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**THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**

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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

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Annotation

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Relationships

Customer behavior is crucial to a company's sustainability, and social media platforms are necessary for acquiring and retaining customers. Despite the relevance of these antecedents, limited studies in the hotel industry literature have looked at the effects of social media marketing on hotel outcomes. The current study uses the "Social Exchange Theory" the "Uses and Gratifications Theory" and "Theory of Communication" to understand the impact of social media marketing on hotel customer behavior. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to empirically evaluate whether there is a positive effect of social media in the formation of relationships with hotel customers in the Czech Republic (CZ). While most hospitality marketing research has focused the relationship between various marketing actions and different dimensions of research examining customer relationships as a multi-dimensional construct, this study used six variables proposed by Hyun and Perdue (2017) to examine customer relationships.

Engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection are the six factors. Data for this study was obtained in two ways: from hotel customers and hotel managers. First, four and five-star hotel clients were triggered by application of questionnaire for data collection. To test the hypothesized relationship correlation and regression tests were conducted in this research. Moreover, data of this study also collected data from hoteliers point of view of four and five-star hotels in the Czech Republic. For this, the methods used to collect the data was interview. The findings of this study revealed the significance of social media marketing in improving customer relationships in the hotels. The results have significant theoretical and managerial implications for the hotel business.

Keywords: Commitment, Cross-buying, Defection, Engagement, Motivation, Social media marketing, Word of mouth.

Anotace

Vliv marketingu na sociálních sítích na vztahy se zákazníky

K vybudování prosperující firmy je zásadní zabývat se chováním zákazníků. Platformy sociálních médií jsou prostředkem, který významně pomáhá k získávání a udržení zákazníků. Navzdory nezbytnosti těchto nástrojů se literatura zabývá účinky marketingu na sociálních sítích na výkonnost hotelů jen v omezené míře.

Disertační práce využívá teorii sociální výměny, teorii užití a uspokojení a teorii komunikace k posouzení dopadu marketingu na sociálních sítích na chování zákazníků hotelů. Hlavním cílem disertační práce je vyhodnocení pozitivního vlivu sociálních médií na utváření vztahů se zákazníky hotelů v České republice. Zatímco většina marketingových výzkumů v oblasti pohostinství se zaměřila na vztah mezi různými marketingovými akcemi a dimenzemi výzkumu vztahů se zákazníky, disertační práce využívá ke zkoumání vztahů se zákazníky šest proměnných navržených Hyunem a Perduem (2017).

Disertační práce pracuje se šesti faktory angažovanost, motivace, odhodlání, křížový nákup, ústní sdělení a odchod zákazníků. Data pro disertační práci byla získána od hotelových zákazníků a od hotelových manažerů. Nejprve byli pomocí dotazníku osloveni klienti čtyř a pětihvězdičkových hotelů. Pro testování předpokládaných vztahů byly v tomto výzkumu provedeny korelační a regresní testy. Disertační práce také analyzuje manažerský pohled na danou problematiku ve čtyř a pětihvězdičkových hotelech v České republice. Sběr těchto dat byl proveden individuálními rozhovory s respondenty - manažery hotelů.

Závěry výzkumu odhalily význam marketingu na sociálních sítích pro zlepšování vztahů se zákazníky v hotelech. Výsledky mají významné teoretické a manažerské přínosy pro hotelový sektor.

Klíčová slova: Zákaznický závazek, Cross-buying, Odchod zákazníků, Angažovanost, Motivace, Marketing sociálních médií, Ústní sdělení.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| AVE | Average Variance Extracted |
| CZ | Czech Republic |
| RQ | Research Question |
| SO | Sub-Objectives |
| SMMA | Social Media Marketing Activities |
| WOM | Word of Mouth |

Introduction

Tourism industry is one of the biggest and most important industries worldwide, it brings a huge income for countries. It helps economies to grow faster. Further than the value generated by tourism industry, the economic potential of this industry is undeniable. Tourism has a huge economic potential for a country or destination that wants to develop its tourism industry. The benefits can reflect into higher range of employment, imports, currency exchange, taxes, and other benefits which bring money into a targeted destination. This industry can be improved by proper marketing strategies.

The hospitality sector thrives on customers, and cannot exist without them. Indeed. Customers are an essential component of hotels' business, and they consistently select the hotels with the best customer service because they want to feel valued and respected. Additionally, they want to believe that their money is being well spent for the value they may receive. There are so many rivals in the hotel market, and if a hotel cannot attract customers, the establishment will not survive.

