
USING THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Abstract:

Social media is after all an online platform through which people can freely express their views, options or grievances. It is critical for a company to track and summarize the discussions that addressed its own brand, but also to track consumer opinion about competing products. Perhaps the most important advantage that these platforms offer is the possibility of collecting feedback directly. A company can ask questions specific professional groups, receiving answers from both existing and potential customers, clients of competing solutions or even directly from the competition. Regular collection, compilation and analysis of this information provides important support for eliminating gaps, for deciding on new features or repositioning products according to customer needs.

Key words: *social media, companies, internet, customer relationship management*

1. Introduction

An important aspect influencing businesses ability to perform is the perceptions of their employees on the implementation of necessary strategies. The corporate culture must be values oriented, characterized by responsibility and directed by people (Taylor C., 2012). It is necessary that employers to have goals and visions regarding the company, to identify with them, and the company to take responsibility toward employee (Verde A., 2012). A firm must give life to its strategy.

2. Transition of Customer Relationship Management to Social Customer Relationship Management

Using new Social Media technologies in applying CRM system was assessed through 14 questions that measured the perceptions of companies employees participating in this study on the use of new Social Media platforms and of technology in general to implement a Customer Relationship Management system in an organization.

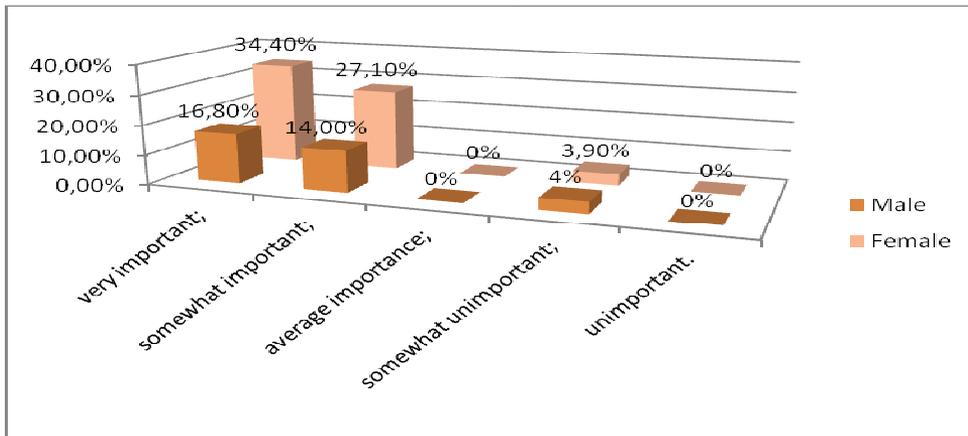
An essential aspect of the management activities is communication, allocation of resources in this respect being extremely important (Tellis G., Stremersch S., Yin E., 2003). Certainly, any step of the enterprise can not be done without the existence of an effective communication, between organization and its employees or between organization and its customers. Companies limited resources slows the process of technology implementing, those preferring the use of most funds in other directions (Kelly H., 2012). So, the enterprises surveyed are not allocating sufficient resources to achieve the transition to Social CRM, the identified situation requiring significant improvement.

Enterprise's ability to perform these transition is evaluated through the item: implementation of rules / policies regarding the use of Social Media in company, over 60% of respondents mentioning the fact that the organization has not implemented at all rules or policies regarding the use of Social media. This item highlights the importance Romanian companies gives to new technologies for communication and promotion, only about 38% of companies having implemented policies on the use of Social Media in Customer Relationship Management.

The reasons why companies actually use Social Media tools are diversified, according to the answers obtained to Questions 8, which explores these reasons, but the main reason is the preservation of a link with customers (about 31% of respondents). The next percentage obtained on this item is the obtaining of customer feedback on the products and services. Other reasons why organizations are using Social Media platforms is the increasing of number of professional and business contacts (bet on a rate of 17.16%) and information searching and sharing the feedback about brands and products (17.61%). To this question, too, there is an element that negatively highlights, namely promoting business, which is why companies actually use social media platforms just bet on a rate of only about 8%.

