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Social media use in professional organizations: boosting and draining workforce

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ABSTRACT

Social media use in professional organisations can have several psychological and physiological consequences. The aim of this study was to examine how social media is used in five professional organisations from distinct occupational fields and how such use relates to job demands, job resources, and personal resources. We collected survey data ($N = 563$) to analyze professional social media use. We also conducted theory-driven content analysis utilising focus group interviews ($N = 52$). Based on the results, internal and external social media platforms were mainly used for content following and sharing as well as communication with work communities. Social media use was not identified very straining or conflicting with private life. Those using social media more often experienced more strain and conflict but also considered social media more useful. Social media use was associated with job demands, such as physiological symptoms, fears, social pressure, and unclear rules, as well as job resources, such as organisational encouragement and support, social networks, information, and autonomy, and the personal resource of personal identity development. Professional social media use is perceived more as a job resource than as a job demand.

1. Introduction

The use of social media for professional purposes increased in the 2010s (Koch, Gonzalez, and Leidner 2012; Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; Treem and Leonardi 2012; Yu et al. 2018) and accelerated in the 2020s, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Oksa et al. 2021c; Oksanen et al. 2021). Social media is defined as a set of Internet-based applications derived from the technological, economic, and social drivers of Web 2.0, allowing for user-generated content exchange and creation (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Krämer, Neubaum, and Eimler 2017). In this study, 'professional social media use' refers to employees' use of social media in their current workplace, the creation and maintenance of useful social networks (Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; Raj, Fast, and Fisher 2017), and following, producing, or sharing work or the organisation's content (Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013).

Organisations and their employees use social media for various internal and external purposes. Social media is used internally to share knowledge and collaborate with a work community via internal platforms such as Yammer and Microsoft Teams, and it is used externally via professional networks such as LinkedIn or more generic platforms such as Twitter (Leonardi,

Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2016b). Publicly available external social media sites are used for sales, marketing, employer branding, and recruitment purposes to attract desirable employees (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; Sivertzen, Nielsen, and Olafsen 2013; Yoganathan, Osburg, and Bartikowski 2021). Moreover, social media functions as a vehicle for organisational ambassadorship (Dreher, 2013; Helm 2011), enhancing relationships with customers and allowing companies to follow competitors and market trends (Leftheriotis and Giannakos 2014). Social media can also foster personal and organisational visibility, personal branding, and development (Leidner, Gonzalez, and Koch 2018; Van Dijck 2013). However, using social media for work purposes also involves a burdening factor (Oksa et al. 2021a; Oksanen et al. 2021; Yu et al. 2018).

The use of professional social media can positively impact employee engagement (Oksa et al. 2021b, 2021c) and commitment (Sharma and Bhatnagar 2016) and enhance social capital by, for example, emphasising the importance of social networks and togetherness (Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; Oksa et al. 2021b). Social media communication can increase information sharing, social learning, and organisational transparency (Leonardi, Huysman, and

Steinfield 2013; Olmstead, Lampe, and Ellison 2015; Treem and Leonardi 2012). It therefore can lead to enhanced employee productivity (Fusi and Feeney 2018; Leftheriotis and Giannakos 2014; Nisar, Prabhakar, and Strakova 2019). Furthermore, social media promotes internal innovation (Ali et al. 2020) and, as such, can increase returns on investments (Scutto 2017). It can also enhance and challenge the integration of professional and personal domains, as it is possible to use social media flexibly for work-related purposes (Microsoft 2021; Oksanen et al. 2021).

Although social media has been found to foster internal collaboration and openness in organisations, it can also result in fragmented in-groups and function as a tool for discrimination (Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013) and wider cyberbullying in the workplace (Oksanen et al. 2020, 2021; Snyman and Loh 2015). Moreover, Holland et al. (2016) revealed the link between job dissatisfaction and generation Y employees born between 1980 and 1999 to express their work-related concerns in social media. As social media use is difficult to monitor and control, it involves the intrinsic risk that employees will engage in undesirable conversations, which can result in reputational problems (Dreher, 2013; Helm 2011; Ivens, Schaarschmidt, and Könsgen 2021; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; van den Berg and Verhoeven 2017).

As work life in professional organisations is heavily digitalised, the strain of professional social media use can actually be part of more general communication-technology – related stress (Mahmuda, Ramayahb, and Kurnia 2017; Salanova, Llorens, and Cifre 2013; Tarafdar, Tu, and Ragu-Nathan 2010). Excessive social media use can hinder concentration on work and blur the line between work time and leisure time, resulting in increased stress and, in the worst case, burnout (Maier et al. 2015; Salo, Pirkkalainen, and Koskelainen 2019; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2016a). Therefore, social media use can cause personal and professional identity negotiation conflicts (Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, and Berg 2013). Social media use may intensify communication and information overload, which can lead to social media exhaustion, which in turn compromises job performance (Cao and Yu 2019; Yu et al. 2018). Moreover, people who are dependent on social network sites (SNSs) have been found to suffer from sleeping problems and experience more cognitive failures in everyday life (Salo, Pirkkalainen, and Koskelainen 2019; Xanidis and Brignell 2016). Consequently, employee productivity can decrease, which means that not all employees are willing to network and share information via social media (Alber et al. 2016; Ellison, Gibbs, and Weber 2015).

Currently, the largest living and working generation of employees in professional organisations were born in the 1980s and 1990s and are labelled 'generation Y' or 'millennials' (Cattermole 2018). Such young adults, in their 20s and 30s, value meaningful work (Robyn and du Preerz 2013) and appreciate opportunities to influence the organisational culture and ways of working (Terjesen, Vinnicombe, and Freeman 2007). Young adults have used the Internet throughout their childhoods and adolescence, used various services when they were new, and participated in a diverse set of online networks (Boyd 2014). These young adults are in key positions to capitalise on the increased use of social media in work life.

Despite the increase of social media use in work contexts, there is still lack of detailed studies on how social media use varies between employees in various industries. In this study, we included the professional use of social media on internal corporate platforms (e.g. Yammer or Microsoft Teams) as well as via general social media services (e.g. LinkedIn or Twitter). Therefore, we examined the use frequency of these platforms and the purposes for which employees use social media in their work.

In addition to use purposes and contexts, scholars have measured social media use in various ways depending on their conceptualisation of it, such as active and passive use, heavy and light use, and use and non-use (Lutz and Hoffmann 2017; Oksanen et al. 2020, 2021, 2021a). In this study, we identified heavy and light users, and we explored the extent to which professional social media is considered beneficial or a burdensome and a conflicting factor. Last, we postulated novel qualitative knowledge on how employees in various professional organisations perceive the association of professional social media use and job demands as well as job resources and personal resources, which had not been studied to this extent. The utilised mixed-methods approach provides comparative knowledge on the use of professional social media among employees across five industries and qualitative information on the personal experiences associated with professional social media use. This combined effort is a significant contribution to the existing research.

