

# Exploring Social Media Metrics: A Comprehensive Literature Review on Assessing Post-Digitalisation Outcomes in Companies from a People-Centric Perspective

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**Abstract:** Assessment of post-digitalisation outcomes in companies remains a pressing concern for stakeholders in industry, and metrics from social media engagements could offer valuable insights that may be beneficial from a people-centric perspective. Yet, there remains a significant lack of comprehensive exploration of these metrics. This review evaluates the state of the art of academic literature on the subject of social media engagement as evaluative indicators of the outcome of digitalisation in companies. Drawing from a people-centric perspective, a qualitative methodological approach examined peer-reviewed articles selected for the literature review. Results underscore the nuanced interplay between social media engagement metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes and offers valuable theoretical and practical insights beneficial to stakeholders both in industry and the academia. The study concludes by advocating for a deeper, more industry-specific exploration of engagement metrics in assessing post-digitalisation outcomes in companies.

**Keywords:** Digitalisation, Metrics, Employee, Workforce, Customers, Social media, Literature review

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## 1. Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed how companies interact with their customers, particularly in terms of how companies collect data on their customers, as well as giving them better opportunities to shape their brand identity. Within specific industry sectors, the use of social media metrics in assessing the impact of the implementation of digitalisation on business organisations has emerged as an area of research interests within the academia (Ornstein, 2012; Cao *et al.*, 2016; Carter and Eger, 2021). While existing research has provided insights into discrete aspects of social media and digitalisation within business organisations, there remains a conspicuous gap in comprehensively exploring the spectrum of social media metrics that can be employed as evaluative tools for assessing post-digitalisation in companies operating across different industry sectors.

This paper aims to bridge this gap by critically assessing the role of social media engagement among the workforce of a company as indicators of the impacts of digitalisation across organisational domains in the company. The study adopts a people-centric focus considering that evidence from previous research efforts acknowledges and emphasises the active roles of employees, customers, and stakeholders in the digitalisation journey of a company, and highlights their impact and interactions within the digital sphere (Goswami *et al.*, 2013; Cardon and Marshall, 2015). The objective of this research is to critically examine existing evidence to gauge the extent to which social media engagement within the workforce of a company can provide useful evidentiary metrics that can be in evaluating the effects of digitalisation across organisational domains in a company.

Taking into consideration the diverse range of metrics, the assessment revolves around the measurement of digital process adoption, efficiency enhancement, and overall competitiveness. Furthermore, the study delves into the role of employees as digitalisation ambassadors, scrutinising how their active engagement through social media channels contributes significantly to the outcomes of digitalisation initiatives. Additionally, the paper investigates the profound effects of customer and stakeholder feedback shared on social media platforms, assessing their impact on shaping, and refining a company's digitalisation strategies. By recognising social media as a dynamic repository of invaluable consumer sentiments and insights, this study endeavours to uncover how these inputs influence and optimise digitalisation efforts within the manufacturing landscape.

This study considers the following research questions relevant to achieving the objectives of the study: How effectively have social media engagement metrics been applied in assessing post-digitalisation outcomes across core organisational domains in business organisations? And what impact does the workforce's engagement on social media platforms have on the outcomes of company digitalisation initiatives? Both research questions will enable the study to achieve its objectives by assessing the effectiveness of social media metrics in evaluating post-digitalisation outcomes across diverse organisational domains, and critically

investigating the role of a company's workforce either as barriers or enablers of the company's digitalisation initiatives.

This study adopts a qualitative methodological approach that combines desk research with critical literature review in assessing state of the art evidence from peer-reviewed academic sources. The research offers valuable insights into the use of social media platforms for multi-stakeholder engagements and its pivotal role in shaping digitalisation outcomes in business organisations. Results from the study contributes both theoretically and practically to the ongoing academic discourse by providing a nuanced understanding of how metrics from social media platforms serve as instrumental evaluative tools in assessing the outcomes of digitalisation in companies.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundation for the Study**

A range of studies have explored the use of social media metrics in assessing post-digitalization outcomes in companies from a people-centric perspective. Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden (2019) and Boujena *et al.* (2021) both emphasise the importance of customer engagement as a key metric. Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden (2019) further highlights the need for firms to define and assess engagement, while Boujena *et al.* (2021) discusses the gaps in understanding customer engagement and its impact on social media performance. Yoon *et al.* (2018) further supports the significance of digital engagement metrics, they found a positive correlation between the volume and tone of Facebook comments and company revenue. Nistor (2011) provides a theoretical framework for understanding people's behaviour on social media, drawing on the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Technology Acceptance Model.