Closely related to the item analysed above, the question number 20 highlights the fact that only about half of companies appreciate Social Media platforms as very important for professional activity (51% of respondents). The fact that emerges from fig. no. 1 is the females pays more attention to the importance of Social Media, professionally.

Fig. no. 1 - How important is Social Media platforms for your professional activity?



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

The fact that emerges from this questionnaire, namely that the organizations allocates limited resources for transition to new Social Media technologies is confirmed by the answers obtained at this question, but still a rate of nearly 8% of respondents generally thought that Social Media tools are somewhat unimportant for performance obtaining in professional activity.

Again, as a confirmation of the low level of Social Media potential exploitation, there is an extent of about 10% of respondents to the item I21 which generally thought they are average satisfied by the results of professional Social Media activities, the pleased ones by these results representing only about 39% of the respondent companies.

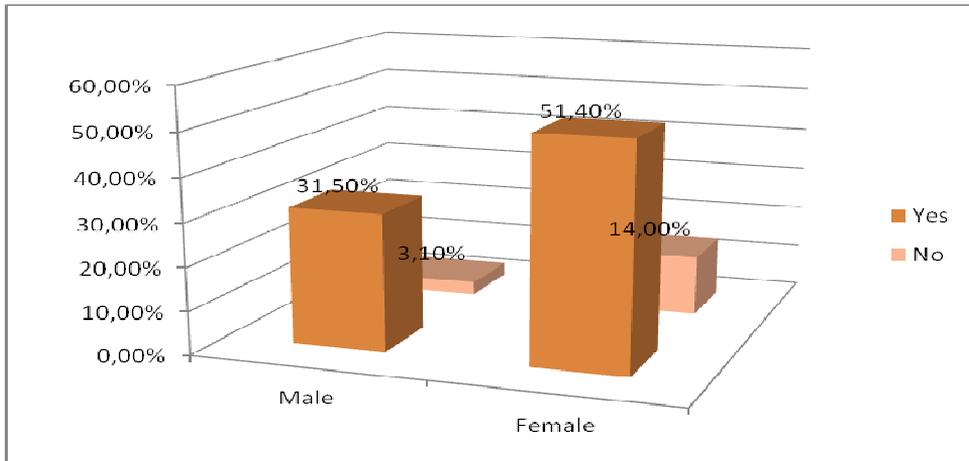
The trend in this respect is the existence of low interest to renew the material base, which is motivated by the low scores recorded. Replacement of the used equipment, the acquisition of a new art equipment or updating existing systems are, according to the respondents of this study, neglected aspects by businesses in Romania.

Another negative aspect identified in the conducted research on the perspective of using Social Media in organizations is observed analyzing the weak outcome obtained from question I22 - just 1.61 points, which shows the fact that just a small part of Romanian organizations (approx. 38%) are adopting well-established rules regarding the use of Social Media. From the few interviews conducted with representatives of companies that were willing to register on the respondents list to the questionnaire, appears that the use of social media platforms at a very low level is caused by employees tend to use these platforms for personal purposes.

Moreover, a percentage of 17% of respondents are not aware of the rules and restrictions that regulates information posting on virtual environment (copyright, privacy, etc.), as it can be seen by analyzing the results obtained from questions 23. Correlating this question with the items I2, I3 and I4, we obtain the next graphs, which

