

Technoturity: Exploring the Paradox of Technology and Effect on Workplace Performance

1st Sola Emmanuel Owolabi
University Library
Bells University of Technology
Ota, Nigeria
seowolabi@bellsuniversity.edu.n
g

2nd Ayooluwa Aregbesola
Centre of Learning Resources
Landmark University
Omu-Aran, Nigeria
aregbesola.ayooluwa@lmu.edu.n
g

3rd Felicia Yusuf
University Library
Bells University of Technology
Ota, Nigeria
foyusuf@bellsuniversity.edu.ng

4th Juliet Omale
Centre of Learning Resources
Landmark University
Omu-Aran, Nigeria
omale.juliet@lmu.edu.ng

Abstract— *Technology has significantly contributed to workplace performance over the years. However, the paradox of technology could have negative and positive effects on staff performance, depending on how it is used. It is on this basis that the concept of technoturity was developed. This paper presented technoturity as nontoxic, civil, logical, and decent use of internet resources, information and communication technologies, and social media. The paper reviewed literature on productive and unproductive social media behaviors. The intensity of social media use was also reviewed, pointing out the effect on staff performance at workplace. Policies, use of filtering software, random audit of activities carried over the internet by staff, communication and education were therefore presented as strategic ways to introduce the concept of technoturity at workplace. Recommendations were made to ensure safe, controlled and ethical use of social media and other innovative communication technologies in a work environment. The paper concluded that technoturity as precautionary measure could promote and sustain organizational productivity.*

Keywords— *technoturity, social media behavior, social media use, innovative communication technologies, workplace performance*

I. INTRODUCTION

The blending of technology and maturity has resulted in the formation of technoturity. As explained by [1], words emanate from blending of two or more words which may be from same language or fixation of two languages or ideas to produce meaning which in the process of time is adopted by majority though constant use. According to [2] words have origin or etymology and they develop from affixation, blending, compounding, clipping, neologism and idiomaticity. In this instance, technoturity has been formed within the context of blending. It is on this premise that the authors blended technology and maturity to develop technoturity. Technoturity as conceived by the authors connotes nontoxic, civil, logical and decent use of internet resources, information and communication technologies, and social media.

Social media and other innovative communication technologies have made workplace communication easy [3]. However, arguments subsist that social media has dual effects (positive and negative effects) [4]. Focusing on the positive effect of social media, [5] established that there are several ways by which social media could enable organizations harness social capital; and staff could make social and professional connections that could engender productivity. There are however contradicting reports establishing the negative effects of social media. A report by [6] cited in [4] revealed that about \$2.2 billion is lost annually by British firms as a result of workers that use social media at the expense of their work. It is also reported by [6] that an average of 3.2 hours is expended on social media daily by active social media American users that are from age 16 to 64. According to [7] about 70 percent of Americans who use Facebook report doing so everyday, with about half (49 percent) visiting the site multiple times per day. Similarly, 59 percent of American users of Snapchat and Instagram and 54 percent of users of YouTube and 46 percent of users of Twitter claim to visit these websites at least once every day. It has been pointed out by [8] as well as [9] that several unfavourable issues may arise from uncontrolled use of social media. Some of the issues are as follows: exposure to malware, high storage and bandwidth consumption, decreased productivity, potential legal liability, the risk of leaking corporate secrets and disclosure of personal information. It could therefore be concluded that despite the positive benefits of social media, misuse by employees could create several challenges for the organization which ultimately could lead to low productivity. This paper aims to provide appropriate strategies at ensuring safe, controlled, and ethical use of social media and other innovative communication technologies in a work environment.

I. SOCIAL MEDIA BEHAVIORS

Some social media behaviors have been identified by [4]. They are referred to as: Productive Social Media Behavior; Relationship Building Social Media Behavior; and Unproductive Social Media Behavior.

