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TEAMS AND E-COMMERCE: EXPLORING THE FUTURE VIA THE PAST

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce is a relatively new phenomenon. One of the basic tenets of e-commerce is the way transactions, processes and customers are distributed, therefore, the role of teams/groups in such an environment can be crucial. In this research, we look at the literature on the interactions of teams/groups with inter-organizational information systems and telecommunications to hypothesize about the role and functionality of e-commerce. This paper can be of value to researchers, in that it will help them identify core areas of research that are yet to be undertaken, and to practitioners who may gain from these findings by recognizing the importance of teams relative to various e-commerce functions.

INTRODUCTION

One of the basic tenets of e-commerce is the way transactions, processes and customers are distributed. Hence, one of the ingredients that needs to be analyzed is the role of teams/groups in such an environment. Numerous benefits of teams have been reported, including increased performance, increased creativity and commitment, higher quality of products, less absenteeism, and reduced turnover [1][2]. Teams allow individuals in locations around the world to interact and solve operational problems; they help firms bridge barriers and combine efforts.

As researchers, it is imperative that we understand the literature on e-commerce and groups/teams to help practitioners prepare for such eventualities by identifying salient factors and interactions, and by developing theory. In this paper, we attempt to lay the groundwork by uncovering patterns in the literature on the role of teams/groups and e-commerce. By sampling key journals we hope to cover interactions between groups/teams and various areas in IS. In addition we look at the publication propensity by journal and year. As such, this paper can be of value to researchers, in that it will help them identify core areas of research that are yet to be undertaken, journals for specific studies, and areas of the literature that are expected to flourish. In addition, practitioners may gain from these findings by recognizing the importance of teams relative to various e-commerce functions.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we discuss how our data was collected, categorized, and analyzed. Results of the analyses are then presented. Following the patterns identified by the results, a discussion on the particular aspects of teams/group research is presented. Finally, in the conclusion section, the key

findings and their implications are briefly summarized.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Thirty-eight articles published between 1990 and 1999 were obtained from a sample of 35 journals. Articles were included in the data set based on the following two criteria: (1) the article should concentrate specifically on groups/teams, and (2) it should have either an inter-organizational information systems or telecommunications focus.

Each article was coded on the following categories: year of publication and topic area of information systems. Based on a reading of the articles and the keywords used by the authors, publications were categorized under the following topic areas: Artificial Intelligence (AI), audit (information), database, decision making, decision support systems, design, Expert Systems (ES), human factors in IS, human-machine interface, information resource management, intra-organization systems, knowledge-based systems, management information systems, networks, Object Oriented Programming (OOPS), project management, programming, systems design and software development. To ensure reliability in the classification process the first two raters coded the articles independently. The third rater then compared the two classifications. If the two earlier classifications matched in terms of the primary and secondary areas - they were included in the database. However, if discrepancies arose, the third rater compared the two classifications with the articles and decided on the final classification.

Given the classification by journal, year, and topic area, a number of analyses were generated. In our study, the articles were first sorted by journal and by year. From this data it was possible to sum the number of publications by year and by journal.

REFERENCES

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- [2] Harris, T.E., _Toward effective employee involvement: an analysis of parallel and self-managing teams,_ *Journal of Allied Business Research*, 1992, 9(1), 25-33.

A complete copy of the paper is available by contacting

the first author.