

*Research Paper*

## Music Sales and Artists' Popularity on Social Media

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### ABSTRACT

The Internet affects not only business processes and information exchange, but also art, including music. Communication between performers and their followers has moved to the net, and more specifically, to social media. The growing popularity of the digital music format has contributed to dynamic development of streaming services. Therefore, in the present paper, the authors aim to analyse the relationship between the number of people following and watching popular artists on 3 social network sites and the number of listeners on a popular streaming service. Furthermore, the presence of artists on social media and streaming services is examined. The study findings will help performers decide which of their Internet activities are most related to the results they have achieved on the streaming service. They may also increase the efficiency of planning activities aimed at increasing their number of followers, and, accordingly, the number of people listening to their music.

**Keywords:** Social media marketing, popularity on social media, music industry, music streaming service

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Throsby (2002), music is one of the most basic forms of expressing artistic value of a musician's creativity. However, it is also a highly commercialised industry, the revenues of which reach billions of dollars (Throsby, 2002). The development of communication technologies has impact on all aspects of the music industry. Nowadays, the Internet enables access to music in two main ways: by legally distributing and selling music and by its access through streaming services (Throsby, 2002; Wikström, 2013). Although Wlömert and Papies (2016) believe that it has yet to be determined whether the influence of streaming services on the music industry is positive or negative. Although such services provide an opportunity to gain new customers and build a strong bond between fans and their favourite artists, they also reduce customer spending on other sales channels (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). Nonetheless, social media are recognised as an invaluable tool to support image-building activities for such public figures as actors, athletes, journalists and musicians (Pindel, 2014). Therefore, the aim of the work is to explore the correlation between the number of fans watching and following popular artists on social media and listening to their music on Spotify.

In the first section of the present article, the Internet-driven changes in the music industry are discussed. In the second part, an outline is given regarding the most important factors concerning the methods musicians use for promoting themselves on the Internet. The subsequent section is focused on the activities of artists on social media. Then, in the fourth part, the methodology of the analyses carried out for the benefit of this article is evaluated, whereas the results are shown in the following – fifth section. Finally, the limitations and scope for future research are presented. The article ends with a conclusion and brief discussion concerning the most important insights deduced from the research.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Internet-driven changes in the music industry

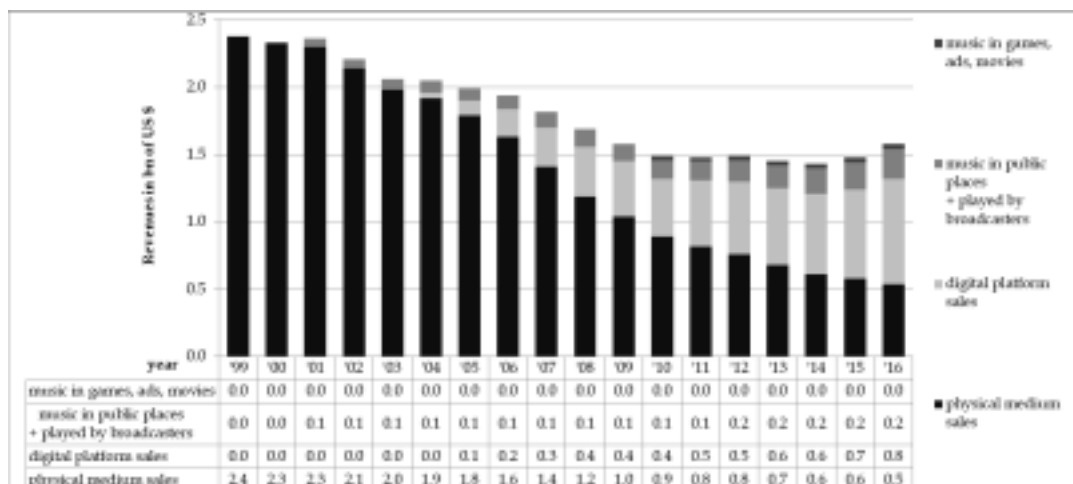
According to Throsby (2002), music is one of the most basic forms of artistic expression, and has been one of the most important means used by many cultures for years to define their identity. However, from a different point of view, music is also a highly commercialised industry in which the revenues generated reach billions of dollars (Throsby, 2002).

Baranowski (2018) claims the music industry consists of:

- The phonographic industry (production, distribution, publishing);
- Concerts and other live performances;
- The publishing industry (managing copyrights).

Throsby (2002) defines the music industry as a composition of composers, songwriters, performers, agents and managers, publishers, record labels, protection rights agencies, other service providers, professionals using music and individual recipients.

The music market primarily aims to generate the highest possible profit from the products offered (Szczurski, 2016). In 2016, the value of the global music industry increased by 5.9% compared to the previous year and reached USD 15.7 billion (Global Music Report 2017, 2017), whereas the sales of digital platforms amounted to 50% of the total music market revenue. In Chart 1, the revenues of the music industry are presented for the years 1999-2016.



