

# **Essays on Enterprise Social Media: Moderation, Shop Floor Integration and Information System Induced Organizational Change**

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*„Für meine Familie, Freunde und Kollegen. Danke.“*

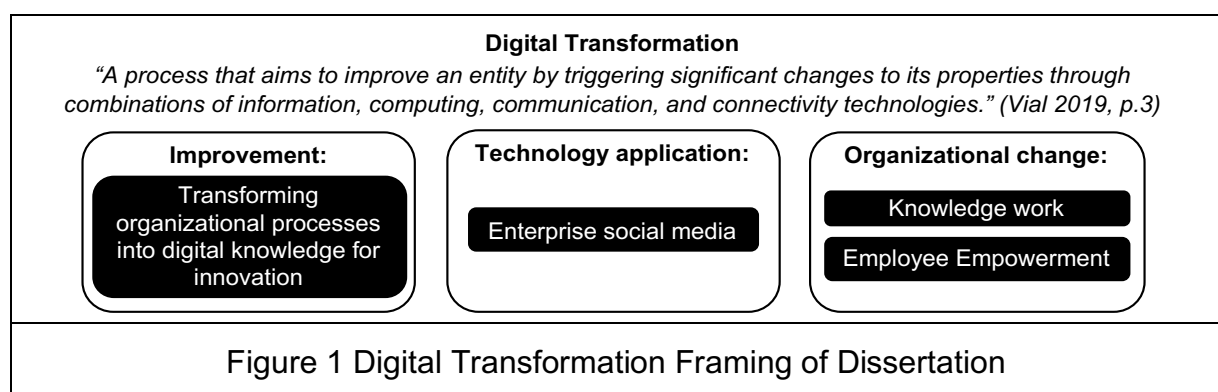
## Abstract

The digital transformation increases the pressure on innovation capabilities and challenges organizations to adapt their business models. In order to cope with the increased competitiveness, organizations face two significant internal challenges: Enabling internal digital collaboration and knowledge sharing as well as information system-induced change. This dissertation will investigate seven related research questions divided in two main parts. The first part focuses on how an organization can foster digital knowledge exchanges and collaboration in global organizations. Enterprise social media has attracted the attention of organizations as a technology for social collaboration and knowledge sharing. The dissertation will investigate how organizations can moderate the employee discourse in such platforms from a novel organizational perspective and provide insights on how to increase the encouragement for employees to contribute and assure content quality. The developed framework will provide detailed moderation approaches. In addition, the risk of privacy concerns associated with organizational interference in the new digital collaboration technologies are evaluated. The second part of the dissertation shifts the focus to the shop floor environment, an area that has faced substantial digital advancements. Those advancements change the organizational role of the shop floor to a more knowledge work-oriented environment. Firstly, a state of research regarding technology acceptance and professional diversity is presented to create an enterprise social media job-characteristic framework. Further, a unique and longitudinal shop floor case study is investigated to derive organizational challenges for enterprise social media and potentials for empowerment. To validate the future shop floor environment needs use cases for the shop floor are derived and a user profile established. The case study is extended by expert interviews to focus on conceptualizing organizational information systems-induced change. In this regard, the role of work practices, organizational and employee mindset and information system change are integrated into a holistic organizational change model that targets employee empowerment. This dissertation provides a comprehensive overview of enterprise social media from an organizational management and shop floor perspective. It contributes to understanding new digital needs at the shop floor and the information systems-induced change journey towards digital employee empowerment.

*Keywords: ESM, shop floor, digital transformation, privacy concerns, organizational change, digital empowerment*

