

# Job Site Social Media Use and Employee Productivity in Agricultural Enterprises: An Institutional Analysis of the Cameroon Development Corporation

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## Abstract

*This study mirrors on job site social media use and employee productivity at the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), the leading agro-industrial enterprise in Cameroon. As objectives, the study estimated daily time wasted; captured employee perceptions on job site social media use effects on performance; as well as examined the nature of the relationship existing between job site social media use and employee productivity. Using convenience sampling and stratification technique, 50 employees were retained from the CDC head office Bota Limbe. The estimation techniques employed for data analysis were the Simple Product Mean for descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation for inferential statistics. Results indicated cumulative daily time wasted amounting to 7,700 minutes, approximately 154minutes wasted on daily basis by each of the sample employees on social media during working hours. Further, correlation results showed a correlation value of 0.585 an indication that there existed a positive correlation between job site social media use and employee productivity at CDC Bota Limbe. Though results indicated no negative effect to date, the huge hours wasted on social media by employees is a call for concern. Based on this, the study recommends that management needs to do more to promote the use of social media for corporate activities among employees while at same time monitoring to fight against corporate time wasted when employees use social media for non corporate activities during working hours.*

**Keywords:** Job Site, Social Media Use, Employee Productivity

## Introduction

Technological advances in the 21st century have resulted in the high use of social media platforms constructed on the technological basis of Web 2.0 (Habibi et al., 2016) across the world. Parveen et al., (2015) uphold that social media is a tool that provides a means for commercial and

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social communication. As observed by Shilu and Thriveni (2018), social networks are more of a human characteristic needed to fulfill the desire of communicating and connecting with people as well as creating new friends. Studies have shown that the increasing use of social media affects employee performance (Priyadarshini, et. al. (2020), Zhang et.al., (2020), Jafar et.al., (2019), AlBuflasa (2019), and Çetinkaya & Rashid, 2018).

Apparently, the growing use of social media may be attributed to increasing availability of internet access offered by telecommunications firms and affordability of Smartphones, thus providing a great opportunity for accessing several online social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp,

Linkedin, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram, highly used today across Cameroon.

According to Mwituria (2015) and Skathivel and Parasuraman (2018), global coworkers and business partners needed for day to day operations is necessitating the use of social media platforms as a way to enhance communication for the collective good of organizations. However, studies have observed that much time is wasted when employees are using the internet for social media activities in an organization (Babinchak, 2011; Meshi, et.al, 2013; Shepherd, 2011), as they turn to go online often to post/ update status and also follow others posting/ updating status as well as for personal messaging.

Given that work performance is the primary important measure of an employee's progress at the job place, this study thus examines how job site social media use plays of employee productivity, the case of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) is the leading agricultural enterprise producing Oil Palm, Rubber and Banana covering an estimated land area of 102,000 hectares (Nguiffo and Sonkoue Watio, 2015). Being an agricultural enterprise and considering that prices of agricultural products are usually very volatile, it thus may be asserted that ensuring high employee productivity so as to produce and reach the market at the right time is critical to success. Thus this study makes an attempt to understand if job site use of social media positively or negatively affects employee productivity at the CDC.

## Literature Review

### Social Media

The concept of social media has been growing and gaining attention across the world. Accordingly, social media simply are communicative practices that are networked, providing some degree of search and privacy features managed by users

(Lomborg, 2014, Kane & Alavi, 2014). Through the use of social media platforms, employees interact with others both within and out the organization. Ali-Hassan, Nevo, and Wade, (2015) highlights that social media is used by people for socializing and strengthening relationships, for the affective need of pleasure and emotional experiences and for the purpose of searching for information and knowledge.

Apparently, social media has grown to the extent that its use has been abused, largely attributed to the little or no restrictions associated with creating user accounts. Also, studies have argued that the addictive use of social media by some employees has resulted in conflicts, privacy risk, low productivity and low performance as well as affecting employee mentally and physically (Moqbel, Nevo, & Kock, 2013; Moqbel, & Nah, 2017; Priyadarshini et. al., 2020) This study based on CDC an agricultural enterprise thus makes an attempt to examine how job site social media use may play of employee productivity.

### Employee Productivity

Employee productivity may be viewed from the performance dimension, relating to the expectations of how well a worker executes activities assigned to him or her (Business Dictionary, 2017). This study focuses on examining if job site use of social media positively or negatively plays on employees abilities to executive assigned task. According to Shaw (2017), employee performance and productivity is associated with their degree of focus on quality as a priority in their work, concerted on skills improvement and readiness to lead on decision making. Expressing a similar view, Burks (2017) upholds that high performers continuously seek ways to improve their performance by finding and making use the resources which they need to excel in their jobs. In this respect, this study examines whether employees at CDC make use of social

media to improve on their skills so as to improve of their performance.

