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Digital Media Use: Analyzing Facebook Engagement for Unity Building in South Sudan

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Abstract

Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for communication, advocacy, and community organizing in conflict-affected communities. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how Facebook pages facilitate interaction about peace and unity in South Sudan. This paper examines how the Kajo Keji Unity Tournament (KKUT) Facebook page facilitates interaction about unity building, peacebuilding, and development activities in South Sudan. Through qualitative content analysis of 76 Facebook posts randomly selected from 2025 and 2026 comprising 9,877 total words, the study employed Voyant Tools as a digital research aid to support thematic identification and interpretive analysis. Kelman's (1958) social influence theory served as the analytical lens. The analysis revealed five major themes: (1) sports as a vehicle for unity and peace, (2) community building and engagement, (3) deterring drug misuse and harmful behaviors, (4) transparency and accountability, and (5) resilience and healing in post-conflict contexts. Engagement patterns demonstrated consistent interaction with tournament updates (45-80 reactions, 10-28 comments) and tribute posts (15-77 reactions, 2-40 comments). The KKUT page serves as a digital platform for promoting sports as a vehicle for unity, deterring drug misuse, and fostering community engagement among the Kajo Keji diaspora and local population. However, challenges including digital divides, language barriers, and the dual nature of social media as both a tool for peace and potential vehicle for polarization remain significant considerations.

Keywords: Social Media, Facebook, Peacebuilding, Unity, South Sudan, Kajo Keji, Sports for Development, Digital Peacebuilding, Community Engagement, Qualitative Content Analysis, Voyant Tools

1. Introduction

Social media represents a paradigm shift in human communication, enabling smaller groups of people to congregate online and share, sell, and exchange goods and information [1]. Despite social media increasingly becoming one of the most vibrant tools for online communication in the contemporary world substantial social media usage figures remain unavailable for South Sudan [2]. Cybercafes are believed to be proliferating across the country, with approximately eight percent of the population being internet users by 2012 [3]. Social science researchers argue that platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) have proven effective as media tools for advocacy, emergency communications, and crisis response [4,5].

The rapid and widespread adoption of these technologies is fundamentally transforming information access patterns. Literature

suggests that such digital media platforms support existing social relationships, provide interaction opportunities, and deliver content on demand, particularly when integrated with mobile devices [6,7]. Digital media has fundamentally altered global interaction patterns. During the 2013/2014 crisis in South Sudan, social digital media played an instrumental role in facilitating violence through misinformation, fabrication of facts, and dissemination of content that created fear, panic, and actual violence [8]. Numerous individuals with agendas ranging from political machinations to hate speech utilized internet and social media platforms to express and act upon such views.

Messages of hate spread via Facebook, X (Twitter), and SMS by both domestic and diaspora populations [9]. Despite high social media adoption among South Sudanese both domestically and in the diaspora, there is a notable scarcity of information regarding how

Facebook pages facilitate interaction about peace and unity among South Sudanese. The characteristics of the most influential social media users interacting about peacebuilding remain unknown. This paper addresses this substantial gap by exploring the extent to which South Sudanese on Facebook pages interact about unity building, with specific focus on the Kajo Keji Unity Tournament (KKUT) Facebook page as a case study. Understanding Facebook pages' influence on interaction and information sharing about building unity among South Sudanese is critically important. Digital media users employ Facebook pages to share information and engage in debates and discussions [10,11].

Social digital media users can participate in conversations that create conditions for positive and sustainable peace by comprehensively addressing structural causes of violent conflict [12,13]. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has recognized the strategic importance of social media in peacebuilding efforts, actively using Facebook to engage with local audiences, promote its mandate, and counter disinformation campaigns. Research on UNMISS's social media practices reveals that digitization opens new possibilities for communication with local populations, providing peace missions with new capabilities to share information with local audiences and gather public input [14].

However, the same technologies that can foster social change and political activism can also be used by governments to control populations, enhance surveillance, and aid groups that promote violent action. This paper examines the KKUT Facebook page as a case study of how grassroots organizations in South Sudan leverage digital platforms for peacebuilding and community development. The KKUT page, managed by a single administrator, serves as a "platform for Kajo-Keji Youth in Juba to Unite Through Sports and to Deter Drug Misuse and other Harm." By analyzing page content, engagement patterns, and community interactions, this study contributes to understanding the potential and limitations of Facebook as a tool for unity building in conflict-affected contexts.

2. Research Philosophy and Approach

2.1. Qualitative Research Paradigm

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm for several compelling reasons. Qualitative research is particularly suited to exploring complex social phenomena, understanding meanings and interpretations, and examining how individuals and groups make sense of their social worlds [15]. In the context of examining Facebook engagement for peacebuilding, qualitative research enables deep contextual understanding of how community members use digital platforms for peacebuilding, interpretation of meanings embedded in posts, comments, and interactions, exploration of processes through which digital engagement supports unity building, examination of social dynamics within digital communities, and understanding of the "how" and "why" behind engagement patterns. The qualitative approach is appropriate because this research seeks to understand not merely how many people engage with peacebuilding content, but what engagement means, how it manifests, and how it supports unity

building in a specific context. The richness of qualitative data allows for nuanced interpretation of the complex social processes at work in the KKUT Facebook page.

2.2. Justification for Qualitative over Quantitative

While quantitative methods might provide numerical data on engagement metrics, they would be insufficient for understanding the substance and meaning of online interactions about peacebuilding. The choice of qualitative methodology is justified by the focus on meanings and interpretations rather than numbers and frequencies, the nature of research questions that ask "how" and "why" rather than "how many," the textual nature of the data being analyzed, the need for thematic and interpretive analysis rather than statistical methods, and the desire for rich contextual understanding rather than generalizable patterns.

Given the research questions, which explore how engagement manifests, to what extent interaction occurs, and how the page is associated with development activities, a qualitative approach provides the depth and nuance necessary to answer these questions meaningfully.

2.3. Role of Voyant Tools in Qualitative Analysis

This research primarily employs Voyant Tools as a digital aid for qualitative content analysis, not as a quantitative measurement instrument. The distinction is crucial. Voyant Tools is used to support familiarization with the corpus by providing an overview of language patterns, identify potential themes through word frequency visualization, generate starting points for qualitative interpretation, provide visual aids that guide deeper textual analysis, and supplement manual analysis with computational support. The analytical process remains qualitative because themes are identified through interpretive reading, not statistical calculation; meanings are derived from contextual understanding, not frequency alone; analysis focuses on the substance of communication, not just its quantity; findings are presented through narrative explanation with illustrative examples; and interpretation is guided by theoretical framework, not algorithmic output.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Social Influence Theory

This paper adopts Kelman's social influence theory as an analytical lens for understanding engagement on the KKUT Facebook page. Social influence theory posits that an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are influenced by referent others through three processes: compliance, identification, and internalization [16].

Compliance refers to public conformity to group norms without necessarily accepting them privately. In the context of the KKUT Facebook page, compliance can be observed when users publicly express support for unity and peace through comments, likes, and shares, signaling their alignment with community norms.

