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Social Media as a Catalyst of Good Governance: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Social media has revolutionized how information flows among people. Therefore, social media is vital in promoting good governance through citizen participation in decision-making. This study investigated social media's role as a catalyst for good governance in East Africa. The objectives of the study were to determine the quantity of research on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa; identify the research themes addressed by scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa; examine the authorship patterns of scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa; and, evaluate the visibility of scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa. The study applied a bibliometrics research approach. Data was collected from Google Scholar using Harzing's "Publish or Perish" software and analyzed in Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer. A total of 999 articles were retrieved for data analysis using keywords in the title. After data cleaning, 601 articles were used for data analysis. The findings indicate that there was a gradual increase in papers on social media for good governance in the last ten years, with a sharp decline over the last two (2) years. Numerous research themes have emerged from diverse disciplines. However, there was little collaboration between authors in the area. The visibility of publications was high but with a significant variance between the leading and the rest. This study recommends that policies on engagement on



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social media be developed; there is need for training on the use of social media tools for research; and, the need to enhance collaborative efforts among researchers in the discipline to enhance good governance through social media.

Keywords: Social media, governance, good governance, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania

Introduction

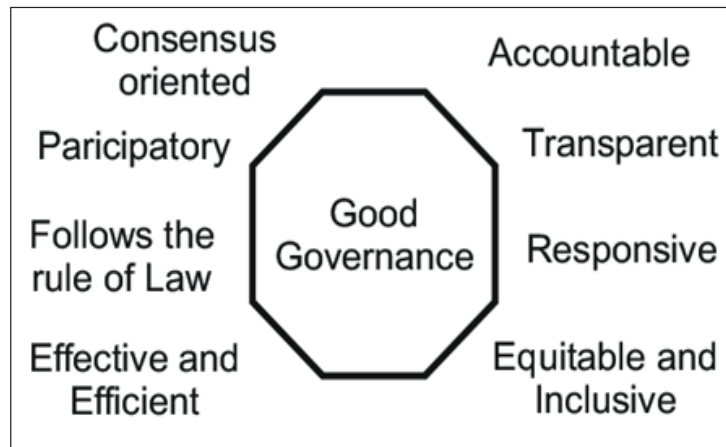
New technologies, mainly social media uptake in recent years, have altered how information flows among people. Technology specifically influences how citizens communicate with persons in government and public administration. Thus, technology provides an open channel that enhances communication between governments and their citizens (Alguliyev & Yusifov, 2023). There has been exponential growth in the number of social media users, thereby creating a significant shift from traditional communication channels like television and newspapers to digital social media systems (Kwon et al., 2021). Browne (2015) opines that social media are web-based tools and services used by citizens to create content, search, share and rate content or information without the need to log into any specific portal site or portal destination. These tools become 'social' in the sense that they are created in ways that enable users to share and communicate with one another through them. They include social networking sites, blogs, microblogs, video blogs, and discussion forums, among others (Browne, 2015).

Kwon et al. (2021) argue that one of the most distinguished and valuable characteristics of social media is the fact that it is interactive, unlike other traditional communication channels, which are mainly one-way, thus limiting audiences from sharing and exchanging information, opinions, and knowledge freely. Social media is a powerful tool based on network communications and provides a tool for mutual communication between government and society. It has the potential to improve government transparency and facilitate the development of a genuinely democratic society (Alguliyev & Yusifov, 2023). According to Tullah (2014), in countries like Kenya, the public has become aware of their roles in enhancing democracy. As such, social media channels are used to communicate issues that they, as a society, deem pertinent for government to address. In the last decade, citizens have used social media in information gathering and dissemination. This has led to the achievement of transparency in public administration through advanced information access and use (Alguliyev & Yusifov, 2023).

Tullah (2014) believes that social media plays a vital role in transforming and promoting good governance through citizen participation in decision-making. He further argues that citizen participation in a democratic society involves a series of actions undertaken by either individuals or groups of people to ensure the smooth running and operation of government services through, for example, social media. Alfakoro et al. (2021) agree that social media plays a crucial role in the dissemination of information in today's modern society by facilitating interactivity, especially in consensus and consent-building in the governance processes. Over time, social media has contributed to the development of citizens' participation in government by creating public awareness and facilitating interactions between people and administrators.

Sheng (2018) explains that the concept of “governance” as the process by which decisions are made and implemented (or not implemented). He furthers his argument that good governance has eight significant characteristics: it is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. Figure 1 presents these attributes that ensure that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account, and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

Figure 1: Characteristics of good governance



Source: Sheng (2018)

Literature Review

This literature review covers critical themes drawn from the paper’s topic. These are social media use, characteristics of social media, principles of good governance, and social media and good governance.

