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From Information Sharing to Knowledge Flow: Digital Transformation as a Moderator of Communication Strategies in Kenya's Public Benefit Organizations

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Abstract

Purpose: Kenya's Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs) run on information. They must account to donors and regulators, coordinate programmes spread across counties, and hold on to what they learn when staff and funding move on. Many struggle to do so: in 2024/2025, more than 4,779 PBOs faced deregistration for non-compliance, and only 61% of active organizations filed annual returns. This study examined whether communication strategies and digital transformation, treated as channels through which organizational information and knowledge flow, explain PBO performance.

Methodology: The study was anchored on Dynamic Capabilities Theory, with the knowledge-based view of the firm as a supporting lens. A pragmatic, mixed-methods cross-sectional survey targeted a stratified random sample of 368 of the 4,750 PBOs registered and compliant with PBORA, with one respondent per PBO, and 261 returned usable questionnaires (70.9%). Ordinal logistic regression, including a moderation model with an interaction term, was applied to the quantitative data, and open-ended questionnaire responses were analysed thematically.

Findings: On their own, communication strategies did not have a significant influence on performance ($\beta = -0.046$, $p = .818$). Respondents explained why. Channels were fragmented, feedback loops were weak and staff resisted new practices, so information moved without becoming shared knowledge. Digital transformation told a different story. It had a significant positive influence on performance ($\beta = 0.495$, $p = .017$) and strengthened the link between communication and performance (interaction $\beta = 0.111$, $p = .036$), working as the infrastructure that captures, circulates and preserves what organizations know.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: PBO leaders need to treat communication as a knowledge process, backed by digital feedback channels, shared repositories and data-driven reporting. For regulators, the priorities are digital reporting standards, sound data governance and digital skills across the sector. Few studies have examined nonprofit communication and digital transformation in Africa through an information and knowledge management lens. This one does, and its evidence points to a simple but consequential conclusion: communication is associated with performance mainly when it is digitally enabled and built into how the organization works.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management, Information Flows, Digital Transformation, Communication Strategies, Public Benefit Organizations, Kenya*

JEL Classification: *L31, M15, D83, O33, L25*

INTRODUCTION

How well a Kenyan Public Benefit Organization (PBO) performs is usually judged by what it achieves with limited means: mobilizing resources, delivering services and shaping policy in fields such as health, education, agriculture and the environment. Common yardsticks include donor retention, cost-effectiveness, beneficiary reach and, increasingly, digital maturity (Kadhim et al., 2025). PBOs matter to Kenya's development. In 2023 the sector contributed KES 201.6 billion, about 2.2% of GDP, and supported more than 325,000 jobs (Public Benefit Organizations Regulatory Authority [PBORA], 2023; PKF Kenya & PBORA, 2024). Its results, however, are uneven. Much of that unevenness comes down to information and knowledge. PBOs need timely information to satisfy donors and regulators, shared knowledge to coordinate programmes spread across regions, and institutional memory to survive staff turnover and short funding cycles (Hume & Hume, 2008; Lettieri et al., 2004).

In this setting, communication strategy and digital transformation are more than support functions. They are how PBOs coordinate change, read stakeholder needs, build trust and turn scarce resources into results (Cordery et al., 2023; Ellström et al., 2022). Communication shapes how an organization handles resistance, explains its goals, builds feedback into its routines and keeps stakeholders confident. Digital transformation supplies the tools: platforms, data systems and automation that make communication faster, wider in reach, more transparent and easier to account for (Kazanskaia, 2025; ServiceNow, 2024). Together, the two form a change-management interface, and for organizations living with uncertain funding that interface is critical. Seen through an information and knowledge management (IKM) lens, communication strategies are the channels through which knowledge travels between people, while digital systems capture, store and circulate it (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Vial, 2019). Most of what is known about linking the two to performance, though, comes from corporate and well-resourced settings. Digitally enabled communication in nonprofits working under tight resource constraints has received far less attention (Cordery et al., 2023).

Olaleye et al. (2020) found that concise, transparent communication builds trust and lowers resistance to change, and they recommended structured frameworks that put openness and responsiveness first. Gallegos (2025) looked at how NGOs in the Philippines communicate with community stakeholders. Partnerships with local government, combined with the deliberate use of several channels at once, widened outreach and made programmes more effective. The lesson was not a fixed model. It was a flexible one, open to new technology, which helped NGO initiatives last and deepened their community impact.

