Vol. 8 No. 2

December 2023

The moderating effect of social media usage on factors influencing workplace knowledge sharing: towards a predictive model

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Abstract

Rationale of Study – Companies seek to implement different knowledge sharing initiatives, such as social media usage, to access a wide range of expertise and knowledge from employees. However, whether social media usage is beneficial or detrimental in workplaces is ongoing. Not much has been done regarding SMU for KS in the Kenyan insurance industry. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the moderating effect of social media usage on factors influencing knowledge sharing among insurance companies' employees in Kenya.

Methodology – The researchers used a survey strategy to collect data for this study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from insurance employees in Kenya. A total of 274 employees from 11 companies completed the survey. The researchers analysed the data using descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and hierarchical regression.

Findings – The results indicate that social media usage significantly moderates the relationships between three individual factors (trust, altruism, and self-efficacy) and knowledge sharing. The resultant model is significant ($F [4, 254] = 187.022$, $p < .001$). This model explains approximately 74% of the variance in knowledge sharing.

Implications – Insurance companies should promote a culture and work environments characterised by trust, knowledge self-efficacy (through continuous personal development), altruistic practices, and appropriate SMU to help increase work-related socialisation among employees, thus increasing the possibility and opportunities for knowledge sharing and exchange which will in return help reduce knowledge loss as shared knowledge will be retained in the organisation even after some employees depart.

Originality – This paper publishes the results of an original study of the moderating effect of social media usage on factors influencing knowledge sharing.

Keywords

Workplace knowledge sharing, social media usage, moderating effect, insurance, survey, Kenya

Citation: Achoki, P.M. & Pondi, K.O. (2023). The moderating effect of social media usage on factors influencing workplace knowledge sharing: towards a predictive model. *Regional Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 8 (2),37-65.

Published by the

Regional Institute of Information and Knowledge Management

P.O. Box 24358 – 00100 – Nairobi, Kenya

1 Introduction

Knowledge sharing (KS) within an organisation has desirable outcomes. Individuals consider KS a fundamental socialisation process, especially in the business world (Ardichvili et al., 2003). Interchanges during the process of sharing often give rise to new ideas, which can create new knowledge (Nonaka, 2009). When employees share knowledge, they can expand their knowledge base, thus enhancing their innovative potential (Montani & Staglianò, 2022). Consequently, KS enhances organisational innovativeness (Chang et al., 2017) and competitive advantage (Adan, 2016). Knowledge sharing also supports organisational learning, thus reducing the gap between individual employees' knowledge and corporate organisational knowledge (Kucharska & Bedford, 2019). The KS behaviour of employees can help an organisation ensure organisation-wide integration of best practices, effective problem-solving, and avoidance of redundancy in creating knowledge (Ritala et al., 2018). All these possible benefits make KS an area of interest for various organisations.

In recent years, the demand for improved efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in Kenya and other African developing countries has increased. To address this demand, the government launched the Kenya Vision 2030, a development blueprint that envisioned the country as a knowledge-based economy that heavily relies on KS and knowledge management (KM) practices (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2007). In addition, Africa Agenda 2063 appreciates the shifting global context, which is characterised by changes in the knowledge market and technology (African Union, 2015). To address these changes and improve service delivery, the government of Kenya encourages organisations to integrate technology to facilitate effective KS among their employees (Nguyo et al., 2015). For this reason, emerging technologies are fast gaining prominence in Kenya as organisations seek to enhance their creativity and innovation to curb the ever-increasing competition (Kipkosgei et al., 2020).

The use of social media, for instance, breaks geographical barriers, thus expanding the boundaries of both individual and organisational knowledge. Individuals with weak or no ties can connect globally to exchange professional experiences (Etemadi et al., 2020). Despite its importance, little has been studied on SMU for KS in the insurance industry in Kenya. Scholars have maintained that much work still needs to be done to better uncover the potential of information and communications technology solutions regarding KS (Caporuscio et al., 2020), especially tacit knowledge sharing (Panahi et al.,

2016). For organisations to continue to access, create, and share knowledge effectively, there is a need for continued studies on how emerging digital platforms affect people's interactions and KS (Kane, 2017).

2 Research problem

Despite the awareness of the benefits of KS, knowledge loss is a challenge that companies in the insurance industry face. Many firms struggle with knowledge loss due to employee turnover (Potrich et al., 2022). Potrich et al. (2022) argue that insurance companies do not often see the threat of lost knowledge because it is an invisible problem. Hence, when employees depart from a company, their experiences, trade secrets, insights, contacts, information, and relationships go with them if the organisation does not identify, capture, and share that knowledge within the company (Kamau & Kwanya, 2019). As a result, insurance employers have realised the need to identify and access a wide range of expertise and knowledge from employees (Kamau & Kwanya, 2019). Companies seek to implement different KS initiatives in their workplaces to achieve this.

Moreover, technology has affected various business operations (Heavin & Power, 2018), including socialisation, a vital KS component. Creating and transferring knowledge primarily depends on individuals and their socialisation of the information received (De Moraes et al., 2016). With the increasing prominence of social media, several scholars have argued that tools like online social networks, wikis, and blogs may provide opportunities for interaction, tacit KS, collaboration, and explicit knowledge transfer (Amidi et al., 2017; Cevik et al., 2016; Oostervink et al., 2016). For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the technological trends already reshaping the business world (Montani & Staglianò, 2022). Therefore, organisations in various sectors increasingly integrate social media into their business processes. However, the debate of whether SMU is beneficial or detrimental to organisations is an ongoing research agenda.

Recent researchers have found that Insurance firms are now using social media for various reasons, such as to "boost their online reach and visibility, foster a sense of familiarity, build relationships and infuse trust" (Seth & Mittal, 2020, pp. 52-52). The study also showed that social media was mainly used for external client interactions and not among employees. Thus, little has been done on the impact of SMU on KS within organisations. Nevertheless, Seth and Mittal (2020) acknowledged that SMU in insurance is still in its infancy stage; hence, much is yet to be done. Other studies have also

suggested more studies regarding SMU. Asrar-ul-Haq and Anwar (2016) suggested an investigation of the contribution of social media in promoting KS and transfer. Recent state-of-art research on KS on social media shows future research's need to address tacit KS (Mladenović & Krajina, 2020; Okazaki et al., 2017). Therefore, these problems (knowledge loss and growing technology adoption) and the suggested gaps motivated this study.

