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Three Essays on the Use of Social Media by Arts Nonprofit Organizations

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ABSTRACT

THREE ESSAYS ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY ARTS NONPROFIT

ORGANIZATIONS

By

RICHA ADHIKARI

AUGUST 2023

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The internet has revolutionized the way organizations engage with their stakeholders, allowing for greater interaction and accountability. However, the nonprofit sector, particularly arts organizations, faces unique challenges in using traditional internet platforms effectively. The emergence of social media platforms offers a potential solution for nonprofits to engage with stakeholders despite limited resources. This study consists of three essays that delve into the adoption and use of social media by arts and culture nonprofits in the United States. Each essay addresses specific questions related to social media's role in soliciting donations, engaging stakeholders, and achieving organizational outcomes. The research draws on theories of nonprofit social media, including adoption factors, communication strategies, and the acquisition and utilization of social media capital. The first essay examines the relationship between social media capital and individual donations, using the social network theory of giving and the social media capital framework. The second essay analyzes the communication strategies of arts nonprofits on social media, comparing messaging themes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The third essay explores the acquisition and use of social media capital by arts nonprofits. By combining these theoretical perspectives and employing multiple methodological

approaches and data sources, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how arts organizations leverage social media platforms for their communication strategies and organizational outcomes. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on social media use in the nonprofit sector, emphasizing its potential to create social capital and drive tangible results.

THREE ESSAYS ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY ARTS NONPROFIT

ORGANIZATIONS

BY

RICHA ADHIKARI

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of
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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of Richa Adhikari's Dissertation Committee. It has been approved and accepted by all members of that committee, and it has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy in Public Policy in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies of Georgia State University.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter I. Introduction

The Internet is a powerful medium for fostering relationships between organizations and their stakeholders. For organizations, the internet has given them an unparalleled ability to engage their audience, sell products, request donations, and communicate their missions. For their stakeholders, the internet's rapid diffusion has given more access to organizations' missions and the ability to hold them accountable. The internet allows for more balanced organization-citizen connections (Coombs, 1998) and greater stakeholder participation in the community (Rice, 2002).

However, these benefits are not necessarily applicable to the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit organizations are weaker, smaller, and technologically challenged compared to their counterparts in the government and corporate sectors. Therefore, many nonprofits have been unable to use traditional internet platforms like websites as interactive stakeholder engagement tools (Kent & Taylor, 2003; Saxton, Guo, & Brown, 2007). The rapid diffusion of social media platforms over the last two decades has provided an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to try to compensate for the lack of technological and financial resources required to adopt and maintain websites. Social media is inexpensive, easy to use, and allows organizations to interact with their stakeholders in real-time.

Nonprofit scholars have studied organizations' decisions to adopt (or not adopt) social media, sectoral differences in its use (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Park, Rodgers, & Stemmie, 2013; Young, 2017), organizational and individual level factors in affecting use, and social media's role in helping organizations create unique social capital that they can harness to achieve concrete outcomes (Saxton & Guo, 2014; 2020).

This study contains three essays exploring the adoption and use of social media platforms by arts and culture nonprofits in the United States for soliciting donations, engaging stakeholders, and achieving broader organizational outcomes. Each essay focuses on a question relating to how arts organizations use social media's power in their organizations' communication strategy by applying multiple methodological approaches and data sources.

1.1 Theories of Nonprofit Social Media Research

Nonprofit social media research started gaining popularity in the early 2010s. Because this research is new, scholars have weaved together components from information technology, public relations, business management, and organizational development theories to explore social media adoption and use. Earlier studies focused on organizations' decisions to adopt (or not adopt) social media platforms. These studies explored the individual and organization-level factors that informed adoption, including individual managers' perceived usefulness, demographic factors like gender and age, organizational governance, external pressures, and organizational technological capabilities (Curtis, Edwards, Fraser, Gudelsky, Holmquist, Thornton, & Sweetser, 2010; Nah & Saxton, 2012). By combining public relations and organizational development theories (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, contingency theory, resource mobilization theory, diffusion of innovations theory), the research on individual and organizational factors affecting use examines organizational decisions on the adoption of social media by drawing parallels with the adoption of other internet technologies like websites (Curtis et al., 2010; Nah & Saxton, 2012).

Scholars have used public relations theories to study organizations' efforts in curating social media messages to foster better relationships with their stakeholders (Maxwell & Carboni, 2014; Tao, Li, Chen, & Ji, 2021) and to understand how stakeholders respond to the messages

(Saxton & Waters, 2014). Others have used the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to examine the effect of individual (gender, age) and organizational (leadership support, specified public relations department) factors on social media use (Curtis et al., 2010). A few others have used the contingency theory of accommodation in public relations (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997) and resource mobilization theories to identify internal and external organization-level factors that affect social media use (Nah & Saxton, 2012; Lee, 2017). The authors found that organizational strategies like lobbying expenses, program service revenues, governance factors like membership structure, board size, and organizational efficiency, outreach factors like involvement in politics and social service, as well as website reach factors strongly affected social media adoption and use (Nah & Saxton, 2012; Lee, 2017). Waters (2010) and Young (2017) have used Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovations theory to study how the adoption of social media tools has proliferated to alter our social systems. These studies found that there are early adopter and innovator organizations that are able to exploit the dynamic features of social media, while the majority of organizations are laggards that are unable to use the platforms effectively.

The research then moved on to speculations about social media communication strategies to understand how organizations use these tools to engage their stakeholders. This research heavily borrows from the dialogic theory by Kent & Taylor (2002). The dialogic theory outlines the need for organizations to have two-way negotiated communications with their stakeholders to get the maximum benefits from using communication tools (Waters, Canfield, Foster, & Hardy, 2011; Gao, 2016; Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018). Another critical theory used to study nonprofit social media communication strategies is Relationship Management Theory. This theory underlines the importance of developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with stakeholders for the

well-being of organizations (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Ledingham, 2003; Carboni & Maxwell, 2015).

Another stream of literature that examines nonprofits' communications with their stakeholders is the message-level analysis of social media posts, in which scholars investigated nonprofit organizations' communication methods for different organizational goals. Lovejoy and Saxton's information-community-action categorization strongly influenced message-level analysis studies in this field (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). In this study, the authors conducted an inductive analysis of nonprofit social media messages to find three themes. *Information* messages are one-way, short posts. *Communication* messages aim to form networks and bring people together, and *action* messages urge followers to "do something" for the organization, like buying a product or attending an event (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). The general finding was that most organizations do not prioritize dialogic communication with their followers and mainly send *information* messages. Shortly after Lovejoy & Saxton's (2012) piece, Guo & Saxton (2014) extended their categorization to advocacy nonprofits and offered another framework. The authors proposed that advocacy organizations' messages are organized into three themes – reaching out to people, keeping the flame alive, and stepping up to action. These themes represent the various steps advocacy organizations adopt to ensure stakeholder engagement with their missions.

Researchers have recently shifted their focus from studying adoption vs. non-adoption, message level analysis, and sectoral disparities to more holistic and theory-centered questions about social media capital acquisition and use (Saxton & Guo, 2014; 2020). Specifically, recent scholars are interested in understanding if social media use generates a unique capital that organizations can use beyond the online world to achieve meaningful organizational outcomes.

This research combines theories of social media capital, message-level analysis frameworks, business management literature relating to stakeholder engagement and theories of individual usefulness of social media to provide a comprehensive insight into social media use by arts nonprofit organizations.

1.2 Overview of the Three Essays

The first essay aims to assess whether organizations' use of social media generates a unique form of capital that can be used to achieve organizational outcomes. Specifically, this essay examines the relationship between art and culture nonprofit organizations' social media capital and overall individual donations. This analysis is informed by combining two theoretical frameworks – the social network theory of giving (Saxton & Wang,2014) and the social media capital framework (Saxton & Guo, 2020). The social network theory of giving posits that the determinants of online giving are markedly distinct from those of traditional giving. Therefore, this theory says that traditional indicators of giving like fundraising efforts, organizational size, and price of giving (Weisbrod & Dominquez, 1986) may not have the same effect on online giving. By studying the determinants of giving in Causes – a fundraising tool within Facebook - these authors (Saxton & Wang, 2014) found that factors like social network size and web reach strongly and positively influence the amount of donations received by nonprofit organizations. The social media capital framework (Saxton & Guo, 2020) fits in perfectly with this analysis because it helps us answer if there is social media capital formation and if it is positively associated with total individual donations.

The combination of these theories is especially appropriate for analyzing arts nonprofit organizations because it has long been established that arts nonprofits are unique – donors in this sector are affluent and mostly White (Jung, 2015); organizations heavily rely on individual

donations, donors are indifferent to administrative efficiency, and there is no association between organizational performance indicators and the amounts of donations received (Jacobs & Marudas, 2009). These traits of the art subsector mean that we should analyze it separately from the other subsectors. This essay uses two sources of data – the Cultural Data Project's (CDP) dataset on arts and culture organizations' characteristics and the Twitter pages of organizations to obtain their social media network and activity. By combining the two data sources, the study's quantitative analysis uses ordinary least squares to run multivariate analyses to see if there is a positive relationship between social media and individual donation variables. Specifically, the study hypothesizes that social media activity and network size on a specific social media platform – Twitter, positively affect the amount of individual donations received by the organizations. Aside from being the first study to use the framework (Saxton & Guo, 2020), this essay gives essential insights into social media platforms, websites, and organizational characteristics' roles in influencing art organizations' specific outcome – total individual donations. This research adds to the recently expanding inquiries around social media platforms' role in not just being tools that bolster existing communication strategies, but in bringing social capital to organizations, which can then be used to gain organizational outcomes.

The second essay examines arts and culture nonprofit organizations' social media communication strategies before and during the coronavirus pandemic to examine how these organizations communicate with their stakeholders during crises. The motivation for this research comes from the message-level analysis literature started by Lovejoy & Saxton (2012) and the interest in examining how the established themes (information – community, and action) change during crises. This is a key area to investigate - since the outbreak of the pandemic, many organizations have completely switched their activities and events online. This also implies that

many organizations may continue to operate online due to the convenience that the internet offers. Because organizations and their stakeholders are increasingly adopting social media, it is critical that we understand how they interact – this has implications for donations they can obtain, staff and volunteer retention, and the visibility of organizations' missions, among other organizational outcomes. For the stakeholders, higher online visibility means increased access to nonprofit organizations' operations, increased access to online events and activities, and most importantly, the ability to hold the organizations accountable for their actions in an unparalleled way.

Literature has established that there are some characteristics that make the art -subsector different from other subsectors of nonprofit organizations. These nonprofits are much more likely than other nonprofits to use the interactive components of social media tools (Waters et al., 2009), such as message boards, but far less likely to strategize their use of social media and use the technologies for tangible organizational outcomes - Saxton & Wang (2014) found that arts nonprofits are less likely to use Facebook's "Causes" feature to solicit donations. Arts noprofit organizations are found to be different in other aspects as well. Jacobs and Marudas (2009) found no association between indicators of organizational financial performance and credibility to the amount of donations that the subsector gets. Grizzle (2015) discovered that funders are indifferent to administrative efficiency when supporting nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities groups but respond positively to fundraising efforts. It has also been documented in the literature that arts patrons are homogenous when compared to other organizations - arts organizations are known for their traditional reliance on a limited number of wealthy, elderly, and predominantly White benefactors (Jung, 2015). This study delves into the messaging of arts nonprofits to examine if this subsector conforms to the main messaging themes found in the literature. For this

purpose, this essay conducts an inductive analysis of over 1,900 messages sent by 142 arts and culture nonprofits before and during the coronavirus pandemic to examine a. the categories of messages sent, and b. redesigning and restructuring of messages during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this message level analysis aims at finding new (if any) community building and action-oriented themes in social media messaging by arts nonprofits.

This analysis draws upon literature on nonprofit use of social media, the effect of organizational characteristics on the level of stakeholder engagement on social media, theories of public relations, dialogic theory (Kent & Taylor, 2002), and Relationship Management Theory. The dialogic theory outlines the need for organizations to have two-way negotiated communications with their stakeholders to get the maximum benefits from using communication tools (Waters, Canfield, Foster, & Hardy, 2011; Gao, 2016; Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018). Relationship Management Theory underlines the importance of developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with stakeholders for the well-being of organizations (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Ledingham, 2003; Carboni & Maxwell, 2015). A small part of this study also draws on business management literature. There is a body of literature in business management that ties an organization's online popularity to performance outcomes. Firms' online popularity on social media (such as likes and shares) has resulted in a documented increase in outcomes such as total sales and other financial performance metrics (Lee, Lee, & Oh, 2015; Yu, Duan, & Cao, 2013). Positive Facebook metrics such as "likes" and "loves" contribute to "social selling" and influence consumer behavior by informing brand trust and buying intention (Mochon, Johnson, Schwartz, & Ariely, 2017; Phua & Ahn, 2016). This study analyzes the online popularity of nonprofit arts and culture groups in the form of total likes and loves received by their posts before and during COVID.

Although the analysis of messages is inductive, the study finds themes closely resonating Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) information – community – action categorizations for the pre-covid messages. However, we see newer themes of messages during COVID that are aimed at building communities, inviting people to take action for the organizations, transitioning into doing online events and operations, and providing comfort to stakeholders. This research digresses from earlier message level analysis which consistently confirmed that nonprofits are not strategic about social media use.

By finding contrasting results for the analysis prior to and during COVID, this research opens opportunities for future scholars to examine social media use for specific sectors, and how crises affect them. Nonprofit organizations are critical for providing services that the public and private sectors are unable to offer. During a crisis, their role in service delivery becomes even more critical. Many studies suggest that nonprofits play an important role in disaster response and recovery (Sisco, 2010; Haupt & Azevedo, 2021). Even during the coronavirus pandemic, small and large nonprofit organizations consistently served their constituents by providing services, support, and comfort. This study shows that even the nonprofit sector that is not directly affected by the pandemic is undergoing and leading a lot of changes in terms of communication strategies during this time. According to this study, even the nonprofit sector that is not directly touched by the pandemic, is undergoing and leading many changes in communication tactics during this period. This essay presents a compelling case for nonprofit and communication researchers to pay particular attention to how nonprofits are shifting online and how this transition affects their missions, organizational outcomes, and stakeholder reactions.

The final essay goes to the source – by interviewing nonprofit organizations' communication managers, this essay provides valuable insights into the organizational and

individual level factors that affect social media use by arts nonprofit organizations, the purposes for which organizations use social media platforms, and the overall organizational outcomes. This qualitative inquiry also asks the communication managers about the "bigger picture" questions relating to social media, like the perceived organizational outcomes from use and the overall gains and losses from using the platforms.

This essay draws from multiple streams of literature – sectoral differences in social media use and outcomes, arts' organizations use of social media, and the individual and organizational level factors that have affected social media use. Based on a review of the literature, this essay revealed that, in general, nonprofit organizations use social media for unidirectional goals such as advertising events or promoting their missions, while overlooking more action and community related goals such as soliciting feedback and donations (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Park, Rodgers, & Stemmie, 2013; Young, 2017). The review also revealed that arts nonprofit organizations are active on social media but have not been able to strategically use it for organizational benefits (Waters et al., 2009). There is also a body of literature which reveals that art and culture nonprofit organizations' stakeholders are also different – they are mostly indifferent to administrative efficiency when donating (Jacobs & Marudas, 2009; Grizzle, 2015). Drawing from the literature that examines organizational and individual level factors that affect social media use, I found that a range of factors like the existence of a public relations department, gender of the communication manager, and organizational leadership support – all affect social media use. By combining elements from different streams of literature, this essay uses a novel framework to examine the relationships between individual and organizational factors and the adoption of social media by communication managers, the purposes behind the use, and the overall organizational outcomes gained through use. To provide a comparative analysis of social

media use between arts and other subsectors, I also interviewed two human service organizations along with the fifteen arts organizations mainly to understand how different missions and target demographics reflect in organizational adoption and use of, and outcomes from, social media use.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the use of social media platforms by arts and culture nonprofit organizations through direct interviews with communication managers. This study reveals several significant conclusions. First, communication managers self-report a wide range of practical benefits from social media engagement. These benefits range from simple program exposure to more substantial benefits such as attracting national and international talent, boosting mission marketing, and drawing a broad audience. Second, communication managers find social media platforms to be simple and enjoyable to use, resulting in widespread adoption across organizations. Finally, and relatedly, arts nonprofit organizations in the sample have plenty of resources to access and leverage social media.

