced sections that provided a better understanding of these phenomena. Five key issues were identified in accordance with the goals of the research, including the degree to which social media was utilised as a marketing communication strategy. The next theme identified the level of social media engagement that motivated NPOs to choose platforms to connect with their target audiences. Three related subcategories were added to this theme to further explore the methods and tactics NPOs employed to use social media as a communication tool as well as the effects this form of communication had on their respective organisations. The viewpoints and attitudes that NPOs generally have towards the use of social media as a strategic marketing communication conduit, as well as their views on conventional promotional activity, emerged as an emergent theme that had an impact on the promotional activity adopted by these NPOs. The third, fourth, and fifth themes were factors that either promoted or inhibited the use of social media, as well as elements of COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic on the respective organisations' views on social media. As mentioned above, the interview guide was divided into various sections, namely context, social media marketing and engagement, and best practice, COVID-19, and branding. For a detailed description of the interview guide, see Appendix A.

Table 4.2: Relationship between interview and research questions

Section	Interview questions	Description/objective of questions	Link to research questions	Research objectives addressed
Introduction, screening (context)		Ice breaker, job description (validation of correct sample unit), verify health sub-sector, description of health NPO (establish marketing qualification and skill set).		
Engagement of social media	1.1 – 1.6	social media strategies (communication, fundraising, other) & the ideal social media platform: list engagements & goals. Challenges in the sector, focus on competition, government support, international influences/support & marketing challenges in the health sector.	To what extent are social media used as a marketing communication strategy by health NPOs? What are the challenges that inhibit health NPOs engagement in social media as a marketing communication conduit?	To identify whether health NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa use social media. To determine the marketing communication strategies that health NPOs employ to promote their core business and to assess its effectiveness of each.
Strategy	2.1 – 2.15	Goals (link to marketing vehicles).	Do South African health NPOs use any social media channels as a component of their communication and marketing strategy? If so, for what reasons?	To assess the level to which NPOs use social media platforms and establish the reason(s) for doing so.
Measurement, assessment , and budget (social media marketing and engagement)	3.1 – 3.5	Establish and assess the effectiveness of each social media channel NPOs engage with.	What are the challenges that inhibit health NPOs engagement in social media as a marketing communication conduit?	To determine the marketing communication strategies that health NPOs employ to promote their core business and to assess its effectiveness of each. To identify and assess and the challenges that prevent the use of social media as a marketing communication conduit.
Best practice	6.1 – 6.4	View of NPO best practice on social media	Which marketing communication strategies are used by health NPOs for promotion purposes?	To determine the marketing communication strategies that health NPOs employ to promote their core business and to assess its effectiveness of each.
COVID-19 & branding	7.1 – 8.3	Goals, marketing vehicles used (above and below the line), link to goals, synergies among different types of marketing vehicles, examine use of social media during COVID-19, strategic use of hashtags	How were social media marketing strategies adapted during COVID-19?	To examine the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy during COVID-19.

4.6.2 Data collection

As stated by Kallio et al. (2016) there are five different methods that can be used for data collection. These methods include content analysis, participant observation, observation, and interviews, questionnaires. In order to collect the necessary data for this dissertation, interviews were conducted, and the structure that followed is explained below. On 29 November 2021, communication with respondents began with an opening email and participation request in an interview via Zoom.

Respondents were asked to send an email with a consent letter to take part in the interview. Following that, a phone call was made to set up a time with the NPO to do the in-depth interview. Because a purposive sampling was employed, the researcher conducted the communiqué in such a way that refusals were minimised.

The in-depth online personal corporate interviews were performed between November 2021 and January 2022. The dissertation's purpose and objectives, as well as the benefits that might result from their participation, were explained to potential respondents. The major method for gathering data was an in-depth interview, which was utilised to find out how health-related NPOs felt about adopting and utilising social media platforms as components of their marketing communication strategies. This was accomplished with the aid of a semi-structured interview that enabled the investigator to examine every topic raised as well as to probe further to explore themes that may have arisen during the interview.

4.7 Ensuring data trustworthiness

When referring to qualitative research, terms such as trustworthiness and credibility are frequently substituted for reliability and validity. The term "trustworthiness" refers to the extent to which qualitative findings can be relied upon and accepted; nevertheless, this does not imply that the reader will necessarily concur with the conclusion. It is important to consider whether or not the findings of the research can be believed as well as whether or not the findings are plausible when discussing credibility (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2002; Ritchie et al., 2013).

The investigator assessed issues of credibility and trustworthiness by elaborating on the procedure that was used to arrive at the conclusions. In terms of generalisability, naturalistic generalisability, as opposed to the more popular statistical generalisability, is more appropriate for qualitative studies. This is because the former refers to the broader applicability of the findings. The naturalistic generalisability of a finding is contingent on the opinion of the reader,

which is in turn founded on the reader's past experiences, present awareness, and past learning (Davis & Neitzel, 2010; Smith, 2018).

The current dissertation does not make any claims about the generalisability of the results to a greater population; instead, the results might be applied in different situations that are analogous to the ones in which they were reached. Extensibility can be supported by conducting additional comparative research in a variety of settings. Because the present investigation is grounded in a specific theoretical context, the possibility of analytical and theoretical generalisations is increased from the findings. A combined total of 13 respondents partook in the dissertation. This brought up the question of the dissertation's external validity, specifically regarding whether or not the 13 people adequately represent the population as a whole. The number of interviews required for large samples that will be statistically analysed (quantitative research) can be computed scientifically, and the participants can be chosen randomly or via stratified means. In qualitative research, using true randomness would be impossible because the sample size would be far too large for the researchers to manage. For the purpose of this investigation, the ideas of representativeness and generalisability were placed in a secondary position to the importance of conducting exploratory research to determine the fundamental components of social media and sub-dimensions of a marketing communication strategy within the given setting. The researcher wanted to find patterns in the data, and one way to do that was to look for similarities in the responses provided by the various participants (Casler et al., 2013; Smith, 2018).

Establishing data trustworthiness is critical in qualitative research for identifying the credibility and dependability of dissertation results. Many factors, such as reliability, validity, and transferability, must be addressed to accomplish this. The quality of the inquiry is decided by the reliability, consistency, predictability, stability, and honesty of the enquiry tools (Kumar, 2014). It also relates to the dissertation's trustworthiness and the degree to which its results may be duplicated and/or generalised (Welman et al., 2005). The research procedure in this dissertation was meticulously documented, providing an audit trail that can be used for replication. ATLAS.ti and Google Drive were used to save primary data, such as audio recordings and electronic interview transcripts, for future reference and auditing.

The degree to which a dissertation's findings and interpretations are credible is characterised as validity (Jones, 2022). To assure the dissertation's validity, the researcher explained how the findings and conclusions were reached. Participants were stakeholders who were actively involved in administering NPO social media channels, and the dissertation acknowledges that

people construct their own knowledge and meaning. The possible applicability of results to other situations or people is referred to as transferability (Elo et al., 2014). The background, location, and participants in this dissertation were all thoroughly documented, giving readers a clear knowledge of the research environment and allowing them to judge the potential application of the findings to other scenarios. By addressing these criteria, this dissertation has made the required efforts to assure the reliability of its data, therefore improving the overall credibility and reliability of the dissertation's findings.

4.8 Coding and analysis of data

Data preparation is the process of validating data collected from respondents and converting it to an electronic format for analysis using computer software (Paulsen et al., 2012). Graulich et al. (2019) highlight that qualitative data analysis is an interpretation of visual elements that results in implicit and explicit structures. The research was conducted in stages to identify the main themes. After the collection of data was finished, the data was transcribed verbatim and grouped together to identify common and coded themes in relation to the research dissertation. For the coding process, categories aligned with the dissertation's goals and its research questions were defined (Williams & Moser, 2019). The data was then classified to the main themes depicted in the responses, which attempted to answer the dissertation's research questions. To effectively analyse data, it must be organised in a way that is simple to interpret and understand. This dissertation made use of the qualitative data analysis program ATLAS.ti (version 9), as shown in Figure 4.3 below. The thirteen transcribed documents yielded nine code groups, which were then subdivided into 40 unique codes and 33 categories. These were colour-coded to match the research questions and objectives.

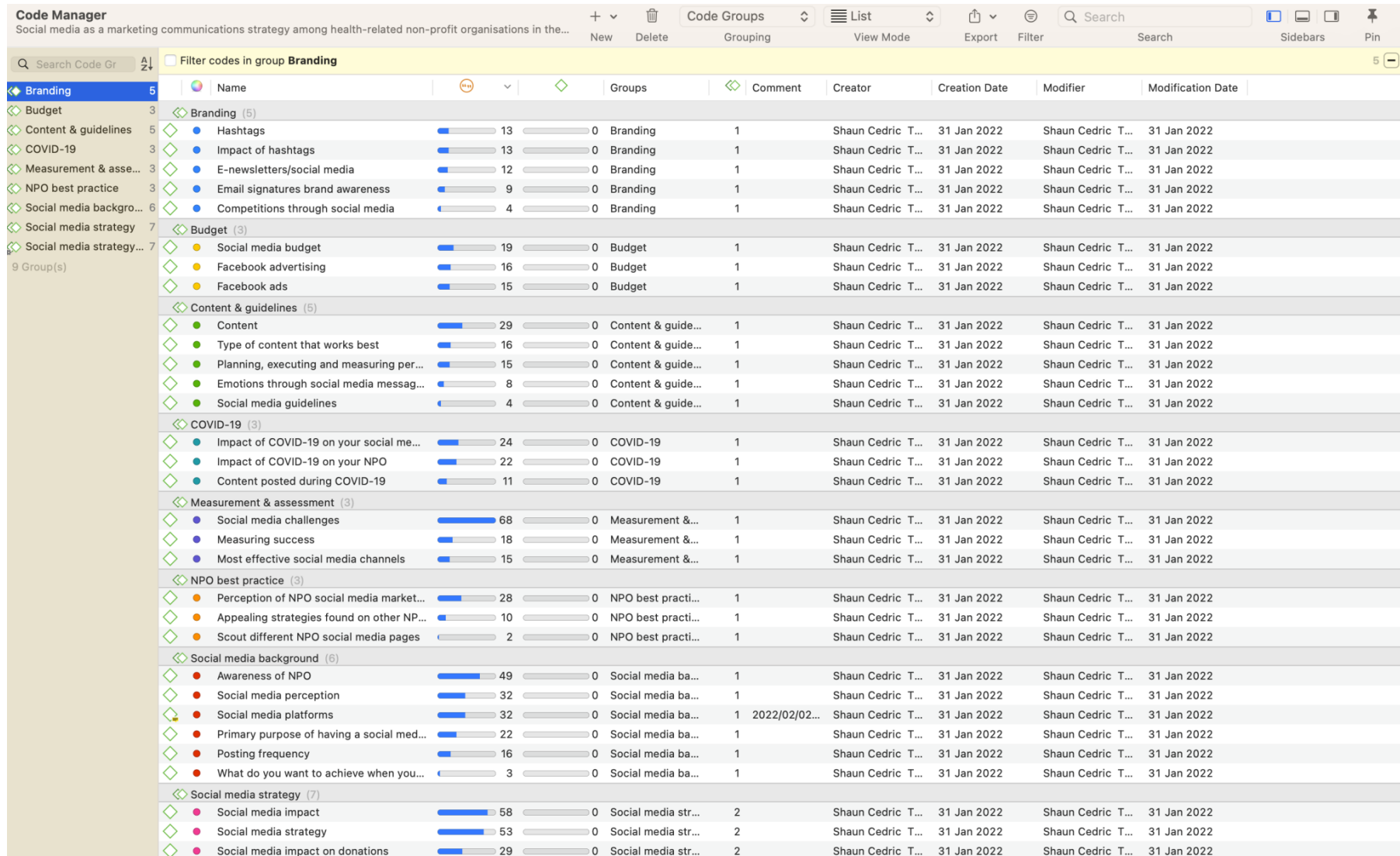


Figure 4.3: ATLAS.ti (version 9) software tool screenshot

Source: Author (2022)

A screenshot of the analysis tool of ATLAS.ti (version 9), which was utilised in this investigation is shown in Figure 4.3. Nine groups of code, which were then subdivided into family groups, were yielded from the 13 input documents. To make them simpler to discover and connect to the research objectives and questions, these were colour-coded. Figure 4.4 shows the coding procedure for an interview source document.

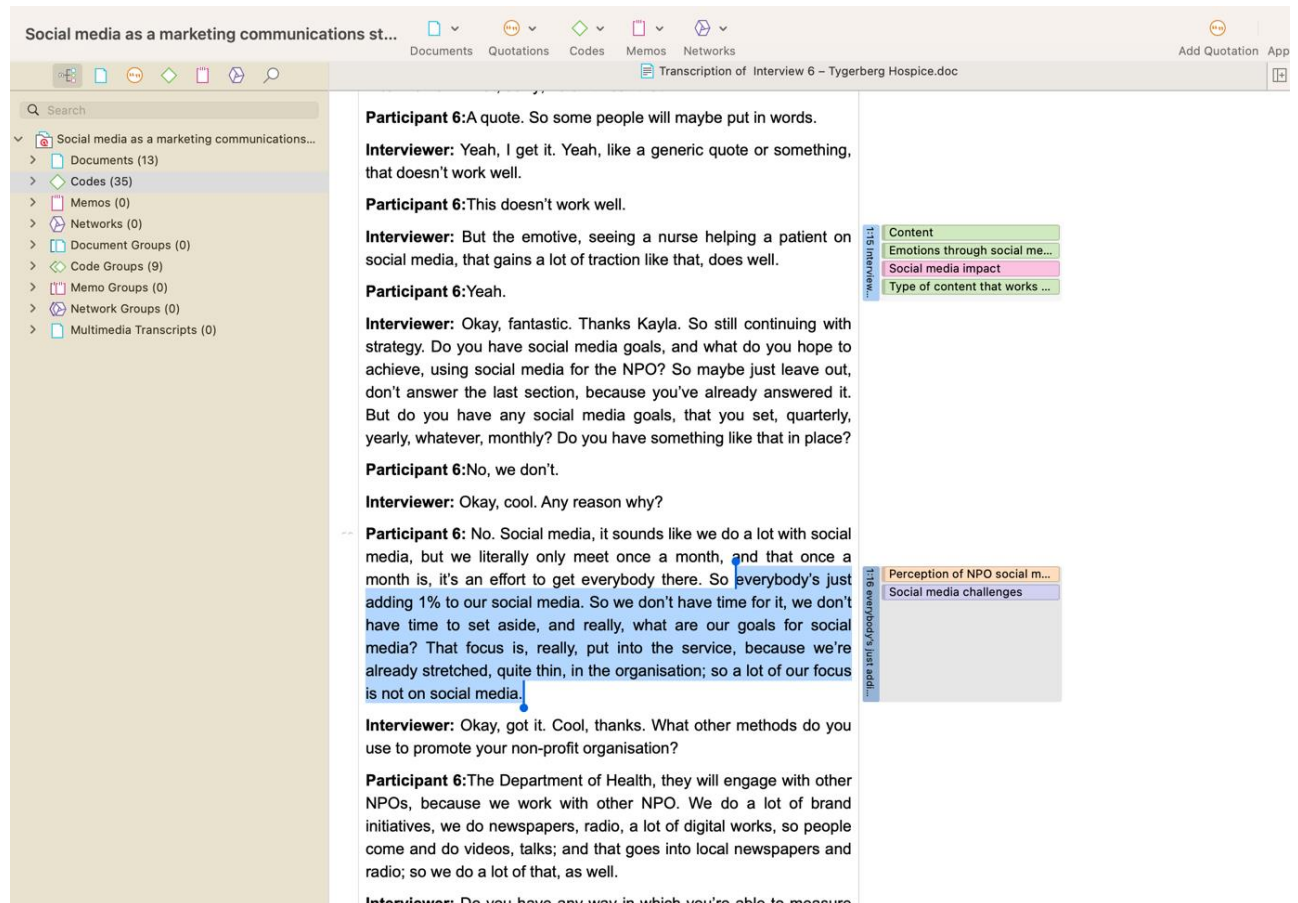


Figure 4.4: ATLAS.ti (version 9) coding procedure

Source: Author (2022)

4.9 Limitations of research methodology

Limitations are elements that limit the potential and outline the constraints of the dissertation (Simon, 2011). The current dissertation identifies and acknowledges the following research limitations:

- At the time of the interviews, the information gathered for this dissertation was limited to the opinions, suggestions, and subsequent actions of NPOs working in the health sector. As a result, no quantified follow-up interviews in the style of longitudinal research were conducted to assess usage trends.

- The dissertation focused solely on health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa. Other NPOs in the Western Cape that are not related to health were not considered, which limited the research population and sample unit.
- The findings were also specific to the social media platforms in which the respondents participated and used, and they might not apply to further social media systems not included in the present investigation.
- Because dissertation participation was entirely optional, it is likely that key informants who opted out for personal reasons prevented the research's ability to collect more meaningful data. Nonetheless, the sample saturation technique, which tracked the inclusion of additional data in the research, may have minimised this issue.
- COVID-19 constraints also hampered the ability to conduct in-person interviews, resulting in an impersonal form of engagement. However, Howlett (2022) found that while virtual interviews may result in an impersonal form of engagement, they increase the objectivity of the responses.

4.10 Ethics

Any dissertation must adhere to a set of standards known as 'ethics', which can be defined as "beliefs or honest distinctions about what is deemed right or wrong" (Harden Fritz et al., 1999; Kanuka & Anderson, 2007). The ethical standards for human research participants are in place to ensure that their rights are not violated. Primary data collection began after all participants were informed of and provided a chance to give voluntary informed permission for, the collection of their information during the interview phase. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews could be conducted after the NPOs provided either a written permission letter or an email confirmation. Before the dissertation could begin, the Faculty Higher Degree Committee (FHDC) of the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences and Research Ethics Committee at Cape Peninsula University of Technology both gave approved it. Please see Appendix B for the Ethical Clearance Certificate. The researcher made direct contact with potential participants before sending them a letter outlining the dissertation and inviting them to participate. Because the NPO industry is hesitant to disclose what it considers private information, the following moral factors were included:

Informed consent: All prospective participants were given all relevant information, including the dissertation's rationale and the option to participate or decline. **Confidentiality:** All identifying information and data shared was kept completely anonymous to encourage open communication and genuine participant responses. **Sincerity and professional conduct:** The results were accurately and professionally recorded, with no embellishment or misrepresentation. **Voluntary participation:** Prior to the dissertation, everyone who

participated were made aware that their participation was completely optional, and that they were free to leave at any time, to skip any questions they felt uncomfortable answering, or to not answer any questions at all.

4.11 Summary of research engagement

Given the discussed methodology, using the revised research onion approach, this engagement can be summarised as follows:

Table 4.3: Research engagement

Stage	Application to the research dissertation	
Knowledge base	Ontological knowledge dimension	
Inquiry nature	Empirical (applied) research	
Research philosophy	Interpretivism	
Research logic	Research argument: inductive	
Research strategy	Research design - archival	Exploratory research design
Time horizon	Cross-sectional	Cross-sectional
Research tactics	Fact finding & literature review	Qualitative research
Research methods and data collection procedures	Secondary data searches & Literature review	Individual in-depth interviews (IDIs)
Sample design execution	Sampled text (by author, subject, and time)	Non-probability sampling design: Judgmental sampling Sample size of 13 respondents from health sector
Measurement	Sourced internet sources, internal documents of public organisations, data depositories, and published text	Open-ended probing questions Applying projective techniques Focus: social media marketing
Manipulation of data	Interpretation, content analysis and information	Inductively based (analytical induction, content analysis), deductively based (explanation building, pattern matching), category construction, and ATLAS.ti

Source: Adapted from Haydam and Steenkamp (2020)

Table 4.3 above categorises the proposed research dissertation into the nine interconnected stages of Haydam and Steenkamp's (2020) revised research onion model. It not only presents the research dissertation logically, but it also ensures that all bases of the research process have been thoroughly covered.

4.12 Summary

This chapter described the research process, which began with a question about whether health-related NPOs in South Africa's Western Cape Province use social media as a communication strategy. While primary data was acquired by in-depth interviews via a sample of deliberately chosen respondents who were considered to be important sources with key

information who could reply to the dissertation questions, secondary data was gathered using an examination of the most recent literature on this subject. The qualitative method was then presented as the research framework for the dissertation, which employed a research strategy that was exploratory. The research method was cross-sectional, and semi-structured in-depth interviews served as the primary data collection method. The structure of the interview guide was expanded and more closely linked to the research objectives and questions. Data analysis techniques were described in order to transform the data into useful knowledge. Measures taken to guarantee the accuracy and credibility of the information were also noted. To maintain the credibility of the current dissertation, a short explanation of the dissertation's restrictions and ethical issues were provided. The revised research onion model's nine interconnected stages provided a logical presentation of the research dissertation and ensured that all bases of the research process were thoroughly covered. The results are considered in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The major objective of this investigation was to examine the usage of social media as a marketing communication strategy by health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa. The gathering, coding and primary data analysis are covered in detail in this chapter. The chapter thoroughly describes each code and category, as well as its importance to this investigation. Within each major theme, several codes, category groups and subcategories were defined. This chapter discusses the major category groupings under donations, best practices, social media strategy, social media platforms, social media challenges and budgeting. Additionally, the chapter included measurement and assessment, content and guidelines and social media usage throughout COVID-19 categories and subcategories. The first section of this chapter focuses on eliciting information about respondents' motivations for using social media. Additionally, the second theme highlights health-related NPOs level of social media engagement. The chapter also discusses the strategic use of social media (third theme), barriers that prevent the strategic implementation of social media (fourth theme) and the amount of social media usage during COVID-19 (fifth theme).

5.2 Themes

As previously stated, an interview guide was created to facilitate the interviews. It was created to obtain a better understanding of how health-related NPOs utilise social media as a marketing strategy. Five major themes were identified in accordance with the research objectives and interview guide. The first theme examined the reasons why health-related NPOs utilised social media as a marketing tool. The second theme examined the extent to which health-related NPOs utilised social media and the manner in which they did so. The third theme evaluated the current state of social media strategies and the best practices that could be adopted to maximise future initiatives, including whether social media could be used as a means to create an additional source of incomes and funds, the fourth theme examined the barriers and challenges that health-related NPOs might be experiencing when it comes to implementing social media as a marketing communication strategy within the organisation. Finally, the fifth theme examined the adaptation and utilisation of social media practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 5.1 illustrates the relationship between the interview guide questions, research questions, dissertation objectives and category groups formed from each topic. Table 5.1 shows an overview of the primary category codes utilised in this dissertation, including how each category relates to the research aims and questions.

Table 5.1: Integration of Interview guide, research questions, objectives, themes, and categories

Interview guide questions	Research questions	Research objectives	Theme	Category groups
These questions ascertain why health-related NPOs use social media as part of a marketing communication strategy.	Do South African health NPOs use any social media platforms as a component of their communication and marketing strategy? If so, for what reasons?	To identify whether health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa use social media	Theme: Motive for the use of social media as a marketing communications strategy	Awareness of organisation Raising funds Sharing services Events Connecting with the community
These questions revealed how NPOs use social media as a marketing communication strategy.	To what extent is social media used as a marketing communication strategy by health NPOs?	To assess the level to which NPOs use social media platforms and establish the reason(s) for doing so	Theme: Level of social media engagement	Posting frequency Impact of hashtags Brand emotions and image Donation appeals Published content Content scheduling social media budget Paid advertising Facebook adverts social media guidelines Most effective platforms Campaign measurement and assessment
These questions identified the social media strategies that were employed as well as the best practices that may be implemented.	Which marketing communication strategies are used by health NPOs for promotion purposes?	To determine the marketing communication strategies that health NPOs employ to promote their core business and to assess its effectiveness of each.	Theme: Use of social media as a marketing tactic and strategy	social media goals social media as a marketing communication strategy Target audience campaign examples
These questions revealed the challenges that NPOs face with regards to social media.	What are the challenges that inhibit health NPOs engagement in social media as a marketing communication conduit?	To identify and assess and the challenges that prevent the use of social media as a marketing communication conduit	Theme: Barriers that inhibit the strategic implementation of social media	social media challenges Lack of organisational understanding Volunteers Priority of social media within organisation
These questions identified how social media were engaged with during COVID-19 pandemic.	How were social media marketing strategies adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic?	To examine the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic	Theme: social media engagement during COVID-19 pandemic	Impact on social media activity Impact on your NPO Content published during the COVID-19 pandemic

5.3 Theme one: motive for the use of social media

To ascertain why health NPOs utilised social media as part of their marketing and communications strategy, one of the critical aspects of this question was to interview members of the marketing team or staff who had a direct role in the organisation's marketing and communications strategy. To begin, a series of broad questions were posed to the respondents on the perceived benefits of a social media presence and the value it adds to the organisation. Respondents listed fundraising, donation appeals, increasing knowledge of the organisation, promoting their services and events and connecting with the community as the primary reasons for their organisations to use social media. As a result of their remarks, several new subcategories were created, as illustrated below.