This study sought to determine the moderating effect of SMU on the relationship between individual factors (trust, altruism, self-efficacy, reciprocity, and rewards) and workplace KS in insurance organisations in Kenya. The research questions were as follows:

1. To what extent does SMU moderate the relationship between individual factors (trust, altruism, self-efficacy, reciprocity, and rewards) and workplace KS in insurance organisations in Kenya?
2. What is the best predictive model of SMU's moderation on KS among employees in insurance companies in Kenya?

3 Knowledge sharing and social media

Knowledge sharing is classified among KM's most important and perhaps most critical activities (Jones & Shideh, 2020). Generally, KS implies a certain set of behaviours that enhances and aids the exchange of previously gathered knowledge (Okazaki et al., 2017). The activities involved in KS provide opportunities for members and groups in an organisation to exchange ideas and collaborate (Dokhtesmati & Bousari, 2013). Additionally, KS is beneficial in transferring solutions or new ideas in organisations, especially during employee interactions (Islam et al., 2018). Hence, for KM initiatives to succeed in an organisation, KS must be effective and efficient.

Previous KS studies related to business have aimed at identifying ways through which organisations can corporately benefit from tapping into individual workers' knowledge (Mabey & Zhao, 2017). Obubuafo-Ayettey (2018) found that sharing more knowledge within an organisation promotes better performance in a highly competitive market. Alghamdi (2018) has argued that enhancing KS with external knowledge to gain new ideas helps create new knowledge that supports innovation within an organisation. Garnering new insight commonly stems from the collaboration of people in brainstorming ideas and opinions and sharing knowledge (Mardani et al., 2018).

Therefore, organisations must provide conditions encouraging interactions and collaborations for workers to share knowledge, thus promoting the KS process.

The KS process has different parts. Balle, Oliveira, and Curado (2020) divided the KS into two, namely, "knowledge donation and knowledge collection" (p. 3). The former signifies communication and exchange of personal intellectual capital from an individual to others (Harjanti & Noerchoidah, 2017). It also denotes the willingness of workers to share their expertise with their workmates within the company (Allameh, 2018). Knowledge donation is characterised by socialisation which entails listening to others, talking to them, and making knowledge available to help them solve problems quicker (Baker, 2018). In the view of Ode and Ayavoo (2020), this type of KS process aims to convert individual expertise into an organisational resource. Therefore, organisations that create a conducive environment promoting socialisation and interaction will most likely benefit from exchanging knowledge.

On the other hand, knowledge collection concerns receivers of knowledge. These individuals motivate their co-workers to share their intellectual capital by listening, observing, or consulting (Balle et al., 2020). This process helps employees acquire knowledge internally and externally (Baker, 2018). Both knowledge donation and collection promote mutual respect and trust, thus encouraging employees' knowledge flow (Silva et al., 2022). Organisations promoting knowledge donation and collection have higher chances of boosting their competitiveness.

The past two decades have seen substantial growth in the interest and adoption of the Internet and social media sites or platforms. Among many other consequences, social media has significantly affected interactions between individuals, groups, organisations, and communities (Ngai et al., 2015). Social media has become integrated into daily routines (Mital et al., 2018; Rode, 2016). People across the world utilise various social networks to accomplish several purposes.

Consequently, social media is increasingly challenging KM processes in organisations. It offers new methods of knowledge creation, searching, dissemination, and application (Obubuafo-Ayettey, 2018). Social media and the Internet hugely contribute to emerging techniques for managing and dispersing individual and shared knowledge through social relationships and networking opportunities (Amidi et al., 2017; Mladenović et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the subject of whether social media use is beneficial or not in the workplace remains controversial amongst business academics and practitioners.

There is an ongoing debate among business professionals and researchers regarding the perceived value of SMU in the workplace. A few scholars have argued that SMU in the workplace improves performance and commitment (Hester et al., 2016; Lam et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019). On the other hand, other scholars and practitioners maintain that SMU by employees wastes important resources, such as time, causing a decline in labour productivity levels (Alghamdi, 2018; Nucleus, 2009; Shepherd, 2011). Nevertheless, a study by the Pew Research Centre shows that implementing social media policies at the workplace reduces the possibility (by 10%) of employees using social media for personal purposes (Lampe & Ellison, 2016). In addition, such policies increase the possibility (by 9%) of employees using social media for work-related purposes.

Social media tools are useful for KS. In theory and practice, social tools can be useful in sharing structured knowledge (through wikis, blogs, etc.) and unstructured knowledge, such as experiences, insights, tips, and tricks (Giménez & Tamajón, 2019). Using such tools can generate new ideas through private chats, forums, status updates, or brainstorming sessions that may lead to actions translating into workplace changes (Maulana, 2014). This reality has prompted various organisations to adopt social media in their KS strategies, as revealed by various studies.

Previous scholars have established a growing adoption of social media tools, including Facebook, blogging, Twitter, wikis, and instant messaging, to increase communication, levels of organisational learning, and KS (Panda & Kapoor, 2017). A study by Ma and Chan (2014) showed a significant relationship between SMU and KS. Mabey and Zhao (2017) concluded that social media allows people to store and retrieve knowledge individually or corporately. Therefore, social media can facilitate knowledge exchange within departments of the same firm, experts worldwide, customers, and partners.

In addition, social media promotes networking, which enhances KS. A study by Bizzi (2020) revealed that social media enables workers in an organisation to create and maintain relationships with other people. These relationships facilitate and encourage them to exchange knowledge and experience, thus gaining new ideas. Findings of a study by Obubuafo-Ayettey (2018) have shown that the high degree of socialisation among employees and the management using social network tools has promoted knowledge sharing, helping modern organisations to become more innovative and competitive, and the workers make fewer mistakes in their daily duties. Consequently, Cao, Ajjan, Hong, and Le (2018) found out that organisations are currently investigating ways to benefit

more from SMU for sharing knowledge with customers, experts, suppliers, and partners within and outside the organisation.