Social media use

Edosomwan et al. (2011) agree that social media has transformed how people interact and communicate. Indeed, social media is a new form of media that is interactive and participative (Manning, 2014). Boyd & Ellison (2007) opine that social media are websites that facilitate the creation of user profiles and the visibility of relationships between users. They are web-based applications that enable users to create relationships, form groups, create conversations, share ideas and create profiles (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Edosomwan et al. (2011) note that social media and social networking sites that came into existence in the 21st Century, like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, Cyworld, and LunarStorm, are not a new concept but have evolved from Web2.0 technologies as a result of information exchange and service provision among individuals, groups, or institutions.

Edosomwan et al. (2011) further expound that social media is challenging to define and that the features and functions put into these websites by their creators dictate how they are supposed to be used. Wolf et al. (2018) are in agreement and explain that research on social media has focused on specific platforms or applications, such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, which differ in functionality; hence, the lack of a clear definition. However, they reiterate that many scholars define it using its common properties.

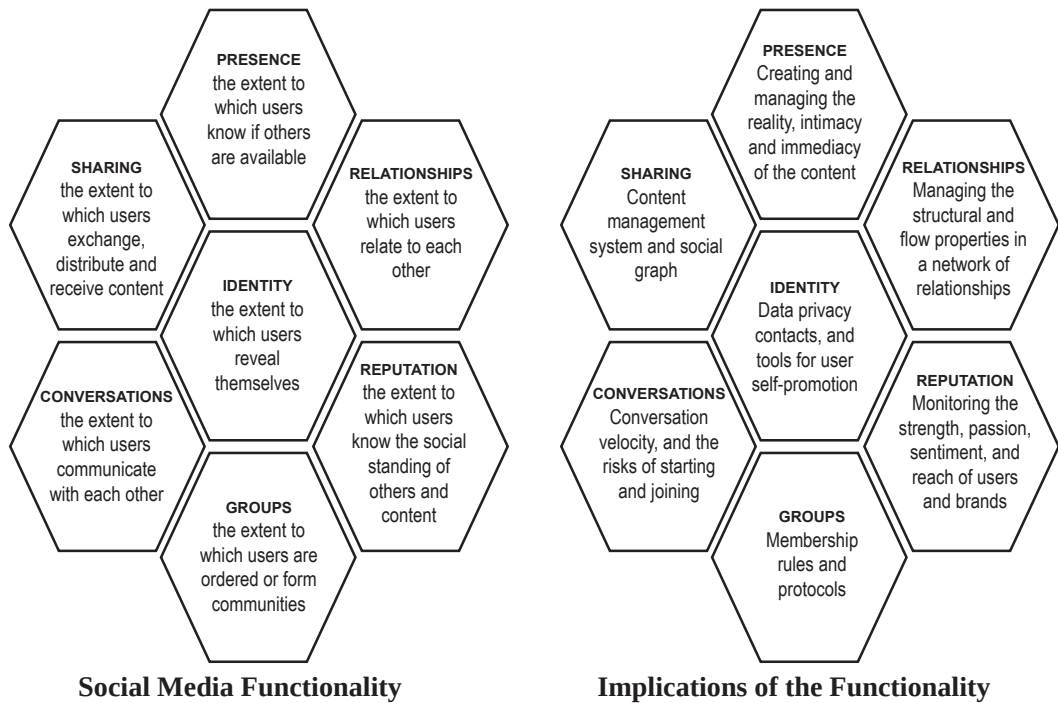
Jere et al. (2016) posit that there is an upsurge in the use of social media in Africa, arguing that it has revolutionized how people communicate. They, however, noted that social media usage in Africa is marred with ethical implications and that despite the benefits it provides, there have been concerns among users, communities, academics, researchers and governments on the ethical implications of its use. In Kenya, the ubiquity of Internet connectivity has given rise to the growth and uptake of social media in the country (Kamwaria et al., 2015; Kwanya et al., 2021). The government of Kenya, for example, has recently scored high in the use of social media technology in government (Kamwaria et al., 2015). The penetration of social media in Africa can be measured by the uptake of Facebook (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019). This is because, as Kwanya et al. (2021) affirm, Facebook is currently the dominant social media platform among the youth in Kenya.

Characteristics of social media

Manning (2014) argues that there are two common characteristics of social media. First, it allows participation because it is not entirely passive. Second, it facilitates interactivity. It is challenging to discuss social media without bringing in the concept of social networking. This enables users to form online communities, share ideas and content, or exchange information and services among individuals, groups, or institutions. Specifically, it facilitates the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business (Edosomwan et al., 2011).

Wolf et al. (2018) explain that the term “social media” is identified through its functionalities, including promoting open communication, enabling the sharing of ideas and formation of effective teamwork, diffusion of knowledge and experiences, enhancing content that is shared; enabling collaborative communication with effective feedback; defining tasks and development of ideas and how to go about them; helping in the recognition of input by members leading to well-recognised communities; and providing a good channel for discussions. However, they reiterate that for these to be effective, users must adhere to the rules and etiquette of social media.

