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van Zoonen, W.; Bartels, J.; van Prooijen, A.-M.; Schouten, A.P.

**DOI**

[10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.031](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.031)

**Publication date**

2018

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Computers in Human Behavior

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

van Zoonen, W., Bartels, J., van Prooijen, A.-M., & Schouten, A. P. (2018). Explaining online ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 87, 354-362. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.031>

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ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Computers in Human Behavior

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh)

Full Length Article

## Explaining online ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn

Ward van Zoonen<sup>a,\*</sup>, Jos Bartels<sup>b</sup>, Anne-Marie van Prooijen<sup>c</sup>, Alexander P. Schouten<sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup> The Amsterdam School of Communication Research ASCoR, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, 1018 WV, Amsterdam, The Netherlands<sup>b</sup> Department of Communication and Information Sciences, Tilburg University, Dante Building, Warandelaan 2, 5037 AB, Tilburg, The Netherlands<sup>c</sup> Department of Communication Science, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Facebook

LinkedIn

Boundary preferences

Organizational identification

Organizational ambassadorship

Self-enhancement

## ABSTRACT

Due to technological advancement work is situated within a broader network where work communiqués become public and observable by anyone at any time. This study draws on identity theory and boundary management preferences to examine the extent to which employees use their Facebook and LinkedIn accounts to share updates about their organization. This study reports on a two-wave panel study among Dutch employees ( $N = 515$ ). Drawing on boundary theory and organizational citizenship literature this study shows that self-enhancement motives are important predictors for ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn. Conversely, segmentation preferences and identification processes significantly affect ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook, but not on LinkedIn. Hence, social media afford similar behaviors across platforms but the antecedents may differ across social media platforms.

## 1. Explaining online ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn

Social media use in organizations is proliferating at an incredible pace (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). However, research has predominantly focused on the consequences of social media use in organizational contexts, identifying important organizational (e.g., reputation: Andreassen, Torsheim, & Pallesen, 2014; Helm, 2011; Dreher, 2014) and individual outcomes (e.g., job performance, job satisfaction, and creativity: Cao, Guo, Vogel, & Zhang, 2016; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Moqbel, Nevo, & Kock, 2013).

Additionally, recent research provides insights into the content that employees share on personal social media. Specifically, research suggests that the overwhelming majority of work-related messages that employees share on personal social media are informational, meaning employees avoid negative or positive emotions in work-related posts (van Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Vliegenthart, 2016a). Through social media employees can function as powerful brand ambassadors who shape the reputation with everything they do and say online (Dreher, 2014). For instance, employees' participation in social media by liking and sharing messages increases the organization's visibility and reach among key audiences (Dreher, 2014). Studies have suggested that employees are aware of their potential to contribute to organizational reputations through social media use (Helm, 2011; Van Zoonen, van der Meer, & Verhoeven, 2014) and can be authentic and credible advocates for brands, products, and the organization at large (van Zoonen et al.,

2016a). Hence, we argue that employees can use their personal social media channels to contribute to organizational goals by *liking* and *sharing* publications by the organization or crafting their own social media messages about the organization. We suggest that these social media behaviors can be viewed as increasingly strong forms of online ambassadorship behaviors.

Although we know a lot about the content and consequences of organization related social media use by employees, from both an empirical and practical standpoint, less is known about the drivers of these online ambassadorship behaviors. Moreover, to date many studies on social media use by employees collapse different social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) into one general measure for social media use (e.g., Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Moqbel et al., 2013; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Vliegenthart, 2016b). However, this approach overlooks potential differences in the causes, consequences, and usage of various platforms. Therefore, in line with some exceptions (e.g., Utz, 2015), this study aims to examine differential effects of the drivers of ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn, respectively.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the drivers of ambassadorship behaviors on public social media. First, numerous studies have directed attention to individual drivers of social media use such as the role of impression management (e.g., self-enhancement: boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013; Yun, Takeuchi, & Liu, 2007). Specifically, impression

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [w.vanzoonen@uva.nl](mailto:w.vanzoonen@uva.nl) (W. van Zoonen), [j.bartels@uvt.nl](mailto:j.bartels@uvt.nl) (J. Bartels), [a.m.vanprooijen@vu.nl](mailto:a.m.vanprooijen@vu.nl) (A.-M. van Prooijen), [a.p.schouten@uvt.nl](mailto:a.p.schouten@uvt.nl) (A.P. Schouten).

management and career advancement have been associated with the use of social networks in organizational contexts (e.g., Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014; Gibbs, Rozaidi, & Eisenberg, 2013; Treem & Leonardi, 2012). We argue that sharing information about organizational achievements can result in more positive perceptions of the organization, which in turn can lead to a stronger professional image of the members of that organization, thereby satisfying self-enhancement needs. Additionally, employees who experience stronger professional or organizational identities have been shown to be more likely to combine social and work connections in social media networks (Fieseler, Meckel, & Ranzini, 2015). As such, we examine whether employees enact their organizational identities through online communications about the organization on Facebook and LinkedIn. Hence, we propose that self-enhancement and organizational identification are important individual drivers of online ambassador behaviors, because positive evaluations of the organization can spillover to employees' professional identities.

