Employee Use of Social Media for Private Affairs During Working Hours

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Abstract

Many organizations have open access to social media (SM), granting employee access at work. The purpose of the study was to find out whether the respondents used SM for private reasons at work, how much time they devoted to such use, and what was the attitude of managers and the employees themselves toward such use. The study was undertaken during 2013-2014 using a questionnaire survey. Open-ended interviews added a third dimension. The main findings were that employees used a considerable part of their working hours for personal SM use. The majority felt that managers objected to such use but an even larger majority believed that such use by their own was unacceptable.

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It was Charles Handy who coined the phrase that "work is something you do rather than something you go to" (Handy, 1991, 2003-2015). Work used to be a place to go to, but not any longer. And the division between work and play, that was historically clear cut, has also become blurred due to communication technology. The home office and the mobile office are relatively recent phenomena where the division between work and private life is perhaps not always very clear, but by the same token one may ask: Are those sitting in formal offices always concentrating on work?

The aim of this research article is to examine one aspect of this blurred on- or off-the-job phenomena, the private use by employees of social media (SM) during working hours. The objective is to present a research study that was carried out in Iceland in 2013-2014 on employee use of SM for private reasons during working hours. Private reasons in this context are defined as every type of communication via the media concerning personal and private matters that are not issues that concern the work or the job being performed. The initial hypothesis was that SM could be distracting employees from their job to the detriment of their performance. The research was intended to reveal if this was true and if so to what extent.

In a recent article Ngai, Tao and Moon (2015) presented "the first comprehensive literature review" of SM research. Research on the use of SM at the workplace has up to this time mainly been aimed at ascertaining whether access to such media was open or not and what influence privately communicating over the internet has in general on the workplace and on the rights of employees and employers. Information on the scale of private use of SM by employees

appears neither to have been available nor is there re-search-based information about the attitude of employees and executives toward such use. The present study aimed to fill this gap.

Theoretical Background

SM, also known as Web 2.0, consists of the various internet technologies that make it possible for people to create material and to share it with others whenever they want (Williamson, 2013). With the use of SM, individuals by themselves or with others can create, organize, change and edit material and information and pass it on via the media (NARA, 2010).

Work and Social Media

Work procedures in organizations have changed in many ways due to the growing use of SM. The increasing use of SM touches many fields in business, ranging from marketing and sale of products and services (Hajli, 2015) to varied connections with customers and employees. Fan pages are a good example of this trend. These pages "depict how organizations and other agents wish to por-tray themselves to users … and symbolize the marketed idealization of brands, agencies, famous people, and insti-tutions" (Villegas, 2016). The use of SM will, therefore, play a wide-ranging role in the operation of organizations in the coming years (Rishika, Kumar, Janakiraman, & Bezawda, 2013). Many organizations allow access to such media and keep it open, especially for marketing purposes, because of the work-related relations between employees within the organization. This open access allows employ-ees at the same time to use the media for their own per-

sonal agenda during working hours.

Research carried out by the University of Massachusetts showed that 60% of the companies on the Fortune 500 list had open access to SM. The percentage was higher for public institutions at an estimated 80-90% (Barnes & Andonian, 2012). Such media make it possible for individuals to connect to and contact each other, and whenever they choose, with the use of these various technologies based on the internet (Williamson, 2013). This includes SM platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, to mention a few.

The popularity of different SM varies between countries. Twitter is popular in France and Britain and LinkedIn is also popular in these countries (Gibson, 2013). Facebook, on the other hand, is the most popular SM from an international point of view. And, according to van Dijck (2013) the persons using different SM are not identical. The users of LinkedIn are using it professionally whereas Facebook is accessed for much more personal use.

The users of SM are many and the expansion has been rapid. Already by the end of 2006 Facebook had 12 million users (Scott & Jacka, 2011) and by the end of 2013 they were over 1.2 billion users (Sedghi, 2014). New SM, like YouTube, Flickr and Instagram, have followed in the wake of Facebook, with others sure to follow.

