

OPEN INNOVATION AND INTERNAL SOCIAL MEDIA TO ACHIEVE AMBIDEXTERITY

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Abstract-Organisations strive for competitive excellence each day to bring in more revenue and sustainability. Keeping sustainability in mind, the very predicament is how an organisation can achieve without disturbing the status quo of the organisation. Organisational ambidexterity comes deliberately as a solution to achieve both exploitation and exploration in a balanced equilibrium. The main picture of competence of the organisation lies with the employees, explained as tacit and explicit knowledge. This paper will focus on how knowledge exploitation and exploration can be framed through open innovation and internal social media. Employees as the key knowledge resource have to be kept engaged and their experience at the work place is never fictional to achieve an ambidextrous organisation. The paper identifies various forms of ambidexterity framed by many researchers and cuts a deeper understanding on how internal social media affects knowledge sharing. With a deep review on the said areas, the paper tries to identify the research gaps and research questions are put forward for future analytical researches. The framed research questions are: How open innovation tools bring a change in knowledge exploration? How internal social media brings a change in knowledge exploitation? How employee resistance towards the change can be reduced to initiate the change? How internal social media can bring in a change among employees' perception of one another when they are multi-cultural? How open innovation and internal social media can improve employee experience framework? What is the role of design thinking in knowledge exploitation among employees?

Introduction

The organisations of today are dwelling on continuous improvement due to enormous competitive push created by the current market and blossoming future opportunities. The core purpose of running towards continuous improvement is to attain competitive advantage, which fluctuates tremendously as an out and in effect of changes in the interests among the stakeholders. Grant (1996) firmly postulates that competitive advantage is achieved via continuous improvement and process innovation. One of the very important stakeholders is employees, who are still under explored till date. The knowledge base created by the employees can stipulate the entire operational band and expand it, if the same is operationalized effectively.

Most of the organisations formulate a knowledge management system to formalise the pattern of knowledge management process in the organisation. As defined by Davenport and Priska (1998), the organisations work hard to condense the tacit and explicit knowledge of the entire work force by capturing, storing, sharing, and using it. Exploiting knowledge and exploring it are two extreme ends, when these two ends are connected through a chained network, it leads to an ambidextrous organisation which would maintain its status quo and flexible enough to accommodate the future opportunities (Atuahene-Gima, 2005). O'Reilly and Tushman (2011) put forward the ability for the organisation to become ambidextrous depends on how it manages to continue doing its business with a flexi-system to incorporate necessary changes according to the needs of the tomorrow's business. In order to bring this kind of strategic structure with in an organisation, there is a high need to consider various mechanisms, which could effectively manage mechanistic and organic nature of the entire system. Though the formalisation of knowledge is very much necessary to have a strong database, the very same may not render the objective of achieving knowledge economy and ambidexterity. An informal network can bring in enormous change in how the employees perceive knowledge sharing. The main purpose of the paper is to bring in a deeper understanding of ambidextrous organisation and to identify the research gaps for future empirical analysis. Longevity of success is realised only by exploiting the existing resources and exploring knowledge (March, 1991; Levinthal and March 1993 & O'Reilly and Tushman 2011). The paper discusses the platforms of required exploration to formulate a model to achieve ambidextrous organisation.

Theoretical Background On Ambidexterity

Exploitative knowledge is a mandate to regularize the operational efficiency and to build core competencies. (Levinthal and March, 1993; Katila and Ahuja, 2002). Exploitation peeks into repetitive process following hierarchal communication process, dealing with a plateaued market while exploration focusses on more realistic, dynamic structure, a lean technology to rely on, coping with the future opportunities and building its own future businesses. (Turner, Swart, & Maylor, 2013). Exploration may seem to be the solution for the kind of dynamic environment faced by the organisations today, it also has its own uniqueness. Benner and Tushman (2003) claims that neither of the both can bring novelty to the organisation alone, it is very essential that a typical balance should be configured between exploitation and exploration.

O'Reilly and Tushman (2011) confirms a major research gap deliberating the fact that there are major papers discussing on the benefits of ambidexterity, but not many papers have put forward a model to achieve ambidexterity. This paper sheds light on micro mechanisms to concentrate on and build a comprehensive model to achieve ambidextrous organisation through knowledge exploitation and exploration. Exploitation and exploration of knowledge should be kept hand in hand to complement each other and derive benefits across both (Birkinshaw and Gibson, 2004; Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009). The tension between exploitation

and exploration has to be balanced without much trade off cost. The following are the forms of ambidexterity formulated: harmonic, cyclical, partitioned and reciprocal ambidexterity(Simsek, 2009).

Harmonic ambidexterity: The agile nature of the organisation is developed within an entire organisational unit. Harmonic ambidexterity can substantiate the organisational efficiency only if the entire organisation generates a conducive atmosphere. Internal and external relatedness plays a major role in building harmonic ambidexterity (Jäckel, 2013).

