

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MODERN WORLD

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Abstract

This article analyzes the transformation of social media from simple communication tools into a comprehensive global digital infrastructure. Based on statistical data, the study examines the impact of social platforms on communication, economics, education, and social activism. Furthermore, the article provides a critical analysis of contemporary risks related to algorithmic control, cybersecurity, and mental health. The conclusion highlights the growing importance of digital literacy and the necessity of responsible technology usage in the modern era.

Key words: social media, digital infrastructure, global communication, digital economy, misinformation, digital literacy.

Introduction

The ways of communication between people have evolved several times throughout the history. However, any of them but social media can enter significantly into all spheres of human life – from personal conversation to global politics and economics – in such short period of time. Nowadays, social media has no longer solely been for entertainment, but also it has already turned into global digital infrastructure. Unlikely, in early 2000s, when it was served only as entertaining platforms, such sites, by 2025-2026, has been becoming central power to form global concepts, to rule the markets and to bring about social changes. To state, the considerable over 64% of total world's population use at

least one kind of social media and the average time allocated on them for each user is more than 2 hours which means that a significant part of human life is spent in virtual reality. Besides, the social media advertisement marketing is estimated around \$270-300 billion annually, a figure that is far higher than the traditional telemarketing and newspaper advertising.

While social media is providing range of opportunities, including accessibility or global communication, it is simultaneously raising concerns for algorithm control, cybersecurity or mental health. This article will explore its multifunctional role in today's developing world and supremacy in social development as well as societal crisis.

Literature review

According to Jacob Amedie, the student of Santa Clara University who studied the impact of social media on society and published the book on it, social media offers the ability to form a group for like-minded people to work together. Social networking sites help students do significantly better in school, primarily through utilizing connecting with each other on school assignments and collaborative group projects outside of class. Then he also highlighted the audacity of one of the most popular sites – Facebook: “One of the most popular social media sites, Facebook, has 1.4 billion users around the world, nearly a fifth of the world's population, thus helping us to better understand, learn and share information instantaneously making the world look like a small village.”

Furthermore, D Miller, J Sinanan, and seven other researchers (2016) investigated impact of social media on work and commerce. They brought up four main points of corporal sector that were shifted after social media involvement: relationship between work and non-work, process of obtaining job, media advertising, and lastly, potential for the development of e-commerce, trade or small entrepreneurial activities. Decision makers, as well as consultants, try to identify ways in which firms can make profitable use of applications such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, Second Life, and Twitter (A. M. Kaplan & M. Haenlein, 2010.)

The study, conducted by Ausat, A. M. A. researcher in Universitas Subang, results show that in a digital age characterized by the central role of social media, it can be concluded that social media has a significant role in shaping public opinion and also influencing economic decision-making. Through social media, individuals and groups can interact with each other, share information, and participate in discussions that shape collective views on various issues. But, an avalanche of information from the soaring number of (frequently unverified) sources floods individual media spaces, potentially causing such negative consequences as information overload, suboptimal knowledge formation, and biased worldview. In connection with these developments, some writers caution against the so-called “filter bubble” (Pariser, 2011).

Global connectivity and communication

“Global village” – the term coined by Marshall McLuhan in 1960s – describes how electronic media and the internet have “shrunk” the world, making it feel like a small, interconnected community where information is shared instantly. So that, distance will no longer keep people from real-time interactions and, on the contrary, it offers individuals to become a part of events world-wide.

Traditional calls have been nearly replaced with text messages and visual contents (emoji, stickers, videos). All these ongoing updates have accelerated the whole process, forming a new “digital language”. Now, ideas and emotions can be expressed effectively in visual elements instead of relying words alone.

With wider access to internet, the information monopoly has been eliminated. Creating independent blog or vlog contents on popular social media platforms is enough for individuals to shape and claim their own digital identity, build an audience, and express their personal views on events, ultimately making a social impact.

Social activism and civic stance

By producing global hashtags (a word or keyword phrase preceded by the hash symbol #), millions of people can unite in particular intention, which means such

platforms help to raise public awareness on prevalent social issues and to deal with them right away.

Especially, during natural disasters, extremal situations or on crisis, world's most popular platforms are the most immediate way to circulate actual urgent information to public. Such urgent calls, posts may make social actions such as spotting people in need, raising money for charity, and establishing volunteering programs easier.

High social media engagement of authorities has created a space for open communication among citizens, reducing the govern bureaucracy which has been serving to deal with their requests and to mitigate social issues transparently through direct interaction.

Economic influence and business models

Social media has brought new concepts into the field: target marketing and Big Data. It channels advertisements posted on social media to specific, targeting audience according to whom Big Data – analysis of huge amount of information on site – find the most relatable. Unlikely, traditional ads, this makes offers based on each users' interest and needs, boosting marketing productivity.

Bloggers and influencers who established their own personal brand have become the leads of modern market. As they have already built a close and honest relationship with their customers, those people tend to have stronger influence on their customers' behavior and decision compared to other artists.

Social platforms also offer wonderful opportunities to small business owners and freelancers. In these days, businessmen have a chance to enter global market, to sell their products and services internationally as well as to set up a communication with their customers by investing minimal sums possible.

Education and exchanging experience

Platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn has been serving as a modern “digital university” where short video-lessons, professional webinars and educational contents are

downloaded, making education more available. This, in turn, allows students to access and learn about latest technological and scientific advancements for affordable price.

Social media has become given an open space for communication and collaboration to students, teachers, and researchers. Now they can exchange experience in professional groups and communities, collaborate in scientific projects or get a council directly from specialists, enhancing the effectiveness of knowledge transfer.

Current challenges and problems

Illusion of “ideal life” on social media has been increasing discontentment in individuals with what they currently have. Seeing only other’s achievements and blissful moments continuously and comparing their realistic and totally normal life with those “ideals” are resulting in increased depression, non-stop anxiety, and low self-esteem in all age groups.

Moreover, the viral spread of unverified information has caused “fake news” issues over the world. While, over time, those made-up rumors are forming misinformation in society, mass panic, or even in manipulation of political themes, and they threat the information security.

Conclusion

To conclude, social media has gone across the border of just being comfortable tool to interact and turned into a huge global infrastructure which incorporates all aspects of new developing age. It has significantly transformed how we collect data, how we set up business, and has altered form of social activism.

As the world keeps digitalizing, media & digital literacy and critical thinking are being demanded from individuals. In the near future, individuals will acquire not only techno-abilities, but also will get literate to work with a huge stream of information and to sort that out independently.

Social media – a comparatively powerful weapon, it only depends on how we are able to use, so we can either take advantage on its practical features or suffer from possible

consequence. We can leave all worries behind if we use it wisely, manage amount of time we spend, and filter data.

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