Chapter 1

Media Richness Perspective of Social Media Usage for Learning: Perception of Cocoa Researchers in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the effect of media richness of four popular social media (Facebook, YouTube, Skype and Wikipedia) applications on their usage for organizational learning. The study is guided by a research framework based on the amalgamation of the SECI model and the media richness theory (MRT). This framework was used to investigate the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCBOD) to investigate which social media platform used by this organization was effective for organizational learning. Data was gathered and analysed using surveys and hierarchical second-order structural equation modeling (SEM). The data was validated using SmartPLS 3. The study concludes that there is a strong relationship between media richness and social media usage for organizational learning.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are increasingly developing various ways of using social media to enhance learning. These technologies keep gaining popularity in their usage for learning in organizations due to their interactive capacity and ability to handle different types of knowledge. Nevertheless, not much empirical research has been conducted to examine their capacity to convey the different knowledge forms and information cues (media richness) and its impact on learning in organizations. The focus of this chapter is to examine the effect of media richness of four popular social media (Facebook, YouTube, Skype and Wikipedia) applications on their usage for organizational learning.

Findings from the study, which sought to examine the effects of media richness of four popular social media applications (Facebook, YouTube, Skype and Wikipedia) on their usage for learning in organizations. The research framework used for the study was based on the amalgamation of the SECI model (Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000) and the media richness theory (MRT) (Richard L. Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). A real world case of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), the governing board of the Ghanaian cocoa sector was used to answer the research question: What is the effect of social media usage on organizational learning? Data were collected using survey and hierarchical second-order structural equation modeling (SEM) was used and validated with SmartPLS 3. Findings suggest a strong relationship between media richness and social media usage for organizational learning.

CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES OF WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES

The term web 2.0 is defined as “the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as a platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them” (Musser & O’Reilly, 2007). Web 2.0, which was originally coined in 2004 by O’Reilly Media, is used to refer to a second-generation approach to the World Wide Web (WWW) with community-driven services such as social networking sites, blogs, wikis, etc. (Paroutis & Saleh, 2009). The capabilities of web 2.0 has shifted the focus of end users from being passive content consumers to active user participation where they are allowed to collaborate, communicate, create, control, and share contents using the web as a medium for communication. Web 2.0 tools come in different forms and classes including blogs, collective intelligence (wikis), digital content management (media sharing), social networks, mash-ups, virtual worlds, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), tagging, peer-to-peer programs and so on.
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