I also find contrasting results for the two subsectors (arts and human services). While the more creative arts subsector organizations reported many benefits from shifting operations and activities online, the human services organizations were struggling. Because of the nature of their mission, the human services organizations in the sample reported having to provide more services during the pandemic and facing more drawbacks from social media use. This essay underlines the need for conducting more small scale, qualitative, and comparative studies relating to social media use and takes the dissertation full circle by enhancing our understanding of the practical ways by which nonprofit managers harness social media capital, as proposed by Saxton and Guo (2020). The findings of this essay provide a compelling case for practitioners to

devote more human resources and time to developing and using strategic social media plan. Additionally, the evident existence of high level of social media capital in this sector is great news for arts and culture practitioners, paving a way for them to use this capital for concrete organizational outcomes.

Chapter II. The Effect of Social Media Capital on Individual Donations: A Cross-Sectional

Analysis

2.1 Introduction

Most American people (around 70%) ("Social Media Fact Sheet," 2021) and nonprofit

organizations (88%) use social media platforms (*NGOs in the United States - 2021 Global NGO*

Technology Survey, 2021). The increasing use of social media has provided nonprofit

organizations unprecedented opportunities to engage with their audiences, raise donations, and

offer their services online. Although most nonprofits believe that social media helps them with

storytelling, information dissemination, brand recognition, and fundraising (Shattuck, 2017), few

have developed a strategic plan for using social media to achieve organizational goals, and even

fewer have recognized the platforms' potential to help them raise funds and track individual

contributions.

Academics have explored the role of social media in engaging stakeholders, building

networks, and outreach initiatives (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012;

Guo & Saxton, 2014). A few scholars have examined the link between social media use and

fundraising success (Saxton & Wang, 2014; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020). A few researchers

(Harris, Neely, & Saxton, 2019; Saxton & Guo, 2020) have recently contributed to this topic by

taking a more holistic approach to examining social media's impact on fundraising success.

These authors contend that using social media generates a distinct sort of capital called social

media capital that can be used to achieve organizational goals. I contribute to this conversation

by conducting an empirical study of how nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities organizations in

the United States acquire and utilize social media capital for organizational returns, specifically

individual donations. In particular, I evaluate the social media social capital framework proposed

by Saxton and Guo (2020) to determine if there is a positive association between social media characteristics, network, activity, and individual donations received by arts nonprofit organizations. This study also examines the link between website strength and reach and individual contributions to better comprehend whether social media capital has a unique role in affecting donations.

It is crucial to distinguish between the two types of platforms (websites and social media tools). Unlike websites, social media can be low-cost or even free and, in theory, should aid smaller and weaker organizations by leveling their playing field so that they are better equipped to exploit the online capital for organizational returns. Websites contain web pages that are designed and organized to provide specific information, services, or resources. They are created by individuals, businesses, organizations, or institutions to share information, promote products or services, provide entertainment, or serve other purposes. Social media, on the other hand, are platforms that enable people to create, share, and interact with content in a more social and interactive way. Social media platforms allow users to create profiles, connect with others, and share various forms of content such as text posts, photos, videos, and links. Users can also engage with each other's content by liking, commenting, and sharing it. Social media platforms often have features like news feeds or timelines that display content from people or accounts that users choose to follow. While websites are more static and provide specific information, social media platforms are designed for communication, sharing, and interaction among users. This study investigates how social media influences organizational outcomes by combining the social media social capital framework with the established social network theory of giving. It explores the connections between social media activity, network, non-social media factors, and organizational factors in relation to the total donations made by the organization. By delving into

these relationships, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the topic at a profound level (Weisbrod & Dominguez, 1986). The hypotheses are tested using cross-sectional data from 2018 on nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities organizations in the United States. The Cultural Data Project, an online repository of arts nonprofits that voluntarily take the survey or apply for grants from a CDP-affiliated donor, provided this data.

The remaining sections of this essay are organized as follows: The part that follows is a brief literature review of the use of social media by nonprofit organizations, followed by a discussion of the role of social media in organizational outcomes. The social network theory of giving and the social media capital framework are the two theoretical perspectives that influence this discussion's empirical model. After presenting the theoretical model and hypotheses, I will describe the data and methods before concluding with the limitations and findings of the study.

2.2 Review of Prior Research

In the past two decades, research on the use of social media by nonprofit organizations has gained popularity. Numerous studies have examined the factors influencing nonprofit organizations' use of social media (Nah & Saxton, 2013; Seo & Vu, 2020) and the impact of social media platforms on advocacy (Guo & Saxton, 2014), marketing, community awareness, and stakeholder involvement (Campbell, Lambright, & Wells, 2014). Nevertheless, the majority of research in this area suggests that nonprofit organizations tend to primarily use social media platforms for disseminating one-way messages. They often overlook the opportunity to actively seek input from their followers and lack a comprehensive strategy for adopting and leveraging social media effectively. This is concerning considering the vast array of dynamic capabilities that social media offers to engage stakeholders and drive positive outcomes. Scholars have recently begun investigating the link between social media use and measurable organizational

outcomes. Saxton and Guo's (2020) social media capital framework is the most recent endeavor in this direction. This framework will be discussed in more detail in the theory section.

2.2.1 Social Media and Fundraising

There are several examples of social media platforms supporting nonprofits with fundraising. Through their famous social campaign #IceBucketChallenge, the ALS Association received over 739,000 new donations and raised over $41.8 million between July and August of 2014 (Hitchings-Hale & Calderwood, 2017). Similarly, the World Wildlife Fund exceeded its monthly fundraising goal in just three days by utilizing Snapchat and Twitter (Turner, 2017). Due to the possibility of rapidly reaching a big audience, raising a substantial amount of money, and incurring minimal costs on the platforms, many charity organizations have shifted to online appeals for donations. This tendency is further supported by the fact that more individuals are now using social media; they engage with organizations' pages, donate money online, purchase goods and services, and express feedback through social media. Therefore, now is the moment for nonprofit organizations to increase their efforts to attract people to their cause and solicit their support, particularly donations.

Few scholars have examined the factors determining the success of social media fundraising. Using Facebook's "Causes" fundraising feature, Saxton and Wang (2014) found that the motivations for social media donations differ significantly from traditional offline donations. The authors discovered that online donors were more influenced by perceived website capabilities, emotional inclinations to give, and other social effects than by more objective criteria of organizational credibilities, such as financial capacity and efficiency. Bhati and McDonnell (2020) discovered that the size, activity, and engagement of Facebook networks, as well as the budget size, age, and program service area of nonprofit organizations, all influenced

online fundraising success. Additionally, organizational transparency (Di Lauro, Tursunbayeva, & Antonelli, 2019) in social media and high levels of engagement with potential contributors and other nonprofit organizations contribute to the effectiveness of online fundraising campaigns (Smitko, 2012; Guidry, Waters, & Saxton, 2014). These results indicate that charitable organizations that invest time, effort, and resources in social media receive tangible organizational benefits. Despite clear evidence that strategic social media use results in positive outcomes for organizations, many nonprofits lack a plan or strategy for effective social media use (Reddick & Ponomariov, 2013; Zbuchea, Roman, & Nic, 2013; Svensson, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2015).

2.3 Theory and Hypotheses

2.3.1 Social Media Capital

The majority of studies examining the relationship between social media and online donations have viewed social media as a tool that increases donations. Recent research on social media has adopted a more comprehensive approach to determining the role of social media in overall organizational returns. This study proposes social media use and activity facilitate the development of a unique form of capital known as social media capital. Social media social capital refers to the network of relationships, connections, and resources that individuals and organizations can accumulate and leverage through their interactions and engagement on social media platforms. It encompasses the social value and benefits derived from these online relationships and connections. Social media social capital is built through various activities such as sharing information, collaborating on projects, participating in online communities, receiving and providing support, and establishing trust and credibility within the online social networks. Nonprofit organizations can use this capital to generate tangible organizational returns. This

relationship between acquiring social media capital through online efforts and employing it to achieve results is explicitly causal - organizations must *first* gain social media capital, then use it for gains (Saxton & Guo, 2014, 2020). This is a key aspect to remember, as earlier research on online social resources has posited social resources as input (IIRC, 2013), output (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), means (Shen, Monge, & Williams, 2014), and mediator (Beaudoin & Tao, 2007). Guo and Saxton (2020)' study also expands upon previous research which has found that organizational participation in social media enhances entrepreneurial engagement (Fischer & Reuber, 2011), organizational legitimacy (Castelló, Etter, & Nielsen, 2016), knowledge exchange, and better marketing of organizations' services (Eschenbrenner, Nah, & Telaprolu, 2015).

Academics have established for a long time that online and offline social capital are significantly distinct, and we must develop distinct frameworks to examine each (Williams, 2006; Faraj, Jarvenpaa, & Majchrzak, 2011; Steinfeld, Ellison, Lampe, & Vitak, 2013). Saxton and Guo's social media social capital paradigm is an important step in this direction. Fig. 1.1 provides a detailed diagram of the framework. The framework says that the formation of social media capital is determined by the "size of the network of connections the organization has fostered on social media – including the network's size, the strength of the ties made, the centrality of the organization's network position, and the norms and values embedded in the network community." (Saxton & Guo, 2020). Based on this assertion, this study uses social media presence (on Twitter), social media network size (friends and followers count on Twitter), and social media activity (the number of posts posted by an organization's Twitter account) as proxies for social media capital to see if there is a link between these variables and individual donations received by the organizations. This study focuses on Twitter because it is one of the

two most popular social media platforms used by arts, cultural, and nonprofit organizations (the other being Facebook) (Thomson, K., Purcell, K. & Rainie, 2013) and is the best channel for importing historical data, as the empirical analysis is for 2018.

The most measurable return from social media for organizations would be the generation of verifiable financial outcomes. As mentioned earlier in the essay, we have seen evidence of increased contributions from social media activity (Bhati & McDonnell, 2020; Saxton & Wang, 2014; Turner, 2017). This study contributes to the scholarship on social media giving by evaluating the relationship between social media capital and total individual donations.

An important metric of social media capital is organizational social media activity (Saxton & Guo, 2020). This study uses the posts made by organizations on their Twitter pages - tweets - as one of the proxies for social media capital. Tweets are short messages posted on the social media platform Twitter. Twitter allows users to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions in a concise format, with a maximum limit of 280 characters per tweet.

These posts are typically public and can be seen by anyone who follows the user's account, unless the user has set their account to private, in which case only approved followers can see their tweets. Due to the character limit, tweets are often brief and to the point, which encourages users to express themselves concisely. However, users can also include media elements such as photos, videos, and GIFs in their tweets to enhance their messages. Tweets can be retweeted, which means other users, including organizations, can share them with their own followers, amplifying the reach of the original tweet. Users can also like and reply to tweets, allowing for conversations and interactions on the platform. Twitter has become a popular platform for public figures, organizations, and individuals alike to share information and engage with a wide audience.

The number of followers a user has represents the total count of people who have chosen to subscribe to their tweets. Having more followers often means that more people are interested in what that person/organization has to say and want to see their updates. Followers can interact with tweets by liking, retweeting, or replying to them, which allows for engagement and conversations on the platform. It's a way for people to connect, share information, and engage with others who have similar interests. In simple terms, Twitter followers are like fans or subscribers who want to keep up with someone's tweets and see what they must share. Twitter friends are followers that the original user follows back.

More extensive networks generate higher donations and social media capital is a distinct predictor of organizational outcomes. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 1: The amount of donations received will be positively related to social media network size

> *Hypothesis 1a: The amount of donations received will be positively related to the number of followers on Twitter*
>
> *Hypothesis 1b: The amount of donations received will be positively related to the number of friends on Twitter*

It is also reasonable to anticipate that organizations that make an effort to engage with stakeholders online will amass greater social media capital than those who do not. I hypothesize the following based on this logic:

Hypothesis 2: The amount of donations received will be positively related to social media activity (number of tweets)

2.3.2 Role of Social Media in the Overall Solicitation Strategy

As introduced earlier in the paper, several scholars have established a positive relationship between social media participation of organizations and higher donations (Saxton & Wang, 2014; Turner, 2017; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020). While these studies provide important insights into the impact of social media on fundraising, they have not examined whether and how social media platforms affect financial returns in the absence of traditional digital media such as emails and websites. This is a relevant research subject since nonprofit organizations use websites, social media platforms, and text messaging for marketing and fundraising. Although nonprofit scholars have generally referred to these platforms as new media, there are significant differences in their maintenance and use. For instance, websites provide organizations with more traffic statistics, insights, brand recognition, and flexibility (PrimePixels, 2019) than social media.

While small-scale fundraisers, such as those offered on Facebook's "Causes" platform, are regularly hosted on social media, others are typically hosted on websites or linked to social media. Lastly, websites are not inexpensive. While the fundamental functions of social media are affordable, building and maintaining a website is expensive in terms of money and technical expertise. Comparatively, smaller firms may lack the financial and technological resources to host and maintain websites. Smaller and younger charitable organizations should ideally be able to compensate for their lack of websites using social media channels. In contrast, social media should be used with websites because these platforms interact to influence organizational outcomes. To investigate these connections, this study hypothesizes that the amount of donations received will be positively related to website popularity, specifically web traffic and the number of referring domains. Web traffic refers to the flow of visitors or users who access and interact

with a website. It is an important metric for website owners as it helps gauge the reach, popularity, and effectiveness of a website. By analyzing web traffic, they can make informed decisions to improve user experience, optimize content, and drive more targeted visitors to their websites.

Similarly, the number of referring domains refers to the count of unique websites or domains that have links pointing to a particular website. When another website includes a hyperlink to your website on their own page, it is considered a backlink. Each unique domain that provides such a backlink is known as a referring domain. Referring domains are an important metric as they play a role in determining the credibility, authority, and popularity of a website. Search engines, like Google, consider backlinks from diverse and reputable sources as signals of trust and quality. A larger number of referring domains generally indicates that more websites find the content on your website valuable enough to link to it.

Hypothesis 4: The amount of donations received will be positively related to website popularity

    Hypothesis 4a: The amount of donations received will be positively related to the traffic that websites get

    Hypothesis 4b: The amount of donations received will be positively related to the number of referring domains

We can also propose a hypothesis that suggests older organizations are likely to receive more donations. This is because they have had a longer existence, which has provided them with the opportunity, resources, and time to invest in crucial aspects such as branding, building relationships with stakeholders, and actively seeking donations.

Hypothesis 5: The amount of donations received will be positively related to website age

2.3.3 The Social Network Model of Giving

The "economic model of giving" is a widely recognized and extensively studied theory that provides insights into the factors influencing charitable donations. According to Weisbrod and Dominguez (1986), this model posits that donations to charitable causes are influenced by price, quality, and fundraising efforts. In the economic model of giving, donations are regarded as indicators of donors' aggregate demand for the products and services provided by nonprofit organizations. These organizations, in turn, are viewed as private producers of public goods, as highlighted by Saxton and Wang (2014). This theory emphasizes the role played by nonprofits in meeting societal needs and addressing public concerns.

In this framework, the "price" refers to the monetary amount a donor "pays" to the organization in exchange for a dollar's worth of its production. According to the economic model, an increase in the perceived price of a nonprofit's offerings is anticipated to result in a decrease in the level of donations received. This implies that donors are sensitive to the costs associated with their contributions and may adjust their giving behavior accordingly.

Furthermore, the quality of a nonprofit organization is considered an important determinant of donation. The age of an organization is often used as a proxy for it's quality. Research suggests that older organizations are more likely to be perceived as reputable, established, and effective, thereby positively influencing the propensity to donate. Finally, fundraising efforts are a key strategy employed by nonprofit organizations to promote awareness of their activities and actively solicit donations from individuals. Consistent with the economic model of giving, fundraising campaigns and initiatives are expected to increase the demand for nonprofit products and services, thereby encouraging charitable contributions.

In summary, the economic model of giving provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the determinants of philanthropic donations. By examining the interplay between price, quality, and fundraising, this model sheds light on the factors that shape donor behavior and influence the overall level of support for nonprofit organizations.