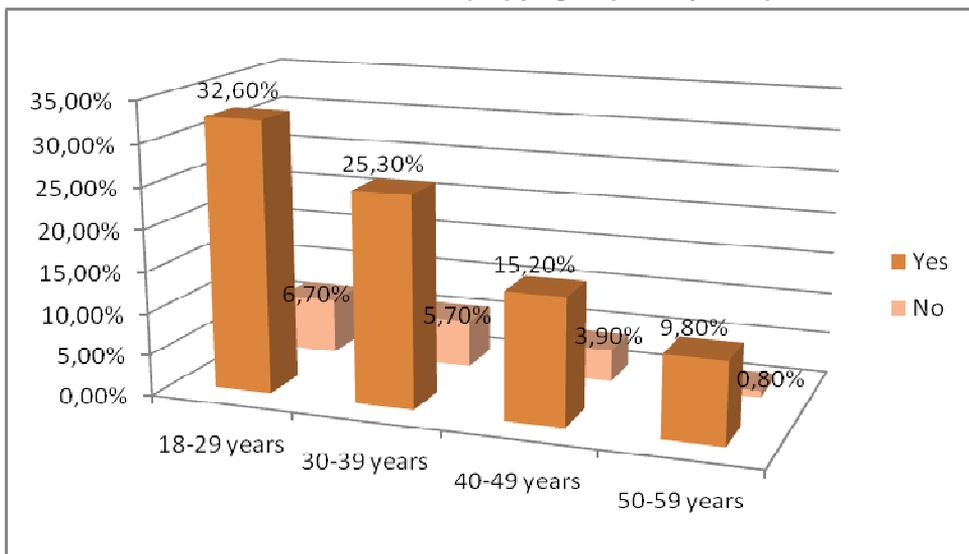
are demonstrating the fact that we can not make nor a difference of sex, neither a difference of age categories, neither between managerial levels in the firm, in the sense that in all listed categories, those who know the rules on posting information online are more numerous than those who do not know them.

Fig. no. 2 - The rules and restrictions that regulates the information posting on virtual environment (copyright, privacy, etc.)



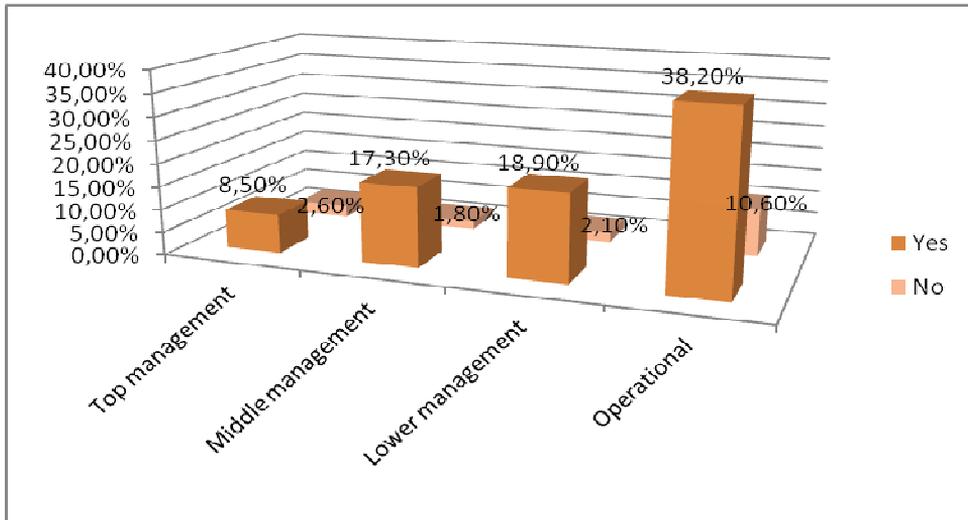
Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

Fig. no. 3 - The rules and restrictions that regulates the information posting on virtual environment (copyright, privacy, etc.)



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

Fig. no. 4 - The rules and restrictions that regulates the information posting on virtual environment (copyright, privacy, etc.)

