Employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn

How likely would employees 'like' a LinkedIn post by their organization? A quantitative study on four predictors and their influence on employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn

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Master's Thesis

June 2023

Word count: 16.421

Abstract

Even though employees were recognized as powerful brand ambassadors, research is scarce on the predictors of employee ambassadorship behavior. As the impressions about the company culture are primarily shaped by the content that employees share online, it is within the interest of the company to understand employees' online behavior. Since networking sites such as LinkedIn allow employees to present themselves professionally, employees are more prone to engage with the companies here rather than via their personal social media accounts. This paper investigates the relationship between the predictors of organizational role, organizational identification, social media guidelines usage, concise social media guidelines and employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Furthermore, this paper reflects on forms of companies' social media guidelines. The study explores 195 full-time employees' (56,9% females) ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn, using both close- and open-ended questions. Quantitative analysis was conducted to predict which factors influence employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Research suggests that organizational role affects employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn as high-skilled workers frequently share online their knowledge in their field, however, this relationship was not confirmed in this study. While high-skilled workers were found to identify with the company, organizational identification was found to not affect ambassadorship behavior. Social media usage proved to be a valuable mediator of a relationship between organizational role and employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn as social media guidelines help employees to navigate the risks encountered when engaging online. On the contrary, concise social media guidelines are not a significant moderator of the relationship between social media guidelines usage and ambassadorship behavior. As found, employees are often exposed to informal social media guidelines. The paper employs thematic analysis to explore the forms of concise social media guidelines. As the results suggest, companies' social media guidelines primarily include risks and brand style to assure that employees adhere to the online rules. Social media guidelines are primarily in a digital format however, some companies prefer spoken rules instead. As such, these findings hold practical implications given that the knowledge of the predictors of employees' ambassadorship behavior can help companies in limiting the risks and encouraging their employees to become brand ambassadors on LinkedIn.

KEYWORDS: organizational role, organizational identification, ambassadorship behavior, LinkedIn, social media guidelines

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1. Introduction

Companies worldwide build and sustain emotional and social ties via social media. Their social media presence helps them in building more personal relationships with their customers which in turn increases customer trust, especially among younger audiences (Alalwan et al., 2017). By increasing the rate of communication on social media, companies can increase the levels of interactivity and association with their customers (McCarthy et al., 2014). Cover's social study shows that over 55% of consumers learn about new brands on social media (2023). Additionally, social media helps marketers reach like-minded individuals that would not have been reached otherwise (Hadud et al., 2016). Hence, companies often use LinkedIn, a professional social media site, as an effective tool for connecting with prospective clients while building their reputation, and credibility online (Witzig et al., 2012). Since LinkedIn hosts the biggest network of work professionals, over 94% of recruiters use LinkedIn to recruit, while over 85% use it for selection purposes (Landers & Schmidt, 2016). Therefore, users are motivated to represent themselves professionally on the platform (Brooks, 2019). Professional identity on LinkedIn is exercised via the order of sections in the profile, the precision in descriptions of work and volunteer experience and the type of portrait chosen (Brooks, 2019).

Due to the users' commitment to the professionality on LinkedIn, they are more prone to engage with the companies they work for. Therefore, employees exercise ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn through the acts of liking, sharing the content that the company posts on LinkedIn and crafting posts about the company. Employees' ambassadorship behavior is seen as authentic because they know the work culture and spirit well (Agresta & Bonin, 2011). Moreover, as ambassadors, employees are expected to internalize the brand's identity and values and project them as a part of their own identity when engaging online (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Schultz et al., 2005). Hence, their social media engagement in companies' content is seen as more authentic (Agresta and Bonin, 2011). Employees who engage actively with their company on LinkedIn increase their reputation as professionals (Cain, 2011), while shaping the reputation of the brand online by increasing the reach and exposure of the organization (Dreher, 2014).

Although a lot is known about the content and consequences of organizational social media use (e.g., Davis et al., 2020; van Dijck, 2013), there is limited knowledge of the drivers of ambassadorship behavior. Therefore, this study aims to broaden the knowledge of the predictors of ambassadorship behavior. Previous research rather focused on individual predictors such as the role of impression management (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Marabelli

et al., 2018; e.g., self-enhancement; Erhardt & Gibbs, 2014) but studied it from the lens of social media use rather than ambassadorship behavior. More specifically, the goal of this paper is to understand how organizational identification, organizational role, and social media guidelines drive ambassadorship behavior. Similarly, van Zoonen et al. (2018) focused on organizational identification, self-enhancement, and segmentation preferences and compared the effect of these predictors on ambassadorship behavior to different social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Similarly, previous studies on employee social media behavior collapse different social media platforms (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) into one general measure for social media use (e.g., Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Moqbel et al., 2013) which limits the overall findings as every social media platform is unique. On the contrary, this paper only focuses on LinkedIn and takes into account the usage and affordances of the platform. This approach allows for a much deeper understanding of LinkedIn's logic and usage. Additionally, it limits the error in measures of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn.

When it comes to organizational identification, Fieseler et al. (2015) found that employees who have stronger professional identities are more prone to combine social and work connections in social media networks. Hence, this study proposes that organizational identification is an important driver of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn as a positive evaluation of the organization can spill over to employees' professional identity online.

Moreover, no study has focused on the differences in ambassadorship behavior across organizational roles, even though Marks and Scholarios (2007) state that the motivation of low-skilled and high-skilled workers differs. While high-skilled workers' intrinsic motivation lies in their work, low-skilled workers often find motivation in their hobbies (Winkler et al., 2014). Hence, this paper is the first one to examine how these differences in organizational roles shape employee ambassadorship behavior. When it comes to employees' social media guidelines, recent studies focus on the content and strategic approach to build effective social media guidelines (e.g. Dreher, 2014, Jacobson & Tufts, 2013; Stokes et al., 2017) rather than the effects of social media guidelines on employee online behavior. Since it was found that the absence of social media guidelines and rules increases the chance of employee risky behavior such as bad-mouthing the company, companies need to develop their social media guidelines (Ivens & Walsh, 2021). Therefore, this paper adds to the knowledge of how social media guidelines restrict employees from risky behaviors and encourage them to ambassadorship behavior.

Building on this, we aim to answer the following question: What is the relationship between organizational identification, organizational role, social media guidelines usage, concise social media guidelines and employee ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn? The study employs a survey to gather insights about the employee inclination towards ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. The findings based on the survey data contribute to society in two key ways. Firstly, it provides insight into the significance of workers' organizational role in fostering ambassadorship behavior. As a result, companies intending to invest in ambassadorship programs can gain valuable knowledge about the specific types of employees who are more likely to generate favorable outcomes for the organization. Furthermore, companies can gain a better overview of the factors that influence employees' intentions to engage in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn.

Secondly, this paper provides companies with several valuable insights for formulating effective social media guidelines that encourage employees to become powerful ambassadors on LinkedIn. Given that social media guidelines are an important tool for guiding employees' online behavior (Cain, 2011), companies need to comprehend how the information contained within their social media guidelines can shape their employees' ambassadorship behavior.

The paper is structured as follows. Chapter two provides an overview of previous research on the role of presented predictors on employee ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn and highlights the affordances of LinkedIn that allow for ambassadorship behavior on the platform. Chapter three outlines and justifies methodology while presenting the open-ended questions that defined social media guidelines. Chapter four presents the findings from the survey, providing insights into how presented predictors shape employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Chapter five outlines the theoretical and practical implications for the companies stressing the importance of employees' ambassadorship behavior, together with limitations and proposals for future research. Finally, a conclusion of the main findings is presented that calls on companies to implement social media guidelines.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this paper, the relationship between organizational role, organizational identification, social media guidelines usage, concise social media guidelines, and ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn is studied. To better understand the theorized relationships, a network site LinkedIn, outcome variable and the predictors selected for this study are defined.

2.1 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional network site that helps its users to find a job, strengthen relationships, and learn new skills to succeed in their careers. To get started on LinkedIn, the individual should create a profile, build a network, look for a job, participate in conversations and post content on the platform. A complete LinkedIn profile includes the showcasing of skills, education and experience that helps the individual to connect with the opportunities on the platform. LinkedIn offers a free, basic membership that allows one to create and maintain a professional profile online. (Linkedin, 2022). It is often used for fieldwork as its affordances can be enacted by using them with regard to professional content (Marabelli et al., 2018). LinkedIn's interface guides the individual towards certain behaviors. The user should build relationships, engage with their contacts, reject invitations that do not add value to the network and carefully select what information they share to appear favorable to the employers (Sardá, 2015).

Duffy et al. (2017) found that users find it important to use social media to promote themselves, their businesses and creative products. As a part of their strategy they often tailor their messages to the specific social media platform as a part of "platform-specific self-branding" (Duffy et al., 2017, p. 3). The users on LinkedIn tend to present themselves professionally. Van Dijck (2013) claims that LinkedIn's profiles look clean and factual with one professional picture and text arranged rather in the form of lists. Based on the structure of the LinkedIn profile each one represents a template of professional identity. Petroni (2018, p. 270) highlights that the self-presentation of the users is constructed via the LinkedIn sections of Recommendations and Skills, Questions and Answers, People You May Know and Who's Viewed Your Profile. As LinkedIn offers a high feedback directness, not only through the comment section but also through skill endorsement that supports the claims made by self (DeVito et al., 2017), the users actively encourage the feedback.

Moreover, recommendations can display the user's relation with authoritative people which endorses the profile strength and increase their connections (Petroni, 2018). For

Questions and Answers, the individual's professional identity may be boosted once they share the knowledge of their field with other professionals which is also necessary for higher connectivity (Petroni, 2018). Li (2021) highlights that the best practice of sharing knowledge on LinkedIn is through posting posts that propose new ideas for a discussion. Since action-oriented messages receive more engagement on the platform compared to product-oriented or value-based messages (Sundström et al., 2020), users should strive for messages that call to action. LinkedIn has only moderate audience transparency and visibility control, and users' content is likely to be recognized by unexpected parties (DeVito et al., 2017). This results in careful consideration of the information shared and users tend to minimize the disclosure of their personal information (Hogan, 2010).

LinkedIn also disposes of association affordance as its algorithm makes the connections towards different profiles based on our profile information to increase our network (Lee et al., 2019). The section People You May Know reflects the principles of connectivity and popularity to connect the users to all possible ties to expand their professional network (Petroni, 2018). All of these affordances construct the professionality of the platform and encourage users to engage with organizations for networking and professional development (Dreher, 2014). Since users like to stay connected with companies on LinkedIn and interact with them professionally (Dreher, 2014) they are likely to form a professional network with the company they work for and other employees. Moreover, the section People You May Know often incorporates people working within the same company or field (Petroni, 2018), so employees are likely to connect with them.

2.2 Ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn

Ambassadorship behavior encompasses the internalization of the values of the brand while employees are expected to act based on them (Harris & De Chernatony,2001). This creates certain role expectations which give the organization the power to regulate employees' behaviors online (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Frandsen and Johansen (2011) proposed that organizational identity is a part of employees' personal identity and thus when enacting ambassadorship behavior, their work is part of their identity (Opitz et al., 2018). Additionally, Andersson (2019) found that most of the employees embrace their ambassadorship persona as they see the importance of delivering professional and favorable content towards the company making them influential brand ambassadors. As ambassadors, employees are expected to internalize the brand's identity and values and project them as a

part of their own identity when engaging online (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Schultz et al., 2005).