Second, the way employees want to organize their life spheres is likely to influence their decisions to engage in ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn (e.g., Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Boundary theory addresses questions about how employees engage in daily role transitions as part of their organizational and social life (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Effectively managing professional and personal boundaries is a challenge for professionals in modern organizations where altered ways of working across temporal and spatial boundaries increase work-life conflict (Rothbard & Ollier-Malaterre, 2016). This is exacerbated on social media, where traditional boundaries of time and place separating work and personal life are challenged and one's online social network often include both personal and professional contacts (e.g., Fieseler et al., 2015; Marwick & Boyd, 2011). As such, boundary management is a prevalent challenge for employees influencing their social media behaviors (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Therefore, employees' segmentation preferences, that is the extent to which they want to keep work separate from private life, are likely to influence their decisions to engage in ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Hence, this study's contributions consist of proposing an integrative framework of antecedents of organization ambassadorship behaviors on personal social media. This study draws on literature on organizational identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Scott & Stephens, 2009) self-enhancement (Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014; Gibbs et al., 2013), and segmentation preferences (Ashforth et al., 2000; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013) to examine online ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn and Facebook. Additionally, this study suggests these antecedents have different effects for behaviors on Facebook and on LinkedIn. These differences can be understood from the notion of imagined audiences and perceived appropriateness of information sharing (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). These differences are important as for instance Utz (2015) demonstrated that individuals experienced higher amounts of professional informational benefits on LinkedIn compared to Facebook. Also on the organizational level it has been demonstrated that Facebook is a more effective tool for stakeholder dialogue than LinkedIn (Kim, Kim, & Nam, 2014).

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Organizational identification and online ambassadorship

Organizational identification refers to the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Expressed in more communicative terms, organizational identification represents the forging, maintenance, and alteration of linkages between employees and the organization as oneness is experienced (Scott & Stephens, 2009).

Organizational identification is important to the overall organizational functioning and success and has consistently been linked with

employees' work attitudes, work-related intentions and behaviors (Riketta, 2005). Organizational identification can motivate members to act on behalf of the group's best interests and as such identification has been linked to extra-role behaviors (e.g., Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005; Riketta, 2005; Van Dick, van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel, & Wieseke, 2008). Organizational identification leads to more cooperation with other organizational members (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994) and positively influences employees' willingness to strive for organizational goals (Elsbach & Glynn, 1996). Social media are a platform that organizational members can use to contribute to organizational goals, for instance through sharing recruitment information (van Zoonen et al., 2016a).

Additionally, greater identification triggers employees to seek for opportunities to express the role identities as a valued portion of the self-concept. In other words, the more valued a specific role or identity, the more likely they will be internalized as an extension and expression of oneself (Ashforth et al., 2000). Social media afford employees with new ways to import the role identity as a (partial) definition of the self that is presented through these online platforms. Indeed, social media have consistently been framed as vehicles for active presentations of the self (Bazarova & Choi, 2014; Hogan, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011; Livingstone, 2008; Van Dijck, 2013). Hence, when the organization represents an important part of employees' self-concept, the organization also tends to be part of employees' online identities (Fieseler et al., 2015). As such, online ambassadorship behaviors should be more likely to occur on social media when employees identify with the organization. An unexplored issue, however, is whether the influence of organizational identification on employees' online ambassadorship behaviors differs between social media platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Although both platforms tend to be relatively similar in the affordances that are offered to users (Treem & Leonardi, 2012; Van Dijck, 2013), Facebook and LinkedIn differ in the type of networking opportunities that are facilitated.

A key feature of Facebook is its focus on establishing social networks that can consist of a range of people that users know from different domains of their lives, such as friends, family, and colleagues (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). Facebook is engineered to allow users to construe a broad image of the self (Van Dijck, 2013). Information that is shared by users on Facebook therefore often includes personal information about, for example, relationship status and leisure activities. In contrast, LinkedIn mainly focuses on building and maintaining professional networks (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). Profiles on LinkedIn center on professional information of the users, such as their expertise and work experiences, hence little personal information is revealed. Consequently, there are differences in the stimulation of self-expression between these platforms (Van Dijck, 2013). Social norms on Facebook encourage users to share personal opinions and interests (e.g., interests in books, music) and to engage in spontaneous interaction (Papacharissi, 2009), whereas behavioral norms on LinkedIn would encourage professional use and dictate interactional norms similar to those in the workplace.

