

# **Stressor-Strain-Outcome (SSO) Model in the Context of Enterprise Social Media Research**

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## **Abstract**

Mobile Internet is the product of the rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It connects the real world with the virtual world and breaks through the space and time constraints of traditional communication. As a technological innovation, the Internet leads to social and economic changes and is an important communication tool for connecting people and society, as well as people and enterprises. With the development of the mobile internet and the popularity of smartphones, various social media software programmes have had a huge impact on people's lives, learning, and work, and this influence is something that business management can only dream of. The use of social networks for organisational management and business promotion has become an indispensable business tool for today's companies. The impact of social media adoption is also gaining attention from companies and academics alike, and the concept of enterprise social media has emerged. This study reviewed the adoption of the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model in the research of enterprise social media.

**Keywords:** Enterprise Social Media, Stressor-Strain-Outcome Model, Antecedents, Outcomes, Mobile Applications

## **Introduction**

After the outbreak of COVID-19, response strategies were implemented globally to reduce the spread of infection, such as closing borders, travel restrictions, closing schools, working remotely, maintaining social distance, and self-isolation (Asgari et al., 2023; Eggers, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally affected the traditional ways of working in organisations, increasing the need to digitise workflows (Almeida et al., 2020). In the post-epidemic era, people have developed and strengthened the habit of telecommuting (Belzunegui-Eraso & A Erro-Garce's, 2020), and the number of enterprise social media users has steadily increased. Moreover, social media software constantly analyses user needs and upgrades application functions. The improvement of collaboration platforms, cloud video conferences, enterprise management platforms, and other functions enhances user stickiness.

In China, big Internet companies are launching enterprise social media software and starting to move into office commerce. Such as WeChat Work developed by Tencent, Ding Talk developed by Ali, Baidu Hi developed by Baidu, Yunzhijia developed by Kingdie, Qtalk developed by Qunar, and so on. As the two most typical professional enterprise social media software products in China, Ding Talk has 223.04 million monthly active users, up 21.3 percent year on year, and WeChat Work has 98.07 million monthly active users, up 33.7 percent year on year by March 2022 (QuestMobile, 2022).

Professional enterprise social media software covering project creation, distribution, feedback, approval, communication, and other office links improves the tacit understanding of team members, helps enterprises improve operation and management efficiency, builds strong executive ability, helps enterprises save operating costs, enhances enterprise competitiveness, and popularize the paperless office (Dittes, 2021; Almeida et al., 2020; Ding et al., 2019; Braojos, 2019; Leonardi & Vaast, 2017; El Ouiridi et al., 2015). But enterprise social media apps do not get a particularly public praise among many office workers. Being online at any time and in any place, the enterprise social media application creates the uncomfortable feeling of being watched.

Employees have to keep an eye on information so as not to miss important work, and they worry that too much expression on enterprise social media will reveal their own deficiencies or privacy (Sun et al., 2019). Faced with more and more perfect software functions, such as the "DING function" and the "message read or unread" function of the Ding Talk, employees feel tired. As companies embrace enterprise social media, its dark side is constantly emerging. Employees feel fatigued with enterprise social media, which gradually affects their work performance. Recent research has focused on this phenomenon, which is the stress and negative impacts generated by enterprise social media. This study provides foundation on the adoption of the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model in supporting the research development in the enterprise social media context.

## **Review of Literature**

### *Enterprise Social Media*

With the prevalence of social media and the characteristics of social media such as immediacy, convenience, and interaction. Companies are also noticing the potential benefits of social media for communication, interaction, collaboration, and knowledge sharing and are starting to introduce social media into their organisations. Most companies in the global Fortune 500 have adopted social media (Ali et al., 2020). Moreover, due to the low threshold for using social media and the formation of users' habits, the enforcement process of using social media in enterprises is smooth and easily accepted by employees.

Kane (2015) defines enterprise social media as social media applied by an enterprise. Researchers use different terms to describe enterprise social media, such as corporate social media, enterprise social software, corporate social software, enterprise 2.0, corporate social network, and enterprise social networking sites (Wehner et al., 2017). Leonardi et al (2013) define enterprise social media as a platform based on an internet website that allows employees to: a) Pass information to selected colleagues or disseminate information to each individual in the group; b) Indicate or imply that a coworker is the communication partner; c) Post, edit, and sort out texts and documents linked to oneself or other people; as well as, d) Check the information, contacts, texts, and documents exchanged, published, edited, and collated by anyone in the group anytime. ESM provides organisations with digital ways to

manage their workforce, facilitate social interactions between employees, and improve employee collaboration, knowledge sharing, performance and innovation (Caya & Mosconi, 2023; Wang, 2022; Labban & Bizzi, 2022; Dittes, 2021; Almeida et al., 2020; Chen & Wei, 2019; Meske et al., 2019; Leidner et al., 2018).

In terms of platforms, companies typically use two types of social platforms: One is the common social platforms such as WeChat, Twitter, Douyin, and Facebook (Braojos, 2019). Small and microbusinesses often use common social media software for office work due to financial constraints. Another one is the private social platform developed and established by the organisation. Some high-tech enterprises develop their own enterprise social media for internal office use (van Zoonen et al., 2022), such as Microsoft Sharepoint, IBM Connections, and so on. Some independent and professional enterprise social media service providers have also emerged, such as Alibaba Dingtalk and WeChat Work, provided by Tencent.

