

## References

1. Avolio, B.J., Kahai, S., Dodge, G.E., 2010. E-leadership: Implications for theory, research and practice. *Leadersh. Quart.* 11 (4), 615-442.
2. Avolio, B.J., Sosik, J.J., Kahai, S.S., Baker, B., 2014. E-leadership: re-examining transformations in leadership source and transformation. *Leadersh. Q.* 25, 105-131.
3. Berger, B., Meng, J., 2010. Public relations practitioners and the leadership challenge. In: Heath, R.L. (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Public Relations*, second ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 421-434.
4. Chu, S.-C., Kim, Y., 2011. Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. *Int. J. Advert.* 30 (1), 47-75.
5. DasGupta, P., 2011. Literature review: e-leadership". *Emerg. Leadersh. Journeys* 4 (1), 1-36.
6. DiStaso, M.W., McCorkindale, T., Wright, D.K., 2011. How public relations executives perceive and measure the impact of social media in their organizations. *Public Relat. Rev.* 37 (3), 325-328.
7. Dutta, S., 2010. What's your personal social media strategy? *Harv. Bus. Rev.* 11 (1), 1-5.
8. Grunig, J.E., 1992. *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
9. Grunig, L.A., Grunig, J.E., Dozier, D.M., 2002. *Excellent Public Relations and Effective Organizations*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.
10. Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verçic, D., Sriramesh, K., 2007. Defining strategic communication. *Int. J. Strat. Commun.* 1 (1), 3-35.
11. Hoch, J.E., Kozlowski, S.W.J., 2014. Leading virtual teams: hierarchical leadership, structural supports, and shared team leadership. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 99 (3), 390-403.
12. Ingerson, K.K., Bruce, J., 2013. Leadership in the Twitterverse. *J. Leadersh. Stud.* 7 (3), 74-83.
13. Kaplan, A., Haenlein, M., 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Bus. Horiz.* 53 (1), 59-68.
14. Kiron, D., Palmer, D., Phillips, A.N., Kruschwitz, N., 2012. What managers really think about social business. *MIT Sloan Manage. Rev.* 53 (4), 51-60.
15. Levenshus, A., 2010. Online relationship management in a presidential campaign: a case study of the Obama campaign's management of its Internet-integrated grassroots efforts. *J. Public Relat. Res.* 22 (3), 313-335.
16. Meng, J., Berger, B., Gower, K.K., Heyman, W.C., 2012. A test of excellent leadership in public relations: key qualities, valuable sources, and distinctive leadership perceptions. *J. Public Relat. Res.* 24 (1), 18-36.
17. Meng, J., Berger, B., 2013. An integrated model of excellent leadership in public relations: dimensions, measurement, and validation. *J. Public Relat. Res.* 25 (2), 141-167.
18. Norris, S.E., Porter, T.H., 2011. The changing face of leadership: making an impression in the technically mediated landscape. *J. Leadersh. Stud.* 4 (4), 69-73.
19. Qualman, E., 2009. *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business*. Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.
20. Paek, H.-J., Hove, T., Jung, Y., Cole, R.T., 2013. Engagement across three social media platforms: an exploratory study of a cause-related PR campaign. *Public Relat. Rev.* 39 (5), 526-533.
21. Park, H., Reber, B.H., 2008. Relationship building and the use of Web sites: how Fortune 500 corporations use their Web sites to build relationships. *Public Relat. Rev.* 34 (4), 409-411.
22. Porter, L.V., Trammel, K.D., Chung, D., Kim, E., 2007. Blog power: examining the effects of practitioner blog use on power in public relations. *Public Relat. Rev.* 33 (1), 92-95.