Identification occurs when individuals adopt attitudes based on their relationship with a group or its members. On the KKUT page, identification manifests through the recognition of community

leaders such as Kenyi Isaac Mono and Col. Maulana Julius Lija, and through users' identification with Kajo Keji community identity.

Internalization represents the genuine acceptance of values as personally meaningful. This process is evident when community members frame the tournament as part of community healing and when they express the tournament's deeper purpose beyond competition—as a tool for "dignity" and "healing."

Social influence enables people or in-groups to reach, share information, and agree with others regarding relevant phenomena [17]. The desire for an informed, correct position ostensibly orients message sharing, and interaction can result in enduring private change in judgments [18].

This paper adopts social influence theory as a sensitizing concept that guides interpretation of how social media engagement supports peacebuilding in this specific context. Rather than imposing a rigid framework, the theory serves as a lens for understanding how consistent messaging, community leadership, and shared activities on the KKUT page shape attitudes and behaviors toward unity, peace, and development.

4. Research Questions

In light of the above discussion, this work aims to bridge the gap by contributing to and accurately documenting how South Sudanese actually "interact" on Facebook pages as a basis for unity. Specifically, the research questions are organized to investigate three main areas:

RQ1. In what way does engagement manifest itself on the KKUT Facebook page about Unity in South Sudan?

RQ2. To what extent do South Sudanese on the KKUT Facebook page try to interact about Unity?

RQ3. How is the use of the KKUT Facebook page by South Sudanese associated with other forms of development activities, particularly deterring drug misuse and harmful behaviors?

5. Literature Review

5.1. Media as a Developmental Tool in Developing Countries

Media serves as an essential tool in developing countries. In the 1950s, radio was the primary medium for providing information to the public [19]. During the 21-year civil war in Sudan before South Sudan's secession, radio was extensively used to spread rival parties' propaganda. The BBC World Service's "Focus on Africa" program was widely listened to by those with radio access during the war, as it represented one of the trusted sources of information on the country's political situation. A study on media's role as a developmental intervention in India found that media responds to specific developmental needs of communities by providing "access" to information related to agriculture, health, education, environment, social welfare, and culture [20]. However, media can also incite violence if misused. Studies reveal that radio plays an important role during conflict situations. Radio played a key role in initiating the Rwandan genocide in 1994 when owners and managers of Radio and Television Libre de Mille Collines (RTLM) used their powers to broadcast political agendas and hate

speech, resulting in violence against the Tutsi minority by both militia groups and ordinary civilians [21,22].

5.2. Social Media in Conflict and Peacebuilding

The advancement of media technology has transformed information sharing patterns. Social media currently serves as the main communication medium, creating a two-way channel to address challenges and bridge the digital divide through provision of essential information [23]. In South Sudan, the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) conducted a survey on media use during the 2013/2014 crisis. The report revealed that the internet, and social media in particular, was instrumental in facilitating violence. Three-quarters of social media accounts were deeply involved in misinforming the public through fabricating facts, creating fear, panic, and violence [8].

Research on the weaponization of social media in conflict zones demonstrates that social media platforms can intensify polarization and offline violence, with women disproportionately impacted through displacement, exclusion from peace negotiations, and heightened risks of gender-based violence [24]. Contributing factors include hostile online environments, the digital divide, and prevailing socio-cultural norms. Studies further reveal that harmful narratives spread on social media can reach people on frontlines who do not have direct internet access through networks of peers, demonstrating the far-reaching effects of online content [24].

The deteriorating conditions in South Sudan attracted significant media and public attention, though other desperate areas received little coverage as the conflict continued [25]. Social media can be a useful tool, yet no substantial study exists on its role in interaction and information sharing among South Sudanese. The characteristics of the most influential social media users advocating for peacebuilding remain understudied. This research is important because social media is a many-to-many communications tool providing interactivity and content on demand, especially when coupled with mobile devices [6].

5.3. Social Media and Post-Conflict Recovery

Social media plays an important role in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. It can restore social and psychological capital by facilitating social cohesion to bridge divides between antagonistic groups and individuals, offering potential ways of delivering mental health support. Social media may promote peace by encouraging dialogue, reshaping attitudes, and promoting tolerance and mutual understanding essential for effective post-conflict recovery and lasting peace [26]. With displacement caused by conflict, social media provides information, facilitates interactions, and enables participation in providing wide representation. A study on new technologies in emergencies and conflicts during the Iranian post-election period in mid-2009 indicated that social networking tools like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr made frontline news while mainstream media lagged behind in reporting the escalating crisis [6].

Research on digital peacebuilding in post-conflict communities demonstrates that well-thought-out social media use by social actors to share information used in resolving conflict can result in socio-political stability and harmonious coexistence [24]. For example, the #Let'sTalkUganda campaign enabled the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP-Uganda) to advocate for transitional justice and forgiveness among victims of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war, with digital interactions helping to connect post-conflict communities to share and discuss reconciliatory ideas [24].

5.4. Sports and Social Media for Peacebuilding

The intersection of sports, social media, and peacebuilding represents an emerging area of research. International organizations have increasingly recognized sports as a tool for peacebuilding and social cohesion. Research shows that sports have an incredible ability to unite people, with friendly play-offs uniting local clubs, youth leaders, and community members while fostering teamwork and promoting peacebuilding [27]. These games demonstrate how sports can heal and connect communities affected by conflict, reminding participants that true victory lies in fostering understanding and building connections [27].

A study on the use of sports in South Sudan found that in the past, community members were scared to cross tiny streams separating communities due to rampant criminality [27]. However, community-driven initiatives have created thriving spaces where youth, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, or place of origin, gather to share their passion for sports, work towards common goals, and show respect for others [27]. These initiatives have helped reduce crime, substance abuse, and positively influenced behavior and attitudes among youth, giving them a better future to look forward to [27].

In Kajo Keji specifically, residents have endured a challenging, conflict-filled past but remain remarkably resilient. Over 180 residents from five Kajo Keji communities, including leaders, women, youth, and elders, have united to promote peace initiatives for a better future (YSA, 2023). As one community leader stated, "Everyone in Kajo Keji has suffered both physical and emotional damage, which means that it is our collective duty and responsibility to restore lasting peace" (YSA, 2023). The commitment is founded on four pillars: recovering glory, rebuilding what was lost, restoring values, and renewing relationships through forgiveness (YSA, 2023).

5.5. Facebook and Social Media for Advocacy

Facebook provides a powerful platform for community organizing and advocacy. Research has demonstrated that Facebook groups and pages enable communities to mobilize around shared causes, coordinate activities, and disseminate information rapidly. A study on the role of social media in Sudanese youth activism found that platforms provided channels for information flow and idea exchange across age groups, urban/rural divides, and other boundaries [28].

Facebook pages, in particular, offer distinct advantages for peacebuilding initiatives. They allow administrators to broadcast messages to a wide audience, facilitate discussions through comments and reactions, and build a sense of community among followers. The interactive nature of Facebook pages enables two-way communication between organizers and community members, fostering engagement and participation [29].

