
Employee Engagement Level in ICT Organizations as a Barrier to the Use of Social Media Functions*

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to prove and discuss the relationship between employee engagement in ICT organizations and the degree of use social media by audited companies. The literature on the subject suggested that social media create a space where it is possible to use tools for communicating, collaborating, connecting, completing, and combining. However, it requires the organization to understand and accept the fact that to achieve purposes in social media it is necessary to engage the whole organization at its different levels.

Research methods: For the needs of the research goal we carried out a quantitative research using the CAVI and CATI survey method and Spearman's correlation coefficient on a sample of 400 companies in the ICT industry. The research question was: Can the number of people employed in marketing or social media be a determinant of the engagement of other employees to create content?

Findings: The presented analysis shows that the companies in ICT industry use the possibilities of social media only in limited extend. It has also been observed that the growing number of employees who are responsible for corporate social media is perceived by managers as the reason for the low engagement of other employees in creating content for business social media. As a consequence, between the organization's employees do not create the community ready to engage in activities in the social media.

Practical Implications: The practical implication of this article can be used to elaborate a model of engaging employees of the company as a community which successfully interacts with the surroundings.

Originality/Value: This article is valuable; it contributes to a discussion on management methods in organization that plans to successfully use the potential of social media. Also, it can set the direction of creating a policy of employee engagement in the company.

Keywords: ICT, engage community, social media, Poland.

JEL codes: M12, M15, M54.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

Employees are considered as one of the soundest assets of the organization (Christian *et al.*, 2011). Engagement is the engagement, passion, and dedication of the employees towards the work (Sarangi, 2012). The engagement of the organization's employees in social media activities is a necessary condition for engaging the social media community, which in turn enables the use of the Web 2.0 potential.

Previous research carried out by the authors showed that ICT companies are aware of the need to use social media channels, especially to share information about the company and recruit new employees (employee branding). Managers of the surveyed companies emphasized that a particular problem is the way of organizing work in the area of social media and finding competent employees. Among the companies that created web applications themselves and tested them among users, there were noticeable opinions about the need to get closer to the social media community and include them in continuous cooperation. The authors, continuing their research, decided to focus on looking for limitations and barriers to using social media functions in the enterprise. For this purpose, they carried out quantitative research using the CATI and CAWI survey method among 400 companies from the ICT industry. The research results became the basis for the development of the following article.

The aim of the article is to discuss the relationship between the level of employees' engagement in the implementation of the social media functions to the number of employees working in dedicated departments.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Categorization of Social Media Functions Relevant to Enterprises

Social media is related to social participation on the Internet. This term is used to describe the interaction of individuals within the Internet community through the use of network technologies (Baxter, 2015). Vuori (2011) characterizes social media tools, considering the degree to which they support the functions of communicating, collaborating, connecting, completing, combining (5C). Table 1 presents the ways of implementing individual functions as well as examples of their commercial use.

Jalonen (2014) emphasizes that the use of the 5C model makes it easier for social media companies to obtain:

- Authenticity: presenting information, opinions expressed by the Internet community.

- Transparency: publishing information essential for the functioning of the organization to various groups of recipients, including clients and potential investors.
- Immediacy: the ability to implement actions taken with the community in real time.
- Collaboration: the possibility of active participation of each of the community participants in various areas of the company's activity.
- Directness: sharing information with participants simultaneously in different locations around the world.

Achieving the above-described effects with the use of the 5C model enables the organization to effectively achieve commercial goals in social media.

Table 1. *The way of using the 5C model in achieving commercial goals by the company.*

Model 5C	Ways to execute	Examples of commercial purpose
Communicating	Publish, discuss, express oneself, show opinion, share, influence, store	promoting products to customers, informing shareholders, sharing knowledge within the company
Collaborating	Create content together, collaboration, prod usage	shortening NPD time, improvement of customer service, innovation creation
Connecting	Socialise, network, connect, play, entertain	brand loyalty promotion amongst consumers, better understanding of customers' needs
Completing	Adding metadata, describing content, subscribing updates	easier search and understanding of the company's offer
Combining	Combining other tools and technologies according to situation and needs	Mashups to achieve different company needs.