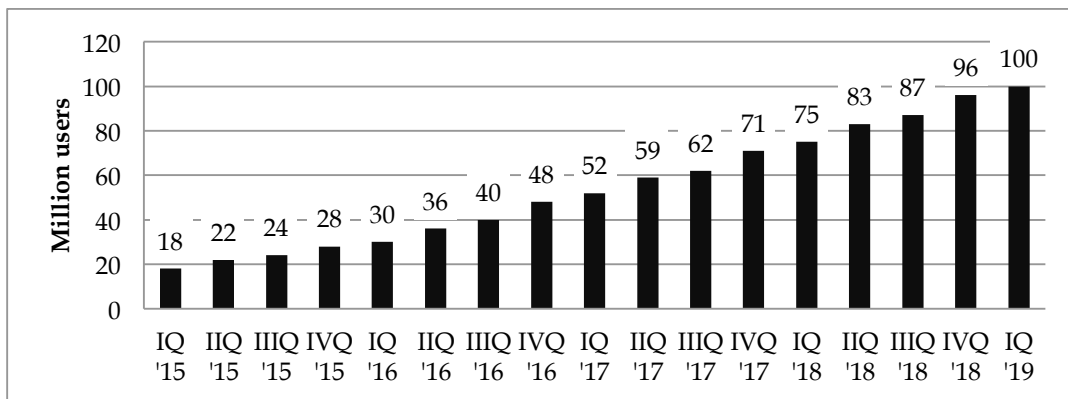
**Chart 1.** Global revenues of the music industry in 1999-2016 (in billions of US dollars)

Source: Global music Report (2017)

For about 60 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the music industry was dominated by 6 large producers. Despite the profitability of such a system for the producers, musicians needed to give concerts with the perspective of earning money (El Gamal, 2012). The situation changed with the advent of the Internet, for the development of the music technology has led to the creation of such websites as Napster, enabling users to share music illegally (Stafford, 2010). Created in 1999 by Shawn Fanning (“Napster loses net music copyright case”, 2000), Napster operated on the basis of a communication model known as peer-to-peer, thanks to which people could send music to one another (Klodnicki, 2015). It was particularly popular among young people and had about 80 million users worldwide (El Gamal, 2012). In 2000, following a San Francisco court decision, the portal had to cease its operations (“Napster loses net music copyright case”, 2000).

The first platform enabling legal sales and distribution of music on the Internet was the iTunes Music Store offering music belonging to large record labels, which was created in 2003 by Apple (Wikström, 2013). Not only did the platform enable the purchase of entire albums, sold for \$9.99 each, but also selected songs, offered at the price of 99¢ a piece (Wikström, 2013). While over a million songs were sold during the first week of its operation, the number reached as many as 20 million from its commencement in April 2003 to December the same year (El Gamal, 2012).

Another major development in information technology was the creation of streaming platforms (Throsby, 2002), sending music in small packages, thus, enabling files to be buffered and ready to play at the same time (Harris, 2019a, 2019b). Hence, the streaming technology has allowed to play music prior to downloading entire files (Costello, 2018). Amongst the top ten streaming services with the largest number of users, the following may be found: YouTube, NetEase, SoundCloud, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Pandora, Gaana, Apple Music, Anghami and Deezer (McIntyre, 2018). Hall considers Spotify as the best music streaming service due to its intuitive interface and the largest number of users paying for access to music (Hall & Kennemer, 2019). In Chart 2. the increase in the number of Spotify users over time is shown.



**Chart 2.** Spotify users over time

Source: “Instagram accounts with the most followers worldwide as of May 2019 (in millions)”, (2019)

Spotify was launched by Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon on 7 October, 2008 as an answer to the growing problem of piracy in the music industry (“How Spotify came to be worth billions - BBC News”, 2018). At the beginning, its use was limited to those having received an invitation from another Spotify user (Parsons, 2018). While paid subscriptions were available from the very beginning, the possibility of free account creation became possible in 2010 (Parsons, 2018).

Conclusive evidence as to whether streaming services have a positive or a negative impact on the music industry is yet to be found (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). Although they attract new customers and establish a strong bond between fans and their favourite artists, they also cause the cannibalisation of sales resulting in the reduction of revenues on other sales channels (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). However, it has been shown in various studies that benefits of paid services outnumber losses resulting from the provision of free music (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). Furthermore, Lee, Choi, Cho and Lee (2016) claim that streaming services have a positive effect on the sales of music on offline channels, as the electronic format promotes the physical one. A study conducted by SNEP (Syndicat National de L'édition Phonographique) and Ernst & Young has provided evidence that 73% of money paid to streaming services is received by music labels, 16% by publishers and songwriters, and 11% by artists (Ingham, 2015). While copyright owners receive between \$0.006 and \$0.0084 for one song play, Wlömert and Papies predict that artists' revenues from this source will experience a decrease (Wlömert & Papies, 2016).

## 2.2 Social media engagement theory

The present paper focuses on user engagement and its impact on listening to music on the Spotify streaming platform. Hence, the authors have based their arguments on the Social Media Engagement Theory (SME) with a view to considering whether the principles of this theory also apply to the studies conducted for the purposes of this article. Di Gangi & Wasko argue that “the Social Media Engagement Theory is developing, which predicts that the user experience, encompassing both the social interactions among users and the technical features of the social media platform, will influence user engagement. User engagement will, in turn, positively affect usage” (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

This theory predicts that a higher level of user engagement results in increased individual use. The higher the levels of critical mass of social acquaintances, completeness afforded to an individual, and evolvability afforded to an individual, all within the social media site, the higher the level of user engagement. In order to understand user engagement, it is deemed indispensable to clarify what this means and how it can be distinguished from similar ideas about user experience (UX), actual use or user involvement (UI).

