THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL POWER ON TRANSACTIVE MEMORY SYSTEMS AND KNOWLEDGE UTILIZATION

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Abstract

Many organizations have attempted to develop knowledge management strategies through which they can substantially enhance their employees’ ability to utilize knowledge resources dispersed across business units. While previous studies have acknowledged that social power is one of the critical factors in facilitating or constraining social interactions among individuals, few studies have examined in-depth how social power within a work group influences an individual’s knowledge utilization. Given that social power in an organization determines the processes of recognizing others’ knowledge and applying it to real business, the investigation of the influence of social power on knowledge utilization is of value to researchers and practitioners. Integrating the volitional model and the theory of social power, this study develops a theoretical model that explains how social power influences individuals’ affect, transactive memory system (TMS), and knowledge utilization. The proposed model was tested using data collected from 206 individuals. The results of this study show that social power significantly influences an individual’s affect and TMS, which in turn influences intention to utilize knowledge. Notably, this study reveals that different power bases have different effects on individuals’ cognitive (TMS levels) and emotional (positive affect) aspects in relation to knowledge utilization in organizations.

Keywords: knowledge utilization, social power, theory of social power, volitional model

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