Conversely, we suggest that the role of organizational identification in online ambassadorship behaviors is likely to be less pronounced on LinkedIn than on Facebook. Due to the professional format of LinkedIn, ambassadorship behavior is an integrated aspect of construing a LinkedIn profile (Utz, 2015), regardless of whether employees' define themselves as members of the organization. In contrast, Facebook offers a wider range of self-presentation opportunities (Papacharissi, 2009; Van Dijck, 2013). As such, ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook might mainly be appealing to employees who identify with the organization, as this allows them to express an aspect of their identity that they value. However, when employees feel that the organization does not represent an important part of their identity, they might be less inclined to engage in ambassadorship behaviors, and prefer to express

other aspects of their identity on Facebook instead.

**H1.** Organizational identification is more positively related to ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook than on LinkedIn.

## 2.2. Self-enhancement and online ambassadorship

Employees intrinsically care about their relative standing in an organization (Ederer & Pataconi, 2010) and are to a varying degree dedicated to uphold or improve their standing (Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014; Goffman, 1959; Yun et al., 2007). Creating an appearance of competence may aid employees in seizing job opportunities, increasing their status in the organization, and creating greater material and psychological rewards and comfort (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008; Bunderson & Reagans, 2011). Self-enhancement refers to the motivation of employees to enhance their positive self-concept and protect it from negative information when they evaluate themselves (Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013; Sedikides, 1993). Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2013) suggest that self-enhancement is the selective attention for and promotion of self-relevant information (e.g., organizational information) that has favorable implications for the self and avoid information that has negative implications (see also Kowalski & Leary, 1990; Sedikides, 1993). Self-enhancement can occur privately and publicly (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Whereas private self-enhancement can be considered as an intrapersonal process (Sedikides & Strube, 1997), the urge to positively present oneself is an important aspect of public self-enhancement (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In social media contexts, motives to publicly self-enhance are thus likely to be expressed through strategic self-presentation. Indeed, self-enhancers “are more likely to try to share information that helps manage the impressions others form of them” (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013, p. 650).

Several studies have demonstrated that impression management is an important antecedent of social media use (e.g., Marwick & Boyd, 2011; Walton & Rice, 2013) and enterprise social media use (Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014). More generally, it has been suggested that communication technologies afford possibilities for strategic impression management by organizational members (Birnholtz, Dixon, & Hancock, 2012; Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014; Leonardi & Treem, 2012). Self-enhancers may benefit from ambassadorship behaviors, as positive evaluations of the organization may spillover to the evaluation of themselves as members of that organization. Hence, through sharing organization related information, employees may benefit from the reputation and achievements of their organization, when receiving evaluations from their online networks. Managing self-impressions is not limited to professional online networks, as the need to enhance ones’ self-concept is prevalent across many life domains (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). As such, we expect that self-enhancement is associated with online ambassadorship behaviors on both Facebook and LinkedIn.

**H2.** Self-enhancement is positively related to ambassadorship behaviors on both social media platforms (Facebook and LinkedIn).

## 2.3. Segmentation preferences and online ambassadorship

In addition to organizational identification and self-enhancement, we expect that employees’ segmentation preferences between work and private life may also impact on online ambassador behaviors. Technological advancements and especially social media (Treem & Leonardi, 2012) present a set of technical features and communicative practices that make boundaries more permeable and create conditions for greater integration among different spheres of life experience such as work/non-work, private/public (Marwick & Boyd, 2011; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

These socio-technical developments present employees with a classical organizational challenge to negotiate tensions between public/private information and work/non-work domains (Ollier-Malaterre

et al., 2013). Boundary management preferences are bidirectional, that is, employees have to manage both intrusion of work in their private lives as well as mixing their private life with work (Rothbard & Ollier-Malaterre, 2016). This study examines employees’ ambassadorship behaviors on personal social media accounts, which implies that employees actively share organizational information in their larger social networks including their friends and family. As such, the work to home permeability preferences are central to this study.

Employees’ boundary preferences have been associated with social media use (Skeels & Grudin, 2009), smartphone use (Derks, Bakker, Peters, & Wingerden, 2016), and information and communication technology use (Park, Fritz, & Jex, 2011). For instance, employees with segmentation preferences are less likely to engage in communication technology use at home (Park et al., 2011). Additionally, Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) introduced the idea that employees create boundaries around their communication technology use, thereby creating self-imposed restrictions on work-related communication technology use during non-work time. Park and Jex (2011), in turn, confirm these findings by demonstrating that people with stronger segmentation preferences are likely to create more boundaries around communication technology use for cross-role involvement. Hence, we argue that employees with stronger segmentation preferences should be less likely to use their social media accounts for organization related communication, given the invasive nature of social media use in blurring work-home boundaries (van Zoonen et al., 2016b).

