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## **Utilization of social media for different business purposes: A social media age?**

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### **Abstract**

The utilization of social networking sites (SNSs) and social networking information (SNI) as parts of broader social media (SM) for various business purposes and practices have gained substantive importance from the academicians and practitioners in recent years. This paper theoretically aims to highlight some of such utilization based on published papers. We carefully selected 132 such papers from “Google Scholar” searching for most frequently used keywords such as SM, SNS, SNI, business, human resource management (HRM), marketing, branding, talent search & acquisition, recruitment & selection etc. After reviewing those papers, we identified that, in general, SM is an increasingly used platform for different business purposes. We anticipate that, despite of several flaws, SNSs will continue to gain momentous attention of all types of users in upcoming years creating a social media based business world. We are hopeful that the paper will be useful for the academicians, practitioners and policymakers from a number of viewpoints.

### **Keywords**

Social media, Social networking sites, Social networking information, Business, Organization, Users.

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## **1. Introduction**

The term “Social Media (SM)” is the digital WEB 2.0 applications that assist in interacting information, user-generated contents and association (Elefant, 2011). The existence of SM is completely based on the Internet that can be accessed through portals/devices such as computers, tablets and/or cell phones. Such applications are diverse technical mechanisms to interconnect human and information. As defined by Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), “SM is a collection of Internet based applications that is founded on the ideological and technical baselines of Web 2.0 allowing the formation and substitution of user-created contents”.

The word Web 2.0 was first used in 1999 to explain websites that utilize technology afar the stationary pages of previous websites. A Web 2.0 site permits the users to interrelate and work together in a SM conversation as creators of user-created contents in an online society. This is somewhat dissimilar to the traditional websites where the users are confined to only the reflexive screening of content information. However, a substantial part of the discussion regarding social media is practically confined to a particular nature of sites popularly known as “social networking sites (SNSs)”. At present, a number of SNSs are being observed to allow cross-posting. Such networking assists each user to become intimate with maximum number of other users without physically contacting them. Although we cannot easily foretell the future of SNSs, it can be easily guesses that such media or sites will exist some more years to come but may be in different forms and rules.

As already explained before, a SNS is special type of SM where the users can interact with each other through posting pictures, videos and comments, liking & disliking; and sharing the contents. Although SM and SNS are used interchangeably, each of them has a particular meaning. SM is power-driven by Web 2.0 that allows individual connections with the help of technological devices such as desktop, laptop, mobile phone etc. indicating that SNSs, social shopping, social marketing, social playing and social positioning are the entire the components of SM (Haag & Cummings, 2013). On the other hand, SNSs are the online platforms through which people can create accounts, search and add new friends and share information contents (Haag & Cummings, 2013). The first SNS was introduced in 1997 through the formation of Sixdegrees.com allowing the users having a personal online profile and a record of contacts (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Although different SNSs maintain dissimilar regulations for making links and making friends, one thing is common among all of them. They frequently let users to see the profile of an established link and yet recommend additional links on the basis of a user’s recognized network. There are SNSs such as LinkedIn that are solely created for professional networking, SNSs such as Facebook are functioning between the scope of individual and social networking. Some social networks are created for particular user needs such as Wechat.

The SNSs were initially introduced as the social communication tools primarily intended to exchange of information, viewing contents and chatting. But with the increasing popularity of SNSs, the number of users began to rise soon after they came into operation. Particularly form 2010, the SNSs got the attention of business organizations to boost their product/service promotion, sales & advertising, asking customer feedbacks, branding, attracting; and acquiring talents and communication.

At present, the influence of SNSs on businesses is growing at a tremendous speed. In fact, all organizations, big or small, profit oriented or voluntary, local or global are taking the advantages of huge user base in order to increase the reachability. By means of such astonishing increase, each business presently is trying to control appropriate SM platform in the finest promising manner. One of the fair reasons of this is that the intended audience pool is hanging around the well-liked SNSs and they're tempting with their preferred brands and involving with them on diverse levels. Connecting the organizational brand the SNSs, a firm can not merely produce more business but also can have a better attachment with customers and serve them on a superior level. In fact, it helps the digital marketing to be more convenient and simple. In accordance with Infographic (2019), 71% customers are expected to advocate a brand publicly if having a positive familiarity with it on SM.

## **2. SM in businesses**

Professional and business organizations are able to utilize their social networking subsistence to attach with their existing and prospective customers. The majority of SNS platforms let companies to advertise their products/services, either openly on the SNSs or through a linkage to the company's sales page. This procedure makes it convenient to enlarge the reach of a business using these one-to-one connections that are promising. There are plentiful small businesses and entrepreneurs having flourishing business ideas nowadays that stay alive roughly completely on what they can generate through a social network. Such promotion and branding are almost free to carry out on SNSs. While the businesses can promote their products/services and/or inform their customers (existing and potential) about their products or services, Governments and social organizations also can create public awareness through SM. In fact, a number of Government agencies, social organizations and public pressure groups exist in SNSs and taking this opportunity in many countries.

### **2.1 Advertising, marketing and branding**

The use of SNSs was perhaps started with promotion, advertising and marketing of products/services and company brands. This part of the paper has been devoted to converse the SSNs' role on modern advertising and marketing.

**2.1.1. Leveraging communal marketing:** Social media marketing (SMM) might be fresh on the wedge, but it is rising sooner than we expected. Although the first social network launched advertisement in 2005, it managed to achieve 9.16 billion in advertising income in the earliest quarter in 2017 (lyfemarketing.com). Since a growing number of businesses effectively experimenting with digital advertising, they have got the realization that taking the SMM strategy makes overall logic. The reasons are manifold.

First of all, there almost no or very little cost of advertising through SMM than the traditional methods such as print media, TV and radio advertising, social ads are not merely trustworthy, but also much inexpensive. Furthermore, the firms are permitted to employ a range of SM channels for free (such as, YouTube videos) before going for paid advertisement. Secondly, conventional marketing media does not provide the comfort to arrive at the intended customer group similar to SM social ads can do.

It simply does not work that way. While the firms are advertising offline, they are taking the blind, shotgun approach where returns are miserable even after making huge investments. Using SM ads can help a company achieve targeted projection, augment conversions and eventually get a superior return on investment.

