

## IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Sustainability is a widely used concept in sustainable development and management of resources. Technology has broadened the concept with progress in human life and increased the use of technology. The research is aimed to discuss the various contexts of sustainability in terms of using social media. Social media has a large scope to spread worldwide and tremendously has changed day-to-day life. As the issues concerned with daily life are shared and discussed on social media, it has transformed the way of expressing thoughts and opinions on these issues. The researcher must highlight the impact of sustainability on social media content that is now used for spreading awareness, business growth, and social activism. The purpose of the paper is to put the concept of sustainability in different contexts by studying the contribution of social media to sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Social media, Sustainability, Economic sustainability, Sustainable development

### Introduction

A quality to sustain is sustainability which can continue over a period. Recently, the concept of sustainability is more expressive beyond the management of natural and environmental resource issues. It is extended as part of the social sciences as a sustainable development that is allied with multiple natural, political, social, or economic phenomena in diverse ways. A new Digital decade recently introduced social media to communicate directly with people and characterized by fast and dependable contact. While considering the best accessibility to these patrons, establishments have countless benefits due to being in touch with potential consumers. Businesses promoting their products, offers, and services through social media acknowledge their customers' preferences, to relate their offers directly. It allows studying the market needs in reasonable ways than conventional marketing strategies that are considered too high. Social media is widely accepted for marketing purposes due to the transparency, competence, and openness of businesses towards their customers. Digital technology has given a new world of exposure for businesses employing social media to capture new target customers and turn their interests into imminent customers. (Ballestar, 2020)

Today, sustainability is not restricted to organizational growth but is further extended in terms of current as well as future generations. However, sustainability issues in different sectors like companies' development, governance, and social and environmental sectors are considered for sustainable development. These issues refer to related factors such as the consumption of natural resources and pollution in environmental issues. Similarly, other issues can be defined for measuring and comparing sustainable performance. Sustainability issues in management and the board of directors are emphasized with governance. However, these factors like environmental, social, and governance (ESG) are crucial in supporting strategies and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in sustainability. Therefore, the paper is purposed for studying sustainability on social media in perceptive of ESG factors.

### Role of Social media

With the emergence of modern technology, these are redefined for social media in the context of interactions on social media. New digital technology tends to increase the use of social media in current and future generations that have a significant impact on the community and society as multiple groups and their sustainability performance are linked with social as well as ecological development. The research also aims to find equality and new challenges outlined using social media that have an impact on social and environmental accounting with interactions between companies and their followers on social media. (Ballestar, 2020). Thus, with digital transformation, the impact of sustainability considers the performance on social media concerning the challenges tackled by businesses and organizations as well as society.

### **Sustainability in Social media**

The sense of sustainability has emerged as a new concept with different perceptives, also for social media. The role of social media is highlighted in their practice to promote sustainability. A social or economic context of using social media together with an ecological context changes the meaning of sustainability. Businesses develop policies and actions that should be socially equitable to contribute to economic growth. While their responsible actions are impacting sustainable development positively with diligent management of the environment. However, issues in strengthening and growing their sustainability entail strategy for the success and operability of the businesses. Therefore, sustainability is a crucial factor in long-term financial and competitive benefits. (Dongre, 2020)

Sustainability in economic, environmental, and social issues powers social media interactions. This paper discusses the ability of social media technology to change behaviours and business performance as well as a transformation of social interactions to reach communities across the globe. These factors of sustainability force the people to participate in influencing or disallowing decisions of governments and corporations that may impact them. Social media helps in such situations as environmental issues in terms of changes, resources' availability and uses, and the impact of business on the environment. Thus, social media provides space and means for connecting people with these challenges and active environmental groups. In this way, the impact of sustainability on the beneficial tool of social media is highlighted in this research to study its contribution to the economic, environmental, and social development of society. (Engelin, 2020)