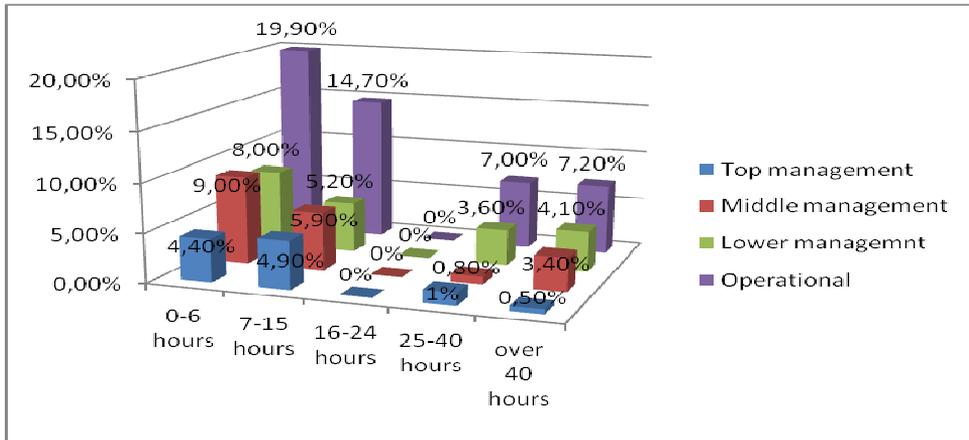


Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

But the potential of growing performance of organizations using Social Media applications is very high. From this point of view the answers obtained at the item 16 highlights the fact that 80% of respondents actually use the Facebook platform both for personal reasons and for professional reasons. If we are referring to the last ones, and if these respondents would use the mentioned platform in an organized way, regulated by rules and policies set by the company, the firms outcomes would definitely improve. It is worth mentioning the fact that the rest of the respondents, in percentage of 20%, they declared that they actually use the Facebook platform just for personal reasons. There is no respondent instead which is not using at all this Social Media application.

The potential that Social Media has to develop the Romanian companies is outlined by Fig. no. 5, which correlate the questions 25 and 4, and notes the fact that there are an 15.2% share of all categories of employees which are using different online applications more than 40 hours per week. Of these, again, stands the operational departments, spending online more than 40 hours per week in a much greater extent than other categories of employees, and in an overview of the chart, we see that the number of operational departments employees that actually uses online tools in all time categories is much higher than the management employees. So, on the opposite regarding the use of online applications lies the top management employees.

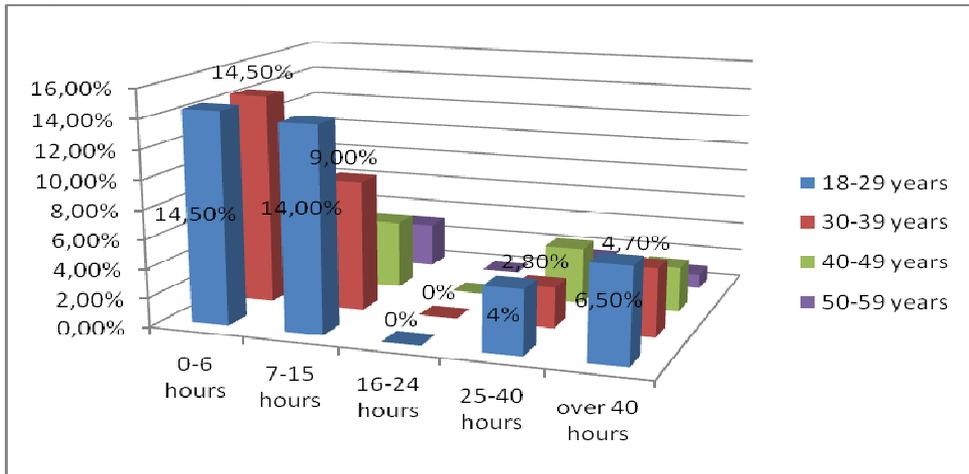
Fig. no. 5 - Average number of hours used per week on Social Media sites



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

Regarding the age categories, as expected, the young people aged between 18 and 29 years have the largest presence online, the activity on Social Media decreasing, as shown in fig. no. 6. which correlates the questions 25 and 3, with the increasing age.