The fusion of social media platforms with modern business landscapes has resulted in a paradigm shift in customer-company interactions, reshaping how brands curate their identities and gather customer insights (Cao *et al.*, 2015, 2016; Hanna, Kee and Robertson, 2017). While Ornstein (2012) and Cao *et al.* (2016) acknowledge the transformative effect of social media on customer-company interactions and brand identity, Ornstein (2012) situates the discourse firmly within the lens of workforce social media engagement within the workplace as distinct entities with agency beyond the dictates of organisational policy. However, the research of Cao *et al.* (2016) presents more relevant findings in terms of workforce social media engagement within the workplace. Results from their research shows that social media usage by the workforce of a company can promote the formation of employees' social capital indicated by network ties, as well as promote a sense of shared vision and trust, which, in turn, can lead to knowledge transfer and better collaboration among the workforce of the company. Also, Cardon and Marshall (2015) presents an interesting dimension to the subject. They argue that while traditional communication channels are used more frequently and considered more effective for team communication, company employees who fall into the demographic classification of Gen X and Gen Y are more favourably disposed to using social networking tools as their primary medium for team communication.

Men, O'Neil and Ewing (2020) conducted research on the effects of internal social media usage on employee engagement, and results from their studies shows that employees' use of internal social media contributes to an enhanced level of perceived transparency of the organisation and organisational identification, which in turn, leads to employee engagement. However, a recurrent theme that continues to emerge from previous research is that of the pivotal roles of employees, customers, and other relevant stakeholders in a company's digitalisation journey (Cardon and Marshall, 2015; Breunig, 2016; Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden, 2019). This highlights a bias and preference by companies towards understanding customers better via social media engagements, hence the use of customer-centric social media metrics as crucial evaluative tools that reflects the customers' perspectives of the company's value offerings over that of their employees' perceptions of the impact of digitalisation on various organisational domains, efficiency gains, and competitiveness of the company within its industry sector. For industry stakeholders, they consider feedback from their customers on social media platforms as influential inputs that should shape their digital strategies (Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García and Castellanos-Verdugo, 2017; Men, O'Neil and Ewing, 2020).

Effective utilisation of social media metrics in post-digitalisation assessment remains a key area for exploration, and understanding the role of a company's workforce (either as barriers or enablers) of digitalisation, makes the need for further investigation necessary (Ornstein, 2012; Cardon and Marshall, 2015; Cao *et al.*, 2016). To get a better understanding of how these metrics translate into tangible business impacts, Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García and Castellanos-Verdugo (2017) makes the connection between customer and stakeholder feedback shared on social media platforms and its influence on shaping post-digitalisation outcomes in a company. They argue that the benefits of a high level of customer engagement will lead to

superior organisational performance outcomes such as sales growth, cost reductions, brand referrals, enhanced consumer contributions for collaborative product development processes, enhanced co-creative experiences, and higher levels of profitability for the company.

Cao *et al.* (2016) applies the media synchronicity theory (MST) in arguing that synchronicity exists among people when they work together at the same time with a shared focus. According to them, at the core of MST lies five objective capabilities in the conceptualisation of a medium that influences the level of synchronicity: transmission velocity: the speed to which a medium can transmit a message; parallelism: the extent to which a medium enables information from multiple senders to be transmitted simultaneously; symbol sets: the number of ways in which the information can be conveyed; rehearsability: the extent to which a medium enables the sender to rehearse or adjust the message before sending; and reprocessability: the extent to which a message can be re-examined or processed again by the receiver. While Quish (2010) adopts a novel approach which he describes as "Utility Media- digital workforce platforms" in explaining the use of social media within the workplace to create richer relationships by driving engagement among the workforces. This approach consists of three factors - Recruitment Relationship Marketing whereby companies social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn to 'fish in the ocean' for talent when needs arise; Enterprise Learning whereby companies leverage social media platforms provide opportunity for socially engaging experiences like online gaming or gamification (Bonsón and Ratkai, 2013; Yoon *et al.*, 2018; Haziri, Nwaiwu and Chovancová, 2019) for formal training, while mobile applications should be explored for quick fix question and answers (Q&A); and finally, Employee Engagement via social media platforms in ways to ensure that social or hierarchical barriers within companies are broken down.

These studies collectively underscore the value of customer engagement and digital metrics in evaluating post-digitalisation outcomes. However, the existing body of research surrounding social media metrics and post-digitalisation in companies, though extensive, remains segmented and lacks a comprehensive exploration of the diverse metrics crucial for assessing the outcomes of digitalisation in business organisations. Despite these findings, a prevalent bias is apparent favouring customer-centric social media metrics over employee perspectives in evaluating digitalisation impacts. This emphasises the need for a more comprehensive and balanced exploration of social media metrics, encompassing both customer and employee dimensions, to effectively evaluate post-digitalisation outcomes and its impact across organisational domains.

