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Social Networking Sites Vs. Employee Performance: An Insight

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Abstract

In this Click and Mortar world the use of social sites is becoming common. Different people use different sites for different reasons like: people connect on linked-In for professional relationship building, Face book for personal reason like fun and entertainment, Twitter for social networking and write personal blogs in order to share their ideas, thoughts and viewpoints. So today, it becomes very important for the organizations to design workforce according to changing environment. The main aim of this research paper is to find out the impact of social networking sites on employee performance and its influence on generation Y talent. The findings of the research paper show that there exists a positive correlation between all the selected parameters of employees' performance. Also social learning is rapidly gaining precedence among Gen. Y employees as preferred learning and relationship building practice in organizations.

Keywords: 21st Century working population, E Media, Employee Performance, E Networking, Generation Y, Social Networking.

1. Introduction

E- Networking has made a tremendous growth in this today's environment. People are using number of sites for expressing their human emotions. Most organizations have started using E Networking portals for creating good employee relationships. Social Networking is a medium through which people interact with each other online and build their relations, share ideas, information and try to create an emotional bond. A social network service consists of the user profile, his/her social links, and various other types of facilities which provide means for users to interact over the Internet, through e-mail or other messaging services. The different types of social networking services include category places (namely school friends/classmates etc.), ways to unite friends (through self-description pages), and a reference system linked to confidence and trust. In short, Social networking is a unified system with the help of which groups are created, support is obtained, information is communicated, and actions are taken to accomplish certain results.

In its progression, talent has also shrug off its traditional, loyal and non assertive role in 21st century. Change, transition, transformation and settling down to the new ways of doing business and running an enterprise were possible and achieved only through this talent recruitment and retention. Today, the organizations all over the world have realized the true power and contribution of the talent towards their success, growth and prosperity. Consequently, every organization is

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striving to retain their talent as it will successfully manoeuvre the organization through turbulent times to avoid being unsure and nervous about their future and existence. To meet this challenge organizations have started understanding the dynamics and demographics of today's employees which comprises of four different generations for e.g. Gen Y (Born Between 1990- present, approximate current age under 30), Gen X (Born Between 1975-1990, late 20s to early 30s), Baby Boomers (1965-1975, early 40s to mid 50s), Veterans (1950 or early 1960s, 60+). It is also estimated that 2020, more than 50% of the future working generation of India will constitute Gen Y and by 2030 it will constitute 75% of world working population. Gen Y is known to be the toughest generation to retain. Hence, it is a big challenge to retain this generation with long-established talent retention strategies. So the developing trend of communication i.e. social media can be used as one of the medium to retain them and make them happy at workplace. This media have remarkable capability to connect and communicate with people in an interactive manner. Moreover, Gen Y is technology loving, is energetic on social media all the time and also expect its access at their workplace also.

Social media became popular between 2004 and 2006, when Face book, You Tube blogs, Twitter, My Space and Linked-In were created. These are the common social networking sites majorly in use. Face book came in to existence in February 2004 and is one of the well-liked social networking websites in use by today's every category of generation. This networking site was initially opened only to students at Harvard University, but now has gained recognition by a membership of over 200 million. Followed by this Linked-In started in May 2003, and is majorly used to network within a desired specialized atmosphere and facilitates individuals to build professional, career-oriented relationships. "Linked-In is the most business-oriented of the four big social networking websites" (Wilson, 2009). 36 million is the population size (membership), using Linked-In. In the same year (August 2003) MySpace started its operation and was more directed toward the musically inclined group of people linking different bands and groups rather than connecting people. 126 million is the membership MySpace has a membership of about 126 million. Following the trend of these social networking sites in March 2006, in self promotional category Twitter became one of the four big social networking websites used by celebrities. Fans can get instant updates about where their favorite singer or actor is, what they are doing, how they are feeling, etc. Twitter has around 10 million members.

