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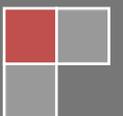
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Contact Address:

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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

TOJCAM welcomes you.

I am happy to inform you that The Online Journal of Communication and Media (TOJCAM) has been published volume 3 issue 2 in 2017. This issue has research papers from all around the world.

The Online Journal of Communication and Media is an international journal in the field of communication and media. TOJCAM is an online and peer-reviewed journal that accepts papers on all aspects of communication and media. Research papers could be about, but are not limited to: communication and media developments.

The aim of TOJCAM is to diffuse new developments in communication and media. The mission of TOJCAM is to provide faculties and students with knowledge about the very best research in communication and media. TOJCAM's acceptance rate is almost 37%. TOJCAM is now a major resource for knowledge about communication and media.

TOJCAM publishes research and scholarly papers in the fields of communication and media. All papers are reviewed at least by two international members of the Editorial Board with expertise in the area(s) represented by a paper, and/or invited reviewers with special competence in the area(s) covered. The Editors reserve the right to make minor alterations to all papers that are accepted for publication.

TOJCAM is confident that readers will learn and get different aspects on communication and media. Any views expressed in this publication are the views of the authors and are not the views of the Editor and TOJCAM.

TOJCAM will organize International Trends and Issues in Communication & Media Conference ITICAM -2017 at Freie University, Berlin, Germany. ITICAM series is an international educational activity for academics, teachers and educators. This conference is now a well-known communication and media event. It promotes the development and dissemination of theoretical knowledge, conceptual research, and professional knowledge through conference activities. Its focus is to create and disseminate knowledge about communication and media.

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TOJCAM invites our authors to submit a research paper. Submitted articles should be about all aspects of communication and media. The articles should be original, unpublished, and not in consideration for publication elsewhere at the time of submission to TOJCAM. Manuscripts must be submitted in English.

TOJCAM is guided by its' editors, guest editors and advisory boards. If you are interested in contributing to TOJCAM as an author, guest editor or reviewer, please send your CV to tojcam.editor@gmail.com.

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Table Of Contents

FRONT DESK EMPLOYEES OF TEHRAN LOCAL BANKS: CASE STUDY THE EFFECTS OF LONG HOURS OF WORK	1
Selira Kotoua, Behnoush Razzaghi	
PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE OF NURSES AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS	11
Havva Sert, Ahmet Seven, Dilek Aygin, Serap Çetinkaya, Hande Açıl	
SOCIAL MEDIA “FACEBOOK” IN THE SERVICE OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES	19
Nabil Al-Awawdeh	
THE USE OF MOODLE IN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	22
Aylin ACAR, Mustafa Naci KAYAOĞLU	
THE USE OF THE BLACKBOARD ALONG WITH INTRANETS AS A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: CASE STUDY THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, PRINCE SATTAM BIN ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY	26
Fathi Ben Basheer Tenzakhti	

FRONT DESK EMPLOYEES OF TEHRAN LOCAL BANKS: CASE STUDY THE EFFECTS OF LONG HOURS OF WORK

Selira Kotoua

Eastern Mediterranean University, Faculty of Tourism, Box 95, Gazimagusa, Via Mersin 10 Turkey
Kotoua.selira@hotmail.com

Behnoush Razzaghi

North Boulevard, No.338, Pardis University, Karaj, Tehran, Iran
Behnoush.razzaghi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the ideal working environment for front desk employees at the Tehran local banks to reduce emotional fatigue among workers. Ten local banks were involved in the research. Customer service and job involvement include institutional commitment and job satisfaction. Banks have traditionally paid much attention to customer behaviour because the action has several effects on revenue from customers. The present competition among banks has generated a new climate of approach to manage local banks through customer relationships that include job commitment, Job contribution, job satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees. It is resulted that majority of Local banks employees in Tehran work long hours and get less paid due the embargo that was put in the country. The results therefore show how most employees are emotionally exhausted and have turnover intentions, but difficult to find new jobs to replace the present stressful employment.

Keywords: jobs, satisfaction, emotions, exhaustion, Banks, Iran

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to examine the local banks in Tehran and the front desk employees. The local banking sector in Tehran is highly working intensively with the front desk employees' working extra hours to accumulate benefits for the banks among other banks in the environment. The customers play an important role in the factors that affect the banks sustainability (Nasri & Charfeddine, 2012), The local banks rely on customers for benefit and functioning of the banks. Based on these reasons, the growth of the Banks depends on the efficient and effective work among the workers at the maximum level. Long hours of hard work will enable the sector to remain feasible in the rapid changing competition among other Iranian banks (Berger et al., 2015). Various Banks in Iran have realized that hard work pays and it creates good relationships between employees and customers. Banking institutions, therefore make their employees work long hours without providing rewards as compensation for the time spent in the workplace (Rai et al., 2012; Adkins & Premeaux, 2012; Hamermesh & Stancanelli, 2015). Most of the local banks focused on managing cost and maintain quality of service thereby encouraging more employees' performance as a strategy to gain the competition and competitive advantage among other bank (Berger et al., 2016; Al-Alak, 2014). Several academicians and researchers have examined workplace problems in the banking sector around the globe that are likely to influence employees' behavior to perceive the best strategy in order to improve long working hours in Banking and performance. One of the most important problems discovered was the unspoken accepting of the turnover intentions among employees and the deep implication and cost the behavior of turnover intention will have in the banking organizations in the environment if nothing is done to avoid the abuse (Gelard & Karimi, 2016). This study, therefore intends to investigate how to use job satisfaction as a mediator to reduce turn over intention in the Tehran central bank. The study of Wallace et al., (2013) reveals that the essential part of the front desk employee in the local banks involvement in their responsibilities makes them commit to their jobs. Its further indicates that when an employee is thoroughly involved in his job he is committed to the institution in which he works. When employees put all their effort to obtain the goals of the organization they work, they are not likely to think about intending to quit (Kashif et al., 2016). The studies of Allen and Meyer (1991) indicate that there are three methods by which employees can be committed to the banking sector. However the studies of Dhar (2015) reveal that affectivity is a commitment by which employees recognize a specific banking institution and wish to conserve the membership and remain there as employees because they perceived economic value and do not want to leave the institution.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of researchers and academicians attempted to answer the questions of what makes employees want to quit their jobs by examining the antecedents of employees' intending to turnover (Trivellas et al., 2013; Muralidharan et al., 2013). Till present time researcher are still investigating this problem. Some findings demonstrate that lack of consistency has always been the main reasons. There are several reasons why employees quit one job and join another (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). The experience of emotional exhaustion and

stress in a job is one factor. Job dissatisfaction is the major influence on employees to turnover their jobs (Weng & McElroy 2012). The research of Zopiatis et al., (2014) suggests that workers turnover jobs because of economic factors. An economic model was utilized to indicate that employees quit their jobs due to low salaries and benefits. In a similar manner role ambiguity can lead to turn over intention. Role ambiguity is a situation where the employees do not know how to do their jobs or the distinction between what management expects of the employees and what the employees feel should be done. Issues of this nature, cause uncertainty about what should be the role of the employees and what should be the role of the employers. This can result to disagreement of what is expected and what is not.

The constructs of job involvement were introduced by Lodahl and Kejner (1965) and Korschun et al. (2014). Various empirical relevant literatures related to employees and different work environments have been studied. Based on organizational perspective, job involvement is being observed as a motivational factor for employees (Diefendorff & Chandler 2011; Leischnig & Kasper-Brauer 2015). It is also considered as a rudimentary basis for initiating competitive advantage among business marketing (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005; Cornaggia et al., 2015; Saeidi et al., 2015). Job involvement has also been noted as a central point for individual employees' development, growth, and satisfaction in workplace goal oriented behavior (Belias et al., 2015; Çetin et al., 2012). Job involvement plays an important role in job enhancement in institutional effectiveness and engages employees in production behavior. It is has been psychologically agreed that the features of job involvement and supervisor behavior characterized organizational delineation and employees' effectiveness in work results for individual people.

In the current books of psychology related to commitment and employee organizational variables (Eisenberger et al., (2010) and Zeinabadi (2010) revealed that organizational commitment is a procedure of identification of the objectives of the organizations. Voluminous review of empirical studies indicates organizational commitment include employees, customers, the public or unions. Organizational commitment has been involved negatively with turnover intentions and withdrawal behavior such as the increment of performance and maximized absenteeism and tiredness of employees. Considerable number of researchers examined the antecedents of organizational commitment literature and inferred that the variables differ from one investigation to another which makes the research literature inconsistent where commitment has been expressed and operationalized in different methods.

Contribution to knowledge

Consumers' turnover intentions have many reasons. Dissatisfaction, better market alternatives or reaction to an increment in the cost of goods and service in the organization are among the various reasons that can lead to intentions to quit (Trivellas et al., 2013). Consumer loss causes a direct effect on the organization and leads to decline in profitability. Turnover intentions from customers can also cause losses to positive word of mouth, decrease in the organizational income and should not be encouraged in any organization. Researchers accepted that customers' citizenship behavior involves voluntary support and action that may not produce direct benefits for the customer, but a value to the organization (Bove et al., 2009; Yi & Gong, 2006; Yi et al., 2011). When customers experience intention to quit doing business in an institution, the idea of organizational citizenship behavior dies naturally. Similarly, intention to quit among employees affects job satisfaction, leads to job stress and discourage job performance as whole that can affect the organization interest.

Conceptual research model

As indicated in Figure 1 the research model has several relationships. Job satisfaction has an impact on turnover intention, job satisfaction impact on job involvement and institutional commitment. Job satisfaction has partial or full mediation with job involvement and institutional involvement. Age, gender, marital status, education and organization tenure are considered control variables.

