Internal social capital and acquiring Knowledge of logistics firms

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ABSTRACT

Vietnam's logistics industry has a lot of potential to grow into one of the major economic sectors of the nation and support the country's overall, sustainable development because of the enormous contribution made by infrastructure investment in this field, particularly ports, which act as hubs for international trade. In the upcoming years, the logistics industry will benefit mostly from the global and national economies recovering. The purpose of this essay is to ascertain how internal social capital at logistics firms in Vietnam affects acquiring knowledge. The author's primary research methodology combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. We analyze, quantify, and test the model through quantitative research. We make use of primary data from an employee survey conducted by logistics firms in Vietnam. Regression models are used to examine the 175 research sample. Research results have not determined that internal social capital (sig. = 0.000 > 0.05) affects acquiring knowledge at logistics firms in Vietnam. Based on the result, we propose governance implications for the business leaders of these firms to improve acquiring knowledge. Besides, research results provide useful references for research on related issues.

Keywords: social work, economics, internal social capital, logistics firms, acquiring knowledge, business administration
JEL codes: A14, M10, O15, G21

1. INTRODUCTION

Internal social capital, as defined by Yli-Renko et al. (2002), is the quantity and caliber of the network of connections that exist between staff members and internal divisions or departments within a business. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of creating a strong corporate culture, every individual and department in the company constantly looks for new ways to guarantee a good communication link (Tasavori et al. 2018).

Vietnam's logistics industry has a lot of potential to grow into one of the major economic sectors of the nation and support the country's overall, sustainable development because of the enormous contribution made by infrastructure investment in this field, particularly ports, which act as hubs for international trade. In the upcoming years, the logistics industry will benefit mostly from the global and national economies recovering.

Logistics services are essential for business manufacturers who wish to control and grow their product's market. In order to move goods on new routes to new markets in compliance with predetermined time and geographical constraints, logistics companies act as a bridge. Creating logistics businesses helps companies take advantage of and grow their business marketplaces, particularly by increasing customer satisfaction and promoting economic restructuring.

Reducing the negative effects of transportation on the environment is one of the objectives of sustainable logistics. Anything from carbon emissions to noise pollution and other associated effects can be attributed to this procedure. As a result, the logistics sector has been concerned with maintaining a high level of environmental awareness, satisfying customer demands, and coordinating industry expansion.

The logistics sector is founded not only on infrastructure, resources, and other things, but also on expertise. Consequently, understanding the terms and characteristics of the market will enable a business to swiftly obtain the knowledge necessary to compete successfully in that market by engaging in a network of relationships as well as links with other businesses (Suseno & Raden, 2007). Research on internal social capital and knowledge acquisition in businesses is therefore important from both a theoretical and practical standpoint.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Internal social capital

Strong ties within the company are fostered by internal social capital (Tsai, 2000), which makes it easier for various departments and employees to communicate and work together (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

According to Nguyen and Huynh (2012), there are two types of networks: one with horizontal links between members and peers, and the other with vertical relationships between leaders and employees or between functions that are superior to subordinate.

Internal social capital, according to Dai et al. (2015), is the quality of relationships between people and departments within an organization. This is demonstrated by employees or departments who have similar aspirations and goals, honor their commitments to one another, uphold their relationships, refrain from harming one another, and exchange knowledge and information.

All workers in a company with high social capital share the company's vision, which fosters the development of productive teams and supports family members in boosting corporate performance (Mikovic et al., 2019; Akintimehin et al., 2019).

2.2. Acquiring knowledge

Knowledge is one of the primary elements that contribute to a firm's success, according to the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), which views businesses as reservoirs of knowledge and capacities (Spender & Grant, 1996).

This viewpoint holds that knowledge is a strong base and a very valuable resource that helps businesses keep their competitive advantage. Knowledge also aids in the study, assessment, and development of new goods, services, and procedures that make tasks easier to carry out.