Cyclical Ambidexterity: The organisation will run its business by exploiting its own knowledge for a longer period and it is intermediated by definitive patterns of exploration, which is of short span. (Simsek, 2009). This formula works well, when the employees need a constant push to be comfortable in their work zone and letting them to an unexplored zone for a short period, thereby decreasing their monotony, while preventing the fear of the unknown. The major unexplored area to be researched is the ability of cyclical ambidexterity to sustain the organisation's competitive advantage. Another area to be researched is the pattern of exploitation and exploration and its time zone.

Partitioned ambidexterity: The organisation breaks down into separate units with separate structures for exploitation and exploration. The need for partitioned ambidexterity is well supported by O'Reilly & Tushman, (2004). The division of units will provide a space to build exclusiveness, ready in hand to compare both the poles and nurture synergy of maintaining status quo and sustaining competitive advantage. This is sketched as structural ambidexterity, which necessitates the organisation to divide itself to facilitate exploitative and exploratory knowledge simultaneously but with different cultural structures, mechanisms and management (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004). Structural ambidexterity brings in only short term benefits as detailed by Zaidi, & Othman, (2015). This might also create isolated islands of information (He & Wong, 2004)

Reciprocal Ambidexterity: This form takes a sequential chain with a feedback, where the outcome of knowledge exploitation tucks in as input to the knowledge exploration, and the output of the latter will be looped into the former. A greater level of synergy is expected to make this form successful as seam less communication plays a vital role. Simsek (2009) posits that external connectedness with alliance partners will provide a successful platform for reciprocal ambidexterity. Though external connectedness is discussed in various researches, the same is not analyzed in depth for informal network platform.

Contextual ambidexterity: Contextual ambidexterity, in contrast with structural ambidexterity, is viewed as a more organic mechanism providing a platform making individuals to decide to focus on exploitation or exploration (Benner & Tushman, 2003). Since the decision power is within the hands of the employees, contextual ambidexterity leads to organisational longevity (Gibson & Birkinshaw, (2004). Employees tend to feel compassion and commitment when they take ownership on the work process, which is usually demonstrated by the top management in structural ambidexterity (Zaidi, & Othman, S. N. (2015).

Internal social media: Social media is driving the entire world to collaborate, donate or collect knowledge. In the recent times, internal social media, exclusively built by the organisations, circle in the knowledge across various units. Leonardi, (2015) states that increased internal social media usage may play a key role in enhancing employees' communication, innovation capabilities, collaboration, and retention. The said work by Leonardi (2015) explored the relationship between internal social media usage and employee engagement within the North American operations of a multinational organization. The results showed that the greater the self-reported usage of internal social media, the greater the levels of self-reported employee engagement.

Internal social media is an exclusive platform incorporated by the organisations for their employees to connect among themselves and create an internal network to share ideas (Buettner, 2015). Internal social media can be a major variable of study to elucidate the effect on knowledge exploitation. Though intense studies have been put forth to analyse the benefits of social media on organisation's performance (Haddud, Dugger, Gill, 2016; Agostini, Nosella, & Filippini, 2017), it paves way to analyse internal and external social media separately in the future. Internal social media is associated positively with employee engagement and self-reported competence (Haddud et al., 2016). From the research undertaken in North American operations of a multinational organization by Haddud et al., (2016), it is clearly understood that internal network partially mediates the relationship between ambidextrous organisation and knowledge exploration and exploitation. Many studies have confronted the variables of social support and top management commitment as second order constructs to measure the possibility of ambidexterity in organisations. But the variables from psychological perspective such as employees' resistance to change, is not given much importance while researching for the success of internal social media (Haddud et al., 2016). The effect of internal social media on knowledge exploitation from individual level can also be explored in the future research as most of the researches cover only the entire organization as a whole. Internal networking partially mediates the relationship between ambidextrous organization and knowledge exploitation and exploration (Agostini, Nosella, & Filippini, (2017) but team cohesiveness is not interpreted with the results, which can be greatly affected using internal social media.

Open innovation:

Knowledge exploration talks itself to be one of the drivers for employees' potential building. Open innovation takes form of sharing knowledge not only to the immediate colleagues, but also to the experts of the particular domain across the organisations (Chesbrough, 2006). Information trading goes far beyond the level of closed network and building core competencies through joining hands together instead of building islands of information (Dahl and Pedersen, 2004). While most of the organisations build a knowledge base to create their own set of knowledge, they often find difficult to build an agile system where the employees can openly share ideas and obtain the same through an open innovation platform (Keupp, & Gassmann, 2009).