Is this economic approach in line with current giving patterns? The results are mixed. Several recent studies have shown that donors consider various non-economic factors when deciding which organizations to support. Personal preferences and affection for the cause precede the reasonable premise that contributors should give to the most deserving or efficient organizations (Breeze, 2013). Similarly, Jacobs and Marudas (2009) found no association between the price of giving, administrative efficiency, organizational age, and total donations for nonprofit arts and culture organizations. Grizzle (2015) discovered that funders are indifferent to administrative efficiency when supporting nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities groups but respond positively to fundraising efforts. Overall, most studies have discovered that donors do not respond rationally to organizational performance indicators when giving; rather, their giving habits are impulsive.

Due to inconclusive results from testing the economic model of giving and the virtual and interactive nature of social media, Saxton & Wang (2014) established a new model of giving based on social networks. Saxton and Wang (2014) are the first researchers to speculate on the factors of social media giving by focusing specifically on the "Causes" platform on Facebook. They extend the standard model of giving by incorporating characteristics that capture the online nature of charitable donations. They focus primarily on the relationship between individual donations and social networks of organizations on Facebook, as well as organizational capacity and the nonprofit industry. The authors (Saxton & Wang, 2014) identified a significant positive

association between the size of online social networks and online donations received by nonprofit organizations.

This study combines the social media capital model (Saxton & Guo, 2020) with the social network theory of giving to examine the relationship between social media networks and activity, web characteristics, and individual donations. Specifically, I investigate the relationship between social networks and total individual contributions. The control variables for the social network model include organizational capability (website age and reach) and industry specialists.

2.4 Data and Method

2.4.1 Context

This essay's empirical inquiry is limited to arts and culture nonprofit organizations in the United States. Several factors influenced the choice to investigate arts organizations: First, nonprofit arts organizations generate massive revenue annually. The nonprofit arts and culture industry in the United States "produced $166,3 billion in economic activity, including $63.8 billion in expenditures by the organizations themselves and $102.5 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences" (Lynch, 2015). Given that the arts and culture subsector is vast in terms of revenues earned and donations received, the study of the motivators of charitable giving in this subsector will assist academics and practitioners in developing best practices for charitable contributions in other subsectors. Additionally, arts and culture organizations have a strong web presence. According to a 2013 survey of arts nonprofit organizations in the United States, technology substantially impacts marketing, education, and performance offers (Thomson et al., 2013), among other organizational goals for arts nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit arts organizations are also rapidly adopting social media to promote their exhibits, grow their audiences, sell tickets, and raise funding. This trend also enables users to share content and

interact with the organizations' social media pages, enhancing the potential for stakeholder involvement and co-creation of social media capital. Additionally, there is a disconnect between arts nonprofit organizations' active use of social media and their traditional reliance on a limited number of wealthy, elderly, and predominantly White benefactors (Jung, 2015). Using advanced social media technology in the arts subsector affords these groups a one-of-a-kind opportunity to expand their patron base and attract young, tech-savvy donors.

2.4.2 Data

This essay's sample includes 410 nonprofit arts organizations from the United States that participated in Cultural Data Project's 2018 survey. In a prior version of this essay, I examined donation data for the year 2018 and, after excluding missing variables, obtained a dataset comprising 524 organizations. To gain a more precise understanding of the connection between the independent and dependent variables, I expanded my analysis to include donation data for the year 2020. This additional data allowed me to analyze a total of 410 organizations, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness of my research. CDP is an online database of survey data on arts, culture, and humanities nonprofit organizations in the United States. The CDP data is not a random sample. It is a sample of arts organizations that voluntarily respond to the survey or apply for grants from a funder linked with CDP. The dataset includes information on organizations' type, size, location, and statistics on capital campaigns, fundraising expenses, and event attendance. Financial information is derived from publicly accessible financial statements, such as the IRS 990 and organization-specific financial documentation.

2.4.3 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the total amount of individual contributions received by an organization in 2020. This data was sourced from ProPublica, an independent, nonprofit newsroom renowned for its investigative journalism. ProPublica maintains an expansive repository of American nonprofit organizations comprising more than 3 million tax returns, including important financial indicators, executive compensation, contributions received, and revenue and expenses.

2.4.4 Independent Variables

This study operationalizes social media capital using three variables: the number of Twitter friends, followers, and tweets an organization serve as a proxy for social media capital. "Followers" are people who follow organizations on their Twitter accounts. Friends are mutual connections - followers that the organization also follows back. Tweets are simply online messages posted by organizations. Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API) endpoints were used to gather the Twitter variables. Python code was written to access the Twitter API and download all Twitter activity for the organizations. The Twitter variables were collected in May 2020, and the individual donations variable was collected in April 2023 and added to the CDP dataset containing observations from 2018.

As a robustness check, the study will have two iterations of each model - one utilizing social media capital data from 2020, the latter assuming linear growth in social media capital for computing social media observations in 2018. The social media capital model is adopted from the conceptualization proposed by Saxton & Guo (2020) and is depicted in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Conceptualization of Social Media Capital Conversion to Organizational Outcomes
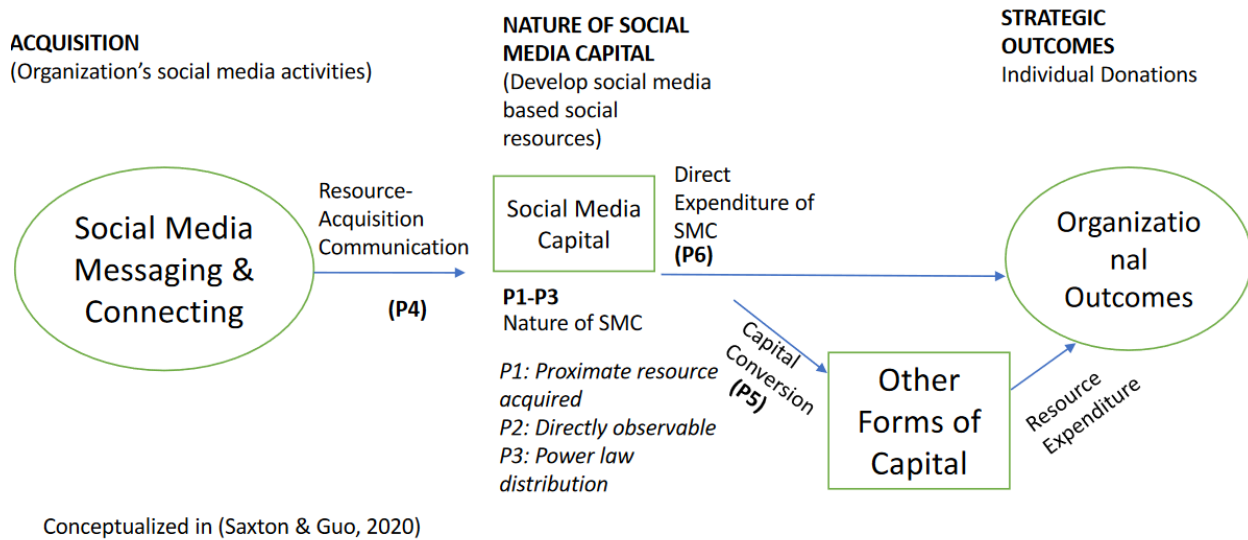
The Economic Model of Giving fails to effectively describe the factors that impact giving in the age of social media (Saxton & Wang, 2014). The authors (Saxton & Wang, 2014) discovered that social media and web variables significantly impact charitable donations compared to traditional factors such as fundraising efficiency and price of giving. The same variables used to test for social media capital (Twitter network size and activity) can also be used to extend Saxton and Wang's model (2014) and are depicted in Model 2 of this study. In the original use of the social network theory of giving, the authors (Saxton & Wang, 2014) used organizational donations received through the "Causes" platform as the dependent variable. This study uses overall contributions instead. Aside from the social media variables, the second model in this study accounts for the price of giving (total expenses/program expenses), fundraising efficiency (total fundraising expenses/total expenses), organization size (measured in terms of total assets), organization age, employee count, and a dummy variable that indicates whether the organization engaged in any capital campaigning efforts in 2018. Fundraising efficiency is the ratio of total expenses the organizations devoted to fundraising efforts to total organizational

expenses in 2018. I added web traffic, website age, and the number of referring domains for website reach on model 3 to test the relationship between web variables and individual donations. The web variables are gathered for the months in which the sample organizations completed the CDP survey. For example, if organization A completed the survey in November 2018, the website traffic and referring domains data were collected for November 2018 to guarantee that these variables corresponded to the precise month when the organization self-reported other organizational characteristics. Web traffic refers to the number of visitors to the organization's website during the month it completed the survey. Website age is simply the age of the domain in which the website is hosted, and referring domains are the total number of external websites that link to the organizations' websites. For example, if an article titled "10 organizations to support in Atlanta" mentions one of the organizations in the sample and includes a link to their website, this would count as one referring domain for the organization. Again, this information is collected for various points in 2018, depending on when an organization completed the survey. The variables used in this analysis pertain to the year 2018 and demonstrate a connection to the contribution data for 2020. This association is based on the assumption that there is a time lag between the accumulation of social media capital and its manifestation as donations. It is posited that it may take a few years for the acquired social media capital to translate into tangible contributions. The data-cleaning process is described in Table 1. Table 2 lists all variables used in the models.

Table 1. Data Cleaning Process

Beginning Sample Size	1,000
Less Canadian nonprofits	-4
Less missing values	-586
Final sample of nonprofits	410

Table 2. List of Variables Used

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Control variables
Total contributions in dollars	1. Twitter friends 2. Twitter followers 3. Number of tweets *Source: Organizations' Twitter pages*	1. Fundraising Efficiency 2. Number of Staff 3. Capital Campaigns 4. Organization Size 5. Website Age 6. Price of Giving 7. Age of the organization *Source: DataArts dataset* 8. Web traffic 9. Number of backlinks *Source: Semrush*

2.4.5 Analytical Method

Because the dependent variable-total contribution, is a continuous variable, I use ordinary least squares regression for the multivariate analyses. The analysis includes three regressions. I first run the social media capital model, which examines the relationship between the social media independent variables and the total individual contributions. In the second model, I added the *price of giving,* fundraising efficiency, organizations' age, the interaction between organizations' age and fundraising efficiency, organizations' size (total assets), number of employees, and capital campaigning efforts. The final model adds website reach variables: referring domains, web traffic, and website age. These models collectively investigate the effects of social media capital, website reach, and other organizational variables on individual donations.

2.5 Results

2.5.1 Descriptive Findings: Arts Nonprofits in the United States

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables in this study. Organizations had over 3,900 tweets, over 1,000 friends, and over 8,000 followers on average as of 2018. On average, organizations had over 8,500 web traffic and over 900 referring domains in 2018.

The primary research question for this study is to understand the correlation between social media capital, social network, and overall donations received by organizations. Table 4 shows that the three models explain 24 to 75 percent of the variance in the total contributions received. The findings of the three models will be presented in detail in the following sections.

2.5.2 Social Media Capital Model (Model 1)

Two social media variables– number of tweets ($\beta = 0.000093$, $p < .01$) and followers ($\beta = 0.0000082$, $p < .01$) are positively and significantly correlated to contributions. This finding

supports the social media capital model proposed by Guo & Saxton (2020) and to hypotheses 1a,

1b, and 2 in this study.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (N=410)

Variable	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Total individual donations (in US $1000)	3010.86	13100	0	194,000
Social media data				
Tweets	3939.76	6749.3	0	71600
Friends	1050.81	2839.24	0	52255
Followers	8447.33	37458.02	11	499661
Website data				
Web traffic	8503.77	28880.01	0	272634
Referring domains	939.26	3854.23	5	52955
Website age	17.02	6.68	0	34
Other organizational variables				
Price of giving	1.61	2.4	1.01	44.58
Total assets (sum in US $1000)	24200	108000	2.41	1170000
Fundraising efficiency	32.8	92.15	1.24	1119.38
Organizations' age	39.7	33.20	1	206
Total number of employees	196	406	0	3459

2.5.3 Social Network Theory of Giving (Model 2)

The total number of tweets and followers still significantly affect total contributions in

Model 2, whereas there is no notable correlation between the number of friends and the

dependent variable. As expected, the price of giving has a negative and statistically insignificant

effect on contributions. This finding supports prior research findings that donors' personal

preferences and attachment to causes precede over budgetary efficiency perceptions (Breeze,

2013). The age of an organization has a negative and statistically significant impact on the

dependent variable, indicating the possibility that newer organizations are dependent on

innovative technological resources like social media tools to compete with the existing

organizations' competitive advantage in terms of assets and age. Fundraising efficiency did not

correlate with total contributions, corroborating prior results that donors giving to the arts

subsector do not necessarily respond to fundraising efforts while giving to the organizations

(Jacobs & Marudas, 2009). They are mostly indifferent to administrative efficiency (Grizzle,

2015). The absence of a substantial link between capital campaigning efforts and donations in

Model 2 supports this result.

Table 4. Regression Models

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Social media capital theory			
Tweets	0.000093***	0.000022**	0.000023**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Friends	0.00002	0.00001	0.000012
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Followers	0.0000082***	0.0000026*	0.0000015
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Social network theory of giving			
Price of giving (log)		-0.06	-0.06
		(0.13)	(0.13)
Fundraising efficiency (log)		0.04	0.04
		(0.05)	(0.05)
Organizations' age		-0.003*	-0.003
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Age*Fundraising efficiency		-0.000012	-0.000012
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Organization size (Total assets (log))		0.51***	0.51***
		(0.03)	(0.03)
Total number of employees		0.00064***	0.00065***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Capital campaigning		-0.16	-0.17
		(0.14)	(0.14)
Web traffic			-0.00
			(0.00)
Referring domains			0.000027*
			(0.00)
Website age			-0.0018
			(0.01)
Intercept	12.63***	6.03***	6.06***
	(0.09)	(0.34)	(0.35)

Table 4. Regression Models (continued)

Total R^2 (%)	0.24	0.74	0.74
Adjusted R^2 (%)	0.24	0.74	0.74

Dependent Variable is the total amount of contributions that organizations gained in 2020. The table shows regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

*$p <.10.$ **$p < .05.$ ***$p < .01.$ N =410*

Organization size ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < .01$) and the number of employees ($\beta = 0.00064$, $p < .01$) have a positive and significant correlation with individual donations. This finding differs from what Saxton and Wang (2014) discovered in their social networking model. This research implies that in addition to social media characteristics, organizational variables such as size and employee count help increase the organizations' donations. While this indicates that, despite living in a digital age, non-digital organizational characteristics continue to influence contributions.

Nonetheless, in all three models, the number of tweets significantly boosts individual donations. Perhaps this suggests that investments in social media are leveling the playing field for firms - even when controlling for organizational characteristics, social media factors are significant and positive.

2.5.3 Web Reach (Model 3)

Model 3 adds web reach variables to the social networking model. This addition has almost no effect on the relationship between social media capital variables and contributions - the number of tweets and followers still positively correlate with individual donations. Similar to Model 2, the organization's size and the total number of employees have a significant positive relationship with donations, whereas web reach appears to have little influence. There is no

support for hypotheses 4a, 4b, and 5. This result means that while web reach variables may be useful in increasing online donations (as reported by Guo and Saxton (2014)), they do not positively affect overall individual contributions to the arts nonprofit organizations in this sample. This finding lends significant support to the notion that social media assists organizations in developing a new social media social capital that assists them in achieving organizational outcomes - contributions in this case. This conclusion is even more noteworthy because the positive association exists when organizational and web reach variables are controlled in the models. Nonprofit organizations should devote more time and effort to establishing and designing social media strategies.

2.5.4 Robustness Check

The social media variables for this study were collected in May 2020, whereas the CDP dataset includes observations from various time points in 2018. To ensure the validity of the models, I ran two iterations of each model in the study: one utilizing social media capital data from 2020 and the other assuming linear growth in social media capital for computing social media observations in 2018. The appendix (Table A) contains the models comprising the social media variables calculated assuming a linear growth in social media capital. There are no changes in the signs and statistical significance of any social media variables in both iterations.