While the organizations are concerned with the risks of employees' social media use (Opgenhaffen & Claeys, 2017), employees were found to be "underutilized actors that can improve the organizational-public dialogue" (van Zoonen et al., 2014, p. 852). From the moment the employees become part of the company, they are seen as brand ambassadors (Jacobs, 2003). The key reasons of employees as powerful ambassadors are their knowledge of the company and their frequent engagement with the customers (Šontaitė-Petkevičienė & Vaščėgaitė, 2022). Employees manage the boundaries between the organization and the public constantly negotiating their private and professional identities. This requires them to balance between disclosure and discretion, professional and private content on social media (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

Since organizations cannot control the posting intentions of their employees, it is the employees' decision to engage in negative or positive behavior towards the company. According to van Hoye (2013), the most significant driver for employees to publish a negative message about their company is job dissatisfaction. However, the lack of motivation was not found to be a reason for negative ambassadorship behavior (Lainert & Pabian, 2022). Whilst organizations may sometimes run into a risk of a negative reputation due to employee ambassadorship behavior, Joglekar and Tan (2022) state that overall employee ambassadorship behavior brings a lot of positives to the company such as an increase in brand reputation and brand awareness building. To conclude, employee ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn is important for the success of the company. As it is perceived more authentically, it can help build a positive reputation for the company.

2.3 Organizational role and employee ambassadorship behavior

Given that employees' roles within the business differ, so might their preferences for engaging in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. For this paper, organizational roles are studied from the lens of employees' skills. The low-skilled roles do not require the employee to complete a college degree in the field, so the low-skilled workers are identified by lower education such as a high school diploma or lack thereof which might result in lower wages (Kagan, 2022). Low-skilled jobs do not require their workers to have any specific skills or qualifications to perform their tasks, so previous experience in the field is not needed (Kagan, 2022). Thus, these workers can receive on-the-job training that prepares them for their role (Sanders & de Griep, 2004). They often perform routine and/or non-cognitive tasks

which are usually of a physical character (Wolcott, 2021). There are several employment opportunities for low-skilled workers in different industries. The industries that rely heavily on low-skilled workers are agriculture, hospitality services, manufacturing, construction, and food with the employees in positions, for example, such as Hotel Housekeepers, Stocking Associates or Agricultural Workers (Vincent, 2021). According to Statista (2023), over 44% of the global workforce was employed in low-skilled jobs by 2020, however, this share is predicted to decrease to 39% by 2030.

In high-skilled roles, the employee is required to have a certain amount of training, the skill to perform complicated tasks, the ability to adapt quickly to changes, and the creative application of skills and knowledge (Clemens, 2009). High-skilled workers are required to have a degree in the field where they garner the skills and training needed to pursue their profession (Fratesi, 2014). These professionals should dispose of the three types of skills. The first is fundamental foundation skills as they serve as the basis and support for additional skills and training (Krošel et al., 2023). The second set of skills is transferable skills that can be adapted to different fields and environments while the third set of skills is technical and vocational skills to perform specific tasks (Krošel et al., 2023). Due to their skills, high-skilled workers have often more job responsibilities and therefore receive higher pay compared to low-skilled workers (Krošel et al., 2023). Additionally, high-skilled workers are often in manager positions, professionals in the field or technicians and associate professionals (ILOSTAT, 2008). According to the study conducted by Muggeridge (2015), the Netherlands is within the top 10 countries with the highest number of high-skilled workers (47.5%) together with Luxembourg, Switzerland and Iceland. While there were no recent studies done on this topic, we are aware that the trend could have slightly changed throughout the years.

Low-skilled workers define work as a means of earning and living while their intrinsic driving force lies in their hobbies (Winkler et al., 2014). Especially young workers define their unskilled jobs as "transitory" before they decide on a "proper career" (Mariager-Anderson et al., 2016, p. 8). Low-skilled workers often internalize the reasons for their actions (Mariager-Anderson et al., 2016). Therefore, if low-skilled workers are obliged to undertake additional education, their self-determination is undermined and they thus show low motivation (Dæhlen & Ure, 2009). Low-skilled workers were found to prefer immediate gain in a monetary or promotion form after engaging in the extra task (Sanders & de Griep, 2004). This is especially due to the lower wages of low-skilled professionals. Therefore, they see the performance of an additional task as a way to gain extra pay (Sanders & de

Grip, 2004). As a result, the motivation of low-skilled workers to perform extra tasks is limited to their own personal gain (Mariager-Anderson et al., 2016). However, according to Dumont et al. (2012), the bargaining power of low-skilled workers appears to fall due to globalization. Therefore, in most sectors, the relative wage preference of low-skilled workers remains constant or falls significantly (Dumont et al., 2012). Hence, the wage is not an optimal motivator for low-skilled workers to perform additional tasks. Moreover, due to the lower wages, low-skilled workers were found to be more easily dissatisfied with their current position and often observed to fluctuate across different companies (Boswell et al., 2005).

As low-skilled workers are often on the lookout for a new position, they benefit greatly from networking on social media sites (Davis et al., 2020). Thus, if the workers build communities on their LinkedIn, they might share information about their current work experience to appear as good workers. While sharing information about their current position ties partly into the ambassadorship behavior on the platform, Mariager-Anderson et al. (2016) found that low-skilled workers rather seek immediate gain from their actions. Hence, in terms of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn, low-skilled workers may see it as an additional task that does not provide an immediate gain, hence they will not engage with their company on LinkedIn.

Contrarily, high-skilled professionals' job motivation is dependent on intrinsic factors such as autonomy and opportunity for self-growth (Gol et al., 2018). Employees with more opportunities to be creative and autonomous were found to be more engaged in their work (Bujacz et al., 2017). High-skilled workers feel value-interest in their work as they have invested years into studying this field, therefore they are often highly passionate about the work they do (Centers & Bugental, 1966). This results in a positive association with their workspace (Centers & Bugental, 1966) where they feel comfortable pursuing their passions. As a result, high-skilled workers generally tend to stay working longer for one company (Wilkens & Nermerich, 2011). Since high-skilled workers are passionate about the field of their work, they always seek to learn more. To gain better knowledge they often use social media sites such as LinkedIn to learn from professionals (Baruffaldi et al., 2017). However, Bertucci (2020) found that high-skilled workers also like to appear highly knowledgeable on their LinkedIn accounts. Hence, they might share their company's research or their working life to position themselves as working professionals in the field taking part in ambassadorship behavior on the platform.

According to Schwabe and Castellacci (2020), most high-skilled professionals feel like they are valued by the company they work at, not only financially but also as valuable assets to the team. Companies are often looking into new ways of work organizations to be more efficient, where high-skilled workers provide valuable knowledge and information (Avogaro, 2019). The digitization of manufacturing is changing the conditions and requests of high-skilled workers therefore companies should be more flexible in their approach and let the parties choose (Avogaro, 2019). Hence, companies are protecting their high-skilled employees as they understand their value. Given that high-skilled professionals feel a higher satisfaction with their job and appreciation for their work, they appear to be highly motivated to go above and beyond the company's expectations (Kovach, 1995). Hway-Boon Ong et al. (2022) found that instrumentality is a primary motivating factor for skilled workers, therefore they like to engage in learning exercises that spark their curiosity. Moreover, high-skilled workers know that additional training provides them with better opportunities and adds to their value, thus they are intrinsically driven to undergo extra education (Ceccagno & Gao, 2022). As high-skilled workers are constantly seeking new knowledge they might see ambassadorship behavior as a way to circulate the knowledge around LinkedIn. Therefore, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: High-skilled workers will be more likely to engage in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn compared to low-skilled workers.

2.4 Organizational identification and employee ambassadorship behavior

Hall et al. (1970) define organizational identification as a perception of oneness with the organization where the organization's values and goals become the individual's own. According to this definition, organizational identification happens on a subconscious level. Contrarily, Cheney (1983) defines organizational identification as 'an active process by which individuals link themselves to elements in the social scene' (1983, p. 342). In this definition, identification is an active process in which the employee develops and maintains sameness with the organization. Therefore, the employee actively decides to identify themselves with the company's values. The definition is not comprehensive because the occurrence of organizational identification has many predictors such as perceived external prestige (Smidts et al., 2001), psychological empowerment (Zhu et al., 2012) or communication climate (van Zoonen et al., 2018). Organizational identification is rooted in social identity theory which posits the two core motives for identifying with the group; 'self-

categorization' and 'self-enhancement' (Elstak et al., 2014). Collective identification offers employees increased safety while reducing uncertainty and enhancing their sense of collective self-esteem (Elstak et al., 2014). Moreover, organizational identification is linked to general organizational success as it has been linked with employees' work attitude, motivation and intentions (Riketta, 2005).

According to Gol et al. (2018), workers in highly - skilled roles feel like they are directly contributing to the well-being of the company. Because higher professionals have more autonomy and self-growth opportunities, they tend to be more committed to the company (Lopes et al., 2014). High control in a workplace was found to be negatively related to organizational commitment. The fewer employees perceive themselves to be in control of their destiny, the less they identify with the organization or commit to the organization (Boshoff & Arnolds, 1995). Therefore, high-skilled workers are in favor of individualism, independence and personal achievement which serve as the main drivers of their organizational commitment (Kinnear & Sutherland, 2020). High-skilled workers need great autonomy and discretion in their work environment (Handy, 1989) and to be treated as colleagues rather than subordinates to acknowledge their independence (Drucker, 2003).

In general, employers benefit from employees' organizational commitment in terms of lowering the rates of job movement (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Researchers found a positive relationship between organizational commitment and organizational identification, meaning that if employees are committed to the organization, they also tend to identify with the organization (Mete et al., 2016; Podnar & Golob, 2015). However, the positive relationship between organizational identification and organizational commitment is only established when looking at individual organizational identification as group organizational identification was found to be negatively related to commitment (Podnar & Golob, 2015). Moreover, high-skilled workers find a personal connection with the company and other workers very important to receive advancement possibilities (Colakoglu et al., 2018). The literature suggests that individuals are seeking to merge their work and personal lives to achieve a more balanced life (Levering et al., 1987; Peters, 1994). Thus, high-skilled workers tend to perceive a company on a more personal level. Therefore, we argue that workers in high-skilled roles identify with the organization through their personal attachment to the company.

On the contrary, research shows that low-skilled workers often do not associate with their company, as they take it only as a means of providing monetary compensation (Winkler et al., 2014). They often feel like they are not being properly compensated and lack

motivation for learning on their job as their main source of passion comes from outside of their working hours-time (Winkler et al., 2014). Low-skilled workers also change their job positions more often which makes it hard for them to create a loyal relationship with the company they work for (Holzer & LaLonde, 1999). Passarelli (2011) found that low-skilled workers have shown organizational commitment below average. This might be because job satisfaction is not related to organizational commitment for low-skilled workers, therefore even if they are satisfied with the job, they perform they might not feel committed to the company (Puangyoykeaw & Nishide, 2015).

Social media allow employees to use new ways to represent themselves. They can thus be framed as vehicles for self-presentation (Bazarova & Choi, 2014). As LinkedIn is an increasingly important tool for career development, especially for high-skilled workers (Baruffaldi et al., 2017), employees find it important to present themselves professionally on the platform (van Dijck, 2013). Cho and Lam (2020) found that high-skilled workers often depict their career paths on LinkedIn to attract new professional connections. Moreover, Andersson (2019) claims that LinkedIn can be used to build professional skills for high-skilled workers by following professionals in the field, learning key industry hashtags to follow for more related content and seeking out the best blogs and podcast recommendations posted online. Employees find networking important as it provides them with new learning and career opportunities (Archambault & Grudin, 2012). Davis et al. (2020) found that the frequency of LinkedIn usage is positively related to career benefits, thus networking helps individuals to obtain professional support. Hence, if the high-skilled employees wanted to be noticed by these professionals, they would most likely increase their online behavior, which was found to be positively correlated with networking (Deters & Mehl, 2013).

