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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

HYPOTHESES

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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

CONCLUSIONS

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INTERDEPARTMENTAL SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS – A PRACTICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Companies often restore to interdepartmental team work to invent new product line, discuss new promotion strategy or evolve long term plan and short-term tactics. To derive optimal benefit from these teams, it is imperative to understand the team dynamics including who is the natural leader, who will help in quick information dispersal, who has the most influence in the team and how cohesive is the team. One of the tools used to understand this team dynamics is SNA or Social Network Analysis. This study was carried out at a major Automobile parts manufacturer in Chennai. The objectives of the study were: identify the most influential personnel in the team, identify key member who forms the central figure, identify the member who has access to information flow and identify the member who can be used to disseminate information among the team. 25 employees in the most active interdepartmental team were analyzed. The network was analyzed for Degree Centrality, Closeness Centrality and Betweenness Centrality and key personnel were identified to fulfill the study objectives.

KEYWORDS

Social Network Analysis, Centrality Measures, SNA.

INTRODUCTION

he increased competitive environment and squeezing profit margins have forced companies to find new ways to tackle the competition. Interdepartmental teams in companies try to come up with new product line, discuss new promotion strategy or evolve long term plan and short-term tactics. To derive optimal benefit from these teams, it is imperative to understand the team dynamics including who is the natural leader, who will help in quick information dispersal, who has the most influence in the team and how cohesive is the team One of the tools used to understand team dynamics is SNA or Social Network Analysis. Measuring and mapping of flow between people, groups, organizations and other entities is called Social Network Analysis. It is often abbreviated as SNA. The nodes in the network are the people and groups while the links show relationships between the nodes. Social network analysis is being used in varied fields like study of local communities, politics and power, lobbying, voting network, uncloaking terrorist network, economic conspiracies, online social communities, data mining of emails and varied other socioeconomic fields.

One of the Chennai based Auto Parts Company wanted to analyse and get optimal advantage from its most active interdepartmental team. The authors with the help of personnel department carried out Social Network Analysis to achieve the objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Identify natural leader in the network instead of the appointed leader.
- 2. Identify the most influential personnel in the interdepartmental network.
- 3. Identify the member who has access to information flow in the network and who forms the anchor between various departments in the network.
- 4. Identify the member who can be used to disseminate information.
- 5. Measure the length of network.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Twenty five employees from of the most active interdepartmental team were identified for survey. The key personnel were surveyed to find whom they will contact for work related and personal related doubts. If an employee A looks to personnel B for advice or opinion then an arrow is drawn from node A to node B. The pattern of direct and indirect arrows surrounding a node helps determine the influence of that person.

TABLE 1: PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Employee Department	Employee Code	Number of Employees	
Marketing	MM01 to MM10	10	
Production	PP01 to PP07	7	
Finance	FF01 to FF06	6	
R&D	RD01 to RD02	2	

MEASURE AND PROCEDURE

The participants were administered questionnaire based on Organizational Network Survey. The data was fed into UCInet Matrix spreadsheet editor. The matrix was the basis for calculation of various Social Network indexes including Degree Centrality, Betweeness Centrality and Closeness Centrality. Netdraw software was used for drawing the organisation's interdepartmental personnel Network and Ucinet software was used for analysis.

Key terms: To understand Social Network Analysis, it is imperative to understand some terms. They are delineated below:

Nodes: Nodes are people connected to the network. Nodes are also called 'actor'.

- 2. Size of Network: The size of a network can be determined in terms of the number of nodes of the network, alternatively, as the number of edges in the network. Size in terms of nodes can be critical for the structure of social relations because of the limited resources that each actor may have for building and maintaining ties.
- 3. Degrees: The number of direct connections a node has.
- 4. Degree Centrality: Network activity for a node is measured by using the concept of degrees. Common wisdom in social networks is "the more connections, the better." This is not true. What is important is where those connections lead to , and how they connect the otherwise unconnected.

- Betweenness Centrality: Betweenness centrality views an actor as being in a favored position to the extent that the actor falls on the geodesic paths between other pairs of actors in the network.
- Degree Centrality: Personnel who have more ties to other personnel may be in advantaged positions. Because they have many ties, they may have alternative ways to satisfy needs, and hence are less dependent on other individuals. A very simple, but often very effective measure of a personnel's centrality and power potential is their degree. In undirected data, actors differ from one another only in how many connections they have. With directed data, however, it can be important to distinguish centrality based on in-degree from centrality based on out-degree. If an actor receives many ties, they are often said to be prominent, or to have high prestige. That is, many other actors seek to direct ties to them, and this may indicate their importance. Actors who have unusually high out-degree are actors who are able to exchange with many others, or make many others aware of their views. Actors who display high out-degree centrality are often said to be influential actors.

