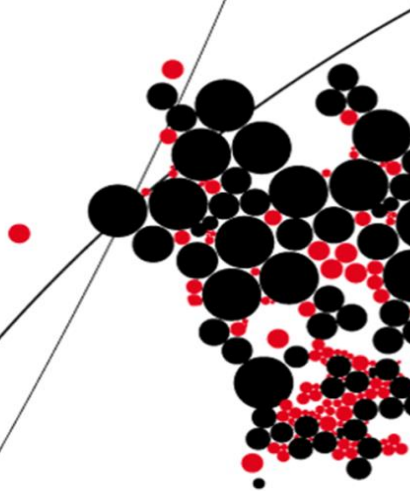


Unlock the potential

*A research into the social networking sites skills
among communication professionals and the con-
tributors to those skills*



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ABSTRACT

Although information and communication technologies, such as social networking sites (SNS), have become an important contributor to the success of marketing strategies in Western society, skills necessary for professional use of these sites are not well studied. The key objective of this study is to approach these skills through the elaboration of a scientific model that involves SNS skills and factors contributing to their level.

A total of 266 (n= 266) German communication professionals participate in an online survey, whereof 203 participants (n= 203) have been the base for analyses. A literature review reveals the importance of a distinction between three kinds of SNS skills: SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills cover different professional actions on SNS. However, the current results show that they are strongly interconnected. Mean scores indicate a lower level of the skills than expected among professionals who work regularly on SNS. So, there is potential for improvement and instructions. Finally, a regression analysis identifies SNS use, intrinsic work motivation, transformational leadership as well as informal and formal support to contribute positively to the level of the three kinds of SNS skills. They are the base for recommended improvement strategies. Apparently, other personal factors (gender, age, educational level, SNS experience) and work-related factors (learning method, transactional leadership style) do not contribute to the level of SNS skills.

As a result, organizations are advised to keep the three kinds of skills and their contributors in mind when practicing improvement strategies in order to use the full potential of communication professionals' SNS skills. They are recommended to remind their communication professionals to regularly use SNS as well as to enhance job satisfaction as an important contributor to intrinsic work motivation. Also, organizations should advise their leaders to be as empathic and charismatic as possible because transformational leadership has been found to enhance the level of SNS skills. Finally, organizations are advised to ensure the presence of informal and formal support sources in order to improve their social media marketing strategies effectively.

Keywords: SNS skills, SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, SNS strategic skills, contributors to SNS skills, communication professionals, social media marketing

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, information and communication technologies have become an important contributor to successful marketing and communication processes in Western organizations. Since the digitalization offers new ways of communication between organizations and their stakeholders simultaneously to the growing use of the Internet, the online environment asks for new strategies regarding online marketing. Going along with this trend, the European Communication Monitor shows increasing importance of social media and digital communication in the media mix of European organizations (Moreno, Verhoeven, Tench, & Zerfass, 2010). As a result, social media are expected to take over the leading position of traditional media. They are defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). As a category of social media, social networking sites (SNS) offer their users services to find and add contacts, send messages to friends, and create a personal profile (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapira, 2012). Because of these features, the number of users on SNS is constantly growing. For instance, Facebook is reportedly one of the top visited websites, used by more than 3.4 billion people daily (Statista, 2017). The great traffic on SNS leads to their continuously increasing influence not only in the private context but also in the professional communication of organizations (Verhoeven, Tench, Zerfass, Moreno, & Verčič, 2012). Social media marketing is one trend used by marketers to strategically communicate with employees, customers, or investors (Thackerary, Neiger, Hanson, & McKenzie, 2008). In this research, SNS are means that are used to spread corporate content time and cost effectively by reaching a great audience through one communication channel (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). It concentrates on the activities communication professionals (e.g., social media managers or PR professionals) perform on SNS to reach organizational goals. Communication professionals are, for example, responsible for creating online profiles, posting corporate messages on organizations’ timelines or contacting target groups through SNS (Tackeray et al., 2008). SNS not only allow them to reach out to and engage their publics in conversation, they also provide an avenue to strengthen media relations (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008). Therefore, the majority of communication professionals state that the use of such communication technology has made their job easier by expediting the circulation of information to reach broader audiences (Eyrich et al., 2008). Because most communication professionals control the strategic aspects of digital and social communication as well as the related budget within organizations (Verhoeven et al., 2012), they need to be highly skilled in SNS practices.

Despite the importance of SNS skills, the concept is barely discussed in academic literature; to our knowledge, research in the field of SNS skills in the professionals sector has not been conducted yet. The current contribution aims to extend existing knowledge about Internet skills in general (Van Deursen, Van Dijk, & Peters, 2011) by approaching professionals’ SNS skills and the factors contributing to the level of these skills in the communication sector. To do so, a new scientific model is con-

ceptualized. In this research, SNS skills are defined as individual abilities that are needed to use SNS in a strategic, socially accepted, and effective manner. Communication professionals' SNS skills are required to realize organizational goals, like product promotion, image development, or crisis management (Jin, Liu, & Augustin, 2014). This concept is of sequential and conditional nature in the way that SNS skills depend on the general ability to use the Internet (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). In recent times of the Web 2.0, defined as both "a platform on which innovative technologies have been built and a space where users are as important as the content they upload and share with others" (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009, p. 247), we aim to give a clear definition on what communication professionals need to effectively use SNS and how these skills can be improved. By conceptualizing a new scientific model of SNS skills, this study determines the current level of SNS skills among communication professionals in order to see whether there is room for improvement. Furthermore, it aims at investigating the personal and work-related factors contributing to communication professionals' abilities to achieve their goals in the online environment successfully. For example, gender, age, and the education level influence the abilities in the digital environment (Van Deursen et al., 2011). Also, the SNS use and experience can contribute to the abilities regarding these sites. Contributors out of work psychology research are, for instance, work relationships, motivation, leadership or support (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Grant, 2008; Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2010; Joiner, 2007). To reach the stated research goals, the following research questions are formulated:

RQ1: *Which skills do communication professionals need to effectively use SNS?*

RQ2: *What is the current level of communication professionals' SNS skills?*

RQ3: *Which factors contribute to the level of communication professionals' SNS skills?*

To our knowledge, this study is the first to conceptualize SNS skills and to make valid predictions about SNS skills of communication professionals on the basis of personal characteristics, SNS use and experience as well as work-related factors. Results are especially interesting for organizations targeting to choose qualified personnel in future and trying to improve its employees' skills on SNS.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous research on digital skills already introduces skills required to use the Internet (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). When measuring Internet skills, both operational skills necessary to use the Internet and content related skills required to comprehend or use online content are introduced (Bawden, 2008). In this context, most authors suggest specific Internet skills related to information searching (Van Deursen, Helsper, & Eynon, 2016). But when it comes to skills regarding Web 2.0 activities, such as marketing via SNS, different skills are required (Calvani, Fini, Rainieri, & Picci, 2012). The

most striking difference between browsing through the Internet and SNS activities is the way of communication. SNS are a “two-way form of media through which users construct personal identities through self-presentation and dialogue” (Smith, 2010, p. 329). In contrast, the Internet is mostly used to search for and use online content (Bawden, 2008), which can be defined as a one-way form of media. Nevertheless, knowledge about Internet skills can be used to conceptualize SNS skills required to communication professionals’ effective use of these sites. By doing so, this research will extend the knowledge of digital skills in the organizational context.

Van Dijk and Van Deursen (2014) propose a detailed typology to conceptualize the following range of digital skills needed in the environment of the Internet: operational skills, formal skills, information skills, communication skills, content creation skills, and strategic skills. This concept will partly be used to introduce the new conceptualization of SNS skills by adapting it to the online social network context. Operational and formal skills are medium-related skills. They are about the technical skills and abilities to use the Internet for browsing and navigating (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). In this study, medium-related skills are not integrated into the concept of SNS skills, because in times of social media marketing, it is not expected that communication professionals have difficulties in using SNS. Information, communication, content creation, and strategic skills are content-related skills. Information skills are excluded from the conceptualization as it is defined as the “the ability to search, select, and evaluate information in digital media” (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014, p. 6). These skills are essential to be a communication professional, so they are not expected to differ among this group. In contrast, the other three content-related skills (communication skills, content creation skills, and strategic skills) are necessary to effectively use SNS because those are characterized by their ability to build up social networks similar to offline social networks (Ahn, Han, Kwak, Moon, & Jeong, 2007). Therefore, communication skills, content creation skills, and strategic skills are used as a scheme of reference to introduce the new concept of SNS skills here.

2.1 SNS communication skills

Similar to the concept of communication skills introduced by Van Dijk and Van Deursen (2014), users need certain skills to communicate with conversation partners via SNS. In this context, communication skills are characterized by the ability to chat with other users, or the ability to communicate individual characteristics and values through the own profile. SNS communication skills are also defined by the ability to communicate in real time without any physical presence of the dialogue partners. The following skills will be discussed in this section:

- Construct, understand, and exchange meaning in chat conversations
- Contribute to online groups
- Acquire strategic contacts

2.1.1 Construct, understand, and exchange meaning in chat conversations

One form of communicating online is chatting with other users. Professionals use the chat function, for example, to answer questions, to spread private messages or to send extra material (Watson-Manheim & Bélanger, 2007). Here, communication functions are similar to real communication in the way that both indicate “an exchange of messages with meaning encoded by a sender and decoded by receivers” (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014, p. 31). Thus, a chat is comparable to real conversations in a way that communication partners exchange information in real time. SNS communication skills resulting from this definition are encoding, decoding, and exchanging messages online. So, communication professionals should be skilled in writing messages in chats that are understandable for the conversation partner and be able to understand the meaning of received messages. Finally, a condition requisite for writing and receiving messages is the understanding of how to start a chat on SNS.

2.1.2 Contribute to online groups

Word-of-mouth marketing is often used by firms to intentionally influence consumer-to-consumer communication and their decision-making processes (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007). Forums or digital groups affect the narratives and influence the audience attracted to the forum and members’ response to its content (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). For instance, XING offers its users the possibility to create groups based on their profession. If an organization searches for a PR professional, it is able to reach this target group by being a member of such a business group. To make use of such a form of online word-of-mouth marketing, the organization’s professionals must know how to join these groups and how to effectively participate in SNS group chats.

2.1.3 Acquire strategic contacts

Dialogic relationship building is one main purpose for organizations using social media. They utilize online networks “to interact, share, and converse with stakeholders in a way that ultimately facilitates the creation of an online community with its followers” (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 343). This collaboration purpose is essential to online communication because it facilitates the enlargement of the organization’s offline network. To do so, new contacts must be reached (Diga & Kelleher, 2009). They are important for different purposes. On the one hand, the more people are in the organizational network the greater the influence of the organization. On the other hand, new contacts often result in new collaborations.

2.2 SNS content creation skills

Communication professionals often use SNS to present their organization or themselves to the outside world. Therefore, SNS content creation skills are considered as the skills required to create and publish content online, so that others are reached by the information. This comprises, for example, the ability of professionals to create a business profile and produce messages or vivid content on SNS (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). In contrast to other digital skills, SNS content creation skills deal

with the professionals' ability to create content, which represents how they want to be seen by other stakeholders. Here, the key concept is self-representation. SNS content creation skills are considered as the skills required to:

- Create informational text messages
- Create professional video content
- Create professional photo and image content
- Create activating content
- Create an organizational profile
- Create a personal business profile

2.2.1 Create informational text messages

Organizations seem to employ social media for one primary purpose – information-sharing (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Referring to this purpose, SNS are often used to enlarge and facilitate the communication between organizations and their stakeholders (Cameron & Webster, 2005; Macias, Hilyard, & Freimuth, 2009). For this reason, informing is a basic function of SNS, which involves spreading information about the organization, its activities, or anything of potential interest to followers (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). In this context, informing is a kind of one-way communication, the exchange of information from the organization to the public (Waters, 2007). To differentiate informing content from other messages, it is classified as being informational and neither used for promotion or self-representation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Examples of informational communication are messages about organization's history, vision or detailed information about finance. A reason for creating informational content is connecting stakeholders and the organization's mission to help boosting accountability and public trust (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

2.2.2 Create professional video content

The digital environment of the Internet requires user-generated content, such as websites, chat forums or videos (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). Especially communication professionals use a mix of qualitative text messages and vivid media content (e.g., music or videos) to reach a great target group and to catch the attention of other users (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Today, mobile video shots can be easily uploaded and posted on YouTube or Facebook profiles. However, these possibilities result in a large variety of quality of the online content produced (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). Professionals need to develop skills in producing and publishing video or music content on SNS. Simultaneously they have to decide which content is appropriate to be published in a business video and how it should be presented online. Content that is evaluated as unprofessional might have negative impact on the image of the publishing organization.

