



Social Media and Employee Productivity at Workplace

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ABSTRACT

This study makes theoretical contributions related to social media usage in the workplace. Participants who showed high work performance used social media to help communicate with their colleagues. People showed high work performance were also the ones escaping from an unsatisfying job for a while and escaping from a demanding job for a while by using social media in the workplace. High frequency of using social media in the workplace resulted in increased work performance.

Keywords: Social Media, Work Performance, Uses and Gratifications

JEL Classifications: D83, L25

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost a decade ago, researchers used to investigate the effects of electronic mail (e-mail) within the workplace and whether or not it lowers productivity of organisations (e.g., Phillips and Reddie, 2007). Today, with the increase usage of social media, researchers have been giving their attention to investigating this new way of communication.

Increase in social media use results in decrease of interpersonal skills. Millennial workers prefer to email colleagues in place of face-to-face talking. In addition to millennial workers, more and more employees send text messages instead of listening and contributing to conversations in meetings. Instant availability of social media and the desire to check friends' latest posts are habitual behavior and are a major distraction in workplaces (Diercksen et al., 2013b).

"Limited research has studied workplace satisfaction in a computer-mediated context, particularly with the use of social media" (Robertson and Kee, 2017, p. 191). Among the limited research, there are studies investigating the use of social media in the workplace and its effect for employee productivity. Munene and Nyaribo (2013), for example, found employees spend most

of their time on social media in the workplace for both work and non-work related activity and this addiction lowers the performance of the workers. Facebook was investigated and the result documented that Facebook use cut productivity at work (Gaudin, 2009). Similarly, Diercksen et al. (2013b) found that the use of social media is an increasing problem in the workplace and the more employees use social media, the less they see it as a distraction. Thus, they recommend that instead of banning social media in the workplace, organizations should develop monitors the amount of time it is used. By that way, employees spending an excessive amount of time on social network sites would be subject to potential disciplinary action in the workplace.

Contrary to the negative effects of SNSs to working productivity literature, Seman (2014) found in her study that staff in an organization have used SNSs in a positive way which decreased their stress levels while increasing their skills. Diercksen et al. (2013a) in another study found that if social media was not properly managed by the managers, it would become a problematic situation at work because it distracted its users. Aguenza et al. (2012) state that social media had a positive effect on employee's two-way communication and working collaboration which resulted in productivity. Martensen et al.

(2011), who investigated social media for career development purposes, self-marketing, and employee-employer relationships, found that employees using social media as self-marketing tools try to develop a positive reputation and their communication is asymmetrical with their employers. Skeels and Grudin (2009) researched workplace use of Facebook and LinkedIn and found extensive social and work related uses. Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014) examined a relation between the use of social media and employees' work performance in an insurance company and found that social media allowed information exchange and help employees to improve knowledge transfer. Tulu (2017) investigated the use of online social media among academicians at a university and found that using social media does not lower the productivity of teachers during official working hours. Nduhura and Prieler (2017) in their research on social media at work found social media had been increasingly playing a central role in functionality of public institutions and the way employees used social media to coordinate various activities including arranging meetings and sharing information. Tajudeen et al. (2018) confirmed in their studies there were benefits of social media usage by organizations. Jiang et al. (2016) findings showed there was a significant relation between social media use and participants' leadership behaviors. Robertson and Kee (2017) found Facebook interaction with co-workers increased employee's satisfaction at work in a positive way.

Based on the abovementioned literature reviews, in this paper, we have formulated the following questions:

RQ1: Does workplace social media usage has a positive effect on (a) two-way communication, (b) employee-employer communication, (c) employee-employee communication, (d) respondents' working efficiency, (e) respondents' work performance, and (f) respondents' workplace productivity?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. Uses and Gratifications and Motives to use Social Media

Uses and gratifications concept is based on the premise that people have gratifications and they search for media to satisfy those (Whiting and Williams, 2013). Gratification refers to needs gathered as a result of using media. People have many needs some of which are social and others are psychological. To gratify their needs, people actively assess the benefits of using certain media over others and select them (Lee and Ma, 2012). Uses and gratifications theory states that people have various needs (e.g., information gathering) and those needs are satisfied by choosing the right type of media (e.g., via Google search) (Blumler and Katz, 1974). "It proceeds from the assumption that consumers are active in their choice of media and they engage with certain technologies to fulfill specific needs" (Pittman and Reich, 2016, p. 156). With the introduction of the Internet and social media in our daily lives, now people have more choices. They use the Internet and social media to satisfy their one of the most important needs which is social connection and belonging to a social group by the use of social media (Wang et al., 2012).

