

Working Paper

Enterprise social media and organizational learning capability: Mediated moderation effect of social capital and informal learning

Anshu Sharma

Assistant Professor (Jindal Global Business School, Sonipat)

Jyotsna Bhatnagar

Professor (MDI, Gurgaon)

M.P. Jaiswal

Professor (IIM, Sambalpur)

Mohan Thite

Associate Professor (Griffith University, Australia)

Abstract

Purpose – With the increasing prevalence of social media in everyday life, scholars have argued the need of exploring enterprise social media for workplace outcomes. This study investigates the relationship between enterprise social media use and organizational learning capability by focusing on the mediating role of informal learning and the moderating role of social capital.

Design/methodology/approach–The paper developed and tested a mediated moderated model explaining the impact of enterprise social media on organizational learning capability. The study used temporally separated data of 281 respondents collected in two-waves from firms in India that use organizationally facilitated enterprise social media platforms for internal workplace communication.

Findings– An analysis of temporally separated two-wave data indicates that informal learning mediates the relationship between enterprise social media use and organizational learning capability. Also, social capital is found to moderate the effect of enterprise social media use on informal learning and informal learning mediated the moderation effect of social capital on relationship between enterprise social media use and organizational learning capability such that the relationship will be stronger when employees have a higher rather than lower level of social capital.

Research limitations/implications–The study theoretically contributes and extends the literature on enterprise social media and learning in organizations. This study provides important practical implications to support and institutionalize learning at work. The results of this study provide evidence that enterprise social media are not just networking tools but a platform for learning. Findings of the study suggest that enterprise social media can be one such tool to promote and capture employee informal learning. The results also show that social capital plays a critical role

in predicting the extent to which employees learn informally using ESM, thereby building OLC. This result suggests that organizations should make conscious and concerted efforts to build employee social capital. The study findings also have interesting implications for learning & development (L&D) and information technology (IT) managers who wish to implement technology for collaborative purposes.

Originality/value—Addressing the underlying processes that explain how enterprise social media positively influence organizational learning capability was highlighted as a critical research gap that needs attention. The paper is novel in its approach as it provides statistically significant evidence for the relationship between enterprise social media and its impact on employee outcomes, an area pertinent in today's digital economy, however, received sparse attention by management scholars so far. It also provides empirical grounds towards a meaningful shift in the social media discourse – transition from being traditionally viewed primarily as 'a networking platform' to 'a learning platform.'

Keywords: enterprise social media; organizational learning capability; informal learning; social capital; mediated moderation