A. Productive Social Media Behaviors: Task-Oriented and Relationship Building

Most organizations have identified the usefulness of social media tools for marketing and service delivery, hence the increasing use of social media at workplace. Increase in the performance of employees could be linked to specific social media related behaviors. Coworkers use the social media to foster relationship, team building and ease of communication. This form of social media behavior is referred to, as relationship building social media behavior. Empirical studies have shown that this behavior could promote organizational efficiency and enhance performance [10]; [4].

Social Media Task-Oriented Behaviors: These are behaviors that are directed at performing optimally in relation to demonstration of skills on social media. Effective use of LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media tools to promote goods and services are good examples. It also has to do with thinking creatively, self-branding on social media, image management and positive disposition are some of the behaviors that are task-oriented. Social media tools, when properly engaged for task-oriented behaviors could lead to performance beyond expectations. It has been pointed out that services could be improved, advertising campaigns could be created, and new products could be generated by employees when applications such as crowdsourcing are engaged [11]; [12]. Work-related decisions could be made through the use of social networking platforms.

Twitter as a social media tool attract attention of persons from all works of life; leaders and heads of organizations, hence it is a suitable platform for task-oriented behaviors. Users therefore deploy the tools to search and develop relationship with persons that have same inclination and could buy into their ideas [12]. In the same vein, several information that are productive could be garnered on the platform. Employees also have opportunity to share experience and learn about innovations through LinkedIn. This is one of the reasons it is becoming popular for employees to create accounts relating to social media tools.

B. Social Media Relationship Building Behaviors

Social media platforms could be leveraged for relationship building behaviors. Social media tools are engaging, encouraging interaction, sharing of pictures, events, ideas, perceptions and several resources that could facilitate effective and efficient communication. There are employees that may not be so enthusiastic about physical face-to-face communication; social media appears to be the ideal platform for them to express themselves. Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook and other tools have been engaged to hold meetings and sometimes celebrations. Relationship building social media behaviors could positively influence organizational culture, resolve disputes, encourage team building and develop a community of workers that share same ideologies and vision. Relationship with customers could also be built using social media tools. Customer loyalty could be achieved.

For instance, there are banks that have the database of the dates of birth of their customers and they ensure they use the social media platforms to send greetings during the birthday of these clients. Through Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, and

Instagram employees could relate with some clients and inform them of new products, services and opportunities. On these platforms, there are links to invite friends or send friends requests. This makes it very easy to quickly create a large friendship and followers' base to grow relationship [13]; [1]. Against the traditional approach in the time past in which a marketer would go from house to house to market products and build relationship with customers, social media tools have given enabling situation through information and communication technologies [14].

C. Unproductive Social Media Behaviors

It has been found that workplace deviance is growing at alarming rate in organizations in recent times [15]. Workplace deviance entails actions that could jeopardize the essence of an organization; threatening organizational well-being, contradicting organizational vision, and promoting inefficiency [16]. Downward trend in job satisfaction and organizational performance have been reported as results of workplace deviance. The deviance reported are linked to intentional slow job delivery, absenteeism, reporting late at work and leaving work early [17].

Sabotage of the organization constitute a major reason for active workplace deviance. When employees perceive that they are unfairly treated and they want to vent their anger on the organization, they may embark on workplace deviance [18]. Self-interest could also be responsible for other forms of workplace deviance. Self-interest persists when employees engage in activities that yield personal gains at the expense of the organization. Some staff engage in online marketing of their own products, while some young people chat all day with friends and family members online because they have access to the internet to use social media platforms during work hours [19].

In some instances, when staff resume office, they get attracted to social media tools from morning to mid-day, neglecting deliverables. While some employees engage in deviance due to private practice online that could yield financial gains, there are others that just derive pleasure in socializing online during work hours [19]. In some occasions, staff use social media to overcome boredom. There are other times that employees may use social media to deceive other coworkers into believing that they are actively engaged on some tasks [20].

A phenomenon referred to as 'guilty pleasure' is sometimes embarked upon by staff. This is the situation in which, at the expense of work-related activities, staff dedicate long period of work hours to watch movies online, spend long hours making internet calls and chat for long hours [21]. Additionally, they deny other staff of building real time relationship with them, hence they obstruct knowledge sharing process which should be seamless during office staff-to-staff interaction. Some of these perpetrators of this act make other staff feel alienated because they may not communicate with neighboring staff all through the work hours [22].

II. INTENSITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The degree of engagement, regularity, passion and amount of time spent on social media could be major factors to consider in determining the intensity of use of social media. Persons that are habitually and constantly on social media may be perceived

as users with high intensity [23]. There are positive and negative effects that have been reported with high intensity social media use. Past studies have established that, there is correlation between high intensity use of social media and self-esteem [24]; [25]. Persons with good self-esteem may positively contribute to organizational goal and vision. On the other hand, the negative effect of high intensity of social media use has also been empirically established by [26] and [27], noting that persons engaged with such degree of use of social media are likely to be more anxious and depressed. Depressed individuals are potential danger to the organization. Such individuals may contradict the set objectives being pursued by an organization, thereby reducing productivity. The need to control the intensity of use of social media therefore comes to the fore, having seen the potential dangers that could emanate from the negative effect of the intensity of social media use.

III. ENSURING TECHNOURITY AT WORKPLACE

There may be no means to measure individuals' maturity in relation to use of technology. However, there are procedures that could be put in place to ensure safe, controlled and ethical use of information and communication technologies, internet resources and social media which clearly define technourity. Sudden audit of organizational use of Information and Communication Technologies may not pose any threat to staff when these procedures that could enable technourity are put in place.

A. Policies

Management needs to present policies that will guide staff on use of social media. The limit or extent of use during work hour should be communicated in order to ensure that the organization does not lose productive hours to social media users. It is necessary that staff members are made to be aware that the organization has vested interest in their use of social media; explaining how it could affect the reputation, goals, objectives, relevance and general acceptability of the organization. The legal implication of social media use by each staff should be made known.

B. Use of Filtering Software

There are indicting sites and information sources that could constitute unfavorable legal issues for organizations, corrupt the mentality of staff at work and ultimately reduce productivity. With the use filtering software access to such sites could be removed. Filtering software as a virtual appliance that blocks access to contents on the internet that are not safe, ethical and productive, depending on the culture and standards of organizations. It is usually used to control internet contents that individuals can access. Pornography, betting, bullying and other sites that contradict organizational culture, principles and goals are blocked when the software is installed.

C. Random Audit of Activities Carried over the Internet by Staff

Staff members are put on their toes and they intentionally caution themselves on sites they intend to visit when they know that there are devices and persons that randomly audit their activities carried over the internet. When it has entered the

subconscious mind of staff not to visit prohibited sites, it can gradually become habitual, thereby achieving technoturity without coercion.

D. Communication and Education

Periodic training, awareness and internal communication within the organization on the consequences of non-productive use of social media are essential to ensuring technoturity in the use of social media. When staff members are well informed of the consequences of unproductive social media behavior and benefits of productive social media behavior, they take precautionary measures to ensure that they do not contradict the policy of the organization regarding the use of social media.

IV. CONCLUSION

The paradoxical features of social media as a result of its dual effects have been established in this paper. The negative and the positive aspects have been presented, it is therefore pertinent for organizations to deploy policies to promote technoturity and ensure nontoxic use of information and communication technologies. If task-oriented and relationship building social media behaviors are encouraged against the unproductive social media behaviors, the tendency is high for enjoy optimum productivity. On this basis, organizations need to encourage nontoxic, civil, logical and decent use of internet resources, information and communication technologies, and social media which define technoturity. Policies; use of filtering software; random audit of activities carried over the Internet by staff; communication and education have been presented as factors that could ensure technoturity. The tendency to get addicted to social media is high, however, if there are precautionary measures such as technoturity, the possibility is very high that organizational productivity will be promoted and sustained.

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