However, we propose that segmentation preferences have a different impact on sharing organizational information on Facebook than on LinkedIn. Due to the inclusive nature of social networks on Facebook (Papacharissi, 2009), it might be challenging for employees who prefer segmenting audiences to manage boundaries between different social groups – i.e., friends, family, colleagues and professional contacts. In contrast, LinkedIn specifically targets professional networking, thereby reducing the chance that private and professional identities will collide. Moreover, sharing organizational information is in line with the general aim of LinkedIn, as this is likely to provide informational benefits to other users, whereas posting professional content is not the norm on Facebook (Utz, 2015). Hence, we hypothesize that segmentation preferences play a more profound role in the context of Facebook use than in the context of LinkedIn use.

**H3.** Boundary segmentation preferences are more strongly related to ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook, than ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Participants and procedures

This study draws on two-wave panel data with a two-month time lag, which allowed us to demonstrate stronger causal evidence that organizational identification, self-enhancement, and boundary preferences predict employees’ online ambassadorship behaviors. Data were acquired through a web-based survey administered by a market research company (MSI-ACI Europe BV). We instructed the market research company to select participants who had a full-time job (i.e., for the Netherlands this means > 32 h per week) and had a Facebook and LinkedIn account. We used a staggered data-collection method, measuring the independent variables two months prior to measuring our dependent variables. In total, 1002 Dutch employees returned the first questionnaire. The second questionnaire was administered among these respondents two months later and was completed by 515 respondents (51.4% response rate). Hence, the final sample consists of 515 Dutch employees. The demographics showed that 49.1 percent of the respondents was male. The average age of the respondents was 44.5 years ( $SD = 12.32$ ). Whereas, the males are slightly better represented in the Dutch workforce (53.5%) and the average as is somewhat lower



( $M = 41.9$ ,  $t = 4.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The average organizational tenure of these employees was 11.87 years ( $SD = 10.74$ ) and they worked 40.12 h on average per week ( $SD = 10.49$ ). Which are both a little higher than the average in the Dutch workforce with an average organizational tenure of 10.8 years and an average workweek of 31 h.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the majority was employed in one of the following sectors: healthcare (14.8%), trade/commercial services (12.6%), business services (11.8%), education/science (9.3%), industry (8.2%), financial services (7.6%), and government/public administration (6.8%).

Selective dropout was examined by comparing the scores of dropouts ( $N = 487$ ) to the scores of survivors in the panel - i.e., those who have completed both waves ( $N = 515$ ). Survivors were slightly older ( $M = 44.51$ ,  $SD = 12.32$ ) than dropouts ( $M = 40.86$ ,  $SD = 12.28$ ;  $t = 4.69$ ,  $p > .001$ ). Similarly, survivors had longer organizational tenure ( $M = 11.88$ ,  $SD = 10.74$ ) than dropouts ( $M = 9.62$ ,  $SD = 9.42$ ;  $t = 3.54$ ,  $p > .001$ ). Survivors and dropouts did not differ on other variables such as education and gender.

### 3.2. Measures

The latent constructs in the model were measured with three indicators each, measured on a seven-point Likert scale. The independent measures were acquired in a separate survey at time 1, whereas the dependent measures were derived from a second survey administered two months later. Table 1 lists all items with corresponding factor loadings, descriptive statistics and average variance extracted.

#### 3.2.1. Independent variables

*Organizational identification* was measured using three items derived from Leach et al. (2008) and refers to the extent employees identify with their organization. This was assessed using the solidarity measure of the in-group identification questionnaire by Leach et al. (2008). Items include: 'I feel a bond with this organization.' *Self-enhancement* was conceptualized as an individual's desire to be positively perceived by others and to project a favorable self-image to others through strategic self-presentation (see also Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013; Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner, & Bartel, 2007; Yun et al., 2007). Self-enhancement was measured using items such as: 'I want others to have positive perceptions of me.' *Segmentation preferences* represent employees' preference to maintain boundaries between different life domains. The scale was derived from Kreiner (2006), and included items such as: 'I don't like work issues creeping into my home life.' These scales were anchored 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

#### 3.2.2. Dependent measures

*Ambassadorship on Facebook and LinkedIn* was measured with three items developed for this study. These items refer to the extent to which employees share updates about their organization on their own LinkedIn and Facebook profiles. Items include, 'would you post a Facebook message about your organization?'. The scales were anchored 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). The ambassadorship measure was introduced in a section named "positive behaviors toward the organization" of the survey.

