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Social factors' influences on corporate wiki acceptance and use<sup>☆</sup>Santiago Iglesias-Pradas<sup>1</sup>, Ángel Hernández-García<sup>\*</sup>, Pedro Fernández-Cardador<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates how social factors affect the use of corporate wikis to share knowledge in organizations. Adopting a holistic approach, the study fills the gap in research on social factors' influence on collaborative knowledge sharing. The study thereby identifies relevant factors for successful knowledge sharing using Web 2.0 tools. Building on research into knowledge sharing, technology adoption, and social theories, this study explores the following social factors: social influence (i.e., subjective norm, social identity, and group norm), social anxiety, and perceived critical mass. The research model explains how these variables affect two knowledge sharing behaviors: knowledge acquisition and knowledge creation/diffusion. Results show that social influence—mainly subjective norm—and attitude toward collaborative knowledge sharing predict intention to use corporate wikis, and that perceived critical mass affects both knowledge sharing behaviors but social anxiety does not. Perceived critical mass is the most important predictor of knowledge sharing behaviors.

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## 1. Introduction

Knowledge is a valuable strategic resource for organizations and a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Kimble & Bourdon, 2008). Knowledge management studies focus on factors that influence knowledge sharing among organizations. These factors generally fall into one of three groups: technological, social, and personal (Riege, 2005). According to Davenport and Prusak (2000), organizations usually consider technological factors (i.e., technology infrastructure) as the most important element for effective knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, users share knowledge in a social context through a social process. Hence, implementing knowledge management technologies without considering social factors may cause failure in system implementation during the deployment phase (Davenport & Prusak, 2000).

Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005) (i.e., the social web) features rich internet applications, web-oriented architectures, and social interaction. Web 2.0 introduces new concepts that enable massive-scale interaction. Blogs, wikis, and instant messaging are Web 2.0 tools that provide new and more effective ways to interact in social contexts and communities (Razmerita, Kirchner, & Sudzina, 2009). In organizations, wikis prove effective in creating, sharing, integrating, and using knowledge (Ashton, 2011).

Few studies explore how organizations adopt and use Web 2.0 tools, especially wikis. Most of the studies that do explore this topic, however, neglect social factors, despite the complex social nature of knowledge diffusion in organizations and Web 2.0 tools' strong social component. Therefore, the present study's holistic approach covering the complex social mechanisms of adoption of Web 2.0 collaborative tools contributes to this research area. This approach must answer the following research questions: Which social factors influence the acceptance and use of corporate Web 2.0 tools for collaboration? How do social factors influence knowledge creation/diffusion and acquisition?

This study responds to these questions for a particular Web 2.0 tool: the wiki. Section 2 builds the theoretical framework, research model, and hypotheses. Section 3 explains the research methods and presents results from the empirical study. Finally, Section 4 discusses main findings and implications for theory and practice.

## 2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

A wiki is a set of linked pages that collaborating users create through incremental development (Leuf & Cunningham, 2001). Wikis are an example of groupware technologies that support collaborative work (Gupta & Sharma, 2004), and they enable groups to jointly create, find, and consume knowledge through collaboration (Wagner, 2004). Wikis are easy to use, and they are a suitable tool for collaborative knowledge management (Hester, 2010; Kille, 2006). Despite the lack of scholarly research about wikis in corporate settings, overall use of wikis as collaborative knowledge management tools is increasing. Employees state that wikis are an effective tool for knowledge sharing and knowledge reuse (Majchrzak, Wagner, & Yates, 2006). According to Kane and Fichman (2009), several features make wikis attractive

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