The role of social media usage in enhancing team members’ trust and team creativity

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Abstract

The rapid development and increasing popularity of social media has drastically changed online creation. Social media has been widely adopted by organizations over the past decade, which provides opportunities to open up team creativity and innovation processes. This study aims to examine how the social media usage influences team creativity in organizations. Moreover, we examine how trust is affected by social media usage and further affects team creativity. Drawing on the literature of social media and team creativity in organizations, we develop a theoretical framework to explain how social media usage influences team creativity through cognitive trust and affective trust. The result of this study confirms the significant effect of both cognitive trust and affective trust on team creativity and the influence of social media usage on both types of trust. In addition, our findings showed that cognitive trust positively affects affective trust. Based on the results, we also provided theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: Social media, trust, team creativity, organizations

Introduction

Social media has been widely adopted by individuals and organizations in the past decade. It is defined as ‘(a) the information infrastructure and tools used to produce and distribute content; (b) the content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, and cultural products; and (c) the people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content’ (Howard and Parks 2012, p. 362). In recent years, the rapid developments of the broadband and mobile technology...
have enabled social media to penetrate many aspects of our daily life. Facebook, according to its statistics, had approximately 2.2 billion monthly active users worldwide (Statista 2018). Undoubtedly, social media and its applications are shaping the way individuals and organizations communicate. Social media has also drastically changed online creation and consumption of information including top-down content consumption, bottom-up participation, and user-centric content creation. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Weibo have significantly reduced costs for organizations to collaborate with external actors, which provides opportunities to open up their innovation processes in a cost-efficient manner.

Academics and practitioners have started investigating social media innovation (i.e., using social media to increase innovation capabilities or performance in organizations) in recent years. Piller, Vossen and Ihl (2012) proposed a typology of open innovation activities, investigating how social media affects the customer-to-customer and customer-to-business relationships in the open innovation process. Dong and Wu (2015) further explored how customers’ innovation ideas collected from social media network influence firm value creation. In addition to the involvement of customers, employees are also stakeholders of organizations, as indicated by stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston 1995), and they should as well be considered when examining social media innovation. Although managers may worry that the social media usage distracts employees’ attention on their work and researchers also found that the hedonic use of social media has a negative effect on routine performance, it eventually can enhance the innovative performance (Ali-Hassan et al. 2015). Other studies have investigated the relationship between social media use and knowledge sharing among employees (Beck et al. 2014; Leonardi 2015) and indicated the effect of employee social media use on innovation (Ali-Hassan et al. 2015).

Team creativity is defined as the degree to which a team generates novel and useful ideas in the context of team objectives (Tiwana and Mclean 2005). Whether they like it or not, employers realize that increasingly their employees use social media to communicate with each other. Leaving voice or text messages for team members is replacing face-to-face communication, due to its effectiveness and efficiency. Employees also use their organizational mobile devices at home, extending team communication beyond the traditional workplace boundaries. When social media incorporated into work processes, the traditional ways of structuring work patterns are altered to be more polychronic. These changes in communication influence many aspects of a team, especially the interaction among team members, which in turn influences team creativity. However, the underlying rationale between social media usage and team creativity remains unclear. Some factors, such as trust among team members, may play an important role in the process.

To address the above-mentioned gaps in the literature and practice, we conduct a study to explore how social media could help with team creativity in organizations. This study aims to examine the social media usage of employees and its effect on team creativity. Team members’ trust works between social media usage and team creativity. Trust was further classified into two categories, cognitive trust and affective trust. These are believed to be influenced by social media use and thereby to influence team creativity. To sum up, we aim to answer the following research questions:

How does social media usage influence team creativity?

How is trust (including cognitive trust and affective trust) influenced by social media usage and how does it affect team creativity?

This study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the role of social media usage on team creativity in organizations and offers important insights to both research and practice. First, this study contributes to the social media innovation research by investigating the social media usage among the employees rather than customers. The new perspective is expected to help future researchers to explore more in this new line, which can enrich the literature on social media innovation. As there are few empirical studies on social media usage within the organizational context, this study is one of the pioneering studies on the relationship between social media usage and team creativity. In addition, this study confirms that the two types of trust, namely affective and cognitive trust, work in between the abovementioned relationship. It also finds the relationship between these two relationships. Therefore, it also contributes to the literature on trust.
This paper is organized as follows: the next section reviews current research on social media in organization and team creativity. The third section presents our research model and outlines the hypotheses. The fourth section describes the methodology of our study, followed by the results in the fifth section. The last section concludes with a discussion and implications.