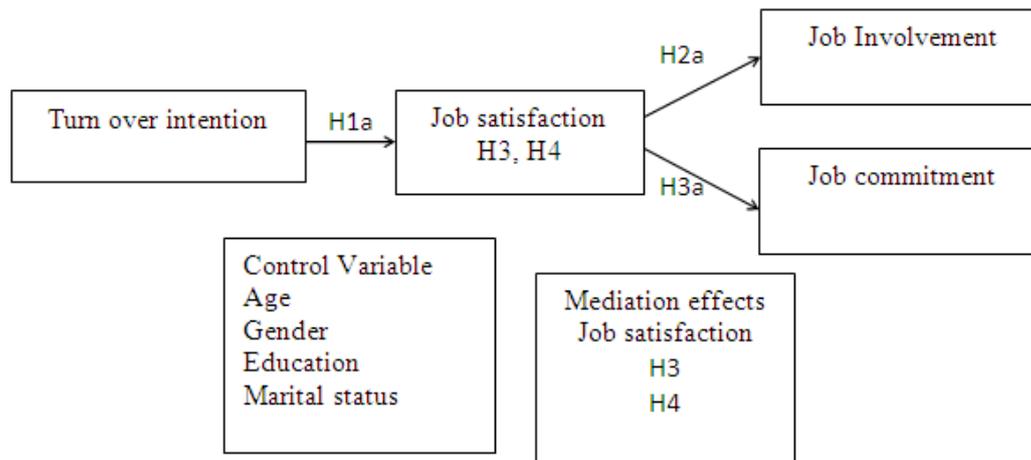


Figure 1: conceptual research model

Mediation effects

Job satisfaction as a mediating influence on job involvement and institutional commitment in various organizational relevant literature indication that employees who are satisfied with their jobs experience internal satisfaction. Job satisfaction is categorized as the extent to which employees feel positive or negative about their work (Oetomo, 2011; Barnes et al., 2015). Negative connection with absenteeism leads to intention to quit among employees (Valente et al., 2015). The problems and impacts of stress in jobs such as role ambiguity and role conflict have impact in job involvement and institutional commitment. The issues of continuance, affective and normative in organization relate to job satisfaction. Continuance is regarded as the positive emotional behavior of employees that has component of strong needs in institutional commitment (Bhuiyan & Islam, 1996). Affective commitment on the other hand is the feelings and the attachment employees have on their organizations, the amount of involvement and their contributions towards progressive development of the organizations' membership. Normative commitment in organizations relates to job satisfaction. Various researchers generally accepted that continuance, affectivity and normative commitments are the perceptions of the workers and their obligations to their institution. Role conflict is a situation where one is expected to fulfil the duties of two contradictory positions. Example of role conflict could be a manager in an organization who is expected to fire someone who is also a friend (Berger, et al., 2016). Role ambiguity on the other hand is presented as a situation where an individual employee has not clear directions about an expected role of his job in an institution.

Turnover intention

Naturally, customers like good services and may intend to move their business to another bank elsewhere if they perceive negative behavior about the services they get from the local bank. It has been proposed that consumers' behavior towards quality of services can be a reason for turnover intentions (Tajuddin Ali & Kamaruddin, 2015). It is important for employees to treat customers well and to avoid a negative behavior that can influence a business moving from one local bank to another. The model of turnover intention by Cotton & Tuttle (1986) demonstrates that the relations between quality of service behavior and turnover intentions can appear stronger in customers than in employees based on perceive quality. It is also posited that employees who work long hours and receive less reward may have intention to turnover a job (Cahuc et al., 2016). Based on these theories the hypotheses were formulated.

Burnout leads to turnover intentions. This refers to a phenomenon that was used by employees in the front desk local banks to deal directly with customers' day to day emotions. Burnout studies were first conducted by Maslach and Jackson (1986). Burnout has three definition components namely (i) emotional exhaustion which is a situation where employees are over extended in their jobs and feel physically and emotionally tired (ii) Depersonalization refers to a period of feelings among various desk front employees that experience disconnected thoughts due to hard work of long hours. This type of feeling does not make employees to lose contacts of reality in their in their jobs, but make them wishing to turnover from their daily jobs (iii) The reduction of personal accomplishment in jobs make employees feel incompetent, unproductive and no achievement in their jobs. Theoretical frameworks link with burnout reveal that it is the major mediating relationship between work stress and behavior results Peng et al., (2016). It is further explained that among these behavior results bring about turnover intentions, which have been researching many academicians around the world.

H1a: Turnover intention has a positive relationship with job satisfaction

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is regarded as one of the main factors of intentions to stay in a job (Zopiatis et al., 2014). Job satisfaction is a complex experience with several affecting components. It is a significant predictor of employees' intent to stay that leads to decreasing in turnover intentions. Many authors inferred that a reduction in turnover intention is experienced when employees are satisfied with their jobs. The study of Çetin et al., (2012) posited that job satisfaction has strong relations with affectivity and normativism than it has with job continuous commitment. Based on the foundation of the theory originated from the early research and the examination of the relationships between job involving and affectivity the following hypothesis was developed.

H2a: Job satisfaction has a positive relationship with job contribution

Job Involvement

Job involvement is a psychological identity of a job by an employee in an organization such as the bank (Trivellas et al., 2013). The research of McKelvey & Sekaran (1977) and Frone et al., (1995) noticed that employees form attachment with their jobs when they have job involvement behavior. Similarly, the studies of Paullay and Stone-Romero (1994) reveal that job involvement is a state of mind where individual employees can be pre-occupied and engaged with his job concerns. Another research from Zopiatis et al., (2014) defined job involvement as an individual with a high interest in his job. An employee with low job involvement pivots his interest in other things than his job. Job involvement is a measurement for job employees' work life quality. The research of Jensen et al., (2013) states that employees with high level of job involvement are likely to be independent in doing their work that is in line with the job responsibilities than people who are less involved in their jobs. It is further explained that people who are involved in their jobs reduce turnover intentions-

Institutional commitment

Institutional commitment is the relative strength of individual identity with one's involvement in a particular institution (Peng et al., 2016). Institutional commitment can be defined into three groups. (i) Belief in an institution and the accepting of the objectives of the institution (ii) The willingness of an individual employee to put considerable effort in the objectives and value of an institution (iii). The wish of individual employees to maintain a relationship and membership of an institution. Institutional commitment therefore demands something more than loyalty to an institution. It requires a strong relationship that the individual employees are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to contribute to the institutions' welfare and security. It is sensible to recognize that though individual employees can be committed to their families, political parties, but the action of commitment to the institution should be paramount and the employee will be liable to display the three kinds of behaviors recognized in the above definition.

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive relationship with institutional commitment

METHODOLOGY

A judgmental sample was used to interview full time front desk employees in 10 local banks in Tehran. An email was sent to the management of the banks to request for permission to conduct the research. The management accepted for the study to be conducted so questionnaire of 350 were distributed to the organizations. The researchers were not allowed to directly distribute the questionnaires to the respondents. A supervisor was selected in each bank to distribute the questions which took two weeks to complete. The respondents were informed the survey was voluntary and they were assured of their anonymity. The respondents rated questionnaire related to work satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment and intention to quit their jobs. Apart from the demographic variables, 5 point response scale was used to measure the study ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All the measurements were originally written in English and later translated to Persian because the majority of the people in Iran do not speak English and there was a need for back translation. The questionnaire was used to test 10 people working in different banks in Tehran and there were found to be understandable and there was no need for any changes. Out of the 350 questionnaires that were distributed, 275 were obtained representing 79% as response rate. About 59 % of the respondents were male and the rest were female. The ages between 18 and 29 were 34% while the ages between 28 and 49 were 52%. The rest were above 49 years of age. Sixty-six percent of the respondents had B.Sc. degrees and the rest had secondary school education. The employees were all front desk employees in the local banks. The participants reported average job tenure of 5.3 years with the local banks as their present employment.

Measurement

Turnover intentions among employees in the front desk local bank were measured by using 4 items from the four scale items of intention to quit (Di Pietro et al., 2014). I intend to leave this job in a few weeks, I have been thinking about leaving this job, I am looking for another job in another bank, I am tired of working in this job without proper rewards. These items were subjected to rating based on a 5 point Likert scale from I strongly disagree to 5 I strongly agree and the cronbach's was 0.88. Burnout was similarly measured by using the theory of (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012; Peng et al., 2016). Burnout is measured by the components of frequent employees' burnout syndrome that include the perception of emotional exhaustion, depersonalizations and employees personal accomplishments.

Job satisfaction was measured using 5 item scale variables adopted from the studies of Kim et al., (2005) and Donovan et al., (2004). The items include (i) I consider my work very pleasant (ii) I feel satisfied with my present work (iii) I like my work (iv) My work is very interesting (v) I enjoy doing my work. The item variables were measured based on five -point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha value was measured as 0.82 indicating strong internal validity consistence.

The front desk employees form the most important part of the banking system. The success and failure of a bank will therefore depend on the involvement of the front desk employees in their jobs. The frontline employees in the bank are always the first to contact the customers' emotions. Job involvement is a cognitive state of employees' psychological mind that impact job identification that differs from one employee to another. It is important to note that when employees are satisfied with their job they experience job involvement. Job involvement therefore impacts the organization and the psychological attachment of the individuals working in the organization. Job involvement is regarded as the most important influence of employees' motivations has received a huge considerable research among academicians over the past years (Trivellas et al., 2013; Berger et al., 2016). The research of Kanungo (1982) suggested 10 item measurements for job involvement that was regarded as the most represented psychological identity of job involvement. The study of Kanungo (1982) originated from the scale of (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965) and the research of Lodahl and Kejner also originated from the studies of (Kaplan, 1990). Based on these theories, this study measured job involvement by using 4 items scale.

Job commitment was evaluated using 5 scale items adopted from (Porter et al., 1974). The measurement of job commitment explained as (i) Do you stay late in the office to complete your work, (ii) Do you skip work before the ideal time is up, (iii) Do you give your own duties to other workers under you to do for you because you don't feel like doing it (iv) What kind of job commitment does your work require. This refers to the commitment individual employees plan to commit to their jobs in the local banks as an affectivity. All the items were measured based on a 5 Likert scale ranging from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree). The Cronbach alpha variable for this measure was 0.90 showing that the internal validity was strong and consistent.

