The Impact of Using Social Networking Sites at Work on Organizational Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

Many of the employers fear a reduction in productivity when employees use social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook for non-work purposes during office hours. Employers then have started regulating SNSs usage at work, but extreme monitoring and blockage of SNSs can spoil the relationship between employers and employees and can negatively affect organizational knowledge (OK). Therefore, this study investigates the effect of using SNSs on OK by employees at work. Collecting data from employees working in national and multinational organizations and using structural equation modelling for data analysis, the results showed that using SNSs for business activities and for emotional disclosure enhanced OK. In contrast to these findings, work deviation caused using SNSs decreased OK but had no effect on productivity. Finally, the study concluded that the benefits of using SNSs at work are increasingly growing but require transparent policies to reduce employee distractions.

KEYWORDS

Emotional Disclosure, Employees, Online Social Networks, Organizational Knowledge, Pakistan, Social Networking Websites, Structural Equation Modelling

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is an essential resource for organizational growth, especially for organizations striving in unpredictable environments to sustain competitive advantage (Miller & Shamsie, 1996). Nevertheless, most organizations do not possess all the required knowledge within their formal boundaries but depend on connections outside organizations to obtain further information (Wasko & Faraj, 2005). Members of the organization, such as employees and employers, require expanding their knowledge base to derive and revive organizational innovation. Organizational members are interested in business networking and making linkages to the people outside the organization to develop new business contacts, grab new ideas and get opinions on different issues and processes that may be useful for their personal growth and their organization.

Social networking sites (SNSs) have drastically changed the way people connect, share, communicate and interact with each other. For example, Facebook and Twitter started as platforms for individuals to connect and express their thoughts and happenings mainly by sharing pictures, writing comments, texting and chatting. However, SNSs have gradually evolved as a forum for the

commercial and social exchange of information, which included job networking, entertainment and targeted marketing (Clark & Roberts, 2010).

Opportunities to interact face to face have become limited due to multinational and national companies scattered in different regions. It is now possible to connect with people outside the organization through SNSs (Wasko & Faraj, 2005). SNSs, now, have opened the ways for employees to interact, share and transfer knowledge internally (employees of the same organization) and externally (employees in other regions, organizations and with consumers), and helped organizations achieved a competitive advantage over their competitors (Bashir, Papamichail, & Malik, 2017).

1.1. SNSs Usage in Asia and Pakistan

Globally, the highest SNSs penetration rate of around 70% was in North America and Eastern Asia (Kemp, 2019). Facebook, for example, has above 1 million monthly active users in Asia and over 270 miollion users from India – the largest population on Facebook (Omnicore, 2020). Moreover, 32.8% of all Twitter users were from the Asia Pacific region, with Indonesia having the highest percentage of 84%, followed by India, with 67% of the online population (Go-Globe, 2015).

However, many Asian countries use native social media platforms instead of global giants such as Facebook and Twitter. For example, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube are hardly accessible due to censorship laws followed by China and therefore, created their mobile platforms such as San Weibo similar to Twitter (Choi, 2020). Korea and Japan also developed some of the popular SNSs local apps and websites that come in the global top 20 most visited website such as Korea's Naver which is similar to Youtube and Japan's yahoo.co.jp.

Similarly, the introduction of mobile broadband (third-generation (3G) and fourth generation (4G) networks) coupled with the influx of budgeted smartphones have exponentially raised the usage of SNSs in Pakistan (Nisar, 2018). SNSs users in Pakistan have more than 44 million accounts, including 30 million Facebook accounts (WebDesk, 2017). Fashion, telecom, e-commerce, and food are the top industries on Facebook in Pakistan (Bakers, 2017; WebDesk, 2017). Also, amid lockdown and social distancing due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, more people in Pakistan and around the world have joined SNSs to continue their office work, connect and virtually meet with their colleagues and friends, and access latest updates on COVID-19. The internet traffic in Pakistan has increased by 15% in times of pandemic, utilizing most of the bandwidth to use SNSs (Jahangir, 2020).