Communication also carries reputational weight. Ajayi and Mmutle (2021) show how the strategic communication of corporate social responsibility builds stakeholder confidence and corporate reputation. Leadership matters as well. Mubarak and Yusoff (2019) found that strategic leadership shapes how well strategy is implemented, which in practice depends heavily on how leaders communicate intent and adapt their message to context.

Closer to home, Kala et al. (2026) studied county government organizations in Kenya. Poor communication with external parties dragged down performance, and the authors called for more transparent and inclusive strategies. Winowiecki et al. (2025), reporting on a global multistakeholder coalition for soil health, point to structured forums and responsive engagement as the means by which support for change is mobilized. Across these studies, the message is consistent: communication works when it is structured, transparent and culturally sensitive.

Research on digital transformation tells a related story. Feroz et al. (2021) reviewed how digital technologies, including AI, cloud computing and data analytics, are reshaping organizational operations and strategy. Qiao et al. (2024) report that digital transformation improves agility and decision-making when it is built into strategic planning and backed by top management. For Michelotto and Joia (2024), readiness is the issue: digital technologies can make communication more efficient and transparent, but employees need training before adoption takes hold. Ndulu et al. (2021) examine how fiscal regimes shape digital transformation across Sub-Saharan Africa and make the case for policy support for digital infrastructure.

Kenyan evidence is thinner. Ng'ong'a (2024) studied the adoption of an e-government project management system by contractors in Nairobi and stressed that digital systems must fit their local context. Wahome's (2023) account of Kenya's "Silicon Savannah" shows how much a digital economy depends on skills and institutions, not technology alone. Paul et al. (2025) linked strategic leadership in Kenya's county governments to their performance. Taken together, these studies underline the strategic weight of digital transformation, while leaving its role in nonprofits largely unexplored.

The sector's performance gaps are well documented. Administrative costs run high and funds are underused, with utilization rates often below 55% (Githiomi & Makau, 2025). Compliance is a persistent problem. Of the 9,609 PBOs active at the end of 2024/2025, only 61% filed annual returns, and more than 4,779 faced deregistration for non-compliance (PBORA, 2026). Fragmented communication channels, weak digital platforms and poor stakeholder feedback make matters worse, and digital maturity remains low: only 27% of NGOs in Kenya were engaged in digital activities in 2023 (PBORA, 2023), rising slightly to about 30% in 2025 (ACTS, 2025). Many organizations therefore struggle to turn communication into coordinated action, accountability, stakeholder trust or adaptive performance. Where communication and digital systems are poorly connected, the risks are real: mission drift, inefficiency, donor disengagement and, at worst, collapse. From an IKM standpoint, these are symptoms of information that is produced but never shared, and of lessons learned but not retained.

Communication supports transparency, clarity and trust, and it reduces uncertainty during change (Olaleye et al., 2020). On its own, however, it may not deliver performance gains. It needs digital systems that allow interactive feedback, timely information flows, visible data and coordination across stakeholders (Cordery et al., 2023; Kazanskaia, 2025). Empirical work increasingly shows that digital transformation strengthens efficiency, innovation and accountability (Banerjee, 2025; Feroz et al., 2021; Michelotto & Joia, 2024). Yet much of the change-management literature still treats communication and digital transformation as separate constructs (Krivokapic & Mathiassen, 2023), and few studies connect either to measurable performance outcomes in PBOs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, research is largely descriptive and rarely treats digital transformation as a capability that enables communication (Ufua et al., 2021). IKM research on nonprofits has likewise concentrated on high-income countries, so the knowledge practices of African PBOs remain largely undocumented (Hume & Hume, 2008; Lettieri et al., 2004). This study addresses that gap by examining how communication strategies and digital transformation jointly shape PBO performance in resource-scarce settings.

Objectives

The study's general objective was to examine communication strategies and digital transformation as predictors of the performance of PBOs in Kenya. Its specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the influence of communication strategies on the performance of PBOs in Kenya;
2. Determine the direct influence of digital transformation on the performance of PBOs in Kenya; and
3. Establish whether digital transformation moderates the relationship between communication strategies and the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: Communication strategies do not significantly influence the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

H_{02}: Digital transformation does not significantly influence the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

H_{03}: Digital transformation does not significantly moderate the relationship between communication strategies and the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

