

Work Performance and the Impact of Social Network as a Communication Tool: A Case of Support Services Employees at a Private Hospital

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Abstract

Social networks have evolved into a ubiquitous communication tool to swiftly deliver and receive messages, for instance through email or social media. In the workplace context, staff's employee performance can be enhanced through the use of communication platforms which teach them things that can be picked up from co-workers. An example of such a platform is social media. The use of social networks can offer many benefits to employees' communication skills and work performance. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between social networks as a tool of communication and its influence on work performance. This offers firms the ability to implement and take full advantage of the benefits offered by social networking towards work performance. This study was conducted among staff members of support services at Private Hospital where 141 questionnaires were distributed. The collected data was subjected to multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that there exists a positive relationship between cooperation, knowledge sharing and interactivity with work performance. All hypotheses in this study were supported. This research provides knowledge and information regarding methods to improve work performance of employees by utilizing social networking, and also contributes to the collection of existing literature in the field.

Keywords: Work Performance, Social Network, Communication Tool, Support Services Employees, Private Hospital

Introduction

Work performance is the outcome of employees putting in more effort, speed and time into their duties. An employee's work performance can be enhanced through developing their

communication skills and networking capacity with the use of technology. The ability to access external resources through technology can also result in better group performances in the firm. Bennett, Owens, Pitt and Tucker (2010) investigated the relationship between a firm's work culture and social networking, and to what extent social networks can reshape and galvanize an organization's established practices. This can subsequently result in improved work processes and work performance. A firm must be capable of identifying and being responsive to current changes and growth in technology. The organization must be prepared to react and tackle problems and setbacks that arise in the workplace (Bennett et al., 2010). Additionally, information technology (IT) aids in the formation of social networks and can enhance job performance (Ou, Sia & Hui, 2013). Social networking contributes to better work performance by facilitating communication (Moqbel, Nevo & Kock, 2013; Ou et al., 2013). Existing research points to the fact that incorporating computerized technology can boost employee performance (Moqbel et al., 2013). Moqbel et al., (2013) assert that the utilization of social networking contributes to enhanced job performance on the basis of various intermediate variables, including boost in morale. Organizations can grow in efficiency through the improvements offered by the use of social networks towards work performance (Crowne, Goeke & Shoemaker, 2015; Cao, Guo, Vogel & Zhang, 2016).

Literature Review

The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between factors of social network utilized as a tool of communication which impacts work performance. It offers firms and industries a chance to implement and make use of the ability of social network to boost work performance. This chapter will examine articles put forth by researchers who wish to establish the capacity of cooperation, knowledge sharing and interactivity to have an influence on the workers' employee performance.

Employees' Work Performance

Work performance refers to the quality, standards and overall strength of a worker's abilities. It incorporates the employee's part in contributing to the firm's performance as whole. Work performance consists of actions which transform resources into products and services delivered by the firm and facilitates the smooth running of the organization (Sonnentag, Volmer & Spychala, 2010).

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is a social method where an individual in a network is impacted by the contribution of another individual in that same network. The process of long-term interaction allows for members of a network to transfer crucial information to each other (Osorio & Nieves, 2013). When social networks are utilized as a communication tool, it will encourage employees to share knowledge related to business topics. This can ensure the strong execution of tasks due to the increased know-how of the employees, and this helps them achieve the firm's established targets. This can also enhance the problem-solving process by allowing for various perspectives and ideas for solutions (Cao et al., 2016). Knowledge sharing is a crucial component of enhancing a firm's competitive edge. Management can assist employees in enhancing their performance by sharing data and feedback through email, as an example (Ou et al., 2013). Social networks prove to be an effective method of delivering information quickly and efficiently.

