

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATION POWER IN GROOMING PROFESSIONALS FOR CAREER SUCCESS

SAODAH WOK & JUNAIDAH HASHIM
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Abstract

Networks, contacts and power are very important for career success. As such this article tries to (a) find out the use of social network sites for social and/or professional purposes, (b) examine the differences between the internal contact and the external contact used by employees, (c) ascertain the differences between information power and relational power used, and (d) analyze the relationships between communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power with career success. The study employed a quantitative research design. A total of 308 middle-level management officers were surveyed, using a questionnaire as the research instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that the employees used mainly email, Facebook and Twitter. They used social networking sites more for social networking than for professional networking. Generally, the employees used more of the internal contacts than the external contacts. However, the employees perceived that they were equally capable of having information power and relational power. Nonetheless, the findings also showed that career success was predicted by information power, external contacts, social networking use, and relational power. Therefore, career success encompasses both what you know and whom you know to climb up the career ladder for successful accomplishment at the workplace.

Keywords: *Social networking; professional networking; interpersonal contacts; communication power; career success*

JARINGAN KOMUNIKASI, KONTAK ORGANISASI DAN KUASA KOMUNIKASI DALAM MEMBENTUK PARA PROFESIONAL UNTUK KEJAYAAN KERJAYA

Abstrak

Jaringan komunikasi, kontak organisasi dan kuasa komunikasi adalah amat penting bagi kejayaan kerjaya. Oleh itu, artikel ini cuba untuk (a) mengetahui kegunaan laman jaringan sosial untuk tujuan sosial dan/atau tujuan profesional, (b) menguji perbezaan antara kontak dalaman organisasi dan kontak luaran organisasi yang digunakan pekerja, (c) menentukan perbezaan antara kuasa maklumat dan kuasa hubungan yang digunakan, dan (d) menganalisis pertalian antara jaringan komunikasi, kontak organisasi dan kuasa komunikasi dengan kejayaan kerjaya. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kajian kuantitatif. Sejumlah 308 orang pegawai pengurusan pertengahan ditinjau dengan menggunakan borang soal selidik sebagai alat pengumpulan data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pekerja lebih kerap menggunakan email, Facebook dan Twitter. Mereka juga menggunakan laman jaringan sosial untuk bersosial lebih daripada untuk tujuan profesional. Pekerja menggunakan kontak dalaman organisasi lebih daripada kontak luaran organisasi. Namun begitu, pekerja bertanggapan bahawa mereka berupaya untuk membentuk kuasa maklumat sejajar dengan kuasa hubungan. Tetapi, kajian ini turut menunjukkan bahawa kejayaan kerjaya dapat diramal oleh kuasa maklumat, kontak luaran organisasi, penggunaan jaringan sosial dan kuasa hubungan. Oleh itu, kejayaan kerjaya mengandungi kedua-dua aspek iaitu apa yang kita tahu dan siapa yang kita tahu untuk memanjat tangga kejayaan bagi mencapai kejayaan di tempat kerja.

Kata kunci: *Jaringan sosial; jaringan profesional; kontak interpersonal; kuasa komunikasi; kejayaan kerjaya*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid widespread of the internet and its innovation has attracted many researchers to use Internet implication as their focus of study. For example, many researchers are interested in studying about Social Networks Sites (SNS).

According to Ellison, Steinfeld and Lampe (2007), SNS is an online space where individuals are allowed to present themselves, expand their social network, and establish or maintain relationships. In these recent years, SNS become popular among adults and working people as well. Of all SNS, Facebook and Twitter are the most popular social network sites. This is probably because the social networks' uses and features are user-friendly, making it easy for people to use them. Most of the social networks will log on into their accounts at least once a day (Bilton, 2010). The social networks are popular for many reasons, for example, they manage to increase social capital and providing entertainment (Ray, 2007).

Besides for entertainment purposes, social network like Facebook also provides information for job search strategy including LinkUp, business cards, inside Job, My LinkedIn Profile, and Work With Us (Osborn & LoFrisco, 2012). This information is very important for one's future career. The use of SNS has enabled the users to gain access to more information which non-users may not have. The extent to which the use of SNS is able to help career development and success among working adults remains unknown. To date, there are limited studies done on SNS and career, and these studies focus on the use of SNS with recruitment activities, and they were studied from the employers' perspective. This is the uniqueness of the present study as it reduces the knowledge gap in the subject by studying on new dimensions of SNS, organizational contacts, and communication power with career success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study tries to (a) find out the use of social network sites for social and/or professional purposes, (b) examine the differences between the internal contact and the external contact used by employees, (c) ascertain the differences between information power and relational power used by employees, and (d) analyze the relationships between communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power with career success.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Related Theories

Social capital consists of resources that are embedded within people's social networks. Two theories that can be used to conceptualize social capital are Horman's Exchange Theory (1956, 1961) and Strength-Of-Weak Ties Theory (Granovetter, 1973).