Source: Own elaboration based on Vouri 2011.

According to Moran and Gossieaux (2010), online community participants are more likely to engage in an organization's social media when it enables them to interact directly with company employees. The ability to build social relations between community participants and employees is necessary to perform the 5C functions. The researchers also emphasize that the company should first learn about the behaviour and communication style of community participants, and then propose cooperation (Moran and Gossieaux, 2010).

Organization's readiness to use the functions of communicating, collaborating, connecting, completing, combining in social media is related to, among others: the way work is organized, the level of employee motivation and awareness of goals. Bearing in mind the above-described assumptions regarding the organization and using the division existing in the literature (Li *et al.*, 2011; Miotk, 2017), organizations can be characterized according to the degree of their engagement in social media:

- Idle - they have no experience, resources or organizational culture focused on social media.
- Testing - individuals or departments have knowledge and test social media, however, their actions come down to observing and listening to the community. The remaining employees are poorly or not at all involved in the above-mentioned activities, there is no efficient flow of information.
- Coordinating - the management of the organization considers it important to use social media to achieve the company's goals. Employees have guidelines, however for the majority of them, activities in social media are an additional responsibility.
- Scaling - most employees test and use media dedicated to clients and employees. Social media also has a place in the organization's operating strategy. The organization involves employees from various areas and constantly improves its activities in social media, treating it as a continuous process.
- Improving - employees are encouraged and motivated to be active in social media. Collaboration in meeting social media goals plays a key role in the daily responsibilities of an organization's employees. Increasing employee engagement is a business imperative.

Accordingly, both "scaling" and "improving" organizations emphasize the need to involve employees from various departments in social media. By creating active teams, the chance of successfully achieving organization's strategic goals increases.

2.2 Employee Engagement as a Key Factor in Using Social Media Functions to Achieve the Organization's Goals

The success of any organization depends largely on the efficiency and commitment of employees (Lee and Ok, 2016). Many studies have shown that engagement positively influences employee performance (Kim *et al.*, 2013; Truss *et al.*, 2013). Employees with the highest level of commitment work 20% more efficiently than other employees, and 87% less often leave the organization (Kumar and Pansari, 2016). Furthermore, companies employing committed employees achieve higher customer satisfaction rates, greater profitability and employee productivity (Ahmetoglu, Harding, Akhtar, and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015; Cooper-Thomas *et al.*, 2014; Vandenabeele, 2014; Vance, 2006; Wagner and Harter, 2006).

Khan was one of the first researchers to describe commitment as a mental state that enables employees to fulfil themselves during work. This state manifests itself in three dimensions: physical, cognitive, and emotional. Subsequent researchers distinguished between work engagement and engagement in the organization. Employee engagement can be defined as “*an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes.*” Features characterizing the strong engagement of employees in the activities of the organization (Cohen, 2007):

- full acceptance of organizational goals and values,
- high tendency to make great efforts for the organization,
- strong desire to belong to the organization.

Accordingly, commitment determines the extent to which employees identify themselves and integrate into the life of the organization, using their own competencies to achieve its goals.

The research carried out by the authors showed that in ICT enterprises, which employed specialists in the field of social media, the engagement of other employees in these areas of activity decreased. Social media requires collaboration and teamwork of many members of the organization at various levels. This is due to the fact that the information needed for active operation comes from various sources within the organization and making it available to recipients is associated with the need for a quick response from employees competent in this field. Lack of cooperation and teamwork in the organization has a negative impact on the effectiveness of activities in social media. Figure 1 presents the relationship between employee engagement and the effectiveness of achieving the company's goals with the engagement of the social media community.

Figure 1. *The relationship between employee engagement and the effectiveness of achieving the company's goals with the engagement of the social media community.*



Source: *Own elaboration based on Kumar an Pansari, 2016; A. Szwajlik, K. Szubińska 2018.*

The individual components of the diagram shown in Figure 1 are described below.

