

Conference Paper

Role and Importance of Fanpage in Promotion of Products and Services

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Abstract

The development of information and communication technology significantly determines how enterprises conduct their activities. The use of ICT solutions is visible in each area of the functioning of enterprises, in particular in activities aimed at promotion of products and services. The aim of all promotional activities is to exercise influence on the current and future customers of a company. They involve providing customers with information to increase their knowledge about the products and services and the company itself. In today's digital economic life, in order to reach potential customers and retain the existing ones, companies have to observe and quickly adapt ICT solutions. Key ICT solutions include social media, which have had a significant impact on both the social and economic life. The growing number of social media users contributed to changes in the form and way of communicating and building mutual relations. Moreover, the final say on many issues belongs more and more often to people for whom Internet communication is an integral part of life, which undoubtedly is a clear signal that preferences of today's and future consumers are undergoing a diametrical change. This change in consumers' preferences, expectations and needs forces enterprises to use effective ways of communication and new forms of providing information to a specific target group. Social media users constitute an increasing group that often actively joins promotional activities undertaken by a company. In addition, the social media environment enables presentation of information that is characterised by high quality, elaborate content and interesting form (text, photos, animation or films). These are only some of the factors in favour of the use of social media in the promotional activity of enterprises. However, the modern reality as well as extended functionality and variety of social media are on the one hand conducive to building and maintaining relations with customers, while on the other hand, they requires appropriate preparation of a strategy of action in a new, virtual economic world. The aim of the paper is to analyse, based on literature studies, the assumptions of enterprises' strategies of action in the social media environment, with particular reference to fanpage. Based on the results of own studies of a group of 172 Polish users of social media conducted at the end of 2015, key actions taken by users on fanpages were indicated, and significant elements influencing the proper structure of fanpage from the user's perspective were presented.

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1. Introduction

More and more frequently functioning of contemporary organizations is affected by various solutions in ITC area. They generate new models of work and cooperation and first of all communication, which is reflected in new forms of dialogue based on new technological and application solutions. Particularly in the area of Internet communication one can observe its significant impact on social and economic life development. The growing number of Internet users, their needs, expectations and lifestyles (which concerns mainly young generations) determine the way in which lots of enterprises function [15]. As a reaction to these issues enterprises make the use of ICT technologies in various areas of their operations, such as internal structures, management and marketing systems and public relation [11]. Generally, it may be assumed that implementation of various ICT solutions is the factor that determines success of contemporary organizations, without which being competitive in a turbulent environment is out of question [7].

An innovative enterprise should fulfil certain requirements in order to create an innovative economy. In particular, it should run activities with a large market potential, which in present times is dependent on the Internet in the majority of cases. The global communicative network facilitates transmitting the latest information in a rapid and direct way [19].

Intensified activity of Internet users is particularly visible in social media. In [5] define social media as "a group of applications based on Internet solutions, which are based on ideological and technological foundations of WEB 2.0 and which make it possible to create and exchange content which is created by users". Escalation of social media users' activities contributes to a growing use of their potential in economic activity. Social media have revolutionized the way enterprises and their stakeholders cooperate, particularly in case of more demanding clients, who frequently become actively involved in actions taken by enterprises. Implementing social media in enterprises requires knowledge on specificity of particular social media types, investigating their popularity and functionality in order to determine and develop a proper strategy of enterprise operations.

The present paper has been divided into two parts. In the first one the authors have reviewed the literature and presented the result of the research analysis connected with social media use. Additionally, opportunities and challenges that particular types of social media create for enterprises have been presented in this part. In the second part the authors have presented the results of own research conducted in the group of 172 Polish users of social media. The research was conducted in November and December 2015. The aim of the conducted research was to indicate key actions taken by users within the functioning fanpages and show vital elements that influence the proper fanpage structure from the point of view of users.

Year	2012	2013	2014
Social media			
Facebook	67	71	71
LinkedIn	20	22	28
Pinterest	15	21	28
Instagram	13	17	26
Twitter	16	18	23

TABLE 1: Use of social media by adults according to the research by Pew Research Centre. Source: <https://www.eactive.pl/aktualnosci/czy-popularnosc-serwisow-spolesznosciowych-ciagle-wzrasta/>; <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/> [cit.: 10.03.2016].

