Chapter 2

Impact of General Social Media Experience on Usefulness for Business in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

This chapter looks at the adoption of general social media applications on usefulness for business, comparing the factors that influence adoption at work between Japan and the United States. In Japan, ease of use and usefulness for collective knowledge in general social media are predictors of usefulness for business social media, and in the United States, only usefulness for collective knowledge is a strong predictor of usefulness for business. The authors did not find behavioral intention to use social media in the workplace to be an important factor in predicting the usefulness of social media for business. The value of this research is its ability to understand the use of social media in the workplace to include how the experience of social media impacts on the expectation of usefulness for business and how the impact of ease of use differs from Japanese to the United States because of cultural, technological, and market reasons.

INTRODUCTION

This research paper addresses the impact from general social media perception or experience to perception of social media usefulness at work in both Japan and the United States. Is there a differ-ence? It appears that culture may have an impact on the use of social media. Social media is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological founda-tions of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan &

Haenlein, 2010). Kalamas, Mitchell, and Lester (2009) defined social media as, "a communication medium that is devoted to or characterized by interaction between participants or consumers of the medium".

The worldwide rapid diffusion and growing popularity, potential risks, negative impacts or controversial issues of social media exists. Das and Sahoo (2011) describe the impact of social networking on individuals: "The growing popularity of social networking sites (SNS) among the Internet users demands an introspection of personal and social behavior of human beings. Today 1.5 billion people across the world have their profiles in social networking sites. Everything looks nice when you create a profile on social networking site, but how you feel when someone starts blackmailing using your personal data. Your boss threatens to fire you for posting comments on SNS. You feel compulsive to check your profile during work hours. SNS becomes a reason for anxiety and addiction. It starts affecting personal relationship with spouse and family members. Such sites make private life and public life of an individual a digital document." However, it might be true that still many practitioners and researchers anticipate massive opportunities, positive impacts and abundant harvest from usage of social media in the workplace, even though the way to success is still ambiguous. Many people, especially the younger generation, have already had some experiences with social media at least in private settings. Before discussing effective and/or efficient usage of social media in the work place, it might be useful for us to clarify ordinary people's needs or expectation to social media in workplace.

Internal corporate use of social media has reported in articles, especially in big global companies such as IBM (2010) and Ernst & Young (Williamson, 2009). Social networking has increased collaboration at IBM. The article explained effects to increase collaboration in IBM by using internal social networking. The article showed preferable effects of implementing social networking to increase internal collaboration in a company (Greenberg, 2009). According to Williamson (2009), a partner at Ernst & Young and the company's Americans Inclusiveness Officer, communication with team members is the most important task for virtual team managers. For efficient and effective communication, managers inevitably use both traditional media and the latest innovative technologies. They should use not only e-mail and a company intranet but also 'a community home space', which seemed to be an equivalent word to 'social networking site', to help virtual team members connect with each other and engage in the team. Moreover Williamson (2009) pointed that telephone call, face-to-face meeting and an annual onsite company-wide event are also important to manage a global company. It means social media should be used as one of communication technologies in global work place and we should understand the country and cultural difference of social media.

One of the benefits of social media is the ability to reach a large group of people by tapping into the network. Each person has their own network and each node in the network taps into a completely different group of people. This creates a very large audience to reach people in general. Many of these social media services are familiar to the younger generation. Annetta (2008) explained that younger social media users spend an average of 6.5 hours a day using variety of media. Managers believe that younger workers are more likely to create high level of emotional engagement when using social media in the workplace. Robinson (2006) also discussed that the increased participation in the use of social media potentially leads to greater attendance by workers and potentially a higher recollection of while at work. Divol, Edelman, and Sarrazin (2012) found that companies invest millions of dollars in social media, with little understanding of how it influences consumers to favor their brands or buy their products. Without knowing how social media affects consumer be-

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