### 3.3. Analysis

The hypothesized model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS. Incremental and absolute fit indices were used to assess model fit. Two incremental fit indices were used: the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Model fit indices of  $> 0.95$  indicate good model fit. Two absolute fit indices were

examined: a standardized version of the root mean squared residual (SRMR) and the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA), with cutoff values of  $\leq 0.08$  and  $\leq 0.05$ , respectively, which indicated a close model fit. Additionally, the  $\chi^2$  statistic was presented. Bootstrapping (5000 bootstrap samples) was used to estimate the model parameters, standard errors and confidence intervals.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Measurement model

The measurement model indicates good model fit  $\chi^2(80) = 235.90$ ; CFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97; SRMR = 0.04 and RMSEA = 0.062 (CI: 0.053, 0.071). Factor loadings and squared multiple correlations were examined to determine convergent validity of the model. The factor loadings of all observed variables on the intended latent construct were significant and sizable, ranging from 0.68 to 0.99 (see Table 1). Cross-factor correlations were examined to determine discriminant validity. The correlation between the dependent variables ambassadorship on Facebook and ambassadorship on LinkedIn was the highest (.62). However, given that the same behaviors were measured for both social media channels, this is not surprising. The other correlations between the latent constructs in the model ranged from  $-0.02$  to 0.33 (see Table 2). These findings demonstrate both convergent and discriminant validity and as such justify further examination of the structural model.

### 4.2. Structural model

The structural model links organizational identification, segmentation preferences and self-enhancement, measured at T1 with ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn and Facebook measured at T2 (see Fig. 1). The hypothesized model demonstrates good model fit:  $\chi^2(80) = 235.90$ ; CFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97; SRMR = 0.04 and RMSEA = 0.062 (CI: 0.053, 0.071).

The results demonstrate that organizational identification, segmentation preferences, and self-enhancement affect ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn and Facebook in different ways. First, in line with hypothesis 1, organizational identification yields a significant positive effect on ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook ( $b^* = 0.131$ , BC95% [0.036; 0.226]  $p = .008$ ). Furthermore, organizational identification did not affect ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn ( $b^* = -0.042$ , BC95% [-0.130; 0.036]  $p = .330$ ). Notably, the difference in effect size was not significant ( $\Delta b^* = 0.090$ , BC95% [-0.071; 0.235]  $p = .253$ ). However, the strong positive effect of identification on ambassadorship on Facebook, versus the non-significant negative effect of identification on ambassadorship on LinkedIn, at least provides some support for the reasoning reflected in hypothesis 1.

Second, hypothesis 2 reflects the assumption that social media are vehicles for self-enhancement. Indeed, self-enhancement is associated with both ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook ( $b^* = 0.171$ , BC95% [0.077; 0.267]  $p = .002$ ) and on LinkedIn ( $b^* = 0.194$ , BC95% [0.103; 0.286]  $p < .001$ ). These results support hypothesis 2.

Third, managing work life boundaries is a classical organization challenge for employees in contemporary communication technology intensive workplaces. Maintaining such boundaries becomes increasingly complicated with the adoption of social media technologies. Hypothesis 3 reflects the assumption that employees with segmentation preferences are less likely to engage in ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook ( $b^* = -0.099$ , BC95% [-0.193; -0.007]  $p = .035$ ) than on LinkedIn ( $b^* = -0.078$ , BC95% [-0.175; 0.012]  $p = .088$ ). As expected, this assumption holds true for ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook, whereas segmentation preferences were not related to ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn. However, in terms of effect size these estimates are not significantly different ( $\Delta b^* = -0.020$ , BC95% [-0.102; 0.060]  $p = .622$ ), finding only weak support for hypothesis 3. Arguably, the blurring of boundaries might be experienced as more

<sup>1</sup> Statistics about the Dutch workforce are derived from the central bureau of statistics. <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/?LA=en>.

intrusive on Facebook—where different social groups are collapsed into one audience—than on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a more appropriate platform for work-related activities, despite the notion that increased connectivity might also cause cross-domain conflicts.

Finally, the study examines the assumption that employees may post different information according to whether or not coworkers are in their imagined audiences. In order to examine the influence of this social predictor we assessed whether respondents without colleagues on Facebook ( $N = 121$ ) differed from colleagues who have added colleagues on Facebook ( $N = 394$ ), using multi-group comparison. The model in which the structural parameters were allowed to vary between the groups was compared with a model in which the structural parameters are constrained between groups (the current model). The fit of the model did not improve when structural parameters were allowed to vary,  $\chi^2(6) = 3.67, p = .721$ , indicating the presence of coworkers in employees' imagined audience did not affect the structural findings in our model.

## 5. Discussion

This study contributes to knowledge on social media use in organizational contexts by demonstrating that the type of platform and the extent to which these platforms are used for ambassadorship behaviors are associated organizational identification, self-enhancement motives, and segmentation preferences, albeit in different ways.