As found by Câmara et al. (2023), high-skilled professionals often build their reputations in the field through the prestige of the companies they work for. According to Grissa (2016), employees communicate their work victories with their network to establish themselves as professionals in the field. They also celebrate the victories of the companies they work at as it showcases them as loyal workers and increases the prestige of their company (Merisalo-Rantanen, 2014). High-skilled workers were found to positively refer to their workspaces online (Di Lauro et al., 2019). Contrarily, people with lower education prefer to share their hobbies rather than work-related information on their social media accounts (Hruska & Maresova, 2020). They use social media primarily for entertainment and connection with their established friends rather than for networking with professionals

(Yates & Lockley, 2018). Therefore, low-skilled workers might prefer to share updates from their personal rather than professional life on LinkedIn.

Moreover, low-skilled employees tend to be under-represented on the companies' social media accounts (McDonald et al., 2016) which might discourage them from engaging with their company online. As Perrault and Hildenbrand (2019) found companies which have ambassadorship programs frequently employ top professionals as representatives of their company limiting low-skilled workers from ambassadorship behavior. Companies want to establish themselves as leaders in their field and do so via their most prestigious employees. Hence, if low-skilled workers do not identify with the company, they do not have the motivation to share content about the company they work for online. On the contrary, if the company represents an important part of employees' lives, it is prone to become a part of their identity online (Ashforth et al., 2000). As a result, we predict that high-skilled workers through the appropriation of company values in their self-presentation online engage in ambassadorship behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Organizational identification will mediate the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn.

2.5 Social media guidelines and employee ambassadorship behavior

Social media guidelines outline the desired behavior that employees should abide by when posting on social media to protect the brand (Dreher, 2014). As digital media make the control of information spread largely impossible, the company culture becomes transparent through the employee's online activity as they showcase the organization's behavior, values, beliefs and general character to multiple stakeholders (Grunig, 2009). Therefore, companies often develop social media guidelines to communicate organizational, legal and regulatory rules to provide a clear understanding of appropriate and lawful social media use to avoid a negative reputation (Rokka et al., 2014).

The development of social media guidelines requires different phases, such as planning, implementation and revising to manage the challenge to balance the necessity for strict social media guidelines and authentic social media communication (Dreher, 2014). For example, Just Eat Takeaway.com, a Dutch multinational food delivery company, has employee social media guidelines that include the don'ts when posting and replying to online content such as being friendly and abiding house rules and don'ts such as posting

incorrect information about the company and using language not abiding with brand identity such as formal or metaphorical language (Just Eat Takeaway.com, n.d.).

When employees have set expectations about their social media use, social media guidelines contribute to an ethical and stakeholder-valuing climate in which employees feel empowered to share organizational content online (Walden, 2018). Social media guidelines help to break common myths and misunderstandings about using social media while helping the individual to perform an informed decision by providing information about risks and a company style guide (Spector & Kappel, 2012). Internal social media guidelines are an effective driver for employee engagement online as they foster mutual understanding and collaboration (Ewing et al., 2019). Parry and Solidoro (2013) found that social media especially drives employee engagement when the culture and leadership of the company already embrace open communication and participation. The findings of Ewing et al. (2019) revealed that the best practices in using social media guidelines by employees include social media policies, training the employees on the use of social media, empowering employee social media advocates and leaders, sharing relevant and practical content strategies and encouraging the employees to adhere to consistency and authenticity while posting. Therefore, through education, social media guidelines help employees to feel comfortable in their new role as online ambassadors. Moreover, it helps the employees maintain the same professional behavior and standards as in face-to-face encounters (Law et al., 2021). Peterson and Pitz (1988) found that when employees are presented with practical training in their new role, they tend to feel more confident in performing it. Additionally, according to the study conducted by Kumar and Nanda (2019), social media education emerges as a crucial predictor of social media engagement due to its role in promoting safe user behavior and mitigating potential risks. As a result, if social media guidelines are used to guide social media usage, high-skilled employees are even more prone to engage in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Thus, the hypothesis is formulated accordingly:

H3: Social media guidelines usage will mediate the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior.

Previous research found that guidelines should be written concisely to be fully understood by the reader. Otherwise, the reader cannot comprehend the information presented which lowers their motivation to follow them (Pillow et al., 2014). Similarly, Macalister (2015) reports that non-concise guidelines are frequently a reason why people do

not follow them as they find it hard to grasp the main concepts. Eastman et al. (2011) claim that too much information in guidelines distracts the reader and decreases the chances they will remember the content afterwards.

Ewing et al. (2019) found that social media guidelines have to include clear social media policies as the employees want to avoid the risks connected to its incorrect usage. If social media guidelines are not presented clearly, the employee is more prone to breach organizational policies and could likely cause harm to the company's reputation (Griffiths, 2015). The consequences the employee would have to face might demotivate them from engagement on social media.

In the recent case of API Microelectronics Ltd, an employee posted a negative comment about the working place and mentioned an attempt to sue the company. The company's policies prohibit its employees from posting comments online that could potentially damage the reputation of the brand. As a consequence, the employee was dismissed from their function. The Employment Tribunal confirmed that the employee had breached the policy and had failed to provide an adequate explanation for the action (Singh, 2017). Without the presence of social media guidelines, more cases like these are bound to happen. Therefore, Linke and Zerfass (2013) state the need to educate employees and draw clear social media guidelines to minimize the risks. Companies should, however, still actively encourage employees to use social media to have a positive effect on the company's image. Since social media guidelines often constitute a manual for the employee rather than strictly enforced rules, the policy should be open and transparent for the employee to understand and respect the company's guidelines (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Opgenhaffen and Claeys (2017) studied the development of social media guidelines for companies. Several companies from their study consulted the guidelines with different internal departments and employees before reaching the final decision. They further found that social media guidelines were intentionally written in a positive tone to create a relationship of mutual trust through which employees are encouraged to use social media more often. Rai (2012) found that companies that have guidelines encouraging openness through transparency and honesty, positively influence employees' online behavior. Hence, transparent social media guidelines help employees understand their role as social media ambassadors and encourage their ambassadorship behavior.

Contrarily, Jacobson and Tufts (2013) found that employees feel misled by concerns about their rights if the disciplinary actions for bridging the social media guidelines are not clearly stated. Therefore, the missing or non-concisely written information in social media

guidelines decreases the chances of employees engaging in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Additionally, Vaast and Kaganer (2013) found that if the guidelines towards what to post and what not to post are specific and to the point, the employees are more prone to use social media in a work environment. Further, Mazzei and Butera (2016) studied the brand-consistent behavior of employees on social media. They found that the clear presentation of social media guidelines sustains employee brand consistent behavior on social media. Similarly, Miles and Mangold (2014) found that when companies provide a proper organizational context and guidelines, they can manage employees' online activity to a strategic advantage. Therefore, the aforementioned studies stress the importance of concisely presented social media guidelines for the encouragement of employee ambassadorship behavior. The proposed conceptual model is presented in Figure 1 and the following hypothesis is presented:

H4: Concise social media guidelines will moderate the relationship between social media guidelines usage and ambassadorship behavior with higher concision of social media guidelines leading to more frequent ambassadorship behavior.

Figure 1

The conceptual model
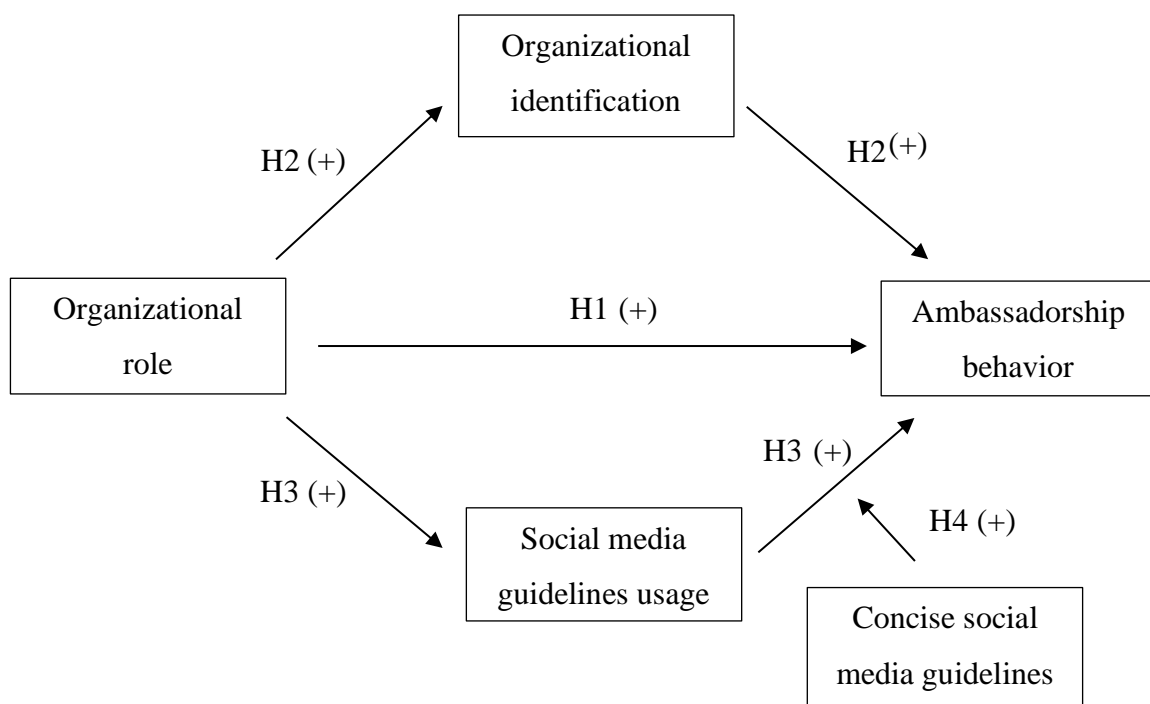
The opinions on what concise social media guidelines incorporate differ. For example, McNeill (2012) states that for social media guidelines to be concise they should include the brand's purpose and company style guide. Selin et al. (2006) add that the guidelines should not only incorporate the corporate identity and design but also strategies for the design, such as 'infotainment'. On the other hand, according to Drude and Messer-Engel (2020), the guidelines should rather incorporate the regulations and potential risks such as the risk of harm as a result of misconduct, or employees' incompetence and the risk of revealing private and confidential information. Researchers found that there is a high occurrence of 'violation of data protection principles' in enterprises' social media guidelines due to the fear of enterprises losing control over the data (Krüger et al., 2013, p. 5). Jacobson and Tufts (2013) claim that social media guidelines can include both on-duty (e.g. protection of information, authority) and off-duty conduct such as general recommendations of employees on social media.

When it comes to rules, Jiang et al. (2020) found that there is a clear variability of rules in the guidelines, however, it is unclear why such a variability occurs. They predict that the companies might focus on and make rules based on the most common misbehavior. Yet, this was not confirmed by the study. Flynn (2012) claims that stylistically social media guidelines should use straightforward sentences, and conversational English and give concrete examples wherever possible to be understood by everyone. Additionally, Althaus et al. (2022) emphasize that there are four standard components in general guidelines: 1. purpose statement, 2. authority and applicability, 3. effective date, and 4. policy statement that makes guidelines easy to comprehend. Since the opinions on what constitutes concise social media guidelines differ, this study aims to further examine this phenomenon. According to research, companies also have varied opinions on the form of their social media guidelines. While large companies such as Walmart primarily incorporate risk management and their public policies into their guidelines (Culnan, n.d.), smaller companies rather promote the brand voice and best social media practices (Hassan et al., 2015). Similarly, Postman (2009) argues that large companies are inherently more vulnerable to potential harm to their brand image. Consequently, these companies should prioritize the mitigation of risks associated with the use of social media platforms by their employees. However, according to Khan et al. (2014) each organization should assess the tolerance of the risks and provide guidelines that maximize the benefits.