The majority of tasks performed in businesses involve knowledge. Thus, information serves as the foundation for the majority of corporate operations (Kogut & Zander, 1992). Knowledge is regarded as each company's distinct expertise that makes it challenging for other businesses to replicate. Consequently, it aids businesses in gaining a long-term competitive edge. Unlike other resources, knowledge is constantly being updated and examined in order to uncover new information. Because every business is unique in how it interprets and applies knowledge to real-world operations, imitation is thought to be challenging and complex.

The first step in knowledge development that businesses or supply chains must carefully complete is knowledge acquisition (Hult et al., 2007). Hult et al. (2007) used the knowledge acquisition scale in their investigation of how to increase supply chain efficiency through knowledge development and a competitive culture.

Acquiring knowledge enables companies to create new products while boosting their competitive edge and managing client apprehension, which increases the chances of success (Zhang et al., 2015).

2.3. Internal social capital and acquiring knowledge

According to social capital theory, internal social capital positively affects the development of corporate knowledge. Accordingly, internal social capital allows members to communicate and share their experiences and knowledge with each other (Mikovic et al., 2019; Prieto-Pastor et al., 2018). Managers and leaders disseminate their knowledge to employees, and employees interact with each other to learn about new things or make suggestions in response to changes in business operations (Suseno & Raden, 2007).

Internal network quality is very beneficial among members of the organization; it allows individuals to learn about different customer needs and specific conditions of each market (Suseno & Raden, 2007). Departments in the business conduct market research and seek information about buyers as well as their needs and desires and their reactions to improve and perfect products or services to satisfy consumer tastes.

Based on publicly available consumer data, such as registration details, purchase histories, customer reviews, and information from various marketing channels, logistics companies examine customer data. From there, it aids logistics companies in comprehending the demands, preferences, and purchasing patterns of their clientele.

Logistics companies establish enduring relationships with clients in order to comprehend their needs. Provide clients with avenues for communication, such as customer events, blogs, social networks, and customer care services. Recognize client comments and suggestions to enhance your business's offerings.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Method research and sample selection

We designed a mixed method, both quantitative and qualitative, to explain the influence of internal social capital on acquiring knowledge at logistics firms in Vietnam.

To begin with the qualitative method, we looked at previous studies and conducted interviews to identify one determinant that affected acquiring knowledge at logistics firms in Vietnam. However, since their studies were based on foreign experience, we try to propose an enhanced framework by synthesizing their insights, adjusting them, adding observation variables to the questionnaires, and applying them to the context of the logistics firms in Vietnam.

Then, we use the quantitative component, which includes the use of questionnaires as inputs for reliability analysis of scales through Cronbach' alpha coefficient, EFA analysis, and regression models, to investigate the influences of each variable on acquiring knowledge at logistics firms in Vietnam.

We conducted a questionnaire survey of 10 observation variables on a 5-point Likert scale. Independent variables are measured from 1 "without effect" to 5 "strongly," and dependent variables are measured from 1 "without agree" to 5 "strongly agree."

3.2. Research models

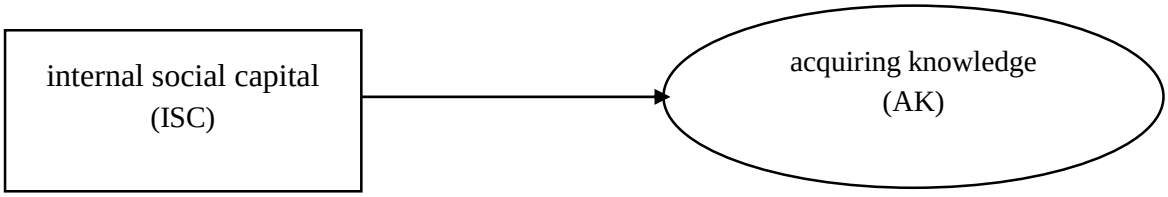

Figure 1: Research model

Internal social capital (ISC): Includes 6 observed variables (ISC1, ISC2, ISC3, ISC4, ISC5, and ISC6) inherited from the research results of Nguyen et al. (2023).