2.2.3 Create professional photo and image content

Social media offers new possibilities to organizations but new technology always goes along with challenges, too. Although many tools seem quite simple to use, creating attractive content of high quality remains unachievable for many users (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). However, the quality of the created content should at least be sufficient to achieve the intended goal. In the professional context, SNS are often used to distribute visual images (Safko, 2010) as well as to make business profiles more vivid through the use of a profile photo (Lee & Shin, 2014). In contrast to content creation on an amateur level, effective and attractive photo and image content on a professional level suggests that created content has the intended effect on receivers (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). For example, professionals publish a photo of a new product and ask for positive evaluations indicated by other users' clicks on the Like-button below. Furthermore, photo and image content is evaluated as being more vivid than only text messages (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). It is important to know how to publish this content because higher degrees of vividness appear to be most effective at enhancing attitudes towards (professional) web content (Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Fortin & Dholakia, 2005).

2.2.4 Create activating content

As already discussed in the prior paragraphs, communication professionals use SNS to reach certain business goals. Possible goals could be spreading information to a greater target group, affecting stakeholders' behavior or attitude in a certain way as well as for self-representation. Depending on the situation of the business, social media marketing strategies must be adapted to different behaviors. Positive word-of-mouth (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013), purchase intention (Wang, Xu, & Wei, 2012), or making contacts (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) are only three examples of intended results of marketing messages spread through SNS. To stimulate these behaviors, communication professionals must develop skills like mixing vivid and informational content (De Vries et al., 2012), creating content according to target group's characteristics (Guy, Zwerdling, Ronen, Carmel, & Uziel, 2010), or knowing the right time to publish new content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In general, measuring the level and success of such skills is difficult because there are many factors influencing the decision-making processes of humans. However, responses like the number of likes, shares or the positive or negative tone in comments indicate how the receivers perceive the content.

2.2.5 Create organizational and personal business profiles

Profiles are essential for communication professionals trying to reach stakeholders via social media because they create a feeling of disclosure (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). There are two types of strategic profiles on SNS. First, organizational profiles that contain descriptions, history, mission statement, logos or administrators listed (Waters et al., 2009). Second, professionals use personal profiles on online business platforms (e.g., LinkedIn or XING) for self-presentation or to get into contact with other professionals (Case, Gardiner, Rutner, & Dyer, 2013). Both kinds of profiles are used to communicate information about the company or the professional for organizational purposes. SNS

content creation skills referring to these aims are creating a corporate profile for representing the organization on social networking sites and creating a personal profile for self-presentation on business and employment social networking sites (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014).

2.3 SNS strategic skills

SNS strategic skills refer to the ability to use SNS as a medium to strategically achieve both personal and professional goals (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). In times of user-centered Internet-based applications, especially the users' control of communication, the development of marketing strategies has become more challenging (Thackeray et al., 2008). Upon reversion, social media also offers new possibilities to communication professionals. They use SNS to make their organization more popular, to receive information in order to improve personal skills or social media content, and to decide how to achieve organizational goals (Safko, 2010). Therefore, SNS strategic skills contain the skills developed to improve strategic decision making in the organizational context in order to achieve certain goals. They are defined as the skills needed to accomplish the tasks in the decision-making process:

- Developing an orientation toward a certain goal
- Taking the correct actions to reach this goal
- Making the right decisions to reach this goal
- Gaining the benefits that result from this goal

2.3.1 Developing an orientation toward a certain goal

Developing an orientation toward a certain goal includes being aware of the opportunities SNS offer to the communication sector and simultaneously determining the goal of SNS use in marketing strategies (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). It is crucial to stay focused on achieving their goals (e.g., create corporate content, improve the organizational profile, enlarge the professional network) because the great number of private and professional users on SNS causes an enormous number of distracting stimuli in the landscape of online social networks.

2.3.2 Taking the correct actions to reach this goal

According to Miller (2006), taking the correct actions to reach the previously determined goal includes gathering and combining online available information in order to achieve the best means to accomplish the goal. Communication professionals can choose between different information forms on SNS. Moreover, information can be published in different ways (e.g., videos, texts, pictures) and the organizational profile also offers a lot of possibilities to present the organization in a certain way. Furthermore, communication professionals must decide which kind of SNS is most beneficial to accomplish the organizational goals. There are SNS, such as Facebook, that target private and professional users as well as SNS that only concentrate on business networks (e.g., LinkedIn or XING). Actions need to be taken carefully because there are many factors influencing the success of professional actions on

SNS (e.g., target group's characteristics or timing). Therefore, taking the right actions on SNS might help communication professionals to reach their goal more effectively.

2.3.3 Making the right decisions to reach this goal

The next step in the decision-making process is to make the right decisions to reach the goal. Here, communication professionals must evaluate the information offered by SNS and decide how it can be used to accomplish the marketing goal (Miller, 2006). For example, SNS can be used to gather information that helps to improve the quality of the content published on these sites. The two-way communication character of social media makes the amount of information on SNS enormous (Schultz, Utz, & Göritz, 2011), so communication professionals must think carefully which content can be used to reach the previously determined goal. The identification of an optimal decision as well as the decision implementation are targeted in this step (Miller, 2006).

2.3.4 Gaining the benefits that result from this goal

If prior decisions and actions are taken carefully, the strategical decision-making process is completed with benefits for the organization (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). In the case of strategic SNS marketing, benefits are mostly of economic or social nature. For instance, if information on SNS helps to improve the quality of the corporate content, more people can be attracted by the marketing messages. If SNS use in the professional context supports the development of communication professionals' SNS skills, marketing processes will be more cost-efficient.

2.4 Personal contributors to SNS skills

The most common contributors determined in digital skills research are gender, age, educational level, Internet use, and Internet experience (Van Deursen et al., 2011). The last two can be transmitted to the context of SNS (SNS use and SNS experience). These personal contributors differ from person to person. So, it is interesting to see whether they are appearing important in the context of communication professionals' SNS skills.

2.4.1 Gender

Even though data regarding the frequency of men's and women's Internet usage do not show differences, researches comparing men and women in their ability to solve actual tasks online demonstrate little disparity (Hargittai, 2002; Hargittai & Sharfer, 2006). But educational gender differences, gender differences in the possession of the Internet and in the time using it are diminishing in developed countries (NTIA, 2000). Barker (2009) also shows that no significant gender differences among the general use of SNS can be provided. Additionally, actual performance tests on Internet skills show that there is no disparity in men's and women's content-related Internet skills (Van Deursen et al., 2011; Hargittai & Sharfer, 2006). Those abilities are highly comparable to SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills. Especially the declining educational differences be-

tween the genders in developed countries might be one explanation why both men and women are highly skilled in digital activities. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: *There are no gender differences in the level of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills of communication professionals.*

2.4.2 Age

In general, younger generations are considered as skilled users of the online environment (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014). Furthermore, research emphasizes younger generations' frequent use of social media (Barker, 2009) and therefore they are particularly experienced in communicating via SNS and in producing content on these sites. However, when it comes to the strategic use of SNS, the organizational environment asks for professionals with high work experience, resulting simultaneously in a higher age (Quíñones, Ford, & Teachout, 1995). This might be one reason, why there are concerns about whether the younger generations indeed have higher levels of strategic skills in the professional online environment (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). For example, Van Deursen et al. (2011) investigate a positive contribution of an increasing age to the content-related strategic Internet skills. In other words, in the professional context, younger generations might be particularly skilled in communication and content-creation because of their frequent use of these sites (Barker, 2009). In contrast, older professionals perform better with regard to strategic skills because of more work experience (Quíñones et al., 1995). This leads to the following hypotheses:

H2a: *The increasing age of communication professionals contributes negatively to the level of SNS communication skills.*

H2b: *The increasing age of communication professionals contributes negatively to the level of SNS content creation skills.*

H2c: *The increasing age of communication professionals contributes positively to the level of SNS strategic skills.*

2.4.3 Educational level

In scientific literature, the educational level of attainment is often mentioned as a determinant of digital skills. It appears to be the most relevant contributor to differences in digital skills (Hargittai, 2002; Gui, 2007). The fact that the number of people owning a computer, having Internet access at home, and spending more than average time online increases with the educational level of the population is in line with these findings (Buente & Robbin, 2008). Furthermore, people with higher educational level often use the Internet at work, so they have more practical experience on social media sites. According to NTIA (2000), with rising educational levels, the Internet applications of doing job-related tasks increase significantly. Furthermore, high graduation is determined to be an important contributor to

job performance (Wise, 1975). That suggests that professionals with higher education are doing better in developing skills that are needed to do their job well. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: *The level of the communication professionals' educational attainment contributes positively to the level of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.*

2.4.4 SNS use

In the professional context, research indicates that professionals become more skilled at their jobs over time (Quíñones et al., 1995). Nevertheless, research into the effect of the amount of SNS use on the level of SNS skills is scarce. Findings on Internet skills show that people spending more time online acquire more knowledge about the Internet and simultaneously strengthen their online skills (Hargittai, 2002). These findings result from a different context, but they are applicable in the context of communication professionals' SNS skills: SNS are part of the online environment, so that rising knowledge is expected to be positively related to the skills they require from professionals, too. Additionally, spending time online has been identified to have a positive impact on the knowledge about how to use the technological devices (Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001). Specifically, a frequent use of digital devices enlarges the knowledge and abilities regarding these technologies (Van Deursen et al., 2011). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H4: *The number of hours communication professionals spend on SNS contributes positively to the level of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.*

2.4.5 SNS experience

To make a clear distinction between SNS use and SNS experience, we consider the number of hours spent on SNS and the number of years people have been using SNS (Van Deursen et al., 2011). Regular use of online applications over a long time makes the Internet and related platforms, such as SNS, playing an important role in the users' life. It requires continuously growing experience to integrate the technologies into the daily life (Renahy, Parizot, & Chauvi, 2008). Additionally, having computer experience at work is a decisive factor in the acquisition of new media skills by adults (Van Dijk, 2004). That means, communication professionals' skills regarding SNS profit from the growing amount of time they use SNS at work. However, there is one exception: strategic Internet skills do not grow with years of Internet experience (Van Deursen et al., 2011). Even though these findings result from a different research context, SNS are part of the Internet and therefore strategic SNS skills can be seen as almost similar to strategic Internet skills. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H5a: *The number of years communication professionals use SNS contributes positively to the level of SNS communication skills.*

H5b: *The number of years communication professionals use SNS contributes positively to the level of SNS content creation skills.*

H5c: *The number of years communication professionals use SNS contributes neither positively nor negatively to the level of SNS strategic skills.*

2.5 Work-related contributors to SNS skills

In addition to personal contributors, research is done on factors contributing to performance in the professional context. They result from the situation at work and differ from organization to organization. Important contributors to job performance are learning methods, leadership, motivation, and support (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004; Pinder, 1998; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997; Joiner, 2007). In this study, we will investigate whether they contribute to the level of communication professionals' SNS skills.