Nevertheless, several managers in various firms have realised that the availability of digital communication within the organisation is not an obvious indicator of KS (Kucharska & Erickson, 2020). Scholars have noted that although tools and technologies like social media are important in facilitating KS strategies, real-world implementations show that the availability of those technologies does not guarantee that individuals will share knowledge (Mitić et al. (2017).

4 Theoretical framework

Researchers have applied several theories to study KS in various contexts. Examining theoretical frameworks employed in KS studies in various contexts may provide an appropriate foundation for investigating KS practices concerning SMU. The most applicable theories to this study are economic exchange theory, social exchange theory, social capital theory, and theory of planned behaviour.

4.1 Economic Exchange Theory

This theory posits that if individuals believe they will gain extrinsic benefits from their actions, they are likely to develop a positive attitude toward those actions (Bock & Kim, 2002). Further, the theory suggests that individuals act after considering the costs and benefits of their behaviour. Costs may be in the form of loss of power, time, ownership, and energy, among others (Chennamaneni, 2007). Hence, Constant et al. (1996) maintain that the rewards associated with sharing knowledge must be more than its costs for KS to occur.

Prior studies have indicated the significance of economic rewards. Several scholars have found out that individuals are likely to share knowledge with the expectation of receiving economic paybacks, including bonuses, career advancement, better salary, promotion, better job assignment, or job security (Ba et al., 2001; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Hall, 2001). For this reason, researchers have recommended reward systems to promote successful KS (Constant et al., 1996). Therefore, this theory is the foundation for explaining the link between extrinsic rewards and KS.

4.2 Social Exchange Theory

This theory emerged from the economic exchange theory, which scholars have applied to explain behavioural practices. According to this theory, self-interest, which entails analysing possible costs and gains, is at the core of people's interactions with others

(Blau, 1964). Unlike economic exchange theory, which is based on expected external rewards, social exchange theory posits that "people exchange knowledge with those with whom they have a reciprocal relationship" (Thibault & Kelley, 1952, p. 9). Besides tangible returns, individuals may also interact with others with an expectation of reciprocity in the future based on trust (Gouldner, 1960). Some expected returns that may influence behaviour include promotional opportunities, status, future reciprocity, and job security (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Therefore, future or expected reciprocity will likely encourage positive attitudes towards KS and relate positively to KS behaviour.

In workplaces, individual employees, groups, or departments compete daily for resources but must cooperate to achieve common objectives. In such an environment, knowledge is a key source of exchange, and KS is part of the exchange process (Andolšek, 2011). Islam (2012) refers to KS as a social exchange process occurring between individuals and individuals, individuals and organisations, and organisations to organisations. Thus, the SET is suitable for this study because it explains the KS process for organisations through the socialisation process (Islam et al., 2010). It is also the basis of understanding the connection between expected reciprocity and KS and expected rewards and KS.

4.3 Social Capital Theory

Social capital denotes the close interpersonal connections among individuals (Bolino et al., 2002). Researchers believe that social capital is an important organisational asset as it facilitates interactions among co-workers, thus helping them function as a team (Leana & Van Buren, 1999). Those interactions can promote trust among team members.

Social capital has three dimensions. They include the "structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). The relational facet reflects the affective aspect of social capital. It describes network relationships denoted by common norms, interpersonal trust, and identification with others within the network. The structural dimension describes the pattern of interpersonal interactions, including the connections among individuals in the network and network configuration in general. In addition, the cognitive facet of social capital results from common narratives among people of the same network and a common language.

In the context of KS, social capital's structural and cognitive facets determine the probability of individuals sharing their knowledge with others (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). Consequently, spending more time with each other increases the probability and opportunities to share knowledge because increased interactions result in increased

communication, common codes, and shared language. Therefore, social ties and common language are key in creating an environment favourable for co-workers to share knowledge.

In addition, the relational dimension of social capital determines whether employees have the needed motivation to exchange knowledge amongst themselves. Despite the availability of opportunities for KS, workers may decline to share because of a lack of willingness. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) observed that the "willingness or motivation to share will be higher when employees trust and identify with one another" (p. 3). Therefore, trust and identification with a group due to close interpersonal connections positively influence KS's intentions and behaviour. In this study, social capital theory is the basis for investigating the relationship between trust, KS, and SMU.

4.4 Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behaviour links people's beliefs to behaviour. It is an elaboration of the theory of reasoned action suggested by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). According to the theory of planned behaviour, an individual's intention to partake in the behaviour determines the definite permanence of that behaviour. That intention results from "attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control" (Yeo & Fisher, 2017, p. 82). Attitude is the positive or negative assessment of performing a behaviour. Subjective norms are the beliefs regarding the prevailing social pressure on a behaviour (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). Thus, attitude and subjective norms correlate with intentions.

Nevertheless, research has shown that behavioural intention sometimes never ends in actual behaviour (Norberg et al., 2007), thus making perceived behavioural control necessary in predicting behaviour. Perceived behavioural control denotes the extent individuals have confidence that they can carry out a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioural control entails perceiving the capability to partake in a behaviour. The theory suggests that individuals are more likely to intend to perform certain behaviours if they perceive that they can perform them successfully (Ajzen, 1985). Therefore, employees are likely to participate in KS if they perceive they can do it well.

Thus, when one has a positive attitude toward KS or SMU, he or she will have higher intentions of sharing knowledge and using social media. Like attitude, the higher the subjective norms an individual has for KS and SMU, the higher the intentions toward the two behaviours. Regarding perceived behavioural control, when a person highly believes that he or she has the required abilities for KS or SMU, he or she would have high

intentions toward the two behaviours. Therefore, in this study, the researcher applies the TPB to investigate KS and SMU behaviours and the correlation between knowledge self-efficacy and KS.

5 Individual factors that influence knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is influenced by the factors discussed hereunder.

5.1 Trust

Trust can be viewed as "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of the members of the community" (Fukuyana, cited in Usoro et al., 2007, p. 5). Additionally, Ebrahim (2020) defined trust as a situation in which an individual or group depends on the action of another and exercises faith that the trustee will act according to expectation. Consequently, trust between the trustor and the trustee develops gradually during social exchanges. Therefore, increasing opportunities for social exchanges is likely to boost the growth of trust in a network.