**Literature Review**

**Social Media in Organizations**

Online engagement in social media has increased dramatically. Many studies in the information systems (IS) field have investigated the effect of social media on organizations or firms from the perspectives of customers. For example, Luo, Zhang and Duan (2013) found that social media-based metrics have a stronger significant relationship with firm equity value than conventional online behavioral metrics. Chen, De and Hu (2015) investigated the effect on music sales of artists’ broadcasting activities on a well-known music social media site, which reveals the effect of social media on consumers’ purchase behavior. Marketers have launched brand communities on social media platforms to engage consumers and increase information sharing (Rishika et al. 2013; Tang et al. 2012), with the aim of ultimately increasing firm performance, including innovation. Dong and Wu (2015) found that in open innovation, the key to value creation is to develop the capability in dealing with the ideas collected from online user innovation communities (OUICs).

The previous studies of social media on organizations from the employee perspective are mainly related to knowledge sharing/exchange. For example, the effect of social media on knowledge exchange in organizations has been identified (Beck et al. 2014; Leonardi 2015). Beck et al. (2014) examined a multilevel model of knowledge exchange in electronic networks, and found that knowledge seekers’ characteristics and relational factors drive knowledge exchanges in social media-enabled electronic networks. Leonardi (2014) conducted a field study on how the increasing visibility of communication shapes knowledge sharing in organizations. Communication visibility in social networking sites was found to enhance meta-knowledge, which leads to more innovative products and services and less knowledge duplication. A quasi-natural field experiment was later conducted to confirm that individuals in the group that used social networking technology for six months improved the accuracy of their meta-knowledge (Leonardi, 2015).

The knowledge exchange between employees, enabled by social media, ultimately benefits firms’ innovative performance. However, we believe the social media usage among employees can benefit organizational innovation through other channels, in addition to knowledge sharing/exchange. For example, researchers found that social, cognitive and hedonic uses of social media have indirect positive effects on innovative job performance through social ties (Ali-Hassan et al. 2015) indicating the possible effect of some social factors, like trust, in explaining the relationship between social media usage and team creativity.

**Trust and Team Creativity**

Trust “is exhibited when a trustee displays a willingness to be vulnerable to the trustee based on the expectation that the trustee will perform as desired by the trustee” (Moody et al. 2014, p. 266). Previous research has identified and examined a variety of antecedents of trust such as image, website quality and usability (Lee et al. 2015; Beldad et al. 2010; Lowry et al. 2008; Lu et al. 2016). McAllister (1995) proposed two types of trust, one grounded in cognitive judgments of another's competence or reliability (referred to as cognitive trust), and another founded in affective bonds among individuals (referred to as affective trust). Cognitive trust is a member’s confidence or willingness to rely on another member’s competence and reliability (Moorman et al. 1992; Rempel et al. 1985). It arises from an accumulated knowledge that allows one to make predictions, with some level of confidence. Affective trust consists of the emotional bonds between individuals (Lewis and Wieger 1985). Team member can make emotional investments in trust relationships and express care and concern to other team members. They believe that these sentiments are reciprocated (Rempel et al. 1985).
When team members have positive expectations, the team becomes more confident (Gulati and Nickerson 2008). According to Kwon and Suh (2005), trust improves the quality of interactions, cooperative involvement, and commitment to a relationship. Laaksonen et al. (2009) proposed that trust enhances dyadic information sharing and lowers transaction costs. They consider trust to be a unique control mechanism in the sense that it creates value. Ireland and Webb (2007) stated that interorganizational trust stimulates positive attitudes and behaviors among business partners. Barratt (2004) mentioned that trust is crucial for the long-term sustenance of collaboration. Similarly, successful collaborations are characterized by high levels of trust and willingness to share risk (Kwon and Suh 2005). Therefore, trust is an essential element of the social capital that is directly linked to performance (Johnston et al. 2004), satisfaction (Jonsson and Zineldin 2003), and competitive advantage (Cheng et al. 2008). The previous research indicates that trust may increase team creativity through trustworthy collaborations.