2. Job demands and resources in the context of social media

Positive and negative elements of wellbeing at work have been widely studied, using the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). The model was originally developed to measure exhaustion and disengagement, i.e. burnout and the lack of

required job resources (Demerouti et al. 2001). Over the years, however, the model has been developed to account more comprehensively for job demands and job resources; thereby, thereby also facilitating the discovery of elements that lead to work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). In addition, the JD-R model has been used to account for work engagement in situations in which job demands are high (Bakker et al. 2007).

The JD-R model uses the health impairment process and motivational process as explanatory mechanisms (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). In the health impairment process, job demands may diminish health and well-being, which in turn lead to burnout (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). Job demands are physical, social, and organisational characteristics of work that require constant psychological or physical determination from the employee and may have negative consequences, such as exhaustion (Demerouti et al. 2001). These stressor characteristics e.g. noise, time pressure, and workload (Demerouti et al. 2001). Job demands, such as time pressure, do not necessarily decrease work engagement, especially when the employee has sufficient resources, such as autonomy and social support, that buffer the negative implications (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). They may, however, lead to exhaustion if the employee must make increasing physical or psychological efforts that negatively impact their health and well-being (Demerouti et al. 2001). Additionally, job demands are said to predict burnout and lead to depression (Hakanen, Schaufeli, and Ahola 2008).

In contrast, the motivational process includes job resources that have a positive impact on individual well-being and may lead to high work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). Job resources are psychological, physical, social, and organisational characteristics of work that enable employees to achieve work goals, enhance personal growth, and have a positive impact on job demands from physical and psychological perspectives (Bakker 2011; Bakker and Demerouti 2007). Control over one's work, social support, and performance feedback are examples of job resources (Demerouti et al. 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004), which can predict work engagement, which in turn has a positive impact on the individual and organisation (Bakker and Demerouti 2017). High work engagement may, for instance, lead to increased organisational commitment (Hakanen, Schaufeli, and Ahola 2008). In addition to job resources, personal resources, i.e. self-belief in resiliency and one's capacity to impact and control the environment positively, play an important role in positive psychological and organisational outcomes (Hobfoll et al. 2003; Xanthopoulou et al. 2007).

Optimism, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are examples of personal resources (Xanthopoulou et al. 2007; Xanthopoulou et al. 2009).

The JD-R model has been used to explore turnover intentions, for example, through the relations between technology-based job autonomy, overload, monitoring, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (Carlson et al. 2017). Research on technology use in the workplace utilising the JD-R model has highlighted the straining elements, such as information overload and interruptions, and motivational elements, such as mental breaks and accessibility, of technology use that affect organisational outcomes and well-being (Kim and Christensen 2017; Ter Hoeven, van Zoonen, and Fonner 2016). The JD-R model has also been used in a blended psychological intervention study by (Makowska-Tłomak et al. 2022) to investigate effectiveness of employees' stress reduction in relation to digital transformation stress during the COVID-19 by enhancing their resources.

The JD-R model has been used in previous social media studies in the work context. Researchers have quantitatively analyzed and focused on the relationship between social media use and specific job demands, such as work-life conflict (van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2016a), communication overload (Chen and Wei 2019), information, social overload (Chen and Wei 2019; Yu et al. 2018), and interruptions (van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2017). Charoensukmongkol (2014) also identified the intensity of social media use as a demand associated with exhaustion.

In addition, researchers have discovered the association of social media use with job resources such as accessibility and effective communication (van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2017), job control and social support (Ding et al. 2019), organisational identification (Oksa et al. 2021b) as well as the integration of work and leisure time (van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2016b). The positive relationship between coworker support and the intensity of social media use has also been discovered (Charoensukmongkol 2014). Furthermore, Sun, Wu, and Jeyaraj (2022) utilised JD-R model to examine the role of challenge and hinderance stressor in the relationship between enterprise social media use and work engagement.

Awareness of the risks and the advantages of social media use has gradually increased in organisations (Cao and Yu 2019; Dreher 2013; Olmstead, Lampe, and Ellison 2015; Opgenhaffen and Claeys 2017). However, there is still a need for further and more thorough qualitative research to understand the variety of job demands, job resources, and personal resources

associated with professional social media use, which we aim to provide.

3. This study and research questions

The aim of this social psychological study was to analyze how employees in professional organisations from five distinct occupational fields utilise social media in their work. In addition, we analyzed how professional social media use relates to well-being at work. We grounded our study on the J-DR model (Demerouti et al. 2001) and previous studies on social media use at work (e.g. Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; Oksa et al. 2021b, 2021c; Treem and Leonardi 2012; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2016a; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2017; Yu et al. 2018). We expected professional social media use to involve various and multidimensional job demands and resources.

The scope of the prior studies has been limited to some specific job demand or resource relationships, and the studies lack a wider view on social media use in work life in various industries and the connection to energising and straining factors, which our study provides. Moreover, in most prior studies, researchers have explored the theme mostly with a single method and by focusing merely on one company or particular platform. The literature also lacks studies on organisations' internal and external social media platform use. By analyzing both types of platform use, we gain a more comprehensive view of how employees are using social media for their work. External platforms can be used for activities such as information retrieval and client cooperation, which can act differently as a resource or a demand, compared to internal platforms, a fact that is important to consider. Moreover, researchers have not qualitatively investigated job demands, job resources, and personal resources related to professional social media. With the current study, we aimed to address and fill these existing gaps. Therefore, this study includes the first analysis of internal and external platforms and their relation to job demands and resources as well as the well-being implications of social media use. We aimed to provide a general perspective on the still-emerging phenomenon of social media use at work. Therefore, we posed the following research questions:

(1) What are the key characteristics of internal and external professional social media use in professional organisations?
(2) For what purposes is professional social media used in professional organisations?

(3) How is professional social media use associated with job demands as well as job and personal resources in professional organisations?

The results offer organisations important information on how social media can be utilised to promote well-being at work and avoid the risks involved. The study provides insight into five distinct industries in Finland: telecommunications, finance, publishing, retail, and personnel services. Overall, the present study provides new knowledge on social media use in the work context with novel qualitative and quantitative evidence.

4. Material and methods

4.1. Participants

To investigate the relationship between professional social media use, job demands and job resources, and personal resources, we conducted a mixed-method study at five Finnish professional organisations representing distinct occupational fields. The data consists of quantitative survey responses from five professional organisation employees and qualitative interviews of young adult employees employed by the same organisations. Mixed-method studies have gained popularity in human–computer interaction and social media studies in the past few years (e.g. Laumer et al. 2017; Shibuya, Hamm, and Cerrato Pargman 2022). We used the mixed-method approach as our study strategy because qualitative and quantitative methods serve different purposes and complement each other. First, the survey gave us quantified information about social media platforms: which internal and external social media platforms professionals are using for their work, how much, for what purposes and how useful, and to what extent they perceive such use as burdensome or conflicting. Furthermore, we qualitatively analyzed the detailed job demands and job and personal resources the interviewees described in relation to social media use. We conducted the interviews prior the survey as input for the original survey design.