### **Research Reviews**

Sustainability is explained in a different context in several studies highlighting the role of innovative technology. The researcher showcases different studies on sustainability on social media. Many organizations have taken a lead to evaluate the impact of sustainability on social media interactions and their performance. The meaning of sustainability is explained in some studies that are further extended from the natural and environmental issues related to resources and their sustainable management. The study analyses the use of social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. by people with different perspectives and extents of knowledge. (Lee, 2021) Social Media provides a platform for communication, discussion, and expression of different issues, views, and opinions. The use of social media is extended to businesses, and organizations with the transformation of people's interaction from shopping to emails, education, and a business tool. It offers ease of connectivity, exchange of ideas, and sharing of information about the world around us. It plays a significant role in the endorsement of awareness of specific issues, and businesses commercial as well as encourages communication in communities or individuals. It is associated with various ideas, thoughts, services, products, and cultures shared on social media across the world. Although sustainable development includes individuals, the public as well as several groups, organizations, and governments with a unified and universal approach and spread at the local as well as global level; social media plays a vital role to cultivate such sustainable development through potential knowledge and advanced technology. These development programs are effectively motivated and committed to acquiring success using social media like Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter which are equally favourable to accessing user mind space. They provide interactive forums like working groups, religious or cultural groups, associations, and institutions for youth to inform people through direct calls or interactive social networking. (Lee, 2021)

The study also analyses social networks for the taxonomy of the network including their dynamics and most relevant conversations and their spread worldwide. Conversations on social media are studied for feelings and perceptions and according to the use of the concept, are rated positive or negative to evaluate whether topics related to either formal fields, like scientific research, or sustainability strategies followed by agencies and organizations. Natural language processing is used to highlight clustering areas practising the concept of sustainability and the sentiment of social media conversations. It explains the fact that social networks have distinctive characteristics depending on the topics and the relationships. While the network includes content with the words "sustainable" or "sustainability" and re-sent content is analysed, it shows the spread of content regarding sustainability within the social network including many micro-communities that are not intricately connected. Earlier studies used modern technologies and software for in-depth analysis from different perspectives. The study explains that social media is powerful and more effective than other costly and time-consuming traditional processes that lack the momentum and spontaneity of digital conversations. (Leo, 2016) Another study on social media sustainability performance drives attention to sustainability issues intensifying environmental, social, and ethical concerns. Modern digital transformation is fostering public and private organizations to adopt recent technologies like social media for their operation to gain substantial benefits associated with social media. The increasing importance of social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube made the creation, sharing, and exchange of information among several stakeholders easier. These are investors, suppliers, consumers, employees, public powers, or non-governmental associations gradually

demanding development companies and strengthening CSR practices. However, CSR and sustainability are so closely related and are often considered equivalent concepts. Correspondingly, social media benefits the augmentation and communication of CSR practices and improvement of the environmental accounting counting sustainable performances with a competitive advantage. As ESG issues are related to sustainability, their significance among CSR practices is a crucial factor that follows reframing the company's identity with codifying the new identity to build a supportive organizational culture. This, in turn, affects the social as well as economic sustainability of companies' performance. Consequently, CSR is the responsibility of businesses for their impacts on society and their strategy impacts on social, environmental, and ethical concerns.

Specific indicators like Sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs) are important in business strategies as well as to assess social, economic, and environmental performance. Improvement in performance and strategic efficiency and sustainability projects need significant investments and sustainability performance management. These performance indicators uncover potential opportunities and evolve faster than other indicators. ESG practices and non-financial performance has positive relations, while ESG and financial performance relation is unclear or positive in some studies. Therefore, sustainability in ESG practices alters the social media interactions between companies and followers. The study highlights the use of social media and its effect on organizations' sustainability performance indicating the impact of digital technologies like social media on social and environmental issues en route to the sustainability perspectives. (Martínez, 2020)

In the Digital era of technological advancement, social media platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn provide a way of communication and enter the daily lives of people for social interaction and information exchange. Additionally, the use of social media entered several fields including entertainment, culture, economy, business, politics, education, etc. These fields are associated with social and economic sustainability. Social media benefits opportunities for businesses and offers new ways of communication with their users to collaborate, create, or receive feedback. Another active advantage of social media includes marketing as products and services of companies have reformed the way towards social media marketing. Therefore, a study on sustainability highlights the role of social media in the growth of businesses as well as improvement in communication strategies. (Martínez, 2020)

Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) conducted a literature review that examined the impact of social media on sustainability communication in the higher education sector. The authors reviewed various studies that explored the use of social media platforms, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, in promoting sustainability initiatives and engaging stakeholders in higher education institutions. The review revealed that social media can be an effective tool for promoting sustainability-related content, engaging stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and raising awareness about sustainability issues in higher education. The authors also highlighted the challenges and risks associated with the use of social media in sustainability communication, such as managing online reputation, ensuring the accuracy of the information, and addressing potential negative impacts. The review concluded that social media has the potential to play a significant role in advancing sustainability in higher education, but further research is needed to better understand its impact and effectiveness. (Kaplan, 2016)