Creativity is generally divided into individual, team, and organizational levels. Team creativity can be viewed as the integration of individual expertise and creativity (Taggar 2002). It typically acts as a bridge, linking individual and organizational creativity (Woodman et al. 1993), and is highly influenced by other team factors such as leadership, cohesiveness, group longevity, group composition, and group structure. For example, the leadership style and intelligence of group leaders have been found to influence team creativity (Anderson and Fiedler 1964). Transformational (Shin and Zhou 2007) and inspirational leadership (Sosik et al. 1998) are positively related to team creativity. More importantly, the quality of intra-team relationships was also found to have a positive relationship with team creativity through expertise integration (Tiwana and Mclean 2005). Good relationships among team members can better predict knowledge sharing, intra-team communication, positive interpersonal exchange, and other positive effects, which may lead to greater team creativity. Group composition and structure are also related to team creativity (Hülsheger et al. 2009). For example, the status or competency differences among members can inhibit the contribution of lower-status or less-competent members. Collaros and Anderson (1969) found that the originality and practicality of ideas was inhibited when the perceived expertise of other team members was high. Group stability (the addition, replacement, or removal of a member, and a control condition in which the original group composition was maintained) can also influence creativity (Ziller et al. 1962). These studies have laid the foundation of the team creativity literature. However, few of them have investigated the influence of social media usage and trust among employees. Therefore, this study focuses on the investigation of how social media usage among employees affects team creativity and how trust works between them.

**Model and Hypotheses Development**

In our study, we examine the social media usage of employees and its effect on team creativity. We develop several hypotheses that investigate the relationship between cognitive trust, affective trust, social media usage, and team creativity. The two types of trust are believed to be enhanced by social media usage and thereby to increase team creativity (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. The Proposed Research Model](image)

Trust includes both cognitive and affective trust (McAllister 1995). Cognitive trust relies on a rational assessment of the target, and refers to the willingness of one team member’s relying on the expertise...
and reliability of others (Barczak et al. 2010). Huang et al. (2017) found that social media interaction of team members positively affects their perception of cognitive trust on each other. The authors indicated that social media interaction enables team members to have non-workplace and non-working time communication via social media. Such expansion in the communication is conductive to strengthen the mutual understanding and trust between team members. IT support in organizations has been found to have a positive effect on the development of a transactive memory system in a team, which includes the cognitive trust in others’ knowledge (Choi et al. 2010). According to this literature, regularly using social media may help one to locate reliable team members with certain knowledge or expertise, and relied on these people. In other words, the more one knows about his/her team members through social media interaction, the more he/she may rely on these people’s expertise and knowledge reliability. Moreover, previous research shows that regular communication about one’s approach to tasks, beliefs and job related information, lead to the formation of cognitive trust (Butler Jr and Cantrell 1994; Kanawattanachai and Yoo 2007; Lewicki and Bunker 1996). When team members use social media for communication and discussion on job or tasks related information more, there tend to be more cognitive trust. More interactions and communications during social media usage make people more aware of others’ professional ability and increase their confidence on them. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1a: The social media usage in a team increases team members’ cognitive trust.

Affective trust stems from emotional attachment and refers to the confidence placed in a team member, based on feelings of caring and concern (Barczak et al. 2010). Previous research indicated that Information technology is important in affective trust-building in organizations (Scott 2000). The social media interaction of team members does not only affect cognitive trust but also affective trust (Huang et al. 2017). Bstieler (2006) argued that transparency in the interaction between innovation project stakeholders facilitates trust. In social media, team members are able to observe how and what their colleagues have posted, increasing communication transparency and improving trust-building. In such an interconnected environment, social media usage brings employees closer and pulled them together, thereby leading to the formation of affective trust on each other. We believe social media, as an effective and efficient communication IT that can facilitate formal, informal, relaxed and personal communication, will positively affect affective trust in a team. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H1b: The social media usage in a team increases team members’ affective trust.

