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**A Scoping Review on the Use of Enterprise Social Media for Knowledge  
Creation and Organizational Learning**

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**Abstract**

Modern societies and advanced economies use knowledge as a catalyst for change and development. Simultaneously, information technology (IT) is regarded as an enabler of communication, knowledge sharing, and learning in the workplace. Enterprise social media (henceforth ESM) are IT tools that initiate social interaction, connect professionals, and facilitate learning in the workplace. While the usage of ESM is growing, existing research on the subject is still limited, and even required, especially in developing countries like Morocco. On the other hand, organizational learning is a challenging subject of research, particularly when it is studied in relation to information technology usage in the workplace. The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive overview of relevant research concerning the use of ESM for organizational learning, and knowledge creation and sharing, with regard to work performance and organizational change. We adopted Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage framework for conducting a scoping review.

*Keywords:* Scoping review, Enterprise Social Media, Knowledge creation, Organizational learning, Work performance, Organizational change.

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**1. Introduction**

Internal communication in the workplace is a subject of increasing importance especially with the undisputed use of manifold tools of information systems (IS). Researchers define IS as “a system in the organization that delivers information and communication services needed by the organization” (Davis, 2000). Information systems are also perceived as social systems that contain information technologies (IT) (Land, 1985) and as “an integrated and cooperating set of software directed information technologies supporting individual, group, organizational, or societal goals”, Watson as cited in (Alter, 2008).

Research has demonstrated that ESM enable communication and knowledge creation and sharing (Alahmad et al., Aug 16-18; Al-Mawali & Al-Busaidi, 2022; Behrendt et al., 2014; Kane, 2015; Leonardi et al., 2013; Soto-Acosta et al., 2016) and facilitate learning (Al-Mawali & Al-Busaidi, 2022; Leidner et al., 2018; Marlow & Dabbish, 2014; Sun et al., 2020). However, literature on ESM does not empirically explain whether the effective usage of ESM for organizational learning and knowledge management enhances work performance and engenders organizational change.

Furthermore, research on ESM is still in its embryonic stage (Högberg, 2019; Wehner et al., 2017), especially in developing countries (Canessa-Terrazas et al., 2017). The present scoping review aims to map the available evidence, and consequently contribute to literature, on how the usage of ESM affects organizational learning and knowledge creation and sharing (Chatterjee et al., 2021; Högberg, 2018; Kane, 2015; Leonardi, 2017), and the way ESM use relates to work performance (Canessa-Terrazas et al., 2017; Kane, 2015; Yee et al., 2021) and organizational change (Canessa-Terrazas et al., 2017).

First, we explain the concept of scoping review as a method that we have adopted to review the literature on the relationship between ESM, organizational learning, knowledge creation, work performance, and organizational change. We also explain the key concepts and interpret the findings in light of what researchers have already documented in literature. Finally, we identify the limitations of our scoping review and provide suggestions for future research.

## **2. Scoping Review as a Method**

According to the Joanna Briggs Institute Reviewers Manual, conducting a scoping review can pave the way for a potential systematic review (Peters et al., 2020). Undertaking scoping reviews can also be initiated by different objectives such as scrutinizing the extent (scope), range (variation), and nature (features) of the literature on a subject; deciding on the importance of conducting a systematic review; identifying gaps or reviewing findings from a literature that comprises various fields and methods (Peters et al., 2020).

Researchers posit that scoping reviews can be used when the research question is more general or when the amount of studies that relate to the research question of interest is limited (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Hanneke et al., 2016). In our case, there is a scarcity of papers that examine the impact of the use of ESM for learning and knowledge creation on work performance and organizational change in developing countries. The present review is structured on the basis of Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage framework for conducting a scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

### *2.1. Stage 1: Identifying the Research Question*

We focused on one research question: To what extent does the literature relate the use of ESM for learning and knowledge creation to work performance and change within organizations in both developed and developing countries? The development of our research question was guided by the Population, Concept, and Context mnemonic (PCC) (Munn et al., 2018). The

research question was engendered by an effective communication among the research team members and shaped by a multidisciplinary review of the literature.

## 2.2. *Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Studies*

Both hand-searching and bibliographic databases available online are required for the identification of relevant studies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). However, retrieving records from electronic databases can be sufficient (Hanneke et al., 2016). The non-exhaustive list of search terms included enterprise social media, enterprise social networks, enterprise 2.0, organizational social media, organizational learning, exploitation, exploration, ambidexterity, knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, workplace learning, work performance, organizational performance, organizational change, and innovation.