According to an often-cited 2005 America Online survey and Salary.com, personal use of the internet was the main reason that employees did not attend to their work during working hours (Bucciol, Houser, & Piovesan, 2013). Research has sought to identify the characteristics and standing of those who are most likely to use the internet at work for private purposes. It has been shown that employ-

ees who were less likely to need to exercise their minds at work were more likely to waste time on the internet (Liberman, Seidman, McKenna, & Buffardi, 2011). The results of the survey by Garrett and Danziger (2008) were different and showed that career, independence on the job, income, education and gender were key indicators of private use of the internet during working hours. The well-educated who held executive positions were more likely to practice this behavior than employees in non-demanding general office jobs. It was revealed that young men were more likely than others to spend time on the internet. Later research confirmed that in some respects young men were more likely to see to private concerns on the internet while at work but the difference between them and others was not as important as had been thought (Vitak, Crouse & LaRose, 2011). Further research on the correlation of work and private use of the internet also confirmed that increased independence on the job was more likely to be associated with such use (Jian, 2013).

Policies Regarding Social Media

It can prove difficult to construct a policy governing behavior that covers employee use of SM, whether it being a part of the job or for personal use during working hours, but such guidelines are available (e.g. ARMA International, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; NARA, 2010; Williamson, 2013). Schmidt and O'Connor (2015) offered four brief and concise recommendations on crafting social media policies: (1) "Don't infringe on your employees' NLRA right to communicate with one another about their working conditions,",(2) Don't draft a social media policy that is ambiguous, vague, or overboard," (3) "Employees must be

cognizant of common policy language mistakes and employers should include specific examples of prohibited conduct," and (4) "Keep current on case law involving social media-based terminations" (Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015, pp. 373-576). Employees doubt that their use of SM will be tracked and furthermore consider it a sensitive issue that such use could be monitored. Basic human rights are important in this connection, such as freedom of speech and the privacy of one's personal life (Abril, Levin, & Del Riego, 2012). Employers in the United States have prevailed in every court case where employees have contested that monitoring the use of their SM networking while at work was violating their right to privacy (Jacobson & Tufts, 2013; Smith & Tabak, 2009). The European Union takes a somewhat different position and looks on the inviolability of private life as a part of human rights, whereas the legal framework in the U.S. looks on privacy as a legal right. The directives of the European Union require companies to obtain user permission in order to access certain information pertaining to privacy. Although the legal regulations are somewhat disparate, it is nevertheless a fact that employers have the right to set rules regarding the use of SM at the workplace both in the US and the EU, although European employees enjoy a greater degree of freedom in this respect (Binder & Mansfield, 2013).

The U.S. National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has criticized some of the policy statements that U.S. firms have written concerning employee use of SM. The Board has pointed out that some of these policy statements can be in opposition to the rights of employees to join forces in collective bargaining in order to improve their working conditions and to voice their opinions about those condi-

tions (Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015). One such policy statement has, however, received praise from the Board: retail giant Walmart (Brice, Fifer & Naron, 2012). US firms have also successfully taken their employees to court when they have promulgated statements using SM that the employers have thought inappropriate. On the other hand, the firms have lost such cases when the collective bargaining argument in the case has been accepted as relevant (Mello, 2012).

In the opinion of Binder and Mansfield (2013), a policy that is well constructed and well written must take into account to avoid at least four issues. Employees should not (1) discuss secrets of the workplace or issues that should be kept secret; (2) post online defamatory, degrading or libelous statements; (3) attack, harass or persecute any individuals online; or (4) publish statements that differentiate individuals because of sex, skin color or religion. A SM policy that takes these issues into account can be a good guide and can prevent many of the difficulties that can be traced to inappropriate use of SM. Employees should state on their SM site that their views are "*their own*" and do not necessarily reflect the views of "*name of the employer.*"

The Responsibility of Management

It is important that executives take into account their own responsibility for such media use, not the least as concerns their organization's legal environment (ARMA International, 2012). One management approach has been to block access of employees to SM, which in fact some firms do, or 25%, by some estimates (Scott, 2008). Other managers take a different view and set standards for employee

performance and do not ban the new technology. The attitude of these executives is to trust their employees or to fire them if they violate that trust (Scott, 2008). In the end, it is the role of the managers to keep employees focused on their work and to encourage them to be productive and creative. The important point to consider here is whether the employee performs his or her job as expected. Then it should not matter whether the employee sees to his or her own private affairs over the internet during working hours (Ivarsson & Larsson, 2012).

