

Chapter 16

Social Media Usage in the University Activities

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Abstract This article was devoted to very actual subject, including exploiting the potential of social media in activity of academies. And so sketch of a character of social media was presented, as an environment, which became a place of functioning of not only Internet users but also various organizations, in it colleges. A level of the application of social media was presented, on the base of secondary and primary examinations, conducted among students of one of the Polish academies. The main findings are directions of social media application in university performance and intensity in using them as well as determining needs and expectations of potential user applications perceiving abilities of exploitation of social media by students.

Keywords Social media • Academies

16.1 Introduction

Development of information technologies, in particular communication, once influences economic and the social area of life. Effective drawing benefits from happening changes requires both competences, which facilitate the optimal use of information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as abilities of the fast adaptation to needs and expectations of contemporary world. Social media are one of the significant examples of ICT development and creating of new forms of functioning of not only private persons but also entire organizations. Particularly growing popularity of social media among Internet users supports the fact that organizations more and more often become involved in functioning in their frames.

Social media are defined as “group being based on Internet applications solutions, which are based on ideological and technological bases Web 2.0, and which enable creating and exchanging of contents generated by users” (Voinea et al. 2015; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Such solutions, ranked among this group, are blogs, microblogs, and social networks, e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter,

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GoldenLine, or Instagram. Mentioned groups of social media are predestinated in the different level for carrying out different functions. Social media users create contents, make them available, comment, and in this way are active authors of many pieces of information, which spread very quickly. Building the social commitment, communication, which most often assumes the form “a lot of too many,” a speed of the transmission of information are constitutive features of this environment creating valuable relations between users (Sobaih et al. 2016; Ferencová et al. 2014).

Basic advantages of social media environment are more and more often used by various organizations with aim of the conduct of marketing and communication operations and of creating sources of relational capital. Research institutions, which academies are, also more and more often become involved into the active participation in frames of individual kinds of social media. In this article a character sketch of social media and main goals the university can carry out by exploiting them were presented. Moreover, results of own research which consisted of applying social media by students of the Polish public college were presented.

16.2 Exploiting Social Media in Poland and on Polish Academies

More and more people create and make their contents available via social media platforms (Manca and Ranieri 2016). According to examinations of the Center of Examining the Public Opinion (CBOS) in 2015 (state on May 2015), almost two thirds of adults in Poland (64 %) use the Internet. Percentage increase in the number of Internet users over the last decade is 36 %. A number of social media users also increase. The presence in at least one of them declares two thirds of Internet users (66 %, height for 4 percentage points), that is, over two fifth of the whole of adults (42 %, height by 3 points). How results from the declaration, 82 % of registered persons use them regularly (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015) (Fig. 16.1).

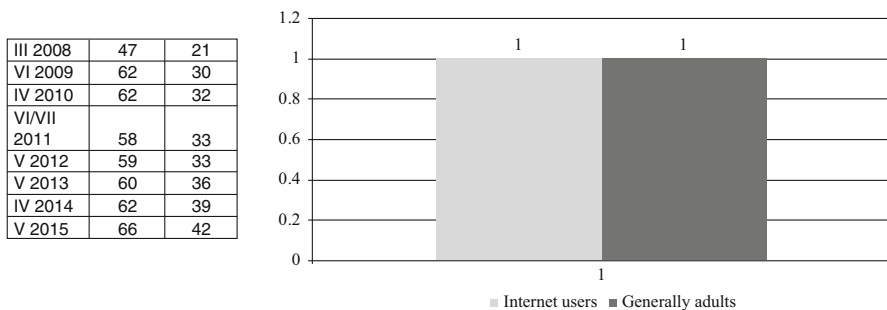


Fig. 16.1 Had you registered in any social media portal, e.g., Nasza Klasa, Facebook, GoldenLine, or similar? (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015)

