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Social Astuteness and Creativity Recognition: Exploring the Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms

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**SOCIAL ASTUTENESS AND CREATIVITY RECOGNITION: EXPLORING THE
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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon the sensemaking theory and socio-political perspective of creativity, our research develops the theoretical model that investigates how the creator's social astuteness may affect evaluators' creativity recognition through the mediating mechanisms of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing. We test the proposed hypotheses by analyzing the cross-sectional data across multiple industries. Results show that creators can capitalize on their social astuteness and initiate proactive efforts such as elaborating the novelty and championing the usefulness of generated ideas to enable their creativity to be recognized. Results also reveal that networking ability can interact with social astuteness and determine the extent to which creators may resort to elaboration behavior on novelty to promote recognition of creativity. Our research contributes to the creativity recognition literature by integrating the creator's political sensemaking into the creativity recognition process and delineating the dual mediation mechanism as well as the moderating mechanisms.

Keywords: Social astuteness, network ability, novelty elaboration, usefulness championing, creativity recognition

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Organizations today face intense pressures to innovate to meet the fast-changing customer requirements and draw market spotlight (Miron-Speckto, Erez, & Naveh, 2011). Identified as the mental or social process (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017) to generate idea, insights, or problem solution of both novelty and potentially usefulness, creativity ranges from breakthrough discovery to incremental improvement with the aim to solve problem or make work more standardized, cost effective, and efficient. Since creativity is conceived as the first stage of innovation (Baer, 2012) and contributes to organizational vitality and longevity, creativity research has burgeoned in the past twenty years with large amount of output that delineate the dispositional attribute, contextual factors, and their interactions in predicting creativity at different levels (i.e., individual, team, organization).

Compared to creativity generation, creativity recognition, which refers to the extent to which supervisors (or evaluators) perceive a target as creative, has captured limited attention (Zhou, Wang, Bavato, Tasselli, & Wu, 2019). Creativity recognition is significant because only after a creative idea is recognized and positively evaluated by evaluators can the idea be implemented and adding value to an organization. In this regard, a nuanced understanding of factors that influence the perception and evaluation of creativity theoretically can shed light on the social process that affect creativity recognition and thereby increasing the success rate of transferring creativity generation to creativity implementation. Specifically, creativity recognition has a subjective component that beyond objective or normative standards (Zhou & Woodman, 2003) and therefore is susceptible to individual and contextual influences. Past research proliferates on the individual influence on creativity recognition from the evaluator's side such as education, functional background, age, tenure (Hulsheger, Anderson, & Salgado, 2009), prior knowledge, experience (Zhou et al., 2019) and other dispositional traits (i.e., Madjar, Greenberg, & Chen,

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2011). For example, some scholar has presumed that domain relevant knowledge is the primary driver (Simonton, 1999) but has not considered whether situational factors may also play a role while domain knowledge remains constant (Muller, Waksalak, & Krishnan, 2014), to remedy this research void, other scholars complements the impacts of contextual factors such as hierarchy (Keum & See, 2017), culture norm (i.e., fearing risks or chasing perfection) and group dynamics (i.e., leadership; Michaelis, Stegmaier, & Sonntag, 2010) on creativity recognition.

Although prior research explicates the factors that influencing creativity recognition, there are still some inadequacies. Firstly, extant creativity recognition research is largely evaluator-centered but underestimates the proactive role that employee creator plays during the interactive process between two parties, which may ultimately affect the recognition results. Secondly, a evaluator may have one's own implicit theory of creativity, which refer to the lay beliefs or mental representations about what causes, predicts, or indicates what (Levy, Chiu, & Hong, 2006), thereby influencing creativity recognition consequence. Implicit theory can be developed through socialization, exposure to media, and perceiving enacted cultural norms (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016). Past research has revealed that even without systematic differences in domain knowledge, evaluator's assessments of creativity can differ systematically (Mueller, Waksalak, & Krishnan, 2014). As evaluators may use their implicit theories of creativity that drawn from work experiences, cultural norms, and capture cues in Chinese context that manifest collective spirit, social harmony, and intuitiveness when they assess creativity (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016). For some people, creativity that engenders change and upsets the status quo within organizations is disruptive in nature (Janssen, Van de Vliert, & West, 2004). With this respect, a creator needs to understand evaluators' implicit theories through their sensemaking efforts with the purpose to form a shared understanding about creativity that featured of novelty and usefulness. In addition, the

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sociopolitical perspective acknowledges that organizations are political in part. Creativity recognition implies that evaluators may not discern a normative level of creativity that inherently possessed by a target (Zhou et al., 2016), which means that requisite conditions beyond technical and capability aspect should also be taken into consideration. Serving as the prerequisite that preceding creativity implementation, creativity recognition might be the positive consequence of political endeavor. Those who perceive a creative idea as threatening their position to engage in self-interested behavior designed to prevent it from being realized (Frost & Egri, 1991). Empirical research demonstrates the importance of political support in creativity implementation (Baer, 2012) and states that political skills are an important driver of innovation (Ford, 1996). Unfortunately, the facilitating role of political skills on creativity recognition has barely been examined empirically. Fourthly, although novelty and usefulness are perceived as two basic components of creativity (Amabile, 199), they are orthogonal in nature (Zhou, Wang, Song, & Wu, 2016) and that predictors influencing novelty may not affecting usefulness. Theoretically, as novelty implies a departure from routine performance (Janssen, Van De Vliert, & West, 2004), it is perceived as the primary factor of creativity whereas usefulness is perceived as the secondary one (Perry-Smith, 2014). Nevertheless, in managerial practice, usefulness is much emphasized (Zhou et al., 2019) than novelty, because novelty is usually disruptive and entails uncertain outcome or risks during implementation. In this regards, divergent mechanisms that addressing the novelty and usefulness divergences should be developed and therefore to achieve a much-nuanced understanding about creativity recognition.

To account for these research gaps, our research draws on the Sensemaking Theory of Creativity (Ford, 1996) to elaborate how employee creators make sense of organizational environment and implicit theories of evaluators. In specific, a creator can take a sociopolitical

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perspective to capture contextual cues and draw implications can achieve understanding about organizational expectation, management dilemma, and calculative concerns of evaluators. Political skills represent a comprehensive set of social competencies that impact on a varieties of workplace outcomes and help to mitigate possible uncertainties and risks that may threaten creativity recognition. As one dimension of political skills, social astuteness refers to the social awareness and competency to observe and interpret the organizational cues and adapt behavior to changing situational demands to effectively influence others' response (Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé, Brouer, Douglas, & Lux, 2007) and achieve one's objective. Furthermore, our article not only explicates that a creator's social astuteness enables one to sensitively capture organizational cues, understand environmental features and take perspective-taking approach to capture others' needs and concerns precisely, but also specifies that social astuteness may serve as a dispositional and ability antecedent of proactive behaviors. A creator who has social astuteness will be more capable to initiate tailored strategies and targeted endeavors to proactively influence the recognition outcome. Our research illuminates the specific proactive behaviors such as novelty elaboration and usefulness championing that a creator may adopt to advance creativity recognition. To this end, Through integrating the sociopolitical approach with sensemaking theory of creativity, our research shifts the focus of creativity recognition from evaluator to employee creator and elaborates that an employee creator's sensemaking outcome, or the perception and conceptualization of organizational environment, may inspire initiative behaviors and decide the specific type of behavioral strategy that one may adopt to persuade and convince evaluators during the social interactive process. Creator's proactive endeavors serve as the mediating mechanisms that channel social astuteness to creativity recognition. Complementarily, we point out that novelty elaboration and usefulness championing account for the creativity components of novelty and

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usefulness respectively, therefore, to empirically advocate creativity recognition in different ways. Despite capabilities, expertise of creator and the quality of creative ideas, resource and social support are integral parts of creativity recognition, our research figures out the moderating effect of networking ability on the relationships between social astuteness, novelty elaboration and usefulness championing. Our paper identifies that a creator who has networking capability can rally support, resource, and apply influence, more importantly, can be more probable to initiate proactive behaviors to promote creativity recognition. Taken together, our research represents an initial attempt to uncover the antecedent and mediating mechanism of creativity recognition.