Exchange Theory is based on face-to-face social interchanges that occur between two persons. When two individuals interact, they may reward or punish, satisfy or frustrate each other. The survival of a social unit from as small as a dyad and to as large as a complex organization depends on the maintenance of profitable exchange outcomes. Based on Homan's Social Exchange Theory, Blau

(1964), Emerson (1962, 1972), Levin and White (1961) articulated on Exchange Theory in which the behavior of one individual in a controlled externally situation by another (or others), who has power over him/her and demands or exercises certain behaviors. This is a phenomenon that can be applied to career success.

The Strength-Of-Weak Ties Theory focuses on the strength of the social ties used by a person in the process of finding a job (Granovetter, 1973). Strong ties consist of frequent, close relationships, emotionally intense ties with friends, advisors and co-workers. The information possessed by any member of this circle is likely to be widely shared with the other members, thus being quickly redundant with the information possessed by the other members. Weak ties are viewed as a connection to knit network densely outside the individual's direct contact, are infrequent, not emotionally intense that provide non-redundant information (Barros & Elves, 2003; Hatala, 2009). Granovetter (1973) argued that it was more likely that weak ties rather than strong ties would that provide a greater opportunity for new information about job leads.

Social relations are expected to reinforce identity and recognition. Being assured and recognized of one's worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group sharing similar interests and resources not only provides emotional support but also public acknowledgment of one's claim to certain resources (Lin, 1999).

Career Success, Communication Networks, Organizational Contact, and Communication Power

Career success is conceptualized as both real/objective and perceived/subjective achievements in individuals' work lives (Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995). Such achievements have been the subject of empirical inquiry, and can be classified into two broad categories. The first category includes objective career outcomes such as promotion and compensation (Dreher & Ash, 1990). The second category consists of subjective career outcomes. This includes more affective/attitudinal in nature and less tangible signs of career success such as career satisfaction, career commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Koberg, Boss & Goodman, 1998; Noe, 1988).

Subjective career outcomes are defined by the criteria of (a) job success, (b) interpersonal success, (c) financial success, and (d) hierarchical success. For this study, subjective career outcomes, such as career satisfaction and job satisfaction are the motivational factors of the higher level of the motivational needs, are used; not the objective achievements.

Several studies have shown that networking is related to both objective and subjective career success (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Langford, 2000; Michael & Yukl, 1993; Orpen, 1996). In this study, networking refers to behaviors that are aimed at building, maintaining, and using informal relationships that possess the potential benefit to facilitate work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily granting access to resources and maximizing common advantages (Wolff & Moser, 2006; Forret & Dougherty, 2004). The construct is defined on a

behavioral level (Michael & Yukl, 1993; Wanberg *et al.*, 2000; Witt, 2004). These behaviors include the use of SNS, as one of the popular media for networking nowadays.

Networking plays an important role in monitoring and controlling other people within and without an organization. Boundary spanners are able to exert their control on others because they have the linkage within the organization as well as outside the organization. Boundary spanners help in the flow of information within the organization (internally) and across organization (externally). They gather information from the outside organization through their contact (Dunham, 1984). Symmetrical (reciprocal) relationship is important for equal exchange of information, that is, equal in getting information and in giving information to others. This type of information-sharing activity tends to last, and the relationships tend to be stable and mutual (Saodah, 1996).

Information is essential for workers to participate at the workplace; therefore, information should be shared. This results in information-sharing activity. Information-sharing is defined as the extent to which individuals share with others any information at their disposal that can be used to make rational decisions or to perform other organizational activities. Information-sharing takes place at the individual level, program level, and the institutional level. At the individual level, information is shared through personal linkages, where such sharing is rather private and based on friendship.

According to Serbeit *et al.* (2001), there are two reasons to expect access to information and access to relational resources, each is related to career success. First, greater access to information and resources should enhance individual work performance. They argued that individuals are able to use their network position to fill a broker or boundary spanner role within the organization, which adds greater value to the organization. Second, information and relational resources are fundamental bases of social power (French and Raven, 1968). Greater access to information and relational resources will increase the individual's organizational reputation (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994; Tsui, 1984) and the individual will be perceived as more powerful or influential in the organization (Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993). These perceptions should make the individual better able at securing valuable organizational rewards independent of their actual level of performance (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Luthans *et al.*, 1988).

The information choices have increased every day. Thus, we should not only rely on the expertise of 'gatekeepers'. The information literacy skills have become necessary in our lives to evaluate authority, to confirm accuracy and credibility of sources of information. Information literacy means more than just finding facts. It means being able to verify those facts and evaluate information in a complex technological environment (Bush, 2008). Noorriati, Saadiah and Raja Suzana (2012) stated that social networking sites increase knowledge sharing among peers at a workplace. There is much evidence to suggest that network resources can substitute for receiving mentoring and, furthermore, to suggest that when both types of resources are present, the benefits of network resources for career success are greater, i.e., over and above the benefits of mentoring

received (Eby, 1997; Higgins & Kram, 2001). New communication technologies have dramatically increased the opportunities for development of relationship ties with other organizational members in a variety of roles and hierarchical levels (Higgins & Kram, 2001). This makes it easier for individuals to obtain access to resources, for instance, information and relational power for they need to advance their careers without the assistance or intervention of the traditional mentor.

