The impact of organizational culture on the use of ICT for knowledge management

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Abstract The paper aims at analyzing the influence of diverse organizational cultures on the use of ICT for strategic KM. By combining literature from different areas, namely strategic KM, ICT for KM, organizational culture and effectiveness, a theoretical model is proposed and tested in a sample of more than 300 firms in Spain. Results show that diverse organizational cultures (hierarchy, clan, adhocracy and market) are found to impact on the use of ICT for strategic KM (personalization and codification) differently. Specifically, corporate cultures based on hierarchies and markets do not impact on the use of ICT for KM, while clan culture favours the use of ICT for personalization strategy and adhocracy positively influences technologies for personalization and codification as well. These findings may have significant implications for researchers and managers.

Keywords Organizational culture · ICT · Knowledge management

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Introduction

In the last decade, the importance of knowledge has been highlighted by both academics and practitioners and organizations are realizing that to remain competitive they must explicitly manage their intellectual resources and capabilities (Zack 1999). Knowledge Management (KM) is defined as the explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge—and its associated processes of creation, organization, diffusion, use and exploitation (Skyrme 2001). Businesses are increasingly finding themselves in a world characterized by globalization, turbulence and complexity, paralleled with an exponential advancement in information and communication technology (ICT), making knowledge a key strategic resource. ICTs enable companies to obtain, process, stock and share information and knowledge. Systems such as Intranets, allow people to collaborate and share their complementary knowledge (Bhatt et al. 2005). Collaborative technologies or eCollaboration technologies bring geographically dispersed teams together for virtual meetings across great distances. This results in tremendous time and cost saving, greatly decreased travel requirements, faster and better decision-making and improved communication flows throughout the organization, thus improving productivity, quality, and efficiency of group work (Cooper 2003). Both academics and practitioners highlight the role of eCollaboration ICTs in KM, although there is a need for a better understanding of the prerequisites of successful technological KM programs (Khalifa and Liu 2003).

Literature defends that although technology is not the main component of KM, it would be a naive attitude to implement KM without considering any technological support, because ICTs are critical in KM programs (Sher and Lee 2004). On the one hand, few studies show empirical evidence of the ICT support for KM, and a research gap in this area exists (Moffett et al. 2002). On the other hand, most of these studies examined the role of ICT in isolation, overlooking its relationships with other KM success factors (Khalifa and Liu 2003). An appropriate

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