Previous studies have revealed that trust is the most important factor influencing KS and transfer (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anwar, 2016). A study by Le and Lei (2018) has shown that trust in a team impacts the KS behaviour of employees, both internally and externally. A study by Ouakouak and Ouedraogo (2019) revealed that trust positively influences KS and knowledge utilisation. Hence, KS is easier in an environment of greater trust (Boh et al., 2013). The results of their study indicate the importance of trust in facilitating effective KS.

5.2 Expected Reciprocity

Reciprocity is the exchange between individuals or groups, generally for mutual benefit (Lewis, 2015). In the context of KS, Kankanhalli et al. (2005) describe reciprocity as knowledge contributors' hope that their present contribution will fulfiltheir future knowledge requests. Previous studies show that individuals share knowledge while expecting others to supply their future knowledge needs. Studies by Abouzahra and Tan (2014), Killingsworth et al. (2016), and Zhang et al. (2017) showed that reciprocal benefits have a strong link towards a positive attitude for KS and significantly impact the KS intention and behaviour. Therefore, individuals are more likely to participate in KS, expecting to receive aid from other people when they need it.

Despite many studies linking reciprocity to KS, others have reported contrary results. For instance, a study by Tan and Md. Noor (2013) showed that reciprocity is a barrier to

knowledge sharing in research universities in Malaysia. A study by Al-Qadhi et al. (2015) revealed that mutual reciprocity does not promote knowledge sharing. Therefore, in a strong teamwork and collaboration climate, individuals may share knowledge without necessarily needing extrinsic benefits, such as reciprocity.

5.3 Altruism

Various scholars generally seem to maintain a similar view of altruism. For instance, some scholars such as Eynur, Akalan, and Sahinler (2020) view altruism as a general phenomenon involving treating the interests of others as one's own. Further, Kerr, Godfrey-Smith, and Feldman (2004) define altruism as a conduct that helps others at the expense of the acting individual. Other scholars describe altruism as the willingness of individuals to act voluntarily for the benefit of others without expecting anything in return (Chai & Kim, 2010; Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Radovanović, 2019).

Studies have reported a positive relationship between altruism and KS. For instance, a study by Killingsworth et al. (2016), seeking to determine the factors influencing knowledge sharing among global virtual teams, established that enjoyment in helping others relates positively to both KS attitude and KS behaviour. In addition, the findings of a study by Zhang et al. (2017) aimed at determining the motivations of KS in online health communities have shown that altruism significantly impacts KS intent and performance. These findings imply that some individuals will share their knowledge without guaranteeing rewards if they gain intrinsic enjoyment and satisfaction in helping others. Nevertheless, the findings of studies by Al-Qadhi et al. (2015) and Park and Gabbard (2018) revealed that altruism did not affect KS.

5.4 Self-Efficacy

In the KM context, knowledge self-efficacy denotes the confidence of an individual in the value of his or her knowledge (Ergün & Avcı, 2018). Sharing useful knowledge and expertise with the organisation boosts employees' confidence regarding their abilities, thus increasing self-efficacy (Le et al., 208). The belief in the usefulness of their knowledge acts as a self-motivation for employees to share knowledge with others (Bock & Kim, 2002). Hence, in this study, the researchers view knowledge self-efficacy as one's judgment of the usefulness of his or her KS in producing a significant effect in an organisation.

Studies have shown a connection between self-efficacy and KS. For instance, studies by Yilmaz (2016), Zhang et al. (2017), and Kopp (2020) have shown that knowledge self-

efficacy significantly impacts the KS intention and behaviour amongst team members. However, contrary to these studies, studies by Tan and Md. Noor (2013) and Al-Qadhi et al. (2015) have shown that self-efficacy does not promote KS. Due to a lack of consensus in previous studies, this study sought to determine whether knowledge self-efficacy significantly influences KS among insurance companies' employees in Kenya.

5.5 Expected Rewards

Previous scholars in businesses have mostly grouped reward practices into intrinsic or extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are non-monetary benefits that do not have a physical existence (Ajmal et al., 2015). Manzoor, Wei, and Asif (2021) define intrinsic rewards as those benefits existing in the job, including achievement, personal advancement, professional advancement, challenge, responsibility, and autonomy. Unlike intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards are monetary-based benefits that have a physical existence (Ajmal et al., 2015). Such benefits include pay raises, job security, merit bonuses, promotions, and competitive salaries.

The findings of a study by Javaid, Soroya, and Mahmood (2020), seeking to investigate the personal and organisational factors that promote effective KS, revealed that the reward system significantly influences the KS attitude. Abouzahra and Tan (2014) found that expected outcomes, such as enhanced reputation and status, significantly influence KS in communities of practice. Additionally, a study by Zhang et al. (2017) showed that reputation significantly impacts KS intention and behaviour. Hence, the perception of enhancing one's status and reputation by sharing knowledge can influence workers to share their valued knowledge with co-workers.

Contrary to many other studies, a study by Bock and Kim (2002), Breaking the Myths of Rewards, shows that rewards do not motivate employees to share knowledge as they discourage the growth of a positive feeling toward KS. Bock and Kim (2002) also argue that rewards kill intrinsic motivation to participate in KS. They argue that managers usually use rewards instead of providing a conducive environment (offering social support, constructive feedback, and room for personal development) for employees to perform well. In addition, Kankanhalli et al. (2005) argue that when an organisation's culture of teamwork and collaboration is strong, workers may not need external incentives to share their knowledge. Hence, employees will voluntarily share their knowledge even without rewards.

6 The moderation of social media usage on the individual factors influencing knowledge sharing

Social media usage in the workplace can have both good and bad effects. A study by Carlson, Zivnuska, Harris, Harris, and Carlson (2016), focusing on the dual effects of SMU in the workplace, revealed that SMU might simultaneously result in productive and unproductive outcomes. Thus, this study investigates whether SMU moderates the relationships between individual factors affecting KS and KS behaviour.