4.1.1. Survey data
We collected the online survey data from employees of the five professional organisations during November and December 2018 to discover the relevant professional social media platforms and the purposes for their use as well as work well-being factors. The survey participants ($N = 563$) were between 21 and 67 years old ($M = 40.7$, $SD = 10.9$), and 67.7% of them were female.

The five selected professional organisations are well-known examples of their occupational fields in Finland. We recruited them by phone calls and e-mail, and participation in the research was free for the companies. The companies represent the occupational fields of telecommunications, finance, publishing, retail, and personnel services. We decided to focus on these occupational fields based on their extensive use of information and communication technologies. These occupational fields also represent different sectors doing knowledge work. The organisations' size ranged from 2,000 to 10,000 employees. The companies' human resources or communications departments recruited participants via e-mail and internal social media platforms. The number of targeted participants in these organisations ranged from 152 to 2,737. The response rate to the survey ranged from 3.2% to 34.2% (M = 17.7, SD = 11.9).

We informed participants about the aims of the study and advised them that they had the right to withdraw from the study during data collection. Participation in the study was fully voluntary. The local Academic Ethics Committee of Tampere Region in Finland approved the study with statement #90/2018.

4.1.2. Interview data

Our interview data included focus group interviews (n = 10) with 52 participants. We conducted these interviews at the same five professional organisations during February and March 2018 in Helsinki, Finland. Focus group interviews are facilitated group discussions, which are used to gather a broad set of collective experiences, views, and beliefs on the research topic within a short period of time (Morgan 1998). The company contact person, usually the human resources manager or the equivalent, sent the participants an invitation email. All the interviewees signed an informed consent form prior to the interviews.

Table 1. Experiencing professional social media use as useful, straining, or in conflict with leisure use, by light and heavy users of social media (N = 563).

Experiencing …	Light users Mean (95% CI)	Heavy users Mean (95% CI)	p	B
work-leisure conflict in social media use.	2.0 (1.9–2.2)	2.5 (2.3–2.7)	0.001	0.46
strain in professional social media use.	2.0 (1.8–2.1)	2.4 (2.2–2.6)	<0.001	0.46
professional social media as useful.	3.7 (3.5–3.9)	5.2 (5.0–5.4)	<0.001	1.47

Notes: CI = confidence intervals for the means, p = p-values of independent two-sample t-tests, B = unstandardised regression coefficient for heavy users in comparison to light users based on linear regression models that we adjusted for age and gender. **[R1: 1]** The scale of the dependent variables ranges from 1 (not at all) to 7 (considerably).

We conducted two focus group interviews at each of the companies over the course of one day, one following the other. According to Bloor et al. (2001), the ideal focus group size is six to eight participants; however, focus groups can be an effective mode of gathering data even with three participants. Also, Morgan (1998) stated that 20% participant loss is acceptable. In the current study, we had an average of five interviewees per focus group, ranging from four to six participants, due to no-shows. The interviews, which we recorded, lasted approximately 46 min each. The mean age of the respondents was 32, ranging from 25 to 38 years, and 69% of the interviewees were women. The interviewees were employed as qualified professionals or supervisors. The focus group interviews consisted of 14 open-ended questions about professional social media use and well-being at work.

4.2. Measures of quantitative data

4.2.1. Professional social media use

With different use concepts, we examined professional social media use from the perspective of use frequency of various social media platforms, hereafter referred as *professional social media use*. The professional use of social media platforms was rated by the survey responses to the following question: 'How often do you use the following social media services for work purposes?' The answer options were 'I don't use', 'Less than weekly', 'Weekly', 'Daily', and 'Many times a day'. We assigned the answers the numerical values of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively. The list we provided to the respondents included 21 internal and external social media platforms. We selected these platforms based on their general popularity during the data collection. To identify active users, we summed the answer options 'Daily' and 'Many times a day' to report daily use of different social media platforms.

For the comparison of heavy and light users of social media (see Table 1), we summed all original items concerning the use of professional social media platforms to achieve a composite variable. The composite variable's possible values ranged from 0 to 84, with a value of 84 indicating that a respondent used all 21 social media platforms many times a day. Researchers have used similar approaches to measure general social media activity in earlier studies (Kaakinen et al. 2018; Savolainen et al. 2020). Second, we divided the composite variable by the median, creating a dummy variable for which the value 1, labelled as *heavy users*, indicated high scores for the use of various social media platforms and the value 0, labelled as *light users*, indicated scores below or equal to the composite variable's median value.

4.2.2. Purposes of professional social media use

We asked the participants, 'For which purposes do you use social media at work?' We asked them to select one or more of the following functions: 'I don't use', 'content following', 'content creation', 'content sharing', 'professional networking', 'to learn something about my coworkers', 'communicating with clients and other stakeholders', 'taking a break from work', and 'communicating with friends and family'.

4.2.3. Experiences of usefulness, strain, and work-leisure conflict related to social media use

We asked the respondents to rate their experiences from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*considerably*) in response to the following questions: 'At the moment, do you experience conflict in social media use between work and leisure time?', 'At the moment, do you experience the social media you use for work as straining?' and 'How useful is your experience of social media at work?'.

4.2.4. Background variables

We used age, gender, and organisational membership (in five professional organisations) as sociodemographic variables.

4.3. Data analysis

4.3.1. Quantitative data analysis

We used descriptive methods to analyze the survey data and general social media use characteristics. We report percentages and frequencies for daily use of social media platforms and the purposes of social media use. To compare heavy users' and light users' experiences of usefulness, strain, and work-leisure conflict related to social media use, we report mean scores, 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the means, and *p*-values of independent two-sample *t*-tests. We also reported our comparison between heavy and light users based on linear regression analyses. The purpose of these analyses was to adjust for age and gender. For the linear regression analyses, we report unstandardised regression coefficients (B) and their standard errors (SE). In the models, we used experiences of usefulness, strain, and work-leisure conflict related to social media use as dependent variables, and the independent variable was type of social media user (0 = *light*, 1 = *heavy*). The controls included age and gender.

4.3.2. Qualitative data analysis

In the focus group interview data analysis, we utilised theory-driven deductive content analysis to categorise the focus group transcripts. Content analysis is a valid and replicable analytical method, and it explores the data thoroughly and permits context-related meaning making (Krippendorff 2004, 18–19). We used the JD-R model as a theoretical framework to discover specific job demands and job resources related to professional social media use (Bakker et al. 2007; Demerouti et al. 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). We used the QSR NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software in the categorisation process.