Previous research has indicated that cognitive trust positively affects affective trust (Johnson and Grayson 2005; Newman et al. 2014; Stewart and Gosain 2006). Newman et al. (2014) indicated that before deciding whether one is ready to invest their efforts in developing more personalized bonds with an exchange party, he/she will tend to seek to figure out the credibility of the other party, i.e. this person’s cognitive trust. More specifically, Zur et al. (2012) indicated that affective trust is more subjective in nature and is developed through “social exchange that includes reciprocal benevolence and understanding accumulated in a relationship (Scott 2000)” while cognitive trust is developed from observable evidences showing one’s expertise and reliability. Affective trust which is based on feelings, care and emotion is more likely to be developed after one is seen to be reliable (McAllister 1995). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H2: The team members’ cognitive trust in a team is positively associated with their affective trust.

In addition to the effect of social media usage on trust, we believe cognitive trust and affective trust also have influence on team creativity. Barczak et al. (2010) suggested that trust, both cognitive and affective, can foster a collaborative culture that enhances the creativity of the team. Mutual trust helps “building a good interpersonal network and innovative resources” (Perry-Smith and Shalley 2003). If a team has a high level of cognitive trust, members will appreciate each other’s expertise, be more willing to rely on the perspectives and ideas of others and work together in the team (McAllister 1995). Mutual trust in the expertise of team members helps them to integrate their individual knowledge into the team’s knowledge, enhancing creativity (Choi et al. 2010; Sung and Choi 2012). With cognitive trust, team members tend to become more relied on each other’s expertise to cooperate and to generate more innovative ideas and outputs for the team. We then hypothesize that:
**H3a:** The cognitive trust of a team increases team creativity.

Furthermore, the emotional investment in trust relationships can also enhance creativity. When team members experience high affective trust, they are more likely to share information with each other, which can promote team creativity (Hoever et al. 2012) by facilitating the team-level integration of diverse ideas, perspectives and expertise that members bring to the project (Tiwana and Mclean 2005). Increased team communications and interactions are very important for team members to develop innovation and creativity (Kauffmann 2015). High affective trust also provides a climate of psychological safety, encouraging team members to come up with new ideas, as they are less concerned about the negative judgments of others (West 1990). In such a psychologically comfortable environment, new ideas and creative solutions are more likely to be produced by team members. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H3b:** The affective trust of a team increases team creativity.

**Methodology**

**Measurement and Pre-test**

Most measurements in this study were developed based on the previous literature (please see Table 1 for details). The validation process for the measurements involves two steps. First, we invited professors of management information systems and management to check the questionnaire, and revised it based on their comments. Second, we asked a company’s employees to comment on the questionnaire, and we then adapted the wording of the questions accordingly. These steps ensured the content validity of the measurement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Author(s) and Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media usage (SMU)</td>
<td>SMU1: My work team often use social media (such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook and Twitter, etc.) through mobile devices (mobile phones, etc.) to communicate with each other.</td>
<td>Rapp et al., 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMU2: We often use social media (as above) to provide information to co-workers in our team through mobile devices (as above).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMU3: We often use social media (as above) to get information from co-workers in our team through mobile devices (as above).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMU4: My work team often use social media (as above) through mobile devices (as above) to discuss current events and trends in our industry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive trust (CT)</td>
<td>CT1: Team members approach our work with professionalism and dedication.</td>
<td>McAllister, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CT2: Given my team members’ track records, I see no reason to doubt their competence and preparation for the work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CT3: I can rely on team members not to make our work more difficult through carelessness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective trust (AT)</td>
<td>AT1: We have a sharing relationship. We can freely share our ideas, feelings and hopes.</td>
<td>McAllister, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AT2: We can talk freely to team members about difficulties we are having and know that they will listen.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AT3: If I share my problems with my team members, I know they will respond constructively and caringly.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Team creativity (TC)

TC1: Our team comes up with new and practical ideas when solving problems.
TC2: Our team quickly develops new methods and procedures related to the task.
TC3: When confronting problems, our team generates creative solutions.