Based on related literature on career success, communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power discussed above, three general hypotheses are formulated, each having two sub-hypotheses. They are:

GH1: There is a positive relationship between communication networks used and career success.

SH1.1: There is a positive relationship between communication networks for social purpose and career success.

SH1.2: There is a positive relationship between communication networks for professional and career success.

GH2: There is a positive relationship between organizational contacts and career success.

SH2.1: There is a positive relationship between internal contact and career success.

SH2.2: There is a positive relationship between external contacts and career success.

GH3: There is a positive relationship between communication power and career success.

SH3.1: There is a positive relationship between information power and career success.

SH3.2: There is a positive relationship between relational power and career success.

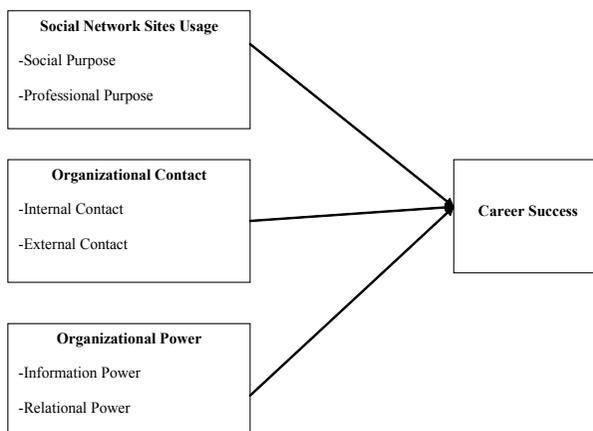


Figure 1: Conceptual framework between career success, communication networks, organizational contacts, and communication power

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employs a quantitative research design, using survey method with questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. This design was used to tap the uniqueness of gathering primary data from an unbiased representation of the population of interest, as well as for standardization of measurement.

Population of the Study and Sampling Procedure

The population of the study consists of the groups of middle-level management from various companies (SMEs and large) residing in Klang Valley. The samples were selected at random, based on the types of industries involved, such as manufacturing, services, health, and education. Trained enumerators were assigned to various locations so that duplication of location and type of industry could be avoided, while taking their representativeness of the industry into consideration.

A total of 308 respondents representing various companies were collected in a duration of two months, from January to February 2013.

Operational Definition of the Variables

Career success consists of 9 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. The overall variable was computed to form a mean score, with a minimum score of 1 and the maximum score of 5. Communication networks form is a composite of seven Social Networking Sites (SNSs), for example, Facebook can be used for social networking and/or professional networking. The usage of each SNS is measured using a 7-point Likert-like scale, where 1=never, 2=less than once a month, 3=once a month, 4=2-3 times a month, 5=once a week, 6=2-3 times a week, and 7=daily. The social purpose was computed for those who answered affirmatively (coded as 1) to the various types of SNSs multiplied by the level of use for the respective SNS. The same calculation was done for the professional purpose.

The overall communication network is the average of the composite value of the social networks purpose and the professional network purpose. Organizational contacts composed of two dimensions, namely, internal contact and external contact. Each dimension has 10 items and each dimension is also calculated for its mean. Therefore, the overall organizational contact is made up of 20 items which were later calculated for its mean. Communication power, on the other hand, has two dimensions, namely, information power and relational power. Each dimension is measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. Each dimension is measured using 10 items and, therefore, communication power has 20 items. Communication power and its dimensions are calculated for their means to be used further in the paired t-test, correlation and regression analysis.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The items of each variable were adapted from previous studies and the items were also found to be reliable. However, since the context of the present study is in Malaysia while the previous studies were mainly in the West; therefore the items under each variable are subjected to reliability test and they are tested against Cronbach's alpha of .70 to indicate that the variable of interest is reliable. Table 1 shows the reliability test for the research variables. The results show that there exists homogeneity and cohesiveness of the items under each dimension of the research variable and the respective variable understudy. Cronbach's alpha exceeds .70 except for the overall communication networks, with Cronbach alpha .663, which is acceptable. This is due to the variability of the number of respondents using all the SNSs identified for the study. Other than that the Cronbach's alpha for the other variables and dimensions range from .852 to .929. Therefore, all the variables and their respective dimensions are considered as reliable and are used, as the mean score, for further analysis in the study.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and reliability statistics for research variables

Variables	Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (n = 308)
Communication Networks	Social purpose	10.205	8.541	8	*
	Professional purpose	8.542	6.621	8	*
	Overall communication networks	9.373	5.550	8	.663
Organizational Contacts	Internal contact	3.658	0.548	10	.852
	External contact	3.330	0.669	10	.900
	Overall organizational contacts	3.494	0.529	20	.907
Communication Power	Information power	3.578	0.563	10	.872
	Relational power	3.522	0.654	10	.909
	Overall communication power	3.550	0.557	20	.929
Career Success		3.487	0.696	9	.928

*Computed variable

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) WIN 17. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the study. The descriptive statistics include frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation while the inferential statistics used were paired t-test, correlation and regression analysis. To obtain the overall percentage, the mean for each item was multiplied by 20. This was based on the 5-point scale, which was equivalent to 100%. Therefore, the overall percentage was obtained by multiplying the mean unit with 100/5. This indicated the overall percentage level of the stated scale. Similarly to the 7-point scale, the mean for each item was multiplied by 100/7.

