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Social Media's Role in Developing an Employees Sense of Belonging in the Work Place as an HRM Strategy

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the strategies of keeping qualified employees within the business by considering the need and desire of maintenance and growth of the business with the use of social media, a new communication medium formed owing to developing electronic technologies of today, as a form of communication, through the eye of the employee.

In this study we have dealt with the level of social media-employee interaction and its relationship and its effect on organizational commitment. To determine this effect, we have included the valuation results of the surveys taken with the employees. Thus we tried to show the strategic importance of social media for the business and the recruitment of human resources to match its conditions.

Keywords: Social Media, Human Resources, Employee Engagement

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1. Introduction

The role of media and communication technologies in our lives are rapidly developing. New communication technologies are creating new possibilities for sharing ideas and productions, allowing a more enhanced environment for discussions and sharing. Social media environments differ from traditional communication tools as its influence is expanding in an increasingly faster manner within the social realm.

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1.1. Social Media

1.1.1. The Birth and Definition of Social Media

As highlighted, the idea behind Social Media is far from groundbreaking. Nevertheless, there seems to be confusion among managers and academic researchers alike as to what exactly should be included under this term, and how Social Media differ from the seemingly-interchangeable related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. It therefore makes sense to take a step back and provide insight regarding where Social Media come from and what they include (A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, 2010).

The term Social Media covers the usage of online tools and web sites that allow interaction between users to share information, opinions and interests. The opportunities of social media for corporations and organizations' are the eases of reaching out to target audience groups, taking easier action and putting out their messages through the communication tools it provides. The nature of social media tools also provides swift and open participancy in communication within organizations themselves (Solmaz, 2012). Apart from social media being a personal communication medium and a social sharing network, Social media also reflects that the internet is a new public domain. Having the characteristics of being a public domain, Non-Governmental organizations uses this medium of social network as a tool to openly discuss their ideologies, put out and spread their messages, and to mobilize their supporters and/or members.

Social media is the layout of applications and technologies that ease the productive interaction between new business forms, the encouragement of social forms and technological presentations using humans, content and data it is an online platform where the participants convey their ideas, mutual interest and experiences by conversing with each other in a natural and sincere way (Evans, 2008). The basis of this is that it enables the communion and participants to integrate within a shared environment and at most times enable the user to enhance their information and therefore their options.

1.1.2. The Areas of Usage of Social Media

The content of the social media is specified totally by the individual, and the individuals are able to interact with each other using these mediums. In other words, without the limitation of time and space (mobile based) social media is essentially where sharing and interacting is the main form of communication. "Communication" and "Sharing" are the fundamental basis for the social media platform.

Social media combines technology and social entrepreneurship with words, pictures, video and audio. Although the definition and extent of the tools of social media vary from person to person, main components that computer or mobile devices support like blogs, micro blogs, online chat, RSS feeds, social networks, social news sites, forums, podcasts, video sharing websites and virtual worlds are the various forms which social media can be brought about (Dikmen, G. Ö , 2011) (Hatipoğlu, H. Burak ,2009).

An application or a website should consist of the following to be named in this manner:

Users who are independent of any publisher,

User-based content,

Interaction between users,

Be without the constraints of time and space

1.1.3. Usage of Social Media in Businesses

One of the concepts that emerged after the social media revolution is the concept of social business. Social Business evaluates their internal and international customers within the virtual channel of this medium, and targets these social employees and other social individuals. The main purpose is to reach out to the social individual it has to sell its product to, and to succeed in this it needs to have the right social employees with the right qualifications. In Conclusion, a social business needs to use the tools of integrated communication and together with this it needs to be a dominant player in the field of social media to have access to the social individual phenomenon (Koçoğlu, D.2012).

A social individual can reach out to information using different channels; she/he can follow news from social networks like Twitter, Facebook, and Friendfeed. The social individual puts its priority to the news shared by people in his/her network (Solmaz B., Görkemli N, 2012).