From the perspective of interaction objects, enterprise social media usage can be divided into external use and internal use. The application in external use means communication for marketing and promotion with externally related personnel, including your customers, upstream suppliers, and the general public (Kane, 2015). Next, regarding to its application in internal use, it refers the communication for sharing, coordination, and collaboration between upper and lower management or among employees (Herzog et al., 2015). This study emphasised the internal usage of enterprise social media, and the enterprise social media proposed in the study refers to the enterprise social media application platform implemented within organisations.

### **Stressor-Strain-Outcome (SSO) Model**

The Stressor-Strain-Outcome model (Koeske & Koeske, 1993) is a popular framework used in social media research. This model has been adopted to research the antecedents that result in social media fatigue (Ou et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2020; Whelan et al., 2020; Dhir et al., 2019), psychological status and work-related stress (Koeske et al., 1993), and dissatisfaction on the job (Zhang et al., 2016). Dhir et al (2019) defined the SSO research framework as including three key dimensions:

- i. Stressor: psychological and behavioural stimuli that can result in adverse effects on the individual;
- ii. Strain: a bad mood or state experienced as a result of stress; and,
- iii. Outcome: Reduced productivity of performance, mental and physical functioning of individuals due to stress.

A stressor is an annoying, troublesome, or destructive event, need, stimulus, or situation that an individual encounters in the environment (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Representative stressors include overload, conflict, and invasion (Pang & Ruan, 2023; Shagirbasha et al., 2023; Ayyagari et al., 2011; Bucher et al., 2013; Maier et al., 2015). Sunil et al (2022) proposes that cognitive factors, self and personality factors, environmental factors and social factors are the four main stressors that contribute to social media fatigue. Next, a strain refers to various responses of individuals to stressors and is the behavioural, psychological, and physiological result of stress (Tarafdar et al., 2019; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). In addition, an outcome can be a psychological or behavioural response to strain. In studies related to the enterprise social media context, scholars have explored outcomes due to strain, like discontinuous behaviours (Luqman et al., 2017; Ravindran et al., 2014), depression, anxiety (Pontes, 2017; Dhir et al.,

2018), poor performance, and declining productivity (Dhir et al., 2019; Lepp et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016).

### **The Adoption of Stressor-Strain-Outcome Model in Enterprise Social Media Research**

The Stressor-Strain-Outcome model established by Koeske (1993) divides the process of dealing with stress into three components, namely stressors, strain, and outcomes. Firstly, stressors cause users to produce the corresponding strain. In this regard, strain leads to the corresponding behaviour or performance, which is known as the outcome. In previous studies, the stressor-Strain-Outcome model has often been used to study enterprise social media.

For example, the study conducted by Lee (2016) adopted the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model to investigate technostress in mobile communication as well as its effects on quality of life and productivity. He found technostress in mobile communication to have a significant impact on the quality of workers' lives and job productivity. In addition, based on the model of Stressor-Strain-Outcome, Teng et al (2022); Ye et al (2022) explores the relationship between overload and social media fatigue, non-continued use and fear of missing out, Pang's study in 2021 revealed a significant negative relationship between information overload and social media fatigue and well-being.

Moreover, some research works examined the antecedents and outcomes of social media fatigue based on the enterprise social media perspective (Zhang et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2018; Dhir et al., 2019), which subsequently affected the adoption of the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model for this study. For instance, individuals who experience fear of missing out always keep an eye on all information they can receive, which leads them to intentionally interact with others over a long period of time. The compulsive social media use caused by fear of missing out can lead to personal fatigue (Bright & Logan, 2018; Dhir et al., 2018; Tugtekin et al., 2020). Furthermore, social media fatigue refers to a subjective, multidimensional feeling. At the individual behavioural level, by reducing the frequency of using social media and ignoring and hiding information, employees can reduce interaction at work (Cao & Sun, 2018), while at the psychological level, employees feel tired, disinterested, disappointed, and have the intention of discontinuing use (Severyn et al., 2016). Hence, the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model has been an ideal ground for research examining the causes and/or effects of the adoption and usage of enterprise social media.

### **Conclusion**

Along with the rapid blossom of the Internet, the continuous prevalence of smart phones, and the continuous improvement of mobile networks, all kinds of social media software have mushroomed. Social media has penetrated all aspects of the Internet, including picture communities, search engines, blogs, as well as micro-blogs, and other related applications. Social media has become a part of the daily lives of modern people.

In a sense, social media has changed the lives of modern people. Traditional media are fading away, and social media platforms are thriving. This study reviews the research related to the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model and enterprise social media. Grounded by the Stressor-Strain-Outcome model, it is believed that academic researchers will be able to deepen their exploration of literature development in the context of enterprise social media. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to adopt and apply the Stress-Strain-Outcome model in

examining the predictors and impacts of enterprise social media adoption on employee and organization performance in various industry and country settings.

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