Employees need to know clearly what they may and may not do at work with respect to the use of SM. Instructions concerning communicating on the internet, including the use of SM, are necessary. Inappropriate communications can clearly damage the organization and also reduce productivity. Furthermore, the question of safety must be taken into account when usage and doubtful internet sources are visited with the result that viruses can infect the organization's computer network. Furthermore, organizations can be held liable for what employees write and suffer damage to their name because of statements made by employees. Finally, it should be noted that organizations may be investing in excessive bandwidth to accommodate heavy downloads, of even illegally obtained material (ARMA International, 2012; Scott, 2008). Some authors, therefore, propose that active monitoring should be used in addition to special policy decisions and instructions on private communications (Blanchard & Henle, 2008). Others point out that although such mechanisms like advanced electronic monitoring and negative sanctions may be effective up to a limit, such measures may often create employee distrust and have a harmful effect

on employee morale (Jian, 2013).

The research questions posed in the current study include: (1) what kinds of SM were used, (2) whether the organization, public or private, had open access and/or allowed access to SM and whether there was a difference between these two types, (3) whether the employees used SM while at work to see to private concerns, and whether the use differed according to age, gender, education or level of occupation, (4) how much time employees spent on this activity and (5) what was the attitude of executives and other employees regarding such use.

Methodology

Iceland provides a good opportunity for surveying the use of SM. Computer use is common and 97% of the Icelanders were considered internet users in 2014 with 97% of the homes connected to the internet. The number has increased steadily and no country in Europe has as a higher percentage of regular internet users than Iceland. At that time 98% of the companies in Iceland with ten or more employees had internet access (Statistics Iceland, 2015). In Iceland the use of SM has developed quickly and is widespread as about 82% of individuals make use of SM, which is the most common use in Europe (Statistics Iceland, 2014). According to the World Economic Forum (2014) Icelanders make up the highest proportion of Facebook users in the world.

Statistical information about Icelanders and the economy is very good and makes it easy to choose a sample that is typical of the country's inhabitants. Furthermore, the company culture and the attitudes of executives to management and work are not really that different from

those that can be found in Western Europe, North America and Australia, which can make the results interesting to those who live in these parts of the world.

The research data were collected in 2013-2014, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative research was based on a questionnaire survey that was sent to a panel of the Social Science Institute of the University of Iceland, and questioning that was carried out by phone. The third approach was based on qualitative research and consisted of interviews. The objective of the quantitative part of the study was to shed light on the personal use of SM by employees during work hours and the objective of the interviews was to obtain more detailed information on the variables that were revealed in the questionnaire survey on this activity.

The Survey

The survey instrument used was a questionnaire that was based on a scale (Neuman, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003; Zikmund, Badin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013) and contained 21 closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was written with the collaboration of two human resource (HR) managers, and two computer experts reviewed them. The questionnaire consisted of questions that were connected with demographic and work-related factors and issues that concerned the use of SM. The questionnaire was presented over the phone to respondents whose names were chosen randomly from the National Registry of the total population, and similarly to a stratified random sample from the internet panel of the Social Science Institute. The sample of the internet panel was stratified by sex, age, place of residence, education and in-

Table 1

The number of respondents by type of employment

	No. of responses	Response rate
Government employee or state enterprise	140	19%
Community/ municipality	145	19%
Private industry	448	60%
Other	18	2%
No. of respondents employed	**751**	**100%**
Not employed	301	
No response	200	
Total	**1,252**	

come and therefore intended to reflect as accurately as possible the composition of the inhabitants of Iceland. The internet panel consists of individuals 18 years or older from the whole country that have agreed to participate in internet surveys for the Social Science Institute. Each sample numbered 1,200 individuals. A total of 1,283 replied, giving a response rate of 53%.

The data were weighted by sex, age, place of residence and education in order to give the most correct picture of the population. This meant that the total number who replied came to 1,252. The internet survey yielded 48% of the replies, or 606, and the phone survey 52%, or 646, such that the total number of responses came to 1,252. The chi-square test of significance was used to test whether there was a statistically significant difference between groups. Of the 1,252 respondents, 751 were working

and in the labor market and only they had the possibility of access to SM during working hours provided that access was open; 38% of them worked for public entities; and 60% were in the private sector. Others were either outside the labor market or did not reply.