First, this study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational identification and ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook. This effect was not found between organizational identification and ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn. This provides insights into how different identities may be enacted simultaneously (on Facebook) or separately (on LinkedIn). Higher levels of organizational identification suggest that organizational life is a more salient part of an employee's identity. This implies that individuals, who derive more importance from their organizational membership, also use organizational information to enact their identities in their social networks on Facebook. In contrast, on LinkedIn employees enact their professional identities by sharing work, organization and profession related information. Regardless of whether employees identify with their organization, organizational information is part of what they do as professionals. Given the purpose of LinkedIn as professional online network and record of employees' curricula, organizational information is likely to be part of this profile regardless of the extent to which employees identify with their organization.

Second, this study demonstrates that employees with self-enhancement motives engage in online ambassadorship behaviors on their Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. This suggests that, in line with self-enhancement theory's prediction that people will seek and embrace positive evaluations, employees engage in online ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn. Arguably, employees share organizational information on social media to create positive spillover effects between the perception of the organization and their professional identities as members of that organization. In that respect, the work-related use of public social media is driven by similar motivations as the personal use of these platforms (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012) and the use of other collaborative tools in organizations (Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014).

These findings can also be explained by the self-consistency motivational theory. In the context of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE: Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989) the self-consistency theory helps to understand how OBSE relates to overall levels of self-esteem. Overall self-esteem derives from an aggregation of experiences across many different contexts, including work, that accumulate across time (Pierce et al., 1989). Findings of the current study suggest that employees with higher levels of self-enhancement motives might expect that a positive self-image can be achieved by presenting an aggregation of positive and socially desirable information across different life

domains on social media, including work and organization related information.

Third, the findings suggest that segmentation preferences are negatively related to ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook, whereas segmentation preferences are not significantly related to those behaviors on LinkedIn. However, both platforms afford possibilities for perpetual connectivity (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). This would suggest that employees with segmentation preferences would be more cautious when it comes to using these platforms, since this connectivity makes it more difficult to maintain boundaries between personal and professional life (van Zoonen et al., 2016b). This study indicates that it might not be the connectivity per se that segmenters try to avoid, rather it would be the collapsing of multiple audiences into a singular audience. This suggests employees are more concerned about the visibility of information and especially to whom information is made visible. As Marwick and boyd (2011) argue, social media technologies collapse multiple audiences into single contexts. This complicates our understanding of who our audiences are, yet we need a more specific conception of audience to make choices about the content we share, the language we use, the cultural referents, style, and so on, which comprise online identity presentation. The idea is that such media choices are based on an imagined audience. In the context of this study, the notion of imagined audiences helps to understand the differential effects of segmentation preferences on Facebook and LinkedIn use. An employees' LinkedIn audience is likely to be predominantly comprised of other professionals who are interested in learning about work and organization-related issues of others' in their network. Therefore, the potential for work life spillover is lower on LinkedIn compared to Facebook, where employees' audiences are more likely to be comprised of other professionals, family members, friends and other social groups, who expect interactions and content that are not necessarily professional or work-related. As such, employees with stronger segmentation preferences would be less likely to use Facebook as a vehicle for their ambassadorship behaviors since the potential for work life spillover is higher.

Overall, the findings suggest that although Facebook and LinkedIn are equally used to engage in ambassadorship behaviors, the use of these platforms is underpinned by a different set of antecedents. Conversely, although social media can afford similar behaviors across platforms (Treem & Leonardi, 2012), the antecedents and consequences may differ across social media platforms.

### 5.1. Practical implications

In today's networked society impressions about organizations are increasingly formed by the content that people encounter online. The role of employees as members of the organization is of increasing importance, as they represent an enormous communication potential and are found to be more credible and authentic communicators of organizational information than official organizational channels (van Zoonen & van der Meer, 2015). However, there is much debate about whether social media use by employees is beneficial to the organization (e.g., credibility, reputation: van Zoonen & van der Meer, 2015), or harmful to the organization (e.g., risky behavior, legal liability and productivity loss: Landers & Callan, 2014).

Regardless, insights into the antecedents of employees' online behaviors provide managers and organizations with increased opportunities to influence these behaviors. For instance, organizations that want to direct managerial efforts to capitalize on their employees' communication potential should facilitate organizational identification processes, as they are likely to result in organizational information sharing on Facebook. Moreover, managers and organizations can raise awareness for work life boundary issues related to the use of these social media platforms (van Zoonen, Verhoeven, & Vliegthart, 2017). However, the desire to utilize this communication potential through ambassadorship on social media may also present organizations with an

ethical dilemma, since this may contradict individual boundary preferences of employees. Especially, ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook are negatively affected by segmentation preferences, which may indicate that employees do not engage in ambassadorship behaviors because of the boundary spanning potential of these behaviors. Organizations could provide training on how to responsibly engage in work-related social media use. Further, social media policies should help employees navigate the complex dynamics of intertwining social and professional demands. These initiatives should serve to offer employees practical advice and raise awareness of potential unintended effects (e.g., boundary conflicts) of social media use, rather than influencing the contents of what is shared.