Cooperation

Bennett et al., (2010) explain how firms with established social networking practices have observed an increase in cooperation. Cooperation involves the application of social networking tools and capabilities to enable connection, sharing of knowledge and resources and the facilitating of problem-solving processes. Employees can connect and collaborate with colleagues in order to reach for the firm's strategic targets together. Social networking tools operate on a basis of transparency, where all communication processes are accessible and visible to the entire network. As such, the contributions of every worker can be acknowledged and rewarded where appropriate. Cooperation is a strong factor in allowing employees to function with greater efficiency (Bennett et al., 2010).

Interactivity

Ou et al., (2013) establish interactivity as the extent to which employees can modify the content and form of their environment in real time. Efficient communication is reliant upon the interaction between the user and the platform as opposed to the platform on its own. Improved work performance is attributed to the interaction between employees and the social networking tools available. Interactivity will help the growth of the employee's affective part and increase commitment to the organization as a whole. Several crucial components within interactivity are synchronicity, active control and two-way communication. Work performance is boosted when employees have the opportunity to make queries and ask for help from other members of the firm through accurate, timely and impactful communication facilitated by social networking (Xiaojuan Ou et al, 2013).

The Relation between Knowledge Sharing and Employees' Work

Ellison, Gibbs and Weber (2015) posit that social networks have evolved to accommodate the growing work performance of employees, particularly in the aspect of knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing encompasses the transmitting of information between members of a network and the capacity for sustained critical thinking. This carries an impact towards work performance, where processes such as brainstorming can birth strong solutions to issues which arise within the organization (Ellison et al., 2015).

Knowledge sharing can only occur when individuals are prepared to provide and search for knowledge. Information must be moderated in order to monitor its impact and facilitate its positive influence on work performance. Brown, Denni, Burley and Arling (2013) are of the opinion that information is best put to use when shared widely in order to boost general work performance, improve decision making processes and ensure every employee is equipped with up to date knowledge.

A theoretical study by Osorio et al., (2013) revealed that the transfer and combination of knowledge provided by social networking tools can effectively impact job performance. Knowledge sharing is beneficial to work performance due to its capacity to allow the consolidation of new knowledge with existing data. It also facilitates information management through the transfer of important resources. Knowledge sharing between components of an organization allows opportunities to learn from and collaborate with each other. The greater the access to resources for an individual to gain information and knowledge, the greater the output of strong and creative products and solutions by employees (Magnusson & Bjorkk, 2009). Sharing knowledge through social networking tools can enhance innovation and creativity in the execution of tasks and consequently boost work

performance. Knowledge sharing also reduces doubts and indecisiveness among workers. (Osorio et al., 2013).

Panahi, Watson and Partridge (2013) explain that information sharing prompts individuals to achieve greater understanding and powers of critical thought. This will enhance their capacity to acquire and process knowledge, which assists in the completion of their duties. A social network is identified as easy to use, informal, immediate, based on multimedia systems and where Internet-based platforms are centered around communities. These conditions allow for opportunities where implicit knowledge is shared among individuals in the organization and contributes to the improvement of each worker's performance (Panahi et al., 2013).

Leonardi's (2017) research findings also corroborate the success of knowledge sharing in improving employees' work performance within an organization. Data was gathered from interviews which took place with staff from financial departments. According to Leonardi (2017) an example of the knowledge sharing process is as follows; an employee develops new knowledge while carrying out their tasks, this knowledge is then condensed into a document which is uploaded to an accessible Internet source. Another individual in the same firm who is seeking information is able to access this document and interpret and utilize the necessary knowledge in their own work. This assists the development of employees' work performance because staff are not required to take on the extra burden of interpreting ambiguous or irrelevant information, due to the fact that pertinent, direct knowledge is accessible through the social network (Leonardi, 2017).

H1: There is a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and employees' work performance.

The Relationship between Cooperation and Employees, Work Performance

Employees develop bonds and trust through consistent and frequent communication. Social networking platforms such as Facebook alter the dynamics of a relationship's development through the ability to allow efficient direct communication with particular individuals and general contact with a larger network (Burke & Kraut, 2014). Such platforms also offer employees the chance to have light conversation, confide in each other and share personal details, which immediately impact cooperation among colleagues in light conversation. Greater levels of cooperation can result in better work performance due to the employees being comfortable and satisfied in their job environment. Consistent communication through platforms such as Facebook is also a mark of an individual's investment and care towards another person (Burke et al., 2014).

