

HRM-relevant Virtual Community Research: Review and Outlook



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Agenda

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- Virtual Community
 - Literature Review
 - Research Outlook
 - Call for future research

Virtual Community: Definition

- ▶ Virtual Communities (VC) are community-oriented, web-based *discussions* of groups of *people* with a certain kind of *common interest* and a certain degree of social belonging. (see Gupta/Kim 2004, Rheingold 2000)
- ▶ Synonyms (?): social software/media, web 2.0
- ▶ core element: communication applications

Virtual Community: Examples



Greedy Associates Boards



TARGETjobs



ASTD Discussion Boards



Virtual Community: e-HRM relevance

- ▶ VC: socio-economic entities with HRM-relevance
 - ▶ Personal needs (social support) → motivation and commitment
 - ▶ Business needs (task-oriented) → efficiency
- ▶ VC: fit in e-HRM framework (see Strohmeier 2007)

Context	IT-availability/literacy, individual IT-usage patterns; Virtual Organization/Workplace	?
Actors	HR-experts, employees, applicants	?
Strategies/Activities	Recruitment, development, leadership	?
Technologies	Internet, Extranet, Intranet; communication / community-supporting applications	?
Consequences	Costs vs. benefits	?

- ▶ VC: State-of-the-Art?

Agenda



Virtual Community



Literature Review



Research Outlook



Call for future research

Literature Review: Method

Period 1995-2010			
Step	Basis	Search Term	No of Hits
1	a) EBSCOhost: BSP, Peer-reviewed Academic Journal, References Available, Titel or Abstract, Boolean Research Mode b) Screening A-Journals (HRM, HRMJ, IJHRM, JHR)	'Virtual Community' + 'Human Resource'	2
2	EBSCOhost: BSP, Peer-reviewed Academic Journal, References Available, Titel or Abstract, Boolean Research Mode	Additional search-term combinations : communication applications, actors, HR-relevant keyterms, Virtual workplace	6
3	Free Internet Search: Google Scholar; snow ball technique Including proceedings	No specification possible	13
4	Free Internet Search: Google Scholar; snow ball technique	No specification possible	N/A

Literature Review: General Results

- ▶ N=21
- ▶ academic journals (N=18), conference proceedings (N=3)
- ▶ Americas (N=12), Europe (N=7), Asia-Pacific (N=3)
- ▶ 50% within 2007-2010

- ▶ heterogenous explanation aims
- ▶ lacking theoretical foundation
- ▶ diverse methods applied
- ▶ implications for research and practice proposed

Literature Review: Contextual Discussion

▶ recruitment

- ▶ **recruitment media, eg. virtual worlds** (Laumer et al. 2008)
- ▶ **potential applicant data collection** (Ebner et al. 2009)

▶ career support

- ▶ **intra- and extra-organizational career communities: IT-applications** (Ettinger et al. 2008) **and typology** (Parker et al. 2004)

▶ development,

- ▶ **E-learning** (Anderson 1999)
- ▶ **intra- (Ardichvili 2008) and extra-organizational (Birchall/Giambona 2007) learning communities**

▶ organizational communication

- ▶ **IM** (Cho et al. 2005, Quan-Haase et al. 2005, Shaw et al. 2007)
- ▶ **weblog** (Stocker/Tochtermann 2008)
- ▶ **virtual worlds** (Kahai et al. 2007)
- ▶ **KM: Suggestion Management System** (Fairbank et al. 2003)

Literature Review: Contextual Discussion

▶ leadership

- ▶ **commitment and performance** (Akkirman/Harris 2005, Bock et al. 2008, Wiesenfeld et al. 2001)
- ▶ **policies** (Cortini 2009, Valentine et al. 2010, Warisse Turner et al. 2006)

▶ industrial relations

- ▶ **strike support** (Pliskin/Romm 1997)
- ▶ **power beyond unions** (Taras/Gesser 2003)

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Research Outlook:

▶ **though being multidisciplinary: explicate perspectives**

- ▶ social
- ▶ IT and design
- ▶ economic

▶ **elaborate definition and characteristics**

- ▶ Actors
- ▶ System
- ▶ Transactions

Dimension	Attribute	Value		
Actors	Participants	Applicants	Employees	HR-executives
	Interpersonal Belonging	Closely-coupled		Loosely-coupled
System	Access	Internet	Extranet	Intranet
	Communication Application	Discussion Board	Weblog	Webchat
Transaction	HR-topic	Function-specific		Function-comprehensive
	Transaction Object	Information		Socials

Research Outlook:

- ▶ **elaborate typology**
 - ▶ applicant communities
 - ▶ HR-to-applicant communities
 - ▶ HR communities
 - ▶ employee communities
 - ▶ HR-to-employee communities
- ▶ **intensify theory application**
 - ▶ **sociological** (social capital, social cognition, social presence, social translucence of technology, evolution)
 - ▶ **socio - media/ICT - economic** (reasoned action, TAM, IS success, uses and gratification, media choice, adaptive structuration, transactions costs, principal agent)
- ▶ **sort and adapt methods to research object**

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Call for future research

- ▶ reviews on (suggested) synonyms and in identified HRM-areas
- ▶ sharpen definition and typology
- ▶ scenarios and business models for all types
- ▶ IT-trends
- ▶ consequences
- ▶ ...

Thank you for your attention.



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