Measurement results

Many items were dropped because of lower standardized loadings and the errors from the correlation measurement in the confirmatory factor analysis. One item from turnover intention measurement, one item from job satisfaction and one item from job involvement were taken off. The result indicated that the five item factor measurement model fit the data accurately ($X^2 = 288.70$, $df=199$; $X^2/df = 1.45$; $CFI= 0.89$; $RMSEA= 0.049$; $SRMR= 0.056$). All the loadings were observed to be significant. The sizes of the loadings are grouped from 0.82 to 0.90. All the loadings were noticed to be significant. The qualities of the loadings were measured greater than the accepted cutoff level of 0.70. The total percentage variances were withdrawn from the turnover intention, Job satisfaction, Job involvement and Job commitment were 0.62, 0.68, 0.60 and 0.66 respectively. The results revealed indicate evidence of convergent validity problems (Price et al., 2012). The study of Schatz & Sandel (2013) measurement was utilized as a base to examine discriminant validity. The average variance obtained from the analyses by each latent variable was noticed to be greater than the variance shared in the constructs. All the measurements were shown to be reliable and each construct was more than 0.60. The composite reliability scores for turnover intention, Job satisfaction, Job involvement and Job commitment was 0.86, 0.82, 0.89 and 0.90.

Table 1: Scale Items and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Items scale	Standardized loading	Percentage Variance	Eigen Values	Alpha Value
Turnover intention		0.62	1.52	0.86
I will probably be looking for another job soon	0.73			
I often think about quitting	0.68			
I will quit this job sometime in the next year	0.77			
I will quit this job sometime in the next year	-			
Job satisfaction		0.68	1.32	0.82
My job is very pleasant	0.74			
I am very satisfied with my job	0.82			
I am very enthusiastic about my job and related responsibilities	-			
I definitely dislike my job	0.76			
My job is very rewarding	0.67			
Job Involvement		0.60	1.38	0.89
How often do you go on break	0.65			
Do you receive phone calls at work not related to your work	0.79			
How long do last at break or lunch	0.82			
How often do you get coffee while at work	0.88			
Do you give your full attention to your work	-			
Job commitment		0.72	1.35	0.90
Do you stay late in office to complete your work	0.91			
Do you skip work before the ideal time is up	0.79			
Do you give your own duties to other workers under you to do for you because you don't feel like doing it	0.87			
What kind of job commitment does your work require	0.78			

The extraction method: principal component analysis, rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization, Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) Measurement of Sampling Adequacy: 0.916. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity p value 0.00 (chi-square: 288.70 df: 199). The Reliabilities were measured using Cronbach's alpha weights.

Table 2 is the correlation table that measures means, standard deviation and the correlations of the variables. This also allows the data to be compared based on their relationships. As indicated in the correlations Table 2, it is noticed that the majority of the of the employees in the local banks in Tehran are not satisfied with their jobs because of the stress of long hours of cheap labor.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of study variables:

	variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Age	-							
2	Gender	0.01	-						
3	Education	0.02	0.04	-					
4	Marital Status	0.05	0.01	0.06	-				
5	Turnover intention	0.05	0.10	0.11	0.09	-			
6	Job satisfaction	0.04	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.21*	-		
7	Job Involvement	0.14	0.07	0.06	0.16	0.25**	0.28**	-	
8	Job commitment	0.00	0.13	0.09	0.01	0.27**	0.22*	0.28**	-
9	Mean	2.10	3.11	2.21	2.03	4.01	3.06	2.08	3.04
10	Standard deviation	1.32	0.92	1.73	1.42	4.06	3.08	2.71	2.09

The composite score for each item was measured and collected from averaging the scores that represent each construct. The gender was coded as binary variable where 0= male and 1= female. The correlation indicates **p< 0.01 and *p<0.05

Note. The composite variable scores for each construct is calculated based on their average of the total scores of the items. The scores for turnover intention, job involvement and job commitment ranged from 1 to 5 but the scores for job satisfaction which is the mediator is arrayed from 1 to 6. Gender was coded as binary variable (0=Male and 1=female). * correlation is significant at 0.05 and ** Correlation are significant at 0.01 level.

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis
Dependent and independent variables of standardized regression weigh

	Job involvement			Job commitment		
	Step 1 β	Step2 β	Step3 β	Step1 β	Step2 β	Step3 β
Independent variables						
(1) Control variables						
Age	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.07	0.05
Gender	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.06	0.08	0.08
Education	0.03	0.09	0.00	0.06	9.05	0.03
Organization tenure	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.03
(2) Turnover intention	-	0.28**	0.14	0.21*	-	0.16*
(3) Job satisfaction	-	-	0.43**	-	-	0.24*
F	6.52*		9.32**	12.34**	16.55**	8.24**
R ² at every step	0.18	0.24	0.33	0.22	0.34	0.44
ΔR	-	0.06	0.9	-	0.12	0.10

Note: Gender was coded as binary variable (0=male and 1=female). The results did not show any problem of multi collinearity from the variance inflation factors. *P< 0.05 and **P< 0.01

As indicated in table 3 turnover intention has a significant and positive relationship with job involvement ($\beta=0.28$, $P<0.01$), turnover intention has positive relations with job commitment (0.21, $P<0.05$) and (0.16, $P<0.05$). Based on these results the hypothesis H1a, H2a and H3a are all supported. The results for the mediating effects are also shown in Table 3. Turnover intention has significant positive relations with job involvement (0.43, $P<0.01$). The results indicates that by including job satisfaction as a mediator in the model reduces the size of the effects on the job satisfaction and job commitment (0.24, $P<0.05$) were not significant any more. The result in Table 3 also shows a significant increase in the the R² of the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.09$, $P<0.01$). Table 3 also indicates that none of the control variables were significant.

DISCUSSION

This study makes a helpful contribution to the management literature in three methods. The first method is the test of the full mediation effect of job satisfaction in the various relationships. (i) between turnover intention and job involvement (ii) turnover intention and job commitment. The second contribution relates to the limited empirical studies that estimated the above stated mediation effects in Europe but this study was conducted in Iran which is a developing country. The third contribution data were collected from front desk employees from Tehran local banks and their managers. Helpful findings were observed from the empirical examination.

The findings related to the impact of turnover intention on job satisfaction were inline with the studies of Schwepker (2001). Social exchange theory was used to determine the behavior of the front desk employees in the local banks. The findings related to job satisfaction on job involvement and job commitment are consistent with the current studies of Zopiatis et al. (2014) and Peng et al. (2016). The results also propose that the effects of job satisfaction on job involvement are much more than job satisfaction and job commitment. This could be the reason why the employees are not happy with their work in the local banks

Practical implications for managers

There are a number of useful implications for managers rising up from this study. First the outcome of the study reveals that bank managers should foster a suitable working environment with less stress for their employees. Long hours of work cause stress on employees and leads to turnover intentions. The bank managers can use intention to quit as a source of encouragement on social exchange behaviour among the front desk employees. It is very important for the front desk employees in the bank to have social exchange relations with their their customers and the banks they work for. The reason being that employees who relate friendly with customers, encourage them to transact monetary business with the local banks thereby expecting the banks to reward their effort. It is therefore important for managers to recognize the effort employees put into their jobs by providing them with financial and non-financial rewards. Secondly, training programs should also be organized to encourage employees to avoid job ambiguity as job ambiguity can lead to turnover intentions. If employees are properly informed and have proper training to perform their responsibilities, they can be aware about the priorities of the banking institutions. Training can also help front desk employees to solve customer complaints very easily without going to see the managers. Lastly, It is important to hire front desk employees who whose

personalities match the job requirement. Employees suitable for a job can be done through case studies or conducting a basic test. Through this strategy, the right types of employees suitable for the local bank in Tehran can be identified and recruited.

Limitations and future research

This study has some few limitations and many directions for future studies. Firstly, this study used a period of two weeks to conduct the research. In the near future more time can be allocated to conduct the research. It was also noted that the managers of the local banks in Tehran did not allow the research to directly contact the respondents. The researchers therefore relied on the managers to distribute and collect the data. However confidentiality of the respondents was guaranteed. Data collected in this manner can cause selection bias. In the future, researchers should be allowed to directly distribute and collect data from respondents to avoid potential problems of common bias. The repetition of this study can be conducted with a larger sample size in other Middle Eastern countries and it will be useful to broaden knowledge and database for future use. It is also observed that working long hours can cause insufficient sleep that may lead to risk of illness and high emotions. The research of Van der Kooy (2007) suggest that employees who work long hours experience psychological stress that may trigger worries that can lead to the risk of cardiovascular problems. Management of the local banking sector in Tehran should therefore consider to reduce long hours among employees.

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PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE OF NURSES AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS

Havva Sert^{1*}, Ahmet Seven¹, Dilek Aygin¹, Serap Çetinkaya¹, Hande Açıl¹

¹Sakarya University Faculty of Health Sciences, Nursing

*hsert@sakarya.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine perceived organizational justice levels of nurses and the associated factors. The descriptive study was conducted on 75 nurses who were working in Sakarya University Training and Research Hospital and agreed to participate in the study, after receiving institutional approval/ethics committee approval, between January and March 2014. The data were collected by using personal interview form and the Scale of Organizational Justice Perception (SOJP). The data were evaluated by using percentage, mean, Mann Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis H, and correlation tests on the computer. It was determined that 60% of the nurses having an average age of 31.24±8.67 were married, 54.7% had bachelor's degree, 50.7% worked in surgical units, they were working in the profession for 10.13±7.55, their monthly average shift was 6.05±3.60 times, and 34.7% never met with their managers in a week, 33.3% met with their managers a few times, and 32% met with their managers every day. SOJP mean score of the nurses was 60.44±17.42. It was observed that variables of educational background, age, marital status, and unit did not affect SOJP scores ($p>0.05$), the variable of weekly meeting with managers affected SOJP score; and mean scores of the nurses who met with their managers every day were statistically higher than those never meeting with their managers and meeting with their managers a few times a week ($p<0.01$). It was determined that as the number of monthly shifts increased, perceived organizational justice of nurses was negatively affected ($p<0.05$). Perceived organizational justice of the nurses was moderate and the number of monthly shifts and state of meeting with the manager affected their perceived organizational justice levels.