1.2. Organizational Knowledge and Social Media

Organizational knowledge is the knowledge that the employees of the organization acquire, share and use to make the organization more effective (Audi & Audi, 1999). Exchange of organizational knowledge between organizations' internal and external fading boundaries to support organizational functions has been increasing through the extensive use of SNSs (Zablith, Faraj, & Azad, 2016). SNSs have facilitated sharing of knowledge between employees to enhance awareness of relevant content, locate expertise and access new contacts (Brzozowski, 2009; Gibbs, Rozaidi, & Eisenberg, 2013). For example, several studies (Palacios-Marqués, Popa, & Pilar Alguacil Mari, 2016; Scuotto, Del Giudice, della Peruta, & Tarba, 2017; Soto-Acosta, Popa, & Palacios-Marqués, 2017) claimed that SNSs provided new prospects to share tacit and experiential knowledge among individuals that enhanced innovation programmes, research and development, and return on investment. Moreover, SNSs have helped employees to transfer behavioural (communication, creativity and problem solving) and technical skills among themselves (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2016).

Contrary to these benefits, excessive use of SNSs at the workplace reduced employees' productivity and expos organizations to legal liabilities and financial problems (Young, 2010). For example, employees can violate confidentiality by posting sensitive information on SNSs to damage the reputation of their employers (Taylor, Haggerty, Gresty, Wren, & Berry, 2016). Also, employers can be held liable for employees placing posts related to harassment (e.g. cyberbullying) and discrimination against colleagues and other organizations (AiGroup, 2018).

Due to these reasons, employers feel uncertain about the productivity and security of their organizations and struggle to understand how the use of SNSs can benefit their firms' missions and goals (Goel, 2015). Therefore, this research aims to explore:

- How perceived organizational knowledge is affected when employees used SNS for 'usefulness ', 'productivity', and emotional disclosure '.
- Also, this study finds how 'strict policy to use SNSs' and 'work deviation caused' by using SNSs affected productivity and perceived organizational knowledge.

Many studies have been conducted to see the effect of SNSs on employees' performance in Pakistan (Ali, Jimenez-Zarco, & Bicho, 2015; Arslan & Zaman, 2015; Ashraf & Javed, 2014; Shabbir, Ghazi, & Mehmood, 2017). For example, SNSs facilitated building up good relationships with stakeholders by communicating corporate social responsibility to customers, investors and employees. (Ali et al., 2015; Ashraf & Javed, 2014). Moreover, an analysis of the literature by Shabbir et al. (2017) found that small business entrepreneurs were motivated to use SNSs to advertise their products and services. Furthermore, Arslan and Zaman (2015) found that SNSs impacted organizational culture by enhancing employee communication and awareness and facilitating recruiting new employees and customers.

Therefore, this study contributes to theory by:

- Developing and testing a model to explain the use of SNSs by employees at the workplace and their effect on perceived organizational knowledge;
- Identifying factors that may inhibit or increase the creation of organizational knowledge;
- Providing managerial insights to improve employees productivity by devising policies for using SNSs at the workplace.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Organizational Knowledge

Organizations, to support their daily functions, are increasingly using the Internet and online applications (such as SNSs) to reach out to their stakeholders and customers dispersed geographically. These online conversations between the organization and stakeholders gradually become the organization's related knowledge. Knowledge which was being in silos and centralized is now being decentralized - moving into and outside the organization, creating new ideas, improving performance (Levine & Prietula, 2012; Song & Kolb, 2013), and facilitating innovation (Nonaka, 1994).

Organizational knowledge, as modelled by March (1991), can be created in two situtations: first when individuals such as employees socialize to develop and exchange organizational knowledge; and second when the organizations and individuals compete for limited resources. The spiral framework of knowledge creation propoed by Nonaka (1994) highlighted that tacit knowledge is exchanged when individuals meet and socialize, whereas, explicit knowledge is created by combining knowledge entities such as books and computers. Hence, organizational knowledge is is informally generated through socialization, where knowledge moves from the individual, to the team, institution and inter-organizational level (Nonaka, 1994). Employees involved in social interaction contribute their knowledge with the purpose to achieve specific goals of the organization (Zablith et al., 2016) . Moreover, knowledge contribution will often unlock innovation and generate new ideas, resulting in fulfilling specific objectives of the organization. Traditional social interactions are now being replaced by computer-mediated tools (such as the Internet and SNSs), enabling organizational stakeholders to seek knowledge beyond the boundaries of the organization by easily collaborating between the organization and online communities (Zablith et al., 2016)

