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## **THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON EMPLOYEE WORK PERFORMANCE<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Social media has changed the ways people communicate, express their views, share content, interact and collaborate, by enabling the network effects, information provision, broad audience and outreach, direct connectivity and global situational awareness. The great dominance of social media in the modern way of life, as well as the strong connection of a large number of people with these media and networks, often lead to the fact that a certain part of their working time is spent on social networks. Social media use in the workplace may contribute to both productive as well as unproductive behavior. Research confirms that for certain areas or sectors, the use of social media has a positive impact, especially in the civil society sector. But it is also important to emphasize that in companies where there is

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<sup>1</sup> original research paper

policy for social media use, it contributes to positive impacts. This paper analyses whether and to what extent social media is used by Macedonian employees during working hours; what are their views on work performance with regards to the social media use; and analyses whether businesses have policies for using social media, which help streamline the benefits while outweighing the downsides? For the purposes of this research, a survey was conducted of 202 employees from the public, private and civil society sectors from the Pelagonia region of the Republic of North Macedonia. This research opens prospective use of findings in managerial and organisational decisions on social media use, as well as in conceptual sense of task diversity for improving work performance in general.

**Keywords:** social media use, employee productivity, work performance, business policy.

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence and development of the Internet and its products has had a profound effect on the personal and professional lives of the people, offering a lot of opportunities for accessing information, gaining and exchanging knowledge, communication and realisation of personal and professional goals. The development of social media and networks contributed to an even greater use of information and communication technologies from almost all categories of citizens and the daily use of these media, both in their free time, but also during working time. Social media becomes a necessity in today's times for both, individuals and businesses.

"Social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organisations enhanced by technological capabilities" (Tuten, 2021, p.35). Social media is the platform that give individuals the opportunity to interact, using two-way communication; meaning, that anyone who has online accounts can share their opinions with other social media users (Hashem, 2015).

The daily spread and importance of the social media brings as more people join online communities. The average user has internet accounts with eight different social media services and spends more than two hours a day on social media (Tuten, 2021). Social media use has skyrocketed over the past decade and a half. Whereas only five percent of adults in the United

States reported using a social media platform in 2005, that number in 2019 is around 70 percent (Allen, 2019).

Social media and networks have a large influence on the way people think and behave. In particular, Facebook has a broad participation all over the Internet. Through the years, the interface and functionality of Facebook have changed and transformed from a university-only communication tool to one of the most well-known websites online (Pilli, 2015). Europe is in third place in terms of Facebook subscribers in the world, after Asia and Latin America (Internet World Stats, 2020). Over time, the use of certain social media is characteristic by categories of citizens, ie by age. Namely, Facebook is becoming the most commonly used among the older population, while use of Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok is especially common among young people under 30 (Auxier&Andreson, 2021; Abrams, 2022;). A majority of Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram users visit these platforms on a daily basis (Auxier&Andreson, 2021). Europe has more than 300 million active users on social media (Mordor Intelligence, 2022). The EU's social network participation rate has steadily. Social network participation includes activities such as creating a user profile, posting messages or other contributions to social networks. Among EU Member States, the social network participation rate was highest in Denmark - 85%, ahead of Belgium - 79%, Cyprus - 78%, Finland - 75% and Hungary - 74%. Among younger people in the EU aged 16 to 24 years, almost 9 in every 10 participated in social networks (87%). Among older people aged 65 to 74 years, over a fifth (22%) participated in social networks (Eurostat, 2021). About 86 % of the total population in North Macedonia aged 15-74 used the Internet, and 80.5% used the Internet every day or almost every day. In the Republic of North Macedonia, about 85% of the population has some kind of participation in social media (creating user profile, posting messages or other contributions to Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and it is the largest among the age group from 25 to 54 years old. Participation in social media shows a growing trend (State Statistical Office of RNM, 2021).

As the use of social media penetrates the household and is rapidly adhered by everyone, it also finds its application in business, as well as in the workplace by employees. The use of social media in the workplace for both private and professional purposes is evident today.

Social media use in the workplace may simultaneously contribute to productive behaviour i.e., task-oriented as well as unproductive behaviour i.e., deviance at work (Carlson et al., 2016).

Namely, the purpose of this paper is to identify these links, as well as the impact on work performance of the use of social media in the workplace in the case of Macedonian employees.