Key Words: Nurses, organizational justice, perception

INTRODUCTION

The concept of justice is described as “providing the use of rights owned with laws by everyone” by Turkish Language Association (TDK)(<http://www.tdk.gov.tr/>). Organizational justice is a term used in order to reveal the effect of justice in organizations (Karademir, 2010), and described as the fact that decisions made and applications by managers regarding organization and employees are positively perceived by employees (Pelit and Bozdoğan, 2014).

The concept of organizational justice is examined in 3 dimensions; distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Pelit and Bozdoğan, 2014; Çıraklı, Uğurluoğlu, Şantaş, Çelik, 2014; Tekingündüz, Aydın, Polat, 2014; Cihangiroğlu, Şahin, Uzuntarla, 2015). Organizational justice is effective on organizational commitment and personal satisfaction levels and organizational performance of employees. Some studies reveal that perceived organizational justice affects individuals' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, withdrawal behavior, organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior, and trust in the organization (Meydan, 2010; Ambrose, Seabright, Schminke, 2002). This, as is in other sectors, is also important for health institutions in which employees possess considerably high level of specialization and

functional commitment (Şahin and Taşkaya, 2010). Personnel working in such institutions (hospital, etc.,) are the one hard to employ and they leave the work, become demoralized and demotivated, have problems in identification with their institution due to the justice they perceive, all of which may cause serious pecuniary loss and intangible damages (Cihangiroğlu, Şahin, Uzuntarla, 2015). It is emphasized in health organizations that commitment behaviors of nurses have an important role in coping with the problems occurring in delivering healthcare services and organizational support is also important for improving organizational commitment of nurses. Job satisfaction is one of the most crucial factors influencing nurses' desire to continue their profession. Nursing studies report that organizational commitment affects satisfaction with the nursing profession (Kaya, 2010).

Consequently, it is emphasized that professional performance, efficiency, job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation of an employee are closely associated with the concept of organizational justice (Cihangiroğlu, Şahin, Uzuntarla, 2015). In this context, this study was conducted in order to determine perceived organizational justice levels of nurses and the associated factors.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This descriptive study was conducted on 75 nurses who were working in Sakarya University Training and Research Hospital and agreed to participate in the study, after receiving institutional approval and ethics committee approval, between January and March 2014. The data were collected by using personal interview form and the Scale of Organizational Justice Perception (SOJP). Turkish adaptation of SOJP developed by Colquitt in 2001 was conducted by Özmen et al., 2007. OJS is a 5-point likert type [(5) Strongly agree, (4) Agree, (3) No idea, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly disagree], consists of 20 items and 4 subscales (Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal Justice, Informational Justice), and there is no reversely coded item in the scale. Score to be obtained from SOJP ranges between 20 and 100 and high scores signify high perception of justice. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.95. The data were evaluated by using percentage, mean, Mann Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis H, and correlation tests on the computer environment.

RESULTS

According to evaluation of socio-demographic data; 34.7% of the nurses were in the age range of 26-34 years, 89.3% were female, 60% were married, and 54.7% had a bachelor's degree. Almost all of the nurses (98.7%) were staff nurse, 50.7% were working in surgical units, most of them (36%) were working in this profession for 1-5 years (10.13 ± 7.55 years in average), 48% were working in double shift (their average monthly shifts were 6.05 ± 3.60 times), 34.7% never met with their manager once a week, 33.3% met with their manager a few times, and 32% met with their manager every day (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive characteristics of the nurses

Characteristics	f	%
Age		
25 years and younger	23	30.7
26 – 34 years	26	34.7
35 – 44 years	21	28.0
45 years and older	5	6.6
Gender		
Female	67	89.3
Male	8	10.7
Marital Status		
Married	45	60
Single	30	40
Educational Background		
VSH	21	28.0
Associate Degree	13	17.3
Bachelor’s degree/Postgraduate	41	54.7
Unit		
Internal Medicine Units	37	49.3
Surgical Units	38	50.7
Working Duration in the Profession		
1-5 years	27	36.0
6-10 years	19	25.3
11-15 years	10	13.4
16 years and more	19	25.3
Staff		
Staff	74	98.7
Contracted	1	1.3
Number of Shifts		
One	23	30.7
Double	36	48.0
Three and more	16	21.3
Weekly meeting with the manager		
Almost never	26	34.7
A few times	25	33.3
Every day	24	32.0

It was determined that total scores of the nurses from SOJP ranged between 20-96, and total mean score was 60.44 ± 17.42 ; subscale mean scores were 21.92 ± 6.66 (procedural), 11.04 ± 4.68 (distributive), 12.41 ± 3.47 (interpersonal), and 15.06 ± 5.50 (informational), respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Subscale and Total Mean Scores of the Nurses for Scale of Organizational Justice Perception

Scale	Mean ± SD	Min-Max Score
Organizational Justice Scale	60.44±17.4	20-96
Procedural Justice	21.92±6.66	7-35
Distributive Justice	11.04±4.68	4-20
Interpersonal Justice	12.41±3.47	4-18
Informational Justice	15.06±5.50	5-25

It was observed in the study that gender, marital status, staff, unit, age, educational background, and the number of children did not affect SOJP total scores and scores of all subscales ($p>0.05$), the variable of weekly meeting with manager had impact on SOJP total scores and scores of all subscales; mean scores of the nurses who met with their managers every day were higher at a statistically significant level compared to those who never met and met with their managers a few times a week ($p<0.01$) (Table 3).

Table 3: Organizational justice perceptions of the nurses in terms of their descriptive characteristics

CHARACTERISTICS	Overall Organizational Justice Perception	Subscales of Scale of Organizational Justice Perception			
		Procedural Justice subscale	Distributive Justice subscale	Interpersonal Justice subscale	Informational Justice subscale
Gender					
Female (67)	37.04	37.37	36.93	37.66	37.08
Male (8)	46.06	43.25	47.00	40.81	45.69
	z=-1.108 p=0.268	z=- 0.722 p=0.470	z=- 1.259 p= 0.208	z=- 0.389 p=0.697	z=- 1.059 p=0.289
Marital Status					
Married	38.30	39.80	35.02	38.82	38.50
Single	37.55	35.30	42.47	36.77	37.25
	z= -0.146 p=0.884	z= -0.878 p= 0.380	z= - 1.476 p=0.140	z= - 0.403 p= 0.687	z= - 0.244 p=0.807
unit					
Internal medicine units	40.07	39.18	40.32	39.16	40.00
Surgical units	35.99	36.86	35.74	36.87	36.05
	z= -0.811 p=0.417	z= - 0.462 p=0.644	z= - 0.928 p= 0.353	z= - 0.459 p=0.646	z= - 0.787 p=0.431
Age					
a-25 and younger	37.31	39.89	40.85	37.89	37.04
b-26 – 34 years	35.15	35.31	35.00	36.08	36.96
c-35 – 44 years	38.81	39.38	39.07	39.95	38.83
d-45 years and older	37.70	37.50	36.00	40.30	44.30
	x ² =0.36 p=0.94	x ² =0.66 p=0.88	x ² =1.01 p=0.79	x ² =0.43 p=0.93	x ² =0.55 p=0.90
Educational Background					
VSH	41.45	43.62	45.57	36.26	35.60
Associate Degree	36.38	35.08	34.81	38.50	37.35
Bachelor's degree	36.74	36.05	35.13	38.73	39.44
	x ² =0.73 p=0.69	x ² =1.96 p=0.37	x ² =3.65 p=0.16	x ² =0.18 p=0.91	x ² =0.44 p=0.79
Number of children					
No	37.54	36.72	41.03	37.38	37.49
1	41.63	43.58	34.29	38.79	44.42
2	33.59	35.02	31.85	35.13	32.46
3 and more	56.63	49.88	57.25	57.75	55.25
	x ² =4.21 p=0.23	x ² =2.538 p=0.46	x ² =6.218 p=0.10	x ² =3.784 p=0.28	x ² =5.092 p=0.16
Weekly meeting with manager					
Almost never	28.96	29.08	30.48	32.02	29.92
A few	35.26	35.96	36.08	35.76	33.60
Every day	50.65	49.79	48.15	46.81	51.33
	x ² =12.96 p=0.002**	x ² =11.64 p=0.003**	x ² =8.80 p=0.012*	x ² =6.23 p=0.044*	x ² =13.67 p=0.001**

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

While there was not a significant correlation between total time of work and SOJP scores ($p>0.05$), a negatively significant correlation was determined between the number of turn in a month and SOJP scores ($p<0.05$) and organizational justice perceived by nurses was negatively influenced as the number of turn increased (Table 4).

Table 4: SOJP total score correlation

	Scale of Organizational Justice Perception Total	
	r	P
The number of monthly shifts	-0.234*	0.043
Total working period	-0.074	0.528

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

DISCUSSION

It was determined that scores obtained by the nurses from SOJP ranged between 20-96, and their mean score was 60.44 ± 17.42 ; subscale mean scores were 21.92 ± 6.66 (procedural), 11.04 ± 4.68 (distributive), 12.41 ± 3.47 (interpersonal), and 15.06 ± 5.50 (informational), respectively.