Likewise, our research entails several contributions. Foremost, we shift the observation standpoint of creativity recognition from an evaluator-centered point of view to creator-concentrated perspective. As creativity recognition is subjective in property and open to a variety of individual and contextual influences, we articulate that a creator who takes a sociopolitical approach to make sense of organizational context can utilize keen social awareness to capture environmental cues and know about other's instrumental concern, therefore to execute proactive behavior to increase the odds of creativity recognition. Given that scant research has examined the impacts of social astuteness in creativity related settings, our research fills in the research blank by building up the association between employee creator's astuteness and creativity recognition which channeled by dual mediating mechanisms. Furthermore, since employee initiator needs not only procedural and resource support, but also social and cognitive support from network ties to support their advocating behaviors in practical, networking ability may determine the extent to which an employee creator can forge relationships, build coalitions and alliances to gain resource and social support. In light of this, our research uncovers the contingency role that networking

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ability plays in determining the extent to which social astuteness may be transformed into advocating efforts.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Creativity Recognition

Creativity recognition refers to the extent to which individuals or groups perceive whether a target is worth pursuing with respect to novelty and usefulness, and in relation to identified problems by referring to internalized criteria of the domain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 80). Due to its subjective nature, creativity recognition is also open to social-political maneuvers. On the one hand, employees' sensemaking may influence creativity recognition. In organizations, employees usually rely on their perception instead of accurate information to make sense of circumstance and act for change or learning (Weick, 1995: 55). Sensemaking process is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995: 55), during which collective narrative is construed for change or learning (i.e., creativity, innovation; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Klein, Moon, & Hoffman, 2006). Organizational events and situational cues such as breakdown, surprise, opportunity, heterogeneity, and uncertainty (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) serve as target for sensemaking. However, sensemaking goes beyond passive extraction and interpretation of cues, and can reversely affect construed situation, which in turn facilitate interpretation of meaning and provoke plausible action (Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993). The sensemaking perspective (Drazin et al., 1999; Ford, 1996) suggests that individuals make sense of uncertain situation by perceiving certain cues and creating their own interpretation or meaning (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), which provide goals and motivation for their subsequent action. In this respect, employees who make sense of organizational environment may exert their influences on creativity recognition results, such as leveraging social intelligence to produce shared understandings and mobilize

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supports. On the other hand, evaluator's dispositional and implicit theory of creativity (Zhou et al., 2016) may also affect creativity recognition. Since creativity is change-oriented and disruptive in nature of creativity and points to breaking or upsetting established structure, systems, routines (Ford, 1996) or behavioral patterns, creativity recognition may encounter resistance either because of technical suspicions or because of potential threat to vested interests (Janssen, et al., 2004). A creator who makes sense of organizational environment to advocate one's creativity should also address evaluator's implicit theory of creativity, such as implementation instrumentality, which refers to the expectation of positive outcomes (both intrinsic benefits and extrinsic outcomes) that associated with recognition and represents the belief that creative efforts will bring about performance improvements and result in certain image gains (Baer, 2012).

The Mediation Role of Novelty Elaboration in the Relationship between Social Astuteness and Creativity Recognition

Past research documented that employees' political framing (or sensemaking) of environmental problems can enhance their idea elaboration, assessment, and implementation (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Political skills may enhance idea evaluation (i.e., assessment of viability, acceptability, and effectiveness; Cropley, 2006). As one critical dimension of this composite construct, social astuteness conceptually indicates to being attuned to social environment and behave astutely when observing and interpreting others' behavior. Social astuteness represents the social competencies functions in intrapsychic, behavioral, and interpersonal processes (Munyon, Summers, Thompson, & Ferris, 2015) and is identified as a type of personal attribute or ability that lubricate agentic behavior effectively for personal and/or organizational objectives (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004: 311).

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Social astuteness can affect creativity recognition for reasons. Novelty recognition, the component of creativity recognition, is defined as that the extent to which that generated ideas are considered as original, unique, or unconventional by normative standards (Zhou et al. 2016). Employees who have social astuteness possess self-awareness and devote outward attention to interpret environmental cues with heightened amount and quality of attention, navigate work environment (Ferris et al. 2007). They are keen observers of people across diverse organizational situations and are sensitive to social norms (Ferris et al., 2007). Moreover, they may develop accurate understanding of evaluators' interests, preferences, characteristics of encountered situations and organizational system which jointly determines the value, fit, and promise of generated ideas (Csikszentmihályi, 1996). As they know the big picture and the incentives or instrumentality concerns of supervisors, and effectively employ past performance as impression management strategies, creativity recognition will be facilitated in consequence.

Social astuteness inspires creativity elaboration in several folds. Firstly, a creator who has social astuteness pays attention to external environment and opportunities with full awareness, such that he or she can accurately capture cues emanating from organizational settings and know how to demonstrate appropriate initiatives (Wihler, Blickle, Ellen, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2017). Secondly, a social astute individual can exert impression management to harvest interpersonal trust, take perspective-taking strategy to stand in others' shoes to build up interactive communication, use persuasion skills to convince others by pointing out tangible benefits. Novelty elaboration refers to the process of systematically elaborating the novel idea's potential for further clarification and development (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017), which involves technical elaboration on new characteristics through comparison, ambiguities clarifications, explanation of induced benefits and changes. As creative ideas imply departures from or extensions of existing products, services, or

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ways of doing things, uncertainty is a signature feature of most creative ideas (Baer, 2012), which provokes disputes caused by differences in viewpoints among those who are influenced, and such conflicts, in turn, may result in unnecessary suspensions in implementation or its ultimate failure (Frost & Egri, 1991). Given the disruptive property of creativity and the uncertainty and risks inherent in novel ideas, an evaluator may have information-asymmetry on the uniqueness of a creative idea and choose to abandon it; whereas social astuteness enables an individual to excel in opportunity recognition and capitalization. Novelty elaboration explains technical specifications in an informative way, maintain authenticity and genuineness through impression management, and build up interactive communication to share the uniqueness of a generated idea as well as eliminate adverse criticism.

Novelty elaboration can promote creativity recognition in folds. Individuals usually have two forms of mental representation: high-level construal that refers to schematic capture of gist and objective during knowing about distant and abstract things and low-level construal that used to capture proximal events with concrete procedures and detailed information of execution (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Given that proximity is associated with familiarity which tends to activate narrow processing and generate relatively non-creative cognition (Muller, Wakslak, & Krishnan, 2014), elaboration on novelty can increase receivers' psychological distance from the knowing target, enhance exposure to novel, unfamiliar stimuli, and activate broader, abstract processing of information (Förster, Liberman, & Shapira, 2009), all of which prepare them best to understand novel information (Förster, Marguc, & Gillebaart, 2010), therefore, to increase evaluator's recognition of novelty. Illuminating on elaborate key features of a new idea or product with accuracy and credibility, novelty elaboration can mitigate existed technical ambiguity and promote idea shareability. Novelty elaboration identifies the implicit changes in behavioral patterns,

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operational procedures, and organizational system. By presenting ideas and translate professional technological knowledge in an understandable and communitive way, novelty elaboration can broaden receivers' attentional scope, deepen their understandings about technical advantages of novel ideas, and account for evaluators' instrumental concern and expectation, in consequence, to promote creativity recognition.

Hypothesis 1. Novelty elaboration mediates the relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition.