This paper is structured as follows: section two presents the literature review which investigates the relationship between the use of different visible social media by employees and their work performance, followed by the second part, based on a survey conducted with a target group of employees in the public, private and civil society sector, an analysis was made of the habits of using social media in the workplace and what is the impact of using social media on fulfilling work tasks and responsibilities. This section also analyses the rules and policies for the use of types of social media of business entities in the workplace by employees. The last section of the paper presents the conclusions.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Extensive scientific research has been conducted (Wushe&Shenje, 2019; Louati, &Hadoussa, 2021; Zhao, Guo, Shang & Wang, 2021, Pavithra & Deepak, 2020; Jong, Chen, Ruangkanjanases& Chang, 2021) to examine the link between employee productivity and social media use in the workplace. The constant expansion of the social media usage has altered how businesses operate and interact and has particularly affected the field of human resource management. Social media are found to be useful resources for developing and maintaining communities of practice in the current era of digital transformation by offering interconnected venues for communication, collaboration, and the encouragement of the exchange of knowledge. However, the emergence of social media has raised questions about its use in the workplace, particularly its effects on worker performance (Wushe&Shenje, 2019).

The use of social media in the workplace could be for personal or professional purposes. The term "social-oriented use of social media" refers to the use of social media to create new friendships, find people who share similar interests, and keep in touch with old friends and clients. The use of social media for business purposes was described as communicating about work with colleagues or sharing documents within the company (Jong et al., 2021). The findings from the study that was carried out by Pavithra and Deepak (2020, p.1466) shown that businesses use social media in the workplace to improve the employees' time management, task performance, and their performance. In fact, they have shown that the "usefulness" aspect of the social media use was substantially connected with job performance, and they helped to boost employees' performance. Authors recommended that the company's management should provide appropriate staff training on how to utilise social media appropriately for organisational goals.

In their study, Kaur and Dhingra (2020, p.1423) indicated that the use of social media promotes teamwork, personal growth, and they are an excellent tool for creating positive publicity about a business, services or products, as well as for targeting larger audiences. However, companies must first accept and adopt this type of technology in their workplace, along with any drawbacks, using the most appropriate social media platforms essentially contributing to the success of the organisation.

Although the advantages mentioned above, there are numerous challenges associated with the extensive use of social media in the workplace. According to Aguenza, Al-Kassem and Som (2012,p. 24), there are several concerns that companies are facing with if the use of social media in the workplace is not properly managed. Some of those issues are: data leakage from employees chatting in public, harm to a company's reputation, decrease in employee productivity, scams used by cybercriminals. The authors suggest that companies should not discouraged the usage of social media for job purposes but they need to define and appropriately applied their strategy regarding social media, especially the guidelines for engaging employees during their work time. If this is accomplished correctly, management will be able to profit from these new communication channels' advantages while reducing unwanted threats.

Eren and Vardarlier (2013) in their study discussed about the extent of employee interaction on social media, its relationship, and how that relates to corporate goals. According to the strategic management principles, companies must accomplish the right strategies, ensure effective implementation of these strategies, and must establish an effective communication environment in order to achieve their goals. The analysis conducted by Ogbuji and Papazafeiropoulou (2016) showed that businesses need a carefully thought-out approach to integrate social media in a successful way. They provide a framework for social media strategy that can be used by different businesses to determine which aspects of the company need to be improved and how to best use social media for business purposes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Research methodology***

The main purpose of this paper is to analyse some different aspects of using social media or networks, answering following questions:

- whether and to which extent social media are used by employees in the workplace;

- what are their views on work performance with regards to the social media use; and
- whether entities in private, public and civil society sector have policies for using social media, which help streamline the benefits while outweighing the downsides?

Target group for this research are employees employed in entities in private, public and civil society sector located in the Pelagonia region of the Republic of North Macedonia, which participated also in the inputs to acquire understanding of the pursued subject, and are perceived practitioner audience of the findings.

The initial part of this research was conducted through an anonymous questionnaire with mostly close-ended questions. We used purposive sampling and snowballing. The intension behind this questionnaire was to summarise the perceptions of the employees either employed on managerial or non-managerial position in different sectors regarding the impact of using social media and networks in the workplace on work performance or productivity of the employees. The field stage of the research was entirely done online in the period between 28 June 2022 and 28 July 2022. A link from the survey was sent to more than 700 employees employed in entities located in the Pelagonia region, and responses were received from 202 employees.

Main research hypothesis: The impact of using social media or networks on employee's work performances depends of the entities sector where employees are employed.

### ***Results of the research***

The results of the research will be presented in two parts. In the first part will be presented specific analysis related to sample structure and the second part will be presented the results related to research questions based on the answers in the research questionnaire.

