

The Impact of Social Media on the Public Sector Employees in Gondar City, Ethiopia

Seid Hassen Hussien^{1*}, Nurhusien Husien Yesuf², Barbra Teater³, and Biset Yalew Abera⁴

¹Department of Social Work, University of Gondar, Gondar, Ethiopia

²Gondar Zuria Woreda Administration, Gondar, Ethiopia

³Department of Social Work, College of Staten Island, NY, USA

⁴Department of Sociology, University of Gondar, Gondar, Ethiopia

*Corresponding Author: shasen47@gmail.com, +251920794216

The use of social media in the work place can both lead to time wastage and decreased productivity or can enhance work performance. Using a mixed-method explanatory-sequential design, this research provided an examination of the impact of social media on the job performance of public sector employees in Gondar City, Ethiopia. The quantitative data were gathered through an author-constructed questionnaire ($N = 243$) that measured the frequency and duration of social media usage during work hours, and the self-reported influence of social media on the employee's job performance. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews ($N = 8$) to gain further insights into the employees' perceptions and experiences regarding social media usage at work. The study found that employees use

social media for various purposes, including information exchange, job performance enhancement, and entertainment. The results showed that most employees perceived social media positively, while a quarter perceived it negatively. The findings suggest organizations should prioritize leveraging the full potential of social media usage and develop strategies to address concerns, which could include providing training on responsible social media usage, implementing guidelines aligned with organizational goals, and encouraging employees to share their expertise and engage with customers or other stakeholder groups.

Keywords: social media, employee, job performance, public sector, Ethiopia

Involved in various social media platforms and other technological aspects for social, economic, and political needs has become the main communication method for most people within the past decade (Matthews, 2010) with an estimated 5.3 billion social media users worldwide (Statista, 2023). According to Cao and Ali (2018), the availability of various social media applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp are playing a crucial role in human interaction by employees within government and non-government organizations. Advances in digital technology have spurred compelling adjustments in how individuals engage, communicate, examine,

The Impact of Social Media on the Public Sector Employees in Gondar City, Ethiopia and enhance knowledge. Currently, it permeates nearly every aspect of people's lives, from purchasing and banking to communication and training, among other desires (Tariq et al., 2012), yet little research has been conducted on the use and influence of social media within the Ethiopian context. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of social media on the job performance of public sector employees in Gondar City, Ethiopia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Africa, the use of the internet has evolved rapidly with around 570 million internet users in 2022 with the number of social media users also rapidly growing with around 384 million users (Statista 2024). In the context of Ethiopia, the Datareportal.com (2023) showed that there were 20.86 million internet users at the start of 2023 and the internet penetration stood at 16.7%. Ethiopia is home to 6.40 million social media users in January 2023, which equates to 5.1% of the total population. The rapid expansion of this medium has prompted a number of public authorities and institutions to adopt social media tools in order to supplement inquiries and services. Thus, several top leaders, including the Prime Minister and other cabinet members, regularly use various social media networks such as Facebook, Telegram, and Twitter to interact with citizens. Today, the socio-economic and political impact of social media is becoming increasingly visible. Many Ethiopians are now using social media platforms to communicate and discuss with high-level and local government authorities.

The driving factors for the massive adoption of social media are its regularly ubiquitous access, comfort, capability, and flexibility (Schroeder et al., 2010). These elements have made the adoption of social media very smooth and have incredibly advanced people's lives by producing exceptional ways of creating and sharing information. This progressive adoption of social media could be attributed to gaining current knowledge, comfort with the latest technology, and convenient accessibility to these tools (Vorderer et al., 2016), which is supported by Uses and Gratification Theory. Uses and Gratification Theory, developed by Elihu et al. (1973), assumes that individuals are active in choosing what media to consume, and are aware of their reasons for selecting their choice of media. Individuals will use and engage in social media if their needs are

fulfilled and they experience gratification in doing so, which could be in the form of social fulfillment, recognition, entertainment, or access to information and knowledge.

Due to the increased use of social media, governmental and non-governmental institutions are feeling the need to be present on several social media sites. In light of the modern-day utilization of ICT (information and communication technology), the splendor of social media networks cannot be denied or left out. Whether employers want to acknowledge this or not, people are logging in and spending an average of two hours a day on various social media sites (Sigerson et al., 2018), thus, potentially using social media to fulfill personal and professional needs.

