SHARED SOCIAL IDENTITIES, COLLABORATION, AND SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Ren Peng[1], Wei Ying Chong[1*]

[1]School of Management & Marketing, Faculty of Business and Law, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, 47500, Selangor, Malaysia

[*]**Email**: weiying.chong@taylors.edu.my

Abstract

This paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the intricate interplay that exists between shared social identities, collaboration, and the foundational framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Through an exhaustive and meticulous analysis of a diverse array of scholarly literature, it endeavors to illuminate the multifaceted and dynamic nature of the relationship between shared identities and collaborative endeavors. Moreover, it underscores the invaluable role of Social Identity Theory (SIT) in elucidating the cognitive processes and motivations that underlie these intricate social interactions. As we navigate the labyrinth of theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and their real-world implications, this paper offers profound insights into the important function that shared social identities assume in shaping collaborative dynamics across a wide spectrum of contexts. It serves to cast light upon the myriad ways in which our shared identities, whether they derive from cultural, professional, or other affiliations, exert a discernible influence on our modes of engagement with one another and our collective efforts towards shared objectives. In dissecting this intricate interplay, we attain a more profound understanding of the profound impact that our social identities wield over our collaborative initiatives and the broader societal fabric in which they are embedded. This exploration thus contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse on the intricate and interconnected dimensions of social identity, collaboration, and the cognitive underpinnings that drive them.

Keywords

Introduction

Shared social identities, rooted in individuals' affiliation with groups that share common attributes or interests, have garnered significant attention due to their impact on collaboration (DiBenigno & Kellogg, 2014; Neville et al., 2022). The synergy between shared identities and collaboration is a potent force in diverse domains, driving joint endeavors for mutual goals (Aliabadi et al., 2022). This paper examines the nexus between shared social identities, collaboration, and the foundational principles of Social Identity Theory (SIT).

This paper comprises five sections. It commences with the introduction section, followed by an examination of the foundational concepts, key mechanisms, and implications of Social Identity Theory (SIT). The subsequent section critically examines the profound interplay between shared social identities and collaboration across diverse contexts. Prior to the conclusion, a concise overview of the literature research process is provided. Finally, the paper culminates by summarizing the key concepts and insights in the conclusion section.

Social Identity Theory

Rooted within the domain of social psychology(Brown, 2000), SIT delves into the intricate manner by which individuals establish their sense of self and affiliation through their associations with various social groups (Neville et al., 2022). This review draws from scholarly works to uncover the core principles of SIT, its cognitive and emotional workings, and its effects on behavior and intergroup dynamics (Brown, 2000). It also explores its applications in various domains, emphasizing its role in building unity (Bai, 2022), discord (Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017), and societal change (Pluntz & Bernard Pras, 2020).

SIT encompasses a triad of interwoven components: categorization, identification, and social comparison (Rubini & Elisabetta Crocetti, 2018). Categorization entails the cognitive act of classifying oneself and others into distinct groups, an essential mechanism that simplifies the intricate fabric of the social landscape (Bai, 2022). Identification, as a psychological construct, involves individuals affiliating themselves with specific groups, thus deriving a sense of self-worth and connection from this association (Rubini & Elisabetta Crocetti, 2018). Significantly, this process is imbued with elements of self-esteem and belonging. Parallelly, social comparison emerges as a mechanism wherein individuals gauge their group positively when juxtaposed with other groups (Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017).

The dynamic mechanisms inherent to SIT illuminate the intricate interplay of cognitive processes and emotive experiences that shared social identities induce (Silva & Lima, 2023). Group membership operates as a guiding compass, subtly molding the perception of self and others. Consequently, these mechanisms culminate in phenomena such as in-group favoritism and out-group derogation (Neville et al., 2022). Such cognitive biases, instrumental in engendering a dichotomy of "us versus them," significantly contribute to the emergence of intergroup bias and stereotypes (Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017). Evidently, the spectrum of emotional responses to group dynamics encompasses emotions ranging from pride and affiliation to the more undesirable domains of prejudice and discrimination.

With an unwavering lens on intergroup behavior and conflict, SIT offers an enlightening perspective into the genesis of discord (Brown, 2000). The distinct social identities that form among individuals spark a phenomenon of intergroup differentiation and competitive dynamics. A paramount revelation of the theory is the propensity for conflict to arise when the sanctity of one's group identity or status is perceived as threatened. This theoretical foundation has the intrinsic capacity to expound on enigmatic behavioral traits such as in-group bias, out-group negativity, and the psychological origins of ethnocentrism (Brown, 2000).