#### ***Sample structure***

Total number of 202 respondents filled in the research questionnaire (Table 1). We used purposive sampling and snowballing wherever possible. The responds gave sufficient information about our research interest. Most of the respondents are female (123 or 60.9%) while 79 or 39.1% are male employees. Most of the employees who responded to the questionnaire are aged from 30-40 (75 or 37.13%) and 9.9% of the respondents are older than 50 years.

**Table 1** Gender of the respondents

Age	Gender		Total
	female	male	
18-29	26	17	43
30-40	48	27	75
41-50	37	27	64
older than 50 years	12	8	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>202</b>

Source:Autors

62.87% or 127 of the employees have obtained higher education of which 49.61% are employed in the public sector, while 68% of the respondents with acquired secondary education are employed in the private sector. In total 106 respondents or 52.48% are employed in the private sector, 86 or 42,57% in the public sector and 10 or 4.95% in civil society sector (see Table 2).

**Table 2** Level of education of the respondents

Sector	Level of education		Grand Total
	Higher education	Secondary education	
Civil society sector	9	1	10
Public sector	63	23	86
Private sector	55	51	106
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>202</b>

Source:Autors

79.7% of the employees who answered the questionnaire are in a non-managerial position, and the rest have managerial positions, of which 78.05% in the private sector, 14.63% in the public sector and 7.32% in the civil sector.

**Table 3** Job position of employees by sector

Sector	Working position		Grand Total
	Managerial position	Non-managerial position	
Civil sector	3	7	10
Public sector	6	80	86
Private sector	32	74	106
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>202</b>

Source:Autors

***Results from the questionnaire related to the research questions***

The first research question concerns on the level of using the social media by employees during working time (Table 4). Despite the fact that almost all surveyed employees use some kind of social network (98.51% answered that they use a social network), 18.81% of the employees who answered the questionnaire do not use any social network during working time. Most of the employees who use social networks during working time, spend less than one hour using it (64.78% or 103 employees), but sufficient number of employees use it more than one hour (28.30% or 45 employees) or even more than two hours (6.92% or 11 employees).

**Table 4** Using social media during and outside the working time

	using social media (networks) during working time	using social media (networks) in the free time outside the working time
less than 1 hour	103	30
from 1 to 2 hours	45	113
from 2 to 3 hours	9	52
more than 3 hours	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>199</b>

Source:Autors



The most used social network during working time is Facebook (43.56%) followed by Viber (15.35%) and Instagram (12.87%), see Table 5.

**Table 5** The most used social media during working time

Type of social media or social network used during working time	Total	Total (%)
Facebook	88	43.56%
Viber	31	15.35%
Instagram	26	12.87%
LinkedIn	9	4.46%
YouTube	8	3.96%
Skype	2	0.99%
Don't use social media or social network during working time	38	18.81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	

Source:Autors

It can be concluded that both private and public sector employees spend almost equal amounts of time using social networks during working time. On the other hand, civil sector employees generally spend one to two hours of working time on social networks (Table 6).

**Table 6** Using social media during working time by the sectors employees

	less than 1 hour	from 1 to 2 hours	from 2 to 3 hours	more than 3 hours	Total
Civil sector	1	8	1	0	10
Public sector	53	16	6	0	75
Private sector	49	21	2	2	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>159</b>

Source:Autors

Concerning the views of the employees about the impact of use the social media or networks during working time on work performance, opinions are divided between positive and negative impact (Table 7). Namely, 32.94% of employees in the public sector believe that the use of social networks or media during working hours positively reflects on the quality of the of working activities. Opposite to this opinion, 32.69% of the employees in the private sector believe that this has a negative impact on the quality of the of working activities.

**Table 7** Impact of use the social media or networks during working time on work performance

	<b>I think that using it NEGATIVELY affects the quality of work performance</b>	<b>I think that using it POSITIVELY effects on the quality of work performance</b>	<b>I think that using it has a NEITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE effect on the quality of work performance</b>
<b>Civil sector</b>	0.00%	70.00%	30.00%
<b>Public sector</b>	21.18%	32.94%	45.88%
<b>Private sector</b>	32.69%	26.92%	40.38%
<b>Average</b>	<b>17.96%</b>	<b>43.29%</b>	<b>38.76%</b>

Source:Autors

On the other hand, both public and private sector employees predominantly believe that the use of social networks and media during working time has a negative impact on work productivity (55.29% and 57.69% respectively, see Table 8).