2.6 Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to look at the relationship between various social media capital variables and total contributions collected by arts and cultural nonprofit organizations in 2020. The study had two main goals: to examine whether the social network theory of giving applies when the dependent variable is total contributions (as opposed to online donations received by a small sample of organizations in Guo & Saxton (2014)) and to test the social media

capital framework. The aim of evaluating the social media capital framework was to determine whether a distinct type of capital exists that can only be obtained through social media use, network, and activity. Even after controlling for web reach and other organizational variables, the findings reveal that social media factors significantly and positively impact total donations to arts nonprofit organizations. Two significant conclusions among the findings merit discussion - I will elaborate on them below.

First, social networks and activity positively and strongly affect the total individual contributions of arts nonprofit organizations. In all three models, the number of tweets and the number of followers of the organizations have a positive association with total contributions. This finding supports both frameworks being tested in this study - the social network theory of giving and the social media capital theory. The result also corroborates findings from prior research (Saxton & Wang, 2014; Turner, 2017; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020) that demonstrated a positive correlation between social media factors and online donations. In addition, the findings bring a new perspective to the research of social media networks and activities and individual donations - online activity positively affects the overall organizational outcomes. The field of social media research has come a long way from asking whether organizations use social media. The findings of this study provide evidence that social media is an essential component of organizational strategy, and organizations should take the platforms more seriously and utilize them more strategically.

Second, indicators of organizational effectiveness strongly affect the amount of money that organizations get, despite the difference in efforts put into fundraising activities and capital campaigning efforts. Nonprofit organizations' size (measured in total assets) and the total number of employees strongly and positively affect individual donations. The correlation

between size and donations indicates that donors may be giving money to "visible" organizations - those that may already have a strong presence in their communities and, of course, those that already have plenty of assets, to begin with. Although this result is not unexpected, it reinforces the case for nonprofit organizations' strategic social media adoption and utilization. Although social media variables are strong and positive in all models, the fact that organizations' size influences individual donations indicates that smaller and weaker organizations must leverage social media to compensate for the lack of social capital that comes with having a bigger size. The same holds for the relationship between the overall number of employees and total donations - perhaps the inexpensive and interactive nature of social media may be leveraged by the smaller and weaker organizations to compensate for their lack of employees that could be devoted to managing social media.

Two *non-findings* are also worthy of discussion. First, there was no correlation between indicators of fundraising efficiency and capital campaigning efforts with the total donations. Patrons should be more likely to donate to a charity during or after a fundraising event, but this was not the case for the organizations in the sample. This finding has also been noted in the literature as being unique to the arts and culture subsector - previous studies (Jacobs & Marudas, 2009; Grizzle, 2015) have found that patrons of the arts are indifferent toward organizations' fundraising investments when donating. The implication for nonprofit organizations, particularly arts charities, is that as charitable giving becomes digital, reliance on traditional fundraising approaches may no longer be adequate to attract donations from diverse donors. The same may be said of capital campaigning. Capital campaigning effort is a dummy variable that indicates whether an art charity engaged in capital campaigning during the survey year. This variable did

not affect total individual contributions. These non-findings further emphasize the case for more and better social media use.

The second non-finding is the lack of a strong relationship between web characteristics and total individual contributions. This finding is a departure from the existing literature (Saxton & Wang (2014), which found that website reach variables positively affect online donations. This finding could be explained by the fact that in the years following Saxton and Wang's (2014) study, social media platforms have grown in popularity, overshadowing the influence of websites on people's intentions to support organizations and possibly even the visibility of the organizations. Donors and stakeholders may be drawn to social media because of the platform's real-time involvement opportunities and dynamic nature. Again, this is excellent news for young and weak organizations attempting to compete with more established ones. The lack of entry barriers into social media and the unique nature of social media capital may mean that younger and smaller organizations can gain access to an arts donor base by accumulating social media capital.

The findings of this study make a strong case for more and better social media use by arts and culture nonprofit organizations. Over the last two decades, nonprofit social media research has progressed from the binary "do nonprofit organizations use social media?" to a more advanced and holistic examination of their role in attracting unique capital that can be expended to achieve organizational goals. This is the first study to use the social media capital framework developed by Saxton and Guo (2020) to determine if organizations are accumulating this distinctive social media capital and whether that capital translates to the organizational outcome of overall donation. This investigation is a small step toward putting the framework to the test. Future scholars should develop strategies for capturing social media capital by merging data

from several social media platforms and network factors, as social media research is continuously expanding with the introduction of new media that organizations can leverage. Researchers should also look into the relationship between social media capital and other organizational outcomes like staff recruiting and retention, volunteer participation, and event attendance. As we establish a strong link between social media capital and concrete organizational outcomes, we can build a body of literature that will eventually persuade nonprofit leaders to embrace social media as more than a tool, but as an organizational strategy.

Chapter III. Information, Community, and Lots of Action – How Did Arts Nonprofits

Change Their Social Media Strategies During the COVID-19 Crisis?

Today's organizations and managers face a twofold challenge: knowing the nature and demands of the public and their expectations *from* the public (Thomas, 2012). As the public becomes more complex, these challenges continue to evolve. Organizations should make it one of their top objectives to continuously revise their communication tactics and incentives to better serve their audience and to gather relevant feedback from them.

The advent of the internet has facilitated and expedited the collection of information from the public and allowed organizations to devise innovative communication strategies. There is a wealth of literature in the public sector that has examined the use of the internet for stakeholder engagement by organizations. These research topics include the analysis of the relationship between website quality and civic engagement attitudes (Coleman, Lieber, Mendelson, & Kurpius, 2008), the effect of stakeholder engagement on the Internet and civic and political participation (Weber, Loumakis, & Bergman, 2003), and analysis of citizen-government relations on the internet (Cassell & Hoornbeek, 2012), among others.

While the earlier internet tools like emails and websites have given organizations many opportunities to engage their stakeholders, these tools are not always accessible to the stakeholders (Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006), and in some cases, organizations lack the financial and technological capacity to use and maintain them. This is especially true for the nonprofit sector – organizations in this sector have fewer resources and more competing priorities than their public and private counterparts.

The rapid diffusion of social media platforms over the last two decades has provided an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to try to compensate for the lack of technological and

financial resources required to adopt and maintain websites. Social media is inexpensive, easy to use, and allows organizations to interact with their stakeholders in real-time. This has given them some unique opportunities to engage with their stakeholders. Nonprofits use social media to communicate with their constituents, build communities, and engage in advocacy (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). Despite these numerous acknowledged advantages of using social media, not all nonprofit organizations have adopted them, and those that have, use the platforms primarily for one-way communication or information dissemination (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Maxwell & Carboni, 2014).

This paper focuses on the social media messaging of arts and culture nonprofit organizations, specifically their Facebook posting behavior to investigate online engagement with stakeholders during a crisis. Literature has established that arts and culture nonprofits are unique from other subsectors. This sector generates enormous revenues yearly, primarily relies on public donations[1], and has a substantial online presence[2]. Arts organizations' comparative advantage in online presence must imply that they have more opportunities to engage with their stakeholders than other sectors. In fact, numerous nonprofit arts organizations self-report tangible outcomes resulting from their use of social media. These organizations have reported accepting donations,

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[1] An economic impact study published by Americans for the Arts stated that in 2015, United States' nonprofit arts and culture industry "generated $166.3 billion in economic activity-$63.8 billion in spending by the organizations themselves, which leveraged an additional $102.5 billion in event-related spending by their audiences" (Lynch, 2015).

[2] According to a survey given to arts nonprofit organizations in the United States in 2013, technology strongly affects various organizational functions, such as marketing and education efforts and performance offerings (Thomson et al., 2013). Moreover, many organizations are using these platforms to "expand the number of online performances and exhibits, grow their audience, sell tickets, and raise funds online, while allowing patrons to share content, leave comments, and even post their content on organizations' sites" (Thomson, K., Purcell, K. & Rainie, 2013).

increasing organizational efficiency, increasing attendance at events, increasing ticket sales, and

engaging in arts advocacy through social media platforms. Many arts organizations also note that

the important metrics of digital media success (websites, Facebook, and Twitter) are measurable

outcomes such as ticket sales and donations (Thomson et al., 2013). This evidence indicates that

arts, culture, and humanities nonprofit organizations gain social capital and concrete

organizational returns from social media use. Chao Guo and Gregory Saxton, two leading

academics in the field of social media use by nonprofits, have explored the concept of social

media-generated social capital. Their recently proposed framework (Saxton & Guo, 2020)

suggests that organizations can use social media platforms to acquire a distinct form of capital

that can then be used to achieve concrete organizational outcomes. Given that nonprofit arts and

culture organizations have extensive access to social media capital, it's worth investigating how

they use it to their advantage.

To that end, this study examines how arts nonprofit organizations use a specific social

media platform, Facebook, to communicate with their followers. The primary motivation for

conducting this research is to determine whether the messaging strategies of arts nonprofit

organizations resemble those of other sectors studied in the literature and whether arts nonprofit

organizations make sufficient efforts to solicit feedback from their followers instead of sending

one-way messages. The approach used in this study involves a combination of inductive and

deductive methods to thoroughly examine and analyze the messages shared by arts nonprofit

organizations. Initially, I start the research with three overarching themes in mind, namely

information, community, and action, drawn from prior research findings. However, as the study

progressed, it became evident that the messages encompass a broader range of categories and

themes beyond the initially anticipated ones. Therefore, the research uncovers additional

categories and themes that were previously unidentified, adding depth and nuance to the understanding of the messages disseminated by arts and culture nonprofit organizations.

Another objective of this research is to evaluate the posting behavior of arts nonprofits on social media before and during the COVID-19 outbreak. There is a wealth of literature and case studies of nonprofit organizations stepping in to give services and assistance to their constituents to cover the service delivery gap left by their government counterparts (Salamon, 1994; Martens, 1999; Worth, 2019). However, these charities are usually directly entrusted with providing such services to their stakeholders - mainly human services or advocacy-oriented organizations. There is also a body of scholarship that examines the role of nonprofit organizations in providing services during periods of crisis (Sisco, 2010; Haupt & Azevedo, 2021), as well as the types of online communications sent by organizations during disasters (Liu, Jin, Briones, & Kuch, 2012; Olson, Sutton, Vos, Prestley, Renshaw, & Butts, 2019). However, no study has directly examined how crises affect organizational communication strategies for different subsectors of nonprofit organizations. Because arts and culture nonprofit organizations rely heavily on individual contributors, we expect them to make an extra effort to comfort their constituents during difficult times, perhaps even more than other subsectors. To examine if and how arts nonprofit organizations have developed different strategies of communication with their stakeholders during the coronavirus pandemic, I will conduct a message-level analysis of Facebook messages posted by 142 arts nonprofit organizations in the months of November 2019 and November 2020.

Specifically, this paper explores the following research question:

- How have the social media messaging strategies of arts and culture nonprofit organizations changed during the coronavirus pandemic? Specifically, are these

organizations' messaging unidirectional or dialogic in their engagement with
stakeholders?

The analysis used Facebook messages because it is the most popular social media channel
among nonprofit organizations (NGOs in the United States - 2021 Global NGO Technology
Survey, 2021) and allows for greater flexibility in the type and length of messages delivered than
Twitter, which comes in second place.

In the following sections, I will review the literature on nonprofit organizations' social
media messaging, as well as their role in delivering services and assistance to their constituents
during catastrophes and emergencies. Following the literature review, I will describe the data and
methods, discuss the analysis of the findings, and finally present the study's conclusion.

3.1 Literature Review

This literature review integrates two streams of scholarship: the use of social media
messaging by nonprofit organizations for organizational outcomes and the role of nonprofit
organizations in crisis communications.

3.1.1 Nonprofit Organizations' Messaging on Social Media Platforms

Few studies have examined nonprofit organizations' messages and social media
platforms. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) have made the most seminal contributions to this field.
The authors (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012) created three categories based on tweets posted by the top
100 nonprofit organizations in the United States: *Information* tweets sent one-way messages,
community tweets aimed to develop relationships, build networks, and foster conversations,
while *action* tweets challenged users to do something for the organization, such as purchase a
product or service or donate to their cause. More than half of the tweets made by the 100
organizations were classified as information, underlining that nonprofits are not doing enough to

foster two-way dialogue with stakeholders. Guo and Saxton (2014) conducted a similar study in 2014 and discovered similar results. By examining the types of messages organizations posted on Twitter, the authors (Guo & Saxton, 2014) found that nonprofits put the most effort into sending out one-way messages rather than attempting to solicit information or input from their stakeholders online.

Nah and Saxton (2013) provided intriguing insights into the relationship between various organizational characteristics and social media use in the top 100 US nonprofits. The authors (Nah & Saxton, 2013) discovered that nonprofit organizations that focus their efforts on generating revenue through market-based program delivery rather than donations or grants used social media more to engage with their consumers. The authors also observed a negative correlation between fundraising efforts and the frequency with which organizations used social media – as organizations posted more on social media, they held fewer fundraising activities, implying that organizations may be viewing social media platforms as substitutes for traditional fundraising efforts. This is surprising given how much research has demonstrated that organizations do not use social media in a planned and strategic manner. The extent to which organizations may utilize social media is positively influenced by website reach and strength, while other organizational characteristics, such as size, are irrelevant. Membership organizations had lower social media post volume than non-membership organizations – perhaps because membership organizations already have a varied and representative constituency and do not need to reach out to more people.

3.1.2 Social Media Stakeholder Engagement

There is a growing body of research on the use of social media to foster dialogues and public relationships. Scholars have investigated the role of social media in assisting organizations in engaging in public relations (Waters et. Al, 2009; Curtis, Edwards, Fraser, Gudelsky, Holmquist, Thornton, & Sweetser, 2010), increasing responsiveness to stakeholders (Saxton, Guo & Brown, 2007), cultivating better relationships with their networks (Waters et al., 2009), and finally, translating the benefits of social media use to generate concrete organizational outcomes (Saxton & Guo, 2014, 2020). This body of research draws heavily from Kent & Taylor's (2002) dialogic theory. The dialogic theory outlines the need for organizations to have two-way negotiated communications with their stakeholders to get the maximum benefits from using communication tools (Waters, Canfield, Foster, & Hardy, 2011; Gao, 2016; Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018). Another critical theory used to study nonprofit social media communication strategies is Relationship Management Theory. This theory underlines the importance of developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with stakeholders for the well-being of organizations (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Ledingham, 2003; Carboni & Maxwell, 2015).

There is also a body of literature in business management that ties an organization's online popularity to performance outcomes. Firms' online popularity on social media (such as likes and shares) has resulted in a documented increase in outcomes such as total sales and other financial performance metrics (Lee, Lee, & Oh, 2015; Yu, Duan, & Cao, 2013). Positive Facebook metrics such as "likes" and "loves" contribute to "social selling" and influence consumer behavior by informing brand trust and buying intention (Mochon, Johnson, Schwartz, & Ariely, 2017; Phua & Ahn, 2016). This online popularity would be part of Saxton and Guo's much larger concept of social media capital (2020).

This study analyzes the online popularity of nonprofit arts and culture groups in the form of total likes and loves received by their posts before and during COVID. As operations, events, and donations move online, are organizations getting more stakeholder engagement and online popularity during COVID? Are organizations getting more support for their mission during the pandemic? Answering these questions will assist nonprofit social media scholars to develop theoretical frameworks for researching social media use throughout prolonged periods of crisis. In this study, I analyze Facebook posts at the message level as part of the organizations' efforts to solicit social media capital, that hopefully ultimately leads to organizational returns in the form of increased donations, increased volunteers, and support for their mission, among others.

3.1.3 Nonprofit Social Media Messaging During Crisis

During catastrophes, disasters, and other crises, nonprofit organizations have played critical roles in supporting their communities. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, nonprofit organizations have actively participated in response and recovery activities, leading to their inclusion in important disaster mitigation initiatives such as the Whole Community Approach, National Response Plan, National Response Framework, and the National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (Haupt & Azevedo, 2021). Even throughout the coronavirus pandemic, small and large philanthropic organizations have served their constituents by offering services, support, and comfort, particularly when government agencies lacked the resources to reach their community. Because nonprofit organizations are unique – they are expected to provide services while being held at a higher standard for ethics – they face several challenges, especially because they have lesser resources compared to their private and government counterparts and do not coerce participation (Sisco, 2010).