Additionally, employees seem to utilize these platforms as a vehicle to present themselves in a favorable manner. Since deviant or negative behaviors usually do not contribute to the desired image or an appearance of competence as a professional, these behaviors are less likely to occur. This is in line with a recent content analysis that demonstrated that work-related content shared through personal social media accounts is usually factual or positive (van Zoonen et al., 2016). However, that is not to say employees social media utterances cannot have negative consequences. There is plethora of anecdotal evidence of unwarranted or misguided social media activity by employees. Similarly, Landers and Callen (2014) identified several behaviors that could diminish personal reputations or represent the organization poorly.

5.2. Limitations and future directions

A few limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, although this study relies on measures obtained at two different time points, the independent variables were only measured at T1 and the dependent variables only at T2. In order to make stronger causal claims, future studies should adopt a full panel design measuring each variable multiple times.

Second, we have focused specifically on ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook and LinkedIn. Notably, message valence was not considered, however, anecdotal evidence suggests employees may also incidentally share negative messages about their organization (van Zoonen et al., 2016a). In addition, many other types of work-related information might be shared through these channels, and other public social media such as Twitter (*ibid*). Recent research in a branding

context indicates that consumers use different social media for different motives and these motives have different brand community-related outcomes (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017.) Future studies might examine whether these differences also hold true for other types of work-related use among employees and other public social media platforms. Similarly, we have examined direct relationships between antecedents and online ambassadorship behaviors. Arguably, these effects and behaviors differ across organizational roles. Employees in representative functions or those in communications may have different motivations and online ambassadorship behaviors than employees that are less experienced in back office functions. Future research could examine moderating effects of organizational roles.

Third, previous research has indicated that employees sometimes apply self-censorship strategies on social media platforms in order to present themselves in an appropriate and professional manner to a collapsed audience (Marwick & boyd, 2011). In the current study, we controlled for the presence of co-workers and supervisors on employees' Facebook pages. However, we did not examine whether employees were more willing to engage in positive online ambassadorship behaviors on, for example, organizational group pages than on their private profiles, or whether employees maintained separate profiles on social media (e.g., professional versus personal). This study examined ambassadorship behaviors on personal social media accounts only. It is possible that employees feel more comfortable sharing organizational information to professional audiences. As such, a more in-depth examination of employees boundary management strategies on social media (e.g., separate profiles for different audiences) and the online ambassadorship behaviors on these different profiles is an interesting avenue for future research.

Finally, our findings suggest that ambassadorship behaviors may be used to bolster self-images. Alternatively, however, self-enhancement motives might function more as a filter for what information to share or like – i.e., does this information not harm or damage my (self)-image? Further research is needed to unpack these relationships. Despite these limitations this study is a good step forward in understanding the antecedents of social media use in organizational contexts. By identifying the importance and differential effects of organizational identification, segmentation preferences, and self-enhancement motives we aid further theorizing on employees' online behaviors.

Appendix

Table 1  
Measurement model

Item	M (SD)	R <sup>2</sup>	St. Factor loading	Unst. Factor loading <sup>a</sup>	Se
<b>Organizational Identification</b>	<b>5.03 (1.43)</b>	<b>.92<sup>c</sup></b>			
<i>I feel a bond with this organization.</i>	5.03 (1.48)	.94	.969	1.000 <sup>b</sup>	
<i>I feel solidarity with this organization.</i>	4.99 (1.48)	.89	.943	0.973	.02
<i>I feel committed to this organization.</i>	5.08 (1.47)	.93	.964	0.995	.02
<b>Self-enhancement</b>	<b>4.53 (1.22)</b>	<b>.66</b>			
<i>I want others to have positive perceptions of me.</i>	4.88 (1.26)	.53	.728	1.000 <sup>b</sup>	
<i>I want others to respect me.</i>	4.23 (1.43)	.70	.835	1.299	.08
<i>I want others to see I am capable of reaching my goals.</i>	4.49 (1.49)	.74	.858	1.394	.08
<b>Segmentation preferences</b>	<b>4.74 (1.48)</b>	<b>.64</b>			
<i>I prefer to keep work life at work.</i>	4.84 (1.66)	.47	.682	1.000 <sup>b</sup>	
<i>I don't like to have to think about work when I'm at home.</i>	4.59 (1.74)	.69	.829	1.215	.08
<i>I don't like work issues creeping into my home life.</i>	4.79 (1.73)	.77	.875	1.283	.08
<b>Ambassadorship behaviors on Facebook</b>	<b>2.79 (1.86)</b>	<b>.84</b>			
<i>How likely is it that you would ...</i>					
<i>'like' a Facebook post by your organization?</i>	3.05 (2.08)	.73	.854	1.000 <sup>b</sup>	
<i>'share' a Facebook post by your organization?</i>	2.75 (1.96)	.98	.989	1.089	.03
<i>'post' a Facebook message about your organization?</i>	2.56 (1.88)	.82	.907	0.961	.03