2.2. Usefulness of SNSs

SNSs have helped employees to get work-related information quickly from other peers (Arslan & Zaman, 2015). Employees may form peer-groups through SNSs (connecting with people with similar interests, age, and background) to enhance their business-specific knowledge and expertise (Wilson, 2009). SNSs have facilitated employees from different organizations to collaborate on business projects, enabling them to increase organizational knowledge by adopting new ideas, exploring work processes (of other organizations), and building up new capabilities and skills (Azua, 2009; Lakatos, 2012; Seman, 2014). For example, a study conducted on 600 newly hired employees in an information technology firm revealed that sharing positive stories about employees with new employees encouraged positive behaviour amongst them (Martin, 2016). Also, a quantitative study based in the United Kingdom showed that perceived usefulness was the most significant driver in the adoption of SNSs by business to business organizations (Siamagka, Christodoulides, Michaelidou, & Valvi, 2015). Furthermore, a qualitative study carried out in Pakistan showed that SNSs enhance communication, knowledge creation and relationship among employees (doctors) by promoting sharing and transfer of knowledge (Imran, Iqbal, Aslam, & Fatima, 2019). Finally, it was found in survey research carried out in Italy that young civil servants and local administration (compared with central administration) perceived SNSs useful for public decision-making process because using SNSs may favour the acquisition of external knowledge for value-based decisions (Todisco, Tomo, Canonico, Mangia, & Sarnacchiaro, 2020). Based on the above arguments, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H₁: Employees using SNSs for work-related activities increase organizational knowledge.

2.3. SNSs and Productivity

SNSs have increased the productivity of employees by facilitating them to learn new skills and knowledge through friends and colleagues available online (Arslan & Zaman, 2015). According to various studies and surveys, employees using SNSs have found to be nine percent more productive than those who do not (Adzovie, Nyieku, & Keku, 2017; David Mielach, 2012; Magnier-Watanabe, Yoshida, & Watanabe, 2010). A study conducted by the Pew Research Centre showed that 20 percent of the employees used SNSs to solve problems at work, and 12 percent asked work-related questions from peers working outside the organization (PWE, 2016). For example, Microsoft's Yammer, the enterprise social network, naturally increases organizational knowledge and drives organizational agility and alignment by empowering employees to be more successful and productive by enabling them to easily collaborate and improve relationships with customers, partners, and other employees (Anurag, 2018; Yammer, 2016). Similarly, quantitative research conducted in the United Arab Emirates showed that using enterprise social networks increased the knowledge and productivity of employees (Aboelmaged, 2018). Therefore, we hypothesise the following hypothesis:

H₂: Employees using SNSs for improving productivity increase organizational knowledge.

2.4. Emotional Disclosure

Emotional disclosure is the expression of positive and negative emotions by talking or writing about the ongoing events (such as work, tragedy, news, politics or daily life chores) (Lin, Tov, & Qiu, 2014). Employees used SNSs for social connection and emotional disclosure to acquire psychological benefits (Lin et al., 2014). SNSs users were more likely to show colleagues and friends a better impression of their well-being by disclosing emotional experiences on SNSs than in real life (Qiu, Lin, Leung, & Tov, 2012). For example, Starbucks' employees did lots of tweeting and posting round the clock, generating $180,000 through their famous 'Tweet a coffee' campaign in less than a month (Ajani, 2013; Holmes, 2015). Also, employees at Zappos were encouraged to share updates about their office chores

on Twitter, and the management appreciated employees with the most number of followers (Holmes, 2015). Moreover, Southwest Airline harnessed its employees to share stories, find inspiration and exchange knowledge among Southwest Airline community members (Southwest, 2018). A survey-based study conducted in North America to see the effect of three categories (cognitive, hedonic and social) of social media use on job performance found that cognitive and social use of SNSs have a positive indirect effect on employees' innovative and routine job performance (Ali-Hassan, Nevo, & Wade, 2015). In contrast, hedonic use while having a negative effect on routine job performance was shown to have a reducing positive impact on innovative job performance (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015). Furthermore, quantitative research carried out in China on the blogging practices of employees working in a mobile telecommunication service provider found that employees' non-work-related corporate blogging practices increased employees' affective commitment, i.e., emotional attachment and participation in the organization (Luo, Guo, Lu, & Chen, 2018). Based on the above discussion, we hypothesise the following:

H$_3$: Employees using SNSs for emotional disclosure increase organizational knowledge.

