

VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND CONSUMPTION PRACTICES: A CASE OF TURKEY

Elif DENİZ

Dokuz Eylül University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Adalet Mah. 2132/3 Sok. No 6 Yanıker Sitesi C Blok D 28 Bayraklı/İZMİR
E-mail: 2010800662@ogr.deu.edu.tr

Ayla ÖZHAN DEDEOĞLU

Ege University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences
Ege Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi 35040 Bornova İzmir
E-mail: ayla.dedeoglu@ege.edu.tr

—Abstract —

The present study aims to explore if virtual communities (VC) take the form of communities of practice. It is also aimed to explore the role virtual communities of practice (VCoPs) play in consumers' identity and consumption practices. Qualitative analysis of a VCoP revealed that it has the structural elements of communities of practice. The community identity is based on the quest of emancipation, adventure and being connected to the nature. Although the community is not explicitly centered upon consumption-related interests, members represent themselves socially within the context of consumption.

Key Words: *Virtual Communities of Practice, Consumption, Identity*

JEL Classification: M30

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a discursive environment that rests on fluid personalities, personal value systems and lifestyles. Consumers can build a new life that embraces hyper-reality that extends/replaces the physical world. Consumers, on social media, produce and consume content and construct diverse identities. One particular type of virtual gathering is VCs. The main aim of the present study is to explore if VCs take the form of communities of practice. It is also aimed to explore the role that VCoPs play in consumers' identity and consumption practices by analyzing members' experiences and interactions. Although there are some remarkable studies in the literature that focus on VCs, there still remains a dearth of research that examines the nature of VCoPs, in the context of consumption particularly.

2. VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

VCs are geographically dispersed gatherings of people on virtual platforms, which are formed based on similar and/or shared social, cultural, consumption-related interests. Community members can voluntarily interact, develop and share content and relationships, and develop a sense of belonging. Members can also extend these knowledge, relationships and decisions to their non-virtual life. To be a community member, people should be aware of unwritten, yet recognized and shared rules of the community (e.g. Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002; Ridings et al., 2002; Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001; Wamalwa, 2007). Unlike modern communities, VCs generally have loose and fluid boundaries, rules and norms that can evolve in accordance to the members' reciprocal interactions and self-monitoring (Johnson, 2001; Moor and Weigand, 2007). As community develops, a dynamic community identity and member identities are constructed. Following the debate whether VCs can take the form of communities of practice (CoPs), it was revealed that despite their computer-mediated environment, geographically dispersed gathering, loose community boundaries and bonds between members, some VCs can also be regarded as CoPs (Dewberry, 2008; Gammelgaard, 2010; Lueg, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Kimble and Hildreth, 2004; Wenger and Snyder, 2000). Suggesting that new technologies and globalization are making distributed CoPs the standard rather than the exception, Wenger et al. (2002:4) defined CoP as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis". To develop their own practices, rituals, artifacts, narratives and symbols through the process of situated learning, members commune and develop knowledge based on shared domain (Wenger and Snyder 2000; Ardichvili 2008).

Three dimensions of the relationship between practice and community are identified as mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). To be defined as a VCoP, the community should have a domain of knowledge, a community of people who care about the domain and the shared practice (Wenger et al.2002). A shared domain brings the members together and forms the basis of a body of knowledge. Through mutual commitment of the members to a domain and shared practice, the basis of the community identity is formed. The domain is dynamic; as meanings are negotiated, the domain and community evolve and a shared repertoire of practices, rituals, rules etc. is further developed. Wenger et al. (2002) define practice as a set of socially defined ways of doing things in a specific domain. The concept of practice includes explicit and tacit concepts, symbols, language, tools, narratives, roles, and frameworks

(Wenger, 1998) and forms the basis for communication and performance. Some VCoPs can be seen as postmodern communities that are “inherently unstable, small-scale, affectual and not fixed by any of the established parameters of modern society; instead they can be held together through shared emotions, life styles, new moral beliefs, and consumption practices (Cova, 1997:300)”.