Several studies have examined nonprofit organizations' online presence during crises from various perspectives like stakeholder reactions to organizations' credibility (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013) and a comparison of social media platforms' effectiveness in communicating during disasters (Liu et al., 2012). A study of a government agency's (National Weather Service) use of social media tools found that in the absence of an impending disaster, the organization issued messages aimed at developing community and building relationships and sent more unidirectional messages during calamities (Olson et al., 2019). This is intriguing, and it shows that government entities, like nonprofits, should improve their social media strategy design to fit the situation.

What about the messaging patterns of organizations that aren't directly involved with disaster communication? Do their strategies change during a crisis? Given that nonprofit organizations are supposed to fill service delivery gaps left by government agencies and are held to far higher standards than their government and business counterparts, it is reasonable to believe that they put in greater effort during crises like the coronavirus pandemic. It is also possible that arts nonprofits will send out communications aimed at building networks, as well as reaching out to their stakeholders to do something for their communities or support the organization. The messaging framework introduced by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) - information, community, and action - guides the analysis of the messages in this research. The expectation is that I will find both more action and community-oriented messages, as well as novel themes that are catered to providing support to the organizations' stakeholders during the coronavirus pandemic.

3.2 Data and Method

3.2.1 Sample

The sample for this essay consists of 142 arts nonprofit organizations in the US that participated in Cultural Data Art's 2020 survey. CDP is an online repository of survey data on American arts, culture, and humanities nonprofit organizations. The CDP data is not a random sample. It is a sample of self-selected arts organizations that voluntarily respond to the survey or apply for grants from a CDP-affiliated funder. The dataset contains information about organizations' type, size, location, and other indicators, including capital campaigning efforts, fundraising expenses, and event attendance data.

3.2.3 Method

To answer the research question - How have the social media messaging strategies of arts and culture nonprofit organizations changed during the coronavirus pandemic? Specifically, are these organizations' messaging unidirectional or dialogic in their engagement with stakeholders? - I examined the organizations' Facebook posts before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study looks at Facebook posts from November 2019 and November 2020 to determine whether organizations adjusted their social media message strategy during the pandemic when everything migrated online. The analysis used Facebook messages because it is the most popular social media channel among nonprofit organizations (NGOs in the United States - 2021 Global NGO Technology Survey, 2021) and allows for greater flexibility in the type and length of messages delivered than Twitter, which comes in second place.

The first step to collect the data was to select 150 organizations randomly from the CDP 2020 sample. The dataset contained 519 organizations in total. I took several steps to collect the Facebook messages. First, I used Google to confirm that all 150 organizations had Facebook

accounts. Seven organizations did not have a Facebook account, and one of the organizations' pages was in a language other than English. Therefore 142 organizations were included in the final sample.

After finding the organizations on Facebook, I generated a clone of the dataset to gather message category information for two months - November 2019 and November 2020. Then I started collecting messages for those two months. Finally, I began categorizing the messages. The entire process took me around six months - February 2022 - July 2022. The November 2019 database included 567 posts, whereas the November 2020 database contained 1367 posts. I examined 1,934 Facebook messages in total.

Just like Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) discovered in their research, I initially expected that the messages I would analyze could be grouped into three main categories: information, community, and action. However, it's important to note that Lovejoy and Saxton examined multiple subsectors, whereas my focus was solely on the arts subsector. This difference in scope left me somewhat unsure whether the same categories would apply in my case. Nonetheless, I approached my coding process with these three categories in mind as a starting point, but I also remained open to the possibility of identifying new or distinct themes that may emerge from the data. In essence, my analysis reflects a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches - I employed a mix of prior expectations and open-minded exploration to assess the Facebook messages of organizations in the dataset.

3.3 Results

I used two types of analyses to address the research questions. First, I examined the functions of the Facebook posts for the organizations in the sample for two points: November 2019 and November 2020. Then, I analyzed the aggregate data to compare the popularity of the

Facebook posts for the two months before and during covid by looking at the number of likes and loves received by the posts.

3.3.1 Message Categories

As shown in Table 6, the Facebook posts conform closely to the information, community, and action framework proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), with a few modifications. I divided the Facebook posts into three groups based on my inductive data analysis: information, community, and action. *Information* includes the most elementary types of unidirectional messages. Specifically, this category contains posts that notify stakeholders about the organization, staff changes, and messages aimed at staying in touch. Here are some messages that fall under the information category:

- On November 15, 2015 the first big festival took place where Almanac played: Winter Masters Of Rock in the Czech Republic! New songs were played for the first time in front of an audience and the first album was announced: "Tsar".

- Gateway Arts Council updated their cover photo.

I've also created a subsection titled mission to the information category. *Mission* comprises posts that highlight the organization's core beliefs. Although these posts are as straightforward as the information posts, I believe they merit their own category, as they remind their audience of the organization's core purpose. The following posts fall under the mission category:

- #TransAwarenessWeek might be coming to a close, but our Trans friends, family, loved ones, coworkers, classmates, and the people we pass in the supermarket deserve our support every day. #TransIsBeautiful

- Reflections and seasonal message from Karla Aguilar at American Indians in Texas.

Table 5. Message Categories

Category	Example	Freq. (2019)	(%)	Freq. (2020)	(%)
Information	America's next star pop duo, getting their big break at CMC. Watch out, world!	248	43.8	394	28
Mission	Over the past few weeks, our #MillGirlMondays have been all about spinning. Today, we're taking a closer look at another aspect of this practice and how it has changed in American culture. Whereas some New England factories only had frames for spinning, Lowell was different by design. In this planned city, many steps of the industrial process all took place under one roof. In the past, working on a spinning wheel had been a solitary, self-controlled act. The power was human and so was the pacing. With the spinning frame, workers doing spinning were part of a much bigger system. Each spinner or doffer would be tending to their machine in the context of a large factory system. As spinning frames came to fill factories all over New England, poets and painters began romanticizing the work of spinning. What had once been a tedious, but vital task in rural homes became a symbol of domesticity. In time, visions of beautifully dressed women in colonial caps eclipsed what earlier generations had seen with their own eyes: women working hard, with their hands and feet, to clothe generations. #MillGirlMonday #LikeLowell #LowellNPS #FindYourPark	14	2.5	96	7

Table 5. Message Categories (continued)

Total		262	46.3	490	35
Community					
Gratitude	Today, we want to thank our members, supporters, and advocates - our Alliance. We could not do the work we do in arts advocacy, research, professional development and resources for arts organizations, and more without you. We are so grateful to have you as part of our Alliance. To support our work, please visit our website	66	11.6	165	12
Employee Appreciation	Happy birthday (x2)! 🎉🎂 Join us in wishing a happy belated birthday to our Guest Services Manager, Kaylah, and a happy birthday to our Director of Development, Tim!	23	4.06	50	3.7
Total		89	15.6	215	15.7
Action					
Call to action	Leave us a piano emoji on this post by Saturday evening at 11:59pm and be entered to win two tickets to hear pianist Till Fellner at Mixon Hall at the Cleveland Institute of Music on Tuesday, November 12 at 7:30pm! Winner will be announced this Sunday! Check out our website for program details and other information.	30	5.3	185	13.5
Promoting an event	Ópera en tu sofá invites you to a program with tenor Joshua Guerrero. Enjoy a conversation about Joshua's singing career and his experience singing in La Bohème at San Diego Opera. Join us!	158	28	385	28.1
Donation appeal	It's always a sad day when we walk into Cogswell on a rainy day like today and we have full buckets of rainwater to empty and we hear the drip drops of the rain coming through our old roof. We still need to raise some money to renovate the building and the sooner we can do it the better! Donate today at creativehaverhill.org/donate Thank you!	28	4.9	91	6.7
Total		216	38.2	661	48.3
Pandemic related posts					
Pandemic comfort	This year has been rough for everyone, especially our youth so, we invite your young artists to end the year with time in the studio! This is an opportunity to reconnect with our creative community and make one of a kind handmade gifts for the holidays.			38	2.8
Event change	In accordance with Gov. Kate Brown's statewide "freeze," we will be closing our gym to all lessons and classes starting November 15th. We will miss you! We'd love to see you in one of our online classes to stay moving, creative, and connected in the meantime.			23	1.7
Total				61	4.5

This category – information - accounts for most of the messages in 2019 (46.3%) and is the second largest in 2020 (35%). The results for 2019 are consistent with prior literature (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Guo & Saxton, 2014).

3.3.2 Community

In line with the paradigm proposed by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), this category of Facebook messages aims to create online communities and appreciate the organization's stakeholders. I have included in this category messages that show gratitude (to stakeholders, other organizations, and donors) and commend the efforts of nonprofit staff. In both 2019 and 2020, approximately 15 percent of all organizational posts were *community* related. The lack of change in the number of these messages indicates that although forming communities is a goal for arts nonprofit organizations, it may not be as strategic as the unidirectional information or the more "active" action messages, which I will examine in the next section.

3.3.2.1 Gratitude. Gratitude simply contains posts that thank the organization's followers, donors, and other stakeholders, such as the larger community and other organizations. There was essentially no difference in the proportion of these messages (11.6% in 2019 and 12% in 2020) compared to total posts in 2019 and 2020. Here are a few examples of messages that fall under the gratitude category:

- We sing to thank the many partner organizations with whom we have collaborated to make meaningful and engaging performances.
- This holiday weekend we are especially grateful for our fans and supporters, and here the musicians of the CSO and Pops take a moment to say "thank you." Happy Thanksgiving from our homes to yours!

3.3.2.2 Employee Appreciation. This new subcategory emerged from my inductive analysis of the Facebook messages. I discovered quite a few messages geared at appreciating their staff - 23 in 2019 and 50 in 2020. However, these messages made up a smaller share of overall posts in 2020 (3.7%) than in 2019 (4.06%). Here are a few examples of messages expressing appreciation of their staff:

- Musician Monday: Contrabassoonist Jennifer Monroe received her Master of Music degree from CCM. You can see Jennifer play the contrabassoon, one of the largest woodwind instruments, in Ravel's "Mother Goose" during the CSO's livestream DEC 5 at 8 pm EST. Learn more about Jennifer and the other members of the Orchestra here

- Theater Latté Da Artistic Director and creator of ALL IS CALM, Peter Rothstein, was featured on Twin Cities Live this week! We're so excited to premiere ALL IS CALM on PBS stations across the country this holiday season.

3.3.3 Action

The third type of communication is action messages, where organizations invite their followers to do something for the organization, such as buy a product, attend an event, or give to their cause. Three subcategories emerged under the action theme - promoting events, appealing for donations, and a third category that includes messages that urge the followers to perform an activity - like their post, share stories or ask their network to support their cause. *Action* made up 38.2% of the total posts in 2019 and 48.3% in 2020. This is a shift from previous research, which claims that nonprofit organizations are known for providing unidirectional messages to their supporters on online platforms. Arts and culture (and possibly other) nonprofits may be rallying their supporters to unify and support their cause during this time of need.

3.3.3.1 Promoting an Event. Messaging by organizations promoting their events was one of the key categories under the action theme of messages. These posts accounted for around 28% of all messages in both 2019 and 2020. This is unexpected, as one would expect organizations to host fewer events considering the pandemic. This result suggests that either the organizations were not putting much effort into promoting their events before the pandemic, or they adapted to the changing times in the months leading to November 2020. Some of the event promotion messages looked like this:

- Rhythm is the Remedy coming up this Tuesday, December 1st! Interactive found sound drumming led by Destiny Teaching Artist Aaron Kierbel. 🎵 Body percussion and stepping playshop led by Stomp alumni & Destiny Teaching Artist Antwan Davis

- Join us for TDOR SF 2020, as we remember the trans and non-binary folks we've lost to violence over the last year. Captions/ASL translation. For more info:
  https://www.facebook.com/events/3406920302711040

3.3.3.2 Donation Appeal. Approximately 5% of total messages in 2019 and 6.7% in 2020 were dedicated to soliciting the organizations' followers for donations under the action category. Some of the messages geared towards appealing for donations looked like this:

- The Guadalupe hopes you had a happy and safe Thanksgiving. We are so thankful for you and your support. If you can, we encourage you to donate. There are many ways to do so, including purchasing our Guadalupe Dance Company T-Shirts and 2020 Fiesta Medals

- #GivingTuesday2020 - Online event
  30 NOV 2020 AT 21:00 – 1 DEC 2020 AT 21:00 PST

3.3.4 Others

There were a few messages that asked followers to act on the organization's behalf but did not fit neatly into the donation appeal or event-promoting posts. Posts imploring followers to change their profile pictures, shop at the organizations' online stores, pay tribute to their favorite artists, or share the organizations' posts on their social media accounts were among the *other* action messages. These messages accounted for 5.3% of all messages in 2019 and 13.5% in 2020. Here are a few examples:

- We found the perfect chip clip/ bottle opener/ magnet! These make great stocking stuffers!!! Shop online at https://.store.tuliptime.com #tulip_time

- Add your tribute for our beloved Artistic Director Emeritus Sarah Crowell! The end of 2020 culminates Sarah's transition from overseeing the day to day artistic operations of Destiny Arts Center into her ongoing role as Artistic Director Emeritus and Destiny Board Member. We look forward to celebrating her at Love in Action.

3.3.5 Social Media Strategy During the Pandemic

During my inductive analysis of the Facebook messages in 2020, I discovered a category of Facebook posts relating to the pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these posts expressed the organizations' support and empathy to their followers. Specifically, under this category, two themes emerged: posts that provided emotional support to their followers and others that informed their followers about changes in events resulting from the pandemic. These posts made up 4.5% of the total posts in 2020, and here are some examples of them:

3.3.5.1 Emotional Support During the Pandemic:

● This year has been rough for everyone, especially our youth so, we invite your young
artists to end the year with time in the studio! This is an opportunity to reconnect with
our creative community and make one of a kind handmade gifts for the holidays.

3.3.5.2 Notification of Event Change/Cancellation

● In accordance with Gov. Kate Brown's statewide "freeze," we will be closing our gym to
all lessons and classes starting November 15th. We will miss you! We'd love to see you
in one of our online classes to stay moving, creative, and connected in the meantime.

3.3.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The final research question in this study aimed to compare the popularity of the posts
among followers in 2019 and 2020. To answer this question, I separated the nonprofit arts and
culture organizations into sub-categories and compared the number of "likes" and "loves" they
received in their Facebook posts for both years. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the sub-categories
of the nonprofits and their relative engagement in 2019 and 2020.

Table 6. Stakeholder Interaction by Subtype

Organizational sub type	2019			2020		
	Posts	Likes	Loves	Posts	Likes	Loves
Broadcast, Media, and Literary Arts	25	175	42	43 ↑	150 ↓	28 ↓
Community	13	104	11	98 ↑	573 ↑	214 ↑
Education	39	343	138	128 ↑	751 ↑	246 ↑
Museum, Visual Arts, and History	88	1,682	148	191 ↑	2162 ↑	281 ↑

Table 6. Stakeholder Interaction by Subtype (continued)

Performing Arts	302	6,862	1903	771 ↑	11173 ↑	2771 ↑
Support and Advocacy	15	110	26	61 ↑	223 ↑	26 =
Unknown/Unclassified	79	613	100	75 ↓	314 ↓	209 ↑
Total	567	9913	2379	1367	15346	3775

As shown in Table 6, organizations in all subcategories posted significantly more in 2020 than in 2019. With a few exceptions, similar findings were discovered for the online popularity variables – "likes" and "loves" in the posts. In 2020, the number of "likes" and "loves" in posts for "Broadcast, Media, and Literary Arts" organizations was lower than in 2019. In both 2019 and 2020, support and advocacy organizations earned the same number of "loves". In 2020, unclassified nonprofit organizations had fewer posts and "likes", but more "loves".

3.4 Discussion and Conclusion

With the advent of interactive and dynamic social media platforms, nonprofit organizations now have unprecedented access to their stakeholders. This development has also enabled smaller and weaker organizations to compete with larger and more established ones, leveling the playing field in terms of gathering comments, donations, and support for their causes. This research aimed to determine whether nonprofits are fully utilizing social media platforms and focusing on more dialogic and community-oriented messaging as opposed to unidirectional ones. In doing so, I addressed the research question – How have the social media messaging strategies of arts and culture nonprofit organizations changed during the coronavirus pandemic? Specifically, are these organizations' messaging unidirectional or dialogic in their engagement with stakeholders? Three noteworthy conclusions emerged from a message-level

examination of 1,934 Facebook messages collected between November 2019 and November 2020, which I will discuss below.