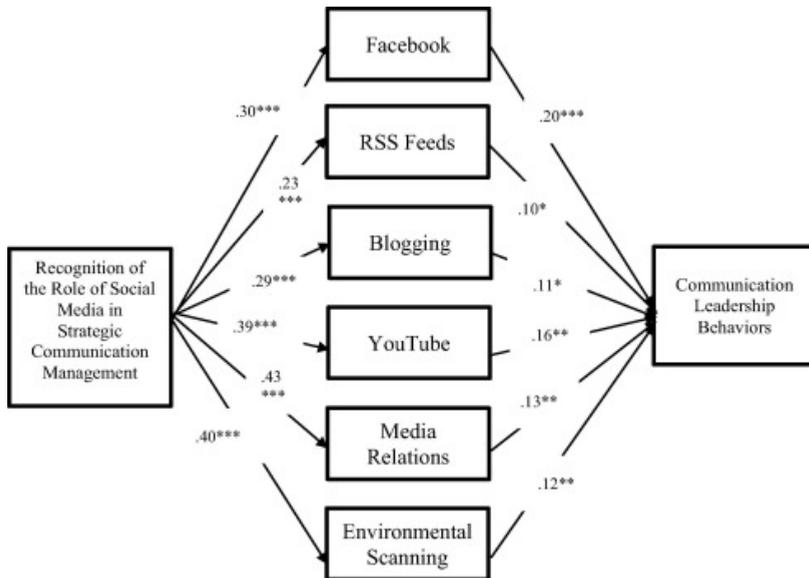


Fig. 1. The finalized model. \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05.

### 5.2. Recognition of social media’s strategic role leading to active social media use

As previous literature (Hallahan et al., 2007; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Qualman, 2009) predicted, the more communication professionals realized the critical role of social media in strategic communication management and relationship building, the more extensively and intensively they tended to use them in their work. We did uncover significant positive paths between the strategic role of social media and all the primary social media tools and communication components (Fig. 1). Future research may further examine how strategic social media management means to the above linkage, going above and beyond simply the extent to which professionals use various social media platforms in various communication functions.

### 5.3. Social media use closely associated with professionals’ leadership behaviors

A significant and positive link between social media use and communication leadership behaviors was the most significant finding of this study. It not only answered scholars’ call for more research (DasGupta, 2011; Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014) but also added to the growing body of literature on communication leadership (Berger and Meng, 2010; Meng and Berger, 2013; Meng et al., 2012). Future research may link leadership development to other important aspects of social media management, for example, core values (e.g., authenticity, transparency, trust, engagement, etc.) for social media use, social media strategic planning and decision making, understanding of new functionalities, adoption of multi-way online interactions, and the interplay between social and tradition media.

### Acknowledgement

This study has been funded by the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations at the University of Alabama.

media in strategic communication management predicted their use of Facebook, RSS Feeds, Blogging, YouTube, use of social media in media relations and environmental scanning, which were ultimately associated with their perceived communication leadership behaviors.

#### **4.3.2. Mediation effects**

A formal test of indirect effects using a bootstrapping procedure in Mplus 7.11 was conducted to examine the mediation role of social media use in the model. Results revealed significant indirect effects in paths from recognition of the role of social media in strategic communication management to communication leadership abilities through all the social media variables: Facebook ( $b = .06, p < .01$ ), RSS Feeds ( $b = .02, p < .01$ ), Blogging ( $b = .03, p < .05$ ), YouTube ( $b = .06, p < .01$ ), use of social media in media relations ( $b = .06, p < .05$ ) and environmental scanning ( $b = .05, p < .01$ ).

### **5. Discussion**

This study took one of the first steps to examine how communication professionals' understanding of social media's role in strategic communication relates to social media use and how strategic social media management leads to communication professionals' leadership behaviors. Key findings included that (1) professionals' years of professional experience, organizational type and size, size of communication staff, and professionals' primary role as communication managers vs. front-line social media professionals did significantly impact the extent to which they used social media tools and used them in various communication functions; (2) communication professionals' recognition of social media's critical role in strategic communication management predicted their use of various social media as well as their social media use in media relations and environmental scanning; (3) which ultimately positively impacted their communication leadership behaviors.

Despite the merit of this study, we do recognize the limitations resulted from only one random sample of communication professionals with a response rate of 16.25%, which certainly does not represent the whole communication profession. Therefore, caution needs to be applied when generalizing findings in the present study beyond the current sample. We suggest future research to further theorize social media use and public relations leadership by testing other groups of the profession, such as PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) and IABC (International Association of Business Communicators).

#### **5.1. Years of experience, organizational type and size, size of communication staff, and managerial vs. non-managerial roles: making a difference**

As shown in Tables 2–6, the present study yielded empirical evidence indicating social media use, both use of social media tools and social media integration in different communication functions, may vary across organizations of different sizes, industry sectors, and their sizes of communication staff. Communication professionals, due to their varied years of professional experience and their primary role in communication work (managers vs. front-line social media professionals), used social media differently. More research is needed to analyze the reasons underlying the aforementioned key differences and theorize on the way strategic social media management can be optimized so as to benefit organizations' overall strategic management.