### **3. Methodology**

The research adopts a qualitative methodological approach in reviewing relevant literature to evaluate state of the art evidence from peer-reviewed academic sources. It begins with desk research to identify peer-reviewed literature on the subject of social media metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes in business organisations. The desk research used both the Scopus and Web of Science academic database which are reputable sources of peer-reviewed journal articles. The initial search employed the following keywords to yield the desired results – digitalisation, metrics, employee, workforce, customers, social media. The results were uploaded unto Rayyan, an intelligent research collaboration online platform useful for conducting literature reviews and systematic reviews. This enabled a quick turnaround time especially in terms of eliminating duplicate articles. The Rayyan platform was also used to process and compare articles in terms of title, keywords, and abstracts, the combined dataset contained articles from multiple sources. This is followed by a critical literature of the peer-reviewed journal articles identified from the desk research (Jesson and Lacey, 2006; Stigmar, 2016). The selection criteria for articles were established to ensure the inclusion of academic papers pertinent to the research questions, excluding practitioner articles due to their differing analytical constructs and form compared to academic journal papers. This step aims to establish a foundational understanding of the subject matter by incorporating diverse perspectives and theoretical lenses. All selected articles which subjected to purposive sampling and selection criteria to ensure that they have social media engagement metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes within business organisations as their primary research focus.

The review specifically focused on identifying gaps, inconsistencies, and emerging trends related to using social media engagement metrics of a company's workforce as a means of assessing post-digitalisation outcomes in the company. This purposive selection process ensured that the selected studies covered variables associated with social media metrics in the context of digitalisation in business organisations. A total of 15 articles were selected from the pool of 90 articles identified. The articles that were selected for examination, were published over the period between 2013 to 2023, this ensured a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter based on recent state of the art research outputs. The method of data collection involved impartial cross-referencing of major journals in the field, followed by a meticulous analysis of cross-references. This

approach aimed to minimise subjectivity in the selection criteria and capture the totality of the literature to comprehend the internal dynamics of discourse within the academic realm.

The detail of selected articles was deconstructed and organised into key categories using a comparative table, this made it possible for a comprehensive analysis. The categories included paper details (Author – Journal – Year of publication), type of relationship, perspective (customer, employee, or both), nature or type of company's business activities, country from which the sample was drawn, methodology and sample information, and findings related to social media metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes. In addition, a deliberate effort was made to simplify the data and enhance comparability among studies by categorising findings into the following three distinct categories: antecedents of post-digitalisation outcomes, dimensions of social media metrics, and consequences of social media engagement on post-digitalisation outcomes. This tabulated form aimed to provide future researchers with a framework for constructing theoretical models and comparing findings across different variables and methodologies. It is pertinent to state that some level of subjectivity was inevitable in this process. However, rigorous cross-checking against the original articles was conducted to ensure consistency, objectivity, and the legitimacy of observations derived from the comparative tables. This meticulous approach was fundamental in attempting to create valid and comparable data for a comprehensive analysis of the role of social media engagement metrics in post-digitalisation outcomes within business organisations. The triangulation of methodological approaches provides a comprehensive, multi-faceted analysis of the interplay between social media metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes in business organisations (Carter *et al.*, 2014; Abdalla *et al.*, 2018).

#### **4. Results and Discussions**

Results from the critical literature review and comparative analysis of peer-reviewed literature on social media engagement metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes in business organisations yielded comprehensive insights into the intricate interplay between these variables. This section presents and discusses a synthesis of findings derived from the reviewed studies, and outlines the significant themes, patterns, and implications that emerged from the analysis. The structure and organisation of the results is intended to elucidate the multifaceted impacts of social media engagements of a company's workforce as well as that of their customers on assessing post-digitalisation outcomes in the company, this underscores its relevance across various organisational domains. The critical analysis and examination of diverse studies focusing on the subject under investigation revealed nuanced perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the workforce of a company's social media metrics in assessing how digitalisation affects various aspects of the company and contributes to a deeper understanding of how social media engagement among the employees of the company influences and shapes digitalisation initiatives across core organisational domains.

