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Impact of Social Network Usage on Employees' Work Performance in Public Organizations: Evidence from Vietnam

Le Thanh TUNG*
Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
** Corresponding author, tung.lt@ou.edu.vn*

Dinh Van HOANG
Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
hoangdv.22ab@ou.edu.vn

Abstract. *This study aims to improve understanding of the relationship between social media usage and work performance in the Vietnamese public sector by examining the roles of trust, network ties, shared vision, and knowledge transfer. By using the Media Synchronicity Theory as the theoretical framework, the study suggests that the use of social networks within public organizations can lead to increased trust among employees, which in turn can improve communication and collaboration. Additionally, social networks can help to promote a shared vision among employees and foster strong network ties, which can facilitate knowledge transfer and lead to enhanced work performance. The findings of this study provide empirical support for the importance of trust, network ties, shared vision, and knowledge transfer in understanding the connection between social media usage and work performance in Vietnam's public sector.*

Keywords: work performance, labour productivity, social network, public employee, public organization.

Introduction

Social media and social networks have become essential elements of modern life, not only for individuals but also for companies to connect, communicate, and do business (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015). Social networking sites are increasingly becoming a favored communication channel for many people both within and outside of the office (Fusi & Feeney, 2018). In the digital age, the strategies for using social network usage in the internal organization to enhance connectivity, share information, and knowledge transfer to organize effective activities (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021). It's an urgent need for the existence and development of the organization. Social network usage in organizations can have a positive effect and improve work performance and academic achievement (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016; Chen & Wei, 2020; Busu & Gyorgy, 2021; Yang et al., 2021). On the other hand, the use of social network usage also brings with it many consequences, such as interrupting working time while performing their duties in the workplace (Mansi & Levy, 2013), disclosing confidential information that can damage an organization's reputation (Wilcox et al., 2014), or reducing productivity (Fusi & Feeney, 2018). Most studies on the impact of social network usage have focused on businesses in sectors such as insurance, banking, restaurants, and hospitality (Leon et al., 2017; Houston et al., 2018; Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021). The usage of social network sites is multi-dimensional, at least in terms of use and the benefits and drawbacks of using social network sites at work, which should be adequately investigated (Jafar et al., 2019; Song et al., 2019). However, there has not been much evidence on the impact of social network usage to promote work performance among employees in the public sector in emerging markets such as Vietnam.

In February 2022, Vietnam had nearly 77 million active social media accounts, accounting for 78.1% of the population, making it one of the top countries in Southeast Asia in terms of social

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media penetration (Datareportal, 2022). Facebook is the most popular social networking platform in Vietnam, followed by YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (Datareportal, 2022). Vietnam has a fast-growing economy (Bentzen & Tung, 2021), and a dynamic business environment (Tung, 2020). However, in this country, several factors contribute to the low performance of civil servants, including weak training personnel, a lack of accountability, and incomplete performance appraisal systems. Due to the complex administrative structure and low performance of civil servants, public organizations in Vietnam often fail to meet the needs of citizens and businesses (Gregory, 2016). Improving the performance of public organizations in Vietnam requires addressing the basic working skills and knowledge of civil servants.

Previous empirical studies have often focused on the impact of social network usage or the role of knowledge transfer to work employees, and how this affects the performance or employee outcomes (Moqbel et al., 2013; Nisar & Prabhakar, 2018; Jafar et al., 2019). However, it is still unclear whether using synchronous media can affect civil servants' social capital and consequently their work results in the context of using synchronous media to increase social capital and transfer knowledge in the public sector in Vietnam. As a result, the primary focus of this study will be on how social network usage affects Vietnamese civil servants' performance directly, thus empirically complementing the theory of synchronous communication and social capital as well as the performance of public organizations.

Literature review

Media Synchronicity Theory (MST)

Media Synchronicity Theory (MST) aims to predict communication performance through the capabilities of different media. The choice of media can have a significant impact on the consistency and effectiveness of communication. Based on this theory, Dennis et al. (2008) argue that diverse media, due to their synchronization capabilities, have the necessary capabilities to facilitate specific communication processes. It can affect the uniformity of communication within the organization and ultimately affect its work results.