SOFTWARES FOR NETWORK ANALYSIS

Many software are available for analysis. Famous software are - UCINet, Cytoscape, ORA, Pajek, GUESS. Private GUI packages are Orgnet, Keyhubs, and KXEN. Other SNA platforms, such as Idiro SNA Plus, have been developed for industries such as telecoms and online gaming where massive data sets are analysed. AutoMap, cFinder, Detica NetReveal, Dsicourse Network Analyzer, DyNet, EgoNet, Gephi, Graphviz, Idiro SNA Plus, igraph, iPoint, JUNG Framework, NetMiner, SNA-Network are some other main application packages.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

DEGREE CENTRALITY

Analysis of degree centrality of the interdepartmental employee network (Appendix: Figure 1) is shown in Table 2. 'In Degree' Centrality refers to the number of ties that the actor (employee) receives and 'Out Degree' centrality refers to the ties that an actor seeks to have. Employee Numbers MM01 and PP02 have the highest out degree of 8 and 8. These two employees are the best node to disseminate information to the network. The 'In Degree' is highest for Employees MM06 and MM10 with a score of 7. It can be concluded that they are the most influential employees.

TABLE 2: DEGRE	EE CENTRALITY
----------------	---------------

Emp No.	Out Degree	In Degree
MM01	8	4
PP02	8	5
MM04	6	6
MM09	6	4
MM08	5	7
PP07	5	4
MM07	5	4
PP01	5	3
MM03	5	5
PP06	5	6
MM06	5	7
MM02	4	4
MM10	4	7
MM05	4	5
FF05	4	2
PP04	3	5
FF03	3	0
FF01	2	1
PP03	2	6
FF02	2	0
RD02	2	1
FF04	1	2
RD01	1	2
FF06	1	1
PP05	0	5

FIGEN VALUE

Eigen value can be used to determine which employee is more central among high degree employee. It was found in the earlier table that the 'In Degree' is highest for Employees MM06 and MM10 with a score of 7. The 'In Eigen' vector value (Table 3) for Employee MM10 (SCORE: 9.604) is the highest. It means most employees seek his help in the interdepartmental network. Thus he is the natural leader of the network.



TABLE 3: THE EIGEN VECTOR Emp No. Out Eigen Vector In Eigen Vector MM01 8.769 4.342 MM02 4.044 5.847 MM03 7.361 5.728 MM04 8.227 5.718 MM05 5.268 8.881 MMOG 6.304 9.277 MM07 8.415 6.565 7.147 7.677 MM08 MM09 8.956 5.409 MM10 6.019 9.604 PP01 4 672 2 78 PP02 5.624 3.547 PP03 2.036 6.079 PP04 2.009 2.839 PP05 0 4.534 PP06 3 603 5 102 PP07 2.586 1.227 FF01 1.528 0 2.006 FF02 0 FF03 0.831 0 FF04 1.173 0.691 FF05 3.575 1.808 FF06 0.697 0 RD01 0.504 0.846 RD02 0.895 0.352



CLOSENESS CENTRALITY

Analysis of Closeness centrality of the interdepartmental employee network (Appendix: Figure 1) is shown in Table 4. 'inFarness' is the sum of the column of the geodesic distance. 'OutFarness' is the sum of row of the geodesic distance. Employee Number P05 is the closest to highest number of other employees (inCloseness score 43.63). This employee can be used to spread information or new skill in the fastest possible time.

TABLE 4: CLOSENESS CENTRALITY

Emp No.	inFarness	outFarness	inCloseness	outCloseness
P05	55	600	43.636	4
PP03	71	159	33.803	15.094
MM08	71	142	33.803	16.901
MM04	71	143	33.803	16.783
PP06	71	146	33.803	16.438
MM06	72	142	33.333	16.901
MM07	74	144	32.432	16.667
MM10	74	147	32.432	16.327
MM03	75	139	32	17.266
PP02	75	137	32	17.518
PP04	78	150	30.769	16
MM05	80	142	30	16.901
MM02	80	145	30	16.552
MM09	81	143	29.63	16.783
MM01	81	133	29.63	18.045
PP07	84	149	28.571	16.107
PP01	85	139	28.235	17.266
FF05	89	141	26.966	17.021
FF04	92	163	26.087	14.724
RD01	96	165	25	14.545
RD02	108	159	22.222	15.094
FF06	553	137	4.34	17.518
FF01	576	111	4.167	21.622
FF03	600	135	4	17.778
FF02	600	81	4	29.63