The Interviews

In the qualitative part of the study, different employee groups were chosen with purposive sampling from five organizations where the number of employees ranged from 150 to 1,000 (Thorlindsson & Karlsson, 2003). A set of questions was developed as a guide for the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). The interviews were conducted from 2013-2014 and were held with executives, human research managers, specialists and general employees, one from each workplace. General employees are general office workers such as clerks and specialists are employees using their university education on the job such as accountants, engineers and computer specialists. The interviewees were chosen with the idea that they could give the most correct information about personal use of SM during work hours in the clearest way (Neuman, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were used that contained open-ended questions. These questions were in part a continuation of the quantitative part of the questionnaire survey but the interviewees were given the opportunity to express themselves openly and in their own words about the personal use of SM during work hours, i.e. whether they used the media for communication about personal concerns and their private lives. The research was not intended, however, to ascertain what kind of personal concerns the interviewees saw to using the media but only the time they spent on

such use and their attitude toward such use, as described above. The same interview frame was used in all the interviews but when the human research managers were interviewed they were not only asked about their own use but also about the use of other employees. It was felt that the human research managers would be aware of such use as a part of their job.

Qualitative research is well suited to obtaining data at the scene (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Gorman & Clayton, 2005) and the interviews were always held at the workplace of the interviewee (Kvale, 1996). A total of 20 people were interviewed at three private firms (companies A, B and C) and two public organizations (institutions D and E). The organizations were identified by letters rather than names in order to protect the confidentiality of both the interviewees and their workplaces. The interviews lasted from about 30-60 minutes and were taped with the permission of the interviewees. Then the interviewees were given the opportunity to review the taped interviews and only one of them made use of that opportunity (Esterberg, 2002; Gorman & Clayton, 2005). The interviews were subsequently recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed.

The analysis of the interviews was also supported by grounded theory; themes were sought in the data and then coded and classified (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Schwandt, 1997). A hypothesis was worked out during the study and from the analysis of the data (Moustakas, 1994). Comparisons were constantly sought and indications found to merge the classifications of the themes. The themes turned on the type of SM used; whether the organizations had open or closed access to

SM; the range of personal use of SM during work hours; and the attitudes of the executives and other employees towards such use.

Findings

The themes from the interview analysis turned on the type of SM used; whether the organizations had open or closed access to SM; the range of personal use of SM during work hours; and the attitudes of the executives and other employees towards such use.

The Use of Social Media

The questionnaire survey asked whether the respondents in general used Facebook, Twitter or other SM. The greater part of the respondents, or 76%, used SM. Only 20% did not. Four % did not use the internet. Facebook was the most popular medium, as a full 84.5% said they used it, 7.5% used Twitter and 8% used other SM. The respondents could name more than one such medium and it was revealed that 15% of them used more than one.

Examination of the background variables showed a significant difference between the groups by sex, age, marital status, education and occupation ($p < 0.001$). Women used SM more than men, or 81% of the women against 70% of the men. The younger groups used the media more than their elders or 99% of those who were in the age range of 18-29 against only 42% of those who were 70 or older. As to marital status, it was revealed that single people were more active on the media or 90% of them. In terms of education level, those who had completed education at the secondary school level used the media the most, or 86%, and those who had a practical or vocational education used the

media the least, or 63%. As to the position of the respon-dents on the labor market, those who were in school and seeking work used the media the most (98% and 93%, re-spectively) in contrast to those who were retired, where the ratio was 47%. There was no difference between the groups in terms of place of residence.

In terms of the interview survey, 15 of the 20 interview-ees generally used the SM. All 15 used Facebook and four of them also used Twitter.

Access to Social Media at Work

Access varied whether the organizations provided open access to the SM. Almost two thirds of the respondents had access to SM at work during work hours, or 66%, such that these employees could see to their private concerns while at work.

