

A Model for Social Media Adoption in Social Enterprises: A Comparative Analysis with Existing Adoption Model

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Abstract—Social media adoption in social enterprises is at its infancy and related scholarly research is relatively scarce. In addition, social media adoption models/frameworks are still limited. The majority of social enterprises have already adopted or in the process of adopting social media although, they are still finding structural and functional difficulties in the implementation process. The main difficulties are in figuring out how to develop an effective social media adoption process. To our knowledge, the literature does not provide a concise and specific model/framework, which shows how social enterprises could adopt social media in their enterprises. The purpose of this paper is to come up with a model/framework that could help social enterprises with their social media adoption process, taking into consideration some of the parameters, which we believe, hinder such adoption in the existing models. The research examines existing social media adoption models, and identifies existing parameters and accordingly, introduces new parameters. In order to test the effectiveness and efficiency of a social media adoption model, it is essential to scrutinize the parameters affecting the adoption process. An extensive research was conducted on the existing models and different technology adoption theories and frameworks to identify the key parameters of the adoption process. Few social media adoption models were tested against these key parameters to figure out their efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, after detailed comparative analysis and testing, the research suggests that the proposed model adds value to existing research and could be adopted by social enterprises as a useful framework to help in their social media adoption process.

Index Terms—social media, social entrepreneurship, social media adoption, parameter in social media

I. INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

THE term “social entrepreneurship” was first used in the literature on social change in the 1960s and 1970s [1], and then came into widespread use in the 1980s with the work of Bill Drayton of Asoka, funding social innovators around the world [2]. The concept of social entrepreneurship has gained more popularity especially after the publication of “The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur” by Charles Leadbeater in 1997 [3].

Social entrepreneurs have always existed in our society but with different names such as humanitarians, philanthropists, reformers, saints, or great leaders [4]. People were historically more concerned with visions and humanitarian acts rather than their social entrepreneurship practices. After 1990, the field started to gain more attention from governments and academia and a variety of social sections [2].

It has become increasingly prominent in society due to growing social and environmental problems. Social entrepreneurship addresses social problems such as poverty, infirmity, illiteracy, environmental destruction, and makes life worth living for many people [4]. It is distinct from other forms of entrepreneurship as it combines social causes with business principles. It has been recognized as a new type of entrepreneurship that is primarily focused on generating social wealth rather than creating economic wealth [2]. Social entrepreneurship has become an immense tent, which includes all kinds of socially beneficial activities [5].

Different researchers have interpreted and defined social entrepreneurship in a variety of ways. Social entrepreneurship is defined as a non-profitable practice that seeks alternative funding strategies, or management schemes to generate social value [6]. Social entrepreneurship is also referred as the socially liable initiatives of businesses engaged in cross-sector partnerships [7]. Social entrepreneurship is a means to improve societal problems and catalyse social change [8].

II. OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION MODELS

The history of social media adoption in social enterprises is at its infancy. Not much work has been done that could clearly define a specific standardised adoption model of social media in social enterprises. In the following work, we will introduce the most widely available/adopted social media adoption and implementation models based on extensive search in past and current research works, review books, website and blogs. The different existing social media adoption and usage models are described below in detail:

A. OASIS Model

OASIS stands for Objectives, Audience, Strategy, Implementation and Sustainment. The OASIS model was developed by L. Mason in 2008, and emphasises that the enterprise objectives should have higher priority than the audiences [9]. The different stages are described as:

- Objectives: The enterprise sets up its social media objectives. It is important to define objectives in order to prepare the social media strategy properly.
- Audience: The enterprise should be familiar with different aspects of their audiences such as their qualities, online activities etc.
- Strategy: Once the objectives and the audiences are set and determined, a social media strategy is developed by audience segmentation.
- Implementation: Starts with implementation procedures. The enterprise determines the important technology tools as well as the essential processes and procedures to implement.
- Sustainment: It is very important for an enterprise to keep up-to-date information on the social media technology and try to improve their social media strategy constantly. The enterprise needs to constantly measure their goals, adjust if necessary or formulate new plans.