On the contrary of the present study; it was determined in a study with 170 people working at a hospital and 424 people working at a hotel that organizational justice perception was higher than moderate level (3.09 ± 0.80 , 3.31 ± 0.97). Mean scores of scale's subscales were 3.21 ± 1.10 for distributive justice, 3.28 ± 1.05 for procedural justice, 3.45 ± 1.04 for interpersonal justice in a study conducted on 424 people; and also 3.0 ± 1.0 for interpersonal justice, 2.9 ± 0.9 for informational justice, 2.5 ± 0.9 for distributive justice, and 2.6 ± 0.9 for procedural justice in another study on 458 healthcare professionals. In the study of Gür, Overall mean score of the scale was 3.28 ± 0.77 , mean score of procedural justice was 2.97 ± 0.85 , mean score of distributive justice was 2.96 ± 1.10 , mean score of interpersonal justice was 3.69 ± 0.92 , and mean score of informational justice was 3.63 ± 0.97 (Gür, 2014; Tekingündüz, 2014; Pelit, 2014; Cihangiroğlu, Şahin, Uzuntarla 2015). According to the present study, the reason behind why different results were obtained was that different scales were used and different occupational groups were studied.

In the study, gender, marital status, staff, unit, age, educational background, and the number of children were determined not to affect SOJP total scores and scores from all subscales ($p>0.05$). Similar to the present study, gender did not affect total score of organizational justice in the study conducted by Taşkaya and Şahin (2011) on 477 healthcare professionals; gender did not affect both organizational justice and its subscales in the study conducted by Gür (2014) on 327 nurses; while marital status did not affect procedural justice and distributive justice, it affected interpersonal justice, informational justice, and organizational justice in contrast to the study; unit had no effect on distributive justice and interpersonal justice similar to this study; unit influenced procedural justice, informational justice, and organizational justice similar to the study. In the study conducted by Karademir (2010), on 106 physical education teachers, it was found that procedural justice was affected by gender and distributive justice and interpersonal justice by educational background differently from this study; there was no difference in the variable of marital status similar to this study. Cihangiroğlu et al, (2015) conducted a study on 458 allied health care professionals and determined that gender influenced procedural

justice, interpersonal justice, informational justice, and distributive justice differently from this study; age had no effect on organizational justice perception and its subscales similar to this study (Karademir, 2010; Taşkaya and Şahin, 2011; Gür, 2014; Cihangiroğlu, Şahin and Uzuntarla, 2015).

In this study, the reason behind why gender did not affect organizational justice perception might be associated with the fact that the number of male nurses was few. In the literature review; it was found that there was no study examining the correlation between staff, educational background, the number of children and organizational justice perception and its subscales.

In the present study, it was seen that while organizational justice perceptions and its subscales were better for those meeting with their manager more, mean scores of nurses meeting with their managers every day were statistically higher than those meeting or meeting with their managers never or a few times a week; although upon literature review there was no study examining the variable of weekly meeting with managers and perceived organizational justice, meetings with managers frequently may lead them to introduce their ideas to the managers more easily and to feel themselves more valuable. Similar to this study, there was a negative significant correlation between the number of monthly shifts and perceived organizational justice in study by Taşkaya and Şahin (2011) (Taşkaya and Şahin, 2011). Increased frequency of shifts might have led individuals to feel physically and mentally more tired and to have decreased organizational perceptions and thus to have a decreased satisfaction from work environment.

CONCLUSION

It was determined that perceived organizational justice of the nurses was moderate, perceived organizational justice of the nurses meeting with their managers frequently was higher, and perceived organizational justice of the nurses having shifts more was lower. Therefore, we are of opinion that nurses need to meet with their managers more frequently and the number of monthly shifts should be decreased in order to increase their perceived organizational justice.

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SOCIAL MEDIA “FACEBOOK” IN THE SERVICE OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Nabil Al-Awawdeh

Graduate instructor - French 1100, 1200 and 2100
University of Missouri - Columbia

ABSTRACT

This paper will describe the process of setting up and operating a group of cultural and linguistic exchanges (francophone / anglophone) created on a social network: Facebook. My reflection is based on an experimental project developed in an American academic institution teaching French for (specialist and non-specialist) students in the university of Missouri- Columbia. It will be a question here of evaluating the various possibilities of exploiting such a group and of defining their limits, It will also be necessary to question the possibility for teachers of today to use social networks for pedagogical purposes, in which public and private spaces intermingle. My reflection will be developed in three stages: first, I shall describe the essential steps involved in setting up such a mechanism, and then analyze the possibilities for the pedagogical exploitation of such a group. At the end, what restrictions related to the use of Facebook in the classroom?

INTRODUCTION

At the heart of this project lies the primary desire to find educational alternatives in order to motivate non-specialist students who mostly choose to learn French only to meet the academic requirements of their university program.

While digital technology may prove to be an ally of choice in the teaching of French as a foreign language, it nevertheless becomes the number one enemy when learners use it in a bad way inside the classroom class. As Hadi Salehi points out: The benefits that SNSs tools bring to the classroom can easily be seen. However, excluding the educational functions, SNSs like Facebook, Blog, or Twitter are still serving us as entertainment on a large degree. Therefore, inserting SNSs into ESL classroom may cause students' distraction. The struggle is also uneven in that the teacher, alone in front of his class, must ensure that text, Facebook statuses and other tweets do not monopolize the attention of the student public to the point of making any attempt to transmissions of knowledge. But, rather than fight against the use of social networks in the classroom, would it not be possible to tame them in order to use them for pedagogical purposes? The relationship between professor and student would not be better to be part of a dynamic of exchanges, even if they were virtual. It is from these multiple questions that the current project was adopted.

HOW TO SET UP SUCH A GROUP?

The creation of the group is quite simple. It is preferable, initially, that the teacher creates a Facebook profile that is not his private profile, which avoids having to juggle with the different privacy settings. Once the profile is created, just create a new group, the device is quite simple. 3 types of groups can be created: public, accessible to all and by all; Closed: visible (members and group) by all, only publications are private; secret: only visible to members who cannot register until they receive an invitation by e-mail. This alternative is for me the one I have chosen, It is the most secure and it makes it possible to reassure the parents, especially on the French side, and to know that I somehow preserve my students from the dangerous drifts of " Internet. Once the group has been set up, everyone can publish on the page on different media: photo, text, or video.

WHAT ARE THE PEDAGOGICAL POSSIBILITIES OF SUCH A GROUP?

Such a project can be developed at the local and / or international level. Originally, the public consisted of two classes of non-specialist American students in verbal agreement with a class of French students, also, non-specialists in English. Consideration could be given to extending the public to Francophiles in addition to Francophones and Anglophones and not necessarily creating other groups, but rather to expanding the network. Another alternative would be to propose a unilingual group that would consist of learners of French, but who would only exchange in the target language , as we did in our project case. It should be noted that no student should be forced to participate in the project. Only the learners who show a real desire to participate in the life of the platform integrate the group.

A paper alternative, more traditional, is therefore proposed to the others. In her article "Technology and Research in the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Literature, and Culture", Nancy Mandlove recalls: Student involvement with technology falls into three basic categories: use of prepared materials (commercial materials or materials prepared by faculty); use of technology for class assignment and projects; and preparation of multimedia programs for use in the department by other students. (Les Lloyd 300)

Such a project therefore has the advantage of cumulating these three categories insofar as the teacher can quite use the Facebook platform as a form of Blackboard in order to put online teaching aids: grammar reminders, Videos (dialogues or even monologues dealing with the subject studied in class, etc. One of the tasks that immediately enchanted students was online writing. For some, editing at home comes down to using Google translate or other online translation sites. Access to such resources has become so free in recent years that it has become a reflex for many non-specialist students. It seems that the use of Google translate, at least for the comparison group of about twenty individuals, has been less systematic in a Facebook editorial. In particular, they were asked to post a photo taken during their spring break and to recount what they had done during their holidays.

Unlike traditional dramas, the compositions written on Facebook showed a real investment on the part of the students. Whatever their level of French, all those who had accepted to join the group started writing without hesitation. The digital medium thus made it possible to remove the blockages that some could feel in front of a sheet of paper. As John Osborne points out, the value of exploiting digital resources within the foreign language classroom is multidimensional: Warschauer (1997) cites a number of studies indicating that computer-mediated exchange tends to achieve better involvement of all members of the class. The particular nature of online communication, intermediate between speaking and writing, also means that learners will often use more spontaneity and interactivity. (Osborne 102) The project can also be done in class, the teacher guiding students to find and correct syntax, lexical errors, or giving them idiomatic expressions that allow them to correctly express what they have Meant. If the teacher notices common errors, he may choose to go back to a grammar point which seems particularly problematic in order to allow the learners to correct their publication later. Once they have been corrected, they can be exploited either orally by a simple reading followed by correction of the pronunciation or by revision of the interrogative words by putting the students in pairs and asking them to transform the editorial staff into a dialogue By inserting questions like "What did you do during your vacation?" "Did you love Missouri?" "Etc. As Nancy Mandlove points out, digital support changes the learning dynamic in a fundamental way. It no longer puts the teacher in the front line, the latter is no longer the essential actor of didactic exchange, because the students themselves become the main actors, the teacher acting in his background: The Internet has revolutionized the teaching of foreign languages by providing immediate access to news, people, cultural information, radio broadcasts, and images from all over the world. It allows students to find and contribute valuable information to the classroom in a way not previously possible. Students feel a sense of ownership and a direct connection between their own experience and their academic work Learning becomes much more student-centered, while the teacher becomes a kind of "orchestra leader" who helps to integrate and assess information that the students, themselves, contribute to the class. (Mandlove 303).

Beyond the linguistic skills that such a group can reinforce, the cultural aspect is also a fundamental element in so far as it is he who, more than the language as a system, will arouse the interest of non-specialist learners. In order to enrich the cultural knowledge, students were asked to post their favorite song with a short note about the artist or to share the traditions of their university, their country in order to make them Members of the group. The compositions written in English by the young French can be exploited in order to initiate discussions around cultural themes such as the comparison of French and American educational systems. For intermediate audiences, compositions written in English may be used as a translation medium. Other activities can of course be set up according to the objectives of the teacher. The main thing is to create among students the desire to invest in learning the language by showing them that the French language is not limited to what is contained in the didactic works. French is a gateway to the world, to a world that resembles them, while differing in certain aspects. Like them, young French people learn a foreign language and, like them, make mistakes in syntax and lexicon, but all share the same desire to get to know the culture and country of the other members of the group.