Table 16.1 Percentage of people using social media at least once a month in 2014 ([http://www.wirtualnedia.pl/artykul/facebook-i-youtube-najpopularniejszymi-serwisami-spolecznosciowymi-w-polsce-hyper-social-coraz-mniej-popularne](http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/facebook-i-youtube-najpopularniejszymi-serwisami-spolecznosciowymi-w-polsce-hyper-social-coraz-mniej-popularne))

Type of social media	% people in the age of 18 years old
YouTube	92
Facebook	85
Blogger	52
Twitter	28
Instagram	25

Analyzing CBOS results, the largest percentage of Internet users registered in social media constitute people from 18 up to 24 years (92 %), people in the age 25–34 (83 %), and the least are people of over 65 years old (21 %). Users exploit social media mainly to keep the social contact. Almost 55 % of users exploit them for keeping contact with friend, 41 % for refreshing contacts, and only 20 % for establishing new ones. For 39 % of respondents, social media are a transmitter of contents of different kinds: of listening to music, watching films or photographs, and reading texts. Smaller groups, only 26 %, constitute people, which place such materials there. These three kinds of activities are characteristics of the youngest respondents. Findings also showed that social media gained popularity as a place for job hunt. One fifth of Internet users use them for that purpose (21 %, height for 5 percentage points). For smaller groups (17 %), they serve to start professional and business relationships (Komunikat z badań CBOS 2015).

Facebook i YouTube najpopularniejszymi serwisami społecznościowymi w Polsce, hyper social coraz mniej popularne (2015), [http://www.wirtualnedia.pl/artykul/facebook-i-youtube-najpopularniejszymi-serwisami-spolecznosciowymi-w-polsce-hyper-social-coraz-mniej-popularne](http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/facebook-i-youtube-najpopularniejszymi-serwisami-spolecznosciowymi-w-polsce-hyper-social-coraz-mniej-popularne) (Table 16.1 and Fig. 16.2).

According to IRC Center examinations summing 2015 up, Facebook is still on the first place in social media. Its share rose from 8 % in year 2011 to 50 % in 2015. However it does not mean that the number of contents on other platforms diminishes—the majority of them grows, forums and blogs, and from 2015 Twitter is the only platform, on which we observe a fall. Examinations showed that despite the diversity of social media platforms, the majority of users start to concentrate on 1–2 chosen. Niżnik W (2015), Social media 2015. Podsumowanie i trendy, (<https://ircenter.com/social-media-2015-podsumowanie-i-trendy/>). In Fig. 16.2 a frequency of using social media was described (2014 data).

The Sotrender company identifies the tendency happening on Facebook, i.e., heights and falls of fans, activities of users, etc. The report contains rankings of 15 major sites according to 15 chosen factors and the change of their position in the relationship to the previous balance sheet (monthly cycle). “Fanpage Trends 02.201” balance sheet, which covers the period from 01 February 2016 to 29 February 2016, also takes Facebook sites of Polish colleges into account. Characteristics of Polish

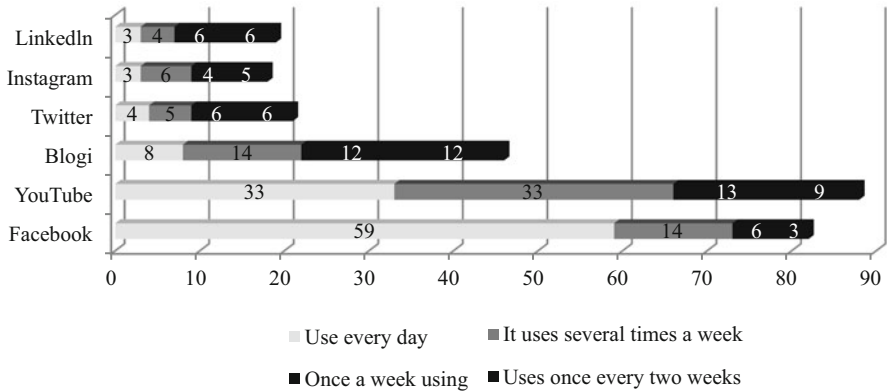


Fig. 16.2 Frequency of using social media Facebook i YouTube najpopularniejszymi serwisami społecznościowymi w Polsce, hyper social coraz mniej popularne (2015), (<http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/facebook-i-youtube-najpopularniejszymi-serwisami-spolesznosciowymi-w-polsce-hyper-social-coraz-mniej-popularne>)

colleges on Facebook according to the above examination look as follows (Fanpage Trends 2016):