B. ACCESS Model

The ACCESS model [10] was developed by Saffo and Brake in their book (The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools, and Strategies for Business Success) in 2009. ACCESS stands for Audience, Concept, Competition, Execution, Social media, and Sales viability. This model reveals that an enterprise needs to generate specific contents for the audience based on the concepts developed during communicating with its audience. According this model it is also very important to segment the target audiences and create a community around these groups; this will ensure that social media activities are relevant to the targeted audiences. The different stages are described as:

- Audience: Audience identification, as well as their activities with the social media, is vital. This can be achieved through surveys and interviews to recognize their audience and their preferences.
- Concept: The enterprise needs to define the concept that it wants to use to serve its audiences. The concept could be the enterprise service, product or brand. These concepts are verified with the audience for accuracy.
- Competition: It is very important for an enterprise to analyse its competitor's online activities. Saffo and Brake suggest focusing on the purpose they serve rather than the tools they use. It is essential to reach beyond the enterprise's common environment and try to compare with global enterprises.
- Execution: Before an enterprise executes its social media strategies, it is essential to plan how and when to use the contents for their social media tools. The

enterprise needs to enhance the contents and/or concepts gathered from the audience before executing the social media activities.

- Social media tools: The enterprise needs to be familiar with the availability of the different social media tools to accommodate their target audience. It should know when and how to use these tools to make the best use of the social media technology.
- Sales Viability: It is vital to create value using a social media approach. The enterprise must define the method of measurement of the social media success and failure, and should always be ready to make possible changes to its social media strategy.

C. Social Engagement Journey (SEJ) Model

The SEJ model [7] was developed by Sean O'Driscoll from the Ant's Eye View firm in 2010. The SEJ model focuses on the steps to be taken by an enterprise to achieve a complete implementation of a connected social organisation. The steps that the enterprise follows to achieve complete connectedness are as follows:

- Traditional stage: In the traditional phase each department in the enterprise communicate independently with their audience. The communication is always one-way, as in the traditional command and control system of communication.
- Dabbling in silos stage: Here, the team begins to experiment with the social media. Individuals and teams are still not connected to each other. They focus on direct engagement with the customers, most likely violating the internal rules of the enterprise.
- Operationalising stage: The enterprise fully adopts social media and begins to formulate social media strategies and policies. The enterprise creates a social media team that is responsible for operating the social engagement in the enterprises. The enterprise focuses on employee training and creates common engagement social media platforms.
- Real results stage: The enterprise focuses on creating functional groups and units to engage directly with the audiences. The measurement framework is developed to determine the return on investments (ROI) of the social media technology. Annual plans and forecasts are constructed to ensure social engagement is delivering the enterprise value.
- Fully engaged enterprises stage: Most of the enterprises are satisfied when they reach the real results stage but there is another stage called fully engaged enterprises stage. The enterprises experience breakthrough results based on satisfied customer engagement. In this stage, enterprises are fully and openly engaged with their audiences.

D. Staged Model of Social Media Adoption (SMSMA)

The Staged Model of Social Media Adoption was introduced by [9], focusing on the adoption process of social media in the public sector. This model has

postulated three broad stages of adoption process. The different stages are described below:

- Stage 1: Decentralized, Informal Early Experimentation by Social Media Mavericks: The social media adoption in the public sector begins with the informal experimentation with the social media technology. The social media mavericks test out different approaches in this stage. They use social media as an opportunity for directly interacting with the audiences that the traditional static website cannot provide. The entrepreneurs collect experiences and enhance their knowledge with the new social media technology.
- Stage 2: Coordinated Chaos: Making the Business Case for Social Media: Social media mavericks create different standards and business cases based on their experimentation in stage 1. This data is then used as a base for transforming the informal social media use to a formal approved use. This reduces the overall risk and uncertainty for the adoption of social media practices in the enterprise. The enterprises formally allocate dedicated social media employee, provide training to key personnel and provide financial support to broaden social media efforts across the organization. Different social media accounts are created in different social media platforms.
- Stage 3: Institutionalization and Consolidation of Behaviour and Norms: This stage includes formal standards and guidelines that enable the integration of social media practices into the existing technology framework of the enterprise. The social media strategy is formulated in this stage. Social media norms and regulations are developed to direct social media practices in the enterprise. Different social media positions including social media director are created. A dedicated social media department is created and social media practices are implemented

in all social media activities. In this stage, a high degree of formalization and standards are set for both the adoption and use of social media technology. The new standards and policies are focused on increasing awareness on the adopted social media technology and reduce the risks to the enterprise.

III. THE RESEARCH'S MODEL

Based on the understandings of the nature and structure of social enterprises and the characteristics of social media, we have developed a conceptual framework that depicts the social media adoption process in the social enterprises. This framework identifies the four major stages of adoption process and argues that the adoption process is influenced by three different factors: Environmental, Organisational and Technological.

A. Stage 1: Experimental Phase

This is the initial stage of the adoption process. The social enterprise has to understand and analyse the available social media technology platforms and their impact on their ventures before its adoption. The social enterprise carefully begins this process by identifying the objective of adopting the social media technology. The social enterprises use social media to disseminate messages among their audience, invite them to participate and contribute in their mission. Once the objective is identified, they should carefully create a presence in the social media platform. This means they create their official accounts with appropriate URLs and IDs in different social media tools. It is important to understand the social media trend in the market while choosing the right social media platforms for the enterprise.

