

Influence of Social Media Networking on Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract

The use of social media tools facilitate knowledge sharing broadly throughout an organization. Social network is one good channel for communicating with others. It allows users to meet and make new relationships with users from all around the world. Successful companies are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate this knowledge throughout the organization, and embody it in technologies, products and services. This paper is about the influence of social media networking on knowledge sharing. Descriptive research design is used and convenience sampling technique is adopted through non random sampling method. The dimensions used for this study are creativity, social capital, altruism, collaboration and internal branding. Descriptive statistics analysis and multiple regression analysis are used for the data analysis. Using the survey of 301 employees in working in IT sector we found that $F=48.321$, $p < 0.000$ shows there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Where, creativity ($\beta=.510$, $p < 0.000$) and altruism ($\beta=.162$, $p < .041$) have positive significant effect on knowledge sharing ($R^2=.450$) at 45 percent of the variation on creativity, social capital, altruism, collaboration and internal branding.

Key words Social media networking, knowledge sharing, creativity, social capital, altruism, collaboration and internal branding, IT companies.

Introduction

Social Media: Web-based tools and technologies used to share information and turn communication into interactive dialogues with internal or external audiences. Recent years have seen the evolution of a new generation of computer mediated communication (CMC) tools, commonly referred to as social media, which provide new capabilities by which broad knowledge sharing within an organization can be fostered (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The use of social media tools to facilitate knowledge sharing broadly throughout an organization is growing (Kane, Majchrzak & Ives, 2010; Treem & Leonardi, 2012). As of 2012, four out of five companies are using social technologies at varying stages of maturity (Overby, 2012), and 86% of managers believe that social media will be important to their business in 3 years (Kiron, Palmer, Phillips & Kruschwitz, 2012). A majority of the adopters are now using social media tools to varying degrees in cross-functional knowledge sharing.

The social media are nowadays playing an increasing role in people's everyday life and the use of the social media has become more and more important as a way of communicating in the last couple of years. Social media like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn have gained more and more popularity (Pondres, 2011). The use of SNSs will also benefit the organizations. SNSs were also used within the organization members as a communication tool, source to share information and knowledge, as a medium to relief their stress and to learn new skills. Social network is one good channel for communicating with others. It allows users to meet and make new relationships with users from all around the world. The use of corporate social networks will cut down on unnecessary e-mails and instant messaging among employees. Using SNSs in the workplace will also allow customers to contact and communicate with the company easily.

Significance of the Study

Social networks provide a great vehicle for learning & professional development. Social media have become extremely popular, Facebook for example has more than billion registered users and thousands of millions of units of information are shared every day, including short phrases, articles, photos, audio and video clips. However only a tiny proportion of these sharing units trigger any type of knowledge exchange that is ultimately beneficial to the users.

Social network can function as a positive reinforcement of the information, as they become more comfortable with the social network and begin to use more, you will see a lot of opportunity to make the company a better place. The employees are what make your company successful so by listening, interacting and making efforts to increase loyalty and satisfaction, your employees will want to continue to use these networks to better their own experience and benefit the company they work for. Constant idea sharing in a cutting edge environment creates a culture of innovation and collaboration.

Sharing of knowledge through social media connects the employees with similar talents and interest can also build stronger working relationships. Nearly half of all U.S companies still ban workers from using social networking sites like twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn while on job. However the 100 best companies to work for embrace social media going so far as to allow their employees to represent their brand online, resolve customers issues and create online content.

Review of literature

De Vries et al. (2006) denoted that knowledge sharing as the process of giving and receiving knowledge. Overall, in sharing knowledge, it is all about communicating knowledge within a group of people, either engaged in formal institution like among colleagues in a workplace or informal like among friends, or interactions between a minimum of two individuals to a multiple of individuals.

Johanna Katariina Wahlroos (2010) explained that the personal, organizational and technological factors influence the respondents' use of social media. As strong predictive variables emerge the benefits that respondents expect to receive from using social media and respondents' experience in using Web 2.0 in their private lives. Also organizational factors such as managers' and colleagues' activeness and organizational guidelines for using social media form a causal relationship with the use of social media. The more social media is considered as a part of individual responsibilities, the more frequently social media is used. Finally, technological factors must be recognized. The more user-friendly social media tools are considered and the better technical skills respondents have, the more frequently social media is used in the working environment.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated the outcomes and benefits of social media diffusion of information could be of major interest for companies willing to establish a strong employer branding reputation. Imagine if someone is looking for a job and he asks or searches for information about various companies before applying somewhere; what if he receives negative information or considers that the company does not offer enough information about the job openings? Organizations could lose a potential qualified and fit candidate for their vacancies. Indeed, not all the companies are comfortable about “ a world where the consumers can speak so freely with each other and businesses have increasingly less control over the information available about them on the cyberspace”.