The Mediating Role of Usefulness Championing in the Relationship between Social Astuteness and Creativity Recognition

Socially astute individuals can accurately diagnose situations and managing shared meaning of organizations in a productive and appropriate way (Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, & Frink, 2005), they can capture evaluators' attention precisely, adopt persuasion skills in communication, and leverage past performance to establish favorable images and signal future performance (Treadway, Breland, Williams, Cho, Yang, & Ferris, 2013). Specially, social astute employees select proper style or delivery tactics to convey the usefulness of produced ideas, and demonstrate honesty, openness, and reliability to gain evaluators' trust, confidence, and support (Ferris et al. 2007: 302).

A creator who has social astuteness can be attuned to organizational environment and take personal initiatives (i.e., champion behaviors) for creativity recognition. Given that generated creative ideas usually have inadequate legitimacy, implementation of creativity typically implies challenging established power structures in an organization, which might cause resistance (Janssen et al., 2004). Creative ideas usually be associated with substantive changes in roles, power, and status and therefore have a greater likelihood of being rejected (Baer, 2021), regardless of how

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promising a creative idea may be, its implementation will probably conflict with some interests and jeopardize some alliances (Kimberly, 1981). Evaluators who selectively rely on situational cues to determine the potential of implementation might experience uncertainty during the evaluation process. With this respect, a creator's reputation, influence, efficacy, ability, and past performance may serve as reference for assessment. A creator who has social astuteness can utilize the impression management strategy to manage evaluators' perception and reaction (Treadway et al. 2007). In addition, social astuteness inspires championing behavior, which is usually triggered by the need for achievement or propensity of risk-taking and conceived as a type of proactive action that dedicated to obtaining resource approval (i.e., money, talent, time; Howell & Higgins, 1990). Through championing the marketability and feasibility of an idea or a product, championing behavior functions in establishing utility and legitimacy.

In addition to novelty, evaluators also need to know with certainty whether any new idea is truly valuable and appropriate. According to the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1996), usefulness is another key factor of creativity, which refers to the plausibility and feasibility of produced idea or product in a given context (Anderson, Potočnik, & Zhou, 2014). Usefulness championing represents a series of promotion efforts of creativity involving usage assessment, alignment of resources, the exploitation and commercialization of said opportunities (McFadzean, O'Loughlin, & Shaw, 2005: 352). Usefulness championing aims at obtaining the green light for acknowledging generated ideas and acquiring the key resources (i.e., money, talent, political cover; Perry-Smith & Munnizzi, 2017) to implement. Through championing the usefulness of a novel idea, a creator can provide concrete cues of the appropriateness of an idea and build up a sense of familiarity that enable evaluators to feel comfortable with the novelty idea. Usefulness championing helps eliminate perceptual and behavioral bias against generated ideas and buffer

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negative effects induced by organizational politics (Brouer, Harris, & Kacmar, 2011), and ensure that generated ideas are worth risking evaluators' social reputation and investing resources. Through illuminating the merits of proposed ideas and specific condition of implementation, usefulness championing, which clarifies the utility, selling point, and feasibility of generated ideas can solicit positive perception and feedback from evaluators, decrease uncertainty about social acceptance, know about, therefore, to increase the odds that generated ideas to be recognized.

Hypothesis 2. Usefulness championing mediates the relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition.

The Moderating Role of Networking Ability

Mobilizing sponsorship requires that individuals have cultivated the types of social relationships—close connections to trusted friends and allies—that provide access to such assets (Obstfeld, 2005). Network abilities are defined as the extent to which individuals skilled in developing and using social network effect change at work (Ferris et al. 2007). Concerning about the effectiveness at forging relationships, building coalitions and alliances with others with the aim to establishing friendships, garnering support, negotiating, and managing conflict, networking ability enables employees to effectively influence their targets to achieve goals. Without networking ability, a creator may lack the capability to develop close connections, forge beneficial alliances, regulate evaluators' implementation instrumentality, thereby decreasing the odds of creative ideas ultimately being recognized (Baer, 2012). A creator who possesses networking ability can employ influence tactics to build beneficial interactive relationships (Grosser, Obstfeld, Choi, Woehler, Lopez-Kidwell, Labianca, & Borgatti, 2018). Furthermore, network abilities enable a focal employee to leverage social capital to mobilize sponsorship, develop championing

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strategies, proactively acquire resource such as social support that is critical for idea elaboration from social networks.

Specifically, to address the uniqueness of a generated new idea, an initiator needs emotional support to reduce ambiguity and push ideas forward (Madjar, Oldham, & Pratt, 2002). Employees who have networking ability can possess emotional support, work in conjunction with others in formulating intentional actions, and build up motivating environment that characterized by a sense of security and relatedness, therefore, to enhance the shareability of generated ideas to gatekeepers (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). To identify the specific ways for idea improvement and expansion (Harrison & Rouse, 2015), an individual needs constructive feedback, whereas a creator who has network abilities can acquire the informative suggestion to refine and consolidate one's ideas.

Originated either from minor adaptive or from set-breaking heuristics, creativity is considered as an alternative to routine performance (Madjar et al., 2011) and requests for substantial resource investment. Social astute employees who have high networking ability can integrate their relationship awareness with resource-seeking capabilities in building up effective coalitions that necessary to induce cooperation, rally support, and overcome the political resistance (Grosser et al., 2018) during creativity recognition process. Past research suggests that entrepreneurs who score higher in networking ability tends to be more proactive in building robust social networks and then leveraging those networks to achieve desired outcomes (Fang, Chi, Chen, & Baron, 2015). Dutton and Ashford (1993) theorized that assembling an alliance of supporters should allow issue sellers to better attract the attention of top management. Social astute employees who have high networking ability can effectively leverage social network positions that offer opportunities to gather and control information. Through leveraging the informational and social resources, they

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can exploit opportunities with tailored behavior for favorable evaluations. For example, they may initiate effective communication with evaluators of different background or experiences to generate positive reputation, mitigate possible resistance, in turn to sell their ideas successfully. On the contrary, a creator who has low networking ability as incompetent coalition builders can't put their social awareness into practice, fails to communicate the novel features persuasively and build robust social networks coalitions to overcome the political resistance of changes.

Hypothesis 3a. Networking ability will moderate the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration, such that the relationship will become stronger (vs. weaker) when networking ability is high (vs. low).

Hypothesis 3b. Networking ability will moderate the indirect relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition through novelty elaboration, such that the indirect relationship will become stronger (vs. weaker) when networking ability is high (vs. low).

A creator who has social astuteness can develop a deep understanding of the cultural norms and organizational dynamics and manage their image and past performance as a cue about their capabilities to put creativity into practice well. Aimed at obtaining approval of generated ideas and resource sponsorship, usefulness championing points to articulating a compelling argument in advocating the implied usefulness and social impact. A socially astute creator who has high social networking ability can effectively translate the feasibility and usefulness of a generated idea to evaluators, enable them to be aware of the embedded value and benefits, gain their approval and required resource for implementation by leveraging one's social influence (Perry-Smith, & Mannucci, 2017; Anand, Gardner, & Morris, 2007). Prior research suggests that decision makers are more probably to approve and support ideas proposed by creators perceived as legitimate and competent (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008). As a referral of legitimacy and competence, networking

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ability serves to ensure evaluators that a creator and his or her proposed ideas are worth risking their social reputation and organizational resources. A creator who has high networking ability is able to mobilize the support of key allies should be in a position to sway important resource allocation decisions in one's favor and thereby improving the chance that creative ideas may be endorsed (Baer, 2012). Conversely, an astute creator who has low networking ability lacks social relational support and resource to manage evaluators' reactions and convince them the marketability and feasibility of generated idea, thereby failing to initiate usefulness championing behavior.