2.5.1 Learning methods

There are two kinds of learning contributing to the level of digital skills, such as SNS skills: formal and informal learning (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004). Formal learning refers to the learning processes that occur within an organized and structured context, which may lead to formal recognitions, like diploma's and certificates (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004; Cross, 2007). Additionally, Kitsantas and Dabbagh (2011) state formal learning in the organizational context to be institutionally sponsored or highly structured. For example, workshops for learning social media skills can be seen as a way of formal learning. However, informal learning processes and methods are also performed in the organizational context. Informal learning is defined as unstructured learning processes resulting from daily life activities related to family, work or leisure (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004; Cross, 2007). It is practiced through observations, trial and error, asking for help or conversing with others (Kitsantas & Dabbagh, 2011). Many organizations try to improve employees' skills through workshops or training but also through informal learning methods, like asking questions or observing coworkers. Both ways result in the development of skills and knowledge at work (Dale & Bell, 1999; Attwell, 2007). Also, they increase individual skills because informal learning is supposed to support and be supported by formal learning activities (Dale & Bell, 1999; Svensson, Ellstrom, & Aberg, 2004). Therefore, it is not expected that one of them contributes more positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS skills than the other. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H6: *There are no differences of formal learning and informal learning in the level of communication professionals' SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.*

2.5.2 Intrinsic work motivation

When it comes to job performance, intrinsic work motivation is a primary contributor (Grant, 2008). It affects job performance by increasing one's job satisfaction (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Upon reversion, intrinsic work motivation has impact on employees' work-related actions, such as developing skills autonomously in order to fulfill job requirements (Judge & Ilies, 2002). This suggests that if intrinsic work motivation is high, it is easier for employees to develop work-related skills. In this study, the

concept is defined to be “a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work-related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration” (Pinder, 1998, p. 11). Thus, intrinsic work motivation is related to the interaction of employees and the organizational environment. It is affected by factors, such as person-context fit, job design characteristics, feedback or organizational justice (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Furthermore, it is found that intrinsic work motivation is essential to employees’ willingness to perform beneficial to the organizational goals and that satisfied employees are likely to spend more effort to work tasks (Katzell & Thompson, 1990). So, motivated employees are more willing to acquire knowledge and develop skills that make their work more effective. For example, particularly motivated communication professionals, who must use SNS for organizational purposes, strive for a higher level of SNS skills to individually support their organization. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H7: *The level of the communication professionals’ intrinsic work motivation contributes positively to the level of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.*

2.5.3 Leadership styles

In this study, two types of leadership are involved: (1) transactional leadership style and (2) transformational leadership style. The transactional leadership style is characterized by an exchange between leader and follower (Burns, 1978). Followers know that they receive certain valued outcomes if they act according to the leader’s expectations (Hartog, Muijen, & Koopman, 1997). To create such a cost-benefit exchange process, the leader clarifies the performance criteria and the benefits received in return (Hartog et al., 1997). In contrast to the traditional oriented transactional leadership, the transformational leadership is rather charismatic (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003). It refers to actions of leaders, who try to inspire followers to do more than originally expected. This predicts “followers’ emotional attachment to the leader and emotional and motivational arousal of followers as a consequence of the leader’s behavior” (Hartog et al., 1997, p. 20). In general, leadership involves developing, adopting and/or maintaining a viable vision, and influencing and motivating followers to work towards this vision as a common goal (Rikkink, 2014). In other words, a successful leader is able to motivate and support his/her followers to act in the way he/ she wants them to in order to achieve organizational goals. Thus, the followers must develop certain skills, such as SNS skills in the context of communication professionals. Here, a good relationship between leaders and followers is identified to affect the employee’s effectiveness positively (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Additionally, charismatic leadership mediates job satisfaction and motivation (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012), which are essential to employee’s job performance and their willingness to acquire new skills (Appelbaum, St-Pierre, & Glavas, 1998). Charismatic leaders make use of emotional transformational leadership style. That means, the level of communication professionals’ SNS skills, such as SNS communication skills and SNS strategic skills, is expected to be positively affected by the transformational leadership style in general. In contrast, SNS content creation skills are expected to contribute

positively to the transactional leadership. Content creation can be seen as a kind of productivity, and productivity is highly achieved through strict rules and less freedom for the employees (Bhatti et al., 2012). Both are characteristics of the transactional leadership style. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H8a: *The transformational leadership style contributes positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS communication and SNS strategic skills.*

H8b: *The transactional leadership style contributes positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS content creation skills.*

2.5.4 Organizational support

There are different support sources in an organization. First, co-worker support is defined as “co-workers assisting one another in their tasks when needed by sharing knowledge and expertise as well as providing encouragement and support” (Joiner, 2007, p. 618). That means, co-workers try to help each other when they are confronted with novel tasks by sharing their knowledge (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Employees may also acquire task-relevant knowledge from supportive co-workers, so that they learn how to be more effective (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). Second, supervisor support refers to the degree employees perceive to be supported by their supervisors (e.g., answering questions concretely or providing key resources) (Babin & Boles, 1996). Co-worker support and supervisor support are forms of informal support. This includes, for instance, learning by doing, through trial and error, or by observing others (Van Deursen, Courtois, & Van Dijk, 2014). In general, co-worker and supervisor support are factors leading to increasing job satisfaction, which is essential to job performance (Babin & Boles, 1996). Furthermore, it appears that being helped by others at work is associated with enhanced organizational performance (Joiner, 2007). In the context of the digital world, the importance of informal social networks for media adoption has been shown by a variety of studies on information communication technology (Stewart, 2007). It has been found that the majority of Internet skills are developed by learning from family, friends, and colleagues at home or at work (Katz & Aspden, 1997; Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2006). Especially informal learning at work through colleagues with expert skills is an important factor when it comes to the overcoming of technological insufficiencies (Wellmann, 2001). Developing new SNS skills in order to do the job better is one example of such a situation. To sum up, scientific literature determines informal support to contribute positively to abilities essential to good job performance.

Formal support sources are helpdesks, libraries or training (Van Deursen et al., 2014). They mostly operate at the workplace and this has been identified to be a frequently reported location for learning to use computers (Selwyn et al., 2006). Even though the success of formal support has been found to depend on the instructional strategies employed (Cahoon, 1998), formal support sources work significantly when it comes to medium-related insufficiencies (Van Deursen et al., 2014). However,

Hobbs and Frost (2003) examine that media literacy education, as a form of formal support, is positively related to the knowledge and understanding of media messages. Van Deursen et al. (2014) state that Internet users who rely on formal support sources score high on communication and strategic skills, so formal support sources have been identified to assist in difficulties with content-related skills. Especially the development of strategic skills is determined to be successful if it is supported in the formal way (Van Deursen et al., 2014). These findings can be transmitted into the context of SNS skills because SNS are part of the Internet. Also, similar to the studied Internet skills, SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills are content-related skills. Taking all these findings into account, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H9a: *Informal support contributes positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.*

H9b: *Formal support contributes positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.*

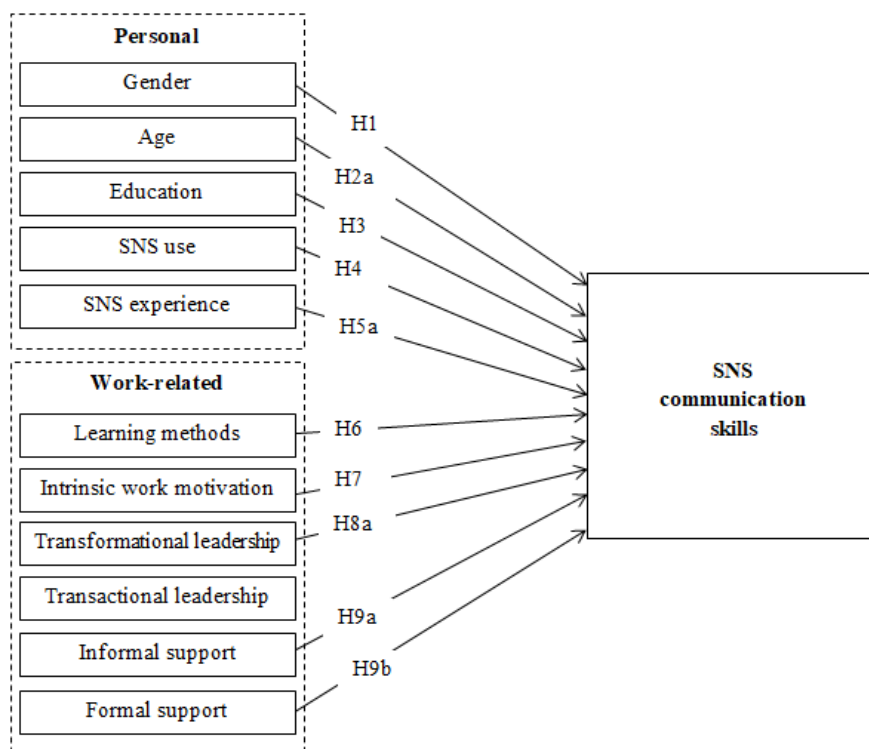


Figure 1a: Conceptual model and hypotheses (1)

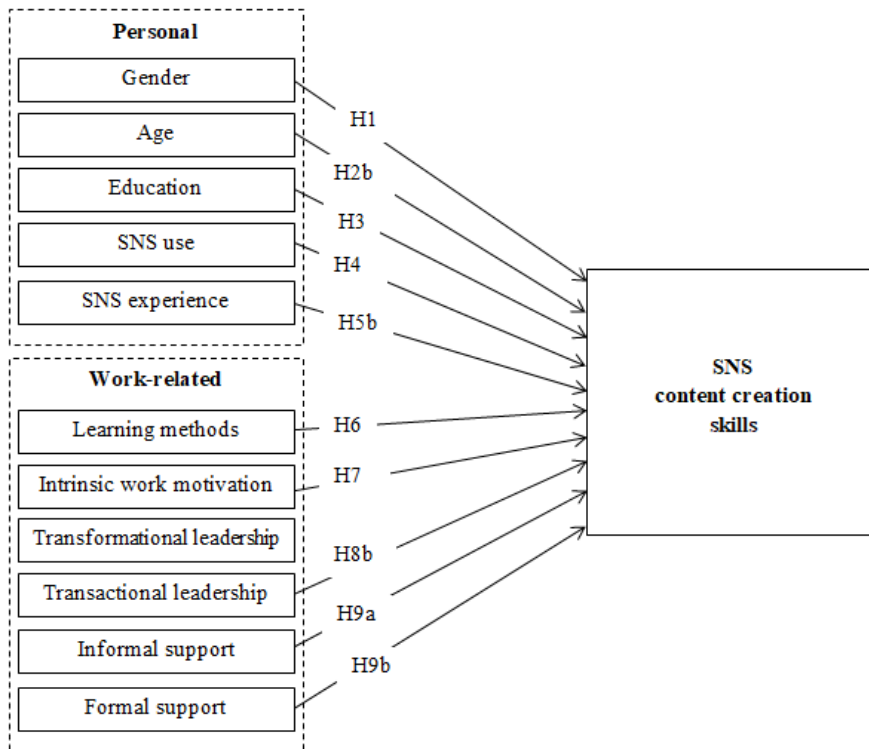


Figure 1b: Conceptual model and hypotheses (2)

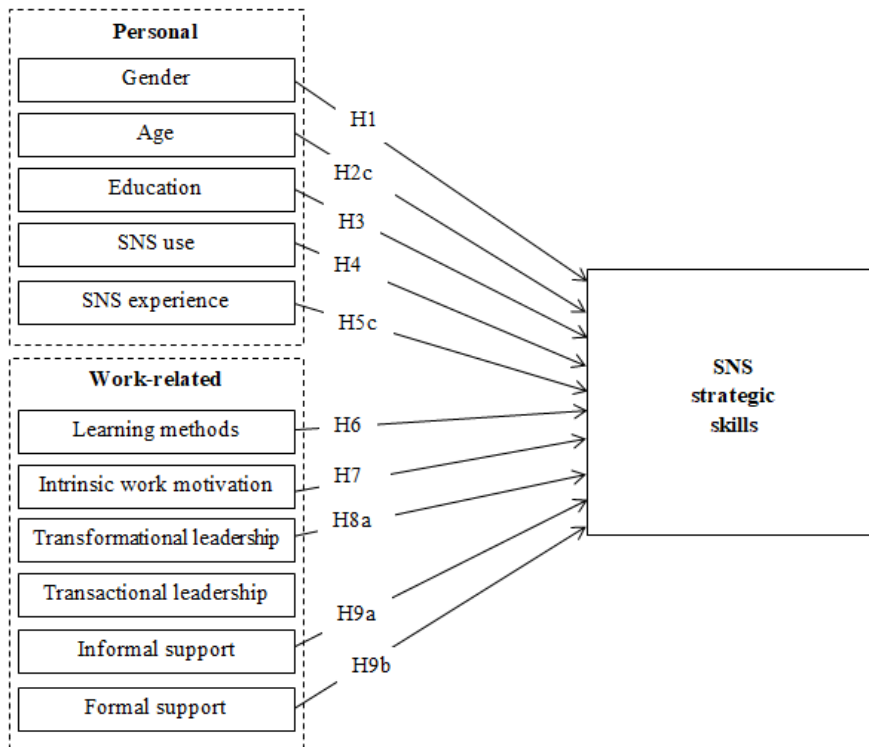


Figure 1c: Conceptual model and hypotheses (3)

3. METHOD

3.1 Research design

After introducing a conceptualization of three different kinds of SNS skills based on a literature review, an online survey was conducted to identify the level of the different skills. Furthermore, this quantitative research was used to measure effects of eleven independent variables (gender, age, educational level, SNS use, SNS experience, learning methods, intrinsic work motivation, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, informal support, formal support) regarding the three dependent variables SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.

3.2 Sample

The study is done among German communication professionals using SNS for professional purposes. This condition ensures that the subjects were familiar with SNS. In total, 266 full-aged communication professionals participated in this study, whereof 203 participants completed the online questionnaire. To be able to generalize from findings, respondents have been recruited by applying a stratified random sampling method. Communication agencies have been randomly selected from online rankings and databases (e.g., www.dprg.de, www.werbeagentur-in.de) and contacted via e-mail. They got an online link and were asked to participate in a research about general SNS use to not affect their answers regarding their skills. 1.000 e-mails have been sent, so the response rate was about 20%.