McEvily, Perrone, and Zaheer, (2004) states that though many findings suggests that the organisations longevity depends on knowledge exploitation and exploration, very little research has been carried so far to frame a model of exploring knowledge through open innovation, while protecting the USP of the organization.

Research questions to be hypothesised:

1. How open innovation tools bring a change in knowledge exploration?

Simsek, et al. (2009) suggested antecedents to partitioned ambidexterity that extend across organizations by using external networks. Interorganisational networks (communities) are formed to organise open innovation, but only little evidences are available to quantify a framework of the antecedents of knowledge exploration and how the exploration can be improved through open innovation technologies. (Vanhaverbeke, 2006; von Hippel, 2005; West & Lakhani, 2008). Previous studies claim that there is a relationship between the internal social media and inter organisational networks.

2. How internal social media brings a change in knowledge exploitation?

The relationship between internal and external connectedness and Harmonic ambidexterity is well mediated by behavioural context, but the same model can't be generalised as it was proportioned for SMEs alone. Ambidexterity, absorptive capacity and networks are related with a more complex network, supported by the theoretical framework of Datta, 2011.

3. How employee resistance towards the change can be reduced to initiate the change?

When the employees encounter a change in the workplace, they resist due to the fear of the unknown and fear of losing their identity (Habib & Shah, 2013). A psychological change among the employees can be brought by proper communication and training (Serban, 2015). Cultural barrier is the most challenging to overcome which is also supported by the work of Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier, & Rogelio Flores, (2009). This part of employee resistance should be dealt with very careful note, not to ignore any of the cultural differences, but to integrate into one social unit. Employees are not ready to share their knowledge as they are not vigilant in knowing the benefits of it Zwick, (2002). Riege, (2005) Claims that the strategies to build a knowledge sharing platform differs from organisation to organisation, therefore it is necessary to build an agile system, modifiable according to each organisational needs.

4. How internal social media can bring a change among employees' perception of one another when they are multi-cultural?

Organisational culture derives from the top management's vision and also from the workforce nationality and their different cultures (Jhunjhunwala, S. O. N. I. Y. A. (2012).). The organisation will turn its best fit out, when this diversity is explored and all the employees work with synergy (Nair, Lekshmi, & Sommerville, 2017). Asian continent has an exclusive cultural isolation which is explained greatly from ancient civilisation (Kundnani, 2001). This history will make even more challenging to learn and develop a model, in Indian context, of building employee inclusion and cultural interchange through internal social media, which may have an effect on employee experience. There is a need to have a detailed insight into how Indian employees accept to share their ideas informally with foreign colleagues and how the same can be improved using open innovation. Most of the researches have tied organisational culture with job satisfaction, employee performance, stress and leadership behaviour (Tsai, 2011; Sabri, Ilyas, & Amjad 2001; Haque & Aston 2016; Sacky & Sanda, 2011). Still research is on the weaker side on how to accept the multicultural diversity through an informal network.

5. How open innovation and internal social media can improve employee experience framework?

New product development is very much tied with an effective crowdsourcing technique and open innovation (Tsai, & Ghoshal, 1998). These techniques can be studied in depth to analyse how much it has an effect on employee experience as a whole. Design thinking plays a greater role in making the employees engaged with the organisation and engagement does not sprawl from the traditional perks (Plaskoff, 2017). The social life and individual interest brings in knowledge which creates the base for organisational longevity, therefore, the future research can take up more detailed analysis on the former as the causal factor (Plaskoff, 2017).

6. What is the role of design thinking in knowledge exploitation among employees?

Design thinking, when it is integrated with an effective knowledge funnel management, leads to sustainable competitive advantage Martin, R. (2010). Most of the researches have detailed about the impact of ambidexterity on new product development, therefore setting a research gap (Wei, Yi, Y, & Guo, 2014). The future research has to analyse how the same strategy will affect the employees as individuals. According to Turner, Swart and Maylor (2013), social capital is tied with the ambidexterity across various level of management; the future researches can bring in how design thinking can accommodate various levels of hierarchy to achieve ambidexterity.

Conclusion

Ambidexterity comes in various forms to achieve organisational competitiveness. This paper concentrates on how two tensions of ambidexterity i.e., exploration and exploitation can be linked with knowledge sharing among the employees and open innovation. Since open innovation takes a new wave in reaching a networking paradigm, future research can bring in more insights with an empirical analysis of the causal factors leading to effective employee experience as a total unit. The current state doesn't deny the fact that more organic structures are in much convention to create an overall positive employee experience (Ledwith, 2011). Many formal studies confirm that internal networking can effectively achieve ambidextrous organisation (Gilbert, 2006), little has been explored from the perspectives of how knowledge exploitation and exploration is influenced by open innovation and in turns affects employee experience. This mediatory effect can be studied with empirical analysis to derive a framework to meet the requisites of ambidextrous organisation.

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