Hypothesis 4a. Networking ability will moderate the relationship between social astuteness and usefulness championing, such that the relationship will become stronger (vs. weaker) when networking ability is high (vs. low).

Hypothesis 4b. Networking ability will moderate the indirect relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition through usefulness championing, such that the indirect relationship will become stronger (vs. weaker) when networking ability is high (vs. low).

OVERVIEW OF TWO STUDIES

We conducted two studies in a progressive manner to test research propositions. We set out to establish the content validity, consistency reliability, factor structure and criterion-related reliability of created variables in Pilot Study 1. In Study 2, we sampled data from several high-tech companies highlighting employees' creativity empirically and ascribe employees' creativity

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into performance evaluation portfolio, with the purpose to make our research fit into the creativity evaluation context. The indirect effects of social astuteness on creativity recognition via novelty elaboration and usefulness championing and the moderating effects of networking ability were tested in Study 2.

STUDY 1

Samples and Data

After reviewing extant literature on creativity recognition and proactive behaviors, we did not find established measures of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing proposed that tailored to our research. We defined the constructs and developed items using the inductive and deductive approaches. Firstly, we interviewed 10 managers (profiles see in Table 1) who served as knowledgeable participants and outsider researchers of their companies and asked them to provide descriptions on idea elaboration and championing during creativity assessment. We further did literature review (See Table 2) on elaboration and championing to clarify the meaning and used logical partitioning technique to generate items. For example, novelty elaboration was measured from aspects of specification, contrasting and structuring. After developing the primary scales, we invited two professors majored in management domain to evaluate the proposed items and revised accordingly to ensure the content validity of newly created constructs. Finally, we developed 12 items that dedicated to reflecting the scenario and context in our research.

Insert Table 1 about here

Insert Table 2 about here

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To refine and examine the structure of measures, we accumulated data of MBA students from City University of Macau who had work experiences in enterprises before entering the university to continue their study. We first interviewed them to discuss the item contents and adopted their feedbacks in item revision process. After that, we invited the students to fill in questionnaires anonymously with a cover letter that documented answer requirement, research purpose, and privacy policy for their consent. Two doctoral students helped hand out and collect questionnaires back. Finally, we got 116 copies of response with response rate of 93%. Among them, 44 were male (37.9%) and 72 were female (62.1%), the average age and work experience were 26.84 ($SD = 5.01$) and 3.27 years ($SD = 4.58$), respectively.

Factor Structure. We did exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine the factor structure first, then we examined the consistency reliability and conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the extent to which proposed measurement model fits the data and establish the criterion-related validity. Since we conceptualized the constructs as higher-order latent variables that shapes reflective (vs. formative) dimensions with arrows flowing from the construct to the indicators, the number of factors with explained variances estimated in percentage to verify scale appropriateness. Results show that Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 (66) = 454, p < .01$) with a factors of Eigen value more than 1 extracted (Eigen value of factor 1 = 3.7, Eigen value of factor 2 = 2.6), which explained 54% of the total variance. Results also reveal that the internal consistency reliability of the developed items of the two latent constructs ($\alpha_{novelty\ elaboration} = .80$), $\alpha_{usefulness\ championing} = .82$) were generally acceptable. The factor structure was shown (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 about here

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To further explore the factor structure of the two constructs of novelty elaboration and usefulness champion, we did EFA to compare the results of 1 factor ($\chi^2 (54) = 259.4, p < .01, CFI = .50, TLI = .39, RMSEA = .18$ with 90% CI [.16, .21], SRMR = .16), 2 factors ($\chi^2 (43) = 78.49, p < .01, CFI = .91, TLI = .87, RMSEA = .08$ with 90% CI [.05, .11], SRMR = .05), the findings verified that the 2-factor measurement model fitted the data better than the alternative model of 1 factor did, thereby providing support to the present scale development and construction. The CFA results of baseline model ($\chi^2 (53) = 99.55, p < .01, CFI = .89, TLI = .86, RMSEA = .08$ with 90% CI [.06, .11], SRMR = .08) suggested acceptable fit to data. The results of the alternative model of both items of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing loaded on one factor ($\chi^2 (54) = 268.8, p < .01, CFI = .48, TLI = .36, RMSEA = .19$ with 90% CI [.16, .21], SRMR = .16) show poorer fit to the data. The findings reveal that the baseline model of 2 factors fits the data better than the alternative one with all items loaded on one factor.

To retest the construct reliability and criterion-related validity of new created constructs, we ran another study. 148 Doctoral students from City University of Macau and their former supervisors were invited to anonymously participated our survey by fulfilling electric questionnaires with a response rate of 72%. Finally, we got 102 valid and paired responses from these students who rated their novelty elaboration and usefulness championing behavior while their supervisors evaluate their creativity. Among these students, there were 27 male (26.5%) and 75 females (73.5%) and the average age was 31 year-old ($SD = 4.82$). All students had work experiences (Mean = 3.41, $SD = 0.74$) before they entered this university. We ran CFA to compare the model fit of the 3-factor baseline model ($\chi^2 (101) = 130.61, p < .05, CFI = .91, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .07$), either to that of the alternative 2-factor model with novelty elaboration and usefulness championing loaded on one factor ($\chi^2 (103) = 236.98, p < .01, CFI$

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= .59, TLI = .52, RMSEA = .11, SRMR = .13) or the 1-factor model with all items loaded on 1 factor ($\chi^2 (104) = 247, p < .01$, CFI = .56, TLI = .49, RMSEA = .12, SRMR = .13). The findings suggest that the baseline model fits the data better than 2-factor or 1-factor model. The reliability of constructs ($\alpha_{novelty\ elaboration} = .72, \alpha_{usefulness\ championing} = .80$) were both acceptable. We also regressed creativity on novelty elaboration ($\beta = .51, SE = .13, p < 0.01$) and on usefulness championing ($\beta = .47, SE = .13, p < .01$). The findings reveal that the impacts were significantly positive, thereby providing primary support to the criterion-related validity of the new-created scales.

STUDY 2

Participants and Procedures

This study was conducted within business contexts which emphasized employees' creativity performance. We adopted the non-probability sampling method, namely, convenient sampling, to collect data from 16 high-tech companies ranging across industries such as pharmacy, IT, information service, and manufacture that located in Hainan and Guangdong provinces of China. With the help of two graduated DBA students, we distributed electric questionnaires to employees and their supervisors and finally we got 415 paired electric questionnaires returned with responses rate over 90%. The data was collected at three different time points with an interval of two weeks, just in case that long time intervals would run the risk of employee turnover.

Employees who consented to anonymously took part in our study were required to report demographical attributes of age, gender, education, and tenure and rated their social astuteness, novelty elaboration and usefulness championing. Among them, 141 were male (33.98%), most employees have college or above education background (Mean = 2.83, $SD = .80$), and their average working experience was 4-6 years ($SD = 1.25$). Supervisors were invited to rate their recognition

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of employees' creativity. Of the supervisors, 33% were male, most of them had college or above education background ($SD = .77$) and the average working experience was 4-6 years ($SD = 1.20$).

Measures

Following Brislin's (1980) translation-back translation procedure, English scales were first translated into Chinese by one DBA student fluent in both English and Chinese, another DBA student, who was also fluent in both English and Chinese, translated the Chinese versions back into English; the two bilingual translators then discussed and resolved the discrepancies in the two English versions. All items without specific notes were measured by 5-point Likert-type scales that ranging from 1= *strongly disagree* to 5= *strongly agree*.

Independent variables. We adopt the 5-item measure of *social astuteness* developed by Ferris et al., (2005). The sample item reads "I understand people of this company very well" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$).

Novelty elaboration. We adopted the items of novelty elaboration that proposed in study 1. The exemplary item reads "I introduce the features of the idea / product /service in details" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$).