2. Social Media - The Scale of the Phenomenon

The literature and research analysis in the scope of social media is conducted in order to answer the question how popular social media environment is with users and about the goals of social media users who use their particular types as well as determine the intensity direction of the actions they take (social media users activeness dynamism). Such an analysis allows to make the right choice as to which type of social media should be chosen by enterprises in their activity. The choice has its meaningful consequences for enterprises on the possibility of creating their own image and using the potential, which is determined by the social media type [16].

The most important advantage of social media is their growing popularity. In Poland the most numerous group of Internet users constitute people aged 18-24 (96%). In 2014 possessing an account in at least one portal of social media was declared by six out of ten Polish internet users (62%), that is almost two fifths of the whole population (39%) - this is 3 percentage points more than a year earlier and 6 percentage points more than in the years 2011-2012. In the month before the survey social media were used by three quarters of registered users (86%). Social media are used mainly to keep in touch with friends (54%) or to renew old acquaintances (40%) and receive content of various types: listen to music, watch films or photos, read texts (38%). 26% of users publish their own materials such as photos, music, films, etc. (www.cbos.pl).

The results of the research by *Pew Research Centreshow* that the most popular social portal still remains, with a relatively large advantage, Facebook (Table 1). Although its growth has slowed down, the level of its users involvement and activeness actually has increase. In case of Instagram, despite the fact the growth in interest in this portal has not been dynamic, its users are becoming more and more active in the network. Activeness of users primarily consists in spreading information between various social networks. The results have been based on data that comes from phone interviews conducted by *Princeton Survey Research Associates International* in September 2014. On the basis of the whole sample results one can state with 95% certainty that the sample error is about 2.5 percentage point. On the basis of the Internet users results ($n = 1.597$), the sample error margin is about 2.9 percentage point (www.pewinternet.org).

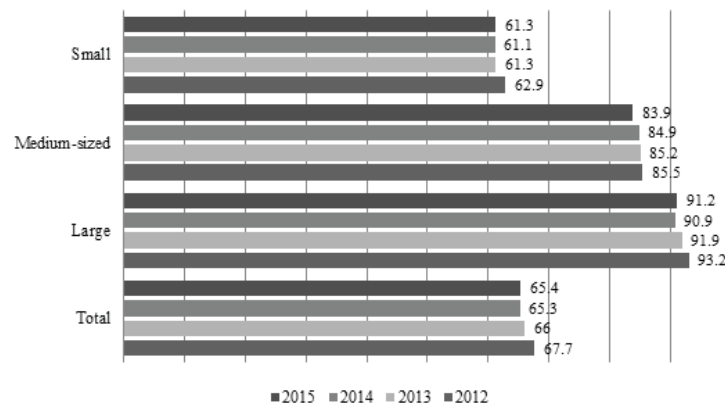


Figure 1: The share of Polish enterprises that had their own website in the years 2012-2015 according to size criteria. Source: <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/nauka-i-technika-spolesctwo-informacyjne/spolesctwo-informacyjne/spolesctwo-informacyjne-w-polsce-w-2015-r-,2,5.html>, [cit.: 10.03.2016].

The necessity to react to changes in the environment concerns especially small and medium enterprises, which have to learn, among others, to create competitive advantage often on the basis of technological advances. Awareness of benefits that result from application of modern solutions in the scope of ICT is of particular importance, as by its nature the SMEs sector has a limited competitive position on the contemporary market dominated by large corporations [9]. Facing constant changeability and turbulence of the environment, efficient enterprises are forced to abandon traditional habits in business activity, which are adequate to changing slowly conditions of the environment in favour of better adjusted to highly competitively and environmentally dynamic possibilities [18], the example of which can be the use of social media by enterprises in their operation. Despite a growing popularity of new communication forms, which are created by social media, enterprises still often use their own websites in order to promote their products and services with the use of the Internet. In 2015 the share of enterprises in Poland that had their own website constituted 65.4% (Figure 1).