Table 1 contains the social demographic information of the participants. Overall, they represent a diverse group of communication professionals, who use SNS at work. In this study, 88 Males (43%) and 115 Females (57%) took part in it. The average age of the subjects was 33.4 years ($SD=10.8$). 26% of the respondents ($n=53$) had a non-academic educational level (lower than a bachelor degree). 32% ($n=64$) had a bachelor degree and 42% ($n=86$) had a master graduation or a higher graduation. Furthermore, the work experience of 82 subjects (40%) was low with less than five years and 60 subjects (30%) had a work experience of five to ten years (middle). 61 participants (30%) had high work experience with more than 10 years. Most of the subjects ($n=66$) worked in the field of public relations (32.5%). Moreover, 29 participants are specialized in design (14%), 28 in corporate communication (14%), 23 in marketing (11%), 19 in online marketing (9%), and 11 in advertising (6%). As presented in Table 1, 168 subjects (83%) gave that they turn to support sources if they face insufficiencies in their SNS skills. 32 subjects (16%) answered that they do not turn to support sources and 3 professionals (1%) did not give information about their use of support sources. Their working time was 39 hours a week on average ($SD=10.6$). As presented in Table 2, Facebook was most frequently used by the majority of subjects for private purposes ($n=117$). In general, 186 (92%) subjects used Facebook in their private time. In the ranking, Facebook was followed by Instagram ($n=120$; 59%) and XING ($n=61$; 31%). Twitter ($n=61$; 31%) and LinkedIn ($n=36$; 18%) were also frequently used. For professional purposes, Facebook ($n=115$) was mostly used. 115 subjects (115%) used XING at work and 81 (40%) professionals gave LinkedIn as being used. Instagram ($n=65$; 32%) and Twitter

($n = 57$; 28%) were also popular. The average amount of hours of professional SNS use was 6.4 hours a week ($SD = 6.7$) and the average years of Internet experience were 5.1 ($SD = 3.3$).

Table 1

Number of subjects over gender, age, educational level, work experience, specialization, and support

	<i>n</i> (%)
Gender	
Male	88 (43%)
Female	115 (47%)
Age	
18–29	96 (47%)
30–39	52 (26%)
40–54	44 (22%)
55–80	11 (5%)
Educational level	
Non-academic	53 (26%)
Bachelor degree	64 (32%)
Master degree or higher	86 (42%)
Work experience	
Low	82 (40%)
Middle	60 (30%)
High	61 (30%)
Specialization	
Public relations	66 (33%)
Design	29 (14%)
Corporate communication	28 (14%)
Marketing	23 (11%)
Online marketing	19 (9%)
Advertising	11 (6%)
Support*	
Use of support sources	168 (83%)
No use of support sources	32 (16%)

Note. *missing answer $n = 3$ (1%)

Table 2

Top five SNS used for private or professional purposes ranked by usage hours a week (1= the most)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i> (%)
Private use							
Facebook	117	46	17	4	1	1	186 (92%)
Instagram	34	58	20	4	4	-	120 (59%)
XING	7	16	21	11	5	1	61 (31%)
Twitter	7	18	17	8	6	3	49 (24%)
LinkedIn	2	6	12	10	5	1	36 (18%)
Professional use							
Facebook	115	23	6	3	1	1	149 (73%)
XING	31	41	27	12	3	1	115 (57%)
LinkedIn	21	22	18	15	3	2	81 (40%)
Instagram	7	34	12	7	3	2	65 (32%)
Twitter	15	21	17	4	-	-	57 (28%)

3.3 Instrument

An online survey was conducted to test the hypotheses that are visualized in the conceptual models before (Figures 1a-c). Surveys are adequate instruments to do quantitative research (Dooley, 2001). In the current research's context, a quantitative research method is advantageous because it supplies generalizable results when a great number of participants is included. It is chosen for an online survey to reach a sufficient number of answers in less time (Wright, 2005). Also, this kind of research instrument offers respondents the possibility to stay in their comfort zone as well as being anonymous, so that the honesty of their answers can be enlarged.

The online survey consisted of three parts. First, respondents had to give information about their professional background, such as their work specialization or how long they work in this field. Furthermore, they had to name SNS that they use for private or professional purposes. At the beginning of the survey, they also answered questions regarding the first five independent variables (gender, age, educational level, SNS use, SNS experience). Second, questions regarding the last four independent variables (learning methods, intrinsic work motivation, leadership, support) were asked. Finally, the communication professionals indicated their abilities on SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.

3.4 Measurements

Before contacting the potential respondents, two pilot tests were realized. The first one contained the feedback of five people with different social demographic characteristics about item formulations, readability, and spelling mistakes. Furthermore, the translation from English to German was checked by using back translation. After modifying the first version of the survey according to the feedback, 30 communication professionals were asked to fill in the second version. The results did not give reason to modify the survey a second time.

Except the items regarding social demographic measurements and regarding personal information about SNS use as well as SNS experience, all items were presented in the form of statements and scored on a 5-point Likert scale concentrating on truth (1= not true of me, 2= not very true of me, 3= neither true nor untrue of me, 4= very true of me, 5= most true of me) (Spitzberg, 2006).

To measure the concept of SNS skills, new items were introduced. For SNS communication skills, items were taken from Blank' (2013) and Jones' (2011) scales. Additionally, new items were added based on the definition of SNS communication skills in the theoretical framework. Exemplary items were "It is easy for me to understand my chat partners' emotions on SNS at work." or "I am able to contact customers/consumers through using SNS at work.". Table 3 shows that the eleven items were highly reliable ($\alpha = .89$). The items measuring SNS content creation skills were newly formulated but their content was based on Blank's (2013) study about content creation on the Internet as well as on the skills defined in the theoretical framework. Two out of the eleven are "At work, it is easy for me to create text content on SNS that fits the target group's needs." and "At work, it is easy for me to

create professional image content on SNS.”. The items were highly reliable ($\alpha = .87$). Eleven items were used to get indications about SNS strategic skills. They are partly taken from Van Deursen et al. (2011) (e.g., “I am able to make decisions based on the information retrieved from SNS at work.”) and partly newly conducted (e.g., “Through the use of SNS, I am able to do my job more effectively.”). As presented in Table 3, the scale showed high reliability ($\alpha = .91$). Furthermore, a factor analysis has been performed for these three scales. The results did not show a clear three factor structure and the items of the scales scored mainly on the same factor. So, the differences between the three kinds of skills were not as clear as expected before. Nevertheless, it was decided to go on with all items because the main differences between SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills were strongly justified with the information examined in the theoretical framework.

Table 3
Mean and standard deviation of all items measuring SNS skills (English translation)

	M	SD
SNS communication skills ($\alpha = .89$)	3.63	0.64
At work, I am able to effectively use SNS for external and internal correspondence.	3.85	0.88
It is no problem for me to use SNS effectively at work.	3.96	0.86
For me it is easy to narrate microblog entries (e.g., Facebook posts) using a readable style at work.	3.82	0.98
It is easy for me to understand my chat partners’ emotions on SNS at work.	3.78	0.83
At work, I am able to respond to message in a panel discussion on SNS.	3.67	0.87
It is easy for me to localize important online groups through using SNS for professional purposes.	3.62	0.83
It is no problem for me to represent my organization through contributing content to SNS groups related to my organizations’ working sector.	3.53	0.95
Through using SNS at work, it is no problem for me to contact important target groups of my organization.	3.75	0.94
I am able to contact customers/ consumers through using SNS at work.	3.51	1.02
For me it is no problem to acquire contacts of financial benefits for my organization through using SNS for professional purposes.	3.07	1.05
It is easy for me to come in contact with strategic contacts through the information I spread on my personal SNS business profile.	3.33	0.92
SNS content creation skills ($\alpha = .87$)	3.57	0.59
It is easy for me to receive positive feedback on the organizational profiles I create on SNS.	3.54	0.82
For me it is no problem to create professional profiles on SNS that communicate the organizations’ image and brand values.	3.75	0.86
I am able to receive positive feedback about the personal business profiles I create on SNS.	3.47	0.83
At work, it is easy for me to create text content on SNS that fits the target groups’ needs.	3.74	0.94
It is no problem for me to create text content on SNS for professional purposes.	3.84	0.86
At work, it is easy for me to create content that evokes positive responses on SNS.	3.76	0.86
For me it is no problem to create content that evokes positive user comments at work.	3.68	0.88
I am able to create professional photo content on SNS that fits the corporate values.	3.85	0.86
At work, it is easy for me to create professional image content on SNS.	3.67	0.82
For me it is no problem to create professional video content on SNS.	3.14	1.02
I am able to create video content on SNS that has the character of an image film.	2.86	1.05
SNS strategic skills ($\alpha = .91$)	3.36	0.65
I am able to make a decision based on the information retrieved from SNS at work.	3.48	0.82
It is no problem for me to use information about a specific topic from different SNS sources for professional purposes.	3.74	0.89
For me it is easy to get more customers/ clients through using SNS.	3.17	0.94

I am able to make my organization more profitable through the use of SNS.	3.35	0.94
At work, it is no problem for me to gain financial benefits from SNS use.	3.13	0.89
It is easy for me to have advantage over my organizations' competitors through using SNS.	3.21	0.81
Through the use of SNS, I am able to do my job more effectively.	3.45	0.96
It is no problem for me to distinguish my organization from competitors through the use SNS.	3.31	0.88
Through the use of SNS, I am able to manifest myself as a communication professional in related business networks.	3.25	0.91
Through the professional use of SNS, I am able to create a positive image for my organization.	3.51	0.93
Through the professional use of SNS, I am able to improve the communication with important stakeholders.	3.37	0.92

Note. All scales measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1= not true of me/ 5= most true of me)

Gender, age, and educational level were measured by using standardized questions. In contrast to gender (Female/ Male) and the educational level (no graduation, Hauptschulabschluss, Realschulabschluss, Fachabitur, Abitur, Berufsausbildung, Bachelor, Master, other), age was identified by asking an open question. Indications about SNS use were given in average hours spent on these sites a week and SNS experience was indicated by giving the number of years that the respondents use SNS for work purposes (Van Deursen et al., 2011).

To measure learning methods, an either/ or question was conducted. Based on Colardyn and Bjornavold's (2004) study on formal, non-formal and informal learning, the question was stated as follows: "I got my knowledge about how to use SNS for work primary through...". Here, the two possible answers were either "...informal learning methods (e.g., online tutorials, self-study, assistance of friends, observing colleagues)." or "...formal learning methods (e.g., workshops, social media training, advanced education).".

The six items measuring intrinsic work motivation were taken from research on organizational psychology research. They were in line with items from Tremblay, Blanchard, Taylor, Pelletier, and Villeneuve's (2009) study combined with items from Warr, Cook, and Wall's (1979) scale measuring work attitudes. Exemplary items were "I am involved in my work, because I derive much pleasure from learning new things." or "I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well.". The items were reliable ($\alpha = .68$).

Transactional and transformational leadership were measured using six items for each variable. The scales are taken from Hartog et al.'s (1997) research on leadership styles. Both are only partly taken because the original scales included 40 items. In the current research context, transactional and transformational leadership were expected to be contributors to the main variables. Therefore, the adapted scale was appropriate. Here, the Likert scale was different to the other scales (1= never, 2= infrequently, 3= sometimes, 4= frequently, 5= always). For transactional leadership, items such as "I am ready to trust my supervisor to overcome any obstacle" were used. Items like "My supervisor points out what I will receive if I do what is required." were chosen to measure transformational leadership. To ensure high reliability, one item ("Problems have to be chronic before my supervisor will

take action”) out of the six was deleted. Then, both scales showed reliability ($\alpha = .88$; $\alpha = .72$).

The items measuring support and its sources were similar to the ones regarding learning methods. First, the respondents answered the question “When experiencing SNS skill insufficiencies at work,...” with either “...I turn to support sources.” or “...I do not turn to support sources.”. Afterwards, they stated whether they either turn to informal support sources (e.g., colleagues, friends or family) or to formal support sources (e.g., computer experts). The different options were taken from prior research on sources of Internet support (Van Deursen et al., 2014).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Level of SNS skills

To gain an overall insight into the level of communication professionals’ SNS skills, the means and standard deviations were calculated for the three kinds of skills in the implemented research (Table 3).