With the huge expansion of social media in the day-to-day lives of people, a study of its influences has become a research agenda (Liang & Turban, 2011). Therefore, several studies have been conducted to identify the influence of social media on users' daily activities. In this regard, Fusi and Feeney (2018) noted that employees use social media to enhance their capacity and job performance. They argued that since employees use social media for their personal and official activities at the workplace, they gain more knowledge and increase their abilities related to their work. Consequently, social media use at the workplace can reduce employees' workload and increase their usefulness for their institution and customers, thus, supporting the use of social media to provide enjoyment, social interaction, and information as indicated under Uses and Gratification Theory (McQuail, 2010).

Thus, today, social media usage is a crucial factor in aspects of employee job performance. Van Zoonen and colleagues (2017) described the advent of social media as gradually becoming widely accepted and serving as a major tool for employee tasks in their workplace. However, enhancement in employee overall performance is the primary issue facing government institutions in the modern-day socio-economic and political environment (Khan et al., 2014). Due to its increased popularity, there are growing concerns over the possible influence of social media use on the job performance of public sector employees. Thus, there have been several debates on various social media platforms about its influence on society and specifically on employees' job performance, for example, to what extent has the use and gratification of the social media become more weighted

toward personal use and fulfilment over the use of social media to more equally benefit individuals' job activities, duties, and performance.

Furthermore, there has been an argument that social media technologies have become a major cause of disruptions that redirect employees' attention from their 'actual' work and extend the limits of work into private life domains (Van Zoonen *et al.*, 2017). Thus, there continue to be discrepancies in research findings as to the positive or negative impacts of social media usage in the work place (Asfaw & Mekonnen, 2021; Moqbel *et al.*, 2013; Jafar *et al.* 2019; Shami *et al.*, 2014; Van Zoonen *et al.*, 2017) with some studies suggesting promising opportunities for social media engagement and others suggesting a negative influence on social media usage. There is no conclusive evidence from these studies to identify its influence on employee job performance.

In Ethiopia, various studies have been conducted on the influences of social networking sites, covering several topics ranging from academic performance to ethical issues (Wondimu, 2015), to using social media to share knowledge among healthcare clinicians (Asfaw & Mekonnen, 2021), to their use for public relations (Nigussie, 2019). On the contrary, the number of studies carried out to examine the influences of social media on public sector employees' job performance is considered zero or very few. Some of the studies on social media use and its influence were carried out by Mesfin (2019), whose main intention was to examine the impact of social media on the marketing performances of commercial banks in Ethiopia. Mehari (2017) focused on the use of social media in public diplomacy by conducting a case study of the Ethiopian Diplomatic Missions' Facebook use, and Baheru (2017) focused on determinants of the effectiveness of social media usage. Yet, a gap remains in the current literature which is that none of the studies directly addressed the influence of social media on employee job performance.

Thus, further investigations on the potential value of social media's contribution to the job performance of public sector employees are necessary. Also, as far as the researcher's attempt is concerned, there are no other studies conducted in the study area regarding the issue of social media influence on the job performance of public sector employees in Ethiopia. Based on the study gaps identified and the application of Uses and Gratification Theory, this study aimed to answer the follow research questions:

1. How often and in what ways do public sector employees spend time on social media networks?
2. What are the social media influences on the job performances of public sector employees?

METHODS

A mixed-method explanatory-sequential design (QUANT → QUAL) was employed to answer the above research questions and to provide an opportunity to investigate comprehensive outlooks and in-depth explorations on the specific outcomes and effects of social media that cannot be completely understood by conducting either qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Prior to the commencement of this study, ethical approval was obtained from the [Blinded for Review]. Study participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent prior to taking part in the study, which included the voluntary nature of the study, the right to withdraw at any time, and the ways in which confidentiality was to be maintained (e.g., all names were changed to pseudonyms).