User experience (UX) encompasses much more than only providing recipients with what they claim to need or with products having useful and important features. With a view to obtaining high quality UX, it is necessary to smoothly intersect many disciplines, such as technology, marketing, graphic and functional, as well as interface design. UX represents “the antecedent of engagement” (Hollebeek, 2011), namely, all aspects of user interaction with the company's products, services and marketing elements. Its essence consists in discovering user habits and tailoring services and products to them. UX is closely associated with changing the centre of gravity regarding product and service creation from the design team and management to the end user. It focuses on understanding what users need and value in order to understand their limitations, habits and abilities. Combining the technical and functional areas with the psychological/philosophical one, involving social interactions, concerns such issues as appearance, content, functionality information, interaction, typography and usability. Social interactions, the communication among users through social media (Prahalad &

Ramaswamy, 2004), provide access to social resources and define benefits as well as costs concerning the use of social media (Jensen & Aanestad, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Wixom & Todd, 2005). Technical features refer to the “perceived capabilities of the technology” and include such features as “the extent to which users can retrieve information and interact, the flexibility to use features, the ability to integrate content and the evolvability of the features to meet users” (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

The term ‘user engagement’ is used in many senses (Brodie et al., 2013) and fields, including management (Saks, 2006), psychology (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006) and education (Baron & Corbin, 2012). Generally described as a category of UX (O’Brien & Toms, 2008), it may be considered as a level of user involvement, namely the frequency or intensity of interactions between the user and the analysed web page, blog, Internet service or profile over a certain period of time. While Sutcliffe regards it as the equivalent of the user’s individual reactions to technology (Sutcliffe, 2010), other authors consider it as a behavioural rather than cognitive or affective state (Javornik & Mandelli, 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010), or a psychological and behavioural one (Claussen, Kretschmer & Mayrhofer, 2013; Lehmann, Lalmas, Yom-Tov & Dupret, 2012). Yet, other definitions focus on the level of the user’s physical, cognitive and/or emotional state. User engagement is believed to be influenced by the presence of dialogue between an organisation and its stakeholders, or its capacity to predict stakeholders’ behaviour on social media (Paine, 2008, 2011; Scoble, 2006). The most recent definitions recognise user engagement as a holistic psychological state in which one is cognitively and emotionally energised to socially behave in ways that exemplify the positive manners in which group members prefer to think of themselves” (Ray, Kim & Morris, 2014). Finally, Di Gangi and Wasko indicate that it is a combination of “user experience, a psychological state, and user behaviour” (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

User engagement can be measured by a wide range of tools analysing replies to sharing and liking content (Rowe & Alani, 2014). Among the most significant measures are the percentage of 1-7-30-day active users per feature, the average number of key actions per user and the average time between key actions per user. Unfortunately, many managers make serious mistakes when trying to measure engagement. One of the errors concerns reporting the total number of users. Although the number of users who visit or like a site is meaningful, it fails to provide information regarding real interest and loyalty.

Furthermore, trying to measure only overall engagement can be misleading, for it presents a holistic image rather than essential details or reasons for change. An attempt to measure everything also proves to be a wrong idea. Even if an IT specialist can understand the parameters, a manager may not be able to interpret them correctly, which may lead to a lack of actions adapted to a specific situation.

There are many existing factors that influence user engagement. Although users should chiefly be interested in content, articles or posts need to be not only interesting, but also useful (Berger & Milkman, 2012). A sufficient level of interactivity, entertainment and the opportunity to share comments should also be provided (De Vries, Gensler & Leeftang, 2012). Positive news, including those regarding hedonic values, indubitably make a contribution to success (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Chiu, Hsieh, Kao & Lee, 2007)

User Involvement (UI) refers to "a subjective psychological state of the individual" and can be defined as "the importance and personal relevance that users attach either to a particular system or to IS in general, depending on the user's focus" (Barki & Hartwick, 1989). It may also be described as participation of potential users or representatives in the system development process (Barki & Hartwick, 1989) or "a psychological state reflecting the importance and personal relevance that a user attaches to a given system" (Lin & Shao, 2000). Yet another definition focuses on the intensity of perceiving its role on social media platforms by the user (Barki & Hartwick, 1989; Debats, 1998; Hwang & Thorn, 1999; O'Brien & Toms, 2008; Ray et al., 2014)

UI is considered to be an essential factor in the development of a new system (Dodd & Carr, 1994), which can aid software developers in obtaining quick and easy methodologies (Allen et al., 1993)). It can also help to close the gap between the user's and the developer's opinions about relevant functions of the system, as well as to eliminate the communication distance between users and programmers (Allen et al., 1993). UI is also believed to increase the user's arousal and motivation (Munson & Mcquarrie, 1987; Zaichkowsky, 1985).

The SME theory postulates that increased user engagement leads to more frequent use of a given social media platform (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016), while social media interactions result in increased user engagement (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004).



Furthermore, Di Gangi & Wasko (2016) advocate for the dependency of user engagement on technical features ('Completeness', 'Evolvability', 'Flexibility' and 'Integration') and social interactions (access to social resources, critical mass, personalisation, risk and transparency) (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016). According to this theory, personalisation involves care for and individualised attention perceived by users (Kettinger & Lee, 1994). Social resources are necessary for the purposes of interaction. Critical mass refers to the perception that a user's friends and significant others are also present on the same social media platform (Boyd, 2007; Dickinger, Arami & Meyer, 2008; Hsu & Lin, 2008). Perceived risk is a factor associated with any harm that can occur while browsing social media sites (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and may have either negative or a positive impact on the engagement. Transparency refers to information symmetry among users (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). While 'Completeness' signifies the user's perception of the abilities necessary to engage at the desired level of specificity (Wixom & Todd, 2005), 'Flexibility' involves experiencing old functionalities in new ways (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and may increase positive feelings about the system or a social media platform (Jensen & Aanestad, 2007; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). 'Evolvability' equals the changes of a social media platform over time, the goal of which is better adaptation to the needs and desires of users (Wixom & Todd, 2005), whereas 'Integration' implies the harmonisation of content (Wixom & Todd, 2005). According to Di Gangi & Wasko (2016), all of these elements influence social media engagement, while engagement influences a user's behaviour "differentiating the mental state of being engaged from the actual act of engaging" (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

As already indicated, the SME theory posits that a higher level of user engagement entails increased individual use (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016). Additionally, higher levels of critical mass, 'Completeness' and 'Evolvability', all within the social media, result in a higher level of user engagement (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016). Therefore, the authors aim to determine, on the basis of the SME theory, how the popularity of musicians in social media translates into familiarity with their music.