## Management Summary

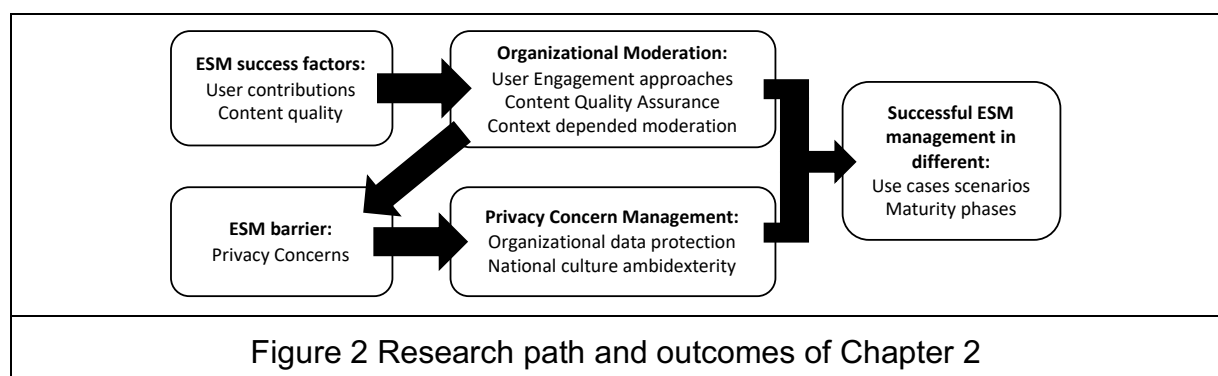
Organizations are currently investing heavily into the digital transformation of their business and internal processes and trying to automate their manufacturing processes. The recent lockdowns during the Covid 19 pandemic have made it obvious that organizations require good internal collaboration and communications technologies to maintain their information flow, while supporting the essential social exchanges of their employees. Since their emergence in 2006, to facilitate social exchanges and knowledge sharing, organizations have implemented enterprise social media (ESM) platforms with Web 2.0 features as social information systems (IS). Web 2.0 is mainly consumer market driven and managing such platforms in an organizational context is new. To harvest all benefits, organizations need strategies to apply to such new crowd-based technologies and understand how organizational management of such services can affect the intended benefits. Next to the challenge of managing new platforms, the change in management that such technologies demand is a unique challenge. Such systems provide employee empowerment. Considering the advancing automation in manufacturing and the ongoing reduction of clerical and manual labor jobs, a conversion of priory unempowered workers into empowered process knowledge providers is required. This change accompanied by new technologies such as ESM are applied to new employee groups. The objective of this dissertation is to provide insights into ESM itself from an organizational angle and to investigate the change process that such technologies induce in the digital transformation process, as illustrated in Figure 1.



The dissertation starts with an introduction setting up the research gaps described in the two major chapters. The first part provides insight on ESM from the perspective of organizational moderation to understand how an organization can extract the benefits associated with it. This is done through two complimentary literature reviews that provide a comprehensive and novel ESM moderation model, including survey-based

validation of the major critique points for organizational interference into crowd-based web 2.0 technology. After understanding how to most beneficially apply the technology, the second part of this dissertation focuses on organizational changes connected through the application of new technology. After a comprehensive literature review cementing the gap regarding the lack of professional diversity in IS research, a case study is conducted on a shop floor area, which one of the areas majorly affected from a digital transformation and is a neglected area of research. This dissertation will take the reader on a journey of digital transformation of a multinational organization that is attempting through digital tools to achieve more employee empowerment and transform its shop floor into a future knowledge work environment. This journey will be told from the perspective of shop floor workers (SFWs) through collected interview data and through the lens of organizational experts to provide a holistic understanding of IS-induced changes.

**Chapter 2.** The second Chapter describes a structured approach to achieving successful ESM management from an organizational perspective. Starting from the basis of two main ESM success factors on how to achieve user contributions and improve the content quality to legitimize ESM in comparison to established organizational information and communication technology (ICT), an ESM moderation concept is developed. Based on an organizational moderation usage context, depended moderation approaches are defined that help to encourage employees to contribute high-quality content throughout different use case scenarios and maturity phases of ESM management. The main ESM barrier of privacy concerns that might be triggered through organizational moderation is addressed through two survey studies, the results of which found that privacy concerns require active management through organizational policies and the recognition of national cultural differences. ESM moderation and the management of ESM privacy concerns together can provide a successful ESM management and foster collaboration and digital knowledge sharing within an organization.



Organizations are applying ESM to engage their employees in open and digital intra-organizational knowledge exchange. Although there has been a significant amount of research conducted on why employees use or do not use such technologies and how ESM benefits an organization, prior research has failed to connect those two areas in a structured manner. With the help of two complimentary literature reviews conducted by Nolte *et al.* (2017) and Nolte, Guhr, Breitner, et al. (2019), regarding ways to engage employees in the use of ESM and assure a certain level of content quality, an organizational perspective is assumed. First, the literature review conducted by Nolte *et al.* (2017) identifies three moderation approaches and ranks them based on organizational interference and encouragement to contribute content. The categories of corporate supervision, employee sales-organization, and corporate guidance approaches were defined during the literature review, which was necessary due to a lack of prior research categories for ESM moderation. As the main takeaway from this initial study, organizational moderation is necessary in an organizational context and is therefore recommended. The discussion of the approaches in an organizational context also provided a clear ranking of content encouragement, providing an initial correlation of the chosen organizational interference level and allowing user-generated content to be produced. The findings of these theses were presented at Hawaiian Conferences of Information Systems, which triggered a scientific discourse regarding the missing dimensions within this framework. How do these approaches relate to the quality of the user content, challenging the concepts of content output and focusing on the importance of ESM moderation. Consequently, the study was extended by a second complementary literature review conducted by Nolte, Guhr, Breitner, et al. (2019) that unfolded a significant research gap for ESM content quality assurance. This study added quality assurance approaches to content localization, content motivation, content control, and no content control, and their operationalization through content quality metrics. Because the literature in this area is scarce, it was necessary to transfer metrics from public social media to the ESM context. The findings showed that content quality assurance is positively bi-directionally correlated with corporate supervision (content control) and corporate guidance (content localization and motivation). The fundamental difference is the manner of conducting a centralized quality control or an approach to guiding users to identified quality content or motivate them to provide quality content through gamification and the concept of reputation. The metrics used to achieve quality assurance are the status quo of the practical solutions mentioned in

