# Chapter 6
# Understanding Employee Attitudes to SNS Implementation in the Australian Banking Sector

**Tanti Kartika Sari**
*Curtin University, Australia*

## ABSTRACT

*The Australian banking sector has utilised Social Networking Sites (SNS) to support companies' sustainability through customer engagement. Numerous studies have been conducted on issues associated with SNS, including teamwork, communication, trust, and security. These studies have usually been concerned with the perspectives and attitudes of customers and organizations, and sometimes, employers. This chapter is based on a Master's degree dissertation research aimed at filling the gap by investigating the opinions of the Australian banking sector employees, in particular those who use the SNS application as a work tool. The Honeycomb framework is used as the theoretical basis with six underlying factors being ascertained as a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The findings are discussed, and recommendations are proposed which are intended to increase the benefits to be gained from SNS adoption. The analysis results make a significant theoretical, methodological, and practical contribution.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the last five years, we have seen the proliferation of applications based on the Web 2.0 platform being utilised by various industries, including the financial industry, for internal and external communication. One of the most widely-adopted Web 2.0 based application types is SNS. This type of Web 2.0 application was intended to facilitate human interaction by incorporating multi-faceted functionalities; however, along with the advantages, there are also risks associated with user interaction. Technology and infrastructure development, such as telecommunication, hardware and software systems have helped to increase public access to the internet.

As of April 2012, Internet World Stats (2012) recorded that Australia has 14,189, 557 users

(68.2% internet population) and ranked it second in the world after the USA with 205,493,713 users (68.7% population). This means that Australian banks have a huge opportunity for tapping the hitherto unrealized market opportunities. The "Big 4": Australia and New Zealand Bank (ANZ), Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA), National Australia Bank (NAB) and Westpac Bank (Westpac) initiated the adoption of SNS. Nevertheless, from 2009 when the Web 2.0 adoption started until 2011, the majority of Australian banks launched an SNS application (i.e. blog) as a temporary trend evidenced by the exclusion of this channel from their corporate websites (Senadheera, Warren, & Leitch, 2011).

The web technology evolution forced both business and industry to begin shifting their perspective. They started by giving customers or community a higher priority (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011), emphasising the organisations' internal and external engagement (Communique, 2010) and anticipating that they would increase their economic value through social capital (Annabi & McGann, 2012). In the corporate context, participation and sharing are part of collaboration which includes the effort to preserve tacit knowledge (Hemsley & Mason, 2012).

The very popular Social Media is also associated with Web 2.0 due its similar characteristics such as crowdsourcing, blogging and user-rich experience (O'Reilly, 2005). However, Social Media refers to the tools whilst SNS is more a type of channel. Hartshon (2010) highlighted five points of difference between these two: definition, communication style, return of investment, timely response and asking or telling. Senadheera et al. (2011) defined Social Media as "web based services that provided space for in-depth social interaction to share, discuss and collaborate, facilitated by one or more media rich functionalities" and Social Media Services as "individual websites that form the new media landscape" (p. 2). Boyd and Ellison (2007) suggested that SNS emphasise the communication channel used to connect

with other people who are already in a particular extended social network. They defined SNS as:

*a web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the systems (p. 211).*

This definition of SNS is consistent with the aim of the study as mentioned in the Abstract. The understanding is constructed from four aspects: 1) the investigation results, whether a specific factor impacted on their effective use of this application; 2) the identified implications of SNS adoption for staff motivation and job satisfaction, 3) the implication for staff's communication skills, who use SNS as their working tools; and 4) the degree of collaborative interaction among the staffs and customers in the Australian banking sector. This chapter is organised into several sections. First, it will examine the current literatures with respect to SNS adoption by the Australian banking sector, followed by a discussion of the research methodology adopted in the dissertation stages. Next, data analysis, in particular the EFA results, and the conclusions derived from the findings will be presented. In the final section, the limitations of this research are acknowledged, the contributions are stated, and a set of recommendations for further study are proposed.

## BACKGROUND

## SNS Characteristics

After the Web 2.0 technologies were introduced by Dale Dougherty in 2004, O'Reilly (2005) discussed Web 2.0's core capabilities which comprise: an application with web as platform, harnessing collective intelligence, remix-able data source and data transformation, focus on service

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