As noted by Sofijanova and Zabijakin-Chatleska, (2013), for employees to be very performant, organizations should engage in practices that enhance commitment and motivation as well as communication, flexibility and involvement among employees. Apparently, the use of social media platforms may help organizations achieve this. However, it is no doubt that as social media enhance communication and involvement, it may also bring disunity among employee and in such situation may negatively affect collective organizational performance.

### **Social Media Use and Employee Productivity**

Same as with other budding technologies, social media use at the job site has also been contentious. Scholarly works have maintained that workplace use of social media positively enhances employee job performance (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017; Bennett et al., 2010; Priyadarshini, et. al. 2020). For example, Priyadarshini, et. al. (2020) on their study on the impact of Social Media Addiction on Employees' Wellbeing and Work Productivity sampling IT firms in India observed that too much social media use both at home and at the work place negatively impacts on performance and that such employees struggle to catch up with their employers expectations.

However, some studies contrast the view that social media use at the workplace improves employee job performance. For example Meshi et al., (2013) and Shepherd, (2011) reported that much time is wasted on social media for personal messaging as such reducing employee productivity. Also Jafar et.al., (2019) studying social media usage and job performance among public and private sector employees in Pakistan observed that knowledge exchange thanks to social media enhanced positively

employee job performance. Similar positive effects of social media use on employee performance have been documented by Zhang et. al.,(2020) sampling 20,161 employees from the energy industry in China.

AlBuflasa (2019), studying the telecom enterprise in Bahrain upholds that social media use has an effect on employee performance and argues that if organizations effectively managing social media factors (such as Trust, Shared Vision and Network Ties), the use of social media will enhance employee performance.

There is no doubt that social media use affects employee performance as such new technologies provide opportunities for technically skilled employees (Van Roy et al., 2018) to interact and may share work related issues. However, care needs to be taken on which employee uses social media at the job site and for what. For example Frey and Osborne's (2017) argues that non-technical staff carrying out assignments that are not inclined to computerization should not be engaged in social media use at the job site for their social media use will not improve their skills in relation to their task.

### **Research Gap**

Several alien studies have been done on social media use and employee productivity thus identifying gap. As can be seen, all literal works reviewed are not from Cameroon, thus by conducting this study in Cameroon, the existing setting gap is filled. Further, previous studies on social media use have focused more only on determining effects on performance. This study adds to existing literature by estimating the daily wastage of corporate time spent on social media by employees, making this study unique in approach and content. Also, most research on social media use and employee productivity (see Kishokumar 2016; AlBuflasa 2019; Priyadarshini et. al., 2020; Zhang et. Al, 2020; Çetinkaya &

Rashid, 2018) has been conducted in the service sector notably IT, energy and financial services. This study adds to the existing studies by extending scope and changing focus to target agricultural enterprises notably the CDC dealing with perishable products like Bananas.

### Study Objectives

This study sets the following objectives:

1. To estimate daily time wasted through employee engagement in job site social media use for non corporate business.
2. To capture and analyse employee perceptions on job site social media use effects on their performance.
3. To establish the nature of the relationship existing between job site social media use and employee productivity.

### Methodological Approach

This study employs a case study design. The target population was employees of the leading agro-industrial establishment in Cameroon – The Cameroon Development Corporation. The convenience sampling stratification technique was used for data collection. Convenience sampling was used because of its advantage in terms of sample collection, lower cost, as well as less time consuming for data collection. The incorporation of the stratification techniques ensured that all departments were represented in data collection. A sample of 50 employees was retained from the CDC head office in Bota Limbe. The 50 employees that constituted the study sampled were the full time staff present at the CDC Bota Head Office during the period of internship when data were collected for this study. Thus the study sample of 50 was attained basically through giving room to available staff to willfully participate, something which was greatly attained thus increasing study reliability

and validity. It is worth mentioning that this study sample excluded CDC branch offices.

Building on Likert, (1932), a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree for each statement, was adopted and a questionnaire was developed for primary data collection. Also, open ended questions were given to allow the respondents express their opinions fully. More still, an option based selection section was included in the questionnaire to get employees approximate their degree of involvement in social media use during working hours. Secondary data was collected from documents at CDC to supplement primary data.

Descriptive statistics notably mean and standard deviations were used to analyze data. Estimations of time spent on social media was done using the simple product mean technique as seen below:

$$\mu = \Sigma x/n \dots\dots\dots \text{eqn 1}$$

$$x = MS*DA*NEC \dots\dots\dots \text{eqn 2}$$

Where:

MS = Minutes spent on social media

DA = Number of daily appearances on social media

NEC= Number of employees per category measured

n = Sample size

The assumed hypothetical relationship was tested using the Pearson correlation. Through ensuring confidentiality of respondents responding to the questionnaire, validity was ascertained. Using the test re-test method (with same questionnaires re-administered to the study participants after 1 week), reliability was assured.