The paired t-test was used to find out the relationship between the dimensions of communication networks (social purpose and professional purpose), organizational contacts (internal contact and external contact), and communication power (information power and relational power). Correlation and regression analyses were used to test the relationships and to determine the predictors for career success.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study are described in terms of their demographic characteristics and their job-related characteristics.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Respondents for this study consist of 308 employees from various organizations that came from different backgrounds (Table 2). The respondents comprised of an almost equal proportion of males (47.2%) to females (52.6%). Almost half of the respondents were aged from 26 to 35 (43.2%), followed by 17-25 years old respondents (26.3%), and 36-45 years old group (18.2%); the mean age of the respondents is 32.32 years old. The majority of the respondents were Malays (81.8 percent), while Chinese made up of 10.7% of them, and the rest (7.1%) were Indian and other races. The respondents also hold various levels of education and qualifications, with most of them having bachelor's degree (46.1%), followed by diploma holders (19.2%) and master's degree holders (14.9 %).

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:	Female	162	52.6
	Male	146	47.4
	Total	308	100.0

Age (years old):	17-25	81	26.3
	26-35	133	43.2
	36-45	56	18.2
	46-55	30	9.7
	56 and older	6	1.9
	Missing	2	.6
	Mean =32.32, SD=9.55	Total	308
Race:	Malay	252	81.8
	Chinese	33	10.7
	Indian	13	4.2
	Others	9	2.9
	Missing	1	0.3
		Total	308
Highest Level of Education	Less than high school	3	1.0
	High school	45	14.6
	Diploma	59	19.2
	Bachelor's degree	142	46.1
	Master's degree	46	14.9
	Doctorate degree	5	1.6
	Professional degree	6	1.9
	Missing	2	0.6
	Total	308	100.0

Job-Related Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3 presents the job-related characteristics of the respondents. Almost half of the respondents (47.7%) worked in the private sector. A total of 31.8% of the respondents were government servants while another 20.1% was from the public sectors, e.g. government link company (GLC). In terms of working experience, more than half of the respondents (51.3%) worked from one to five years. Many just started working (18.2%) while a substantial number of them have worked between 6-10 (14.6%), and more than 10 years (15.3%). Almost all of them (91.2%) were full-time staff of the organizations. They mainly worked as executive officers (36%), followed by managers (19.5%), individual contributors (17.5%), and supervisors (17.2%).

Table 3: Job-related characteristics of respondents

Job-related Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type of organization:	Private	147	47.7

	Government	98	31.8
	Public	62	20.1
	Missing	1	0.3
Working period:	Less than 1 year	56	18.2
	1 year – 5 years	158	51.3
	6 years – 10 years	45	14.6
	More than 10 years	47	15.3
	Missing	2	0.6
Employment status:	Full time	281	91.2
	Part-time	26	8.4
	Missing	1	0.3
Designation:	Executive Officer	111	36.0
	Manager	60	19.5
	Individual contributor	54	17.5
	Supervisor	53	17.2
	Director	28	9.1
	Missing	2	0.6

Communication Networks

This study employs the online communication networks as it can be used for social networks purpose and for professional networks purpose. There are seven social networking sites (SNSs) identified for social purpose and for professional purpose (Table 4a). They are Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Blogging, Twitter, Skype, and Email. Majority of the respondents used email (89.9%), and followed closely by Facebook (73.3%). The rest of the social networking sites is less subscribed and used. Assuming that at least one SNS was being subscribed to, it was found that the respondents did not use the SNSs to the fullest for all the available SNS.

Table 4a: Frequency of using online social networking site usage

Online Social Networking Site (SNS)	Mean*	SD	Percentage
E-mail	6.292	1.453	89.9
Facebook	5.133	2.239	73.3
Twitter	2.555	2.247	32.1
Skype	2.159	1.843	26.3
Blogging	2.097	1.843	26.3
LinkedIn	1.584	1.322	18.9
MySpace	1.484	1.185	16.9
Overall mean for online social network site	3.044	1.023	43.5

*on a 7-point scale where 1=Never; 2=Less than once a month; 3=Once a month; 4=2-3 times a month; 5=Once a week; 6=2-3 times a week; 7=Daily.

It was found that different sites were used for different purposes. Specifically, Facebook is used widely for social network purposes (73.7%) while Email is used widely for professional network purposes (74.7%). The rest of the distribution of the online social networking sites is presented in Table 4b.