Kietzmann et al. (2011) specify seven functional building blocks of social media, as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Building Blocks of Social Media

Source: Wolf et al. (2018)

Principles of Good Governance

Governance is the process of managing a country's affairs through political and administrative authority (UNDESA, 2012). It is the process through which decisions are made and implemented. It involves both formal and informal actors and the structures put in place to arrive at decisions at the corporate, local, national, and international levels (Sheng, 2018).

United Nations (2007) posits that for good governance to be realised, political and institutional processes should be transparent and accountable by encouraging public participation in the processes. UNDESA (2012) agrees that good governance is centred on what makes the institutions and the rules guiding them more effective and efficient in order to achieve equity, transparency, participation, responsiveness, accountability, and the rule of law. It further states that these are crucial in the eradication of poverty and fostering development since ineffective institutions cause the most significant harm to the poor and vulnerable in society. Good governance is all about strengthening the active participation of communities in the decision-making processes and putting an emphasis on practical cooperation among civil society, governments and communities.

However, UNDESA (2012) argues that the performance of institutions is a subject of debate, especially in the fields of education, health, finance, and other development sectors. However, it concludes that the target of good governance is tied to aspects of administration applicable to all government functions and includes transparency, accountability, integrity,

equity, efficiency, and participation.

The United Nations (2007) explains that good governance is a fundamental human right. It is not an exclusively government affair but requires public participation through contributions to policies that respect civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Policies resulting from participatory processes are likely to be perceived as legitimate by the population through informed social dialogue.

Sheng (2018) outlines eight major characteristics of good governance as a process that requires participation, consensus building, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusivity and follows the rule of law to ensure that the views of the minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the society.

However, Sano (2002) argues that governance, good governance, and democratic governance were vaguely defined during the 1990s depending on the context and who was interpreting them. Gisselquist (2012) agrees that good governance is an extremely elusive concept that means different things to different people, organizations, and actors within these organizations.

Poor governance is projected to be the primary impediment to economic development in Africa (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019; Fosu, 2018). Some scholars argue that the continent of Africa lags because of bad governance, as political leaders in Africa exhibit selfishness, corruption, and non-inclusivity of the people in their respective countries in decision-making (Yaro et al., 2019). As such, the African Union (AU) has put forth a set of shared values for good governance in Africa, including democracy and good governance, the rule of law and human rights, peace and security, and continental development and integration (Corrigan, 2017).

Social Media and Good Governance

In this age of information systems, social media plays a pivotal role in communication and organizational transformation due to social networking. The year 2000 saw the emergence of many social networking sites that facilitated interactions of people with common interests, thus affecting how organizations are run (Edosomwan et al., 2011).

Manning (2014) also posits that with the rise in technology, and in particular mobile technologies, considerable scale interaction between individuals arose, and interactivity took centre stage in new media functions. In addition, instant feedback became possible, and citizens who used to have limited and somewhat muted voices could now share their opinions and contribute to good governance. Furthermore, social groups now exist where members share values and beliefs and can collaborate as team members, share workload, keep up-to-date with the latest developments, interact with leaders and resolve conflicts, resulting in better outcomes as compared to individual effort (Edosomwan et al., 2011). However, Edosomwan et al. (2011) opine that it is not easy to quantify the gains of social media, especially in terms of

good governance. They argue that despite the fact that people can take part in conversations, discuss and contribute on social media sites, users can manipulate comments, introduce errors and manipulate data for personal or business gain.

Social media has contributed to the development of governments due to citizens' participation in government since it creates public awareness and interactions between people and the government (Alfakoro et al., 2021). In Kenya, many public officers and organizations, especially government departments, use social media. For example, the President of Kenya explained that he engages with Kenyan citizens at a personal level through his social media accounts to discuss matters of national importance by reading and responding to comments and questions addressed through social media by citizens on various issues (Kamwaria et al., 2015).

Context and Rationale of the Study

The use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs, among others, has created considerable impact on the roles of traditional mass media in the world today. According to Maina (2012), up until 2008, the world witnessed an upsurge in social media sites, which caused traditional media outlets to suffer a setback. Consequently, social media has progressively influenced how communication occurs within organizations. Thus, organizations, as well as the government, cannot ignore social media if they are to expect good results.