Within their functioning website enterprises take various actions. The study on functionality of company websites in Polish enterprises in the year 2015 shows that they are most frequently used to present product and services catalogues (60.3%). The second place belonged to application of privacy policy, ensuring personal data protection or a certificate confirming that using the website is safe (32%) (Table 2). The analysis of the study on the use of websites of Polish enterprises proves that their potential is poorly used in the new conditions of Internet technologies.

According to the data by Eurostat (Figure 2) Polish enterprises belong to a group of countries that make the use of social media at a very low level, in particular in comparison to the number of Internet users and social media users.

However, a growing number of Internet users, in particular social media users, forces enterprises to exist in such social networks as for example Facebook. In Poland Facebook is the most popular with users social network compared with various types social media (14.12 million users in 2016) (www.sotrender.pl).

Activities taken by enterprises within own websites	%
Presentation of product and services catalogues	60.3
Application of privacy policy, ensuring personal data safety or a certificate confirming that using the website is safe	32.0
Allowing users bookings of customized products	11.8
Presenting information on vacant work posts and enabling submission of application forms	16,5
On-line orders or booking	13.0
Checking the status of on-line orders	8.7
Website content personalization for regular users	6.8

TABLE 2: Aims of enterprise websites in 2015. Source: on the basis of <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/nauka-i-technika-spoleczenstwo-informacyjne/spoleczenstwo-informacyjne/spoleczenstwo-informacyjne-w-polsce-w-2015-r-2,5.html>, [cit.: 10.03.2016].

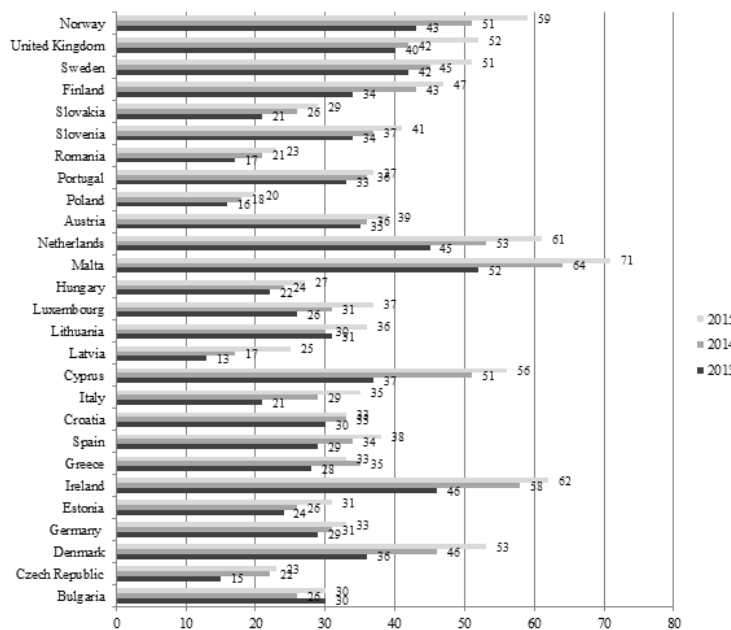


Figure 2: Percentage of enterprises that use social networks (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing, Viadeo, Yammer, etc.) - all enterprises, without financial sector (10 persons employed or more). Source: Own elaboration on the basis of <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>, [cit.: 10.03.2016].

According to the research by [2] concerning the activeness level of biggest Polish enterprises in social media it can be observed that the use of social media is primarily limited to marketing communication, which is mainly conducted through the leading social network, namely Facebook. Actions of enterprises are not coordinated within a conducted marketing strategy and activeness in other social network is undertaken very rarely. However, in publications concerning the use of social media by Polish

enterprises it is emphasized that although enterprises are aware of advantages of being active in social media, their maturity in this respect is very low [17].