Setting and Sample

The sample for this study consisted of public sector and government employees from various sectors in Gondar City, Ethiopia. This study focused on the following four public sector pools with a total of 620 employees working across these institutions: City Administration Pool ($n = 130$); City Civil Service Pool ($n = 160$); City Agriculture Pool ($n = 210$); and City Micro & Small Scale Enterprise Office ($n = 120$). For the quantitative portion of the study, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from each of the four public sector pools. Slovin's (1960) formula was used to determine the sample size from the total population ($N = 243$) and from each of the four public sector pools: City Administration Pool ($n = 51$); City Civil Service Pool ($n = 63$); City Agriculture Pool ($n = 82$); and City Micro & Small Scale Enterprise Office ($n = 47$). For the qualitative portion of the study, a purposive sampling approach was employed (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) to recruit individuals from the four public sector pools. Relying on the existence of data saturation, a final sample size consisted of eight individuals.

Instrumentation

This study utilized a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data, as well as an in-depth interviews to obtain further elaborations and explanations for the qualitative components of the study. The author-constructed quantitative questionnaire was devised based on the Uses and Gratification Theory to examine the extent to which social media can be used to gratify and meet needs within the workplace among a larger sample of public sector employees. The questionnaire began with two questions that asked for participants' source and use of social media, three demographic questions of gender, age, and educational status. The questionnaire then turned to a series of 12 statements on social media's influence on job performance where participants indicated the extent to which they strongly disagreed to strongly agreed to each statement (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree) (see Table 3 for the list of statements). The statements were constructed to capture the extent to which the use of social media was used to satisfy a need, provide gratification, or where social media had become problematic.

The qualitative interview schedule consisted of the following questions to further elaborate on the quantitative data and findings and to provide more nuance in how social media impacts job performance: Which social media platforms do you use the most? What are your primary purposes to use social media? How do you explain the influence of social media for your job performance? Does the social media usage influence your job performance negatively? How does social media use affect your job performance? and What kinds of measurement should be taken to enhance the benefits of social media and to reduce its negative impacts on your job performances?

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to explore the percentages and frequencies of responses to each question from the survey questionnaire. Content analysis as used for the qualitative data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) where each participant response was read and collated with like responses from other participants. The existing words or phrases within each participants' responses were examined for latent meanings and themes across the responses in relation to the positive and negative influences of social on employees' productivity. The content analysis consisted of the following steps as detailed by Lune and

Berg (2017) where the data were organized to read, each response was read and re-read to generate initial codes, the initial codes were reviewed, collated into similar codes, and transferred into categorical labels or themes of positive and negative influences.

Trustworthiness of the qualitative data was considered in the following ways. First, credibility was enhanced by providing direct quotes from the participants to support the qualitative findings and themes and by debriefing with colleagues on the data analysis. Second, dependability and credibility were further enhanced through member checking where the data collection and initial analyses were discussed with participants by way of debriefing. If the participants found any part of the data or analyses to be inaccurate, it was deleted and/or adjusted to the satisfaction of the participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS

A total of 243 participants completed the survey questionnaire. The majority of the participants were male (73.6%) and were between the ages of 26 – 30 years (69.2%) with an educational status of holding an undergraduate degree (79.4%). Table 1 provides the full sample demographics.

Table 1: Sample Demographics (N= 243)

Variable	% (f)
Gender	
Male	73.6% (179)
Female	26.4% (64)
Age	
20 – 25	7.8% (19)
26 – 30	69.2% (168)
31 – 35	23.0% (56)
Educational Status	
Diploma	14.4% (35)
Undergraduate Degree	79.4% (193)
Masters	6.2% (15)

Quantitative Results

Social Media Use. Table 2 provides details of the source of access to social media usage and the daily time spent using social media. As the table indicates, 69.1% of the participants’ source of access to social media was through Wi-Fi and mobile data networks, indicating the employees use social media in their workplace and in their homes or other areas. Other participants (30.9%) use social media only in their workplace because they use these media tools through Wi-Fi internet access that is available only in their office setting. This finding suggests that nearly one-third of employees rely on their workplace’s Wi-Fi network to access social media as they are limiting their usage to the office environment. Although, it may be worth nothing that this dependency on office Wi-Fi may be due to restricted access or personal preference by using social media during working hours. Additionally, the largest percentage of participants (40.3%) reported spending between 3 – 4 hours a day on social media, followed by 35.8% who reported spending greater than four hours a day on social media.