5.3.1 Awareness of the organisation

In response to the question, six respondents reported that raising awareness of the non-profit organisation to attract prospective funding, donations and general public understanding of what they did was a key reason for utilising social media platforms. Respondent number one stated that there was a misconception about what their organisation was about among the general public, which was that hospices were just for the dying, when in reality, this was not the case, and that social media were essential in dispelling the myth. According to respondent two, social media enabled the organisation to reach a larger audience than would otherwise be reached by simply searching for the organisation online. Four of the five respondents made reference to the vast potential reach that social media provides, alluding to the attitudes that have been altered as a result of social media's efforts to shift perceptions about what particular health-related NPOs stood for. Respondent seven stated that social media is not limited to South Africans and that they could reach a global audience; the respondent further stated that social media enabled them to reach audiences that they might not have otherwise reached through traditional media such as newspapers, newsletters or phone calls.

Category 1.1

Non-profit organisation awareness

Responses

Yes, I think that there's an idea that hospice is just for the dying, and it is really not, and social media has helped with that. [R1/9:25]

I think it just helps us to reach a wider audience than people who would directly search for us. [R2/1:7]

I think the main purpose is just to let ourselves be known by the community, and what we do, through social media. [R3/2:13]

Yeah, we want to reach as many people as possible, and we want to create as much awareness as possible. [R4/7:19]

Absolutely. I think, because of the visualness of the medium, and the fact that you can bring a message across in a very quick way, it [has] grabbed the attention of many people, and it [has] changed a lot of perceptions about, specifically, osteoporosis being an old woman's disease. [R4/9:12]

Social media is not just South Africans, you can reach a global audience as well. So it is very important, because you can reach different audiences that you may not reach in the newspaper or through a newsletter or through a telephone; and it is a way of keeping track of your organisation, your brand; it is about promoting your brand. [R7/2:6]

Category 1.2

Donation/fundraising awareness

Responses

Communicating with the potential donors, and potential investors. [R10/3:17]

Category 1.3

Organisational services that are offered

Responses

I think social media has really made a difference to people understanding what we do and why we do it. [R5/6:30]

So I definitely want people to understand the work that we do, and get that message across, to change that perception, and social media has helped in this aspect. [R12/21:100]

5.3.2 Raising funds

Another significant sub-category that emerged as a key reason for engaging with social media was fundraising. Respondent thirteen notes that while social media can be utilised to create awareness, obtaining funds is equally vital because the support they receive from the government is insufficient to sustain the organisation. Along with raising funds, the means by which these monies are raised must be cost-effective. Respondents four and five both mention how cost-effective social media are for reaching a large number of people; respondent five emphasises that if you engage with social media strategically and use it effectively, it can be incredibly beneficial in terms of costs and raising funds. While social media and fundraising are successful, they are only as good as the relationships one develops with potential donors. Respondent six noted that using social media on a regular basis helps to highlight what one is doing, which is important for creating relationships so that potential donors can see what the organisation is doing. Respondent 10 stated that developing relationships through social

media is critical in order to keep people interested and returning, and ultimately, hopefully, motivating them to donate and contribute to the organisation.

Category 2.1

Cost effective

Responses

Absolutely. I think social media is one of the most cost effective and most efficient ways to reach a lot of people; and it lends itself to quite a lot of creative expression. So there's various ways that you can get your message across. [R4/1:8]

I think, the thing about social media, is that it is a way of reaching a lot of people at a low cost, and if you do it well, it can be effective. [R5/1:10]

No, it is vital, it is one of the most cost-effective ways to reach people. [R4/37:103]

Category 2.2

Fundraising

Responses

But yes, I mean, I think social media channels, are very useful in a number of ways, in terms of fundraising.... [R6/1:12]

As I mentioned earlier, creating awareness, but also raising funds; because we are not government-supported, so we raise all our funds through fundraising events, so all our fundraising events get spread on social media. [R13/5:21]

Category 2.3

Building relationships with donors

Responses

Because I think it is very apparent then, what it is that you're doing, you're visible, because if you're not on social media, and somebody is not seeing you regularly, which most people are not, it is a bit of a black hole, potentially, especially with donors. [R6/7:30]

So making sure that we stay in touch with people, and keep people up-to-date with what it is we're doing, when we're doing it, why we're doing it, I think, is crucial, in order to keep people interested, and keep people coming back, and ultimately, hopefully, encouraging people to donate, and to support us. [R10/1:14]

5.3.3 Sharing services

Respondents one and seven mentioned that sharing the services that various health-related NPOs provide on social media has been important. Respondent seven said that WhatsApp has been excellent for their non-profit organisation's counselling division.

Category 3

Sharing services

Responses

Do you know how powerful and useful our WhatsApp has been, for counselling, the videos,

to let people know what services we offer? It is amazing. [R7:16:62]

We want to share our services, and we want to share information. So sometimes health-related information, maybe, at the moment, it is vaccine awareness, those kinds of things; so we want to share information, I guess, awareness, as well. [R1/8:23]

5.3.4 Events

Two respondents identified the importance of using social media to post about events within the organisation, in particular fundraising events.

Category 4

Events

Responses

Okay. Because we've had a bit of a slowdown in the organisation, and my assistant has gone more on a part-time basis, so she would post about events. [R13/4:15]

To advocate our name, and to get a perception of our NGO out there, as well as advertising for fundraising events. [R12/2:8]

5.3.5 Connecting with the community

Sharing information, communicating with others and being known in the community, as well as establishing an "online community", were deemed essential goals for health NPOs using social media. Respondent three felt it was critical to make the health NPO to be known in the community. Respondent ten believes that being engaged with a health NPO, particularly in their field of work, is critical to having community support; this is owing to the organisation's funding, which is also dependent on the local community. Respondent one had strong opinions about the community and using social media almost as a level of accountability to demonstrate to donors what their money is being spent on, as well as the impact of their work to the community through social media. The responses below provide more information on my findings.

Category 6

Connecting with the community

Responses

I think the main purpose is just to let ourselves be known by the community, and what we do, just to let ourselves known by people, what we do. [R3/3:13]

I think, ideally... and I do not think we're there now, but what I would like to achieve, is to have some kind of community, an online community. [R6/6:25]

The graphic below illustrates how respondents viewed organisational exposure, raising funds and connecting with the community as essential criteria for using social media. Additionally, respondents viewed events and sharing organisational services as important factors for using social media (refer to Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2: Motives for social media usage

Source: Author (2022)

5.4 Theme two: Level of social media engagement

The respondents were asked questions in an attempt to address one of the dissertation's research objectives, "To what extent are health NPOs using social media as a marketing communication strategy?" Figure 5.3 demonstrates the extent to which respondents have implemented social media usage in connection with social media communication channels and strategy.

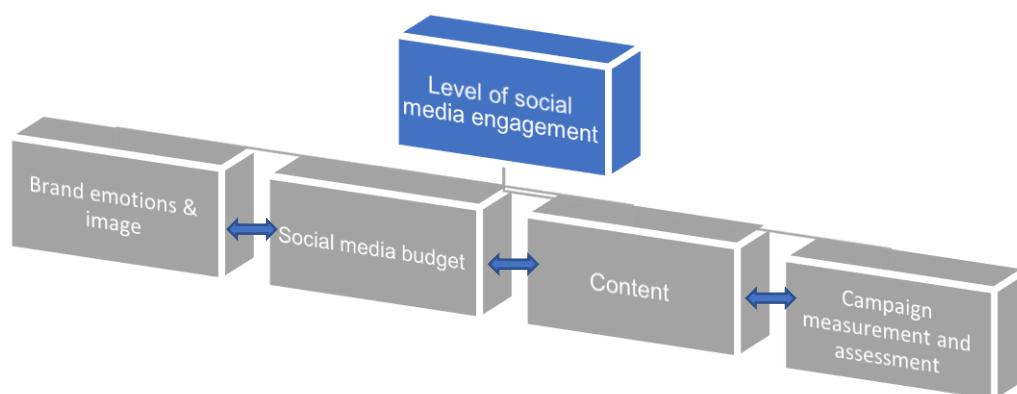


Figure 5.3: Level of social media usage

Source: Author (2022)

5.4.1 Social media usage

Prior to conducting the dissertation, the researcher verified that each respondent's organisation had a social media presence. It was required to ascertain their preferred social media platforms. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and WhatsApp were found to be the most popular social media platforms among health-related NPOs. Each of the thirteen respondents stated that they used both Facebook and Instagram. Nine respondents said they used Twitter, eight said they used WhatsApp, one said they used YouTube and one said they used Telegram. It is worth mentioning that respondent eleven felt that Twitter was the strongest platform for donor networking, in her opinion. The following figure corroborates the above conclusions.

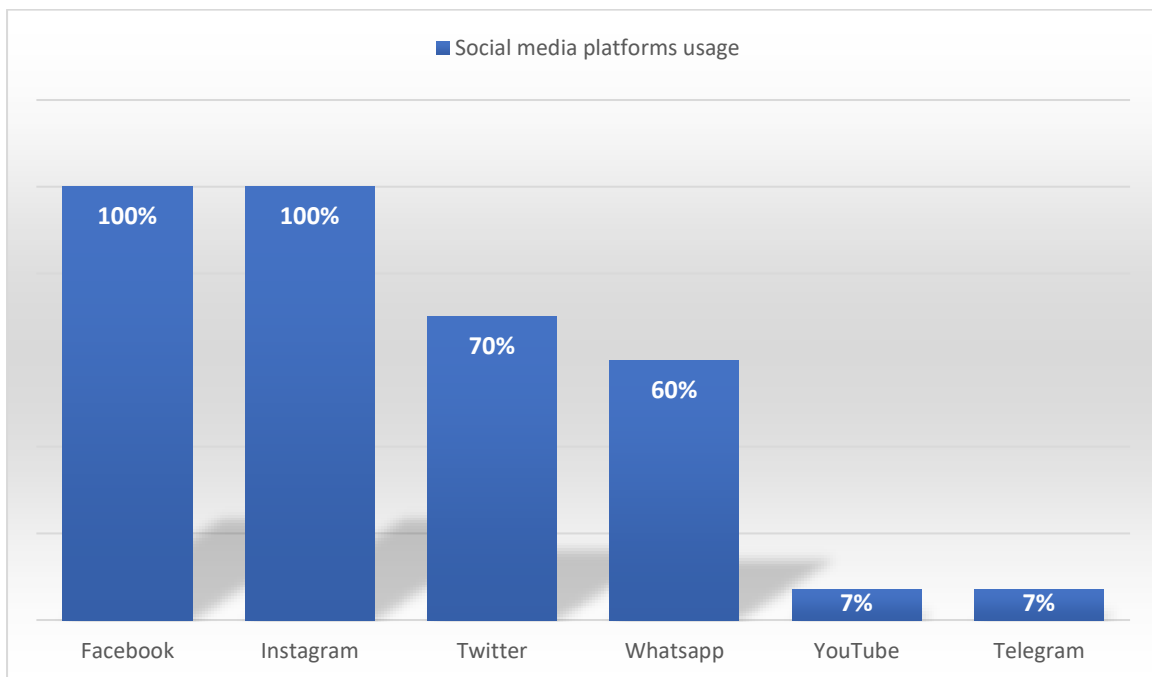


Figure 5.4: Social media platform usage

Source: Author (2022)

5.4.2 Posting frequency

To bolster the research purpose, "To analyse how health NPOs use social media as a marketing communication strategy", the researcher first had to ascertain how frequently health-related NPOs posted on their selected social media platform in order to determine activity frequency. Nine of the thirteen respondents claimed that they posted at least once a week, while two indicated that they posted daily and another two indicated they posted three times a week. Respondent eight indicated that their organisation did not really have a formal

structure regarding how they posted and that it was more on an ad hoc basis. Figure 5.5 summarises each respondent's daily and weekly activity.

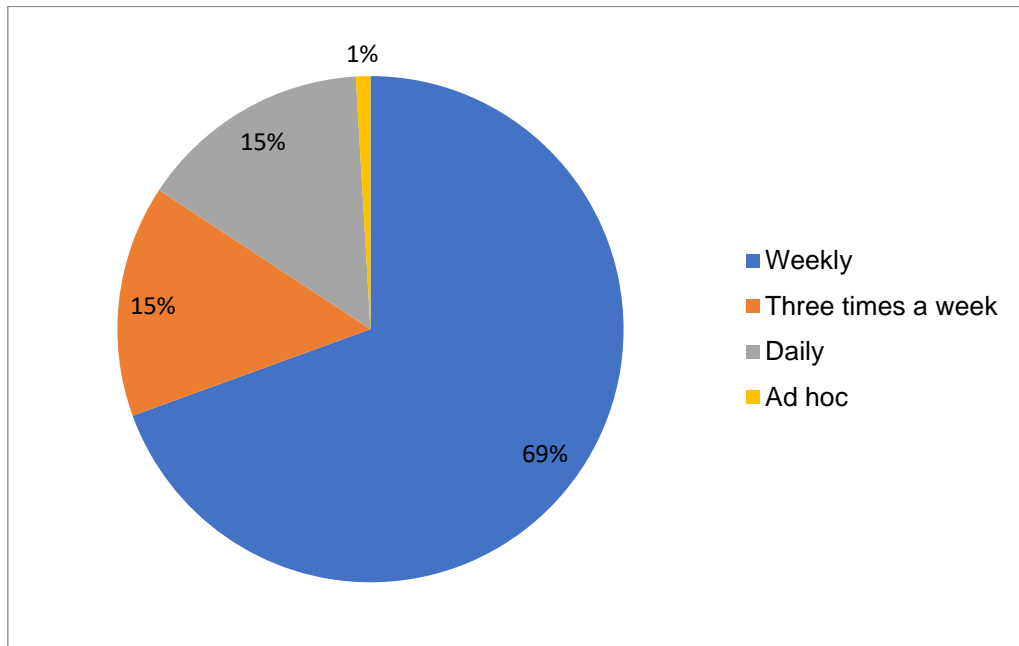


Figure 5.5: Social media activity frequency

Source: Author (2022)

5.4.2.1 Weekly

According to the statistics above, most health NPOs interviewed published on social media on a weekly basis, with nine responding organisations stating this. Notably, responders four and ten identified the days of the week on which they were most likely to upload content and the type of content that worked. Respondent eleven mentioned that they could only post ad hoc due to the fact they were the “communication department”, alluding to capacity issues. The responses that follow shed light on this finding.

Category 7

Activity frequency: several times a week

Responses

Once a week, because, basically, we are busy working with the health issues, and we do not often post on Facebook. [R3/4:21]

I post at least twice a week, pretty much every week, and we’ve been short-staffed, so it [has] been extra challenging. [R5/5:18]

5.4.2.2 Daily

From the findings provided in Figure 5.5, respondent one affirmed that they posted on social media on a daily basis.

Category 8

Activity frequency: daily

Responses

Yeah, so we post every day, on social media; so for example, we have a social media meeting, once a month, and then we schedule all the posts for that month. So we will look at the health calendar for that month, and then slot that in. [R1/6:17]

Category 9

Activity frequency: three times a week

Responses

I know from experience, that you shouldn't really post much more than three, maybe, four times a week. We try to stick to that kind of thing, and we try to split it up between three main categories, I guess, in the types of content we have. [R10/9:21]

So we post three times a week; we feel that that is the golden ratio. It is not too much; it is not too little. Our posts vary between sharing blogs that we've written on the website, so we direct traffic to the website to read the blog. [R4/6:17]

Category 10

Activity frequency: Ad hoc

Responses

It is ad hoc, and the reason it is ad hoc, is because I am the Communications Department. [R11/4:24]

5.4.3 Competition for income generation

The researcher enquired of respondents whether social media was used as a marketing strategy for the organisation to raise funds through competitions, raffles or giveaways. Out of the thirteen respondents, only four could answer the question with some degree of accuracy, with respondent thirteen making mention that the exact idea had actually been raised in a board meeting. The researcher then further probed the aspect of e-commerce within the organisation and whether the use of social media had an impact on e-commerce activities.

Category 11

Competitions

Responses

We have; not competition so much. Years ago, we had a giveaway, every now and again, but we haven't done that for a very long time. [R5/17:107]

We've done donation appeals, all the time; and then we did do competitions, but usually linked to a campaign or a partner. [R7/34:147]

As I mentioned earlier, creating awareness, but also raising funds; because we are not government-supported, so we raise all our funds

through fundraising events, so all our fundraising events get spread on social media. [R13/5:21]

Strangely enough, that's exactly what I'm planning to do; a competition, a raffle, whatever, to bring us some funds, to start off in the new year. That's exactly what I'm planning to do. [R13/23:130]

Category 12
E-commerce

Responses

I'm not sure, on Facebook, but on our website we do, we have many options, we have PayFast, SnapScan, EFT, all those. But not necessarily on our Facebook. [R1/19:69-70]

Yes, we've created PayFast mechanisms, so you can donate via PayFast, or you can pay membership fees via PayFast, and we've also got a GivenGain account. [R4/27:77]

We've been trying to get an e-shop up and going, properly, for the last three to five years. [R7/22:89]

So a short answer, no, but we have set up the PayFast account, and in the near future, I would like to see it fully integrated with our website, so that people can make payments, as much as possible on the website, as much as it is secure to do so; and which, I truly believe, will make a huge impact on our follow-through, because I'm 99 percent sure that most of the people that click on our donate button, that gets taken through to another page, then go, no, I do not trust this, and we lose them. [R10/31:119]

5.5 Branding

The respondents were asked specific questions about how branding was executed when a health NPO used social media as a marketing strategy.

5.5.1 Brand awareness

Respondents highlighted brand awareness as a motivator for adopting social media as a marketing communication strategy in theme one. The researcher uncovered how respondents employed brand awareness as a component of their social media engagement in the section below.

5.5.1.2 Impact of hashtags for brand recall and brand awareness

The respondents were asked if they used hashtags to increase brand recall and exposure across their social media channels. All but one of the thirteen respondents stated that they utilised hashtags on social media. Each respondent understood that hashtags should be used in posts, but the impact of including hashtags was questioned by many of the respondents. Note that to maintain anonymity, the researcher omitted any hashtag reference to a particular organisation from the data provided. The responses that follow attest to this.

Category 13

Hashtags for brand recall and awareness

Responses

Yes, we do. We use hashtags like, #loveyourbones, #bonehealth, #osteoporosis, #silentdisease, #rattlethembones, all those different kinds of ones. [R4/11:33]

When I post things on LinkedIn, I do, because it prompts you to put the hashtags, but I do not do them just out of my own head. [R2/9:46]

Yes, I think it increases your visibility and it categorises your content; so if people are looking for specific content, and you use the correct hashtags, it features. [R4/12:35]

So I know that with Instagram, you need to have hashtags, not so much with Facebook. And then from some of the talks I've been going to, they say, do not put too many hashtags if it is a Facebook post; so I normally put two or three. And to be honest, I probably am not using them as effectively as I could. [R5/15:92]

Yes. Whether we're doing it effectively or not, I'm not 100 percent. I've never been very *au fait* with hashtags, or whatever. [R10/14:34]

But I do believe it has an impact, because, when somebody does search for you, automatically, your stuff will automatically start popping up, or if they go on a hashtag something, your profile will pop up. [R12/27:122]

No, I wouldn't even know how to do it. Do you see why I need that person to help? [R13/21:126]

5.5.1.3 Advertising and branding activities

Four respondents provided examples of their organisation's branding and advertising activities. Respondent one mentioned how the organisation used the email signature to draw attention to important events and increase awareness. Respondents two and four stated that

increasing brand awareness through email signatures and newsletters increased awareness of social media channels.

Category 13.1

Branded email signature and domain

Responses

Of late we have; it sends you to either our website, or our Facebook page, because of our Tree of Lights fundraiser. So in that case, we do it, but we do not do it throughout the year. [R1/25:99-100]

Yes, so we do have, at the bottom of our signature, there's the little F button with the link to the Facebook or the LinkedIn, and things; and then, we also try to get people to engage more in the newsletter, where, when you click on a link for an event or something, it will take you to the Facebook page, and then people can sign up for the event or show that they're interested, and things like that, on the Facebook page and on the website. [R2/10:48]

Category 13.2

Branded marketing emailer/newsletter

Responses

We've got a monthly newsletter that goes out, and we definitely promote the social media links on there. And it is also present on our website, and our email signatures link through, back to the website, as well. [R4/13:37]

We do have them in the email signatures, and the newsletter is something that has taken a back seat, with staff issues, over the last few years, and then Covid and things. [R5/16:101]

5.5.1.4 Brand emotions

It was critical to identify the brand sentiments that respondents wanted to portray through brand imagery and content on social media. This question formed the basis of the story about how respondents presented content messaging. Seven respondents mentioned brand emotions that they used in their content creation. For respondent one, four, five, eleven and twelve, displaying a sense of enthusiasm and belonging to something bigger than yourself are essential brand emotions that they strove to establish through their social media content.

Category 14

Brand emotion: enthusiasm media and belonging

Responses

But the emotive, seeing a nurse helping a patient on social media that gains a lot of traction, and provides a sense of belonging. [R1/15:51-52]

I think we want to create a sense in people that there's something they can, personally, do to change things, that there's actions that they can

take. So we want people to feel positive, we want people to be aware of the issues, but also to feel positive about the actions that they can take, that will make that change. [R11/24:108]

Category 14.1

Brand emotion: communicate and celebrate

Responses

So we obviously, what we call it is, it is three things, so it is, communicate, share and celebrate; and communications being things like, we have our AGM coming up, or do not forget our charity shop, and those types of things, any events that we might be having. [R10/10:21]

Category 14.2

Brand emotion: humour and enlightenment

Responses

I think we use a lot of humour, sometimes, but also, I think, just enlightenment ... I never realised this, this is something interesting to me; and to get people to understand how important their bone structure is in terms of the overall health and longevity. [R4/34:97]

Category 14.3

Brand emotion: sympathy

Responses

For people to be sympathetic towards us, to not see us a place where they're coming to die, but the value in the work that we do; we do such amazing work, it is unbelievable. [R12/20:95]

5.5.1.5 Brand image

It is worth mentioning that respondent nine saw the usage of social media as the first step in building the perception that an NPO, while a charity, is also run like a business and that NPOs may support businesses if used strategically.

Category 15

Brand image

Responses

An NPO is a business, like any other business; we are not there, standing, waiting for handouts; please Sir, can I have some more? Please give me the crumbs off your table. We are a business; you donate to us, and we give you information, we can give you a Section 18A Tax Certificate; we can help you with your BEE, EEE, EE, points score card, in exchange for your donation; so, it is a business transaction, you are not giving to a charity, we are not a charity organisation. [R9/26:88]

5.6 Budget

Respondents were asked about their social media budget usage and spending.