The social individual has access to the latest information about businesses via the social platforms and has a faster way of feedback. The Social individual is nested in technology, does not open periodical commercial/promotional tweets, but has the ones it has interest to always open.

The social individual expects the business it is interested in to be on the social networks and give the latest information it has to offer. Thus the business should always be in touch with these social individuals and should create activities that could interest these social people. The social individual expects to be interactively involved with the social business. But the individual doesn't want bulk mail or tweets but wants the interaction to be within their choice whenever they want to be interacted per se. The social businesses should have social network experts that are constantly online and who have a wide follower base on social networks within their organization (Sökmen, A. 2000). (Koçoğlu, D.2012).

Because a business is actively conversed on many levels, the social individual expects any employee of the business to be informed about an inquiry it has about on another platform. For example; a social individual expects the customer support personnel to be informed about his/her inquiry/complaint about the business which he/she has previously written via Twitter. Likewise, the candidate employee should expect the human resources personnel to be informed and have a comment on at any negative feedback the candidates might have seen on the social medium.

After the concept of the Social Employee, human resources management has been termed as Social HRM. Social HRM is the concept born after the mixed use of traditional communication tools with the likes of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and others. Social media websites such as MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube have grown rapidly in recent years making it easier than ever to both view and distribute personal media on the Web (E.M. Morgan et al. 2010).

There is unilateral communication between the employee and the business in the traditional HRM method. Although it seems that the Human Resources collects data from the employee to present new rights and working opportunities, the employee is not actively involved in the process, and stays as the one that is evaluated passively. With Social HRM, we see that this has totally changed.

Social media is a medium where almost everyone that has access to the internet is involved in. Not only individuals but also businesses have an obligation to be a part of this medium. This is because the target audience is almost obligated to be inside the social medium. This doesn't only mean that a business has a company page, a website, or give advertisements over the internet, this means to be a living identity, a trademark and to be actively involved and communicate in this medium. This is because the social media is an area where it is possible to be actively converse and communicate with the target audience. The difference from the classical employer-employee relationship, apart from giving information, the most important premium of the many ways of establishing this communication, is the strengthening of the brand value and loyalty. Not only that, social media also has many advantages when compared with the traditional methods used. A company which effectively uses the social media has easier access to information on potential and existing employees, and to determine their traits and preferences. Social media platforms are being more and more important where people listen to others thoughts, ideas and recommendations, and for companies it is crucial to note that these are determinant factors that affect the other users' preferences.

1.2. Human Resources Aspect

1.2.1. Employee's Sense of Belonging

The loyalty, devoutness and participation towards the business are considered as a factor of positive effects and premium towards the business (Göksel, 2012). Organizational loyalty is generally described as the desire of an employee to stay within the organization and his/her commitment to the company's objectives and values. The organizational commitment reflects the psychological commitment felt by the employee towards the organization. This commitment is derived from the strong belief the employee holds for the organization values, loyalty and interest in the job done (Sökmen, A. 2000).

Organizational Commitment is the loyalty an employee feels towards the corporation, and derives from the identification of mutual values, purpose and goals. As the commitment of the worker increases, productiveness, trust and attachment to the work done and overall performance increases while absence rates, work transfer decreases (Göksel, A., Aydınlan, B. 2012).

The most important outcome of the HRM functions and Organizational commitment policies, which enable the determination of the employees' roles within the organization, as mentioned above are the sense of belonging. The strengthening of this sense enable the business to get a hold of and keep qualified and productive individuals within their organization and this in turn will have a positive impact on competition (Uysal, G. 2005).

1.2.2. Creating Sense of Belonging and its Outcome

To create a sense of belonging, the organizations must show that they care about their employees by understanding their needs of communication and success. Mutual expectations in businesses are explained through the process of social relationships, change and communication. It has more than ever been a necessity for businesses that see their employees as sustainable competitive advantage to be aware of their expectations, their priorities in the field of HRM, and their positive or negative opinions and thoughts concerning the business. In addition the organizations should be baldly open about their aims, missions, visions and their employee's role within the organization. Businesses that want to keep and improve their productive workforce and a workforce that has high rate of commitment to the business will enable the company to be successful under competitive circumstances.