Social media are a new form of activeness on the Internet. Its users are currently no longer just recipients of the messages but also their full-fledged authors. Their role is changing, from consumers to prosumers, people who can actively participate in co-creation and promotion of favourite brands or simultaneous production and consumption of goods and services. The dynamism of social media development and growing popularity of this type of networks gathers still growing groups of potential consumers, among whom information spreads very quickly and its range is also very large. Social media have become a tool of a great potential also in marketing activities of enterprises. Apart from creating brands social media allow to build relations with clients, which in turn allows enterprises to win competitive advantage. The domain of the Internet, and social media in particular, is easy and very fast exchange of views and information among consumers on products and services, strategies and employees. Lack of a profile within social networks does not mean that the company is not present there, but that it cannot react to comments that appear in them, especially the negative ones or ones that contain some misinformation. A properly thought of strategy of operation supported by knowledge on particular social networks functioning offers enterprises great possibilities of marketing actions, which first of all fit in the expectations and lifestyles of contemporary consumers [6]. Moreover, as it was stressed by [20], nowadays application of ICT is a decisive factor that makes it possible to improve enterprise management and its value growth.

3. Classification and Characteristics of Social Media

Preparing a strategy of operation which is based on social media requires knowledge on their particular types and challenges which they create for potential users. According to Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu and Krush social media functionality creates a "new path" for bidirectional communication, which gives the way to more positive interactions between buyers and sellers, on condition that they are properly applied [1]. Social media have changed the communication model from one-to-one to one-to-many. The dialogue created in social media is not only a bidirectional one but often multi-person one, which is much more efficient than transfer of information in the form of one-way communication. This gives the basis for creating a meaningful relationship [3, 8] between a company and its potential stakeholders, where clients constitute the most important group. In Table 3 the authors has presented the classification and short characteristics of social media.

The presented classification and short analysis of social media outlines various possibilities of their potential and use, presenting and transferring information and, what follows, it forces users to behave in a particular way. In [5] present the characteristics of social media in the scope of two key elements, which include social presence and media richness. Social presence concerns forms of communication. In case of indirect communication the interaction between communication process participants is lower than in case of the *face to face* conversation. Indirect communication on the Internet

Social media	Characteristics
Publishing opinions and views, e.g. Blogs	Providing everybody interested with a possibility to express their views on various areas of both private and economic life in a free and unconstrained way. It mainly consists of text form with a possibility of interaction through adding comments.
Resource sharing, e.g. YouTube, Flick, Slideshare	Sharing multimedia content in the network, which comes in the form of video films, pictures, presentations, applications, etc., which are stored and made available by means of network servers.
Building and maintaining relationships, e.g. Facebook, forums, instant messaging and chat	Mainly building and maintaining relationships among people through creation of personal profiles. More and more frequently this concerns enterprises that use social networks such as Facebook in order to create the brand community through informing, distribution, links to the website, etc.
Co-creation or cooperation, e.g. Google docs, wiki	Aimed at user cooperation. Creating content by numerous users. Might come in open or closed form.
Real time informing and referring to the news, e.g., microblogs, alert services, livestream	Reporting and referring to current news. Solutions created within this category concentrate on current issues.
Virtual game worlds, e.g.the World of Warcraft	Social games genre within which there is a possibility to appear in the form of personalized avatars and users can cooperate one with another just like in the real world.
Virtual social worlds, e.g. Second Life	An interactive, 3D multimedia environment of virtual avatars existence by means of which users communicate one with another and exist in the virtual world.

TABLE 3: Classification and characteristics of social media. Source: Own analysis on the basis of [5]; <http://networkeddigital.com/2010/05/10/podzial-i-klasyfikacja-social-media/>).

has two basic features: the asynchronous communication (e-mail) and synchronous one (chat). The authors stress the fact that the higher social presence is, the greater social influence the users have on mutual communication behaviours. Media richness in turn is connected with information transfer in various forms, for example text, graphics, animations, etc., without ambiguity and uncertainty. Media differ as to the level of their richness - that is the amount of information that can be transferred in a given time period. Therefore, while comparing various media it can be noticed that some of them are more effective in solving problems that are connected with ambiguity and uncertainty of information transfer.