We adapted our qualitative data analysis from the six stages Krippendorff (2004, 83–84) defined: unitisation, sampling, coding the data, reducing the data, making abductive conclusions, and narrating the data to answer the proposed research questions. The first step of our qualitative data analysis process was the interview data transcription, after which we imported the transcripts into the QSR NVivo 12 software. In the first stage, we openly coded text segments under job resources and job demands. In this way, we developed our theoretically grounded coding scheme based on the JD-R model. We used four categories for the job demands: physical demands, psychological demands, social demands, and organisational demands (Bakker et al. 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). We divided job resources into four categories: task-related resources, work-organizing-related resources, social resources, and organisational resources (Bakker et al. 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). Additionally, we used self-efficacy and self-esteem as a combined category for personal resources (Xanthopoulou et al. 2009). Next, we further analyzed and reduced the data. We further subcategorised each of the four job demand categories into physiological symptoms, fears, social pressure, and unclear rules. Moreover, we further classified job resources into four subcategories: organisational encouragement and support, social networks, information and autonomy, and personal resources into professional identity development. We answered our second research question based on these specific subcategories.

To confirm the coding reliability, two researchers coded the data independently. They cross-checked the coding and discussed and clarified any disagreements on coding, which eventually led to mutual agreement on the coding. To increase the results' credibility, we used direct quotations from the interview data to demonstrate our conclusions. Additionally, to strengthen the findings' credibility, we used two evidence sources. In the studied professional organisations, we used the survey data to determine the nature and the extent of professional social media use, and we used the focus group interviews to explore the job demands, job resources, and personal resources related to professional social media use more in-depth.

5. Results

5.1. General characteristics of social media use in professional organizations

Based on the survey data ($N = 563$, see Table 2), 84.4% of the employees used social media once or many times a day, and the use varied across industries. Telecommunications (95.1%) and finance (94.3%) employees demonstrated the most active use, and retail employees (75.8%) demonstrated the least active use. The descriptive statistics suggest that employees use internal social media platforms more than external ones. The social media platform most used for internal purposes was Skype, which more than 60% of the respondents used daily. In telecommunications and finance, only 8% and 15% of employees, respectively, used Skype on a less than daily basis. The second most used platform was Microsoft Teams, which almost 40% of the respondents used daily. Microsoft Teams's greatest ratio of daily users was among employees at the finance company (67.8%). Additionally, more than 15% of all the respondents used Workplace by Facebook, Yammer, or WhatsApp once a day or more.

Employees used external social media platforms considerably less frequently than internal ones. LinkedIn was the most used external social media platform, and less than 12% of respondents used it daily. However, more than one-fourth of the employees at the personnel service organisation used LinkedIn. The second most used external social media platform was Facebook, which 11% the of respondents used. Daily use of Facebook was most popular in the finance (19.5%) and publishing organisations (19.2%). Additionally, a surprisingly high proportion (31.4%) of telecommunications employees used wiki sites daily. Interestingly, almost 95% of respondents used Twitter less than daily, and the finance organisation featured the highest proportion of daily Twitter users (10.3%). The proportion of daily Instagram users was even smaller (2.8%), with no major variation across organisations.

Figure 1 shows the main reasons for social media use at work. Content following was the most popular reason in all professional organisations, as 79% of the participants selected it. Communicating with colleagues and staying in touch with the work community was also a popular purpose for social media use (69%). More than half of the respondents indicated that they used professional social media for content sharing (56%) and professional networking (52%). Furthermore, approximately one-third of respondents used professional social media to create new content, communicate with friends and family, take a break from work, get to know colleagues, and communicate with clients and stakeholders. Almost 6% of the respondents did not use social media for work purposes at all. Moreover, we observed some differences across fields. For example, content sharing and professional networking were more common in the personnel services organisation than in the other organisations.

On average, the respondents did not regard professional social media as highly useful, but they also did not experience much strain or conflict between work and leisure time in the context of social media use (see Table 1). However, comparing light and heavy users' mean scores, light users ($M = 2.0$) experienced less conflict than heavy users ($M = 2.5$). Moreover, light users ($M = 2.0$) experienced less strain from social media use than heavy users ($M = 2.4$). Interestingly, heavy users considered the use of professional social media especially useful ($M = 5.2$) whereas the light users did not regard professional social media as particularly useful ($M = 3.7$). These differences were statistically significant based on a t-test ($p < 0.05$).

Linear regression analyses provided similar results. Compared to the light users of social media, the heavy users had average scores that were 0.46 points higher on a scale of 1–7 for strain ($B = 0.46$, SE[B] = 0.13, $p < 0.001$) and for conflict between work and leisure ($B = 0.46$, SE[B] = 0.14, $p = 0.005$). Heavy users also considered social media significantly more useful than light users did ($B = 1.47$, SE[B] = 0.14, $p < 0.001$). Overall, all the respondents considered professional social media use a resource rather than a demand regardless of age, but heavy users regarded social media as more demanding and more useful than did light users. This may indicate that perceiving social media as useful may lead to heavier use.

5.2. Job demands related to professional social media use

Aside from the survey data, the qualitative part of the research was concentrated on the views of young adult employees from the five professional organisations. We aimed to attain a thorough understanding of how they associate professional social media use with job demands and job resources and personal resources. The focus group interviews of these young adults yielded similar findings about the demanding aspects of professional social media use: Professional social media use was not regarded as highly straining because its use was not forced in the organisations and because people had the autonomy to use it flexibly in terms of content and time. Next, we introduce the key job

Table 2. Use of various social media platforms in five professional organisations (N = 563): Percentage of respondents who use a social media platform once a day or more (n).

	1. (personnel service) N = 128	2. (finance) N = 87	3. (publishing) N = 52	4. (retail) N = 194	5. (telecom) N = 102	All 5 orga-nizations N = 563
Heavy users[a]	46.9% (60)	63.2% (55)	53.9% (28)	37.6% (73)	47.1% (48)	46.9% (264)
At least one platform	82.8% (106)	94.3% (82)	82.7% (43)	75.8% (147)	95.1% (97)	84.4% (475)
Internal						
Skype	60.2% (77)	85.2% (74)	42.3% (22)	47.9% (93)	92.2% (94)	63.9% (360)
Microsoft Teams	56.3% (72)	67.8% (59)	50.0% (26)	13.9% (27)	38.2% (39)	39.6% (223)
Workplace by Facebook	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	51.6% (100)	0.0% (0)	17.8% (100)
Yammer	1.6% (2)	79.3% (69)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (1)	21.6% (22)	16.7% (94)
Trello	3.9% (5)	1.2% (1)	34.6% (18)	2.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	5.0% (28)
Slack	15.6% (20)	1.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (3)	2.9% (3)	4.8% (27)
Smarp	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.2% (1)
External						
WhatsApp	25.8% (33)	10.3% (9)	15.4% (8)	7.7% (15)	21.6% (22)	15.5% (87)
LinkedIn	28.1% (36)	9.2% (8)	0.0% (0)	9.8% (19)	2.9% (3)	11.7% (66)
Facebook	7.8% (10)	19.5% (17)	19.2% (10)	8.3% (16)	8.8% (9)	11.0% (62)
Wiki sites	2.3% (3)	8.1% (7)	3.9% (2)	2.6% (5)	31.4% (32)	8.7% (49)
Twitter	1.6% (2)	10.3% (9)	0.0% (0)	7.2% (14)	5.9% (6)	5.5% (31)
Instagram	2.3% (3)	3.5% (3)	5.8% (3)	2.1% (4)	2.9% (3)	2.8% (16)
Facebook Messenger	4.7% (6)	3.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (2)	1.0% (1)	2.1% (12)
YouTube	2.3% (3)	1.2% (1)	1.9% (1)	0.5% (1)	2.0% (2)	1.4% (8)
Chat forums	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.0% (2)	0.4% (2)
SlideShare	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (2)
Snapchat	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.9% (1)	0.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (2)
Blog services	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.2% (1)
Periscope	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Pinterest	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