Hotels are expected to provide superior service or present good behavior to customers. Customer service usually entails being responsive, attentive, and cheerful and this approach can be applied in various aspects of business such as the way of communicating and connecting with customers and responding to customers' requests (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022).

Marketers are reshaping the marketing landscape by empowering consumers to connect, share, collaborate and create spheres of influence by leveraging several interactive marketing platforms. This means that traditional media is not the only tool for capturing consumer attention. The focus is not only on reaching customers but on maintaining their attention through engagement that incorporates traditional and social media.

Social media expanded the interactions among people through different platforms. Instead of dealing with traditional ways of communicating, with social media, people are able to provide information or share their knowledge (Alshahrani and Pennington 2020). As people are seeking more convenient and cost-effective ways of communicating and collecting information, hotels need to satisfy customers' demands and deal with social media.

Social media marketing is important in the business process as the cost is efficient due to decreasing the costs of personnel; enhancing the profitability for various reasons such as availability of information, building relationship with customers, and creating customer-to-customer connections and so on.

1 Overview of the Current Situation

Customers are a very important property for hotels and in general for all businesses. Behavioral outcomes of hotel visitors and guests are considered as the most important factors of success since they significantly contribute to the performance of hotels (Gil et al. 2001). Long-term customer-company relationships are a key antecedent of marketing success.

Social media has become one of the most effective tools for attracting clients in recent years. Social media help marketers to create, communicate, and deliver content about products or services which have value to customers.

The tools of communication with customers have significantly changed after the introduction of social media, and as a result, a traditional form of interaction existing in the past has become less popular (Yadav and Rahman 2017). Companies are turning to marketing communications through social media since it has been demanded from the market in recent years (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022).

Currently, the growing demand for social media among people is increasingly affecting the marketing strategies in hotels (Leung and Bai 2015). Social media marketing contains various aspects such as users' reviews, ratings, forums, referrals, recommendations, and shopping. These facilitate interaction, transfer information among users, and spread word of mouth (WOM) towards products or services. The wide application of social media by hotels and hotel customers encouraged managers and scholars to focus more on this trend, and assess the effect of social media on businesses. Therefore, social media is becoming a mainstream concern among marketers, managers, and scholars.

There are studies that recognized customers' trust, satisfaction and loyalty (e.g. Ibrahim and Aljarah 2018; Chen and Lin 2019; Tran, 2020) and so on as part of the critical purposes of the hotels in order to obtain higher customer outcomes. However, to frame the behavioral intentions of customers, researchers need to adopt a conceptual model that explains the customer relationship outcomes in the hotel industry and provides a proper framework for a better understanding of the complex marketing strategy (Hyun and Perdue 2017).

2 Aim of the Dissertation and Concept

This dissertation describes the issues considering how hotels can efficiently apply social media to help target the right audience, and apply the proper social media platforms, which in turn can lead to creating a better relationship with the customers. It is a contemporary issue that is becoming more significant considering how quickly technology is advancing.

The major objective and sub-objectives of the dissertation are established on the basis of studying the theoretical background and literature, which was further supplemented and enlarged throughout the author's research emphasis. The direction of the entire research process, including data collection, evaluation, and conclusions, is provided by the study objectives. Research objectives also assist in directing the investigation process by helping to focus the research and identify important factors.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to empirically evaluate whether there is a positive effect of social media on the formation of relationships with hotel customers in the Czech

Republic (CZ). In this sense, this research is one of the few research which evaluates the effect of social media on customer relationship outcomes in the territory of the Czech Republic.

The Sub-Objectives (SO) of the dissertation has also been outlined in order to assist in achieving the main objective. Indeed, the steps in order to accomplish the main purpose are regarded as sub-objectives that must be specific and precise, whereas the purpose might be wider. Basically, sub-objectives are defined based on what is needed to accomplish in order to route to the main objective. This dissertation is considering the effect of social media marketing activities on customer relationship building related to services provided by hotels. To do so, and to have a deeper understanding of social media, this dissertation considers five aspects of social media marketing activities (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and perceived risk) which were applied by Seo and Park (2018). The following sub-objectives have been defined in order to facilitate achieving the dissertation's main objective. These sub-objectives (SO) are listed below:

- SO1. To recognize the impact of social media as a marketing tool on consumer outcomes. In other words, to understand the importance of social media for consumer decision-making and from the perspective of consumers.
- SO2. To understand the importance of social media platforms as a marketing tool their usefulness in business from the perspective of hotel managers.
- SO3. To understand how hotel customers perceive the application of social media. Moreover, the perception of hoteliers is also considered in this dissertation.