Engagement attributes:

Kumar and Pansari emphasize that the following dimensions are important for the creation of commitment: job satisfaction, employee identification with the organization, employee loyalty and efficiency (Kumar and Panasari, 2016).

According to the authors, the dimensions of engagement that will have a significant impact on the engagement of employees operating in the areas of social media are:

Satisfaction– Employee satisfaction is an emotional reaction to the overall job circumstances and different job factors, such as the qualities of the supervisor and co-workers, as well as pay level (Brown and Peterson, 1993).

Identification – Employee identification has been defined as “a psychological state wherein an individual perceives himself or herself to be part of a larger whole” (Rousseau, 1998). Employees who identify with the organization to a greater extent are more involved in carrying out additional duties.

Loyalty–Employee loyalty can motivate an employee to do work for an organization beyond what is expected for their role, and employees who are loyal to their organizations meet customers’ needs and deliver high levels of customer service (Schrag, 2009). Loyal attitude of employees is of particular importance when creating the image of an organization in social media.

Commitment--Employee commitment is defined as “the extent of psychological attachment of employees to the brand, which influences their willingness to exert extra effort towards reaching the brand goal” (Punjaisri *et al.*, 2009) Employees identifying with the brand and its values is the basis of the brand's image success in the media.

Employee empowerment:

Most companies operating in a dynamic environment recognize the need to empower employees in order to increase their productivity (Spreitzer and Doneson, 2005). Empowerment on the part of the organization focuses on, among others, active and direct communication, subjective, partnership-based style of management and employee financial participation in the effects (Cierniak-Emerych and Piwowar-Sulej, 2017). Strengthening employees also involves transfer of decision-making powers down the organizational hierarchy (Menon, 2001). It should be remembered that the employee determines their own level of commitment, adequately to the conditions created by the employer and the funds provided. In the team responsible for the implementation of activities in social media, it is important to:

- emphasize the importance of the relationship between activities carried out in social media and achieving the organization's goals,
- delegate the power to make decisions related to activities in social media to the employees actually implementing them,

- develop an organizational structure that ensures efficient communication between team members responsible for social media and the rest of the organization,
- provide financial participation of the team in the achieved results,
- improve the competences of team members in the area of knowledge and skills related to the activities of the organization and the use of social media,
- empower the employee by representing the organization in social media through the right to personally represent it.

Social media community engagement:

In order to effectively use the functions categorized in the 5C model, first of all, the Internet community gathered on various social media platforms should be involved. In practice, this means the need to motivate a specific member of the community to engage in particular activities. In his works, Brabham lists the following key motivators affecting the community (Brabham, 2008): developing creative skills, building relationships and cooperation with other professionals, gathering experience for future work, testing one's competences while solving difficult problems, building friendships, sharing with others, financial gratification, fun.

3. Research Methodology

As part of the cycle of research carried out in the ICT industry, the authors, at the first stage, conducted qualitative research in the form of in-depth interviews with representatives of companies from the ICT industry (more on the research methodology in the publication by Słupińska and Szwajlik 2018). The group of respondents consisted of marketing managers and social media specialists. The interview was conducted based on a research scenario. The aim of the research was to assess the scope of use of social media functions in selected areas of the organization's activity (image creation, sales support, gaining ideas for new products, sharing knowledge) by ICT enterprises. The authors used the 5C model, describing the functions of social media, to create questions. Moreover, the research scenario uses questions regarding the identification of barriers related to the use of social media in the organization. During the interviews, managers paid special attention to the way work was organized in social media and the lack of professionally trained employees. It can be concluded that managers showed interest in social media, but at the same time noticed the problem with the organization of work in the indicated area. The authors decided to conduct quantitative research and investigate to what extent the above conclusions can be translated into a larger group of ICT companies.

The authors put particular attention to specifying to what extent the human factor is the real reason limiting the use of social media. The following research question was posed: "Can the number of employees in the marketing or social media department be a determinant of the engagement of other employees in creating content?".