Social networking tools facilitate efficient internal communication levels, which is a crucial element in ensuring a competitive edge for the organization. The majority of firms employ various methods of internal communication tools in order to strengthen the cooperation between staff and consequently establish social capital which will boost the firm's performance (King & Lee, 2016). Computer-based social technology focuses on creating bonds between employees in the same network in order to develop mutual goals and standards. This fosters a sense of collaboration and positively influences work performance. Social networking can also be said to have the same impact on work performance using the element of cooperation. Organizations are becoming more conscious of the need to foster good relationships between employees in order to improve work performance and general efficiency in the firm. Cooperation is contingent upon establishing connections and cultivating a sense of community (King et al., 2016).

Cooperation through the medium of social networking systems assist individuals in the network to stay updated and facilitate the processes of decision making and problem-solving, which is reflected in higher work performance levels. Employees can access information through colleagues, online connections or even new people on social media sites whenever necessary. Cultivating cooperation among members of an organization also gives rise to a sense of belonging which encourages them to work harder and consequently boosts work performance (Bao, 2016).

Soltis, Agneessens, Sasovova and Labianca, (2013) posit that cooperation with other members of the firm and access to mutual resources allow workers to feel a stronger connection to the company. A survey was conducted among 282 employees from two sectors of a firm operating in two separate Midwestern states in the USA. Solitis et al., (2013) discovered that strong cooperation contributed greatly towards better work performance. This can include sharing advice with colleagues one regularly interacts with in the course of daily responsibilities. Cooperation also gives rise to changes in attitude, such as the development of enjoyment or dedication to the workplace. The study asserts that cooperation is a vital trait and process that must be practiced and present in order to improve general work performance in the firm (Soltis, Agneessens, Sasovova & Labianca, 2013).

An issue that arises in terms of cooperation is the cost of sharing one's resources compared to the potential advantages for others that are achieved through the sharing of those resources (Rand, Newman & Wurzbacher, 2014). A cooperative mindset should be inherent to individuals who view their partners as trustworthy and see collaboration as a beneficial and productive process, as opposed to those who find cooperative undertakings to be unpredictable. Internet-based social networking enhances work performance by reducing the amount of time spent on completing a task, especially once all team members have achieved strong cooperation and accomplish their required responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner (Rand et al., 2014).

On the basis of research findings, firms would prefer that staff be capable of innovation and creativity, sharing knowledge and information and tackling conflicts and problems (Carmi et al., 2014). Technological platforms such as social networks allow for changes in the transfer, acquisition, enhancement and management of information on a worldwide scale, as well as minimizing uncertainties in various forms of commercial exchanges. Carmi et al., (2014) discovered a strong link between cooperation and trust with the adoption of technology. Three social networking platforms which are focused on the completion of tasks are email, forums centered around the exchange of knowledge and instant digital messaging services. Social media also functions to blend work and social relationships through computer-based applications. This gives rise to a boost in individual job performance levels. As an example, online file sharing systems can be a solution for employees to monitor and share updates on mutual tasks (Carmi et al., 2014). Such tools can improve cooperation levels among members of a team which can go on to raise work performance levels.

H2: There is a positive relationship between cooperation and employees' work performance.

The Relationship between Interactivity and Employees' Work Performance

Ariel and Avidar (2015) posit that social networks allow for staff to work together and reach mutual understanding with other members of the organization during the process of task completion. Social networks involve the use of internet-based or mobile technology to generate interactive systems whereby individuals and groups can share and modify content

created by users. When a piece of content is disconnected or irrelevant to the needs of its users, then that knowledge has so significance of its own (Ariel et al., 2015). Elements which conceptualize interactivity include control, hyper-textuality, synchronicity, directionality, control, speed, experience, the availability of options, interest, openness and. Strong work performance is dictated by the extent to which all parties in communication are able to take action on each other, the communication platform used and the information being (Ariel et al., 2015).