While social networks can certainly become educational allies, the setting up and operation of such a medium is not without its difficulties. French national education is a major obstacle. In France, teachers are obliged to respect the programs established by the national education system. The weight of the common core of knowledge and skills leaves them little room for maneuver, they are not free to exercise their creativity as they see fit. The bilateral agreement that I tried to put in place did not have the expected success on the French side, insofar as my colleagues met the reluctance or even the categorical refusal of their hierarchy. The Internet is frightening in France and parents, like some members of the national education, fear for the safety of children. Having only secondary school teachers in my network, the age of our correspondents was also an obstacle in that they were not all allowed to use the Internet freely.

Implementing such a project also involves clearly setting limits on the teacher-student relationship. The digital medium introduces a relationship of proximity which, if it is planned to be done in an anarchic way, risks causing

harm to both parties. As Chen Chenzi writes, "Besides, sometimes online teacher-student relationship could be tricky. This is why it is better to create a professional Facebook profile before setting up such a group. One can always change the security settings of the account, but it is an additional manipulation that is not useful and may otherwise confuse teachers less comfortable with computers. This is why we created American - American group. Students could post their writing and other members of class could comment on it. Another way to attract student to be engaged in the project, we posted a riddle every evening and first three students guess the answer, would get two extra credits. That did help the students a lot and engaged them in the project daily.

In conclusion, in order for such a group to be truly effective, in the case of a bilateral agreement, the two teachers must also be invested in the project and each group of students must be aware that the work will generate a note. If one proposes something optional, the investment will not be the same. Alternatively, once the group is formed, motivated, and active on the page, set up conversation exchanges on Skype possibly but with profiles created in class so that the boundary between private sphere and the educational sphere is not too confusing. In pairs, students could spend 10 minutes talking in French and 10 speaking in English. The time difference would not be without problems, it would be advisable to think about the problem on a case by case basis. In any case, social networks provide instructors with the opportunity to increase interactivity and increase student interest, which is essential in the case of non-specialist students.

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THE USE OF MOODLE IN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Aylin ACAR

Lüleburgaz High School, Kırklareli, Turkey
aylinacar39@yahoo.com

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Naci KAYAOĞLU

Department of Western Languages and Literature, Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey
naci@ktu.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the effect of blended instruction on language skills. A total of 44 students participated in the study ranging in age from 16 to 18 selected on the basis of convenience sampling technique. After a fifteen-week treatment, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were administered to the experimental group. The overall analysis of the data from both questionnaires and interviews indicates that MOODLE improves all four skills. Students were found to improve their writing skills much more than other language skills.

Keywords: MOODLE, Blended-learning, Course management system, English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

Educational technology has been widely applied in English Language Teaching (ELT) for a long time. Especially since the 1990s, parallel with the developments in the information technology sector, it has become an indispensable part of ELT at all levels of education. Over this time, classroom use has moved from drill, text manipulation, and word processing to more interactive and communicative applications such as e-mail, chat, and web-based programs (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). As teaching and learning gain new dimensions in today's world, due to the proliferation of ICT education, it becomes independent of time and place. Consequently, learners and instructors have to challenge the new modes of learning and communication due to the proliferation of ICT (Kern, 2006).

It has always been a matter of concern to raise the quality of instruction. Innovations and new approaches are seen as essential to improve the quality of studies in the field of ELT as well as other educational studies (Boticki, Hoic-Bozic & Mornar, 2009). One of these innovations is to use a course management system (CMS). CMSs are web applications that run on a server and are accessed by a web browser. These are systems that are used to simplify the creation and administration of learning content (Cole & Foster 2007). A CMS allows content to be stored, retrieved, edited, updated and then outputted in a variety of ways. These systems can be used to support face-to-face instruction or for complete online distance learning (Robb, 2004).

One of these CMSs is the Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (MOODLE), which is a free, open source software package designed using sound pedagogical principles, to help educators create effective online learning communities (<http://moodle.org/>). It is also defined as "Learning Management Systems" (LMS), or "Virtual Learning Environments" (VLE). It was originally developed by Martin Dougiamas in 2002 to help educators create online courses with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content, and is in continual evolution (Cole & Foster 2007). It facilitates online content creation and collaboration and entails various social and communication tools that support teacher-student, student-student, and teacher-teacher interactions.

Aim of the Study

Students learning a new language need as much language support as possible and any language support is helpful for their language acquisition. According to Liaw (2002), teachers should offer English language students a language-rich environment in which students are constantly engaged in language activities. Nunan (1999) suggests 200 hours of instruction for adequate exposure to a second language (L2); the average instruction time students receive in compulsory English language education in state primary schools and high schools is far below this number. In addition to small amounts of class time, large classes are also an obstacle for different in-class language activities (Kırkgöz, 2008).

Studies show that supplementary on-line learning environments may enhance language learning and development (Kung & Chuo, 2002; Ware, 2004; Wang, 2005). In this regard, English teachers can benefit MOODLE to create an authentic language environment to enable their students use English language. In addition, MOODLE can be a useful supplement to the traditional curriculum of the English language learning

classroom by developing students' language skills in a variety of ways. Therefore, the study aims to explore the effect of blended instruction on language skills.

THE STUDY

A total of 44 students participated in the study ranging in age from 16 to 18 selected on the basis of convenience sample technique. Therefore, the participants in this study were chosen from 11th grade students in Lüleburgaz High School where the researcher is employed as an English teacher.

The course was organized using blended learning concept, where traditional teaching methods are combined with activities and resources presented through MOODLE. During the study, the students were asked to do various tasks in order to get used to learning English with the software. The course activities included actions related with contents such as presentations, reading, vocabulary, listening, speaking and writing. Students regularly uploaded their written homework given by the researcher under the writing section and the teacher gave feedback to the students' written works. All students could see each other's works as well as the feedback supplied by the teacher. Thus, they had the opportunity to do self-assessment. Besides routine written homework, students worked on collaborative writing activities such as story and film script writing in groups.

The mixed-method approach was chosen as the methodology of this research. Mixed-method research was defined by Creswell (2003) as “the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data is collected concurrently or sequentially, are then given a priority, and thus involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” (p. 212). The quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire administered at the end of the treatment. The qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted with randomly selected students among the experimental group. Both the control group and the experimental group were selected by convenience sampling technique. The experimental study lasted 15 weeks.

FINDINGS

This study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v.16.0) was used to analyze the quantitative data which was obtained from the questionnaire. The data collected through the interviews were processed using content analysis.

The Analysis of the Questionnaire

Table 1: Students' opinions on the effect of blended instruction with MOODLE on language skills

Question	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1	Use of Moodle is useful for collaborative learning.	3 (%13,6)	13 (%59,1)	6 (%27,3)	-	-	2,13
2	Use of Moodle is useful for increasing individual learning.	5 (%22,7)	15 (%68,2)	2 (%9,1)	-	-	1,86
3	Feedback is applied to correct any mistakes in writing.	15 (%68,2)	7 (%31,8)	-	-	-	1,31
4	Collaborations with Moodle upgrade my skills in writing.	6 (%27,3)	11 (%50,0)	4 (%18,2)	1 (%4,5)	-	2,00
5	I enjoy collaborative learning as I can work with other students.	4 (%18,2)	9 (%40,9)	7 (%31,8)	2 (%9,1)	-	2,31
6	I have improved my reading skills through the activities on Moodle	2 (%9,1)	13 (%59,1)	4 (%18,2)	2 (%9,1)	1 (%4,5)	2,40
7	I have improved my listening skills through the activities on Moodle.	2 (%9,1)	10 (%45,5)	10 (%45,5)	-	-	2,36
8	I have improved my writing skills through the activities on Moodle.	6 (%27,3)	11 (%50,0)	4 (%18,2)	1 (%4,5)	-	2,04
9	I have improved my speaking skills through the activities on Moodle.	1 (%4,5)	3 (%13,6)	14 (%63,6)	3 (%13,6)	1 (%4,5)	3,00
10	I have improved my grammar through the activities the on Moodle.	3 (%13,6)	12 (%54,5)	5 (%22,7)	2 (%9,1)	-	2,27

The analysis of the questionnaire reveals that MOODLE improves all four skills (reading 59.1%, listening 45.5%, writing 50%, speaking 13.6%) of the students. However, students (27.3%) strongly agree that MOODLE

improves their writing skills much more than other language skills. This is in line with the findings of Arslan (2009). In addition, students 15 (%68,2) strongly agree that they got feedback for their writings. It is also interesting to note that students think that MOODLE is both useful for collaborative learning (59.1%) and individual learning (68.2%).

The Analysis of the Semi-structured Interview

All the participants reported that using MOODLE improved all their language skills. However, they stated that some skills improved much more than other skills. The students put the skills in order according to improvement level as follows; 1. writing skills, 2. reading skills, 3. listening skills and 4. speaking skills. One of the participants ranked the activities on MOODEL as follows:

“Writing, reading, listening and speaking” (S2).

Another participant declared that:

“It improved my writing and listening skills. I listened to the tracks on MOODLE and tried to fill in the gaps. In the writing section you corrected our writing works, so we could see the correct forms” (S4).

As agreed among students, the use of MOODLE improved speaking skills least. One of the interviewees stated that:

“It has improved my writing and listening skills. Generally, I try to improve my speaking skill by watching foreign films and serials” (S8).

Another interviewee also said that:

“I think MOODLE has improved my writing skills. In addition it has improved my listening and reading skills. But I think there was a deficiency in speaking because we could not speak on MOODLE” (S9).

Most of the students stated that they enjoyed the collaborative story writing tasks very much. The reasons for enjoying the collaborative story writing tasks are as follows;

- Improving imagination.
- Group work.
- Combination of different opinions.
- Becoming close friends.
- Improving collaboration and cooperation.
- Improving English.
- Competition between groups.