Carroll and Shabana (2010) conducted a literature review that examined the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its relationship with sustainability and social media. The authors reviewed various studies that explored the business case for CSR, including how CSR initiatives can impact a company's financial performance, reputation, and stakeholder relationships. The review revealed that CSR can have positive effects on a company's performance and that social media can play a role in communicating and promoting CSR efforts. The authors discussed the potential of social media as a tool for engaging stakeholders, disseminating CSR-related information, and fostering transparency and accountability. However, they also pointed out the challenges and risks associated with using social media for CSR communication, such as managing stakeholder expectations, ensuring authenticity, and addressing potential backlash. The review concluded that social media can be a valuable tool for integrating sustainability and CSR into business strategies, but further research is needed to better understand its impact and effectiveness in this context. (Carroll , 2010)

The research study by Mikyoung, (2017) employed an online experimental design with 285 college students as participants. The findings revealed that in the case of organic brand-related UGC, recommendations from close friends resulted in higher information-sharing attributions and lower monetary-gain attributions compared to recommendations from celebrities. However, there was no significant difference in causal attributions based on source type when the UGC was sponsored. Moreover, the study identified that both information-sharing and monetary-gain attributions played a mediating role in the effects of source type and content sponsorship on brand attitude and intention to comply with the recommendation. This study contributes to the limited body of research on the effectiveness of celebrities as a source of brand-related UGC and further expands our

understanding of source effects by examining the relative effectiveness of close friends and celebrities as sources of product information. Additionally, the findings highlight that the effectiveness of source type may be contingent on whether the brand-related UGC is sponsored or not, shedding light on how source type influences the effectiveness of brand-related UGC. (Mikyoungh 2017)

In their research paper, Smits and Mogos explore the influence of social media on business performance by analyzing organizational capabilities. Using a mixed research approach that includes qualitative analysis through interviews and quantitative analysis through a survey of 60 employees at SponsorPay, a start-up in the online game advertising industry, the authors find that the utilization of social media enhances business capabilities and overall performance. Notably, the impact is not solely attributed to a single social media tool, but rather to the successful integration of six social media tools into an effective ecosystem that facilitates coordination between internal and external business processes. This highlights the significance of leveraging multiple social media platforms for achieving business success while maximizing organizational capabilities. (Smits, 2013)

The research paper conducted by Pop, (2020) investigates the relationship between social media and consumers' motivation and intention to purchase green cosmetics, utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The study finds that social media plays a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes, subjective norms, altruistic and egoistic motivations, and ultimately, their intention to purchase green cosmetics. These findings highlight the significance of implementing effective communication strategies on social media platforms to enhance consumer motivation and intention to purchase environmentally-friendly cosmetics, offering valuable insights for marketers in the cosmetics industry targeting environmentally-conscious consumers. (Pop, 2020)

The research paper authored by Murwaningtyas, (2020) investigates the impact of celebrity endorsements on attitudes toward advertisement and intention to purchase organic cosmetics through Instagram. Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study collected data from 200 respondents via Google Forms on Instagram. Utilizing Structural Equation Modeling for analysis, the findings revealed a positive association between celebrity trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness with attitude toward advertisement and intention to purchase organic cosmetics on Instagram. Moreover, the results indicated that attitude toward advertisement serves as a partial mediator between celebrity trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and purchase intention. This research underscores the significance of celebrity endorsements on social media in shaping consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions in the realm of organic cosmetics.