Acquiring knowledge (AK): Includes 4 observed variables (AK1, AK2, AK3, and AK4) inherited from the research results of Le et al. (2024).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Statistical results from Table 1 show that the survey subjects agreed and rated the independent variable and dependent variable quite highly. Internal social capital (ISC) consists of six component attributes; all six attributes are rated on average at 3.96 or higher. Acquiring knowledge (AK) consists of four component attributes; all four attributes are rated on average at 4.05 or higher.

Table 1: Statistical results describing creative culture interpretation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Acquiring knowledge (AK)					
AK1	175	2	5	4.05	0.764
AK2	175	2	5	4.18	0.749
AK3	175	2	5	4.11	0.718
AK4	175	2	5	4.19	0.761
Valid N (listwise)	**175**			**4.13**	

Internal social capital (ISC)					
ISC1	175	2	5	4.03	0.776
ISC2	175	2	5	3.96	0.746
ISC3	175	2	5	4.01	0.747
ISC4	175	2	5	3.97	0.826
ISC5	175	2	5	4.05	0.772
ISC6	175	2	5	4.11	0.765
Valid N (listwise)	**175**			**4.02**	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024) and SPSS software.

4.2. Cronbach's Alpha

By using scale analysis, it can eliminate inconsonant variables and reduce errors in the research model. Therefore, only variables with total correlation coefficients (corrected item-total correlation) greater than 0.3 and Cronbach's alpha coefficients equal to or greater than 0.6 are accepted (Hoang & Nguyen, 2008; Hair et al., 2010). By analyzing Cronbach's alpha analysis of determinants that have an influence on acquiring knowledge at logistics firms in Vietnam (1 determinant with 6 observed variables), the result is presented in Table 2. The result shows that all Cronbach's alpha coefficients are above 0.6; all corrected items—the total correlation of observed variables—are above 0.3. Thus, all variables of the research model are suitable for the next analyses (Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 2: Results of analysis of Determinants Confidence of Scales in the Model

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Acquiring knowledge (ISC): 0.860, N = 4				
AK1	12.48	3.573	0.745	0.805
AK2	12.35	3.711	0.706	0.821
AK3	12.41	3.922	0.658	0.841
AK4	12.34	3.650	0.715	0.818
Internal social capital (ISC): 0.912, N = 6				
ISC1	20.10	10.433	0.776	0.893
ISC2	20.17	10.909	0.703	0.904
ISC3	20.12	10.773	0.734	0.899
ISC4	20.15	10.315	0.740	0.899
ISC5	20.08	10.488	0.769	0.894
ISC6	20.01	10.368	0.807	0.889

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024) and SPSS software.

4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Subsequently, component analysis and variance were used to perform exploratory factor analysis (EFA), as indicated by tables 3, 4, and 5.

The KMO index is 0.824 and 0.912, respectively, greater than 0.5 (>0.5), according to the results of Bartlett's test used to investigate the hypothesis of correlation between observed variables.

The extracted variance is 70.430% and 69.625%, respectively (>50%), meaning that these four and six observed variables account for 70.430% and 69.625% of the variation in the data. There is statistical significance (Sig. < 0.05) in Bartlett's test. Consequently, it can be said that the study's indicators satisfy the requirements of the EFA analysis (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014).

These statistics demonstrate that research data analysis for factor discovery is appropriate. Through the quality assurance of the scale and the test of the EFA model, we have identified four components of acquiring knowledge and six components of the internal social capital of logistics firms in Vietnam (Hoang & Chu, 2008; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

AK	**KMO and Bartlett's Test**	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.824
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	307.069
	Df	6
	Sig.	.000
ISC	**KMO and Bartlett's Test**	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.912
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	640.185
	Df	15
	Sig.	.000

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024) and SPSS software.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
AK						
1	2.817	70.430	70.430	2.817	70.430	70.430
2	0.472	11.805	82.236			
3	0.374	9.352	91.587			
4	0.337	8.413	100.000			
ISC						
1	4.178	69.625	69.625	4.178	69.625	69.625
2	0.466	7.767	77.392			
3	0.451	7.520	84.912			
4	0.335	5.590	90.502			
5	0.309	5.147	95.649			
6	0.261	4.351	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024) and SPSS software.