Usefulness championing. We adopted the same indicators demonstrated Study 1. The exemplary item reads "I highlight the market value of this idea /product/service" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$).

Moderating variable. We adopt the 6-item measure of networking ability that developed by Ferris et al. (2005). The sample item reads "I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$).

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Dependent variables. We used the 4-item measure of *creativity recognition* proposed by Soda, Stea, and Pedersen (2017). Exemplary item reads “I acknowledge that the employee’s product / service can improve this unit’s performance” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .73$).

Control variables. Demographic attributes such as *age, gender, experience, and education* were controlled.

Analysis Strategy

We calculated the correlations among variables and conducted Confirmative factor analysis (CFA) to test the fit indices of structural model composed by social astuteness, novelty elaboration, usefulness championing, creativity recognition, and networking ability to test for convergent and discriminant validity. We also did path-analysis on the direct and indirect effects and plotted the moderation effects.

Results

CFA. The CFA results on the structural model that composed by 5 latent variables (χ^2 (314) = 612.37, $p < .01$, CFI = .91, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .048 with 90% CI [.042, .053], SRMR = .05) suggested that the baseline model fit to the data was acceptable. To make comparisons between baseline model fit and alternative model fit, we also ran CFA on alternative models. The findings suggest that the original model fits the data better than the alternative ones with 4 factors (χ^2 (318) = 628, $p < .01$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, $p < .01$, RMSEA = .05 with 90% CI [.043, .054], SRMR = .05; or (χ^2 (318) = 635, $p < .01$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, $p < .05$, RMSEA = .05 with 90% CI [.043, .055], SRMR = .05), or 3 factors (χ^2 (321) = 651, $p < .01$, CFI = .89, TLI = .88, $p > .1$, RMSEA = .05 with 90% CI [.044, .055], SRMR = .05), or 2 factors (χ^2 (323) = 712, $p > .1$, CFI = .87, TLI = .86, $p > .1$, RMSEA = .054 with 90% CI [.05, .06], SRMR = .06) or o1 factor (χ^2 (324) = 792, $p > .1$, CFI = .84,

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TLI = .83, $p > .1$, RMSEA = .06 with 90% CI [.054, .064], SRMR = .06), thereby the convergent and discriminant validity of constructs in baseline model was established.

Hypotheses testing. The descriptive statistics (See in Table 4) suggest that social astuteness positively correlates to novelty elaboration ($\gamma = .62, p < .01$), usefulness championing ($\gamma = .52, p < .01$) and creativity recognition ($\gamma = .52, p < .01$). Creativity recognition positively relates to novelty elaboration ($\gamma = .56, p < .01$) and usefulness championing ($\gamma = .51, p < .01$). In addition, networking ability positively correlates to novelty elaboration ($\gamma = .64, p < .01$), usefulness championing ($\gamma = .56, p < .01$) and creativity recognition ($\gamma = .50, p < .01$).

Insert Table 4 about here

We adopted the Hierarchical Linear Regression and ran regression analysis, which yielded significant findings (See Table 5). When demographical variables were controlled, the regression coefficients of social astuteness on novelty elaboration ($\gamma = .59, p < .01$) and usefulness championing ($\gamma = .48, p < .01$) were both significantly positive. Likewise, when we regressed creativity recognition simultaneously on social astuteness ($\gamma = .26, p < .01$), novelty elaboration ($\beta = .29, p < .01$) and usefulness championing ($\beta = .32, p < .01$), the regression coefficients were both significantly positive, suggesting the existence of partial mediation effects. During our testing of the moderation effects, the hierarchical regression results show that the coefficients of social astuteness ($\gamma = -.01, p > .1$) and networking ability ($\beta = .06, p > .01$) on novelty elaboration became insignificant; the interaction parameter of these two constructs on novelty elaboration was significantly positive ($\beta = .09, p < .01$), supporting the moderating effect of networking ability. Whereas the interaction parameter of social astuteness and networking ability on usefulness

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championing was insignificant ($\beta = .02$, $p > .1$), suggesting that the moderation effects of networking ability on the two mediators were partially verified.

Insert Table 5 about here

We also conducted SEM (structural equation modelling) to retest the integrated results. The findings (see Figure 1) reveal that social astuteness positively relates to novelty elaboration ($\gamma = .32$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$) and usefulness championing ($\gamma = .17$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$). Also, novelty elaboration and usefulness championing positively relate to creativity recognition ($\beta = .43$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$; $\beta = .44$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$). The overall results generally replicate the findings of hierarchical linear regression.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Mediation effects. To specify the mediation effects, we calculated the bootstrapped mediation effects. The estimated mediating effect of social astuteness on creativity recognition via novelty elaboration was significantly positive (indirect effect = .14, $SE = .03$, with 95% CI [LL = .08, UL = .20]). The indirect effect of social astuteness on creativity recognition via usefulness championing was also significantly positive (indirect effect = .10, $SE = .04$, with 95% CI [LL = .06, UL = .17]), verifying H1 and H2. The simple slope testing (Table 6) and hypotheses testing results (Table 7) were demonstrated.

Insert Table 6 about here

Insert Table 7 about here

Moderation effects. Results yielded significant interaction effect between social astuteness and networking ability on novelty elaboration ($\gamma = .10$, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .03, UL = .16]), such that when networking ability was high (+1SD), the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration was stronger ($\gamma = .38$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .28, UL = .48]); when networking ability was low (-1SD), the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration was weaker ($\gamma = .28$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .18, UL = .38]), supporting Hypothesis 3a. However, the interactional effect between social astuteness and networking ability on usefulness championing is insignificant positively ($\gamma = .02$, $SE = .04$, $p > .1$, 95% CI [LL = -.05, UL = .09]), rejecting Hypothesis 4a. The single slope result of networking ability on the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration was plotted in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Moderated mediation effects. The findings also suggested that the moderated mediation effect of networking ability on the indirect relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition via novelty elaboration was significantly positive ($\gamma = .04$, $SE = .02$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [LL = .01, UL = .14]), supporting Hypothesis 3b. Specially, when networking ability was high (+1SD), the indirect effect between social astuteness and creativity recognition through novelty elaboration was significantly positive ($\beta = .17$, $SE = .04$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .11, UL = .24]); when networking ability was low (-1SD), the indirect effect between social astuteness and

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creativity recognition through novelty elaboration was significantly positive ($\beta = .11$, $SE = .04$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .01, UL = .18]). However, the moderated mediation effect of networking ability on the indirect relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition via usefulness championing was insignificant ($\gamma = .01$, $SE = .03$, $p > .1$, 95% CI [LL = -.02, UL = .09]), rejecting Hypothesis 4b. Specially, when networking ability was high (+1SD), the indirect effect between social astuteness and creativity recognition via usefulness championing was significantly positive ($\beta = .11$, $SE = .03$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .07, UL = .17]); when networking ability was low (-1SD), the indirect effect between social astuteness and creativity recognition via usefulness championing was significantly positive ($\beta = .10$, $SE = .04$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [LL = .01, UL = .16]). The Bootstrapping results of moderating and moderated mediation effects were summarized in Table 8.

Insert Table 8 about here

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Creativity plays a critical role in promoting organizational performance and sustaining organizational survival and prosperity. Referring to positive evaluation on creative idea, solution, or product, creativity recognition functions as a conduit through which generated idea can be implemented. Although most of the creativity literature has examined how creative ideas are generated, relatively less emphasis has been attached on how creative ideas are spotted and recognized (Muller, Wakslak, & Krishnan, 2014). Past research has suggested that the generation of creative ideas by no means guarantees their implementation (Sohn & Jung, 2010). Creativity recognition is of no less importance than creativity generation as it investigates how people receive

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creativity and determines the possibility of an idea to be implemented. In this regard, research on creativity recognition has both scientific and practical value (Zhou et al., 2019). Since evaluators serve as gatekeepers who determine the extent to which creativity can be recognized, prior research largely examines the antecedents of creativity recognition from the perspective of evaluators, whereas the proactive role of creators during creativity recognition is underestimated and omitted. To remedy these research voids, our research pay attention to creativity recognition from the perspective of creators and figure out how will a creator's sensemaking of creativity and execution behavior influence creativity recognition in consequence.