2.5. Deviation From Work

Using SNSs at work for personal use and entertainment incur some negative consequences on employees' productivity, such as deviation from work (Eren & Vardarlıer, 2013). Organizations have identified risks of using SNSs at the workplace such as poor performance, low productivity, scams and organizational data leakage (Loveland, 2012). For example, a report on the use of SNSs and productivity stated that employees at the workplace spent approximately two hours on Facebook that eventually resulted in work deviation (Seman, 2014). Moreover, SNSs activities such as chatting, listening music, watching the news, shopping online, and playing games distracted employees from work and make them unproductive and less committed towards the organization (Ashmore & Herman, 2006). Furthermore, The World of Work Report stated that employees spent an average of 2.35 hours daily on SNSs during working hours, causing a loss of 13 percent in overall productivity (Khosla, 2016). Survey research conducted in China on working professionals found that excessive use of SNSs deviated employees from work which significantly reduced their job performance (Yu, Cao, Liu, & Wang, 2018). Similarly, another study carried out in China on working professionals showed that excessive use of SNSs reduced employees' job performance (Cao & Yu, 2019). Furthermore, survey research conducted on government employees in Harare, Zimbabwe, found that the usage of SNSs at work reduced employee productivity in terms of learning and knowledge (Wushe & Shenje, 2019). In contrast, a study conducted in Pakistan on the employees of public and private sectors demonstrated that personal and work-related use of SNSs could increase employees' productivity through the exchange of knowledge (Jafar, Geng, Ahmad, Niu, & Chan, 2019). Thus, we can formulate the following hypotheses:

H$_4$: Deviation from work caused by using SNSs decreases productivity.
H$_5$: Deviation from work caused by using SNSs decreases organizational knowledge.

2.6. Policies for Using SNSs at Work Place

SNSs polices at work reflect the degree to which organizations have incorporated certain strategies to appropriately control the use of SNSs (Demek, Raschke, Janvrin, & Dilla, 2018). Consequently, organizations have started monitoring the Internet activities of employees and according to the American Management Associations, many employees lost their jobs due to the excessive use of SNSs for watching adult content, playing games and shopping. (Association, 2007). Moreover, a few organizations have restricted employees using certain types of websites, for example, British Telecom (BT) had blocked pornographic and gambling websites, though allowing access to SNSs (Broughton,

Higgins, Hicks, & Cox, 2009). Moreover, to ensure productivity and efficient use of time, employees at BT were not allowed to use the Internet for non-work related activities but, were provided with cyber cafes in break times to use the Internet and SNSs for personal use (Broughton et al., 2009). Also, in France and Germany, employers have provided guidelines and recommendations (e.g. using the Internet in break times, no defamatory remarks for the organization and other employees) to their employees for using the Internet and SNSs at the workplace (Barrow, Martin, & Göpfert, 2012; Proskauer, 2014). In contrary to the above discussion, policies that restricted employees to use SNSs at the workplace decreased collaboration and knowledge sharing among employees and customers, hence leading to decreased organizational knowledge (Broughton et al., 2009; Ferreira & Du Plessis, 2009). As suggested by O'Connor, Schmidt, and Drouin (2016), through a study carried out on the employees of a Midwestern United States university, that organizations should provide proper training to employees before incorporating the new rules and policies at work, or else such directives induce stress among them and decrease their work outcomes. Similarly, Pakistan-based survey research on the employees of public and private organizations found that restricting the usage of SNSs increased work stress among employees depriving them of the knowledge exchange process, which eventually reduces sharing and obtaining information (Jafar et al., 2019). Also, an Ethiopian study on university teachers concluded that preventing teachers from using SNSs at university would negatively affect their performance inhibiting knowledge sharing and awareness (Tulu, 2017). Last but not least, a mixed-methods study exploring publicly available social media policies of the most influential and powerful corporations globally found that the SNSs usage guidelines increasingly impede the communicative principles of corporate social responsibility, that is, collective information sharing, free speech, and stakeholder engagement, thereby, reduce employee performance and participation in the social responsibilities of organizations(Stohl, Etter, Banghart, & Woo, 2017) . Therefore, we postulate the following hypotheses:

H$_6$: Implementing SNSs usage policies at work increase productivity.
H$_7$: Implementing SNSs usage policies at work decrease organizational knowledge.

3. METHODS

3.1. Data Collection

Data were collected in September 2018, from part time executive masters' students (n=178), employed full-time in national and multinational organizations located in Karachi, Pakistan. Only employees active in using SNSs during their work were recruited. Responses were collected through a paper survey during the three hour weekend class sessions on weekends.