Operationalization of Key Constructs

Communication strategies are operationalized as the practices through which a PBO moves information among staff, beneficiaries, donors and regulators during change. Five sub-dimensions were measured: (i) frequency of change communication; (ii) transparency of the information shared; (iii) multi-channel messaging to reach diverse audiences; (iv) stakeholder feedback loops that support two-way dialogue; and (v) clarity in communicating strategic goals. Digital transformation is operationalized as the extent to which digital technology is embedded in the PBO's operations, captured through six sub-dimensions: (i) digital infrastructure adoption, that is, the use of digital tools and platforms; (ii) automation of key processes; (iii) data and systems integration, through ICT that links service delivery and stakeholder engagement; (iv) data-driven decision-making; (v) staff digital literacy, built through continuous training; and (vi) monitoring and evaluation of digital initiatives. PBO performance is operationalized through five indicators: cost-efficiency of service delivery, employee adaptability to change, stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency of resource allocation, and transparency and accountability in reporting. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), and composite scores were computed as the mean of the retained items.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT). Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) define dynamic capabilities as an organization's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure competencies in response to changing environments, through sensing opportunities and threats, seizing them, and transforming its routines (Teece et al., 2016). Here, digital transformation is treated as an enabling dynamic capability. Digital platforms, integrated data systems and analytics strengthen sensing, because they make stakeholder signals, programme data and compliance requirements visible in time, and they strengthen seizing, because they allow PBOs to act on those signals and reconfigure routines quickly. Communication strategies, by contrast, are operating routines: necessary, but unlikely on their own to change performance. DCT therefore predicts that digital transformation will relate to performance directly and will condition the value of communication. The theory suits PBOs operating in uncertain, resource-scarce environments (Diane & Kimemia, 2025), although its definitions vary across studies and are difficult to operationalize (Collis & Anand, 2021; Teece et al., 2016), which is why the constructs are operationalized explicitly above.

The knowledge-based view (KBV) is used strictly as a supporting lens to explain the knowledge flows through which these capabilities work. The KBV treats knowledge as the organization's most strategically significant resource and sees its core task as integrating members' specialized knowledge (Grant, 1996). Read alongside Nonaka's (1994) model of socialization, externalization, combination and internalization, communication strategies are the social routines through which knowledge is converted, and digital transformation is the infrastructure that makes explicit knowledge storable, searchable and reusable.

The underlying failure mechanism follows from this framework. PBOs engage in traditional communication routines, such as meetings, written reports, circulars and ad hoc feedback, but without digital infrastructure to capture, structure and automate these interacti ons, the information they generate is rarely recorded, integrated or retrieved. Knowledge flows therefore break down where they matter most for performance: lessons from the field are not consolidated into organizational memory, programme and financial data are not available when reports fall due, and spending decisions rest on recollection rather than evidence. The visible results are low reporting compliance, with only 61% of active PBOs filing annual returns in 2024/2025 (PBORA, 2026), and poor fund utilization, with rates often below 55% (Githiomi & Makau, 2025). Digital transformation is expected to interrupt this mechanism by turning communication into captured, shared and reusable knowledge, which is the logic behind H03.

Methodology

The study followed a pragmatic research philosophy and a convergent mixed-methods, descriptive cross-sectional survey design (Dube et al., 2024). Data were collected at a single point in time, which allowed the relationships among communication strategies, digital transformation and PBO performance to be examined together.

The study targeted PBOs registered with the Public Benefit Organizations Regulatory Authority (PBORA). At the end of the 2024/2025 financial year, PBORA's register held 14,287 registered PBOs, of which 9,609 were active (PBORA, 2026, pp. 10–12). Based on the same report, the sampling frame consisted of approximately 4,750 PBOs listed as compliant in seven thematic areas: education, environment, gender, health, HIV/AIDS, livelihoods and refugees. A sample of 368 PBOs, determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, was drawn by stratified random sampling with proportional allocation across thematic areas and organization types (national and international), and one senior or middle-level manager was purposively selected in each PBO. Data were collected using structured, self-administered questionnaires.

Pilot data (n = 37) were tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha and for validity using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The hypotheses were tested with ordinal logistic regression (cumulative logit) models, consistent with the study's conceptual framework. The likelihood-ratio chi-square tested whether each model predicted performance better than an intercept-only model, and the test of parallel lines examined the proportional-odds assumption, which is supported when the test is not significant. Normality was checked using skewness and kurtosis.

Qualitative data came from the two open-ended questions at the end of each questionnaire section, one on challenges and one on the practices that contributed most to performance; no interviews were conducted (Levitt et al., 2021). Responses were coded **and** analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic approach, and the resulting themes were used to interpret the quantitative findings.