## 2.3. *Stage 3: Study Selection and Search Strategies*

*Time Period.* Considering time and budget limitations, we only included articles published between January 2009 and December 2022 and excluded studies outside these dates. The choice of the time frame for articles searching can be attributed to the fact that a large number of studies concerning enterprise social networks (ESNs) was published between 2013 and 2015 (Leonardi et al., 2013; Wehner et al., 2017). Retrieved data was exported into excel for further analyses.

*Language.* We included English written studies and excluded those written in other languages, except for a French written study conducted by a Moroccan scholar who analyzed the issue of learning as embedded in social networking and organizational setting. The inclusion of this study can be explained by the fact that French language is prioritized in Moroccan academia since “academic references and textbooks are written in French” (Zakhir & O'Brien, 2017), also because publications conducted by scholars from developing countries, regarding our research topic, are scarce.

*Type of Articles.* Literature and Study Focus. We included all articles published in indexed journals, including “the basket of eight” IS journals, where the dominant concepts relate to ESM, organizational learning, knowledge creation, performance, and change within organizational environments that comprise individuals, groups, and systems. Exclusion concerned articles that did not meet the requirements of the review protocol.

*Population and Sample.* The review mapped ninety-two articles (N = 92) that examined the use of ESM within for-profit organizations from developed and developing countries. The reviewed articles related to over ten different fields of study such as information science and technology, business management, human resource development, organizational studies, education, workplace learning, applied cognitive psychology, healthcare research, and knowledge media research.

## 2.4. *Stage 4: Charting the Data*

The fourth stage is akin to data extraction in systematic reviews. It relies on synthesizing and interpreting qualitative data by “charting and sifting” records according to key concepts and themes. Guided by Arksey and O'Malley's framework for conducting a scoping review, we

used Excel as a data management tool. The data extraction sheet contained authors' names, year of publication, study location, key concepts, type of intervention, study population, aims of study, methodology, outcome measures, and key results. We also assigned each paper a unique identifying number to be able to track included and excluded papers (Daudt et al., 2013).

### 2.5. *Stage 5: Collating, Summarizing, and Reporting the Results*

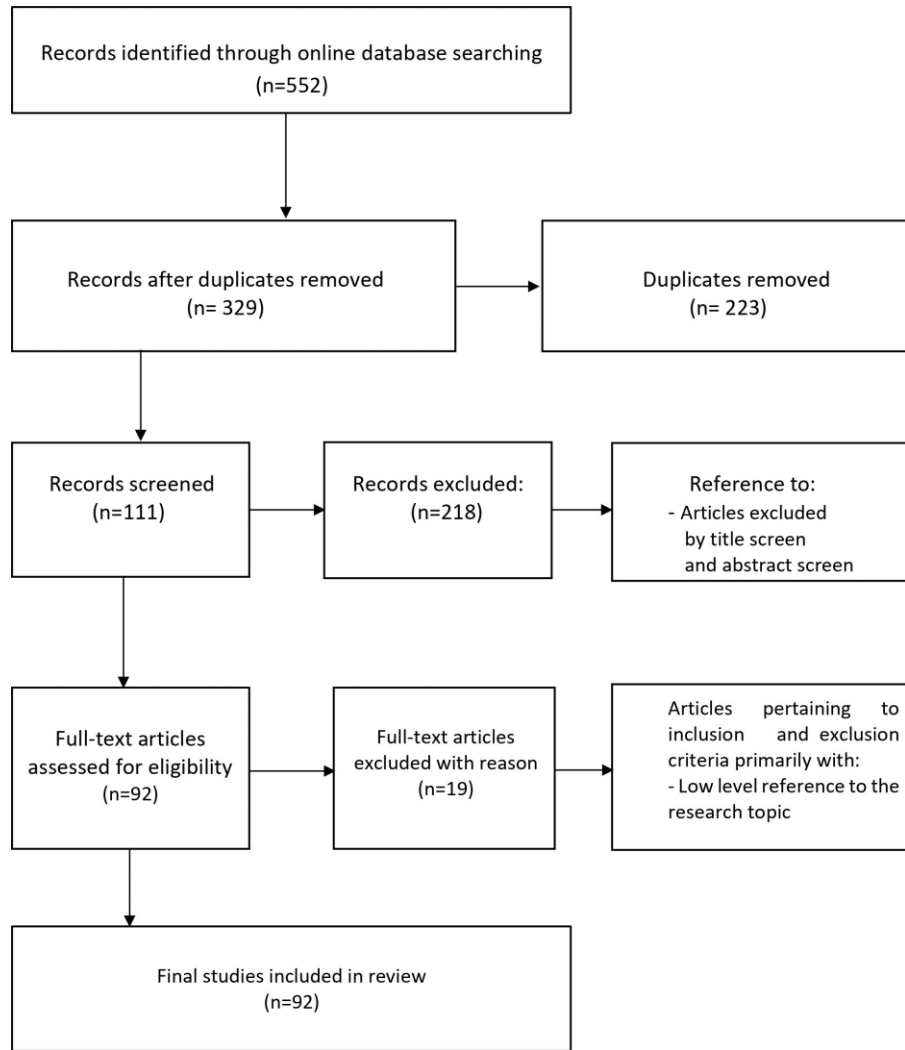
This stage relates to the analytical construction of the main themes that we identified during the charting phase to present a narrative account of the existing literature. In scoping reviews, the findings are generally published in an aggregated format, usually in tables (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