Third, companies can conduct a kind of real-time performance breakdown through SNSs. Being informed about whether the advertisement is functioning or not is very essential to change it. In case of conventional, offline advertising, companies are not capable to study the performance of their advertising campaigns which extremely restricts their hard work. SM advertisements, on the contrary, permit the firms to continually keep track of how well (or how bad) the ads are functioning (through likes or dislikes and the comments on those ads). The firms are capable to change their ads rapidly and immediately observing the outcome. Finally, it is significant for the companies of all kinds to recognize that ads on SNSs are being better and smarter.

**2.1.2. Boosting brand awareness:** SNSs proves to be the powerful tools when it comes to growing brand awareness. There are businesses that release it as a way to build a brand, but by doing that, they're leaving an open ground for competitors. On the other hand, many reputed chief marketing officers (CMOs) consent that SM has some exact impact on creating brand awareness. A company can begin focusing on a particular social platform, find out whether the target audiences are there on it or not. It can perform this by looking for pertinent conversations about the product or industry. As an example, a B2B company may find their audience on LinkedIn rather than Facebook. Once the company knows where the target audience is, it can capture their concentration by using eye-catching visuals with its contents. Images and videos play a big role in serving to grow brand awareness on social media channels as they not only increase engagement but also boost social shares. Secondly, an organization can measure its efforts by the tracking tools provided in the platforms (Facebook page insights) along with other outer tools such as URL shorteners, Google Analytics, etc. to measure social media activity.

The company can use the insights we expand to understand what is working so that it can optimize efforts and build a stronger brand with SNSs. Third, SNSs can help a company to *build influence on the potential customers*. If the companies want a higher engagement rate along with better brand awareness, they should work on building authority by sharing real value. Along with borrowed content, they should post something original they possess, as it adds to the credibility. It should be noted that strong brand awareness is not only helpful for getting potential customers; it can also help an organization to attract and retain potential competitive employees (Rampl & Kenning, 2014; Rampl, 2014; Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Cable & Turban, 2001). Every single step that an organization takes to increase brand awareness with social media will impact the overall growth of business in the long run.

**2.1.3. Increasing inbound traffic (subscribers):** Inbound marketing is one of the most efficient ways to create targeted traffic to any website. However, if any company ignores the importance of social media in business, the company reputation will be limited to the inner circle of customers or the people that are already well-known with market or brand. By putting more endeavors in SM based promotion, a company can build a complete new channel to draw in targeted inbound traffic and get more inbound links.

For example, having an active blog makes it easy for a company to connect with its audience with the help of fresh content (product pictures, videos and other tools). But by sharing those contents (on the right time) on Twitter or Facebook increases the mass reachability. Companies can suddenly reaching out to a bigger audience that may like plus share the content, follow the brand and ultimately become a potential customer.

Similarly, people who are already keenly searching for keywords related to the product or service are a smaller percentage than those who are not. SNSs help companies attach to this larger, unexploited segment of the market. By using SM, companies can diversify their marketing efforts in more than one way, reaching out not to just one type of crowd, but connect to a versatile customer base. This is very crucial to for any brand to make a mark in its niche market. For example, while the professionals may find the company website via LinkedIn; the younger crowd or the millennials may find the same on Instagram. Each piece of SM content that a company creates is a new entrance for new customers to enter. It is a different opportunity for them to connect. Ultimately, it boils down to creating enough high quality content that can be posted on SNSs and in the process can catch the attention of high-converting inbound traffic.

**2.1.4. Improving search engine optimization:** Every experienced social media marketer is aware of the fact that there are *some* connections between social media and search engine optimization. Google as world's largest search engine has clearly affirmed that it does take "social signals" into consideration when ranking a page. This makes sense of understanding the importance of social media in business and working on it can help improve your search engine optimization (SEO).

According to Matt Cutts, the former spam head of Google, although social shares have no impact on website's ranking, it is a fact that social media properties govern the front of the search engine result pages for brand names (searchengineland.com). In other words, social media profiles certainly have the power to rank in the top searched results. SM profiles are an enormous way to attach to prospects and customers. They work as a doorway for the business website as they demonstrate the human side. They not only notify the searcher about the business, but also assist them become a part of conversations. By optimizing the social profiles and by keeping them bright with the correct content, a company can create a stronger presence on the web, get more coverage and have numerous channels to draw the attention of the people towards your business.

**2.1.5. Ability to reach more people via social media search:** People are no longer reliant on Google search when they want to connect to something or someone. Today, search is not limited only to the mighty web search engines. It has moved beyond to further extent that is why SM platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are the latest search engines. There are huge amounts of content being formed and shared on the social web. These contents can simply be discovered by users with the help of keyword search or hash tags. When people search for the type of content they are publishing on the SM page, they may recover new fans that want to follow, connect and conduct business with. It is just not about the content, but also about the content producer, which is the company itself.

When people observe great content being created and shared, they become inquisitive about who is behind it. This may lead them to look up on LinkedIn and learn more about the business. Being a business it is vital to take the essential steps to stand out from other competing social media profiles and avoid having duplicate accounts. The SM world is evolving with the SEO arena and there are high chances that social signals may start having affected on company rankings. Therefore, the companies should be prepared by building their SM presence with valuable contents.

**2.1.6. Increasing conversion rates:** A further importance of SNSs in business is the reality that it can be used for capturing targeted leads for businesses, but it does not stop there. Receiving quality leads is merely one part of the equation while the other part is converting those leads into sales. Can SM help to amplify the conversion rates? Does it have the ‘x’ factor when it comes to the question to achieve more sales? The answer is a resounding “yes”, but only, if it can be done on the right way. According to Marketing Promotion Web (2017), a social blog related to social media marketing, social proof which is also recognized as informational social influence, is a psychological phenomenon where people presume the actions of others reveal acceptable behavior for a given situation.

In simple terms, people just follow what others do. They like to believe what the majority likes to believe. The motive why social proof works is because it provides a sense of guarantee to the business prospects and lets others know about the benefits of the product, without any selling. SM is overflowing with activity that can be used for social proof. If someone commented on Facebook post admiring the company, it can use it as a reference. When someone tweets about how the product/service changed their life, the company can use it as a reference also. When someone posts a happy Instagram picture of them enjoying the service, it also can be used as positive feedback.

Creating excellent content for SM is vital. But the better way is to let the fans create these contents rather than by the company itself. People who follow the company on SM may mention it in a positive note, which can be used to feature them on company social profile. In fact, the company can engineer it by asking people to share specific content for a chance to get featured to a wide audience. Even if a company possesses a decent audience size, most SM users would be delighted to have such an opportunity to post it. There are many ways that SM can influence conversions and help a business to increase sales. But for that, the company needs primarily to comprehend the significance of social media in business and take the necessary steps.

