Research Article

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY- A REVIEW

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this paper is to make contribution to the employee productivity literature by considering the impact that the use of social media at work may have on it. This paper aims to explore the literature linking the relation between use of social media at workplace and employee productivity. A review of literature shows that there is a mixed opinion on the impact of use of social media as a tool for organizational communication where on one hand it is deemed beneficial and on the other unprofitable for the employee productivity. This paper provides an overview of what is known about the impact of use of social media at work and how its impact can be studied better.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational communication has seen a huge change since the time social media began to be used at work first, informally and later as a formal communication tool. Organizations sought to coordinate complex work structures and reduce managerial costs through the use of networks provided by the internet. Some workers wanted to leverage the social network to telework from their homes balancing work with personal lives while others used it to develop an informal bond with their coworkers.

Social Media, having gained huge impetus from the wide accessibility of internet and availability of mobile devices to the masses, is a form of computer mediated communication and broadly refers to a web based platform of communication through tools, websites and other applications that facilitates interaction among individuals and organizations. It can be classified into: 1) Enterprise collaboration platform that enables employees to communicate and collaborate within the organization on work projects e.g. IBM connections, Yammer etc. 2) Public Social networking sites that allow engagement on sites where people with common interests associate together and build relationships through communities e.g. Facebook, Twitter. 3) Individual Social tools such as blogs and wikis used for creating and sharing unstructured content where other people can comment their views.

Through social media, employees have access to networks from their mobile devices that they can access from anywhere anytime. Unhindered interpersonal contact on the network is easier than it was on traditional channels. Employees now have a voice, and a platform to broadcast it, leading to a free flow of ideas and feedback. Social media discussions are not limited by the time one could manage to book a meeting room for.

Positive Effects of the Use of Social Media at Work

Internet that opened a world of information at the fingertip also allowed an interactive interface that brought about changes in people's way of living. Decline in the level of communication within family members and diminishing social circles were some of the negative influences upon people with internet connections. However, the negative outcomes are insignificant in comparison to the positive outcomes (Paul DiMaggio1, 2001).

Social media helps connect not only workers who are peripherally located in the organizational network but also working together (Gibbs, 2013). Enterprise social media and networking can help an employee feel more connected within an organization because of how it encourages employees to interact, discuss ideas, and become part of a community and the culture in an organization (Huang, 2012). Social media also has been said to have effects on the knowledge distribution in an

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organization. The importance of information distribution in an organization is known to all. However, locating that information at the right time has been made possible by the advent of social media. Use of social media at workplace creates a blend of contact information, rich presence and collaborative platforms. In this environment, individuals don't just know who to reach out to for a certain information but also know how to reach out to them (Bernoff J., 2008).

Organizations use social media because they believe it has increased the participation of organizational members through giving them a platform to voice their opinion and reducing the social pressure. There is a body of literature (Safko, 2010), (Groysberg, 2012), (Postman, 2009)supporting the view that social media flattens the communication hierarchy by facilitating lateral communication (Jue, 2010), taking a detour from traditional communication networks and making information available to all.

Overall, these effects of the use of social media at workplace are said to have a positive impact on the employee productivity (Arvanitis, 2009), (Harlan Lebo , 2014), (Bennett, 2010), (Li, 2010), (Patel, 2010). In the next section, we review the literature available on the ways in which use of social media use impacts productivity.

Social Media Use at Work and Employee Productivity

In light of the discussion surrounding the possible consequences of use of social media while at work, some say it can increase productivity through enhanced collective knowledge, improved morale (Bennett, 2010) (Leidner, 2010) (Li, 2008) (Patel, 2010) and positive engagement (Patricia J. Guinan, 2014). Others posit that use of social media at work may have an impact on employee performance because engaging in personal business on the job improves job satisfaction, reduces stress and brings work life balance (Ioan, 2010), (Harlan Lebo , 2014), (Kirchmeyer, 1999), (Polach, 2003), (Hobson, 2001), (Nord, 2002). An exploratory research based in the USA studied the link between social networking site use intensity, perceived job satisfaction, perceived organizational commitment and job performance (Murad Moqbel, 2013). It was empirically proven that social networking site use intensity has a significant positive effect on job performance through the mediation of job satisfaction, and that this mediating effect is itself mediated – in a nested way – via organizational commitment.