Table 1 reports the reliability of the measurement scales. Cronbach's alpha was 0.935 for communication strategies, 0.861 for digital transformation and 0.836 for PBO performance. All three values exceed the conventional minimum of 0.70 (Bryman & Bell, 2015), so the scales were considered reliable.

Table 1: Reliability of Measurement Scales

Construct	Coefficient Alpha (α)
Communication Strategies	0.935
Digital Transformation	0.861
Performance of PBOs	0.836

Source: Research Data (2026)

Sampling adequacy was also confirmed. For communication strategies, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was 0.883 and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 146.766$, $p < .001$); for digital transformation, the KMO value was 0.795 ($\chi^2 = 130.252$, $p < .001$); and for PBO performance, 0.849 ($\chi^2 = 114.106$, $p < .001$). The EFA retained five items for communication strategies and six items for digital transformation and five for PBO performance; the item on the adequacy of annual training loaded below 0.30 (0.258) and was excluded from the performance composite.

Results

Table 2 presents the ordinal regression estimates for the three models. Threshold parameters are not tabulated because they do not bear on the hypotheses; they are reported in Equations 1–3.

Table 2: Ordinal Regression Estimates for Models 1–3

Model	Parameter	Estimate (β)	SE	Wald	p	95% CI
1	CS	−0.046	0.198	0.053	.818	[−0.433, 0.342]
2	DT	0.495	0.207	5.738	.017	[0.090, 0.901]
3	CS	−0.052	0.196	0.071	.790	[−0.436, 0.332]
	DT	0.284	0.141	4.056	.044	[0.007, 0.561]
	CS × DT	0.111	0.053	4.234	.036	[0.007, 0.215]

Note. N = 261. Threshold parameters omitted. CS = communication strategies; DT = digital transformation. Source: Research Data (2026)

Research Hypothesis one, H_{01}: Communication strategies do not significantly influence the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

Communication strategies did not have a significant influence on PBO performance in the ordinal logistic regression ($\beta = -0.046$, $p = .818$; Table 2). The model did not predict performance better than an intercept-only model ($\chi^2 = 0.052$, $p = .820$), and the test of parallel lines was not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.151$, $p = .985$), so the proportional-odds assumption held. H_{01} was therefore not rejected. The coefficient is close to zero: PBOs that communicated more intensively were no more likely to report higher performance than those that communicated less. From an IKM perspective, this suggests that messages were transmitted without being converted into shared, actionable knowledge. Information moved, but understanding and coordinated action did not move with it (Szulanski, 1996). The estimated model was:

$$OP = -0.046CS \text{ (}\textit{Cut off points:}\text{ } -5.029, -4.101, -1.508, 0.981) \quad \ldots\ldots 1$$

Research Hypothesis two, H_{02}: Digital transformation does not significantly influence the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

Digital transformation had a positive and significant influence on performance in the ordinal logistic regression (β = 0.495, p = .017; Table 2). The model was significant ($\chi^2 = 4.773$, p = .029), but the test of parallel lines was significant ($\chi^2 = 15.594$, p = .001), so the proportional-odds assumption was violated, and the coefficient should be read as an average influence across performance categories. H_{02} was therefore rejected. PBOs with more advanced digital practices were more likely to fall into higher performance categories. This is consistent with digital systems acting as knowledge infrastructure: shared databases, automated workflows and dashboards turn individual and paper-based information into explicit organizational knowledge that can be retrieved, audited and reused, which is what regulators and donors increasingly require (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Cordery et al., 2023). The estimated model was:

$$OP = 0.495DT, (Cut\ off\ Points: -3.150, -2.213, 0.389, 2.910) \quad \ldots\ldots 2$$

Research Hypothesis three, H_{03}: Digital transformation does not significantly moderate the relationship between communication strategies and the performance of PBOs in Kenya.