However, the same platforms that can foster constructive dialogue also carry significant risks. Studies examining social media polarization reveal that exposure to opposing viewpoints does not lead partisans to become less committed to their positions, and interactions between people who hold divergent views are typically impolite and fruitless [24]. Polarization manifests as stereotyping, vilification, dehumanization, and intolerance of other people's views, beliefs, and identities [24].

5.6. Technology for Peace in Conflict Situations

New technologies like social media can be effective tools for advocating peace and development in conflict situations like South Sudan. Modern media technology can strengthen efforts to prevent violence and conflict, particularly for international actors, governments, and civil society, especially with increased cybercafé numbers in South Sudan [3]. Although social media was viewed with suspicion by all warring sides for inciting violence, resource collection, and recruitment it can equally serve as a tool for advocating unity, peace, and nation building [30]. For example, a peace movement in Ambon, Indonesia, used social media for maintaining relationships and sharing grievances [31]. Facebook proves especially effective in countries with limited freedom of expression. A study on youth activism and social media tactics under repression found that digitally active young civic actors in Cambodia used social media to navigate contentious politics and express dissent under state control and surveillance [32].

Social media also plays an important role in charitable initiatives, enabling individuals and organizations to provide information, encourage donations, inspire action, and build online communities [29]. The complexity of the relationship between social media and conflict is well-documented. While digital interactions have been shown to reduce prejudice and promote social harmony in some contexts, there is strong evidence that social media platforms have had negative effects on societal conflict by pushing moderate actors toward divisiveness and enabling the actions of conflict entrepreneurs [24]. These problems cannot be solved by content moderation alone but must be addressed through design changes that help prevent the escalation of destructive conflict.

6. Methodology

6.1. Research Design: Qualitative Content Analysis

This study employs a qualitative content analysis research design, which is particularly suited for examining textual data from social media platforms. Qualitative content analysis is defined as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" [33].

The choice of qualitative content analysis is justified by the exploratory nature of the research questions, the textual nature of the data (Facebook posts and comments), the focus on meaning rather than frequency, the contextual understanding required for interpretation, and the flexibility to identify both expected and unexpected themes.

6.2. Role of Voyant Tools in Qualitative Analysis

Voyant Tools (<https://voyant-tools.org/>) is employed as a digital research aid to support the qualitative content analysis. It is important to clarify that Voyant Tools is used qualitatively as a means of familiarization and theme identification not as a quantitative measurement instrument.

The Voyant Tools functions used include Cirrus (Word Cloud) for visual overview of frequent terms to identify potential themes for investigation, Summary for corpus statistics to provide context for the corpus, Trends for term distribution across documents to show how themes appear across the corpus, and Topics for theme identification to generate potential thematic categories.

Voyant Tools supports qualitative analysis through familiarization via visual overview of language patterns, theme identification through frequency data directing attention to significant concepts, pattern recognition through trends across documents, triangulation by comparing outputs with detailed reading of texts, and data reduction by highlighting frequently used terms. The analytical process remains qualitative because theme identification involves interpretive reading, not algorithmic classification; meanings are derived from context, not frequency alone; Voyant outputs are starting points for analysis, not conclusions; findings are based on textual examples, not statistical measures; and interpretation is guided by theoretical framework, not computational output.

6.3. Data Collection

The sample consists of publicly available content from the KKUT Facebook page, including posts by the page administrator (76 documents), comments from followers, reactions (likes, love, etc.), shares, and engagement metrics. The corpus characteristics include 76 documents, 9,877 total words, and 2,113 unique word forms. The data source is the KKUT Facebook page, managed by administrator Fransico Khamis, which serves as a "platform for Kajo-Keji (KK) Youth in Juba to Unite Through Sports and to Deter Drug Misuse and other Harm." The timeframe spans from approximately March 2025 to July 2026, providing longitudinal data on the tournament's development and community engagement.

6.4. Data Processing

Data was processed through five steps. First, collection involved capturing all publicly available posts from the KKUT Facebook page, along with comments, reactions, and shares where available. Second, cleaning involved removing irrelevant or repetitive content, removing spam and data in languages other than English, and anonymizing personal information where identifiable. Third, data organization involved categorizing content by theme for analysis and noting engagement metrics for context. Fourth, Voyant

Tools analysis involved uploading the cleaned corpus to Voyant Tools and generating word clouds (Cirrus), summary statistics, trend visualizations, and topic analysis. Fifth, thematic analysis involved detailed interpretive reading of the corpus, identification of themes based on both Voyant outputs and interpretive reading, and selection of illustrative examples.

6.5. Thematic Analysis Process

The thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, adapted for social media data [34]. Phase one involved familiarization with the data through reading all posts and comments multiple times, using Voyant Tools to gain an overview of language patterns, and noting initial impressions and potential themes. Phase two involved generating initial codes by coding relevant features of the data using both deductive (theory-driven) and inductive (data-driven) coding approaches. Phase three involved searching for themes by collating codes into potential themes, using Voyant Tools to cross-reference coded themes, and developing thematic maps to visualize relationships. Phase four involved reviewing themes by checking them against the entire corpus, ensuring they are coherent and distinctive, and refining them through iterative reading. Phase five involved defining and naming themes by defining the essence of each theme, naming themes to capture their character, and selecting illustrative quotes and examples. Phase six involved producing the report by writing the findings section with compelling examples, connecting themes to research questions, and relating findings to theoretical framework.

6.6. Ethical Considerations

This research is internet-based and although the data is publicly available, ethical considerations were carefully addressed. Regarding informed consent, Facebook users are regarded as having agreed to the terms and conditions of the platform before openly contributing to public discussions. Regarding anonymization, personal identifying information was removed where possible, and usernames and personal details have been excluded from analysis and reporting. Regarding public versus private, the KKUT page is a public Facebook page, making its content openly accessible. Regarding beneficence, this research aims to contribute to understanding peacebuilding and development communication, potentially benefiting communities by documenting successful strategies.

6.7. Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations. The single case study design means findings may not be generalizable to other Facebook pages or contexts. Language limitations arise from analysis focused on English-language content, potentially missing posts in other languages. Public data only means private interactions and closed group discussions were not captured [35]. Limited demographic information means profiles of commenters were not systematically analyzed. Voyant tool limitations mean Voyant Tools is a research aid, not a substitute for interpretive analysis.

7. Findings and Analysis
7.1. Voyant Tools Visualizations

The following visualizations were generated using Voyant Tools

to provide an overview of the corpus and guide the qualitative analysis.