Papacharissi and Rubin's (2000) research on the motives of using the Internet and their findings of five motives (interpersonal utility, information seeking, entertainment, convenience, and pass time) is the basis of many Internet and social media basis research.

"Interpersonal utility" is an important driver to use social media. In Cha's study (2010) it was found that due to the motivation of interpersonal utility people's frequency of using social network sites and duration increased.

Lee and Lee (2012) found five motivations for watching online video ads, those are namely: social interaction, relaxation, information, escapism-pass time, and entertainment. Bae (2018) found that users' SNS continuance intention was related to their satisfaction with SNS use. Khan's (2017) research on gratifications of YouTube displayed that there were motivations of relaxing-entertainment, social interaction, and information giving.

Gao and Feng (2016) classified gratifications of social media into five categories, they are: Information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, and impression management. Heravi et al. (2018) found four dimensions for online social network usage, they are: relationship maintenance, entertainment, relationship building, and information seeking.

Based on the theoretical framework, the additional research question was employed:

RQ2: Will social media participation in the workplace have a significant favorable effect on participants' work performance?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Multiple Choice Questions

Among multiple choice questions, the seventh question asking the participants' frequency of using social media in the workplace (Diercksen et al., 2013a) and the twelfth question asking the participants' belief on the use of social media and it helps their work efficiency (Diercksen et al., 2013a and b) were slightly modified to make the questions more convenient. They were in the form of "yes-no questions" and "not sure" choice was added to the answers. In the closed-ended options, "only access at home" was dismissed and it was replaced by "I don't visit every day". Other multiple choice questions were developed under the light of literature review by the authors.

3.2. Workplace Social Media Usage Scale

To understand the main reasons why employees participate in social media in their workplace, seven-item a 5 point Likert scale (1-5 strongly DA-strongly A) questions were developed and included to the study by the authors. Those questions are:

- To find work related information and download it
- It helps me communicate with my colleagues
- It helps me communicate with my managers
- It helps me to coordinate my work
- It helps me do my business planning
- I can communicate in an instant
- I can communicate in an urgent situation.

The rest of the six-item (1-5 strongly DA-strongly A) was adopted from a study done by Munene and Nyaribo (2013), which are:

- To build business contacts
- To share information with colleagues
- To search for work related information
- Part of daily routine
- To escape from an unsatisfying job for a while
- To escape from a demanding job for a while.

3.3. Work Performance Scale

Work performance is the degree to which employees indicate their performance. Work performance scale was adopted from Leftheriotis and Giannakos’s (2014) study. We used 5-point Likert scales to measure the variables (worded “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Neutral,” “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”).

3.4. Reliability

The instrument was subjected to a reliability test to check for reliability by checking for internal consistency. Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach’s alpha Cronbach alpha test of the instrument returned $\alpha = 0.787$ for work performance and $\alpha = 0.844$ for social media participation at workplace.

3.5. Dependent and Independent Variables

Independent variables are demographic profiles of participants, frequency of visit social media, and social media participation in the workplace. Dependent variable is work performance.

3.6. Analysis

Survey method was used to gather information, and the data was analyzed using the SPSS 22 software. We used factor analysis, frequency and regression analysis for measuring the effects of social media participation in the workplace on work performance. 455 people accepted participation and were surveyed. 259 didn’t participate in the study. The participants work in different institutions. Those are Kibris İlim University, Yakın Doğu University, Girne University, Doğa College, Kandil Pharmacy, Fikri Terkan Construction, Bücürük Child Clothing, Temya Advertising Agency, Lapta Yavuzlar High School, Nicosia Land Office, Nicosia Registrar of Companies, Nicosia Chamber of Accounts, International Final University, and Lefke European University.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Descriptive Results

4.1.1. Demographic background

Females (58%) were more than males (42%). The majority of the participants were Northern Cypriots (69.2%), it is followed by Turks (19.3%), English (4.8%), Iranian (4.8%), and other nationalities (1.8%). The participants were between the ages of 36-46 (38.9%), 25-35 (30.3%), 47-57 (21.1%), 58-68 (7.7%), and 69-79 (2%). The majority worked in a private university (52.5%), others worked in governmental work (35.8%), and in the private sector (11.6%). 51% of them were academicians/lecturers, 11.6% of them were office workers, 5.5% of them were managers, and 31.9% had other titles. WhatsApp (46.2%)

was the most used social media in the work place. Facebook was second 32.5%, Instagram was third 13.6%, Twitter was fourth 5.3%, and Viber was fifth 2.4% used social media. The majority used it once or twice a day (45.1%), 33.2% used it up to 10 times a day, 10.8% used it virtually all the times. The minority (9.7%) did not visit every day, and only 1.3% did not used social media in the work place.