Sung & Choi, 2012

Data Collection

We collected the data from 80 teams in the companies in Hong Kong and Shenzhen in China. It was a cross-sectional survey. We sent a questionnaire with the introduction of the research purpose to the respondents and invited them to fill in the questionnaire. With two rounds of reminders, a total of 251 valid individual questionnaires were collected.

Data Analysis and Results

In our sample, 70.9% of the respondents are male and 29.1% of the respondents are female. 74.9% hold a Bachelor’s degree, followed by a master’s degree (11.6%) and a community college degree (10.8%). Averaged affiliation seniority of the respondents is 34.5.

Smart PLS 2.0 was used to perform statistical analysis in our study. Smart PLS is a structural equation modeling (SEM) tool widely used in IS research. The analysis involved two stages (Hair et al. 2006). The measurement model was first examined, then the structural model evaluated. The rationale of this approach is to ensure that structural relationship conclusions are drawn from a set of measurements with desirable psychometric properties.

Validation of the Measurement Items

First, we tested the common method bias by using Harman’s one-factor test (Podsakoff et al. 2003). All variables are subjected to an exploratory factor analysis and the first un-rotated single factor explains lower than 50% of the total variance, suggesting that common method bias is not serious in this study (Harman 1976). Reliability and validity tests were conducted for verification of the measurement model. The reliability was tested using Cronbach’s α and composite reliability (CR). Cronbach’s α and CR should be at least 0.70 to ensure internal consistency. In our study, the two conditions of reliability were satisfied in data sample by having the CRs ranging from 0.890 to 0.925, and the Cronbach’s α from 0.815 to 0.879 (see Table 2).

The convergent validity and discriminant validity of the constructs in the model were also examined. Convergent validity was tested using three criteria for all constructs: (1) the composite reliability (CR) should be at least 0.70 (Chin 1998), (2) the average variance extracted (AVE) should be at least 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker 1987), and (3) all item loadings should be greater than 0.70. The three conditions of convergent validity were satisfied in data sample by having the CRs ranging from 0.890 to 0.925, and the AVEs from 0.730 to 0.899. The item loadings were all higher than the 0.70 benchmark (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Factor Loading and Reliability of Constructs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructs</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMU1</td>
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<td>SMU2</td>
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<td>SMU3</td>
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<td>SMU4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive trust</td>
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Discriminant validity is the degree to which the measures of two constructs were empirically distinct. Discriminant validity between constructs can be verified if the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the correlation between constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1987). The square root of AVE for each construct was greater than the correlations between the constructs and all other constructs. Therefore, the results suggested adequate discriminant validity (see Table 3).

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Diagonal elements are square roots of the average variance extracted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SMU</th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>TC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMU</td>
<td>0.829</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>0.717</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>0.679</td>
<td>0.787</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>0.749</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td>0.896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structural Model

The results indicate that social media usage has significant effect on cognitive trust and affective trust with path coefficients of 0.718 (p<0.001) and 0.237 (p<0.001), respectively. Hypotheses H1a and H1b are supported. Cognitive trust and affective trust have significant effect on team creativity, with path coefficients of 0.423 (p<0.001) and 0.414 (p<0.001), respectively. Hypotheses H3a and H3b are supported. Therefore, we confirmed the effects of both cognitive trust and affective trust between social media usage and team creativity. Moreover, cognitive trust is significantly related to affective trust (β = 0.617, p < 0.001) that supports H2. Overall, the whole model explains 62.6% of the variance in team creativity (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. PLS Model](image-url)
Discussions and Implications