## 3. **Key Concepts and Results**

We identified five hundred and fifty-two records ( $N = 552$ ) through online database searching. The number of records was reduced to ninety-two ( $n = 92$ ) based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The excluded texts concerned duplicates ( $n = 223$ ), papers excluded by title screen and abstract screen ( $n = 218$ ), and publications with low-level reference to our research topic ( $n = 19$ ) (See Figure 1).

### **Figure. 1**

*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) for article selection (Tricco et al., 2018)*



We used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram for article selection based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015; Tricco et al., 2018).

The results from the present review show that 34% of the publications are located in Europe (n = 31), and 23% in North America and Asia (n=23) respectively. The number of publications from developing countries in the Middle East and Africa represents only 7% (n = 6) and 5% (n=5) respectively, as demonstrated in Table 1.

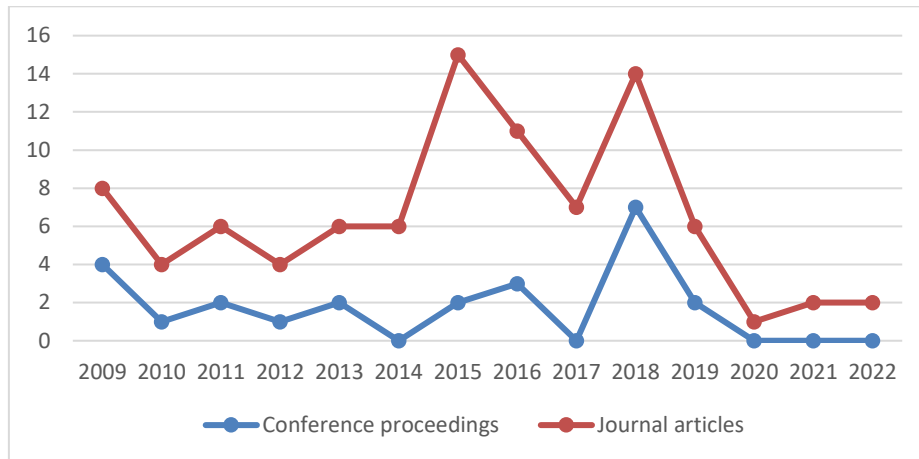
**Table 1.**  
*Number of publications per geographic region (author’s data)*

Global region	N	%
Europe	31	34
North America	21	23
Asia	21	23
Australia	7	8
Middle East	6	7
Africa	5	5
South America	1	1
Total	92	100

We retrieved only three publications by Moroccan scholars, two of which examined organizational learning culture in relation to work performance with no reference to the use of ESM (Momani & Amand, 2015; Rajaa & Lin, 2018). The publication outlets represent 74% of journal articles (n = 68) and 26% of conference proceedings (n = 24), with a growing number of publications between 2013 and 2015 (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2.**

*Publication outlets and number of articles per year*



These findings are corroborated by previous studies that demonstrate an increasing rate of publications on ESM between 2009 and 2015 with the highest rate recorded in 2015. This can be explained by the fact that scholars from the field of IS heavily invested in research on ESNs, as companies became largely interested in the implementation and use of ESNs during that period (Leonardi et al., 2013; Wehner et al., 2017).