In [5] presented a classification of various media depending on their social presence and media richness connecting them with a possibility of self-presentation and self-disclosure. With reference to social presence and media richness their low level show applications such as cooperative projects (e.g. Wikipedia) and blogs with a higher score for auto-presentation as they are frequently text based and allow only relatively simple exchange. The middle level includes such types of social media as for example

YouTube, which enable low auto-presentation and social networks such as Facebook with a high level of auto-presentation and self-disclosure. Facebook, apart from the text communication makes it provides opportunities for sharing photos, videos and other information transfer forms. The highest level constitute virtual games and social worlds (e.g. the World of Warcraft, Second Life), which attempt to model all dimensions of the face-to-face communication in the virtual environment.

While analyzing information on various types of social media with reference to their popularity it can be clearly observed that social networks such as Facebook offer a high potential for enterprises to build their brand on the Internet and shape appropriate relationships between the enterprise and its clients. This is supported by the fact that Facebook gathers a large number of active users, who within their profiles allow access to their personal data, which provides an opportunity to conduct personalized marketing campaigns based on demographic and social preferences. Facebook is a popular tool for carrying out marketing strategies [14] and a great chance to build a strong brand. Within Facebook it is possible for enterprises to create an official fanpage, by means of which they can build their own profiles in the network. Functionality of fanpages is directed at starting various marketing and promotional actions. Fanpages can also function as "places" ensuring fast customer service [10, 12]. As information on Facebook may be viewed by largest number of users the content that is published there should be of highest factual and esthetical level. Another important aspect that increases the fanpage attractiveness is managing it actively, which means updating information, publishing new content, reacting to user comments. These actions are necessary as information within Facebook (and not only there) spread very quickly, which is the result of the fact that users do not only receive information but also share messages or hyperlinks within their profiles.

4. Fanpage as a Tool for Promoting Enterprise Products and Services – Own Research Analysis

4.1. Research methodology

The conducted research aimed at presenting key activities taken by social media users within functioning fanpages and showing elements that influence a proper structure of fanpages from the point of view of their users. The research sample was chosen on the basis of a purposeful selection. The research was conducted in the period between November-December 2015 in a group of 172 Polish social media users. The research tool was created by the authors questionnaire that consisted of 35 closed-ended and semi-open-ended questions and a metrics. The survey was anonymous, which encouraged the respondents to express their own opinions on the subject of ICT solutions use both in social as well as professional life. Such a sample was not fully representative, therefore it can be treated as a pilot research that can be used for further research of the problem in the future, by conducting representative research.

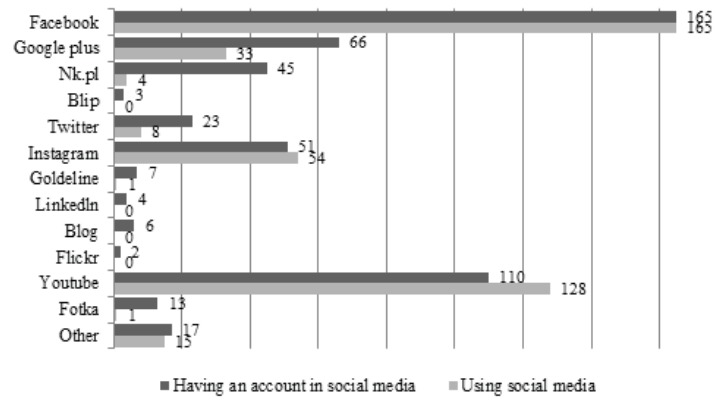


Figure 3: Social media use - own research results(n=172). Source: Own work based on a survey.

4.2. Research Results

The own research analysis concerned two issues, namely having an account in social media and using social media. The research conducted in the social media group shows that most frequently the respondents have a Facebook, 165 indications, which constitutes over 95% of all answers, 110 respondents have an account on YouTube (almost 64% of all answers). Apart from the mentioned social media types the users also indicated Google+ and Instagram, respectively 66 and 51 indications (see Figure 3). Other social networks were not often mentioned by the respondents which may mean that these accounts constitute a small percentage in the whole group of social media. The comparative analysis of the results presented in the theoretical part concerning their popularity and the number of social media users has been correlated with the present own research results.