Anupam Pareek et al. (2012) explained a majority of leading organizations in India are venturing into the new pastures for employee communication, engagement, collaboration and other areas of human resources. However, a great amount of insecurity and ambiguity still exists from an information security perspective. Organizations are embracing social media for various reasons and some are doing so, because they wish to be there because their competition does so”. Social media is trendy to some and a necessity to the others. With

generation Z entering the active workforce, the need to be on social media is assuming greater importance from a human resources perspective. They found that Leadership in majority of the organizations has shown keen interest in usage of social media in the areas of Internal Branding, Collaboration & Communication, and Hiring. Social media continues to remain a major tool for organizations to reach their customers and employees, however, marketing and sales leads the way, followed by human resources and corporate social responsibility. Majority of the organizations use social media in human resources. However, they also agree that it has not been tapped to the maximum. It is used disparately and inconsistently, however, organizations are confident that they will be using social media better in the future to be ahead of the competition.

Osterman Research (2012) indicated that social media is used heavily in the workplace: a survey conducted during the first quarter of 2012 found that the average employee spends 28 minutes per day using social media during work hours (not counting time spent away from work), or 2.9 workweeks annually. Despite the problems associated with the use of social media, 81% of organizations allow the use of Facebook, or have a policy limiting or prohibiting its use that goes unenforced. The same applies for 84% of organizations with regard to Twitter – it's 94% for LinkedIn. Moreover, only 19% of organizations have deployed enterprise grade social media platforms. By "enterprise-grade" social media, we distinguish it from "public" tools like Twitter or Facebook to mean a dedicated social media platform that has been deployed specifically for use by employees, business partners and others.

Rima Khader Sliat et al. (2013) identified the influence of the individual and organizational knowledge sharing enablers on knowledge sharing behavior that leads to develop firm innovation capability. They found that while there is a positive effect of the individual factor "enjoyment in helping others" and the organizational factor "top management support" on the employee knowledge sharing behavior. There is no influence of the individual factor "knowledge self efficacy" and the organizational factor "organizational rewards" on the employee knowledge sharing behavior.

Allam (2013) stated that enabling individuals to focus on specific elements of the creative process, collaboration can bring different individual insights into collaborative practices. Furthermore, collaboration allows individuals to access others' knowledge bases that would otherwise be inaccessible by taking advantage of tools and skill sets that are unique to each individual. Most importantly, collaboration can help create new connections, and build expert views which can substantially improve the quality of the final product.

Objectives

1. To identify knowledge sharing enablers in IT companies and find out their influence with knowledge sharing through social media networking.
2. To find out the perception of IT company employees and their usage of social media networking.

Methodology

This paper aims at describing the influence of social media networking on knowledge sharing among IT employees. The dimensions used are creativity, social capital, altruism, collaboration and internal branding. This study adopted, the descriptive research design has been used by the researcher. Convenience sampling procedure through non random sampling method was adopted for this paper. The primary data was collected with the help of self constructed questionnaire and the statistical tools used are descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.

Data analysis

Multiple Regression

Multiple regression analysis showing relationship between knowledge sharing and creativity, social capital, altruism, collaboration and internal branding.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.671 ^a	.450	.441
a. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Branding, Creativity, Altruism, Collaboration, Social Capital			
b. Dependent Variable: Knowledge sharing			

ANOVA^b

Model		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5	1260.795	48.321	.000 ^a
	Residual	295	26.092		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Branding , Creativity , Altruism, Collaboration, Social Capital					
b. Dependent Variable: Knowledge sharing					

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.329	2.166		2.460	.014
	Creativity	.644	.069	.510	9.307	.000
	Social capital	.021	.079	.020	.261	.794
	Altruism	.192	.094	.162	2.054	.041
	Collaboration	-.035	.077	-.034	-.454	.650
	Internal branding	.086	.059	.107	1.460	.145
Dependent Variable: Knowledge sharing						

The table shows the regression analysis for knowledge sharing on Creativity, social capital, altruism, collaboration and internal branding. The influence is explained through coefficient of regression determination represented by adjusted R². The value 0.450 shows that 45 percent of the variation on creativity, social capital, Altruism, collaboration and internal branding. ANOVA was used to check the difference among knowledge sharing and the independent variables. The result F=48.321, p <0.000 shows there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

The regression results of creativity ($\beta=.510$, p <0.000) shows there is a significant relationship between creativity and knowledge sharing at 1% level of significance, social capital ($\beta= .020$, p < .794) shows there is no significant relationship between social capital and

knowledge sharing, altruism ($\beta=.162, p<.041$) shows there is significant relationship between altruism and knowledge sharing at 5% level of significance, collaboration($\beta = -.034, p<.650$) there is no significant relationship between collaboration and knowledge sharing and internal branding($\beta= .107, p< .145$) shows that there is no significant relationship between internal branding and knowledge sharing. Creativity and altruism significantly influence knowledge sharing. Hence, it was finalized from the result that the above mentioned variables creativity and altruism are the most significant variables that influence knowledge sharing among the employees in top ten IT sector.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics analysis showing the demographic characteristics of the employees.