- Academies which gathered the greatest number of followers are Jagiellonian University (54,636), S. Staszic Mountain-Mining University in Cracov (51,143), and SWPS University (44,692).
- Growth of the number of followers was noticed in the fanpage of the Technical University in Warsaw (+5 %), SWPS University (+4 %), S. Staszic Mountain-Mining University in Cracov University in Warsaw, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, and The Warsaw School of Economics (+2 %).
- The greatest absolute growth of the number of followers gained fanpages for SWPS University (+1542), the Technical University in Warsaw (+1266), and S. Staszic Mountain-Mining University in Cracov (973).
- The greatest number of followers engaged websites of S. Staszic Mountain-Mining University in Cracov (46 %, 23,462), the Technical University in Warsaw (59 %, 14,410), and SWPS University (15 %, 6546).
- The highest levels of interactivity index gained fanpages of the Technical University in Warsaw (74,951), SWPS University (52,042), and S. Staszic Mountain-Mining University in Cracov (43,697).
- The highest levels of relative interactivity values gained fanpages of the Technical University of Warsaw (3021), SWPS University in Sopot (2497), and SWPS University (1137).

The characterization of academies having their sides on Facebook was prepared based on such factors as fans of the site, employed users, interactivity index, and relative interactivity. Fans of the site are users, which got to like the profile of the site. Next, users employed in these academies, in the analyzed period, have done

at least one initiative on the site, e.g., getting to like, commenting, adding a post or photo, or casting the voice in the questionnaire form. For characteristics of sites on Facebook in the examination, interactivity index was used, which was defined as collective rate of all activities within the site, and relative interactivity, which stayed defined as the collective rate of all activities of fans within sites in the chosen period, including the number of fans (Fanpage Trends 2016).

16.3 Characteristics of Social Media in the Aspect of University Functioning

Growing popularity of social media also contributed to the growth of an interest in their potential by various organizations, in it by academies. Application of social media by universities, determining the income and benefits coming from the interactive communication, is more and more frequent a subject of academic publications (Rutter et al. 2016).

Social media are determined as “new” media of social character, which enable to contribute and to disseminate contents between users (both known and unknown) of shared social network (Kulczycki 2012). Social media are also defined as the means of interaction between people, in which they can communicate, cooperate, and share information online through the social dialogue as authors of contents generated by users in virtual communities (Grosseck 2009). Social media are a platform, on which users can together examine the content of the network, to share their experience and to build the relation at different targets, for example, social and educational ones (Jiao et al. 2015; Sobaih et al. 2016). Social media can be characterized as applications being based on the Internet (Każmierczyk), enabling creating, making available, and exchanging of data with others (Balakrishnan and Chin Lay 2016) and communication in the model a lot of to many. A constitutive feature of social media is also a multimediansess of contents and a variety of forms, e.g., blogs, forums, portals, or games.

Blogs enable everyone to be interested in the possibility of opened and unrestricted expressing of opinions and views of both concerning different spheres of private and economic life. They have mainly text form with the possibility of interaction by adding comments. Next, e.g., YouTube, Flickr, and SlideShare allow for the resource sharing of multimedia contents, e.g., of video films, photographs, images, presentations, applications, etc. which are stored and made available from the level of network servers. Facebook, forums, Internet messengers, and chats are solutions allowing building and keeping relations between people by forming profiles of personal details. Moreover, Facebook offers additional functions, like e-mail, notice boards, or communicators, which allow for easy spreading of information (Balakrishnan and Chin Lay 2016). The popularity of social networks of Facebook type and functional possibilities of the portal contribute to greater interest in this kind of social media by organizations, which use Facebook for creating the