3.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of demographic variables (e.g. gender), reasons for using SNSs, and the six constructs namely, usefulness of SNSs (four items), productivity (four items), emotional disclosure (five items), deviation (five items), strict policy (four items) and perceived organizational knowledge (five items). The items of these six constructs (see Appendix) were adapted and self-developed by reviewing the literature. For instance, items of perceived usefulness were adapted from a study conducted in the United Kingdom on the use of SNSs in B2B organizations (Siamagka et al., 2015). Next, items of productivity were adapted from a United Arab Emirates based research on motivational drivers of using enterprise social network and its effect on employees' productivity (Aboelmaged, 2018). Items of emotional disclosure, furthermore, were adapted from the constructs 'hedonic use' and 'social use' from a study based in North America on the use of social media dimensions on job performance (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015). Moreover, items for deviation were customized from a study conducted in China exploring the effect of social media overload on work (Yu et al., 2018).

Also, items for strict measures were developed using the constructs from research conducted in Taiwan on the effects of employers monitoring employees using SNSs (Suen, 2018). Finally, items for perceived organizational knowledge were developed using the constructs organizational innovativeness,(Siamagka et al., 2015) image (Siamagka et al., 2015), and knowledge management (Bharati, Zhang, & Chaudhury, 2015). The constructs used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree', through 3 = 'neutral' to 5 = 'strongly agree'.

3.3. Data Analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to validate the proposed model (see Figure 1). SEM technique was preferred because it combines both the factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. SEM can measure the measurement characteristics of the constructs (measurement model) and assess the proposed causal relationships between constructs with multiple measurements items (structural/causal model) (Joe F Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). Reported by Gorsuch (1983) and Kline (1979), the minimum sample size to conduct confirmatory factor analysis is 100 (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999). The analysis was conducted using SEM software AMOS v19.

4. RESULTS

Data were cleaned by removing the missing responses, and then analysed (n= 167). Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 show the demographics of the respondents while Table 4 exhibits reasons for using SNSs at work.
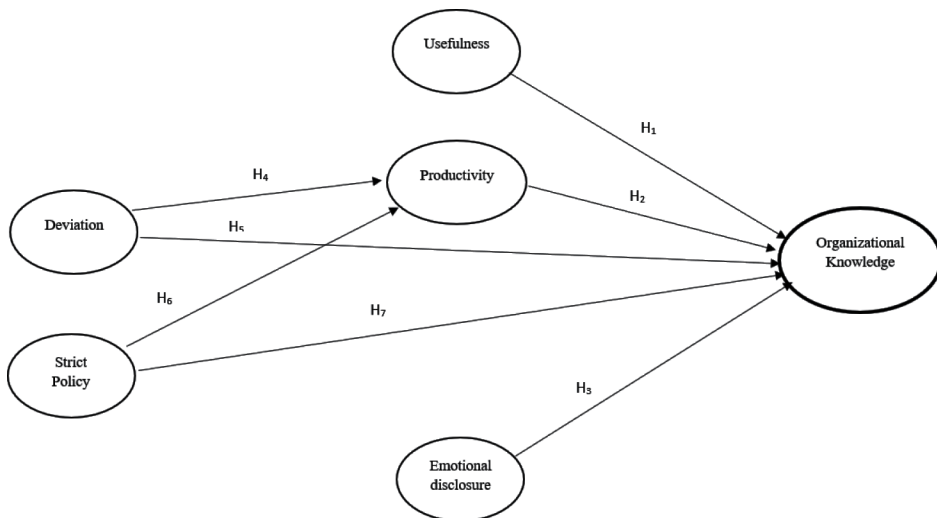
Figure 1. Proposed model

Table 1. Number of males and female participants

Gender	Frequency
Male	117
Female	50

Table 2. Age brackets of the respondents

Age	Frequency
20-29	99
30-39	36
40-49	9
50-59	19
60+	4

Table 3. Nature of employment of the respondents

Nature of employment	Frequency
Primary Sector (e.g. Raw Material, agriculture, fishing etc.)	14
Secondary Sector (e.g. Production, construction et.)	51
Tertiary Sector (e.g. law, medicine, distribution etc.)	53
Quaternary Sector (e.g. education, research, consultation)	49

Table 4. Reasons for using SNSs at work

Resaons for using SNSs at work	Percent
Build business contacts	57.5
Chat	53.1
Discuss work related activities with colleagues	44.1
Upload pictures	45.3
Socialize	74.9
Find solutins to work-related queries	51.4

Measurement and structural models are discussed below.