Table 2: Social Media Use (N= 243)

Variable	% (f)
Source	
Wi-Fi	30.9% (75)
Wi-Fi + Mobile Networks	69.1% (168)
Daily Time Spent	
1 – 2 hours a day	23.9% (58)
3 – 4 hours a day	40.3% (98)
> 4 hours a day	35.8% (87)

Social Media’s Influence on Employee Job Performance. Table 3 provides a list of statements gauging social media’s influence on the participants’ job performance and provides the percentage and frequency of responses from Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree. Overall, the majority of participants (74.1%) either agreed or strongly agreed that social media had a positive influence on their job performance with 21.8% of participants disagreeing with this statement. The extent to which social media use influenced the participants’ job performance varied by the activity. For example, only 20.1% either agreed

or strongly agreed that the information obtained from social media enhanced their job performance, and 29.6% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that social media was used to share best practices and experiences with other colleagues. Where social media appeared to be more beneficial was in helping the participants to get access to updated professional materials (68.3%) and helps participants to easily exchange various ideas with colleagues and office executives (97.1%). Despite these benefits, the majority of participants (64.6%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that social media make their work environment easy, fast, and responsive.

Table 3 also reports the ways in which the participants viewed social media negatively on their job performance. Only 28% of participants reported that social media had a negative influence on their job performance. The majority (95.5%) of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed that social media distracted them from their job activities with only 21.8% agreeing that they spent an excessive amount of time on social media that subsequently affects their working effort and time. Conversely, 80.6% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that social media affects their social interaction with colleagues and family, with 46.5% of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing to their use of social media leading to non-professional and unethical activities, yet 63.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their use of social media leads to internet addiction.

Table 3: Social Media’s Influence on Employee Job Performance (N= 243)

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree % (f)</i>	<i>Disagree % (f)</i>	<i>Neutral % (f)</i>	<i>Agree % (f)</i>	<i>Strongly Agree % (f)</i>
<i>Social media positively influences my job performance.</i>	0% (0)	21.8% (53)	4.1% (10)	62.6% (152)	11.5% (28)
<i>I use information obtained from social media to enhance my job performance.</i>	1.2% (3)	77.4% (188)	1.2% (3)	18.9% (46)	1.2% (3)
<i>I use social media to share best practices and experiences with other colleagues.</i>	1.2% (3)	67.9% (165)	1.2% (3)	28.4% (69)	1.2% (3)
<i>Social media helps me to get access to updated professional materials.</i>	0% (0)	31.7% (77)	0% (0)	62.1% (151)	6.2% (15)
<i>Social media helps me to easily exchange various ideas with colleagues and office executives.</i>	0% (0)	2.9% (7)	0% (0)	89.3% (217)	7.8% (19)
<i>Social media makes my work environment easy, fast and responsive.</i>	1.2% (3)	63.4% (154)	31.7% (77)	3.7% (9)	0% (0)
<i>Social media negatively influences my job performance.</i>	1.2% (3)	53.9% (131)	16.9% (41)	28.0% (68)	0% (0)
<i>Social media distracts me from my job activities.</i>	11.5 % (28)	84.0% (204)	1.6% (4)	2.9% (68)	0% (0)
<i>I spent excessive time on social media that affects my working effort and time.</i>	5.3% (13)	67.9% (165)	4.9% (12)	21.8% (53)	0% (0)
<i>Social media affects my social interaction with colleagues and family.</i>	0% (0)	14.1% (34)	5.3% (13)	69.1% (168)	11.5% (28)
<i>Social media leads me to non-professional and unethical activities.</i>	4.1% (10)	38.7% (94)	10.7% (26)	42.8% (104)	3.7% (9)
<i>Social media leads me to internet addiction.</i>	2.5% (6)	32.5% (79)	1.2% (3)	62.6% (152)	1.2% (3)

Qualitative Results

Perception of the Influence of Social Media on Job Performance. The in-depth interviews provided further detail and more nuance on employee's perception of the influences of social media on their job performance that could help to further explain the quantitative findings. The qualitative findings fell into two major categories: positive influences; and negative influences. The employees who perceived the positive influences of social media on their job performance believed that it enhanced communication and collaboration with colleagues, enabled quick access to information, and provided opportunities for professional networking. On the other hand, employees who perceived the negative influence of social media expressed concerns about distractions, decreased productivity, and potential privacy breaches that can occur due to its use during work hours. Overall, these findings highlight the varied perspectives among public sector employees regarding the impact of social media on their job performance.