2.1. Community and Member Identities

Although identity of a VC may be defined looser than a non-VC due to the anonymous nature of the social media and dispersed gatherings, domain and shared meanings and repertoire that guides the joint enterprise and separate the group from others may indicate existence of community boundaries, norms, and values. Knowing the identity of those with whom you communicate is essential for understanding and evaluating an interaction (Donath,1998). Community identity constitutes the basis of interaction and motivates members to actively participate in group interactions, and, furthermore, enables the members to construct their own virtual identities. To express themselves, consumers have access to an expansive array of semiotic devices (e.g. avatars, member names, images, videos and portrait information) which can be displayed to more people compared to the cues of ‘real’ identities in the non-virtual world (Schau and Muniz, 2002; Hemetsberger, 2005). Through ‘authoritative performances’ (Arnould and Price, 2001), members also create a unity between themselves and community, enact the community identity and gain individual legitimacy. As community develops, members interactively establish a shared repertoire and negotiate and construct a community identity through social participation and practices. A new, peripheral (Wenger et al., 2002), member learns from old members, develops a member identity and moves from peripheral to full participation and becomes an active or core member (Kimble et al., 2001). In situated learning process, members develop an understanding of, and commit themselves to the community values and norms (Dholakia et al., 2004) The roles, e.g. active-passive or leader-follower, develop in time. (Ballantine and Martin, 2005; Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001; Koliba and Gajda, 2007; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002). Core members are the members who have the highest level of commitment, determine main communication themes, develop community projects and lead other members. Both active and core members are more likely to lead community’s consumption-related practices compared peripheral members. Although being committed, active members do not play such decisive and managerial roles.

Wenger et al. (2002) observed five stages of community development; potential, coalescing, maturing, stewardship and transformation. Communities start as loose gatherings. As connections between members are built, the community enters the coalescing stage. During the maturity, cycles of high and low activities can be observed. At the end of this stage, community takes stewardship of shared knowledge and practices.

2.2. Virtual Communities of Practice and Consumption

As Miller (1995) reminded, consumption has become the vanguard of history. Consumption objects and experiences play a key role in constructing and expressing an individual's identity, and a sense of self and community. Consumption is central to the construction of the social world (Schau, 2000). Consumers continuously consume, produce, communicate and negotiate meanings that explicitly or implicitly relates to consumption objects and experiences. As tools of social interaction, consumption objects are used for their linking value in the community (Cova, 1997). Whether or not the domain of a VCoP is based consumption-related interests is not a major concern in a consumer culture; individuals practice and represent themselves socially within the context of consumption. Still, some VCs can be explicitly centered upon consumption-related interests, such as virtual communities of consumption (Kozinets, 1999). Interactions within a consumer community can be seen as more authentic; thus, they can have the power to initiate word-of-mouth communication. All the content stored in databases can also facilitate asynchronous interaction and enable viral marketing activities (Hagel and Armstrong, 1997; Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001; Presi et al., 2006; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002; Kozinets, 1999).

3. A QUALITATIVE STUDY

The main aim of the present study is to explore if VC's take the form of communities of practice. It is also aimed to explore the role that VCoPs play in consumers' life and consumption practices. Despite some remarkable studies in the literature that focus on VCs, there still remains a dearth of research that examines the nature of VCoPs particularly in the context of consumption. A VC called "*I Wanna Set Out With My Backpack (Hit the Road)*" is purposefully sampled. The community, which offers free, voluntary access via Facebook, was established in 2007 with the aim of promoting outdoor sports. The community mantra is; "With no commercial or political aim, *Hit the Road* endeavors to activate the subconscious of people who would like to set out with their backpack, and doing that with no rules or plan and to achieve world peace." More than

10.000 members actively share and develop specific practices. Qualitative data was collected during the period of February and June 2010. Persistent observation and member checking was utilized to increase the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research (Lincoln and Guba 2000); observation lasted six months and second-order interpretations were checked by the community leaders.

3.1. Findings about structural elements of the VCoP

Findings reveal that most of the community members actively participate in practice. Becoming a member is a key element of their practice. From 2008 until 2010, the member count increased from 500 to 11117. The analyzed data, such as wallpaper posts, discussion topics, activities, multimedia data, and comments, are representations of the members' practices. Members' high involvement reveals that they are included in what matters for the community. Findings reveal that community members engage in outdoor and social activities. They post/upload content about past practices. Members' interactive communications about future activities reflect their activity planning, organization and implementation processes. They also organize activities in cooperation with other communities with a similar or close domain.