To be even more specific, this dissertation triggers six determinants of consumer relationship outcomes in order to comprehend the impact of social media marketing on customer behavior. Based on the study done by Hyun and Perdue (2017) customer relationships in the hotel industry are associated with six constructs named engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. These factors developed by Hyun and Perdue (2017) are considered in this dissertation in order to have a deeper grasp of how to build relationships with clients.

As a means of achieving the study aims, this dissertation also provides the key questions. Research Questions (RQ) are essential and the foundation of all scientific investigation. These questions affect the other phases of the research process because they draw attention to the fact that the researcher is trying to find out. These questions are listed below:

Research question 1. What is the perception of hoteliers towards the application of social media?

- RQ 1.1. What kinds of information do hotels post on social media?
- RQ 1.2. Why is social media marketing for hotels so crucial?

Research question 2. What is the perception of hotel customers towards social media?

- RQ 2.1. Do social media marketing activities improve customers' engagement?
- RQ 2.2. Do social media marketing activities improve customers' motivation to stay in a hotel?
- RQ 2.3. Do social media marketing activities improve customers' commitment?

- RQ 2.4. Do social media marketing activities improve customers' cross-buying intention?
- RQ 2.5. Do social media marketing activities improve customers' word of mouth?
- RQ 2.6. Do social media marketing activities affect customers' defection?

Regarding the research concept, the entire process of the dissertation consists of three main parts such as literature review, primary research (among hoteliers and customers) and deriving conclusions. It is displayed in Figure 1.