Notes: Original scale was 0 = I don't use, 1 = Less than weekly, 2 = Weekly, 3 = Daily, 4 = Many times a day.
[a]We divided a composite variable, the sum of all 21 platform items, by the median.

demands brought up in the interviews. Following the job demands, we present professional social-media-related job resources and personal resources.

5.2.1. Physiological symptoms

Although white-collar professional work is rarely physically demanding, the interviewees reported some physiological problems. Compared to the time before social media, neck and back pain have become more common. Furthermore, the respondents believed social media decreased energy levels. Some of them mentioned blue light from screens and sleeping problems in the conversations, which they often considered as technology-related demand.

> Yes, my social media use is draining. If you would have asked me in my twenties, I would have said, "No way," but when you have done it 15 years, it brings all these physical problems (i.e. back, blue light, and falling asleep, etc). (Retail, group 2)

Consequently, some interviewees indicated that they had restricted their social media use and dedicated specific times to using social media.

5.2.2. Fears

The focus group interviews revealed that social media causes various kinds of fears. For example, respondents discussed fear of missing out (FoMO) in most of the focus group interviews. People wanted to follow news and people, and stay updated because they fear missing out on professional and entertaining content in social media. Additionally, interviewees expressed fears of losing face and being humiliated. Young adults are especially cautious about posting on social media, and when they do so, they want to express their own views and avoid simply reposting for the sake of amplifying their visibility. This may lead people to worry about whether they have enough skills to craft appropriate social media posts and, more broadly, to question their capability and professionalism. People want to maintain an attitude of professionalism; therefore, they avoid being linked to negative discussions and social media scandals.

> If I'm not there [on social media], am I a real professional? Maybe it's the feeling that you have to be there all the time and the demand for yourself that if you say something, it needs to be something new and mind-blowing. (Telecommunications, group 2)

5.2.3. Social pressure

Social media creates social pressure if colleagues and clients are active on it. For instance, clients may make contact via social media at any time of the day. The interviewees mostly described social media as a hectic experience, in which a sense of information overload is present at all times. People feel that they do not have enough time for social media. Therefore,
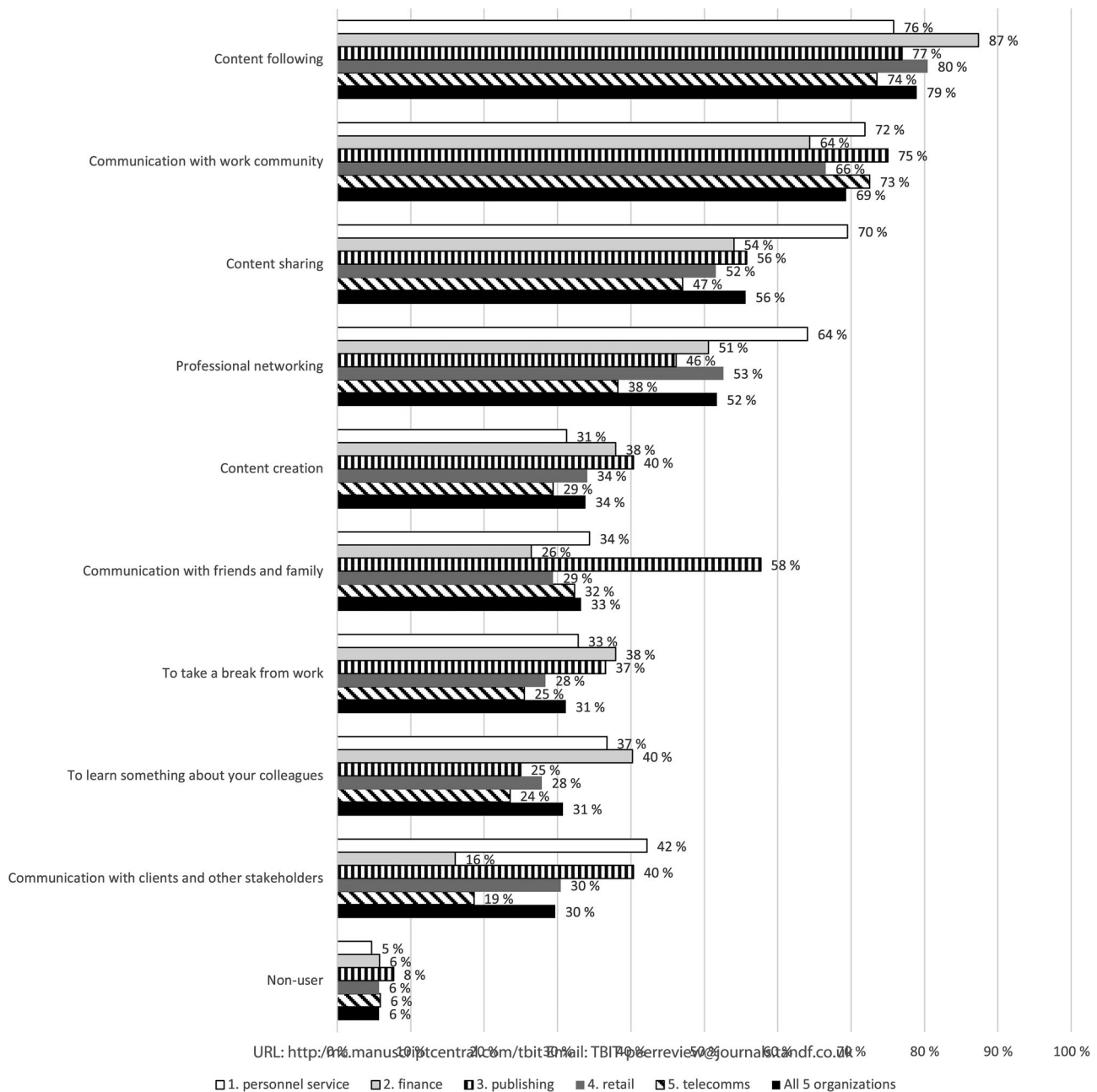
Figure 1. . Professional social media use purposes by industry (%, *N* = 563).

they experience feelings of guilt when they are not active on social media. Moreover, social media is used for networking and sharing work-related information. However, fragmented groups and in-groups may emerge on social media forums and lead to discrimination, even accidentally. Therefore, many companies have decided that social media cannot be the only platform for sharing work-related knowledge and information.