## Results and Discussions

### Part A: Results

#### Descriptive results

#### Institutional Social Media Policy

In order to examine job site social media use and employee productivity at CDC, the first focus was on understanding if there was an institutional social media policy and also if the staff were aware of the policy. This study uncovered that there existed a policy guiding the use of social media at the job site. According to study respondents, the social media policy of CDC prohibits the unauthorized use of social media during working hours. All the study participants testified that they were very much aware of this policy though it was difficult to respect. Worth mentioning is the fact that Friday was reserved as a social media day, during which employees were allowed to use social media platforms at the job site for unofficial job activities.

#### Degree of job site use of social media by staff

Despite the existence of a social media policy prohibiting job site use of social media during working hours at CDC for non corporate activities with the exception of Fridays, the study uncovered that the use of social media during working hours was common with 26 employees reporting that they go online 3 to 4 times daily during working hours. Table 1 shows the average number of times employees reported they posted or shared post (non job related activities) on social media during working hours on daily basis at CDC

**Table 1: Number of times that employees post on social media daily during working hours (Non job related activities)**

Measure	Frequency	Percent
1-2 times	3	6
3-4 times	26	52
5-6 times	16	32
7-8+ times	5	10
Mean	5.5	

N=50

Further, the conservatively estimated wasted corporate time in minutes spent by employees each time they went on social media for non corporate activities was captured. This estimation made use of the approximated mean social media appearance times per staff per day of 5 (See table 1). Cumulatively, this study uncovered that, CDC employees at the Bota Head Office spent significant amount of unauthorized work time on social media platforms doing non corporate activities. Table 2 gives a summary of the cumulative time in minutes spent on daily basis as generated from the questionnaire.

Apparently, estimating from table 2 by dividing cumulative hours on the sampled employees (7700 /50) indicates that approximately 154minutes are wasted on daily basis by each of the sampled employees on social media during working hours. It is worth mentioning that the use of social media during break time, on Fridays and for official business is not included in this estimation.

**Table 2: Estimated cumulated time in minutes wasted using (unauthorized) social media on daily basis**

Category (of time) Measured	Approximated average number of daily social media appearances per staff	Number of employees listed	Cumulative amount of time (minutes) spent per category	Percent
<15 mins	5	4	300	8
25mins	5	22	2750	44
35mins	5	15	2625	30
45+mins	5	9	2025	18
Total		50	7700	100
Mean			154	

n=50

Note: Friday which is social media day not included

### Employee perception on job site social media use effects on their performance

In order to measure how job site social media use affects performances, the perceptions of employees were sort. These perceptions were captured using six statements developed based on literature review. These statements with the associated calculated mean and standard deviation were as follows: (1) The use of Social media provides a medium of performing task and contacting clients ( $\mu=3.64$ ,  $s=0.485$ ), (2) Through job site social media use I have gained skills and experience diversification in terms of task I perform ( $\mu=2.6$ ,  $s=0.606$ ), (3) Team work is high with feedback received timely from team members thanks to job site social media use ( $\mu=3.78$ ,  $s=0.465$ ), (4) Through job site social media use, new employees as well as old employees easily identify and select their mentors ( $\mu=2.5$ ,  $s=0.58$ ), (5) The efficiency of task performance has increase due to job site use of social media ( $\mu=3.92$ ,  $s=0.34$ ), and (6) Through job site use of social media, staff events are easily created, planned, and communicated ( $\mu=2.94$ ,  $s=0.818$ ). Table 3 summaries the quantification using mean and standard deviation of employee perceptions on job site social media use effects on their performance.

### Inferential statistical results

The Pearson Correlation coefficient was employed to establish the nature of the relationship existing

between Job Site Social Media Use and Employee Productivity as seen in table 4. Job site social media use was estimated by collecting data on both authorized and unauthorized use of social media during working hours at the job site. Authorized job site social media use was that oriented at carrying out organization related activities like communicating with suppliers, employees and customers. The unauthorized job site social media use was estimated by collecting data on the number of times employees went online for personal reasons mostly socialization with friends and attaining to family issues which was non job related. On the other hand employee productivity was captured from the perspective of individual job performance proxied using task performance and counterproductive work behavior.

The analysis resulted in Pearson's correlation coefficient value of 0.585, with the level of significance of 0.038. The positive correlation value of 0.585 indicated that there exist a positive correlation between job site social media use and employee productivity at the Cameroon Development Corporation Head Office at Bota Limbe. With the level of significance being 0.038 less than the level of alpha of 0.05, it was thus conducted that job site social media use has a positive effect on employees' productivity. Table 4 shows the details of the correlation analysis.