Figure 1: Voyant Tools Summary Displaying Statistics from A Corpus Of 76 Documents With 9,877 Total Words And 2,113 Unique Word Forms

The Summary provides an overview of the corpus:

Metric	Value
Documents	76
Total Words	9,877
Unique Word Forms	2,113
Longest Document	Birthday Tribute (675 words)
Shortest Document	Facebook (0 words)
Average Words per Sentence	Varied (0-81.7)
Vocabulary Density	Varied (0-1.0)

Table 1: Corpus Statistics

The corpus consists of 76 documents with 9,877 total words and 2,113 unique word forms. The variation in document length from 0 to 675 words reflects the diverse nature of Facebook content, ranging from brief announcements to detailed tributes and

appreciations. The presence of 2,113 unique word forms indicates a rich vocabulary that covers multiple thematic areas including sports, community, peace, and development.

Topic	Key Terms	Interpretation
Topic 1	50w, 6w, city, rock, playground, match, opening, grand, saturday	Event logistics and tournament operations
Topic 2	time, 33w, organizing, love, kkfa, just, referees, building	Organizing committee and tournament administration
Topic 3	unity, tournament, kajo, keji, kkut, comment, like, post, relevant	Core mission and community engagement
Topic 4	fc, team, football, 8w, verification, isaac, teams, play, players	Sports activities and club operations
Topic 5	rest, soul, 31w, peace, 30w, rip, sad, family, isaac, hon	Tributes, memorials, and community grief
Topic 6	birthday, 11w, happy, god, julius, years, col, 4w, continue	Celebrations and community recognition
Topic 7	kkut, edition, media, south, committee, community, 2nd, sudan, development	Tournament administration and media engagement
Topic 8	2w, 1w, kkut2026, fixtures, pm, need, lo, group, confirmed, week	Tournament scheduling and logistics
Topic 9	club, football, na, kita, solid, replied, finals, nyoi, replies, mali	Club rivalries and tournament competition
Topic 10	3w, 7w, june, 2026, good, day, fan, isaac, 12w, harmonize	Community interactions and fan engagement

Table 3: Topics Identified by Voyant Tools

The topic analysis reveals 10 distinct thematic clusters that characterize the KKUT Facebook page content. Topics 3 and 7 represent the core mission of the page promoting unity, peace, and community development through sports. Topics 1, 4, and 8 relate to tournament operations and logistics. Topics 5 and 6 reflect the page's role in community recognition and mourning. Topics 2 and 10 capture organizing committee activities and fan engagement.

This distribution confirms that the page serves multiple functions: mission promotion, event management, community building, and recognition. The presence of Topic 3 as a distinct cluster centered on "unity" and "tournament" demonstrates how the page consistently reinforces the normative framework that positions the tournament as a peacebuilding initiative, a key mechanism for social influence.

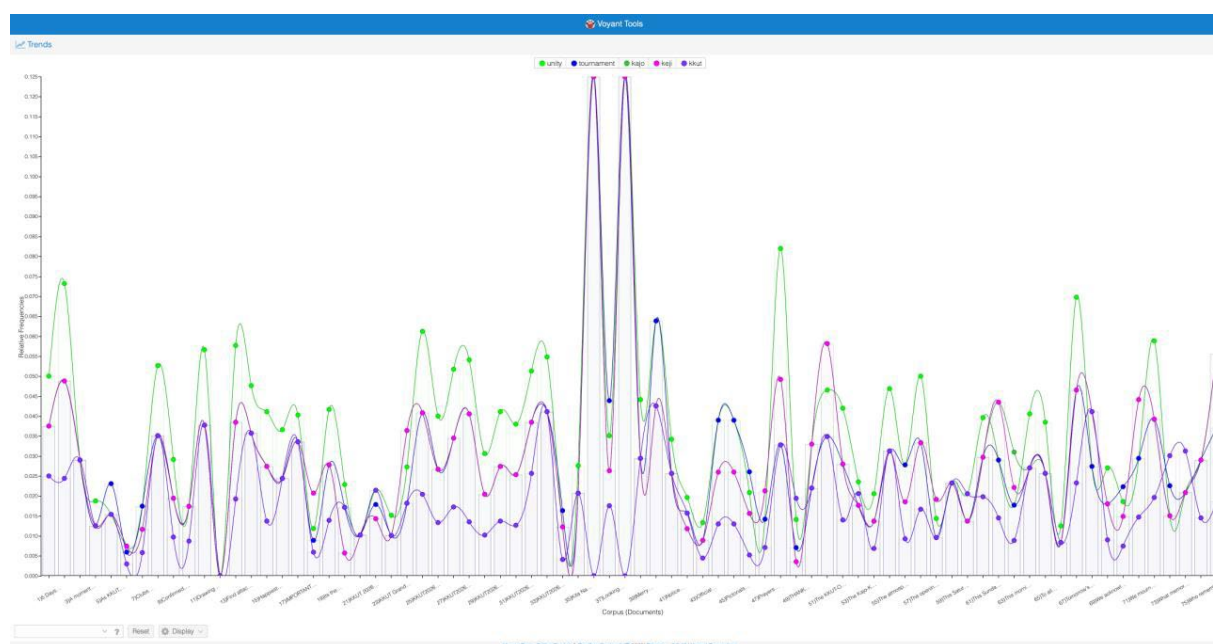


Figure 4: Voyant Tools Trends Visualization Showing the Distribution of Key Terms Across The 76 Documents in The Corpus

The Trends visualization reveals that "unity" appears consistently across the corpus, with spikes in posts that explicitly promote the tournament's mission. This consistent reinforcement of unity messaging creates the normative conditions for social influence through compliance, where users internalize expectations to publicly support unity. "Tournament" is clustered in operational posts, while "peace" appears more frequently in promotional content. "Kkut" appears across virtually all documents, serving as a consistent identifier. The presence of "comment" in interactive posts confirms the page's function as a two-way communication platform, enabling identification as community members engage with the page and with each other.

7.3. Most Frequent Words in the Corpus

The frequency analysis from Voyant Tools confirms that the page content is dominated by themes of community identity (kajo, keji), mission values (unity, peace), activities (tournament, football), and engagement (comment, like, share). The term "unity" appears 254 times as the most common term, demonstrating the centrality of this value to the page's purpose. "Tournament" appears 201 times, "kajo" 200 times, "keji" 198 times, and "kkut" 153 times. The strong presence of community identity terms suggests the page serves to reinforce Kajo Keji identity among followers, a process central to identification in social influence theory. The frequent appearance of engagement indicators (comment, like, share) confirms the interactive nature of the page, which enables the social influence processes to operate through community feedback and reinforcement.

7.4. Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis, supported by Voyant Tools outputs, revealed five major themes that characterize the KKUT Facebook page content and engagement.

- **Theme 1: Sports as a Vehicle for Unity and Peace**

The most prominent theme across the corpus is the use of sports, specifically football as a tool for promoting unity, peace, and community cohesion. The page consistently emphasizes the tournament's mission, with the repeated slogan "Score for Peace & Unity!" appearing in virtually every post.

Key findings indicate that sports events serve as platforms for bringing together community members across ethnic, age, and geographic divides. The tournament documentation creates visibility for peacebuilding efforts. Football is presented as a constructive alternative to harmful behaviors. Community leaders, including Col. Maulana Julius Lija, participate in and endorse the initiative.