The study on the elements of social media marketing (Felix et al., 2017) states that employees are in need of rules and guidelines articulated by their management. Moreover,

companies should allow employees to be involved in the formation of social media guidelines to motivate their internalization (Felix et al., 2017). Hence, while the companies are unsure of the form of their social media guidelines, employees know the company policies and brand voice well and therefore can help the companies make them clearer (Wahlroos, 2011). When it comes to the format, several studies provide evidence that the learning material is more effective in a digital format (Sopina & McNeill, 2014; Nokelainen, 2006) because it fosters higher engagement and the information is stored in one place making it easy to access at any time. Klionsky et al. (2021) found that the use of videos leads to higher engagement levels while long videos are more influential than shorter videos. Moreover, if the video conveys an emotional message, it achieves higher active engagement (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). However, the use of contemporary images was found to be even more influential on engagement levels.

Since most people are already using their laptops daily, Shemberger and Wright's study (2014) revealed that when information is stored digitally, it makes it easier for people to recall and review the information presented. Sadik (2008) also found that digital projects could increase the understanding of the content as they are more immersive and engaging. As media enables and constrains the messengers from certain actions, so the format of the message may vary. Sometimes emojis or gifs are used to convey emphasis or pragmatic nuance in written messages, or the length of the message is controlled (Page et al., 2022). Therefore, even the information presented in a digital format may sometimes become hard to read or understand (James, 2008). This study hopes to get a clearer definition of what, according to the employees, concise social media guidelines incorporate.

RQ1: What are the forms of concise social media guidelines?

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

To examine the proposed hypotheses, survey research is employed. A survey is a systematic method for gathering quantitative information from a large sample of the population (Fowler Jr, 2013). It includes a set of questions that are designed to gather factual data, people's opinions, ideas, attitudes, knowledge, and experiences (Fowler Jr, 2013). Hence, the survey is well-equipped to study the attitudes employees have towards ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Surveys are used to ensure that a wide range of people and experiences are included for the results to be generalized (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). Therefore, the employment of surveys to study the predictors of employee ambassadorship behavior ensures that results can be applied to any organization.

A survey was developed which consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions that related to predictors of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. An overview of the whole survey is displayed in Appendix A. The survey was divided into several parts that incorporated general questions including participation criteria, questions about organizational identification, organizational role, social media guidelines and ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Completion of the survey took approximately 28 minutes ($M = 28,42$ min.; $SD = 10979.7$). Nonetheless, a substantial degree of variability was observed among the values, indicating that certain participants took significantly longer than others to complete the survey. Data collection took place from the 30th of April 2023 till the 12th of May 2023. The survey was closed upon the receipt of enough responses to conduct the analysis.

3.2 Sample and sampling strategy

This paper employs a virtual snowball sampling method that uses virtual networks to reach normally hard-to-reach populations by expanding the geographical scope (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Leighton et al. (2021) found that this method is an effective and efficient way to recruit participants as it reaches those who would not otherwise know about the study. Participants were asked to identify other participants who meet the inclusion criteria. Since this method's main limitation is that the same networks might occur in different populations resulting in very similar results (Parker et al., 2019) the different snowballs were initiated to collect results from various types of employees. To assure the variety of employees the paper employs "chain referral sampling" in which the snowball samples are strategically built via multiple varying seeds (Penrod et al., 2003). Therefore, to begin the sample the

participants had to be as diverse as possible. It primarily concerns variety in the profession, age and familiarity with LinkedIn. The selected participants were requested to assist in obtaining other participants.

As one of the main criteria for participation was to have an active LinkedIn account and be a full-time employee, the survey was primarily distributed on LinkedIn. The survey was distributed as a post on the researcher's personal LinkedIn account and shared by several professionals in marketing, business and communication. A series of personalized messages with the link to the survey was composed and distributed to the entirety of the researcher's LinkedIn connections, with the request for them to spread the survey across their respective personal or professional networks. Since the aim was to initiate several snowballs, the survey was also shared on the Instagram story of the researcher's personal Instagram account, as well as, in the form of a personal message to the followers. Additionally, the survey was distributed to personal contacts on WhatsApp and to several WhatsApp groups from the Erasmus University Rotterdam who were asked to refer the link to the survey to their contacts who might fulfil the criteria. To assure there will be enough participants from outside of the friends' circle, the survey was shared on the platform SurveySwap and SurveyCircle, research platforms that help people find participants for online surveys. The platforms work on the principle of mutual support, therefore the more surveys you fill in the higher ranking your survey gets and thus more participants it obtains.

In total, 314 respondents participated in the survey about employee ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Six respondents did not give consent and therefore could not continue with the survey, while 21 participants were deleted from the analysis because they completed less than 20% of the survey. Another 55 respondents were not full-time employees and 33 did not have an active LinkedIn account and thus were redirected to the end of the survey. When it comes to age, two respondents were younger than 18 years old and two respondents were older than 65 years, thus they were discredited from filling out the survey as there is low possibility for them to be full-time employees. Consequently, 195 respondents ($n_{females} = 111$; 56.9%; $n_{males} = 60$; 30.8%) remained in the dataset and were used for analyses. The overview of participants deleted from the dataset is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Participants deleted from dataset

	n
Indicated that they do not give the consent to continue with the study	6
Completed less than 20% of the survey	21
Filter question 1: they are not full-time employees	55
Filter question 2: they do not have an active LinkedIn account	33
Filter question 3: were under 18 or over 65	4

Note. N = 195

Respondents were on average 28 years old (*M* = 28.12; *SD* = 6.85; *range* = 18-65). The majority of respondents finished their Bachelor's education (*n* = 83; 42.6%) and Master's (*n* = 64; 32.8%), while the rest of the respondents finished primary school (*n* = 3; 1.5%), secondary school (*n* = 11; 5.6%), high school (*n* = 28; 14.4%), and doctorate or equivalent (*n* = 6; 3.1%). Further, the respondents were asked whether the education they completed was in the field of their work or not. Generally, fewer of the respondents are educated in the field they currently work in (*n* = 96; 49.2%) compared to the respondents who do not have an education in the field they work in (*n* = 99; 50.8%). Most of the respondents were working in other fields (*n* = 62; 31.6%) than the ones presented in our options which included engineering (*n* = 13; 6.7%), legal (*n* = 5; 2.6%), accounting (*n* = 7; 3.6%), human resources (*n* = 9; 4.6%), marketing/communication (*n* = 41; 20.9%), retail trade (*n* = 15; 7.7%), office/administrative support (*n* = 24; 12.3%), education services (*n* = 7; 3.6%), medical services (*n* = 6; 3.1%), and manufacturing (*n* = 6; 3.1%). The other fields incorporated sales, finance, technology/IT, hospitality/HORECA, consulting, safety, government, pornography, logistics, recruiting, trade, management/events and the construction industry. The sample description is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Sample Description

Variable	Description	*n*	%	*M*	*SD*
Gender	Female	111	56.9%		
	Male	60	30.8%		
	Other	24	12.3%		
Age				28.12	6.85
Education	Primary School	3	1.5%		
	Secondary School	11	5.6%		
	High-school	28	14.4%		
	Bachelor's	83	42.6%		
	Master's	64	32.8%		
	Doctorate or equivalent	6	3.1%		
Education in the field	Yes	96	49.2%		
	No	99	50.8%		
Work field	Engineering	13	6.7%		
	Legal	5	2.6%		
	Accounting	7	3.6%		
	Human Resources	9	4.6%		
	Marketing/communication	41	20.9%		
	Retail trade	15	7.7%		
	Office/administrative support	24	12.3%		
	Education services	7	3.6%		
	Medical services	6	3.1%		
	Manufacturing	6	3.1%		
	Other	62	31.6%		

Note. N = 195

3.3 Operationalization of concepts

Organizational identification. To measure whether the respondents ($n = 195$) identify with their organization, the survey employed a three items scale from Leach et al. (2008). Items included a statement such as "I feel a bond with this organization" (Leach et al., 2008) The concept was measured on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). These items had good reliability (Cronbach's α = .91; $M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.46$). Skewness is reported to measure the asymmetry of a distribution to perform statistical procedures (Zach, 2022). Similarly, kurtosis shows the tailedness of the distribution (Turney, 2022b) While normality is not considered to be an important criterion for performing linear regression analysis (Hayes, 2013), the research proposes implications of omitting the normality measure. In cases of small sample size, non-normality can influence sampling variance and reduce the power of regression test (e.g., Duncan & Layard, 1973; Edgell & Noon, 1984; Havlicek & Peterson, 1977). Therefore, the skewness and kurtosis are reported for all the variables accordingly. The skewness of organizational identification was found to be -.81, indicating that the distribution was left-skewed (Zach, 2022) while kurtosis is .06, a thin-tailed distribution compared to the normal distribution (Turney, 2022b).

Organizational role. To measure organizational role, participants ($n = 195$) were asked to mark their competencies as employees on a three items scale from Abella (2006). This scale refers to the competencies of high-skilled workers. Workers in high-skilled roles are expected to have specialized skills, previous experience and education in the field (Abella, 2006). If the workers are not required to dispose of any of these competencies, they are in a low-skilled role. Items included statements such as "I have to have specialised skill". The responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (very important). These items had good reliability (Cronbach's α = .78; $M = 3.06$; $SD = 1.05$; Skewness= -.33; Kurtosis = -.80). The distribution of data is left-skewed (Zach, 2022) and thin-tailed (Turney, 2022b). Further, the dummy variable was created where 0 represents low-skilled workers and 1 represents high-skilled workers. The participants who answered on a scale from 1 to 2.99 were coded as low-skilled workers and those who scored 3 and more were coded as high-skilled workers.

Ambassadorship behavior. To measure ambassadorship behavior, a six items scale developed by van Zoonen et al. (2018) was used, which refers to the extent to which employees share information on LinkedIn. Since their study was done on Facebook and LinkedIn, only the three items relating to LinkedIn were used. Participants ($n = 153$)

answered the questions such as "How likely you would 'like' a LinkedIn post by your organization?" (van Zoonen et al., 2018, p. 357). Overall, 42 respondents out of the total sample (n = 195) did not answer these questions. Ambassadorship behavior was measured on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 7 (extremely likely). The items had good reliability (Cronbach's α = .87; M = 4.08; SD = 1.65) and the skewness of ambassadorship behavior is -.33, indicating left-skewed distribution (Zach, 2022) and kurtosis is -.90, pointing to thin-tailed distribution of data (Turney, 2022b).

Social media guidelines. To study social media guidelines usage, a three items scale on Planning Activity and Organizational Formation Formalization by House and Rizzo (1972) was adapted to study the social media guidelines usage by participants (n = 79). Items include statements such as "Social media guidelines are used to guide work" (House & Rizzo, 1972, p. 480). Responses are measured on a 7-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (never) to 7 (every time). According to the reliability test the scale is not reliable which might have consequences on the analysis, therefore the reliability of the results of this scale might be limited (Cronbach's α = .45; M = 4.25; SD = 1.19; Skewness = -.30; Kurtosis = .61). When it comes to the distribution of data, the data are left-skewed (Zach, 2022) and fat-tailed (Turney, 2022b).

To further distinguish whether the social media guidelines have a concise structure based on the information they provide, an adapted three items scale by Lee et al. (2002) is employed to measure whether participants' (n = 76) social media guidelines are concise. The items include statements such as "Social media guidelines are presented concisely" on a 10-point Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely) (Cronbach's α = .93; M = 6.66; SD = 2.60; Skewness = -.21; Kurtosis = -.16). The items had good reliability according to Cronbach's alpha while the responses are dispersed closely to the mean. Concerning the distribution, the data are left-skewed (Zach, 2022) and thin-tailed (Turney, 2022b). The dummy variable for concise social media guidelines was created where 1 represents low concise social media guidelines and 2 represents high concise social media guidelines. The answers from 0 to 4.99 were coded as low concise social media guidelines and answers above 4.99 as high concise social media guidelines.