> I get this feeling sometimes if I have been really busy and been like whole day in meetings, and then you realize that, "Oh no, I have not published anything, and I

indeed should." So, in these kinds of situations, it may be demanding when you think that it is part of your job, but it's not your priority number one. (Personnel services, group 1)

5.2.4. Unclear rules

Many interviewees reported that the rules for social media use were unclear. Companies may have provided social media guidance, but employees often either were not aware of it or found it ambiguous. In particular, there was a lack of clarity regarding the specific platforms and the purposes for their use. Information was

disseminated to several places, and colleagues and clients could make contact through various platforms. Moreover, the interviewees expressed uncertainty about whom to contact and what to do if they were confronted with provocative content or a social media scandal. Furthermore, they reported ambiguity about the appropriate time within which one might need to react or respond on social media. For instance, it may be challenging to determine whether one must answer messages on external social media platforms in the evenings and on weekends. Doing so would increase their workload – mentally and physically. It was pointed out that commenting on something in the middle of the night may even create a reputational problem.

> Maybe it is the guidance thing, which I at least or I might have missed the guidance. I feel that if I get involved in some discussions in social media and I have to comment something a bit challenging as the company employee, how should I react, and what are the limits? (Publishing, group 1)

5.3. Job resources related to professional social media use

5.3.1. Organisational encouragement and support
Overall, social media is seen in a positive light in the interviewed professional organisations, and its use is encouraged but not forced. Most of the organisations encouraged and offered support. For instance, employees may receive help and advice from colleagues, supervisors, or communications or IT departments. Some companies have dedicated social media teams that collect news and relevant information from various social media platforms, which help employees share relevant content. Employees from all the organisations reported that leadership examples were an essential job resource. We observed that on social media, leadership activity immediately cultivated a culture of trust and honesty. Moreover, social media made people feel equal regardless of their titles or status.

> It has maybe something that diminishes people's fences or roles and titles, that people became somewhat equal, that links are shared in some group, [that] it doesn't matter if you are CEO or assistant … that everyone is just a human there and that people are connected by being part of that particular group (Publishing, group 2).

5.3.2. Social networks
Collaboration on social media occurs quickly regardless of location. Social media makes it easy to share status updates on projects, decreases working in silos, and groups together people who are committed to shared goals. Consequently, social media improves knowledge

sharing and ways of working. Social media also makes it easier for coworkers to get to know each other personally, thus enhancing the experience of working face-to-face and team spirit across the organisation. Among our participants, the ability to create and maintain social networks effortlessly was seen as a resource. They noted that social media facilitates finding and contacting people with similar interests, expanding one's network, and connecting with people one has never met. Social media makes it possible to stay connected with old and new colleagues and clients, and it may positively influence customer relationships.

> One [way] in which I use social media, especially if we're talking about customer work, it is nice to get to know the customer; you see the professional personality somewhere like in LinkedIn. You see what they have shared, if they have liked something, what I have said, and build the relationship that way. (Personnel service, group 1)

5.3.3. Information
Most of the interviewees identified information availability as social media's the most important job resource. On social media, access to information is unlimited, making it easy to familiarise oneself with competitors, market trends, clients, and collaborators. Furthermore, knowledge sharing is seen as a positive job resource because social media enables wider and faster dissemination of information than traditional email, intranet, or training sessions. Social media is an effective tool for following news and participating in discussions about one's employer and overall work life. Given social media's sharing speed, good news, bad news, and rumours spread rapidly. That being said, social media also affords a reasonable opportunity to correct wrong information quickly.

> Teams is maybe the best technical thing that has happened during my career here so far. All messages are coming through way better than, e.g. in Skype, where you may not even notice if someone has sent you something. In Teams, you can easily share materials, and it is cool that several people can update documents at the same time. (Finance, group 1)

5.3.4. Autonomy
The interviewees pointed out that they had autonomy to control their social media use. It is vital to allow people to discover their own style of social media use. Not everyone wants to participate actively in discussions, but they can still play important roles by following news and gathering information. Additionally, if people feel proud of their work, they may find it worthwhile to

share work-related content on social media. Social media posts that are done purely on promotion and commercial purposes to boost company's brand may seem awkward. The frequency of social media use varies greatly from person to person. Some use social media many times a day whereas others may not even use it weekly. Some may prefer to use it at home whereas others tend to use it during the workday. Moreover, people appreciate their ability to control their use by turning off notifications or muting social media groups. Thus, social media makes work-related communication more flexible, and respondents viewed it as a job resource enhancing job autonomy.

> Social media use is like using email; it is my own decision. If I want to read my emails, then I read them, and it's my personal choice, which I've made. I have not felt any kind of pressure; it is just part of the ordinary day. (Finance, group 2)

5.4. Personal resources related to professional social media use

5.4.1. Professional identity development

From a personal resource stance, social media helps people enhance their professional identity and self-esteem. Social media is increasingly used for professional development purposes. Work-related information, such as market trends, articles, and online courses are readily available. Moreover, creating professional social networks is regarded as a valuable asset for personal growth. When people get involved in discussions and enjoy successes on social media, their self-esteem is enhanced. Positive public recognition can have an enduring power. Additionally, observing one's own created content positively affecting someone's life makes social media use meaningful.

> I'm still excited about the fact that the company CEO retweeted my story and replied to me using [a] smiley. (Retail, group 2)

To summarise, professional social media use involves many elements, positive and negative, that influence well-being at work. Relative to survey data, the focus group interviews yielded similar results in terms of the purpose and frequency of professional social media use. Several companies had dedicated social media teams engaged in updating their social media platforms. Although several external social media platforms were in use, some interviewees felt that companies' external social media platforms did not have dedicated resources and that their content and appearance could be more up to date. Additionally, social media was used for internal purposes at all the interviewed organisations. Some

people used internal social media regularly whereas others rarely used it.

Aligning with the survey results, the focus group interviews revealed that across organisations, internal social media was primarily used as either a communication channel, aimed at reaching all employees, or a project management tool. Additionally, the interviewed participants used social media mainly to follow interesting work-life content (e.g. professional social media groups). Social media is used to gain information on new trends and clients and attain an improved understanding of the market. Therefore, social media use was more closely related to learning and improving one's own professionalism and skills than to representing the company. To sum up, the focus group interview results support the survey results; both sets of results indicate that although the use of social media has energetic and straining factors, it is seen as a job resource rather than a job demand.

6. Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine how professional social media is used and to identify the key characteristics of professional social media use in the five studied professional organisations. Furthermore, we analyzed the relationship between professional social media use and job demands, job resources, and personal resources.