As with the quantitative findings, most of the in-depth interview participants perceived that social media positively influenced their job performances and public sectors. They used these media tools to quickly adjust and organize various activities, such as preparing meetings, posting their daily major activities, making various announcements like job openings, and passing on orders. Consequently, their tasks have become much easier and faster than ever before. Additionally, social media platforms help employees share those messages with many staff members at the same time and can get rapid feedback from other staff members as well as from other people. More importantly, one of the in-depth interview participants (P3) articulates his perception of the influences of social media as follows:

I think the current social media networks create a good opportunity for public sector employees. It not only introduces us to new technology but also becomes a means of communication to announce our daily activities and current issues. It helps us to give information, to rectify the falsified information, and to get prompt and up-to-date information. I recalled that before the introduction of social media, when our manager needed to send certain information to us, he or she would use files or letters, which caused information delays. But now, through these media, managers

can send various messages that reach us immediately and are shared among the entire staff.

The above direct quote asserts that public sector employees' social media usage plays a pivotal role in their job performance as well as in the function of their institutions. Social media creates important communication platforms for the public sector and its employees to introduce their activities directly to their customers through their private and institutional pages. Of course, based on the service delivery system, public institutions are far from their people. But social media creates a chance to narrow this gap by enabling the information flow to flow smoothly in two ways. Additionally, these employees and institutions can get immediate and concrete feedback directly from the people who help enhance or correct their performances. In general, social media has played an important role by making communication faster among employees and creating a smooth relationship with their customers. Furthermore, social media platforms allow public institutions to reach a wider audience and engage with individuals who may not have access to traditional communication channels. This inclusivity fosters transparency and accountability, as citizens can actively participate in discussions and hold institutions accountable for their actions. Ultimately, social media has revolutionized the way public institutions interact with their constituents, promoting a more democratic and responsive governance system.

Furthermore, the qualitative results showed that among the Woreda public institutions, especially Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, and Imo, are the most popular and widely used by the employees. These employees use these tools to accomplish various activities that enhance their job performance through their smartphones, laptops, or institutions' desktops. Regarding this, one of the in-depth interview participants (P8) revealed that:

Yes, of course, I use social media to get various updated materials that help enhance my job career. In addition to this, I use these tools to exchange and get various best practices and work experiences from other woreda and zones. In my follow-up, these tools help to maintain the employees' entire relationship. For instance, if some employees get concerned about something wrong in our sector, they can easily share the difficulty with us, and then we take a look at how the

issue will be handled in a quick time. It is our responsibility to know the issue before it affects our reputation and destroys the image of our institution.

The above direct quote and experience illustrates that public institutions have become much more practical than before. Social media helps employees and their public institutions share best practices and experiences with other employees who work in other areas; thereby, it enables collaboration and partnerships among the employees as well as the institutions. The current social media networks allow employees to work in environments safe for collaboration. It also helps to cut the burden of transportation and communication costs, mainly at institutions in far-flung locales. Besides, employees also use these media to promote and build the image of their institutions through various engagements.

In addition to the above responses, most of the employees perceived that the advances of social media enable them to report on what they do daily by using short messages on these tools. These messages are shared via internal groups that bring together both employees and employers. Also, social media has helped notably in organizational management by reducing the variety of legitimate documents scanned and dispatched via different transportation means. Moreover, social media plays a particular role in some of the specific job positions, such as the Public Relations Departments of the Woreda Communication Office, and its employees directly depend on these tools. They primarily use Facebook and Telegram to announce or post in their timelines about Woreda's major activities daily and to seek the communities' feelings and feedback on the current Woreda governmental services. Staff members in these positions posit that social media are even more practical than the other media that are available in the study area to interact with different stakeholders.