Illustrative Examples:

"KKUT is more than a football competition. It is a platform to strengthen community ties and showcase the talent and discipline of Kajo Keji youth in Juba." (Post: "KKUT 2026 Kicks Off Club Verification with Strong Turnout," June 27, 2025)

"The Kajo Keji Unity Tournament Second Edition aims to promote peace, unity, and youth development in the Kajo Keji community through competitive football in Juba." (Post: "KKUT 2026 Kicks

Off Club Verification with Strong Turnout," June 27, 2025)

"Special recognition goes to Col. Maulana Julius Lija for accepting the invitation to captain the Legends Team. His presence on the pitch and continued backing of youth programs reflect the kind of fatherly leadership that inspires the next generation." (Post: "The Kajo-Keji Unity Tournament Organizing Committee in partnership with KKFA," June 29, 2025).

The consistent emphasis on unity and peace, reinforced by the slogan "Score for Peace & Unity!," creates a normative framework that positions the tournament as a peacebuilding initiative. The participation of respected community leaders provides legitimacy and reinforces social influence through identification, community members identify with these leaders and adopt the values they endorse. The framing of sports as a tool for healing and dignity connects to literature on sports for development and peacebuilding (YSA, 2023). The repeated messaging creates conditions for compliance, where users publicly express support for unity to align with community norms.

- **Theme 2: Community Building and Engagement**

The KKUT Facebook page functions as a digital community space where followers can engage with tournament activities, share opinions, and express support. The page documents not only the tournament itself but also planning meetings, verification processes, and community events.

Key findings indicate that planning meetings at Epatha Primary School are regularly announced and documented. Club verification processes are transparently communicated. Engagement metrics demonstrate active community participation. The page serves as a bridge between organizers and the community.

Illustrative Examples:

"This morning, passionate members came together at Epatha Primary School in Gosene in Juba to kickstart planning for the highly anticipated phase in Juba. The meeting was a resounding success, with key stakeholders discussing crucial aspects to ensure the tournament's sustainability and impact." (Post: "This morning, a passionate member came together at Epatha Primary School," April 11, 2025)

"The members also heard brief readings of the summarized financial record, detail financial document shall be shared for public consumption." (Post: "This morning, a passionate member came together," April 11, 2025)

"We have extended sincere gratitude to fans, community leaders, and partners who turned out in large numbers for yesterday's exhibition match. The match, played in the true spirit of unity and peace, saw both teams deliver an exciting display of skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship." (Post: "The Kajo-Keji Unity Tournament Organizing Committee in partnership with KKFA," June 29, 2025)

The page's role in community building is evident through its documentation of participatory processes (planning meetings, verification) and its encouragement of community engagement. The emphasis on transparency including financial records available for public consumption builds trust and legitimacy. The page functions as a two-way communication channel, with organizers

informing the community and community members providing feedback through comments. This interaction enables the social influence process of identification, as community members engage with the page and with each other, reinforcing their sense of belonging to the Kajo Keji community and their commitment to its values.

- **Theme 3: Deterring Drug Misuse and Harmful Behaviors**

The page explicitly addresses the second pillar of its mission deterring drug misuse and other harmful behaviors by promoting the tournament as a constructive alternative. This theme is particularly evident in the page description and in how the tournament is framed.

Key findings indicate that the page explicitly states its mission to deter drug misuse. Sports are presented as a constructive alternative to harmful behaviors. The tournament is promoted as a way to keep youth engaged positively. Community leaders emphasize the importance of providing alternatives.

Illustrative Examples:

"Platform for Kk Youth in Juba to Unite Through Sports and to Deter Drug Misuse and other Harm" (*Page Description, KKUT Facebook Page*)

"KKUT is more than a football competition. It is a platform to strengthen community ties and showcase the talent and discipline of Kajo keji youth in Juba." (*Post: "KKUT 2026 Kicks Off Club Verification with Strong Turnout," June 27, 2025*)

The page's explicit commitment to deterring drug misuse represents a significant development focus, positioning the tournament as not only a peacebuilding initiative but also a youth development intervention. This aligns with research demonstrating that sports can build character and good manners in children and prevent them from getting involved in drug abuse, alcohol, and joining street gangs [27]. The page's framing of sports as an alternative to harmful behaviors connects to broader public health and community development strategies. From a social influence perspective, this messaging promotes internalization, the genuine acceptance of values as personally meaningful. When youth participate in the tournament and engage with the page, they internalize the values of unity, discipline, and healthy living as personally meaningful alternatives to harmful behaviors.

- **Theme 4: Transparency and Accountability**

The page demonstrates a commitment to transparency in tournament operations, regularly posting updates on verification processes, fixtures, results, and standings. The page also documents administrative processes and decision-making.

Key findings indicate that club verification processes are publicly documented. Fixtures, results, and standings are regularly shared. The page invites questions and concerns from the community. Financial records are mentioned as being available for public consumption.

Illustrative Examples:

"The Management of the Kajo keji Unity Tournament Second Edition, Juba 2026 has applauded the successful completion of day one of its club verification exercise, calling it a strong start toward

a transparent and professionally run tournament. Seven clubs were verified on day one: Miami FC, Malli-kata FC, Jobless Corner FC, Heros FC, Kita Na Nyoi FC, Phoenix Athletic FC, and Homeland FC." (*Post: "KKUT 2026 Kicks Off Club Verification with Strong Turnout," June 27, 2025*)

"The members also heard brief readings of the summarized financial record, detail financial document shall be shared for public consumption." (*Post: "This morning, a passionate member came together," April 11, 2025*)

"Kindly note that the Sunday match between KKUT-OC and SSD Media Team has been moved from afternoon to the morning at 8:30 AM, same venue." (*Post: "IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!," May 30, 2025*)

The page's emphasis on transparency serves multiple functions: building trust with the community, demonstrating accountability, and documenting the tournament's legitimacy. By publicly sharing information about verification, fixtures, results, and financial records, the page positions the tournament as a professionally managed, accountable institution. This transparency is particularly important in a post-conflict context where trust in institutions may be limited. In terms of social influence, transparency reinforces compliance by demonstrating that the tournament operates according to fair and transparent rules, making it easier for community members to publicly support and participate in the initiative.

- **Theme 5: Resilience and Healing in Post-Conflict Context**

The page documents the community's resilience in the face of past trauma and ongoing challenges, including memorials and tributes to community members. This theme emerges most prominently in posts about deaths of community members and the tournament's role in healing.

Key findings indicate that the page announces and mourns the passing of community members. Tributes are made to individuals who contributed to peacebuilding. The tournament is framed as part of the community's healing process. Community members express collective grief and solidarity.