### **2.3 Promotion of artists on the Internet**

Music marketing may be defined as a process aiming to raise awareness of a band's or artist's work (Letang, 2020). Nowadays, the press, radio and television are considered traditional music promotion channels, reaching considerable numbers of people in a

short period of time. Although they mainly focus on artists with a strong market position, young musicians promoted in this way rapid gain in popularity. Traditional music promotion methods include word-of-mouth marketing (WOM), live performances, leaflets and posters, high-quality music making a lasting impression on the listener ("How to promote music the old fashioned way," n.d.).

Vicioso (2018) argues that the promotional model based on building a specific image, which was used before the popularity of the Internet, fails to be measurable. This stems from the fact that music labels are unable to link image campaign expenditures with the number of songs played and tickets or gadgets sold (Vicioso, 2018). The Internet has changed the way artists promote their music and deliver it to the public worldwide. Social media has become a place where music communities are created (El Gamal, 2012). Therefore, promoters have had to change their current attitudes and focus on promoting CD sales via the Internet (Vicioso, 2018).

The Internet offers 4 ways of finding new artists (Stafford, 2010):

- Browsing the Internet and finding new artists via links or websites that classify artists according to music genre;
- Accidentally discovering new artists on browsed websites;
- Sharing music with acquaintances;
- Finding new artists on social media.

While artists use such social media as Facebook or Twitter to contact their fans, they sell electronic versions of albums and promote new projects thanks to MySpace and BandCamp (El Gamal, 2012). A ranking from 2, March, 2019, presenting Twitter profiles with the largest number of followers, shows that the first 20 places are occupied by 10 musicians ("TOP 100 Most Twitter Followers", 2019). In a similar ranking generated by Facebook, there are 13 musicians ("Top Celebrities on Facebook", 2019). According to an Instagram report from May 2019, 4 out of 10 accounts with the largest numbers of followers belonged to musicians ("Instagram accounts with the most followers worldwide as of May 2019 (in millions)", 2019).

Social media can be used to create buzz around new artists through viral distribution of songs or videos (El Gamal, 2012). If projected properly, content published via links to songs on websites, social media and blogs (Stafford, 2010) enables not only rapid

access to wide audiences (Turner & Shah, 2014), but also the promotion of music without direct involvement of the musician or the publisher. Thus, artists can interact with their fans and reach potential recipients without signing a contract with a record label (“How Digital Marketing is Adapting to the Ever-Changing Music Industry”, n.d.). Defining content as “a message based on a unilateral channel, by establishing long-term relationships with the recipient through interactive activities and building bilateral engagement”, Szczurski believes that “the better the strategy and content marketing, the greater the potential for the artist's success” (Szczurski, 2016). He also perceives social media as the main channel for this type of marketing (Szczurski, 2016).

Wiebe mentions the 6 best social media platforms for musicians (Wiebe, 2018):

- YouTube, allowing to reach a large number of people, present backstage material, interact with the community, comment and to share videos;
- Facebook, whose key to success consists in adding posts even several times a day, interacting with the community, adding videos, participating in groups, using ads and live broadcasts;
- Instagram, constituting a useful tool for obtaining the responses of many users to shared visual content;
- Twitter, functioning in a similar way to Facebook;
- Bandcamp, allowing musicians to share and sell their own music;
- SoundCloud, enabling to share entire songs or short fragments for free.

In the authors' opinion, the above list should be supplemented with the Spotify platform, where the social aspect is based on the recommendation scheme. The algorithm utilised by this platform is also based on the preferences of people with whom we have common ‘Likes’. Additionally, Spotify enables to track other people, including friends or artists, to see what they are listening to – also online.

Facilitation in online promotion has contributed to an increase concerning competition in the music industry (Stafford, 2010). Thanks to the Internet, artists have the opportunity to reach a virtually unlimited number of people, whereas consumers can benefit from a growing selection of music at more affordable prices (El Gamal, 2012). Additionally, Ogden, Ogden and Long point to “returning to roots”, a phenomenon in music marketing manifested in the possibility of independent recording instead of being forced to operate under the banner of a large record label (Ogden, Ogden & Long,

2011). While El Gamal predicts that the success of the music industry will largely depend on innovation (El Gamal, 2012), Throsby believes that, irrespective of the developments in the music industry, copyrights will remain its key element (Throsby, 2002).

#### **2.4 Musicians' presence on social media**

Social media are considered an invaluable tool for supporting image activities of such public figures as actors, athletes, journalists and musicians (Pindel, 2014). Pindel claims that musicians use this means not only to talk about their new projects, but also to announce concerts and future premieres (Pindel, 2014). Furthermore, it is used by artists to maintain contact with their fans (El Gamal, 2012).

The advent of social media has had substantial impact on the requirements set for musicians by their fans in terms of communication, for constant presence and commitment is expected from the former (Baym, 2012). The issuing of content on social media allows artists to rapidly reach wide audiences (Turner & Shah, 2014). A star profile aiming to fulfil its tasks should meet a number of important criteria (Pindel, 2014). Firstly, it should contain information related to topics most relevant to fans such as new concerts, new albums or any news about important facts from an artist's private life. Next, the profile should preserve its informative nature, but also contain private, concert and backstage photos. Additionally, it should include interesting contests - all shown in an aesthetic form. Finally, the profile should remain neutral and stick to a specific label.