**2.1.7. Satisfying the customers:** For any business, getting a new customer is a difficult task but retaining an existing customer is 10 times easier than that. This is why customer satisfaction should be the highest priority for any company. By using SM platform to connect with customers, a company has the chance to monitor what they want, the problems they are facing and how the company could serve them. In order to truly satisfy customers and make their life easier, the company needs to offer them a proper, effective customer service that is more personalized and efficient. SNSs can help a lot to do that. Customers now-a-days know that social media is a lot more approachable and friendly than a call center executive that might be thousands of miles away, who has a hard time resolving the problem. In other words, customers want superior service without the hassle.

Escalating customer satisfaction with social media may include the following:

- Monitoring conversations on a regular basis to see if the customers are talking about the brand and in what context.
- Broadcasting important messages, announcements and offers to customers via a SM platform such as Facebook or Twitter.
- Offering prompt customer service to customers who are facing genuine problems or need some help with the product or service.
- Holding regular question & answer sessions with customers to understand their concerns, get real feedback and see how things can be improved.
- Connect and build a relationship with power users or customer advocates so that they can help serve other customers.

Apart from of what SM platform an organization is using to help its customers, it is imperative to speak in their language, give them personalized service and respond to them without as early as possible.

**2.1.8. Enhance brand loyalty:** A lot of businesses are trapped on their follower count, which is nothing but just a vanity number. It does not serve a real purpose if the followers are not loyal to the brand. There is a distinction between a random follower and loyal one, because the latter adds real value. If a company want to get the most out of its social media marketing efforts, it is essential that it focuses on growing brand loyalty. Having loyal followers means better engagement and better conversations and they will speak positive about the brand without the need to push about their trusted brand which leads to natural word of mouth marketing. SM platforms are always evolving and each has its own personality. Facebook is not Twitter, and Twitter is definitely not LinkedIn.

A company cannot take the same old, obsolete marketing and advertising methods and apply them to SM. It needs to formulate a social media strategy that clearly aligns the goals with other areas such as content marketing, search engine optimization etc. This should provide a fair idea of what type of value a company can create for its loyal SM followers. It will allow not only retaining them but also helping them spread the word. Second, a company must create **sharing value oriented contents**. There is a reason why the followers are loyal to a certain product, service or a brand. They are looking for value, which needs to be delivered at all times by sharing quality content. As an example, sharing a detailed case study is much superior to a 500 word article. The more useful and relevant the content a company posts, the better result it gets. It should have a plan how and what type of content it would like to share. By spending time on strategizing content creation, the content will bring you a higher return when the company shares it. For example, visual content gets more shares than regular SM content which means it is free to use photos, videos, etc. as long as they add some value.

The brand has a personality and some specific aspects that are exclusive to it. By identifying these personality traits and by bringing them out, it gets easier to connect to target audience. The aim should be to be consistent in approach and maintain the same voice throughout the interactions. The content that has been created and shared along with the way of conversation with others should reflect brand's personality. The SM followers naturally look up for answers. So when they approach with a relevant query, the company should get back to them with the right answers. It will prove that the company is in real deal and actually cares

about its followers/customers. Search can be done using targeted keywords and look for questions that need a response.

By answering such questions, the business can establish itself as an expert or an authority. Finally, personally interacting with other people and humanizing the brand will go a long way. It will keep the followers/fans keeping coming back for more. People like to see the human side of others more than just robotic answers. A business need to connect to them on a more personal level and engage in real conversations even if it is just for the sake of interacting or conversation.

It can be concluded that if done in a proper way, SMM can prove to be really cost effective in the long run. Because as of today, even the paid SM based campaigns, such as Facebook ads are much cheaper than other advertising options such as search engine or print media advertising indicating there is chance of a higher return on investment. Jumping on the social media bandwagon is no longer a matter of choice but a good option for marketing. The significance of social media in business is now more prominent than ever before.

## **2.2 HRM functions**

A high level of activities by the individuals and organizations in SNSs is creating countless amount of information everyday. Organizations are now using that information for serving their own purposes as resources. High availability, larger visibility, free of cost accessibility have made such information as the center of attraction not for only individuals but also a number of profit and non-profit organizations to discover. As an example, LinkedIn, a job oriented SNS records all the professional information about a user which can be viewed and used by the hiring professionals in order to attract competent future employees. An interesting fact is that, initially, such SNS information were never imagined to be utilized in businesses (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009).

At present, the social networking information (SNI) is being used by the HR departments for a number of functions such as attracting & acquiring (recruitment) talents, selection & pre-employment background checks, internal communication, training, on-boarding and team-building (Hosain, 2021; Hosain et al., 2021; Hosain et al., 2020). This section of the literature has been utilized to critically analyze the role of SNI on different HRM functions.

**2.2.1 Talent search and acquisition:** As mentioned before, human resources is the source of competitive advantage that needs to be acquired like any other assets only with the distinction that such resource is lively, movable and needs to be attracted and motivated. It cannot be just bought and placed to initiate production process. More recently, the complete process of attracting and acquiring the talented human resources is being popularly termed as “talent management”. According to Cappelli & Keller (2014), talent management is a latest practitioner-generated term covering a range of long standing practices that aim to place “the right person in the right job at the right time”. CIPD (2014; 2103), a UK based renowned organization practicing HRM practices, coincide with this statement and they articulated the same outlook in outlining their definition of recruitment. Talent management includes mutually internal and external labor markets, whereas external recruitment is generally considered to be about attracting competent individuals to the organizations’ first and foremost priority in talent management process. Although not the same, both talent management and recruitment share some similar characteristics. For example, there is a surprising resemblance

in the challenge for academics to define talent management, just same as in the case with attempting to vigorously define recruitment and within that, recruitment activities (Munro, 2018).