First, arts nonprofits are sending more action-oriented messages. The nonprofit organizations in the sample were found to be more action-oriented, urging their followers to actively support their organizations in 2020. Following the messaging framework of Lovejoy & Saxton (2012), "action" oriented messages aim at urging followers to do something (buy a product, donate, attend an event) for the organization. This stands in stark contrast to all previous research on the subject. Nonprofits have a history of sending unidirectional and information-giving messages (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Lovejoy et al., 2012; Maxwell & Carboni, 2014), and arts nonprofits are less inclined to exploit the dynamic elements given by social media platforms (Waters et al., 2009).

Secondly, arts nonprofits are re-designing and modifying their messaging strategies during the pandemic. Approximately 5% of all messages sent by organizations in 2020 focused on bringing comfort to their followers or informing them of any changes in events because of the pandemic. Numerous studies (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Park, Rodgers & Stemmie, 2013 Young, 2017) have shown that nonprofit organizations do not develop carefully designed communication strategies. Perhaps because of the pandemic, nonprofit organizations are being reminded of the value of community and pushing their supporters to help them in numerous ways, including, most critically, shifting their operations online. This is wonderful news for charitable organizations because shifting operations and maybe events to online platforms may result in lower costs and increased accessibility of their activities. A comprehensive report on social media messaging by arts nonprofit organizations (Thomson et al., 2013) showed that organizations have expressed that the meaning of art is changing because of the chronically

online times that we live in. The results of this study confirm this – arts (and perhaps other) nonprofit organizations have no choice *but* to be more present online and open more avenues for their stakeholders to have access to them.

Finally, practically all types of arts and culture charities posted more in 2020, and their postings received more interaction - more likes and more loves. Perhaps this is a lesson for academics and practitioners that there is strength in numbers. Because of the pandemic, more people may have had time to post and respond with organizational Facebook messages. This finding is also consistent with a few studies that have found that online popularity of nonprofit organizations is determined by their level of activity – the volume of posting (Campbell & Lambright, 2019; Nah & Saxton, 2013). This result has the implication that posting more *and* posting strategically are both important to drive the best results from social media use.

This study's findings indicate that the nonprofit arts and culture organizations in this sample are making significant efforts to use social media strategically and gain feedback from their followers. This improvement in the social media messaging strategies of arts and culture organizations has various benefits for the subsector. Numerous studies have claimed that organizations must engage in two-way communication to derive the greatest benefits from communication platforms, like more donations, organizational well-being, and publicity for their mission (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Waters et al., 2011; Gao, 2016; Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018), and bidirectional ties with stakeholders increase organizational well-being (Dozier et al., 1995; Ledingham, 2003; Carboni & Maxwell, 2015). The increase in the number and types of messages sent, as well as the popularity of those messages, indicates that arts organizations are investing more in their communication strategies and targeting organizational outcomes through social media use. These findings corroborate arts nonprofits' self-report that they gain invaluable

benefits from social media use, ranging from ticket sales to increased donations (Thomson et al., 2013).

Despite its limitations, such as the small sample size and focus on one sector of nonprofit organizations, this study offers valuable insights into the discussions about nonprofit organizations' use of social media messages. This study confirms that nonprofit arts and culture organizations' Facebook messages are increasing in quantity and improving in quality. Organizations are investing more effort into gathering input from stakeholders and establishing communities, as opposed to simply transmitting one-way messages. The number of interactions these organizations receive also supports this observation. Arts and culture nonprofits have great potential of gathering and expending social media capital to get organizational outcomes. Therefore, this study gives a useful guideline for researchers to seize this moment when organizations may be more active on social media (relative to before the pandemic) and ask more complex questions regarding the organizations' social media use.

There are multiple avenues for future research. For one, researchers should look at the types of comments that followers are posting on the organizations' messages and exploring the types of messages that solicit the highest levels of feedback. Additionally, based on the claims of dialogic, relationship building, and social media capital theories, future research should investigate the relationship between social media message type, stakeholder feedback, and overall organizational outcomes. Ultimately, scholars *and* nonprofit practitioners are interested in using social media as the inexpensive and dynamic communication tool that it was designed to be to bring concrete organizational outcomes. More empirical studies that show positive and significant relationships between communication strategies, public reaction to the strategies, and ultimately organizational benefits will strengthen this line of scholarship.

Chapter IV. Catalyst or Capital? A Qualitative Study of the Use of Social Media by Arts Communication Managers

4.1 Introduction

We have progressed significantly from mere speculation regarding nonprofit organizations' use of social media to posing nuanced, comprehensive questions about how they use these platforms, the unique advantages they derive, and the implications of social media for their long-term outcomes (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Saxton & Wang, 2014; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020; Saxton & Guo, 2020). Social media scholars generally concur that nonprofit organizations have not allocated sufficient resources to develop strategic plans for social media usage and could benefit from a more deliberate approach in leveraging these platforms (Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003; Saxton, Guo, & Brown, 2007). However, it is essential to consider the disparities in social media usage among different subsectors and the outcomes they attain. Do all subsectors possess the necessary resources or the opportunity to access the diverse benefits offered by social media?

Different organizations employ information technologies and social media for diverse purposes. Depending on their available resources, mission, and sector, it is reasonable to assume that they will use social media platforms differently and achieve varying outcomes. Recognizing the inherent diversity among nonprofit organizations, which are not uniformly structured, is crucial. While some organizations may experience significant benefits from social media usage, others may feel pressured to utilize these platforms without reaping the desired results.

To comprehend the sectoral disparities in social media usage within the nonprofit sphere, this study undertakes a comparative case study involving the arts and culture, as well as human services nonprofit sectors. Specifically, this research addresses the question: "What are the

organizational outcomes achieved by arts and culture nonprofits in the United States compared to human service nonprofits through their use of social media?" This comparative case study places special emphasis on social media usage by these two subsectors during the global COVID-19 pandemic to explore the differences in nuances during crisis periods. Furthermore, considering that the study of social media use by nonprofit organizations is an evolving field, it is important to reflect on what has been gained and/or lost and how these experiences differ across different types of organizations. These experiences encompass the redistribution of staff time, shifts in mission and emphasis, the redirection of funds towards communication departments, and changes in program and service offerings.

To answer the questions, I interviewed the communication managers (marketing and communication directors, presidents, Executive Directors, fine arts directors, and board members) of fifteen arts and culture nonprofit organizations in the United States. I also interviewed the communication managers (president and consultant) of two human services organizations that administer federal rental assistance to people needing support during the pandemic. I included this sample of human services nonprofits to better understand how arts nonprofits use social media compared to other sectors and how social media use differs between organizations with different missions and target populations. The case study also explores the responsibilities of communication managers within nonprofit organizations. Specifically, the study highlights the importance of comprehending the effects of communication managers' autonomy in overseeing social media content, and how it shapes the overall achievements of nonprofit organizations. This aspect holds significant value and has not been adequately explored in previous studies, making it a crucial angle to consider.

The following section summarizes the literature on sectoral differences in nonprofit organizations' social media adoption and use, arts and culture nonprofit organizations' adoption, and various individual and organizational factors influencing social media use. This is followed by a discussion of the data and model used in this study and the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

4.2 Literature Review

The amount of research on nonprofit organizations' use of social media has escalated in the last two decades. Scholars have written extensively about nonprofits' use of social media in three major fields: advocacy (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Edwards & Hoefer, 2010; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009), community engagement (Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), and fundraising (Saxton & Guo, 2020; Saxton & Wang, 2014; Sura, Ahn, & Lee, 2017; Waters et al., 2009). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, research topics included speculations about whether nonprofits use social media platforms. Beginning in the second half of the century, researchers began asking more complex questions about the contents of social media messaging and its effect on organizational outcomes (Saxton & Wang, 2014; Bhati & McDonnell, 2020). Researchers have recently begun asking even more holistic questions about nonprofit organizations' social media use. These researchers (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Saxton & Guo,2020) posit that social media network and activity helps organizations get social media capital - a unique form of online capital that can be translated to achieve concrete organizational outcomes. The consensus among social media scholars is that nonprofit organizations have not invested enough resources in developing strategic social media use plans and would benefit from being more intentional about utilizing these platforms (Carboni & Maxwell, 2015; Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003; Saxton. Guo, & Brown, 2007). Ultimately, the research on social media use by

nonprofits is aimed at helping nonprofits tap into social media capital to realize organizational gains.

4.2.1 Sectoral Differences in Social Media Use and Outcomes

There are several sectoral differences in social media use among nonprofit organizations. Scholars have examined the adoption and use of social media by human services, advocacy, environmental, health, and immigrant-serving organizations. Despite being the largest nonprofit sector in the United States, Young (2017) found that most human services organizations primarily use social media to advertise events. Goals that require two-way communication, like engaging stakeholders, fundraising, and attracting new donors, were secondary goals for these nonprofits. Scholars found similar observations in other sectors. Bortree & Seltzer (2009) reported that most small environmental nonprofit organizations adopted social media due to pressure from similar organizations and funders' expectations and not because of a comprehensive social media needs assessment of the organizations.

Similarly, although health nonprofits use social media more than other health organizations, they use the platforms primarily for one-way communication with low participation in their online posts. Health-related nonprofits use fewer sophisticated social media features, indicating that they lack the resources or interest to effectively exploit social media platforms (Park, Rodgers & Stemmie, 2013). There were also substantial differences in social media adoption among immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits serving Hispanic Americans adapted to social media quickly, while Asian-American nonprofits were the slowest. Although there were multiple disparities within and between subsectors regarding adoption, use, and prioritization, existing literature has generally found that nonprofits do not have a solid social media use strategy. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that our current understanding

of nonprofit organizations' use of social media and information technology primarily stems from quantitative studies based on secondary data. Therefore, it is important to incorporate qualitative inquiries into this research field, allowing us to directly capture the perspectives of managers who actively engage with social media. By doing so, we can deepen our comprehension and expand our knowledge base in this area.

4.2.2 Social Media Use by Arts Nonprofit Organizations

Few studies have examined the use of social media by arts nonprofit organizations. These studies show that arts nonprofits are different from other subsectors. These nonprofits are much more likely than other nonprofits to use the interactive components of social media tools (Waters et al., 2009), such as message boards, but far less likely to strategize their use of social media and use the technologies for tangible organizational outcomes - Saxton & Wang (2014) found that arts nonprofits are less likely to use Facebook's "Causes" feature to solicit donations. Arts nonprofit organizations are found to be different in other aspects as well. Jacobs and Marudas (2009) found no association between indicators of organizational financial performance and credibility to the amount of donations the subsector gets. Grizzle (2015) discovered that funders are indifferent to administrative efficiency when supporting nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities groups but respond positively to fundraising efforts. It has also been documented in the literature that arts patrons are homogenous compared to other organizations - arts organizations are known for their traditional reliance on a limited number of wealthy, elderly, and predominantly White benefactors (Jung, 2015). Because it is evident that arts and culture nonprofit organizations are unique in terms of social media acceptance, use, and donor base, their communication approach is worth investigating, especially in comparison to other sectors.

Arts organizations self-report substantial benefits from social media use. A Pew Research Center survey of over 1,200 organizations revealed that digital technologies are essential for arts nonprofits to promote events, increase audience interaction, fundraise, and improve organizational efficiency (Thomson, Purcell, & Rainie, 2013). An intriguing finding was that using social media to promote art events and services attracted a more diverse audience, maybe because it made the events more accessible to consumers who would not have attended otherwise. This is a positive development for a sector traditionally catering to a homogeneous and privileged clientele. However, the diverse audience unexpectedly increased patron demand for free or inexpensive digital art. Art organizations in the sample study claimed that it was difficult to keep up with this demand because social media platforms require staff capacity and specialized training (Thomson et al., 2013). This finding implies that, while social media platforms may blur the distinction between wealthy and less-wealthy clients, organizations must adapt their resources to keep up with the times. This overview gains even greater significance when we consider that donors in the arts subsector are not responding to conventional indicators of organizational efficiencies, such as financial performance and administrative efficiency (Jacobs & Marudas, 2009; Grizzle, 2015). Research (Chung, Marcketti, and Fiore, 2014) has validated that small arts nonprofits often face challenges due to the hidden expenses associated with using and maintaining social media. Consequently, it raises the question of whether arts nonprofit organizations can effectively capitalize on the cost-effective nature of social media (in comparison to traditional technologies like websites) to attract clients. Alternatively, do smaller organizations continue to face disadvantages due to their limited financial resources, especially when compared to other sectors? These pressing questions serve as the basis for this qualitative assessment. This study contributes to the continuing scholarly discussion by interviewing arts

organizations and human service organizations of varying sizes and types from around the United States.

4.2.3 Social Media Use: Individual and Organizational Factors

A comprehensive understanding of social media use among nonprofit organizations necessitates acknowledging the substantial disparities in resources, time allocation, and the skill sets of communication managers responsible for administering these platforms. By considering these factors, we can gain deeper insights into the complexities and nuances that shape social media practices within the nonprofit sector and how they might vary across nonprofit subsectors. Prior research has examined the organizational and individual factors influencing the adoption and use of information technology tools from various perspectives, including strategic management (Hackler & Saxton, 2007) and social and institutional forces (Zorn, Flanagin, & Shoham, 2011). There are reasons to believe that the variables driving the adoption of technology and websites differ from those influencing the adoption and use of social media. Social media platforms have minimal to no cost, and their functioning is more dynamic, requiring active management by communication professionals. In addition, social media platforms have only gained popularity in the past decade. Therefore, they are still relatively new to many organizations compared to websites. One of the primary goals of this study is to assess the effects of various organizational and individual level characteristics (of communication managers) on social media adoption, use, and perceived outcomes from the use.

Few researchers have examined the organizational characteristics that influence social media adoption. Curtis et al. (2010) discovered that organizations with public relations departments were likelier to use social media, presumably because they have a specialist department and funds to enable plans involving new communication channels. According to Nah

and Saxton (2013), adoption decisions of social media are influenced by organizational strategy, capacities, governance traits, and external influences. A comparative analysis of human services nonprofit and public organizations revealed that nonprofits are significantly more likely to use social media than public organizations but are less strategic about their use (Campbell, Lambright, & Wells, 2014). Seo and Vu (2020) discovered that nonprofit leadership support (overall support, resource support, and policy support) for social media use was the most significant indicator of social media use and appreciation. This finding is particularly notable because the researchers did not find such a positive association between leadership support and the use of *websites*. Websites contain web pages that are designed and organized to provide specific information, services, or resources. They are created by individuals, businesses, organizations, or institutions to share information, promote products or services, provide entertainment, or serve other purposes. Social media, on the other hand, are platforms that enable people to create, share, and interact with content in a more social and interactive way. Social media platforms allow users to create profiles, connect with others, and share various forms of content such as text posts, photos, videos, and links. Users can also engage with each other's content by liking, commenting, and sharing it. Social media platforms often have features like news feeds or timelines that display content from people or accounts that users choose to follow. While websites are more static and provide specific information, social media platforms are designed for communication, sharing, and interaction among users.

Seo and Vu's (2020) finding that nonprofit leadership support for social media use was the most significant indicator of social media use also aligns with previous research, which showed that management support plays a significant role in an organization's adoption and use of digital communication technologies (Bruque & Moyano, 2007; Nah & Saxton, 2013; Soliman &

Janz, 2004). Overall, various organizational characteristics influence social media adoption, including the presence of a public relations department, organizational strategy, capacities, governance traits, external influences, and leadership support, with the latter being particularly significant as it has a stronger association with social media use compared to website use, highlighting the crucial role of management support in the adoption and use of social media.