community brand, through inquiring, distribution, link to the site, and the like. Such applications, e.g., Google docs or wiki, allow contribution or cooperation. They constitute the group of tools supporting the development of the knowledge. Other kinds of social media are microblogs, alert services, and Livestream, which enable current inquiring and referring to news. The most extended forms of social media are virtual game worlds, e.g., World of Warcraft, and virtual social worlds, e.g., Second Life. Virtual game worlds are a kind of community games, in frames of which a possibility of the appearance in the form of personalized avatars and cooperating with oneself, like in real world, exists. However virtual social worlds are interactive, three-dimensional, multimedia environment of the existence of virtual avatars, through which users communicate and exist in virtual world (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Kucęba et al. 2013; Sobaih et al. 2016).

A variety of social media forms and their basic features support using their potential by colleges in such areas as marketing communication and creating the image of the college among current and potential stakeholders (Koszembar-Wiklik 2015), encouraging the teaching process (Sobaih et al. 2016; Smolaż et al. 2015) and the scientific development of employees or the cooperation in frames of academic groups (Manasijević et al. 2016).

16.4 Research Methodology and Findings

16.4.1 Research Methodology

Conducted own examinations were aimed at collecting information concerning perceiving the application of social media in functioning of the college by students. Sampling research had intentional character. The examination was conducted in the period January–February 2016 on the group of 147 students of the Technical University in Czestochowa. An independently constructed questionnaire form consisting of 24 closed and half-open questions and the certificate form was a research tool. The questionnaire form was anonymous. Such a sample was not truly representative, and therefore it is possible to treat the examination as the pilot scheme, serving further getting to know the problem in conducted representative researches.

16.4.2 Findings

Analysis of own examinations concerned chosen issues of functioning of the college in frames of social media. Organizations, which exploit the potential of social media, including colleges, are driven by a desire for increasing an interest in their offer in order to reach the greatest number of potential clients. Therefore present students



Fig. 16.3 Do activity of the university on social networks had an influence on your decision about choosing the academy? *Source:* Authors' elaboration



Fig. 16.4 How do you obtain information about the college, on which you study? *Source:* Authors' elaboration

were also asked, whether when choosing the college, the activity of the college on social networks affected their decision on choice of the given academy. For nearly 86 % of respondents, the activity of the college social networks did not affect making a decision of the selection of studying place. Remaining respondents acknowledged that it was a factor, which they considered in deliberations about the continuation of education (Fig. 16.3).

Among respondents, the most popular source of obtaining information about the college was its own website. This reply indicated 114 polled persons. Next respondents most often used information given by other students (96 replies). Social media, as the information carrier, positioned themselves on the third place in this ranking, fulfilling desire for obtaining information of almost a half (71 people) of respondents. Traditional media, such as television or the press, had marginal meaning (Fig. 16.4). Obtaining information about the college is an important component of the process of communication between the college and its students, which considerably influences employment of students into college life and their feeling that the college is caring about their interests and affects the comfort of the learning.

How results in Fig. 16.5 show, among social media, the college, which according to respondents, should be used to contact with students, Facebook has majority (131 readings). The remaining kinds of social media are not so popular as Facebook; only 30 respondents suggested using YouTube. A lower figure of readings had services: Instagram (14), Twitter, and Google plus (12). A few replies gathered LinkedIn (5), Nasza Klasa (3), and Blip (1). These results are comparative with the performance of other units dealing with the evaluation of the most popular kinds of social media.