the research, and are assigned to each of the quality assurance approaches based on their nature. As an important practical finding, companies need to be knowledgeable about how certain metrics can be perceived as a type of control. The study concludes that organizations need to have situational awareness to successfully moderate an ESM. There is not just one approach that an organization should apply because different organizational usage scenarios demand more control or a higher degree of freedom. The situational awareness requires ambidexterity based on the ESM moderation capabilities of the organization. Figure 2 summarizes the initial basic model developed and the enhanced ESM moderation concept, which provides a holistic ESM moderation assessment.

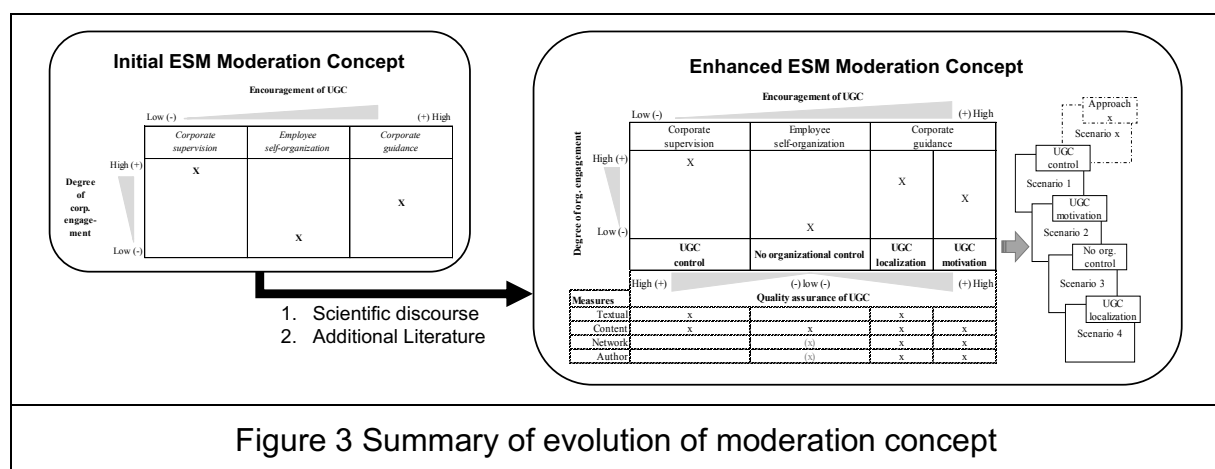


Figure 3 Summary of evolution of moderation concept

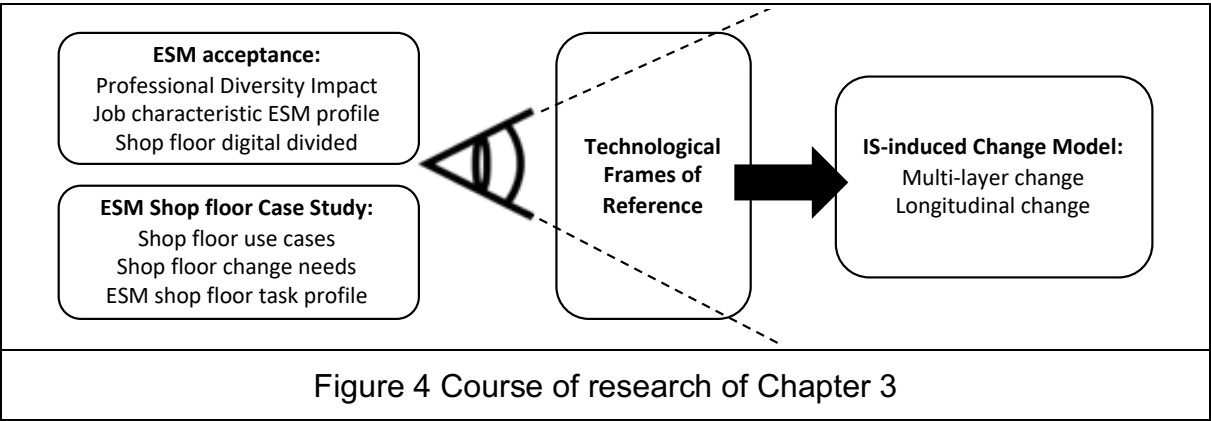
One of the main limitations of ESM moderation is the risk of reduced usage owing to privacy concerns of the employees, which originate from perceiving organizational interference as a control or monitoring of ESM user activities. The first ESM study focused on utilizing a research model relating privacy concerns with perceived risk and trust constructs that influence the technology acceptance construct of intention to use. The study additionally uses the big-five personality traits, to validate any moderating effects on the intention to use. The basis of the study is a quantitative survey that applied to evaluate the research model through structural equation modeling. The results of the study show that, as expected, privacy concerns negatively influence the ESM usage intentions. The expected negative influence on the perceived trust and higher perception of perceived risk through privacy concerns is shown. However, the model surprisingly found that perceived risk and trust do not significantly influence the intention to use. The study concludes that the organizational environment with its policies and governance mechanisms has an influence on the perceived risk and trust of the employees. Therefore, it is extremely important for organizations to nurture a



transparency and trustworthiness in regard to personal data protection that can help to mitigate the impact of general privacy concerns in an organizational setting. As the final finding of the study, personality traits do not moderate the intention to use in regard to privacy concerns. This clearly emphasizes again that the organizational context has an impact on prior public social media research findings, suggesting that with its unique intra-organizational safe space, different rules apply to ESM in regard to privacy concerns.