4.1.2. Results for opinions of social media at work place

The participants with the high percent (80.4%) confirmed that “social media usage in the workplace contribute positive two-way communication”, 13.4% didn’t confirm this, and 6.2% were not sure.

50.3% didn’t believe that “social media usage in the workplace improves employee-employer communication, 36.5% of them believed this improvement, and 13.2% were not sure.

65.7% said yes to “social media usage in the workplace improves employee-employee communication. 21.5% said no to this question and 10.3% were not sure.

More participants (52.7%) believed that “social media usage in the workplace helps work efficiency” and less participants 34.9% said no to this question. 12.1% were not sure about it.

47.7% of them said no, 35.6% said yes to the statement that “social media usage in the workplace increase work performance,” 16.5% were not sure.

The participants who said no (49%) were more than the participants who said yes (33.2%) to the statement “social media usage in the workplace improves productivity.” 17.8% of them were not sure.

4.2. Regression Analysis Results

There is a significant relation between work performance and using social media for escaping from an unstisfying job for a while ($\beta = 0.125$, $P \leq 0.05$) ($R^2=0.016$). People using social media for escaping from an unstisfying job for a while showed more work performance (Table 1). There is a significant relation

Table 1: Regression Results for the Predictors of Social Media Participation at Workplace by Work Performance

Items	Work performance
Building business contacts	0.029
Sharing information with colleagues	0.031
Searching for work related information	0.069
Finding and dowloading work related information	0.059
Part of daily routine	0.017
Escaping from unstisfying job for a while	0.125**
Escaping from demanding job for a while	0.131**
It helps me to communiante with my colleagues	0.098*
It helps me to communiante with my managers	0.020
It helps me to coordinate my works	0.060
It helps me to do my business planning	0.014
I can communicate in an instant	0.052
I can communicate in an urgent situation	0.029

* $P \leq 0.05$, ** $P \leq 0.01$, *** $P \leq 0.001$

between work performance and using social media for escaping from demanding job for a while ($\beta = 0.131, P \leq 0.05$) ($R^2 = 0.017$). The result was significant between work performance and social media helps me to communicate with my colleagues ($\beta = 0.098, P \leq 0.05$) ($R^2 = 0.010$).

When social media frequency of usage increased in the workplace, work performance increased in a positive way ($\beta = 0.137, P \leq 0.05$) ($R^2 = 0.019$).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Blumler and Katz (1974) states that by selecting the right type of media, people satisfy their needs. This research employed uses and gratifications theory to investigate their workplace social media usage and their satisfaction by using them. The latest uses and gratifications researches have been done in the field of new media and its effects on people. This research is one of them which has investigated the use of social media to satisfy their workplace needs.

Results showed that WhatsApp and Facebook together was the most used social media in the workplace (78.7%).

Participants believed that “social media usage in the workplace contribute to positive two-way communication” (80.4%). They supported “social media usage in the workplace improve employee-employee communication (65.7%). They stated that “social media usage in the workplace helps working efficiency” (52.7%). The participants didn’t agree social media has a positive effect on employee-employer communication (36.5%).

Participants’ work performance increased, when social media frequency of usage increased in the workplace. However, some of earlier studies (Munene and Nyaribo, 2013; Gaudin, 2009; Diercksen et al., 2013b) found that use of social media in the workplace lowered employee productivity.

The results confirmed Aguenza et al. (2012) research in which they found positive effect of social media on employee’s two-way communication and cooperation. The results also supported the studies by Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014), Tulu (2017), Nduhura and Prieler (2017), Tajudeen et al. (2018), Robertson and Kee (2017) who found a positive relation between social media usage in the workplace.

This study also found that escaping from a demanding and unsatisfying job for a while by using social media increased their work performance.

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