IV (factor)	DVs	F statistic	g <sup>2</sup>
Size of communication staff	Tumblr	F <sub>6,428</sub> = 2.23 <sup>✓</sup>	.03
	Vide Conferencing	F <sub>6,436</sub> = 2.32 <sup>✓</sup>	.03
	Blogging	F <sub>6,447</sub> = 2.36 <sup>✓</sup>	.03
	YouTube	F <sub>6,448</sub> = 2.45 <sup>✓</sup>	.03
	Media relations	F <sub>6,449</sub> = 4.16 <sup>✓</sup>	.05
	Crisis management	F <sub>6,449</sub> = 5.69 <sup>✓</sup>	.07
	Employee/internal communications	F <sub>6,449</sub> = 2.37 <sup>✓</sup>	.03

Note: \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05.

Table 6  
Results of independent-samples T-tests (IV = communication managers vs. front-line social media professionals).a

DVs	Level 1: front-line social media professionals
Facebook	M = 9.74, SD = 2.43, N = 155
LinkedIn	M = 5.48, SD = 3.54, N = 151
RSSFeeds	M = 4.77, SD = 3.88, N = 151
Blogging	M = 5.42, SD = 3.72, N = 155
YouTube	M = 7.48, SD = 2.82, N = 155
Google+	M = 3.35, SD = 3.06, N = 155
Wikipedia	M = 3.54, SD = 2.96, N = 153
Employee/internal communications	M = 5.09, SD = 3.40, N = 155
Annual/quarterly reports	M = 3.13, SD = 3.15, N = 155
Environmental scanning	M = 5.51, SD = 4.04, N = 155
Cause-related marketing/social marketing	M = 6.97, SD = 3.69, N = 155
DVs	Level 2: communication managers
Facebook	M = 9.06, SD = 2.77, N = 258
LinkedIn	M = 6.82, SD = 3.19, N = 252
RSSFeeds	M = 6.26, SD = 3.75, N = 250
Blogging	M = 6.45, SD = 3.67, N = 257
YouTube	M = 8.26, SD = 2.63, N = 257
Google+	M = 4.23, SD = 3.37, N = 255
Wikipedia	M = 4.69, SD = 3.26, N = 255
Employee/internal communications	M = 6.02, SD = 3.43, N = 258
Annual/quarterly reports	M = 4.11, SD = 3.56, N = 258
Environmental scanning	M = 7.06, SD = 3.82, N = 258
Cause-related marketing/social marketing	M = 6.19, SD = 3.84, N = 258
DVs	t(df)
Facebook	t(411) = 2.54 <sup>✓</sup>
LinkedIn	t(401) = -3.91 <sup>✓</sup>
RSSFeeds	t(399) = -3.78 <sup>✓</sup>
Blogging	t(400) = -3.50 <sup>✓</sup>
YouTube	t(410) = -2.82 <sup>✓</sup>
Google+	t(408) = -2.66 <sup>✓</sup>
Wikipedia	t(406) = -3.59 <sup>✓</sup>
Employee/internal communications	t(411) = -2.68 <sup>✓</sup>
Annual/quarterly reports	t(411) = -2.82 <sup>✓</sup>
Environmental scanning	t(411) = -3.90 <sup>✓</sup>
Cause-related marketing/social marketing	t(411) = 2.02 <sup>✓</sup>

Note: \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .05.

a. Although we reached out to communication leaders, some of them forwarded our survey link to front-line social media professionals who were directly managing and leading social media account(s) of the organization. Based on “the Official PR Salary & Bonus Report” (2014 edition, Spring Associates, INC., New York, NY), we used \$80,000 as the cut-off and divided participants into two groups-communication managers and front-line social media professionals.

In particular, communication professionals’ recognition of the role of social

RSS Feeds	F <sub>5,437</sub> = 3.36	.04
YouTube	F <sub>5,450</sub> = 3.95	.04
Wikipedia	F <sub>5,446</sub> = 2.34	.03
Community relations	F <sub>5,451</sub> = 2.92	.03

Note: \*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05.

<sup>a</sup>. All post-hoc Tukey HSD test results are available upon request.

**Table 3**  
Results of one-way ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey tests (IV = organizational type).