The second study on privacy concern focuses on bring your own device (BYOD) usage, which is often applied by organizations to allow their employees more flexible work arrangements and to allow them to use applications such as ESM on their private devices. To minimize security risks from granting organizational access on private devices, organizations often demand the ability to manage such devices. Such mobile device management grants an organization access to personal data and limits the degree of freedom of device usage. To derive practical relevance and understand how organizations deal with such a solution, two case studies are described. The first finding shows that organizations try to reduce potential privacy concerns through data protections agreements and restricted usage of personal data. Based on the fact that organizations are dealing with privacy concerns in the implementation of BYOD solutions, a research model consisting of BYOD benefits and risks that influence the employee attitudes of BYOD was developed, which will ultimately influence the usage intension of BYOD. To test the model, a three-nation survey was initiated to test the model through structural equation modeling. The findings show that for all nations, privacy concerns significantly influence the risk perception, and with it, negatively affect the attitude toward BYOD and ultimately make it unlikely that employees will use this solution. More interestingly, the differences in national samples showing that the USA places a higher importance on risk perception, whereas the German and South Korean samples empathize more the importance of the benefits when it comes to building a particular attitude. To make sense of the differentiated sample findings, they are related to the Hofstede cultural dimensions. Particularly for multinational companies, the study shows that management needs to address privacy concerns differently based on the country, similar to the focus on communication, in which the USA emphasizes risk reduction and Germany emphasizes benefit campaign.

**Chapter 3.** In the third chapter, this dissertation addresses two main themes of digital change induced by ESM: the impact of professional diversity on technology acceptance and the organizational change induced by technology. This chapter starts with a comprehensive literature review of technology acceptance and the influence of professional diversity. This is of particular interest as ESM unfolds its overall benefits when applied throughout the entire organization, and thus understanding the impact of professional diversity is crucial for an organization. This review identified a research gap, showing that there are only a few dedicated studies on shop floors within the IS research domain, and thus far, none have described the digital change journey for the SFWs. The dissertation conducts a case study with semi-structured interviews of SFWs, shedding light on the digital changes happening with the insertion of ESM into the shop floor. The study derives shop floor use cases, as well as the need for changes of the shop floor itself, and derives an ESM shop floor use profile. After the descriptive part of the case study, the study is evaluated through the theoretical lens of technological frames and extended by interviews of organizational experts to evaluate the underlying process of change. The conceptualization of IS-induced change as multi-layer and longitudinal change provides the research pinnacle of this chapter of the dissertation.