Draws upon the integrated theory of sensemaking theory of creativity and sociopolitical approach, our research examines the impact of a creator's social astuteness on creativity recognition through mediating mechanisms. Organizations are inherently political arenas whereas political skills are referred to the exercise of influence through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation (Mintzberg, 1985). In terms that the specific political competencies that facilitate creativity or innovation have seldom been examined empirically (Grosser et al., 2018), our research posits that a creator who makes sense of the organizational environment from a socio-political perspective can leverage one's social astuteness, namely, the specific type of political skill of social awareness can inspire novelty elaboration and usefulness championing to affect creativity recognition. Our research explicates that social astuteness offer the introversive psychological awareness and extraversive environmental scanning intelligence, which enable a beholder to capture contextual cues, read the wind, attuned to diverse social situations, comprehend social interactions, and capitalize on emerging opportunity effectively in social settings. More importantly, social astuteness can inspire discretionary behaviors such as novelty elaboration and usefulness championing to mitigate uncertainties, decrease resistance, and achieve goal. Prior

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research suggests that idea elaboration and championing, the intermediate phases between idea generation and idea implementation, are neglected and largely confounded without clarification (Perry-Smith, & Mannucci, 2017). By incorporating proactive behaviors of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing into research framework, we build up the specific mediating mechanisms that channeling social astuteness to creativity recognition. Given that novelty and usefulness are two key components of creativity, our research further points out that elaboration on novelty and championing of usefulness can jointly promote evaluators' creativity recognition. In terms that creativity recognition is a social process that involve support, collaboration, and sponsorship from others (Zhou et al., 2019), we further incorporate the moderating role of networking ability into our research framework and argued that networking ability, the abilities to acquire resources and social supports, may shape the association between social astuteness and proactive behaviors such as novelty elaboration and usefulness championing, that is, when a creator's social awareness and relational intelligence is bound with social networking ability, he or she may possess adequate social support, social influence and resources to initiate novelty elaboration and usefulness championing behavior, further to advance creativity recognition.

Given that there were no established measures for the constructs of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing, we developed the measurement scales in Study 1 and empirically test the propositions in Study 2. The generated results supported our hypotheses that social astuteness positively influences creativity recognition through the dual-mediating mechanisms of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing. Employee creator who has intrinsic motivation, commitment and social astuteness which enable he or she to be champions of creativity to overcome indifference or resistant intervention that provoked in an organization (Powell et al., 2015). As evaluators who make sense of creativity recognition drawing upon their implicit theory

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of creativity and instrumental concerns about valued outcomes of implementation, a creator who initiate championing behavior may utilize multiple strategies to address different levels of barriers (Weiner et al., 2012). As a strategy of social network building and capitalization, networking ability can help a creator develop mutual-beneficial relationships with stakeholders, bridge intra-organizational boundaries, overcome social perceptual resistance and procedural inertia, and secure resource investment. Our results verify that networking ability moderates the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration and their indirect relationship through novelty elaboration as well. Unfortunately, the moderation effects of networking ability on the relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition and on the indirect relationship between them through usefulness championing were not verified, suggesting that complementary contingencies should also be taken into consideration. Past research suggests that despite networking ability, a creator might require role-breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) to cross professional knowledge boundaries to facilitate social acceptability of idea appropriateness and feasibility, and organizational readiness for changes (Shea, 2021). Beyond that, a creator should influence the beliefs of other individuals on specific topic as opinion leaders (Rogers, 2003), in particular, he or she needs to understand evaluators' cognitive configuration, which plays critical role in sensemaking process and shape the extent to which generated creative ideas can be valued and recognized as creativity. With this respect, evaluators' cognitive frame, or mindset, may serve as a moderator that interacts with creator's social astuteness to impact one's usefulness championing behavior and the creativity recognition result.

Theoretical Implications

Although political skills are documented to be directly related to career-relevant outcomes (Todd, Harris, Harris, & Wheeler, 2009) and moderate the relationship between predictors and

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outcomes (Ferris et al. 2007: 291), the relationships between political skills dimensions and creativity recognition are barely investigated. Through integrating the sensemaking theory and socio-political perspective of creativity, our research explicates that employee creators (or initiators) who have social astuteness can make sense of organizational cues in a socio-political way and initiate proactive, goal-directed behaviors to advance creativity recognition. Firstly, we investigate that social astuteness, a subdimension of political skills that highlights social awareness and intelligence, can establish shared understandings about common valued interests and build up positive interactions between two parties (creator and evaluator), therefore, to gain confidence and approval from evaluators. In term of this, our research establishes the primary dialogue between employees' political skills and evaluators' creativity recognition. Secondly, our research builds up the mediating mechanisms that channel the gap between social astuteness and creativity recognition. As organizations are partially political in nature and conceptualized as the sensemaking target that featured by ambiguities and uncertainties, a creator's social astuteness can serve as a pattern of social competencies and initiate strategical endeavors during opportunity exploration. In specific, we delineate that the proactive behaviors such as novelty elaboration and usefulness championing can advocate evaluators' comprehensive understandings about the two key components (i.e., novelty and usefulness) of creativity. Thirdly, our research figures out that networking ability, a subdimension of political skills, which manifests the capability of resource acquisition and social influence soliciting, serves as the boundary condition that may constrains or facilitates the relationship between social astuteness and proactive behaviors. The interaction between networking ability and social astuteness may shape the extent to which a creator resorts to proactive endeavors to influence creativity recognition consequence. Overall, our research switches the research focus of creativity recognition from an evaluator-centered standpoint to

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creator-concentrated one and highlights the mediating roles of proactive behaviors between social astuteness and creativity recognition.

Managerial Implications

Our research also offers some practical implications for practitioners. As we known, creativity is critical for organization's long-term effectiveness, prosperity, and longevity. Given the significance of creativity recognition, managers who serve as evaluators of creativity should build up interactive communication mechanisms with employee creators to combat efficiency-thinking, the hard-coded expectations for quantifiable results, and break bottom-line mentality to identify their subordinates' confidence and enthusiasm for creativity. However, organizational system might propose inertia and inflexibility (Sue-Chan & Hempel, 2016) to handicap creativity recognition since it is built on the notions of predictability, conventional norms and designated organizational goals. Defined as "the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005: 127), political skills not only promote individual career-related outcomes for employees (Todd et al., 2009) and team-level performance (Ahearn et al., 2004), but also change organizational environment by influencing others with the overall objective of attaining valued goals. Our findings suggest that employee's political skills allow them to make sense of contextual cues or requirement, account for evaluators; instrumental concerns, alter social presentation in ways to impact evaluators, garner resources and social support to pave way for creativity recognition. In addition, employee creator's political skills such as social astuteness and networking ability, can inspire proactive behaviors such as novelty elaboration and usefulness championing to promote creativity recognition.

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In terms of the benefits of political skills, HR managers can develop internal training programs to enhance employees' political skills for them to navigate organizational environment, build up cross-boundary collaboration and capitalize organizational resource and support to promote creativity recognition and implementation. Though political skills are partly dispositional, they can be cultivated, improved, or developed (Ferris, Anthony, & Kolodinsky, 2002). HR managers can take ways to increase employees' political skill through learning and skill-building, whereas gaining insight and self-awareness through case studies, experiential exercises, developmental simulations, role-playing can enable employees to understand and develop their political skills (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005).