Illustrative Examples:

"It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Hon. Stephen Lodu Onesimo this morning in the tragic plane crash in Luri while en route from Yei to Juba. Hon. Lodu served as Deputy Chairperson of the Kajo keji Community Organization (KCO) and formerly as Central Equatoria State Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry. He played a key role in the success of the first edition of the Kajo keji Unity Tournament (KKUT) held in Juba last year." (*Post: "It is with deep sorrow," April 27, 2025*)

"We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and colleagues, and the entire Kajo keji Community during this difficult time. May his soul rest in peace." (*Post: "It is with deep sorrow," April 27, 2025*)

"We mourn the demise of Sasuk Isaac Jackson, you shall forever be remembered in the history of Kajo keji football everywhere around the globe." (*Post: "We mourn the demise of Sasuk Isaac Jackson," December 12, 2025*)

The page's documentation of community deaths and expression

of collective grief serves multiple functions: it maintains community bonds, recognizes contributions to peacebuilding, and reinforces shared identity. The linking of deceased individuals' contributions to the tournament positions the tournament as part of the community's legacy and ongoing peacebuilding efforts. This theme aligns with literature on social media's role in post-conflict recovery and community healing [26]. From a social influence perspective, these tributes promote internalization by connecting peacebuilding values to respected community figures. When community members mourn the loss of leaders who contributed

to peacebuilding, they reinforce the importance of these values and internalize them as meaningful aspects of their community identity.

7.5. Engagement Patterns

Analysis of engagement metrics reveals patterns in how followers interact with page content. The page shows consistent engagement across posts, with "comment," "reactions," "shares," and "like" appearing frequently in the corpus.

Topic	Average Reactions	Average Comments	Example
Tournament updates	45-80	10-28	KKUT 2026 Kicks Off (50 reactions, 5 comments)
Grand opening announcements	70-80	15-28	KKUT Grand Opening amended (76 reactions, 28 comments)
Tributes	15-77	2-40	Hon. Stephen Lodu (41 reactions, 22 comments)
Fixtures	10-80	1-15	KKUT2026 fixtures (80 reactions, 15 comments)
Registration reminders	10-25	1-2	Notice to all interested clubs (11 reactions, 2 comments)
Planning meetings	10-30	2-6	Dear all, You're invited (22 reactions, 6 comments)

Table 4: Engagement Patterns by Content Type

The highest comment volume was observed for KKUT Grand Opening (28 comments), followed by It is with deep sorrow (22 comments), and KKUT2026 fixtures (15 comments). Some posts received only 1-2 comments. Tournament operations were the most frequent content type, followed by event announcements, tributes and memorials (occasional but high engagement), and administrative updates (regular but lower engagement).

The page appears to moderate comments, as indicated by the notice "Most relevant is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out." This content moderation practice shapes the discourse on the page.

Qualitative Examples of Engagement:

"We are coming in full swings" (*Comment by Mc Printer De Printable on pre-launch match*)

"I hope this time, officiating standards will be greatly improved compared to the first which was just below average." (*Comment by Jean Monoja De Antonio on verification post*)

"May his innocent soul rest in peace" (*Comments by multiple users on tribute posts*)

The engagement patterns demonstrate that the page successfully encourages community participation through multiple mechanisms. High engagement on tournament updates and grand opening announcements reflects community enthusiasm for the tournament. The tributes generate significant engagement, demonstrating the community's collective grief and solidarity—a form of internalization where community members genuinely embrace shared values. Constructive feedback on officiating and verification shows that the page provides a channel for community concerns, reinforcing compliance with norms of accountability and transparency.

7.6. Key Individuals and Roles

The Voyant Tools analysis reveals key individuals who play prominent roles in the KKUT community.

Individual	Role	Frequency in Corpus
Fransico Khamis	Page Administrator	Page creator/manager
Kenyi Isaac Mono	Chairperson, KKUT	Frequently mentioned
Stephen Lodu Onesimo	Deputy Chairperson, KCO	Prominent in tribute posts
Col. Maulana Julius Lija	Legends Team Captain	Cited for leadership

Active Commenters:

Individual/Entity	Role	Engagement
Samin Anita Sebit Mansur	Active commenter	Regular engagement
Denis Duku	Active commenter	Regular engagement
Mulai Harmonize	Active commenter	Regular feedback
Mali Kätä Football Club	Club representative	Regular comments
Phoenix Afc	Active commenter	Regular engagement

Media and Entertainment Contributors:

Individual/Entity	Role	Contribution
Isaac The Sports Journalist	Media	Coverage and commentary
MC Samix	Master of Ceremonies	Event hosting
Big Trail Music	Entertainment	Musical performances
Kita Na Nyöi Traditional Group	Cultural performers	Opening day performances

Table 5: Key Individuals and Roles

The page serves as a platform for recognizing community contributors, building a network of key individuals who support the tournament. The active participation of these individuals reinforces community bonds and creates role models for other community members. This aligns with social influence theory, where identification with key figures shapes community norms and behaviors. When community leaders like Kenyi Isaac Mono and Col. Maulana Julius Lija endorse the tournament, followers identify with them and adopt the values they promote. The recognition of active commenters as "Top fans" further reinforces identification by acknowledging community members who consistently engage with the page.

7.7. Tournament Structure and Operations

The KKUT Facebook page documents the comprehensive structure and operations of the tournament.

- **Registration and Verification:**

Club registration requires forms with a fee of 500,000 SSP. The club verification process is documented with day-by-day updates. Deadline communications and reminders are regularly posted.

- **Tournament Structure:**

The tournament features group stages with fixtures and standings, week-by-week updates on results and standings, semi-finals and finals, and a top scorers' chart with regular updates.

- **Venues:**

The primary venue is Rock City Playground, with Merkolong Playground as a secondary venue, and Epatha Primary School used for planning meetings and draws.

Venue concerns were documented on the page:

"To the CO My inbox is full of concern from fans and clubs inboxing me thinking am part of the OC asking why the OC did unfair venue scheduling cose other teams are balanced and others only play on one playground and surely the conditions of the grounds are not equally the same." (*Comment by Leju David Logune on fixture post*)

- **Timetable (2025-2026):**

The first edition was held in July-August 2025. Planning meetings occurred in April 2025 and April 2026. The Grand Opening for 2026 was scheduled for July 4, 2026. Regular matches followed weekly fixtures. The finals for 2025 were held on August 9, 2025.

- **Administrative Communication:**

The page provides regular updates on tournament proceedings and transparency about financial records.

7.8. Challenges and Concerns Documented on the Page

The page also documents challenges and concerns raised by

community members.

- **Venue Distribution:**

"I'm not blind how EWorld is the only team you decide to play all their games in Merkolong ground be fair enough otherwise this is the sign of weakness." (*Comment by Ceasor Rolee*)

- **Officiating Standards:**

"I hope this time; officiating standards will be greatly improved compared to the first which was just below average." (*Comment by Jean Monoja De Antonio*)

- **Verification Issues:**

"A person from the verification team can not said a player was registered with another yet all clubs representative were there that's not fail." (*Comment by Pau Paka*)

- **Communication:**

"We need fair verification from the team cos yesterday they were not doing the job as needed." (*Comment by Pau Paka*)

"try to update us about the fixtures on the Facebook page some followers don't have the WhatsApp group" (*Comment by Emma De Wizzydoctaa*)

- **Referee Training Request:**

"Subject: Request for Capacity Building Training for Referees. Equipping referees with professional skills and up-to-date knowledge of international rules and standards would be a valuable investment in their development." (*Comment by Aku Baba Africa*)

The documentation of challenges and concerns on the page demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability. While critical comments are visible, they also represent opportunities for improvement and community dialogue. The page's willingness to allow concerns to be aired—albeit with moderation—suggests an openness to community feedback, which can strengthen trust and legitimacy. From a social influence perspective, addressing these concerns reinforces compliance by demonstrating that the tournament operates according to accountable and transparent processes, making it easier for community members to support the initiative.