In Model 3, communication strategies remained non-significant (β = −0.052, p = .790), digital transformation remained significant (β = 0.284, p = .044), and the interaction between communication strategies and digital transformation was positive and significant (β = 0.111, p = .036). H_{03} was therefore rejected: digital transformation moderates the relationship between communication strategies and PBO performance. In practical terms, communication effort is more strongly associated with performance where digital systems are stronger. Digital tools appear to supply what analogue communication lacks: a feedback channel, a record of what was said and decided, and a way of reaching dispersed staff, donors and beneficiaries. Communication then becomes a knowledge-sharing routine rather than a one-way broadcast. The estimated model was:

$$OP = -0.052CS + 0.284DT + 0.111CS \times DT\ (Cut\ off\ points: -5.112, -4.023, -1.487, 1.025) \quad \ldots\ldots 3$$

Discussion of the findings

The study examined how communication strategies and digital transformation shape PBO performance, using responses from 261 PBOs. The findings suggest that the central question is not whether communication matters, but whether it is sufficiently institutionalized and digitally enabled to influence performance (Kazanskaia, 2025). They position digital transformation as the capability that turns communication from routine information-sharing into an accountable, adaptive and performance-oriented organizational process (Cordery et al., 2023; Ellström et al., 2022). The key findings are discussed below in line with the hypotheses.

Communication strategies had no significant influence on performance. PBOs reported frequent communication about goals and change, the use of multiple channels and some feedback mechanisms, but these practices, although applied to a high extent (M = 3.61), were the least adopted of the change management strategies in the wider study and were weakly institutionalized. The finding challenges a common assumption in nonprofit management, that more communication automatically produces better results. Knowledge management research offers an explanation: knowledge transfer depends less on the volume of messages than on the recipient's absorptive capacity and the quality of the relationship between source and recipient (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Szulanski, 1996). Where staff lack the skills, time or incentives to act on information, communication remains information exchange rather than knowledge sharing.

Thematic analysis of the open-ended questionnaire responses showed that communication occurs regularly but is often disjointed. Respondents described resistance to new communication practices and weak feedback loops. Transparency and clarity were seen as keys to success but were difficult to achieve in practice.

Table 4: Communication Strategies – Content Analysis

Theme	Frequency (mentions)	Illustrative Quote
Resistance to change	16	"Staff resist adopting new communication practices."
Weak feedback loops	19	"Feedback is not systematically integrated into communication."
Transparency & clarity	13	"Clear communication of goals builds trust."

Source: Research Data (2026)

Weak feedback loops (19 mentions) and resistance to change (16 mentions) dominated the qualitative explanations (Table 4). Feedback is the mechanism through which organizations learn from their own experience; without it, the tacit lessons of beneficiaries and field staff are never externalized into shared organizational knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). This helps explain why communication strategies, although rated high (M = 3.61), did not have a significant influence on performance.

Digital transformation had a significant, positive influence on performance, and the second null hypothesis was rejected. ICT-supported service delivery, automation of key processes, data-driven decision-making and continuous staff training were associated with greater accountability and efficiency. These practices matter for IKM because they convert organizational information into explicit, searchable and auditable form. A digital beneficiary database, for example, preserves programme knowledge after staff leave, supplies the evidence that donors require and PBORA expects in annual returns, and allows managers to base decisions on data rather than recollection (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Vial, 2019).

In the qualitative data, respondents described technology, automation and ICT integration as sources of efficiency and accountability. Adoption challenges, however, came up repeatedly, notably high costs, inadequate training and cultural barriers. Several participants argued that digital transformation should be part of organizational culture rather than an add-on.

Table 5: Digital Transformation – Content Analysis

Theme	Frequency (mentions)	Illustrative Quote
Technology adoption challenges	25	"High costs and inadequate training hinder adoption."
Digital initiatives (ICT, automation)	18	"Automation has improved efficiency and accountability."
Resistance to digital change	14	"Cultural resistance slows digital integration."
Staff training gaps	20	"Staff lack skills to fully utilize digital tools."

Source: Research Data (2026)

Technology adoption challenges (25 mentions) and staff training gaps (20 mentions) were the most frequent concerns (Table 5). They point to a digital divide within the sector: PBOs that cannot afford skills or systems are also the least able to generate the digital evidence on which funding

and compliance increasingly depend. Together with its high adoption score (M = 3.55, this supports the interpretation of digital transformation as an enabling condition whose value depends on people's capacity to use it (Heeks, 2018).

Digital transformation significantly moderated the relationship between communication strategies and PBO performance, so the third null hypothesis was rejected. Communication was more strongly associated with performance when it was carried by digital systems, which made information two-way, traceable and accessible across locations. Respondents also identified barriers that cut across both constructs: governance gaps, donor dependency, staff capacity gaps, resistance to change and digital adoption challenges (Table 6).

Table 6: Cross-Cutting Barriers – Content Analysis

Barrier	Frequency (mentions)	Illustrative Quote
Donor dependency	28	"Dependence on donor funding limits autonomy."
Governance gaps	22	"Weak accountability structures undermine sustainability."
Staff capacity gaps	30	"Insufficient skills reduce effectiveness of change initiatives."
Resistance to change	27	"Cultural inertia slows transformation."
Digital adoption challenges	25	"Costs and training deficits hinder digital transformation."