The results presented confirm the declarations of respondents concerning their use of social media. The results show that most frequently the respondents use Facebook, 96% of indications, YouTube - over 74% of indications and Google+ and Instagram, respectively 20% and 31% of indications. Such results show that Facebook plays a dominant role among social media users and is the most frequently indicated social network chosen by the users (see Figure 3).

The results obtained in the research unequivocally show that Facebook is a dominant social network. In the view of the authors enterprises should concentrate their attention on the possibility of using the potential of this media to conduct their own marketing or sales activities. Therefore, in the conducted research, relationships have been indicted between the following variables: having an account on Facebook and activeness within a Facebook fanpage and the answers to the questionnaire's questions on the rank scales (gradable) concerning the frequency of social media use and frequency of information exchange within a fanpage estimating the Gamma rank correlation coefficients (Table 4). The test probability lower than $p < 0,05$ was accepted as a relevant one. The statistical software Statistica 12.5 was used in the correlation analysis, that is why the procedure of particular correlations calculating has not been presented and only its results and interpretation have been shown. In the conducted

	Having a Facebook profile	Activeness within the Facebook fanpage**
	Gamma rank correlation (* p-value < 0,05)	
Frequency of social media use	0,940*	0,254*

TABLE 4: Frequency of social media use and having a Facebook profile and activeness within a fanpage (n=172). ** activeness within the Facebook fanpage was defined in the course of the research as participating in competitions, promotional actions, etc., conducted by enterprises. Source: Own work based on the survey.

	Having a Facebook profile	Activeness within a Facebook fanpage**
	Gamma rank correlation (* p-value < 0,05)	
Frequency of information exchange (positive one) on a fanpage	0,481	0,413*
Frequency of information exchange (negative one) on a fanpage	0,128	0,346*

TABLE 5: Frequency of information exchange and having a Facebook profile and activeness within a fanpage (n=172). ** activeness within a Facebook fanpage was defined in the course of the research as taking part in competitions, promotional actions, etc, conducted by enterprises. Source: Own work based on the survey.

research the fanpage was unambiguously determined for the respondents as a profile of an enterprise offering products and services. The survey respondents did not evaluate fanpages run by famous representatives of the world of politics, music or art.

On the basis of the research it turned out that the frequency of social media use depends on having a Facebook profile and activeness within Facebook. A positive statistic relevance ($p < 0,05$) at the levels of $\gamma = 0,940$ and $\gamma = 0,254$ was confirmed between the variables *having a Facebook profile* and *activeness within Facebook*. Thus, it can be concluded that users who possess a Facebook account are more active social media users, that is ones who use other social media types more frequently. Moreover, users who possess a Facebook account more often indicate taking certain activities within fanpages (determined as activeness within a Facebook fanpage in the research). Activeness of users consist mainly in liking the company profile, recommending it to their friends and taking part in competitions or offered discount vouchers for products and services.

The research does not confirm a statistically relevant dependence between having a Facebook profile and frequency of information exchange within a fanpage. This may result from the motivation of the users to set up a Facebook account. Their primary goal is to satisfy the need to maintain and build relationships with their family and friends, the ones which are difficult to maintain in real world. Thus, it turns out that users who possess a Facebook account not necessarily become involved in posting information within a fanpage concerning products, services and actions taken by enterprises. This concerns both positive and negative comments posted by users on fanpages.

However, the conducted research shows that the activeness within a Facebook fanpage and frequency of information exchange, both positive and negative one, are statistically relevant positively correlated at the level of $\gamma=0,413$ and $\gamma=0,346$. This may prove that there is also a group of social media users who use Facebook as a tool to search and exchange information concerning products, services and operation of enterprises.