Starting with a literature review of cross-research domain, Chapter 3.1 shows that the task characteristics play an important role on how users perceive the usefulness of technology while on the job. Second, occupational culture is associated with influencing how employee groups perceive a certain technology, deeming it fitting or not for their profession. Interestingly, the study found that occupational groups share to a certain extent certain personality traits. Hence, professional diversity (task characteristics, occupational culture, and personality traits) can be a challenging factor for the implementation of ESM, a technology designed for knowledge work. As a result of such

findings, in this study, an initial ESM professional diversity fit assessment was designed, focusing on the degree of task unstructuredness, degree of openness in the occupational cultures and the degree of extraversion among personality traits. Linking it to the properties of ESM, a best fit exists for occupational groups with highly unstructured tasks, an open culture, and in which no members are introverted. Because the adoption rates for work-related use may differ, this is particularly relevant for the management of expectations when implementing ESM in different organizational areas.

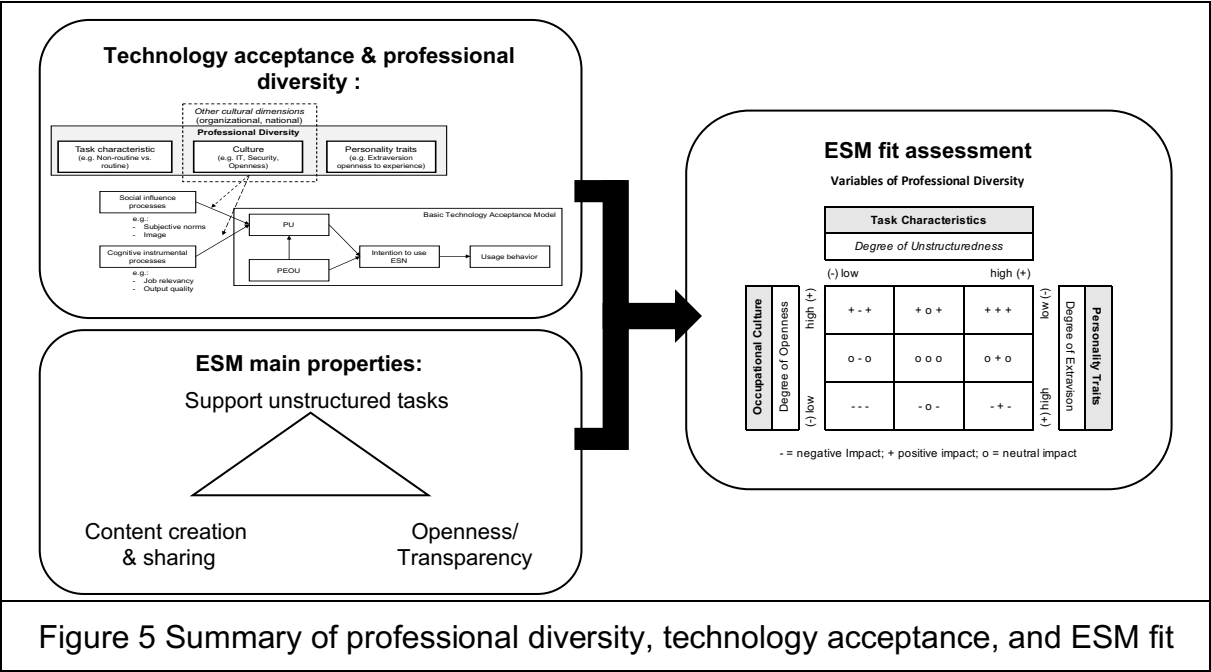
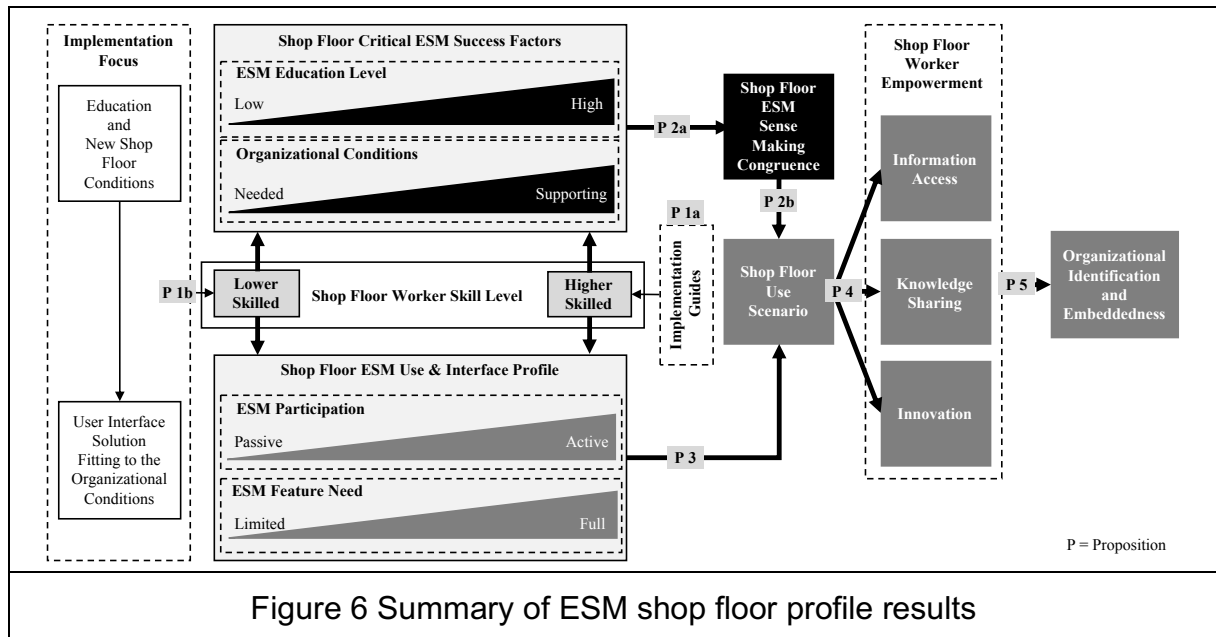


