

Review Paper of Importance of Trust for Iranian Weblog's Evaluation

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Abstract: When weblogs have been used intensively among youths, especially students, it is expected they bring the skill of using weblog to organizations speedily. Although previous studies have revealed the importance of factors such trust and culture for weblog evaluations. There is an obvious scarcity of research focusing on different factors for weblog evaluations. This paper aims to investigate the role of trust for Iranian weblog evaluations.

Keywords: Weblogs, Trust, Organizations

1. Introduction:

A weblog, or blog in short, is a website that contains regular entries on a common webpage in reverse chronological order. Each entry or blog post at a website is written and published by a blogger (or group of bloggers) who maintain(s) the site. A compilation of blogs is called a blogosphere. Blogs frequently function as online diaries (Spiliopoulou *et al.*, 2006), evangelical platforms, or as an informal channel for covering events. Most weblogs are maintained by an individual and are known as individual or single-author blogs. However, community or multi-authored blogs, comprising blogging by groups of individuals who share similar viewpoints or a common aim, are increasing (Agarwal and Liu, 2008, 2009).

2. Weblog's Characteristics

Blogs have not only become a new phenomenon, but also a natural product of the web (Kumar *et al.*, 2004). The distinct characteristics of the blog include (De Moor and Efimova, 2004; Gill, 2004; Lankshear and Knobel, 2003):

- Personal editorship (a blogger edits the contents of a blog according to personal taste), high publicity and openness (a blog is normally accessible on the web).
- Easy use and publication (little technology required, simple operation).
- High but limited interactivity (a blog is frequently open to people on the web, but the exchanges between the blogger and readers are restricted by many factors, such as common interests).
- Frequent updating (a blogger often posts the latest information on a blog). Reverse chronological order (the last entry is shown at the top).
- Hyperlinked post structure (each entry has an URL address and is easily connected to other online resources).

- Archived, date-stamped entries (all entries are archived by a posted date by blog services).
- Ease of organization through RSS and XML feed (RSS and XML feed functions are supported by blog services, thus enabling a reader to easily read the latest updates of a blog).
- Links to related blogs and the forming of blogrolls (a blogger links a list of preferred blogs or online resources on the blog).

3. Trust

McKnight et al. (1998) defines trust as the readiness to accept and rely on others. Trust can be defined as voluntarily accepting the possibility of experiencing losses due to the exploits of others (Tang *et al.*, 2008). Gefen *et al.* (2003) defined trust in relation to reliability, compassion, aptitude and inevitability. In an online situation, Cyr (2008) describes trust as the belief of users that they will not be susceptible to any kind of threat. In this study, trust refers to individuals' belief that other weblog users will perform expected behavior and will not take advantage of them opportunistically.

Coleman (1990) posited in risky situations trust become a key factor. Echoing this, Das and Teng (2004) proposed a risk-based framework of trust and divided subjective trust into two main dimensions namely goodwill trust and competence trust, which are linked with relational and performance risk respectively. If we apply their view to this study, relational trust can be seen as trust to other bloggers and blog users; and considering weblogs' contents trustworthy is a kind of performance trust.

In another classification suggested by Fang and Chiu (2010), four dimensions of justice including informational, procedural, distributive and interpersonal justice defined that have impact on referents of trust including trust in management and trust in members. Trust is a keystone element of every human relationship and great degrees of attention has been paid to it in the literatures of various subjects. But, despite the notable developments that appear to have been made in employing the notion of trust in some disciplines, the fact that we still do not have a clear understanding of the concept is rather disconcerting. Different conceptualizations of trust have been introduced over the course of years with the offered definitions covering various concepts like social structure, situational feature, personal trait, action, and positive belief (Das and Teng, 2004). Risk is one of the concepts that are being intertwined into trust's conceptualization more and more. According to a number of academics, trust is only required in risky circumstances and trusting someone means to take a risk with the trustee (Das and Teng, 2004). According to Das and Teng (2004), trust has three conceptions namely subjective trust, which is known as a perception, trust antecedents which are the different factors, situational and personal, which result in subjective trust, and behavioral trust which is actions which are subsequent of subjective trust.

Knowledge is able to create value when it is shared with others and transferred to them. Knowledge sharing identifies with the concept of 'dependency' as well. It can be interpreted as the extent to which the benefits of a firm from relation and connections go beyond the advantage they gain from the best option outside the relationships. Knowledge sharing has become very important because of its value in creating knowledge, innovation (Donate and Guadamillas, 2011) and organizational learning. Individuals who share knowledge with one another motivate and influence competitiveness and knowledge-creating company. The knowledge in the system of the organization and its members can bring about sustainable competitive advantages for the company due to the fact that such knowledge is valuable, rare, non-substitutable and inimitable.