5.6.1 Social media budget

No allocated budget for social media was reported by three respondents. Prioritisation, total budget allocation, funding and utilisation were just a few of the consequences of not having a defined budget in place.

Category 16

No defined budget in place

Responses

We do not have the money. I mean, we are only funded by Social Development, who are very specific in the funding they give us, and social media is not one of the funding line items in a budget. [R9/21:70]

Nothing. And that is something we're currently fighting for, literally. So we would need to physically use our personal credit cards and things like that to do it. [R12/18:77]

Our funds that we raise go specifically for food parcels and bursaries, and assisting patients that need accommodation, and assisting patients with travel allowance. So all the funds that we raise through our fundraising, it goes for that. And then we have the priority need, which is the running of the office, and the salary for myself and my assistant, so we do not have a budget for social media. [R13/17:97]

It is interesting to note that while social media budgets were not necessarily a priority, there was strong understanding of the benefits of paid advertising from the respondents, and the majority of them had some understanding of the concept which the section below will touch on.

5.6.2 Budget: paid advertising

Five of the respondents mentioned using Facebook adverts/paid advertising to raise donations and increase visibility of the organisation, which is an interesting finding in retrospect. While broad awareness of a social media strategy seemed to be limited, the use of Facebook adverts emerged strongly, and while some respondents were unsure whether they were utilising it appropriately, they recognised they need to start engaging with the idea. Respondent eleven even went as far as saying paid advertising could potentially be the only way to reach mass audiences in the future, as relying on organic reach was not sustainable.

Category 15

Paid advertising

Responses

Yes, sometimes they do get boosted, but I do not manage that part. So I'm not sure how much, or how often; it is not very often, unless we have something big going on that we would want

people to join, then we might boost the post; but it doesn't happen very often. At least once, in the last eight months. [R1/20:78]

Yeah, I think probably about three times a year, we'll get an additional budget to boost. [R4/10:27]

We've got a budget, and we've got funding for six months, to be able to put some extra money into boosting it, because it does ... well, it used to really make a difference, so I presume it still makes a difference. [R5/9:32]

Absolutely. You can't do without them. So for me ... well, for us, we do not get those marketing budgets to pay for buying space, going to do the mass media, and all of those things. So with social media, it is affordable, and you can track it. [R7/1:6]

Yeah, so for a specific campaign, or a specific fundraiser, we'll usually spend about R500, and from R500, we'll usually get about R10 000. So for every R500 that we spend, we'll get R9 500 in return. [8/1:78]

No, we haven't done that, but it is something I really want to look into, in the coming couple of years, because I think it is, actually, really the only way, these days. [11/21:90]

5.7 Content and guidelines

It was critical for the researcher to discover how health NPOs employ content and social media guidelines throughout their social media channels. The respondents were asked to provide feedback on the following topics, namely how material is uploaded, what content is posted, social media guidelines, brand image and the emotions they are trying to surface when creating content.

5.7.1 Content published

The respondents all had a different viewpoint on the type of content they posted on their social media channels, which was reflected in their responses. Six of the respondents said that they primarily focused on advocacy-type material or content that was directly relevant to the health non-profit organisation's mission, such as fundraising events, patient stories, community work and donation drives and educational webinars. This is supported by the responses below.

Category 16.1

Content published: advocacy related

Responses

So for example, we have a fundraiser today, which is Tree of Lights, and if we post personal things, like what we're actually doing, the engagements, this is going to receive most of our traction. [R1/14:46]

We focus on a combination of relational and promotional content; so we try and have one post a week, where we speak about the organisation, then we have another post, which is more relational, might be a patient story, might be educational, and then, obviously, more a promotional post, which promotes an event, or promotes donations or engagement in a specific activity. [R4/32:93]

So there's quite a lot of advocacy work. Some of its feel good stuff; I'll put stories up on our website, and then I'll share that. Quotes from people. If there's events, if there's conferences and stuff, that we're at, we'll often try to Live Tweet from those, and stuff that we're involved with there. [R11/6:28]

Category 16.2

Content published: patient stories

Responses

But the emotive, seeing a nurse helping a patient on social media, that gains a lot of traction like that, does well. [R1/15:51-52]

Patient stories tend to get a lot of good engagement, because I think people can identify with it. [4/18:55]

Category 16.3

Content published: donations

Responses

But we post anything, from events that we hosted, to people that give donations to us, to our fundraising events, to any communication that needs to be made to the public. [R12/6:14]

Category 16.4

Content published: training events

Responses

So when we post things about local training events that can get people CPD points, then we get a great response. So if there's a training webinar series that we've put together, and we've had it approved for CPD points, then people buy in, and we get a great response. [R2/5:27]

So there's a lot of canvassing and education and webinars that we share on social media and our last congress was also a virtual one. [R4/3:11]

Category 16.5

Content published: ad hoc

Responses

It is ad hoc, because I would say to my assistant, oh, by the way, have you done x y z? And then she'd say, yes or no. And then I'd say, okay, do not forget to put it on again, tomorrow, type of thing. So it is ad hoc, yeah. [R13/8:105]

5.7.2 Content planning and scheduling

The dissertation recognised the critical importance of establishing how information is created and structured across the several social media channels utilised by health-related NPOs. Respondents were questioned about their content preparation process and whether they had a strategy in place. Respondent four stated that their organisation was focused on both relational and promotional content, whereas respondent eight stated that they disseminated factual items published in scientific journals. Respondent eleven indicated that they only posted content that they believed would offer value and would prefer not to post than regurgitate the type of material that other organisations posted to remain relevant. It is worth noting that respondent nine stated that the board was accountable for any strategic postings and correspondence that the organisation shared.

Category 17

Relational and promotional content

Responses

We focus on a combination of relational and promotional content; so we try and have one post a week, where we speak about the organisation, then we have another post, which is more relational, might be a patient story, might be educational, and then, obviously, more a promotional post, which promotes an event, or promotes donations or engagement in a specific activity. [R4/32:15]

Category 17.1

Journal-accredited content

Responses

We will share factual pieces, which is either published in a scientific journal, or it is legislation which is published. So we do not promote opinions about it, we promote factual educational things about it; which means that any time something has been published in science, which is peer reviewed, which comes to the public, we will share it, because I do not have to worry, because it is in alignment with education. [R8/28:108]

Category 17.2

Content that adds value

Responses

Yeah. If I've got something to share, for sure, if there's a good story, or something that's come up, and it is interesting, that stuff that we do, I really want to put out stuff that's adding to stuff,

rather than just regurgitating stuff that other people are doing. [R11/22:100]

Category 17.3

Board approves content

Responses

So what happens is, the Board is responsible for all the strategic stuff. The EXCO, or Executive Committee, is responsible for acting on what the Board strategize about, and I'm the implementer or operations person. [R9/14:41]

5.7.3 Content types

It is compelling to establish that images and videos were highlighted as the two content types that the majority of health-related NPOs used on their social media channels.

5.7.3.1 Images

According to the respondents interviewed, incorporating images as part of social media material worked best for them. Additionally, respondents confirmed that their social media platforms contained both video and image content.

Category 18

Images

Responses

Seeing a nurse helping a patient on social media, that gains a lot of traction like that, does well. [R1/15:51-52]

Patient stories, linked with images, tend to get a lot of good engagement, because I think people can identify with it. [R4/18:55]

I literally just posted a couple of pictures and said, thank you to everyone involved, and that just absolutely skyrocketed with engagements. And so things like that, I find, do incredibly well. [R10/25:88]

After our AGM, I posted a picture of our CEO reading the newspaper and just said, our CEO taking a load off after the AGM, incredibly engaging; so those types of things, the really simple and just off-the-cuff posts, seems to be the most engaging. [R10/26:89]

So there's quite a lot of advocacy work. Some of its feel good stuff; I'll put stories up on our website, and then I'll share that. Quotes from people linked with images, do really well. [R11/6:28]

5.7.3.2 Video

Respondents reported that using video as part of their social media content worked equally well for them.

to monitor the content as well as how to deal with any unpleasant or sensitive remarks or content that might arise. Respondent nine stated that the social media guidelines were in their hard drive and that they would respond to any sensitive comments with a moral compass.

Category 20

Social media guidelines

Responses

Yes. So the guideline that we always use [are] to acknowledge the comments, or the concern, at its source, whether it be on Twitter or LinkedIn or Facebook, and then take it offline. So in other words, engaging with the person directly. [R4/33:95]

In my head, yes. So I would use my own moral compass, for now. [R9/25:80]

We've got a guideline in place for staff, in terms of we've got a social media policy. And I've also done a number of workshops with staff, around what to post, and what not to post. But at the moment, because it is really only me driving the social media, I monitor that. [R11/23:103]

Yes, so there is a guideline that's in place. So, like I said, it will come down to the fundraising, it will be more to advertise. So we do the My-school, My-village; so you'd constantly see those type of things. [R12/19:86]

5.8 Measurement and assessment

Respondents were asked to answer specific questions on their experiences measuring and evaluating social media platforms.

5.8.1 Most effective social media platforms

Among the various social media platforms examined in this study, Facebook emerged as one of the most effective platforms for NPOs. The impact and strategies are explored in more detail below.

5.8.1.1 Facebook

Respondents were asked to indicate which social media channels they believed was the most effective for publicising their non-profit organisation's health promotion efforts. According to the majority of respondents, Facebook was the most sought-out and effective social media marketing channel. Respondent four noted, however, that LinkedIn had proven to be an excellent platform for their organisation and respondent eleven added that Twitter worked best for them in terms of the donor community. The subsequent responses all substantiated the finding.

Category 21.1

Most effective platform: Facebook

Responses

I believe Facebook is most useful, so it must be Facebook. [R3/6:43]

It is hard to know which one of them it is. I would say, Facebook, simply because we get more messages on Facebook than we do on Instagram; but we also get phone calls or emails. [R5/10:70]

I think that you have to use Facebook, as the most powerful tool, at this moment, and I'm quite surprised, the more that I'm using the Facebook page tools, the more I'm very amazed, because [they are] quite powerful. [R3/7:11]

I would say Facebook, Yeah, at the moment. I think Instagram could be; there's two things that we need to do, one, is to get better photography, and one is, we need to get the donate button on the Instagram page, which, that's a hardware issue, but I think we can sort that one out quite soon. So I think it could be good, but at the moment, I would say Facebook gives us more opportunities. [R6/25:99]

Gosh, I think they're all valuable; but at the moment, probably Facebook, because we use it nationally and regionally, and only because it is so high, and we had it in the beginning. [R7/25:102]

So we find that Facebook is the most effective, because it allows you to create groups where people can workshop and work together, either in private or public, and having that functionality of groups within Facebook is not something that you can really find in other social media platforms so much, really. [R8/3:14]

At the moment, right now, it is Facebook. [R9/23:74]

Facebook, yeah, absolutely. [R10/34:132]

Probably, Facebook; I know it is a cliché, but I'm sure that's what it is.... [R13/13:83]

5.8.1.2 LinkedIn and Twitter

LinkedIn and Twitter were highlighted as the second most effective social media platform by two of the respondents.

Category 21.2

Responses

Once again, this is because we've got two

Most effective platform: LinkedIn and Twitter

different audiences, but LinkedIn does seem to be a very effective medium, specifically, with regards to the engagement that we're getting on there, from the medical fraternity. [R4/30:85]

So I would say Twitter, for us; but then Facebook, as I said, is good for a slightly different target market; the young people that we engage with, most of them are on Facebook, and it sounds bizarre, I know everyone's like, oh, Facebook is such an old ladies thing, but that's what comes out of the research that we do. But I would say, in terms of the donor community and the global public health world, then Twitter is probably the best. [R11/17:82]



Figure 5.7: Word cloud on the most effective platform

Source: Author (2022)

A word cloud highlighted the most frequently used terms by respondents, specifically while commenting on the most effective social media platforms, particularly Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn (refer to Figure 5.7). As a result, respondents indicated that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were their most effective social media sites.

5.8.2 Social media campaign measurement

Four respondents, or less than half of the sample unit, said that they tracked social media activity and campaign success in some manner. According to respondent seven, the organisation's largest challenge was measuring and monitoring, namely obtaining affordable monitoring tools, which was noteworthy given that Facebook gives this monitoring data for free. Notably, respondent nine said that no one monitored their social media initiatives due to a lack of resources and time.

Category 22.1

Campaign measurement: platform analytics

Responses

Yeah. Obviously, there's the easy stuff, which is, how much traffic is coming onto Facebook; how many new likes; how much interaction is there to certain posts; the built-in generic, statistical measurements. But then, also, we've integrated our Facebook into our website, with Facebook Pixel, so we can see then how much traffic is coming from our social media pages, and where they go to the website and what they're doing there. [R8/15:60]

At the moment, it is through engagements and reach, that is the overarching metric, depending on the content; so if we have a post that is specific to an event, or whatever that we're having, obviously things like ticket sales that come through those posts, and what have you, that would be a metric there. [R10/33:130]

Look currently the only way I'm viewing is obviously ... from the back end from a social media point, you are able to view how many people liked your page, how many people stopped following you. So that's how I measure every single post, so I can basically see every single post from there, and how it was measured. [R12/14:50]

Category 22.2

Campaign measurement: word-of-mouth

Responses

Yes. No, I understand the question. I mean, we haven't formally been measuring it. I think you get anecdotal feedback, from people who say, gosh, you're very active on social media, or I really like the stuff that you post. [R6/27:103]

Category 22.3

Campaign measurement: none

Responses

Ooh, they can be difficult. I think the biggest challenge for us is to find affordable monitoring. [R7/27:113]

As I said, it is currently not being measured, purely because there's no time to do it. [R9/22:72]

5.8.3 Summary of level of social media usage

This theme examined the extent to which health NPOs use social media. It was classified into five broad categories, namely social media usage, branding, budgeting, content and guidelines and measurement and assessment. The responses were grouped in accordance with the research objective, "To assess the level to which NPOs use social media platforms and establish the reason(s) for doing so". Several important findings suggested that Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram are the most engaged and effective channels, according to respondents. Additionally, there are some interesting findings on the way content is created and presented on social media. Additionally, respondents frequently mention a lack of time and financial constraints in relation to utilising social media for their individual NPOs.

5.9 Theme three: The use of social media as a marketing tactic and strategy

Another important research goal of the inquiry is to establish how health NPOs can make the most of the strategic usage of social media as part of their marketing and communications strategies, and whether the basis of a social media strategy is in place.

5.9.1 Social media strategy

Respondents were asked to provide insight into their social media strategy and how it aligned with the organisation's overall marketing and organisational goals.

Only three respondents reported that they had a dedicated social media strategy in place. Respondent one noted that their strategy revolved around daily posting, followed by a monthly meeting to discuss and schedule content for the upcoming month.

On the other hand, respondent four mentioned that their strategy involved staying abreast of current trends and topical issues. They would then incorporate these elements into their existing strategy. Respondent seven mentioned their social media strategy aligned with the business pillars and was ultimately set up for that.

Category 23.1

social media strategy

Responses

Yeah, so we post every day, on social media; so for example, we have a social media meeting, once a month, and then we schedule all the posts for that month. So we will look at the health calendar for that month, and then slot that in. [R1/6:17]

Every year, we refresh that strategy by looking at what is topical and trendy now, and incorporating that into the strategy; and then, obviously, I evaluate the metric and I make some suggestions throughout the year. [R4/17:51]

Yes, we do, Our strategy is to support the business pillars. [R7/11:36]

Respondents who indicated that their health non-profit organisation did not have a specialised social media strategy were invited to explain why. The respondents provided a variety of replies, but frequent themes included having the strategy not down in paper, but in their heads, not being urged to build a strategy due to a lack of understanding and education regarding the importance of it, being in organisations that were old school at board level, so lacking in understanding, or being in the process of developing a strategy via organisational structures or external consultants. What was not evident in the data was awareness of the importance of a strategy, and barring respondent ten, all other respondents seemed oblivious to the difference and the positive impact an actual social media marketing communication strategy can make on a non-profit organisation. The responses below summarise the most frequently discovered findings.

Category 23.2

No social media strategy

Responses

The people who make up the Board are quite advanced in their years - if I can say it like that – and a lot of them are not even on Facebook; so they use WhatsApp and they use the email, and we've recently redone our whole website and redesigned it to make it much more user-friendly. But at the outset, the people who set up our organisation were very old school and traditionally minded, and it is only recently in the last couple of years, that I've tried to bring in a bit more technology and things like that. [R2/4:21]

Not outlined on paper. I'm always excited if we have growth in our audience, but there's nothing written down or set in place. [R2/36:19]

I think in South Africa there's a lot of education that's lacking. I've been involved with quite a few NPOs - not just in the medical fraternity - and people lack skills, they lack experience, they lack the knowledge on how to do this right, and in the right way; and I think there's so many other fires to put out, and goals to achieve, [so] that they sometimes miss the connection between how the

communications strategy can add value to achieving those goals. [R4/36:101]

Well, we do not have a written strategy as such, it is all in my head, so it is pretty much, keeping it regular, and at the moment, what we're doing is that.... [R5/8:32]

I mean, not a formal one, I mean, I think we've got a general direction, but it looks quite fluid. [R6/15:63]

Yeah. So I, basically, started creating a strategy, although I do not have one on paper, but it is up here; so I'm basically working with a strategy, up here, that's still got to be put down on paper. [R9/12:35]

So we have recently engaged with a fundraising consultant, as it were. So one of her mandates was to develop a fundraising strategy for us, and part of that is a social media strategy. It is obviously very broad, almost more overarching than it is specific. And it is now up to us to put the specifics in place, and all of that sort of thing. [R10/23:82]

Category 23.3

Social media strategy equals success

Responses

I think it is quite clear, the most successful NPOs have a very good marketing strategy or social media strategy. [10/36:141]

5.9.2 Social media alignment with organisational marketing goals

The researcher recognised the importance of understanding whether respondents' social media marketing efforts were matched with their marketing and organisational goals. Respondents elaborated on the synergy between the social media marketing activities of health NPOs and the organisations' overall marketing goals. Respondent seven stated that the organisation's social media efforts were consistent with its business and strategic goals. Additionally, respondent nine mentioned membership growth and increased knowledge of the sector and organisation. However, respondent twelve answered that the organisation made an effort to grow their social media presence in order to generate additional revenue through such channels.

Category 24

Social media alignment with marketing goals

Responses

So our goals are to, obviously through social media, support what the business is doing, and the strategic goals of the business. [R7/14:59]

I think I've mentioned it earlier ... the growth of membership, the awareness raising within the sector, the awareness raising of the actual organisation, marketing the organisation; and just, purely, communicating; you're creating that communication channel, which is so important. [R9/16:49]

Yes, we do. I mean, we would always like to expand on our social media presence and generate more funding through our social media. [R12/10:28]

5.9.3 Target audience

Respondents were surveyed about their perceptions of their online target audience. The responses obtained were diverse in form and provided insight into the markets in which each health-care NPO worked. Females in their thirties and forties were a frequent audience. Audiences that belonged to a specific sector were also mentioned, as well as the donor community in general, as possible target audiences. The subsequent responses corroborate the aforementioned findings.

Category 26.1

Target audience: Defined audience

Responses

Well, it would probably be middle aged and older, those who have experienced some kind of trauma, or lost a loved one. [R1/17:61-62]

Our target audience [is] two-fold, it is patients; anybody from eighteen up to sixty-five and over; so we've got quite a broad range. [R4/24:67]

I would say the audience is female, generally, tends to be more female, that are following us; I would say, middle LSMs [Living Standards Measures]. And we're actually starting to get more people; we were very conscious of reaching the black demographic of people, reaching people that do not have access, making sure we offer language. So you'll see our WhatsApp now, is not just English, Afrikaans, it is isiZulu, Siswati; we're very conscious of trying to get materials translated. [R8/29:35]

Target audience is everybody in the disability sector; so that would cover your actual disabled person, the organisations dealing with disability,

doctors, carers, caregivers, anybody providing rehab services; because, being a networking organisation, we need to put people in touch, so we need to know who's out there, so that we can connect others with you. [9/18:59]

Generally speaking, it will be the older female target market. So call it forty-five and above, that market is probably our most engaging. [10/28:98]

Category 26.2

Target audience: Donor community

Responses

So the donor community is a target audience, and the media, the mainstream online publications, etc. They would be a target audience, but for us to reach that donor community. And then, we also have I say, general public. [R11/14:58]

Category 26.3

Target audience: No defined audience

Responses

I guess, one would say, everybody that's on social media, but I often put up out there, on social media, but then I put it out on my own page, because I have lots of friends on social media. [R13/10:65]

5.9.4 Social media goals

Several of the responding NPOs identified increasing followers and reach across social media platforms as a primary purpose of establishing a social media presence. Respondents two, nine, and twelve all made reference to this finding, while respondent six, ten and eleven mentioned that their organisations did not have any social media goals at the time. The following answers below shed light on the aforementioned finding.

Category 27.1

social media goal: increase followers and generating funding through social media

Responses

Not outlined on paper. I'm always excited if we have growth in our audience, but there's nothing written down or set in place. [R2/6:34]

Yes, we do. I mean, we would always like to expand on our social media presence and generate more funding through our social media. [R12/10:28]

To increase our following, we did not get to that point.... [R8/37:26]

Category 27.2

social media goal: growth of membership

Responses

I think I've mentioned it earlier ... the growth of membership, the awareness raising within the sector, the awareness raising of the actual organisation, marketing the organisation; and just purely communicating; you're creating that communication channel, which is so important. [R9/16:49]

Category 27.3

No social media goals

Responses

Not at the moment, no. [R6/21:85]

Again, as an organisation, we've been feeling out what it is that social media can do for us, and a lot of what I've been doing, is almost proving exactly that. So now, the next step for us is that, is now going into our goals and planning that. [R10/29:96]

No, we do not have those. [R11/11:47]

5.9.5 Best practice from other organisations - appealing strategies

The purpose in this section is to ascertain best practice social media marketing communication tactics from other NPOs that can be recognised in order to maximise the marketing efforts of health-related NPOs. Respondents were asked whether they had identified any appealing strategies from other non-profit pages that they would like to implement in their respective organisations' social media. Incorporating quality video and images was one of the common strategies identified by respondents five, ten and eleven. Respondent one mentioned that the use of QR codes was something their organisation would like to use more strategically, while respondent ten further elaborated on the idea of having many touchpoints in their digital channels that highlighted the option to donate to the organisation.

Category 28.1

Appealing strategies: incorporating quality visuals/video, engaging content & website optimisations

Responses

I do go and have a look. I like the ones where they've got good visuals, where it is short. [R5/19:128]

I think, yes, short answer yes. But not so much on social media, that's the thing. So for me, I find one of the areas that we need to improve is our user interface on our website. [R10/39:148]

So I have, but perhaps not so much the pages, as the actual content, and obviously I see a lot of great content online. In terms of the type of stuff, I do not know, I think it is more to do with the tone that they take, and the visuals, the graphics, and how appealing, or not, that is. [R11/25:114]

5.9.6 Summary strategic usage of social media as a marketing communication strategy

The focus of this theme was on how to effectively use social media as a marketing communication strategy. social media strategy and best practices were selected as categories. Only four respondents said they had a specialised social media plan in place, which came as no surprise. Eight respondents revealed that, while they recognised the significance of a social media strategy, none was in place formally, and much of the strategy existed in their "heads." Furthermore, only three respondents mentioned a connection between their social media activities and the overall aims of the organisation. It is worth noting that, while a social media plan did not appear to be particularly common, six of the respondents were able to clearly define a target demographic that they would consider with their organisations' marketing efforts. All of the criteria listed above played a role in reaching the research goal of "determining which marketing communication tactics are employed by health NPOs to promote their main business and assessing the success of each." Respondents also mentioned incorporating quality visuals/video, engaging content and website optimisations, call to action campaigns, and having a variety of donation portals (options) available to their audience as significant methods used by health NPOs that can be considered for local implementation.