The survey was carried out on a sample of 400 companies from the ICT sector. During the selection of the sample, an effort was made to consider the structure of the industry in accordance with data from Statistics Poland. The definition of the ICT sector adopted in the study was based on the Polish classification of activities (PKD). The study used random-quota sampling based on the so-called typical values in relation to the number of analyzed subgroups in the population. In this case, reference was made to the number of companies from the above-mentioned PKD classification groups in individual voivodships and the aimed and imposed amounts, which reflect their structure, in accordance with Statistics Poland.

4. Results and Discussion

As part of the survey, managers were asked whether they post information for customers about their products and corporate activities in various types of social media channels. A frequency scale was also used to assess the actual activity in terms of posting information in individual social media channels. Each type of social media requires a different approach to the frequency of publication. In order to assess the use of a given channel as part of the analysis of the results, the authors assumed that the frequency of less than a few actions taken within a month would be treated as an unplanned activity. The question was to assess the degree of implementation of activities related to the Communicating function. Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Posting information on the company's products and activities in social media for customers*

	none	a few times a year	once a month	a few times a month	a few times a week	once a day	multiple times a day	NO	YES
in social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, etc.	27.50%	28.25%	21.00%	12.25%	10.00%	0.75%	0.25%	76.8%	23.2%
on company's blog	50.75%	26.00%	13.25%	6.75%	1.75%	0.75%	0.75%	90.0%	10.0%
in business oriented websites such as LinkedIn	61.50%	24.75%	8.00%	4.75%	0.25%	0.50%	0.25%	94.2%	5.8%
on YouTube	81.00%	9.00%	6.75%	1.75%	1.50%	0.00%	0.00%	96.8%	3.2%
in forums or Usenet newsgroups	57.25%	21.50%	11.25%	5.50%	3.75%	0.50%	0.25%	90.0%	10.0%

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in information services (e.g. wp.)	87.00%	10.00%	2.00%	0.00%	0.25%	0.25%	0.50%	99.0%	1.0%
in the internal Internet platform made available to clients	66.75%	15.0%	9.50%	4.75%	1.75%	0.50%	1.75%	91.2%	8.8%

Source: Own elaboration.

As the research results have shown, a large group of companies do not post information about their products and activities for customers on social media. The Communicating function, understood as sharing information with the Internet community, is performed by 23.2% of the surveyed enterprises. Only 10% of the respondents indicated forums, newsgroups, and company blogs. It should be emphasized that the social networks most frequently used as part of the described function are Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. YouTube is used by only 3.2% of respondents.

In order to obtain information on the implementation of the Collaborating function, a question was asked about engaging customers to work together in various social media. For comparison, questions about interactions with clients outside of social media (off-line) were asked. In order to obtain clear and reliable results that are not subjective in nature, frequency scales were provided - Table 3.

Table 3. *Engaging clients to work together.*

	none	very rarely	rarely	often	very often
from social networking sites	44.25%	23.25%	16.75%	10.00%	5.75%
from dedicated online platforms	60.00%	16.25%	12.25%	8.00%	3.50%
from the participation of clients in the work of teams at the company's premises	65.00%	15.75%	11.25%	5.75%	2.25%
from observing customers while using the product or service (offline)	41.25%	16.00%	20.25%	14.00%	8.50%
from face-to-face meetings with clients (offline)	28.75%	14.00%	17.50%	20.50%	19.25%

Source: Own elaboration.

The collaborating function is used in social media by 15.75% of respondents (often and very often), with 11.5% using dedicated internet platforms in this area. 39.75% of the respondents (very often or often) use the form of direct contact with the customer, i.e. interact with customers in an off-line environment. It should also be

noted that the collaborating function was more commonly used than the communicating function studied earlier.