The concept of talent management was initially created in industries and the organizations successfully coordinated the term in their recruitment and selection process. The issue gave rise of another popular term “war for talents” first introduced by McKinsey & Co. in 1997 (Chambers et al., 1998). Later, the term was appropriated by Michaels et al. (2001) in their groundbreaking book “The War for Talent” published in 2001, discussing the issues with the internal and external jobs market relative to the last few decades. The term has been conventionally used as a means to demonstrate the accessibility of talented individuals in the jobs market and the competition by employers to secure them as employees. Cappelli & Keller (2014) argued that talent management is the procedure through which organizations predict and mitigate their requirements for competent employees in strategic jobs. They also evaluated the differences between inclusive and exclusive talent management practices and stated that the bulk of strategic HRM literature points to organizations involving in exclusive behaviors. This statement indicates an inconsistent emphasis and investment regarding the individual or the job, although they contended this was due to the employer’s maximum prospective for return on investment (Munro, 2018).

However, irrespective of the question focusing on retaining existing talents or attracting talents from outside the organization, a critical consideration is how attract competent applicants. In addition, organizations must consider the supply from the external labor market as they may be attracting talent from other industries or sectors. In their comprehensive evaluation of this issue, Cappelli & Keller (2014) argued social media can be most prolifically utilized in attracting applicants to apply for fewer strategic entry level roles inside the organization and this is might happen as a result of the employer having a lot greater contact in terms of its potential audience (Munro, 2018). In this regard, it should be noted that although in many literature, two words “job applicant” and “job candidate” have been used interchangeably; there is a subtle difference between the two. While the former one indicates those individuals who applied for a job position but not contacted yet, the latter one indicate those who have been already been through some form of screening process and are subsequently selected for interview (Lauby, 2011).

According to Brown & Swain (2009), the greatest way for organizations and those responsible for attracting applicants is to move toward their candidate attraction plan. They argued that the job of “candidate attraction” starts with “candidate attraction strategy” and ends up with “having the CVs”. More or less, this is the approach adopted by most of the organizations in terms of the “what to do” element of the process, as more often than not recruiters come across countless choices. Further, they opined that hiring professionals have different techniques by to attract applicants and recommended using a blend of sources that is most appropriate to be the successful for the organization. In addition, they viewed that the organizations should establish if the latent applicants are active or passive jobseekers and that this information will in turn help to decide the attraction medium to be utilized for.

Organizations can attract talents by SNSs in a number of ways such as developing social media profiles in different SNSs, observing the tentative job applicants through SNSs or directly contacting the tentative job seekers. For example, many organizations use SNSs such as LinkedIn recognize passive job seekers who use their profiles indicating that they are interested

in and available for certain organizations, positions and occupations. HR professionals nowadays recognize that business oriented SNSs offer a fruitful supply of information relating to passive job seekers (Wolk, 2004).

Even as the use of technology for recruitment has been changed by the progression of technology, the basic philosophy have remained the same and the uncertainty faced by organizations with labor force shortages may be compensated or alleviated through the effective utilization of social media information in the recruitment process. Such platforms can also probably afford the employer with an economy of scale for large number of recruitment and at the same time could provide the advantage to generate a close and more one-to-one relationship with passive job seekers (Munro, 2018).

DeKay (2009) argued there is no convincing academic evidence to prove or disprove that SNSs which are paying attention on professional or business networking actions can declare to be the most effective doorway for employers in searching passive job seekers. Conversely, he tried to reply the question whether there was decisive evidence positive each way but later he concluded it was a questionable statement (Munro, 2018). In fact, his (DeKay, 2009) study revealed that almost all of the participants subscribed to LinkedIn and were interested in hearing about possible job opportunities, which proves that the respondents were not the beginners, rather passive job seekers. Literally, the use of SNSs can be considered an element of web-based or Internet or online recruitment. Baum & Kabst (2014) argued the use of web-based tools for searching candidates could potentially provide an employer with a more successful portal than any other sources. The main reason is the information contained on web-based sources is considered to be radically more information rich from the applicants'/candidates' point of view. However, they (Baum & Kabst, 2014) also claimed organization's brand-identity has a much greater influence on applicant choice in case of candidate attraction through SNSs. It is still a subject of debate whether employers can attract competent candidates via social media. Some authors (Hosain et al., 2021; Hosain et al., 2020; Hosain & Liu, 2020a; Hosain & Liu, 2020b; Hosain & Liu, 2020c; Hosain & Liu, 2020d; Jeske & Schultz, 2019; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015; Sameen & Cornelius, 2013) pointed that SNSs can ensure a far more range of potential for an employer to locate passive candidates. In this case, passive job candidates refer to those individuals who are not actively seeking work, but may have online profiles on recruitment site such as LinkedIn. In searching these types of passive but experienced, mature employees, employer brand plays a significant role.

The use of SNSs for candidate attraction is still in its immature and therefore it would be too complicated for organizations to deal with measuring the return on investment from it (Wadee, 2013). There is also an issue regarding how employers would measure the return on investment, as conventionally social networking and social media tools have a comparatively low start-up cost and therefore the long term investment would be complicated to calculate. As the scale of applications received by some employers are mainly for relatively low level jobs, may compensate the low cost of early recruitment activities (Kaplan & Haenlien, 2010). There is also not any structural outline in practice as of yet addressing this issue though; most organizations use social media in-built analytical tools as an instrument to calculate their return on investment. In a similar manner to established networking linked with employment search opportunities, Nikolaou (2014) claimed that social media has been considered as an efficient way for individuals to search for jobs (Van-Hoye et al., 2009) and the use of social networking information provide an even greater scope and intensity for this activity. Bird (2011) recommended if companies do not have accounts or postings on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, they risk of being hidden out of touch to younger job seekers grown up in the age of

information technology with virtually immediate global communication ability. In fact, the effect of the volume of information being sent and the realism in the information being supplied to applicants is accredited to the success being able to draw the attention of suitable individuals.

The second step of talent management can be defined as talent acquisition (recruitment). In this step or process, a number of CVs/resumes are selected according to the respective job description and job specification advertised or searched before. In this step too, social networking information has a vital role to play. For many years before the existence of social media, the employers were dependent on the jobsites sites such as Careerbuilder.com for their recruiting practice, leading to the appeal of job seekers from more than 100 career sources (Tong & Sivanand, 2005). According to Nessler (2014), Careerbuilder.com has enabled the reduction of cost per hire by 70% due to a decrease of travel costs and by 60% the time it takes for employers to hire an employee. Electronic recruiting is the blend of the web with the process of recruiting human capital (Melanthiou et al., 2015). At present, not surprisingly, many well known companies have their own social media pages for recruiting job applicants (Melanthiou et al., 2015). As an example, companies are now creating their own Facebook or LinkedIn profiles and using those as an advertisement tool to help attract talent (Andrews, 2012). An increase in Facebook usage by human resource professionals has been reported by many authors with the intention of finding "comprehensive information about job applicants," and to screen and select the best-suited applicants (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Facebook introduced a new feature that would allow the organizations to post the upcoming job adverts directly (Take the Work out of Hiring, 2017). Furthermore, now job seekers can notice new jobs available through the "Jobs bookmarks" on Facebook or on the Marketplace. SNSs now provide as a lead to redirect followers to companies' individual websites where they can discover vacancies available (Spellmann, 2018).