Philips and Shipps (2013) assert that as global communication continues to evolve, it is imperative to a firm's competitive advantage to identify methods to create an effective interactive environment. The process of utilizing the platform, such as interacting with features on a website can give rise to stronger communication and more clarity in messages, which promotes better work performance. Interactivity is connected to severe attention. The process of utilization may impact perspectives regarding the experience of interacting with website features and the enhancement of work performance through stronger and greater clarity in communication. Strong flow or attention can result in more satisfaction among employees and subsequently result in higher usage of social networks (Shipps et al., 2013).

A previous study by Hsu, Chang, Lin & Yi-Wan Lin (2015) revealed that a higher level of human-message interaction has the ability to boost the general performance of an individual, whether they are an employee or a student, through the benefits of seeking information and receiving feedback. This is established on the analysis of data collected from 296 users of social networks. Social networking aids in enhancing work performance by offering timely and relevant information to all parties involved in an organizational task. Additionally, employees who are satisfied with the degree of interactivity will see a favorable impact on their work performance (Hsu et al., 2015).

Disparate results are seen in terms of how and why employees' attitudes are influenced by internet interactivity. Research indicates that good web interactivity is conducive to the explanation of knowledge and the ability for workers to review necessary information. Research by Shen et al., (2017) attribute internet interactivity levels to the improvement of work performance, thanks to interactive elements such as comments, links and presentations. In these ways, website users can make their feedback known. Compared to text-only interfaces, the availability of audio, visuals and other interactive components are more interesting and effective to users of social networks (Shen et al, 2017). Jiang, Wilson, Wang, Sha, Huang, Dai and Zhao (2017) explain how existing studies in interactivity are focused especially on work performance of employees. It has the capacity to alter how employees deal with the internet. For instance, company email addresses are necessary for employees to be included in organizational networks. There is a strong social pressure for employees to consistently respond to each other on social networking platforms when contact is initiated. Stronger interactivity will aid in the efforts to boost work performance (Jiang et al., 2017).

H3: There is a positive relationship between interactivity and employees work performance.

Methodology

Research design is the overall tactic which is selected in order to consolidate the various elements in the study in a comprehensive and logical manner, which will help the researcher effectively state the research problem, and subsequently construct a blueprint for data gathering, assessment and analysis (Trochim & William, 2001). The current study uses descriptive research as its research design. A cross-sectional survey was carried out to gather

information from the sample population. Divisions of staff at the studied hospital incorporate four types of services, namely nursing services, allied health services, support services and medical officers. Support services staff number 141 individuals. The researcher utilized non-probability sampling, also known as accidental/convenience sampling for this study. This sampling incorporates the sample drawn from the section of the population close to the researcher. This population sample is chosen because it is suitable for the research purposes and is easily available.

The variables for this study are derived from measured variables in existing research conducted by academics in the past. The first independent variable to be measured is knowledge sharing, with instruments adapted from Lin (2007). The reliability value for this instrument is 0.95. The second independent variable is cooperation, and the proposed measures are derived from (Scott, Bishop & Chen, 2003) with a recorded reliability value of 0.92. The third independent variable is interactivity, where the suggested measures are adapted from (Leiner & Quiring, 2008) with a reliability value of 0.92. Finally, the dependent variable that is being assessed is work performance, adopted from (Koopmans, Bernards, Hildebrandt, De Vet & Van Der Beek, 2014) with a reliability value of 0.90. Overall, three items are proposed in this study. The respondents must answer based on their understanding of employee work performance