Not only does the business gain from this commitment, but also the employee benefits from this commitment. High employee commitment has a positive effect on the individual like the sense of being a part of something and sense of trust and safety.

In general most of the employees aim to take a better turn and direct themselves towards a specific goal, or is a member of prestigious establishments. Organizational commitment enables the employee to gain organizational rewards, due to the effort an employee applies to the business policies and because the continuation of his/her efforts (Cengiz 2000).

2. Research Findings

2.1. Objective

The research has been projected to determine whether there is a relationship between organizational commitment and social media usage and the effects of social media on employees when used by employers.

2.2. Sample

The sampling method to be used is preferred to be picked from non-random sampling and of convenience sampling because of its ease in the collection of data.

As a sample, using convenience sampling method, a total of 88 participants who are company employees in the service sector in Istanbul filled in an online survey prepared and sent by us. These participants were Human Resources

Managers from organizations with Human Resources Departments. After eliminating the incomplete and incorrect forms a total of 66 surveys were evaluated for the final sampling.

2.3. Method

The evaluation medium used was that of a survey. The questionnaires in the survey were collected from studies involving Social Media and Organizational Commitment. The survey has a total of three sections together with demographic information. In the first section, the participants Age, Sex, Educational Background is asked, In the second section, the usage and habits of social media is evaluated, and on the last section the participants were asked to answer the the role of Social Media in their business and the employers commitment to it with a 5 point likert scale.

2.4. Hypothesis

The aim of the research, its hypothesis, research model and analysis method and its results are given below.

H1: Social Media usage has a increasingly positive effect on the employees sense of belonging to the organization.

H2: Employees are influenced by the usage of Social Media applications carried out by their employers.

2.5. Findings

The results acquired from the participants were analyzed by package program SPSS 16.0. These values have been put through a reliability analysis, and a 0.866 Cronbach's Alpha value has been acquired. Because this value was higher than 0.70, the test is considered reliable.

The acquired data is primarily seen as to whether it is suitable for factor analysis, and in accordance the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO) and Barlett tests has been concluded. The KMO sample coherence has been found as 0,836, and the Barlett normal distribution result for the test has been found to be suggestive ($p < 0,05$). The result conducted with the factor analysis, the first 7 questions are valued as demographic information and user habits, the third section which consists of questions 8 to 23 is determined to be a four factor structure. The questions have come about in the form of a four-factor structure.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	530,381
	Df	120
	Sig.	,000

The first factor, "Organization Commitment in Social Media"; second factor "The Impact of Social Media"; the third factor "Sense of Belonging in the Workplace; and finally the fourth factor "The Usage of Social Media in the Process of Recruitment"

With the factor analysis, the credibility of the test has been defined as 0.844 according to the Cronbach Alfa value.

Table 2. Organization Commitment in Social Media: Assesment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
8. I follow companies that I am interested in when using Social Media.	65	1	5	3,95	1,007
9. I share news about the companies I am interested in when using Social Media.	63	1	5	3,43	1,132
10. I stand up for a company that I am following in the Social Media.	65	1	5	3,40	1,087
11. I am happy to communicate with employees(former/current) of a company that I am following in the Social Media.	64	1	5	3,41	1,165
12. I share favorable/sympathetic thoughts and feelings I have about a company that I am following in the Social Media.	65	1	5	3,65	,959
13. Effective use of social media by the employer increases the value I put into my job.	63	1	5	3,73	1,035
14. I try to help other people by sharing my solutions for problems that they might be experiencing with the companies that I am following in the social media.	61	1	5	3,38	1,128
15. I tend to share the adverts and other messages of the companies I follow in the social media.	65	1	5	3,37	1,069

The questions that are partaken in the third part of our survey (q8-15) were asked to determine and understand the look and their level of support for companies and businesses that are active in the Social Media. When we analyze the answers to these question we see that individuals are more prone to share their interests and topics about the companies that are on the social media platform, and the importance of their employers activity in the social media and its positive effect on the value put in to their job.