111 people, the majority of respondents, held a view that the college should have a community profile, because it can in the determined way influence recruiting students. From this group, 45 people hold a view that this service should be Facebook—tool having the greatest reach and popularity—while others did not indicate a specific media. Eight respondents stated that the community profile of

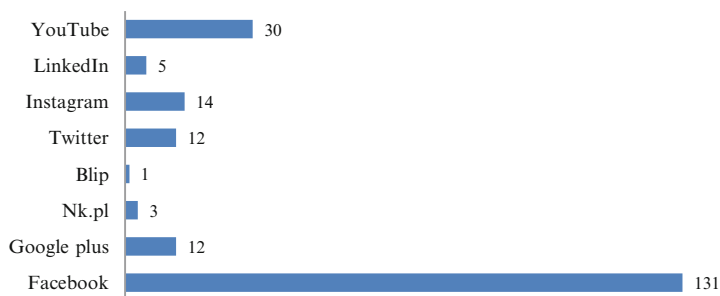


Fig. 16.5 In which social networks the college should have an own profile? *Source:* Authors' elaboration

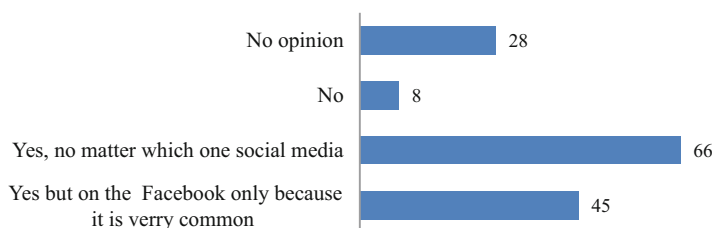


Fig. 16.6 Do you think a fact that the college has its Facebook or other social media profile increases the chance for gaining the greater number of students? *Source:* Authors' elaboration

the college will not contribute to recruit new students, and 28 people acknowledged that they have no definite view about it (Fig. 16.6).

Answering investigating question, from where students obtain information about the college, respondents were asked for choice of only one reply. Almost 45 % of respondents obtain information about activity of the college both in the traditional way, e.g., from notice board, posters placed in the building of the college, or as part of classes, as well as online. Almost 30 % of people subjected to the questionnaire form obtain information of this type exclusively through the Internet; for the counterbalance, only 2 % of respondents never use this source. Only 4 % of respondents obtain information in the traditional way. Results presented in Fig. 16.7 confirm intense power of online transmission, which results from the speed of the access to its sources, topicality, and easiness of obtaining information irrespective of place and time of desire for its searching (e.g., by using smartphones, tablets, mobile devices, etc., with which contemporary students are not parting).

From actions conducted by colleges point view, in frames of social media profile, for its users essential are data, which the college put on its fanpage. Therefore subjects of research analysis were elements, which can be put into composition of the fanpage of a given college. Elements concerning the content of the fanpage were assessed by social media users during examinations in 5-degree Likert scale which let for obtaining the more detailed opinion of respondents. On Fig. 16.8 an evaluation of particular fanpage elements was presented, where 1 means the

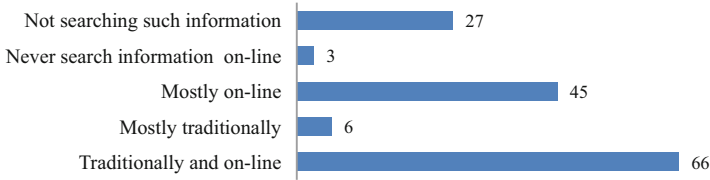


Fig. 16.7 How do you seek information about activity of the college? *Source:* Authors' elaboration