IV (factor)	DVs	F Statistic	g <sup>2</sup>
Organizational type	Facebook	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 4.46	.06
	LinkedIn	F <sub>6,438</sub> = 9.77	.12
	Flickr	F <sub>6,434</sub> = 5.49	.07
	Videoconferencing	F <sub>6,437</sub> = 5.13	.07
	Blogging	F <sub>6,448</sub> = 2.57	.03
	YouTube	F <sub>6,449</sub> = 3.56	.05
	Instagram	F <sub>6,447</sub> = 5.33	.07
	Wikipedia	F <sub>6,445</sub> = 3.70	.05
	Crisis management	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 2.94	.04
	Publicity (i.e., information dissemination)	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 2.15	.03
	Employee/internal communications	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 5.00	.06
	Special events	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 2.16	.03
	Community relations	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 3.27	.04
	Public affairs/governmental relations	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 9.57	.11
	Annual/quarterly reports	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 5.00	.06
Financial/investor relations	F <sub>6,450</sub> = 5.34	.07	

Note: \*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05.

**Table 4**  
Results of ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey tests (IV = organizational size).

IV (factor)	DVs	F statistic	g <sup>2</sup>
Organizational size	Facebook	F <sub>9,445</sub> = 2.44	.05
	LinkedIn	F <sub>9,433</sub> = 2.69	.05
	RSSFeeds	F <sub>9,431</sub> = 3.89	.08
	Videoconferencing	F <sub>9,432</sub> = 3.31	.06
	Blogging	F <sub>9,443</sub> = 2.31	.04
	Crisis management	F <sub>9,445</sub> = 4.71	.09
	Employee/internal communications	F <sub>9,445</sub> = 6.51	.12
	Financial/investor relations	F <sub>9,445</sub> = 2.72	.05

Note: \*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05.

**Table 5**  
Results of ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey tests (IV = number of communication management staff).

removing the nonsignificant paths) and examined the resultant change in the second phase of the analysis (i.e., examined chi-square value of an alternative model without those non-significant paths) (Chu and Kim, 2011, p. 63). Freeing those paths did not yield a significant change in chi-square of the data-model fit. As a result, we retained the more parsimonious model (see Fig. 1). The model did fit our data fairly well (CFI = .93; RMSEA = .09 [90% C.I.: .063–.112]; SRMR = .05;  $\chi^2 = 51.485$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $n = 436$ ).

### 4.3. Hypothesis testing

#### 4.3.1. Direct effects

All the path coefficients were re-estimated in Fig. 1. All the linkages were statistically significant. Our hypotheses were supported (only with the selected social media platforms and communication functions/components in the finalized model).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of use of social media tools and social media use in specific communication functions/components.

Use of social media tools	Mean	SD	Valid N	Social media use in communication functions/components	Mean	SD	Valid N
Twitter	9.57	2.36	458	Publicity (i.e., information dissemination)	9.89	2.19	461
Facebook	9.38	2.62	461	Special events	9.16	2.75	461
YouTube	7.99	2.73	460	Product/brand communication	8.98	2.89	461
LinkedIn	6.35	3.37	449	Community relations	8.58	3.08	461
Blogging	6.08	3.67	459	Media relations	8.53	2.74	461
RSS Feeds	5.65	3.86	447	Reputation management	8.52	2.91	461
Videoconferencing	4.42	3.17	448	Crisis management	7.59	3.40	461
Instagram	4.24	3.66	458	Environmental scanning (i.e., monitoring issues)	6.49	4.00	461
Wikipedia	4.18	3.18	456	Cause-related marketing/social marketing	6.46	3.80	461
Flickr	3.99	3.36	445	Public affairs/governmental relations	6.08	3.53	461
Google+	3.92	3.29	458	Employee/internal communications	5.59	3.46	461
Pinterest	3.57	3.22	447	Annual/quarterly reports	3.75	3.48	461
Tumblr	2.40	2.57	440	Financial/investor relations	2.40	2.66	461
MySpace	1.20	1.05	455				

Table 2

Results of one-way ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey tests (IV = years of communication professional experience).<sup>a</sup>

IV (factor)	DVs	F statistic	$\eta^2$
Years of communication professional experience	Tumblr	$F_{5,430} = 2.59$	.03

American (5.50%), Chinese (.40%), Filipinos (.90%), and others (2.00%). A large portion of the sampled participants reported to have a Master's degree (n = 205, 44.90%), some graduate work (n = 181, 39.60%), or a doctorate degree (n = 45, 9.80%). As for salary range, 41.40% (n = 188) earned \$100,001 or more. Another 41.40% earned an annual salary ranging from \$50,001 to \$100,000. Almost half of our participants had at least 15 years of professional experience in communication – 47.30% (n = 218).