The broad nature of scoping reviews allows the inclusion of papers involving various themes and methodologies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Munn et al., 2018; O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). The reviewed articles involve different methodological approaches including 23% of conceptual research papers (n= 21), 22% of literature review papers (n = 20), 21% of surveys (n= 19), and 17% of case studies (n = 16) as reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
Type of articles

Type of articles	Method	N	%
Conceptual research	In-depth analysis, Structural Equation Modeling, quantitative analysis, confirmatory factor analysis	21	23
Literature review	Systematic, scoping, narrative	20	22
Survey	Quantitative and / or qualitative	19	21
Case study	Comparative, empirical, qualitative	16	17
Theoretical research	Qualitative	4	4
Empirical study	Qualitative	3	3
Exploratory research	Qualitative and/or quantitative	3	3

Field research	Qualitative	2	2
Grounded theory	Comparative analysis	2	2
Action research	Observation and analysis of cocreation strategies	1	1
Field experiment	Observation, qualitative, and quantitative	1	1
Total		92	100

### 3.1. *ESM and Organizational Learning*

Scholars use concepts like information systems, information technology, knowledge management systems (KMSs), enterprise social networks (ESNs), enterprise social media, and organizational social media (OSM) to refer to IT tools used by organizations for communication and knowledge management (Alahmad et al., Aug 16-18; Högberg, 2018; Meske et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2020). Multiple social media tools are used for social interaction, communication, and knowledge management within organizations (Benabdeljlil, 2013; Harden, 2012; Leonardi et al., 2013). These tools are classified according to two types of usage. First, public social media that are used for external communication and ubiquitous social interaction with stakeholders like Twitter (n = 10), Facebook (n = 11), and Skype (n = 2). This type of usage is widely studied by IS researchers. Second, embedded systems that concern internal communication like in-house implemented blogs (n = 22), enterprise microblogging (n = 8), and the Intranet including Jive (n = 7) and Yammer (n = 6). Scholars argue that the use of ESNs enables information sharing, improved communication, and problem solving (Leonardi et al., 2013; Stieglitz et al., 2014).

The concept of organizational learning occurs in 52% of the reviewed articles (n = 48). However, measurements of learning outcomes that could probably result from the use of ESM are missing in most studies. Some studies examine the concepts of exploration (n = 10) and exploitation (n = 12) as organizational learning processes that are shaped by the use of ESM. Exploitation is an incremental (low-level) learning process that regards the use of current knowledge, skills, and capabilities. Exploration targets at high level learning through search, variation, experimentation, and discovery. Only two articles address the question of ambidexterity as a vital process to strike a balance between exploitation and exploration (Benitez et al., 2016; Kane, 2015). Participants in some studies are aware of the positive effects of the use of ESM on learning and knowledge creation and sharing (Abdelrahman, 2019; Chatterjee et al., 2021; Leonardi, 2018; Yee et al., 2021).

The automotive industry is an example of a complex work environment where knowledge is intensive, the workforce is dispersed, and the usage of IT is crucial. The findings from an empirical case study conducted in a family Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) in Morocco demonstrate that IT-enabled social networking fosters informal learning and enables a collective creation of meaning. The study highlights the importance of organizational learning culture and IT-enabled social networking in employees' skills development (Benabdeljlil, 2013).

Organizational learning is the outcome of an aligned process of exploitation and exploration. The use of ESM for exploitation enables employees to leverage the knowledge they have

already acquired to be able to meet short-term objectives such as day-to-day routine task performance. On the other hand, the use of ESM for exploration enables employees to gain new knowledge that supports their creative task performance and helps the organization meet its long-term objectives and gain competitive advantage (Canessa-Terrazas et al., 2017; Claudia & Mihaela, 2019; Kane, 2015; Shang & Guo, 2017). Accordingly, we argue that organizations learn better only when they manage to strike a balance between exploitation and exploration and capture knowledge in their transactive memory systems.

### 3.2. *ESM and Knowledge Creation and Sharing*

Organizations, including Multinational Corporations (MNCs), implement ESNs to enhance the practice of knowledge management (Abdelrahman, 2019; Chatterjee et al., 2021; Leonardi, 2018). Knowledge creation and sharing, as fundamentals of knowledge management, are discussed in 88% of the reviewed articles (n = 81). Knowledge creation is embedded in conversion (from tacit to explicit) through social practices and interactions (Jarrahi & Sawyer, 2013). Many researchers argue that the evolving affordances of ESM enable knowledge creation, hasten knowledge sharing, and significantly enhance learning (Ahmad et al., 2013; Benabdeljlil, 2013; Sun et al., 2020). In the academic context, tacit knowledge sharing is enabled by the use of wikis, forums, and blogs (Ahmad et al., 2013).