Fig. no. 6 - Average number of hours used per week on Social Media sites

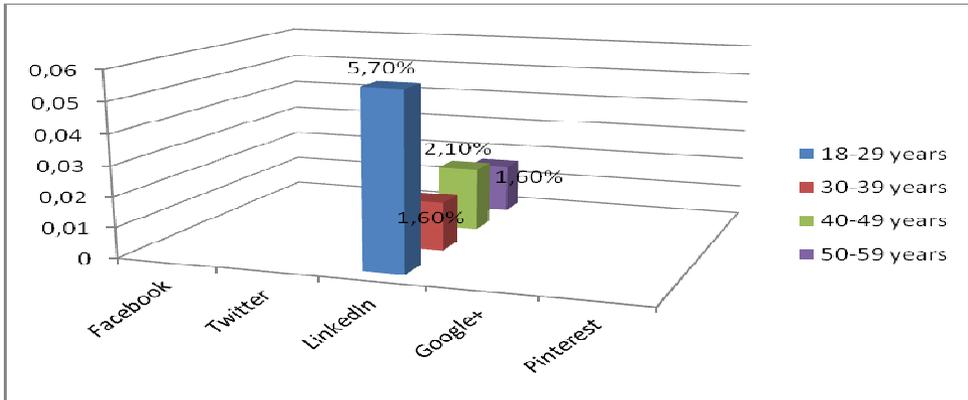


Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

Although there is a Social Media platform that the participants at this study are using, that's right just bet on a rate of 10.85%, but they are using it just for professional reasons, otherwise the only platform used only professionally, and this is LinkedIn, the most used business platform worldwide. Fig. no. 7 highlights the age categories which

actually use it more intense, this application being the most popular among youth that fits in the age category of 18 to 29 years, the use of LinkedIn among them being almost three times more intense than among those in the age category following as a percentage, namely those between 40 and 49 years.

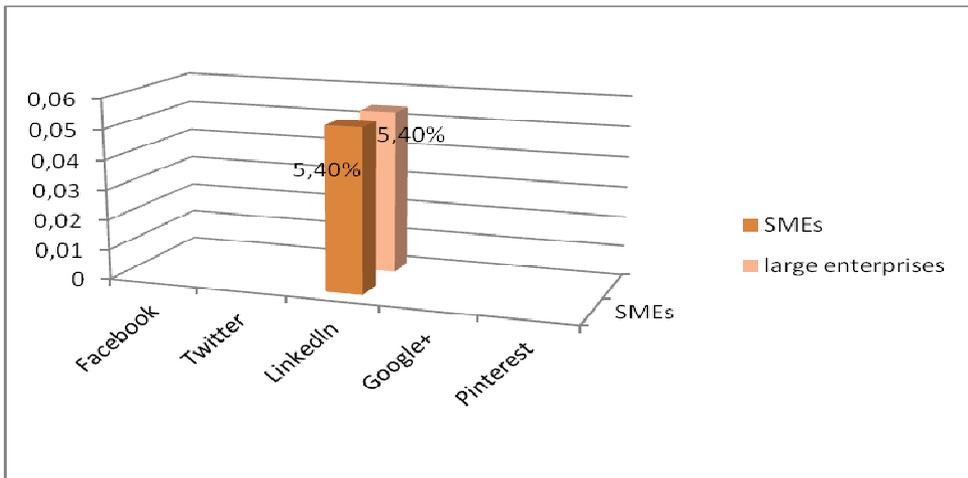
Fig. no. 7 - Professionally used Social Media platforms



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

Noteworthy is the fact that the use of this platform is made by SMEs and large companies equally, fact proved by fig. no.8.