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Item	M (SD)	R <sup>2</sup>	St. Factor loading	Unst. Factor loading <sup>a</sup>	Se
<b>Ambassadorship behaviors on LinkedIn</b>	<b>2.28 (1.81)</b>	<b>.93</b>			
How likely is it that you would ...					
'like' a LinkedIn post by your organization?	2.33 (1.89)	.93	.964	1.000 <sup>b</sup>	
'share' a LinkedIn post by your organization?	2.29 (1.83)	.97	.950	0.992	.02
'post' a LinkedIn message about your organization?	2.23 (1.82)	.90	.854	0.951	.02

<sup>a</sup> All factor loadings are significant at  $p < .05$ .

<sup>b</sup> Unit loading indicator constrained to 1.

<sup>c</sup> Figures in Bold represent average variance extracted for the reported scale.

Table 2  
Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean (sd)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Organizational identification	5.03 (1.43)	-									
2. Self-enhancement	4.53 (1.22)	.33*	-								
3. Segmentation preferences	4.74 (1.48)	-.02	.01	-							
4. Ambassadorship on Facebook	2.78 (1.86)	.19*	.22*	.23*	-						
5. Ambassadorship on LinkedIn	2.28 (1.81)	.03	.18*	-.10*	.63*	-					
6. Age	44.50 (12.32)	.13*	-.13*	-.08	-.18*	-.19*	-				
7. Working hours per week	40.12 (10.48)	.09	.08	.14	.13	.12	.11	-			
8. Organizational tenure	11.88 (10.74)	.11*	-.12*	.05	-.15	-.15	.59*	.28	-		
9. Gender <sup>a</sup>	1.51 (0.50)	-.02	.08	.09	-.08	-.14*	-.12	-.31	-.15*	-	
10. Fixed term <sup>b</sup>	1.14 (0.35)	-.13*	.14*	-.05	-.24*	.01	-.31*	-.14	-.35*	.13*	-
11. Managerial position <sup>c</sup>	1.70 (0.45)	-.14*	-.04	.16*	-.02	-.25*	-.05	-.06	-.05	.16*	.18*

Note: Significant correlations at  $p < .05$  are indicated with an \*.

<sup>a</sup> 1 = male 2 = female.

<sup>b</sup> 1 = fixed 2 = temporary.

<sup>c</sup> 1 = yes 2 = no.

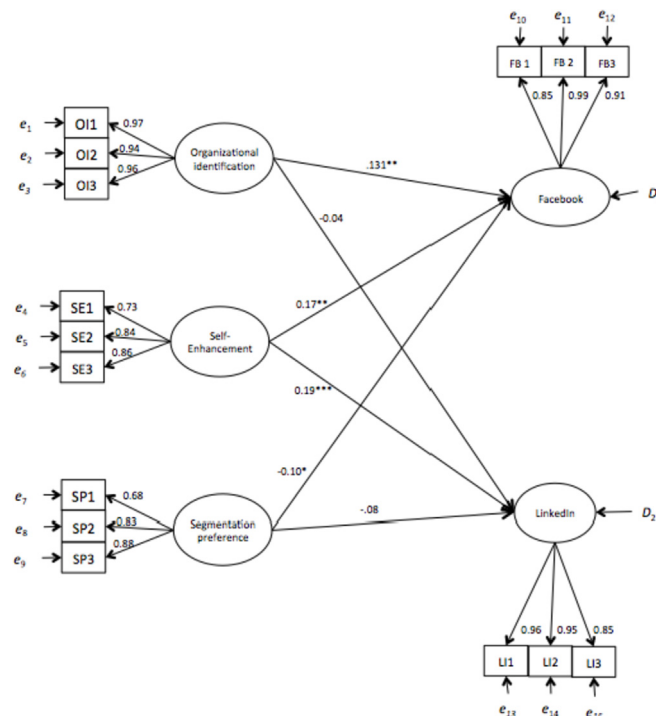


Fig. 1. Structural regression model with standardized parameter estimates. Note: Correlations between independent variables not shown, for sake of clarity. Significance levels are flagged: \*\*\* $p > .001$ , \*\* $p > .01$  \*  $P > .05$ .



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