Employers are aware about the increase in usage of social networking sites at the workplace by their employees, but they are helpless in preventing its usage during work hours so as an alternative this study suggests that employers make use of social networks instead. A positive role of networking sites would be to use them as a mediator between management and its employees in order to make sure that employees are productive but not overburdened and tensed. Another use could be as marketing tools. In order for businesses to work with these social networking websites, it is very important that they have a policy on use of social networking in the workplace. This commendation is based on the well accepted fact that use of social networking in the workplace continues to increase. The required internet security will never be just right in filtering personal or business information on social networks. The level of this problem is ongoing and impossible to predict. It is a known fact that today's young generation is updated with the use of latest technologies and hence it is obvious that modern organizations incorporate use of social media for talent management i.e. to enhance their on the Job performance.

2. Review of Literature

For the current research work enriched literature was gathered from various sources.

Social Media and Employee Performance

Somani and Gupta (2012) found that various companies want their employees to be highly motivated to increase their productivity, for better furnishing of goods and services and to improve its goodwill. In order to manage the performance of its employees, organizations keep close contact with them and are even having control on employees' networking activities. For performance review, keeping the employees busy within company activities and giving out organization's information at real time they can create informal social networks groups. Pruthi (2010), mentioned that organizations rigorously use social networks to communicate within organizations and to communicate information to its employees to increase their knowledge and work performance. Further to this, Jim Flynn (2011) found that working on social networking sites while at work, improves their performance, enhance their knowledge, working capabilities, motivation and helps in developing close bond between employee and employer. Sin Avalos (2011) categorized employees on the basis of habit of response on social networking in to five parts: Creators, Critics, Collectors, spectators and Inactive. Collins and Clark (2003) found that use of social networking sites builds competitive advantage for the company and its HR department by creating powerful relationship between top level of management and employees and also help in improving employee performance. Bosch (2009) mentioned that companies design performance training methods based upon social networking, which has solid impact on the performance of the employee. Liu and Lee (2010) conclude that organization relates information provided by employees on social networking sites with their performance and collaborates with filtering employees' performance. Organizations can also look forward to use these sites in order to develop HR practices. For them the main motive behind the use of these networking sites is building social contacts and sharing (Ehrlich, 2011). Same social networking becomes power for organizations when it's used to establish good relationship with employees, to direct them, to collect information about employee behavior and train them. These sites affect skills, productivity, qualification, knowledge and motivation level of the different employees (Flynn, 2011).

Influence of Social Media on Gen Y

Advertising Age introduced the term "Generation Y" in 1993 as the last generation; this generation represents youngest members of the workforce globally (Born after 1990) also named as, *Generation Next, Neters, Echo Boomers, the Millennium Generation, Millennial, Net Generation, Nexters, and Digital Generation*. This most recent entrants to the workforce grew up during prosperous times but find them-selves entering a post boom economy. They have high expectations, accept challenges and seek job satisfaction. Nexters are comfortable with diversity and are the first generation to take technology for granted. They have lived much of their lives with technological innovations like i-pads, tablets, ATMs, DVDs, cell phones, laptops, and Internet (Sanghi, 2008) Most of the research studies are paying attention on generation Y, most of the organizations are talking about its retention but little work has been done to retain this generation. Various studies and publications have discovered the importance of social media to Gen Y. When millennium generation work values are decreasing social media's prominence in their lives is rapidly increasing. A survey reveals that 80% nexters have an account on social media, while 54% of these use it as a way of killing time (Twenge, 2010). Facebook was named as the site with the most awareness, followed by Twitter, Google+ and My Space (Meese, 2013) and 58% said they use Twitter all the time (Walter, 2012). Research studies points that 42% of Gen Y checks their Facebook updates more than ten times a day, 73% spend more than one hour a day on Facebook. World Technology Report (2012) by Cisco reveals that out of 2,800 Gen Y members, from 17 countries, roughly 33% give top priority to social media freedom, while accepting a job offer & 64% of college students enquire about social media usage policies

during job interviews (Woods, 2011). These results further authenticate the inclination of Gen Y towards these tools.

3. Problem Statement

Employers are worried in regard to use of social networking sites at workplace i.e. apparent loss in employee efficiency, information leakage through employee gossiping, resultant damage to a company's reputation which further leads to e scams by "cyber crooks,". It is definitely a matter of unease for the HR department and top management that the employees at work waste time on these websites which ultimately reduce their productivity. A possible use of social networking sites for management could be to ensure that employees are efficient on their job if not overworked. HR planners can always use it as a promotion tool in hiring and retaining young generation. Social networking is a consistent web enabled tool to form alliances, to support employees, for communication and transfer information, and to take actions for certain results. If companies have to adopt a system where they need to allow the use of social networking websites, they should have a policy on its use and misuse at workplace. Keeping the above scenario in mind the above topic was chosen for research.

4. Objectives

The rationale of the research work is:

1. To review and analyze the effect of growing use of Social Networking Sites on employee's performance i.e. skills, knowledge, productivity;
2. To study the influence of social media on Generation Y from both employer and employees' perspective.

5. Research Methodology

Primary and secondary data both has been collected in order to achieve the above objectives. Interview method and questionnaire method has been used for primary data collection. Interview was divided in to two parts: part one deals with the questions related to use of social networking sites (SNS), and part two deals with the questions related to impact of social media on performance through variables like knowledge, skills, and productivity. A structured questionnaire was prepared containing close ended questions. Part 1 of the Questionnaire deals with Demographic Profile of the respondents and the second part deals with the questions related to Usage of social networking sites and its impact on the performance of the employees through different parameters like knowledge, skills and productivity. Data was analyzed using SPSS 19.0. Probability sampling method was used to gather data from 125 professionals. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire was checked. Correlation analysis was applied for results.

Reliability Testing of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire reliability was checked using Cronbach's Alpha to estimate the reliability of a psychometric test. The reliability of the items is .882. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. The results of the test (.882) show that the items are reliable.

6. Analysis and Findings

Demographic Analysis

The respondents were between 20-40 years of age. Out of the total sample the respondents were found to be in the ratio of 56:44 percent on gender basis i.e. most of the respondents were male. Most of the respondents were (60 percent) Post Graduates and 34 percent were simply graduates whereas only 6 percent were diploma holders. Total work experience of the

respondents was also divided in to four categories with 32 percent falling in to the category of 3-5 years of experience. 44 percent had an experience of between 1-3 years. Further only 6 percent had less than one year experience and remaining had more than 5 years of experience. Among social networking sites majority of the employees use Face-book (75%) followed by Twitter and LinkedIn. Out of 125 employees 46.4 percent responded that they daily use social networking sites at workplace that too several times a day. Whereas 26 percent respondents confirmed that they don't assess these sites at workplace at all.

The study also shows that large number of respondents (74%) use SNS for chatting, sharing and uploading photos among their family members, friends and relatives. Therefore, it is clear that they are wasting productive working hours. Only 13.6 % respondents use networking sites for communicating office information.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

	Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	55	44.0
	Male	70	56.0
Qualification	Post Graduate	75	60.0
	Graduate	42	34.0
	Diploma Holders/Others	8	6.0
Total Experience	Less Than 1 year	8	6.0
	1yr. –Less than 3 years	55	44.0
	3 yrs. –Less than 5 years	40	32.0
	5 Years and above	22	18.0
Frequency Distribution Related to Usage			
Usage Status (Networking Sites)	Facebook	94	75.2
	LinkedIn	17	13.6
	Twitter	8	6.4
	My Space	3	2.4
	Others	3	2.4
Frequency of SNS usage at workplace	Daily (Several Times)	58	46.4
	Daily (Once)	14	11.2
	Weekly	9	7.2
	Monthly	4	3.2
	Irregular	14	11.2
	Don't Use	26	20.8
Purpose of using SNS at workplace	Personal Chat	74	59.2
	Official Information	17	13.6
	Both Personal and Official Communication	34	27.2
Accessibility of SNS at workplace	No Access	50	40
	During Break time	37	29.6
	Access without superior knowledge	23	18.4
	Allowed to access	15	12

Source: Primary Data

Out of sample population of 125 employees, only 50 (40%) responded that their employers does not allow them to use SNS during working hours whereas it is also noticeable that 37 (29.6%) employees access these sites during break time and 18.4% access without their superior's knowledge. Only 12% of the population accesses these sites with their employers' consent and knowledge.