'There is less than one month left to Rock-A fest. Sea, sun, beach, nature, activities and rock music are waiting for us. {[hyperlink removed](#)} (O.T)' "I bought my tent, pillow and everything else today. All arranged. We should reveal our "concept" there, by the way. Nobody should step to their own corners. I have a hunch that it'll be so great (H.T.)'

Consistent with literature (Pan and Leidner, 2003; Koliba and Gajda, 2007), it is found that by sharing information and experiences to solve problems, members develop a healthy dialogue and shape future activities. Online interaction and reciprocal participation enables newcomers to learn the social practice from old members and move from peripheral to full participation and become active or core member (Johnson, 2001; Presi et al., 2006); they learn, for instance, what kind of a backpack or a hotel suits their needs.

'Hi, I wanna set out with my backpack, but I don't even have a backpack. Is there any brand or store that sells high quality but economical products you can recommend?(T.Ç.)' 'Hey guys, you who have been to many places, I am talking to you. How did you begin? What is needed to start? Lots of money? Desire? Courage? I have all of them, but money. What should I do?(Y.G.)'

Online computer mediated environment has its advantage of enabling

asynchronous interaction. Following quotation also reveal that online presence of multimedia and textual data of conversations and activities also serves as an inventory that can be used by newcomers as reference.

‘...Hiking Tour was great. A Siberian wolf, and a Kangal dog accompanied us for 7 hours. We, 42 people, had a great adventure. Thanks to everyone who joined or wanted to join the activity. Upload all the photos you took so that everyone who sees them will get jealous and we’ll be more crowded next time.(A.F.O)’

Their mutual engagement also extends to the members’ life themes by providing diverse opportunities in, e.g., employment. They also engage in some protest activities; in one case they organized a silent march to protest the murder of Pippa Bacca, an Italian who was wandering around the world to promote world peace.

‘Attention! We’ll hike in Lycia, a famous place and witness nature, history and adventure. It’ll also be a lovely working environment. A long-term job opportunity for guys who are experienced in photography, tourism guide, theater etc. We’ll need almost 200 fellows. If you are interested, just send an email.(OA)’

The community also develops joint enterprises. Joint practices include interactions, orientation of newcomers, activity planning and implementation, online administration of the community, selection of people who are in charge. Participative decision-making, clearly-defined roles and accountability enables enhanced engagement in objectives and solutions (Probst and Borzillo, 2008; Koliba and Gajda, 2007). Consistently, democratic and transparent atmosphere facilitates trust of members. Enhanced dialogue influences fast decision-making.

‘I opened a new topic. Let’s talk there, share ideas. I have lots of ideas about training. Let’s decide together.’ ‘We need a male and a female admin who can do real things for the group. Just contact me.(A.F.O.)’

The shared repertoire is based on a shared language and behavior patterns that facilitates orientation of members. During interactions member systematically refer to the recorded resources, such as community mantra, comments, recommendations, multimedia content. Shared content and photographs allow members to understand activities and build up a higher spirit to get involved. The shared repertoire, a kind of social capital, further develops with each contribution of members. Supporting Chiu et al. (2006) and Wasko and Faraj (2005)’s propositions, the community’s open and unrestricted online access enables creation of public information which creates value and attraction. Consideration and deliberation of written stories about previous experiences and community

activities enables effective and efficient management of new practices.

‘We set out with our backpacks, too. Details are in the link about ... trip. I hope it’ll be a guide for those who are interested to visit (K.Y.)’ ‘Dear K., I am following your actions and envy you. I regret that I had no information earlier. With my love as a former traveler ‘who knows everything’. I like to support this platform. Ten points go to the pals here.(M.I.A.)’