- The enterprise could assign the task of managing the social media to its employees or outsource it to a social media management agency for a time. They are responsible for generating, posting and updating enterprise contents across the social media platforms.

B. Stage 2: Partial Integration

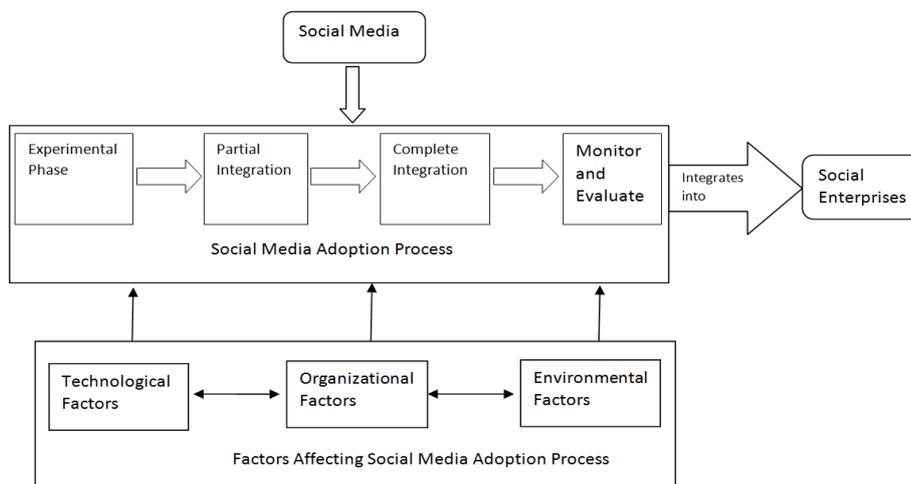


Figure 1. The research's proposed model

In this stage, the social enterprises disseminate the adopted social media and ask users to start using some of

its functions in their daily activities. Because social media enhances enterprise communication reach, the use of

social media, in most cases begins from the marketing and public relations departments of the enterprise. In this stage, the social media adoption begins partially to support the specific needs of certain departments. The social media now starts to grow in the enterprise. This means other departments of the enterprise also start to adopt social media to enhance their activities and accomplish their tasks faster.

The social enterprise should train, advise and provide adequate assistance to their employees so that they can understand the technology and utilize it in the most efficient way and leverage benefits from it. The responsibilities of the social media manager grow, and act as a coordinator between different departments, managing multiple accounts and managing the required contents.

C. Stage 3: Complete Integration

In this stage, the social media platform is adopted throughout the enterprise. The social media adoption now becomes a reality from the conception phase. The enterprise starts to create social media strategies for the better utilization of the social media technology. The enterprise need to upgrade its traditional tools and channels in order to collaborate with the new technology. Better process guidelines should be developed and coordination among different sectors of the enterprise becomes essential at this stage.

Different social media roles such as online community manager begin to emerge. The social enterprise needs to hire more social media personnel to support the emerging social media roles. The use of social media begins to be normalized and becomes a normal activity for all employees in the enterprise. Social media is well integrated in every department and every department utilizes it according to their needs.

D. Stage 4: Monitor and Evaluate

Social media has been properly integrated into the entire enterprise; each department has already started to use it in its own particular way. Human resources may be utilizing the platform to recruit new employees, while managers may be blogging or participating in conversations with senior executives. The enterprise needs to monitor and evaluate the impact of the adopted social media. The social enterprise should monitor the social media activities constantly and evaluate its impact. The ROI (Return on Investment) of social media needs to be calculated to measure the impact. Different tools and techniques are available that can be used to calculate ROI. In this stage, the integration of social media across the entire enterprise is completed.

IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN EXISTING MODELS AND PROPOSED MODEL

This section will compare the characteristics of the existing models and the proposed model of social media adoption. Each of the existing models will be compared with the proposed model and the major differences will be highlighted.

As can be seen in Table I, Table II, Table III, and Table IV, the proposed model introduces additional factors to those that are already available in the literature.