All in all, most of the in-depth interview participants pointed out the fact that social media contributes significantly to reducing employees' job stress, which boosts their willingness to accomplish more. Consequently, the Woreda Administration and managers of other public sectors and institutions become well aware of the benefits and their positive influence on their employees' job performance as well as on the institution's productivity. Therefore, the Woreda administration and some of the public sector office executives began to encourage their employees to use social media and become widely

connected with the wider community. On the other hand, two of the participants perceived that social media affects employees' job performances negatively. For instance, they revealed similar answers that highlighted issues where social media platforms weaken employees' social interaction with their families, social media leads them into un-ethical and unprofessional activity, and/or it leads to a problem of internet addiction. In this regard, one of the interview participants (P7) replied:

I use social media platforms, particularly Facebook, Telegram, Imo, and YouTube, through my smartphone and office desktop. Most of the time, my social media accounts are online for various purposes, such as staying updated on the current situation, sharing my feelings by posting in my timeline, watching and listening to various movies, music, and sports highlights, and chatting with other people. Currently, I am too dependent on this medium. I can't wait for a couple of moments without checking those social media accounts.

The above direct quote showed that some employees spent excessive time on various social media platforms that affected their social interaction and work activities.

Employees use these social media for excessive amounts of time, which makes them stay isolated with their smartphones; this may hinder them from giving enough time to their families or adhering to their family responsibilities. Additionally, the employees' constant desire to stay updated on various social media platforms may lead them to spend time on irrelevant and time-consuming activities. This activity also leads to employees' lives becoming more dependent on these platforms. In a similar vein, one of the in-depth participants (P5) shares his perception as follows:

Of course, I use social media networks such as Facebook, Imo, and WhatsApp for plenty of purposes, especially to communicate with various people and to read various documents and papers about my profession. But due to the nature of social media, various unnecessary contents (like sexual pictures and movies, celebrity lifestyle videos, and fake news) are available within my reach. So, most of the time, I open these contents to check what happens, but unexpectedly, I spend a lot of time on this media content. Thus, these media lead me to spend excessive time on those unethical and irrelevant contents.

The above direct quotes of employees' experiences show that public sector employees are failing to attend to their job duties because they spend excessive time on social media. Although employees desire to get various valuable issues to enhance their work performance, due to the nature of these media contents, they may lead to spending excessive time on irrelevant, unethical, and unprofessional activities. Consequently, this may harm employees' work motives, and it may lead them to become internet-addicted. Thus, at some of the institutions, there have been complaints about having been denied quick service by employees who are affected by Facebook or YouTube. Such social media use, in keeping with participants, tarnishes institutions' reputations and, finally, may additionally hinder productivity. For this reason, some participants opted to only use social media on a weekend day and during break time.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore public sector employees' use of social media networks by examining their time spent on various social media networks and the possible influences of social media on their job performance. The findings revealed 75.8% of the participants spent more than three hours a day on social media. In the Ethiopian context, the average working hour of any public sector employee is eight hours a day, thus, according to this result; an employee spends a good portion of their time at work on social media. This result is similar to the studies of Ward (2008), and Bennett *et al.*, (2010), which found participants, spent more than four hours a day using various social media networks. Conversely, Nduhura *et al.*, (2017) found that public sector employees are always online and check their social media accounts consistently. This study's findings show that social media is increasingly playing a pivotal role in the functioning of public sector employees and their institutions, and supports the Uses and Gratification Theory.

Most public sector employees in this study perceived the influence of social media positively. In alignment with Uses and Gratification Theory, the positive influences of social media show in terms of helping them to get updated information and professional materials and using it as a major communication tool to easily exchange various ideas with their staff members and use these tools to get and share various best practices and experiences with other colleagues. Thus, they believed that social media affected their job

performance positively by meeting many needs. Such findings are similar with the studies of Moqbel et al., (2013), Shami et al., (2014) and Mohamed et al., (2017), as they displayed that there is a strong association between intensity of social media use and employee's job performances and they insured that social media serves as an effective communication tool among employees to create and enhance their relationship, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and many others. Thus, social media influences an employee's job performance positively and creates an opportunity to enhance the organization's productivity.