The respondents were also asked about the use of particular social media to build relationships with the environment. This question corresponds to the Connecting function. As in the previous questions, a frequency scale was used to assess the actual activity in the analysed function. The detailed results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Using social media to build relationships with the environment through publishing, communicating, commenting, and observing customer behaviour, activity, etc.*

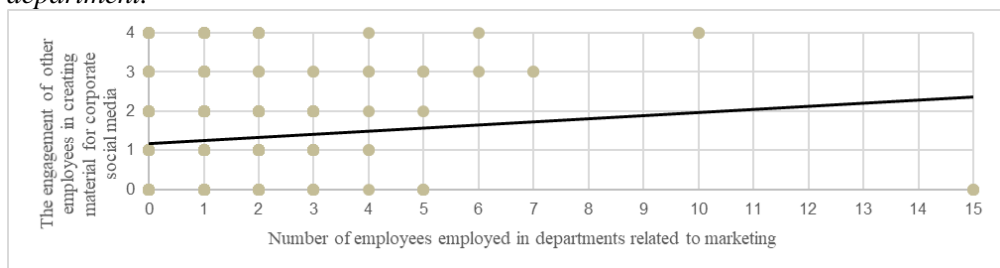
	none	a few times a year	once a month	a few times a month	a few times a week	once a day	multiple times a day
Facebook	24.00%	<u>21.75%</u>	<u>18.50%</u>	<u>18.00%</u>	10.25%	4.00%	3.50%
YouTube	66.00%	<u>19.25%</u>	8.00%	3.75%	1.50%	0.75%	0.75%
Twitter	75.50%	9.25%	8.00%	4.00%	2.00%	0.75%	0.50%
Instagram	74.50%	12.25%	7.00%	3.75%	1.25%	0.50%	0.75%
Pinterest	89.00%	6.25%	2.00%	2.00%	0.75%	0.00%	0.00%
Messenger	60.25%	7.50%	8.75%	10.75%	8.50%	2.50%	1.75%
WhatsApp	64.50%	7.00%	5.75%	9.25%	10.50%	1.25%	1.75%
Vimeo	96.50%	2.75%	0.25%	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
LinkedIn	71.50%	<u>18.25%</u>	4.50%	2.50%	1.75%	0.50%	1.00%
Golden Line	84.50%	10.00%	3.00%	1.00%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
Forums/newsgroups	59.75%	14.50%	11.75%	8.75%	4.25%	0.75%	0.25%
Blogs	65.00%	<u>19.00%</u>	8.75%	4.25%	2.00%	0.75%	0.25%
Wiki websites	84.00%	9.50%	3.50%	2.25%	0.75%	0.00%	0.00%
Tumblr	96.50%	3.00%	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Snapchat	96.25%	3.25%	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Internal channels of collective communication	72.00%	9.25%	4.75%	6.25%	2.25%	1.50%	4.00%

Source: Own elaboration.

As it can be seen, Facebook is the most popular social media platform among the surveyed companies, which is indicated in the 5C model as the basic platform for building a community around the organization. However, the frequency of using Facebook several times a year (21.75%) or once / a few times a month (18.5%; 18%) does not indicate exceptional activity in the implementation of the collaborating function. As far as the questions regarding other functions in the 5C model, i.e. Completing and Combining, are concerned, it was noted that they are used at an average level of +/- 7.5%. In order to answer the research question "Can the number of employees in marketing or social media be a determinant of the engagement of other employees in creating content", statistical analyses were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 package. It was used to perform an analysis of the basic statistics, as well as descriptive and linear correlation analysis using the Spearman's Rho test. The classic threshold $\alpha = 0.05$ was chosen as the level of significance.

In the first step, it was checked whether any outliers appeared in the data set. It turned out that there were outliers in the set, however, it was concluded that their occurrence is related to the specificity of the variables, and their removal would result in the loss of a lot of valuable information. Then, basic descriptive statistics were calculated together with the Shapiro-Wilk test, examining the normality of the distribution of all measured variables on the quantitative scale. The distributions of both variables significantly differ from the Gaussian curve. Moreover, the asymmetry measure exceeded the range from -2 to 2 for the number of employees in the department related to marketing, and amounted to more than 2, which indicated a right-skewed distribution. For both variables, a kurtosis that was greater than 2 was noticed, which meant that both distributions were considered leptokurtic. For this reason, non-parametric tests were used in the analyses. In order to find out whether the number of employees in the marketing department correlates with the opinion of managers regarding the significance of the problem of low engagement of other employees in creating materials for corporate social media, the analysis of Spearman's Rho was performed. The results are shown in Figure 2.

