


Chapter 10

The Dynamics of Employee Relationships in a Digitalized Workplace: The Role of Media Richness on Workplace Culture

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ABSTRACT

Employees of this day are not confined only to the physical space that they occupy during office hours. Today's workstations are connected environments ensuring instant access to other employees and anything that employees need for work which goes beyond any communication barriers and as a result is changing employee experiences to better engaged, innovative, and efficient ones. All these changes have given way to alterations in employee interrelation dynamics within the boundaries of technological environments. The chapter leads to an understanding of how today's work culture has changed, what the digitized workplace looks like, the where and how of task-technology fits, and the model of interpersonal relationships. The chapter also talks about the related implications of media richness theory at workplace with special reference to digitized work environment and virtual reality. Further, the chapter brings in the challenges of cyberloafing and phubbing as consequences of the digitized workplace and how those affect performance and employee relations.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-3515-8.ch010

INTRODUCTION: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AT WORKPLACE

People spend most of their day time at the workplace and it is asserted that people who possess a best friend at work are much more engaged in their work. In a study conducted by Gallup (2017) on work relationships, it was found that people, who simply had a good friend, as compared to a best friend even, were found to be more satisfied at work in general. While asserting that man is a social animal, it is focused that men are naturally social beings and that a man desires friendship and positive connections which can be compared as equal to the need for food and water. Thus emphasizing on the fact that the better the relations are at workplace, the gladder and more industrious people would be. Dating back to some old studies, it can be said that the indication that spirits of friendship impact performance in the workplace is an old one, (Mayo, 1933). Looking back at the famous Hawthorne studies, this can be related as well, that, personal relations in industrial settings are significant (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939).

The average full-time employee will easily spend eight hours on the job each working day, during which they sometimes work together intensively with others. That's why it's necessary for them to engage in interpersonal relationships. The decisions that need to be made can't be made by one person. The quality of the relationships within an organization says a lot about its culture, too. A positive culture is characterized by cheerful employees who get along well. A positive corporate culture usually has a positive influence on business results. A negative culture will manifest in the form of many conflicts and useless discussions. Workplace interrelationships focus the core domain of communication, and there are various ways of improving and stimulating interpersonal relationships within an organization through improved communication (Chakraborty & Ganguly, 2019). Communication is the link to humanity. Interpersonal relationship and communication are closely inter-related. Individuals in an interpersonal relationship share the accountability for shaping the nature of a relationship by creating sense from the interaction. Looking at the workplace communication, the scenario of workplace communication has altered over the recent years.

Digital transformation is not considered as a niche concern today, as digital environment has plunged beyond just the technical departments and made its way into the boardroom of leaders; and this is true for every kind of industry and across geographical boundaries. Communication takes place a lot through digital platforms and relation get in impetus on digital platforms. Thus, anytime we communicate with another person, whether a friend, parent, coworker, or employer, we are communicating interpersonally. It is very regular for communicators to bring into play digital media to get their messages across to one another or the public with the help of blogging, texting, tweeting, Instant messaging, e-mailing, or posting in a

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