Table 4b: Purposes for using online social networking site

Online Social Network Site (N=308)	For Social Networking (%)	For Professional Networking (%)
Facebook	73.7	25.3
E-mail	36.0	74.7
Twitter	27.3	11.0
Skype	23.7	10.4
Blog	20.1	12.0
LinkedIn	6.8	14.6
MySpace	5.8	20.1
Total	*	*

*Multiple responses

Table 4c further presents the comparison between the overall usage for social network purposes and for the professional network purposes. The results confirm that many SNSs are used for social network purposes ($M=10.205$, $SD=8.541$) than for the professional network purposes ($M=8.542$, $SD=6.621$). However, there is no relationship between social network purposes and professional network purposes ($r=.057$, $p=.322$). Nonetheless, there exists a significant difference between social network purposes and professional network purposes ($t=2.777$, $p=.006$). This means that many respondents used SNSs more for social network purposes than for the professional network purposes.

Table 4c: Paired t-test between social networking usage and professional networking usage

Networking Usage	Mean	SD	r	N	p	t	df	p
Social Networking Usage	10.205	8.541	.057	308	.322	2.777	307	.006
Professional Networking Usage	8.542	6.621						

Organizational Contacts

Organizational contacts comprised of two dimensions, namely, internal contact and external contact (Table 5a). It is found that the internal contact ($M=3.58$, $SD=0.548$) is exercised more than the external contact ($M=3.330$, $SD=0.669$). This means that the internal communication is carried out more than the external communication involving other department and other organizations. Specially, the three most likely to be communicated within the organization is “where the

colleagues become the referral group” (73.2%), with “when instructions or work documents are not stated clearly, I ask colleagues for clarification” (77.8%) and “when I need answers to sensitive questions I turn to reliable colleagues to find out more about the matter” (75.0%). The external contact activities, on the other hand, are much less practiced among the respondents (66.6%). Colleagues, too, come as an important person for external contact where “for business purposes I keep in contact with former colleagues” (70.3%).

When further analyzed for the relationship between internal contact and external contact and for its differences (Table 5b), results showed there was a moderate positive relationship between internal contact and external contact ($r=.508, p=.000$). This means that those who made higher internal contact tend to make higher external contact as well, and vice versa. On top of that, the internal contact is exercised more than the external contact ($t=9.407, p=.000$). In addition, the results confirm that the internal contact is practiced more than the external contact.

Table 5a: Mean and standard deviation of organizational contacts

Internal Contact	M*	SD	%
When instructions or work documents are not stated clearly, I ask colleagues for clarification.	3.890	0.783	77.8
When I need answers to sensitive questions I turn to reliable colleagues to find out more about the matter.	3.750	0.842	75.0
If I want to meet a person who could be of professional importance to me I take the initiative and introduce myself.	3.731	0.784	74.6
If a colleague has assisted me with a difficult problem, I inform him of the outcome once the problem has been resolved.	3.727	0.785	74.5
When a colleague from another department asks me for help with a professional matter, I help him/her, even if it is not part of my job.	3.718	0.804	74.4
In my company, I approach employees I know by sight and start a conversation.	3.594	0.835	71.9
When I meet members of my company for the first time at formal meeting I introduce myself personally before or after the event.	3.581	0.841	71.6
At informal occasions I exchange professional tips and hints with colleagues from other departments.	3.542	0.788	70.8
I discuss upcoming organizational changes with colleagues from other departments.	3.526	0.936	70.5
I use company events to make new contacts.	3.520	0.960	70.4
Overall internal contact	3.658	0.548	73.2
Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=.852$)			
External Contact			

For business purposes I keep in contact with former colleagues.	3.516	0.848	70.3
I develop informal contacts with professionals outside the organization, in order to have personal links beyond the company.	3.464	0.946	69.3
I use business trips or training programs to build new contacts.	3.451	0.928	69.0
If I meet acquaintances from other organizations, I approach them to catch up on news and changes in their professional lives.	3.432	0.818	68.6
I accept invitations to official functions or festivities out of professional interest.	3.409	0.847	68.2
I exchange professional tips and hints with acquaintances from other organizations.	3.325	0.838	66.5
When I can't solve a problem at work I call acquaintances from other organizations and ask for advice.	3.296	0.920	65.9
I use my contacts outside my company, to ask for business advice.	3.266	0.989	65.3
I take part in professional association meetings (e.g., trade union, Chambers of Commerce, Malaysian Institute of Management).	3.075	1.129	61.5
I meet with acquaintances from other organizations outside of regular working hours.	3.062	0.913	61.2
Overall external contact	3.330	0.669	66.6
Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=.900$)			

*on a 5-point scale, where 1=Never (1-20%); 2=Seldom (21-40%); 3=Sometimes (41-60%); 4=Frequent (61-80%); 5=Very frequent (81-100%)

Table 5b: Paired t-test between internal contact and external contact

Organizational contact	Mean	SD	r	N	p	t	df	p
Internal contact	3.658	0.548	.508	308	.000	9.407	307	.000
External contact	3.330	0.669						

Communication Power

Communication power consists of two dimensions, namely, information power and relational power (Table 6a). Results showed that information power ($M=3.578$, $SD=0.563$) was almost equal to the relational power ($M=3.522$, $SD=0.654$). The highest item claimed by the respondents regarding information power was "I have the information acquired through experience" (77.0%) while for the relational power was "I am good at interpersonal communication" (73.6%). There is a strong relationship between information power and relational power ($r=.674$, $p=.000$). This means that those who are high in information power are also good at relational power. However, there is no significant difference between information power and relational power ($t=1.955$, $p=.051$). This means

that information power as a whole is at par with the relational power practiced in the organization.