Limitations and Future Studies

As with any research endeavor, there are some limitations. Firstly, as creativity recognition were assessed by different evaluators from different firms, the outcomes of creativity recognition is probably nested in the effects of possible firm-level variables such as culture and climate, leadership etc., which should be elaborated in future studies. Another related limitation is the lack of a causal explanation to the study. Yet our research uses cross-sectional data with time segmentation and interview data to test the proposed framework, one cannot unequivocally say from this study that social astuteness causes novelty elaboration, usefulness champion, and creativity recognition. Future studies should consider other research designs (i.e., longitudinal, experimental studies) to support the causal direction of our predictions.

Although our study elaborates the positive impact of political skills, especially the impacts of social astuteness and network ability on creativity recognition, the dark side of political skills should not be ignored. Political skills can cast shadow over change-oriented initiatives and creativity recognition. As politically skilled individuals possess social savvy and know the

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organizational rope, they may choose to stay in their secure and comfortable zones, manipulate the environment they accustomed to and exploit benefits through opportunistic behaviors, instead of traveling extra miles to seek chance for change. They are more likely to avoid extra-role load strategically, set limitation on supervisors' expectations (Cullen, Gerbasi, & Chrobot-Mason, 2015), and eliminate engagement and endeavors in creativity-related work.

Despite political skills, the adverse impact of resource scarcity on creativity recognition should also be addressed. Resource (time, manpower, or budgets) scarcity can reduce epistemic motivation (i.e., the desire to develop an accurate and clear understanding of the environment), psychological support, intelligence, self-esteem, and skills that critical for creativity. Resource constraint may also constrain or even reframe evaluators' cognitive mindset, reduce time spent on deep thinking or alternatives examination, and therefore, to eliminate the possibility of creativity recognition. When resources are unavailable or inadequate, supervisors who make sense of their surroundings may narrow their attentional focus and pay attention to priorities. In this case, they are more probably to recognize useful idea rather than novelty idea as creativity (Albrecht & Hall, 1991), and favor incremental creativity to radical creativity.

Given that the impact of social astuteness on creativity recognition is determined by specific boundary condition, alternative moderators should be addressed in future research. For example, situational variables may determine the extent to which a focal employee can effectively enact political influence (Ferris & Judge, 1991). A high justice environment can be viewed as a "strong" situation, where consistent and accurate information and rules dictate actions. Strong situation may limit the effectiveness of political skills (Andrews, Kacmar, & Harris, 2009). In contrast, a low justice environment viewed as a "weak situation" may create uncertainty and encourage individuals high in political skill to act flexibly to fulfill goals (Andrews et al. 2009). Given that

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individuals modify their behavior to environmental features in adaptive and responsive ways, political skills function more effectively in weak situation than in strong situation. Moreover, effects of a creator's political skills may also be enhanced by supervisor political behavior, supervisor-subordinate relationship, and resources availability (Shi, Johnson, Liu, & Wang, 2013). Quality of leader-member relationship may skew creativity recognition consequence. As supervisor evaluators place more trust and trust to in-group rather than outgroup members, employee creators as outgroup members will confront outgroup bias, suspicion, and interpersonal obstacles (Weber, Malhotra, & Murnighan, 2004) during creativity recognition process. For example, Guanxi networks, the informal personal relationship between individuals who are linked by social norms that govern the exchange of favors, mutual commitment, loyalty, and obligation (Chen, Chen, & Huang, 2013) that formed under conditions of resource scarcity may influence the consequence of creativity recognition.

CONCLUSION

Integrating the sensemaking theory of creativity and socio-political perspective, our research advances understandings on the relationship between political skills and creativity recognition through the mediating mechanisms of novelty elaboration and usefulness championing. Our research also identifies that networking ability can moderate the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration and the indirect relationship between them through novelty elaboration. Overall, by incorporating creator's sensemaking, elaboration and championing behaviors into the dynamic process of creativity recognition, our research verifies creator's influence on creativity recognition consequence and shifts the research focus of creativity recognition from evaluator to creator.

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Table 1 Profile of respondents in Study 1

Type	No. of employees	Company profile	Nature of business	Founding year	Interviewee	Current position
PE	45,000	Customized circuit boarding manufacturer	IT, international	1969	Respondent 1	Division Manager
PE	5,000	Electronic device provider	International trade, international	1995	Respondent 2	Department manager
SOE	45,000	Automobile parts provider	Manufacturing, international	1997	Respondent 3	Department manager
PE	194,000	IT service	Information and communication technology solution provider, international	1987	Respondent 4	Division director
PE	1200	Marketing	Retail industry, national	2000	Respondent 5	Division manager
PE	350	Hospitality service	Hospitality industry, international	2011	Respondent 6	General manager
SOE	2800	Road and bridge construction	Civil engineering construction industry, national	1992	Respondent 7	Branch manager
SOE	5000	Saving and loan service	Banking industry, national	2007	Respondent 8	Division manager
PE	6000	Asset management	Insurance industry, national	2005	Respondent 9	Division manager
PE	194,000	Communication service	Information and Communication technology solution provider, international	1987	Respondent 10	Division manager

Note: For enterprise type, PE = Private enterprises, SOE = State-owned enterprises. Enterprises' size ranges from small scale with 1-199 employees, medium scale with 200-500 employees, to large scale with more than 500 employees.

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Table 2 Definition of constructs in study 1

Construct	Author(s)	Definition
Elaboration	Fisher & Aguinis (2017)	Accuracy, predictive adequacy (i.e., the degree to which proposed ideas approximate reality), and explanatory potential
Idea elaboration	Perry-Smith & Mannucci (2017)	The process of systematically evaluating the novel idea's potential and further clarifying and developing it
Idea championing		The active promotion of the novel idea, aimed at obtaining the green light for pushing it forward and, consequently, the resources in terms of money, talent, and political cover to implement it
Champion	(Powell et al., 2015)	An individual who is “the face” of an implementation effort—one who dedicate[s] themselves to supporting, marketing, and driving through an implementation, overcoming indifference or resistance that the intervention may provoke in an organization
Innovation championship	McFadzean et al (2005)	The effort of promoting innovation from an internal organizational perspective, through the assessment of potential new opportunities, alignment of resources, exploitation, and commercialization of said opportunities.
Innovation diffusion	Rogers (1995)	defines as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain communication channels over time among the members of a social system.

Table 3 Factor analysis results of study 1

Item		Factor	
		Novelty Elaboration ($\alpha = .80$)	Usefulness Championing ($\alpha = .82$)
1	I introduced the new features of the idea / product /service in details.	.73	
2	I precisely explained the technical improvement on this new idea / product / service.	.72	
3	I compared the similarities and differences of this new idea / product / service compared with existed ones.	.70	
4	I systematically explained the change this new idea /product/	.71	

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	service will make to this company.		
5	I introduced the new selling point of this new idea /product / service.	.70	
6	I identified how this new idea /product / service can capture customers' interests.	.71	
7	I explained the practical usage of this idea /product / service.		.78
8	I explained how this idea / product /service can satisfy customers' emergent requirement.		.70
9	I championed the market value of this idea /product/service.		.72
10	I identified the legitimacy of implementing this idea /product/service in this company.		.70
11	I promoted the appropriateness of developing this idea /product / service.		.82
12	I anticipated the prospect of implementing this idea /product / service.		.70

Table 4 Descriptives, reliabilities, and intercorrelations of variables in study 2

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Age	2.27	.99									
2.Gender	.33	.47	-.01								
3.Education	2.86	.77	.40**	.01							
4.Experience	3.14	1.20	.51**	.01	.30**						
5.Social astuteness	3.46	.64	-.03	-.08	-.04	.13**	(.73)				
6.Networking ability	3.45	.65	-.12*	-.04	-.07	.06	.68**	(.77)			
7.Novelty elaboration	3.41	.63	-.09	-.03	-.04	.12*	.62**	.64**	(.70)		
8.Usefulness	3.34	.58	-.09	-.01	-.04	.13**	.52**	.56**	.59**	(.70)	
championing											
9.Creativity recognition	3.46	0.71	-.14**	.02	-.10	.02	.52**	.50**	.56**	.51**	(.73)

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Notes: $N = 415$. For age, 1= 18-30 years, 2= 31-45 years, 3= 46-60 years, 4= 61 year or above; for gender, 0= female, 1= male; for education, 1= secondary school or below, 2 = college, 3 = undergraduate, 4= postgraduate or above; for experience, 1= less than 1 year, 2= 1-3 years, 3= 4-6 years, 4= 7-10 years, 5= more than 10 years. SA=Social astuteness, NA = Networking ability, NE= Novelty elaboration, UC= Usefulness championing, CR= Creativity recognition, Values in the brackets are Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; two-tailed.