Results show the highest mean score on SNS communication skills ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.64$). Regarding the single items, subjects scored the highest on the effective use SNS at work ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.86$) and the effective use of SNS for external and internal correspondence ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.88$). In comparison with the other items in the scale of SNS communication skills, the items “For me it is easy to narrate microblog entries (e.g., Facebook posts) using a readable style at work” ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.98$), “It is easy for me to understand my chat partners’ emotions on SNS at work” ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.83$), and “Through using SNS at work, it is no problem for me to contact important target groups of my organization” ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.94$) show high mean scores. Moreover, the mean scores and standard deviations regarding the ability to respond in panel discussions ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.87$), to localize important online groups ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.83$), to represent the organization through online content ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.95$), and to contact customers/ consumers through SNS ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.02$) indicate a level above average of these skills. With a mean score of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.92 the item “It is easy for me to come in contact with strategic contacts through the information I spread on my personal SNS business profile” shows low values compared to the others. The subject scored the lowest on the acquisition of financially beneficial contacts ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.05$), whereby the answers differed a lot.

In comparison with the other two kinds of skills, subjects scored the second highest on SNS content creation skills ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.59$). Here, the standard deviation is the lowest. As presented in Table 3, the creation of photo content that fits the corporate values ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.86$) and the creation of professional text content ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.86$) show the highest mean scores. Furthermore, the creation of content that evokes positive responses ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.86$), the creation of profiles that communicate the organizations’ image and brand values ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.86$), as well as the creation of text content that fits the target groups’ needs ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.94$) show high mean scores on the 5-point Likert scale. Mean scores of 3.68 ($SD = 0.88$) respectively 3.67 ($SD = 0.82$) indicate a positive

level of skills regarding the ability to create content that evokes positive user comments at work or the ability to create professional image content on SNS. Compared to this, the ability to receive positive feedback on the created organization profiles ($M= 3.54$, $SD= 0.82$) as well as the ability to receive positive feedback on created personal business profiles ($M= 3.47$, $SD= 0.83$) is lower. By far, the subjects scored the lowest on "For me it is no problem to creation professional video content on SNS" ($M= 3.14$, $SD= 1.02$) and on "I am able to create video content on SNS that has the character of an image film" ($M= 2.86$, $SD= 1.05$).

Finally, compared to the other two kinds of skills, subjects scored the lowest on SNS strategic skills ($M= 3.36$, $SD= 0.65$). Here, subjects show the highest level of skills on using information about a specific topic from different SNS sources for professional purposes ($M= 3.74$, $SD= 0.89$). In comparison to the other items in this scale, "Through the professional use of SNS, I am able to create a positive image for my organization" ($M= 3.51$, $SD= 0.93$), "I am able to make decisions based on the information retrieved from SNS at work" ($M= 3.48$, $SD= 0.82$), and "Through the use of SNS, I am able to do my job more effectively" ($M= 3.45$, $SD= 0.96$) show high mean scores. Lower mean scores resulted from the answers given on "Through the professional use of SNS, I am able to improve the communication with important stakeholders" ($M= 3.37$, $SD= 0.92$), "I am able to make my organization more profitable through the use of SNS" ($M= 3.35$, $SD= 0.94$), "It is no problem for me to distinguish my organization from competitors through the use of SNS" ($M= 3.31$, $SD= 0.88$), as well as on "Through the use of SNS, I am able to manifest myself as a communication professional in related business networks" ($M= 3.25$, $SD= 0.91$) and "It is easy for me to have advantage over my organizations' competitors through using SNS" ($M= 3.21$, $SD= 0.81$). Regarding SNS strategic skills, subjects scored the lowest on getting customers/ clients through using SNS ($M= 3.13$, $SD= 0.89$) and on gaining financial benefits from SNS use ($M= 3.13$, $SD= 0.89$).

4.2 Contributors to SNS skills

A multiple regression analysis is conducted for each dependent variable to examine if the constructs of gender, age, educational level, SNS use, SNS experience, learning methods (informal, formal), intrinsic work motivation, leadership styles (transformational, transactional), and support sources (informal support, formal support) contribute to the level of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills.

Before performing the multiple regression analysis, a collinearity analysis was conducted to verify that the independent variables are not multicollinear to each other. Tests supported the assumptions according collinearity and showed that multicollinearity is not given (Gender, Tolerance = .79, VIF = 1.27; Age, Tolerance = .45, VIF = 2.25; Educational level, Tolerance = .68, VIF = 1.47; SNS use, Tolerance = .94, VIF = 1.07; SNS experience, Tolerance = .52, VIF = 1.94; Learning method, Tolerance = .95, VIF = 1.06; Intrinsic work motivation, Tolerance = .95, VIF = 1.06; Transactional leadership, Tolerance = .67, VIF = 1.50; Transformational leadership, Tolerance = .64, VIF = 1.57;

Informal support, Tolerance = .44, VIF = 2.30; Formal support, Tolerance = .43; VIF = 2.32). Also, Durbin Watson tests did not give causes to concern about autocorrelation (SNS communication skills, $d = 1.95$; SNS content creation skills, $d = 1.95$; SNS strategic skills, $d = 1.78$).

The multiple regression analysis revealed that the eleven independent variables significantly contributed to the regression model of SNS communication skills ($F(11, 189) = 7.52, p < .001$). Furthermore, the eleven variables accounted for 26 % of variation of this kind of skills. As presented in Table 4, the results of the multiple regression analysis show that SNS use and transformational leadership significantly predict SNS communication skills. Both predictions indicate a positive contribution of the two variables to SNS communication skills. That means, the higher the SNS use or the more transformational the leadership style, the higher are the SNS communication skills of the respective professional. Moreover, as well informal as formal support reveal a significant positive effect on SNS communication skills. The more often subjects turn to informal or formal support sources in their organization, the higher are their communication skills on SNS. However, other personal contributors (gender, age, educational level, and SNS experience) as well as three work-related contributors (learning method, intrinsic work motivation, and transactional leadership) do not have any statistically significant influence on SNS communication skills. Specifically, they contribute neither positively nor negatively to the level of communication professionals' communication skills on SNS.

Regarding SNS content creation skills, multiple regression analysis showed statistical significance when it comes to the prediction of these skills by the independent variables ($F(11, 189) = 5.45, p < .001$). However, the eleven variables only explain 20 % of the variation of SNS content creation skills. Table 4 exhibits that SNS use, intrinsic work motivation, and transformational leadership significantly predict SNS content creation skills of the communication professionals. All the three Beta-values are positively loaded. Therefore, a higher SNS use, a higher intrinsic work motivation, and the more transformational the leadership style are in an organization, the higher are the SNS content creation skills of the concerning communication professionals. In contrast, gender, age, educational level, and SNS experience do not show statistical significance in their contribution to SNS content creation skills. Also, learning methods, transactional leadership, informal support, and formal support do not statistically contribute to these skills.

The eleven independent variables account for 16% of the variation for SNS strategic skills. Nevertheless, the multiple regression analysis shows that they significantly contribute to the level of the SNS strategic skills of communication professionals ($F(11, 189) = 4.45, p < .001$). Similar to the results regarding SNS content creation skills, SNS use, intrinsic work motivation, and transformational leadership significantly predict SNS strategic skills. If the level of these variables is high, the level of SNS strategic skills will also be higher than compared to the level of these skills in situations, in which the level of SNS use, intrinsic work motivation, or transformational leadership is low. None of the three predictions shows a negative loading (Table 4).

Table 4

Regression analysis predicting SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, SNS strategic skills: Regression coefficients

	SNS communication skills		SNS content creation skills		SNS strategic skills	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Gender	-.04	-.59	-.03	-.40	.05	.62
Age	-.13	-1.44	.04	.37	-.12	-1.23
Educational level	.10	1.29	.06	.82	.05	.69
SNS use	.32***	5.03	.27***	4.12	.31***	4.66
SNS experience	.12	1.40	-.09	-.99	.11	1.18
Learning method	-.06	-.89	-.08	-1.29	-.02	-.30
Intrinsic work motivation	.09	1.48	.20**	3.00	.17*	2.51
Transactional leadership	.04	.58	.05	.65	.01	.14
Transformational leadership	.25***	3.34	.20*	2.56	.17*	2.12
Informal support	.24*	2.56	.13	1.36	.04	.38
Formal support	.23*	2.46	.14	1.41	.06	.64
R ²	.30		.24		.21	
F	7.52***		5.45***		4.45***	

Note. N= 200

*p< .05, ** p< .01, *** p< .001

4.3 Hypotheses testing

In order to answer the previously stated hypotheses the implemented analyses were conducted. Figures 2a-c visualize the accepted hypotheses.

H1 was a hypothesis about the absence of gender differences in the level of communication professionals' SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills. Based on the conducted analysis, the hypothesis is accepted because there is no statistically significant ($p=.55$; $p=.69$; $p=.54$) contribution of gender to the three different kinds of skills.

H2a-c dealt with the age of communication professionals contributing to the level of their SNS skills. It is expected that increasing age contributes negatively to the level of SNS communication and SNS content creation skills, but that it contributes positively to the level of SNS strategic skills. The three hypotheses are rejected by a signification level of .05.

H3 was a hypothesis dealing with the educational level of communication professionals that was expected to contribute positively to the level of the three kinds of SNS skills. According to the results of the conducted analyses, the hypothesis is rejected by a signification level of .05.

H4 stated that the time communication professionals spend on SNS contributes positively to their level of the three kinds of SNS skills. By a signification level of .001, the hypothesis is accepted.

H5a-c dealt with the SNS experience of communication professionals. H5a-b assumed that SNS experience contributes positively to the level of SNS communication skills and SNS content crea-

tion skills. Following the results of the conducted analysis, both are rejected by a signification level of .05. Using the same signification level, H5c (The number of years communication professionals use SNS contributes neither positively nor a negatively to the level of SNS strategic skills) is accepted.

H6 stated that there are no differences of formal and informal learning methods regarding the level of the three SNS skills of communication professionals. There is neither a positive nor a negative contribution to the three dependent variables ($p = .38$; $p = .20$; $p = .76$). So, H6 is accepted.

H7 assumed that communication professionals' intrinsic work motivation contributes positively to the level of the three kinds of SNS skills. It is partly accepted. Results show, that the intrinsic work motivation does not contribute to SNS communication skills ($p = .14$). However, by a signification level of .01, it contributes positively to the level of SNS content creation skills. Also, by a signification level of .05, intrinsic work motivation contributes positively to the level of SNS strategic skills.

H8a-b dealt with the leadership styles contributing to the SNS skills. H8a is accepted because there is a statistically positive contribution of transformational leadership on SNS communication skills ($p < .001$) and SNS strategic skills ($p < .05$). Even though it has not been expected that there is a positive contribution of transformation leadership to SNS content creation skills, this contribution is an extra significant finding ($p < .05$). In contrast, H8b is rejected by a signification level of .05 because transactional leadership does not contribute positively to the level of SNS content creation skills.

The last two hypotheses (H9a-b) are partly accepted. There is a statistically positive contribution of informal and formal support to SNS communication skills ($p < .05$), but no contribution to SNS content creation skills ($p = .18$; $p = .16$) or SNS strategic skills ($p = .71$; $p = .64$).