A. The SEJ Model Versus the Proposed Model

TABLE I. COMPARISON BETWEEN SEJ MODEL AND PROPOSED MODEL

1	Focuses on achieving a complete connected organization	Focuses on mutual coordination between the organization and the audiences
2.	One-way communication in the initial phase	Two-ways communication with the audiences in the initial phase
3	All activities are based on predefined policies and standards	Policies and standards are developed after analysing the adoption activities
4	Focuses only on the organizational factor of social media adoption process	Considers the Influence of Technology, Organisational and Environmental factors in the adoption process

B. The SMSMA Versus the Proposed Model

TABLE II. COMPARISON BETWEEN SMSMA AND PROPOSED MODEL

1	Provides a structured way of social media adoption through pre-defined policies and business cases	Policies and standards are developed after analysing the social media adoption activities
2.	Social media roles are created in the later stages of the model	Social media roles are created early at the initial stage of the model
3	Ignores Environmental factors of adoption process	Detailed implementation of Technology, Organisational and Environmental factors in the adoption process

C. The ACCESS Model Versus the Proposed Model

TABLE III. COMPARISON BETWEEN ACCESS MODEL AND PROPOSED MODEL

1	Create a community based on segment of audiences	No segmentation of audiences
2.	All activities including development of policies and standards are based on audience preferences	Policies and standards are based on mutual preferences between the enterprise and its audiences
3	Ignores Organisational factors of adoption process	Detailed implementation of Technology, Organisational and Environmental factors in the adoption process
4	Increased value for audience than the enterprise itself	Emphasis on mutual coordination and value for both enterprise and audiences

D. The OASIS Model Versus the Proposed Model

TABLE IV. COMPARISON BETWEEN OASIS MODEL AND PROPOSED MODEL

1	Value customer preferences over enterprise preferences	Emphasis on mutual coordination and value for both enterprise and audiences
2.	Policies and Standards are developed based on the segment of targeted audiences	Policies and standards are based on mutual preferences between enterprise and its audiences
3	Ignores Organisational factors of adoption process	Detailed implementation of Technology, Organisational and Environmental factors in the adoption process
4	Unclear social media roles in different phases	Clearly defined social media roles in different adoption stages

V. TESTING THE MODELS AGAINST PARAMETERS

In this research, we have identified different parameters, namely, relative advantages, technology compatibility, technology complexity, management drive, organizational culture, audience/donors preferences, end users, government policies, and cultural values and norms. We tested these parameters with each of the existing models as well as the proposed model. The following sections demonstrate the results of the testing and elaborate on our findings.

A. *Social Engagement Journey (SEJ)*

The SEJ Model discusses on different reasons of companies' transformation into customer-centric organisations by adopting and integrating social media technology [7]. This model incorporates different parameters that are vital to successful social media adoption in the organisation. The model mainly defines the adoption process in the business organisations while only some parameters are applicable to social organisations. This model falls short to include vital parameters that are important for social organisations. The model describes the journey of an organisation to integrate social media technology. The journey of social media integration is applicable for all types of organisations including social organisations, but the absence of some essential parameters makes the model less effective for social organisations than other types of organisations. Social organisations attempt to acquire donation in the form of crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding. Hence, considering donor preference in adoption process is very important, and something this model fails to incorporate. Government policies also influence the adoption process and the choice of tools and channels of social media. The absence of such important parameters in the model makes it less effective and inappropriate in the context of social organisations.

B. *Staged Model of Social Media Adoption (SMSMA)*

The SSMA Model focuses on the public sector adoption of social media technology. Hence, it incorporates major influential parameters of social media adoption in social organisation. The adoption process begins with informal experimentation on the perceived benefits and as an opportunity to interact with the end users directly. The major concern of this model is creating standards and guidelines in order to reduce the risk and uncertainty of the adoption process. A high degree of formalization and standards are set to guide the adoption process. The model fails to incorporate the impact of government policy in the adoption process rather emphasize on creating organisational level policy and procedures. Since the model focuses on public sector organisations, it identifies the impact of community culture and trend of social media usage. This model effectively incorporates major parameters, and hence, can be considered as an effective and efficient model for adoption process in social organisations.

C. *Audience Concept Competition Execution Social Media Sales Viability (ACCESS)*

The ACCESS Model focuses on the purpose rather than tools. Therefore, the audience preference is emphasised over the parameters such as technology compatibility and technology complexity. Management support and organisational culture is considered as highly important and would be incorporated throughout the adoption process. The adoption process is guided by the organisational policies, while the policies imposed by the government are ignored. This model insists to familiarize with social media tools and identify its perceived benefits. The major concern is to identify the audience and their preferences. It discusses different aspects of the audiences including their cultural values and norms. This model incorporates major parameters of social media adoption process, and hence, can be considered as an effective model for all type of organisations including social organisation.