5.10 Theme four: Barriers that prevent the strategic implementation of social media

This theme examined the challenges that curtail health NPOs from engaging in social media as a marketing communication channel. The theme was established to uncover the key challenges health NPOs faced when it comes to the adoption of social media and further light that can be shed on these challenges. The intention of the theme is to answer the subsequent research question: "What are the challenges that inhibit health NPOs engagement in social media as a marketing communication conduit?"

5.10.1 Social media challenges

The broad assortment of obstacles that respondents currently face when it comes to promoting their respective health NPOs on social media are illustrated in figure 5.9 below. Among the issues raised by responders four, nine, eleven, and twelve, budgets and access to funds were identified as a prevalent source of difficulty. Among the other prevalent themes mentioned by respondents one, five, nine, ten, and thirteen was a lack of time and the inability to maximise the potential of social media platforms. Respondents four, six, seven, eight, nine, and thirteen all noted a lack of awareness or education in terms of social media marketing as a caveat to that conclusion. The responses and additional insights that followed showed the aforementioned conclusions, which are detailed below.

Category 23.1

Budget

Responses

Doesn't necessarily have a big marketing budget, so boosting posts is not necessarily a priority. But we find that with the way that we post, and the ratio, in terms of which we're posting, we do get a lot of organic engagement. [R4/8:19]

I think budget is always a challenge, to get money. [R4/31:87]

We do not have the money. I mean, we are only funded by Social Development, who are very specific in the funding they give us, and social media is not one of the funding line items in a budget. [R9/21:70]

No, but we do have a social media strategy in place, for one of our programmes; and this is complicated, but essentially, I have no budget for marketing communication of the whole organisation. [R11/8:31]

Unfortunately, with an NPO, we do not have the money to pay somebody to do it. So I truly believe we were doing an injustice with our social media platform, and if we actually put as much effort into it, we can achieve so much more. [R12/17:69]

Category 23.2

Capacity constraints

Responses

Everybody's just adding 1 percent to our social media. So we do not have time for it, we do not have time to set aside, and really, what are our goals for social media? That focus is really put into the service, because we're already stretched quite thin in the organisation; so a lot of our focus is not on social media. [R1/16:56]

And then the other challenge, is just not enough time to put into it, to find interesting articles and that kind of thing; the time is a problem. [R5/12:74]

Okay, the only thing preventing me from putting it on paper is time. Because I am doing two full-time jobs in one day, plus I'm the social media marketer, strategy... whatever you want to call me. I do everything, basically. [R9/13:39]

As I said, it is currently not being measured, purely because there's no time to do it. [R9/22:72]

Posting content is a challenge, because I do all my posting during my personal time, very little is done during working time. [R9/24:76]

I think it is more capacity, than anything else, really. We have Uber amounts of content, that's not an issue; there's enough for us to touch on, in order to generate. The issue is, as you say, in an NPO, as ... my official title is Assistant General Manager, and I wear, as you say, many hats, one of which, is funding. [R10/35:137]

I guess, from a personal point of view, is that it is just myself and my assistant; we do not have sufficient staff, we can't afford sufficient staff, to assist. [R13/6:43]

Category 23.3
Frequency of posting

Responses

Internally, yes; it is a struggle to get people to post, or post on time, to post relevant information, to make sure that our logo is transparent – I do not know how many times I have to tell people that – finding appropriate captions. And I can understand, everybody's really busy, to sit and do it. And I think, to do social media when it is not even an interest, or you do not even know to take a proper photo, it can be quite challenging. So it is more internal than external, getting the content out. [R1/27:110]

I post at least twice a week, pretty much every week, and we've been short-staffed, so it [has] been extra challenging. [R5/5:18]

But, I mean, photography again, it is actually having content, and it is not the words ... the visual content is the biggest challenge really. [R6:26/101]

Yeah. I think our Twitter needs more thought. I think sometimes our tweets are a little bit too corporate. I think we sometimes need to be a little bit controversial. And I think LinkedIn is good, I think LinkedIn we're getting there, but we could do better. [R7:13/57]

I think that the question should be, how often we intend to post, because it doesn't always work out that way. [R10:7/21]

Category 23.4
Organic reach

Responses

Yes, the one is what you said, which is what I suspected, but did not know for sure, is it just feels like organic is not really working like it did before, and even putting money in, it doesn't

seem to be having as much of an effect. [R5/11:73]

I mean, less than 1 percent of the people that follow your page would organically see your stuff. So they'd completely, which means it is not what it used to be, it used to be [an] unbelievable tool to really get people worked up, and get stuff done. It is not as effective anymore, unless you've got the budget. [R8/19:70]

Category 23.5

Channels constantly changing

Responses

I think Facebook is such a pain to work with, they keep changing the algorithms, and also the minute that you do a little bit of boosting, they want you to advertise all the time. [R7/26:111]

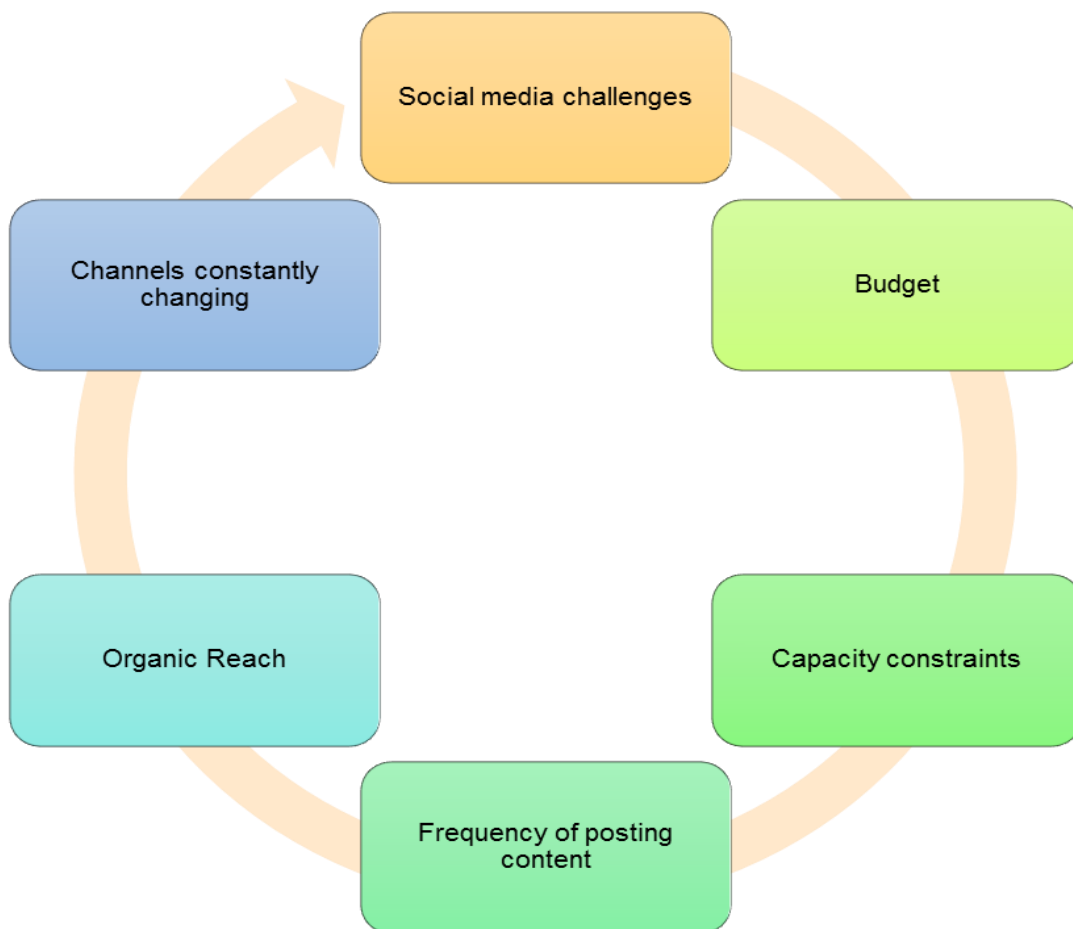


Figure 5.9: Social media challenges

Source: Author (2022)

5.10.2 Lack of organisational understanding

A significant sub-category that emerged as one of the key barriers that prevented the strategic implementation of social media within health profit organisations was the lack of fundamental

understanding in the higher levels of each organisation of social media and the potential it has. Respondent four noted that in general there seemed to be insufficient education in South Africa when it came to experience of social media, how to use them well, and not seeing how the communication strategy could add value to achieving those goals. Respondent eight further elaborated this finding by mentioning that most people working in NGOs and NPOs, were not very technologically savvy, hence did not know what was available and how best to utilise it when it came to social media. Respondent seven and nine both mentioned struggles with trying to convince board level and top management of the impact social media could have on the organisation.

Category 24

Lack of understanding/education within organisations

Responses

I think in South Africa there's a lot of education that's lacking. I've been involved with quite a few NPOs – not just in the medical fraternity – and people lack skills, they lack experience, they lack the knowledge on how to do this right, and in the right way; and I think there's so many other fires to put out, and goals to achieve, that they sometimes miss the connection between how the communications strategy can add value to achieving those goals. [R4/36:101]

Yeah, but there's always more. Like, what you do with a story? There's so many things, that you add to your story. And there's a lot of stuff that we haven't really dabbled with. And I'm sure that if you really know what you're doing, you can bring all those things together, and make it much more impactful. [R6/16:67]

Yeah, we need to persuade the higher-ups that social media provides value. [R7/24:96]

Most of the people that are working in NGOs and NPOs, they're not technologically savvy; so, a lot of the times, their hearts in the right places, they want to do a lot of stuff, but when it comes to the technology thing, they do not even know what is available. [R8/29:113]

I mean, I've already had discussions with the Board to say, when I came into the organisation, we had so many likes and we had so many followers, and now, four years later, we've got so many likes; and they look at me like, hmm, Yeah, and so? It is meaningless to them. [R9/17:51]

Well, personally, I think that we need to employ another person. I do not have all the knowledge.

I always call myself the chief cook and bottle washer of the Association, because I have to do everything; but I'm not that clued up with all social media and the strategies that go with it; so I think we need another person, or a volunteer, to come on board and do it for us; that would help. [R13/8:47]

5.10.3 Availability of data

Respondent nine mentioned that while everything happens on social media these days, the availability and cost of data is still a real issue.

Category 25

Availability of data

Responses

Definitely, yes. I believe that's the way to go, these days, because everything happens on social media, these days. So, especially in the disability sector, people do not really have access to print media or other forms of media, so they rely heavily on social media; but it is also dependent on data, obviously, so the cost of data, the availability of data, in a particular area where they live or work. [R9/17:107]

5.10.4 Volunteers

Two respondents identified the importance of linking with volunteers to help with their social media efforts because of capacity and understanding shortfalls within the organisation, and volunteers could help lessen the impact of the issue.

Category 26

Volunteers

Responses

I think, what would really get it done, is if we could get a volunteer, probably a young volunteer, or an intern, who really understands how to make the most of these things, and could actually, maybe, take time to understand where we're at, and what we need [R6/16:67]

Well, personally, I think that we need to employ another person. I do not have all the knowledge. I always call myself the chief cook and bottle washer of the Association, because I have to do everything; but I'm not that clued up with all social media and the strategies that go with it; so I think we need another person, or a volunteer, to come on board and do it for us; that would help. [R13/8:47]

5.10.5 Priority of social media within the organisation

It was important to establish the priority of social media within health-related NPOs, because while identifying the barriers is important, if the perception of social media are completely lacking then that would need to be unpacked further. Respondent four, seven and ten all mentioned the fact that social media is one among the most economical ways to connect with people that one cannot do without it. Equally, it is easy to track, thus further implying the value they see in social media. Respondent ten stated that it was quite clear that the most successful NPOs had very good marketing strategies. All these responses can be found below.

Category 27

Perception of social media

Responses

Yes. No, it is vital, it is one of the most cost-effective ways to reach people. [R4/37:103]

Absolutely. You can't do without them. So for me ... well, for us, we do not get those marketing budgets to pay for buying space, going to do the mass media, and all of those things. So with social media, it is affordable, and you can track it. [R7/1:6]

I think, it is quite clear, the most successful NPOs have a very good marketing strategy or social media strategy. [R10/36:141]

I mean, the most successful companies and businesses, even private and small businesses, SMEs, have good social media strategies, and it is the same in the NGO world, I think, the smaller NPOs that are doing well have good strategies. [R10/38:141]

was not possible due to lockdown. This meant that many organisations had to pivot their social media efforts in rapid time. Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on the impact of COVID-19 on social media engagement. It is worth noting that while the majority of respondents expressed similar sentiments about the negative impact COVID-19 had on their organisation, others expressed positive sentiments about the influence COVID-19 had on their social media activities. Respondents four, six, seven, nine, and twelve all stated that the pandemic compelled many of them to begin utilising social media more strategically, with respondent twelve stating that COVID-19 compelled the organisation to be more active on social media. The comments that follow back up the aforementioned finding.

Category 31

COVID-19 impact on social media

Responses

Our activities [are] based on the visits, and we run clinics, so ... many times, we are in physical contact. So our social media, basically, is just to inform about the new event, or some other information regarding how we must behave; that's where we use social media. Otherwise, because people must come to us for health assessment , so we use social media just for the announcement or informing people, this is our activities, so that whoever does not know us, may get to our service through social media. [R3/7:51]

I think it just reiterated the fact that you need to be on social media, because people are meeting virtually online. There's been a lot of isolation during lockdown, and because of the internet and because of social media, we were able to still connect with our target audiences. [R4/15:43]

Yeah, I mean, we have definitely posted more regularly, because prior to that, it was a bit hit and miss, and then sometimes we wouldn't post anything for a few weeks or a few months or whatever; and then suddenly, we post a load of stuff. So I think it [has] given us that focus and that discipline, to make sure that we do it regularly. [R6/11:42]

More annually, but flexible, because I mean, thank goodness for... I actually think the one good thing about Covid, nothing like a good crisis that made people realise the value of online, the value of fundraising, the value of using those tools. [R7/15:62]

That's what we would do on social media. So now the only thing that we're doing on social media is educational. We're no longer actively

campaigning to get volunteers, and things like that. [R8/24:90]

Our social media helped in a great way, where that was concerned, because people then started... they voiced their frustrations, they take it to social media, I pick it up on Facebook, and I see, oh, you're having a problem, you're having a problem; how can we help you? And so, in that way, it was a great help. [R9/28:93]

I think that was a very interesting thing, because, in terms of our programme, so not our overall brand, as an organisation, but in terms of our programmes, when lockdowns and restrictions happened, we were really, really stuck, because we couldn't access our beneficiaries, as we had been, before, which was in person; so we had to really pivot quickly, and come up with content that could be distributed via WhatsApp and Facebook. [R11/26:116]

It was one of the positive things that came out of COVID-19; because that was the only way we could go about it. So like I said, it allowed us to be more active on social media. [R12/24:110]

It ... (social media) has gone very quiet. Prior to this, my assistant did it, all the time; since July, we have had a major backslide, so we've not done much. [R13/20:122]

5.11.1 COVID-19's impact on health NPOs

The dissertation wanted to know how respondents had to change their social media habits during COVID-19. Respondents six and seven stated that the pandemic provided them with the opportunity to rethink and adapt their social media activities and practices, whereas respondents eight and nine stated that COVID-19 had had a negative impact on the entire organisation and that they had to adapt many of their day-to-day activities.

Category 32

Impact of COVID-19 on NPO

Responses

I think, in a way, Covid's made it easier for us to engage with our supporters, because everybody has been doing the same thing; I mean, at a personal level, washing your hands and wearing a mask, and all of that stuff. [R6/10:40]

I think it impacted in a - how can I say it? It made you up your game, and I think it was a good thing, it became the go-to platform for some people. Some people weren't on WhatsApp, some people weren't able to get news, or whatever, so

we enhanced it, a lot. We realised it could be a wonderful platform to help raise awareness, promote our service, and at the same time, also raise funds. So definitely, I think it became a very valuable platform, to reach people during Covid, and especially for patients, they were anxious, they were scared, all of those kind of things; it was very valuable. [R7/30:133]

Well, obviously, COVID-19 has affected our entire organisation, in a huge way, since our function was usually providing support services at events, so because those events are not taking place anymore, we are not actively campaigning for volunteers. [R8/23:88]

It is turned it on its head, completely, because of the challenges that we faced with lockdown. Shutting us down completely... I mean, the organisations in the disability sector were virtually shut down completely, with lockdown, in terms of not being able to go outside, for example. [R9/27:91]

The way things are going now, with Covid, it is so difficult to be able to host events. [R12/11:28]

Very badly. We have not been able to hold or host any fundraising events. And that's where we would normally have put it on Facebook. We have had no fundraising events. [R13/19:118]

5.11.2 Content shared during COVID-19

It was critical to check with responders the type of content that was published on social media during COVID-19. Some responses concentrated on information that emphasised their organisations' actions during the pandemic, such as vaccine pushes in specific areas and mask wearing.

Category 33

Content shared during COVID-19

Responses

It would be the same and, probably, we add a bit of our COVID-19 relief efforts, or our vaccine drives, we do a lot of vaccine drives, in areas. [R1/21:92]

So there's been quite a lot of nice research done, in America, on the brain, and how Covid has affected it, and things like that, so I always try to repost those articles and the research links and things like that, so I think it [has] increased our activity a little bit in that regard. I'm posting more research and articles

of interest, rather than just events, that type of thing. [R2/8:42]

So obviously Covid had an impact on the type of content that we've posted, but not on the amount of content, or any of that; we've always been quite active. So I think it is more of a type of content influence that it had. [R4/16:45]

That's what we would do on social media. So now the only thing that we're doing on social media, is educational. We're no longer actively campaigning to get volunteers, and things like that. [R8/24:90]



Figure 5.11: Word cloud on social media usage during COVID-19

Source: Author (2022)

With regard to COVID-19, the word cloud displays the most commonly used words by respondents while commenting on social media activity. Covid, people, events, and fundraising were the most often used words (refer to Figure 5.11). When asked about their social media activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents frequently mentioned the sort of content/media and fundraising.

5.11.3 Summary of social media usage during COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, this theme focused on social media usage. The researcher presented empirical findings from respondents, such as the influence of COVID-19 on social media activity and how respondents had to alter their social media practices.

5.12 Summary

The findings of the primary research were analysed and summarised in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter gives the findings of a dissertation of the responses acquired from interviews with respondents from health NPOs. Furthermore, it shows the recorded data and determines recurring patterns in responses and provides additional interesting insights. ATLAS.ti was used to code the interview transcripts of thirteen respondents, resulting in 35 unique codes and 33 categories. Five main themes arose from the list of codes, and within each main topic, categories and sub-categories were developed. The findings of this chapter, which meet the inquiry's research questions and objectives, constitute the themes and categories. Furthermore, the findings in this chapter are represented through diagrams, direct quotes from respondents, and tables that organise the data in a more methodical manner.

The first theme in this chapter indicated respondents' motivation for using social media. Following that, the emphasis was on the level of social media participation of health NPOs. This was followed by a discussion of the strategic usage of social media as a marketing strategy, which was then followed by the barriers that prevent the strategic implementation of social media and finally, how social media were employed during COVID-19. The following chapter will explore the data in further depth and discuss the results in conjunction with the current literature in order to discover any new insights that may arise.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The extracted data results after categorising and coding the 13 interview transcripts that were derived from health-related NPO respondents in South Africa, Western Cap were summarised in the previous chapter. The data generated by the dissertation, whose primary goal was to determine whether health-related NPOs use social media as a marketing communication strategy and compares the findings and implications in relation to available literature from similar studies, are examined in this chapter. The results of the analysis show the respondents' life experiences' parallels and contrasts in terms of using social media as a marketing communication strategy.

6.2 The extent to which respondent NPOs use social media

A growing body of research has considered the business and marketing opportunities offered by social media, together with the elements that affect its acceptance (Ayeh et al., 2012; Alalwan et al., 2017). social media has become an important component of corporate communication strategies as they diversify from traditional media due to their interactive nature and pervasiveness (Gbadeyan & Mensah, 2016; Philip & Kannan, 2019). Year on year, global social media has grown from 4.2 billion (January 2021) to over 4.6 billion (January 2022), which signifies a 10.1 percent increase (Su, 2022).

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have grown rapidly in the last five years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Katz & Nandi, 2021). Like the rest of the world, South Africans have had to develop a new method of staying in touch while being geographically separated. South Africa has 25 million active social media users, according to the *SA social media Landscape Report* of 2021, which represents a 12.6 percent annual increase in the number of social media users year over year (Petousis & Holmes, 2021). Overall, this equates to 41.9 percent of South Africa's total population who are active on social media. It is interesting to note that of the 25 million active users, 98.5 percent access social media platforms via their mobile device (Petousis & Holmes, 2021). By noting the answers to questions focusing on this theme, looking at the social media platforms that the respondents claimed to be using and noting a variety of online platforms being used by specific NPOs in addition to the activity frequency that was recorded, the extent of the use of social media by health-related NPOs in this dissertation was ascertained.

6.2.1 Social media channels used and reasons why

Chaffey (2022) reports that the most widely used social networking site internationally is Facebook, which is followed by the WhatsApp messaging app and YouTube video platform. According to the *SA social media Landscape Report*, WhatsApp and YouTube are the most popular platforms, followed by Facebook and Instagram in South Africa (Petousis & Holmes, 2021). Regardless of South African statistics cited in the above source, the results of the studies reflect international patterns of usage, including the current dissertation.

The results show that Instagram and Facebook were the two social media networks that respondents considered to be the most popular. The researcher examined the various respondents' social networking platforms to contrast their assertions with their behaviour. All 13 health-related NPOs had Facebook and Instagram accounts, but their activity varied. In terms of other social media platforms, more than half of the respondents mentioned that their organisations use Twitter and WhatsApp, whereas a single respondent each mentioned that their organisations used YouTube and Telegram. A respondent believed that Twitter was the best platform for networking with potential donors. When asked what the main purpose of a social media presence was, responses varied, but there were a couple of common themes that emerged below.

6.2.1.1 Awareness of organisation

The social media marketing funnel implies that the first step in any social media strategy is to raise awareness. Sanchez (2022) stated that during the initial phase of social media contact, supporters learn about an organisation through a variety of channels, including social media, search engines, friends and partner organisations.

During the awareness stage, potential consumers, leads or donors learn about the brand as they become interested in learning more about the organisation and its mission. Creating content that addresses the problems and obstacles that potential customers face in their personal lives or professions is an excellent way to draw attention to an organisation's unique material (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

This literature ties in well with the findings in that more than half of the respondents highlighted raising awareness of the NPO to attract funding, donations and public understanding as being a key reason for using social media. Furthermore, a respondent stated that social media use was critical in dispelling the myth that hospices were only for the dying and another stated that social media helped the organisation reach a larger audience for free. Several respondents

mentioned social media's broad reach potential and how it positively influenced attitudes toward health-related NPOs.

Another respondent correctly stated that social media was not limited to South Africans and that one could reach a global audience. The respondent also stated that social media allowed one to reach audiences that traditional media such as newspapers, newsletters or phone calls might not have reached. As previously stated, the current dissertation's findings mirror literature that social media plays an important role in raising awareness of an organisation and that it has enormous potential in terms of reach and awareness. As such, this current dissertation confirms that a majority of health-related NPOs utilise social media to create brand awareness, and that the vast majority of participants were cognisant of the potential social media has in terms of the awareness stage.

6.2.1.2 Raising funds

NPOs made every effort to adjust to the crisis brought on by the global COVID-19 pandemic (Clampit et al., 2021), and as the need for funding grows in tandem with the popularity of these organisations, there is a potential revenue stream that many of these NPOs are missing out on as a social media marketing channel to nurture donations (Cazorla Milla et al., 2017; Kaul & Luo, 2018). The results in the previous chapter show that fundraising was another significant sub-category that emerged as a key reason for using social media among health-related NPOs. Several respondents noted that while social media can be used to raise awareness, obtaining funds is equally important because the government support that they receive is insufficient to sustain the organisation. In addition to raising funds, the method by which these funds are raised must be cost effective. More than half of the respondents mentioned how inexpensive social media is for reaching a large number of people; with a majority of the respondents emphasising that if an organisation engages with social media strategically and effectively, it can be extremely beneficial in terms of costs and raising funds.