3.2. Findings about community and member identities and consumption practices

The community identity is based on the quest of emancipation, being connected to the nature, adventure and sociability. The domain that brings people together is based on adventure and outdoor activities and the idea of backpacking. Dominant discourse is based on emancipation from boundaries and love of nature. A backpack is used as a truly alive symbol of the dominant discourse. The domain of the community is not an abstract area of interest, but consists of key experiential issues of members. The founder of the community is the one who set the basic idea; “setting out with a backpack”, yet the domain and the identity have evolved as new members get involved with their backpacks full of their new ideas and needs. Members define the community as, e.g. a community that creates synergy, a bridge for friendship, a great family, and a community of people who have free spirits. Findings reveal that the community is heading towards maturity stage. It can be proposed that they also have coalesced, i.e. members practiced their first value-laden activities, different types of membership began to appear and norms about information sharing have been developed. The core and active members actively try to develop better communication and information sharing processes, encourage members to participate in activities and attract new members. The domain of the community is clearly defined and understood. After 6 months of the initiation of the group, a logo was designed and chosen by consensus. Members developed their language; e.g. they define their joint activities as ‘chug-chugging, sailing to new adventures etc.’ and define each other as ‘wanderers, sleeping beauties (during low cycles of communication), crew’, newcomers as ‘fresh blood’ and members who do not frequently interact as ‘ghosts’. Some members communicate their ideas about how the profile of a newcomer should be, while others express their reasons for joining the community and the achievements of the community that make them proud.

‘I’m proud of participating in this group because I believe that it is a part of what’s going inside my mind. Like I always wanted; get your backpack and set

out, recklessly and irresponsibly.(F.Y.)’ {originally all uppercase letters}

As a result of joint enterprises and shared repertoire that includes collaborative experiences, bonds between members flourished. Following quotations demonstrate bonds and community mantra as well.

‘We’re here for all the nice people who carry their happiness on their backpacks and have a wanderer spirit no matter they’ve backpacks or not. We’ve events at certain times of the year. Urfa or Bodrum has never been far away from us. What matters is your companionship and closeness to us.(M.I.A)’

Members who have a life trajectory in tune with community values and highly involved in activities also have well-defined member identities. During their intense interactions, they share content, photographs, videos, comments and suggestions and use avatars which reflect their commitment to the community mantra. Core and active members frequently share avatars and personal information and photographs that show their outfit, accessories, backpacks and other symbols that reflect their commitment to the community mantra and values.

Although the community is not explicitly centered upon consumption-related interests, members represent themselves within the context of consumption. Members share information about products and services. They communicate about products typically needed by a traveler, specific brands, prices, the stores where the products are sold and their satisfaction with the brands. They also provide external hyperlinks, contact addresses and phone numbers. The data reveal that members react to and comment on these messages very rapidly.

‘Indispensable Books in a Backpack: Our suggestion to members who would like to experience adventure within the pages of a book:{book title }(O.S)’ ‘Products on sale:...windstopper jacket for 300\$,...goose-feather filled jacket 250\$(A.F.O.)’ ‘We stayed at this motel. Our room had 3 beds and wi-fi connection. It was so warm thanks to the non-stop working heater. {photographs}(B.B.K)’

Members and administrators are allowed to forward messages about other organizations’ or companies’ offers that address the community members’ domain-specific needs and wants. Companies, such as tent marketers, and yacht tour organizers are also allowed to join the group, create avatars and post their domain-specific marketing messages. Online presence helps marketers to develop favorable corporate image as well. The data reveal that members have positive attitudes toward the marketing messages and comment on them. Recorded online archives enable members to reach older messages when needed (Kozinets, 1999;

Ballantine and Martin, 2005). Due to the online access to shared repertoire, both synchronous and asynchronous communication and comments of members, marketers have the chance to exploit the advantages of word-of-mouth and viral marketing (Cheung et al., 2009; Rothaermel and Sugiyama, 2001).

Core and active members' consumption-related recommendations and comments are seen relatively more trustworthy. Consumption-related posts of core and active members are more informative, rich in content and have the potential of leading others' consumption practices. This finding is consistent with Lam et al.'s (2009) suggestions; recommendations and comments of members who reveal strong identities are highly accredited. The findings support Hagel and Armstrong (1997) and Elliot's (1998) suggestions that online interactions in the context of consumption affect members' socialization efforts and consumption decisions. Thus, all types of interaction may spread word-of-mouth and influence consumers' decisions.

4. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

The main aim of the present study is to explore if VC's take the form of communities of practice. It is also aimed to explore the role that VCoPs play in consumers' identity construction and consumption practices by means of qualitative research methods. Qualitative data was collected from online records of a community called "I Wanna Set out with My Backpack (Hit the Road)" that is purposefully sampled. Findings demonstrate that the observed community has the structural elements of communities of practice; members mutually engage in practices, develop joint activities and have a shared repertoire of the practices. Online interaction and reciprocal participation enables newcomers to learn the social practice, and move from peripheral to full participation and become active or core member. The community identity is based on the quest of emancipation, being connected to the nature, adventure and sociability. The domain that brings people together is based on adventure, outdoor activities and the idea of backpacking. The domain and the identity have evolved as new members get involved. Members who have a life trajectory in tune with community values and are highly involved in activities also have well-defined member identities. Although the community is not explicitly centered upon consumption-related interests, members practice and represent themselves socially within the context of consumption. Online interactions in the context of consumption affect members' socialization efforts and consumption decisions. All types of interaction may function as a word-of mouth communication tool and have a significant

influence on consumers' decisions. Furthermore, due to the online access to shared repertoire, both synchronous and asynchronous communication and comments of members, marketers have the chance to exploit the advantages of word-of-mouth and viral marketing.

This study is not without limitations. The community that is studied is purposefully sampled based on prior prolonged observation by researchers. Studying other samples may extent current knowledge on VCoPs in the context of consumption. Yet, this study can be seen as a preliminary effort that might spread further academic interest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ardichvili, A. (2008), "Learning and Knowledge Sharing in Virtual Communities of Practice: Motivators, Barriers, and Enablers", *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp.541-554.

Arnould, E. and L. Price (2000), "Authenticating acts and authoritative performances: questing for self and community", (eds) S. Ratneshwar, D. G., Mick & C. Huffman, *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on Consumers Motives, Goals, and Desires*. London: Routledge, pp.140-163.

Bagozzi, R.P. and U.M. Dholakia (2002), "Intentional Social Action in Virtual Communities", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 16, No 2, pp.2-21.

Ballantine, B.W. and B.A. Martin (2005), "Forming Parasocial Relationships in Online Communities", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol.32,No1, pp.197-201.

Cova, B. (1997), "Community and Consumption: Towards a Definition of the "Linking Value" of Product or Services", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 3, No 3/4, pp.297-316.

Cheung, M.Y., C.Luo, C.L.Sia, and H.Chen (2009),"Credibility of Electronic Word-of-Mouth: Informational and Normative Determinants of On-line Consumer Recommendations", *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 13, No 4, pp.9-38.

Chiu, C.M., M.H. Hsu, and E.T.G. Wang (2006), "Understanding Knowledge Sharing in Virtual Communities: An Integration of Social Capital and Social Cognitive Theories", *Decision Support Systems*, Vol. 42, No 3, pp.1872-1888.

Dewberry, D. R. (2008), "Theorizing the E-Tribe on MySpace.com." (in: T.L. Adams and S.A.Smith ed., *Electronic Tribes : The Virtual Worlds of Geeks, Gamers, Shamans, and Scammers*), USA: University of Texas Press, pp.79-95.