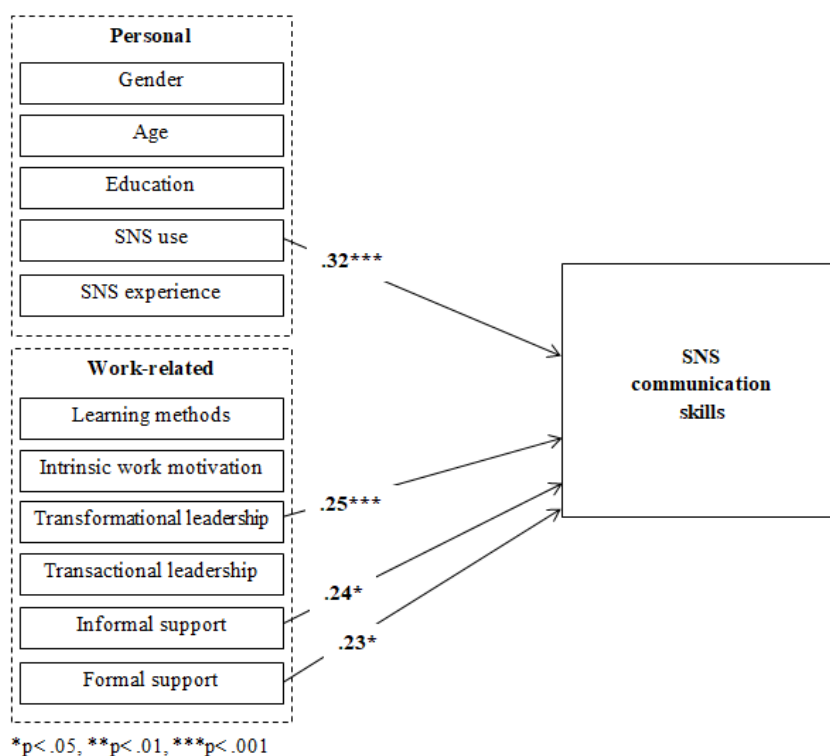


Figure 2a: Results of the regression analysis (1)

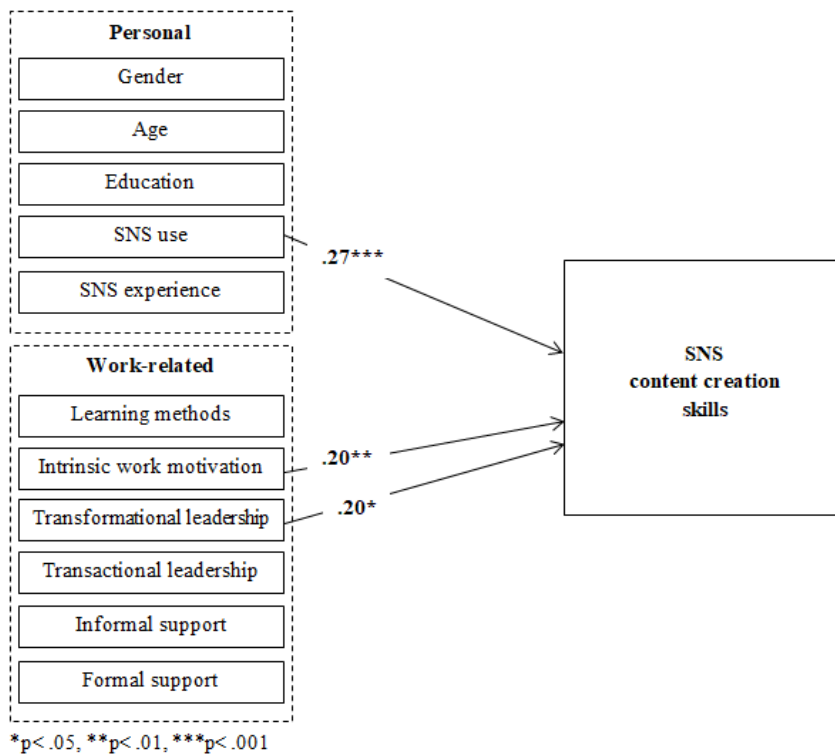


Figure 2b: Results of the regression analysis (2)

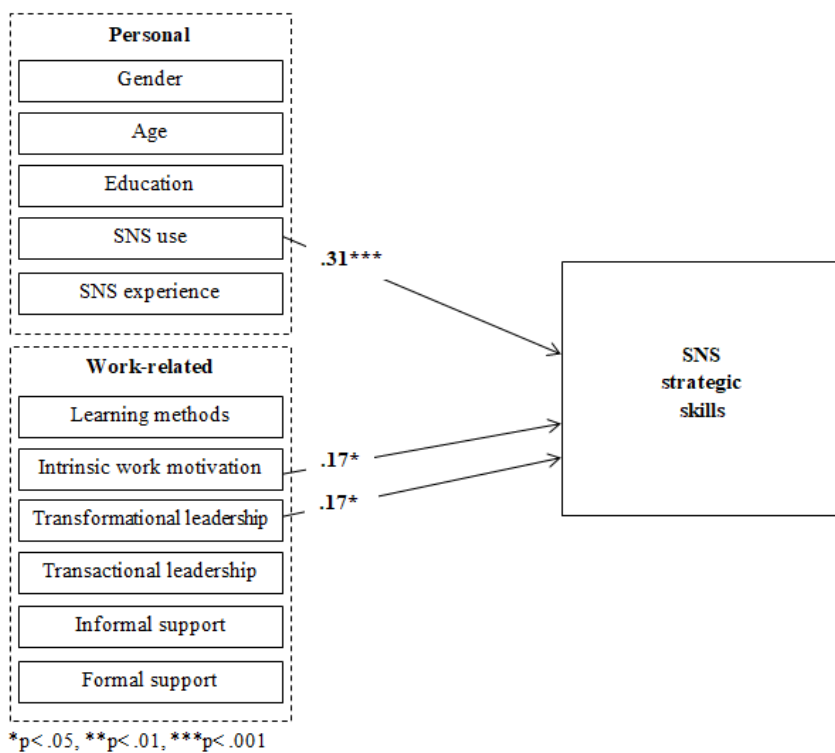


Figure 2c: Results of the regression analysis (3)

5. DISCUSSION

In times of the Web 2.0, the use of SNS by communication professionals has become more important than ever in the marketing mix of organizations. In this context, the primary goal of the current study is to approach the skills communication professionals need to effectively use SNS through the elaboration of a new scientific model. So, the study is intended to define the level SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, SNS strategic skills among German communication professionals as well as to determine personal and work-related contributors to these skills following the research model. Therefore, three research questions are formulated: (1) *“Which skills do communication professionals need to effectively use SNS?”* (2) *“What is the current level of communication professionals’ SNS skills?”* (3) *“Which factors contribute to the level of communication professionals’ SNS skills?”*

To our knowledge, the current study is the first providing a comprehensive overview of the SNS skills levels among German communication professionals and revealing basic assumptions concerning personal and work-related contributors to these levels. Prior research concentrates on digital skills in general (Van Dijk & Van Deursen, 2014) and factors contributing to the level of Internet skills (Van Deursen et al., 2011). Research is also directed to several activities that are needed to effectively use SNS for private or professional purposes (Watson-Manheim & Bélanger, 2007; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Cameron & Webster, 2005). Skills acquired to effectively use SNS in the context of communication professionals, the professionals’ level of these skills, and contributors to these levels are still understudied. On the one hand, the innovative findings of this study contribute to the scientific knowledge about digital skills. On the other hand, they are important for the field of professional communication and guide organizations in their social media marketing strategies. Practical recommendations and instructions based on the main findings are discussed in the following sections.

5.1 Main findings

In general, mean scores of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills indicate that the level of communication professionals’ SNS skills is above average. However, there is room for improvement and results show the importance of the work environment when trying to enhance the level of SNS skills. The following paragraphs sum up, which possibilities organizations have to improve the current level of the different SNS skills.

5.1.1 Improving communication professionals’ level of SNS communication skills

The level of communication professionals’ SNS communication skills is found to be the highest in comparison to their level of SNS content creation skills and SNS strategic skills. Even though the mean scores of this kind of SNS skills are above average, they have been expected to be higher. The sample consists of communication professionals. They are experts in the use of SNS and a group that should have scored higher on SNS communication skills. When looking at the single actions, it can be summarized that communication professionals are particularly skilled in effectively using SNS for

external and internal correspondence as well as in narrating microblog entries, in understanding chat partners' feelings or in using SNS to contact important target groups. One possible reason for these competences can be the high practical experience in the particular actions. The strategical communication with important stakeholders as well as the creation and update of online profiles are main objectives of communication professionals on SNS (Tackeray et al., 2008). Therefore, external and internal correspondence, chat conversations, and the narration of entries in timelines are expected to be frequently practiced by communication professionals. In contrast, when it comes to contacting or acquiring strategical contacts, results show that communication professionals' skills are scarce. One reason why these actions seem problematic is that communication professionals' evaluate social networking as less frequently practiced than for example instant messaging (Eyrich et al., 2008). Here, future research is recommended to see which actions communication professionals take on SNS and how the frequency of these actions might affect their SNS skills. However, in order to improve communication professionals' SNS communication skills, organizations should strive to encourage their abilities regarding the competence to acquire and maintain strategic contacts.

In order to unlock the potential of SNS communication skills, three practical instructions can be given to organizations. First, organizations should remind their communication professionals to regularly use SNS for professional purposes. SNS use has been found to contribute positively to communication professionals' SNS communication skills. This is also confirmed by the findings of previous researches (Hargittai, 2002; Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001). One possible explanation for this contribution is that increasing practical experiences on digital technologies, such as SNS, enlarges the users' knowledge and abilities concerning the used technology (Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001; Van Deursen et al., 2011). Therefore, a high number of hours spent on SNS should be ensured by organizations that want to unlock communication professionals' potential regarding their SNS communication skills. Second, leaders within the organization should behave in a charismatic, emotional way without concentrating too much on the employees' mistakes. The transformational leadership style has been determined to positively affect employees' job performance (Bhatti et al., 2012). In line with these findings, the current study uncovers transformational leadership as a positive contributor to the level of communication professionals' SNS communication skills. A reason for this contribution is that transformational leaders are able to inspire their followers to do more than originally expected (Hartog et al., 1997). The presence of those leaders is determined to increase job satisfaction and motivation at work (Bhatti et al., 2012). In other words, employees led by charismatic and empathic leaders are triggered to improve their performance at work because they feel highly satisfied and motivated. Therefore, they are more willed to acquire knowledge and abilities, such as SNS skills, making their job performance more effective. In contrast, there is no effect of the transactional leadership style found in this study. Transactional leadership is examined to contribute positively to job satisfaction, which is an important determinant of job performance (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006). But it is previously identified to enhance productivity and communication is not defined to be a kind

of productivity (Bhatti et al., 2012). So, future research should be conducted to study whether these findings can be confirmed. However, the previously stated findings can be used as a recommendation for organizations to instruct their leaders to be empathic in order to improve the SNS communication skills of their communication team. Third, organizations should ensure the existence of support sources. Both informal and formal have been identified to be positively related to job performance and Internet skills (Katz & Aspden, 1997; Selwyn et al., 2006; Van Deursen et al., 2014). To our knowledge, the current study is the first that determining informal support as well as formal support as contributing positively to the level of SNS communication skills. This contribution might be caused by the fact that support leads to increasing job satisfaction as an important determinant of effective job performance (Babin & Boles, 1996). And the development of work-related skills is part of job performance beneficial to the organization. Our assumption would be that informal and formal support make employees feel more satisfied with their job and in return, they are motivated and able to do their work as effective as possible. For example, satisfied communication professionals are willing to develop SNS skills in order to overcome technological insufficiencies (Wellmann, 2001). Consequently, organizations should ensure that their employees are motivated to help each other. Additionally, formal support sources, such as help desks or the presence of computer experts, will improve communication professionals' SNS communication skills. All three advices can be realized by organizations themselves. Other personal contributors (gender, age, educational level, SNS experience) are difficult to be influenced by an organization. But in contrast to previous expectations, there is apparently no contribution of these personal factors on SNS skills. One reason why there is no contribution found regarding gender, age, and educational level among German communication professionals is that in Western societies the usage of SNS is part of the daily life (Moreno et al., 2010). Disparities between males and females as well as between different generations or educational backgrounds are diminishing because nearly everybody has access to the Internet and SNS in developed countries (NTIA, 2000; Barker, 2009; Buente & Robbin, 2008). Therefore, it is not surprising that, for example, younger and older generations have SNS communication skills, even though previous research indicate to find different contributions of age and the educational level to the three kinds of SNS skills. Against the previous expectations, there is apparently no contribution of increasing SNS experience on SNS communication skills. This finding seems contradictory to previous researches, so future research is needed to clarify whether the missing contribution can be confirmed or disproved. When it comes to SNS communication skills, learning methods and intrinsic work motivation do not show any contribution to their level, so they are not expected to lead organizations to any success in improving communication professionals' SNS communication skills. The missing contribution of learning methods can be explained by the fact that informal and formal learning methods are interwoven (Dale & Bell, 1999). Both ways of learning increase individual skills, such as SNS communication skills, because informal learning is supposed to support and be supported by formal learning activities (Svensson et al., 2004). Moreover, intrinsic work motivation is expected to contribute positively to the level of SNS communication skills.

because it affects job performance positively by increasing job satisfaction (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Contrary to these findings, there is apparently no contribution of intrinsic work motivation to SNS communication skills and future research is recommended to confirm or refute the current results.

5.1.2 Improving communication professionals' level of SNS content creation skills

The level of SNS content creation skills among communication professionals is comparable to the level of their SNS communication skills, but it has also been expected to be higher. A possible reason for this finding is that single skills weaken the values of the whole SNS content creation scale. It is conspicuous that it is easy for communication professionals to create professional photo and text content on SNS, which not only fit target groups needs and corporate values, but also evokes positive user comments. In contrast, the creation of professional video content on SNS seems problematic. It remains to be the most difficult task in a comparison of the actions regarding all SNS skills. One possible reason is that especially video content is often realized by video experts. As presented in Table 1, the majority of the subjects works in the field of public relations, design, corporate communication, and marketing. These specializations do not always include tasks related to video content, so missing practical experience can be a reason for the absence of video creation skills. In contrast, the creation of photo and text content on SNS is part of the daily routine of the mentioned working fields (Tackeray et al., 2008). However, it seems to be most important to improve especially the SNS content creation skills among communication professionals to enhance their work on SNS.