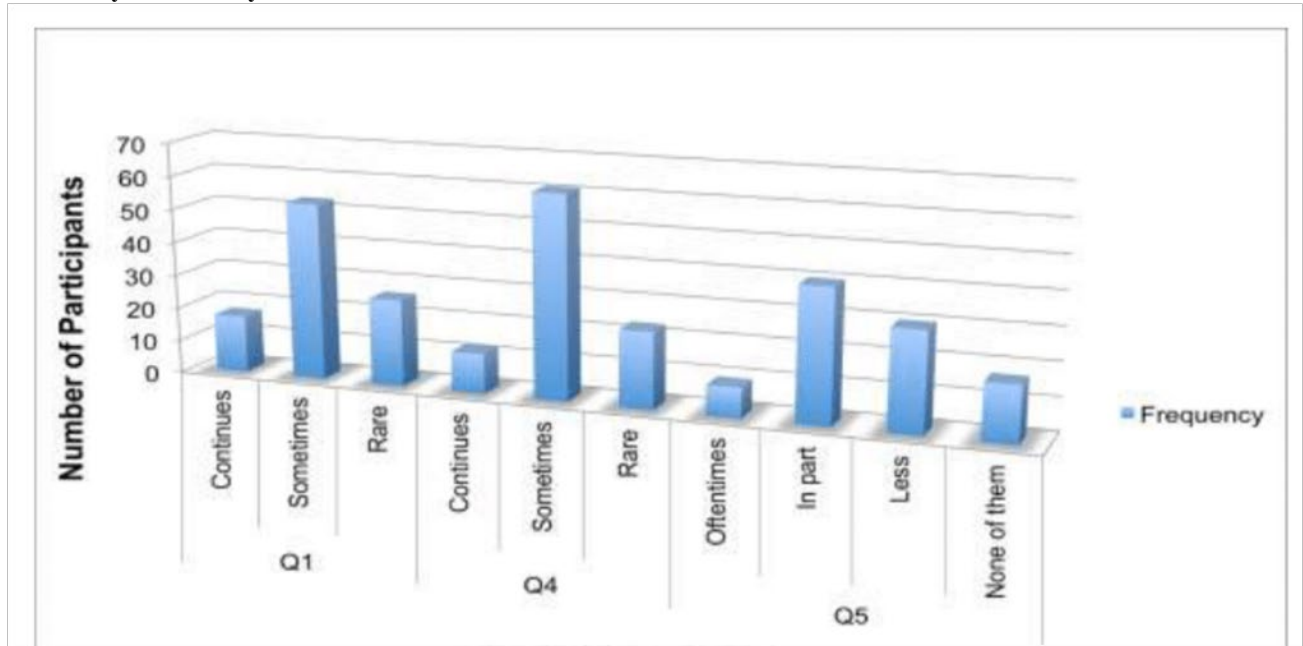
### **Objectives of the Study**

- I.To study the role of social media to cultivate sustainable development through potential knowledge and advanced technology.
- II.To assess the effectiveness of sustainable development initiatives promoted through social media.
- III.To examine the role of social media users while promoting sustainable practices and sharing information to raise awareness.
- IV.To identify challenges and opportunities in integrating sustainability into social media strategies.

### **Research Methodology**

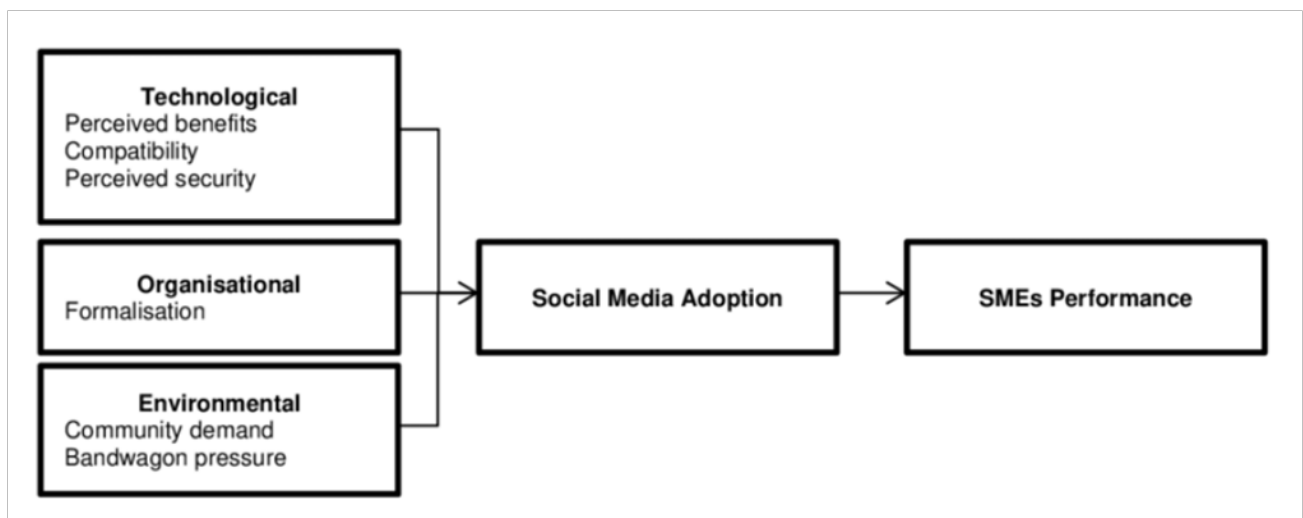
The researcher is aimed to study sustainability since the term is comprehensive of organizational growth, extended to current generations and future generations. The researcher explains digital technology with the emergence of social media and discusses its sense to practice sustainability. The study on the impact of sustainability is purposed for highlighting social media use in the context of economic, social, and environmental factors. The researcher analysed numerous studies on social media impacted by sustainability in the digital age. The significance of social media in sustainable development is considered by various organizations and sustainability performance is considered for the strategies while focusing on the social media benefits. The study also put the need for social responsibility in the CSR of organizations and its relationship with social media. Some of the benefits of social media are studied for the enhancement of business indicating sustainability performance. Thus, many advantages of social media like time, cost, and effectiveness are compared with other traditional practices. The researcher discussed marketing strategies in social media as well as social well-being for the sustainable development of society. The study explains how various social media platforms encourage the active participation of users in environmental issues. The opportunities provided by social media are studied in the context of the impact of sustainability in content creation and the spread of content and their impact on social, political, and environmental issues. Social media has the power of expressing ideas, views, and thoughts on life-affecting decisions in daily life taken by the government or non-government organizations. However, sustainability in social media is not restricted to the economy, business, and environmental issues but is also linked with other fields like entertainment, culture, politics, education, and other issues.