Similarly, the findings of this study showed that both public sector employees and their managers enjoyed these new tools as social media can take their communication to another level by making things easier, create more rapid transmissions of messages, and get quick and unbound feedback. Thus, maintaining the existing relationship and knowledge sharing is central to this process. In line with this finding, Fulk et al., (2013) noted that social media enables employees to manage their current relationships and easily find new friends. During these interactions, information is clear and feedback runs through users, in doing so, they can create a shared character, thus meeting social needs and gaining affection.

The findings of this study revealed that employee's use of social media is crucial to the integrity and well-being of employees as well and their job performances. Thus, most of the employees spend excess time and become more dependent on various social media networks. This is indicated with the concepts of Media Systems Dependency Theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976), which illustrates that people either personally or as a group become more prone to media dependency as they are searching for a way to satisfy their needs and fit in with society. As supported by Uses and Gratification Theory, people prefer to use certain media that provides content that are essential to their goals, and then they may become more inclined to continue to use that particular media in the future (Nayyar, 2007).

On the other hand, the results of this study additionally showed that almost one quarter of public sector employees believed that social media negatively influenced employees job performances in terms of affecting their social interaction with colleagues and other people and it leads them into unethical and unprofessional activities; thus, some employees are more dependent and become addicted to the internet.

Limitations

The findings of this study should be considered against several limitations. Despite employing a stratified random sample to represent each of the four public sector pools, there are limits to generalizability of the findings. Future research should attempt to replicate the study with additional public sector worker both within Gondar City and elsewhere in Ethiopia to enhance the external validity of the study findings and examine the ways in which the findings are similar or different in other geographical areas and how the findings may change over time. Additionally, this study used an author-constructed questionnaire, based on the Use and Gratification Theory, yet the questionnaire has not been subjected to psychometric testing. Future research could replicate this study with the questionnaire to examine the extent to which the questions are measuring individuals' gratification and need in using social media. As there are limited studies in Ethiopia on the job performances of employees, and this is the first study that examines the influence of social media on job performance in Ethiopia, future research could use the findings of this study as benchmark to develop, intervene, and conduct further investigations in the Ethiopian context and beyond.

Conclusion

The findings of this study keep the debate that surrounds the use of social media whereby most employees and managers praise their benefits, and others lean towards the negative viewpoint. This study has a particular distinction indicating that although some employees often fear using social media because of their perception of deteriorating their social interaction and may fear the problem of internet addiction, the reality for the participants in this study is different. In most institutions, the public sector employees' use of social media is well-suited with employees' daily activities. Some of the managers of the institutions were aware of those practices and did not take any significant measures to counter them. Instead, the general motives were to promote employees to use social media to get more collected and hardworking employees. Additionally, the managers believed that social media could enhance communication and collaboration among employees, leading to increased productivity and efficiency in the workplace. However, it is important for organizations to establish clear guidelines and policies regarding social media usage to

ensure that it does not negatively impact work performance or become a distraction for employees.

References

- Asfaw, T. G., & Mekonnen, B. Y. (2021). Knowledge sharing by clinicians using social media: A case study in Ethiopia. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 14(3), 630-641. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20421338.2021.1883413>
- Abrehet Mehari. (2017). *The use of social media in public diplomacy: A case study of the (FDRE) Ethiopia diplomatic missions' Facebook use*. School of Journalism and Communication, Ababa University.
- Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M. L. (1976). A dependency model of mass-media effects, *Communication Research*, 3(1), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365027600300101>
- Bennett, J., Owers, M., Pitt, M., & Tucker, M. (2010). Workplace impact of social networking, *Property Management*, 28(3), 138-148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02637471011051282>
- Cao, X., & Ali, A. (2018). Enhancing team creative performance through social media and active memory system. *International Journal of Information Management*, 39, 69-79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2017.11.009>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 5th ed. Sage.
- Elihu, K., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratification research. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509-523. <https://doi.org/10.1086/268109>
- Eskedar Baheru. (2017). *Determinants of effectiveness of social media usage: The case of Ethiopian Airlines*. School of Commerce, Addis Ababa University. <https://etd.aau.edu.ethandle/123456789/13162>
- Fulk, J., & Yuan, Y. C. (2013). Location, motivation, and social capitalization via enterprise social networking. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(1), 20 – 37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12033>
- Fusi, F., & Feeney, M. K. (2018). Social media in the workplace: Information exchange, productivity, or waste? *The American Review of Public Administration*, 48(5), 395-412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074016675722>
- Henok Mesfin. (2019). *The impact of social media on the marketing performance: the case of commercial bank of Ethiopia*. School Of Commerce, Addis Ababa University
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- DATAREPORTAL (2023). *Digital 2023 Ethiopia*. Retrieved from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-ethiopia>
- Jafar, R. M. S., Geng, S., Ahmad, W., Niu, B., & Chan, F. T. (2019). Social media usage and employee's job performance. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 119(9), 1908-1925. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ims-02-2019-0090>.
- Khan, G. F., Swar, B., & Lee, S. K. (2014). Social media risks and benefits: A public sector perspective. *Social science computer review*, 32(5), 606-627.