There are three advices that can be given to organizations that want to enhance the SNS content creation skills of their communication professionals. First, organizations should ensure the growing use of SNS among their communication professionals. Similar to SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills are positively related to SNS use. In other words, the more hours a communication professional spends on SNS, the higher are his/ her SNS content creation skills. Even though findings on Internet skills showed a great number of Internet using hours results in more knowledge on the Internet and simultaneously in more online skills (Hargittai, 2002), to our knowledge, the current findings are the first identifying SNS use as a positive contributor to SNS content creation skills. Here, one reason might be that increasing practical experience on SNS improves users' knowledge and abilities regarding the technology (Hargittai, 2002). The more time users invest into the use of SNS, the more skills they develop because they learn how to deal with insufficiencies (Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001). The current results show that other personal contributors (gender, age, educational level, SNS experience) do not contribute to the level of SNS content creation skills, so that they should not be central to strategies targeting the improvement of the level of these skills. Their missing contribution might be explained by the same reason why they do not contribute to the level of SNS communication skills: the majority of people in developed countries grows up with SNS. Especially communication professionals work frequently on SNS and they are able to develop related skills through practice. Little disparities seem to diminish in future (NTIA, 2000). Contradictory, SNS experience

has been expected to contribute positively to SNS content creation skills but apparently, there is no contribution. This is not in line with previous findings, so future research is recommended to focus on this contribution in detail. Second, organizations should invest into the motivation of their employees. Intrinsic work motivation has been found to be an important indicator of high job satisfaction, job performance, and the willingness to perform in an organizationally beneficial way (Grant, 2008; Judge & Ilies, 2002). In other words, intrinsically motivated employees are more willing to develop new skills and to overcome insufficiencies that influence their job performance negatively. Therefore, intrinsic work motivation has been expected to contribute positively to SNS content creation skills and the current findings support this expectation. Consequently, organizations are advised to ensure a continuously high intrinsic work motivation in order to improve the level of SNS content creation skills among their communication professionals. In this context, job satisfaction is an important contributor and it can be achieved through, for instance, positive feedback, clear instructions, empathic leadership, and fairness at the workplace (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Third, transformational leadership is identified to contribute positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS content creation skills. Specifically, being an empathic leader results in high SNS content creation skills. This phenomenon has not been expected before, but it can be explained by the fact that empathic leadership mediates job satisfaction of the followers, which is an important contributor to their motivation and job performance (Rikkink, 2014; Bhatti et al., 2012). Followers of transformational leaders are more satisfied and simultaneously willing to improve their job performance in order to support their organization (Eagly et al., 2003). For example, they try to improve their SNS content creation skills targeting to do their job better. Therefore, team leaders should be regularly reminded by the management to be sensitive in their behavior. Also, feedback and criticism should be given individually and in a transparent way, so that the followers do not feel patronized (Hartog et al., 1997). Charisma, as a characteristic of transformational leaders, cannot be trained, but human resource managers should lay attention on this characteristic within job interviews with potential leaders. By doing so, they will decide upon more transformational than transactional leaders. This is an indicator of success when trying to improve the SNS content creation skills among communication professionals because the transactional leadership style, learning methods as well as informal and formal support did not show any statistical contribution to these skills. Transactional leadership is previously identified to enhance productivity (Bhatti et al., 2012) and simultaneously content creation as a kind of it. Future research is needed to show whether the apparently missing contribution of transactional leadership to SNS content creation skills can be confirmed because previous findings led to contradictory expectations. Following the results of previous research, formal and formal learning methods do not show any difference in the contribution to SNS strategic skills. Our assumption would be that both ways of learning cannot be completely separated from each other. The majority of employees acquires its knowledge simultaneously from formal training and informal social interaction (Dale & Bell, 1999). Finally, informal and formal support have been expected to contribute positively to the level of SNS content creation skills. Apparently, there is

no contribution. This is contradictory to other researches' findings, so future research should be conducted to show which findings can be confirmed.

5.1.3 Improving communication professionals' level of SNS strategic skills

In order to make their social media marketing strategies more effective, organizations should try to improve the SNS strategic skills of their communication professionals. In general, the level of SNS strategic skills offers the greatest potential for improvement because it is the lowest in comparison to SNS communication skills and SNS strategic skills. Therefore, it is an important advice for organizations to concentrate on the improvement of SNS strategic skills. When looking at the single actions concerning these skills, it is easy for communication professionals to use information about a specific topic from different SNS sources for professional purposes. They are able to create a positive image for their organization on SNS, to make a decision based on the information retrieved from SNS, and to do their job more effectively through the use of SNS. All three abilities are essential to the work of communication professionals, so it is not surprising that those tasks not seem problematic to the target group. But the scores on the single actions show that these tasks are more difficult than those of SNS communication skills or SNS content creation skills. Communication professionals face problems if they try to get more customers/ clients through the use of SNS and to gain financial benefits from SNS use. These findings might be explained by the low work experience of the subjects. In this study, the majority of the subjects works less than five years in the field of communication. Those participants might face problems when trying to get customers or to gain financial benefits from SNS because those skills grow the increasing number of working years (Quirónes et al., 1995). Consequently, organizations should trigger these competences the most when trying to improve the level of their communication professionals' SNS skills in order to unlock their potential on SNS.

To reach a high level of SNS strategic skills among their communication professionals, organizations should take three practical instructions into account. According to scientific literature, age, the educational level, SNS use and SNS experience have been expected to contribute positively to the level of communication professionals' SNS strategic skills (Van Deursen et al., 2011; Hargittai, 2002; Schumacher et al., 2001; Renahy et al., 2008). The current study only finds high SNS use to contribute positively to the level of these skills. As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, gender, age, and the educational level do not contribute to the level of SNS strategic skills because the differences between males and females as well as of different generations and educational backgrounds in SNS use and abilities is diminishing. SNS experience has been hypothesized to not show a contribution to SNS strategic skills and this is confirmed by the current findings. This might be explained by the fact SNS experience help users to overcome technical insufficiencies but it does not lead to more strategical thinking processes (Van Deursen et al., 2011). The positive contribution of SNS use to SNS strategic skills is the reason why organizations should invest time and money in motivating their personnel to regularly use SNS. For example, the creation of business profiles on new SNS will result in more

working hours on SNS. In this context, more practice leads to more skills. Another strategy is to encourage communication professionals' intrinsic work motivation. Previous research on work psychology identifies this construct to be positively related to job performance (Judge & Ilies, 2002). In accordance with these findings, the current study uncovers a high intrinsic work motivation to contribute positively to the level of SNS strategic skills. A possible reason for this contribution is that this type of motivation has an impact on employees' work-related actions, such as developing skills autonomously in order to fulfill job requirements (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Overall, motivated employees develop new skills more easily and effectively (Katzell & Thompson, 1990). As already proposed in the paragraph before, there are several ways to enlarge the intrinsic work motivation of employees. In general, organizations should ensure the improvement of employees' job satisfaction because it is positively related to intrinsic work motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002). For example, it makes the job more satisfying, if leaders give funded feedback, hierarchies are balanced, and organizational justice is present (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Finally, the transformational leadership style has been found to contribute positively to the level of SNS strategic skills. Previous research is already directed to uncover the positive effect of this leadership style on employees' effectiveness. It has been found that transformational leadership supports employees' willingness to perform effectively and to develop new skills autonomously (Wayne et al., 1997; Rikkink, 2014). Both past and present findings indicate that leaders within organizations should act in a charismatic, emotional way because the employees' positive evaluation of the leaders' behavior is essential to the improvement of their performance on SNS and in general. By coaching their leaders in order to make them more empathic, organizations will succeed in enhancing communication professionals' SNS strategic skills and simultaneously the effectiveness of their strategic work on SNS. In this case, only intrinsic work motivation and transformational leadership are promising because the other work-related contributors (learning method, transactional leadership, informal support, formal support) do not indicate to have any statistical effect on SNS strategic skills. The absence of learning methods' positive contribution to SNS strategic skills might be explained by the fact that strategic thinking is difficult to learn. Formal and informal learning methods help communication professionals to learn how to communicate via SNS and how to create content on SNS. Strategical decision-making processes cannot be explained, they have to be experienced (Bonn, 2001). Moreover, transactional leadership does not contribute positively to the level of SNS strategic skills. The leadership style has been found to increase job performance, so future research is recommended to concentrate on this contribution again (Bhatti et al., 2012). Finally, informal and formal support do not contribute to the level of SNS strategic skills and these findings are not in line with previous expectations. Therefore, future research is needed to show whether these findings can be confirmed.

5.2 Limitations and future research directions

The research design involves a diverse sample of the target group and all scales are reliable with high Cronbach's alphas. However, there are limitations that result in future research directions.

After the data collection, a confirmatory factor analysis regarding the items measuring SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills did not show a clear three factor structure. Even though a back translation has been performed, one explanation could be that the original English items react differently when translating them into German. Another explanation is that the conceptualization of the three kinds of skills is introduced for the first time, so that the current scales have been chosen from comparable research and mixed up with new items according to scientific research. Regression analysis of the three kinds of skills indicates strong correlations between the three. Strictly speaking, if subjects are highly skilled in one out of the three, he or she would also have good skills in the other two. This might be one reason why the items of the three kinds of SNS skills did not clearly score on three different factors during the factor analysis. Especially the items measuring SNS communication skills and the items indicating the level of SNS content creation skills scored on the same factors. These two kinds of skills are interwoven because creating content on SNS is often part of communication. For example, if users want to communicate with others, they have to write messages on SNS. In order to improve the results of the factor analysis, future research should concentrate on the revision of the items measuring SNS communication skills and SNS content creation skills. The differentiation between the two should be more obvious for future subjects. Furthermore, when concentrating on single items it is notable that some of the items did not score high on one factor but showed nearly the same scores on two or more factors. The items “It is easy for me to localize important online groups through using SNS for professional purposes.”, “It is no problem for me to represent my organization through contributing content to SNS groups related to my organizations’ working sector.”, and “Through using SNS at work, it is no problem for me to contact important target groups of my organization.” are one example. All three items deal with abilities concerning online groups on SNS and they are items intended to measure SNS communication skills. However, it seems obvious that all the three also contain actions related to SNS content creation skills. For instance, when trying to contact people in online groups, it is necessary to create text messages. Another example of items scoring similarly on two or more factors contains the items “It is easy for me to receive positive feedback on the organizational profiles I create on SNS.” and “I am able to receive positive feedback about the personal business profiles I create on SNS.”. Here, it is obvious that the expression “receiving feedback” complicates the allocation of one single factor. Therefore, future research should avoid this or comparable formulations in order to improve the results of the factor analysis. Finally, one item (“Through the professional use of SNS, I am able to improve the communication with important stakeholders.”) indicating the level of SNS strategic skills should be changed in future research. The formulation of the item gives causes to concern because it involves both strategic actions and communication actions. It is recommended to avoid the expression “communication” if an item is meant to measure SNS strategic skills. Otherwise, the allocation of the item is difficult. Even though the factor analysis does not bring up a clear three factor structure, Cronbach’s alphas have been high regarding all three scales. Also, collinearity analysis (VIF values) as well as autocorrelation tests (Durbin Wat-

son) do not give any cause for concern about the accuracy of the model's variance. The results of all three tests show that other possible treats, such as the respectively low number of respondents compared to the high number of variables, as well as the failed factor analysis do not affect the research model negatively. Therefore, future research is needed that makes a clear distinction between the different kinds of skills. Even though the regression analysis uncovers the significance of the model, future research should use different items, adapt the existing instrument according to the recommendations or add another kind of skills. Thereby, the current findings regarding the skills affected by the previously named contributors can be examined.

This research takes the first step to elaborate a scientific model of SNS skills and it is directed to identify the level of these skills among German communication professionals as well as contributors to the skills. However, a number of items has been measured by using a self-perception test. For example, the subjects gave indications about the leader-employee relationship and ranked their own abilities on SNS professional activities. Therefore, the variable "leadership" is only measured on the base of the employees' perspective. Through the usage of self-perception test, it has not been possible to also ask the leader about the relationship. Moreover, the subjects had to assess their abilities on SNS sites without any performance test. Because of time and cost limitations, it has been chosen for this kind of research design. At the end, it is also not possible to predict, whether the self-perception the subjects gave is realistic or not. But the measurements indicate interesting findings, which are the basis for future skills performance test regarding the level of communication professionals' SNS skills as well as on the impact of personal or work-related contributors. Therefore, future research should be directed to test and enlarge the knowledge about SNS skills by using performance testing. This method is more time- and cost-intensive, but it will bring up interesting results from a different perspective. Thereby, the innovative results of the current research can be strengthened.