Lin & Kant (2021) are in agreement that traditional media involves participation among a small number of selected representatives or stakeholders in governance. These participants were required to be present in a physical place at a particular time, thereby resulting in many problems, such as lack of inclusion and the inflexibility of participation. Recently, this situation has changed, and scholars, planners, and policymakers have turned their attention toward social media in order to overcome the problems of traditional participation methods and, in particular, its increasing use in planning to include citizen participation (Lin & Kant, 2021). The state develops two-way interactions or digital participation systems to increase citizens' participation, improve accountability and accommodate feedback (Hollands, 2012). However, Browne (2015) states that as much as social media has a great potential to be used for good governance purposes, this potential remains unexploited in most contexts. He argues that many governments are using e-government strategies and disseminating information through online channels but not soliciting citizen feedback. Where there are two-way channels, it is unclear whether citizen feedback is acted upon or not. There is promising evidence that social media improves the transparency of organizations and government ministries, but there is less evidence on whether this improves accountability (Browne, 2015).

Sheng (2018) also opines that despite the presence of various approaches by governments to social media and social media analytics in international practice, the impact of social media on public administration is of no doubt. He argues that there are still pending issues surrounding the building of mutual communication between government bodies and citizens, the role played by social media in enabling feedback between government and citizens in an

e-government context, the application of social media in e-government, and the transformation of administrative mechanisms using social media channels.

Governments in the East African region are increasingly using social media. In Kenya, for instance, social media have been used in government planning to gain public opinions, distribute information, and support citizen participation in planning practices. Nevertheless, few studies have been conducted in East Africa to understand the influence of social media in local contexts and the extent to which its use can enhance citizen power and inclusion in good governance.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the amount of research on social media as a catalyst for good governance in East Africa;
2. To identify the research themes addressed by scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa;
3. To examine the authorship patterns of scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa;
4. To evaluate the visibility of scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance in East Africa.

Methodology

Bibliometric methods were used for this study. Roy & Basak (2013) explain that bibliometrics is a quantitative method employed to probe the scientific communication process by measuring and analysing various aspects of written documents and that bibliometrics has become a standard tool of science policy and research management in the last decades. Bibliometrics has been used to provide quantitative analysis of written publications (Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015) and is accepted as a scientific method in research in different disciplines. Gauthier (1998) explains that one of the primary goals of scientometrics and bibliometrics, as applied to public policy, is to provide objective information for decision-making since bibliometrics indicators can provide accurate information on the scientific output of a country by listings of papers and citations, listings of patents and citations, as well as measures of the volume and impact of research at various levels. Padrós-Cuxart et al. (2016) agree with Ellegaard & Wallin (2015) stating that bibliometrics has become an increasingly necessary tool used by researchers to study and analyse publication activities by other researchers and institutions. Dede & Ozdemir (2022) opine that due to technological advancements, more robust methods like bibliometric analysis methods have emerged to find various parameters in research, such as the quality, value and productivity of scientific output by researchers. In addition, Dede & Ozdemir expound that bibliometric analysis uses statistical methods to analyse books, articles, and other publications and can be applied to describe, evaluate and monitor publications in regard to citations, authorship, institutions, journals, and countries of publication. When bibliometric analyses are used over prolonged periods, they provide a means of identifying trends in scientific production. The output of one country can then be compared to that of other

countries competitively or comparably. Comparisons between countries can also be based on disciplines (Gauthier, 1998). Bibliometric analysis provides significant contributions in terms of directing researchers to the most compelling studies even before they start reading, enabling them to quickly find research gaps in the field, inspiring new ideas for research, revealing research trends and mapping the research area to see the conceptual, social or cognitive structure (Dede & Ozdemir, 2022).

Bibliometric analysis has gained immense popularity in research in recent years due to the advancement, availability, and accessibility of bibliometric software such as Gephi, Leximancer, VOSviewer, and scientific databases such as Scopus and Web of Science (Donthu et al., 2021). It is popular because it can be applied across disciplines from information science to business research, handle large volumes of scientific data, and produce high research impact.

For these reasons, the researchers used bibliometrics to provide public policy makers with a guide to using bibliometric tools currently available to obtain information on using social media for good governance. The publications used for bibliometric analysis in this study were retrieved from Google Scholar using Harzing's "Publish or Perish" software. Google Scholar was chosen because it offers diverse publications, and its access is not restricted. A total of 999 articles for a period of ten (10) years (2012-2022) were retrieved using keywords in the study title. Data cleaning was done to weed out publications that did not meet the search criteria, such as subject matter and region of publication. The published materials included journal articles, published books, conference proceedings, and theses. The data was analysed with the aid of Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer and presented in tables and charts.

Findings of the study

From the bibliometrics search on Google Scholar, the researchers retrieved 999 articles on social media as a catalyst for good governance. However, after data cleaning, 601 scholarly articles were identified as suitable for analysis. The researchers used keywords from the title and the content to select the publications.