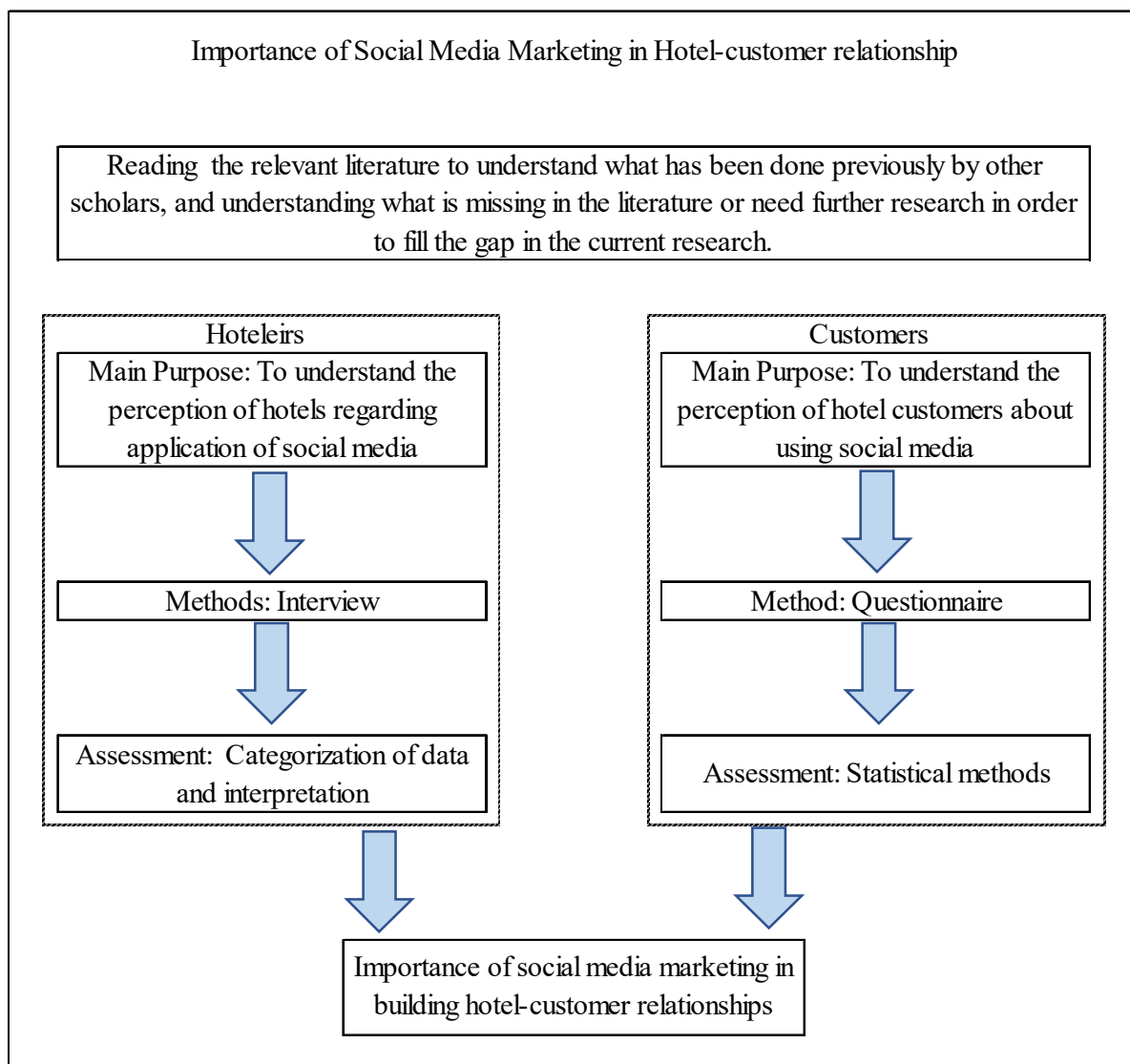


Figure 1: Research Concept

Source: Own

Pre-existing literature was taken into account throughout the literature review. The context data presented in this part serves as the foundation for determining the main objective, sub-objectives, and research questions. It includes a summary of earlier research works and publications.

Following a review of the literature, the next phase involved gathering primary data. The source of data is indeed based on the dissertation objectives and its intended contributions to the existing literature. In the primary research phase, both quantitative and qualitative research was

conducted. To explore more about how hoteliers perceive using social media to connect with guests, qualitative research was employed. It was also helpful to determine the information hotels share on social media and their opinions about the efficiency of this marketing tool. The qualitative research broadened the researchers' understanding by giving them a clearer sense of the advantages of social media.

Quantitative research was also carried out in order to comprehend what hotel guests think about social media and how they can utilize these platforms to choose or interact with the hotels. Having a better grasp of the useful benefits of social media from both the viewpoints of customers and hotels, the researchers' knowledge was strengthened as a consequence of this research.

3 Theoretical Framework

This research considers five components of social media marketing activities in order to have a better overview of what makes social media very popular among users. The five components of social media marketing activities are as follow: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, as well as perceived risk applied by Seo and Park (2018) since these factors can represent more comprehensive aspects of social media marketing. Entertainment as the first dimension of social media marketing activities is connected to a brand's efforts to offer interesting and fun content to customers through social media. Interaction occurs when a company allows individuals to access the exchanging and sharing of information with other users on social media (Liu et al., 2019). Trendiness is the aspect of social media that is connected to releasing the trendiest, latest, and most updated information. Customization refers to the extent that social media deals with customized information. Perceived risk refers to the level of uncertainty for users since the purchase or transaction may create loss or benefit (Permatasari and Kartikowati 2016; Permatasari and Kuswadi, 2017).

Customer relationships we assessed by six dimensions developed by Hyun and Perdue (2017) which are engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. Customer Engagement refers to the emotional attachment that a person can experience during ongoing and repeated interactions (Bansal 2016). Consumer motivation can be understood as an internal state that induces people to seek out and buy goods or services in order to satisfy their conscious and unconscious needs and desires. This may lead to motivate them in order to repeat the purchase. Commitment refers to the desire to retain the relationship which is based on affiliation and loyalty (Gundlach et al. 1995). When customers are effectively committed to a company, they are more likely to buy additional products or services from the same company in preference to other competitors (Marshall 2010). Cross-buying refers to the customers buying behavior in order to buy additional goods or services from an existing company or service provider which they already use (Kumar et al. 2008). Word of mouth refers to communication among consumers towards products, services, or a company that can be assumed independent from commercial influence (Litvin et al. 2008). This communication between people provides access to information related to the usage of that products or services apart from formal advertising (Huete-Alcocer 2017). Customer defection refers to customers leaving one service provider or a company for another (Garland 2002). Hypotheses effects are provided in Figure 2.