The present paper focuses on 3 social networking sites, namely Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – the top 3 popular social media in Poland. Nowadays, Facebook has become the most popular social media site in the world. What constitutes the key for musicians' success on Facebook is adding posts up to several times a day, interacting with the community, adding videos, joining specific groups and using ads as well as live broadcasts (Wiebe, 2018). According to Washenko, the posts should have a content that matches the brand and the perception of the artist, using the technological opportunities offered by the website (Washenko, 2012). Moreover, he draws attention to such good practices as adding band members' private posts related to inspiring songs or movies, sharing attractive photos, videos and personal content (Washenko, 2012). He also

mentions adding thought-provoking quotes or messages not related to an artist's work (Washenko, 2012).

Instagram is a platform where the monthly number of active users amounts to 1 billion and over 100 million photos and videos are added every day (“Instagram by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts”, 2019). It is a useful tool for receiving responses to shared visual content from many users (Wiebe, 2018). Not only is it implemented by musicians to promote new albums or songs, but also to present their lives and personalities (Titlow, 2017). Furthermore, Instagram proves effective for less known artists willing to express and promote themselves (Titlow, 2017). As the number of people interested in an artist and following him or her on Instagram increases, the tool becomes a source of valuable data and information. Musicians can thus acquaint themselves with their audiences and, accordingly, adjust their strategies (Titlow, 2017). New features introduced in 2016, i.e. ‘Instagram Stories’ and ‘Instagram Live’, have increased the daily number of people using the application by 66%, and have provided artists with more opportunities to interact with their fans (Titlow, 2017).

Twitter is a tool with an optimal frequency for musicians to add new Tweets several times a day (Wiebe, 2018). It can be defined as a channel for musicians through which they can directly communicate with their fans (Titlow, 2012). In order to make good use of the possibilities offered by the tool, musicians should express their opinions on the work of other performers, tell the story of how their career began and share song lyrics (O’Donnel, 2019). In addition, they should engage themselves in conversations with other musicians, provide answers to fans' questions via videos and share photos from holidays or ongoing concert tours (O’Donnel, 2019). The posts should not be passive or boring. In order to avoid that, the musicians should engage fans in competitions, but also show their human side and emotions through celebrating important events, describing funny, real-life situations, sharing information on cooperation with other artists and finally, alternating the format of Tweets to surprise fans (O’Donnel, 2019).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In order to assess the importance of social media for the popularity of artists, ethnographic research was conducted among the most popular artists in Poland. All the stars selected for the study are Polish singers who sold the largest number of records in physical form in 2018. The authors decided to examine the stars’ social media accounts in 1 country only, in order to avoid the penetration of content between countries and

unnecessary noise, as well as to conduct a thorough correlational analysis between the studied variables. The mentioned noise is due to the fact that only domestic sales were included in the study, whilst in case of global artists, the number of fans would include people from all around the world. By analysing only the Polish market, the research includes Polish artists and Polish fans only. Therefore, the above assumption is also an important limitation of this study.

The authors examined the impact of artists' activity in Poland on the sale of songs regarding the analysed market. Data were collected manually from 3 social networking sites: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter; as well as from Spotify in May 2019. The study itself and data analysis were conducted in early June 2019. The appropriate research sample, consisting of 31 Polish music stars, was based on the Official Sales List (OLiS) for 2018. The list is compiled by MicroBe on behalf of the Audio Video Producers Union based on retail sales data of the largest music stores ("The Best Selling Records and the Most Popular Songs on the Radio – Summary of 2018," 2018). Compilations, often consisting of the works of several artists and described as created by "various artists" (McDonald, 2020), were not included in the analysis.

The study is based on 3 social media services, namely Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and the streaming service Spotify, as it has the highest rate of paying users in the world. The collected data include:

- The number of people following an artist on Instagram;
- The number of people following an artist on Twitter;
- The number of people following an artist on Spotify;
- The monthly number of an artist's listeners on Spotify.

In case of Spotify, listeners and followers were considered separately. This is due to the fact that not every follower must listen to a given singer, and above all, because not every listener must also be a follower.

Data concerning the presence and activity of fans on Spotify were collected in an application available for computers users. Statistics on the monthly number of listeners and followers are available on the profile of an artist in the 'Information' tab. The monthly number of listeners is defined by Spotify as the number of unique users having played an artist's music in the last 28 days ("Stats – FAQ", 2019). The term 'unique user'

refers to a person having listened to many songs of one performer, who is still counted as one listener (“Stats – FAQ”, 2019). Followers are people who have pressed the ‘Follow’ button available on all artists’ profiles (“Stats – FAQ”, 2019).

Data on the number of people who like a Facebook fanpage and follow an artist on Instagram and Twitter have been collected from the respective sites available in a web browser (facebook.com, instagram.com and twitter.com). This information appears on an artist’s profile. In the case of Facebook, clicking the ‘Like’ button results in being able to see the news the materials posted by the profile owner (“Interact with pages”, 2019). Due to the inability to indicate a cause and effect relationship of the analysed coefficients, instead of regression, correlation analysis was performed. This is also due to the fact that it cannot be clearly stated whether fans listening to the artists are starting to track their activity on other social media platforms and whether through this activity, the artists gain new recipients of their work.

#### **4. RESULTS**

The retrieved data were analysed to:

- Determine how many of the performers use social media and which of the social media are the most popular among musicians belonging to the examined sample;
- Study the relationship between the number of people watching performers on a specific social media platform and the number of monthly listeners on Spotify;
- Analyse the relationship between the number of followers on a particular social media site and the number of followers on Spotify.