Additionally, this study employs the measure of understandability of social media guidelines to understand whether employees find their company's social media guidelines on average understandable. In line with Brown et al. (2011) guidelines should be understood to be followed. Moreover, Mendling et al. (2010) posit that the information should be

presented in a readily comprehensible format, thereby enabling employees to effortlessly grasp the main points of the document.

The four items scale by Lee et al. (2002) was used to study the understandability of social media guidelines. Participants ($n = 76$) answered the statements such as "The information presented in social media guidelines is easy to understand." The items were measured on a 10-point Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely) (Cronbach's α = .11; $M = 6.25$; $SD = 3.01$; Skewness = -.84; Kurtosis = -.70). Cronbach's alpha shows that the scale is not reliable which might affect the results. The distribution is left-skewed (Zach, 2022) and thin-tailed (Turney, 2022b).

As regression analysis is not very sensitive to skewed data, especially when they are only mildly skewed (Blanca et al., 2013), there was no further action required. The overall description of variables is presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Variable Descriptives

	M	*SD*	Cronbach's α	Skewness	Kurtosis	*n*
Age	28.12	6.85				195
Gender[a]	.64	.48				195
Ambassadorship behavior	4.08	1.65	.87	- .33	- .90	153
Organizational role	3.06	1.05	.78	- .33	- .80	195
Organizational identification	4.64	1.46	.91	- .81	.06	195
Social media guidelines usage	4.25	1.19	.45	- .30	.61	79
Concise social media guidelines	6.66	2.60	.93	- .21	-.16	79
Social media guidelines understandability	6.25	3.01	.11	-.84	-.70	75

Note. [a]For Gender: 0 = male 1= female

The respondents whose company has social media guidelines ($n = 126$; 64.6%) received several open-ended questions. They were asked questions such as: what is the content of your company's social media guidelines? In which format are your company's social media guidelines presented? Can you remember a situation in which you overruled the rules of the use of social media in your company without knowing it? If your company does not have social media guidelines, what informal social guidelines in your company do you

have? Additionally, they were asked to upload their company's social media guidelines in case they dispose of them.

Thematic analysis was used to code the data from the two open-ended questions about content and format of social media guidelines while the additional open-ended questions were used to fill in any gaps in these data. First of all, the researcher got acquainted with the data and participants' descriptions of the social media guidelines in their company. Then relevant data were coded and divided into specific themes. The coding categories emerged from the data (inductive) and the data was coded at a semantic level. In the next stage, the themes were re-evaluated and deleted if not necessary. Lastly, the themes were redefined, and the final result section was produced in the form of relevant quotes related to the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Concerning the content of social media guidelines, four main themes emerged. Additionally, when looking at the format of social media guidelines, four themes emerged. The themes are further elaborated in the results section. The themes that emerged from thematic analysis for content and format of social media guidelines are presented in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2

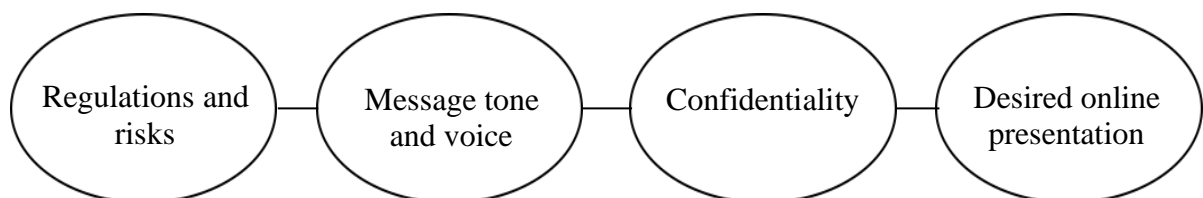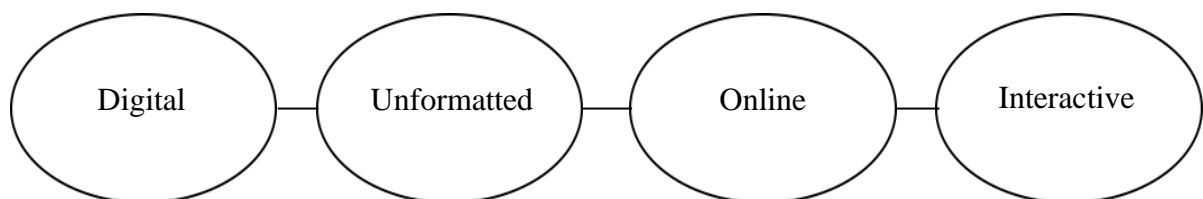*Thematic map of content of social media guidelines*

Figure 3

Thematic map of format of social media guidelines

3.4 Processing and analysis of data

Data were processed and analyzed in SPSS. First of all, a preliminary analysis of the data was conducted to prepare the data for further analysis (Blischke & Murthy, 2011). To

understand the correlation between the variables, the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) was calculated. The number between -1 and 1 measures the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables (Benesty et al., 2009) which helps to indicate multicollinearity between the variables.

To test the hypotheses, Hayes' PROCESS macro plug-in using 5000 bootstrap simulations with a 95% confidence interval was used in SPSS (Hayes, 2013). PROCESS macro is a widely used logistic regression analysis modelling tool (Postman, 2009). It is used to test the direct and indirect effects in single or multiple mediator models, moderation models, as well as, conditional indirect effects in moderated mediation models (Process macro for SPSS et al., n.d.).

4. Results

Hereby, the results from the analysis are presented. At first, this study employs preliminary analysis to measure the correlations between the variables. Then the results from the main analysis are introduced to confirm or reject the stated hypotheses. Lastly, the results from the thematic analysis are presented shading light on the content and format of employees' social media guidelines.

4.1 Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted in order to understand the correlations between all variables. The results are interpreted in line with Turney's (2022a) article about the Pearson correlation coefficient where the value of Pearson correlation coefficient between 0 and -1 signifies a negative correlation, a value of 0 shows no correlation and a value between 0 and 1 suggests positive correlation. The correlational coefficients of the measured variables are presented in Table 4.1. The organizational role and ambassadorship behavior were found to be moderately positively correlated ($r = .45$; $p < .001$). Additionally, the organizational role and organizational identification are also moderately positively correlated ($r = .37$; $p < .01$). Further, the organizational role is moderately positively correlated with social media guidelines usage ($r = .46$; $p < .001$) and concise social media guidelines ($r = .36$; $p = .001$). There is a strong correlation between ambassadorship behavior and concise social media guidelines which means that a change in one variable is in many cases accompanied by a change in another variable ($r = .50$; $p < .001$). Organizational identification and ambassadorship behavior are positively moderately correlated ($r = .39$; $p < .001$). Similarly, ambassadorship behavior is moderately positively correlated with social media guidelines usage ($r = .49$; $p < .001$). Organizational identification was found to be moderately positively correlated with social media guidelines usage ($r = .48$; $p < .001$) and concise social media guidelines ($r = .33$; $p < .01$).

Furthermore, there is a strong positive correlation between social media guidelines usage and concise social media guidelines ($r = .54$; $p < .001$). The correlation between the control variable, age, was found to be insignificant with ambassadorship behavior ($r = .09$; $p = .291$), organizational role ($r = .13$; $p = .068$), organizational identification ($r = .05$; $p = .493$) and concise social media guidelines ($r = .07$; $p = .539$). The correlation between age and social media guidelines usage is weak and negative ($r = -0.3$; $p = .803$). Similarly, the correlation between the second control variable, gender, is not significant with ambassadorship behavior ($r = .08$; $p = .078$), organizational role ($r = .07$; $p = .330$), social

media guidelines usage (r = .11; p = .366) and concise social media guidelines (r = .21; p = .085). The correlation of gender with age (r = -.01; p =.919) and gender with organizational identification (r = -.02; p =.782) is not significant.

The control variables, age and gender, were not significantly correlated with the dependent and independent variables. Hünermund and Louw (2020) advise against using control variables in the main analyses in case they are not significant in the correlation matrix as they do not control for the results. Likewise, Black's (2001) study also omits insignificant control variables as including them leads to a risk of finding insignificance when an effect exists. Spector and Brannick (2010) argue that control variables should not be treated equally with other variables in the analysis. Their inclusion in the analysis is not necessary in case, they were proven to be insignificant and thus have no effect on the variables (Spector & Brannick, 2010). Moreover, Li (2021) claims that adding control variables may at times introduce overcontrol and endogenous selection biases, creating alternative interpretations rather than ruling them out. As there was neither a strong theory nor previous empirical research suggesting their inclusion, gender and age were excluded from the main analysis.

Table 4.1

Pearson correlation matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Age	1						
Gender[a]	-.01	1					
Ambassadorship behavior	.09	.08	1				
Organizational role[b]	.13	.07	.45***	1			
Organizational identification	.05	-.02	.39***	.37***	1		
Social media guidelines usage	-0.3	.11	.49***	.46***	.48***	1	
Concise social media guidelines	.07	.21	.50***	.36**	.33**	.54***	1

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001; [a]For gender: 0 = male 1= female; [b]For organizational role: 0 = low-skilled workers 1 = high-skilled workers.

4.2 Main Analysis

        To test the hypotheses, a moderation-mediation regression analysis using bootstrapping resampling method was conducted via PROCESS v4.2 by Andrew F. Hayes (2013) using model five for moderated mediation. The data were analyzed using 5000 bootstrap simulations with a 95% confidence interval (CI) to examine the effects of organizational role, organizational identification, social media guidelines usage and concise social media guidelines on ambassadorship behavior. If the 95% CI does not include zero, the effect is considered statistically significant (Altman, 1998). Organizational identification (X) was entered into the model as an independent variable, organizational identification (M) and social media guidelines usage (M) as mediators, concise social media guidelines (W) as moderator and ambassadorship behavior (Y) was entered as the criterion variable.

        The overall model was found to be significant, $F(5,72) = 8.27$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .36$. The model predicts that 36% of the variance in employee ambassadorship behavior is explained by the employee's organizational role, organizational identification, social media guidelines usage and concise social media guidelines. The relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior was not significant, $b = 1.72$, $SE = 1.27$, $t(72) = 1.35$, $p = .181$, 95% CI [-0.81, 4.24], therefore the organizational role is found to have no effect on ambassadorship behavior and thus H1 could not be confirmed. The beta coefficient for all reported variables is unstandardized as PROCESS macro reports unstandardized coefficients. Hayes (2013) claims that if the variables in the model are measured on a similar measurement scale, reporting of unstandardized coefficients allows for the interpretation of all coefficients and effect sizes. The relationship between the variables is further reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

The analyzed relationship between criterion variable, mediators and moderator

	Organizational identification				Social media guidelines usage				Ambassadorship behavior			
	b	*SE*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*	*b*	*SE*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*	*b*	*SE*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
[a]Organizational role	1.56 ***	.31	.95	2.17	1.11***	.25	.62	1.61	1.72	1.27	-.81	4.24
Organizational identification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.15	.12	-.10	.40
Social media guidelines usage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.33 *	.16	.01	.65
[b]Concise social media guidelines	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.07*	.50	.08	2.06
Model Summary	*F(1, 76) = 25.64*				*F(1, 76) = 20.25*				*F(5,72) = 8.27*			
	$R^2 = .25$				$R^2 = .21$				$R^2 = .36$			
	p < .001				*p < .001*				*p < .001*			

Note. Number of bootstrap samples for confidence intervals: 5000. Level of confidence for all confidence intervals: 95. N = 78; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, [a]For organizational role: 0 = low-skilled workers 1 = high-skilled workers, [b]For concise social media guidelines: 1 = low 2 = high

The second hypothesis predicts that organizational identification will mediate the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. The first part of the aforementioned model where organizational identification affects organizational role was found to be statistically significant, $F(1, 76) = 25.64$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .25$. Hence, 25% of the variance in organizational identification is predicted by organizational role. The relationship between organizational role and organizational identification is significant, $b = 1.56$, $SE = .31$, $t(76) = 5.06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.95, 2.17]. Therefore, organizational role can be said to predict the organizational identification. The positive direction of b refers to the positive effect of high-skilled workers on organizational identification. However, the relationship between ambassadorship behavior and organizational identification is statistically not significant, $b = .15$, $SE = .12$, $t(72) = 1.18$, $p = .240$, 95% CI [-0.10, 0.40]. There was found to be no indirect effect of organizational role on ambassadorship behavior through organizational identification (*effect* = .23, $SE = .20$, 95% CI [- 0.17, 0.62). The effects are summarized in Table 4.3. As a result, H2 was rejected.

