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Social Analytics – Toward Emotionally Intelligent Value Co-Creation

The rapid development of digital technologies, and of social media in particular, has transformed companies' business landscape. Social media has punctured holes into companies' internal and external walls and made them transparent and susceptible to criticism by their customers, employees and other stakeholders. The manageability of emerging issues within and outside organizations has become ever more complex. Unsurprisingly, many studies have argued that companies should be aware of the tone of social media discussions related to their products, services and brands (Chmiel et al. 2011; Fan & Gordon, 2014; Jalonen & Jussila, 2016).

People, whether they are employees, managers or customers, prefer that things go the way that they want them to go. Employees, for example, expect fair treatment by their managers and colleagues, whereas managers want that their subordinates achieve their performance goals. Obviously, customers desire products and services that work as promised. However, occasionally things go wrong. Employees can feel injustice in terms of uneven working load, while managers are facing underperformance of their staff members. Customers, in turn, may find out that a product is out of stock or poor customer service. The gap between what is expected and what is delivered, induce disappointment, frustration, and sometimes even anger. Handling these situations is not an easy task. However, if succeeded, there are many advantages to gain. Studies show that *emotional intelligence* is associated with higher leadership effectiveness (Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005), job satisfaction and performance (Sy et al., 2006), and customer satisfaction (Kernbach & Schutte, 2005).

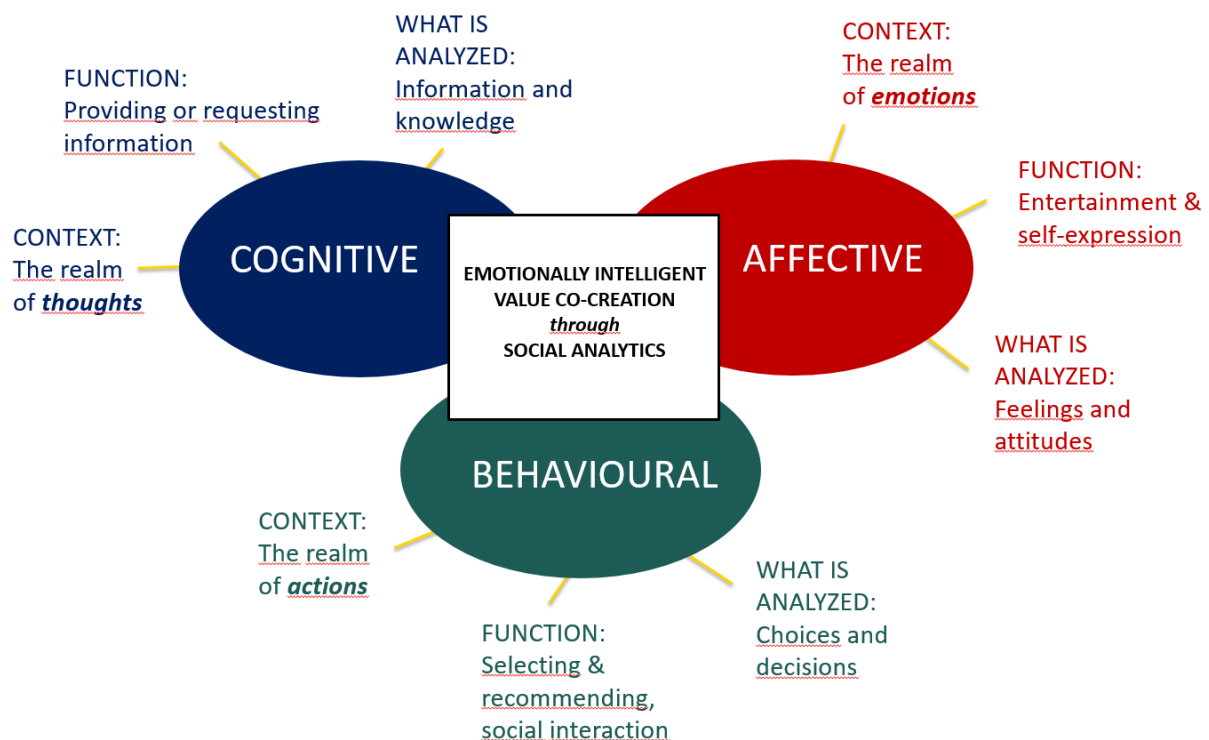
Emotional intelligence refers to a constellation of five skills: self-awareness – knowing one's strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and impact on others, self-regulation – controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and moods, motivation – relishing achievement for its own sake, empathy – understanding other people's emotional makeup, and social skill – building rapport with others to move them in desired directions (Goleman, 2015). Each of these skills have been covered extensively in previous research. Worth noting is that emotional intelligence is not an attribute of a leader, but a feature of good leadership. Emotional intelligence can (and should) be conducted through repetitive interactions within and outside of organisation. In practise, emotional intelligence manifests in the individual's ability to consider other people's feelings especially when making decisions. The importance of emotional intelligence in the business context is unquestionable. Emotionally intelligent individual is able to understand, relate to and be sensitive to customers, colleagues and communities, whereas its opposite, a sociopathic individual, succumbs to arrogant, self-centred, insensitive and manipulative behaviour.

Social media has brought new complexity to organizational life and, consequently, shifted the requirements of organizational emotional intelligence. Social media is not just the implementation of communication technology, but the transformation of working and organization cultures. This paper, builds on the conviction that the rapid growth of social media requires and enables new ways of looking at emotional intelligence. Numerous studies and everyday experiences indicate that social media has changed societies and the ways we interact with each other. Social media is an unregulated context allowing people to publish almost anything that comes to their minds. There is no need/room for gatekeepers in social media. Many studies have shown that social media is an arena for activities that reflects negative or contradictory emotions, such as communicating discontent, being sarcastic and provocative, acting rude, and sometimes even expressing hatred and anger (Pfeffer et al., 2014; Pang et al., 2014; Burnap & Williams, 2015). Studies have also shown that positive sentiment around

a company's brands in social media often becomes reality on the balance sheet and bottom line (Kaplan & Haenlain, 2010; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Berthon et al., 2012). The message is clear: An emotionally intelligent organisation must develop the ability to recognise the emotions shared and diffused in social media and to understand their relevance to business and to behave on the basis of that understanding.

While a lot is known about the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance, what is lacking is the understanding how emotional intelligence can be enacted through social media. Expressing emotional intelligence in social media is not an easy task. It's been argued, for example, that due to the lack of interpersonal cues (i.e., nonverbal behaviour, facial expression, prosodic speech qualities etc.), social media reduces the information transmitted and therefore the result is more impersonal and less empathic interaction compared to face-to-face communication (e.g. Derks et al., 2008).

However, at the same time, increased processing capacity of computers has enabled the more accurate analysis of the mechanisms by which things, events and phenomena arise and spread. Many private issues that previously remained hidden have become public on social media. It is not surprising that *social analytics* – and particularly the automatic identification of content that expresses emotions and opinions – has been one of the fastest-growing application areas of information technology in recent years (Gartner, 2014; Fan & Gordon, 2014). This paper explores how social analytics can be used for blending data, emotions and experiences in a way that enables new kind of value (co)creation. Leaning on the *service-dominant logic* (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), this paper adopts the view that value is co-created in the interactions among producers and consumers through the integration of resources and application of competencies. Companies can propose value through market offerings; however, the real value arises if customers and other stakeholders accept the offering and continue to the value-creation process through use (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). As a main contribution, this paper proposes a preliminary framework for *emotionally intelligent value co-creation through social analytics* (see figure).



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