Knowledge problems need four problem solving practices: Expertise locating, expert locating, reaching out, and instrumental socializing (Jarrahi & Sawyer, 2013). However, factors like confidentiality, lack of trust, lack of time (Ahmad et al., 2013; Razmerita et al., 2016), perceived risk (Harden, 2012), and increased communication flow (Ellison et al., 2014) can negatively impact the way users locate or share useful knowledge. On the other hand, organization climate and organizational culture can both facilitate and hinder the use of IT for knowledge creation and sharing (Ahmad et al., 2013). These restricting factors are mostly overlooked by IS researchers (El Ouiridi et al., 2015).

In developed countries, research on the way geographically dispersed workforces use ESM platforms to learn and share knowledge, as in the case of multinational corporations, has been increasing since 2015. According to Leonardi (2018), three major factors influence knowledge sharing among globally dispersed employees, mainly network expansion of colleagues, content integration, and triggered recalling of content. The use of social media sites enables the development of transactive memory systems that transcend time and space. In addition, social networking, vicarious participation, and direct engagement in shared experiences with coworkers engenders shared cognition. However, similarity in perceptions of what and whom coworkers know not only hinders diversity of visions and ideas but also adds pressure on a particular group of “knowledgeable” workers, while missing opportunities for others. Hence, managers have to be cognizant of the importance of variation in thought and action (Leonardi, 2018).

Another case study about the use of DingTalk by employees of two large companies in China demonstrated that ESM platforms are dynamic environments where knowledge contributors and knowledge seekers engage in interactions that create meaning and foster learning.



According to Sun et al. (2020), there are four mechanisms that determine the use of ESM in the workplace: identity visibility, communication visibility, collaboration visibility, and process visibility. Identity visibility stimulates individual's attention since it exhibits the identity of information and facilitates knowledge sharing between co-workers. Communication visibility and collaboration visibility enable employees to share experience with colleagues and make tacit knowledge more explicit through dialogue and observation. Then, process visibility supports communication and collaboration and provides employees with the appropriate knowledge they need for performance (Al-Mawali & Al-Busaidi, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2020).

On the other hand, Qureshi et al. (2009) state that knowledge networking and inter-organizational learning facilitate knowledge transfer and help bridge the digital gap that exists between developed countries and developing countries in Africa. The authors acknowledge that developed countries use knowledge networking in order to source skilled labor from developing countries. They also argue that knowledge networking enables farmers, small business entrepreneurs, students, and NGOs to perform efficiently because it facilitates access to information, markets, and talent pools. However, knowledge networking can impede development by generating negative communication cycles (Qureshi et al., 2009).

### *3.3. ESM, Organizational Change, and Work Performance*

Researchers consider organizational learning as a process of change in the organization driven by experience acquisition (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Drawing on the literature of organizational innovation and organizational change, we posit that change occurs when organizations adopt new ideas or behaviors that could improve products, services, or practices (Hage, 1999). The issue of organizational innovation is raised in 11% of the reviewed articles ( $n = 10$ ). Scholars admit that innovation, as a contributing factor to change, is enhanced by IT-based learning and knowledge networking (Ahmad et al., 2013). In addition, the use of IT for exploration, exploitation, and team connection has strong effects on organizational change (Watkins, 2016) and employees' innovation (Benitez et al., 2016; Durcikova et al., 2011; Kane, 2015; Meske et al., 2019).

Scholars also argue that the simple implementation of ESNs does not promote innovation and productivity unless it is underpinned by an individual and cultural inclination toward change (Patroni et al., 2016). At the individual level, the study identified four categories of ESM users who embrace change and innovation. Social open minds are employees whose mindset affects their intention to use ESM to communicate and perform tasks. Open-minded individuals are ready to take risks and willing to change the status quo when they receive managerial support. Social digital natives is the category of younger generation employees who consider the use of ESM as a good opportunity to seek new knowledge through connection and communication with colleagues. Social collaborators take advantage of the use of ESM to share thoughts, connect, and collaborate across departments and units and work creatively building on the work of co-workers. Then, social competitors is the category of employees who consider ESM communities as suitable environments for "friendly competition" that improves practices and increases motivation to perform effectively and efficiently.

At the organizational level, the study identified four cultural factors that influence change and innovation within the organization. The factor of social open communication refers to transparency as well as the social and collaborative nature of the conversations initiated by ESM communities. The factor of social digital leadership is associated with the day-to-day participation of top managers in the communicational process with their employees via ESM platforms. The third factor is social digital strategy and involves encouraging employees not only to exploit existing knowledge to execute tasks but also to explore new pathways that lead them into innovation and creativity. The fourth factor is social fast-paced learning and is related to the interactions that facilitate organizational learning through the use ESM (Patroni et al., 2016).