**Secondary Data Analysis**



**Figure 0.1 Environmental Awareness and Social Media**

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307968837\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Social\\_Media\\_on\\_Environmental\\_Awareness\\_of\\_Undergraduate\\_Students\\_in\\_University\\_of\\_Sulaimani\\_in\\_Iraq](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307968837_The_Role_of_Social_Media_on_Environmental_Awareness_of_Undergraduate_Students_in_University_of_Sulaimani_in_Iraq)



**Figure No 0.2 Conceptual Model of social media adoption and Impact**

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Conceptual-model-of-social-media-adoption-and-impact-in-Malaysian-SMEs\\_fig1\\_338098434](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Conceptual-model-of-social-media-adoption-and-impact-in-Malaysian-SMEs_fig1_338098434)

A researcher analysed secondary data from several studies on social media and sustainability in various fields. It is found that these studies are focused on organizational sustainability, which explains the role of social media. Studies on environmental and social sustainability highlight the importance of social media in the efficient way of connecting people and making them aware of environmental, social, and governance issues. The researcher found that social media is an effective platform for expressing ideas, thoughts, and views besides sharing information. It is not confined to discussion but inspires the active information of people in the sustainable development of a community in terms of economic growth with the ESG factor.

The impact of sustainability on social media content has been significant, with increased users using social media to spread awareness about sustainability, drive business growth, and promote social activism. Social media platforms provide an excellent opportunity for individuals and businesses to showcase their sustainable practices and initiatives to a global audience. This has helped create a culture of sustainability, where individuals and businesses are encouraged to adopt more environmentally conscious practices.

Moreover, social media has become a powerful tool for driving business growth through sustainable practices. Many businesses have realized that sustainability can provide a competitive advantage, and social media has enabled them to highlight their sustainability initiatives to a broader audience. This has helped businesses attract more customers and gain a reputation for being socially responsible.

Finally, social media has also become a platform for promoting social activism related to sustainability issues. Social media users can share information, engage in discussions, and organize events to raise awareness about environmental issues and promote sustainable practices. This has helped create a sense of community around sustainability, where individuals can come together to drive change and promote a more sustainable future. Therefore, the role of social media in promoting sustainability has been significant, and it is expected to continue to grow in the coming years.

### Findings

While doing a secondary data analysis, the researcher identified the following findings:

#### Impact of Sustainability on Social Media

A study analyses the efficiency of social media like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others using different models and statistics. The scientific method and advanced technology help to collect data on social media to evaluate the results. These results reveal the success of social media in the last few years in organizational association with people sharing their knowledge. (Devarajan, 2005)

#### Environmental Sustainability on Social Media

Environmental sustainability has a higher impact on social media, and they are positively correlated with each other. The results recommend further need to research to evaluate the sustainability value of social media. Social media not only contributes to sustainability but reduces energy consumption through “green” initiatives. The broader sustainability framework accumulates business resources as well as investments in social media for sustainability. It helps in the achievement of targets for HRM and SCM resources. Thus, the sustainability strategy of organizations contains social media as a significant part of today. Research on IT to scrutinize IT resources, business resources as well as strategies that are aligned with sustainable development of specific objectives set for sustainability. Therefore, organizational changes and new ways of thinking about roles, work processes, and structure in the organization are adequate investments in human resources. It allows for managing many-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many customer relationships through social media. Consequently, the positive feedback from customers enhances the image of the organization transforming it into long-term sustainable advantages.