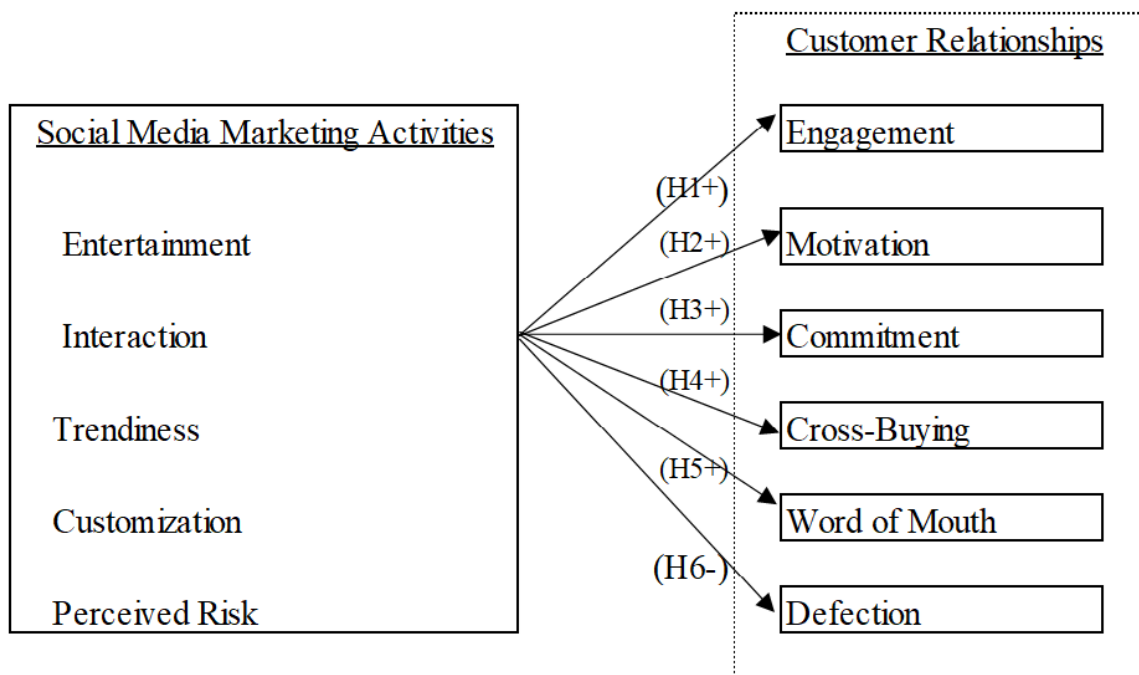


Figure 2: Hypotheses Effects
Source: Own

4 Research Methodology

Processing methodology of this research is based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The mixed methods technique is a fast-emerging subject of social science approach today. It is frequently emphasized in such discussions that the adoption of methodologies should be driven primarily by relevant research questions. Because all approaches have limitations as well as strengths, qualitative and quantitative methods can be integrated to compensate for complementary and overlapping deficiencies. As a result, it will be demonstrated that method integration can serve more comprehensively and complete the examined field.

Quantitative Research (Research of Hotel Customers)

This study was conducted in the Czech Republic. The distribution of questionnaires was both online (electronically) and also paper-based. The questionnaire was posted on online platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn as well as researchers administered the paper-based questionnaires at the airport and tourist places of the Czech Republic. Data for this study was collected through a questionnaire from respondents who have stayed at 4 and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic. Using questionnaires is a convenient technique and data was collected from May to October 2021. Before distributing the questionnaire on a large scale, first it was tested.

Items of the questionnaire (with thirty main items in total) were obtained from relative literature, which has been applied and tested previously. Eleven items have been applied to assess social media marketing activities based on the study done by Seo and Park (2018). Dimensions of customer relationships were assessed by nineteen items designed by Hyun and Perdue (2017).

Before testing the hypothesized relationship, research instruments had to be analyzed. That is, the questionnaire was subjected to reliability and validity assessments before testing the relationship between variables. Testing the reliability was done by commonly applied reliability tests (e.g. Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability) to assess internal consistency among scale items.

The average variance extracted (AVE) was applied to test convergent validity. To determine the discriminant validity, we checked whether the square root of each latent construct's average variance extracted value is greater than the correlation between any of two latent constructs (Zait and Berteau 2011).

