

The impact of using technology-based communication on the quality of work relationships

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INTRODUCTION

The use of modern technologies has changed the work setting and this change offers us many advantages and benefits. Technology based communication allows us to span time and distance among people. Technology development is moving at such speed that social human behaviour science has not kept pace. There is enormous research on human behaviour, but we lack new models for guiding managerial practices. The question is how to have highly performing, motivated and satisfied employees within companies, where communication is fully or partly technology based.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current article has described the relevant literature pointing out the most important theories and influencing aspects of the presented contextual model. The conceptual model, developed by the authors, shows that the relationship between a technology-based communication work setting and the quality of relationships is moderated by culture and the development of social relationships among employees.

RESULTS

From the presented literature review it can be concluded that technology-based communication (the amount of technology used) affects the quality of work relationships, which is mediated by culture and can be influenced by face-to-face events and norms. The more work communication is done through technology-based means, the harder it is to maintain high quality relationships inside the company.

Communication via technology has a negative effect mainly because of misunderstandings and anonymity. Considering cultural differences and implementing suggestions for the development of social relationships, the quality of relationships can be improved.

DISCUSSION

First of all, the cultural differences have to be taken into account, especially in a multicultural context. Low Context culture members tend to be more specific and clear with their messages, while High Context culture members tend to have hidden context and messages that are not so clear, because of missing context that is rooted in the past.

Another mediator that can improve the quality of relationships is development of social relationships.

For further research the authors recognize the importance of leadership as the most important role in maintaining good quality relationships within the company.

In future research this model should be continued by investigating the technology-based communications' effect on work motivation and work satisfaction. The quality of work relationships are expected to have an influence on employee satisfaction and this idea could be discussed in order to extend the current model.

CONCLUSION

The connection of these variables is clear and the more that communication in the company is through technology-based means, the less is the quality of relationships among members. There are several suggestions for improving these relationships.

In this article, the lack of concentration on human behaviour science in Computer Supported Cooperative Work is recognized. The future competitive advantage will be a motivated work force in combination with advanced technologies.

KEYWORDS

Technology-based communication, work relationships, high-context and low-context culture, computer supported cooperative work.