4.1. Measurement Model

Measurement model was evaluated in terms of reliability as well as convergent and discriminant validity. Items with low factor loadings (< 0.5) were removed from the model as follows: one item each of usefulness and deviation; and two items each of productivity, emotional disclosure, SNS policy and organizational knowledge.

Table 5 shows the composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance (MSV) and the inter-construct correlational matrix of square root of AVE ($\sqrt{AVE}$).

All CR values above 0.7 suggested good reliability and indicated internal consistency within the constructs (Joe F Hair et al., 2012). Moreover, AVE measured construct validity and all values of $>$ 0.5 showed that all latent individual factors were well explained by their observed variables (Joe F Hair et al., 2012). Finally, discriminant validity was established using measures (MSV $<$ AVE) and ($\sqrt{AVE} >$ inter-construct correlations) (Joe F Hair et al., 2012).

Table 6 shows the five model-fit indices, normed chi-square ($\chi 2$ /df), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and standardized root mean

Table 5. Construct reliability and validity measures

	CR	AVE	MSV	Emotional disclosure	Usefulness	Productivity	Deviation	SNS policies	Organizational knowledge
Emotional disclosure	0.836	0.630	0.270	**0.794**					
Usefulness	0.777	0.538	0.270	0.520	**0.733**				
Productivity	0.827	0.712	0.171	-0.090	0.266	**0.844**			
Deviation	0.883	0.655	0.195	0.064	-0.072	-0.414	**0.809**		
SNS policies	0.820	0.700	0.195	-0.137	-0.345	-0.304	0.442	**0.837**	
Organizational knowledge	0.815	0.595	0.266	0.398	0.516	0.202	-0.220	-0.257	**0.771**

residual (SRMR) to determine the overall goodness of fit of the measurement model. We adopted the threshold values of Hair et al (2010) as they are widely used for multivariate data analysis and globally used as a benchmark for the goodness of fit.

The indices suggested a good model-fit for the measurement model (see recommended values in Table 6).

4.2. Structural Model

The five model-fit indices shown in Table 7 for the structural model confirmed the adequate model-fit for our research model.

The path analysis showed three significant paths out of seven, that is, usefulness and emotional disclosure had a positive significant influence on organizational knowledge ($R^2 = 0.33$ of organizational knowledge), whereas, deviation had a negative significant impact on productivity ($R^2 = 0.18$ of productivity). Table 8 provides estimates with p-values and the outcomes of the proposed hypotheses.

Table 6. Overall model-fit indices for the measurement model

Model fit indices	Results	Recommended value (J.F. Hair, Black, & Babin, 2010)
χ^2/df	1.085 ($\chi^2 = 112.864$; df=104)	≤ 3.0
GFI	0.930	≥ 0.9
AGFI	0.898	≥ 0.8
CFI	0.993	≥ 0.9
SRMR	0.0435	< 0.09

Table 7. Overall model-fit indices for the structural model

Model fit indices	Results	Recommended value (J.F. Hair et al., 2010)
χ^2/df	1.314 ($\chi^2 = 160.267$; df=122)	≤ 3.0
GFI	0.908	≥ 0.9
AGFI	0.871	≥ 0.8
CFI	0.970	≥ 0.9
SRMR	0.0555	< 0.09

Table 8. Outcomes of the proposed hypotheses

Hypotheses	Standardised estimates	p-value	Hypotheses Accepted/ Rejected
H_1: Employees using SNSs for work-related activities increase organizational knowledge	0.376	0.002	Rejected
H_2: Employees using SNSs for improving productivity increase organizational knowledge	0.067	0.433	Accepted
H_3: Employees using SNSs for emotional disclosure increase organizational knowledge	0.225	0.035	Rejected
H_4: Deviation from work caused by using SNSs decreases productivity.	-0.192	0.063	Accepted
H_5: Deviation from work caused by using SNSs decreases organizational knowledge	-0.372	≤ 0.001	Rejected
H_6: Implementing SNSs usage policies at work increase productivity	0.027	0.796	Accepted
H_7: Implementing SNSs usage policies at work decrease organizational knowledge	-0.088	0.334	Accpeted

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Statement of Principal Findings

Out of seven, three hypotheses were found significant (see Table 8). This study showed that employees using SNSs for work-related activities (such as networking, business leads, customer feedback) and emotional disclosure increased organizational knowledge, whereas, work deviation due to the usage of SNSs, lessened organizational knowledge. Finally, the evidence did not support restricting the usage of SNSs at work.