SI NO	Variables	Classifications	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	21-30	240	79.7
		31-40	61	20.3
2	Gender	Male	139	46.2
		Female	162	53.8
3	Marital status	Married	121	40.2
		Single	180	59.8
4	Education qualification	Under graduate	115	38.2
		Post graduate	186	61.8
5	Designation	Entry level	48	15.9
		Middle level	253	84.1
6	Experience	Less than 1 year	12	4.0
		1-5 years	144	47.8
		5-10 years	133	44.2
		Above 10 years	12	4.0
7	Shift	Day shift	222	73.8
		Mid shift	25	8.3
		Night shift	54	17.9
8	Employment type	Permanent	283	94.0
		Contract	18	6.0
9	Organization type	IT	175	58.1
		ITES	96	31.9
		BPO	30	10.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is inferred that out of 301 employees 79.7 % (240) of the employees in IT sector of Chennai city belongs to the age group of 21-30 and 20.3 % (61) of employees belong to the age group of 31-40.it also explores that 46.2% (139) of employees are male and 53.8 % (162) of employees are female.

Out of 301 employees 40.2% (121) of employees are married and 59.8 % (180) of employees are single. About the education qualification 38.2 % (115) of employees are undergraduates and 61.8 % (186) of employees are post graduates. It shows that 15.9% (48) of employees belong to entry level and 84.1% (253) of employees belong to middle level. It depicts that 4% (12) of employees have less than 1 year of experience, 47.8% (144) of employees have 1-5 years of experience, 44.2% (133) of employees have 5-10 years of experience and 4% (12) of employees have above 10 years of experience.

Out of 301 employees in top 10 IT sector of Chennai city 73.8% (222) of employees belongs to day shift 8.3% (25) of employees belongs to mid shift and 17.9% (54) of employees belongs to night shift. It shows that 94% (283) of employees are permanently employed and 6% (18) of employees are employed on contract basis. About the organization type, 58.1% (175) of employees belongs to IT, 31.9% (96) of employees belong to ITES and 10% (30) of employees belong to BPO sector.

Findings and suggestion

- The regression results of creativity ($\beta=.510$, $p < 0.000$) shows there is a significant relationship between creativity and knowledge sharing at 1% level of significance
- It is found that, altruism ($\beta=.162$, $p < .041$) shows there is significant relationship between altruism and knowledge sharing at 5% level of significance.
- It is found that out of 301 employees 79.7 % (240) of the employees in IT sector of Chennai city belongs to the age group of 21-30
- It is found that 53.8 % (162) of employees are female.
- It is found that 59.8 % (180) of employees are single.
- It is found that 61.8 % (186) of employees are post graduates.
- It is found that 84.1% (253) of employees belong to middle level.
- It is found that 47.8% (144) of employees have 1-5 years of experience.
- It is found that 73.8% (222) of employees belongs to day shift.
- It is found that 94% (283) of employees are permanently employed in the IT companies.
- It is found that 58.1% (175) of employees belongs to IT.

The result suggest that the organizations should help employees to socially interact and socialize with coworkers, family members, and friends while in the workplace using social networking sites. Organization should pay serious attention to the status and role of transmitter in successfulness of knowledge sharing program and system and attempts to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the knowledge sender and manages them well.

Conclusion

It's clear that social media tools are metamorphosing the way we work and will continue to do so in ways we can only imagine. It is perilous for Human Resource professionals to understand what these tools are used for and assess the risks and opportunities they may present to an organization. Social media is redefining how companies pioneer by connecting individuals and ideas in which have previously not been explored. Organizations currently have the ability to utilize knowledge from external audiences round the globe that they could never reach before. It is dynamically changing the way we tend to do business these days. Additional benefits include the ability to enhance your public image, improve interactions with customers, and promote employee engagement. But it is not without internal and external risk. Organizations should establish systems and means to incorporate collaborative culture so than employees will donate and collect ideas and information to bring improvements and creativity in their tasks and roles.

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