Table 4.3

An outcome of total direct and indirect effects of mediators and moderators on the criterion variable and organizational role

	Direct effect of concise social media guidelines on ambassadorship behavior				
	Effect	*SE*	*t*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
Low concise social media guidelines	1.07	.60	1.78	-.13	2.28
Highly concise social media guidelines	.43	.48	.89	-.54	1.40
	Indirect effect of organizational identification on ambassadorship behavior				
	Effect	*SE*	*BootLLCI*		*BootULCI*
Organizational identification	.23	.20	-.17		.62
	Indirect effect of social media guidelines usage on ambassadorship behavior				
	Effect	*SE*	*BootLLCI*		*BootULCI*
Social media guidelines usage	.36	.18	.01		.74

Note. 5000 bootstrap simulations with confidence interval of 95%. $N = 78$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Further, it was proposed in H3 that the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior is mediated by social media guidelines usage. The second part of the model where the relationship between social media guidelines usage and organizational role was tested is statistically significant, $F(1, 76) = 20.25$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .21$. Thus, 21% of the variance in social media guidelines usage is predicted by organizational role. Looking at the relationship between social media guidelines usage and organizational role, it was found to be statistically significant, $b = 1.11$, $SE = .25$, $t(76) = 4.50$, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [0.62, 1.61]. Social media guidelines usage is a significant predictor of ambassadorship behavior, $b = .33$, $SE = .16$, $t(72) = 2.04$, $p < .05$, 95% *CI* [0.01, 0.65]. There is an indirect effect of organizational role on ambassadorship behavior through social media guidelines usage, $effect = .36$, $SE = .18$, 95% *CI* [0.01, 0.74]. Social media guidelines usage was confirmed to mediate the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior, thus H3 was confirmed.

Lastly, it was proposed that concise social media guidelines moderate the relationship between social media guidelines usage and ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. The relationship between ambassadorship behavior and concise social media guidelines is found to be statistically significant, $b = 1.07$, *SE*= .50, *t* (72) = 2.14, *p* < .05, 95% *CI* [0.08, 2.06]. The conditional effect for a low level of concise social media guidelines is not statistically significant, *effect* = 1.07, *SE* = .60, *t* (72) = 1.78, *p* = .080, 95% *CI* [-0.13, 2.28]. So social media guidelines that are not written concisely or only on a low level are not significant moderator. Similarly, concisely written social media guidelines were also found to have no effect on the relationship between social media guidelines usage and ambassadorship behavior, *effect* = .43, *SE* = .48, *t* (72) = .89, *p* = .377, 95% *CI* [-0.54, 1.40]. The conceptual diagram showcasing the relationships between the variables is presented in Figure 4. As a result, H4 was rejected.

Additionally, participants were asked to report on the understandability of their company's social media guidelines. The results show that on average respondents found social media guidelines understandable, (*M* = 6.25; *SD* = 3.01). Therefore, employees' company social media guidelines are relatively easy to understand.

Figure 4

Andrew Hayes' mediation-moderation model 5 conceptual diagram
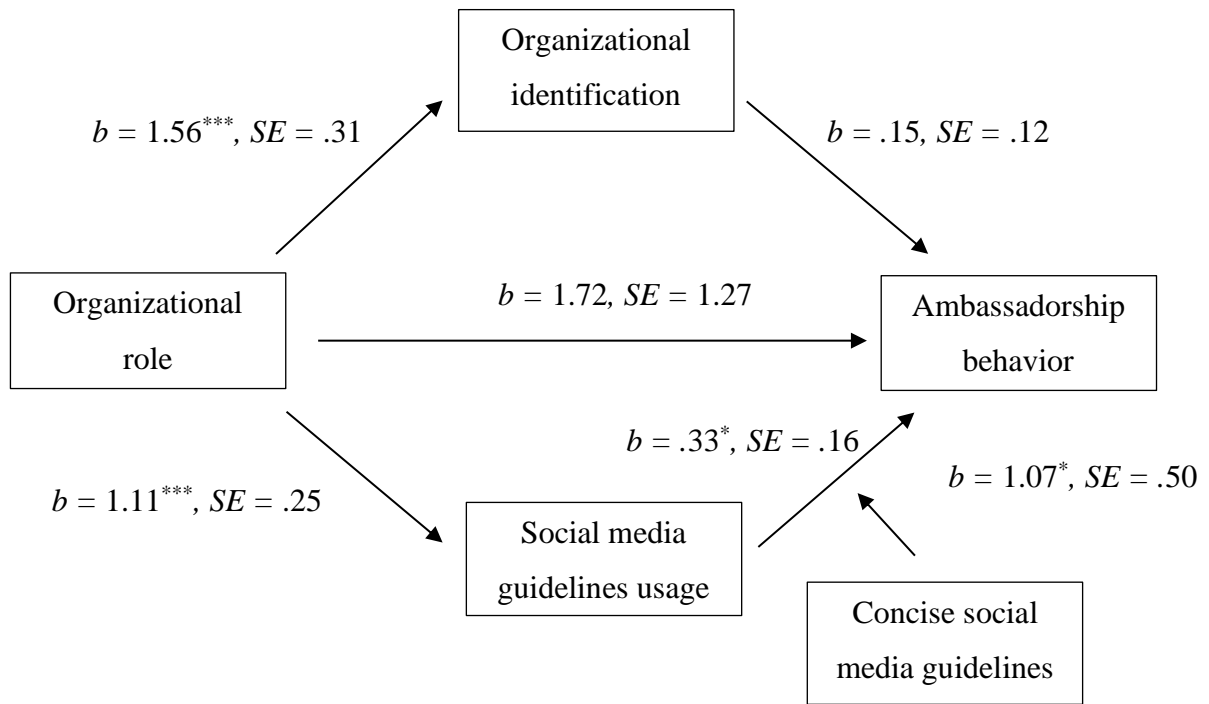
Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between the variables. Number of bootstrap samples for confidence intervals: 5000. Level of confidence for all confidence intervals: 95%. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

4. 3 Thematic Analysis (RQ1)

As described in the method section to answer the first research question, thematic analysis was used to identify the emergent themes related to the formation of concise social media guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theme here refers to important information about the data in reaction to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While 126 participants confirmed that their company disposes of social media guidelines, only 66 participants (51.6%) provided an answer to questions about the content and format of their company's social media guidelines, 28 respondents (22.2%) further specified the informal social media guidelines they use in the company and 58 respondents (46%) answered the question about the time they violated social media guidelines of their company. Unfortunately, none of the participants uploaded their

company's social media guidelines. Due to the lack of responses, there is a limited generalizability of these findings in real-world context.

To fully understand what forms concise social media guidelines, participants ($n = 66$) were first asked to elaborate on the content of their company's social media guidelines. In total, 8 participants were excluded due to non-valid answers in which they confirmed that they do not have knowledge about the content of their social media guidelines. From the analyses, four main themes emerged that summarize the type of content that is most represented in the company's social media guidelines. These themes create concise social media guidelines for employees which are easily followed and understood.

Regulations and risks. A fairly large proportion of the sample ($n = 30$; 45.5%) reported that their company's social media guidelines included general rules and regulations on the behavior of the employee on social media. They described it as don'ts on social media to protect the company from a bad reputation and negative public image. Therefore, the companies were aware of the risks employees' social media ambassadorship behavior can obtain. Several respondents ($n = 10$) have provided more concrete examples of the behavior which is prohibited in their company. For instance, a male participant (30) reports that "*You are free to express yourself however ensuring you are not clashing with religious or strong political views, you are not offensive or insulting*." Others also reported the ban on sharing photos from work and using social media during their working hours.

Message tone and voice. In total, 12 (18.2%) respondents indicated that their company's social media guidelines include primary information on their social media message tone and voice to match that of the company. As a male participant (42) explains "*It is important for the company I work at to highlight that what the company stands for, we as employees also stand for*." Some respondents ($n = 3$) state that it is important to take into account brand values and purpose when crafting the message for social media. Moreover, several social media guidelines ($n = 4$) include more concrete information on the language that is recommended to use on social media, the use of symbols and logos and in which scenarios employees can mention their company's name online.

Confidentiality. Many companies do not want their employees to share sensitive data with the public, therefore several respondents ($n = 10$; 15.2%) reported that the social media guidelines include information on the protection of sensitive or personal data and customers. A few respondents ($n = 5$) highlighted the importance of protecting the company, their data and general image. For instance, the male respondent (25) highlighted "*We're allowed to entice others in the field to join, but asked not to talk to the general public about the firm,*

regarding salaries etc." So, companies are concerned about the leakage of their data to the public. Other respondents (*n* = 5) noted that their social media guidelines rather focus on protecting their patients and customers as a male respondent (23) says "*No sharing of confidential client data, not even in the background of a photo.*"

  Desired online presentation. A total of 6 respondents (9.1%) found in their company social media guidelines primarily the information on how to create desired online content. Several of them (*n* = 4) reported that their social media guidelines included tips and tricks on how to create engaging and favorable content that can be shared on social media. The female respondent (26) explains what their company's social media guidelines include "*When to create LinkedIn posts and guidelines on what the post should contain, whom to tag and who can review your posts.*" Therefore, he points out that some companies have a setup procedure for reviewing the posts before posting. Others (*n* = 2) report on the information about what is appropriate to post according to the company and how they should behave online.

  Further, if the company does not have any official social media guidelines the respondents were asked to identify the informal social media guidelines in their company. From 17 valid responses, most of the respondents referred to spoken rules (*n* = 10; 58.8%) that are not specifically noted anywhere but it is the managers or the employees who speak of them openly. As a female respondent (28) explains "*We also have spoken rules that people should not be on their social media during work hours or post during these hours*." This claim is in line with the social media guidelines content on regulations and risks. Therefore, the spoken rules also mostly entail risks connected with social media usage by employees. Further respondents (*n* = 4; 23.5%) referred to the common knowledge or common sense which directs you towards certain online behavior. As a male respondent (24) highlights "*The only social media guideline in my company is not to share any background details regarding tactics, formation or players with the broad public, but it is more of a common sense than a rule.*" The rest of the respondents (*n* = 3; 17.6%) named a specific informal rule such as "*correct usage of branded elements*" or "*not to post about the company on personal social media.*"

  The participants were then asked to elaborate on the format of their company's social media guidelines. Together, 63 valid responses were analyzed from which 4 main themes emerged. Since most of the respondents mentioned more than one format, some of their responses might have been coded to several themes or codes.