Table 6a: Information power and relational power

Information power	M*	SD	%
I have the information acquired through experience.	3.851	0.751	77.0
I have the knowledge of how to get the information.	3.737	0.730	74.7
I have access to important information needed.	3.669	0.704	73.4
I know the sources of important needed information.	3.630	0.799	72.6
I have the information that I want to share with them.	3.623	0.808	72.5
I give important information needed by organizational staff.	3.617	0.844	72.3
I can withhold scarce information.	3.516	0.793	70.3
I have the control of information in organization.	3.399	0.962	68.0
I am the source of information for most people in the organization.	3.370	0.955	67.4
I have the information that others do not have.	3.364	0.872	67.3
Overall information power	3.578	0.563	71.6
Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=.872$)			
Relation power			
I am good at interpersonal communication.	3.679	0.837	73.6
I know many high ranking people in my organization.	3.597	0.906	71.9
I communicate well with the high ranking people in the organization.	3.578	0.856	71.6
I have the influence on people through communication.	3.578	0.797	71.6
I have many subordinates to help me.	3.526	0.875	70.5
I always get things done through my connections and linkages.	3.526	0.886	70.5
I have many influential friends outside my organization.	3.484	0.911	69.7
I have many influential friends inside my organization.	3.455	0.907	69.1
I hold important position in my organization.	3.435	0.916	68.7
I stand high in the organizational chart position.	3.364	0.930	67.3
Overall relational power	3.522	0.654	70.4
Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=.909$)			

*on a 5-point scale where 1=Strongly disagree (1-20%); 2=Disagree (21-40%); 3=Somewhat agree (41-60%); 4= Agree (61-80%); 5=Strongly agree (81-100%)

Table 6b: Paired t-test between information power and relational power

Organizational Power	Mean	SD	r	N	p	t	df	p
Information power	M=3.578	0.563	.674	308	.000	1.955	307	.051
Relational power	M=3.522	0.654						

Career Success

Career success is perceived as the outcome to employees who aspire to be high achievers in the hierarchy of the progression and promotion ladder. A total of 69.7% of the respondents agreed that they had achieved their career success. The highest item rated by 73.5% of the respondents was “I am respected by my peers”. This means that there is still room for improvement for the respondents.

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation of Career success

Career success	M*	SD	%
I am respected by my peers.	3.675	0.810	73.5
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.	3.549	0.791	71.0
I am in the position to do mostly work which I really like.	3.536	0.859	70.7
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.	3.523	0.840	70.5
I am satisfied with my opportunities for promotion.	3.464	0.904	69.3
I am drawing a high income compared to my peers.	3.425	0.950	68.5
I have reached my career goals within the time frame I have set for myself.	3.422	0.908	68.4
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income.	3.403	0.862	68.1
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.	3.386	0.919	67.7
Overall career success	3.487	0.696	69.7
Cronbach’s Alpha ($\alpha=.928$)			

*on a 5-point scale where 1=Strongly disagree (1-20%); 2=Disagree (21-40%); 3=Somewhat agree (41-60%); 4= Agree (61-80%); 5=Strongly agree (81-100%)

Relationships between Career Success with Communication Networks, Organizational Contacts and Communication Power

This section further tests the hypotheses of the study. Zero-order correlations between all the variables are presented in Table 8. Results showed that there were moderate relationships between career success and information power ($r=.436, p=.000$) and relational power ($r=.414, p=.000$). Nonetheless, the relationships between career success and internal contact ($r=.289, p=.000$) and external contact ($r=.384, p=.000$) are weak. On the contrary, there is a negligible relationship between career success and social networks purpose ($r=.151, p=.004$) and there

is no relationship at all with professional network purposes ($r=.055, p=.168$).

The zero-order correlation also revealed the interrelationships between the independent variables. It is found that social networks purpose had no relationship for communication networks dimensions, that is, with the professional networks purpose, but moderate relationship for the organizational contacts dimensions, that is, between internal contact and external contact ($r=.508, p=.000$), and strong relationship for communication power dimensions, that is, between information power and relational power ($r=.674, p=.000$). Nonetheless, professional networks purpose has a weak relationship with internal contact ($r=.222, p=.000$) and negligible relationship, though significant, with external contact ($r=.147, p=.005$) and with information power ($r=.099, p=.042$). Internal contact, on the other hand, has a moderate relationship with external contact ($r=.508, p=.000$) and with information power ($r=.444, p=.000$) but with a weak relationship with relational power ($r=.395, p=.000$). External contact exhibits moderate relationship with information power ($r=.494, p=.000$) and relational power ($r=.502, p=.000$). In addition, information power has a strong relationship with relational power ($r=.674, p=.000$).