Closer examination showed that a larger proportion of the men, or 72%, had such access in contrast to 59% of the women, a significant difference ($p < 0.001$). Access was re-vealed to be more often open in organizations in the capi-tal area, or 71%, than in the countryside, where only 59% of the respondents had open access, a difference that was also significant ($p < 0.001$). When access was examined in connection with the level of education, the difference was also significant ($p < 0.001$); employees with a university education had most often access, or 81%, in contrast to those who had completed only compulsory schooling, or 52%. Private firms were more likely to offer such access, or 63%, whereas the proportion dropped to 42% at the state institutions, a difference that was also significant ($p < 0.001$).

The interviews revealed that three organizations of the

five had open access to SM, i.e. firms A and B and institution D, whereas the other two, firm C and institution E, did not have open access to such media.

The study showed that 372, or 49% of those who had such access, used the media for private reasons during work hours to some degree. Some respondents replied seldom, or 7%, using it only three times a month or less, whereas 42% used it more often, or once to four times a week and up to twice or more often daily.

Private Use of Social Media

As to occupation, the interviewees gave different answers about the private use of SM during work hours. Three of the general employees used it at work for a total of two hours a week, the executives four and a half, the HM managers six, and the other specialists for a total of eight hours. One of the general employees, the one who worked for institution B, did not use SM during work hours. The interview also showed that none of the three organizations that had open access to SM placed a ban on personal use.

Participants spent from less than half an hour to four hours or more per week using SM for personal concerns during work hours (Table 2).

The study showed that 34% of the respondents felt that they spent two to four hours and more per week on personal use of the SM. The work week for office staff in Iceland is commonly 37.5 hours and 16% of the respondents felt it was acceptable to spend 10% of the work week on such use.

Those who spent even less time on this, i.e. once a week, were asked to estimate how much time they spent in a

Table 2

Average time per week spent at work for private reasons using SM

	N	Ratio
Less than half an hour	45	15%
30 to 59 minutes	59	20%
An hour to an hour and 59 minutes	93	31%
Two hours to three hours and 59 minutes	52	18%
Four hours or more	47	16%
Number	**296**	**100%**
Do not use SM during working hours	383	
Do use SM during working hours three times a month or less	55	
Not gainfully employed	302	
No answer	216	
Total	**1,252**	

month on using the SM for private concerns during work time. The majority of these, or 58%, felt that they spent less than an hour each month and very few, or 13%, spent more than two hours monthly.

In the interviews the interviewees were asked to think hard and estimate as accurately as possible how much time in whole and/or half hours they spent in general per week using SM for private concerns during work time. It turned out that 11 of the 12 interviewees in three of the organizations which had open access to SM spent a considerable amount of time doing this. In firm A the four interviewees in general spent a total of 9 hours, in firm B four interviewees spent 6 hours, and at institution D three in-

terviewees spent a total of 6 hours on such use. The general employee at institution B did not use SM during work time.

Attitudes toward Personal Use

Half of the participants said they believed management at their workplaces was very or rather opposed toward employees using SM during working hours for private purposes. Thirty % said neither supportive or opposed, and 20% said very or rather supportive. Further examination of the results in terms of the background variables showed that 24% of those who worked for private firms felt that the attitude of the executives on the use of SM for private concerns during work time was very or rather positive. The proportion turned out to be lower in the public sector or 7% of those who worked for municipalities and 10% of those who worked for state institutions. This difference was significant ($p < 0.001$).

When the employees were asked for their own attitude on personal use of SM during work hours, the larger number, or 65%, felt that it was very or rather unacceptable that employees used SM for personal reasons during work hours. However, only 50% of the employees felt that the executives deemed that it was very or rather unacceptable. Only 16% of employees said that their own SM personal use during work hours was very or rather acceptable.

There was a significant difference between the groups in respect of sex and education ($p < 0.001$). In the opinion of 20% of the men it was very or rather unacceptable that the employees could see to personal concerns using SM during work time against 11% of the women. Those with more education were more accepting of such use, i.e. 22%

Table 3

Views on personal use of SM during working hours

Employee	Firm A	Firm B	Firm C	Firm D	Firm E
Executive	+	+	–	+	–
HR manager	+	–	–	–	+
Specialist	+	+	+	+	+
General employee	–	–	+	–	–

+ signifies positive and – signifies negative

of those who had completed university education and aca-demic study in secondary school felt that it was very or rather unacceptable against 6% of those with a practical education or study in special schools.