Media synchronicity can have a strong influence on an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Ng & Detenberg, 2005). Highly synchronous media, such as phone calls or face-to-face meetings, can effectively convey emotions and build trust, while low-synchronized mediums, such as email or text messages, may be less effective at conveying emotions. Ryoo and Koo (2010) propose employing information and communication technology as a source of knowledge creation. When evaluating communication performance, it is critical to evaluate not just the aims but also the media's capabilities, interpersonal connections, and social interactions among individuals. Communication and social variables can also have an impact on job success. MST is especially useful for studies on social network usage since social media is a blend of multiple media. (Cao et al., 2016).

Related studies and hypothesis development

Social networks refer to the social resources, and relationships that are available to individuals and groups through their membership in social structures. It is often described as the "glue" that holds social groups together and enables them to function effectively. Social media networks can provide opportunities for individuals to build social capital by facilitating trust, shared vision, knowledge transfer, and network ties.

Several studies have examined the relationship between social network usage and social relationships. The previous evidence discovered that social network activity was associated with improved work performance. (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015; Cao et al., 2016; Huang & Liu, 2017). Tijunaitis et al. (2019) found that social network usage among dispersed workers was associated with the promotion of network ties, shared vision, and trust. Putnam (2015) argued that the decline in social capital, as evidenced by a decline in group membership and participation in community organizations, was associated with a decline in trust and social cohesion.

Social networks describe the resources that people have access to because of their interactions with others. These resources may include factors such as trustworthiness, shared values and norms, and a sense of community or common purpose (Lin, 2001). Social networks can improve interoperability within an organization, reduce conflict, and help the organization grow. Reliability in knowledge transfer refers to the reciprocity of social interactions between the source and the recipient (Levin & Cross, 2004). Trust can be a key factor in fostering cooperative behavior and reducing concerns about knowledge transfer (Putnam, 2015), and can also affect work outcomes and employees' performance (Min et al., 2020). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H_1: Trust through social networks has a positive impact on work performance.

Shared vision refers to the shared understanding among team members about the goals and objectives of their team and organization. It is a crucial aspect of group dynamics that can help align team members' efforts and actions toward common goals and foster a shared sense of purpose and commitment (Hackman & Hackman, 2002). Social media may be a valuable tool for sharing the vision and facilitating communication and cooperation among team members who are not physically situated in the same location (Tijunaitis et al., 2019). It can also enhance communication, collaboration, and coordination among team members, leading to improved work performance and better outcomes for the organization (Adnan & Valliappan, 2019). Therefore, the next hypothesis is presented.

H_2: Sharing vision through social networks has a positive impact on work performance.

Network ties can have a significant impact on the provision of social support. These ties refer to the relationships and connections that individuals have with others within a social network (Wellman & Gulia, 2018). The most important resource inherent in a social or knowledge connection is the network ties that give access to such resources (Ganguly et al.,2019). The extent and strength of these relationships, as well as the frequency of communication among employees, can contribute to the overall strength of network relationships within an organization (Chiu et al., 2006). Research also indicates that individuals with a wider network of relationships tend to achieve higher work performance (Judge & Zapata, 2015). To examine this relationship, the hypothesis is established.

H_3: Network ties through social networks have a positive impact on work performance.

Knowledge transfer refers to the act of passing on and integrating knowledge from one individual or group to another. It can be accomplished through various means, such as training or collaboration, and is meant to help employees acquire new knowledge and skills that they can use in their jobs. Effective knowledge transfer can increase employees' efficiency and productivity, as they have a greater base of knowledge and skills (Zhao, Qi & De Pablos, 2014). However, knowledge transfer can also involve costs, such as the time and resources required to train employees or facilitate the transfer process. These costs can directly impact organizational performance (Dhanaraj et al., 2004). In modern organizations, social media is often used as a tool for knowledge transfer, as it can facilitate the exchange of information and ideas among employees.

When knowledge transfer is successful, it can lead to improved performance (Marbun et al., 2020). Based on the discussions, the following hypothesis is constructed.

H_4: Knowledge transfer through social networks has a positive impact on work performance.