However, research has proved that among all the SNSs, Facebook and LinkedIn are the most popular SM based recruiting sites (Melanthiou et al., 2015) due to the vast source of information they can provide a recruiter about the applicants. According to a survey conducted among HR managers to discover the type of technology they were using in their department and for what reason, concluded that in North America technology was becoming more widespread for recruiting and selecting job applicants especially at mid-level (Villeda & McCamey, 2019). It should be noted that the use of SNS for hiring differs in different countries depending on the accessibility of internet connection and the user rates of social media. As an example, 89% of the U.S. has access to the internet, 91% in Canada, 71% in China, 67% in Mexico, 39% in Kenya, and 25% in India (Pew Research Center, 2018). Moreover, according to Pew Research Center (2018), developed countries such as U.S., Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Australia, and Canada have a higher use of Internet compared to developing countries such as India, Tanzania, Indonesia and Kenya. Depending on those two factors, an increased number of SNSs are being evident in developing countries from 42% in 2013 to 64% in 2018 (internet usage) and 34% from 2013 to 53% in 2018 (SNS usage) (Pew Research Center, 2018). Considering those numbers into consideration, the incorporation of SNS in the hiring process is more likely to occur in developed countries although the practice is growing in developing countries as well.

**2.2.2 Selection and background check:** Selection is the step that comes after initial recruitment, where the best suitable candidates are selected after shortlisting of candidates during the recruitment process. Landers & Schmidt (2016) defined the selection process as the system employers use to determine the best-suited candidate for a job position based on a

series of screening processes. Again, screening is the procedure of reviewing applicants' strengths and weaknesses, in order to make a satisfactory selection decision (Berryman-Fink & Fink, 1996).

The conventional screening process focuses on a person- job fit (person and organization fit) defined as the knowledge, skills, and abilities (popularly known as KSAs) of a job applicant that improve the possibilities of effectively performing a job (Adkins et al, 1994).

The practice of incorporating information acquired via SNSs into the selection process is now getting quite common at least in developed countries and the process has already been started even in developing countries (Landers & Schmidt, 2016). The reason for this practice can be attributed, at least to a certain extent, due to the ease and attractiveness of social media as sources of information, termed as social networking information (SNI) in this study. In fact, such social networking sites were established on the slogan of "connectivity and information-sharing" assuming those as the implicit goals. The users of SNSs provide a good number of information about themselves by means of their online behaviors within such platforms and these online behavioral tendencies can be observed, captured and acted upon by employers. However, it is still unclear for both researchers and practitioners to reveal what those SNI truly represents and how to make best use of it. The process of selection is quite different from recruitment as this a deductive process, not inductive. The recruiter is required to select only the best one two as final candidates. Therefore, using SNI for selection may raise a number of issues that needs to be considered before actually implementing it. For example, a fundamental question may be asked regarding the reliability and validity of information available via social media. A job applicant might not symbolize himself/herself honestly or genuinely, even going so far as to create false identity to represent. Further, a profile may be contaminated by another user's activities or postings. For example, other people may post information that appears within the social media content of a job applicant thus contaminating it. Alternatively, false identities and the postings of friends (even third party) possibly will still include as job-relevant information, useful in creating predictive (negative) models of job performance.

Even if the information is legitimate from the viewpoint of its psychometric properties, such scores may not be virtually useful (Landers & Schmidt, 2016). A number of attempts were made in order to build up foretelling models of later behavior based upon social media profile information, including algorithmic approaches (Youyou et al., 2015). Attempts that relied upon human decision have been less thriving in this case (Van-Iddekinge et al., 2013). This lack of interpretability (converting information into judgmental decision) may be due to the fact that information about job applicants obtained via social media is by definition as behavioral outcomes. As the SNS activities are largely influenced by the respective cultural background. For example, a person from USA or China may have alcohol as a normal drink while it might be culturally unwelcomed in Iran or Pakistan. Once social media postings are observed by those making hiring decisions, they are observing a person-situation interaction. In this point of view, Tett & Burnett (2003) argued that observers must consider the influence of the situation or social & cultural norms when making judgments about personality. Hiring professionals attempting to make judgments about candidates based on confusing information obtained from social media platforms they do not understand, may influence their ability to identify relevant information (Funder, 1995). As a result, biased decision could be taken. Even more concerning view is that newly invented social media technologies may change the nature of the situation on a day-to-day basis.

Even assuming the information is/are basically useful and valid, it may not be legal to utilize it. Although information posted or stored on the Internet is commonly considered “public,” numerous lawful systems restrict the consultation of specific types of information in making hiring decisions (Landers & Schmidt, 2016).

Therefore, the legal aspects of using SNI are not very clear all over the world. As an example, an employee may present an application for a job and decided not to share any social media information openly with the recruiter. The hiring manager decided to look for the candidate online and discovered that several SNI concerning that applicant’s sex, religion, race, skin color and national origin. Although such information is publically available (even those may be on the CV as well), it can now unjustifiably influence the hiring manager’s decision, intentionally or unintentionally. Unreliable entrance to social media by socioeconomic position and population differences in social media membership may also manipulate the legality of such use.

The information that can be viewed or accessed in such a way that it seems legal to use for selection, but may not be ethical. Considering the previous case where the applicant chose not to provide his/her SNS information on the materials submitted to the employer, but the employer mined (dig out) that information and browsed it anyway. It does not seem much illegal as those information was branded as “public” but obvious not ‘ethical’ to do so. However, SNS platform such as LinkedIn is very different in this case as that specific platform has been created in order to showcase the applicants’ profiles to the potential recruiters. A similar but more traditional case may be considered in this regard. A person applied for a high ranked job but currently employed, declaring that current job location on the CV. A hiring manager for the prospective organization travels to the job location of current employer and waits for the applicant to leave office, following him until he reaches home and taking pictures of everything what he does. Although all information collected in this manner may not be illegal, such act would be considered as a significant breach of privacy with severe reactions from the applicant.