Table 8: Correlation between communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power with career success

Variables (N=308)	Career Success	Social Networks Purpose	Professional Networks Purpose	Internal Contact	External Contact	Info Power	Relational Power
Career success	1						
Social Networks purpose	$r=-.151,$ $p=.004$	1					
Professional Networks purpose	$r=.055,$ $p=.168$	$r=.057,$ $p=.161$	1				
Internal Contact	$r=.289,$ $p=.000$	$r=-.008,$ $p=.443$	$r=.222,$ $p=.000$	1			
External Contact	$r=.384,$ $p=.000$	$r=.091,$ $p=.056$	$r=.147,$ $p=.005$	$r=.508,$ $p=.000$	1		
Information Power	$r=.436,$ $p=.000$	$r=-.074,$ $p=.099$	$r=.099,$ $p=.042$	$r=.444,$ $p=.000$	$r=.494,$ $p=.000$	1	
Relational Power	$r=.414,$ $p=.000$	$r=-.046,$ $p=.210$	$r=.088,$ $p=.063$	$r=.395,$ $p=.000$	$r=.502,$ $p=.000$	$r=.674,$ $p=.000$	1

When tested using multiple regression analysis to make comparison between the contribution made by the selected variables toward career success, results (Table 9) showed that social networks ($t=-2.909, p=.004$), external contact ($t=3.143, p=.002$), information power ($t=2.944, p=.003$), and relational power ($t=2.210, p=.028$) are able to predict career success.

Table 9: Simple multiple regression between career success with communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	1.262	.274		4.610	.000
Social networks	-.012	.004	-.146	-2.909	.004
Professional networks	.000	.005	-.008	-.155	.877
Internal contact	.045	.077	.035	0.582	.561
External Contact	.209	.066	.200	3.143	.002
Information power	.257	.087	.208	2.944	.003
Relation power	.164	.074	.154	2.210	.028

F (6,301) = 17.904, p = .000, R=.513, R²=.263, R² Adj=.248

Additional analysis was carried out. When the dimensions for each independent were combined together an additional simple multiple regression analysis was carried out. Results are presented in Table 10 and Table 11. It is found that career success is moderately correlated with communication power ($r=.464, p=.000$) but weakly related with organizational contacts ($r=.392, p=.000$). Communication power, on the other hand, has a negligible relationship organizational contact ($r=.165, p=.002$). However, the relationship between organizational contacts and communication power is moderate positive ($r=.580, p=.000$).

Table 10: Correlation between communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power with career success

Variables (N=308)	Career Success	Communication Networks	Organizational Contacts	Communication Power
Career success	1			
Communication Networks	$r=-.084, p=.072$	1		
Organizational Contacts	$r=.392, p=.000$	$r=-.165, p=.002$	1	
Communication Power	$r=.464, p=.000$	$r=-.011, p=.424$	$r=.580, p=.000$	1

When tested for their contribution, results (Table 11) showed that communication networks ($t=-2.428, p=.016$) contribute negatively towards career success as opposed to organization contacts ($t=3.465, p=.001$) and communication power ($t=5.554, p=.000$). This means that communication power is the best predictor for career success.

Table 11: Simple multiple regression between career success between communication networks, organizational contacts and communication power

Model	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	1.134	.257		4.418	.000
Communication Networks	-.015	.006	-.123	-2.428	.016
Organizational Contacts	.283	.082	.215	3.465	.001
Communication Power	.425	.077	.340	5.554	.000

F (3,304) = 34.195, p = .000, R=.502, R²=.252, R² Adj=.245

Table 12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

General Hypothesis	Sub-Hypothesis	Remarks
GH1: Communication networks is positively related to career success	SH1.1: Social networks purpose is positively related to career success.	Supported
	SH1.2: Professional networks purpose usage is positively related to career success.	Not supported
	Overall GH1	Partially supported
GH2: Organizational contacts is positively related to career success	SH2.1: Internal contact is positively related to career success.	Not supported
	SH2.2: External contact is positively related to career success.	Supported
	Overall GH2	Partially supported
GH3: Communication power is positively related to career success	SH3.1: Information power is positively related to career success.	Supported
	SH3.2: Relational power is positively related to career success.	Supported
	Overall GH3	Fully supported

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with the objective of examining factors that contribute to career success. Specifically, it examines the influence of communication networks (communication networks for social purpose and for professional network purposes), organizational contacts (internal contact and external contact) and communication power (information power and relational power) on career success.

The findings revealed the communication networks for social purpose was widely used than for the professional networks purpose. Such personal use has little contribution towards career development. But, since both social networks

purpose and professional networks purpose are strongly related to one another, therefore, career success can be achieved through both social networks and professional networks. Thus, the findings support the exchange theory more than the Strength-Of-Weak Ties Theory.