8. Discussion

8.1. Engagement Manifestation on the KKUT Facebook Page (RQ1)

The analysis reveals that engagement on the KKUT Facebook page manifests through multiple dimensions.

- **Content Creation and Dissemination:**

The page administrator regularly posts updates on tournament activities, including planning meetings, verification processes, fixtures, results, and community events. The content is

characterized by clear articulation of the tournament's mission and values, documentation of activities with textual and visual content, regular updates on tournament progress, and transparency in operations and decision-making.

- **Community Interaction:**

Followers engage with page content through comments (supportive messages, questions, concerns, and suggestions), reactions (likes, loves, and other reactions indicating support), shares (content distribution to wider networks), and replies (multi-threaded conversations among followers).

- **Normative Reinforcement:**

The page reinforces norms of unity, peace, and community engagement through consistent messaging around "Score for Peace & Unity!" highlighting community leaders' participation and endorsement, documenting diverse participation (including women in sports), and celebrating collective achievements.

- **Digital Community Building:**

The page creates a sense of community among followers through shared identity around Kajo Keji heritage, common purpose (unity through sports), mutual engagement with tournament activities, and recognition of individual contributions.

- **Interpretation through Social Influence Theory:**

The manifestation of engagement on the KKUT page reflects key concepts from social influence theory [16]. The consistent messaging creates conditions for compliance with community norms around unity and peace. Users publicly express support for these norms through comments, likes, and shares, signaling their alignment with community expectations. The recognition of community leaders and active participants enables identification with the tournament's values—community members identify with respected figures like Kenyi Isaac Mono and Col. Maulana Julius Lija, adopting the values they promote. The documentation of positive community engagement and collective achievements promotes internalization of peacebuilding values as personally meaningful, as evidenced by the framing of the tournament as a tool for "healing" and "dignity."

8.2. Extent of Interaction About Unity (RQ2)

The analysis demonstrates significant interaction about unity on the KKUT Facebook page.

- **Consistent Unity Messaging:**

The page consistently emphasizes unity through the tournament's name (Kajo Keji Unity Tournament), the slogan "Score for Peace & Unity!" posts highlighting community coming together, and recognition of the tournament's role in promoting unity.

- **Community Endorsement:**

Unity messaging is reinforced by community leaders' participation and statements, followers' supportive comments, engagement metrics showing community approval, and the tournament being described as "the best and most peaceful tournament."

- **Unity Through Sports:**

The page documents how sports serve as a unifying force by bringing together diverse community members, creating safe spaces for youth engagement, bridging divides between different groups, and providing constructive alternatives to harmful behaviors.

- **Challenges to Unity:**

The page also documents challenges to unity including concerns about fairness in tournament operations, questions about inclusivity and representation, critiques of officiating standards, and language suggesting competitive rivalries (which may have both positive and negative aspects).

- **Selective Moderation:**

While interaction about unity is evident, the page also shows selective moderation of comments ("Most relevant is selected"), potential polarization around competitive rivalries, limited evidence of deep dialogue about structural peacebuilding issues, and focus on sports events rather than broader peacebuilding discussions.

- **Interpretation through Social Influence Theory:**

The extent of interaction about unity reflects the page's successful positioning of the tournament as a peacebuilding initiative. The consistent, positive framing of the tournament's purpose generates community buy-in and engagement through compliance and identification. However, the challenges documented—including concerns about fairness and officiating—suggest that peacebuilding is an ongoing process requiring attention to procedural justice and inclusive participation. The selective moderation of comments raises questions about the page's role in facilitating open dialogue versus managing its public image. From a social influence perspective, addressing these challenges is important for maintaining the credibility that underpins compliance—if community members perceive unfairness, their willingness to publicly support the tournament may diminish.

8.3. Association with Development Activities (RQ3)

The KKUT Facebook page is clearly associated with development activities beyond peacebuilding.

- **Youth Development:**

The tournament provides constructive engagement for youth, sports activities are framed as alternatives to harmful behaviors, the page documents youth participation and achievements, and it promotes development of sports skills and teamwork.

- **Drug Misuse Deterrence:**

The page explicitly states its mission to deter drug misuse, sports are presented as a constructive alternative to harmful behaviors, the tournament is promoted as a way to keep youth engaged positively, and community leaders emphasize the importance of providing alternatives.

- **Community Cohesion:**

The tournament brings together community members, the page documents community engagement and participation, activities create opportunities for interaction across divides, and collective celebration of achievements reinforces community bonds.

- **Economic and Social Development:**

The tournament provides visibility for local clubs and talent, the page documents sponsorship and partnership opportunities, activities create networking opportunities, and the tournament is framed as contributing to community development.

- **Inclusivity:**

The page documents women's participation in sports and leadership, inclusion of non-Kajokeji players in tournament

activities is praised, gender-inclusive participation is explicitly valued, and diverse community engagement is promoted.

"The Organising Committee is particularly proud that both teams embraced inclusivity, with women represented among the players and within the technical teams. This reflects our shared commitment to gender inclusion and equal participation in sports and community development." (Post: "THANK YOU AND APPRECIATION MESSAGE," May 31, 2025)

• **Interpretation through Social Influence Theory:**

The page's association with development activities extends beyond peacebuilding to include youth development, public health (drug misuse deterrence), and community development. This broad framing positions the tournament as a comprehensive community development initiative, not merely a sporting event. From a social influence perspective, the explicit valuing of gender inclusion and diversity promotes internalization of progressive community values. When the page documents women's participation and celebrates inclusivity, it signals that these are important community values, encouraging followers to internalize them as personally meaningful. The emphasis on drug misuse deterrence frames the tournament as a positive alternative to harmful behaviors, promoting compliance with healthy norms and identification with the community's values of health and well-being.

8.4. Applying Social Influence Theory to the KKUT Page

Social influence theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how the KKUT Facebook page facilitates unity building and development [16].

• **Compliance:**

The page consistently reinforces norms of unity, peace, and

community engagement through its messaging. The repeated slogan "Score for Peace & Unity!" creates a normative environment where public support for unity is expected and reinforced. Users' comments, likes, and shares publicly signal their alignment with these norms, demonstrating compliance. The page's transparency about tournament operations—including verification processes and financial records—reinforces compliance by demonstrating that the tournament operates according to fair and accountable principles.