The data used in the study concern the number of people who follow singers on social media and the number of followers and listeners on the selected streaming service (Chart 1). The value “N/A” signifies that the star lacks an account on the social network and refers to 3 stars having no account on Facebook, 4 stars having no account on Instagram and finally 23 out of the analysed 31 stars having no account on Twitter. Links to the singers' social media profiles are included as an attachment.

Artist	Monthly listeners on Spotify	Followers on Spotify	Facebook 'Likes'	Followers on Instagram	Followers on Twitter
Dawid Podsiadlo	659 685	380 825	412 687	258 903	21 693
Taconafide	498 077	386 456	28 432	149 465	N/A
O.S.T.R.	272 052	193 350	800 159	213 766	6 250
Pawel Domagala	256 856	91 428	163 327	105 322	726
Paluch	419 488	313 731	515 105	381 208	731
Kękę	230 723	136 328	270 276	247 303	N/A
Kortez	305 191	141 244	153 241	69 782	N/A
Zbigniew Wodecki	141 775	24 880	N/A	N/A	N/A
Taco Hemingway	697 878	538 777	310 687	368 762	N/A
Szpaku	418 450	120 044	97 687	239 992	N/A
Slawomir	106 678	42 872	134 561	125 535	178
Kali	157 537	125 738	648 268	317 350	2 439
Flwvxss	96 922	105.00	1 245	3 039	N/A
Ania Dąbrowska	270 853	119 187	127 509	21 253	N/A
Hinol PW	57 858	16 822	66 403	88 225	N/A
Pro8L3M	365 388	91 157	130 671	124 826	N/A
Stanisława Celińska	7 271	2 492	28 538	N/A	N/A
Lao Che	136 410	47 835	95 150	4 673	N/A
Maanam	201 116	54 242	N/A	N/A	N/A
Agnieszka Chylińska	133 548	43 833	527 012	236 187	1 191
Nosowska	113 468	41 918	265 744	367 602	N/A
Sarius	317 860	78 483	81 257	124 863	N/A
Bedoes	620 439	272 645	144 239	340 229	N/A
Kubi Producent	610 482	27 738	54 122	94 933	N/A
Słoń	124 085	41 951	364 545	89 590	N/A
Maciej Maleńczuk	70 303	20 711	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reto	323 150	267 720	181 326	363 129	N/A
Krzysztof Zalewski	293 658	50 845	93 175	73 184	N/A
Tulia	152 853	10 257	45 929	20 212	N/A
Michał Szpak	47 660	23 035	231 954	181 991	3 016
Guzior	332 229	97 157	93 864	105 422	N/A

**Table 1.** The analysed artists and their social media results

As a result of analysing basic statistics, it was confirmed that of the 3 social networking sites described in this paper, Facebook is the most popular in Poland - in May 2019, all the analysed artists achieved over 6 million followers (median for the statistical singer  $M = 139\,400$ ,  $Min = 1\,200$ ,  $Max = 800\,200$ ). Instagram comes in second – 4.7 million followers ( $M = 125\,500$ ,  $Min = 3\,000$ ,  $Max = 381\,200$ ), while Twitter comes in third with a total number of 36 000 followers ( $M = 1\,500$ ,  $Min = 200$ ,  $Max = 21\,700$ ). For



comparison, the number of followers on Spotify reaches 3.8 million fans (M = 78 500, Min = 100, Max = 538 800), while the number of listeners on Spotify (over the entire month) reached the value of 8.4 million (M = 256 900, Min = 7 300, Max = 697 900). It also turned out that none of the analysed variables (Spotify listeners, Spotify, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter followers) were characterised by normal distribution. In each of these cases, the *p*-value for the Shapiro-Wilko test is less than 0.05. Each distribution also has right-sided asymmetry, which is indicated by skewness coefficients greater than 0 and the median, which for each of the 5 observed groups is lower than the mean. In addition, a wide range means that in each of the 5 analysed cases, individual artists significantly differ from each other within the context of achieved popularity results on Spotify, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Detailed data for basic statistical analysis can be found in Table 2.

	Spotify listeners (monthly)	Spotify followers	Facebook followers	Instagram followers	Twitter followers
N	31	31	28	27	8
M	272 256	122 703	216 683	174 694	4 528
Mdn	256 856	78 483	139 400	125 535	1 515
SD	189 852	133 267	201 402	122 251	7 203
Skewness	0.83	1.63	1.46	0.38	2.46
Kurtosis	-0.12	2.21	1.64	-1.12	6.28
Shapiro-Wilk	0.917	0.798	0.839	0.92	0.64
p-value	0.020	< 0.001	< 0.001	0.039	< 0.001
Range	690 607	538 672	798 914	378 169	21 515
Min	7 271	105	1 245	3 039	178
Max	697 878	538 777	800 159	381 208	21 693
Sum	8 439 943	3 803 806	6 067 113	4 716 746	36 224
15 <sup>th</sup> percentile	128 816	34 828	90 195	88 907	730
75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	348 808	138 786	280 379	253 103	3 825

**Table 2.** Basic analysed statistics

The further part of the present study includes only Instagram, Spotify and FB data. No further analysis was performed between the number of an artist’s Twitter followers and the number of the artist’s followers and monthly listeners on Spotify. This exclusion resulted from the insufficient number of stars having a Twitter account, represented by

solely 8 artists, which corresponds to roughly  $\frac{1}{4}$  (26%) of the entire research sample. This shows that Twitter fails to be as popular a social media site among musicians as Facebook or Instagram. On the basis of previously characterised data (e.g. skewness), it was found that none of the tested distributions were normal, which made it impossible to carry out further parametric analysis. As a result, non-parametric analysis was carried out using Spearman's tests regarding the correlation between the number of fans on social media and the number of fans and listeners on Spotify.