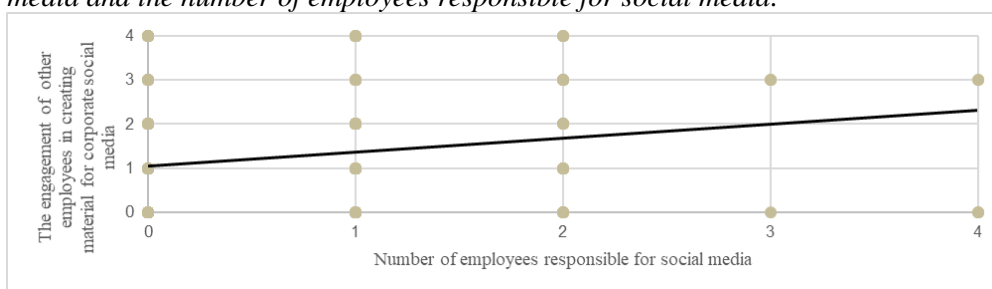
Figure 2. The relationship between the low engagement of other employees of the organization in social media and the number of employees in the marketing department.



Source: Own elaboration.

The results showed a statistically significant relationship between the variables. The correlation was weak ($0.1 < |r_s| < 0.3$). The interdependence of the variables had a positive direction, which meant that the more employees in the marketing department the company had, the more managers complained about the problem related to the low engagement of other employees in the company's social media. It was decided to investigate whether this dependence also occurs in the case of employees directly employed in positions responsible for social media. The results are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The relationship between the low engagement of other employees in social media and the number of employees responsible for social media.



Source: Own elaboration.

The analysis showed a statistically significant correlation between the number of employees responsible for corporate social media and the low engagement of other employees in social media activities ($r_s = 0.2$; $p < 0.001$; $N = 400$). The relationship was again at a weak level and had a positive direction. The more employees were hired to handle social media, the more important was the problem of low engagement of other employees in creating materials for corporate social media in the eyes of the managers.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

As the research results show, ICT companies use social media to a limited extent in order to carry out activities related to communicating, collaborating, connecting, completing, and combining (5C). The reasons for this are mainly attributed to “low engagement of other employees in activities in social media”. Statistical analyses showed that there is a relationship between the engagement of the remaining employees of the organization and the number of employees in the marketing department or social media specialists. In a situation where the number of people working in the marketing or social media department increases, the engagement of other employees in the organization in the above-mentioned activities decreases.

A literature study showed that committed employees are those who fully accept the organizational goals and values, have a strong desire to belong to it, and a high propensity to make a lot of effort for the organization. The attributes of a committed

employee are satisfaction, identification, loyalty and commitment. An organization that understands and supports its employees focuses on, among other things, developing the principles of internal communication, a partnership style of management and appropriate financial motivation. Especially important in the case of activities in social media are efficiency and effectiveness, which are obtained by transferring the possibility of making decisions and greater scope of powers to lower levels of the organizational hierarchy.

Social media community as group of people with common passions and interests that regularly communicate and interact in an organized way over the Internet platform. Getting to know the habits and behaviours of the social media community enables building relationships and increases its engagement in the implementation of the functions of communicating, collaborating, connecting, completing, and combining. As a consequence, greater engagement of the organization's employees in the social media community leads to the achievement of the organization's goals in its various areas.

The above considerations open up another area of research in which it is necessary to identify and characterize the sources of low engagement of the organization's employees in cooperation with the social media community. It is also interesting to look for answers to the question regarding what motivates the social media community to get involved in the organization's activities.

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