Based on prior studies, the conceptual model for this study (Figure 1) asserts that social network usage elements have a direct influence on the work performance of employees in the public sector. The model investigates how various social network usage components influence how employees perform at work.

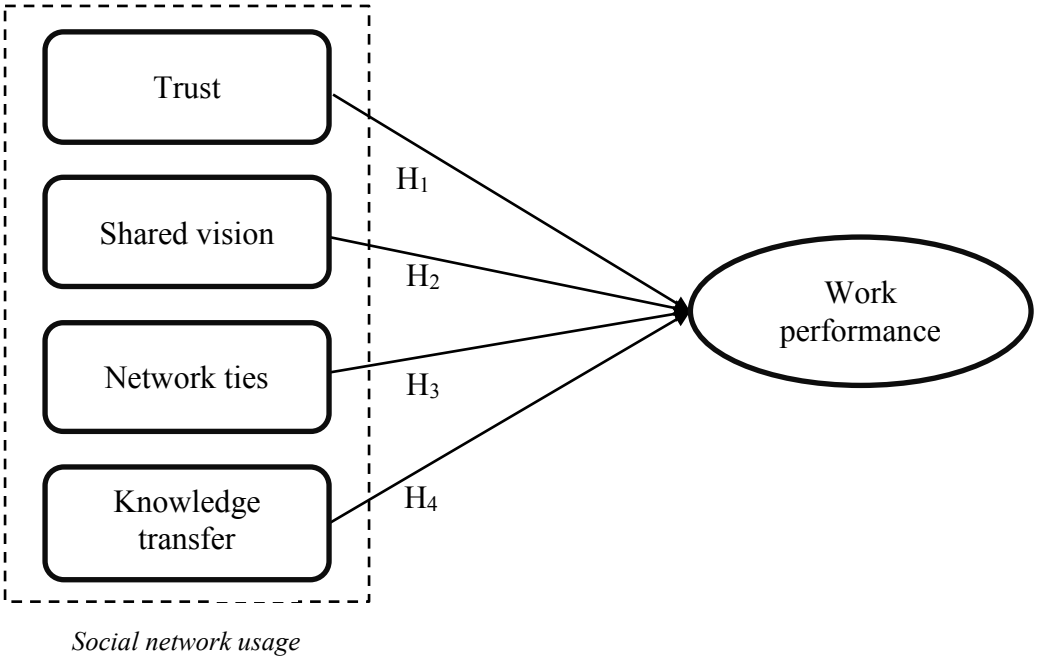


Figure 1. Proposed model

Source: Author's own research.

Methodology

This study is quantitative, which implies that calculation approaches were used for gathering, analyzing, and evaluating the data. The survey of collecting data involves assigning numbers to statements to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement among individuals with them. The results of regression calculations made with IBM SPSS version 20 are used to assess multiple relationships. The questionnaire is designed to cover the study's objectives.

The participants who have joined the survey are employees in public organizations in Ho Chi Minh City because the study aims to examine the impact of social media usage on their work performance. This population was selected because it aligns with the study's objectives and allows the researcher to assess the effect of social media usage on the work performance of public servants in Ho Chi Minh City.

For the quantitative process of this study, the sample size should be at least five times the number of variables that were observed (Hair et al., 2019). Due to the questionnaire having 24 observed variables, the required minimum sample size for this investigation is 144. Public employees in Ho Chi Minh City were chosen as sample units for this study using a convenience sampling approach, suggesting that every member of the population had an equal chance of being

chosen. The data collection method will be a survey, using a questionnaire to gather responses from the participants. Respondents will rate their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire has two sections for collecting the data. The first part of the survey focuses on gathering information about the demographic profiles of the respondents, while the second part is designed to collect their views on the use of social media networking and its impact on their work performance. The convenience sampling method is employed to collect the research data. The survey was conducted from September to November 2018. The second part includes 24 questions that assess five latent variables: trust, shared vision, network ties, knowledge transfer, and work performance. The five independent variables were modified: (1) Trust, which was measured using 05 items from the study of Levin and Cross (2004); (2) Shared vision, which was measured using 03 items from the study of Chiu et al., (2006); (3) Network ties, which were measured using 04 items from the study of Tsai and Ghoshal (1998); (4) Knowledge transfer, which was measured using 06 variables from the study of Dhanaraj et al., (2004); and (5) Work performance, which was measured using 06 items from the study of Kuvaas (2006).