Spearman's correlation coefficient for the numbers of Facebook and Spotify followers is  $rs(28) = 0.465, p < 0.014$ . The results of this test for the numbers of Instagram and Spotify followers is  $rs(27) = 0.592, p < 0.001$  for the numbers of Instagram and Facebook followers, this equals  $rs(27) = 0.651, p < 0.001$  (Table 3).

		Spearman's rho		p	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Spotify (followers)	Facebook (followers)	0.465	*	0.014	0.111	0.714
Spotify (followers)	Instagram (followers)	0.592	**	0.001	0.274	0.794
Facebook (followers)	Instagram (followers)	0.651	***	< 0.001	0.361	0.827
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001						

**Table 3.** Pairs of analysed variables and Spearman's correlation coefficients – followers vs. followers

The authors wanted to focus on analysing the correlation between listeners on Spotify and followers on Spotify, Facebook and Twitter. The goal was to see if fans following artists on various social media sites also listen to their music on Spotify.

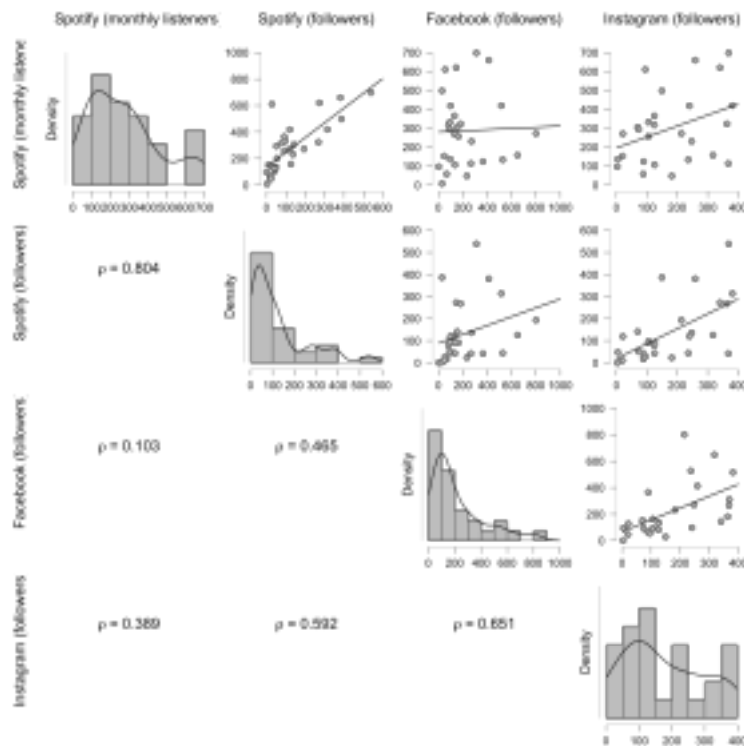
Spearman's correlation coefficient for the numbers of Facebook followers and monthly Spotify listeners is  $rs(28) = 0.103, p = 0.601$ . Its value for the numbers of Instagram followers and monthly Spotify listeners is  $rs(27) = 0.389, p < 0.046$ , while for the numbers of Spotify followers and monthly Spotify listeners, this reaches  $rs(31) = 0.804, p < 0.001$ .

		Spearman's rho		p	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Spotify (monthly listeners)	Spotify (followers)	0.804	***	< 0.001	0.629	0.902
Spotify (monthly listeners)	Facebook (followers)	0.103		0.601	-0.281	0.458
Spotify (monthly listeners)	Instagram (followers)	0.389	*	0.046	0.011	0.670

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

**Table 4.** Pairs of analysed variables and Spearman's correlation coefficient – followers vs. listeners

The analysis of correlations between variables revealed a positive relationship between the number of people following performers on Instagram and Spotify and the number of people watching and listening to their songs every month on the analysed streaming services. In Chart 3, a detailed graphical analysis of all the aforementioned correlations is presented.



**Chart 3.** Spearman's correlation coefficient for the analysed pairs of coefficients

The above analysis clearly shows that actions taken on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter do not translate directly into the popularity of artists on the Internet. However, based on Spearman's correlation coefficient for Spotify followers and monthly listeners ( $r_{s(31)} = 0.804, p < 0.001$ ) it may be claimed there is some correlation between the analysed factors. Therefore, deeper analysis is required to verify this correlation in more detail.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Some authors consider whether streaming services are really beneficial for music sales (Wlömert & Papiés, 2016). Some predict that the higher level of user engagement results in increased individual use (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016) – also in case of social media platforms (Wlömert & Papiés, 2016). Additionally, social media interactions should result in increased user engagement (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). As shown in the present study, although Facebook is the most popular social networking site in Poland, it cannot be said that all activities focused on attracting fans to that portal, translate directly into the number of listeners on Spotify. The same conclusion refers to other analysed social media platforms. Even though social media profiles with the largest number of followers are occupied by musicians (“Instagram accounts with the most followers worldwide as of May 2019 (in millions)”, 2019; “TOP 100 Most Twitter Followers”, 2019; “Top Celebrities on Facebook”, 2019), it should be considered that not FB, Instagram or Twitter related activities, but artistic work itself is a testimony to the popularity of singers. Furthermore, the quality of this work is responsible for whether the artist will be popular or not. Also worth mentioning is the fact that only 8% of artists' fans available on Spotify are clearly their listeners. Thus, many people become ‘followers’ of individual artists for various reasons (e.g. fashion, influence of friends), not necessarily related to their actual interest in the musical aspect.