D. *Objectives Audiences Strategy Implementation Sustainment (OASIS)*

The OASIS Model emphasizes organisation objective over audience. The organisational goals are considered more important than the audience preferences. It emphasises on knowing the audience and their online activities and determining the tools, despite their complexity, which are important to achieve their objectives. User training and management support are provided during the adoption process. This model emphasises on creating social media strategy that benefits organisational goals ignoring different important factors such as technology complexity, government policy, cultural values and norms. Hence, this model is less effective than other models in describing the nature of adoption process in social organisations.

E. *The Proposed Model*

The proposed model incorporates most of the essential parameters and introduces new parameters specific to the adoption process in social enterprises. Therefore, donor preferences and government support have been discussed in detailed and are argued as the major influential factor. The model's easy and free to use feature of social media makes it suitable for the social enterprises. Social media is easily compatible to the flat and open organisational structure of the social enterprises. Since the focus is on adoption of the tools that are preferred to the donors and end users, the complexity nature of the tools was ignored. The model argues in favour of the adoption of tools that are preferred by the donors and users despite having difficulties in incorporating them in the existing enterprise infrastructure. The model has emphasised on analysing the trend and demands of social media in the community. This could serve as a decisive factor in the adoption of tools over other tools. Some social media tools might be restricted to use in certain communities for various reasons such as religion, politics, cultural value etc. Thus, it is very important to consider the impact of cultural values and norms in the adoption process. The

proposed model has incorporated this major factor effectively.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

The research, based on detailed analysis of current literature, presents a conceptual framework that depicts the role of social media in social entrepreneurship. Research on social entrepreneurship is still phenomenon driven [3]. Social media is an evolving technology and is advancing with time; therefore, are various opportunities exist to establish a basis for further studies on the adoption of social media in the field of social entrepreneurship.

The current research focused on the explanatory study on the domains, future researchers could perform quantitative study to draw statistical analysis, which re-enforce the research’s findings. The findings of this research could be used by social entrepreneurs to

facilitate social media adoption process in their entrepreneurial ventures and can be used by academics for further research. Different parameters were derived from various technology adoption theories and frameworks for testing the social media adoption models. These parameters are the factors specific to social enterprises. The operating environment of social enterprises was investigated in detail and the parameters that influence the social media adoption were identified. These factors served as the testing parameters for different models against the research’s model. We posit that, a model that consists of these parameters would be considered, effective and efficient for the social enterprises, while the absence of major parameters is considered as an ineffective and inefficient model.

Table V summarizes the testing analysis of different existing model including the proposed model based on the identified parameters:

TABLE V. TESTING SUMMARY

Parameters →	Relative Advantage	Technology compatibility	Technology Complexity	Management Drive	Organisational Culture	Audience/ Donor Preference	End Users	Government Policy	Cultural Values and Norms
Models and Frameworks ↓									
SEJ	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
SMSMA	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
ACCESS	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
OASIS	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Proposed Model	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

This paper revealed the importance of audience/donor support for the existence of social enterprises. Therefore, we posit that it is very important to consider the donor preference in creating a social media strategy. The SEJ Model fails to integrate this important factor in its adoption process framework. Other discussed models have considered this as an important factor for the adoption process. The decision of the enterprise to adopt and use a specific social media technology is also influenced by the cultural values and norms that people are subjected to. Hence, cultural values and norms are important factors that should be considered during the adoption process. The SEJ and OASIS models ignore this factor, but the ACCESS model has incorporated them.

All of the models have incorporated vital factors such as relative advantage, end users and organisational culture in their adoption strategy. All of the models, except the ACCESS model, have focused on the impact of the compatibility nature of the social media technology. Our work and analysis reveals that all the models except the proposed model fall short to include this factor. All of the models have focused on organisational policy and standards to be considered in the adoption process, but none have discussed the impact of government policy in the adoption process.

The OASIS Model is an effective model but fails to incorporate important factors such as government policy and cultural values and norms. According to the testing analysis, SMSMA, ACCESS and the proposed models

are the most effective models. The SMSMA and ACCESS models ignore government policy, while the proposed model considers government policy as an important factor.

The proposed model has a slight edge over the SMSMA and ACCESS models. The proposed model was developed after detailed research on the operating environment of the social enterprise. It is specific to social enterprises and incorporates most of the influential factors that need to be thoroughly considered during the adoption process in social enterprises. It fails to address the impact of cultural values and norms, but discussed in detail the trends and demands of the community, which in a way, are relevant to the factor. Still, detailed study needs to be performed on this factor and incorporate it to enhance the effectiveness of the adoption process. The pitfall of the proposed model is that it is specific to social enterprises and other enterprises can only use it as a partial reference in their adoption strategy.

Thus, in the context of social enterprises, the proposed model can be considered as an effective and efficient model that can be adopted by social enterprises as a useful framework in their social media adoption process.

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