A global challenge of environmental sustainability is a major issue that is the main concern in setting objectives to enhance natural resources and endorses well-organized use of resources that are economy-based uses as well as includes protection of people’s health. The European Union has taken initiative to set the objectives of designing environmental policies that promote sustainable development of businesses through a “green economy.” These environmental aspects comply with regulations to encourage their sustainable growth with keenness on the global market. Thus, social media is a significant part of effective environmental sustainability performance. Social media efficiently access governance policies for everyone that achieves sustainable development. (Balaswamy, 2017)

#### Economic and Social Sustainability on Social media

The researcher found the connection between social media and social sustainability that analyses economic growth as well as awareness of environmental resources. The study explains the social sustainability concept that links social conditions such as poverty and environmental decay. Economic growth and poverty alleviation are necessary preconditions for sustained economic growth. The social organization identifies a negative linkage between sustained colonization, sustained poverty levels, and sustained natural resource exploitation. Social media is linked with economic sustainability through the opportunity for income as well as an increase in the capacity of the market to allocate resources efficiently. As economic growth enhances the capability to use technology to replenish natural resources destroyed. (Balaswamy, 2017)

Social media-based sustainability strengthens the corporate image of organizations linked with their performance and valuation. The research evolves to focus on communication on social media and organization sustainability with increased social media marketing to understand consumer expectations. However, the need for the impact of sustainability in decision-making with information on social media. According to studies conducted in the context of sustainable development, it is found more related to sustainability in a broad sense. Moreover, subjective judgments defining criteria for sustainability are inexorably involved in the restricted search for

sustainability in a narrow sense. Thus, the researcher has broadened the search on sustainability and found that social media is emerging as a crucial part of sustainable development in education, communication, consumer behaviour, marketing, finance, and more. It is initiating discussions, sharing information, and activism of people on various ESG issues. Thus, social media has a significant impact on sustainability, and performance on social media encourages people to achieve sustainable development goals. (Russo, 2021)

The research on sustainability performance shows the impact on general, pillar, and sub-pillar levels that is exaggerated by the size and equity number of companies. Hence, sustainability performance is mostly found to be pursued by larger companies or higher financial solidity companies. In addition, energy and utilities are more specific sectors widely considered while social media like Twitter considers the amount of equity per share more relevant irrespective of company size. Therefore, dividend policies have an impact on companies' sustainability performance. The profitability of companies increases equity with reinvestment within the business, resulting in a positive effect on the company in pursuing and achieving higher sustainability performance. Thus, a social medium that is promoting business, improving profits, and increasing equity have a positive impact on businesses. Hence, the discussion on sustainability on social media exemplifies the key role of social media in businesses, marketing, governance, and the environment. (Russo, 2021)

Sustainability has had a significant impact on social media in recent years. As people become increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability and its impact on the environment, they are using social media to raise awareness, share information, and promote sustainable practices.

One of the ways sustainability has impacted social media is by increasing the amount of content related to sustainability. Social media users are sharing more posts about environmental issues, sustainable living, and eco-friendly products. This content is not only raising awareness but also encouraging people to adopt more sustainable practices. (Sachs, 2005)

Another impact of sustainability on social media is the rise of eco-influencers. These are social media users who have a large following and use their platforms to promote sustainable living, eco-friendly products, and environmentally conscious practices. Eco-influencers have become a powerful force in driving sustainable behaviour, as their followers often look to them for guidance and inspiration.

Sustainability has also led to the development of new social media platforms focused on sustainability and the environment. These platforms provide a space for people to connect, share information, and promote sustainable practices. Examples of such platforms include Treehugger, Earth911, and Greenpeace Connect.

Overall, the impact of sustainability on social media has been positive, as it has helped raise awareness and encourage more sustainable practices. As more people become aware of the impact of their actions on the environment, we can expect sustainability to continue to play a vital role in social media in the years to come.

## Conclusion

In the modern digital world, sustainability is also broadened beyond the term of environmental issues. However, social media has taken a responsible role in sustainable development including economic and social well-being. Social media has transformed the way of communication to sharing information, discussing issues, and active participation with people. Many corporate, governance, and organizations have taken the initiative to support sustainability in the overall growth of a community. The use of social media in these activities effectively influences people due to their significant benefits as less time-consuming and inexpensive. However, social media content is influenced by various sustainability issues to take a step toward the development and progress of the community. Still, the need for more research on sustainability in a different field is looked-for.

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