**Table 3: Employee Perceptions on job site social media use effects on their performance**

Description of issue measured	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The use of Social media provides a medium of performing task and contacting clients	50	3.64	0.485
Through job site social media use I have gained skills and experience diversification in terms of task I perform	50	2.6	0.606
Team work is high with feedback received timely from team members thanks to job site social media use	50	3.78	0.465
Through job site social media use, new employees as well as old employees easily identify and select their mentors	50	2.5	0.58
The efficiency of task performance has increase due to job site use of social media	50	3.92	0.34
Through job site use of social media, staff events are easily created, planned and communicated.	50	2.94	0.818

**Table 4: Correlation Analysis**

Correlation Analysis			
		Job Site Social Media Use	Employee Productivity
Job Site Social Media Use	Pearson Correlation	1	0.585
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.038
	N	50	35
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	0.585	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.038	
	N	50	35

### Part B: Discussion

Institutional policy frameworks that regulate employee behaviour the job site are critical to managing what is done and how. As observed in this study, CDC has a social media policy which prohibits job site use of social media for non corporate activities with the exception of Friday. However, the challenge remains how to monitor employee use of social media platforms like WhatsApp during working hours noting that it is end to end inscripted.

As established by this study, social media use at the job site resulted in about 7700 minutes of the corporate time wasted daily by the sampled 50 employees (see table 2). This represents about 2 daily working hours wasted per employee which is a huge loss to the enterprise. Fortunately, this seems not to have significantly affected productivity as overall results indicated an increase in team work with the use of social media enabling employees share and receive feedback from teammates timely thus creating collaborative collab environments necessary to enhance employee productivity. This finding is similar to those of Boshoff and du Plessis (2008), Davenport, (2001) and Orlikowski, 2002). It may thus be argued that employees at CDC Bota have high competence in relation to their jobs given that despite the huge time wasted daily performance

remains positive as uncovered by the study.

Correlation analysis revealed that a positive relationship exist between social media use and employees productivity with Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient of 0.585 with the level of significance being 0.038. Thus an indication that job site social media use affects positively employee productivity. It may thus be argued that through job site social media use, employees at CDC Bota shared ideas and learn from each other thus helping them to be high performers. This finding is similar to those of Burks (2017).

However, given that the nature of the correlation is positive but not strong calls for attention and raises the question as to whether employees in CDC Bota really use social media for job related activities while at the job site. Apparently, judging from the daily number of posting (Table 1) and the cumulative time spent (Table 2) on social media indicates that emotional motives, socializing, and maintaining or establishing affective relationships, may be a high practice among employees at CDC Bota and not job related issues. This argument is similar to that of Ali-Hassan, Nevo, and Wade, (2015). Management thus needs to seek ways to encourage the use of social media while at the same time implementing measures to minimize its use for personal issues during working hours. Such a management move may play positively for organizational benefit at CDC Bota.

### Conclusion

This study highlights on job site social media use and employee productivity in agricultural enterprises. Although Social Media use is gaining importance and fast growing across the world, it is still a major challenge establishing how job site use of social media plays on employee productivity notably in an agricultural enterprise. Building on this study finding, management needs to do more

to promote the use of social media for corporate activities among employees while at same time monitoring to fight against corporate time wasted when employees use social media for non corporate activities during working hours.

### **Study Limitations, Implications and Recommendations for Management / Further Research**

Although this study makes significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge, there are certain limitations. This study selected only CDC head office staff at Bota Limbe and indication that the sample may not be 100 percent representative. Findings by implication suggest that that the use of social media at the job site may help build cohesion and facilitate job performance. Thus theoretical, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on social media use and employee productivity.

From the practical point of view, findings suggest that much organizational time is wasted by employees doing non work related activities on social media. Therefore CDC losses the time resource and financial resource paying employees for being at the job site and not totally committing effort to job related activities throughout the required daily duty hours. The practical implication of this to the organization is that to cut time waste, management may introduce individual employee daily activity work log books. This will help management to track daily effectively attained task of each employee and compared with the hours spent at work, hence providing a means to measure if the work done and the time spent may be judged equivalent. Such a practice may likely reduce employee time wasting on social media for non work related activities as employees will turn to spent more time and effort trying to quantitatively and qualitatively complete daily task, hence improving employee performance and organizational productivity in general. Further,

management may install cameras at the job site to monitor the employees during working hours. Such a move will likely yield positive effects in term of reducing time waste, thus positively impacting on performance.

Future research may thus be conducted on same topic using a larger sample in other industries in the country like Banking, Education, and Construction. Also, future research may focus on doing a comparative study either among enterprises in the same industry or across industries.

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