5.2. Strengths and Limitations

Data collected were from the multicultural city of Karachi, which is Pakistan's most populous city, and leading financial and industrial hub. Moreover, respondents were employees in various national and multinational organizations located in Karachi.

The generalization of results was difficult due to the limited sample size (n=167) and collecting data only from one city (Karachi) of Pakistan. However, results could be generalized to an extent because Karachi attracted people from all regions and communities within Pakistan for jobs, business, education and leisure. Moreover, SNSs can be divided into three different categories that could take place at work: 1). Using public SNSs such as Facebook to monitor the activities of friends and post non-employer related information, 2). Using public SNSs such as Facebook to post employer-related information, such as updates about products, and 3). Using private SNSs such as Microsft's Yammer to communicate with co-workers. The impact of SNSs usage on productivity would seem to vary greatly across these categories, but that is not addressed in this study. This limitation, however, is a possible suggested research topic for the future. Finally, this study included responses from employees only, however, data from employers may provide different results and directions.

5.3. Interpreting The Findings In The Context of Wider Published Literature

Knowledge is a significant asset for any organization and is vital for its competitive advantage (Jalonen, 2014). Employees using the Internet and Information and Communication technologies such as SNSs enhanced organizational knowledge through employee collaboration and knowledge sharing. Organizations may face strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats when using SNSs (Kane,

2017). For example, as found in this study, SNSs may become the strength for the organizations when they are used to build relationships among employees and develop organizational knowledge. On the contrary, they may become weaknesses when they hamper the productivity of employees. Moreover, they can be an opportunity when the customers find relevant information uploaded on the companies' website. However, the uploaded information may pose a threat when competitors may take benefit from the information available, or the employees may post negativity on SNSs about the organization.

Despite the issues such as work deviation, low productivity and posting negativity by employees, SNSs may also have many benefits such as presenting the human face of the organization (a Facebook page or a Twitter account) and engaging with customers (e.g. customer care and product feedback) (Broughton et al., 2009). The connectivity of employees using SNSs within and across organizations and with customers generate a large amount of big data, which can be interpreted to create useful knowledge for leaders involved in organizational strategic decision making, innovation, and marketing (Jalonen, 2014).

Employers usually perceived SNSs as a productivity killer. As shown in this research, a study conducted by Team Lease (staffing and recruitment company) found that employees spend 32 per cent of their work time on SNSs for personal use, thus, negatively affecting productivity (Bureau, 2016). Taking a mental break is one of the most common reasons employees use SNSs at work (Ellison, 2016), for instance, emotional disclosure. Similar to this study, other reasons employee use SNSs include connect with friends and family at work, make or support professional connections, get help on work from colleagues inside or outside their organizations, build or strengthen the relationship with coworkers, and learn about someone they work (Ellison, 2016). Contrary to this research, a survey conducted on the employees of a healthcare organization in the United States (US), showed that employees were more productive and engaged when using SNSs at work, but come up with innovative ideas when interacting with colleagues on SNSs (Bizzi, 2018). However, the survey found that employees using SNSs were more likely to leave their organizations by engaging with new potential employers (Bizzi, 2018). These results present a conundrum for employers, that is, employees using SNSs are more productive and engaged, but they are more likely to join other companies. Employers can handle this issue in two ways (Bizzi, 2018). First, employers should neutralize the retention risk caused by SNSs by giving their employees training to focus on making business collaborations rather than making contacts for leaving their organizations. Second, employers can recognize employees' achievements and highlight their success stories on SNSs by which employees will be less likely to share external job opportunities or discuss withdrawal intentions and more likely to work together for their company. (Bizzi, 2018).

Furthermore, a study conducted to reduce employee turnover and acclimate new employees in financial institutions, by beginning a social- and work-related online networking site, found that mixing social life with work life through SNSs developed positive emotions among employees (Business, 2014; Koch, Gonzalez, & Leidner, 2012). These emotions further led to more social networking and eventually helped employees to build social capital and organizational knowledge, as found in this study (Business, 2014; Koch et al., 2012). However, care needs to be taken when employees' use of SNSs may potentially risk the reputation of their organization. For instance, employees may post defamatory comments, disclose unauthorized confidential information, and behave disrespectfully with colleagues.

Therefore, transparent and consistent policies, as necessary as vacation, discrimination, and leave policies are required for using SNSs in the workplace (Westwood, 2018). A Pew Research Center survey revealed that around 50% of the employers in the US had inculcated social media policies at work that restricted employees to use SNSs for personal reasons during working hours (Ellison, 2016). However, using proactive policies and giving discretion, employees' habits of using SNSs at work can be beneficial for employers and organizations, for example, free promotion of business, increasing company morale and building new client relationship (Westwood, 2018).

5.4. Implications for Policies, Practice and Research

The findings of this research should provide useful insights for employers and managers to make friendly and effective SNSs usage policies at work. SNSs such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have become useful sources of information, facilitating open communications between employees of same and different organizations to post news, plan projects, share links and ask queries.

Organizations not paying attention to social media strategy may run the risk of losing the market share. Even, the traditional organizations with brick and mortar presence, have some form of social media presence, be it the customer service representative on Facebook or a CEO running the Twitter account. Moreover, recently, the world has witnessed the unprecedented crisis of coronavirus (COVID 19) that badly affected the global economy. In these difficult time of lockdown, SNSs have immensely become indispensable for employees and employers working from home - to communicate among themselves and customers effectively and efficiently. However, many companies' reputation will be at stake when employees complained of SNSs about the working conditions and delays in paychecks (due to shutdown), for example. Therefore, employers need to establish policies and guidelines to protect companies reputation by restricting their employees' usage of SNSs.

Researchers may take this research further, including more variables, finding new causal relationships, and adding new employee engagement social media initiatives such as gamification (e.g. GamEffective) (GameEffective, 2019) and peer recognition tools (e.g. Bonusly) (Bonusly, 2019). Besides, future research may involve evidence from a large sample of employees to increase confidence in the findings.

6. CONCLUSION

Our study suggested that using SNSs to an extent in the workplace is beneficial for both employees and organizations. Employees connecting with peers and disclosing their emotions using SNSs at work increased organizational knowledge. Organizations, furthermore, have used SNSs to boost employee engagement within and outside organizations to create new business opportunities, such as interacting directly with customers to get feedback on products and services and to get views of customers on upcoming products, thus leading to increased organizational knowledge. SNSs, on the contrary, deviated employees in performing organizational tasks leading to decreased organizational knowledge. However, the implementation of SNSs usage policies may minimize work deviations.

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APPENDIX

Please answer the following using this KEY

Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5)

Table 9.

1. Usefulness	1	2	3	4	5
SNSS encourages people to work from remote locations					
SNSS encourage people to work in team and groups					
SNSS encourage people to share knowledge and expertise					
SNSS encourage innovation through collaboration					
Make contacts with customers and suppliers					
Make new business or professionals contacts					
Stay connected with peers at work					

Table 10.

2. Productivity	1	2	3	4	5
SNSS help me in completing my office work					
SNSS increases my knowledge of work					
I find easier to communicate with my colleagues through SNSS					
SNSS will allow me to perform my day to day work functions more efficiently					

Table 11.

3. Deviation from Work	1	2	3	4	5
SNSS sites wastes time					
SNSS sites deviates me from my work					
Using SNSS delays my work targets					
SNSS lowers my productivity					
Using SNSS negatively influence the way I normally to an extent					

Table 12.

4. Strict Measures	1	2	3	4	5
SNSS should be blocked during office times					
Employees using internet should be monitored for using SNSS during office times					
Administrative should take strong notice of employees using SNSSs					
Overall using SNSS during office hours should not be allowed					

Table 13.

5. Emotional Disclosure	1	2	3	4	5
SNSS Reduce my stress caused by office works					
SNSS Reduce my stress caused by personnel matters					
SNSS Makes me feel I am connected to a larger community					
SNSS Make me feel I am valued by others					
SNSS When I feel lonely, there are several people online I can talk with					

Table 14.

6. Organizational Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
SNSS helps employees of organization to learn more about their competitors					
SNSS helps employees to get instant feedback from their customers					
SNSS helps employees to get new ideas for the betterment of the organization					
SNSS gives employees more awareness to their work related chores					
SNSS contribute to the intellectual capital of an organization.					

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