Figure 5 Summary of professional diversity, technology acceptance, and ESM fit

More interestingly, as in the past, in which an intra-organizational digital divide paradigm neglected this user group, the study showed a lack of research in the shop floor area. However, with the changing shop floor environment, the digital transformation is converting the shop floor significantly into a more knowledge work oriented environment, resulting in an interesting research gap that the dissertation explores in Chapter 3.2 with a shop floor case study. This case study examines an international automotive supplier that is trying to expand it in 2010 started “workplace of the future” program to the shop floor environment. The study provides unique insights through interviews with SFWs and organizational experts. The study is framed within the ongoing empowerment of SFWs by the changing job environment and explores how ESM fits into the pursuit of greater empowerment. The study produces first an overview of shop floor use cases that are categorized by an active or passive ESM interaction mode, the potential empowerment, ESM features, and worker task profiles (high, medium, and low skilled). The use cases provide the first instances of ESM as a structural empowerment enabler. However, three challenges or future required changes were identified:

“supporting organizational conditions for ESM use,” “work-centric shop floor user interface designs,” and “empowerment and ESM education needs.” These challenges, together with the use cases, build the basis for the synthesis of an ESM SFW profile. The profile provides clear guidance on how to implement ESM at the shop floor level, combining identified critical success factors of a shop floor, interaction scenarios with the SFW task profiles that will allow ESM to be used on the shop floor, and a digital empowerment for this often neglected user group.



The viewpoint of this study was originally limited to SFWs and was consequently expanded through organizational experts to provide a holistic view on the overall organizational change process of the case study. The study was extended by utilizing the theoretical lens of technological frames. With the help of such a framework, the study mapped out the differences between SFWs, highlighting that the shop floor is a heterogeneous work environment and that such workers are in different stages of their digital empowerment process. The higher skilled workers showed a clear understanding and need for IS in their evolving workspace, demanding new ways to engage with the rest of the organization, whereas the lower skilled workers did not fully comprehend the technology or its necessity. However, after some education on ESM, the lower skilled workers also increased their desire to engage in knowledge sharing. At this different stage of digital transformation, the organizational experts were prompted to add their viewpoint. The experts related to the SFWs but described a broader organizational picture of a mindset change that needs time to unfold. Combining the findings from the

expert interviews with the viewpoints of the SFWs allowed a unique holistic organizational change assessment to occur. The change process that was initiated by the insertion of IS onto the shop floor produced a chain of events that incrementally advanced the organization by changing the IS, work practices, and mindset of the organizational members. These three identified dimensions or layers of change need to be passed overtime, where each of the dimensions affects the others and could also be the initiation of change. This conceptualization of IS-induced change as a type of longitudinal multi-layer change helps with understanding change as multi-stop journey that continuously and in a step-by-step manner assists organizations in evolving each frame of reference until a state of congruence is achieved that allows for the change to occur.