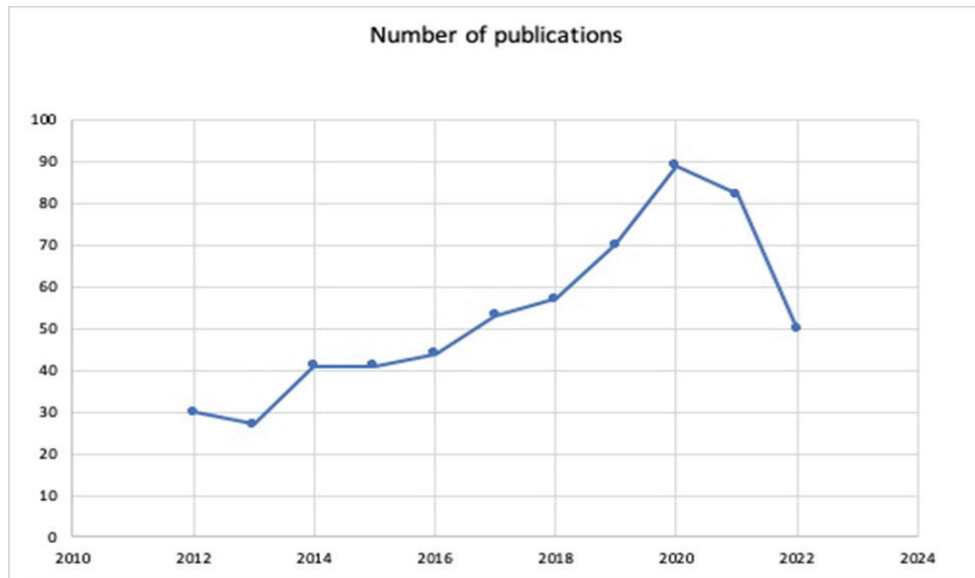
Quantity of research on social media as a catalyst of good governance

Table 1 shows the number of publications on social media as a catalyst of good governance for the period between 2012 and 2022. The year 2020 had the most publications (89), followed by 2021 (82) and 2019 (70). The lowest number of publications was witnessed in the year 2013 (27) and 2012 (30).

Table 1: Publications on social media as a catalyst of good governance (2012 – 2022)

Year of publication	Number of Publications
2012	30
2013	27
2014	41
2015	41
2016	44
2017	53
2018	57
2019	70
2020	89
2021	82
2022	50

The publication trends show a gradual increase in the number of publications from 2012 up to 2020, peaking in 2020 and then decreasing sharply between the years 2020 and 2022. However, since the research was conducted before the end of 2022, the researchers cannot conclusively say if 2022 will experience a decline or an increase. Figure 3 presents the publication trends on social media as a catalyst for good governance.

Figure 3: Publication trends on social media as a catalyst for good governance

Research themes addressed by scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance

From the emerging themes from the title of the publication, the prominent keywords were “Right” with 24 occurrences, followed by “Information” (16), “Facebook” (14), “Twitter”(13), “Reforms” (11), “Challenge” (10), “Effect” (10), “Growth” (10), “Initiative” (10). Other themes included “Social media tool” (8), “Social media user” (8), “Benefit” (7), “Democratic governance” (7), “Good governance practices” (7) and “bad governance” (6), among others. This is depicted in Table 2.

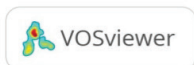
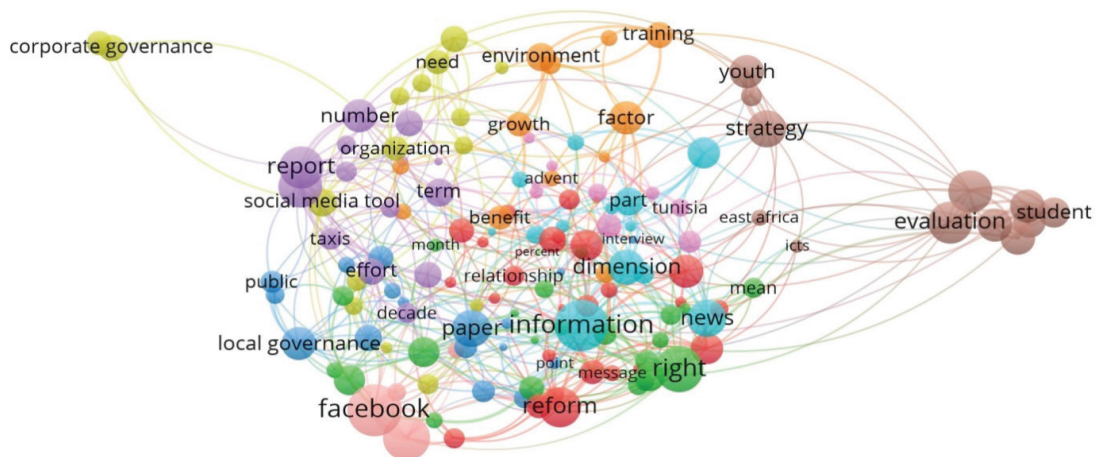
Table 2: Research themes on publications on social media as a catalyst of good governance