6. CONCLUSION

The premise of this study was to meet the demands of the digitalization regarding marketing strategies by approaching the skills communication professionals need to effectively use SNS through the conceptualization of a new scientific model. To our knowledge, it is the first elaborating a concept of SNS communication skills, SNS content creation skills, and SNS strategic skills, searching for the level of these skills, and uncovering contributors to SNS skills. It is found that there is room for improvement when it comes to communication professionals' skills on SNS. In order to unlock this potential, we gave instructions concerning personal and work-related contributors to SNS skills (SNS use, intrinsic work motivation, transformational leadership, informal and formal support). Following these recommendations, organizations are able to improve their social media marketing strategies effectively.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Standard Frageblock

Liebe Teilnehmerin,
Lieber Teilnehmer,

Vielen Dank, dass Sie an meiner Studie zum Thema „Nutzung von sozialen Netzwerken (SNS) durch Marketing- und Kommunikationsfachleute“ teilnehmen. Das Beantworten des Fragebogens dauert ca. 10 Minuten. Ihre Anonymität ist zu jedem Zeitpunkt gegeben und die gesammelten Informationen werden nur für meine Studie genutzt. Sie haben zu jedem Zeitpunkt die Möglichkeit, das Beantworten des Fragebogens zu beenden.

Jede(r) Teilnehmer(in) hat die Chance einen 50 Euro bzw. einen von zwei 25 Euro Amazon Gutscheinen zu gewinnen. Wenn Sie an der Verlosung teilnehmen möchten, können Sie mir am Ende des Fragebogens Ihre E-Mail-Adresse mitteilen.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!
Carla Verlage

Diese Forschungsarbeit befasst sich mit sozialen Netzwerken (SNS) und Ihre Nutzung für berufliche Zwecke. SNS sind Websites wie Facebook, LinkedIn oder XING, genauso wie andere Onlinedienste, die ähnliche Services bieten.

Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen:

Wie alt sind Sie?

Jahre (in Zahlen)

Was ist Ihr Geschlecht?

- ☐ weiblich
☐ männlich

Was ist Ihre Nationalität?

Was ist Ihr höchster erreichter Abschluss?

- ☐ Keinen Abschluss
☐ Hauptschulabschluss
☐ Realschulabschluss
☐ Fachabitur
☐ Abitur
☐ Bachelor
☐ Master
☐ Abgeschlossene Berufsausbildung
☐ anderer, nämlich

Wie lange sind Sie schon im Kommunikations- und/oder Marketingbereich tätig?

Jahre (in Zahlen)

In welchem Fachbereich sind Sie tätig (z.B. Design, PR, Unternehmenskommunikation)?

Wie viele Stunden arbeiten Sie in der Woche?

Stunden (in Zahlen)

Welche SNS nutzen Sie privat? Bitte ordnen Sie diese nach Nutzung in Stunden pro Woche (1= am meisten)

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>
6	<input type="text"/>

Welche SNS nutzen Sie für berufliche Zwecke? Bitte ordnen Sie diese nach Nutzung in Stunden pro Woche (1= am meisten)

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>
6	<input type="text"/>

Wie viele Stunden nutzen Sie SNS für berufliche Zwecke durchschnittlich pro Woche?

Stunden (in Zahlen)

Wie viele Jahre nutzen Sie SNS bereits im Berufszusammenhang?

Jahre (in Zahlen)

Bitte denken Sie daran, dass diese Forschungsarbeit sich ausschließlich auf den Gebrauch von sozialen Netzwerken (z.B. Facebook, LinkedIn oder XING) für berufliche Zwecke bezieht.

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit die folgenden Statements auf Sie zutreffen:

Ich gehe meiner Arbeit nach, weil mir das Lernen von neuen Dingen Spaß macht.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich gehe meiner Arbeit nach, weil mich neue Herausforderungen persönlich erfüllen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich gehe meiner Arbeit nach, weil die erfolgreiche Bewältigung schwerer Aufgaben mich erfüllt.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich fühle persönliche Befriedigung, wenn ich meine Arbeit gut mache.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich bin stolz, wenn ich in meinem Job mein Bestes gebe.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich mag es, wenn ich auf den Tag zurückschaue und das Gefühl habe, meinen Job gut gemacht zu haben.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Wenn ich auf der Arbeit Probleme mit SNS habe,...

- ☐ ... suche ich mir Hilfe.
- ☐ ... suche ich mir keine Hilfe.

Wenn ich auf der Arbeit Probleme mit SNS habe,...

- ☐ ... suche ich mir formlose Hilfe (z.B. bei Kollegen, Freunden, der Familie)
- ☐ ... suche ich mir formelle Hilfe (z.B. bei Beratungsstellen, Computerexperten)
- ☐ Ich brauche keine Hilfe.

Mein Wissen über die Nutzung von SNS im Berufszusammenhang erhielt ich vorrangig durch ...

- ☐ ... formlose Lernmethoden (z.B. durch Online Tutorials, Selbstlernprozesse, Hilfestellungen von Freunden, das Beobachten von Kollegen)
- ☐ ... offizielle Lernmethoden (z.B. SNS Workshops, Social Media Training, Fortbildungen)

Bitte denken Sie daran, dass diese Forschungsarbeit sich ausschließlich auf den Gebrauch von sozialen Netzwerken (z.B. Facebook, LinkedIn oder XING) für berufliche Zwecke bezieht.

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit die folgenden Statements auf Sie und Ihre(n) Vorgesetzte(n) zutreffen. Sollten Sie sich selbst in einer leitenden Position befinden, beantworten Sie die folgenden 11 Fragen mit "manchmal".

Ich vertraue meinem Vorgesetzten/meiner Vorgesetzten, dass er/sie jedes Hindernis überwindet.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

In meinen Augen ist mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) das Sinnbild von Erfolg und Vollendung.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) zeigt, wie man Probleme aus neuen Blickwinkeln betrachtet.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) behandelt mich wie ein eigenständiges Individuum und nicht nur wie irgendeinen Teil der Gruppe.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) zeigt außerordentliches Talent und Kompetenz in seinen/ihren Entscheidungen.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Meiner Meinung nach macht mich mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) auf festgelegte gemeinsame Werte, Ideale und Ziele aufmerksam.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) erklärt mir, was mich erwartet, wenn ich meine Aufgaben erfülle.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) achtet auf Unregelmäßigkeiten, Fehler, Ausnahmen und Abweichungen bei dem Ausführen meiner Aufgaben.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Probleme müssen regelmäßig vorkommen, bevor mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) aktiv wird.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) sagt mir, was getan werden muss, damit ich für meine Mühe belohnt werde.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) ist von ihren/seinen Gedanken und Werten sehr überzeugt.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Mein(e) Vorgesetzte(r) vereinbart mit mir, was ich bekomme, wenn ich meine Aufgaben erfülle.

- ☐ überhaupt nicht
- ☐ selten
- ☐ manchmal
- ☐ oft
- ☐ immer

Bitte denken Sie daran, dass diese Forschungsarbeit sich ausschließlich auf den Gebrauch von sozialen Netzwerken (z.B. Facebook, LinkedIn oder XING) für berufliche Zwecke bezieht.

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit die folgenden Statements auf Sie zutreffen:

Ich bin in der Lage, SNS auf der Arbeit effektiv für interne und externe Kommunikation zu nutzen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es ist für mich kein Problem SNS effektiv für berufliche Zwecke zu nutzen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es fällt mir leicht, Microblog Einträge (z.B. Facebook Posts) auf der Arbeit zu schreiben.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich bin in der Lage, die Emotionen meiner SNS-Chatpartner im Berufszusammenhang zu verstehen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Auf der Arbeit ist es für mich kein Problem in SNS-Diskussionsrunden Antworten zu liefern.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es ist leicht für mich, Online-Gruppen auf SNS zu finden, die für meine beruflichen Zwecke wichtig sind.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich kann mein Unternehmen in SNS repräsentieren, indem ich etwas zu SNS Gruppen beitrage, die wichtig für die entsprechende Branche sind.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS kann ich wichtige Zielgruppen meines Unternehmens kontaktieren.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es ist kein Problem für mich, auf der Arbeit über SNS mit Kunden in Kontakt zu kommen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es fällt mir leicht, für mein Unternehmen finanziell vorteilhafte Kontakte durch die Nutzung von SNS zu gewinnen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich bin in der Lage, durch die Informationen, die ich auf meinem persönlichen SNS Business Profil (z.B. auf XING) veröffentliche, strategische Kontakte zu gewinnen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Bitte denken Sie daran, dass diese Forschungsarbeit sich ausschließlich auf den Gebrauch von sozialen Netzwerken (z.B. Facebook, LinkedIn oder XING) für berufliche Zwecke bezieht.

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit die folgenden Statements auf Sie zutreffen:

Es fällt mir leicht, positives Feedback zu meinen erstellten professionellen SNS Profilen zu erhalten.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich kann professionelle SNS Profile für Betriebe anlegen, die dessen Image und Markenwerte nach außen kommunizieren.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es fällt mir leicht, positives Feedback zu meinen persönlichen SNS Business Profilen (z.B. auf XING) zu bekommen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Auf der Arbeit fällt es mir leicht, Textinhalte in SNS zu erstellen, die an die Bedürfnisse der Zielgruppe angepasst sind.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es ist kein Problem für mich, Textinhalte in SNS für berufliche Zwecke zu erstellen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich bin in der Lage, Inhalte in SNS zu erstellen, die positive Reaktionen (z.B. Likes) hervorrufen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Für mich ist es kein Problem, auf der Arbeit SNS-Inhalte zu erstellen, die andere User positiv kommentieren.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich bin in der Lage, professionelle Bildinhalte in SNS zu veröffentlichen, die zu dem Image des Unternehmensprofils passen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Auf der Arbeit fällt es mir leicht, professionelle Bildinhalte in SNS zu erstellen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich kann professionelle Videoinhalte für berufliche Zwecke in SNS erstellen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich bin in der Lage, Imagefilme für Unternehmensprofile in SNS zu erstellen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Bitte denken Sie daran, dass diese Forschungsarbeit sich ausschließlich auf den Gebrauch von sozialen Netzwerken (z.B. Facebook, LinkedIn oder XING) für berufliche Zwecke bezieht.

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit die folgenden Statements auf Sie zutreffen.

Ich kann Entscheidungen auf der Basis von Informationen treffen, die ich auf der Arbeit via SNS erhalte.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Ich kann Informationen über ein bestimmtes Thema in verschiedenen SNS für berufliche Zwecke sammeln.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Es fällt mir leicht, Kunden durch den Gebrauch von SNS zu gewinnen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS kann ich mein Unternehmen profitabler machen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch den Gebrauch von SNS auf der Arbeit fällt es mir leicht, einen finanziellen Vorteil für mein Unternehmen zu erlangen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS ist es für mich kein Problem, im Vorteil gegenüber der Konkurrenz zu sein.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch den Gebrauch von SNS kann ich meine Arbeit effektiver verrichten.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS auf der Arbeit fällt es mir leicht, mein Unternehmen von der Konkurrenz abzusetzen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS im Berufszusammenhang bin ich in der Lage, mich selbst als Kommunikations- und Medienprofi in Business Netzwerken (z.B. XING) zu etablieren.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS im Berufszusammenhang kann ich ein positives Image für mein Unternehmen aufbauen.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Durch die Nutzung von SNS im Berufszusammenhang fällt es mir leicht, die Kommunikation mit wichtigen Interessenvertreter verbessern.

- ☐ gilt überhaupt nicht für mich
- ☐ gilt nicht für mich
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ gilt für mich
- ☐ gilt sehr für mich

Danke, dass Sie meinen Fragebogen ausgefüllt haben. Sollten Sie Fragen und/oder Anregungen haben oder an den Ergebnissen der Arbeit interessiert sein, nehmen Sie gerne Kontakt zu mir auf (c.verlage@student.utwente.nl).

Geben Sie unten Ihre E-Mail-Adresse ein, wenn Sie an der Verlosung teilnehmen möchten und drücken Sie auf ">>" um Ihre Antworten abzuschicken.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

E-Mail-Adresse:

