

# Chapter 7

## Online Social Capital and Sustainable Development: A Systematic Review of Empirical Studies

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### ABSTRACT

*The review explores the potential of online social capital in contributing to sustainable development. Online social capital refers to the networks and relationships formed through online communication and interaction, which can be used to achieve social or environmental objectives. The goal of sustainable development is to balance the economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection. By examining case studies and research on the topic, this review argues that online social capital has the potential to contribute to sustainable development by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, resources, and support among individuals and groups. However, it also highlights the potential risks and challenges associated with online communication, which may undermine the positive impact of online social capital on sustainable development. The chapter concludes by outlining the prospects and limitations of online social capital in contributing to sustainable development and by making recommendations for future research and policy making.*

### INTRODUCTION

The topic of social capital has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of sustainable development such as by Cao C, Meng Q (2020), Bae SM (2019) and Spottswood and Wohn, (2020). The emergence of online social networks and digital technology has provided a new platform for individuals and organizations to develop and maintain social relationships. This has led to an increased interest in the role of online social capital in promoting sustainable development.

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Social capital refers to the shared values, norms, networks, and relationships that enable individuals and groups to collaborate effectively and achieve common goals (Adler and Kwon (2002) and Bizzi, L., (2015)). Sustainable development, on the other hand, is a holistic approach to economic, environmental, and social progress that seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Capital social and Sustainable Development are two intertwined concepts that have gained significant attention in the development discourse. This is because social capital is a key driver of sustainable development, and sustainable development, in turn, enhances the creation and preservation of social capital.

Online social capital is defined as the social resources that individuals or groups can access through their online networks, such as online communities or social media platforms. Sustainable development refers to the balance between economic, social, and environmental factors to ensure long-term prosperity for people and the planet.

The topic of social capital has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of sustainable development. The emergence of online social networks and digital technology has provided a new platform for individuals and organizations to develop and maintain social relationships. This has led to an increased interest in the role of online social capital in promoting sustainable development. The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive review of empirical studies on online social capital and its relationship with sustainable development.

The chapter explore how online social capital can contribute to sustainable development by facilitating collaborative efforts, spreading knowledge and awareness about sustainable practices, and empowering individuals to become agents of change. They discuss case studies where online networks have played a crucial role in promoting sustainable development, such as the use of social media to organize protests against environmentally harmful projects or the creation of online communities to share information on sustainable agriculture practices.

Moreover, the chapter highlight the limitations and challenges of relying solely on online networks for sustainable development. They point out that online social capital cannot replace the need for strong institutional frameworks, policy reforms, and grassroots mobilization. The importance of addressing issues such as inequality, digital divide, and privacy concerns in the online world is also emphasized.

Overall, the chapter provide insights into the potential of online social capital as a tool for sustainable development while highlighting the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach that recognizes the role of both online and offline networks for achieving sustainable development goals.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive review of empirical studies on online social capital and its relationship with sustainable development.

This chapter will discuss the relationship between capital social and sustainable development, including how social capital promotes sustainable development and the role of sustainable development in building social capital.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **The Importance of Online Social Capital for a Sustainable Development**

Online social capital and sustainable development are both areas of growing importance in today's world (Budhiraja, K. (2023), Almeida, et al. (2021) and Yang, S. and Sun, M. (2020)). Social capital refers to

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