S/N	Theme Concept	Cluster	Weight Links	Weight (Total Links)	Occurrence
1	Right	2	20	22	24
2	Information	6	23	25	16
3	Facebook	10	18	26	14
4	Twitter	10	13	21	13
5	Reform	1	15	18	11
6	Challenge	4	7	10	10
7	Effect	1	13	13	10
8	Growth	7	6	9	10
9	Initiative	1	12	13	10
10	Report	5	14	19	10
11	Research	2	12	12	10
12	Strategy	8	12	16	10
13	Campaign	2	11	11	9
14	Corporate governance	4	3	10	9
15	Year	5	15	19	9
16	Impact	1	9	10	8
17	Leader	8	13	19	8
18	Quality	1	13	14	8
19	Social media tool	4	11	11	8
20	Social media user	5	8	10	8
21	Benefit	7	8	9	7
22	Commitment	9	8	8	7
23	Democratic governance	1	7	8	7
24	Evidence	1	9	9	7
25	Good governance practices	1	8	9	7
26	Local governance	3	13	14	7

S/N	Theme Concept	Cluster	Weight Links	Weight (Total Links)	Occurrence
27	Regulation	2	8	9	7
28	Bad governance	2	6	7	6

The themes in Figure 4 below show that most of the research conducted on social media and good governance revolve around the “right to or access to information”, “information”, “Facebook” as a social media tool, “Strategy”, “Reforms”, “Youth”, “Cooperative governance”, “Evaluation”, “Students”, “training”, “Environment”, “Reports” and “News”, and “Paper”, among others.

Figure 4: Themes from social media and good governance research



Authorship patterns of the publications on social media as a catalyst of good governance

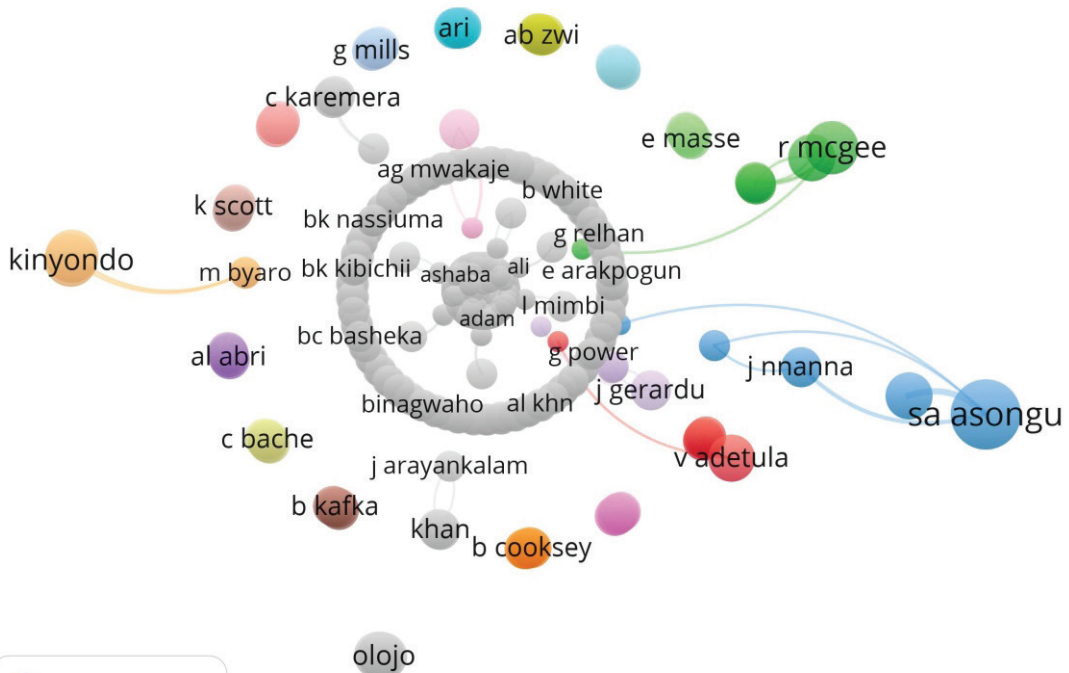
From the 601 publications used for analysis, S.A. Asongu had the most publications on social media and good governance attributed to him with a total of eight (8) occurrences and a weighted total link (collaboration) strength of eight (8) with a weighted link of four (4). Odhiambo followed this with a total occurrence of five (5) publications and a total weighted link strength of four (4) with a weighted link of one (1). He was followed closely by Mutula with a total occurrence of five (5) publications and a total weighted strength of four (4) with a weighted link of three (3). Other authors include Kinyondo, Oje, Mcgee, Pelizzo, Sigsworth and Willems, each with a total of three (3) occurrences, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Authorship patterns of publications