The most important issue is that how to utilize those information on the selection process. Until now, such information is being used in selection systems usually at the discretion of the person making the hiring decision (Landers & Schmidt, 2016). In a few cases, so far, the perusal and collection of such information has been semi-formalized, although there are noteworthy exceptions (O’Brien, 2014). If such information to be a part of the selection process judgment, it is vague where in the process those would be best included. Most importantly, the question of training has been withheld empirically, although there is evidence that trained raters tend to produce higher quality judgments than those of untrained raters in such circumstances (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Further, changes in technology may make those implementations outdated or alter their significance in a comparatively short period of time. Fresh technological inventions even more basically alter the experience of SNSs and it is uncertain how useful these systems or any plan and recommendations developed based them will be even after five years.

Before, final selection, the employers conduct a type of background checks known as pre-employment background check (PBC). Here it should be noted and pointed clearly that this background check is normally conducted after final selection but before signing the job contract. Some authors, in their literature have used the adopted the terms “pre-employment screening” or PBC as interchangeable and those checks are conducted before selection or during selection. However, it should be clearly noted that the PBC is process that is carried out

at the final stage of hiring, which is even after final selection but before signing the formal job contract.

An SM based background check can indicate many things. It can be as simple as checking out a Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter profiles or as complicated as hiring someone (third party or agent) to search for every bit of social media about an individual. The term “SM” in this guidance captures a broad range of information such as social networking sites, blogs, micro blogs, and file-sharing sites (including photographs and video). SM based background checks are becoming alluring because they are often faster and simpler than other kinds of background checks. Another distinction between social media background checks and traditional background checks is that individuals can perform them under the pretext of a social relationship (Hosain & Liu, 2019). These differences can make it difficult to recognize SM-based PBCs for what they are: a way to screen and monitor current and prospective employees, volunteers, and candidates. While those PBC in literature actually highlighted on the background check before or during selection process, the PBC in this study is done after selecting a candidate but before signing the final contract as an employee.

**2.2.3 Internal communication:** To express very easily, internal communication is the exchange of information and instructions within an organization. More precisely, internal communication is the transmission of ideas, information and instructions from sender to receiver at any direction and any time within an organization. A proper, clear and timely transformation of information from the actual sender to receiver is vital for organizational accomplishment. Without a proper communication, an organization suffers confusion, mislead and miscommunication that might fetch severe consequences. The success of any organization and its business largely depends upon the success of its internal communication system.

From the last 10 years or so, numerous organizations have started utilizing social media to improve communication both to and between employees (Bond, 2010; Brzozowski et al., 2009). Social media include a variety of platforms, including blogs, micro-blogs (such as Twitter), online video, wiki pages, virtual worlds, and profile-based online networking (such as Facebook) (Bond, 2010; Buechler, 2010). The embracing of these tools in the corporate world in North America has accelerated over the past few years but very recently, a growing number of employees around the world, particularly those of the millennial generation, have been completely anticipated to have these tools available in the workplace (Bond, 2010). As an old fashion, e-mail communication is gradually losing its attractiveness among many professionals (Blodget, 2011) the gap is being supplementing with corporate social networks. Such corporate social networks let colleagues (users) to publicly post questions, answers & ideas; share photos, videos, and documents; and send & receive classified messages to specific co-workers. Communication is no longer merely an email, PowerPoint, or meeting directed from the top bosses down to front-line employees opening a new avenue to share real time information.

Yammer (yammer.com) was one of the initial commercially presented corporate social networking platforms (Klie, 2011) currently used by over 100,000 companies as an internal communication tool (Vance, 2011), including 80% of Fortune 500 companies ([yammer.com](http://yammer.com)). Furthermore, related corporate social networking applications, such as SocialCast, Present.ly, and Chatter are also being used for internal communication in the corporate and government

environment. Corporate social networks can aid businesses to develop the practices of knowledge sharing and teamwork between employees, reinforce their brand, create new ideas and build a sense of harmony (Naslund, 2010). The significance of such mutually collaborative behaviors cannot be underestimated in any case. Geographically distributed teams that communicate and collaborate most often are more successful at achieving complex goals (Gloor et al., 2008).

Furthermore, members in a team are linked to in his or her online network has a straight correlation to his or her individual performance, even if the communication with each member is occasional (Gloor et al., 2008). Thus, having access to many colleagues through social networks has great possibility to transform into the performance they carry out their job duties.

The collaborative behaviors that SNSs promote can guide to better productivity among employees (Semple, 2011). Such increased productivity allows organizations to deliver more value with fewer people, presumably leading to increased profit margins. However, using SNSs for employees to communicate with each other within the workplace requires a cultural swing (Naslund, 2010; Semple 2011; Grossman & McCarthy, 2007). Corporations cannot impose these technologies on employees and demand that they codify their knowledge which moves against the very basic nature of social media and is not well appreciated at all (Nash, 2011; Levy, 2009). The initiative of compelling employees to interrelate in a sociable manner with the expectation of enhanced output becomes seldom effective (Nash, 2011). Rather, providing social networking tools as an option, even fun can motivate employees to enthusiastically share tips and information with co-workers can be a better altruistic choice (Levy, 2009). Opening up a workplace to interior social networks needs readiness from management to offer a segment of the control over what, when and how information is shared (Grossman & McCarthy, 2007). Even corporate executives, those who are responsible for communicating with employees as part of their everyday duties, need to abandon some control over the content and timing of internal communication (Mengel, 2009). Employees should be able to speak their minds and share their ideas liberally, without fear of vengeance if they happen to post a non-conforming point of view.

A practice of open communication adopted by SNSs may offer many benefits to the company, including the possible improvement for bottom line. D'Aprix (2011) argues that organizations with highly efficient internal communication enjoyed an average of 47% higher return to shareholders over a five-year period (2004-2009) than organizations with less effective communication programs. Effective internal organizational communication is further associated with higher levels of employee engagement, performance, satisfaction and retention (D'Aprix, 2011; Vance, 2011). However, there are a few concerns as well about using social networking in the workplaces. With the informal nature of social networking, employees may be less formal in communicating, opening the door to potentially unprofessional discussions or office gossip (Vance, 2011). In addition to that, executives are alarmed about the security of SM platforms (Levy, 2009), as well the potential absence of inter-operability between the various tools (Grossman & McCarthy, 2007). Some authors argue that the use of social networks in the workplace actually decreases productivity (Hoover, 2007).