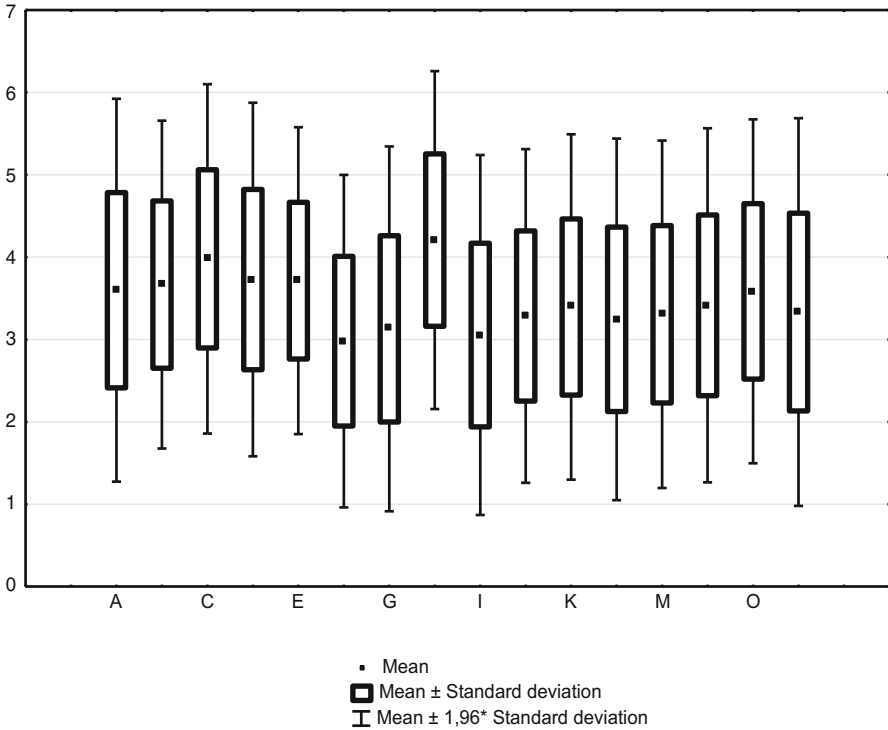


Fig. 16.8 Evaluation of elements of the content of the college profile in social media ($n = 147$) *Source:* Authors' elaboration

unimportant element and 5 very important element. For the purposes of conducted analysis used, symbols from A to P were used, where (Fig. 16.8):

- A—Information about the college
- B—Information about the present activity of the college
- C—Information about degree courses
- D—Possibility of communication/dialogue
- E—Information of additional classes, courses
- F—Films from the most important scientific events

Table 16.2 Descriptive statistics concerning the analysis of the content of the college fanpage

Variable	Descriptive statistics				
	N valids	Medium	Minimum	Maximum	Std. dev.
A	147	3,598,639	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,185,875
B	147	3,666,667	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,015,856
C	147	3,979,592	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,082,041
D	147	3,727,891	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,095,181
E	147	3,714,286	1,000,000	5,000,000	0,950,847
F	147	2,979,592	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,030,158
G	147	3,129,252	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,130,354
H	147	4,206,897	1,000,000	6,000,000	1,046,798
I	147	3,054,422	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,115,165
J	147	3,285,714	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,033,679
K	147	3,394,558	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,069,873
L	147	3,244,898	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,120,126
M	147	3,306,122	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,076,602
N	147	3,414,966	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,096,967
O	147	3,585,034	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,065,290
P	147	3,333,333	1,000,000	5,000,000	1,201,217

Source: Authors' elaboration

- G—Films from the most important entertainment and cultural events
- H—Current information for students about classes
- I—Contents, which can be shared on own website
- J—Contents about cultural events
- K—Contents about sports events
- L—Curiosities about the college
- M—Scientific curiosities/links
- N—Possibility of discussion with other users
- O—Experts' advices
- P—College photos

On the basis of conducted examinations, it turns out that elements assessed at most having a positive effect on a content fanpage of a college are (Table 16.2 and Fig. 16.8):

- Current information for students connected with classes, assessed for the best on the level 4.02
- Current information about degree courses, assessed for the best on the level 3.97
- Possibility of communication/dialogue, assessed for the best on the level 3.72
- Information about extra classes, courses, assessed for the best on the level 3.71

Analysis of evaluation results of elements of the content of the profile of the college in social media showed that 7 of 16 elements, which were marked during examination, had been assessed by respondents on the level of above 3.50, what