BETWEENESS CENTRALITY

A node with high betweenness has great influence over what flows - and does not - in the network. They form the 'broker' and know the general thought process of the network. Table 5 shows that Employee numbers PP02 and MM01 have 76.9 and 64.7 betweenness . They form the anchor between various departments in the network. To understand the viewpoint of network and to understand the information flow, these employees can be tapped by the management.

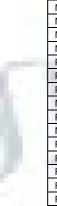


TABLE 5: BETWEENNESS CENTRALITY Emp No. Betweenness nBetweenness PP02 76.978 13.945 MM01 64.799 11.739 MM06 56.105 10.164 9.415 MM05 51,969 FF05 51.82 9.388 9.062 MM08 50.021 PP06 40.648 7.364 PP07 40.464 7.33 MM04 36.751 6.658 MM07 6.56 36,212 MM10 33.879 6.137 MM03 32.17 5.828 PP01 30.073 5.448 **PP03** 21.969 3.98 PP04 15.896 2.88 MM02 8.881 1.609 1.497 FF04 8.266 7.088 MM09 1.284 FF06 6.344 1.149 RD01 4.056 0.735 FF01 3 0.543 RD02 2.611 0.473 FF03 0 0 PP05 0 0



LIMITATION

The study has the following limitations:

- The results of this network analysis cannot be extrapolated to other similar shaped network as the nodes and connections in the network may differ in
- If some key employees studied in the network leave the organization, the entire network needs to be reanalyzed.
- The selection of participants was based on Management and employees input. Selection could have been made more objective by management

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Interdepartmental Social Network leads to identification of key personnel of the network.

- 1. The natural leader in the interdepartmental network is Employee MM10 ('In Eigen' vector value: 9.604).
- 2. The two influential personnel in the interdepartmental network are Employees MM06 and MM10 with a 'In Degree' score of 7 each.
- The members who have access to information flow in the network and who form the anchors between various departments in the network are Employee numbers PP02 and MM01 with 'betweenness' value of 76.9 and 64.7 respectively.
- The member who can be used to disseminate information is Employee Number P05 with a 'inCloseness' score of 43.63. This employee can be used to spread information or new skill in the fastest possible time.
- Measure the length of network.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

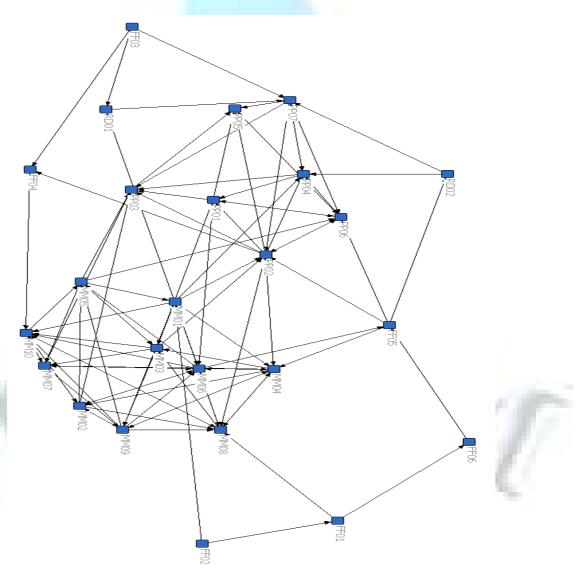
This study has contributed to research in practical use of Social Network Analysis. By establishing that the analysis will be helpful in critical management – interdepartmental negotiations, the study paves the way for other similar research in organization, not only in interdepartmental negotiations but also in routine management aspects like network study of multidisciplinary teams, study of interdepartmental projects, intra department issues, Branding, CRM and similar organizational issues.

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APPENDIX

FIGURE 1: SOCIAL NETWORK GRAPH OF KEY INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMBERS



- The numbers in the Graph nodes represent the Employee Numbers (Dummy numbers have replaced the actual employee number in this paper to maintain privacy of employees).
- The Graph picture has been provided as separate file (interdepartmental network.bmp) for publication.

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