Results

The questionnaire was distributed among all the respondents through their heads of department. However, out of 141 prepared and distributed questionnaires only 126 or 89% of the total surveys were returned. Additionally, only 121 out of 126 surveys were considered usable, as such (n=121). Female respondents outnumber male respondents. The total number of female respondents is 75 people (62%) while the men number 46 respondents (38%). The majority of respondents also have non-executive level positions, numbering 82 individuals (67.8%), while executive level employees consist of 16.5% of respondents (20 people), and the lowest or manager level employees number 19 people (15.7%). The majority of respondents also have some form of educational qualification, where diploma holders make up 38% (46 employees) of the total respondents. This is followed by those with bachelor's degrees at 26.4% (32 employees). Employees with SPM level qualifications are the third highest, with 19.8% (24 employees), and this is followed by STPM level holders with 13.2% (16 employees). Postgraduate level employees number only 3 individuals or 2.5%.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation technique is shown to measure the relationship between knowledge sharing, cooperation and interactivity with employees' work performance among staff in the support services division at KPJ Klang Specialist Hospital. This section will answer research objectives and research questions number (1), (2) and (3). Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted on the collected data.

Table 1

Correlation Analysis of Knowledge Sharing and Work Performance

Variable		Work Performance	Knowledge Sharing
Work Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.705
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000
	N	121	121
Knowledge Sharing	Pearson Correlation	0.705	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	
	N	121	121

Based on table 1, it is revealed that there is a significant positive high relationship between knowledge sharing and work performance ($r = 0.705$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$). This shows that there exists a relationship between knowledge sharing and work performance. As such, it can be said that the higher the level knowledge sharing, the higher the work performance among employees. Thus, H1 is supported.

Table 2

Correlation Analysis of Cooperation and Work Performance

Variable		Work Performance	Cooperation
Work Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.620
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000
	N	121	121
Cooperation	Pearson Correlation	0.620	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	
	N	121	121

Table 2 indicates that there is a significant positive moderate relationship between cooperation and work performance ($r = 0.620$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$). This proves that there exists a relationship between cooperation and work performance. As such, it can be said that the higher the level of cooperation, the higher the work performance among employees. Thus, H2 is supported.

Table 3

Correlation Analysis of Interactivity and Work Performance

Variable		Work Performance	Interactivity
Work Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.416
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000
	N	121	121
Interactivity	Pearson Correlation	0.416	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	
	N	121	121

Table 3 illustrates the existence of a significant positive moderate relationship between interactivity and work performance ($r = 0.416$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.01$). This proves that there is an existing relationship between interactivity and work performance. As such, it can be said that the higher the level of interactivity, the higher the work performance among employees. Thus, H3 is supported.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis is utilized to establish the degree to which, or the percentage of the dependent variable that can be explained by the three independent variables. The aim is also to discover which independent variables are connected to the dependent variable, and the comparison between the true relationship among variables to the predicted relationships.

Table 4

Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

		Coefficients ^a			
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	11.658	2.270		5.135
	total_knowledgesharing	.434	.073	.529	5.923
	total_cooperation	.264	.085	.271	3.124
	total_interactivity	-.007	.064	-.008	-.109

a. Dependent Variable: Total Work Performance

Based on the coefficient table, one of the most influential variables in employees' work performance is knowledge sharing, as $\beta = 0.529$ (53%) and $p = 0.000$ which is $p < 0.05$, as such it is a significant relationship. This is followed by the cooperation variable which has the least influence on work performance with the values $\beta = 0.271$ (27%) and $p = 0.002$ which is $p < 0.05$, thus it is a significant relationship. However, the last variable, which is interactivity,

has a negative relationship as shown by $\beta = -0.008(-0.8\%)$. Interactivity was found to be not significant with the value $p = 0.913$ which is $p > 0.05$. As such, it is shown that knowledge sharing and cooperation are significant to work performance. The independent variable of knowledge sharing has the most significant impact on employees' work performance due to its high value result of standardized coefficient. It proves that knowledge sharing has a stronger influence on work performance compared to the other independent variables such as cooperation and interactivity. Although knowledge sharing functions as the strongest influence for employees' work performance, the remaining two independent variables, namely cooperation and interactivity, are considered the second and third most important variables respectively, with regard to employees' work performance.