From the point of view of actions conducted by enterprises on their own fanpages the data concerning how users evaluate posted information on products, services and operation of the company is important. That is why the authors decided to analyze the elements that may be included in a fanpage. The social media users evaluated the elements that may be included in a fanpage with the use of the Likert's five-point scale, which allowed to obtain more detailed opinions of the respondents. Figure 4 presents the evaluation of particular fanpage elements by the users, where 1 means a small importance element and 5 means a very important element. For the needs of the conducted analysis symbols from A to J were used, where:

1. information on company/institution,
2. information on the company/institution operations,
3. information on products/services,
4. communication/dialogue possibility,
5. content that can be shared on own profile,
6. entertaining content,
7. interesting facts/interesting links,
8. possibility of discussion with other users,
9. expert advice,
10. competitions.

On the basis of the conducted research it turns out that the elements that received highest ranks as the ones positively influencing the fanpage content include:

1. information on products and services at the level of 4.43;
2. expert advice evaluated at the level of 3.93;
3. communication/dialogue possibility evaluated at the level of 3.90.

It is worth stressing that 6 out of 10 elements distinguished in the course of the research were evaluated by the users at the level above 3,50, which confirms the fact that most elements of the fanpage is useful for users while accessing the whole group of information included in the profile of a given enterprise. The element which received the highest rank from the users was sharing the content included in the fanpage on their own Facebook profiles, which may confirm the fact that those who

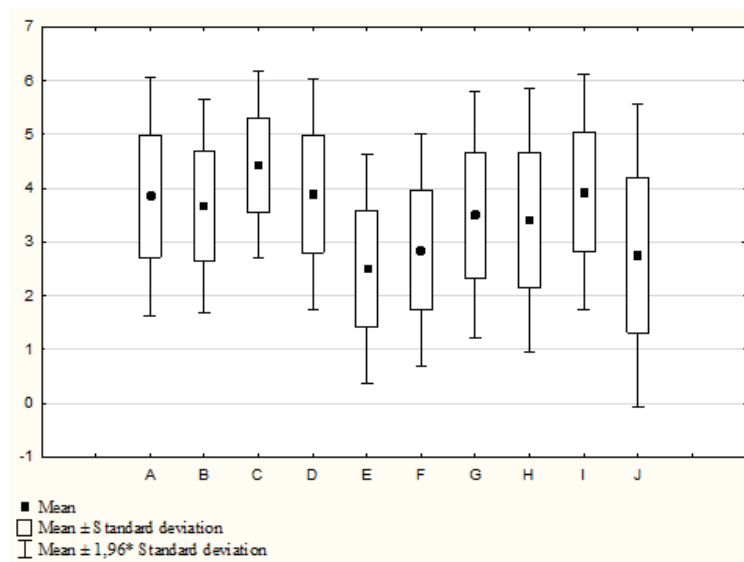


Figure 4: Fanpage elements evaluation (n=172). Source: Own work based on the survey.

use a given company profile are primarily interested in acquiring information and less interested in sharing it. The analysis of the fanpage elements contributes to specifying and determining user expectation and needs as to presenting information and actions taken by enterprises, the aim of which is proper functioning within Facebook.

5. Conclusion

Social media offer enterprises a high potential in the scope of winning new clients and maintaining the ones that have already been connected with the company. However, in order to make an effective use of their advantages enterprises need to possess proper information on their popularity, directions of user activeness development and characteristic features of particular social media types. Another vital information concerns needs, expectations and requirements of clients and potential clients (information recipients) towards actions taken by enterprises within social media. These actions should not be limited exclusively to passing information, but to building an effective interactions, which are the basis for the created bond between the enterprise and its clients and potential clients. The paper includes the present state of knowledge on social media with reference to their popularity and the level of their use by enterprises. Additionally, the authors have included in it the results of their own research concerning Facebook users and their activeness within fanpages of companies offering products and services.

The presented research results are not representative and have their limitations mainly due to the small size of the sample group, its differentiation as well as evaluating social media only in certain aspects. Thus, it seems justified to continue the research in the scope of social media use by enterprises through an extensive analysis and evaluation not only of fanpages, but also other forms in which enterprises exist in social media (characteristics and evaluation of enterprise operations within particular

social media types). An additional challenge is an analysis of efficiency of actions taken in the evaluation of enterprises which undertake activeness within particular types of social media. Continuing the research will make it possible to create an extensive knowledge compendium in the scope of social media use in enterprises.

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