To test the hypothesized relationship, statistical tests (correlation and regression analysis) were conducted. Using Structural Equations Modeling, the research model was tested which is divided into two basic phases. The first step is related to testing the model fit. Regression is used in the second phase to verify the existence of links between measured latent variables.

Qualitative Research (Research of Hoteliers)

The methods used to collect the data include interviews and it was based on the quota sampling method from May to October 2021. Since for this research we were unable to cover the entire population, a quota sampling technique was employed and it was done in two steps. The initial stage was to identify the various regions of the Czech Republic where hotels were located. According to the Czech Statistical Office (2022), there are around nine hundred 4 and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic. The quota was based on regions in the Czech Republic.

Following the selection of regions, the researcher moved on to the second phase, which was to identify hotels from each region. Hotels were divided into fourteen groups (based on region). To participate in this survey, 5 hotels in each region were emailed or called and asked about their willingness to attend to this research. Ten hotels (six 5-star and 4 four-star hotels) were accepted to participate in the interviews. The open-ended interview was applied in the research focused on the use and experience of the hotels with social media.

5 Research Results

The participants in this study included 238 people who had stayed in 4 and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic. The bulk of participants (52%) were female, with only 48% being male. The majority of the respondents (53%) were married, while 46% were single. Around 27% of participants had a high school or college diploma, and 46% had a bachelor's degree. Around 24% of the participants had a master's degree, with the remainder (2.5%) having completed postgraduate courses. Nearly a quarter of the participants (25%) were between the ages of 18 and 27, and 31% were between the ages of 28 and 37. Only 33% of the participants were between the ages of 38 and 47, with the remainder (11%) being 48 or older.

Factor analysis confirmed enough level of model fit with CMIN/df=3.15 (Al-Mamary and Shamsuddin 2015), CFI=0.89 (Wolor et al. 2020), NFI=0.85 (Al-Mamary and Shamsuddin 2015), and TLI=0.88 (Hair et al. 2009). All Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values were higher than 0.07 (Hair et al. 2014). Average Variance Extracted values were higher than the accepted level of 0.50 (Shrestha 2021). To test discriminant validity, the comparison between the square root of each latent construct's AVE value and correlation showed that the

square root of each latent construct's AVE is greater than the correlation between any of the two latent constructs and this confirms the existence of discriminant validity. Results of factor loading show that all values are over the accepted level of 0.30 (Tavakol and Wetzel 2020), and only one factor was removed due to lack of fit.

Table 1 shows the correlation between variables, it shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and customers' engagement ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 indicate the regression result and represent the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' engagement ($\beta = 0.74$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide evidence that social media marketing activities are an important antecedent of higher customer engagement. Thus, H1 is supported.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis Results

| Variable | SMMA | Engagement | Motivation | Commitment | Cross-buying | WOM | Defection |
|--------------|---------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|
| SMMA | 1 | | | | | | |
| Engagement | 0.69** | 1 | | | | | |
| Motivation | 0.57** | 0.58** | 1 | | | | |
| Commitment | 0.57** | 0.63** | 0.70** | 1 | | | |
| Cross-buying | 0.55** | 0.58** | 0.63** | 0.73** | 1 | | |
| WOM | 0.57** | 0.50** | 0.49** | 0.60** | 0.69** | 1 | |
| Defection | -0.19** | -0.20** | -0.17** | -0.16* | -0.32** | 0.31** | 1 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own (Analyzed by IBM SPSS 16)

The second hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' motivation. Table 1 demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and customers' motivation ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 represent the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' motivation ($\beta = 0.64$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide evidence that social media marketing activities is an important antecedent of higher customer motivation. Thus, H2 is supported.

The third hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' commitment. Table 1 demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and commitment ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 represent the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' commitment ($\beta = 0.62$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide evidence that social media marketing activities is an important antecedent of higher customer commitment. Thus, H3 is supported.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Results

| Effects | β | P |
|---------------------|---------|-------|
| SMMA → Engagement | 0.74 | <0.01 |
| SMMA → Motivation | 0.64 | <0.01 |
| SMMA → Commitment | 0.62 | <0.01 |
| SMMA → Cross-buying | 0.58 | <0.01 |
| SMMA → WOM | 0.59 | <0.01 |
| SMMA → Defection | -0.22 | <0.01 |

Source: Own (Analyzed by Amos 27)

Forth hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' cross-buying intention. Table 1 demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and customers' cross-buying intention ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 represent the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' cross-buying intention ($\beta = 0.58$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide evidence that social media marketing activities are an important antecedent of higher customers' cross-buying intention. Thus, H4 is supported.