In the same way,

Table 3. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
18. I have long-term career ambitions for the company I work for.	Between Groups	,293	1	,293	,295	,589
	Within Groups	61,457	62	,991		
	Total	61,750	63			
19. In the short-run I do not have any intention of looking for a job.	Between Groups	,001	1	,001	,001	,982
	Within Groups	66,484	62	1,072		
	Total	66,484	63			
20. I have an active résumé in job search networks online.	Between Groups	,011	1	,011	,009	,924
	Within Groups	71,974	62	1,161		
	Total	71,984	63			

When we evaluate the Anova table according to the Anova analysis that cover business usage of Social Media activities and the questions concerning the sense of belonging factor;

- a. I have long-term career ambitions for the company I work for. According to our hypothesis Sig. Value $p=0.589 > 0.05$
- b. In the short-run I do not have any intention of looking for a job. According to our hypothesis Sig. Value $p=0.982 > 0.05$
- c. I have an active résumé in job search networks online. According to our hypothesis Sig. Value $p=0.924 > 0.05$

with these results, H1 is rejected

When the factor of Impact Social Media is considered "Employees are influenced by the usage of Social Media applications carried out by their employers.", The distribution of the answers to the following statements are as followed:

Table 4. Social Media Level Factor Evaluation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
16. It is generally considered that a company that has positive feedback from users within the social media, It effects my stance positively towards the company.	65	2	5	3,89	,868
17. It is generally considered that a company that has negative feedback from users within the social media, It effects my stance negatively towards the company.	65	2	5	3,69	,917
18. I feel that in general a candidate employee can make his/herself heard by sharing content aimed at companies.	64	2	5	3,81	,990
19. I think that companies should direct their human resources policies in accordance with the discussions and comments made by their employees and candidate employees in the social media.	64	1	5	3,73	1,027

When the average values for the answers are considered, a mean value of 3,69-3,89 are put through. In this circumstance, the usage of Social media by the business has an importance to the employees, and has a positive effect on them. In order to test the H2 hypothesis with accordance to these statements, we apply the ANOVA analysis; these are as followed:

Table 5. ANOVA

13. Effective use of social media by the employer increases the value I put into my job.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	27,062	4	6,765	9,972	,000
Within Groups	39,351	58	,678		
Total	66,413	62			

$P=0.000 < 0.005$; Hypothesis H2 is accepted.

3. CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

From the point of information economies and digital marketing examples and practice forms, although it is a relatively new medium, Social Media is rapidly developing. With this development, together with the personal usage

areas, the corporate participation areas are expanding. As social media was a tool for Marketing and Communication it has started to be used in the fields of Human Resources and other bodies for different purposes.

By the principles of strategic management in order for businesses to achieve the objectives to perform the proper strategies and provide effective implementation of these strategies and in the same way must create an effective communication field. This communication to establish a business environment in the same way by building skills with internal clients and should feel the need to reach out to talents and keep them in the organization. In fact, the strategy established with stakeholders to achieve the most critical position in this network belongs to these talents.

With this research, we have tried to see how personal use of the social media reflects in corporate use and with this to determine the employee's social network use habits and their views on businesses/companies. The results that derived from the hypothesis evaluation, we could say that employees follow their organizations and their employers via social media and give importance to the messages that are shared by the employer through social media. Not only their give importance to the messages shared, but also the an employer that is active on the social media has a parallel effect on the employee as his/her commitment is positively enhanced and the value put in to the job done is increased likewise.

When we look at the results of the hypothesis, Usage of social media in businesses don't have a direct effect on the sense of belonging (H1, rejected) but we see a positive effect on the motivation of the employee (H2, accepted). One of the effects we can see especially are acceptance of the increasing level of interaction between employees, but the varying number and dominance of factors involving sense of belonging to an organization through social media do not have a direct influence in the overall sense of belonging.

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