As far as performance is concerned, the findings from the present review show that 68% (n = 63) of the reviewed articles demonstrate a correlation between the use of ESM and work performance (Högberg, 2018). Performance is positively and significantly correlated with social open communication and collaboration (Al-Mawali & Al-Busaidi, 2022; Patroni et al., 2016), and organizational learning practices triggered by administrative and technical innovation (Chen et al., 2009). The constructs of the learning organization and shared cognition are also significantly linked to the extent to which organizations perform and innovate (Leonardi, 2018). Other studies prove that factors such as usefulness (utilitarian) and enjoyment (hedonic), generated by the use of ESNs, promote individual and organizational performance and productivity (Meske et al., 2019). Although the use of ESNs in the workplace affects organizational processes such as work performance (Cetinkaya & Rashid, 2018; Pavithra & Deepak, 2021; Yee et al., 2021), the issue has not yet been fully addressed and empirically scrutinized (Stei & Rossmann, 2018).

The findings from a meta-analysis of the impact of ESM use on work performance show that innovation performance and agility performance are improved by ESM visibility affordance such as knowledge conversations and relationship construction visibility (Wu et al., 2021). The scholars identify four factors that determine the use of ESM in relation to work performance. The first factor is related to gender. The use of ESM by women is highly correlated with job performance, which explains that gender difference and heterogeneous communication, with regard to the use of ESM, influence employee work performance. The second factor is hierarchical. The use of ESM by managers has a strong effect on performance because managers have specific information needs and a greater communication awareness as opposed to non-managers.

The third factor is developmental. The correlation between ESM use and work performance is higher in developed countries compared to developing countries. These developmental differences are due to high access costs and less developed IT infrastructure in developing countries compared to developed countries where the implementation and usage of ESM platforms are characterized by maturity. The fourth factor is associated with the type of industry. The researchers state that employees from the service industry perceive higher affordance of ESM since they seek more information and engage in more communication; therefore, their work performance is more affected by the use of ESM platforms compared to

employees from the manufacturing industry for example (Wu et al., 2021). However, the use of ESM platforms can have a negative effect on employees' work performance if employees only communicate with colleagues who are like them (Kane, 2015).

#### **4. Limitations and Implications**

To the best of our knowledge, the present scoping review is the first study conducted in Morocco by researchers in the fields of education and sociolinguistics to explore a dynamic issue such as IT-based organizational learning and knowledge creation in relation to performance and change in the workplace. Nonetheless, there are some limitations that should be considered by researchers who will potentially be interested in a further examination of this issue.

First, the inclusion of gray literature is important for scoping reviews as it contains useful information. Indeed, future research should target large sample sizes to provide perceptive insights into the available evidence on the question. In addition, the consultation and inclusion of stakeholders like experts from the industrial, academic, and economic arenas as part of our research team could have provided us with invaluable insights vis-à-vis this issue. The consultation process is an optional stage (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Yet, it is generally adopted in healthcare research (Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 2010; Tricco et al., 2018).

#### **5. Conclusions**

Scoping reviews enable the exploration of complex issues where individuals, groups, cultures, and systems interact in volatile dynamic environments. Our study was underpinned by Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage framework for conducting a scoping review. First, we identified our research question to be able to provide an overview of the evidence on ESM, organizational learning, and knowledge creation available in literature. Second, we used online databases to retrieve relevant studies for further inclusion, and searched key concepts related to the fields of information systems, workplace learning, organizational learning, and knowledge creation. The third stage concerned the selection of articles and search strategies guided by the PRISMA flow diagram for article selection based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The fourth step regarded the exportation of extracted data for further analysis using Excel. During the last step, we synthesized the findings and presented a narrative explanation of the reviewed literature. The findings demonstrate a gap in literature with regard to the impact of ESM-enabled organizational learning and knowledge management on work performance and organizational change especially in developing countries; hence, the need to conduct more research to provide insights and guide practices.

#### **List of Abbreviations**

ESM	Enterprise Social Media
ESNs	Enterprise Social Networks
IS	Information Systems

IT	Information Technology
KMSs	Knowledge Management Systems
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
PCC	Population, Concept, and Context mnemonic
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SNSs	Social Networking Sites

### Conflict of Interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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