Fig. no. 8 - Professionally used Social Media platforms

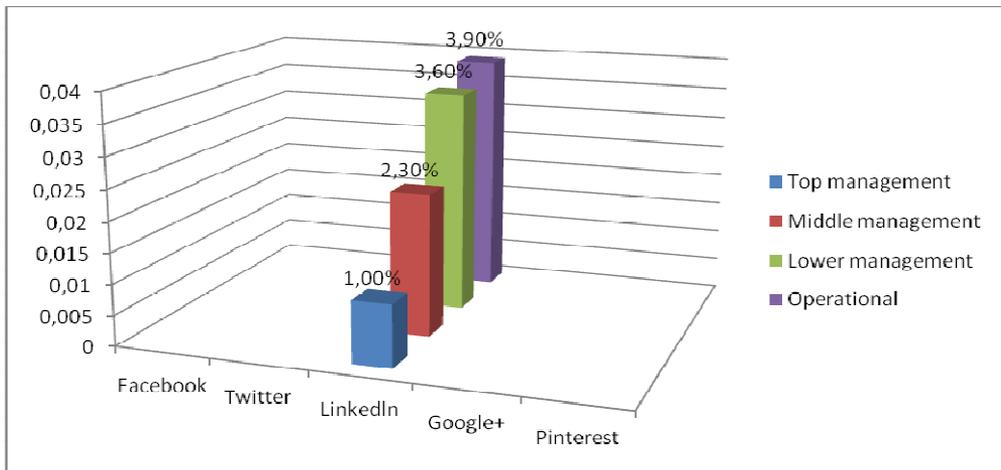


Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

In terms of employees categories users of this business online platform, the most numerous users lies inside the operational departments (3.90%), followed by those in lower management departments (3.60%), then the middle management (2.30%), the least numerous users of LinkedIn being the top management (1%).

Percentages are calculated from the mentioned total of 10.85% users of LinkedIn. These categories are highlighted by Fig. no. 9.

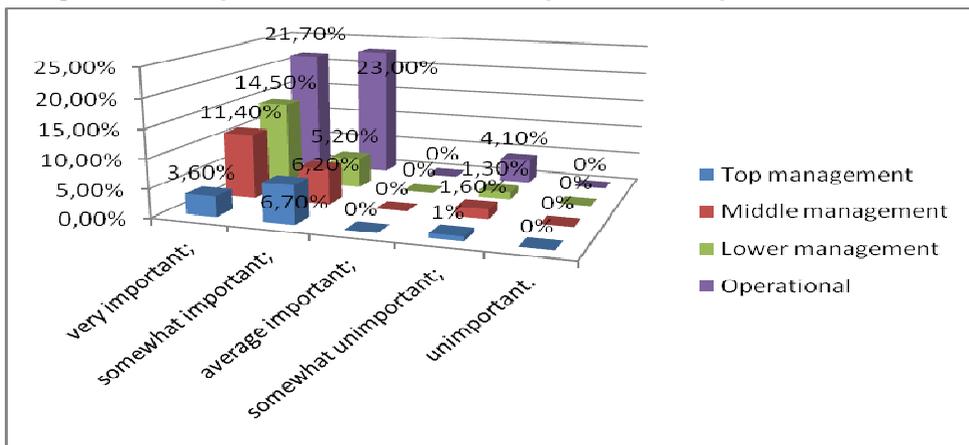
Fig. no. 9 - Professionally used Social Media platforms



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

But completely lacking both rules and policies on the use of Social Media, and knowledge regarding the regulation of posting information in the virtual environment in many Romanian companies, we can say that the prerequisites for performing the transition to Social Customer Relationship Management system are missing. This lack has an explanation, namely very small importance that companies management gives to Social Media platforms, as a way to increase their performance. The degree of importance that Social Media receives, depending on the category of employees is shown in Fig. no. 10.