- Liang, T. P., & Turban, E. (2011). Introduction to the special issue social commerce: A research framework for social commerce. *International Journal of electronic commerce*, 16(2), 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.2753/JEC1086-4415160201>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (1st ed.). Sage.
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (9th ed.). Pearson.
- Matthews, L. (2010). Social media and the evolution of corporate communications. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 1(1), 17-23.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. Sage publications.
- Mohamed, S., Sidek, S., Izharrudin, Z., Kudus, N., & Hassan, A. (2017). Social media impact on employee productivity at the workplace: A review. *Asian Journal of Information Technology*, 16(1), 32-37.
- Moqbel, M., Nevo, S., & Kock, N. (2013). Organizational members' use of social networking sites and job performance: An exploratory study. *Information Technology & People*, 26(3), 240-264. <http://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-10-2012-0110>
- Nayyar, D. (2007). *Modern mass communication concepts and processes*. Oxford University Press.
- Nduhura, D., & Prieler, M. (2017). When I chat online, I feel relaxed and work better: Exploring the use of social media in the public sector workplace in Rwanda. *Telecommunications Policy*, 41(7-8), 708-716.
- Etenesh Nigussie. (2017). *An assessment on the role of social media in public relations: A case of Facebook page in Mekelle City - Tigray Public Relations Bureau*. School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University.
- Schroeder, A., Minocha, S., & Schneider, C. (2010). The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of using social software in higher and further education teaching and learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 26, 159-174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2010.00347.x>
- Shami, N. S., Nichols, J., & Chen, J. (2014, April). Social media participation and performance at work: A longitudinal study. In *proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 115-118).
- Sigerson, L., & Cheng, C. (2018). Scales for measuring user engagement with social network sites: A systematic review of psychometric properties. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 83, 87–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.023>
- Slovin, E. (1960) Slovin's formula for sampling technique. Retrieved from: <https://prudencexd.weebly.com>
- Statista. (2023). *Number of internet and social media users worldwide as of October 2023*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>
- Statista (2024). *Social media in Africa - statistics & facts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/topics/9922/social-media-in-africa/#topicOverview>
- Statista (2024). *Internet usage in Africa - statistics & facts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/topics/9813/internet-usage-in-africa/>
- Tariq, W., Mehboob, M., & Khan, M. (2012). The impact of social media and social networks on education and students of Pakistan. *International Journal of Computer Science Issues*, 9(4), 407-411.

- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). Issues and dilemmas in teaching research methods courses in social and behavioral sciences: US perspective. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(1), 61-77. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13645570305055>
- Van Zoonen, W., Verhoeven, J. W., & Vliegthart, R. (2017). Understanding the consequences of public social media use for work. *European Management Journal*, 35(5), 595–605. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2017.07.006>
- Vorderer, P., Krömer, N., & Schneider, F. M. (2016). Permanently online–Permanently connected: Explorations into university students’ use of social media and mobile smart devices. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, 694-703.
- Ward, S. (2008). Review: Mediating nature. *Media International Australia*, 126(1), 160–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878x0812600120>
- Wondimu, B. (2015). *Department of EDPM* (Doctoral dissertation, Addis Ababa University).

Funding and Acknowledgements

The authors declare no funding sources or conflicts of interest.