6.1 Social media usage moderation on the trust-knowledge sharing relationship

The use of social media for work-related purposes can augment workplace KS. Social media users can maintain numerous online connections that foster deep understanding, trust, and common values, facilitating knowledge exchange across the organisation (Bharati et al., 2015). Therefore, SMU, for workplace purposes, is likely to promote trust among co-workers, which may enhance KS, thus strengthening the trust-KS relationship in the workplace.

H1: SMU moderates the relationship between trust and KS among employees in insurance companies in Kenya.

6.2 Social Media Usage Moderation on the Self-Efficacy-Knowledge Sharing Relationship

Workplace use of social media can moderate the relationship between employees' self-efficacy and KS. A study by the Pew Research Centre showed that 56% of the respondents found SMU useful for connecting with experts, whereas 46% found SMU useful for finding the information needed to perform their tasks (Lampe & Ellison, 2016). Moreover, a study by Razmerita et al. (2016) revealed that 50.9% of respondents used social media for learning purposes. Hence, SMU can help enhance employees' competence, develop their professional connections, and solve work-related problems (Cleary, 2019), thus enhancing their self-efficacy regarding the value of their knowledge. Enhanced self-efficacy makes employees more likely to share their knowledge with their co-workers.

H2: SMU moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and KS among employees in insurance companies in Kenya.

6.3 Social Media Usage Moderation on the Altruism-Knowledge Sharing Relationship

Social media usage can promote altruistic activities. Klisanin (2014) referred to this concept as digital altruism. The findings of her study show that online interactions can promote altruism; thus, people can find various ways of using the Internet to help others.

In the context of KS, digital altruism can include voluntarily contributing content or sharing useful information and knowledge with others through online platforms (Obrenovic et al., 2020). Therefore, workplace SMU will likely strengthen the relationship between altruism and KS.

H3: SMU moderates the relationship between altruism and KS among employees in insurance companies in Kenya.

6.4 Social Media Usage Moderation on the Reciprocity-Knowledge Sharing Relationship

Workplace SMU can moderate the relationship between reciprocity and work-related KS. Besides socialisation, SMU facilitates externalising personal and organisational knowledge (Razmerita et al., 2016). Such externalisation of work-related knowledge can occur through multimodal interactions, continuous online conversations, and answering questions, among other means (Razmerita et al., 2014). Continuous online communal knowledge conversations promote reciprocal exchanges that entail co-workers asking and answering each other's work-related questions. Hence, workplace SMU will likely strengthen the relationship between reciprocity and work-related KS.

H4: SMU moderates the relationship between reciprocity and KS among employees in insurance companies in Kenya.

6.5 Social Media Usage Moderation on the Rewards-Knowledge Sharing Relationship

The use of social media to share knowledge can strengthen the rewards-KS relationship by providing opportunities for both monetary and non-monetary benefits. Social media provides opportunities for its users to gain financial rewards (Tang et al., 2012), including coupons, premiums, and other related rewards (Janzik, 2010). On the other hand, social media also provides opportunities for non-monetary rewards, such as recognition, autonomy, and praise. The prospect of gaining rewards will likely promote SMU for KS, thus strengthening the rewards-KS relationship.

H5: SMU moderates the relationship between rewards and KS among employees in insurance companies in Kenya.

7 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the proposed conceptual framework for this study. The framework shows the relationships between trust, reciprocity, altruism, self-efficacy, rewards, SMU, and KS. The independent variables (trust, reciprocity, altruism, self-efficacy, and rewards) are postulated to significantly influence the dependent variable (KS). Further, SMU is

postulated to moderate the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

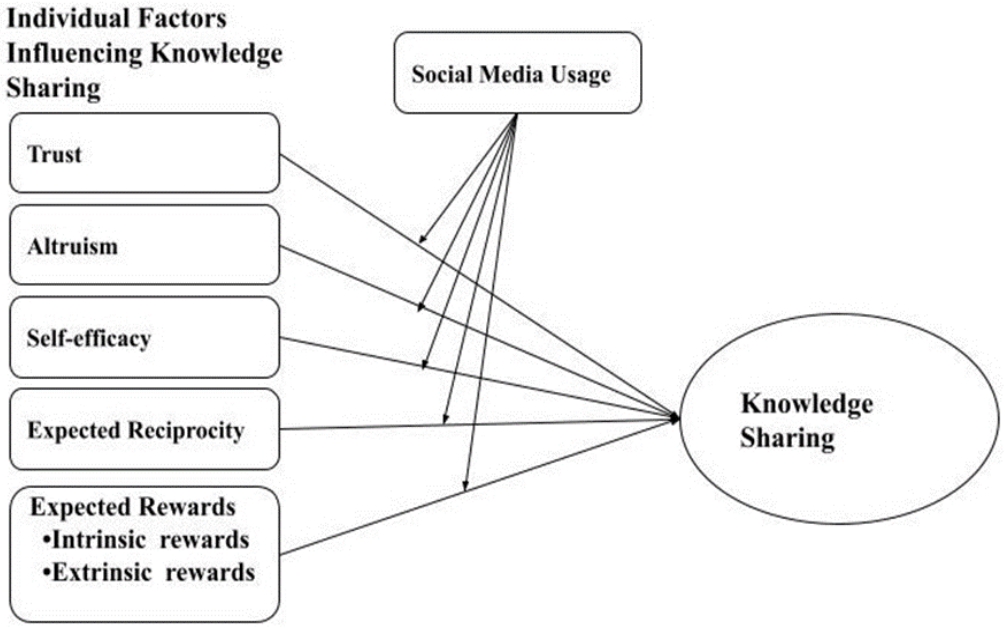

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework.

(Source: Authors)

This conceptual model suggests that SMU moderates the effect of trust, altruism, self-efficacy, expected reciprocity, and expected rewards on KS. Using social media facilitates interactions and socialisation among users. Increased interactions are likely to promote trust, a key predictor of KS. In social media discussions, several users ask and answer others' questions even without expecting compensation. Hence, SMU promotes altruistic behaviour, which in turn promotes KS.

Social media usage can also help enhance the knowledge and skills of users, thus promoting a feeling of competency. This self-efficacy is key in enhancing KS. Moreover, SMU entails reciprocal social exchanges. Such exchanges are likely to promote sharing behaviour among network members. Sharing knowledge on social media can result in monetary or non-monetary benefits. Users can be recognised by their peers, promoting their reputation and respect. The anticipation of gaining such rewards is likely to encourage KS.