General Discussion

The results of this study indicate that social media usage positively influence both affective trust and cognitive trust. We conjecture that this is because by using social media team members can be aware of what their colleagues have posted, increasing communication transparency and enhancing trust building. More specifically, social media usage enables team members to be more confident on each other’s expertise (i.e. cognitive trust) and brings them closer to each other (i.e. affective trust). Our findings indicated that cognitive trust positively affects affective trust, which is in accordance with previous studies (Johnson and Grayson 2005; McAllister 1995). The results suggest that to nurture more affective trust with team members, it may be better to develop cognitive trust to members first. To become someone reliable in a rational sense (i.e. reliable in expertise) in a team first may induce more confidence on feelings of being caring and concern. The positive effect of trust on team creativity is partially consistent with a previous study (Barczak et al. 2010). Our results showed that both cognitive and affective trust have positive effect on team creativity. While in Barczak et al. (2010)’s study, they only found the significant result for cognitive trust on team creativity. We conjecture that the partial inconsistency is because of the sample are gathered from different contexts. Barczak et al. (2010) study using team members from undergraduate students in the same courses who may only know each other for a relatively shorter time (like a semester) compared with employees in organizations. Therefore, the affective trust among members may not have enough time to be developed well and its effect on team creativity was not easily identified in that case.

Implications

The primary purpose of our study is to examine how social media usage influences team creativity in organization. Moreover, this study aims to investigate the effect of trust (i.e., cognitive trust and affective trust) between social media usage and team creativity. This study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the role of social media use on team creativity in organization and offer important insights to both research and practice.

First, this study investigates the relationship between social media and team creativity, which can enrich the social media literature. There are a few empirical studies on social media use within the organizational context (Ali-Hassan et al. 2015; Beck et al. 2014; Leonardi 2015), this research area is still largely unexplored. Second, our study contributes to the literature on trust. Previous studies examined the effects of on trust in organization. However, how affective trust and cognitive trust are facilitated by social media usage of organizational and how these two types of trust affect team creativity remain unknown. Trust enables team members to form a reliable and harmonious environment in the organization, which is crucial to the teams and organizations. Creative teams are valued by organizations because novel ideas, solutions or products are produced by them to maintain the firm’s competitive edge (Barczak et al. 2010). Thus, our study adds value on trust literature by linking social media usage to building trust, and how formed affective trust and cognitive trust affect team creativity. Third, this study contributes to the literature of organizational behavior. Previous organizational behavior studies were conducted in traditional contexts, but little research has been conducted into the effect of social media on team creativity. IT has permeated and penetrated every aspect of our daily lives. It is changing the way we live and work. In this context, it is necessary to confront the new dynamics and conduct further studies related to these technologies.

In addition to the theoretical implications discussed above, the findings of our study also provide valuable insights for practitioners. The positive relationship between social media usage and team creativity can help to reduce the reluctance to accept social media in organizations. The usage of social media may hinder a firm’s routine performance (Ali-Hassan et al. 2015), but it may sometimes be a catalyst rather than a distraction, particularly to innovation performance. Team leaders can encourage their members to use social media to increase the relationship quality and social support of the team. New technologies (such as Microsoft SharePoint that is directed at enabling efficient team collaboration) can be leveraged to increase team creativity, and possibly the innovation performance.
of the organization. More incentive strategies about using social media appropriately can be devised to promote team members’ social media usage to enhance trust among team members, leading to more innovative ideas and solutions.

Conclusion

Social media has also drastically changed online creation and consumption of information including top-down content consumption, bottom-up participation, and user-centric content creation. Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Weibo) have significantly reduced costs for organizations to collaborate, which provides opportunities to open up their team creativity processes in a cost-efficient manner. This study aims to examine the social media usage of employees and its effect on team creativity. Moreover, we examine trust working between social media usage and team creativity. Trust was further classified into two categories, cognitive trust and affective trust. These are believed to be influenced by social media use and thereby to influence team creativity. The empirical analysis of this study indicates that social media usage positively influence both affective trust and cognitive trust. Both cognitive trust and affective trust also have positive effect on team creativity, thus confirming the effect of trust. In addition, our findings showed that cognitive trust positively affects affective trust. We believe that our study has valuable theoretical and practical implications.

Our research model is evaluated using structural equation modeling (SEM) and based on data collected from Chinese organizations. A couple of limitations should be noted when interpreting the results. First, the sample size is not large, so that individuals from different populations might not be evenly distributed. Researchers must be cautious about the external validity of the results, and a larger sample size with diverse populations is highly recommended for future studies. In addition, the study uses cross-sectional data to test the model, which needs further confirmation by longitudinal data in the future. Finally, other factors from social support perspective, such as collaboration facilitation, conformity pressure reduction might also play a role in the model and therefore should be further explored.

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