Our results demonstrate that employees in professional organisations are active social media users; nevertheless, they also reflect use differences across industries. Most of the expert organisation employees used at least one social media platform for professional purposes, and that proportion was higher among the telecommunications and financial industry employees than among employees from the other organisations. Internal social media platforms were used more frequently than external platforms. The use of professional social media mainly involved content following and internal communication. Moreover, social media was used for content sharing and professional networking. Professional social media use was not perceived as highly straining or conflicting with private life. However, those using social media more experienced more strain and conflict but also regarded social media as more useful than light users did.

In addition to examining professional social media use, we investigated job demands, job resources, and personal resources as they relate to professional social media use and developed an extensive overview of these factors across five industries in Finland. We organised job demands into four categories:

physiological symptoms, fears, social pressure, and unclear rules. Furthermore, we assigned job resources to four discrete categories: organisational encouragement and support, social networks, information, and autonomy. In addition, we identified professional identity development and considered it a personal resource (see Figure 2 for a summary of resources and demands).

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study furnishes new information about how social media is used in professional organisations. Previous studies have focused mainly on specific social media platforms (e.g. Twitter; Syrek et al. 2018; van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart 2016b) or non-work-related use of social media at work (Brooks and Califf 2017; Syrek et al. 2018; Vitak, Crouse, and LaRose 2011). In contrast, we extensively explored social media platforms, internal (e.g. Microsoft Teams) and external (e.g. LinkedIn), while considering social media platforms that people may regard as personal (e.g. Instagram). By studying these various types of platforms, we gained a holistic view of how social media is used for professional purposes. For example, clients and other stakeholders may communicate via external platforms, which respondents experienced as straining. Moreover, external platforms can be utilised for networking with other professionals with similar interests, retrieval of information and best practices, and following the latest market trends and competitors, which may not be possible if only internal platforms are used. Therefore, studying only external or internal platforms would not have been adequate. Additionally, the current study was concentrated specifically on professional social media use (i.e. how social media is used for work-related matters), which is important to differentiate from more leisurely social media use.

The present study contributes to the literature by providing new insights about job demands, job resources, and personal resources related to professional social media use, as we utilised qualitative interview data and thus captured employees' genuine elaborations of social media use. The present study revealed that employees experience various fears regarding the use of professional social media – related to internal and external platforms, with those regarding the latter being more prominent. For instance, respondents discussed the fear of lacking sufficient competence, the fear of negative online discussions, the fear of losing face, and FoMO in several focus group interviews. To date, no studies have been conducted on professional social media use and its association with the FoMO phenomenon although FoMO has been linked to non-

work-related social media use and lower productivity at work (Rozgonjuk et al. 2020) and has gained attention in work settings without a pure work-related social media construct (Budnick, Rogers, and Barber 2020; Tandon et al. 2022). Therefore, this study is the first to contribute to research on work-related social media use and FoMO.

In the focus interviews, the participants emphasised feeling social pressure to participate in using social media – internal and external platforms – if colleagues and clients were using it. However, interviewees raised the following concerns: Whether one participates or not, in-groups can develop on social media, and social media can be used for discrimination or cyberbullying purposes – even in the work context – which supports previous findings (Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield 2013; Oksanen et al. 2020; Snyman and Loh 2015). In accordance with Xanidis and Brignell's (2016) work, this study revealed that social media use can lead to sleeping problems. Notably, our interviews provided important insights into unclear organisational social media rules and the guidance that employees seek, especially in burdensome situations, such as negative online interactions. Our findings also strengthen earlier calls for rules and guidance regarding online harassment (Oksanen et al. 2020).

Supporting van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart (2016b, 2017) findings and those of Leidner, Gonzalez, and Koch (2018), this study confirmed that social media is used as an information source and a way to communicate with colleagues and clients. Additionally, social media is used to expand one's professional network internally and externally; these factors are seen as job resources. Supporting Treem and Leonardi's (2012) findings as well as those of Olmstead, Lampe, and Ellison (2015), we discovered that the use of professional social media has a positive impact on learning and information sharing across organisations, thereby enhancing solidarity. Beyond these positive outcomes, our results advance the understanding of the importance of organisational encouragement and support, especially leadership examples, which were experienced as essential resources for professional social media use. Moreover, this study contributes to the existing social media literature by enforcing the roles of autonomy and individual differences in social media use, which previous studies have not explored in such depth. Social media's roles in personal growth and self-esteem enhancement were also exposed as personal resources, thereby providing insights into these phenomena in the professional context.

This study yielded information on internal and external social media platform use in five professional
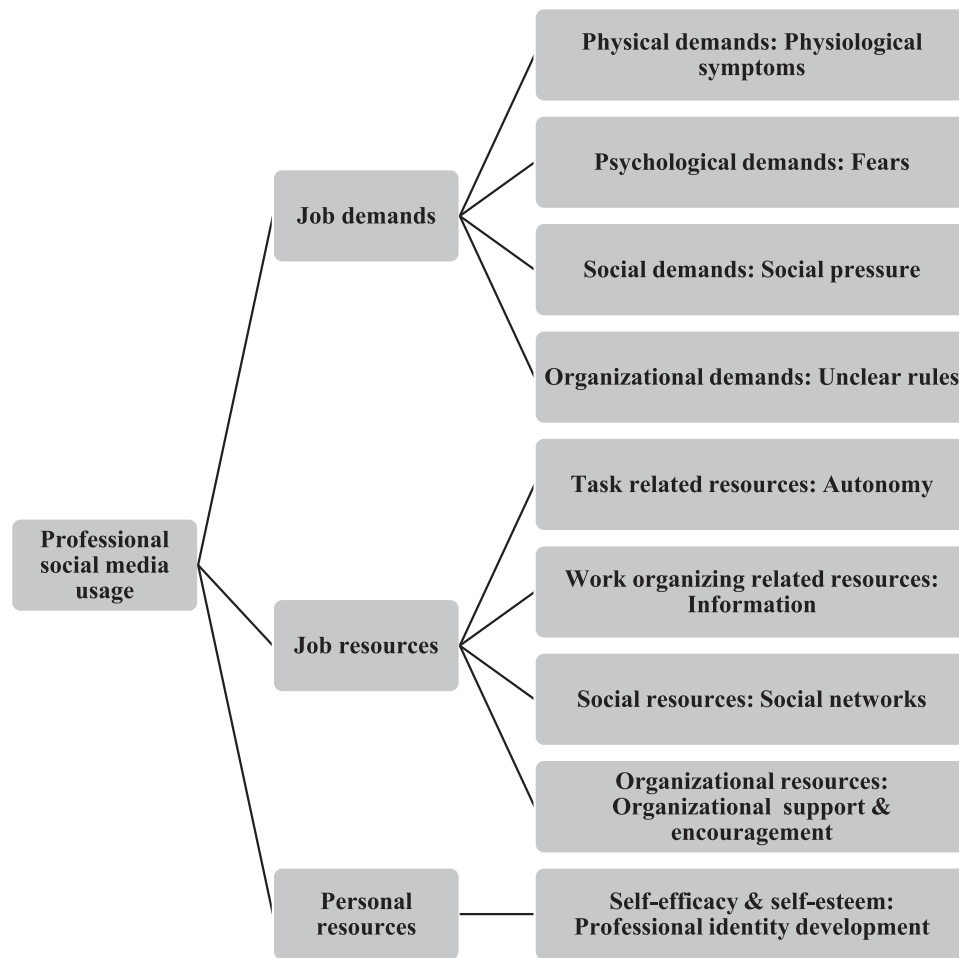
Figure 2. Categorisation of job demands, job resources and personal resources related to professional social media use.

