

INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY ON THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract

The impact posed by digital literacy on the social entrepreneurship growth has been examined by the scholar of the present study. The study has analyzed such an effect by examining the role of digital literacy to improve the social impact, market reach, operational efficiency and innovation. The author has adopted an analytical and descriptive research design and has collected primary as well as secondary data for study purposes. The respondents of the study are the social entrepreneurs from whom primary data has been collected with the help of a questionnaire. Review of previous studies, empirical researches and reports have been done for collecting primary data. The relationship of digital literacy with social entrepreneurship has been assessed by employing regression. The findings of the study provide beneficial reports regarding the positive effects of digital literacy on the social entrepreneurship.

Keywords:Digital Literacy, Social Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has been witnessed to emerge as an influential means to address the critical environmental, economic and social challenges in recent times. Dissimilar to the traditional entrepreneurship, financial sustainability along with creation of social value are given preference in social entrepreneurship. The problems prevailing in the society are identified by the social entrepreneurs. They further apply market-oriented and innovative solutions for creating sustainable development and inclusive growth. The global problems like climate change, unemployment and poverty are seen to increase rapidly and in this reference, social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in developing and developed countries.

Along with such a development, fast developments with respect to digital technologies further, have changed the manner of functioning of the societies, individuals and organizations. The digital devices like e-commerce, systems of digital payment, cloud computing, platforms of social media and mobile applications have changed the business models and enlarged the market access. The term digital literacy is referred to as the potential of using the digital technologies in an effective way for accessing, evaluating, creating and communicating information. Digital literacy has turned out to be an important competency in the present ecosystem of entrepreneurship.

As for the social entrepreneurs, the prevalence of digital literacy helps to improve innovation, enhance operational efficiency and scale the social effect. The social entrepreneurs with digital literacy possess the ability of controlling technology for mobilizing the resources, engaging the stakeholders, assessing the impact and providing solutions for the marginalized communities. The digital platforms help the social enterprises in reaching the beneficiaries ahead of geographical boundaries, creating awareness regarding the social causes and attracting funds by way of crowd-funding.

In spite of the increased significance of the digital literacy, it can be still noticed differences with respect to digital access and potentials, mainly in the developing nations. Most of the wannabe social entrepreneurs do not possess sufficient digital skills, thereby restricting their potential in using the digital instruments in an effective way. Such a digital divide slows down the development and the sustainability of the social enterprises. It further limits their ability of generating huge scale social effect.

In the modern entrepreneurial ecosystem, the presence of digital literacy is highly crucial; especially for the social entrepreneurs those who desire to have sustainable social effect and economic viability. Reliance on digital platforms, technology-based solutions and online networks has increased which demands for an understanding about the manner in which digital literacy affects the social entrepreneurship development.

With this reference, it has become crucial to examine the effect posed by digital literacy over the development of social entrepreneurship. Becoming aware of the way in which digital skills and knowledge influence growth, sustainability and scalability of the social enterprises would be beneficial for the educators, development agencies and policymakers. The study presented here is an attempt to analyze the relationship of digital literacy with the social entrepreneurship growth. It also emphasizes the role played by digital skills to empower the social entrepreneurs.

Problem Statement

Though the digital technologies have provided huge opportunities towards social entrepreneurship, development of social enterprises stands to be restrained because of insufficient digital literacy amongst the social entrepreneurs. Most of the social entrepreneurs find it difficult in adopting digital tools towards communication, innovation and balancing their efforts, thereby having restricted effect and outreach. No empirical studies had been done to understand the manner in which digital literacy affects the social entrepreneurship growth, especially in the developing nations, thereby establishing the need to have a systematic investigation.

Need for the Study

The entrepreneurial activities of the contemporary world depends more in digital platforms and this demands a great awareness of the digital literacy amongst the social entrepreneurs. The study is essential for identifying the way in which the digital competencies affects the development and the sustainability of the social enterprises. Outcomes of the study would be helpful for the policy-makers in designing programs to develop capacity, help the

educational organizations to promote digital entrepreneurship and further extend support for the social entrepreneurs to control technology, in having huge social impact.

Research Gap

Review of prior studies shows that many literatures had emphasized digital literacy with reference to commercial entrepreneurship, employability and education. Only few studies had examined the effect posed by digital literacy over growth of the social entrepreneurship. Further, prevailing literatures had not focused the concept with reference to developing nations and had also not integrated the concept of digital literacy along with the indicators of the growth of social entrepreneurship, like social impact, innovation and scalability. The present study tries to address such gaps through the empirical examination of the role played by digital literacy to foster social entrepreneurship.

Research Objective

The aim of the study is to analyze the effect of the digital literacy over the development and growth of the social entrepreneurship.

Review of literature

Gibson & Manuel (2018) performed a study for examining the effect of digital literacy to improve the entrepreneurial skills among the social entrepreneurs. The study was done with reference to UK. The purpose was examination of the manner in which digital competencies affect market outreach and innovation. The author had done the study among the social entrepreneurs of London and the data was collected through a survey. Respondents were selected by performing purposive sampling. Analysis of the collected data was done using regression. The results of analysis reveal that increased digital literacy enhanced the organizational growth and the innovation potential of the social enterprises.