8 Methodology

The researchers employed a mono-quantitative methodology to collect and analyse data. Using a cross-sectional survey strategy, the researchers collected quantitative data from

insurance employees in Kenya through questionnaires. They followed the necessary proposed procedures, including seeking the required approvals from the ethical review board of the researchers' institution, the insurance companies, and the individual employees before collecting data. This strategy facilitated a quick collection of standardised quantitative data from the sampled population in a highly economical way using questionnaires.

8.1 Sampling

The population of this study included employees in 11 insurance companies in Kenya (whose total number was unknown). Therefore, the researchers used a representative sample of 385 employees. The sample size was calculated using a formula developed by Cochran (1963) to estimate the sample size representative of an unknown population. Systematic sampling was used to identify 11 insurance companies from the list of 55 licensed firms (Insurance Regulatory Authority, 2017). The 11 companies were sampled by selecting all the companies in the fifth position of the list. The sample size (385) was distributed equally to the selected firms. Random sampling was used to get the 385 respondents from the 11 companies. The first 35 respondents available to participate in the study were selected.

8.2 Pilot Test of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted with a representative sample of 50 insurance employees of four insurance companies in Kenya. The reliability test for the survey instrument showed that the overall Cronbach alpha was 0.891, thus indicating that the instrument was reliable for data collection. The variable with the highest Cronbach value was SMU, with a value of 0.946. The least Cronbach value was expected reciprocity, with a value of 0.843. The pilot study respondents were excluded from the main sample.

8.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to collect data. The questionnaire scales were adapted from validated questionnaires developed by previous researchers. The scales contained items for measuring trust (McKnight et al., 2002), reciprocity and altruism (Constant et al., 1996; Kankanhalli et al., 2005), expected rewards (Kankanhalli et al., 2005), self-efficacy (Bock & Kim, 2002), and KS (Bock & Kim, 2002; Holste & Fields, 2010; Lee, 2001). Questionnaire items were measured using five-point Likert scales ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The validity and reliability of the scales were tested before the instrument was operationalised.

8.4 Data Collection

Upon obtaining all the required approvals, the researcher emailed the consent letter and the Google questionnaire hyperlink to the sampled employees through the heads of human capital and research in the sampled companies. The companies were based in Nairobi because most insurance companies are headquartered in Nairobi, and this city has the highest number of branches (Association of Kenya Insurers, 2021). 274 respondents (71.17% response rate) filled and returned the questionnaires.

8.5 Data Analysis

The data collected using Google Forms were downloaded to Excel and checked for missing data, extreme values (outliers), and normality. The basic assumptions of inferential statistics, including the availability of linear relationships, no multi-collinearity, and no heteroscedasticity, were checked. Then the data was exported to the SPSS (version 26) for further statistical analysis. Hierarchical regression was used to test for the moderation of SMU on factors influencing workplace KS. Variables were added sequentially to the regression analysis (Keith, 2019). In step 1, the individual factors were entered. In the second step, the moderating variable was entered into the model, and the change in R2 was assessed.

The decision criterion for this analysis was that if a significant value ($p < 0.05$) exists, the hypothesis would be confirmed, thus implying that the relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable are significantly moderated by the moderating variable and account for the variance observed in the dependent variable. In addition, the effect in R2 at the step when interaction terms were introduced to the regression model was used to describe the moderating contributions.

9 Results

Research Question 1: Social media usage's moderation on individual factors influencing workplace knowledge sharing

To test for moderation, hierarchical multiple regression was used. To determine the contribution of variables to the predictive equation at each step, the change in R^2 and the corresponding statistical significance test were evaluated. Interactions were created for SMU with each of the individual factors: SMU X trust, SMU X altruism, SMU X self-efficacy, SMU X expected reciprocity, and SMU X expected rewards after standardising the variables. Each interaction was then entered in the second step of the regression analysis for KS, as shown in Table 1 below. In step 1, the individual factors were entered.

In the second and third steps, the moderator and interaction terms were added, respectively, as suggested by Keith (2019).

Table 1: Model Summary of the Effect of Interaction Terms

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
Step 1.					.522	275.877	<.001
Trust[a]	.723[a]	.522	.520	.359			
Step 2	.854[b]	.729	.727	.270	.208	193.114	<.001
SMUxTrust[b]							
Step 1	.434[a]	.190	.187	.467	.190	59.473	<.001
Reciprocity[a]							
Step 2	.816[b]	.666	.663	.300	.476	358.891	<.001
SMUxReciprocity[b]							
Step 1	.096[a]	.009	.005	.516	.009	2.372	.125
Expected Rewards[a]							
Step 2	.823[b]	.678	.675	.295	.669	523.051	<.001
SMUxExpeceted_Rewards[b]							
Step 1	.670[a]	.449	.447	.385	.449	206.342	<.001
Self_Efficacy[a]							
Step 2	.846[b]	.716	.714	.277	.267	237.082	<.001
SMUxSelf_Efficacy[b]							
Step 1	.542[a]	.294	.291	.436	.294	105.295	<.001
Altruism[a]							
Step 2	.847[b]	.717	.715	.276	.423	377.477	<.001
SMUxAltruism[b]							

c. Dependent Variable: Knowledge_Sharing

In model 1, the regression of trust and KS produced an R^2 of .522 (F [1, 253] = 275.877, p <.001, β= .693). When the SMU X trust interaction was entered, the interaction was significant and positive, with an increase in R^2 of .208 (F [1, 252] = 193.114, p <.001, β= .138). In model 2, the regression of reciprocity and KS generated an R^2 of .190 (F [1, 253] = 59.473, p <.001, β= .418). When the SMU X reciprocity interaction was entered, the interaction was significant and positive, generating an increase in R^2 of .476 (F [1, 252] = 358.891, p <.001, β= .185). In model 3, the regression of rewards and KS generated an R^2 of .009 (F [1, 253] = 2.372, p = .125, β= .108). Finally, when the SMU X rewards interaction was entered, the interaction was significant and positive with an increase in R^2 of .669 (F [1, 252] = 523.051, p <.001, β= .281). All these three interactions resulted in a significant and positive increase in R square.