### 3.3. Measures

All items used an 11-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (“never” or “strongly disagree”) to 11 (“always” or “strongly agree”). Participants were asked how they had been using different social media tools<sup>1</sup> and their use of social media in different components of communication<sup>2</sup>. To measure participants’ perception of the role that social media play in strategic communication management, we adapted eight items (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .91$ ) from the Excellence study (Grunig, 1992; Grunig et al., 2002) to be used in our study. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principal axis factoring and varimax rotation generated only one factor with eigenvalue greater than 1. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) further verified the one-factor structure of the measure and tested its construct validity. We selected and revised 24 items from Meng and Berger’s (2013) study to assess professionals’ communication leadership behaviors. Both EFA and CFA verified the construct validity results that Meng and Berger (2013) reported.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Preliminary descriptive statistics, ANOVAs, and T-tests

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that participants extensively used social media tools in their communication-related work (see Table 1). We also conducted one-way ANOVAs and t-tests to examine the significant effects of professionals’ managerial and non-managerial roles, years of professional experience, type and size of organization, and size of communication/PR unit on social media use in communication work. See Tables 2–6 for our key findings.

### 4.2. Path model analysis

To test our hypotheses, we started with a path model analysis with Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Blogging, RSS Feeds, publicity, special events, product/brand communication, community relations, media relations, reputation management, crisis management, environmental scanning, cause-related marketing/social marketing, public affairs/governmental relations, and employee/internal communications as observed social media use variables<sup>3</sup>. The data-model fit was acceptable (CFI = .91; RMSEA = .07 [90% C.I.: .057–.075]; SRMR = .07;  $\chi^2 = 301.49$ ; df = 104;  $p < .001$ ; n = 436). In order to refine the model and achieve model parsimony, we relaxed restrictions (i.e.,

1. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Flickr, Pinterest, RSS Feeds, Videoconferencing, Blogging, YouTube, Google+, MySpace, Instagram, and Wikipedia.

2. Media relations, crisis management, publicity (i.e., information dissemination), employee/internal communications, special events, community relations, reputation management, product/brand communication, public affairs/governmental relations, annual/quarterly reports, environmental scanning (i.e., monitoring issues), cause-related marketing/social marketing, and financial/investor relations.

3. See Table 1 for the relatively frequently used social media tools and use of social media in communication functions.

2010, p. 2). Dutta (2010) stressed that leaders adopt social media to engage with both internal and external audiences to “strengthen and leverage relationships” (p. 3). Linking social media adoption and leadership contributes to positive organizational outcomes such as increased employee trust, efficiency among virtual teams, higher level of employee participation, efficient knowledge sharing, and improved relationships with external stakeholders (Meng and Berger, 2013; Norris and Porter, 2011).

Leaders in the technologically mediated landscape have been conceptualized as virtual leaders (Avolio et al., 2010). These virtual leaders use digital technologies to induce changes in attitudes and behaviors of individuals, groups, or organizations (Avolio et al., 2010, p. 617). In a global survey of leaders from 115 countries, participating leaders used social media to improve their relationships with customers by monitoring online communities, creating and supporting virtual communities, and facilitating customer engagement (Kiron et al., 2012).

Examining the impact of social media use on communication professionals’ leadership behaviors thus provides insight on how they can cast social influence among stakeholders (Ingerson and Bruce, 2013). Applying the concept of virtual leaders who are in charge of social media management (Avolio et al., 2010), strategically managed social media programs can allow communication professionals to develop better relationships with key stakeholders (e.g., consumers, employees, government), foster participation from various stakeholders to creatively solve problems, create strategic visions, and help program execution (Meng and Berger, 2013). We hereby suggest the following hypotheses:

H2. The use of social media platforms is positively associated with communication professionals’ perceived leadership behaviors.

H3. Social media use in various communication components is positively associated with communication professionals’ perceived leadership behaviors.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Data collection

Data were collected through an online survey of communication professionals at U.S.-based corporations, non-profit organizations, and other organizations (e.g., start-ups). To ensure a representative range of organizations, we used some primary databases (e.g., Fortune 500, Guidstar.org, Deloitte list of technology companies, Becker Hospital Review, US News & World Report of Colleges) to compile a sample pool. We identified a total of 4700 organizations with various sizes and across different industry sectors. We visited these organizations’ Websites to identify communication professionals at all levels. A total of 3889 emails were identified. A total of 632 participants visited the survey Web site (16.25% response rate). In sum, 461 completed surveys were usable for data analysis.