Researchers have also explored the impact of individual managers' characteristics on organizational technology use (Atkin, Hunt, & Lin, 2015; Seo & Vu, 2020; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Venkatesh (2003) used a unified view of information technology acceptance, which claims that individual adoption and use are influenced by performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and other conducive variables. Atkin et al. (2015) added the uses and gratification dimension to Venkatesh's unified view theory, claiming that gratification from utilizing technology influences individuals' technology adoption at work. By surveying a group of MBA students, Anandrajan, Simmers, & D'Ovidio (2011) discovered that personal web skills relate to perceptions of internet usefulness and usage, users' gender and age have no impact, and there was lower use among individuals who considered the internet as intimidating. However, by surveying 409 nonprofit public relations managers' use of social media, Curtis et al. (2010) found that gender *does* affect social media perception and use. While women were more likely than men to perceive social media as beneficial, men were more confident about using the platforms (Curtis et al., 2010). By studying technology use among older adults in the United States, Seo, Erba, Geana, & Lumpkins (2017) and Seo, Erba, Altschager, & Geana (2019) found that older adults exhibited more difficulty than younger adults.

Studying the effect of demographic factors on perceptions is crucial as they are great predictors of actual use (Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017). Existing research has thoroughly examined

organizational and individual factors that affect social media perception and use. However, no studies have investigated how individual autonomy within an organization affects social media adoption, use, and content. This is a critical angle to study because an employee's relative position in an organizational hierarchy and freedom to post on social media affects what gets posted, how often, and whether the benefits of using social media are incorporated into the organizational culture to gain meaningful outcomes. Moreover, this autonomy also affects whether the employees can initiate strategic social media management activities like maintaining social media calendars, using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools, and proposing a budget for sophisticated social media functions like paid boosts. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this knowledge base gap by examining how nonprofit workers' job autonomy affects their perception of social media and the content they post.

4.3 Data and Method

This study adopts a comparative case study approach, a commonly used method in qualitative social science research. It aims to explore phenomena across multiple cases, identifying similarities, differences, and patterns. By analyzing multiple cases within a specific framework or theoretical perspective (Yin, 2017), comparative case studies offer a contextualized and comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia State University. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, their rights as participants, and the use of collected data solely for research purposes.

For this study, qualitative data was collected through interviews conducted with fifteen nonprofit arts and culture organizations, along with two human services organizations in the Southeastern US with the exception of one in California. These interviews covered various topics, such as the individual characteristics of communication managers who use social media, the role of leadership support, and the impact of organization type on adoption and usage. The interviews were conducted over a period of five months, from February to July 2022 (refer to the appendix for the interview protocol). The analysis framework used in this study is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework: Factors Affecting Social Media Use

Figure 1: Conceptual framework: Factors affecting social media use
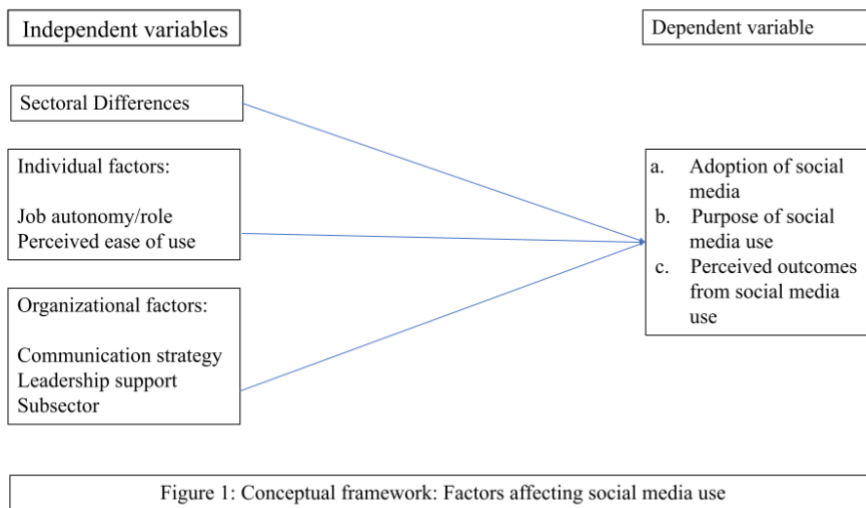
4.3.1 Sampling

As the primary objective of this research was to analyze the social media use of a range of arts nonprofits, I intended to interview 20 organizations. After numerous "cold call" interview attempts yielded a poor response rate, I contacted communication managers at arts and human

services charities using my personal and professional network. This prompted me to conduct interviews with the seventeen organizations. All organizations had to be 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofits to be included in the sample.

This study used snowball sampling to find the nonprofit organizations. At the end of each interview, I asked the communication manager if they knew any other manager in any other arts nonprofit organization. Researchers use snowball sampling to build a pool of participants for a research study by referrals from individuals who share a particular research-relevant attribute with the target population (Vogt & Johnson, 2011; Crouse & Lowe, 2018). It is also known as chain referral sampling or chain sampling.

While snowball sampling may not have the same level of validity and efficacy as probability sampling, it is an appropriate approach when researchers encounter challenges in accessing the desired study population. This sampling technique is commonly used in qualitative and quantitative research studies, though it is more prevalent in the former, particularly in identifying prospective interviewees (Noy, 2008). Table 8 lists some of the basic organizational characteristics of the 17 organizations.

The sample for this study, as presented in Table 8, encompasses a diverse range of nonprofit organizations, including fifteen arts organizations and two human services organizations. With the exception of two arts nonprofits located in California and North Carolina, all the organizations included in the sample are located in the state of Georgia, providing a geographically concentrated focus for this study. The age distribution of the arts organizations in the sample has a wide range, with the youngest organization being just two years old and the oldest 35 years. On average, the arts organizations in the sample have been operating for a decade, reflecting a mixture of both well-established institutions and relatively

newer ones. This diverse composition of organizations allows for a more comprehensive

examination of social media use within the arts and culture sector, considering varying levels of

organizational maturity, resources, and experiences in navigating the digital landscape.

Table 7. Characteristics of Nonprofit Organizations in the Sample

Organization type	Size (total assets) in USD	Location	Age in Years
Arts			
Visual Arts	150,000 – 200,000	GA	11
Printmaking	15,000 – 20,000	GA	16
Visual Arts	35,000 – 40,000	GA	9
Visual Arts	65.000 – 70,000	GA	12
Public, Society Benefit	25,000 – 30,000	GA	8
Printmaking	Unknown	NC	5
Visual Arts	35,000 – 40,000	GA	8
Arts and Culture	650,000 – 700,000	GA	35
Arts and Culture	Unknown	GA	2
Arts Education	Unknown	GA	3
Youth Organizing	Unknown	CA	2

Table 8. Characteristics of Nonprofit Organizations in the Sample (continued)

Visual Arts	150,000 – 200,000	GA	15
Visual Arts	65,000 – 70,000	GA	8
Arts and Culture	65,000 – 70,000	GA	12
Printmaking	15,000 – 20,000	GA	6
Human Services			
Employment, youth services	1,500,000 – 2,000,000	GA	27
International Development	450,000 – 500,000	GA	26

Within the human services group, the sample comprises two nonprofit organizations. These organizations are 26 and 27 years old and based in Georgia. To gather information on the organizations' characteristics, including organization type and asset size, data were collected from Guidestar. Guidestar, a trusted online repository maintained by Candid, serves as a comprehensive resource for accessing data on a vast number of nonprofit organizations across the United States. Through this platform, a wealth of information is made available, including the most recent IRS Form 990 filings, ruling year, principal officer or president's name, and subject area or core activities of each nonprofit organization. By leveraging data from Guidestar, this study ensures accurate and up-to-date information on the selected human services organizations, enabling a comprehensive analysis of their social media practices within the context of their organizational characteristics and assets. Table 8 provides an overview of the

organizations' total assets. This quantitative data, combined with the qualitative insights gathered

through interviews offers a thorough understanding of the relationship between organizational

characteristics, social media use, and perceived outcomes within the human services sector.

In general, the virtual interview questions centered on various aspects related to the roles

of communication managers within organizations. These questions explored their responsibilities

in utilizing social media, the extent of control they exert over the content shared on social media

platforms, the level of leadership and staff support they receive, the outcomes derived from

social media use, and the long-term benefits and drawbacks associated with using social media.

4.4 Findings

4.4.1 Sectoral Differences in Social Media Use and Outcomes

The main reason for incorporating the two human services organizations in this study's

sample was to understand the disparities in social media use among organizations based on

demographic type and mission. There were considerable differences in social media use across

the two subsectors, highlighting distinct incentives and outcomes associated with their

engagement in digital media. In general, arts organizations used social media to increase

visibility for their work, call to action, attract donations, increase event attendance, engage the

community, get feedback on their existing work, tell stories, conduct online events, and use it as

a tool for social action. In contrast, human services organizations used the platforms primarily to

direct individuals to available resources, which in this case, was funding for Emergency Rental

Assistance, other organizations with similar a mission of helping people during the coronavirus

pandemic, other services geared towards helping young people like food pantries in the

community, and youth programs.

Respondents from human services organizations reported that throughout the pandemic, these nonprofits encountered many difficulties. While some respondents from arts organizations had the option of "taking a break" for a short time during the pandemic, human service organizations were called upon by the federal government to administer ERA funding to their local communities because their mission was directly related to assisting those in need. During the pandemic, the two human service organizations also experienced difficulties with personnel recruitment and retention. Overall, they faced numerous internal challenges and lacked the time to make social media or communication strategy a priority. In stark contrast, arts nonprofits reported that they reaped more organizational benefits from social media use than the human services organizations in the sample. These benefits included increased opportunities to pursue the communication managers', expanded avenues for showcasing art online, and garnering national and international support for their mission, among others. These benefits will be explained in greater detail later in the essay.

4.4.2 Impact of Organizational and Individual Characteristics on Social Media Use and Adoption

The interview sample included a diverse group of nonprofit professionals, including three executive directors, three presidents, one fine art director, three board members, and five marketing and communication managers from arts organizations, and one president and one consultant from human services. To better understand the influence of organizational and individual level factors on managers' social media use, I posed questions around three key areas - the role of communication managers within the organization, their extent of control over social media content, and the involvement of managers in using social media insights to inform future events or strategies (see interview protocol for detailed questions).

There was minimal variation between the organizations in terms of leadership support and control over social media content since all managers held prominent positions within the nonprofits and had significant authority over social media content. This could also be a result of adopting snowball sampling - the communication manager from the organization being interviewed would have connections with managers from other organizations with comparable job positions.

There were a few notable challenges faced by arts nonprofit organizations relating to social media use.-The insight provided by a board member from a printmaking group highlights the challenges faced by smaller nonprofit organizations. Due to their limited size, the board member took on the responsibility of managing all social media content and had to quickly learn about the engagement patterns of the organization's target audience on social media platforms. While the social media interns were accountable for content creation, another board member noted that she was responsible for verifying the material before it was posted online. Consequently, the issue was not that the managers lacked authority; instead, the nonprofits were understaffed, leading managers in other roles to assume social media management responsibilities.

Regarding the use of social media tools, all the communication managers interviewed claimed to be active on various platforms, publishing events on Facebook, streaming live on Instagram, and hosting events on Facebook live. However, only a few managers reported having a structured social media plan or strategy calendar. Only four of the fifteen arts nonprofits indicated that they maintained social media calendars. Most of the remaining organizations described their social media tactics as "spontaneous" and "event-driven."

In contrast, among the human service organizations, one had a calendar but seldom used it, while the other lacked an implementation plan altogether. Although communication managers spent considerable time generating material and engaging with their stakeholders on social media, these activities did not follow a strategic plan. This indicates a lack of effort in both subsectors to apply the lessons learned or capitalize on social media insights to inform future events or organizational strategies.

Overall, these findings suggest that while managers within nonprofits possess significant control over social media content, there is a lack of structured planning and strategic utilization of social media platforms. These findings highlight the need for greater emphasis on developing social media plans and leveraging the gained knowledge and capital to inform future organizational strategies and events.

4.4.3 Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic

One of the questions inquired about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the respondents' operations, budget, and staffing requirements. Contrary to expectations, the arts nonprofit organizations reported experiencing several positive repercussions from the pandemic. One notable benefit was the availability of grants specifically aimed at compensating for the financial damage caused by the crisis. These grants provided much-needed support to sustain their operations during these challenging times. Additionally, the shift towards virtual platforms due to social distancing measures had unexpected advantages for arts nonprofits. The organizations found that they were able to reach a broader audience and raise awareness about their missions through increased online engagement. With more people turning to digital channels for entertainment and connection, the nonprofits had a unique opportunity to showcase

their work and connect with people who may not have been previously familiar with their initiatives.

The pandemic also created additional time and resources for communication managers to curate online content. With physical events and programs on hold, these managers could focus their efforts on developing and implementing innovative digital strategies. They explored new avenues for engagement, such as offering online classes through popular platforms like Instagram and Facebook live streaming. This allowed them to maintain a connection with their audience and provide valuable artistic experiences in a virtual format. The communication and marketing manager of one of the interviewed arts organizations shared a personal insight. She expressed that although her organization was established just before the pandemic hit in 2019, she viewed the crisis as an opportunity to embrace her personal and organizational "calling" in unprecedented ways. The challenging circumstances compelled her to think creatively and pursue innovative approaches to promote art for social justice and youth empowerment. She described the pandemic as a catalyst that propelled her and her organization towards success, opening up new avenues to fulfill their mission. Overall, despite facing numerous challenges , these organizations seized the opportunities presented by the crisis to further their goals and expand their reach.

However, and evidently, the pandemic caused certain challenges for arts nonprofits. One notable challenge was the financial implications of transitioning to online events. Monitoring the costs of online events (more people could watch programs for free and came to anticipate entirely free events from organizations), investing more time and employees in social media management, and transferring all operations online were among these obstacles. The executive director of one of the arts organizations focused on youth empowerment remarked that, due to

the pandemic's pervasiveness, it was critical and challenging to come up with engaging activities for the youth to prevent them from turning to crime and other negative paths. Despite these obstacles, it is noteworthy that all the arts nonprofits interviewed emphasized the significant opportunities they gained during the pandemic, which ultimately outweighed the challenges they faced. The ability to reach a wider audience, raise awareness about their missions, and explore new avenues for artistic expression were cited as transformative outcomes.

Neither human service organizations recognized any opportunities or positive developments during the pandemic. During the pandemic, many individuals required the assistance of these organizations. The nonprofits claimed that in addition to providing services quickly, they had to devote a substantial amount of time and resources to promoting the services to reach more individuals. Since many Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) applicants submitted their applications online, these nonprofits had to cope with a significant backlog of cases, erroneous or incomplete applications, and internet scammers posting false information. Overall, the human service organizations in the sample encountered a range of difficulties during the pandemic. Their focus revolved around responding to the immediate needs of individuals seeking assistance, addressing administrative challenges associated with increased demand, and navigating the online landscape while safeguarding against fraudulent activities. Their experiences highlight the critical role played by these organizations in times of crisis and the multifaceted nature of their work in ensuring the provision of essential services to those in need.

While the arts nonprofits found opportunities amidst the challenges, the human service organizations encountered a range of difficulties while ensuring the provision of essential services to those in need.

4.4.4 Social Media Use and Crowding Out

During the interviews, one particular question aimed to understand the gains and losses experienced by the organizations due to their use of social media. Interestingly, when it came to the impact of the pandemic, nonprofit arts and culture organizations displayed a significantly higher appreciation for social media tools compared to their counterparts in human services. They shared the numerous benefits they had reaped from using social media platforms.

Among the advantages highlighted by the nonprofit arts and culture organizations were the ability to attract renowned artists from both national and international spheres, heightened support for and better comprehension of their mission, a broader and more diverse audience, increased opportunities for collaborations with other organizations, and the ease of marketing their programs. One board member of a printmaking organization even stated that social media tools allowed their organization to "stand tall and remain strong" despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Another executive director emphasized how social media facilitated a shorter learning curve in understanding an organization's objectives, as it enabled real-time interaction with its postings.

However, along with the gains, there were also losses identified by these organizations. One prominent loss was the investment of organizational time that could have been directed toward other priorities. Additionally, they missed opportunities for in-person networking and personal connections with stakeholders. Communication managers involved in social media management also reported experiencing digital fatigue due to the constant demand and pressure of online engagement. Furthermore, the organizations acknowledged the inherent limitations of social media, such as the potential loss of nuance when presenting art and the ever-changing nature of online platforms, where an organization's image could swiftly shift.

In reflecting on the gains and losses associated with social media, these organizations recognized the multifaceted nature of their digital presence, embracing the advantages while remaining cognizant of the challenges and complexities accompanying their online efforts.