Although, while it cannot be denied that although some of the employees use corporate SNSs to converse topics unconnected to their jobs, those who use SNSs are generally the least likely to leave the organization (Vance, 2011). This is apparently because high levels of interface with colleagues on a social network reflect an employee's engagement and satisfaction in his or her role (and the job as well). Organizations that choose to not implement a corporate social

network might have trouble attracting and retaining employees from the millennial generation as well. Bond (2010) explains that the next generation of employees has been brought up on a lifestyle of social networking and will obviously expect access to such facilities in the workplace. Accordingly, Levy (2009) notes that younger employees not only find social networks to be intuitive channels for communication, but fully expect them to be available as a business tool.

**2.2.4 Employee training and development:** No doubt, training has been established as an important mechanism for developing human resources (Collins & Smith, 2006; Lau & Ngo, 2004; Souitaris, 2002; Marchington & Grugulis, 2000; Valle et al., 2000). Considering that individuals' required and relevant skills and knowledge are noteworthy predictors of employees' creative process of generating innovative and skillful ideas (Marchington & Grugulis, 2000), organizational training may better equip employees to be inventive, leading to enhanced overall innovative performance. Corporate training scheme can be formulated and delivered in a diverse number of forms (lectures, workshops, seminars, practical visit, case analysis, management games) as well as through diverse media (collective, face to face, personalized online training) (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Bartel, 1994). With the assistance of social associations among staffs and combining their knowledge and ideas, both internal and external corporate trainings promote employees' creative process of generating new and constructive thoughts, leading to creation of knowledge and superior overall innovative performance (Marchington & Grugulis, 2000; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Furthermore, considering that knowledge is a core element of generating innovation through new combinations and reconfigurations of already existing mechanism (Kang et al., 2007; Laursen & Foss, 2003; Laursen & Mahnke, 2001), escalating both the depth and the width of knowledge bases of employees through corporate training has noticeable strategic significance for organizational performance.

Since successful training needs planning, curriculum or program development and continuous investment, social media can remain those expenses downward to a reasonable level (Arjomandy, 2016). For example, a number of US organizations use social media such as Twitter or LinkedIn as employee training platforms for shared employee training experiences. With online social training, the training expenses related to traveling and using a large physical training room has been reduced to a greater extent. Importantly, social e-learning systems such as TELUS can be utilized to permit trainees interacting each other for sharing their experiences. Simulated environment such as IBM's Second Life allows the enhanced learning experiences. SM based training can be more interactive comparing to traditional e-learning where the emphasis is given more on delivering the training contents to the passive receivers (Arjomandy, 2016). In fact, pictures, videos and other related contents uploaded to training and development based social networking sites can offer synergetic opportunities for trainees to learn from each other.

Web 2.0 tools manipulate training procedures as information is more and more becoming user driven and companies often come across transitions toward sharing data, user generated contents and user experience. As a consequence, training activities today are not confined to a specific geographical location or time frame. Webinars take place all over the world and blogs, RSS filters, forums, wikis and podcasts may enhance the training experience (Smits & Mogos, 2013). Such applications with an inner focus allow for inexpensive and efficient learning and training for employees, whereas outwardly focused applications allow a company to incorporate into the on-line industry and minor costs with training customers and suppliers.

The impact of SM on training is measured as the ability to support conventional training, the ability to alter training content, the ability to support asynchronous training; and the ability to codify and distribute training contents (Smits & Mogos, 2013).

**2.2.5 Employee on-boarding or orientation:** Employee on-boarding (or orientation) is a strategic process of welcoming new employees to the organization and providing information, training, mentoring and coaching throughout the transition.

The process begins at the acceptance of an offer and throughout the first six to twelve months of employment, in general. Even a carefully selected employee does not guarantee that he/she will perform effectively. Even high potential employee cannot do their jobs if they do not know what to do or how to do. This is why orienting and training is important for new employees. Therefore, the on-boarding or orientation process provides new employees with basic background information about the firm, such as information about the company rules. Without basic information like rules and policies, new employees may make time consuming or even dangerous errors. Orientation is not just about rules; it is also about making the new person feel welcome at home and part of the team.

SM, as like all other functions can contribute to employee on-boarding process. However, SM can be a good platform to start, since not many companies yet started doing even the simple stuff when it comes to leveraging social media for on-boarding. Recruiters can take the help of SNSs' to welcome new employees by inviting them to join company online network and post pictures or videos, talk about hobbies, get tips and hints from recent hires already in the company; and form connections with dozens of people before even showing up for day one. Such step might help the new employees to get rid of their fear and anxiety. Once new staffs have system access, the ability to join online communities of practice, enabled by social tools, will provide them entrance to people working in the same kinds of jobs or tackling the same kinds of problems, no matter where they are physically located. The more cross-functional is the workflow, the more it can gain from SNSs. If there is one single place that everyone concerned in the process can straight away view the status of each new hire, it will be less likely that a step will be dropped because of miscommunication.

**2.2.6 Employee engagement:** Employee engagement is the process of involving the employee spirit into the organizational operational and strategic functions voluntarily. The term "employee engagement" has achieved substantial recognition over the last 20 years still inconsistently defined and conceptualized (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Baumruk (2004) termed engagement as the energy or the passion that employees contribute to their jobs and their employer, resulting in emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization. Again, Richman (2006) defined employee engagement as a momentum for an employee to utilize his/her discretionary efforts, experience, and energy, which stimulate generating innovative solutions that, in turn, promote the employers without any explicit assurance of personal gain.

Richman (2006) and Shaw (2005) pointed out that engaged employees have high degrees of involvement and attachment to their employers and/or organizations. Robinson et al. (2004) argued that the definition of employee engagement overlaps with already well-established constructs such as organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). However, Shaw (2005) acknowledged that there is a multitude of dimensions or constructs connected with employee engagement as the concept of employee engagement emanates from

relations of distinctive individuals under diversified working perspectives. This width requires the necessity of concentrating on only a few key dimensions or constructs. Gill (2012) proposed the dimensions for employee engagement should be: alignment with the organization, management effectiveness, salary and compensation, communication, and opportunity for development and recognition.