Martin & Grudziecki (2019) examined the effect of digital literacy on the social innovation. The study was done with reference to the social enterprises of Europe. The aim of the study was to evaluate the manner in which digital literacy influenced social problem-solving. The study was done with respect to the nations of Europe and the respondents were selected through stratified sampling. The data was put into thematic analysis and factor analysis. It was explored that the digital knowledge improved the balancing of the social ventures, access to funds and collaborative networks.

Rashid & Rahman (2020) studied the effect of the digital knowledge over the performance of social entrepreneurs. The study was done with respect to social entrepreneurs of Malaysia. The aim of the study was examination of the way through which digital skills influenced the operational efficiency. The method of quantitative survey was adopted and sample of 200 social entrepreneurs were selected by simple random sampling. Analysis was done by SEM and results showed that there was a positive relationship of digital literacy with social and financial performance.

Nambisan in the year 2020 explored the role played by digital platforms to enable the growth of social entrepreneurship. It was study with respect to the developing nations. The aim of the research was to explore the digital literacy levels which were platform-oriented. The authors had done the study in India and it was a case study in which respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Findings of content analysis revealed that social entrepreneurs were enabled by digital literacy in overcoming the resource limitations and the scale effect, in an effective manner.

Katz & Green (2021) examined the effect of digital literacy on the entrepreneurial intention. The study was with reference to the social enterprises which were led by younger generation people of US. The aim of the study was to explore the innovation readiness and skill development. The data was collected from the sample population of 180 respondents who were selected by stratified sampling. Analysis through regression showed that the digital literacy had a positive effect on the entrepreneurial intention and the sustainability of the enterprise.

Sharma & Bansal (2021) studied the effect of digital literacy on the social entrepreneurship. It was a study in the concept of rural India. The aim of the study was to examine social impact and digital inclusion. The author had adopted descriptive research and had collected data from around 220 social entrepreneurs who were selected by random sampling. Data was analyzed through correlation and ANOVA. Results revealed that the social entrepreneurs who were digitally literate were able to accomplish high levels of community outreach and growth.

Research Methodology

The author of the present study has adopted analytical and descriptive research study for exploring the digital literacy's effect over the social entrepreneurship growth. The sample population of the study is the social entrepreneurs. Primary data has been collected by the author through questionnaire which comprised of items related with levels of digital literacy and growth indicators regarding social entrepreneurship.

The sample population comprised of individuals who are engaged in the activities of social entrepreneurship. The method of sampling adopted to select the respondents is convenience sampling. Government reports, policy documents, academic journals and books related with social entrepreneurship and digital literacy have been reviewed for collecting secondary data. Regression analysis, correlation analysis and descriptive statistics have been performed for analyzing the relationship of digital literacy with the growth of social entrepreneurship. Interpretation of analysis has been done to exploring beneficial information and suggestions.

Analysis and Interpretation

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
.811 ^a	.657	.635	29.718	.000 ^a

a Predictors: (Constant), Social Influence

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.576	.273		2.107	.038
I can easily access the internet when required for professional or entrepreneurial activities.	.139	.050	.230	2.808	.006
I am able to search for relevant information online to support my entrepreneurial decisions.	.142	.044	.227	3.189	.002
I am confident in using social media platforms for professional and entrepreneurial communication.	.161	.055	.213	2.905	.005
I can create digital content such as posters, videos, or posts to promote my social enterprise.	.121	.039	.242	3.123	.002
I can create digital content such as posters, videos, or posts to promote my social enterprise.	.226	.073	.250	3.077	.003
Digital technologies help me improve the efficiency of my enterprise operations	.090	.050	.134	1.808	.074

Dependent Variable: Social Entrepreneurship

Interpretation

Outcomes reveal that every statement of digital literacy has a significant effect on the social entrepreneurship. In other words, both the variables of the study are related with one another. Regression analysis shows that all the indicators highly affected social entrepreneurship. Value of F is 29.718. This infers that value of p is less than 0.000. To be more precise, digital literacy predicts social entrepreneurship. Results reveal that digital literacy positively influences social entrepreneurship.

Discussion

Review of earlier studies shows that the digital literacy is the driver of entrepreneurial innovation and growth. Though prior studies had identified that prevalence of digital competencies is essential for entrepreneurship, focus has been limited towards social entrepreneurship. Results propose that the entrepreneurs who are digitally literate have high levels of innovation, balance their efforts and improve the social impact. The digital platforms have the potential in providing solutions, for raising funds, outreach and engagement of stakeholders, which are cost-effective. This paves the way to sustainable growth of the social enterprises.

Conclusion

The author of this study emphasizes the effect posed by digital literacy over social entrepreneurship growth. The social entrepreneurs are empowered through digital skills in leveraging technology for social impact, innovation and scalability. Improving the digital knowledge (literacy) among the social entrepreneurs paves the way to nurture sustainable and inclusive development. In the present times of digitalization, development agencies, educational institutions and policymakers need to give preference to initiatives which build capacity for supporting the development of the social entrepreneurship.

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