The discussion herein delineates key insights gleaned from the critical literature review, delving into the implications of social media metrics on the efficiency gains, competitiveness, and overall organisational dynamics post-digitalisation. By examining the interconnectedness between social media metrics and post-digitalisation outcomes, this discussion aims to offer valuable implications for businesses seeking to leverage these insights in shaping effective digital strategies and fostering enhanced organisational performance. Table 1 provides a summary of key findings in the literatures included in the review.

**Table 1: Summary of key findings in the literatures included in the review (source: authors)**

<b>Title of Article</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>A set of metrics to assess stakeholder engagement and social legitimacy on a corporate Facebook page</b>	2013	Online Inf. Rev.	(Bonsón and Ratkai, 2013)	The study sought to propose and validate metrics for evaluating stakeholder engagement on corporate Facebook pages, demonstrating their validity and adaptability across other social media platforms.
<b>How to measure engagement in Twitter: advancing a metric</b>	2017	Internet Res.	(Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García and Castellanos-Verdugo, 2017)	The study proposes a novel metric for gauging engagement on Twitter, with the aim of aiding companies in refining their engagement strategies through a new analytical approach for the social media platform (Twitter, now X).

<b>Title of Article</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Social Media Use in Research: Engaging Communities in Cohort Studies to Support Recruitment and Retention</b>	2015	JMIR Research Protocols	(Farina-Henry, Waterston and Blaisdell, 2015)	The study evaluates Social Media usage within the context of the National Children's Study. It demonstrates the feasibility of metrics for content and engagement analysis on Facebook and offers insights for optimising future posts and engaging online communities.
<b>Attracting Comments: Digital Engagement Metrics on Facebook and Financial Performance</b>	2018	Journal of Advertising	(Yoon <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	The study investigates how social media engagement affects a company's business performance, how user comments on company Facebook posts influence company revenue of S&P 500 companies over a five-year time span (from 2010 to 2015). Results show a positive correlation between engagement volume and sentiment with company revenue, guiding potential future research directions.
<b>Visibility and vulnerability in online marketing practices</b>	2021	Journal of Cultural Economy	(Carter and Eger, 2021)	The study explores how users' perceptions of engagement metrics influence content creation on social media, results from the study shows that tactics enhancing metrics also prompt users to disclose personal and vulnerable information in online interactions.
<b>Exposure to Social Engagement Metrics Increases Vulnerability to Misinformation</b>	2020	ArXiv	(Avram <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	The study reveals that exposure of other users to a user's social media engagement metrics elevates susceptibility to misinformation, and it emphasises the need for platforms to reconsider displaying these metrics to mitigate the spread of false information.
<b>Off the Court: Examining Social Media Activity and Engagement in Women's Professional Sport</b>	2021	International Journal of Sport Communication	(Piché and Naraine, 2021)	The study evaluates the social media engagement of the Women's National Basketball Association, results from the study reveals a heightened interaction during the season compared to off-season periods, suggesting a need for sustained engagement strategies.
<b>Social Networks' Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Spain: Health Media vs. Healthcare Professionals</b>	2020	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	(Pérez-Escoda <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	The research explores the relationship established between the population in general and digital media in particular through the measurement of engagement. Results from the study shows that the pandemic accelerated the transformation of communication in general and created new challenges for stakeholders in the communication industry, as well as higher education institutions.
<b>Multi-Emotion Detection in Social Media Post using Lexicon-Driven Approach</b>	2020	Conference Proceedings : International Conference on Digital Transformation and Applications , 2020	(Yow <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	This research examines how various content types on popular social media platforms influence customer engagement metrics, results from the study reveals that media and content type significantly impact audience interactions, potentially affecting real-world purchasing behaviour.
<b>Social Media Analytics: Instagram Utilization for Delivering Health Education Messages to Young Adult in Indonesia</b>	2021		(Mukti and Putri, 2021)	The study analyses the Centre for Indonesia's Strategic Development Initiatives' (CISDI) social media marketing impact on health messages. Results from the research reveals engagement rates metrics averaging 14.43% on trending issues like sex education, engaging 10,266 individuals in their classes. The study concludes that social media utilisation benefits CISDI in engaging audience and moves them to participate in their cause.