Digital. In total, 39 participants refer to the format of their social media guidelines as being in a digital form. Over 10 participants claim that their social media guidelines come in a video format which means that employees can rewatch them at any time in case of doubts when posting online. The majority of participants receive their social media guidelines in graphics form ($n = 32$) which includes photos and PDF files of employee handbooks, brand guidelines, contracts or code of conduct. Additionally, 15 respondents received a presentation either as a part of their training on the first day or as a file to view the rules when posting on social media.

Unformatted. Several respondents ($n = 15$) claimed that their company does not have social media guidelines stored in any concrete format. 5 of the respondents (33.3%) claimed that they only follow logical rules that were never spoken but can be logically thought of. The rest ($n = 10$; 66.7%) mentioned that they have several spoken rules that are mostly said by their managers.

Online. A total of 10 participants mentioned that their social media guidelines are uploaded online, and they have to access their internal website or social media to access them. Half of the participants ($n = 5$; 50%) claimed that their social media guidelines are uploaded on their company website as described by a participant (23, male) "*somewhere on their internal company website*." One of the participants referred to the company's knowledge-sharing app on which he can find the article about social media guidelines. The other half of the participants ($n = 5$; 50%) can find their social media guidelines on social media such as Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn but only with the internal link that is shared with employees.

Interactive. Some respondents ($n = 10$) have mentioned a more interactive format of their social media guidelines. Three participants (30%) have mentioned that they have received training or a workshop on how to behave on social media. The rest ($n = 7$; 70%) have reported seeing the posters in the employee room or the office. The posters were more elaborate on the social media desired behavior as the participant notes that they have a "*poster with manuals on how to take a pleasant photo or what areas can be actually pictured*."

Lastly, participants were asked to identify the situation in which they overruled the rules of social media use in their company without knowing it. These answers help us understand what other social media rules the companies have but fail to clearly communicate to their employees. In this case, we identify the social media guidelines that are not presented clearly and luck the concision. While over 58 respondents answered this question,

only 11 of the responses were identified as valid. Some respondents ($n = 2$; 18.2%) referred to the times when they posted content on social media that displayed alcoholic drinks while the content could be connected with the company they worked for. They further explained the actions that had to be taken after this content was displayed such as "*the agency asked us to take it down and replace with the videos without the drinks or non-alcoholic drinks*."

Further, several respondents posted revealing photos at their work outside of working hours ($n = 2$; 18.2%). As the respondent explains "*I have once posted a photo which was revealing more of my skin and was taken in the changing room at my work. I had a serious talk about this with my manager and almost got fired due to this*." This participant almost lost their job due to their social media behavior. Other respondents ($n = 3$; 27.3%) have shared content from their workplace that is not accessible to the public or shared content with their colleagues. Two of the respondents were asked to take down the content from their social media accounts and one of them got into an argument with their colleague about posting the photo they did not consent. The rest of the respondents ($n = 4$; 36.4%) mentioned very specific scenarios such as posting about the competition, cropping some of the company's symbols, sharing a photo with the winning student seen as favoritism or asking the contacts to vote for their company in a competition while they were not allowed to vote.

5. Discussion

In this section, the main findings are discussed, with theoretical and practical implications drawn from academic literature. Further, the several limitations of this study are introduced together with the recommendations for future research.

5.1 Main findings and theoretical implications

This study answers calls for more empirical research on predictors of employee ambassadorship on LinkedIn. With the digital revolution, companies are struggling to control their image online, therefore employees can act as authentic ambassadors of their company on LinkedIn (Smith et al., 2021). This paper argues that organizational identification, social media guidelines usage, concise social media guidelines, and organizational role are important predictors of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Although scholars have studied employee social media usage (e.g., Davis et al., 2020; van Dijck, 2013), there are limited studies on the predictors of employee ambassadorship behavior. As social media became an important communication tool (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014), it is essential that companies understand employees' behavior online.

The results show that there is no direct relationship between the organizational role and ambassadorship behavior. In other words, high-skilled workers are not prone to engage more on LinkedIn compared to low-skilled workers. Therefore, the workers' skill is not a significant predictor of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. While the theory presented concentrates on the motivation of high-skilled workers to learn and develop themselves in new areas with the use of LinkedIn (Baruffaldi et al., 2017; Ceccagno &Gao, 2022), it promotes passive rather than active online behaviors. Therefore, the nonsignificant relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior can be explained by the employees' preference for observing rather than engaging with the content on LinkedIn. Cooper and Naatus (2014) claim that most professionals find learning content on LinkedIn useful for their areas of expertise. They, however, prefer to learn by consuming the content accessible on the platform. When it comes to engaging with the professionals in the field, employees were found to join in the networking activities rather than engage with the professional content on the platform (Chang et al., 2017). As such high-skilled workers are more prone to learn from the consumption of the content on LinkedIn rather than from sharing their own learnings not being prompted to engage in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn.

Alternatively, while high-skilled workers tend to take on additional work (Kovach, 1995), they might not see their online behavior as of value for the company. In cases when the company is not active on LinkedIn or does not enforce the employee ambassadorship behavior through their internal communications, the employees are not motivated to engage in online ambassadorship behavior (Aagaard, 2013). When the advantages of employees' ambassadorship behavior are not presented to the employees, they feel like their online activity does not provide value to the company and thus restrict from it (Aagaard, 2013). Even if high-skilled workers might go above and beyond their companies' expectations, this is often related to their work performance (Boye Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). As found by Ho et al. (2009) high-skilled workers strive to grow within the company, therefore their performance adheres to the projects in which their skills are recognized. This is primarily the innovations and efficiency projects within the company as these are easy to measure compared to their online ambassadorship behavior which is appreciated but not rewarded accordingly (Van Dyne et al., 2001).

On the contrary, a field of work might be a more significant predictor of ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. For instance, employees in marketing, social media and communications are more connected with the world of social media. They are aware of the social media trends, strategies and brand image therefore they know how to present themselves online on different social media platforms (Ananda et al., 2016). Majid et al. (2019) claim that the extensive knowledge of the development of effective social media messages motivates them to be more active on their social media accounts. On the contrary, people working in more technical fields often lack the knowledge of social media and the creativity to actively represent themselves online (Koch et al., 2013). While they can be perceived as authentic when sharing their technical expertise, they were not found to be powerful actors in building brand image (Weinländer, 2021).

Moreover, it's important to note that employee ambassadorship behavior is a new marketing strategy for companies. Several studies confirmed that companies see their employee engagement online as a risk rather than an advantage (Smith et al., 2018; van den Berg & Verhoeven, 2017). Therefore, companies are often not satisfied with the online presence of their employees and rather limit than encourage this behavior (Wæraas & Dahle, 2020). This is in line with the findings of this study, given that a large proportion of our sample described regulation and risks to be a major part of their company's social media guidelines. As respondents often referred to the prohibition of certain online behavior, this might have demotivated them from engaging in ambassadorship behavior. Sarens and

Christopher (2010) found that if guidelines include extensive information on the risks, people are unmotivated to perform the activity to avoid running into them. This paper found that employees have limited knowledge about their company's social media guidelines. Therefore, companies do not promote their internal social media guidelines sufficiently. In the case of LinkedIn, employees might need more concrete guidelines to keep up with the professionality of the platform.

Secondly, organizational identification does not mediate the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior. However, the relationship between high-skilled workers and organizational identification was found to be significant, hence high-skilled workers tend to identify with their organization more than low-skilled workers. As discussed, high-skilled workers are motivated by the freedom and opportunities to grow within the company (Gol et al., 2018). Since they often work in the area of their interest, their work becomes part of their personal lives (Rao, 2017). It was found that high-skilled workers stay working in one company for a longer time if the company values their contribution to the overall growth (Albrecht et al., 2018). Once their work ignites their passion it starts to intertwine with their personal life (Leovaridis & Vătămănescu, 2015) until they find it hard to differentiate between their work and private life. Hence, high-skilled workers identify with their company through the passion, autonomy and opportunity for the self-growth the companies offer them.

The non-mediating effect of organizational identification on the organizational role and ambassadorship behavior can be explained by the employees' established professional presence on LinkedIn. Employees on LinkedIn already enact their professional identities by sharing their work experience, and organizational and profession-related information (van Zoonen et al., 2018). They use LinkedIn to find a professional network with whom they can exchange knowledge in the field (Sharone, 2017). Professionals like to mention their current and previous work or research experiences, especially if they work in well-established companies (Thew, 2008). Hence, regardless of whether the employees identify with their organization, organizational information is part of their professional identity. Given the affordances of LinkedIn such as the skills, education, and experience displayed, organizational information is already part of employees' profiles whether they identify with the organization or not.

Furthermore, social media guidelines usage was found to mediate the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior. So, if the employees use their company's social media guidelines, they are prone to engage in ambassadorship behavior.

This goes in line with the research of Kaufhold et al. (2018) who found that social media guidelines make people more aware and prepared for the risks they could encounter when engaging online. Employees were found to use social media more proactively if they understood the correct online behavior (Ventola, 2014). For example, if the restriction on social media usage during working hours was clearly communicated with the employees during their onboarding session or internal company communication channels, employees most frequently avoided this behavior (Ventola, 2014). Additionally, (Pitafi et al., 2019) claim that employees' social media knowledge encourages safer online behavior. These results prove that employees are concerned about the consequences of their social media behavior and try to actively avoid any penalties.

It seems that the employees' usage of social media guidelines can be justified by not only avoiding the risks connected with social media behavior but also learning how to actively engage with their company on LinkedIn. Given the importance that employees attach to showcasing their accomplishments, they actively seek to comprehend the means by which they can enhance their portfolio of professional achievements through the utilization of their company's online platforms (Brenner et al., 2019). Furthermore, in the case of employees affiliated with renowned enterprises, they aspire to leverage professional connections via the prestige of their company (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). To achieve this, employees understand the need to comprehend the values and style guidelines of their company. Consequently, they refer to social media guidelines to effectively represent their organization professionally on LinkedIn. As a result, social media guidelines help employees make informed decisions about their online behavior (Bezboruah & Dryburgh, 2012).

On the contrary, the concise presentation of social media guidelines was found to have no moderating effect on the relationship between social media usage and employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. This might be primarily explained by the limited measure and outdated supporting literature. Since no recent research was conducted on the topic of concise guidelines, this paper relied on the research from eight years ago that was proven in this study to be outdated. Moreover, the vision for the measure of concise social media guidelines was too arbitrary. First of all, the participants were asked to rate the conciseness of their company's social media guidelines without being clearly presented with the definition of conciseness. As conciseness might be perceived differently depending on the person's ability to interpret the social media guidelines (Pancer et al., 2018), the general definition of conciseness could avoid the polarization of answers. Secondly, this study did not control for the variability across the individual parts of social media guidelines. The

company could have elaborated more on the part about the risks than the part about the company's brand style. Therefore, measuring all parts as one could generate unreliable results.

Additionally, this study found that social media guidelines are often missing in the company setting or that companies rather rely on informal social media guidelines such as spoken or logical unspoken rules, employees might be primarily exposed to non-concisely formatted social media guidelines. People learn to read and interpret non-structured documents if they are frequently exposed to them (Davahli et al., 2020). Since in general employees view their company's social media guidelines as understandable, the form of their social media guidelines seems to not alter their social media guidelines usage behaviors. As discussed by Chen et al. (2018) conciseness and understandability do not always go hand-in-hand. Sometimes people might need a more extensive explanation of a topic including details which would have been otherwise skipped in concise texts (Yanto et al., 2020). While concise social media guidelines might save the time spent on reading by employees, employees seem to prefer more elaborate explanations of their social media behaviors.