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Table 5 Hierarchical Regression Analyses of Study 2

Variable	Novelty elaboration			Usefulness championing			Creativity Recognition		
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
Constant	1.37(.17)	0.89(.16)	2.02(0.45)	1.68(.17)	1.26(.17)	1.48(.48)	1.65(.20)	1.08(.21)	.75(.22)
Control variable									
Age	-.08(.03)	-.06(.03)	-.05(.03)	-.06** (.03)	-.04(.03)	-.03(.03)	-.08** (.04)	-.05(.03)	-.04(.03)
Gender	.02(.05)	-.01(.05)	-.01(.05)	.03(.05)	.02(.05)	.02(.05)	.09(.06)	.08(.06)	.02(.07)
Education	.00(.03)	.00(.03)	.01(.03)	.01(.03)	.01(.03)	.01(.03)	-.03(.04)	-.03(.04)	-.03(.04)
Experience	.06(.02)	.05** (.02)	.05** (.02)	.04(.02)	.04(.02)	.04(.02)	.01(.03)	-.01(.03)	-.02(.03)
IV									
SA	.59** (.04)	.33** (.05)	-.01(.14)	.48** (.04)	.24** (.05)	.18(.14)	.58** (.05)	.33** (.06)	.26** (.06)
Mediator									
NE								.42** (.06)	.29** (.06)
UC									.32** (.06)
Moderator									
NA		.39** (.05)	.06(.13)		.34** (.05)	.28** (.14)			
Interaction									
SA* NA			.09** (.04)			.02(.04)			
R²	.40	.48	.49	.29	.36	.36	.29	.37	.41
adjusted R²	.39	.47	.48	.28	.35	.35	.28	.36	.40
ΔR²	.40	.48	.49	.29	.36	.36	.29	.37	.41
F	53.96**	63.84**	56.54**	33.08**	38.71**	33.15**	33.52**	40.4**	41.12**

Notes: N = 415. For age, 1= 18-30 years, 2= 31-45 years, 3= 46-60 years, 4= 61 year or above; for gender, 0= female, 1= male; for education, 1= secondary school or below, 2 = college, 3 = undergraduate, 4= postgraduate or above; for experience, 1= less than 1 year, 2= 1-3 years, 3= 4-6 years, 4= 7-10 years, 5= more than 10 years. SA=Social astuteness, NA = Networking ability, NE= Novelty elaboration, UC= Usefulness championing, CR= Creativity recognition. β denotes unstandardized regression coefficient.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$; two-tailed.

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Table 6 Simple slope of the moderating effects

Moderator	Simple slope	
	Novelty elaboration	Usefulness championing
Low networking ability	.28 ($t = 5.55, p < .01$)	.22 ($t = 1.01, p > .1$)
High networking ability	.38 ($t = 7.55, p < .01$)	.25 ($t = .83, p > .1$)

Table 7 Summary of hypotheses testing results of Study 2

Hypothesis	Testing result
Social astuteness → Novelty elaboration	Supported
Social astuteness → Novelty elaboration → Creativity recognition (H1)	Supported
Social astuteness → Usefulness championing	Supported
Social astuteness → Usefulness championing → Creativity recognition (H2)	Supported
Moderation effect of networking ability on the relationship between social astuteness and novelty elaboration (H3a)	Supported
Moderation effect of networking ability on the indirect relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition via novelty elaboration (H3b)	Supported
Moderating effect of networking ability on the relationship between social astuteness and usefulness championing (H4a)	Denied
Moderating effect of networking ability on the indirect relationship between social astuteness and creativity recognition via usefulness championing (H4b)	Denied

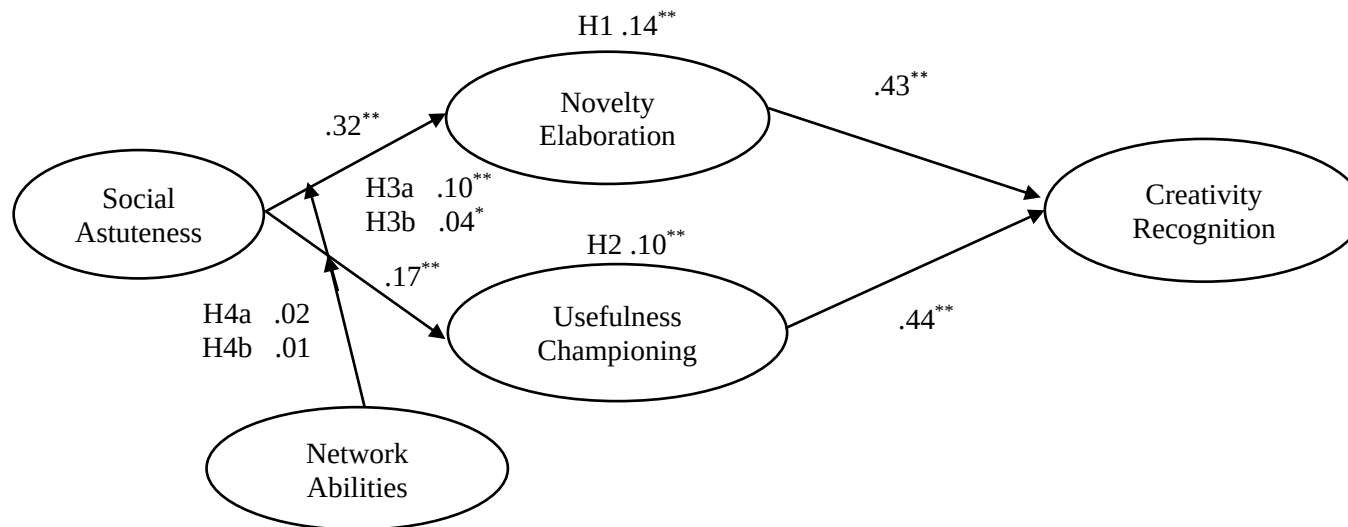
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Table 8 Summary of Bootstrapping Results of Study 2

Mediator	Independent Variable Moderator	Social astuteness				
			Conditional indirect effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Novelty elaboration	Networking ability	Low (-1SD)	.11	.04	.01	.18
		Mean	.14	.03	.08	.20
		High (+1SD)	.17	.03	.11	.24
Usefulness championing	Networking ability	Low (-1SD)	.10	.04	.01	.16
		Mean	.11	.03	.06	.16
		High (+1SD)	.11	.03	.07	.17

Note: bootstrapping = 2,000

Figure 1 Structural equation modelling results of Study 2



Notes: N= 415 individuals. Unstandardized estimates are shown.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

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Figure 2 Plotting on the Moderating Effect of Networking Ability