The authors aimed to determine how the popularity of musicians in social media translates into familiarity with their music. They have managed to support the claim that popularity influences music sales. Despite the impossibility to specify the reasons for the existence of this effect, the research has provided evidence that in some way, presence on social media translates into listenership of music on Spotify. This result can be compared to studies stating that publishing content on social media allows artists to quickly reach a wide audience (Turner and Shah, 2014). Nonetheless, there is still a

need for more detailed research to further explore this topic.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Internet and social media are inseparable elements concerning the society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for they have considerable impact on many areas of human life, including music. As the music industry is still in the process of adapting to the changes caused by the advent of universal Internet access, the amount of music sold through streaming portals is on a constant increase. The changes also affect the way of communication between artists and their fans. Therefore, 90% of the musicians analysed in this study have an account on at least 1 of the 3 main social networking sites. Furthermore, all the aforementioned artists have their own profiles on Spotify. Analysis has shown an average, positive correlation between the numbers of an artist's Instagram and Spotify followers, as well as a small correlation between the numbers of Instagram followers and Spotify listeners. Thus, this provides a hint for performers on planning their Internet activities with a view to increasing their popularity and music sales, however, future research on the topic is still required.

The article contains a few limitations. A certain one is the fact that the authors did not examine the level of fan involvement nor how many times a song is played. It has been decided that a listener is one who has listened to a selected track of a selected artist at least once, even though s/he could have really played it many times. Another limitation concerns not analysing the nature of selected bands or singers. So, it may be the case that the target group of an artist are elderly people who do not use social media. It is also worth mentioning that very detailed data on sales of the surveyed artists' works were not available. This made it impossible to perform regression analysis and contributed to the fact that only simple nonparametric tests were performed. Another drawback may also refer to not analysing how artists communicate with their fans and whether this communication is effective or not. Only studied was the final effect of all communication and popularity of artists expressed in the total number of people who follow their profiles and listen to their music.

All of the above limitations clearly indicate a need to deepen analysis of the correlation between the number of fans following artists on social media and the listeners of their music on streaming sites. As the afore-described research focused on the Polish market, what would require attention is also deeper research considering all of the most important social networks and streaming services active outside of Poland. Correlations

between these variables for musicians from other countries may also be worth exploring. However, to avoid unnecessary noise associated with the impact of international factors, it is recommended to study domestic artists and their activities on their home markets.

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**Attachment 1.** Polish singers and their social media accounts

Artist	Facebook account	Instagram account	Twitter account
Dawid Podsiadło	facebook.com/555550131146307	https://www.instagram.com/dylanwishop	https://twitter.com/dylanwishop
Taconafide	facebook.com/161893451183404	https://www.instagram.com/taconafide/	N/A
O.S.T.R.	facebook.com/106928552668727	https://www.instagram.com/adam.ostr.ostrowski/	https://twitter.com/ostrome
Paweł Domagała	facebook.com/1423016214604121	https://www.instagram.com/paweldomagala/	https://twitter.com/domagalapawel
Paluch	facebook.com/221168844575339	https://www.instagram.com/paluchofficial/	https://twitter.com/paluchofficial
Kęka	facebook.com/335160109839691	https://www.instagram.com/mrkekeoficjalnie	N/A
Kortez	facebook.com/458204217664785	https://www.instagram.com/kortez_z	N/A
Zbigniew Wodecki	N/A	N/A	N/A
Taco Hemingway	facebook.com/189287054474842	https://www.instagram.com/tacohemingway	N/A
Szpaku	facebook.com/286669638337985	https://www.instagram.com/szpakusimba	N/A
Sławomir	facebook.com/602997829783032	https://www.instagram.com/slawomir_gwiazda_rock_polo	https://twitter.com/SLAWOMIR__
Kali	facebook.com/113330225416715	https://www.instagram.com/k4lion/	https://twitter.com/kalitweed
Flvwlxss	facebook.com/455263494845892	https://www.instagram.com/flvwlxss	N/A
Ania Dąbrowska	facebook.com/297410105909	https://www.instagram.com/aniadabrowskaofficial	N/A
Hinol PW	facebook.com/466574246789712	https://www.instagram.com/hinol_polska_wersja	N/A
Pro8L3M	facebook.com/427978447279431	https://www.instagram.com/pro8l3m/	N/A
Stanisława Celińska	facebook.com/193010697535019	N/A	N/A
Lao Che	facebook.com/114233971971515	https://www.instagram.com/laoche_official/?	N/A
Maanam	N/A	N/A	N/A
Agnieszka Chylińska	facebook.com/207385765723	https://www.instagram.com/agnieszka.chylinska	https://twitter.com/chylinska.com
Nosowska	facebook.com/42944035533	https://www.instagram.com/nosowska.official	N/A
Sarius	facebook.com/482849415124141	https://www.instagram.com/mariuszsarius	N/A
Bedoes	facebook.com/224071074391649	https://www.instagram.com/bedoes2115/	N/A
Kubi Producent	facebook.com/529656220458596	https://www.instagram.com/kubiproducent/	N/A
Słoń	facebook.com/190739510943269	https://www.instagram.com/braindeadslon	N/A
Maciej Maleńczuk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reto	facebook.com/161952007273697	https://www.instagram.com/reto_synku/	N/A
Krzysztof Zalewski	facebook.com/410360602319678	https://www.instagram.com/zalewskiofficial	N/A
Tulia	facebook.com/188846645006097	https://www.instagram.com/tulia.official/	N/A
Michał Szpak	facebook.com/181113758607902	https://www.instagram.com/michal_szpak_official	https://twitter.com/michal_szpak_pol
Guzior	facebook.com/185747581605437	https://www.instagram.com/guziormati	N/A

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