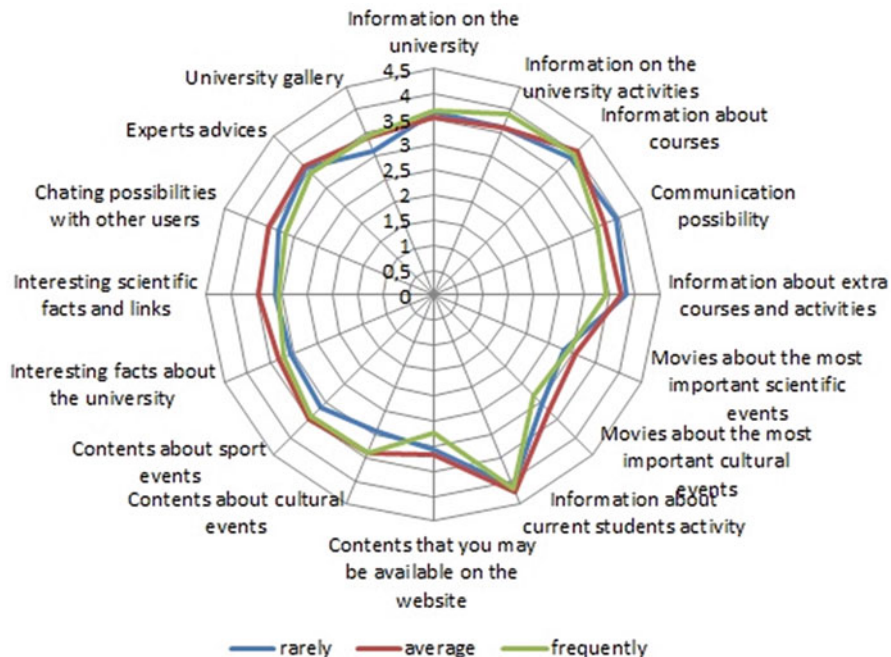


Fig. 16.9 Dependence between the frequency of using social media and the assessment of the profile of the college on Facebook (most rarely answers of using no more than one kind of social media, averagely answers exploiting 2–3 kinds of social media, and most often corresponds to using above four different kinds of social media) *Source:* Authors’ elaboration

provides the fact that there is a group of fanpage elements, which are most useful to users while using the entire group of information included on the profile of the given college. Most low assessed (on the level 2.97) by students was the element, which regards films from scientific landmarks, what can provide that people using the given profile of the college are not interested in them. It can result mainly from the fact that information of this type enjoy popularity mainly of researchers of the college and the group of students involved in scientific groups and constitute valuable sources of information and knowledge for them.

Figure 16.9 shows relations between the frequency of using social media and with evaluation of the profile of the college on Facebook. How results indicate there are no big differences resulting from perceiving the content of the Facebook profile of the college and the frequency of using social media. Such a situation can result from the fact that people participating in the examination represent the group of people from 20 to 25 years. This is so-called Y generation, for which functioning in the world created through social media is a natural area of taken action. This group knows social media specificity for the best and its basic functionality, and the service of the application of this type constitutes no biggest problems for them.

Conducted analysis of elements of fanpage of the college lets for specifying and determining expectations and needs of users, as for the presentation of information and action taken by academics, in which the goal is a proper operation in frames of one of the most popular kinds of social media, which Facebook is.

16.5 Summary

Social media determine considerable potential in functioning of the college. Effectively using their power requires analyzing the specificity of social media, characteristics of its individual kinds, and observation of directions and intensity in using them and of determining needs and expectations of potential users. Information presented in this article show the general state of the knowledge about the possible applications and evaluations of social media on the college. Moreover quoted findings of own applications concern perceiving abilities of exploitation of social media by students of one of the Polish colleges. If it was already recalled in methodological assumptions, presented findings are not representative and nevertheless let for fixing directions of further analyses and deliberations in this area. Surely carrying out a comparative analysis concerning exploiting individual kinds of social media for the realization of basic activities of the college, to which marketing communication and creating the image of the college among current and potential stakeholders, supporting education process, and the development of employees or cooperation within academic groups, will be an interesting challenge.

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