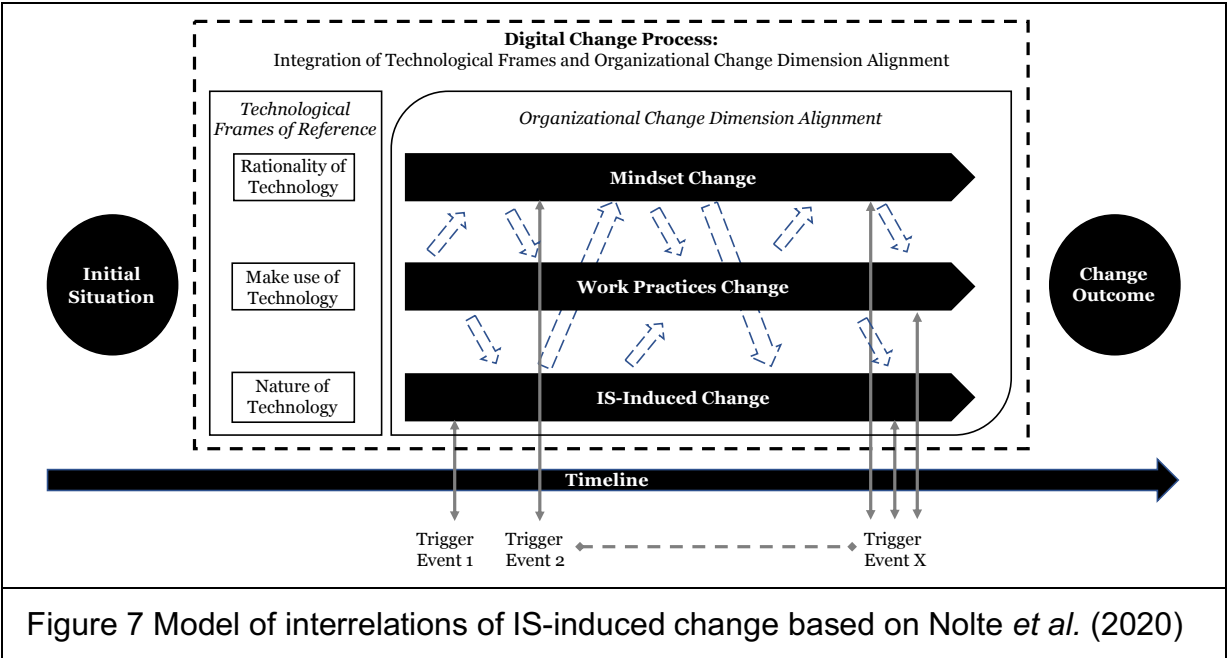


Figure 7 Model of interrelations of IS-induced change based on Nolte *et al.* (2020)

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## Overview of Publications and Task Allocation

The publications described in this section are listed in chronological order of the publication date (Table 1). Each published article went through a scientific peer-review process, with latest article being in the process of being submitted to a peer-reviewed scientific outlet as well. Some publications went through several rounds of the review process and therefore the dates of publication of the articles are not necessarily congruent to the course of the research.

In the first article, the categorization of ESM moderation approaches is presented and translated into an organizational moderation concept (Nolte *et al.* 2017). This specific research gap was identified based on the fact that the main part of the ESM literature is focused on the user and not on the organization as the platform operator. In the research process, I conducted a literature review according to Webster and Watson (2002) with the aim to conceptualize new research advances by connecting prior research. Along with the co-authors, I developed a categorization framework for organizational moderation approaches. The categories were derived by me from the literature (theoretical foundation) and discussed among the author's team. The moderation concept was also developed by me and refined in the research team. Except for the methodology section (in which I acted as a reviewer and dataset provider for the literature review documentation), the article was written by me and refined through a discussion with the co-authors.

The second article is about the influence of professional diversity on the technology acceptance of ESM platforms (Guhr *et al.* 2018). Based on the first article, we identified the need for an organizational wide application of ESM and through an established relationship to an organization I could validate the practical relevance. A literature review was then conducted according to Webster and Watson (2002) to find related studies and create a theoretical foundation. Based on the literature review findings, I created an ESM professional diversity assessment concept. The concept was discussed and refined with the research team. Except for the methodology section (where I again acted as a reviewer and dataset provider for the literature review documentation), the article text was written by me and refined through a discussion with the co-authors. An integration with the technology acceptance model was added for this dissertation summary as a research extension, which was reduced due to the page restriction of the chosen publication outlet.



The third article is a consequence of the first article and extends the moderation concept based on the content quality dimension (Nolte, Guhr, Breitner, et al. 2019). The relevance for this extension was derived from the presentation and the scientific discourse of the initial moderation concept at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences in 2017. Based on the collected feedback, I formulated a connected research assignment for two bachelor students, who are also listed as co-authors of this publication. To validate the theoretical gap, the two co-authors conducted a subsequent literature review according to Webster and Watson (2002). Based on the screened literature, I executed a backwards and forward search to complete the review process. The literature review sample was then refined to meet the expected quality standards for the publication process, and the extension of the original moderation concept was developed by me through integrating the identified organization moderation approaches into content quality assurances approaches and operationalization with content quality metrics. Except for the methodology section (where I functioned as a reviewer and dataset provider for the literature review documentation), the article text was written by me and refined through a discussion with the co-authors.