While social media and fundraising are effective, they are only as effective as the relationships that one builds with potential donors. Several respondents mentioned that using social media on a regular basis helps to highlight what exactly the organisation is doing in terms of accountability, which is important for developing relationships with potential donors.

A third of the respondents stated that developing relationships via social media was critical to keep people interested and returning, ultimately motivating them to donate and contribute to the organisations. The findings of the dissertation tie in well with Di Lauro et al. (2019), who

found that several studies highlighted that social media can help NPOs with their fundraising efforts, as long as those efforts have clear engagement tactics, transparency in terms of where the funds/donations are used and accountability.

6.2.1.3 Sharing services

Understanding what an NPO provides is important to distinguish it from other NPOs. Veldeman et al. (2017) asserted that, regardless of the categories of services and products offered by a company, a strong social media marketing communication plan with a strategic angle can positively influence sales. The same can be said for NPOs, and judging by the results there is a positive link between the literature and findings in that several respondents mentioned how important it was to share the services that various NPOs provided on social media. Another respondent stated that WhatsApp had been extremely beneficial to their NPO's counselling division. Roberts et al. (2017) propose that when an NPO organisation utilises social media, the primary objective should be to connect with individuals who have a need for the organisation's services or who are unfamiliar with the organisation's offer but would like to support it financially or by donating their time. When analysing the literature and the findings linked to the dissertation, there is a clear link between having a social media presence for sharing services and ultimately nurturing people for donations and support.

6.2.1.4 Connecting with the community

Sharing information, communicating with others and becoming well known in the community, as well as establishing an online community, were identified as critical goals in the previous chapter for health NPOs using social media. More than half of the participants thought that making the NPO known in the community was critical, further believing that involvement with an NPO, particularly in their field of work, was critical to gaining community support, which was due to the organisation's funding that was also dependent on the local community. A couple of the respondents had equally strong feelings about the community and the use of social media as an indicator of accountability. The latter was used to show donors where and what their money was being spent on, as well as the impact their work has on the community.

The above-mentioned findings tie in well with the available literature uncovered in previous studies. Albanna et al. (2022) found that regular engagement of social media affected NPO fundraising, awareness and community engagement in a positive light. Furthermore, research has found that much of an NPO's power stems from its relationships with members of the community, along with other important parties and that they may be able to develop and maintain these relationships using social media platforms (Given et al., 2013; Albanna et al., 2022). The inquiry contributes to the corpus of knowledge that social media has an immediate

positive impact on the community that a specific NPO serves, although there should be clear transparency and accountability in terms of what is shared and how it is communicated on social media. For example, where exactly a sponsorship cheque is going to be used, whether it be for ten extra beds or meals for 1 000 underprivileged children.

Figure 6.1 depicts the primary motivations for health-related NPOs to use social media as a marketing communication strategy.

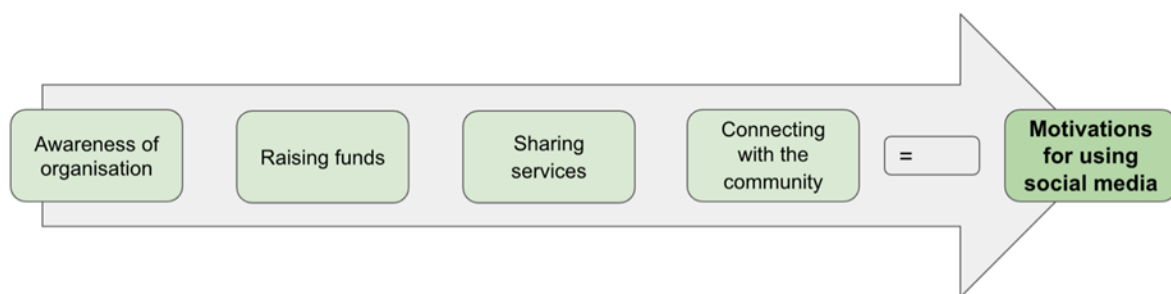


Figure 6.1: Motivations for using social media

Source: Author (2022)

6.3 Activity and frequency of social media use

Social media marketing, like traditional forms of advertising, aims to pique the interest of the target audience (Keutelian, 2022). As such, the success of social media marketing begins with content creation, distribution, activity and frequency. For an organisation aiming to ensure their social media posts reach the intended audience at the most opportune time, understanding the best times to post is crucial (Keutelian, 2022). To support the research goal, “To analyse how health NPOs use social media as a marketing communication strategy”, the researcher had to first determine how frequently NPOs posted on their chosen social media platforms. As found in the previous chapter, more than half of the 13 respondents mentioned that their posting frequency followed a trend of at least once a week, while a third of the respondents mentioned that they posted daily to a maximum of three times per week.

It's intriguing to consider that a couple of respondents reported that their organisation did not have a formal structure for posting and that it was done on an ad hoc basis. Even though these findings do not align with the literature, as both Ferreira (2021) and Keutelian (2022) stated that organisations should at least be posting content on the majority of the regularly used platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, twice a day, it signals that the organisations in the dissertation understood that they needed to post at least to stay relevant and not just have social media channels lie dormant.

According to the previous chapter's results, most of the health-related NPOs published on social media on a weekly basis. From a strategic standpoint, there appeared to be a knowledge barrier, as only a few respondents identified the days of the week when they were most likely to upload content and, more importantly, the type of content that worked.

One respondent stated that their organisation could only post ad hoc because they were the “communication department”, therefore implying capacity constraints. A couple of other respondents stated that their organisations could only post once a week because they were too focused on health issues and helping patients, which agreed with the literature. Shon et al. (2019) and McIntyre (2021) mention that while NPO success and sustainability are not always correlated with the large number of NPOs in South Africa.

There are many South Africa NPOs that are not viable, many of which are due to capacity issues, with NPOs frequently lacking the resources needed to succeed, especially within the framework of social media marketing. As a result, the dissertation ties in fittingly with literature in that the high burden on health-related NPOs to deliver where government lacks causes the priority focus to shift from marketing activities to patient-focused activities, which results in a gap in strategic social media marketing and leaves a significant unrealised opportunity.

6.3.1 Budget and paid advertising

Despite the fact that none of the health-related NPOs had a specific budget allocated for social media and paid advertisements, nearly half of the respondents highlighted the importance of Facebook advertisements. This finding is intriguing, especially considering the general lack of awareness about social media strategy reflected in the findings.

The usage of Facebook advertisements emerged strongly despite the fact that some of the respondents were uncertain as to whether their usage was appropriate. Respondents were aware that they needed to begin engaging with the concept, although one respondent claimed that their organisation was unable to function without social media advertisements and that paid advertising had the potential to be the only way to reach large audiences in the future, given that relying on organic reach is not a sustainable strategy.

These findings concur with Albanna et al. (2022), who found that NPOs are increasingly turning to social media platforms to assist them with reaching their public engagement goals, specifically through the use of social media advertising. An additional finding that emerged from this investigation was the identification of factors, including priority, total budget allocation and consumption as inhibiting aspects for not having a budget for social media.

Prior literature indicates that there are several obstacles in NPOs when it comes to social media and advertisements, such as inefficient social media performance measurement, insufficient organisational resources, a budget deficiency and a lack of awareness, which are reasons why many NPOs do not engage in or provide a budget for paid advertising (Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020). This is consistent with the statements made by one respondent, that the organisation did not boost posts more frequently than once every eight months and that when they did engage in social media advertising, it was not a routine occurrence. Instead, it typically took place only to draw attention to a particular event. Furthermore, another respondent mentioned that although they had not investigated Facebook advertisements, it is something that they would really like to understand better because it was really becoming inevitable. This exemplifies the initial signs of awareness of the importance, but lack of understanding, which was revealed by the literature. According to the aforementioned literature, allocating a social media budget and utilising paid advertising has the potential to be used for a multitude of purposes in the NPO market. These purposes include increasing the audience base, raising funds, increasing awareness of the cause and even becoming a member of the organisation. Yet, there appears to be a significant disparity between paid advertising, the understanding of the concept and social media budget in terms of how it all links together within the health-related NPO sector in South Africa.

6.3.2 Hashtags for brand awareness

The usage of hashtags was found to be prevalent among all but one respondent in the dissertation. A common theme amongst each respondent was the utilisation of a hashtag that was aligned to a specific health day in the calendar, or a hashtag linked to the service they provided. It is important to observe that while the majority of respondents understood that hashtags should be used in posts, the impact of including hashtags was questioned by many of the respondents.

Another significant finding was that a large portion of the NPOs working in the health sector were aware that the use of hashtags could help increase visibility. This correlates with research by Bush (2016) and Sharma et al. (2020), which found that while searching for healthcare might yield results if a user wanted to learn more about healthcare, searching for #healthcare would guarantee that the results were pertinent to the topic or organisation. This was an important result that this dissertation also found.

A number of respondents mentioned that using hashtags increase visibility and categorise content. Therefore, if businesses are looking for particular content and the appropriate

hashtags are used, the sought content features higher in the results. Naraine et al. (2021) support this finding and emphasise that the strategic use of hashtags has become an essential tactic in digital marketing because they serve as the foundation of online communication.

The research findings suggest a positive correlation between the literature review and the empirical investigation, indicating that the use of hashtags generally enhances brand awareness for the respondents and their respective organisations. However, a limitation of this study is that most of the research analysed for this dissertation focused on how organisations use hashtags as a marketing communication strategy rather than on how supporters of these organisations use hashtags. This aspect should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

6.4 Factors enabling the strategic use of social media

This dissertation focuses on four factors that promote or enable the use of social media as strategic marketing communication channels, constituting cost effectiveness, fundraising, donor relationship building and community connection. While these findings are limited to the current dissertation, similar findings have been observed in other studies regarding analogous factors (Feng et al., 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019; Seelig et al., 2019; Lim et al., 2021).

6.4.1 Cost effectiveness

The affordability of using social media as a marketing communication conduit for the NPO to interact with their audience was an important consideration. According to the available literature, NPOs in general lack resources and capacity, including financial capacity to promote themselves and thus seek strategies that are affordable to do this (Museli & Jafari Navimipour, 2018; Tajudeen et al., 2018; Qalati et al., 2021).

The findings of the current dissertation indicate a similar viewpoint, with a couple of respondents using traditional media but agreeing that social media platforms are one of the most economical methods to reach individuals. Despite this claim, a participant remarked that using Facebook as a medium to attain broader reach (organically) had become more costly and that paid advertising might become the only way to reach mass audiences in the future, as relying on organic reach was not sustainable.

A significant number of respondents stated that they used social media channels owing to the low cost, particularly in relation to the broad reach that the platforms provided and the creative expression that the platforms allowed users to engage in.

This result is in line with earlier research where the widespread use of social media as a marketing communication conduit was seen as being enabled by cost effectiveness due to the

simple set-up and management process and the fact that it is free (Shaltoni, 2017; Sponder & Khan, 2019; Wilson, 2019). Dwivedi et al. (2021) note that while these platforms are cost effective, a well thought out strategy is required for successful deployment and that having a social media presence is no guarantee of a successful marketing campaign. While it is true that these platforms are economical and that there is a constructive connection between research outputs and the literature, the fact remains that success cannot be fully realised in the absence of a well-conceived marketing communication strategy.

6.4.2 Fundraising

The extent to which social media allows NPOs to connect with and engage an audience that may not be aware of the NPOs is an enabling factor. Furthermore, the aspect of raising funds through the strategic use of social media are another enabling factor of its use, which was another key finding of the dissertation. This sentiment was shared by more than half of the respondents, who stated that in addition to communicating with potential donors and investors, social media were also important in terms of fundraising. One respondent stated that they were not government-funded, and all fundraising was primarily driven through events that were promoted on social media.

Feng et al. (2017) found that consumers' levels of trust and satisfaction with an NPO's social media presence significantly influenced their propensity to donate and spread the organisation's message through WOM after engaging with the organisation's content, thus social media had the potential to reach a new audience. This is supported by a systematic literature review that was conducted by Di Lauro et al. (2019), which found that social media are useful for NPO fundraising efforts if the fundraising activities on social media include defined engagement methods, transparency in terms of where the funds/donations are used, and accountability.

Thus, the studies mentioned above confirm that using a social media strategy helps fundraising efforts and engagement with health-related NPOs in South Africa. The current dissertation concurs that South African health-related NPOs should continue to engage strategically with social media in a bid to use these digital platforms to raise funds for their respective organisations.

6.4.3 Building donor relationships

The majority of respondents' responses indicate that they used social media for building relationships and interacting with key stakeholders such as the local community, engaged audiences, members of an organisation, investors, and donors. However, while social media and fundraising can be used in tandem, they are only as effective as the relationships that are

cultivated with potential donors. A number of respondents used social media on a regular basis that helped to highlight what the organisation was doing, which is important for building relationships so that potential donors could see the impact of the organisation. Another respondent stated that developing relationships via social media was critical to keep people interested and returning, ultimately motivating them to donate and contribute to the organisation.

NPOs are actively developing relationships with current and prospective donors, and if this is not the case, it is strongly advised, particularly through social media marketing (Rathi et al., 2014; Konuk, 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Kim & Stepchenkova, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Thomas & Jadeja, 2021; Albanna et al., 2022). A number of respondents in this dissertation stated that it was essential to interact with people and keep them updated on what the organisation was doing, why they were doing it, and why it was important to retain an audience, new or old, interested, returning, and hopefully donating and supporting the organisation through relationships built through strategic social media marketing.

This finding is in alignment with studies by Cruickshank (2017) and Barbu et al. (2019) who found that NPOs must be well known in order to retain volunteers, members, sponsors, donors, and other supporters, and marketing was critical to achieving that goal. In addition, it was found that NPOs can combat declining donations and a shortage of volunteers by increasing public awareness of their existence and mission using strategic social media marketing. The findings of this investigation also demonstrate that cultivating relationships with donors is an essential component of a successful social media strategy for an NPO operating in South Africa.

6.4.4 Community connection

Organisations working to improve public health should use social media if they hope to accomplish the following goals: information sharing, community outreach, and building a recognisable online presence which underpins a strong connection to the community. One third of respondents agreed that publicity for the NPO was essential; with a respondent mentioning that showcasing the impact of an NPO, especially one operating in a community, was important for gaining community support. NPOs often rely heavily on donations from members of the community for funding.

Another respondent expressed robust opinions on the significance of giving back to the community and using social media as a level of accountability to show donors where and how their money was being spent. These findings are all aligned with Albanna et al. (2022), who examined how social media affected NPO fundraising, awareness, and community engagement/connection. Overall, it was found that there was a positive influence on the NPO

within the community through active social media use. Accordingly, the current dissertation's findings that utilising social media led to an increase in brand awareness and a more positive connection with the community are further supported by literary studies.

The enabling elements that encourage the adoption of social media as a marketing communication channel are shown in Figure 6.2.

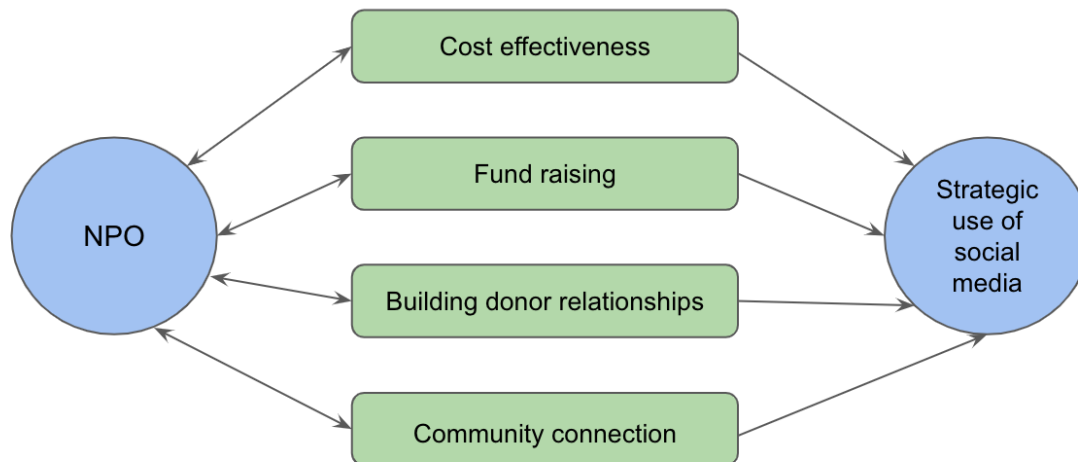


Figure 6.2: Elements enabling the strategic use of social media

Source: Author (2022)

6.5 Impediments of using social media as a marketing communication strategy

Increasingly, research is being done to determine what factors lead health-related NPOs, and NPOs in general, to adopt or use social media as a communication strategy (Feng et al., 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019; Seelig et al., 2019; Ihm & Kim, 2021; Swart et al., 2021). However, in this section, the dissertation will consider some of the difficulties associated with using social media as a marketing communication strategy.

Interaction, compatibility, cost-effectiveness, perceived trust, technical and organisational acceptance, budget and capacity are the most common factors adversely influencing an organisation's adoption of social media as a communication strategy (Museli & Jafari Navimipour, 2018; Tajudeen et al., 2018; Qalati et al., 2021). The results in a South African context show that budget, frequency of posting content, resources, lack of platform knowledge, and capacity constraints are the main limiting factors in the participating respondents' adoption of social media. The dissertation's respondents also lacked an understanding of social media's full potential. The sections that follow will highlight the factors that impede social media use by associated these with the findings and related literature.

6.5.1 Budget

NPOs face a number of challenges in attempting to utilise social media (Feng et al., 2017; Maxhuni, 2021; Albanna et al., 2022). To begin, many NPOs simply do not have the means to devote to social media. Sun and Asencio (2019) found that a lack of budget and full-time employees can be a barrier to social media adoption. Furthermore, Vogelsang et al. (2021) report that human resources and budget constraints are the most common reasons why NPOs do not use social media.

Current literature points to 'budget' in a general sense being a barrier for NPOs to engage with social media; however, often the barrier of budget is used interchangeably and linked with a lack of budget for paid adverts, a lack of budget for staff to implement social media effectively, and a lack of budget to actually run some sort of social media marketing communication (Swart, 2018; Vogelsang et al., 2021; Berenguer & Shen, 2020; Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020).

Budget in general was flagged as a major issue by more than half of the respondents with common issues identified as the budget not prioritised towards marketing, and big corporates not funding marketing activities when funding the NPOs. A couple of respondents actually stated that in general there was absolutely no budget for marketing, so there was no budget available for digital engagement.

One respondent alluded to the need to pay a professional to handle their social media accounts, saying, "Unfortunately, as an NPO, we do not have the budget to hire someone to manage our social media efforts." This individual believed that the organisation was doing social media marketing a disservice by not having a professional handle this department.

The growing expense for utilising Facebook as a medium for marketing was another issue connected to the budget barrier, despite the fact that the majority of respondents considered this platform to be cost-effective, with the exception of two respondents who mentioned that to reach the intended target market and planned audience, so Facebook boost options (or paid advertising) was required as frequent posts only reached a small audience and the organic reach had decreased.

According to the results of this research, using social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram and WhatsApp can be an extremely cost-effective strategies compared to traditional media when it comes to reaching an audience, while claims that employ the boost option has made Facebook advertising costly that solely pertain to Facebook.

In sum, while the findings of this dissertation show that social media are cost effective, NPOs still have significant budget constraints A clear indicator is that the organisations under

dissertation were often not fully aware of the potential social media have for the NPOs. If the budget is prioritised to marketing efforts, potential positive impact such as reaching new audiences, growing them, and nurturing donations from the audience could be achieved (Waniak-Michalak et al., 2022).

6.5.2 Frequency of posting content

The frequency of publishing material, the timing of the posts and how often these posts are distributed are essential elements of strategic social media marketing. social media marketing communication, like all other forms of marketing, is about capturing the attention of current and potential customers (Keutelian, 2022). Creating and disseminating engaging and excellent postings is only the beginning of social media marketing success (Keutelian, 2022). Knowing when to post on social media are essential for reaching the right people at the right time.

To determine activity frequency, the researcher determined how frequently health-related NPOs posted on their preferred social media platforms. More than 70 percent of respondents posted once per week. Ferreira (2021) and Keutelian (2022) suggest that each social media platform is unique, with a different strategy working for each platform, and a generic approach is not strategic enough. This is precisely what was discovered in this dissertation where nearly half of the respondents found that posting content frequency and strategy were a significant challenge.

One respondent stated that getting members of the organisation to post, post on time, post relevant information, ensure the logo was transparent, and finding appropriate captions was difficult. Another respondent stated that the organisation was currently understaffed, which made posting difficult. The findings also showed that a couple of respondents were not overly concerned with how frequently they posted because they were unaware of best practise, and posted any piece of content that they felt would resonate with the audience as an organisation.

These findings support Ferreira's (2021) research, which posed the question of how frequently companies should post on social media. A number of companies do not have suitable social media strategies, so it can assume that NPOs also do not have appropriate strategies in place when attempting to engage in strategic social media marketing.

6.5.3 Resources

Zhang and Gupta (2018) and Cho et al. (2017) found that resource availability influenced the performance of health-related NPOs, and that social media have been proposed as a possible solution to aid in financial sustainability. The major issue for NPOs is that they frequently lack the resources to effectively use these platforms.

Probably due to the fact that the global number of NPOs has grown, so has the demand for donor support (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009; Kilonda, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2017; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020; Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020) and the resources available to NPOs have not grown proportionately (Greggory & Howard, 2009; de los Mozos et al., 2016; Barnabé et al., 2020; Mash et al., 2020; Choto et al., 2020). As a result, many NPOs face varying degrees of resource scarcity (Bose, 2012; Hamunakwadi, 2021; Jönsson & Huzzard, 2021; Gamielien et al., 2022)

The literature confirms this dissertation's findings about resources being another challenge in strategic social media use. Notably, one respondent stated that there was no real monitoring of their social media initiatives due to a lack of resources and time. More than a third of respondents believed that using social media was a positive strategy, and that there was a clear understanding of its importance, but NPOs resources were scarce when trying to balance priorities within organisations, and this is unfortunately when social media use did not appear to have a very strong position.

6.5.3.1 Lack of organisational understanding

Ahmad et al. (2018), Khoo (2019), Nchabeleng et al. (2018), and Dwivedi et al. (2018) indicate that a significant barrier to NPOs' adoption of social media marketing as a marketing communication instrument is a lack of organisational understanding and time spent on social media, which does not equal the recompense. The studies also revealed that a fundamental misunderstanding of the ease of use social media frequently inhibits these organisations which have a problem due to a lack of resources to understand new technological hardware or infrastructure, which may limit the organisation's ability to capitalise on social media.

However, the notion that social media networking and marketing are free or inexpensive for NPOs is a myth (Marwick, 2017), because many newer organisations lack the resources to purchase computers and manage social media effectively, and they may also lack the personnel to effectively use this resource (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018).

Many NPOs have a limited view of marketing communication strategies, believing that these strategies only include promotional, advertising, and sales activities on occasion, rather than addressing needs and wants through the marketing concept (Hollen, 2018; Kotler & Lee, 2019).

This misconception is supported by Tharpe's (2019) findings, which show that many NPOs continue to demonstrate a clear lack of understanding of marketing communication strategies,

focusing instead on sales and promotional activities. To be successful, organisations must recognise that marketing is about more than just bringing in money; it is also about satisfying customers and donors, and there is a strategy behind that.