Manifesting its pertinence beyond scholarly confines, SIT extends its implications into the pragmatic realm (Bai, 2022; Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017). Within organizational contexts, the convergence of shared social identities contributes indispensably to the cohesiveness, motivational impetus, and unwavering commitment of teams (Lee et al., 2013; Pluntz & Bernard Pras, 2020). Likewise, in the realm of marketing, comprehension of consumer group identities serves as the bedrock for meticulously tailored advertising strategies (Lee et al., 2013) . Furthermore, the transformative potential of SIT unfurls in the context of addressing societal quandaries, including the paradigms of diversity, inclusion, and catalytic social movements (Bai, 2022; Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017).

Unveiling its influence in the arena of collective action and societal metamorphosis, SIT finds vivid manifestation within social movements and activism (Bai, 2022; Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017). Collective endeavors, driven by shared social identities, coalesce individuals bound by a common cause, accentuating the collective impetus to challenge conventional norms and advocate transformative change. Evidently, the theory underscores the pivotal role that identity-based mobilization plays in fomenting consequential shifts within the societal fabric.

Shared Social Identities and Collaboration

Shared social identities denote the sense of belonging that individuals derive from group memberships characterized by shared attributes, values, or experiences(Neville et al., 2022; Rubini & Elisabetta Crocetti, 2018). It holds immense significance in understanding how individuals relate and cooperate within various groups. Collaboration, as a cooperative effort among individuals or groups, is profoundly influenced by these shared identities (Nordbäck et al., 2022). The alignment of interests and perspectives fostered by shared identities serves as a catalyst for cohesive collaboration. The interconnectedness of these concepts highlights the role of shared identities in shaping the nature and extent of collaborative engagements (Melasalmi & Husu, 2018).

Various theoretical perspectives contribute to understanding the mechanisms through which shared social identities facilitate collaboration (Smaldino, 2019). Social Identity Theory (SIT), for instance, underscores how individuals derive a sense of self-worth from group membership (Smaldino, 2019), leading to increased motivation for collaborative actions (Nordbäck et al., 2022). Self-categorization theory explains how shared identities diminish perceived differences, promoting cooperation by blurring intergroup boundaries (Pluntz & Bernard Pras, 2020). These theoretical frameworks offer a lens to comprehend the cognitive and motivational processes driving collaboration within shared identity contexts.

Shared social identities create a foundation for effective communication and enhanced trust among collaborators (Melasalmi & Husu, 2018). Individuals who identify with a common social identity often share a common language and understanding, streamlining communication channels (Bai, 2022; Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017). Trust emerges from the familiarity and shared objectives associated with shared identities, reducing uncertainty and fostering a conducive environment for collaboration.

While shared identities can stimulate collaboration, they may also engender challenges arising from out-group biases and intergroup conflicts (Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017). It is crucial to acknowledge that collaboration within shared identity contexts can inadvertently perpetuate exclusionary dynamics, limiting diversity of thought and perspectives (Brown, 2000). A nuanced understanding of the potential pitfalls ensures that collaborative efforts within shared identity frameworks remain inclusive and equitable.

The impact of shared social identities on collaboration varies across contexts. Factors such as the salience of identity (Pluntz & Bernard Pras, 2020), context of interaction (Fu-Lai Tony Yu & Diana S. Kwan, 2017), and nature of the collaborative task influence (Nordbäck et al., 2022)the degree to which shared identities drive collaboration. Collaborative outcomes can encompass innovation, productivity, and collective efficacy, illustrating the multifaceted impact of shared identities on the success of joint endeavors.

A shared entrepreneurial identity can engender a sense of kinship and shared purpose among ecosystem participants (Silva & Lima, 2023). Entrepreneurs who identify with this collective identity are more likely to engage in collaborative endeavors, sharing knowledge, ideas, and resources (Meyer, 2020). The common ground provided by shared identities facilitates smoother communication and cooperation (Stevens et al., 2019), fostering an environment conducive to innovation and problem-solving (Nordbäck et al., 2022).

Overview Of the Literature Research Process

The process of literature research flow entails several sequential steps: initially, we defined the research objectives and formulated a search strategy using relevant keywords. Next, scholarly sources are collected from databases and libraries, and a rigorous review and selection process is undertaken to identify the most pertinent ones. These selected sources are then systematically organized, and researchers proceed to synthesize and analyze them, aiming to identify key themes and research gaps. Subsequently, a comprehensive literature review is crafted, ensuring proper citation, and referencing. This is followed by iterative reviews and revisions to enhance the quality of the review.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper serves to illuminate the intricate interplay that exists among shared social identities, collaborative dynamics, and the foundational principles of SIT. The establishment and acknowledgment of shared identities lay the groundwork for fostering effective collaborations, a phenomenon that finds its roots in the underpinnings of SIT. As stakeholders navigate the complexities inherent in collaborative ventures, their adept incorporation of insights from SIT becomes imperative. These insights are instrumental in cultivating inclusive, productive, and innovative collaborative efforts, thereby effectively capitalizing on the inherent strengths encapsulated within the realm of shared social identities.

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