When it comes to the research question about the forms of social media guidelines, this study presents the most commonly used content and format in social media guidelines. Most of the company's social media guidelines include the risks and general rules, as well, as the information on brand voice and tone. As discussed by Wan and Schell (2007) companies are trying to protect their image, therefore the display of general rules should avoid the risks connected with employee social media presence. It also seems that risks and rules are most often viewed as parts of company social media guidelines. Thus, employees are concerned about the consequences of their social media presence (Sims, 2002). Because companies care about the way they are presented on social media, employees must represent the company's values and match the tone to be perceived as authentic (Holtzhausen & Fourie, 2009).

Most of the guidelines were distributed to employees in digital format which makes it easier to share and store in case employees need to revisit them. Jung and Stolterman (2012) argue that digital format allows for storing a large amount of information in one place which is easily accessible at any time. If the company does not have social media guidelines stored in a file, they distribute them through a company website or social media accounts. This allows the employees to easily access this information, however, the exact location of social media guidelines has to be clearly communicated by an employer. Otherwise, the

employee might get frustrated from not finding the information online, especially if the website contains a lot of information. Quite a large proportion of participants stated that their guidelines do not have a clear format and rather follow spoken and logical rules. While several employees might benefit from the spoken guidelines, if there is no one to remind them, employees tend to bypass the rules (Hadud et al., 2016).

5.2 Practical Implications and contributions

In today's digital society, impressions about the company culture are mostly formed through the content employees share online (Seo & Lee, 2021). As found, employees are powerful ambassadors due to their high credibility and authenticity in their online communications (Moiseeva, 2021). While there are some discrepancies on whether employees' engagement is more beneficial (Eagleman, 2013) or risky for the companies' reputation (Lam, 2016), insights into the antecedents of employees' online liking, sharing and posting behavior provide companies and managers with increased opportunities to influence these behaviors.

There are several practical implications of this study. The employee's skill is not a significant predictor of ambassadorship behavior, therefore companies investing in brand ambassadorship programs should allow workers on all skill levels to participate. Employees might benefit from proper guidelines to navigate the complex dynamics of professional and social demands. Thus, employees would be more aware of how their actions can damage the companies' image and can thus avoid risks of misconduct or revealing confidential information online. As a result, companies could rely on their employees to maintain their positive brand image on LinkedIn.

Secondly, since the employee does not need to identify with the organization to engage in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn, there is a huge potential for companies to engage employees who do not necessarily identify with the organization. As a result, the companies have a possibility to onboard a large number of potential brand ambassadors while setting expectations that exhibit influence on their online behavior.

Furthermore, social media guidelines usage was found to be an important mediator of organizational role and ambassadorship behavior. This insight suggests that companies should invest in promoting their internal social media guidelines among employees. Since the majority of respondents have social media guidelines in digital format, we recommend the companies continue using this digital format, distributing them to the employees via internal communication channels such as Slack or email. Previous research on corporate

reputation demonstrates that for brand ambassadors to be perceived as authentic, the employee has to show an understanding and relation to companies' values and identity (Edinger-Schons et al., 2019). The knowledge of brand guidelines is significant as it can empower the employee to represent themselves authentically online (Krause, 2016). This paper further suggests that companies include sections on risk management and brand identity in their social media guidelines for the accessibility and recall potential of the employees.

*5.*3 Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample was fairly international as the researcher's network primarily consists of professionals coming from various countries and backgrounds. As online behaviors across countries differ based on culture, habits and social media knowledge (Dinev et al., 2009), the opinions about ambassadorship behavior among our participants could also differ. While in economically developed countries, the engagement of employees on social media is highly praised and encouraged by companies, in a more traditional countries the employees are discouraged from online engagement due to its connected risks (Kim et al., 2008). Additionally, in some countries, LinkedIn is not a popular tool, such as Slovakia in the case of this research, which discouraged many people from participating in this research. Thus, the difference in cultural background among the sample could provide inconsistency in the results. It is advised for further studies to first understand how employees' ambassadorship behavior is viewed in certain cultures and focus on a local sample to avoid the extremes in results.

Secondly, the data were collected from many participants across a short period of time, so they have a cross-sectional nature. While cross-sectional studies employ a large pool of participants, they might be unrepresentative of the behavior of a group as a whole (Thomas, 2022). For instance, when looking at the impact of organizational role on ambassadorship behavior, this study did not take into account the individuals who currently entered high-skilled positions or individuals who despite their higher education work in low-skilled positions. Moreover, it is hard to establish the cause-effect relationships from a single measurement of the alleged cause. So, if the relationship between ambassadorship behavior and its predictors was measured across time, this study could have provided better insights into its cause-effect relationships and established long-term trends (Thomas, 2022). Therefore, future research could incorporate a longitudinal study to observe whether the

employees' intentions towards ambassadorship behavior change over time while controlling for its predictors.

Thirdly, it is important to note that the present study solely considers individuals classified as high-skilled and low-skilled workers while disregarding the presence of middle-skilled workers. Middle-skilled workers possess a level of technical education and training that surpasses that of high school (Modestino, 2016). In an attempt to simplify the study and offer a broader perspective, the intermediate values were assigned to high-skilled workers. However, for future research on the behavior of employee ambassadorship behavior, it would be valuable to broaden the scope to include middle-skilled workers, acknowledging their diminishing presence across a majority of labor markets in the OECD (Green, 2019).

The survey utilized in this research featured a sequence of consecutive open-ended questions, a format that discouraged numerous respondents from providing answers. Specifically, although a total of 126 participants reported having social media guidelines present in their company, only 66 participants responded to the initial open-ended question. Consequently, this decline in response further impacted the number of answers obtained regarding ambassadorship behavior. To enhance the value of responses in future investigations, it is advisable to avoid an excessive concentration of open-ended questions within a single survey page. Instead, Geer (1988) recommends implementing a more equitable distribution of open-ended questions throughout the survey. He emphasizes the significance of systematically incorporating open-ended questions into surveys to ensure a higher rate of response from participants (Geer, 1988).

Further, the lack of social media guidelines uploaded by the participants limited the understanding of the content of social media guidelines. While respondents tried to describe the content of their social media guidelines in several words, we account for several details in social media guidelines that could have been missed due to the favoritism where the respondents replied based on the socially favorable answer (Abbink & Harris, 2019). Moreover, the respondents are susceptible to remembering the content they liked or used to guide their social media presence. Future research should make uploading of social media guidelines mandatory to study them more precisely avoiding the loss of information.

Furthermore, the scale for social media guidelines usage was found to be unreliable which might have altered several results. If a scale is unreliable, the measures are inconsistent and therefore we cannot predict whether the same results will occur if we measure the same construct by the same scale (Lee et al., 1991). While it implies consistency and not accuracy, the results presented in this study incorporating social media

guidelines usage might still be accurate. However, for future studies, it is recommended to use a different scale on social media guidelines usage. The new scale on social media guidelines usage should also incorporate the frequency of social media guidelines usage, as well as, the scenarios in which employees find the information reported in social media guidelines useful to guide their behavior online.

6. Conclusion

This study serves to expand the knowledge of the predictors of ambassadorship behavior. The results indicate that organizational role is not a significant predictor of employees' ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. Therefore, the worker's skill does not predict their ambassadorship behavior. Similarly, organizational identification was not found to be a significant mediator of organizational role and ambassadorship behavior, however, high-skilled workers often identify with their company compared to low-skilled workers. Social media guidelines usage mediates the relationship between organizational role and ambassadorship behavior. Therefore, if the employees use social media guidelines to navigate their online behavior, they are more prone to engage in ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. However, the concise social media guidelines do not moderate the relationship between social media guidelines usage and ambassadorship behavior. Thus, the conciseness of social media guidelines is not an effective moderator. On average social media guidelines are understandable by the employees thus their non-concise presentation does not affect their understandability. The social media guidelines frequently contained the risks and regulations together with a brand style guide to assure that the employees follow the company rules when engaging with their content online. Several employees reported the lack of official social media guidelines in their company while referring to spoken or logical unspoken social media rules. Companies primarily distributed their social media guidelines in digital format.

7. References

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8. Appendix A: Online Survey

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in research about ambassadorship behavior on LinkedIn. The purpose of the study is to understand how employees use their LinkedIn and engage with their company's LinkedIn profile.

We appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey.
Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all information collected will be kept confidential and stored in a secure environment. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your responses will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared with any third parties.

Important: this survey is only for participants who are currently full-time employees over the age of 18 and have an active profile on LinkedIn. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Please take your time and answer each question to the best of your ability.
If you have any questions about the study or are dissatisfied with any aspect of the survey, you may contact me via this email address 538787pr@student.eur.nl.
P.S.: This survey contains credits to get free survey responses at SurveySwap.io

 Thank you for your time and contribution to the research.

Sincerely,

Patricia Rovna

- ○ I give my consent

- ○ I do not give my consent

Are you a full-time employee?

○ Yes

○ No

Do you have an active LinkedIn account?

○ Yes

○ No

What is your age?

▼ younger than 18 (4) ... older than 65 (69)

Please, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel a bond with my organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel solidarity with my organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel committed to my organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

In which work sector do you work?

○ Engineering

○ Legal

○ Accounting

○ Human Resources

○ Marketing/communication

○ Retail trade

○ Office/administrative support

○ Education services

○ Medical services

○ Manufacturing

○ Other

If you selected "Other", please specify the sector you work at.

_____

How important is it to have the below-mentioned skills, education and experience to perform your work?

	Unimportant	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
I have to have specialised skill.	○	○	○	○	○
I have to be educated in the field.	○	○	○	○	○
I have to have a previous experience in the field.	○	○	○	○	○

What is the highest level of education you completed?

▼ Primary school (1) ... Doctorate or equivalent (6)

Was your highest achieved education in the field that you currently work in?

○ Yes

○ No

Does your organization have social media guidelines?

Any unofficial, non-written social media rules within your company are also social media guidelines. Social media guidelines communicate organizational, legal and regulatory rules to provide a clear understanding of appropriate and lawful social media use to the employees.

○ Yes

○ No

What is the content of your company's social media guidelines?

_____

In which format are your company's social media guidelines presented?

_____

Please, upload your company's social media guidelines here (in case your company has them).

Can you remember a situation in which you overruled the rules of the use of social media in your company without knowing it? Please, write the scenario below.

_____

If your company does not have social media guidelines, what informal social media guidelines in your company do you use?

_____

Please, indicate how true these statements about the social media guidelines you use at your company are.

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	Average	6	7	8	9	Completely
Social media guidelines are formatted compactly.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social media guidelines are presented concisely.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The representation of social media guidelines is compact and concise	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please, indicate how true these statements about the social media guidelines you use at your company are.

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	Average	6	7	8	9	Completely
The information presented in social media guidelines is easy to understand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The meaning of the information presented in social media guidelines is difficult to understand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The information presented in social media guidelines is easy to comprehend.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The meaning of the information presented in social media guidelines is easy to understand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please, indicate how often social media guidelines are used in the scenarios below.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually	Every time
Social media guidelines are used to guide social media usage.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social media guidelines are planned beforehand.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Important factors in Social media guidelines are frequently overlooked.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please, indicate how likely is that you would perform the following tasks.

	Extremely unlikely	Moderately unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Slightly likely	Moderately likely	Extremely likely
'Like' a LinkedIn post by your organization?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
'Share' a LinkedIn post by your organization?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
'Post' a LinkedIn message about your organization?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please indicate your gender

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

Thank you for your time spend on this survey.

I appreciate the effort you took to fill in this survey.

Might you have any additional questions about the research, please do not hesitate to reach out to me by email: 538787pr@student.eur.nl.

The following code gives you credits that can be used to get free research participants at SurveySwap.io: https://surveyswap.io/sr/C0SJ-6NID-RMHW . Or, alternatively, enter the code manually: C0SJ-6NID-RMHW

Redeem Survey Code with one click: https://www.surveycircle.com/R5VN-KPAC-P3LV-HWS2/