All respondents of the dissertation confirmed they had a social media presence or knew someone who did, so understanding the medium's potential was not an issue. However, one respondent explained the difficulties their NPO faced due to a lack of understanding, attributing it more to a regional barrier than an organisational barrier, by saying, "In South Africa there's a lot of education that's lacking." The respondent said further that a lack of people with the right skills, experience, and knowledge had been a major issue for all NPOs they had worked with, and that many NPOs failed to see how a strong communications strategy can contribute to their overall mission and success.

Two respondents mentioned the difficulty of persuading upper-level executives of the value of social media, given that the majority of them are not technically sophisticated. Another respondent described issues at the board level, where they had to explain the impact social media had on the organisation over a four-year period by increasing likes, followers, and newsletter sign-ups, but the board did not understand the success or see the potential the growth statistics provided.

One of the most important findings of this dissertation is the connection between a lack of social media understanding within organisations and the barrier it poses to the successful implementation of a social media marketing communication strategy.

6.5.3.2 Capacity constraints

While there are a large number of NPOs in South Africa, this does not necessarily correlate with NPO sustainability and success, as many NPOs are not sustainable, much of which is due to capacity issues and frequently lacking the resources needed to succeed (Shon et al., 2019; McIntyre, 2021).

According to the current dissertation, capacity is a significant constraint and barrier when it comes to social media. As stated by more than half of the respondents, many people simply add to social media where they can because they do not have the time due to service delivery being their primary driver.

Furthermore, two respondents emphasised the capacity constraint by stating that they frequently juggled multiple responsibilities at their organisation. Another respondent said that

they had only two administrative staff and that in addition to running the organisation, they also needed to stay current with marketing trends, which unfortunately were often overlooked.

This situation is also reflected by Evans et al. (2005) and Skhosana (2020), who found that NPOs are forced to prioritise service delivery over other important tasks due to time and capacity constraints. Young (2017) identified a similar situation where networking, establishing, or maintaining donor relations, marketing, branding, proposal writing, and developing a fundraising strategy are examples of skills that often do not receive the attention they require in NPOs.

The lack of capacity is reflected in the dissertation and in the literature reviewed, which indicates that in South Africa health-related NPOs face the same capacity challenges as the majority of other NPOs. Figure 6.3 below illustrates the factors retarding or preventing the use of social media as a communication strategy by health-related NPOs in the current dissertation.

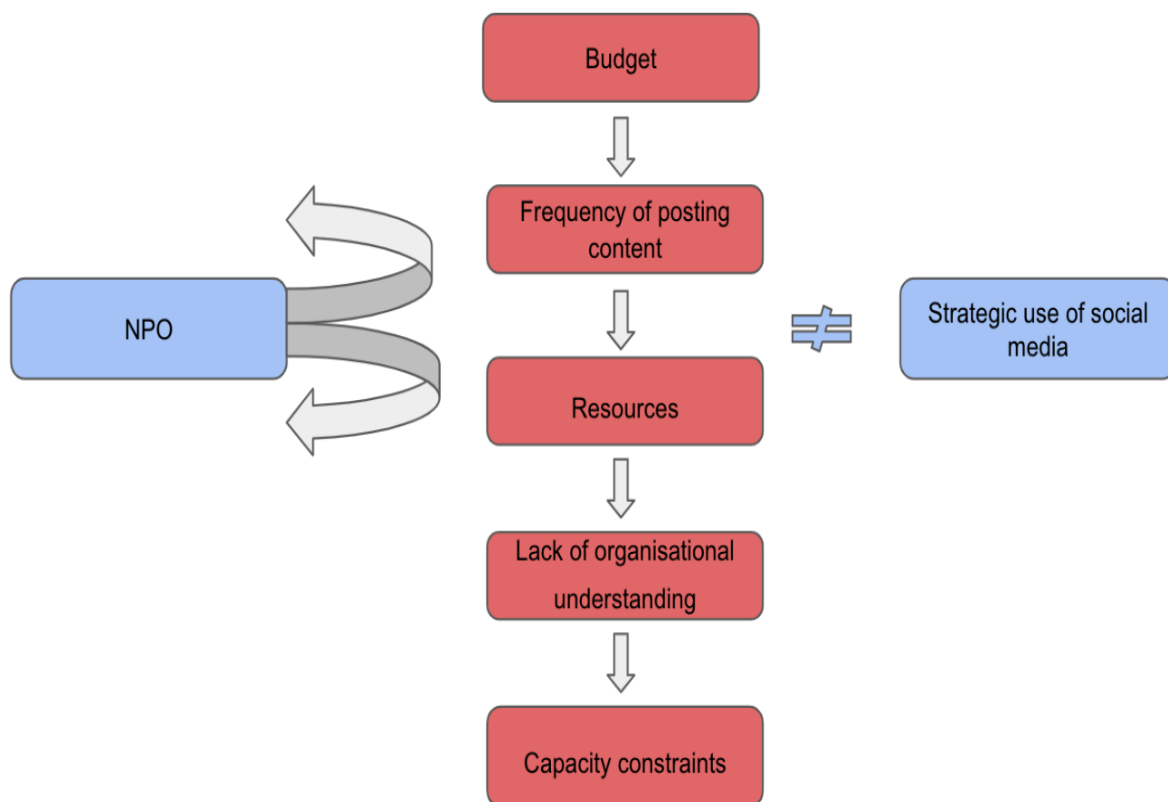


Figure 6.3: Challenges to effective social media strategy

Source: Author (2022)

6.6 Motivation for using social media as a marketing communication strategy

NPOs can now use multiple social media channels to reach the most people (Young, 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019; Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020; Swart et al., 2021). Han (2021) believes 92 percent of NPOs use Facebook and 34 percent advertise. Use of social media, as a marketing communication strategy, requires understanding why certain platforms are important and how to use them to maximise awareness and impact (Barreto & Whitehair, 2017; Clark et al., 2017; Johnson, 2017; Giersemehl et al., 2022).

Business communication has evolved alongside social media marketing communication to increase brand exposure (Wibawa et al., 2022). Organisations are designing their social media presence to control brand marketing and gain insights into consumer-generated content about their business (Pütter, 2017; Hu et al., 2019; Cattrall & Castello, 2022). Silva et al. (2020) highlights that social media helps companies communicate with customers faster, cheaper, and more interactively. Many businesses now devote a large portion of their marketing budget to social media marketing (Al-Azzam & Al-Mizeed, 2021). With rising consumer knowledge and impatience, competition, and costs, social media communication opens up new opportunities and a plan is essential for long-term success (Blue Fountain Media, 2016). As the global COVID-19 pandemic spread, it became essential for nearly all NPOs to raise funds online through social media and other low-cost Internet-based technologies (Maxhuni, 2021). This was initially done to make the transition from manual to online donations, which offer more efficient, quick, direct, and easy money transfers (Getto & Flanagan, 2022).

Despite the challenges that NPOs must overcome in order to develop an online presence (Museli & Jafari Navimipour, 2018; Tajudeen et al., 2018; Qalati et al., 2021), there are numerous studies that highlight factors that motivate the adoption of social media as a strategic communication channel for NPOs (Feng et al., 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019; Seelig et al., 2019; Lim et al., 2021).

The following section discusses the factors that motivated respondents in the dissertation to use social network platforms as communication contact points with current and potential audiences. The desired outcomes of this activity include increased organisational brand awareness, donor relationships, and donation support and growth. The onset of COVID-19 pandemic activity prompted respondents to engage in this medium that will also be shared in the sections below.

6.6.1 Organisational brand awareness

The majority of studies found a positive correlation between the strategic use of social media for an NPO and general positive sentiment, increased brand awareness, and donations (Chang et al., 2019; Paxton et al., 2020; Zollo et al., 2020; D'Souza et al., 2021; Zhou & Ye, 2021). More importantly, these studies suggest a link between an NPO's deliberate use of social media and an improvement in brand sentiment and organisational brand awareness.

In terms of organisational brand awareness, half of the respondents stated that using social media platforms was important for raising awareness of the NPO to attract prospective funding, donations, and general public understanding of what service they provide. One respondent stated that the general public had a misconception about what their organisation was about, and that social media was critical in dispelling the myth. According to a few respondents, social media allowed their organisation to reach a larger audience than would have been possible by simply searching for the organisation. The vast reach potential of social media was mentioned by the majority of respondents, alluding to the attitudes that have changed as a result of social media's efforts to shift perceptions about what specific health NPOs stood for. Overall, organisational brand awareness was a major motivator and driver for using social media.

The current dissertation's findings echo those of Zhang et al. (2022), Albanna et al. (2022), Chen and Wang (2021) and Namisango et al. (2021), who found that respondents were motivated to use social media to raise awareness of their organisations. Gartner et al. (2021) affirm that the established model of service quality also applies to the social media era. Trust in a brand and overall brand awareness are influencing perceptions of service quality, which are driven by social media engagement and organisations. The respondents in this dissertation provided similar reasons why they used social media to drive organisational brand awareness.

6.6.2 Donor relationships

Another significant finding of this dissertation is the use of social media to build donor relationships. Respondents mentioned that building donor relationships with audiences is important and a way to cultivate loyalty among them. Literature verifies the above-mentioned notion by stating that the two-way communication is made possible by online interaction that helps potential donors learn more about the charitable cause supported by the NPO (Behl et al., 2020). Haro-de-Rosario et al. (2018) report increased interactivity and relational trust in an organisation's social media. Positive testimonials, content, images, videos, and reviews attract

donations effectively, since new donors will be drawn in more easily if evidence is provided that they are pleased with their donation and that the outcome is real and measurable (Tonetti, 2019).

By establishing an online community of supporters through social media adoption and strategic use of social media as a marketing communication strategy, NPOs can cultivate public engagement and donors (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020; Albanna et al., 2022). Over 67 percent of NPOs worldwide accept online donations, and online giving is growing at a 7 percent annual rate (NP Source, 2022).

While social media and fundraising are effective, they are only as effective as the relationships that are built with potential donors. According to one respondent, using social media on a regular basis helps to promote the organisation's current operations, which is vital for developing contacts with possible funders. Another respondent stated that building relationships through social media was essential to keep people interested and returning, ultimately motivating them to donate and contribute to the organisation.

The current dissertation's findings, as well as those cited above, reflect similar goals in their use of social media as a communication strategy in terms of the desired interaction and relationship they want to develop with existing and new potential donors to foster positive relationships.

6.6.3 Donation support and growth

While an NPO has a mission, it is still a business in the sense that it relies on revenue/sales, also known as 'donations', to stay afloat (Jeter, 2017). Many NPOs rely on grants and donations to cover their operating costs; the majority of NPOs rely on donations in the form of corporate social investments from local and foreign governments, individuals, foundations, or businesses (Folger, 2020). New contacts are likely to learn about and interact with an organisation in a variety of ways on their way to becoming a supporter or donating. Likewise, the funnel can help businesses clarify those journeys, since it can also help NPOs clarify those journeys by allowing the organisation to focus on strategies that move them closer to achieving their most important goals (Young, 2017; Wafa'a, 2019; Tian et al., 2021). By connecting directly with the audience, strategic social media engagement can promote registrations, downloads, donations, sign-ups, and other critical indicators of interest (Biligin, 2018).

Feng et al. (2017) show that both NPO content dissemination and interactivity on social media have a significant positive impact on consumers' perceived trust and satisfaction, which influence their donation intention and WOM. Di Lauro et al. (2019) observe that social media

are good for NPO fundraising efforts if they have defined engagement methods, openness in terms of where the funds/donations are spent, and accountability. All 13 respondents stated that they used social media in some capacity to solicit donations from their audiences and to publicise the good work they did. Two respondents stated that they were conscious of posting where exactly the donations were being used for transparency's sake, with a further two responding that they aimed to build a larger pool of potential donors through social media because relying on corporate and government funding was not sustainable, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

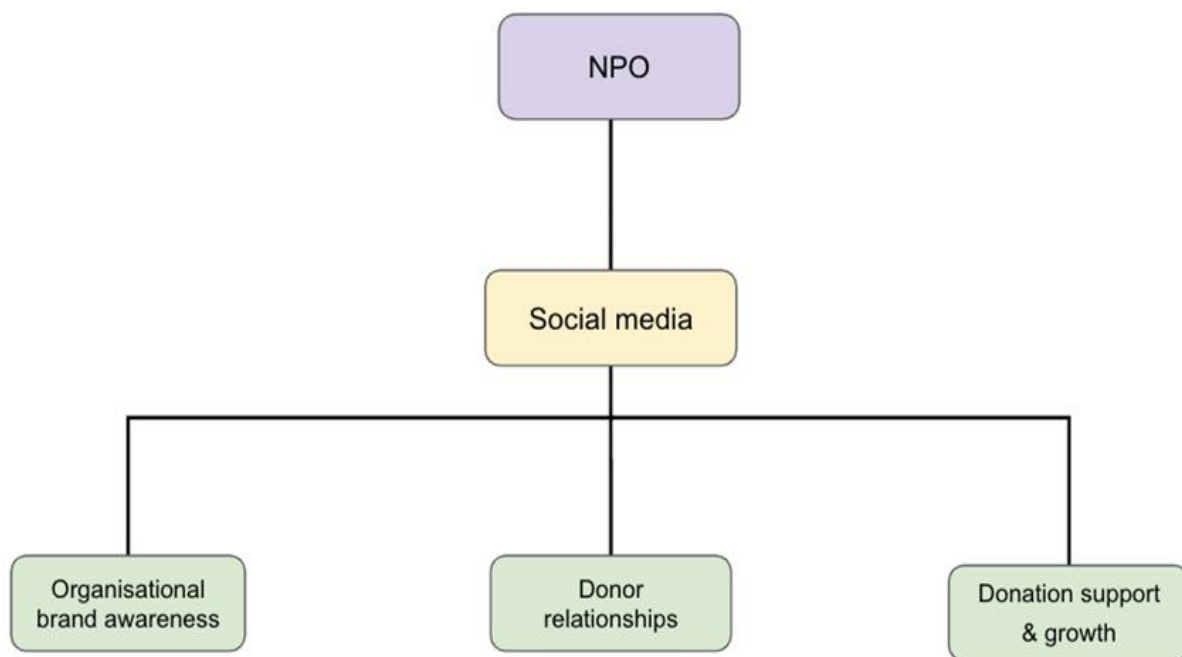


Figure 6.4: Factors motivating the use of social media

Source: Author (2022)

6.7 Impact of social media - content preferences

Respondents acknowledged the impact of social media in terms of the medium's perceived value as a communication channel, the effects of social media on the visibility of their organisations as individual brands, and the corresponding effect on overall performance. Specifically, an overwhelming majority of respondents mentioned the positive impact social media had on their NPOs. A few respondents expressed strong feelings about the community and the use of social media as a level of accountability to show donors where and what their money is being spent on, as well as the impact of their work on the community via social media. Many respondents stated that social media were not limited to South Africans and that they could reach a global audience; the respondent further stated that social media allows an organisation to reach audiences that it would not have otherwise reached through traditional

media. Respondents were also unanimous in their belief that social media had a positive impact on the brand of their NPOs. One respondent was also successful in building a community of Facebook followers, which resulted in those members actively donating to the organisation through fundraising events. Two respondents emphasised the low cost of using social media to reach a large number of people; both respondents stressed that using social media strategically and effectively can be extremely beneficial in terms of costs and raising funds. According to the findings, the primary impact of social media on respondent NPOs was increased awareness, visibility, accountability, and a channel for fundraising and community building.

These findings are consistent with previous research that indicate social media networking sites have emerged as powerful platforms for NPOs to communicate with stakeholders in the global communication landscape (Rathi & Given, 2017; Maxhuni, 2021). Furthermore, Feng et al. (2017) found that both NPO dissemination and interactivity on social media had a significant positive impact on consumers' perceived trust and satisfaction, which influenced their donation intention and WOM. Regardless, the cumulative effect of the aforementioned factors is a positive outlook on this channel as a communication contact point with the audiences that the NPO seeks to reach.

One of the most important aspects of social media development and success is content creation. As a result, this dissertation examined the types of content shared by health-related NPOs on their various social media channels. Increased exposure and brand image of an organisation through active content engagement and publishing can result in either a positive or negative perception of the company on social media (Na et al., 2020).

Respondents were primarily interested in content related to the social media channels they used. The emphasis was on the types of content published, the tone in which that content was expressed, as well as the quality and visual appeal of the content. The majority of respondents focused on advocacy or directly NPO-related information. NPOs should consider the emotion that the post is intended to elicit in their respective target audiences. Leary (2022) suggests that aiming for high-energy emotions increases the likelihood of people sharing or acting on the content. An audience, for example, may react strongly to an image or video shared by an NPO about the impact of their organisation's work/services in a specific community or for a specific individual. These images or stories are typically euphoric in character and elicit a very positive response from the audience, resulting in a post with the potential to go viral due to the feel good nature it portrays. These findings are consistent with the current dissertation, in

which a strong majority of respondents stated that when they posted, they aimed for content that would touch on the emotional side of people and display on social media the real impact being made on the ground through their work.

This research is also relevant to the current dissertation's findings, as nearly all the respondents stated that they wanted to share good, high-quality photographs with impact. One respondent gave the example of a nurse feeding a patient in rural South Africa after their family disowned him. This particular tale and image went viral, garnering a lot of attention, reactions, and donations for that particular organisation.

Seelig et al. (2019) found that organisations that used single images as opposed to groups of images and photos elicited emotions, and that success stories that demonstrated how actions resulted in positive outcomes were highlighted. As previously mentioned, it is believed that the human brain processes visual content such as images and videos more readily than text. Therefore, for NPOs, crafting captivating visuals is essential to capture users' attention, which not only resonates with them but encourage them to pause while browsing their news feed (Harman, 2017; Nuckols, 2020).

Again, this research is relevant to the dissertation because a few of the respondents indicated how patient anecdotes (success stories), aesthetically appealing photos, and emotionally charged films are all content that they have used and found to be effective for their particular organisations. Tonetti (2019) report that positive testimonials, articles, photographs, videos, and reviews attracted donations.

New donors will be more easily attracted if evidence is presented that they are satisfied with their donation, and that the impact is real and measurable (Tonetti, 2019). Thus, while this dissertation focused on health-related NPOs in South Africa, the findings are universal in terms of content choice and what seems to work. Figure 6.4 depicts the content preferences of health-related NPOs on social media.

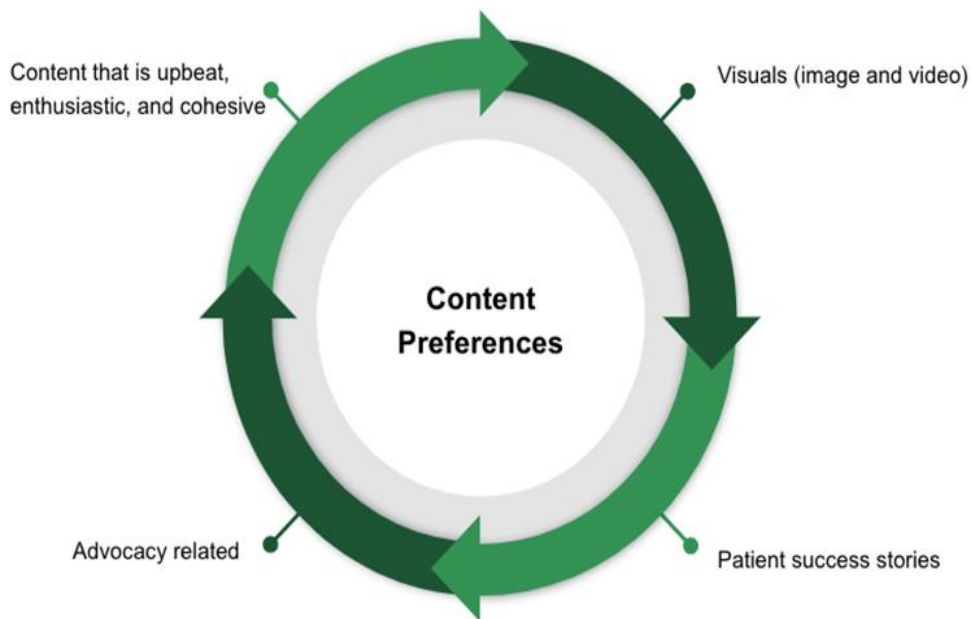


Figure 6.5: Social media content preferences

Source: Author (2022)

6.8 Perspectives on social media as a marketing communication strategy

As a strategic marketing communication medium and strategy, respondents gave a variety of responses, but common themes included having the strategy in mind rather than writing it down; not being pushed to build a strategy due to a lack of understanding and education about its importance; being in organisations that have a traditional board so lack understanding; or being in the process of developing a strategy through organisational structures or external consultants. These findings are consistent with previous research, which found that many NPOs misunderstand the scope and purpose of marketing communication strategies as a discipline, believing that these tactics consist solely of the occasional promotion, advertising, and selling, rather than addressing needs and desires through the marketing concept (Hollen, 2018; Kotler & Lee, 2019).

Tharpe (2019) found that many NPOs continue to have a significant lack of awareness of marketing communication methods, instead focusing their efforts solely on sales and promotional activities, which reinforces this misconception. Marketing is more than just making a sale or collecting a donation; it is a technique for meeting the needs of the customer and donor, with a plan in place, which if carried out correctly, may be of tremendous benefit to the organisation.

According to the current dissertation's findings, this lack of awareness when it comes to establishing a successful social media marketing communication plan is quite common among

South African health-related NPOs. However, the results do not appear to demonstrate the significance of a strategy, and with the exception of one respondent, all other respondents appeared oblivious to the positive influence an actual social media marketing communication strategy may have on an NPO. The same notion was observed by several other authors (Holland, 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Roza et al., 2017).

Furthermore, this research found that a small number of respondents have a distinct social media strategy. The current method, according to one response, comprised publishing every day, and meeting once a month to review information and plan the month's content. Another respondent stated that their strategy entailed researching what was current and popular (trending topics) and implementing it into their current plan. According to one respondent, their social media strategy was aligned with the pillars of the organisation and was eventually generated and modelled on that basis.

6.9 COVID-19

Examining the impact of COVID-19 on social media, it is crucial to understand how social media platforms have evolved and been utilised during this global pandemic, shaping communication and engagement strategies for NPOs.

6.9.1 Social media during COVID-19

This dissertation considered how health-related NPOs used social media during the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme was also established to investigate the effects of the global pandemic on health-related NPOs' social media influence, adoption and content in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The proposed subject is intended to answer the research question, "How were social media marketing methods altered during Covid 19?". COVID-19 has emphasised the importance of social media for NPOs in general, making it a critical tool for audiences to stay connected and support the organisations. As a result, it was critical to understand how NPOs used social media to grow, extend or stay relevant with their audiences throughout the global pandemic. The rapid spread of COVID-19 and severe lockdown restrictions had a significant impact on the prospect of NPOs conducting in-person site visits to patients and hosting important fundraising events that frequently helped sustain these organisations. Unfortunately, COVID-19 also impacted businesses which had sponsored NPOs due to budget cuts and the uncertainty that the global pandemic brought to all sectors.

6.9.2 Impact of COVID-19 on social media use by the health NPO sector

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the NPO sector at all levels and across all themes. Trialogue conducted a poll of NPO responses to COVID-19, and it was determined that 24 percent of the 115 NPO respondents claimed their funding had been stopped or put on hold, and 19 percent indicated it had been cut (Tyolwana, 2020). To incorporate COVID-19, approximately 38 percent of NPOs had to make modifications to their existing programmes, with a quarter needing to lower their offers (Tyolwana, 2020). Lack of money and increased pressure on health-related NPOs to respond during the pandemic altered how they operated, particularly in South Africa (Burger & Mchenga, 2021). The pandemic compelled most NPOs to diversify their revenue streams, supporter segments and awareness efforts (Wheeler, 2021), while also hastening processes that had already begun to modernise organisations' communication methods, as they were increasingly forced to operate in an almost entirely digital environment (Blackburn et al., 2020). Many NPOs were on the front lines of pandemic response, and they frequently lacked the resources to make significant modifications to their marketing strategy and budgets (Berenguer & Shen, 2020).