One of the participants stated that:

“I think it was most entertaining, each student in the group wrote what they wanted. There was no certain thing. Everything was changeable. My friend wrote something, I wrote something else, but at the end a whole story came up and it was enjoyable to read” (S4).

Another participant also supported the same idea as follows:

“Yes it is very nice. We became close friends. We talk about it, then, in the evening we write it on MOODLE. We wonder who wrote what. It is exciting” (S10).

One participant also added that:

“Yes it was so enjoyable, because the emergence of a story combining different ideas is more fun than a story written by only one person” (S8).

However, only one student reported that he disliked the collaborative story writing activity because he thought that face-to-face group work was more useful than group work on the net. He explained that:

“I did not like that activity. Because I think it is more individual on the Internet. In my opinion face-to-face group work can be more efficient” (S7).

CONCLUSIONS

All four skills were integrated into the study. A section was assigned for each skill. The findings display that MOODLE improves all four skills (reading 59.1%, listening 45.5%, writing 50%, speaking 13.6%) of the students. However, students (27.3%) strongly agree that MOODLE improves their writing skills much more than other language skills. This is in line with the findings of Arslan (2009). In this respect, MOODLE can be utilised to improve students' writing skills in particular. In addition, it can be used to give feedback especially on writing works.

By the help of wiki, students actively collaborated on writing wiki projects. It appears from the findings that the students enjoyed collaborative writing tasks much more than individual writing tasks. The reasons for enjoying the collaborative story writing tasks were reported as improving imagination, group work, combination of different opinions, becoming close friends, improving collaboration and cooperation, improving English and competition between groups. In this regard, it can be said that MOODLE offers mediating tools which help to achieve the objectives of a social constructivist-based classroom in many ways (Baskerville & Robb, 2005). Since collaboration and interaction facilitate students' language development, teachers can benefit from MOODLE to create constructivist environments.

In conclusion, MOODLE is an effective learning tool supporting blended learning. This study can be a beneficial guide for English teachers who look for new ideas to make their instruction more interesting and innovative. The findings of the study can also give valuable information to the Ministry of National Education (MONE) about integrating blended-instruction with MOODLE in EFL at high school level.

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THE USE OF THE BLACKBOARD ALONG WITH INTRANETS AS A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: CASE STUDY THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, PRINCE SATTAM BIN ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY

Fathi Ben Basheer Tenzakhti
Department of Management Information Systems
Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
f.tenzakhti@psau.edu.sa

ABSTRACT

This study tries to show how higher education institutes can use the Blackboard and Intranets as a knowledge management system for knowledge discovery, capturing, sharing and application. It evaluate such objectives in three perspectives: educator-student perspective and educator-educator perspective, student-student perspective.

Keywords: Knowledge Management Systems, Intranet, Blackboard, Web2. Applications, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

The use of the existing e-learning systems and tools in education is not enough for achieving a quality education. Even with the use of very good learning management systems like Moodle and Blackboard and the use of very sophisticated e-learning tools like web publishing tools such as blogs and WordPress , conferencing tools like videos, video conferencing, and communication tools like e-mail and instant messaging, we still need an information system that provides the educator and the management with a system that provides tools for creating and sharing knowledge as well as a multidimensional analytic capabilities that is needed to do all sorts of ad hoc analysis and decision making regarding student, educator and management performance (B. K Baradwaj, S. Pal, 2011, Sangeeta Namdev Dhamdhare. 2015, I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015, J. Blackwell and P. Gamble. 2002).

As higher education becomes a multi-purpose enterprise, there is a growing need for knowledge management systems to be implemented in higher education institutes. These systems should augment the e-learning tools in providing a knowledge management system (KMS); an information system that combines groupware, tools, intranets, extranets and internet to support communications within the institute supporting the sharing of documents and knowledge to the different teams and individuals within the institute (Walid Qassim Qwaidar. (2011). ,J. Blackwell and P. Gamble. 2002),I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015). Such a system could lead to knowledge discovery, creation and sharing. This knowledge management system should also have learning analytical capabilities to assist the educator and management in taking the right decisions (L. Ali and al. 2013).

THE ROLE OF KM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Academic environment is a treasure of knowledge and KM in higher education are the strategic management activities that support educators in using the institute's knowledge resource to effectively teach and research. These knowledge management practices can help capture, discover, share and apply knowledge in schools through the use of information and communication technologies. Therefore KM makes available for use satisfactory communication channels for educators to debate about important school topics and problems within the academic body, the students and the administration. The feedback from such a debate could be used to develop further strategies and plans to ameliorate school policy and improve teaching effectiveness. (I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015). These are some of the goals of a knowledge management in higher education(I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015):

- KM is a knowledge platform that provides educators with a discussion forum where they can debate ideas concerning their teaching and research work and a place to post their course materials and tools for students to learn.
- KM allows experienced educators to transfer their knowledge to new educators and foster a knowledge sharing culture in the university.
- KM allows teachers and management to use data mining techniques to discover knowledge about student performance, strengths and weaknesses as well as career guidance.

One of the problems with such management information systems is its high cost. Not all higher education institutes are capable of purchasing such a system. One option is to for these institutes to develop systems that

provide some of the knowledge management system capabilities. The objective of this studies is to give a brief introduction to how such development can take place in a university environment and among educators. But before we embark, let us briefly define what knowledge is and what knowledge management systems are.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE AND WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

Knowledge is the information, skills, and understanding that one have gained through learning, observation or experience. Knowledge is a form of capital which gives organizations a competing advantage as knowledge is power affecting the performance and perhaps the survival of any organization. Knowledge management is described as the tools, techniques, and strategies to retain, analyze, organize, and share this knowledge (Jehad Al-Sadi. 2012). Knowledge management associates three fundamental resources of any organization namely people, processes and technologies. The knowledge management processes includes but is not limited to knowledge discovery, knowledge capturing, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application (I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015) . The tools used in knowledge management include those for sharing messages and files, e.g. email, web publishing, wiki technology, file sharing, etc., conferencing tools: e.g. video/audio conferencing, chat, forums, etc., and systems like data warehousing, data mining, text mining, and web mining as well as online analytical processing systems (OLAP) etc....

In this paper, we will focus on how higher education institutes with no or limited access to knowledge management systems could use the blackboard as well as Web technologies for achieving knowledge discovery, knowledge sharing, and knowledge capturing and knowledge application. For example in the university where I am teaching there is no knowledge management system and not even a learning collaborative system. There is only a Virtual Learning Environment (the blackboard) that is available for both faculty members and students to manage the course tools and provide collaborations between students and educators. There are also educator's intranets for internal collaboration between the educators and a university web site that provides information about the services offered by the university and access to regulations, forms, and files that the user can use online or download to his computer. The question is how can we augment this Virtual Learning Environment with Web based tools , applications, and mashups to be able to achieve knowledge discovery, sharing, capturing and application; in other words how can we develop a custom knowledge management system with little or no cost to the University?

ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 3 reviews and discusses some existing research work related to knowledge management in higher education. Section 4 describes the knowledge management process and how it relates to students, educators, and management. Section 5 describes a case study of using the blackboard and the Intranets as a knowledge management system at the College of Business Administration, at Al-Kharj (CBAK), Saudi Arabia. Section 6 describes the use of the blackboard in CBAK as part of the Knowledge Management System. Finally section 7 describes the use of the Intranets as a second part of the Knowledge Management System. Section 8 concludes the paper and presents future directions.

RELATED WORK

Knowledge management and knowledge management systems in higher education have been widely studied in the literature (B. K Baradwaj, S. Pal, 2011, Sangeeta Namdev Dhamdhere. 2015, I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015, J. Blackwell and P. Gamble. 2002). In (B. K Baradwaj, S. Pal. 2011), The author offer a data mining model for higher education system in the University. This model uses decision trees classification algorithm to evaluate student's performance. The model extracts knowledge to predict students' performance in final examination and help in identifying at an earlier stage the students in need of a special attention before the drop out of the school. This finding allows the educator to suggest the right advising/counseling.

This paper in (Farzana Shafique. 2015) proposes to customize the Library Knowledge Management Center (LKMC) proposed by Parker Nitse and Flowers. The purpose is to adapt this center to the needs of the needs of the universities in Saudi Arabia. It then discusses different components of the LKMC model and describe the importance of this model to the Saudi education sector.

In (Raman, Murali;Ryan, Terry;Olfman. 2005), the authors examine the use of a wiki to facilitate knowledge management in an academic setting. The authors describe how they used wiki in a knowledge management class to support collaborative activities. The findings suggest that wiki can support knowledge sharing and creation in an academic environment.

The paper in (Walid Qassim Qwaider. 2011) discusses how to integrate e-Learning systems an Knowledge Management Systems technology to improve the capture, organization and delivery of training courses and

corporate knowledge. The author proposes a model for the phases of knowledge management that includes concepts and technology from e-Learning. He then uses the model to illustrate real world scenarios that add increasing amounts of knowledge management to an e-Learning environment.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

We start by defining knowledge discovering, capturing, sharing, and application in higher education and how vital it is to the success of the teaching process. We will evaluate such objectives in only three perspectives: educator-student perspective, educator-educator perspective and student-student perspective. We will not touch the remaining three perspectives namely the student- administration perspective, the administration-administration perspective and the educator-administration perspective. The knowledge management processes that is of interest to this study are knowledge discovery, knowledge capturing, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application. In the next section, we will explain each one of these processes and how it relates to the educator-student perspective, educator-educator perspective and student-student perspective.

KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY

In knowledge discover, one develops new tacit or explicit knowledge from data or information. This new knowledge could also be the result of synthesizing (combining) prior knowledge. The knowledge discovery component of the knowledge management system will explore the opportunities for knowledge discovery in educational data. It will use the data collected from the VLE, E-mail and any other e-learning and e-assessment systems to predict future student performance and learn the underlying structure of student knowledge from these datasets. It will also explore the nature of educational data and what factors are important in determining student knowledge. Examples of educator-student interaction that can lead to knowledge discovery are:

- Educators should supervise student to detect student behaviors that can lead to student dropping or failing the course.
- Educators perform data mining in student test scores in order to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. He then uses for this knowledge to effectively design his instruction tools. Examples of educator-educator interaction that can lead to knowledge discovery are:
- Educators meeting for time to time (e.g. in department and College Board meetings) to assess the overall performance of the students and the amendments that might need to be made to the courses and curriculum.
- Educators assessing the values of the key performance indicators in different subjects and different programs.
- Educators working collectively in research with the opportunity to learn from each other and to help each other.

Examples of student-student interaction that can lead to knowledge discovery are:

- Students participating in discussion boards by posting their views in the discussion forms.
- Students viewing other students answers to essay questions
- Students participating in Wikis and blogs related to the courses they are enrolled in.

KNOWLEDGE CAPTURING

Knowledge capture is the process of converting tacit knowledge which resides in the brains of people, artifacts or organizational entities to explicit knowledge so that it can be documented, verbalized and shared. Knowledge captured might be within entities external to the organization including consultants, competitors, students, suppliers, and prior employers of the organization (I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015). Examaples of educator-student interaction that can lead to knowledge capturing are:

- Students attending the educator lectures
- Students visiting the educator during office hours and acquiring about the matters he/she does not understand in the lecture.
- Student surfing the educator web site...
- Educator reading the student research work and attending the student's project presentations.

Examples of educator-educator interaction that can lead to knowledge capturing are:

- Educators working in research groups.
- Educators teaching multiple sections of the same course getting them insight into different assessment methods.
- Educators evaluating each other and providing each other with feedback on the shortcomings of their teaching methods and how to remedy those shortcomings.
- Educators collaborating on assessing the students as well as in the marking of the exams to gain insight into different assessment and marking strategies.

Examples of student-student interaction that can lead to knowledge capture are:

- Students posting their work to a discussion board so other students can see it.
- Students reading other students essays.
- Students writing field trip reports and attaching them as uploaded files in their blogs.
- Students writing their personal manuals on how to use a software and making them available to others.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Knowledge sharing is the process through which tacit or explicit knowledge is exchanged among individuals.

Examples of educator-student interaction that can lead to knowledge sharing are:

- While supervising students, the educator could learn from student's work leading to a sharing of knowledge between them.
- Students interacting with the lecture tools including lecture notes, assessments, training, wikis, discussion forums...etc. that leads to student learning.
- Educators and students forming communities of practice on lesson study for sharing pedagogical knowledge.

Examples of educator-educator interaction that can lead to knowledge sharing are:

- Educators attending department and College Board meetings
- strengthening the new teacher's knowledge through knowledge exchange in teaching and administrative work.
- Educators having common research work.
- Educators should collectively make student exams.

Examples of the student-student interaction that can lead to knowledge sharing are:

- Students posting their work to a discussion board so other students can see it.
- Students publishing their thesis and PHD reports on the college intranets.
- Students discussing and collaborating with other students via blogs and wikis.

KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION

Knowledge application is the process of using the knowledge that others have without the need to acquire or gain that knowledge. Knowledge application is usually divided into routines involving the utilization of knowledge embedded in procedures, processes, rules, and norms and directions which is the process through which individuals that have the knowledge direct the actions of other individuals without transferring to them the knowledge involved in the direction (I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015). Example so educator-student interaction that can lead to knowledge application:

- Educators instructing students to use a particular software to find a solution to his linear programming problem without having to explain how linear programming is actually done.
- Educators instructing his master students to publish in a particular area.
- Educators providing students with best practices on getting your paper accepted in different journals.
- Educators learning through the use of the VLE.

Examples of educator-educator interaction that can lead to knowledge application are:

- Educators attending department and College Board meetings
- Educators teaching different sections of the same course
- Educators should have common research work.
- Educators should evaluate each other.
- Educators should collaborate in assessing students.
- Educators should collectively make student exams.

Examples of the student-student interaction that can lead to knowledge Application are:

- Senior students directing freshman and juniors by posting to them the use good study habits and best practices with different course and different teachers.
- Students providing other students with proper habits used in research paper writing and best practices on getting your paper accepted in different journals.

CASE STUDY AT CBAK

The College of Business Administration at Al-Kharj (CBAK), Saudi Arabia is part of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University. It has six departments with educators from different disciplines. It has educators who are

specialized in Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Administration, Human Resources, Information Technology, Computer Science, and Management Information Systems.

The tools that we use here at CBAK is the blackboard, Intranets and the Internet (Fig. 1). Blackboard which is a Virtual Learning Environment that offers some tools that are known to be used as part of a knowledge management system like wikis, blogs, discussion boards, e-mail, SMS, Journal, etc.. (Raman, Murali; Ryan, Terry; Olfman. 2005, I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015) as well as tools for outcomes rubrics, course analytics, assessment, communication and collaboration through real-time web conferencing and multimedia recording.

The Intranet provides an excellent way for educators to share their knowledge by providing a common knowledge database that helps improve the value of an educator expert's knowledge. It integrates this expert's knowledge with the knowledge of his colleagues. This is very valuable in multi-disciplinary environments where there is a variety of expertise and knowledge. The intranet is capable of providing the four important aspects of information: reach, depth, richness, and aggregation (I. Becerra-Fernandez and R. Sabherwal. 2015). If each department in a college has its own intranet, it would be much easier to achieve the four KM processes provided by the four KM systems namely sharing, capturing, discovery and application of knowledge.

Fig. 1. A knowledge Management System consisting of the blackboard and the college intranets.

THE BLACKBOARD AS PART OF THE KMS

Blackboard is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that allows online access to learning materials and activities. Some of the services that black board offers that relate to knowledge management are:

- Publishing the material related to a course.
- Communication between educators and students.
- Collaborating between students and educators using wikis, blogs, and discussion forms.
- Course work submission.
- Online assessments and training of students.

The benefit of the black board are as follows:

- Allows easy, anytime anywhere access to course tools including handouts, web links, assessment, training material, reading material etc..
- Allows an easy way to announce course information and deadlines to the members of a course.
- Allows the educator to monitoring and tracking student's access and progress.

We will now discuss the knowledge management tools offered by blackboard and how it can be used for knowledge capturing, sharing, discovery, and application.

THE DISCUSSION BOARD

The Discussion Board in blackboard is a place where instructors and students can have asynchronous conversations around a particular subject. The participants of a discussion board can post comments and reply to other posts. Educators could use discussion boards for content generation and student collaboration. Student can help each other through discussion boards allowing for knowledge discovery and knowledge sharing. The educator can monitor the participation of course members in a discussion and grade them for that if he wishes.

PODCASTS

Allow student to interact through text, images, videos and file attachment.

BLOGS

Students can use the blackboard to create and manage blogs. Blogs are a collection of posts that contain short, informal information with the freshest information at the top. Student especially those who are shy could use blogs to express themselves and share the knowledge material they collect. Blogs allow educators to gain insights into the activities that the student are engaged in.

WIKIS

Wikis are websites that allow students to collaborate by collectively modifying its content and structure. All students can view the content of a wiki, add to it and modify it. Usually the wiki is created by the instructor and any course member can add pages. Sometimes however, the instructor could decide to use the wiki as course material and restrict students to reading the wiki.

JOURNALS

Journals allow students to privately communicate with the instructor their concerns about the course. It allows them to post their personal opinions and ideas and analyze course-related material.

INTRANETS AS A PART OF THE KMS

The Intranets we are developed by the faculty members. Access to these private intranets is extended to authorized students, collaborating colleges and to other branches of the university to improve coordination of the teaching process. The intranets support such activities as the sharing of documents and knowledge to specific teams and individuals within the college. The objective is to encourage multidisciplinary interaction within both the faculty and student bodies. With such a system, the student will have access to material of different courses within his major that he is not enrolled in. In each course he studies, he is not limited to the course material but can access the material and tools of any other course in the college. This is important because in many instances, there is an overlap between the courses. Some tools the student needs to use in one course are well explained in another course. For example, when teaching an introductory management information system course, one of the covered subjects is databases. The student can be referred to the database course to know more about databases and database management systems. In this same course, the student is exposed to management as an integral part of an organization management information system. He could be referred to an introductory management course to know more about management principals. Another example is when you teach an e-commerce course, the student will need to refer to a basic web design course. This situation becomes an urgent one in final year projects or in thesis work when the student needs to use knowledge and techniques from other courses and sometimes from different disciplines to solve his problems.

Also the intranets will allow students to create an on-in-one learning and testing environment similar to Pearson Labs. This site provides students with a variety of resources, including:

- Audio and video material to view or listen to, whatever your learning style. This material is provided as a Peer to Peer networking by distributing files across machines and gathering and assembling pieces of them from many machines.
- Self-assessment tests that create a personalized study plan to guide the student on making the most efficient use of study time.
- A training environment where students can assess their knowledge of a subject or a tool.
- A collaborative environment where faculty members can share research ideas and methodologies.
- An environment where faculty members can develop online analytical processing tools to discover knowledge from the blackboard data.

TECHNOLOGY USED TO DEVELOP THE INTRANETS

To develop the intranets, we essentially use the following web2 technology tools:

- Apache web server: to publish the web site. This is an open source web server that you can download from the Internet.
- HTML: to develop the web pages and to use the many new features of HTML5 such as the canvas, web workers, and animation
- MySQL: to manage the database.
- PHP: to access the database from the server and process the data.
- Ajax: to allow client and server to exchange small pieces of data without requiring the page to be reloaded.

CONCLUSION

In this short study, we explained why KMS are important in higher education and tried to show using as case study the College of Business Administration at Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia how the Blackboard and the college intranets could be used a knowledge management system to improve faculty and student performance. In the future, we will try to incorporate more tools to this KMS such as virtual environments where students can simulate concepts they learn such as business processes and routines and different system integration within an organization. The hope is to take advantage of the diversity of the faculty members and the multi-disciplinary nature of the college to improve the KMS.

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