Moreover, in model 4, the regression of self-efficacy and KS generated an R^2 of .449 (F [1, 253] = 206.342, p <.001, β= .676). When the SMU X self-efficacy interaction was

entered, the interaction was significant and positive with an increase in R^2 of .267 (F [1, 252] = 237.082, p <.001, β= .154). In model 5, the regression of altruism and KS generated an R^2 of .294 (F [1, 253] = 105.295, p <.001, β= .501). When the SMU X altruism interaction was entered, the interaction was significant and positive with an increase in R^2 of .423 (F [1, 252] = 377.477, p <.001, β= .162). These two interactions also generated a significant and positive increase in R square. These results show that SMU augments the relationship between individual factors (trust, altruism, self-efficacy, expected reciprocity, and rewards) and KS.

Research Question 2: Best Predictive Model

In step 1, KS was regressed on the individual factors, beginning with trust followed by altruism, self-efficacy, expected reciprocity, and expected rewards. These five variables combined had a significant and positive effect (R^2= .623, F [5, 249] = 82.169, p<.001) on KS. Each interaction term was then entered in the second step of the regression analysis for KS, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Model Summary of Knowledge Sharing (Comprising of Variables Dimensions)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.789[a]	.623	.615	.321	.623	82.169	<.001
2	.843[b]	.711	.704	.281	.089	76.178	<.001
3	.867[c]	.751	.744	.262	.040	39.700	<.001
4	.873[d]	.763	.755	.256	.011	11.650	<.001
5	.873[e]	.763	.754	.257	.000	.160	.689
6	.873[f]	.763	.753	.257	.000	.250	.617

Predictors: (Constant), Rewards, Trust, Reciprocity, Altruism, Self_Efficacy[a]
Predictors: (Constant), Rewards, Reciprocity, Altruism, Self_Efficacy, SMUxTrust[b]
Predictors: (Constant), Rewards, Reciprocity, Self_Efficacy, SMUxTrust, SMUxAltruism[c]
Predictors: (Constant), Rewards, Reciprocity, SMUxTrust, SMUxAltruism, SMUxSelf_Efficacy[d]
Predictors: (Constant), Rewards, SMUxTrust, SMUxAltruism, SMUxSelf_Efficacy, SMUxReciprocity[e]
Predictors: (Constant), SMUxTrust, SMUxAltruism, SMUxSelf_Efficacy, SMUxReciprocity, SMUxRewards[f]
Dependent Variable: Knowledge_Sharing[g]

(Source: Authors)

The interaction of SMU and trust was statistically significant and positive with an R square of .711 (p <.001, β= .085). The interaction of SMU X altruism was also significant and positive (R^2= 751, p<.001, β= 111). The interaction of SMU X self-efficacy was also significant and positive (R^2= 763, p<.001, β= .186). These three interactions (SMU X trust, SMU X altruism, SMU X self-efficacy) increased R square of .089, .040, and .011,

respectively. However, the interaction of SMU X expected reciprocity was not statistically significant (ΔR^2 = .000, p = .689, β= .028). Additionally, SMU X expected rewards were not a significant interaction (ΔR^2 = .000, p = .617, β= .026).

Regression Results for the Final Integrated Model

The F ratio in the ANOVA results (Table 3) was used to test whether the overall hierarchical regression model fits KS well. The results show that independent variables (trust, altruism, and self-efficacy) statistically significantly predict KS when moderated by SMU. The model interactions comprising SMU X trust (F [4, 250] = 130.069, p <.001), SMU X altruism (F [5, 249] = 134.659, p <.001), and SMU X self-efficacy (F [6, 248] = 120.425, p <.001) is thus a good fit for KS.

Table 3: ANOVA Regression Results

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.663	3	11.554	86.975	<.001[b]
	Residual	33.345	251	.133		
	Total	68.008	254			
2	Regression	45.936	4	11.484	130.069	<.001[c]
	Residual	22.073	250	.088		
	Total	68.008	254			
3	Regression	49.648	5	9.930	134.659	<.001[d]
	Residual	18.361	249	.074		
	Total	68.008	254			
4	Regression	50.631	6	8.438	120.425	<.001[e]
	Residual	17.378	248	.070		
	Total	68.008	254			

a. Dependent Variable: Knowledge_Sharing
b. Predictors: (Constant), Self_Efficacy, Trust, Altruism
c. Predictors: (Constant), Self_Efficacy, Trust, Altruism, SMUxTrust
d. Predictors: (Constant), Self_Efficacy, Trust, Altruism, SMUxTrust, SMUxAltruism
e. Predictors: (Constant), Self_Efficacy, Trust, Altruism, SMUxTrust, SMUxAltruism, SMUxSelf_Efficacy

(Source: Authors)

The final model summary (Figure 2) explains approximately 74% of the variance in KS (Adjusted R^2 of .738). This means that approximately 74% of KS insurance employees in Kenya may be determined by trust, altruism, and self-efficacy moderated by SMU. Therefore, this model is useful for predicting KS given the predictor and moderating variables.