Fig. no. 10 - Importance of Social Media platforms for professional work

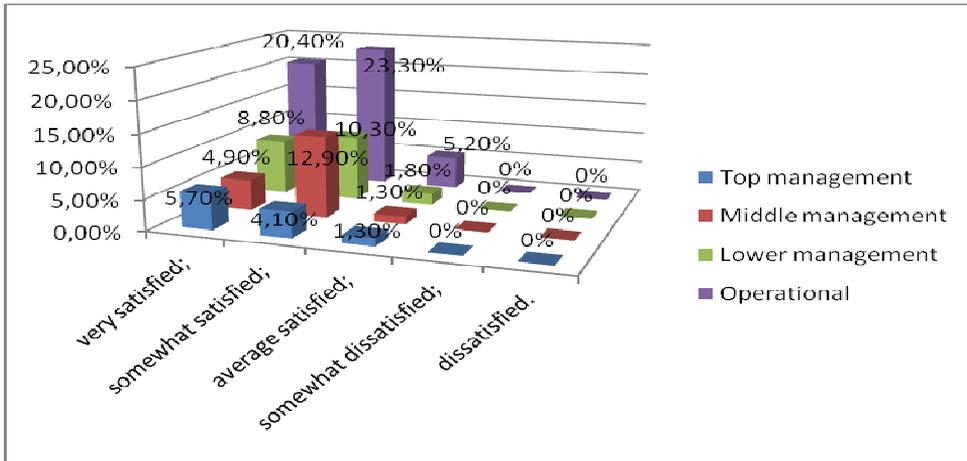


Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

It can be seen very clearly in this chart that as the category of employees drops from management to operational department, increases the importance they attach to Social Media.

This is something explainable by the satisfaction obtained from the use of these applications, satisfaction that just in the top management employee is found in the lowest percentage, increasing with the decreasing categories of employees, fig. no. 11.

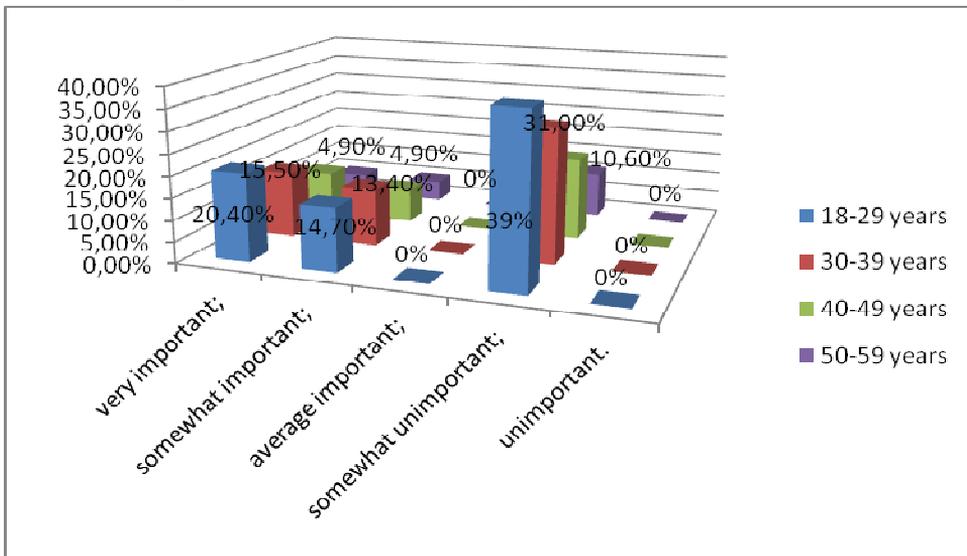
Fig. no. 11 - Satisfaction obtained by using the Social Media applications



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

Importance given to social platforms decreases, as expected really, with the age increase, which is apparent from the analysis cf. fig. no. 12

Fig. no. 12 - The importance given to social platforms



Source: Own processing through Microsoft Office Excel of obtained data using SPSS software

3. Conclusions

Moreover, a large part of various organizations hampers the transition from different forms of rudimentary CRM to a new and more efficient system of Social CRM, deliberately limiting the use of Social Media platforms, which is exactly the precondition of this transition.

The large companies and SMEs area is still very dynamic, but Social Media channels such as Facebook and LinkedIn are unfortunately or fortunately a necessity that no business can not ignore. One of the success keys in business is adapting to new times and new methods, it means Social Media, and those who realize this soon will be better off when the others will be compelled or forced to do the same.

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