The questionnaire asked more closely about how much time a week the employees thought was acceptable to spend on personal use of SM during work hours. The an-swer was that 40% of the respondents thought it was ac-ceptable in all respects to use SM in that way, 22% thought it acceptable to use less than an hour, 23% thought it acceptable if the use was under two hours, and 16% of the respondents thought that it was all right to spend two or more hours a week seeing to private concerns on the SM during work time.

All 20 interviewees from the five organizations where the interviews were conducted were asked for their views on personal use of SM during work hours. All replied but their answers were usually not decisive. It was therefore decided to ask them whether they thought such behavior

was rather positive or rather negative. Table 3 shows the results of their assessment.

The interviewees turned out to be more positive than negative regarding the personal use of SM at work, or 11 positive against 9 negative. The majority of the executives were rather positive about such use, or three out of five. Those who were positive mentioned that it was often for the good as when work strained the mind, and even time-saving, but they indicated it needed to be within recognized limits. For example the executive in firm A said: "this replaces the use of telephones and e-mails and is acceptable within limits," and the one in firm B said: "our staff must use their mind a lot during work – they put their mind at ease by visiting Facebook occasionally."

More HR managers were rather negative about it, or three out of five. Those who were negative said it was a waste of time and felt that employees should stick to their job during work and the one in firm B said for example: "far too much time is spent on this by our staff."

The specialists, on the other hand, were all rather positive and they all said that sometimes, and even often, they tended to work during their spare time. They were of the opinion that working during their spare time made up for any personal use of SM during work hours. The specialist in firm A said for example: "it does not bother my conscience to use Facebook at work – I spend countless hours working while at home, both in the evening and during weekends," and the one at institution D said: "I find it all right. I am always working in my spare time, both at home and while travelling."

Almost all of the general employees were rather negative, or four of the five. Those who were negative generally

did not use SM or were clearly against such use during work hours. One of them, for example, did definitely not like the idea of using SM at work, could always do it after coming home. The general employee at organization C said however: "I wish that I could do this at work – my friends at other firms can, but here it is not allowed."

Discussion

SM use is widespread in Iceland and 76% of the respondents to the questionnaire said they used such media. The responses RQ1 showed that Facebook was the most popular social medium and that the popularity of Twitter and other SM trailed far behind that of Facebook. This coincides with Gibson(2013).

The findings from RQ2 revealed that about two thirds of the organizations (66%) had open access to SM during work hours and about one third did not. Private firms seemed to be more likely than public ones to have open access to SM, or 63%. In the present study the proportion was 42% of the state institutions and 56% of the municipalities. Three of the five organizations where the interviews took place had open access to SM, but in recent years there has been an increase in the number of organizations that make use of the media in business (ARMA International, 2012; Barnes & Andonian, 2012). None of the three organizations in the interviews that had open access to SM banned such use by their employees during work hours.

Almost 50% of the respondents in the questionnaire made use of the possibility to tap into SM for private concerns during work hours and the majority used Facebook, to answer RQ3. The use was more common among younger

people and students and those who were in the labor market turned out to be the most active users. The questionnaire showed that it was more common for men than for women to have access to SM, thus making it possible to tend to private concerns at work, or 75% of the men in contrast to 59% of the women. This is interesting as in general it seems that the use of SM is more common among women than men, or 81% of the women against 70% of the men who said they used the media. It is not at all clear, however, whether this difference is correlated with sex as it could also be correlated with the fact that men still hold more executive positions than do women in Iceland. The results showed that open access to SM for private use during work hours was more common among the more educated support the conclusion that use is correlated with occupation. For example it can be noted that 81% of the respondents with a university education said they had such access in contrast to the 52% who had only compulsory education. This is consistent with the results of Garrett and Danziger (2008) that show, among other things, that the better educated employees saw to private concerns on the internet during work time more than the less educated. The answers of the interviewees showed that men more than women, especially the younger ones, were more likely to use SM for personal concerns at work. The results from both in the questionnaire and interviews were consistent with the results of other research on internet and SM use at work in respect of sex and occupation (Garrett & Danziger, 2008; Vitak, Crouse & LaRose, 2011). The interviews showed a difference by occupation in the personal use of SM during work. The three general employees spent two hours a week on this, the executives

four and a half, the HM managers six and the specialists a total of eight hours. In this study it can be surmised that specialists were more likely to need to jog their thinking at work more than did other staff members. In this connection the results differed from Liberman et al. (2011), which showed that employees who had jobs that were less mentally demanding were more likely to see to private concerns on the internet during work hours.