Numerous new surroundings, channels and opportunities exist. Smart, focused marketing with the proper tone could help NPOs overcome the crisis, stretch their resources, reach new audiences and even grow (Waniak-Michalak et al., 2022). A handful of respondents expressed similar sentiments about the pandemic's destructive influence on social media engagement for their respective organisations. It is worth noting that the majority of respondents expressed similar sentiments about the negative impact COVID-19 had on their organisations and others expressed positive sentiments about the influence COVID-19 had on their social media activities. At least half of the respondents claimed that the pandemic forced many of them to begin using social media strategically, with one respondent adding that COVID-19 compelled the organisation to be more active on social media. This finding is consistent with other findings showing that NPOs can use social media marketing to target audiences globally and locally, as well as respond promptly to pandemic events (Abbasi et al., 2018; Luna & Pennock, 2018). Seelig et al. (2019) believe that NPOs can utilise social media to create awareness, explain their mission and new initiatives, campaigns and issues, while reaching individuals in need. The COVID-19 pandemic, as highlighted by the studies above, presented significant barriers to health-related NPOs' social media usage around the world, and thus equally impacted South African NPOs in this dissertation, particularly in terms of communication and coordination with their members. The pandemic also opened up opportunities for health-

related NPOs to expand their efforts on social media and to become consciously aware of the channel and put some effort into it.

6.10 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the perceived usage of social media in terms of respondents working for health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa (refer to Figure 6.6). It is divided into several sections, including social media external variables (positive and negative influences), PU of social media (positive and negative influences), social media PEOU (positive and negative influences), and social media behavioural intentions (positive and negative influences), which all ultimately tie into the factors that promote the actual use of social media.

It is crucial to emphasise that the concepts presented here are drawn from the TAM which has been modified to make it relevant to the current dissertation. The impact of social media can be recognised as a result of the behaviour of some of the respondents, but it can also be viewed from the perspective of non-adopters.

6.10.1 Key social media external variables

The first section of the conceptual framework focuses on the important external elements that influence health-related NPOs' use of social media. External reasons such as the rising costs of traditional advertising, a communication tool during COVID-19 and increased awareness of the organisations were emphasised as major positive external variables for engaging with social media in the context of the dissertation. Negative external influences were also evident in the framework, including a lack of government support, lower living standards measure (LSM) group reach and a lack of awareness of the impact of social media in the organisation.

6.10.2 Perceived usefulness of social media

The second section of the conceptual framework focuses on the key PU of social media. Typical positive themes that emerged were organisational awareness, being able to connect with the community virtually during COVID-19 and a cost-effective platform to raise funds. It was also mentioned that sharing the visual impact of an NPO's activity on social media are beneficial. One of the negative aspects found was that NPOs found it difficult to keep up with ever-changing platforms, organic reach was on the decline and patient care took priority, leaving little time for social media.

6.10.3 Social media perceived ease of use

The third section of the conceptual framework focuses on the important perceived ease of utilising social media. Common positive themes that emerged include the fact that the majority of platforms are free, easily accessible and provide free exposure/reach for individual NPOs. Negative aspects influencing the ease of use of social media included capacity restrictions, a lack of social media effort measurement and the difficulty of keeping up with all social media platform changes.

6.10.4 Social media behavioural intentions

The fourth section of the conceptual framework focuses on the major perceived social media behavioural intentions to use the channels. On the positive side, sharing patient stories, brand emotions and images provided a sense of positive behavioural intention to use social media. COVID-19, interestingly, also played a role in positively shaping a behavioural intention to utilise social media for NPOs. Several factors hinder the intention to use social media within health-related NPOs. These include a lack of progressive thinking among executive boards, the absence of clear goals and plans for social media, and limited resources due to a lack of understanding of these platforms.

6.10.5 Factors promoting actual use of social media

Finally, all of the variables discussed above lead into the final component, which is the factors that promote the actual usage of social media, and they are in essence patient stories that can be shared widely, assisting organisations in raising awareness through social media channels. Social media has proven beneficial for health-related NPOs in several ways. Firstly, it has enabled NPOs to expand alongside their communities. Secondly, it has facilitated an increase in donation support and overall growth through various social media channels. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the importance of social media, compelling NPOs to engage with these platforms if they hadn't already. Lastly, social media has been instrumental in reaching audiences that align with the NPO's mission and vision.

The proposed conceptual framework for the dissertation is outlined in Figure 6.6 below.

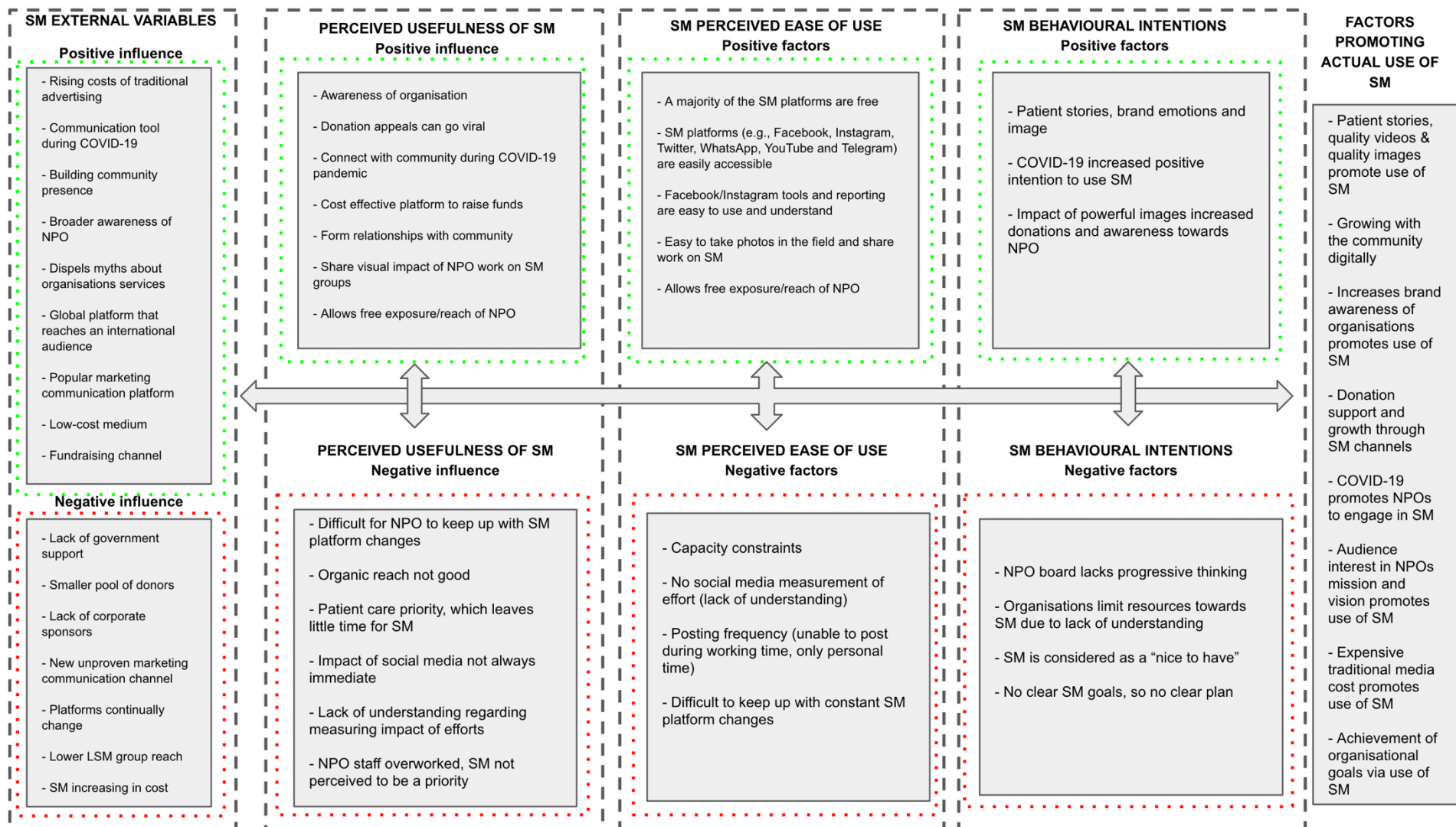


Figure 6.6: Key enablers and negative influences impacting health-related NPOs' intentions to adopt and use social media

Source: Author (2022)

6.11 Summary

This chapter follows on from Chapter 5, in which the data gathered was coded and organised into themes congruent with the dissertation's aims. The findings were compared to the existing literature in terms of the relationship that health-related and general NPOs have with social media as a strategic marketing communication medium. Respondents' replies reflect their lived experiences and perceptions of using social media as an interactive online contact point with their target consumers.

Given the extensive usage of social media as a source of information and a communication route by customers and organisations, the extent to which it was employed was explored. Facebook was found to be the respondents' preferred platform, which is consistent with earlier studies exploring the usage of social media among NPOs.

Cost effectiveness, fundraising, donor connection building and the capacity to connect with the community were factors that enabled the adoption of this media as a communication channel. Budget, frequency of publishing content, lack of organisational awareness and capacity limits were factors that inhibited the media's adoption and utilisation. Motivational elements for using this digital media included growing awareness in the organisation of platforms for fundraising, sharing the organisation's services more widely and reconnecting with the community.

Respondent perspectives on social media suggested that they were considered a significant resource that had a favourable impact on the active respondents' organisations. These findings were compared to other studies to find support or disagreement with the conclusions drawn by this dissertation. The chapter concluded with the introduction and in-depth analysis of the key enablers and negative influences of health-related NPOs' intentions to adopt and use social media, which was shared in as the proposed conceptual framework model.

The following chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and implications of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to present the conclusions and recommendations derived from the literature data-analysis methodologies used in earlier chapters. The dissertation was carried out using the TAM framework to evaluate health-related NPOs' usage of social media as a marketing communication strategy via five primary TAM variables. These include PU and PEOU attitudes toward social media, behavioural intentions to use social media and actual social media use.

The primary goal of this investigation was to determine the utilisation of social media as a marketing strategy for health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa. The dissertation's objectives and subsequent themes were taken into account while drawing results and making suggestions. The first theme addressed the motivation for using social media as a marketing communication strategy, while the second addressed the amount of social media engagement among these NPOs. The third theme examined the use of social media as a marketing strategy and the fourth theme investigated the barriers that prohibit health-related NPOs from strategically implementing social media. The fifth and final theme was to determine social media engagement during COVID-19.

This chapter summarises the important research findings in relation to the research objectives and questions, as well as explores the theoretical and managerial implications and contributions. The chapter also discusses the dissertation's limitations and potential future research directions.

7.2 Key findings and recommendations

The key findings reported below answer the research questions originally raised in the inquiry and address the dissertation's stated themes.

7.2.1 Motives for the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy

Within the analysis of motives for the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy, the first theme explores the importance of brand awareness and its role in shaping NPOs' social media efforts.

7.2.2.1 Brand awareness

This dissertation posited that developing a strong brand would improve the organisation's success and that branding was an important marketing principle and the primary reason the organisation used social media. Branding was viewed as a means of distinguishing the organisation from

others, sharing services and increasing the organisation's visibility to donors, particularly through the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy. Brands were viewed as more than the visual component; rather it was the brands' personality that communicated the message and values that was most important in an era when everyone has easy access to an organisation via search engines and social media platforms. Branding can only be successful if it is used consistently, accurately and strategically. Health-related NPOs lacked the expertise and capacity to effectively build the organisation's brand, particularly through social media. The health-related NPOs, on the other hand, believed that most of their work was visually strong and that sharing powerful images of their work in communities and online had a positive impact and would continue to have a positive impact on the organisations' brand if continued. The above conclusions are in alignment with various authors' views on branding in the digital age and the importance attached to the concept (Duffett, 2015; Ayodeji & Kumar, 2019; Tharpe, 2019; Tonetti, 2019; Duffett et al., 2020).

Recommendations

There are numerous methods for increasing brand awareness and through this dissertation it has been made clear that social media is by far one of the most effective means of doing so, especially for health-related NPOs. Brands and health-related NPOs are encouraged to engage their target audience through social media, as this increases customer engagement and brand awareness. Furthermore, health-related NPOs are encouraged to build a strong brand and a solid reputation through the strategic use of social media as a marketing communication strategy. Ideally, these organisations should implement an effective communication strategy as part of an overall strategy, with social media playing an important role. Organisations should make sure the correct communication channels are chosen to reach a specific target market and be ethical in marketing and other activities, especially those shared on social media, as these can have a positive or negative impact on the perception of a health-related NPO's brand image.

7.2.2.2 Relationship building

One of the primary reasons health-related NPOs use social media for marketing communication is to foster relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. Numerous authors agree that NPOs would be well-served to begin by cultivating relationships via social media (Charoensukmongkol & Sasatanun, 2017; Tharpe, 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2021). This research confirmed that relationship marketing and building relationships through social media were the most important marketing principles for NPOs. Furthermore, the dissertation found that

relationship building was related to the underlying fundraising principle, which was the reason NPOs needed to market themselves, particularly on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

NPOs are able to establish an emotional connection with the customer (donor) through the strategic use of social media in order to gain the donor's trust and integrity in order for the donor to make a donation. Through regular communication, relationship building would establish a personalised relationship with the customer. This dissertation found that using social media as a marketing communication strategy among health-related NPOs was positively impacted by the practise of relationship building and nurturing, in which stakeholders become supporters and eventually donate to the organisation.

Recommendations

This finding suggests that health-related NPOs should consider social media as a means of connecting with their audience. Accordingly, by leveraging pre-existing social media infrastructure, NPOs can broaden their impact, fortify their brands and attract a following of potential supporters who may one day donate or volunteer their time.

7.2.2.3 Raising funds

This investigation suggests that to raise funds, NPOs should market their product to donors or funders, as marketing is an important part of fundraising. social media marketing is critical in laying a successful digital fundraising foundation. Strategic social media marketing includes an effective communication strategy to target different markets for an organisation's supporters and as previously stated, building a strong brand will create brand awareness for NPOs to stay in the minds of people and promote their brand image, all of which will help an NPO raise funds. These findings are consistent with the findings of various studies that have addressed the relationship between the strategic use of social media and the link they can create for fundraising (Tonetti, 2019; Ayinkamiye & Spencer, 2021; Rashid et al., 2021).

Recommendations

As previously stated, social media allows brands to build relationships with new and existing audiences, thus health-related NPOs should have marketing expertise to guide and support their fundraising activities, particularly when engaging in digital engagement. NPOs should ideally have an integrated social media marketing communication strategy in place to help raise funds, awareness and ultimately serve as a pillar of sustainability.

7.3 Level of social media engagement

In the examination of the level of social media engagement, the second theme focuses on the specific social media platforms that NPOs utilise to interact and engage with their target audience.

7.3.1 Social media platforms used

Health-related NPOs use social media platforms as a marketing and communication strategy to some extent. The extent of social media usage ranges from a wide range of platforms to carefully selected media. This dissertation's health-related NPOs preferred Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram. It is worth noting that each of the dissertation's respondents used Facebook and Instagram, making these the two most used social media platforms, which ties into literature that these two platforms are the most frequently used and engaged with by NPOs in general (Appel et al., 2020; Su, 2022). Given that health-related NPOs in South Africa use comparable social media platforms, it is reasonable to conclude that these findings support the current dissertation's findings.

Recommendations

It is recommended that NPOs explore a wider range of social media channels when interacting with their target demographic. This will enable organisations to take advantage of each platform's specific features, such as Twitter's trending hashtags, YouTube videos (shorts) and Telegram's unlimited groups (no restriction compared to WhatsApp). Furthermore, NPOs and their stakeholders should take advantage of the growing popularity of visual data consumption on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to boost brand awareness through the application of visual methods, while also exploring channels that are growing in popularity through video engagement, such as TikTok.

7.3.2 Most effective social media platforms for NPOs

Given the importance of social media use by NPOs in this dissertation, it was critical to determine which platforms were deemed the most beneficial. Facebook was the most preferred and efficient social media marketing communication platform for health-related NPOs, which was followed by Instagram. Similar findings were made by Chaffey (2022), who estimated the number of global Facebook users in January 2022 to be 2.93 billion. Notably, Meta controls three of the top four social media networks, with the most popular being Facebook. Han (2021) disclosed that more than 92 percent of NPOs already utilise Facebook, with 34 percent spending money on advertising. It was also found that LinkedIn is better suited to professionals and entrepreneurs, Instagram is better suited to young visually astute people and Facebook is better suited to a bigger audience (Expert Commentator, 2018; Ali et al., 2022; Bushell, 2022). This makes sense in terms

of NPOs seeking to reach the widest possible audience with limited resources, hence engaging in Facebook and sharing visually engaging images via Instagram. The current dissertation's findings, as well as those indicated previously, indicate that NPOs and persons representing the marketing side of NPOs hold similar views regarding Facebook and Instagram as the most effective social media platforms.

Recommendations

NPOs and marketers must ensure that the social media marketing communication channels and material they use are most relevant to their target demographic. Instagram and Facebook are excellent sites for interacting with followers and providing interesting, expressive photographs and videos. When engaging in these platforms, social media marketing practitioners and NPOs should consider unlocking the full suite of tools that Instagram and Facebook have to offer, while making sure that they are placing a strategic lens on the content shared on these platforms. The NPOs should ensure that there is no duplication and create content purposefully that is tailored to suit the strengths of these two channels.

7.3.3 Frequency of social media use

The major conclusion about the frequency of social media engagement shows that health-related NPOs posted at least once a week, although most of the time on an ad hoc basis with no clear and planned posting schedule. Ferreira (2021) and Keutelian (2022) raised the subject of how frequently companies should post on social media and indicated that publishing more regularly on social media can boost a company's capacity to engage with followers and increase positive brand mentions.

Recommendations

Health-related NPOs that use social media should find a balance between being useful and annoying to their followers. NPOs must monitor the performance of each social media platform according to best practises. On Twitter, the higher the number of tweets a user writes the better; however on Facebook and Instagram, the quality of material always prevails over the quantity. Additionally, NPOs should not feel compelled to post every day; there are numerous free resources available to help them schedule material for the week, which allows them to continue providing online services to the communities they serve.

7.3.4 Advertising and branding activities

Health-related NPOs regularly engage in marketing and branding endeavours as part of their social media community management strategy. The use of branded e-newsletters and email signatures was cited in this dissertation as one of the most important advertising and branding

activities; however, not all NPOs make use of this relatively simple method of showcasing the organisation to a wider audience.

Recommendations

Brands and NPOs must consider developing a plan for each advertising or branding activity they utilise or engage in because each platform is unique. It is critical to determine which advertising and branding tactics produce the most engaging content for a certain audience. Furthermore, NPO marketers should investigate broad cross-promotion and co-branding opportunities with internal and external stakeholders who have a strong social media presence, to strengthen the organisation's brand and market presence. Furthermore, NPO marketers should ensure that each relevant event, fundraising call or campaign is branded within email signatures and newsletters delivered to wider audiences for better exposure.

7.3.5 Hashtags for brand awareness

The use of hashtags was demonstrated to be widespread across all of the health-related NPOs, however they did not always fully understand the strategic use, relevancy or the number of hashtags to employ. The use of hashtags has become a crucial approach in digital marketing since these serve as the foundation of online dialogues (Digital Marketing Institute, 2022). Hashtag-sparked interactions can involve both meaningful dialogues between consumers and marketers, as well as spontaneous, unexpected thoughts (Willemsen et al., 2019).

As a result, hashtags have the ability to help an organisation build an online brand community and be beneficial in analysing and targeting crucial segments of users, as well as boosting awareness of important themes related to the organisation (Naraine et al., 2021). This dissertation also concluded that hashtags that were utilised for brand purposes helped the formation of an online brand community among its audience by health-related NPOs when used strategically.

Recommendations

NPOs should use hashtags that are relevant and specific, using as few as possible so that the objective of the hashtags for the actual post is not lost. If the hashtag is excessively complicated, it will be difficult to find and will not be used by the audience. Health-related NPOs should also utilise hashtags in conjunction with their posts that are relevant to their cause, especially on health days, such as #WorldCancerDay and #BreastCancerAwareness.

7.3.6 Engaging content that triggers an emotive reaction

One of the most important parts of social media success and development is content generation. The dissertation delves into the content types and preferences of health-related NPOs that use social media as a marketing communication approach. In terms of content types and preferences,

there was universal agreement among health-related NPOs that the use of visuals (picture and video), patient impact stories and general organisational-related content were valuable to them.

Furthermore, respondents preferred content that exemplified positiveness, unity, enthusiasm, pride and elicited positive emotions. These findings are consistent with the observations of Decker (2018) and Nanavati (2022), who stated that it is critical to use people's emotions in marketing. Several methods can be used to appeal to people's unconscious, emotional side, hit their pain points and push them to take action without thinking too much about it when considering the desired message for an audience.

Recommendations

NPOs should generate and include emotionally appealing material. Health-related NPOs frequently engage in community activity and this involvement and impact should be documented with photographs and videos and extensively shared with their audiences on social media. It is important to stress that if such a strategy is implemented, NPOs should ensure that they have adequate permission to post and utilise the content, and that the faces of minors are sufficiently blurred to ensure anonymity. This should not detract from the importance of the work they are doing on the ground, which should be publicised on social media.

7.4 Use of social media as a marketing tactic and strategy

Continuing the exploration of the use of social media by NPOs, the third theme delves into the strategic use of social media as a marketing tactic and communication strategy, highlighting the various approaches employed by NPOs in leveraging these platforms.

7.4.1 Strategic use of social media marketing and communication

Health-related NPOs have some understanding of the use of social media marketing as a strategy, but not enough to build upon their relationship with their audiences because these strategies are not consistent over a long period of time, or they often do not have enough buy-in from the NPO boards. As a result, this element represents an opportunity for health-related NPOs to improve how social media is regarded and spend resources in using social media strategically as a marketing communication strategy.

When engaging with all of the different social media channels accessible, it is critical to understand why specific platforms are significant and, more importantly, how to use them in the most effective way to assure awareness and impact (Barreto & Whitehair, 2017; Clark et al., 2017; Johnson, 2017; Giersemehl et al., 2022). As a result, it is critical to demonstrate how the continued expansion of social media strategies can result in both short and long-term organisational benefits for an organisation. The dissertation found that South African health-related NPOs do not

implement social media strategies for extended periods of time, or at all in certain circumstances, due to a lack of understanding, knowledge and frequently a lack of prioritisation of social media.

Recommendations

The dissertation's recommendations inexorably mirror the need to accelerate the development of an appropriate social media marketing strategy for health-related NPOs to further increase brand awareness, online donations and organisational sustainability via the strategic use of social media.

7.4.2 Social media alignment with organisational goals

The absence of connection between organisational goals and social media goals was a key finding among health-related NPOs. It can be concluded that most organisations engaging in social media do not have any established goals in place, which indicates that social media is not always an important part of NPOs' overall strategic goals.

Recommendations

NPOs should establish and implement meaningful measurements to track social media goals that are aligned with the organisation's overall goals. Board members and CEOs of NPOs should prioritise the usage of social media and consider embracing cutting-edge technology. They need to develop strategies for achieving organisational objectives through the use of social media. By positioning social media as a pillar that feeds into the organisation's overall goals, the organisation will be aligned, and social media will be viewed through the correct lens in terms of value within the organisation.

7.4.3 Social media goals

This dissertation investigated whether or not certain NPOs in the health sector followed a specific framework for their social media goals, such as increasing their number of online followers and social media channels. It is possible to draw the conclusion that this was extremely inconsistent and was not well positioned within the relevant organisations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that utilising and developing social media goals will lead to a better understanding of social media and the impact they may have on an organisation.

7.5 Barriers that prevent the strategic implementation of social media

In the analysis of barriers that hinder the strategic implementation of social media, the fourth theme focuses on the specific challenges faced by NPOs in effectively utilising social media for their marketing and communication efforts.