organisations, all operating in distinct occupational fields. In these organisations, employees used internal social media platforms such as Skype and Microsoft Teams actively; however, external social media (e.g. LinkedIn and Facebook), surprisingly, were used on less than weekly. This study also revealed that heavy use of social media is associated with elevated strain and conflict between work and leisure time. These findings align with van Zoonen, Verhoeven, and Vliegenthart (2016a) work on the conflict and strain factors and provide new information: Particularly, heavy social media use is regarded as more conflicting and straining – but also more useful (i.e. the more one uses social media, the more useful one considers it). Based on the current study's quantitative and qualitative results, professional social media is not seen as overly demanding, and it is regarded as a job resource rather than a job demand.

6.2. Practical implications

This study contributes to the research field with practical guidance on accounting for the possibilities and risks involved in professional social media use. Because companies are in constant turbulence due to digitalisation and new technologies, it is important to recognise the factors that impact organisational culture as well as the ways of working and approaches to well-being at work that enable the best possible future for a business. The study's findings provide organisations insights on how social media is used within the studied organisations, and they provide a glimpse into the use differences across five distinct occupational fields. Moreover, the use's frequency and purpose were exposed. For instance, one noteworthy discovery was that external social media platforms were not used dynamically in the studied organisations. Furthermore, the findings suggest organisations' potential to enhance the use of internal social media platforms.

For organisations, it is crucial to understand what motivates people to use social media for work purposes. Our findings highlight that affording employees some autonomy to determine how, when, and why they use social media for work are key motivators. Complementing more conventional means, social media also serves

as a professional development method, which is important to understand in organisations. However, it is vital to train people to use social media. Organisational encouragement and support for professional social media use, such as providing leadership examples, were seen as a job resource that enhanced organisational transparency, in support of previous research findings from Treem and Leonardi (2012) and Olmstead, Lampe, and Ellison (2015). In turn, organisational transparency enhances organisations' social support and togetherness, as the findings of Oksa et al. (2021b) and our findings demonstrated.

Our results highlighted that social media guidance and rules are neither clear nor comprehensive. According to the literature, regulations and policies of professional social media use has increasingly been established across organisations (Banghart, Etter, and Stohl 2018; Dreher 2013; Olmstead, Lampe, and Ellison 2015; Opgenhaffen and Claeys 2017; Stohl et al. 2017). However, our results suggest that although a positive change has occurred over the years – from forbidding to allowing social media use at work – there remains a need to clarify the various platforms' use purposes. Moreover, we determined that guidance for difficult situations, such as negative discussions or social media scandals, is highly critical but still missing in some organisations. To conclude, it is fundamental for organisations to recognise not only professional social media use's energising factors but also its draining factors. We have presented this study's results to the exposed organisations along with suggestions proposed to help them optimise professional social media use.

6.3. Strengths, limitations, and suggestions for future research

We conducted this study using a mixed-method approach, which is one of the study's strengths. First, we conducted the focus group interviews to gain an overall understanding of social media use in the studied organisations and its relation to well-being at work. Then, we developed the survey based on the information from the focus group interviews. For this study, our survey data provided quantified information on professional social media use. Furthermore, the focus group interviews facilitated an in-depth analysis of professional social media use and its association with job demands and job resources and personal resources. Notably, investigating social media use, job demands, job resources, and personal resources in the work context and thus contributing to psychology, social science, health, information and communication technology,

and management research fields is another of the study's strengths.

One of this study's limitations is its focus group size, which averaged five people because of no-shows. We could have generated more discussion and wider perspectives with larger focus groups; however, we covered the research topics successfully with the smaller groups. We collected the data during 2018 and in Finland; therefore, the findings are limited to that specific time and geographical location. Our data were limited to five professional organisations representing distinct occupational fields. However, our results on social media use in these organisations align with official statistics on social media use in various occupational fields in Finland (Official Statistics Finland 2018).

Additionally, narrowing down consideration of job demands, job resources, and personal resources to be based solely on focus group interviews could be seen as a limitation of the study. In the future, job demands, job resources, and personal resources could be studied quantitatively as well as qualitatively to gain a deeper understanding of their associations with professional social media use. Moreover, a longitudinal investigation of various job demands and job and personal resources in relation to professional social media use could be useful.

7. Conclusions

Our goal for this study was to discover professional social media use's key characteristics in the five studied professional organisations from distinct occupational fields to gain an overview of social media use in the professional context. To summarise, these organisations used social media for external and internal purposes. Internal use was more routine, and external social media platforms were not used actively. Based on the analysis, professional social media was used mainly for content following and internal communication purposes. Moreover, people shared content in social media and engaged in professional networking. Professional social media use was not regarded as particularly draining or as conflicting with work and leisure time. However, those using social media more often experienced more strain and conflict due to social media use, but they also regarded social media as more useful than did users who did not use social media for work purposes as actively.

We discovered an association between professional social media use and job demands, job resources, and personal resources. According to the findings, professional social media use correlates with job demands, including physiological symptoms, such as neck pain,

and psychological elements, such as fears. Additionally, we identified social pressure and unclear rules of professional social media use as job demands. Moreover, professional social media use is associated with four job resources. Our participants defined information availability and autonomy to control the use of professional social media as key job resources. In addition, our participants regarded the potential to create and maintain social networks and obtain organisational support for and encouragement regarding social media use as job resources. People use social media for professional identity development purposes, and this use constitutes a personal resource. In sum, job demands, job resources, and personal resources are important elements for well-being at work that organisations should take into account when utilising social media for work purposes.

The present study's contribution to the research field is threefold. First, it contributes to theory by providing multidisciplinary findings to multiple research fields, including psychology, social science, health, information and communications technology, and management. Second, the study furnishes organisations with practical implications and suggestions worthy of consideration for avoiding pitfalls and fostering the positive potential of social media use. Third, this study provides an in-depth analysis of and novel knowledge on social media use in the work context and the related job demands and job and personal resources. To conclude, professional social media use has yet to fulfill its optimal utilisation potential in organisations. Using social media for work purposes has positive and negative consequences for well-being at work and for organisational culture and ways of working. However, professional social media ultimately functions as a job resource rather than a job demand.

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Informed consent and ethical approval

Signed informed consent has been received from all the interviewees. Favourable statement has been received from the regional ethics committee for the study.

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