- Dholakia U.M., R.P. Bagozzi, and L.K. Pearo(2004), "A Social Influence Model of Consumer Participation in Network and Small-Group-Based Virtual Communities", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol21, pp.241-263.
- Donath, J. S. (1998), "Identity and Deception in the Virtual Community" (in: P. Kollock and Smith ed., *Communities in Cyberspace*), London:Routledge, pp.27-58.
- Gammelgaard, J. (2010), "Knowledge Retrieval through Virtual Communities of Practice", *Behaviour & Information Technology*, Vol. 29, No 4, pp.349–362.
- Hagel, J. and A.G.Armstrong (1997), "Net Gain Expanding Markets through Virtual Communities", *The Mckinsey Quarterly*, No 1, pp.141-153.
- Hemetsberger, A. (2005), "Creative Cyborgs: How Consumers Use The Internet For Self-Realization", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 32, pp. 653-660.
- Johnson, M. (2001), "A Survey of Current Research on Online Communities of Practice", *Internet and Higher Education*, Vol. 4, pp.45-60.
- Kimble, C. and P. Hildreth (2004), "Communities of Practice: Going One Step Too Far?" *Proceedings 9e colloque de l'AIM*, Evry, France.
- Kimble, C., P. Hildreth and P. Wright (2001), "Communities of Practice: Going Virtual", (in Y.Malhotra ed., *Knowledge Management and Business Model Innovation*), London:Idea Group Publishing, pp.220-234.
- Koliba, C. and R. Gajda (2007), "Evaluating the Imperative of Intraorganizational Collaboration: A School Improvement Perspective", *American Journal of Evaluation*, Vol. 28, No.1, pp.26-44.
- Kozinets, R.V. (1999), "E-Tribalized Marketing? The Strategic Implications of Virtual Communities of Consumption", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp.252-264.
- Lam, D., A.Lee, and R.Mizerski (2009), "The Effects of Cultural Values in Word-of-Mouth Communication", *Journal of International Marketing*, Vol.17, No.3, pp.55-70.
- Lincoln Y.S. and E.G. Guba (2000) "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences", (in: N. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln ed., *Handbook of Qualitative Research*), London: Sage Publications, pp.163-188.
- Lueg, C. (2000), "Where Is the Action in Virtual Communities of Practice?" *Workshop Communication and Cooperation in Knowledge Communities*. D-CSCW 2000 Conference, Germany.

Miller, D. (1995), "Consumption as the Vanguard of History a Polemic by Way of an Introduction", (in: D.Miller ed., *Acknowledging Consumption*), London: Routledge, pp.1-52.

Moor, A. and H.Weigand (2007), "Formalizing the Evolution of Virtual Communities", *Information Systems*, Vol. 32, No 2, pp.223-247.

Pan, S.L. and D.E. Leidner (2003), "Bridging Communities of Practice With Information Technology In Pursuit of Global Knowledge Sharing", *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, Vol. 12, No 1, pp.71-88.

Presi, C., P.Michell and A.R. Lock(2006),"Reading Consumers Identity in Virtual Communities of Consumption:Exploring the Influence of Motive and Focus of Attention",*Asia-Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*,Vol.7,No1, pp.330-338.

Probst, G. and S.Borzillo (2008), "Why Communities of Practice Succeed and Why They Fail", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 26, pp.335-347.

Ridings, C.M., D.Gefen and B. Arinze (2002), "Some Antecedents and Effects of Trust in Virtual Communities", *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, Vol.11, No.4, pp.271-295.

Rothaermel, F.T. and S. Sugiyama(2001),"Virtual Internet Communities and Commercial Success: Individual and Community Level Theory Grounded In The Atypical Case of timezone.com",*Journal of Management*,Vol.27,No3,pp.297-312.

Schau H.J. (2000), "Consumer Imagination, Identity and Self-Expression", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 27, pp.50-56.

Schau H.J. and A.M.Muniz (2002), "Brand Communities and Personal Identities: Negotiations in Cyberspace",*Advances in Consumer Research*,Vol.29,pp.344-349.

Wamalwa, T. (2007), "Internet Technology and Challenges of Virtual Communities", *International Journal of Business Research*, Vo1.7,No.4, pp.69-85.

Wasko, M.M. and S.Faraj (2005), "Why Should I Share? Examining Social Capital and Knowledge Contribution in Electronic Networks of Practice", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol.29, No.1, pp.35-57.

Wenger, E.C. (1998), *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E.C. (2000), "Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems", *Organization Articles*, Vol. 7, No 2, pp.225-246.

Wenger, E.C. and W.M.Snyder (2000), "Communities of Practice: The

Organizational Frontier”, *Harvard Business Review*, Vol.78, No.1, pp.139-145.

Wenger, E.C., R. McDermott and W.M. Snyder (2002), *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press.