Among the human services nonprofits, the benefits derived from using social media were disappointingly minimal. While they acknowledged the potential to raise awareness about their services and gain valuable social media insights, these organizations voiced concerns regarding the dissemination of information about financial assistance through social media platforms. They revealed that such practices opened a gateway for internet scams, with fraudulent people creating "fake profiles" that posed as legitimate organizations offering Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA). Unfortunately, there were people who hastily reacted to online information and fell victim to these scams, demonstrating a level of naivety in believing everything they encountered on the internet.

In addition to these challenges, one nonprofit's president expressed the difficulty of maintaining a consistent online presence for those in need while also attending to the personal traumas experienced by staff members. Balancing the demands of daily operations and supporting vulnerable populations presented a significant burden for these human services nonprofits.

In stark contrast, the arts nonprofit groups reaped many benefits from their use of social media. The advantages ranged from increased visibility for their artistic endeavors to enhanced engagement with their target audiences. These organizations were able to harness the power of social media platforms more effectively, leveraging their potential for creative expression and connection-building.

In summary, the discrepancy in the benefits derived from social media use was pronounced between arts nonprofits and human services organizations. While the former thrived in leveraging social media platforms to further their missions, the latter encountered various obstacles that hindered their ability to fully capitalize on these digital channels.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

This study contributes to a critical ever-evolving scholarly discourse about the use of social media by charitable organizations. As far as my knowledge extends, this is the first study that delves into the realm of arts and culture nonprofits by engaging in direct interviews with communication managers steering these organizations. Overall, the purpose of this study was to better understand the organizational outcomes that arts nonprofits achieve through their use of social media, as well as the impact of individual and organizational level determinants on social media adoption and use. In my investigation, I've identified three noteworthy findings.

To begin with, social media brings tangible advantages to arts and culture nonprofits, according to the communication managers. They see a range of benefits, starting from simple program promotion to more significant outcomes like attracting talented individuals from across the nation and even internationally. It also helps improve the marketing of their organization's mission and reach a more diverse audience. However, it seems that not much has changed in terms of strategy since the last comprehensive study on how arts charities use social media (Thomson et al., 2013). In my conversations with these managers, it became clear that social media platforms are seen as catalysts that support other organizational activities. Sadly, their actual benefits to the organizations are often overlooked or underestimated, either intentionally or unintentionally.

A secondary observation is that the findings challenge certain causal speculations surrounding the scholarly understanding of social media capital. Guo and Saxton (2020) put forth the notion that charitable organizations must first accumulate social media capital before using it to achieve desired organizational outcomes. However, the reality is that 1. organizations are using social media tools and simultaneously reaping the benefits they provide, and 2. they may be using it without actively considering it as a long-term strategy to attain organizational outcomes. Based on my interviews with the managers, it became apparent that their approach was primarily event centric. They tended to post and engage in live classes, without dedicating significant thought to overall reflections on the gains and losses incurred. Furthermore, there appeared to be a lack of systematic data collection that would enable them to track and analyze changes over time in social media use. This observation calls for further scholarly research using primary data to refine existing conceptual models. By delving deeper into this phenomenon, researchers can better understand the dynamics of social media capital and its impact on organizational outcomes. Moreover, this finding is a compelling call to action for nonprofit organizations to take their social media strategy seriously. By recognizing the potential of social media capital and harnessing it effectively, these organizations can leverage social media platforms to achieve their desired organizational outcomes.

The second significant finding revolves around the little evidence of factors that influence use of social media at both the organizational and individual levels that influence the use of social media, as reported by the interviewed organizations. While one might be inclined to view this as an absence of significant finding s, it actually sheds light on the lack of strategic approaches used by arts organizations when it comes to social media use. Surprisingly, very few organizations have established dedicated teams specifically focused on managing their social

media presence. Consequently, it becomes challenging to establish a clear understanding of the relationship between job roles, the level of support provided for these roles in using social media, technological competencies, and the actual use of these platforms.

Until more nonprofit organizations develop robust strategies and allocate specialized positions for social media use, understanding the intricate dynamics between these factors remains a complex endeavor. This finding underscores the need for arts organizations to proactively address their social media strategies and invest in dedicated personnel to effectively harness the potential benefits of these digital platforms.

Finally, the interviews shed light on the abundance of resources available to arts nonprofits that can be leveraged to harness social media capital. A significant majority of these organizations reported using social media daily, which was not always the case for human service organizations. The latter often found themselves consumed by urgent matters and crises due to the nature of their mission and the vulnerable populations they served. This disparity in social media use between arts nonprofits and human service organizations is encouraging news for the former, as it establishes a solid foundation for managers and scholars to develop more effective strategies for social media adoption and use. In the case of human service nonprofits, this observation may underscore the need to reassess their resource allocation, conduct a strategic evaluation of their assets, including time, finances, and personnel dedicated to social media. It is crucial to ensure that social media is being used strategically to maximize the benefits derived from it.

The practical implications derived from this research carry significant weight for organizations. It goes beyond emphasizing the importance of strategic development and the creation of social media calendars; it highlights these strategic tools as integral components of

the overall communication plan. By incorporating these aspects, organizations can effectively align their social media efforts with their broader goals and objectives.

Furthermore, the wealth of self-reported, perceived positive effects resulting from social media use presents a compelling case for organizations to allocate dedicated human and financial resources to this specific area. Recognizing the potential impact and benefits of social media engagement empowers organizations to make informed decisions about resource allocation. By prioritizing and investing in social media, organizations can maximize the potential for positive outcomes and effectively leverage these digital platforms to enhance their mission and reach a wider audience.

This research also underscores the need for organizations to adopt a proactive approach to social media. Rather than viewing it as an optional or peripheral element, organizations should recognize it as a vital tool for communication and engagement. By embracing social media as a core aspect of their operations, organizations can tap into its full potential and capitalize on its opportunities.

In summary, the practical implications of this research emphasize the integration of social media strategy into the overall communication plan. It encourages organizations to allocate appropriate resources and prioritize social media efforts based on the recognized positive effects it can yield. By doing so, organizations can position themselves for success in an increasingly digital landscape and effectively engage with their target audience, furthering their mission and objectives.

Chapter V. Conclusion

This study has offered insights into arts and culture organizations' use of social media platforms for different organizational outcomes. It offers several contributions to the literature. On the theoretical side, this study has provided different angles on the process by which organizations capture and use social media capital. On the empirical side, this study tests the social media capital framework for the first time, performs the first social media nonprofit message-level analysis during the coronavirus pandemic and the first qualitative study aimed at understanding the organizational and manager-level motivations to use social media by arts nonprofits. In addition, there were very few studies on nonprofit arts organizations' use of social media. This study has tested multiple theories and frameworks on this subsector to draw similarities and differences with other nonprofit subsectors.

The first essay aimed at finding the relationship between social media capital and the overall organizational outcome of total individual contribution. The research on nonprofit organizations' social media use started by asking simple questions relating to their use, then transitioned to a deeper examination of factors that affected adoption and use. Recently, scholars have started asking holistic questions relating to social media's overall contribution to organizational outcomes. This is the first study conducted in this direction. This essay uses Saxton and Guo's (2020) social media capital framework for the first time. The framework asserts a causal relationship between social media activity and network (collectively called social media capital) and organizational outcomes. The empirical analysis in this essay found that Twitter activity and network are positively correlated to overall individual contributions, even when controlling for indicators of website reach and strength, organizations' size, capital

campaigning efforts, and fundraising efforts. These findings support both frameworks used in the study – the social network theory of giving and social media capital framework.

This study offers substantial support for the framework that social media investment by organizations - publishing, participating, and acquiring friends - does have real effects on organizational outcomes. Even more compelling is the fact that typical fundraising efforts and capital campaigns, as well as website reach characteristics have no influence on total individual contributions. These findings provide strong support for the use of social media by nonprofit organizations, particularly in the current era in which most people are constantly connected to the internet and have greater access than ever before. This investigation is a small step toward using the novel social media capital framework. Future studies should develop more sophisticated ways to capture social media capital for organizations, perhaps by collecting data for more social media-based variables *and* from multiple social media platforms to continuously test the framework. Additionally, researchers should examine the relationship between social media capital and other organizational outcomes – some suggestions are staff retention, volunteer participation, and event attendance. As a body of these studies underline the relationship between social media capital and organizational outcomes, we will also be able to persuade nonprofit practitioners to invest in social media.

The second essay explores how arts and culture nonprofits use social media *and* how communication strategies have changed during the coronavirus pandemic. Studies on the message level analysis of nonprofits' use of social media have consistently identified unidirectional, informational messages. This study's objectives were to examine if arts nonprofit organizations are distinct from other subsectors in general, and if they use unique messaging strategies during the coronavirus pandemic. To answer the research question, I analyzed

Facebook messages sent by 142 arts nonprofits before (November 2019) and during (November 2020) the COVID-19 pandemic at the message level. In general, pre-covid messages conform to the themes established in the literature - the majority of messages were unidirectional and did not attempt to solicit information from followers. However, I discovered three noteworthy changes in the messages sent during COVID: a. organizations posted more; b. organizations sent more messages aimed at building networks and communities; and c. organizations sent more messages focused on providing comfort and services to their constituents during the pandemic.

This research has several implications. These findings present a compelling argument for scholars to revise existing social media message frameworks and perform more research that examines specific subsectors in greater depth. They also provide a new study avenue: how do organizations alter their communication strategies during abnormal events? I have explored social media messages during a pandemic, but future researchers can expand the scope to include political unrest and natural disasters to find broader insights into changes in organizational communication strategies. For practitioners, these results offer a strong case for stepping away from unplanned, spontaneous, and event-driven social media posts to more strategic communication.

Finally, the third essay goes to the source. Existing research on the use of social media by nonprofit organizations rely primarily on secondary data from social media pages and financial documents. The purpose of this essay was to get a full understanding of the use of social media by arts nonprofits, including the implications of organizational and individual level influences on use, as well as the overall results organizations receive from using social media. As a supplement to the second essay's consideration of the message level, this essay also examines the use of social media platforms by communication managers during the pandemic. To the best of my

knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the social media use of arts nonprofits through direct interviews with organizations.

By interviewing the communication managers of arts nonprofits, this essay finds that although arts nonprofits' social media strategies are spontaneous and event driven, they report great benefits from social media use. Arts organizations use the tools to increase their visibility, urge their followers to support their mission, increase event attendance, engage their community, get feedback on their work, tell stories, and conduct online events. In general, social media use yields concrete organizational benefits. In contrast, the communication managers did not report having a social media use strategy, despite the organizations having plenty of resources to leverage social media capital.

The third essay's findings complement those of the first and second essays. Non-profit arts organizations have access to social media capital, report several benefits from social media use even during the pandemic, and, most crucially, conduct a significant number of operations and events online. For the third essay, I also interviewed the communication managers of two human services firms for comparative purposes. Human services organizations did not report as many benefits as arts organizations. Because of the nature of their mission, the human services organizations in the sample reported having to provide more services during the pandemic and facing more drawbacks from social media use such as spreading of misinformation and digital fatigue among staff members. These findings further strengthen the case for the strategic use of social media by arts nonprofits.

This collection of essays points to changing times. Previously, we saw the public as "customers" of organizations, from whom they would obtain goods or services (Thomas, 2012). The internet has blurred the barriers between the public and organizations, involving the public

in the co-production of organizational outcomes and holding organizations accountable for their activities. Organizations have no choice but to be serious about their online communication strategies in order to succeed in these chronically online times. This requires a thorough evaluation of the public's participation in the organizations.

These concepts are especially relevant for non-profits. Nonprofits are far less isolated from their publics than the other two sectors since they are the "third" sector tasked with filling the delivery gaps left by their business and government counterparts. This reality has several policy ramifications. As nonprofit organizations communicate with their followers more frequently and develop techniques to incorporate them into their organizations, they are more likely to observe tangible organizational results. As nonprofits invest more resources in developing strategic communication plans utilizing social media, these tactics are more likely to be adopted by other organizations and subsectors, attracting public attention, and possibly funding from private and public donors.

Apart from funding, social media hosts a wealth of analytics that can be used by organizations for decision-making. Having access to detailed data on event attendance, number and types of stakeholders visiting and interacting with the social media pages, and the types of donors and amounts of donations, for instance, will strongly support the development of communication strategy devoted to social media use. Additionally, as organizations collect more social media information, they will face the need to develop the infrastructure and policies around data protection, social media safety, and appropriate use of social media for organizational outcomes. Because nonprofit organizations have comparatively more access to social media capital, it is possible that investing in social media will make them more qualified at co-production of knowledge and services with the government and private sectors. Another

strong implication for social media research is to inform the social media use and adoption by public sector organizations, especially for stakeholder engagement. Many citizens connect with public sector organizations on a regular basis to express their concerns, hold elected officials accountable, and receive access to recorded public hearings. Stakeholder participation in the public sector significantly informs democracy and creates an informed public. The strategic use of social media to generate organizational outcomes like increased number of people attending public hearings via social media or more citizens submitting infrastructure inquiries is a potential research area that has important positive implications for the public sector.

Appendix A. Robustness Check Table

Table A. Robustness Check: Models Containing 2018 Linear Growth Social Media Data

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Social media capital theory			
Tweets 2018	0.00013***	0.000046***	.000048***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Friends 2018	0.000046	0.000036	.00003
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Followers 2018	0.000006	0.0000001	0.0000012
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Social network theory of giving			
Price of giving (log)		-0.03	-0.07
		(0.19)	(0.19)
Fundraising efficiency (log)		0.10	0.11
		(0.07)	(0.07)
Organizations' age		0.00	-0.00
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Age*Fundraising efficiency		-0.00	-0.00
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Organization size (Total assets in (log))		0.51***	0.49***
		(0.04)	(0.04)
Total number of employees		0.00**	0.00**
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Capital campaigning		0.13	0.13
		(0.21)	(0.21)
Web traffic			-0.00
			(0.00)
Referring domains			-0.00
			(0.00)
Website age			-0.00
			(0.00)
Intercept	10.86***	4.03***	3.75***
	(0.11)	(0.50)	(0.51)
Total R^2 (%)	0.20	0.59	0.60
Adjusted R^2 (%)	0.19	0.57	0.58

Appendix B. Interview Protocol

Interviewer: Richa Adhikari

1. <u>Script prior to the interview</u>:

I'd like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I have mentioned to you before, my study seeks to understand how communication managers, which includes anyone from communication interns to communication directors at nonprofit organizations, affect the social media adoption and use in communicating with and engaging stakeholders. The aim of this research is to document exactly how communication managers curate and post content online for the purpose of communicating with and engaging with stakeholders. Our interview today will last approximately forty minutes during which I will be asking you about your role at this nonprofit, your experience with social media platforms, and the different strategies that you use related to using social media to communicate with stakeholders.

2. <u>Request to record</u>:

Are you ok with me recording (or not) our conversation today?

● Yes

● No

If yes:

● Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no:

● Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.

3. State that the opinions you will/might express are your opinions and not the institution's (Georgia State University's)

Interview questions:

1. Before we get into the details, could you describe your job role at [organization]?

    - Your role

    - Your role in communication and marketing

    - Your role in using social media

2. How much do you use social media day to day? How much do you use social media tools compared to websites? What are some of the purposes for which you use social media?

3. Who has control over the internet platform content?

    - Do you have a dedicated staff that oversees and is responsible for publishing the content for the social media and website?

    - If so, are they the same staff?

    - What is the delegation of tasks like? Is it fixed or changing?

4. What organizational outcomes do you gain from using social media?

5. How do you use insights gained from social media to plan future events or social media strategies?

- Provide an example of how you used lessons learned from social media to shape future programs or activities in the organization.

6. How has the pandemic affected your social media use?

- What were some of the challenges that you faced in terms of using digital tools during the pandemic?

- Did you have to prioritize anything when everything had to shift online?

- Did the pandemic (and resulting online operations shift) affect the budget you used for social media? Did it affect staff hiring needs?

7. Crowding out: What have you gained and lost from social media use?

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Richa has teaching experience at Georgia State University, where she instructed introductory courses in nonprofit management and evaluation in public policy at the undergraduate level. Her expertise led her to be invited as a guest speaker, delivering a lecture on responsible data utilization and effective data visualization within local government, to a data analysis class at Georgia State University.