In the fourth article, the focus is shifted from ESM moderation itself to the shop floor environment and the internal digital transformation potentials (Nolte, Guhr, and Breitner 2019). The article builds upon the theoretical foundation of the second article and provides through a case study real practical insights of a digital shop floor empowerment project. In the present study, I conducted the semi-structured interviews with SFWs, transcribed the recordings of the interviews, and conducted an analysis of the initial interviews. The initial and explorative findings were discussed with the co-authors, one of whom reviewed my interview analysis for validation. The text was written by me and refined through a discussion with the co-authors. In the methodology part, the theoretical case study method was written by the co-authors, whereas the case study and description of the data collection process were written by me.

In the fifth article, the critiques regarding the privacy concerns of organizational management of new digital collaboration technologies are investigated based on an example of BYOD (Degirmenci *et al.* 2019). The article describes the development and validation of a structural equation model on the effect of privacy concerns regarding the intention to use private company managed devices. The article is based on a theoretical foundation as well as two real life case studies as a practical starting point for the evaluations. My role in this research was limited to providing a case study valuation

and acting as an advisor for the discussion. The survey study was conducted by the main authors. The article was based on prior conference proceedings of the main authors, and was submitted for publication several times in different outlets without the addition of the case studies. With the additions of the case studies the articles provided the necessary relevance for a peer review, which is an integral part of a successful publication.

Article six picked up the initial explorative shop floor ESM case study evaluation of article four, and added a theoretical evaluation based on the technological frames as well as a new expert interview study for a holistic organizational IS-induced change model (Nolte *et al.* 2020). The existing shop floor interview study was evaluated by me and one of the co-authors. Both of us observed the expert interview round and I transcribed and evaluated the additional interviews. During the research process, a new researcher was added to the team and helped with revising and framing the introduction as well as providing revision comments for each paragraph. In the methodology section, the theoretical case study method was written by the co-authors; however, the case study and data collection process description were conducted by me. The remaining text was written by me and refined through a discussion with the co-authors.

The seventh article, was focused again on privacy concerns particularly for ESM (Guhr *et al.* 2022). The research gap was established based on the ESM moderation privacy critique and a theoretical foundation. The study described the development of a structural equation model that was validated through a survey. In this present article, I functioned as a co-author in the capacity of an advisor, helping with refining the introduction, the overall discussion, and the interpretation of the empirical findings for determining their practical implications. The study design, survey execution, and structural equation modeling was done by the lead author and one of the co-authors. By the time of the submission of this dissertation, this article is in the final stage of being submitted to B-ranked and peer-reviewed journal.

Table 1 Overview of Publication

Year	Title	Authors	Outlet	VHB-JOURQUAL 3 <sup>1</sup>	Chapter
2017	Moderation of Enterprise Social Networks – A Literature Review from a Corporate Perspective	Nolte, Ferry; Guhr, Nadine; Breitner, Michael H.	Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)	C	2.1
2018	Enterprise Professional Diversity and Challenges for Social-Collaboration Technologies	Guhr, Nadine; Nolte, Ferry; Breitner, Michael H.	International Journal of Business and Social Science	NA	3.1
2019	Enterprise Social Media Moderation and User Generated Content Quality: A Critical Discussion and New Insights	Nolte, Ferry; Guhr, Nadine; Breitner, Michael H.; Badtke, Larissa; Göing, Katharina	Proceedings of the 27th European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS)	B	2.2
2019	Organizational Challenges for Enterprise Social Media at the Shop Floor	Nolte, Ferry; Guhr, Nadine; Breitner, Michael H.	Proceedings of the 25th Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS)	D	3.2; 3.2.4; 3.2.5
2019	Future of Flexible Work in the Digital Age: Bring Your Own Device Challenges of Privacy Protection	Degirmenci, Kenan; Shim, J P; Breitner, Michael H.; Nolte, Ferry; Passlick, Jens	Proceedings of the 40th International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS)	A	2.4
2020	The Journey towards Digital Work Empowerment - Conceptualizing IS-Induced Change on the Shop Floor	Nolte, Ferry; Guhr, Nadine; Richter, Alexander	Proceedings of the 41th International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS)	A	3.2; 3.2.7
2022	An Empirical Analysis of the Influence of Information Privacy Concerns on Enterprise Social Network Usage	Guhr, Nadine; Nolte, Ferry; Lohse, Thomas; Breitner, Michael H.	To be submitted	(B)	2.3

<sup>1</sup> Verband der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft JOURQUAL 3 Ranking