Objective 1: Effect of Rising Use of Social Networking Sites on Employee Performance

Table 2 shows the effect of using social networking sites at workplace. Approximately half of the sample population did not agree with most of the negative effects of using social sites at workplace for e.g. Reputation, employee performance, morale, productivity and harassment etc. whereas some of the employees were neutral in giving their responses towards these questions. Whereas employees were agree when they were asked about the positive effects of using social networking sites while at work e.g. improvement in job skills (47%), employee’s knowledge about their work profile (47%) and their motivation level improves (48%).

Table 2: Effects of Rising Use of Social Networking Sites

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Using social sites while at work effects organization’s reputation negatively.	23%	46%	31%
SNS usage lowers down the employee performance	28%	51%	21%
It negatively effects employee morale	25%	42%	33%
Its usage improves employees’ knowledge about their work profile.	47%	23%	30%
It improves employees’ job skills.	47%	32%	21%
Usage of Social Networking Sites leads to leakage of organization’s information.	36%	43%	20%
It helps in improving employees’ motivation level.	48%	27%	25%
Company harasses employees by using information shared by employees on these sites.	48%	15%	37%
Negative impact on productivity	32%	46%	22%
Using Social Sites helps in building strong relationships between employees and management.	76%	18%	6%
These sites prove highly effective in understanding employees needs at workplace.	67%	13%	20%
Use of social networking sites builds competitive advantage for the company and its HR department.	72%	14%	14%

Source: Primary Data

Above table also depicts that 37% employees remain neutral when they were asked questions related to their harassment by management and various legal obligations organizations face because employees putting misleading information on these sites while using them which may cause negative reputation for the organisation. Their responses were also very positive in context to building strong relationship (76%), better understanding of employees’ needs (67%) and helps in building competitive advantage for HR and company both having response rate of 72%.

Correlation Analysis of the Data

Table 3 shows the relationship between usage of social networking sites and its impact on employees’ performance. For performance judgment purpose, three parameters are taken in to

consideration i.e. skills, knowledge and productivity of an employee. Results show that there is a positive correlation between all the parameters of employees' performance. The results were significant at the level of 0.01-0.05 between social networking and skills of employees, their productivity and knowledge. Correlation results between social networking sites and employees' skills is .684 (Sig. level= 0.000), between knowledge and networking sites it is .460 (Sig. level= 0.000) and between productivity and networking sites it is .348 (Sig. level .006).

Table 3: Correlation of Social Networking Sites with Performance Parameters

Performance Parameters	Pearson Correlation (Sig.)	Skills	Knowledge	Productivity
Skills	Pearson Cor. (Sig.)	1	0.460 (0.000)	.684** (.000)
Knowledge	Pearson Cor.(Sig.)	0.460 (0.000)	1	0.348(0.006)
Productivity	Pearson Cor. (Sig.)	.684** (.000)	0.348 (0.006)	1

Source: Primary Data

The results indicate that correlation between dependent and independent variables are strongly positive and all parameters are highly correlated as far as their relationship is concerned in terms of usage of social networking sites. It is further stated that with little efforts from employer side this correlation can be improved.

Objective 2: Influence of Social Media on Generation Y

Employees' Perspective

Web enabled business processes such as e commerce and tele /video conferencing symbolizes the times we live in. For instance, television took thirteen years and radio took thirty eight years (almost three times) to reach to the fifty million population- it has taken the internet barely four years to do so (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). It is difficult to imagine that on a routine average, the Sprint network transmits data electronically, equals to seventeen million books available in the US library of Congress and it is also predicted that by the end of this year i.e. 2017, voice data will be only two percent of the total electronic traffic carried (Coyle, Cheryl, L. (2008).