Name (s)	Cluster	Weight <Links>	Weight<Total Link Strength>	Weight <Occurrences>
S.A. Asongu	3	4	8	8
N. M. Odhiambo	3	1	4	5
S. M. Mutula	18	3	3	5
J. Baguma	24	2	3	4
Kinyondo	16	3	5	3
Ojo	29	2	2	3
R. Mcgee	2	4	5	3
R. Pelizzo	16	3	5	3
R. Sigsworth	77	2	4	3
W. Willems	200	1	2	3

Figure 5 shows the authors' collaboration patterns from a social network analysis of the publications. The co-authorships observed are mainly between S.A. Asongu and J. Nnanna. Other collaborations are between V. Adutela and G. Power, R. McGee and G. Relhan, and Kinyondo and M. Brayo, among others. However, most publications were single-authored, as can be noted by authors such as Khan, Olojo, E. Masse, Ari, Ab Zwi, and B. Cooksey, among others.

Figure 5: Publication collaboration patterns among authors



Visibility of scholarly articles on social media as a catalyst of good governance

The visibility of research publications can be deduced from the citation counts the publications get. Citation counts are dependent on the number of users who have accessed a particular publication. This is further influenced by the scholarly channel in which the article has been published. High-quality articles are typically published in journals with high impact factors, thereby guaranteeing their visibility and, ultimately, the citations they attract. The article with the highest number of citations in this research had 472 citations. A second publication with 189 citations followed this. There is a vast difference in citations between the first and second publication. The leading publication, in terms of citation, is by the World Bank Group and is a World Development Report published in 2016. The citation for publications in this research on social media for good governance is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Visibility of publications on social media for good governance

S/N	Citations	Authors	Title
1	472	World Bank Group	World Development Report 2016: Digital dividends
2	189	J.G. McGann	2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report
3	183	L. Rodić, D.C. Wilson	Resolving governance issues to achieve priority sustainable development goals related to solid waste management in developing countries
4	169	I.A. Agyepong, N. Sewankambo, A. Binagwaho...	The path to longer and healthier lives for all Africans by 2030: The Lancet Commission on the future of health in sub-Saharan Africa
5	167	G.G. Haile, Q. Tang, S. Sun, Z. Huang, X Zhang, X Liu	Droughts in East Africa: Causes, impacts and resilience
6	162	J.J. Mistry, A. Jalal	An empirical analysis of the relationship between e-government and corruption.
7	133	A. Kolk, M. Rivera-Santos	The state of research on Africa in business and management: Insights from a systematic review of key international journals
8	118	S. Olsson, S.N. Pal, A. Dodo	Pharmacovigilance in resource-limited countries
9	112	C. Johnson, S. Blackburn	Advocacy for urban resilience: UNISDR's making cities resilient campaign
10	112	F.L. Wang, E.A. Elliot	China in Africa: presence, perceptions and prospects
11	111	R. Rotberg	Africa emerges: Consummate challenges, abundant opportunities
12	109	S. Christopoulos, B. Horvath...	Advancing the governance of cross-sectoral policies for sustainable development: A meta governance perspective

13	106	S.B. Banerjee	Transnational power and translocal governance: The politics of corporate responsibility
14	99	S. Batabyal, A. Chowdhury	Curbing corruption, financial development and income inequality
15	96	A.L. Kühn, M. Stiglbauer, M.S. Fifka	Contents and determinants of corporate social responsibility website reporting in Sub-Saharan Africa: A seven-country study
16	93	A. Kolk, F. Lenfant	Cross-sector collaboration, institutional gaps, and fragility: the role of social innovation partnerships in a conflict-affected region
17	83	S. Podder	Non-state armed groups and stability: Reconsidering legitimacy and inclusion
18	80	A. George, K. Scott, S. Garimella, S. Mondal, R. Ved...	Anchoring contextual analysis in health policy and systems research: a narrative review of contextual factors influencing health committees in low and middle income ...
19	77	A. De Waal, R. Ibreck	Hybrid social movements in Africa
20	76	E. Mwasalwiba, H. Dahles, I. Wakkee	Graduate entrepreneurship in Tanzania: Contextual enablers and hindrances

It is worth noting that the first two (2) leading publications are economic reports. The publications with high citations were organizational publications, single-authored publications, and multi-author publications. The publications also covered various disciplines and did not cover a particular field.