The fifth hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' word of mouth. Table 1 demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and customers' word of mouth ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 represent the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' word of mouth ($\beta = 0.59$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide evidence that social media marketing activities are an important antecedent of higher customer word of mouth. Thus, H5 is supported.

The sixth hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a negative effect on customers' defection. Table 1 demonstrates that there is a negative and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and defection ($r = -0.19$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, the results shown in Table 2 represent the negative and significant effect of social media marketing activities on word of mouth ($\beta = -0.22$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide evidence that social media marketing activities are an important antecedent of lower customer defection. Thus, H6 is supported.

6 Findings of Qualitative Research (Research of Hoteliers)

Hotels may use social media for a variety of reasons to improve their outcomes. There are a few key factors that have been identified by hoteliers in interviews. Table 3 shows a summary of the findings.

Table 3: Advantages of Social Media Marketing from Hoteliers' Point of View

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Creating connection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being more accessible • Responding the queries • Connecting people |
|------------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 2. Involving customers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate and Reviews • Tagging and Hashtagging |
| 3. Source of information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing new products and services • Learning from customers • Customization |
| 4. Competing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being updated with changes • Being attractive |
| 5. Visibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the message visual • Celebrities involvement |
| 6. Affordability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Cost • Covering a wide audience |
| 7. Keeping customers | |
| 8. Post-satisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologizing and compensating • Providing Rewards |

Source: Own

Good and rich social media content is critical to a hotel's success. It can be considered a reliable source of information, as well as a place where customers can get the information they may require. There are various contents that hotels typically share on social media. These contents can be divided into three main categories. The following are what hotels commonly share on social media:

Information about the Hotel: Hotels use this type of information to explain their products and services, as well as new modifications, promotions and discounts, forthcoming events, what services are included in the price, customer service, and so on. This category can also include information about location and accessibility. Hotels use this type of information to attract guests by assuring them of the value and service quality.

Customers don't want to make the wrong decision-making, so the information provided in this category is a critical aspect that may influence the entire decision experience. People can make their decisions easier by gathering more information and by not wasting too much time on researching. Therefore, content shared for this purpose can play a critical role in retaining customers.

Information about Surrounding and Attractions: There might be specific rules and regulations raised by governments, last changes on rules that may affect people's travel decisions may be considered in this category. For instance, Hotels may inform customers about new rules and restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, hotels can share information about sightseeing and other tourist attractions, which may entice tourists to visit/revisit the destination. Attractions are the most essential factor for some people when making travel decisions. Therefore, the goal is to capture the interest of the consumer so that they will visit a specific region and discover the many attractions while on vacation. As a result, this content has the potential to draw travelers from all over the world.

Specific Occasions Announcements: There are times when hotels are eager to share messages to demonstrate their concern for guests and other people. For example, while the first day of school, Labor Day, and other occasions may not be directly related to hotel marketing, however sharing such information may demonstrate how much hoteliers care about their clients and the events in their lives. Hotels may also provide some additional tips and information on these special days.

Moreover, some promotions can be offered on occasions such as mothers' day, women's day, teacher's day, and so on, which can show the support of hotels and their appreciation towards those people. As a result, this can affect the brand reputation, and improve the brand image in a long run.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the significance of social media marketing as a driver of positive customer relationship outcomes. Since social media marketing is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to traditional forms of marketing, the outcomes of this research could improve marketing through social media. Individuals have frequently used social media services in recent decades, and the findings of this study emphasize the relevance of these platforms for users.

The findings of this research are useful in the context of the hotel sector. Although the importance of social media marketing on customer behavior has been highlighted in the literature, only rare studies have been undertaken in the hotel industry. As a result, this study expands the understanding of the effects of social media marketing in the hotel sector and provides practical implications.

First, from hotel customers' point of view, social media is an important instrument in order to create relationships with the hotels. Social media can improve this relationship by improving customers' engagement, enhancing customers' motivations toward the hotel, increasing the level of commitment, accelerating the return intention, facilitating word of mouth, as well as decreasing the level of defection.