• **Identification:**

The page recognizes and celebrates community leaders and active participants, creating opportunities for identification. When community members see respected figures like Kenyi Isaac Mono, Col. Maulana Julius Lija, and Samin Anita Sebit Mansur engaging with the tournament, they identify with these individuals and adopt the values they promote. The recognition of "Top fans" and active commenters further reinforces identification by acknowledging community members who consistently engage with the page.

• **Internalization:**

The framing of the tournament as more than a competition—as a tool for "healing," "dignity," and community building—promotes internalization of peacebuilding values. When community members describe the tournament as "the best and most peaceful tournament" and express its importance for youth development, they demonstrate genuine acceptance of these values as personally meaningful. The tributes to community members like Hon. Stephen Lodu Onesimo, who contributed to peacebuilding, further reinforce internalization by connecting peacebuilding values to respected figures.

Process	Definition	Evidence from KKUT Page
Compliance	Public conformity to group norms	"Score for Peace & Unity!" messages, comments expressing support, likes and shares signaling alignment
Identification	Adoption of attitudes based on relationship with a group	Recognition of community leaders, "Top fans" acknowledgment, identification with Kajo Keji community
Internalization	Genuine acceptance of values as personally meaningful	Framing of tournament as "healing" and "dignity," community mourning, voluntary participation

Table 6: Applying Social Influence Theory to KKUT Page Engagement

9. Recommendations

9.1. Recommendations for the KKUT Page

Based on the analysis, specific recommendations for the KKUT Facebook page include:

• **Content Strategy**

The page should increase posting frequency to maintain follower engagement, use more visual content (photos and videos) to increase reach, balance competitive content with explicit peacebuilding messaging, develop a content calendar to maintain consistent engagement, and document and share success stories from tournament participants.

• **Community Engagement**

The page should encourage comments and discussions through questions and calls to action, engage more actively with comments

to foster deeper dialogue, address concerns about fairness and transparency in tournament operations, and highlight women's participation and gender inclusion more explicitly.

• **Partnerships**

The page should partner with other peacebuilding organizations to cross-promote content, engage more media professionals to amplify the peacebuilding message, and document and acknowledge sponsors to encourage ongoing support.

• **Accessibility**

The page should consider multi-language content to reach wider audiences, ensure mobile-friendly content given limited internet infrastructure, and provide WhatsApp group integration for followers without Facebook access.

9.2. Broader Recommendations for Digital Peacebuilding

Drawing from research on social media and peacebuilding, several broader recommendations emerge.

- **Media Literacy Initiatives**

Media literacy programs are crucial to empower communities to navigate social media safely and engage actively in discussions, thereby bridging the digital divide (Maweu & Mare, 2021).

- **Inclusive Peacebuilding Frameworks**

Peacebuilding frameworks should integrate women's voices to reduce marginalization and strengthen contributions to stability and reconciliation efforts [24].

- **Open and Safe Digital Spaces**

Open and safe digital spaces should be created where citizens can engage meaningfully across ethnic and tribal divides [24].

- **Gender-Sensitive Technological Approaches**

Gender-sensitive technological approaches are needed to address the disproportionate impact of hostile online environments on women [24].

- **Platform Design Changes**

Platform design changes should be explored to reduce engagement incentives to divisiveness and promote bridging content. Strategies include reducing the weight of engagement signals in content selection, collecting additional feedback to discriminate between positive and negative engagement, and algorithmically promoting content that gains approval across diverse groups [24].

9.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies of Facebook page engagement over time, compare multiple Facebook pages across different communities and contexts, interview page administrators and active followers to understand motivations and impacts, track changes in attitudes or behaviors over time associated with page engagement, explore the relationship between online engagement and offline participation, examine how social media can be used to support early warning systems and mediation platforms undertake cross-social media studies of interventions and peacebuilding, and structure studies along a "contextualized community" framework that has been successful in understanding impact [24].

10. Conclusion

This paper has explored the potential of Facebook as a tool for unity building and peacebuilding in South Sudan, with specific focus on the Kajo Keji Unity Tournament (KKUT) Facebook page. Through qualitative content analysis of 76 Facebook posts comprising 9,877 total words, the study has demonstrated how the page serves as a digital platform for promoting sports as a vehicle for unity, deterring drug misuse, and fostering community engagement among the Kajo Keji diaspora and local population.

The literature review has demonstrated that social media platforms have a dual nature, they can both escalate conflict through polarization and misinformation and facilitate peacebuilding through dialogue and community engagement. The KKUT Facebook page represents a grassroots initiative that embodies the potential of digital media for positive social change. The

findings from the analysis demonstrate that engagement manifests through content creation, community interaction, normative reinforcement, and digital community building; that interaction about unity is significant and consistent, with the page reinforcing unity values and documenting community engagement; and that association with development activities is evident through youth development, drug misuse deterrence, community cohesion, economic development, and inclusivity.

Applying social influence theory as an analytical lens, this study demonstrates how the KKUT page works through three interconnected processes: compliance (public conformity to unity norms through engagement), identification (adoption of peacebuilding values through identification with community leaders), and internalization (genuine acceptance of peacebuilding values as personally meaningful) [16]. These processes are reinforced through consistent messaging, community leadership, shared activities, and collective recognition. The research has highlighted the importance of context in understanding the role of social media in peacebuilding. In Kajo Keji, a community that has endured repeated displacement and violence, digital platforms offer a way to maintain connections, share information about peace initiatives, and build a sense of community across geographic distances. However, significant challenges remain. Digital divides, low media literacy, language barriers, and the potential for online polarization all pose obstacles to effective digital peacebuilding. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines media literacy initiatives, inclusive peacebuilding frameworks, and platform design changes that reduce incentives for divisiveness.

The use of Voyant Tools as a qualitative research aid has demonstrated the value of digital tools in supporting qualitative content analysis. When used as a complement to interpretive reading, Voyant Tools can provide an overview of language patterns, identify potential themes, and support triangulation of findings. This methodological approach offers a model for other researchers examining social media content for peacebuilding and development communication. This paper contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital peacebuilding by providing empirical evidence of how Facebook pages can support community-led peacebuilding initiatives in South Sudan. The findings offer practical insights for peacebuilding practitioners, policymakers, and researchers interested in leveraging digital media for peace and development in conflict-affected contexts. As the KKUT page itself emphasizes: "Together, through sports, we continue to promote Unity, Peace, Diversity, and Development." This study demonstrates that Facebook pages can play a meaningful role in this mission, creating digital spaces where communities can connect, engage, and work towards a more peaceful future.

Declarations

Funding

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

Not applicable. This study analyzed publicly available Facebook page content and did not involve human participants or animals.

Author Contributions

[Specify individual author contributions: conceptualization, methodology, analysis, writing, etc.]

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are publicly available on the KKUT Facebook page. The corpus used for analysis is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI Usage Statement

During the preparation of this work, the author used generative AI tools for language refinement and editing assistance. The author utilized AI-assisted technologies to improve clarity, grammar, and readability of the manuscript. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

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