Discussions of the Findings

The increasing rise in the volume of publications on social media as a tool for good governance can be attributed to the interest generated in the topic. As opined by Mishaal and Abu-Shanab (2015), the emergence of social media, its characteristics and benefits created an opportunity for people to connect, thereby creating a revolution. This triggered researchers to study the phenomenon, leading to vast research outputs, especially during the years preceding 2010. Beyond 2010, social media gave not just businesses but churches, non-profit organizations, and basically everyone, including governments, a chance to communicate effectively (Sterne, 2010). These kinds of views by researchers might have propelled them to study the phenomenon of social media. Indeed, Osterrieder (2013) stated that social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and many other social networking sites existing today complement people's lives by allowing users to share content and interact online with like-minded people; hence, better decisions can be arrived at, leading to good governance.

Mishaal and Abu-Shanab (2015) also allude to the fact that social media had an impact on governments when governments realised the presence of their citizens on the platform in 2011 and beyond. For example, the popularity of Facebook as a tool for governance also spurred interest in the area. As Hussain (2014) explains, the Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)

adopted Facebook as a social communication tool to enhance the provision of e-government services in 2013 in Northern Pakistan. However, with the popularity of social media sites rising, so were the vices committed to it that decelerated its uptake in the years 2020 and beyond. As Kwanya et al. (2021) argue, social media sites like Facebook have become the new tool for committing social vices like cyberbullying. This new realisation is driving some people off such social media platforms, thereby catalysing a decline in its popularity in governance, as highlighted in the research publication themes identified.

There were divergent themes in the publications on social media for good governance. The most dominant themes in the publications were social rights, information and Facebook, among others. The most dominant use of social media is representation and equity. Through social media, people can air grievances, highlight problems and fight for their rights. Thom (2017) argues that social media gives a voice to the voiceless and, as such, gives an equal platform to be heard. People use social media to communicate their thoughts freely without any fear of intimidation due to anonymity (Kwanya et al., 2021). As such, these themes were strongly evident in the publications retrieved and analysed.

Osterrieder (2013) opines that social media now complements many parts of people's lives. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and many other social networking sites enable their users to share and interact with online content and connect with like-minded people. Its strengths – rapid dissemination and amplification of content and the ability to lead informal conversations – make it a powerful tool to use in a professional context. From the research, there was a significant disparity between the most cited publication and the second most cited. This may be attributed to the most cited publication of a World Bank Group, which is a reputable and established organization, as opposed to individual researchers. As such, they may have the requisite tools and experience to conduct studies perceived to be of a higher quality. Alternatively, the high citations it attracted may be due to its multidisciplinary nature.

The advantage of using social media in governance is the rapid dissemination and amplification of information, as captured in one of the major themes of the research publications retrieved. In addition, informal conversations can be converted into powerful ideas applied in a professional context, such as scientific content (Osterrieder, 2013). Osterrieder (2013) further argues that researchers, therefore, should collaborate on social networks and build a social presence. This was noted to be lacking in the current research. Despite the few collaborative networks formed by the researchers, most studies on social media for good governance were single-authored.

However, Osterrieder (2013) also notes that as much as there is a presence of a scientific community on social media and studying effective social media use within the scientific community, there are some common reasons that make scientists not engage on social media. These include the fear of being judged unprofessional for using social media, posting content perceived as inappropriate, being misunderstood, and lacking the requisite IT skills. However, there is a rapid change in academic publishing through social media. The dissemination of scientific research through 'altmetrics' is being adopted fast, and more or so, in tracking online engagement with scientific content. Because of this, digital literacy should be an essential skill

in scientists' toolkit to enhance their visibility in research.

Conclusion

Social media facilitates faster communication, enables inclusivity in participation, facilitates the exchange of ideas and spurs innovation. Numerous research studies have been conducted on the application of social media for good governance. It is evident from the publications that governments across the East African region are utilising social media to support governance in all sectors, as indicated by the themes in the published research retrieved and analysed. However, most professionals, especially in scientific communities, seemingly do not take social media seriously because it is an informal means of communication. Research articles on this subject matter are visible, based on the citations and publication channels from the bibliometrics analysis, especially for reputable organizations like the World Bank, but this can also be enhanced for individual scholars so as to improve their visibility. East African countries, in particular, need to set up clear policies on public engagement on social media coupled with proper and adequate training to spur this.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend the following:

- *Enhance policies on social media use:* The governments of East African countries should come up with effective policies on their engagement with social media for good governance.
- *Training on social media use:* Governments should facilitate training on the ethical use of social media to enrich the quality of conversations and engagements on social media platforms. This will play a crucial role in improving the use of social media technologies for decision-making, citizen participation, and good governance.
- *Adoption of social media for scholarly communication:* To enhance the impact, exposure, and accessibility of their research, academics ought to leverage social media platforms for academic communication. This will facilitate cross-disciplinary cooperation and help them reach a global audience.
- *Enhance collaboration among scholars:* The research contributes essential insights on how best to use social media to catalyse good governments in East Africa. Efforts to improve the quantity, quality and visibility of research on the subject will potentially empower governments, citizens and stakeholders to effectively use social media to entrench good governance in the region.

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