Respondents spent a considerable amount of time during the work week on personal use of the SM; 65% of them spent more than one hour a week and some as much as two hours and up to four or more hours a week (RQ4). In this case the use was therefore more than 10% of the work week. According to the interview survey the 12 employees who worked for the three organizations that had open access spent a considerable amount of time using SM at work in fact a total of about six hours in two of them and nine hours in the other.

Half of the respondents to the questionnaire were of the opinion that the executives were against allowing employees to tend to private concerns using SM during work hours, answering RQ5. It is interesting that a still larger proportion of the respondents, or 65%, i.e. the employees themselves, felt that it was not acceptable for them to make use of SM in this way. Those who were outside the labor market also answered this question but it is not known whether there was a difference in the opinions of those who had jobs or were unemployed. Forty % felt that it was definitely unacceptable to see to one's personal concerns on SM during work hours but 22% felt it was acceptable provided it did not exceed over one hour per week. The results also showed that 24% of those who worked for

private firms felt that the executives were very or rather positive toward the use of SM for private concerns during work hours. This percentage fell to 7% of those who worked for the municipalities and 10% for those who worked in state offices. The 20 individuals interviewed in the five organizations were asked for their opinions on the personal use of SM during work time but the answers turned out to be not unconditional. Effort was therefore made to assess and analyze them in terms of whether they were rather positive or rather negative. It appeared that there were more rather positive than rather negative replies, or 11 vs. 9. It also appeared that the executives and specialists were more positive than the HR managers and general employees as to the use of SM for private concerns during work time. These results showed that the assessment of the employees of the opinions of the executives of such use seemed to be more negative than the actual opinions of the executives. This is an interesting result and it would be prudent to research it further.

Conclusions

Research has shown a positive attitude toward the internet and the use of SM for private concerns during work if it is within an agreed limit, according to the policy of the organizations, and is not overdone. When employees have reached the level of spending more than 10% of their time at work on SM for private concerns, then SM is clearly a distraction at work as was the initial hypothesis. A management intervention seems appropriate when the use has become that extensive. In this connection it is important to have written instructions in place and an agreed organizational policy on the use of SM during work

hours (ARMA International, 2012; Binder & Mansfield, 2013, p. 36; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015, pp. 573-576; Scott, 2008, p. 48).

A limitation of this study is that the number of interviewees was not large. However, it should be noted that those interviewed were those believed to be in the best position to provide the information.

It is expected that the results of this research will clarify the position of the use of SM during work hours and can at the same time support a better understanding of such use. The results can help executives of organizations to assess the advantages and disadvantages associated with the use of SM and at the same time whether it is desirable to allow employees to use the media for their own private concerns during working hours. In this way executives can use the research to develop their policy concerning such use.

Work is increasingly performed outside of the office and the boundaries between work and private life are becoming increasingly unclear. Technological innovations such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones have made it easy to work either outside of the office or at the workplace. Places outside the workplace are often called "the third office," which can mean places like a hotel, coffeehouse, library, home, and other places that were earlier defined as public areas such as airplanes, long-distance coaches, trains and other public thoroughfares (Allen & Shoard, 2005; Mäkinen, 2013; Mäkinen & Henttonen, 2011). For this reason executives need to assess the success rate and performance of their employees and must look at their productivity and worth rather than worrying about where and when they have worked or how long it has taken (Ivarsson &

Larsson, 2011).

The research adds valuable information to a better understanding of the status of SM in general and especially at places of work. The findings could be of value to organizations and their managers that want to evaluate the pros and cons of SM for their organization as a marketing or communication tool and how they impact their people at work.

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