Employees in Malaysia should realize that communication networks can do more for them rather than just getting connected with their friends. It is a great loss to the employees if they do not take the advantage of such benefits. In fact, co-worker sites have recently begun to appear as a viable social media platform. These sites are intended to enhance the workplace environment by encouraging staff to get to know more about peers, administrators, and others in the organisations for career advancement. Therefore, for effective change and general acceptance of the role of SNS in organisation, senior managers need to develop a clear communication strategy, both vertically and horizontally, to promote the benefits and effects these tools have to offer.

In addition, internal contact is being practiced more than the external contact and there is a positive relationship between internal contact and external contact. To a certain extent, both theories (exchange theory and strength-of-weak ties theory) apply to this situation, with the exchange theory being more practiced than the strength-of-weak ties theory. This implies that boundary spanners exist to help in the inter-organizational linkages towards information-sharing activities. Boundary spanners are well connected internally within the organization and externally between organizations. On top of that, information power is found to be more practiced than relational power. Usually, boundary spanners are organizational staff members who are strongly linked internally and externally, and they gather information from the other organizations and share the information internally. They are at the strategic positions for career success where joint ventures can take part between the organizations. The boundary spanners can help in the flow of information within organization and between organizations. Thus, this means that *Strength-Of-Weak Ties Theory* and the exchange theory are being supported by the findings.

Communication power contributes to career success where information power and relational power correlate strongly with each other, despite the fact that information power is slightly practiced than the relational power. Both types of power are able to promote and help in career success. This is so since there is a strong positive relationship between information power and relational power, thus implying that both the Exchange Theory And Strength-Of-Weak Ties theory exist together within the organization for career success.

More researches is needed on SNSs contributions to employees specifically on their career development and career success as communication networks, organizational contacts and communication are hastened by the use of SNSs, if used diligently. The present study triggers and calls for more in-depth studies in this subject.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Saodah Wok is a Professor at the Department of Communication, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). She specializes in Organizational Communication and Applied Statistics.

Junaidah Hashim is a Professor at the Department of Business Administration, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). She specializes in Human Resource and Training.

REFERENCES

- Barnes, S. B. (2006), 'A privacy paradox: social networking in the United States. *First Monday*, 11(9). Retrieved November 5, 2010. http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_9/barnes.
- Barros, C. P. & Alves, F. M. P. (2003), Human capital theory and social capital theory on sports management, *International Advances in Economic Research*, 9(3):218-226. DOI:10.1007/BF02295445.
- Bilton, N. (2010, March 09). Facebook will allow users to share location. *The New York Times*. Retrieved February 8, 2013. <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/09/facebook-will-allow-users-to-share-location/>
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Dreher, G. F. & Ash, R. A. (1990). A comparative study of mentoring among men and women in managerial, professional, and technical positions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(5), 539-546.
- Dunham, R. B. (1984). *Organizational behavior: People and processes in management*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends:" Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), article 1. Retrieved February 8, 2013. <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.htm>
- Emerson, R. M. (1962). Power-dependence relations. *American Sociological Review*, 27(1), 31-40.
- Emerson, R. M. (1972). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2(2), 335-362.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(5), 360-80.
- Hatala, J. P. (2009). Assessing individual social capital capacity: The development and validation of a network accessibility scale. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 22(1), 53-68.
- Higgins, M. & Kram, K. (2001). Reconceptualizing mentoring at work: A developmental network perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 264-88.
- Homan, G. C. (1956). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(3), 597-606.
- Homan, G. C. (1961). *Social behavior: Its elementary forms*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Judge, T. A., Cable, D. M., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz, R. D., Jr. (1995). An empirical investigation of the predictors of executive career success. *Personnel Psychology*, 48(2), 485-519.
- Levin, S. & White, P. E. (1961). Exchange as a conceptual framework for the study of interorganizational relations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 5(2), 583-601.

- Lin, N., Ensel, W. M., & Vaughn, J. C. (1981a). Social resources and occupational status attainment. *Social Forces*, 59(5), 1163-1181.
- Lin, N., Ensel, W. M., & Vaughn, J. C. (1981b). Social resources and strength of ties. *American Sociological Review*, 46(4), 393-405.
- Nooriati Din, Saadiah Yah, & Raja Suzana Raja Kassim. (2012). Online social networking for quality of life. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 35(3), 713-718.
- Osborn, D. S. & LoFrisco, B. M. (2012). How do career centers use social networking sites? *The Career Development Quarterly*, 60(3), 263-272.
- Raine, C. (2008). Uses and gratifications of Facebook for political information. Unpublished M. S. Dissertation, University of Kansas, United States. Retrieved February 8, 2013.
- Dissertations & Theses: Full Text (Publication No. AAT 1460175).
- Ray, M. (2007). Needs, motives and behaviors in computer-mediated communication: An inductive exploration of social networking websites. Unpublished M. A. Dissertations, York University, Canada. Retrieved February 8, 2013.
- Dissertations & Theses: Full Text (Publication No. AAT MR51624).
- Saadah Wok. (1996). Information sharing among research and development agencies within an integrated agriculture development program Johor Barat, Malaysia. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, USA.