Table 5: Component Matrix[a]

	Component
AK	1
AK1	0.866
AK4	0.846
AK2	0.840
AK3	0.805
ISC	Component
	1
ISC6	0.873
ISC1	0.850
ISC5	0.846
ISC4	0.823
ISC3	0.819
ISC2	0.793

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024) and SPSS software.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlation matrix are indicated in Table 6. The correlation coefficients of internal social capital with one dependent variable are greater than 0, reflecting a positive relationship. But the values of sig. are more than 0.05, which means that all variables are not interrelated (Hair et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014). Thus, it cannot be confirmed that internal social capital has an influence on the acquiring knowledge logistics firms in Vietnam.

Table 6: Correlations

		Acquiring knowledge	Internal social capital
Acquiring knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	0.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.144
	N	175	175
Internal social capital	Pearson Correlation	0.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.144	
	N	175	175

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024) and SPSS software.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The process of organizing, carrying out, and managing the movement of items or information pertaining to inputs (raw materials) and outputs (finished goods) from one location to another is known as logistics. Modern logistics activities include planning and coordinating the movement of raw materials from suppliers to manufacturers, as well as advancing the movement of goods from the point of final production to the customer. These activities are not limited to transportation logistics. Engage the community as a whole to optimize and lower processing and storage expenses.

Logistics companies handle the additional circulation process in the sphere of meeting production and living needs with goods and services. In addition to distributing products made by manufacturing companies, logistics companies provide services to meet customer needs. These services include full, synchronous, rapid delivery of items at the prearranged time, location, and quantity. Services are not only a way to raise the standard of customer care but also a way to successfully take on rivals in order to gain clients, open up new markets, and boost sales. In order to do this, logistics companies need to be customer-focused, innovative in all aspects of their business, prioritize their clients, and continuously raise the bar on the satisfaction of clients' ever-increasing expectations through service delivery, fair pricing, and customer service initiatives. In order to give consumers the best possible service, logistics companies must collaborate and interact with businesses in other industries, such as banking, insurance, and finance. Logistics companies may use all of their strengths to assist clients in selecting appropriate items with varying qualities and prices, as well as in designing various product types, because they specialize in providing service activities. Create distribution routes to provide products to customers based on their needs.

Logistics companies frequently have to make tough choices over the course of their operation, including whether to enter new markets or develop a competitive pricing strategy. Choices Unwanted outcomes, such lost income or missed chances, might result from improper foundation. Businesses must gather crucial market data and information to use as a foundation for decision-making in order to reduce this risk.

The majority of logistics companies rely heavily on market research when launching new goods and services or expanding into new markets. There are numerous advantages to this approach, such as risk reduction, idea generation, and horizon narrowing. From there, it aids businesses in achieving superior business outcomes.

Logistics companies obtain the most practical and intuitive viewpoint by studying consumer behavior. This enables them to construct hypothetical scenarios and solicit input from clients. As a result, logistics companies won't have to rely solely on data to forecast issues; instead, they will have better-prepared scenarios.

Market research, customer data analysis, direct customer interaction and communication, market trend monitoring, customer relationship building, monitoring and assessing results, using customer analysis tools, keeping an eye on competitor activity, employing customer research techniques, and gathering customer feedback are all tasks that logistics firms should carry out. Logistics companies can get a competitive edge and boost sales by using the research and analysis to improve solutions, boost responsiveness, and satisfy customers.

Logistics companies should begin implementing sustainable practices for road transportation, like switching to more ecologically friendly and efficient cars. An answer that ensures less emissions might be switching to electric vehicles. Compared to utilizing vehicles that destroy the environment, logistics companies that invest in vehicles using electric fuel will profit from a more cost-effective and sustainable starting cost.

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