Results and discussions

The research team distributed 650 questionnaires to public sector employees. Following the screening process, 573 valid votes were gathered, reflecting an 88.15% response rate. The SPSS version 20 was used for the demographic and descriptive analyses. As demonstrated in Table 1, there is a significant gender disparity in participation (male = 73.12% and female = 26.88%). The bulk of those who took part (35.43%) was between the ages of 41 and 50. The study involved 84 people over the age of 50. Most respondents (53.58%) had 10 years or more of work experience, a university degree (78.53%), and worked full-time (73.65%).

Table 1. The descriptive analysis

Characteristics	Number	Frequency %
Gender		
Male	419	73.12
Female	154	26.88
Age		
21-30	99	17.28
31-40	187	32.64
41-50	203	35.42
> 50	84	14.66
Work experience		
< 1 year	10	1.75
From 1 year to < 6 years	97	16.93
From 6 years to < 10 years	159	27.75
≥ 10 years	307	53.57
Education		
High School and lower	6	1.05

Characteristics	Number	Frequency %
College	96	16.75
University	450	78.54
MA/MSc	21	3.66
Job title		
Manager	42	7.33
Full-time employee	422	73.65
Part-time employee	109	19.02
Total	573	100

Source: Authors' own research

The survey's reliability was tested through a pilot study, where responses from 10 participants were collected. In the final database (573 people), results from the analysis showed that all scales were reliable (with Cronbach's alpha values > 0.7). Besides, the Pearson correlation matrix is used to test the relationship between variables. This method is an effective tool for investigating the relationship between variables. Table 2 displays the inter-bivariate correlation coefficients, which vary from 0.228 to 0.584. The correlation coefficients confirm that all independent variables have significant positive relationships with the work performance of employees.

Table 2. Pearson correlation matrix

Variables	Work performance	Trust	Shared vision	Network ties	Knowledge transfer
Work performance	1.000				
Trust	0.382*	1.000			
Shared vision	0.387*	0.228*	1.000		
Network ties	0.453*	0.576*	0.385*	1.000	
Knowledge transfer	0.442*	0.584*	0.307*	0.554*	1.000

Notes: * significant at 1% level. Source: Authors' own research

The maximum likelihood approach is used to examine the direct relationships between variables. Table 3 displays the regressive result. Among the three components of social capital through social network usage in this model (share vision, knowledge transfer, network ties) affects the working efficiency of employees ($p < 0.01$) Trust component through social network usage has the weakest impact on the working efficiency ($ß = 0.097$, $p < 0.05$). Table 3 showed that the value of $R2 = 30\%$ indicated that independent variables in the model explained 30% of the variation of the dependent variable. With the value of Durbin-Waston = 1.959, this value is close to 2, and it can be concluded that there is no autocorrelation problem.

As seen in Table 3, all independences have significant positive impacts on work performance, in detail, shared vision ($\beta = 0.226$, P-value < 0.01), knowledge transfer ($\beta = 0.208$, P-value < 0.01), network ties ($\beta = 0.194$, P-value < 0.01), and trust ($\beta = 0.097$, P-value < 0.05). Therefore, all four hypotheses of the proposed model are accepted. These findings are comparable to those of previous studies (Min et al., 2020; Adnan & Valliappan, 2019; Judge & Zapata, 2015). In addition, this study shows that trust has a relatively weak impact on the work performance of employees in the public sector in Vietnam. The reason is that the trust between individuals in the virtual community is often low (Mehta et al., 2017), and trust in public organizations that individuals with high autonomy will reduce the effectiveness of the group (Langfred, 2004).