Utilization of internal SM may play a key role in enhancing employees' communication, innovation capabilities, collaboration and retention (Haddud et al., 2016). The main argument of those authors is that more engaged employees can communicate and manage their job tasks more effectively, align their work goals more with the overall organizational goals and strategies; and develop more recognition and get better compensation. Further, considering that the use of internal SM leads to more engagement, it seems more likely that there will be a consequent development in the functional areas such as: productivity, profitability, safety, customer satisfaction, turnover and absenteeism. Some of the previous studies have established a clear positive relationship between employee engagement and business performance (Pillay & Singh, 2018; Sarangi & Nayak, 2016; Kazimoto, 2016; HBR, 2013), internal social media can further boost such performance through proper integration and communication between the employee and the organizations.

**2.2.7 Job satisfaction:** Employee Job satisfaction is a frequently and most widely studied phenomenon in communication and behavioral research in the workplace (Staw, 1984). Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as an enjoyable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Employees who are more satisfied with their every day jobs are more likely to assist their organizations reach their goals efficiently (Scott & Stephens, 2009). In other words, job satisfaction can harvest positive benefits within workplace tasks, roles and relationships. Organizational research has commonly viewed job satisfaction as a variable that is created internally through workplace interactions, practices, routines and policies (Robertson & Kee, 2016).

Robertson & Kee (2016) reported in the findings of their study that an employee's job satisfaction is positively associated with the amount of time they spend on Facebook interacting with co-workers. Part time employees reported spending the most amount of time on Facebook with their co-workers and contract employees reported the highest degree of job satisfaction at work. In another recent study, Alahmad et al. (2018) revealed that employee social media (ESM) identity positively influences co-worker support and that co-worker support mediates the relationship between ESM identity and job performance and job satisfaction. On the other hand, Demircioglu (2018) reported an indirect effect of social media on job satisfaction. Similar results were reported by Hanna et al. (2017).

### **3. Utilization of SM for business: Recommendations and future trends**

SM is evolving and consumers are increasingly turning first and foremost to digital media, both at home and outside. Beyond just SM, customers are deeply engaged with products and services across the entire digital space by their own choice. They are using multiple outlets to ask questions, give feedback and share and connect with others and dictating when and where they interact with products and services. As a result they are developing an expectation of response

from businesses at all times and from everywhere. We have entered into a new era in how businesses interact with their customers. It is no longer enough that a strong marketing initiative will turn consumers into customers. If brands want to stay relevant in the digital era, they have no choice but to adapt with digital media. SM is more than media- it is a cultural shift. While conventional norms holds that people do not want businesses to intrude on their personal lives, presently such an idea far from the reality.

Many customers today are utilizing multiple outlets, not just Facebook, Twitter or YouTube to ask questions, give feedback, share and connect with others, they are, in fact, personalizing their experiences whenever possible. 40% of consumers have become a fan of a product or service on social networks, 26% of consumers have followed a brand on Twitter and 73% of consumers have posted a product or service review on websites like Amazon or Yelp (socialmediatoday.com). Due to such immense popularity of SM, at present 80% of businesses are using the platform to handle their marketing and sales.

But just being active on SM is not enough. For businesses to digitally connect with today's customer, they must not only stand for something but also do something. To have an impact, businesses have to find other ways to connect with customers to turn them from passive reactors to advocates. One of the significant drivers in SM for businesses is engagement- using digital media to connect with people, hear what they want, what they think, how a product or service worked or how it did not. Businesses now should identify about what resonates with their audiences and whether or not they are posting as “click-worthy” and compelling content that will raise awareness and get attention. The other significant driver in SM is customer service. Many consumers following brands are also customers, which is why smart businesses are using helpdesk software to solve customer's problems and answer questions instantly. Also, some businesses like Starbucks and American Airlines offer exclusive deals and tips to their digital audiences so they can drive awareness and sales. The future of SM will offer many exciting, new opportunities for businesses to connect with their customers. Smart contemporary businesses must rethink and shape their future business strategies and shift most of their marketing efforts towards engaging with customers. No business is going to strike out by opening the lines of communication with its customers and marketing to them in a personal, caring way that makes them feel valued. Positive brand experiences create customers and experience not only matters to customers- it drives results to the bottom line.

## **4. Theoretical and practical implications**

### **4.1 Theoretical implication**

Using SM platforms for different business purposes is comparatively a new trend for the organizations that basically began in the last decade. The practice has become extremely popular and growing among the policymakers of various organizations. However, with the increasing pace of SNS utilization, the academia has not so far paid adequate attention in guiding and advising the professionals on how to utilize SM-based information, the legal and ethical aspects, users' fairness and privacy concerns and so many more issues. We are hopeful that this theoretical paper can shed at least some lights on such issues. Further, the upcoming scholarly investigations can get some clues from this review paper.

## 4.2 Practical implication

Organizations are keen to utilize SM platforms due to cost-friendliness and access to mass number of users rapidly. Therefore, we can see a fast-growing utilization of different SNSs for business purposes particularly on different marketing and HRM functions.

However, the fairness, ethics and privacy concerns of the users' are needed to be discussed more elaborately for guiding the business professionals on how to use, when to use and which information to use for different business purposes evading the negative legal and ethical consequences such as lawsuits by the employees, job candidates or customers for screenings or overseeing their personal contents on SNSs. We optimistically anticipate that this paper can provide some guidelines to the professionals on such perspectives.

## 5. Conclusion

The emergence of SM began as personal platforms for the users for basically entertainment and communication purposes. But with the passage of time, the media has turned into many opportunities for the businesses due to its large user base and free accessibility. As a result, SM has turned into a blessing for the businesses rather than just being a medium of entertainment and communication. Therefore, business authorities and policymakers should consider SM platforms as the technological opportunities and blessings of modern science and Information Technology (IT).

The key message of this review paper is to highlight the growing utilization of social media based information or contents for different business purposes. We have also put some action recommendations and point of caution for the users and policymakers as such online information can be used for further business purposes although there are several risks if used without proper caution. We argue that the future will experience more and more utilization of such SM-based information for marketing, HRM and branding purposes due to cheap and easy accessibility of gaining such information.

Considering such rising importance, we expect more and more empirical and review papers should be written discussing the different issues of utilizing social media information for different business purposes. Such papers will enrich the academia as well as professional guidelines from where the scholars and stakeholders can be benefitted for the upcoming longer period of time. In emergency periods such as present Covid-19 outbreak, SNSs can play a real role on serving many purposes such as communication, marketing or even training. However, we also need not to overlook the challenges and drawbacks of using SM-based online platforms that can breach the users' privacy concerns.

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## **Disclosure statement**

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