Research studies clearly shows that it is very difficult to maintain performance of new age employees just with lucrative salaries, perks and other benefits as they have more career options available to them, jobs have become more resilient, job span has reduced, and new rules of emotional contact have also replaced the employees' trustworthiness and job security with multi-skilling and high mobility. Generation Y employees have high expectations from work-life and they want to achieve everything very fast which necessitate the materialization of novel strategies to retain them. To counter this retention problem as well as in response to this conversion, organizations should adopt an e networking media to performance management, which needs deep understanding of various expectations and demands of today's generation also need to understand the different via media to realize these demands as well. This is only possible through regular interactions between employees and employers, by applying various e networking applications of engaging and retaining employees having different capabilities.

Today's development oriented, technology savvy, acknowledgment seeking, generation has craving for feedback and also a team oriented. Social media tools assure them all, by offering an easy to get to, open medium for sharing content, communication and building relationship.

Not only this, social media supports talent management strategies including Training and Development (T&D) programmes, employee association and appreciation programmes, in-house communiqué, creating an employer brand and career development programmes. Gen Y prefers practical, team-oriented, unceremonious learning and self-paced modules with personalized content. To successfully train and connect employees, companies may adopt tools like help chats, videos, teaching communities, blogs, wikis, discussion boards, internal blogs, Face Book, Linked-In and intranets. In addition, social media as a learning tool is rapidly gaining precedence in the form of social mentoring to provide support to new joiners to be in constant connect and to share expertise in organizations. This new generation prefers building rapport with team members as well as seniors, using various e-enabled interactive sessions.

Employer's Perspective

Leaders are equipped with tools like blogs, social intranets, and internal networking sites to update employees about clear objectives associated with organizational goals as well as strategies that enhance employee satisfaction. Leaders are trying hard to build up Gen Y's pursuit for uninterrupted feedback by prompt and professional communication channels of social media. From past so many years Information Technology giant IBM has been productively using social media technology for uninterrupted and concurrent communication through its in-house tool called Beehive and several blogs for its employees where they can share their views and give suggestions also related to various policies and plans of the company (www.ibm.co.in). Gen. Y want association between their personal and organization values which is possible through social media. Social media acts a bridge to generate as well as endorse employer brands. Most of the big companies like Reliance, Infosys, Genpact etc. uses social media sites to catch the attention of prospective candidates through its career dedicated page on Face book. These tools are in parlance to new emotional agreement where candidates are liable to their career progression a tendency well-known among Gen Y employees. Interactive internal hiring tools, wikis and blogs help in internal mobility programs by providing Internal Job Postings (IJPs), this exhibit organization has thought of about career paths for employees and also enhances their loyalty towards organisation. In agreement to Gen Y emotional profile, the theoretical framework explains social media leads to performance management of employees in an efficient and effective way. As soon as today's generation needs are fulfilled by social media-enabled HR strategies, their perception about organization's technological support levels also change, which in return transform into positive outcomes i.e. higher job satisfaction, engagement and retention.

Further, according to Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory of motivation esteem or appreciation are the factors which are inherent human needs and are basic motivational factors need to be satisfied. Today's generation is no exception. Organizations can fulfill these needs by providing a platform that makes their achievements more noticeable.

7. Conclusion and Suggestions

Exploring the present issue has a major proposition especially it carries the interest of HR department, HR learners and practitioners who have concern for employees' performance. First employers must concentrate on employees' attitude towards using E Networking. They can initiate their training programmes in accordance with the habits of using these networking sites by their employees. Employers can make Face Book page and use it for training, even can start a blog and ask its employees to share their views. Employers should also develop a right approach for e media and should be taken as constructive and decent medium of social communication.

Further, taking into consideration the existing war for talent, a company cannot survive in the job market if it fails to keep hold of its workforce simply due to lack of hi-tech access. In context to it, organizations must widen their social media track to manage young generation employees in a better way.

8. Limitations and Future Scope of Research

The current research work is more academic in nature and proposes a conceptual framework. The study have selected only three parameters to judge the impact of social networking usage on employees' performance i.e. skills, knowledge and productivity. There could have been other contributing factors also. This paper is just a beginning on the topic from the perspective of HR specialists. As result clearly depicts that social media contributions are significant, as far as retention and performance of Gen Y employees are concerned, it has some shortcomings which can be answered in further researches.

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Social Networking Sites Vs. Employee Performance: An Insight

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