#### 3.2. Participant profile<sup>1</sup>

Participants on average aged ( $M = 44$ ,  $SD = 10.12$ ). Females comprised the majority of the sample ( $n = 248$ , 54.30%). The participants were primarily White ( $n = 411$ , 91.10%), with small diversity including Black or African

1 . A complete participant profile is available upon request.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Strategic management and social media use among professionals

In communication discipline, strategic communication often refers to the purposeful communication aimed at advancing the mission of an organization (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 4). Such conceptualization is much applicable to a wide range of communication professionals' activities aimed to fulfill organizational objectives (e.g., relationship cultivation, issues management, and reputation management). The extensive use of social media across different industry sectors has given rise to a technically mediated landscape and a "people-driven" economy (Qualman, 2009, p. xvii). In charge of strategic communication management (Hallahan et al., 2007), communication professionals thus encounter a critical challenge of how to strategically use social media and adapt to this "people-driven" economy to help an organization achieve its goals.

Recent research on social media and organizational leadership in business studies has pointed out some promising directions for scholars to address this challenge. A survey of nearly 3500 business executives and managers from around the world<sup>1</sup> found that social media activities can make two distinctive contributions to leadership—"strategic insight and strategic execution" (Kiron et al., 2012, p. 57). Specifically, social media tools sharpened these leaders' vision and helped them formulate strategies to accomplish their organizations' business goals. To extend the impact of social media on leadership behaviors to communication profession, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1. Communication professionals' knowledge about social media's strategic role in communication management is positively related to the likelihood of their use of various social media tools (H1a) and the likelihood of their social media use for various communication components/functions (H1b).

### 2.2. Social media use and communication leadership

There has been a limited amount of research linking communication leadership to social media. Previous research has primarily studied how organizations and stakeholders used social media (Paek et al., 2013). Communication managers who frequently used blogs had a higher level of expert power and prestige power than those who infrequently managed blogs (Porter et al., 2007). Influential leaders were more likely to acknowledge the value of social media, and social media use enhanced communication professionals' abilities to communicate with various audiences interactively (Levenshus, 2010; Park and Reber, 2008). This line of research has slowly advanced from outlining the challenges facing communication professionals to an emerging focus on linking their use of social media with strategic management issues. For example, communication leadership scholars (Meng et al., 2012) have stressed the urgency to study the impact of social media use on specific leadership tasks for most communication professionals such as issues management and crisis communication.

### 2.3. Impact of technology on leadership

The prevalence of digital technologies has prompted organizations to "creating comprehensive strategies in [social media] to support their goals" (Dutta,

1. MIT Sloan Management Review conducted the survey in collaboration with Deloitte.

# Leading in the digital age: A study of how social media

**Hua Jiang**

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University, United States

**Yi Luo**

School of Communication and Media, Montclair State University, United States

**Owen Kulemeka**

Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Oklahoma, United States

## abstract

This study examined: (1) how communication professionals' understanding of social media's strategic role was associated with their active social media use, and (2) how strategic social media management was related to communication professionals' leadership behaviors. Analysis of an online survey from a national sample of communication professionals (n = 461) revealed the following. First, social media use was closely related to participants' leadership behaviors. Second, years of experience, organizational type and size, size of communication staff, and professionals' primary role as managers significantly impacted the social media use in communication-related work. Finally, communication professionals' strategic vision about social media predicted their social media use.

## Keywords

Social media  
Strategic communication management  
Communication leadership  
Communication professionals

## 1. Introduction

Drastically evolving technology has altered how we perceive organizational leadership abilities and behaviors (Avolio et al., 2014). Unfortunately, the impact of the digital technology (e.g., social media) on leadership still remains at a nascent stage (DiStaso et al., 2011; Hoch and Kozlowski, 2014). This deficiency let many scholars stress that organizational leaders must consider the impact of new media adoption on an organization's effectiveness and operation. In the context of communication, an important yet under-examined question lies in how to integrate social media into strategic communication management (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). To bridge these gaps, this study examines communication professionals' perceptions of social media's strategic role, social media use (i.e., different media tools and their use in different components of communication) in their communication-related work, and the link between their social media use and leadership behaviors. This study also investigates how social media use is affected by communication professionals' years of experience, organizational type and size, size of communication staff, and the primary role (managers vs. front-line social media professionals) that communication professionals enact in their work.

سُبحانُ

روزنامه زمانه دانایی

w w w . s o b h e - n o . i r



وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامی  
با هدف گسترش فرهنگ مطالعه  
و حمایت از مطبوعات طرح تخفیف اشتراک  
تا سقف ۵۰ درصد را اجرا می کند.

[www.eshterak.ir](http://www.eshterak.ir)

مشترک شوید

مدیرستان  
میرسانه