Chapter 5
The Influence of Social Media on Teamwork Aspects: Introduction of a Conceptual Model to Measure the Influence Social Media has on Teamwork

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of society compared to only ten years ago and has changed the way we communicate. On the other hand organizations are increasingly working in teams. Key in teamwork is communication, according to Salas et al. communication is invaluable in teamwork. However what is the influence of social media on teamwork with this major adjustment in the way we communicate? This chapter introduces a conceptual model to measure the influence of social media on teamwork aspects.

INTRODUCTION

The research field of social media is relatively new and is receiving increasing more attention over the last years. Social media has influence on all levels in our way of living and more importantly the way we work and communicate with each other. Some even say that social media is a revolution happening (Qualman, E. 2013) and one of the most powerful online networking tools which has been integrated into our social and economic life in the real world (Gerritsen et al. 2014).

Most of the work that people do requires some degree of corporation and communication with others, some kind of teamwork. This is not limited to any specific industry or business model. Over the last decade the way we communicate has changed drastically due to social media, however the influence of this has yet to receive sufficient attention. This is underlined by the research done by Treem et al (2012) which concluded that the study of social media use within organizations is in its infancy.

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The Influence of Social Media on Teamwork Aspects

Whereas most of the current research field has studied the influence that social media (dubbed as social networks) has for consumers and organization in all different fields, primarily marketing and e-commerce (outward). There is little to no research done on the influence that social media has on teamwork or the internal organization (inward). In the end social media all comes down to communication, and communication is essential within a team and organization. This research project focuses on how social media influences teamwork within teams. Knowing how social media influences teamwork and having a model in measuring the influence per social media function offers organizations a method in creating guidelines. This brings us to the research question of this research project:

Which functions that are used in social media influence (certain aspects) of teamwork?

In addition the following sub questions are defined:

- What functions are offered by social media to support teamwork?
- Which social media’s are used by individuals (business / private)?
- What etiquettes are agreed upon (before or reactive)?
- Which aspects of teamwork, based on the TWQ framework of Hoegl and Gemuenden, are influenced by social media?.

This article starts with the literature study, results and provides the definition of both social media and teamwork aspects. Afterwards the research method used is outlined, why this was chosen. To finalize the findings, conclusions and closing comments on this research project and possibilities for future research are described.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media

The first known use of the term social media in print is believed to have occurred in 1997, when then AOL executive Ted Leonsis commented that organizations needed to provide consumers with “social media, places where they can be entertained, communicate, and participate in a social environment” (Treem, J.W. & Leonardi, P.M. 2012). In addition the first popular social networking site, SixDegrees.com (1997 to 2001) was introduced in that same year. It was named after the six degrees of separation concept and allowed users to list friends, family members and acquaintances both on the site and externally; external contacts were invited to join the site (Wikipedia, 2014). This was the start of a period in which a large number of nowadays highly popular social media platforms came to see the light of day. Some examples includes the wiki-based encyclopedia Wikipedia (2001), LinkedIn (2002), MySpace (2003), Facebook (2004), Twitter (2004), Hyves (2004), Youtube (2005), Yammer (2008), WhatsApp (2009) and Instagram (2010).

Since the rapid growth of social it is apparent that social media is not something to be dismissed as a youthful or consumer oriented hobby. There are many definitions and interpretations of social media. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010) define social media as “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”. Boyd et al (2008) define social network sites as “Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a
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