Employees' lack of desire in sharing their knowledge with their organizational colleagues and coworkers is the major obstacle that organizations encounter. Knowledge sharing's perceived costs; which include loss of expert power, and time and effort, along with individuals feelings toward their colleagues and organization are key determining aspects of knowledge sharing (Casimir *et al.*, 2012).

Since an individual's voluntary sharing of knowledge with others is considered to be a social transaction and trust is thought to facilitate the sharing of knowledge; the significance of trust's role in social transactions is more than its role in economic transactions (Mariotti, 2011). Trust affects the performance of an organization through facilitating the voluntary cooperation, particularly in complex inter-dependent actions' context. Establishing the culture of knowledge management; which is a key element of interpersonal trust, is the greatest obstacle faced by the majority of knowledge management initiatives (Soliman and Spooner, 2000).

The definition that has been offered for interpersonal trust is "the degree of individuals' confidence and willingness to act on the basis of another individual's decisions, actions, and words" (McAllister, 1995). Interpersonal trust has been conceptualized into two different dimensions by McAllister (1995) which are cognition-based trust and affect-based trust (affective trust) with the first being based on the responsibility, competence, and available knowledge of the individuals and the latter being based on the emotional alliance between individuals which can take the form of expressions of concern and care and the belief in the reciprocity and intrinsic value of this type of relationships (McAllister, 1995).

Compared to competency based trust, affective trust has more relevance to the voluntary sharing of knowledge since it decreases the vulnerability feelings (Swart and Harvey, 2011) and reduces the fear that the other involved members will be opportunistic or exploitative. According to various researches (Swart and Harvey, 2011), trust has a positive relationship with trust. The negative impacts knowledge sharing's perceived costs have on knowledge sharing might be reduced by positive emotions (Swart and Harvey, 2011). If people regard their organization, colleagues, and coworkers positively, they are less probable to regard their organization and colleagues from an academic point of view and therefore will probably be more willing to sustain the costs that sharing their knowledge will bring about. Although the positive relation of knowledge sharing and effective commitment along with the reducing impact of perceived cost might be evident, these relations might depend on the degree of affective trust between colleagues.

Rufín et al. (2012) analyzed the effect of building trust on commitment to politicians' blogs. They have argued that building trust among local blogs users may lead visitors to recommend the blog to others, revisit it and prefer it to the rest. Rufín *et al.* (2012) analyzed the impact of various factors in building trust and commitment on the Internet. The study developed the theory of behavior of the relationship quality to the some weblogs in Spain, along with two more factors such as distrust and attachment which have impacts on building trust and commitment. The results of their study confirm the behavior of relationship quality, and indicate that commitment and satisfaction are significantly related to and mediated by trust. The study explores that attachment has significant impact on satisfaction and commitment, but there is no significant relationship between trust and attachment, and neither between commitment and distrust (Rufín *et al.*, 2012).

Park et al. (2014) examined the role of dependence and trust on knowledge sharing in information system projects. They posited that team members share their knowledge when they trust their partners and when they feel dependent. Therefore, advised project managers to pay attention to these factors in order to increase the level of knowledge sharing among team members especially in information systems development projects where primary tasks are critically knowledge-intensive.

4. Conclusion

Even though there is an obvious scarcity of study that investigates the role of trust on knowledge sharing in employee weblogs, there are some researches with contradictory findings about the impact of trust in other genre of blogs or online communities. For instance, while Rufin *et al.* (2012) revealed that trust is an important factor for followers who visit politicians' weblog, Hsu and Lin (2008) concluded that trust did not have a important impact on attitude toward using weblogs. Likewise, while Casimir *et al.* (2012) suggested that trust in colleagues play a significance role by moderating relation between knowledge sharing and affective commitment, Chow and Chan (2008) after examining the role of social trust, social network and social capital in regard with organizational knowledge sharing posited that social trust did not have significance effect on attitude toward and subjective norm about knowledge sharing. Despite the fact these studies are not directly related to knowledge sharing via employee weblog, an empirical investigation may provide more insight into the role of trust in respect with knowledge sharing. By considering all studies mentioned above, it can be inferred that trust have undeniable influence in knowledge sharing through weblogs, as the trust among colleagues motivate them to share their knowledge, building trust and commitment among weblog users makes them visit the blogs and recommend it to others, and the cost of knowledge sharing and perceived risk taking can be overcome by building trust.

5. References

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