"The effect use of social media at workplace has" is similar to the effect of traditional steps for maintaining work-life balance such as providing family holiday programs, flexi timing, child care centers etc. had upon absenteeism, tardiness, turnover and job satisfaction (Hobson, 2001), (Nord, 2002). Some authors have found evidence to support the possibility that doing personal work while on job improves job satisfaction, organizational commitment and productivity (Kirchmeyer, 1999), (Polach, 2003).

Apart from enhancing work-life balance and reducing, use of social media at work offers a new avenue for organizations to propel employee engagement. Engaged employees feel more connected, informed and optimistic about their employers. (Asha Kaul, 2017) opines that employee productivity and performance is expected to be impacted by positive engagement that social media at work brings about.

However, contrary to the view that use of social media at workplace improves employee performance and productivity there is another body of literature research that argues that online social networking at work leads to waste of time and a resultant loss of productivity (Nucleus, 2009), (O'Murchu, 2004), (Rooksby, 2009), (Shepherd, 2011), (Computing, 2009)(Maltby, 2009). "By the year 2008, the average American worker was spending between 21 and 26 percent of his or her paid time engaged in personal activities online' (Frauenheim, 2009).

Researchers (D'Abate, 2007) described a term presenteeism as the act of not functioning to best of one's potential because of lack of concentration resulting from non-work related activities such as checking emails, talking over the phone for personal work and internet surfing. Which means, employees may not perform to the best of their abilities due to distractions at work thus showing presenteeism.

In line with this concept relating to work related presenteeism, in a study it was found that full access to Facebook at workplace may result in 1.5% drop in worker's productivity (Nucleus, 2009). Even back in early 2000 it was reported that loss to employers resulting from employee use of internet at work is a critical one as it ran into billions of dollars (Greengard, 2000), (Herring, 2004, January 25), (Adschiew, June 2000), (Stewart, 2000). In a study based in Sri Lanka, (Warnakula, 2010) found that more than 60.8% of the participants said they checked Facebook at work. Employees are meant to perform their work at the workplace as per (Mastrangelo, 2006) where attending to every beep and ping may be a means of distraction. (Mastrangelo, 2006) and (Sherman, 2009) posit that distraction through social media is the adverse side of its use at workplace that the organizations are struggling with.

The generation of graduate students now joining the workforce has grown up with technology personal computers at their homes and owning a smart phone as they grew up (Arnold, 2009). Stronger and more cost efficient internet connectivity has contributed to the making of a generation that is 'impatient and requires instant gratification', terms that are harmful for productivity at workplace (Sujansky, 2009). This generation, generally referred to as the "Millennials" expects uninterrupted internet availability and access at work and feels it's their right to enjoy at work even if it is through activities not related to the job requirements (Blades, 2010). A research study in 2008 done in European IT service companies showed that 39% of 18 to 24 year old employees would consider leaving their jobs if Facebook ban were imposed (Sujansky, 2009).

Use of social media at workplace brings risk of development of addictive behavior among the employees which if not attended to may result in reduced employee productivity (Hathi, 2008). There are other risks that pertain to online social networking at work that have caught the attention of Researchers such as the risk of employees venting their negative emotions on social media, risk of malware and exposing of intellectual property to the public. Main arguments in favor of the usage of social media at workplace are that socializing during work makes employees happier and thus more productive during work

hours (Kesten, 2009), (Arnold, 2009), (Whadcock, 2010). However, it has been seen that even though benefits mentioned seem rational, employers surveyed in many studies are unwilling to accept the argument. (Mellon-Hogan, 2009), (Markel, 2009).

CONCLUSION

There is a mixed opinion about the body of literature available on the effect of use of social media at work resulting from the difference in approach of studying this variable. Where Researchers have focused on the balance that social media's use brings that in turn enhances the efficiency at work, there are others who target the lost minutes that were supposed to be use doing productive work. From the review of literature on this topic, it can be said that social media is here to stay and grow as an organizational communicational tool in the times to come and it will have both positive and negative effects on employee productivity. The type of industry, age group of the employees and other factors such as the support and encouragement that the organization extends towards such use may play a role in how the use of social media impacts the employees.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Apart from the possibility of various outcomes stemming from different settings, a point worth noticing is the use of self-reported measures of productivity in all the studies which in itself is not easy to measure. Questions asked to measure productivity are often too direct and suffer from the risk of eliciting untruthful responses. The use of Role efficacy, the potential effectiveness of an individual occupying a particular role in an organization, which is a potent predictor of actual productivity can be used for further research.

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