Table 5

Hypotheses Findings

The table shows the results of the tested hypothesis:

	HYPOTHESIS	RESULTS
H1	There is a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and work performance.	Accepted
H2	There is a positive relationship between cooperation and work performance.	Accepted
H3	There is a positive relationship between interactivity and work performance.	Accepted
H4	There is a positive significant relationship between most affected variable and work performance.	Accepted

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the factors of social networking when used as a tool of communication and its impact on employees' work performance. In the case of support service staff at Private Hospital, it has been established that the variables of knowledge sharing, cooperation and interactivity all have a relationship with work performance.

The conducted study revealed a majority female demographic among the respondents, along with an age majority of 18-25 years old. Additionally, the majority of respondents, namely 53.7%, are also married. Most respondents hold non-executive level positions and the majority of 38% have a diploma-level education.

On the basis of the descriptive analysis conducted on work performance (dependent variable) and the independent variables of cooperation, knowledge sharing and interactivity, the following results were established. The highest mean value of 4.63 shows that the staff at KPJ Klang Hospital are aware of the criteria that must be met in order to reach high work performance. The next highest mean of 4.51 indicates that employees have an established ideal plan to tackle tasks in their assigned roles. Van Wingerden, Derks and Bakker (2017) explain that work performance reached optimal levels when the organization's desired outcomes are communicated to the staff. Consequently, employees will make an effort to reach the expected targets. In terms of knowledge sharing, the highest mean of 4.38 was recorded, indicating that employees are in agreement to make good attempts to share knowledge with co-workers. Panahi et al., (2013) asserts that social networks can impact the creation and sharing of knowledge in the firm and subsequently boost the knowledge and work performance of staff. The variable of cooperation recorded the highest mean of 4.58

which reflects how vital collaboration is to the functioning of the organization. Cooperation within social networks is akin to a support system which impacts work performance through the offering of emotional support, suggestions, plans, advice and other elements conducive to problem solving (Bao, 2016). The other variables recorded lower mean values than that of cooperation, whereby cooperation has the highest mean value of 4.40. This is followed by knowledge sharing which has a 4.19 mean value and finally interactivity with a 3.87 mean value. The highest mean for the component of interactivity is recorded at 4.18, indicating that employees are willing to express opinions and thoughts directly through email. Staff believe that utilizing email carries a high degree of interactivity in the organization. It is widely agreed that interactivity within social networks is vital to effective communication and functions as a tactic for relational maintenance which influences work performance (Ariel, 2015).

The research questions and aims were established in this study for the purpose of investigating the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In the context of this study, the objectives and research questions were intended to examine the link between knowledge sharing, interactivity and cooperation with work performance. The research concludes that all three independent variables have positive and significant relationships with work performance, or the dependent variable.

Recommendations

Recommendation for Future Research

There are a few limitations in this research study that must be tackled to enable future research undertakings to be able to obtain stronger results. Firstly, the distribution of questionnaires, which was limited to support services staff at Private Hospital, should include all employees at the hospital. The current study did not account for the three other sections of employees at the hospital, namely allied health services, nursing services and medical officers. Future studies would do well to include all these staff members. A wider scope of respondents may offer deeper insight into this issue.

Future research can also involve public hospital employees and the impact of social network on work performance. Public hospitals generally have a much larger staff compared to private medical centers. Comparative research between public hospitals, private hospitals and other medical institutions is also suggested.

Additionally, the range of discourse regarding the variables must be expanded. Studies in the future may possibly include an additional or new independent variable, or build upon the existing framework by deriving from literature.

Finally, the data collection method can be enhanced. The method used in this study was that of manual distribution of questionnaires. This involves high expenditure for printing, and the process of distributing is time consuming and takes up considerable effort. In terms of improving this undertaking, it is suggested that online-based platforms such as email be utilized in order to allow participants to complete surveys and questionnaires digitally. In this manner, the burden on the researcher's financial and time-based resources can be reduced.

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