Title of Article	Year	Journal	Reference	Notes
<b>The use of social networking platforms for sexual health promotion: identifying key strategies for successful user engagement</b>	2015	BMC Public Health	(Veale <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	The study examines successful strategies for sexual health promotion on Facebook and Twitter. Findings show that active, interactive profiles have higher levels of user engagements by adopting regular multimedia and celebrity/influencer involvement.
<b>Effectiveness of social media marketing on enhancing performance: Evidence from a casual-dining restaurant setting</b>	2019	Tourism Economics	(Li, Kim and Choi, 2019)	The study investigates the impact or influence of social media engagement on customers in casual-dining restaurants, the results reveal variations among metrics across platforms and promotional activities and indicates their positive influence on restaurant performance. The study offers valuable insights for marketing decisions.
<b>What KPIs Are Key? Evaluating Performance Metrics for Social Media Influencers</b>	2019	Social Media + Society	(Gräve, 2019)	The study examines challenges associated with influencer marketing, and the results reveals that professionals rely on reach and interactions as primary metrics. Comment sentiment also significantly correlates with content evaluation, and this challenges the adequacy of traditional quantitative metrics.
<b>Firm-level perspectives on social media engagement: an exploratory study</b>	2019	Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal	(Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden, 2019)	The study investigates the perception of companies of customer engagement on social media platforms. The results highlight measurable metrics like growth, interactions, and subscribers. It also outlines propositions for defining engagement, social media breadth, and its strategic usage, thereby suggesting the need for clearer engagement definitions and platform choices for fostering customer interaction.
<b>Synergies between Social Media Features and User Engagement to Enhance Online Brand Visibility - A Conceptual Model</b>	2013	Information Systems & Economics eJournal	(Goswami <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	The research investigates the relationship between social media features, user engagement, and online brand visibility, and proposes a conceptual model that uses a social media-user engagement matrix, as well as proposing metrics to measure online brand visibility, aiming to contribute to understanding their synergies and effective measurement.

Findings from the critical analysis of the selected literature reveals a variety of interesting perspectives in relations to how previous research efforts into the subject of social media metrics as a frame of reference for assessing the impact of digitalisation in companies. Results from the study conducted by Yoon *et al.* (2018) established a positive correlation between engagement metrics and the revenue of companies, their research was focused on companies from S&P 500 list, their research provides valuable insights but within a constrained scope because of the absence of in-depth exploration of various engagement metrics' impact across diverse organisational domains.

## 5. Conclusion

The study shows that while significant efforts have been made in conducting research into the subject of social media engagements, the scope and focus on applying metrics from the use of social media by the workforce of a company as an evaluative lens into assessing post-digitalisation outcomes is still an area of research that has not been adequately explored. A typical example is reflected in the research efforts of Bonsón and Ratkai (2013) who adopts an approach which in itself does not focus on assessing post-digitalisation outcomes in companies, but proposes metrics that they believe can be valuable for stakeholders in industry to use in evaluating stakeholder engagements on social media platforms, with particular focus on corporate Facebook pages, and demonstrating their validity and adaptability across social media platforms. The approach adopted by Bonsón and Ratkai (2013) can be argued to be pre-digitalisation because it is constrained by the fact that it seeks to analyse all-encompassing stakeholders' engagements on corporate social media platform with a view to helping the company get a better understanding of the perceptions of their stakeholders which in this case is more inclined towards the perception of the company's customers.

Yow *et al.* (2020) highlighted the impact of content types on audience engagement but failed to delve into broader influences on brand performance. While the research by Mukti and Putri, (2021) (2021) explored social media's impact on health messages. Results from their research offers valuable insights into engagement rates and audience participation. In addition, Li, Kim, and Choi (2019) investigated social media's influence on restaurant performance but did not thoroughly explore specific metrics' effects across diverse platforms, the limitation of their research can also be seen from the focus on financial performance of companies. Gräve (2019) examined influencer marketing metrics but could further explore alternative metrics for comprehensive evaluations. Hallock, Roggeveen, and Crittenden (2019) conducted research which focused on analysing company's perspectives on social media engagement; however, the lack of offer deeper insights into industry-specific metrics and strategies presents a challenge which significantly limits the value derivable from their research findings. Goswami (2013) proposed a model without empirical validation, requiring further exploration and verification of practical applicability. In summary, while these studies offer valuable insights, there remains a need for comprehensive analyses to understand the broader implications of engagement metrics in the assessment of post-digitalisation from a people-centric perspective in business organisations. This would enable companies to benefit from a less subjective dataset that is often neglected. Based on the review of extant literature on the subject of social media metrics used in assessing post-digitalisation outcomes in Companies from a people-centric perspective, it can be inferred that there are two broad categories of people centric metrics: those that are focused on the employees and another group focused on the customers. It can also be inferred that companies tend to pay more priority to the customer facing metrics when compared to the employee facing metrics. This has significant implications in practice for companies who embark on digitalisation initiatives as they only tend to see one side of the picture of their digitalisation initiatives while largely ignoring the other aspect which is equally consequential as the workforce of a company is a vital resource relevant to its overall wellbeing.

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