**Table 8** Impact of the use of social networks and media during working time on work productivity

	<b>I believe that the productivity of the employee is not related to the time of using social networks (media) during working hours for private</b>	<b>I believe that employee productivity increases by using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes</b>	<b>I believe that employee productivity is reduced by using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes</b>

	<b>purposes</b>		
<b>Civil sector</b>	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%
<b>Public sector</b>	38.82%	5.88%	55.29%
<b>Private sector</b>	37.50%	4.81%	57.69%
<b>Average</b>	<b>39.20%</b>	<b>6.03%</b>	<b>54.77%</b>

Source:Autors

In general, this opinion is slightly higher among those with a managerial position (58.54%) compared to those from a non-managerial position (53.80%), see Table 9.

**Table 9** Managerial and non-managerial opinion of the social networks and media impact

	<b>I believe that the productivity of the employee is not related to the time of using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes</b>	<b>I believe that employee productivity increases by using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes</b>	<b>I believe that employee productivity is reduced by using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes</b>
<b>Managerial position</b>	34.15%	7.32%	58.54%
<b>Non-managerial position</b>	40.51%	5.70%	53.80%
<b>Average</b>	<b>37.33%</b>	<b>6.51%</b>	<b>56.17%</b>

Source:Autors

The question of whether entities have established policies for using social networks or media, 73.16% of the employees in the public sector, 51.89% of the employees in the private sector and all the employees in the civil sector answered negatively (Table 10).

**Table 10** Established policies for using social networks or media

	Yes	No	No information
<b>Civil sector</b>	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
<b>Public sector</b>	17.44%	73.26%	9.30%
<b>Private sector</b>	40.57%	51.89%	7.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.71%</b>	<b>63.37%</b>	<b>7.92%</b>

Source:Autors

On the other hand, as many as 67.84% of the surveyed employees believe that it is necessary to establish policies for the use of social media or networks in the workplace during working time (Table 11).

**Table 11** Need for business policies for use of social media or networks in the workplace

	Yes	No	No opinion
<b>Civil sector</b>	60.00%	0.00%	40.00%
<b>Public sector</b>	67.06%	15.29%	17.65%
<b>Private sector</b>	69.23%	13.46%	17.31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.84%</b>	<b>13.57%</b>	<b>33.94%</b>

Source:Autors

### *Hypothesis testing*

The impact of using social media or networks on employee's work performances depends of the entities sector where employees are employed.

$H_0$ : there is no difference of employee's work performances and using social media or networks in different sectors where employees are employed

$H_1$ : there is a difference of employee's work performances and using social media or networks in different sectors where employees are employed

**Table 12** Difference of employee's work performances and using social media or networks in different sectors

Sector	I believe that the productivity of the employee is not related to the time of using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes	I believe that employee productivity increases by using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes	I believe that employee productivity is reduced by using social networks (media) during working hours for private purposes	Results from $\chi^2$ test
Civil sector	0	7	3	$\chi^2 = 11.256 > 9.488$ $df = 4$ $p < 0.0238$ $\alpha = 0.05$
Public sector	18	28	39	
Private sector	34	28	42	
Grand Total	52	63	84	

Source:Autors

From  $\chi^2$  test of independence we can conclude that on the level of significance  $\alpha = 5\%$  (Table 12), we should reject the null hypothesis e.g., according to the opinions, there is a difference of employee's work performances and using social media or networks in different sectors where employees are employed.

### CONCLUSION

The use of social media is becoming an everyday choice, behaviour and tool in people's lives. The spread and development of social media is at a high speed, and over time there is a reorientation in the use of social media,

especially by young people (from one social network to another). Today, social media is heavily used in the workplace. The use of social media during working time is an important issue for employers and the Human Resources Department. Although it has a positive and negative impact on the quality of the work, however controlled use, as well as policy making for social media use in the workplace, will contribute to greater productivity in operation.

It can be stated that Macedonian employees use social media during working time. The most frequently used network during working time is the Facebook platform. Employees in the civil society sector spend more hours on social media during work time compared to other sectors (public and private), and they highlight the importance of using social media to achieve greater operational performance.

Employees both in public and private sector predominantly believe that the use of social networks and media during working time has a negative impact on work productivity.

The largest number of Macedonian companies don't have policies for the use of social media in the workplace, but there is a positive opinion among employees that it is necessary to create appropriate rules and policies for the use of social media. In the company where there are already policies and rules for the use of social media, in that case they are not used for private purposes, but to improve performance in the work.

Creating appropriate rules, policies and guidelines for social media use in the workplace will lead to their proper and useful use, to reduce operating defocusing and positive impact on work performance. Also crucial are the trainings for social media use of employees. The use of social media can find application in all sectors but if properly implemented.

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