Source: Research Data (2026)

Staff capacity gaps (30 mentions) and donor dependency (28 mentions) were the most frequently cited barriers, and both are knowledge-retention problems. Short, donor-funded project cycles rely on contract staff, so expertise and institutional memory leave with each departing team. Communication, meanwhile, is often designed to meet donor reporting requirements rather than internal learning needs. These conditions help reconcile the quantitative and qualitative evidence: communication is valued, but without the capacity and continuity to absorb and retain knowledge, it does not translate into performance on its own.

Implications for Information and Knowledge Management Theory, Policy and Practice

Implications for Theory

These findings advance IKM theory in three ways. First, they refine the knowledge-based view (Grant, 1996) for resource-constrained nonprofits. Communication is the routine most often equated with knowledge sharing, yet on its own it was not associated with performance; its contribution depends on whether the organization has invested in the digital and human infrastructure that converts information into shared knowledge. Second, the moderating role of digital transformation supports the Dynamic Capabilities Theory view that digital systems are a mechanism through which organizations sense stakeholder signals, act on them and reconfigure routines (Ellström et al., 2022; Teece et al., 2016). In knowledge-creation terms, digital platforms appear to strengthen the externalization and combination stages of Nonaka's (1994) model, turning scattered field experience into explicit, recombinable knowledge. Third, the study extends IKM scholarship to African PBOs, a setting in which donor dependency and staff turnover make knowledge retention, rather than knowledge creation, the binding constraint. From a dynamic capabilities perspective, data systems, digital platforms and staff digital skills matter less as assets

than as sensing and seizing capabilities whose value lies in how they are deployed (Cordery et al., 2023; Teece et al., 2016).

Implications for Policy

For policy, the findings suggest that regulating how PBOs communicate is less effective than strengthening the infrastructure through which information flows to support reporting and learning. PBORA could promote open-data templates and standardized digital reporting that make annual returns easier to file and more useful for sector-wide learning, not merely for compliance. Because PBOs increasingly hold sensitive beneficiary data, digital support should be paired with guidance on implementing the Data Protection Act, 2019 (Republic of Kenya, 2019). Government and development partners could narrow the sector's digital divide through subsidized software, shared platforms, tax incentives and digital-literacy programmes, which would also reduce the loss of knowledge when donor-funded projects end (Cordery et al., 2023; ServiceNow, 2024).

Implications for Practice

For PBO leaders and information managers, the priority is to redesign communication as a knowledge-management process. This means building two-way feedback channels, such as beneficiary platforms, digital surveys and staff forums, whose results are recorded and acted upon; maintaining shared repositories for reports, lessons learned and programme data; and embedding knowledge capture, such as handover notes and after-action reviews, in project cycles so that expertise does not leave with departing staff (Hume & Hume, 2008; Lettieri et al., 2004). Investment in digital tools should be matched by training in information literacy and data use, because the qualitative evidence shows that skills, not technology alone, limit adoption. Joint resource mobilization and strategic alliances can help smaller PBOs share the cost of digital infrastructure.

Conclusion

This study set out to establish whether communication strategies and digital transformation explain the performance of PBOs in Kenya. Communication strategies, though widely practised and valued for transparency and trust, are not yet embedded deeply enough to influence performance on their own. Digital transformation is different. It is directly and positively associated with performance, and it is also the condition under which communication becomes associated with performance. For IKM, the central lesson is that performance depends less on how much PBOs communicate than on whether what they communicate is captured, shared and reused as organizational knowledge. That fits Olaleye et al.'s (2020) argument that structured, transparent communication builds trust, and the view of Kane et al. (2015) and Westerman et al. (2014) that digital transformation is a key enabler of adaptability in dynamic environments.

The study's originality lies in treating nonprofit communication and digital transformation as linked knowledge processes, and in providing mixed-methods evidence from an under-researched African setting. It has limits. The design was cross-sectional and self-reported, so causal claims cannot be made, performance was measured through the perceptions of one respondent per PBO, and the proportional-odds assumption was violated in the digital transformation model, so that result should be interpreted with caution. Future work could use longitudinal or case-study designs to trace how specific knowledge-management practices, such as feedback systems or shared repositories, change performance over time, could include non-compliant PBOs, and could compare PBOs with private and public organizations.

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