LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role of Social Media in Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Transfer

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The present era of globalization brought people closer by introducing different networking mediums. The introduction of networking mediums promotes a diverse cultural atmosphere throughout the globe which has opened the doors to the vast field of knowledge and information from different regions of the world. This idea has brought the world together. However, it would not have been possible without electronic media. One of the great sources of electronic media is social networking which provides and promotes information and knowledge sharing through easy and informal interactions among the people belonging to different regions of the world. There is a vast variety of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., which are increasing day by day as the world is becoming more dependent on them, thus creating their high demand in the global market. Knowledge sharing through social media has made the world a global village. The individuals from various regions, religions, and cultures interact on a common platform, share their ideas, and enhance their knowledge which shapes their thinking towards other people across the globe.

Currently, there are many fields that are benefitting from social media for gaining knowledge and transmitting it for various purposes. One of these fields is academia, where researchers and students require information and knowledge regarding various subjects. Social media tools have made the life of a researcher easy and efficient. The intervention of social media utilization in the educational sector has widened the scope of education and provided a vast pool of knowledge for academics. The use of social media has expedited the educational processes worldwide by providing academics with numerous ideas and literature, an integrated approach towards education, group discussions, and increased communication assistance among their peers. These factors have played exceptionally to ease and improve the scholarly work of students across the globe (Ghazali et al., 2016).

In today's business market, organizations are spending more on social media platforms to communicate with their vendors such as suppliers, distributors, and customers, and promote their products and services in the global market. The invention of social media has expanded the consumer market and provided exposure to the business world. Now, the customers are more knowledgeable and aware of the market trends. This has become possible through the use of social media tools, especially Facebook and LinkedIn which are adapted by the businesses and firms, and publicize them through blogging and advertisements, thus channeling the vast knowledge regarding organizations, their market and industrial trends, employee portfolio, and jobs vacancies to the public (Bharati et al., 2015).

Social media has a vast pool of advantages. In the world of globalization, where people want to interact and become part of a collaborative environment, social media is attracting employees and workers from different organizations to get involved in such interactive settings. This may provide the motivation and a sense of self-actualization along with getting the latest knowledge to make their work more effective, thus improving organization performance (Gaál, et al., 2015). The past studies show that social media tools and technologies are utilized to share knowledge during work for professional growth as well as contribute towards the personal development of the workers.  The researchers further argue that in the knowledge-driven realm, it is essential that the workers are known to compete in the market. Similarly, organizations also need to realize the importance of knowledge sharing and dissemination throughout the company including all dependent parties through implementing knowledge management applications. The effective use of social media can lead organizations and enterprises to achieve a competitive advantage in the global market. Moreover, social media sites significantly provide platforms for e-commerce solutions and online businesses. This has changed the nature of business and customer behaviors. People can easily access and avail different products and services available around the world.

Though social media has many advantages, it also has a darker side which opposes its usage and reliance. According to Zaffar and Ghazawneh (2012), organizations feel uncomfortable embracing social media assistance. The employers are reluctant in providing access to social media platforms in order to avoid any infringement or misuse by the employees (Zaffar and Ghazawneh, 2012). Though social media plays a powerful role in shaping people's minds, it can also be considered as a drawback with regards to societal manipulation. Moreover, the quality of knowledge or information shared and transferred through social media sites can be questionable. The study shows that although these platforms provide vast knowledge, it does not assure better performance (Levine and Prietula, 2012).

The impact of social media knowledge sharing is contradictory among the children and youth. The wide range of knowledge and information available on social media sites makes the younger generation more knowledgeable. They are well-informed of the changing trends around the globe. However, in contrast, the content available on social networking sites is not appropriate for all the age groups and can influence their minds adversely which is then reflected in their behaviors and habits (O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Although, social media platforms provide a great variety of entertainment programs and interactive podiums, all the content available on those sites does not prove to be appropriate for the kids. Moreover, there is a possibility that the knowledge shared on social media is unrealistic and unreliable and may misguide the public.

Social media tools have made knowledge and information about countless fields available to the world. The current social media trends entertain us through sharing vast and different information in the form of pictures, videos, text, news, location check-in, educational details, daily life events, and much more. However, sharing the pieces of information with the public puts the privacy of an individual at great risk. Nowadays, people take information from social media sites which may end up in privacy infringements, disclosing the information that should be kept confidential. This is one of the flaws of sharing and transferring information through social media networking which has adversely impacted our societal norms and ethical values (Senthil Kumar N et al., 2016).

At present, millions of people are addicted to the use of social media either to gather information or for connecting with the people. This has enabled the discovery of new business platforms with a vast pool of audience. It provides knowledge to the people of all age groups despite belonging to diverse cultures. It has created opportunities for the organizations to be benefitted from the organic content and get feedback from their customers directly. However, the downside of social media in knowledge sharing cannot be ignored. The adverse effects of inappropriate information available to the communities has destroyed our cultural values and created many health issues such as depression among the youth, childhood obesity, and their sedentary behaviors impacting the family time. These are the shortcomings of social media and networking which need to be adjusted for the betterment of the communities. As explained in the previous literature, the role of social media in knowledge sharing and transferring has been discussed both in positive and negative ways.

Finally, the literature review suggests that social media plays a vital role in knowledge sharing and transferring information around the globe and therefore, it has become an essential requirement to live in the present era of globalization. However, there are some drawbacks of social media that can be overcome by creating awareness and improving the quality of the knowledge being shared.

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