7.5.1 Social media challenges

It is crucial to note that the health-related NPOs encountered a number of difficulties when seeking to promote their respective organisations on social media. Reach, activity frequency, cost and budget limits, content creation, lack of knowledge and organisational buy-in were recognised as key issues. The findings of this dissertation are consistent with those of Feng et al. (2017), Maxhuni (2021), and Albanna et al. (2022), who encountered similar issues when NPOs engaged with social media. As a result, this dissertation found that when it comes to social media marketing, health-related NPOs are faced with similar obstacles to other organisations around the world. Furthermore, this analysis indicates an understanding among social media usage challenges, which were highlighted by health-related NPOs in South Africa.

Recommendations

Social media provides numerous advantages for NPOs, but they also have certain drawbacks. Health-related NPOs are encouraged to regularly assess and improve their social media efforts and efficacy across all social media platforms and not allow problems to stop them from participating on these platforms. Furthermore, NPOs should consider enrolling in free online courses and university service-learning projects to help with social media marketing.

7.5.2 Lack of organisational understanding

Organisational understanding describes the internal factors that determine a company's embrace of innovation (Awa et al., 2017). Support from top management is critical in assessing an organisation's willingness to accept and implement social media as a marketing communication strategy (Chung et al., 2017; Matikiti et al., 2018).

According to Nisar et al. (2019), in the context of social media, members of an organisation require the support of their top managers to participate and engage in and with social media successfully. It can be concluded that the health-related NPOs highlighted that there was a general lack of organisational understanding when it came to the importance of social media and how they should be prioritised, which frequently stifled the growth and potential of social media as a marketing strategy.

Recommendations

NPOs must upskill and invest in digital channels to stay in touch with their core audience and reach new audiences. Organisational leaders must recognise that the use of social media is no longer a superfluous option, but rather a crucial component of every organisation or NPO, and that all parties involved should strive to understand the benefits of social media for their respective organisations.

7.5.3 Capacity constraints

Keegan and Rowley (2017) and Stieglitz et al. (2018) show that when it comes to building a social media strategy for a NPO, there are numerous obstacles to overcome. The most frequently mentioned obstacle is a lack of resources and capacity, typically in terms of personnel and time to create and implement a strategy (Meyer & Xin, 2018). It can be concluded that health-related NPOs identified capacity as a significant barrier to engaging strategically in social media. social media marketing and marketing in general were not viewed as a priority by NPOs, and when there was limited capacity, other projects were deemed more important for an NPO's sustainability.

Recommendations

It is vital for an NPO to prioritise marketing and if capacity is limited, the involvement of students from university service-learning projects and experienced volunteers, particularly those who are familiar with social media marketing communication strategies, should be considered. These students and volunteers are normally quite passionate about assisting a worthy cause, so it is a mutually beneficial situation.

7.5.4 Insufficient marketing and fundraising expertise

Health-related NPOs faced financial and sustainability issues, which were frequently linked to a lack of knowledge, especially when it came to using social media to solve those funding concerns due to a lack of marketing and fundraising expertise. Furthermore, health-related NPOs did not understand marketing principles, including branding, communication, social media, targeted marketing and relationship marketing, as well as the connections between marketing, social media and fundraising.

Recommendations

NPOs should appoint competent managers with adequate management, business and marketing skills to key positions within their organisations. NPOs should also invest in upgrading the abilities of their existing management, especially when it comes to best practises for social media marketing. NPOs should also invest in management and marketing operations, as well as capacity building, particularly in regard to digital marketing skills.

7.6 Social media engagement during COVID-19

7.6.1 COVID-19 impact on social media use

The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly forced NPOs to adapt and adopt innovative marketing methods to maintain audience engagement. It can be concluded that, despite the economic challenges that COVID-19 brought to many organisations, the silver lining was that it propelled many NPOs to turn towards social media for the sustainability of their organisations, during a time

when there was no in-person engagement, where everything was virtual for almost two years. Furthermore, the pandemic provided these NPOs with the opportunity to analyse and change their social media operations and procedures, while also continually adjusting activity frequency and content to sustain audience engagement. Therefore, COVID-19 had a positive impact on the usage of social media among many of the health-related NPOs.

Recommendations

Considering the growth of social media for NPOs during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recommended that NPOs continue in this vein and further refine and adopt more social media ideas and strategies in a post-Covid world.

7.6.2 Adoption of social media during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic unquestionably compelled NPOs to adjust and establish distinctive strategies to promote the services of their organisations to provide and maintain audience engagement. It is possible to draw the conclusion that the pandemic had a positive influence on the adoption of social media activity by health-related NPOs, because it caused NPOs, which were not active on social media prior to the pandemic, to become active on social media as a result of stringent in-person lockdown restrictions.

Recommendations

As a result of the pandemic, NPOs had to invest in digital platforms to ensure effective communication with their constituents. It is highly recommended that NPOs continue investing in social media and maintain engagement across various platforms, even after the pandemic has subsided. The positive digital momentum generated during the most challenging stages of the pandemic should be sustained and built upon, rather than halted.

7.7 Theoretical implications

This dissertation connects the findings of the motivation and behavioural intention for using social media as a marketing communication strategy to the TAM model (Davis et al., 1989). The outcomes of this dissertation add to the current basis of TAM in the social media and health-related NPO contexts. Therefore, the inquiry considered the external variables in the form of positive and negative influences; these include positive and negative factors of PU and PEOU, positive and negative factors influencing the behavioural intention to use social media, and factors encouraging the actual use of social media within a NPO setting.

In addition, the research reveals additional factors associated with the TAM theory positive external variables, including broader awareness of NPO, rising costs of traditional advertising,

communication tools during the COVID-19 lockdown, building a community presence, dispelling myths about organisations' services, a global platform that is able to reach an international audience, fundraising channel and a low-cost medium. The negative external influences included the fact that social media is a new unproven marketing communication channel, a lack of government support, platforms continually changing and the lack of organisational support.

Considering the PU of the social media construct of the TAM, NPOs identified positive influences such as video and images as the most effective content types, donation appeals that could go viral, allowing free exposure/reach of the NPO, forming relationships with the community and being able to connect with the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The negative factors within the PU construct were identified as the lack of human resources, difficulty with NPOs in keeping up with ever-changing social media platforms, patient care often taking priority over marketing and social media efforts, the impact of social media not always being immediate, a general lack of understanding regarding measuring the impact of social media efforts and the inadequacy of organic content reach.

This research contributes to the existing body of literature by extending the current understanding of NPOs' social media use by presenting robust data about health-related NPOs' levels of PU. By focusing on health-related NPOs in South Africa, this inquiry addresses the research gap for studies beyond international cases for NPOs and their different sectors in terms of social media usage.

Thus, the PEOU construct positive factors within this dissertation were the preferment and ease of using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube and Telegram as easily accessible amongst the NPOs, the ability to efficiently take photos or videos of the work in the field and share that information on social media and once more, content which allowed the NPOs to reach their targets for free. The negative PEOU factors included social media challenges such as capacity and time, limited social media measurement of effort, inconsistent content posting frequency and scheduling and lastly, difficulty keeping up with the constant social media platform changes.

The behavioural intentions to use social media provided several positive factors from health-related NPOs, including increasing and promoting patient stories, brand emotions positively impacting content creation and the impact of powerful images often increased donations to and awareness of NPOs. Lastly, there was a keen relevance to use social media among health-related NPOs during COVID-19 as organisations had to adapt to the virtual world, which indirectly had a positive influence on the intention to use social media for these NPOs. Conversely, the negative behavioural intention factors highlighted by the NPOs were at board level, where often there was a blockage with regard to progressive thinking, organisations having limited resources allocated

to social media due to lack of understanding or where social media is considered as a superfluous option, as well as an absence of social media goals and strategy implementation.

In addition, COVID-19 resulted in constrained and onerous content being published by the NPOs. In essence, these new behavioural intention variables that were integrated into the TAM theory presented a more precise and practical perspective on how NPOs might form meaningful relationships with their followers on social media while promoting their brand, organisation and services that they offer. Lastly, several factors have been identified that promote the actual use of social media within health-related NPOs. These include sharing patient stories, posting high-quality videos and images, increasing brand awareness, and building relationships. Social media also allows these organisations to grow digitally alongside their communities, and it supports donation drives. The sharing of information and communication through these channels has become even more crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has pushed many organisations to engage more actively in social media. Furthermore, the high costs associated with traditional media have made social media an attractive alternative for these organisations.

Moreover, building engagement through social media and finding an audience interested in an NPO's mission and vision were also considered as factors that promoted social media usage.

This dissertation shows that using social media as a marketing communication strategy increased customer engagement, awareness of organisations and frequently created an additional resource for donations and fundraising (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020; Saurel, 2020; Albanna et al., 2022). This means that NPOs' use of social media positively influenced customer engagement, awareness and intention to purchase, or in this case, intention to donate.

Feng et al. (2017) and Swart et al. (2021) concur that the strategic use of social media portrays the organisation as authentic and making an impact in the communities that they serve, thereby creating a mirror of transparency that anyone can search for and see, and thus want to support via time or financial means. Swart et al. (2021) investigated the use of social media among NPOs, particularly in South Africa, however, there has not been much research on how social media is used as a marketing communication strategy among health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Hence, this investigation addresses a gap in the literature relating to the relationship that health-related NPOs have with social media as a marketing communication strategy. This investigation has yielded substantial new insights into a relatively new issue, particularly in the African setting, which will assist NPOs who use or intend to employ social media as a marketing communication strategy, as well as academics who are scholars of the evolution of TAM theories. This dissertation is unique as it is the first to empirically investigate health-related NPOs' social media

usage in the Western Cape, South Africa. Despite the fact that a significant number of NPO researchers have emphasised the necessity of NPOs using social media as an extension of conventional marketing (Nageswarakurukkal et al., 2020; Saurel, 2020; Albanna et al., 2022), the effects of social media on health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa have attracted relatively limited research attention in marketing.

Moreover, in the current investigation, the motives for social media usage, level of usage and strategic use were extensively examined, and the impacts of COVID-19 were also empirically recognised. The current dissertation presented several positive connotations between PU, PEOU and behavioural intention towards promoting the actual use of social media. These discoveries verify and add to the TAM theory that using social media positively benefits NPOs. The dissertation also shows some negative factors that add to the TAM theory on the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy among health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa.

7.8 Managerial implications

This research offers valuable insights not only for health practitioners and marketers within health-related NPOs but also for the broader NPO community. Moreover, it carries significant practical implications for professionals in the field of communication. The findings of the dissertation may be valuable to managers or marketers in various health-related NPOs and other NPO sectors in general as they investigate the role of social media and how to incorporate social media into strategic marketing initiatives. The findings provide critical strategic insights for marketing professionals working with NPOs who want to use or build an online community on social media to raise funds, create events, identify the most effective social media platforms, increase brand awareness, develop relationships with current and potential new audiences and find cost-effective ways to publicise an NPO's name through the strategic use of social media.

The dissertation provides social media marketers with useful information into the social media marketing activities of health-related NPOs. Communication professionals working at NPOs, for example, should strive to create targeted and relevant content about various parts of the organisation, rather than focusing solely on ad hoc content or content that lacks depth or will have little impact if shared. Another benefit of this research is that it helps South African health-related NPOs establish effective social media use strategies based on the dissertation's best practise measurements and techniques, such as the optimum time to post social media content, the type of content that will connect well with the target audience, the relationship between using visual and video content for increased engagement and how these could lead to additional donations and support for an individual NPO.

Furthermore, NPOs should regularly review the efficiency of various content elements by evaluating the content supplied, as well as the participation of their followers. The immediate dissemination of information via social media provides an opportunity for marketers within NPOs to enhance audience engagement. They can do this by consistently sharing visual content such as images and videos, patient stories, and advocacy-related content.

In addition, coordinating community projects and showcasing their positive impact on social media can improve transparency and trust with the respective NPO. This approach allows the organization to effectively demonstrate its contributions and achievements.

All of this begins with viewing the organisation's social media through a strategic lens and connecting the social media goals to the organisational goals. Distributing material can be time-consuming, but social media networks make it easier by providing features that allow content to be planned throughout the day and week.

NPOs should create a content schedule and decide on a topic for the pieces they want to produce that also fits in with the broader strategy of the organisation. Marketers can also take advantage of the built-in monitoring and analytical capabilities that these social media platforms provide to keep track of their efforts for reporting purposes. If marketers are unsure how to use these capabilities, YouTube frequently provides relatively simple video tips to help them.

Communication professionals should also consider the value of quality over quantity of content, as well as the times of day and week when content may attract the greatest interactions, as all of these are critical components of this dissertation's pioneering digital and social media approach. Health-related NPOs and NPOs in general cannot always guarantee that marketing the way they have been will always work. Marketing strategies change and social media evolves, and whether or not it is influenced by a significant public health crisis like COVID-19, it is critical for these NPOs to avoid complacency and adopt a more active, individual social media strategy. This approach should be built on and always linked to the organisation's goals. This way, regardless of how the year unfolds, the foundation of the strategy is always tied to the organisation's overall goals and would then only need to be refined relative to the theme of the organisation, the content the organisation would like to distribute and the organisation's mission and vision.

Given the recent global pandemic, which has had a substantial impact on various businesses, including the NPO sector, this research is pertinent. The dissertation looked at how NPOs coped with the pandemic in regard to their supporters. As a result, this research can assist South African organisations in using social media in their overall marketing and communications to engage users, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, because the lessons learnt from the pandemic have highlighted the importance of social media, making it a critical channel for organisations to

stay connected with their audiences and audiences to stay connected with organisations. This raises the dissertation's importance and credibility.

One significant finding was that barriers to social media usage included reach, frequency of action, expense, time and a lack of organisational awareness. This also means that NPO marketers should prioritise and invest in resources to better understand their online community and audience, as well as strengthen their organisation's social media strategy to anticipate potential usage difficulties. Often, NPOs only need to conduct a simple Google search on volunteers available for digital assistance to find resources and helpful links to alleviate the burden of capacity when it comes to social media and expenditure, time and awareness. An organisation might even make a post on their various social media accounts asking their supporters to help them find people who can assist their NPO in increasing their digital presence and providing a better strategic lens.

7.9 Research limitations and future research

Time and resources did not allow for examination of all NPO sectors. The researcher focused on a subset of NPOs in one industry, namely the health industry. The research only included NPOs focused on health in the Western Cape of South Africa. Future research may thus focus on other regions of the country to gain a broader geographical perspective on social media usage among South African NPOs.

The sample was a non-probability convenience sample; therefore, the results cannot be objectively regarded as fully representative of the opinions of all NPOs operating in South Africa and abroad, but simply those that formed part of the dissertation. Future research could consider increasing the sample size, examining additional provinces in South Africa or even conducting a global dissertation that focuses on different countries and how their respective NPOs use social media as a marketing communication approach. Future research could investigate the use of various probability sampling strategies, such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling.

Additionally, the research was restricted because it solely evaluated the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy, rather than taking into account other marketing strategies including traditional advertising, sponsorships, brand activations, sales promotion and direct marketing. Future research approaches could include other social media/digital marketing channels like Google advertising, mobile marketing, influencer marketing, TikTok, WeChat, Snapchat and Reddit to examine whether NPOs use or engage in those marketing communication tools or techniques.

Due to COVID-19 lockdown laws in South Africa during data collection, semi-structured in-depth interviews that would have taken place in-person were instead conducted virtually, with the use of Google Meets and Zoom. This was a limitation because face-to-face interviews could have resulted in stronger rapport with the interviewee and more specific information and longer interviews than digital interview platforms, which could have limited the depth of the data acquired to some extent.

Although there were certain restrictions, the dissertation achieved its goal of providing a solid foundation for future research on the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy among health-related NPOs in the Western Cape of South Africa.

7.10 Concluding remarks

This chapter began by summarising the dissertation's research objectives, themes and then presented major findings from the discussion chapter, along with recommendations. TAM, external variables and both positive and negative impacts leading to the PU, PEOU, attitude toward social media, behavioural intention to use social media and actual use of social media all contributed to accomplishing the primary goal of this dissertation. The primary objective of the dissertation was to identify how health-related NPOs use social media as a marketing communication strategy.

This was successfully answered and well documented in that while the majority of the NPOs do use social media, there is little, if any, strategic view on their efforts. Consequently, creating a perception that social media is not important, as these organisations are not able to monitor efforts and leaders are hesitant to provide resources to social media marketing efforts. The secondary objective was to assess the extent to which social network platforms are being used as a marketing communication strategy by health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, South Africa. This objective was successfully answered, and it was found that Facebook is the key social media platform used among these organisations. Furthermore, the dissertation improves understanding and awareness of the relationship between social media and NPO marketing in South Africa. By contributing to TAM and enhancing the growing body of knowledge in South Africa on consumer behaviour, NPOs and digital marketing, this dissertation has significant theoretical and practical implications. The dissertation found that health-related NPOs in the Western Cape do not prioritise strategic social media involvement and that, as a sector, their major concerns are survival, owing to a lack of funding.

South African financing seems to be declining, particularly support from government sources. Despite reduced funding, the need for NPO services is on the rise. As a result, efforts to promote and ensure the survival of NPOs have become critical. Nevertheless, NPOs are missing the opportunity to strategically use social media to nurture audiences who may eventually become advocates for these organisations, providing not only money but also time. Unfortunately, the

majority of NPOs face closure if funding continues to decline. NPOs are not functioning sustainably enough to ensure their survival and part of the problem is a significant lack of fundraising within NPOs. NPOs generally lack social media marketing efforts and sufficient top management understanding that social media, when used strategically, can ultimately aid in the sustainability of these organisations.

Government, in particular, must ensure that it is adequately supporting NPOs because they are the organisations working towards development and social upliftment within the country. However, NPOs must also recognise their responsibility in pushing their own fundraising efforts via the use of social media as a marketing communication strategy. Owing to the importance of health-related NPOs in the Western Cape, this dissertation on their social media marketing activities, as well as their financial sustainability and security, was necessary.

The objective is that through this dissertation on social media marketing of health-related NPOs, awareness will increase and positive marketing and social media improvements inside health-related NPOs will begin, shedding light on all NPOs battling to survive. Furthermore, the dissertation provides a resource that can help shed light on strategies and best practices, techniques and learnings that NPOs, marketers and academic researchers can use to further the body of knowledge that is currently available.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research title: Social media as a marketing communication strategy among health-related non-profit organisations in the Western Cape

Name of organisation: _____

Participant designation: _____

Date: _____

My name is Shaun Cedric Thomas. We obtained your contact details from the Western Cape Health Department. We are conducting a research dissertation on behalf of CPUT for a Master's dissertation in Marketing. In this regard we wish to establish your marketing communication strategy as an NPO. I hereby request to conduct an interview with you on behalf of CPUT Department of Marketing. The interview will last about 20 to 60 minutes.

ENGAGEMENT

Request to talk to the owner or marketing or social media manager(s) / director who can provide insights into the health NPO. Try to obtain more than one name. All content and engagement in this interview relate to marketing or social media issues. Complete details of each on page 1. By collecting our information, we guarantee ANONYMITY and STRICTEST CONFIDENTIALITY. In other words, the results of the dissertation will be presented as a collective and your personal comments and/or contact details will not be forwarded to ANY third party. In this regard, you have the right to refuse to participate all together (outright rejection), refrain from answering certain questions to which you feel uncomfortable with or terminate the interview at any point during the course of the interview. In this regard, you will decide which part of the content can be used for research purposes. NOTE that all interviews are audio RECORDED for analysis purposes only. Audio files remain the property of CPUT and will never be passed on to a third party.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Introduction and background to social media use: We will start the interview with some questions to find out more detail about the NPOs social media use.

- 1.1 Do you believe there is any value in using social media marketing communication channels in marketing an NPO?
- 1.2 What is the primary purpose of having a social media presence for your NPO?
- 1.3 Which social media platforms are you currently using and why?
- 1.4 How often do you post on social media?
- 1.5 What type of content do you post on your social media platforms?
- 1.6 What do you want to achieve when you engage with social media?
- 1.7 Do you think social media has had an impact on the way people perceive your non-profit organisation?

2. STRATEGY

- 2.1 Does your NPO currently have a social media strategy in place?
- 2.2 If not, are there particular reasons as to why the NPO does not have a strategy in place?
- 2.3 What would convince you to design a targeted social media strategy as a means of marketing promotions?
- 2.4 Who is responsible for planning, executing and measuring marketing performance of your social media strategy?
- 2.5 Can you provide me with an example of content that worked really well on your social media and also an example of what hasn't worked well?
- 2.6 Do you have social media goals and what do you hope to achieve using social media for the NPO?
- 2.7 What other methods do you use to promote your non-profit organisation?
- 2.8 How do you measure the success of these methods?
- 2.9 What marketing activities do you conduct through, or within these social media platforms?
- 2.10 How does social media marketing fit with your current marketing strategy?
- 2.11 Who is your target audience?
- 2.12 Does your social media strategy align with your NPO's goals?
- 2.13 Do you think social media has an impact in the way donations have come through online?
- 2.14 Is social media used as a marketing communications strategy to generate donations for the NPO?
- 2.15 If yes, have you implemented an e-commerce element that is linked to your social media platforms?

3. MEASUREMENT / ASSESMENT

- 3.1 How are you currently measuring the success of your online campaigns?
- 3.2 Which of the social media platforms do you consider the most effective in promoting the NPO?
- 3.3 How do you measure ROI and define success with your social media strategy?
- 3.4 Are you currently facing any challenges in your social media promotions?
- 3.5 How do you measure the effectiveness of your social media activities such as an improved perception of your non-profit organisation?

4. BUDGET

- 4.1 Do you have a social media budget?
- 4.2 If yes, how often do you use paid adverts on social media or boost posts to reach a larger target audience?

5. CONTENT & GUIDELINES

- 5.1 How do you decide on what type of content gets posted on your social media channels?
- 5.2 Do you have social media guidelines in place that assist in monitoring social media content that appears on the NPOs platforms should you be faced with a sensitive matter?
- 5.3 What emotions do you hope to bring across through your brand's visuals and messaging on social media?
- 5.4 What type of content types works best for you and how does it appeal to your target audience?

6. BEST PRACTICE

- 6.1 What is your opinion on NPO's social media marketing strategies?
- 6.2 Have you visited any other NPOs social media pages?
- 6.3 If yes, what are most appealing NPO social media pages that could see yourself implementing those strategies on your own NPO's social media platforms?
- 6.4 Are there any specific examples of these campaigns that you would like to share?

7. COVID-19 PRACTICE

- 7.1 How has COVID-19 impacted your social media activity?
- 7.2 How have you adapted your social media practice during COVID-19?
- 7.3 What type of content are you publishing on your social media platforms during COVID-19?

8. BRANDING

- 8.1 Do you make use of hashtags across your social media platforms to create brand recall and brand awareness?
- 8.2 Do you promote your social media channels in e-newsletters or email signatures for brand awareness?
- 8.3 Have you implemented competitions or donation appeals across your social media channels?

APPENDIX B: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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Symphony Road Bellville 7535


Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
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At a meeting of the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee on **11 June 2019**, Ethics **Approval** was granted to **Shaun Cedric Thomas (211205192)** for research activities of **Master of Marketing** at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AMONG HEALTH-RELATED NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA Lead Researcher/Supervisor: Dr N Haydam
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Comments:

Decision: Approved

 <hr/> Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	12 June 2019 <hr/> Date
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Clearance Certificate No | FOBREC664

APPENDIX C: COPY EDITOR CERTIFICATE

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2 May 2023

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I have copy-edited the following thesis by Mr Shaun Thomas:

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AMONG HEALTH-RELATED NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

Please note that this does not cover content, conceptual organisation or textual changes made subsequent to the editing process.

Best regards



KEN BARRIS

APPENDIX D: TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AMONG HEALTH-RELATED NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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