Table 3. Estimated result

Dependent variable	/	Independent variable	Standardized Estimate	*t*-value	*p*-value	Conclusion
Work Performance	<-----	Trust	0.097	2.079	**	Accepted H_1
Work Performance	<-----	Shared vision	0.226	5.921	***	Accepted H_2
Work Performance	<-----	Network ties	0.194	4.135	***	Accepted H_3
Work Performance	<-----	Knowledge transfer	0.208	4.526	***	Accepted H_4
R-square = 0.305			Adjusted R-square = 0.300			

Notes: ***, ** significant at 1%, 5% level. Source: Authors' own research

Because there was a lack of prior research on this topic, particularly in the public sector in developing nations like Vietnam, current research provides theoretical additions to documentation. This research shows that social network usage can create favorable conditions for the development of the social capital of employees through trust, vision, relationships in the network, and knowledge transfer. This shows that social network usage not only serves the purpose of social connection but is also capable of supporting open and social knowledge transfer activities for the objects inside the organization. Whether or not communication sharing is used effectively may affect how well employees perform at work. To exchange information and social capital through the media, trust between individuals will play a role. Managers must therefore focus on communication sharing, especially boosting the respect or reputation of those who share knowledge, and companies must control the usage of social media at workplace gatherings to limit any unfavorable repercussions. This may include implementing policies around the appropriate social network usage, providing training to employees on how to use social media effectively, and monitoring the use of social media to ensure that it does not disrupt work or cause other problems.

Conclusion

From a theoretical perspective, using the Media synchronicity theory in the context of using social media to promote employees' social capital through aspects such as trust, shared vision, network ties, and knowledge transfer is a new factor contributing to the Media synchronicity theory and solving the problem of the mechanism of using the means of transmission social networking to increase the social capital of employees. Therefore, the study results help employers improve the working performance of employees in the context of the public sector in Vietnam. On the other hand, this experimental research also proves that trust has a weak impact on work performance due to concerns about trust with other individuals in virtual communities. Nowadays, the media carry out exchange activities in the organizational infrastructure, but the function of the social context, where interactions between persons take place, plays a vital role (Cao et al., 2016; Eid & Al-Jabri, 2016; Leon et al., 2017). As a result, in addition to addressing social network usage features, this research considers how people in the organization communicate with one another via network media. As a result, the necessity of social capital for efficient communication is demonstrated, as is its function as the fundamental explanation for how media improves work performance (Liu & Bakici, 2019; Song et al., 2019).

This study has notable limitations, including the potential for social desirability bias in responses about work performance and social network usage at work. Future research could address these limitations by exploring the relationship between social network usage and employment rates among different demographic groups, and by examining how social network usage impacts

management-level performance. This would provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to utilize social media to improve productivity at various levels.

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Appendix: Measurement Scales

No	Constructs and Scale Items	Source
	Trust	
1	I assumed that members in the virtual community created by social media would always look out for my interests.	Levin & Cross (2004)
2	I assumed that members in the virtual community created by social media would act in their ways to make sure I was not harmful.	
3	I felt like members in the virtual community created by social media cared what happened to me.	
4	I believed that members in the virtual community created by social media approached their jobs with professionalism and dedication.	
5	Given members in the virtual community created by social media records of accomplishment, I saw no reason to doubt their ability and diligence.	
	Shared vision	
6	Members in the virtual community created by social media share the vision of helping others solve their problems.	Chiu et al. (2006)
7	Members in the virtual community created by social media share the same goal of learning from each other.	
8	Members in the virtual community created by social media share the same value that helping others is pleasant.	
	Network ties	
9	I maintain close social relationships with my colleagues through social media.	Tsai & Ghoshal (1998)
10	I spend a lot of time interacting with my colleagues through social media.	
11	I know some colleagues through social media on a personal level.	
12	I have frequent communication with my colleagues through social media	

Knowledge transfer		
13	I learned about the technology effectively from my colleagues.	Dhanaraj et al. (2004)
14	I learned business manuals effectively from my colleagues in an effective way.	
15	I learned knowledge about management techniques effectively from my colleagues.	
16	I learned new working expertise effectively from my colleagues.	
17	I learned about corporate culture effectively from my colleagues.	
18	I learned managerial techniques effectively from my colleagues	
Work performance		
19	I usually perform better than an acceptable level.	Kuvaas (2006)
20	I often get results that are better than can be expected from me.	
21	I often put more effort into my work.	
22	I intentionally expend a great deal of effort in carrying out my job.	
23	I try to work as hard as possible.	
24	The quality of my work in the group is the highest.	