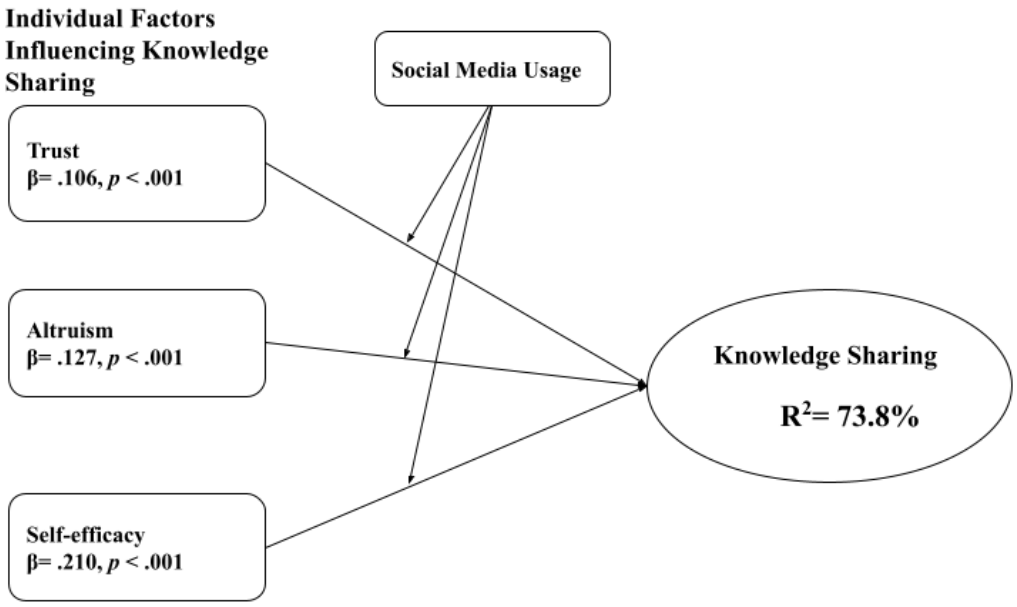

Figure 2: Best predictive model of SMU's moderation on the individual factors-KS relationship

(Source: Authors)

10 Discussion

Researchers have revealed that research about SMU for workplace KS is still at an early stage of progress (Ahmed et al., 2019; Behringer & Sassenberg, 2015; Seth & Mittal, 2020). Therefore, much remains unknown; hence, it is a subject for further study. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by investigating whether SMU strengthens or weakens the relationship between individual factors (trust, altruism, knowledge self-efficacy, expected rewards, and reciprocity) and KS. The study found a significant moderation of SMU in the relationship between combined individual factors (altruism, trust, and self-efficacy) and KS. This finding means that SMU augments the relationship between these individual factors and KS among insurance employees in Kenya. Hence, an increase in the interaction between SMU and these factors among insurance employees will likely result in a significant increase in KS.

Some of the mechanisms that can explain this finding include organisational knowledge creation theory and social capital theory. The knowledge spiral presented by the organisational knowledge creation theory entails continuous interactions among individuals and constantly converting tacit knowledge to explicit form and vice versa (Chin et al., 2021). The social capital theory denotes the close interpersonal connections among individuals and are important in facilitating co-worker interactions (Swanson et

al., 2020). Moreover, a study by Zhang, Li, and Tong (2022) suggested that strict platform access control can facilitate people's interactions, thus enhancing KS. Social media facilitates interaction, socialisation, and networking among employees. These interactions may result in the growth of trust among employees, thus promoting reciprocal exchanges and altruistic actions. Consequently, knowledge exchanges between users and information encountered on social media could enhance their competence and expertise, thus enhancing their self-efficacy.

Despite its potential to enhance KS, social media should not be used as a replacement for face-to-face KS interactions. The findings showed that individual factors (trust, altruism, self-efficacy, reciprocity, and rewards) predict approximately 51.7% of the variance in KS among the study population. This implies that even without SMU, employees can share their knowledge significantly through other methods if the five individual factors are available. A few previous KS researchers have reported findings similar to this study's. For instance, a study by Panahi et al. (2016), aimed at assessing the contribution of digital social networks towards tacit KS, revealed that SMU contributes to tacit KS through networking, socialising, encountering, practising, and storytelling. Despite those potential contributions, the scholars maintained that face-to-face interaction is still the best channel for organisational socialisation and KS. However, Panahi et al. (2016) recommended that researchers should not ignore social media tools when researching tacit KS due to the potential of such tools to facilitate KS. Therefore, social media should be used as a complementary tool to other face-to-face KS initiatives.

Moreover, this current study revealed that the model comprising of interactions among SMU and individual factors (trust, altruism, and self-efficacy) is a good fit for KS among insurance employees in Kenya ($R2 = .750$). This finding means that approximately 75% of KS insurance employees in Kenya may be determined by trust, altruism, and self-efficacy moderated by SMU. This finding also means that other factors may determine the remaining approximately 25% of KS among insurance employees in Kenya. An explanation for this finding could be that insurance employees in Kenya are likely to share knowledge when their work environments are conducive (characterised by trust, social support, and opportunities for personal development), even without rewards. Bock and Kim (2002) also argue that rewards kill intrinsic motivation to participate in KS. Hence, in a work environment where trust, self-efficacy, and altruism are prominent, employees may not necessarily need rewards or expectations of reciprocal benefits to share their knowledge. They will share knowledge voluntarily and altruistically.

11 Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the moderating effect of SMU on the relationship between individual factors (trust, altruism, self-efficacy, reciprocity, and rewards) and workplace KS in insurance organisations in Kenya. The results revealed that SMU can augment KS by interacting with trust, altruism, and self-efficacy. Considering the global digital revolution's influence in the business world, companies, including KS, are forced to find ways of using emerging technologies to improve their operations. Therefore, increasing SMU for work purposes is a possible trend that will likely increase KS's socialisation in modern workplaces. Social media usage may thus augment the KM processes by facilitating socialisation among employees and externalising employees' knowledge based on the organisational knowledge creation theory.

In addition, although managers would prefer formal KS (Walliser & Wever, 2016), current disruptions and trends would mean they must also consider informal KS. For instance, SMU would possibly enhance KS as it allows employees to have faster and less formal interactions in a less constrained space by internal regulations and hierarchies. Considering the ongoing debate on whether SMU is beneficial or detrimental in the workplace, managers, knowledge workers, policymakers, and researchers have the task of finding effective methods and models of enhancing KS in organisations. Hence, promoting work environments characterised by trust, continuous personal development, altruistic practices, and appropriate SMU can help increase socialisation among employees, thus increasing the possibility and opportunities for KS, which will, in turn, help reduce knowledge loss as shared knowledge will be retained in the organisation in case of departures.

12 Suggestions for further study

As with other studies, this study was not exhaustive. The findings of this study have revealed a few possible gaps for further investigation. Future studies may address the best practices, pros, and cons of incorporating SMU for workplace KS. Future studies may also investigate the social media platforms that can best work for knowledge sharing in various contexts. Moreover, qualitative studies on the moderating effect of SMU on workplace KS would be beneficial in validating the findings of this quantitative study. In addition, the question of how social media facilitates workplace tacit knowledge sharing is an ongoing debate that needs further investigation.

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