Secondly, from hoteliers' point of view, social media is an important instrument in order for hotels to connect with people and build relationships with them. Hotels mainly share three main information on social media which help them to actively market their businesses. They share information about the hotel and services, about surrounding and other attractions in the area, as well as some announcements and appreciations on special occasions. However, the benefits of social media marketing are not only limited to the one-way connection with customers. The main benefits of social media in order to create customer-hotel relationships are improving the level of connecting people, involving clients in business, being significant sources of information, improving competitiveness, helping with visibility and affordability, retaining customers, and post-satisfying clients.

Since social media is important for both parties hotel customers and hoteliers, it is necessary for hotels to be active on social media. Customers can benefit from social media to collect more information for their decision-making and make the best choice. The hotelier can also keep their connection with their current and potential customers and provide them the most recent information and respond to questions whenever customers reach out. Both customers and hotels can benefit from this two-way relationship.

Theoretical Implications

The study looked at social media as a communication phenomenon in hotel marketing that has emerged as a result of the internet and new technology. The findings of this study could broaden current knowledge in social media marketing in a variety of ways.

As mentioned in previous chapters, there are studies on the impact of social media marketing on customer outcomes. However, these studies are carried out in a variety of areas, including luxury brands, airlines, insurance, and hotels. Indeed, the importance of social media can vary in different sectors. The internet, as the most significant technical phenomenon, provides tourist and hospitality businesses with completely new competitive options. Because of its leisure orientation, the hotel industry may differ from other industries in terms of marketing, and the findings of this research can provide a beneficial contribution to the literature in field of hotel industry.

Considering that tourism is a important industry in the Czech Republic, it was critical to place a focus on strengthening it. This country attracts visitors from all across the world throughout the year. It generates revenue from hotels and the tourism industry in general. However, given the importance of the industry, rare studies looked at the tourism business, and notably, the hotel sector considering the effect of social media marketing into the business. The current study attempted to analyze the impact of social media on hotel customers' behavior and findings could contribute to expanding the knowledge in this field in the Czech Republic.

Moreover, scale development processes by Hyun and Perdue (2017) were utilized to establish the dimensions of customer relationships in both the hotel and restaurant industries: engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. Knowledge of the six characteristics that define client interactions, in particular, can help hospitality companies plan and implement more effective marketing initiatives. Future research might look into the impact of various marketing methods across many dimensions of client interactions, allowing for more refined plans to be developed.

Managerial Implications

This study emphasizes the value of social media in improving customer relationships. In relationship marketing, the connection between hotels and its consumers is crucial; yet, some hotels may not be appropriately using social media to connect with customers. Indeed, the findings of this study underline the necessity of hotels offering high-quality services to their consumers, as well as the value of social media marketing in the hotel business.

Even though social media has a huge impact on hotels' performance, hotels may not be completely aware of all these benefits. This research listed these advantages, which may provide beneficial information to hotels in order to apply these platforms more actively and effectively.

The findings of this study showed that hoteliers believe in the importance of social media in retaining customers, and they actively use these platforms for marketing purposes. They try to use various social media to build a relationship with customers and keep them updated. However, there are some hotels that use only a few social media platforms, or even if they do, they do not actively share information across all of them.

The main advantage of using all social media platforms (instead of just one or two) is that they represent information from/to a wide range of people who may favor different platforms. Furthermore, customers are more likely to combine and employ different cues from various websites in their purchase decision and they value different opinions. Therefore, dealing with various social media platforms for hotels provides a better opportunity for customers to find information about hotels that affect customers' purchase decisions.

Moreover, using various social media platforms is more likely to exhibit a broad understanding of customer behaviors and to have a strong association with hotel performance. However, it is critical for some hotels to be active on social media. Hotels with more bureaucracy may find this process more time-consuming. For example, some chain hotels may require prior approval from the marketing department headquarters before sharing information on social media. The process may take longer as a result.

Hotels must be informed of industry innovations, new changes, and improvements in trends in order to provide high-quality services to its consumers in today's competitive market. Providing exceptional service, on the other hand, motivates customers to behave favorably, but hotels must inform their customers about these amenities. Hotels will not benefit as could do if they deliver the greatest and highest quality products and services, but their clients are unaware.

In order to build a good connection with consumers, hotels should emphasize on service quality and social media marketing to enhance and improve customer relationship. To do so, hotels must first learn about their target customers and what they want. Understanding what guests want and search on social media and what hotels can provide to customers as response is necessary.

To remain updated, it is crucial for hotels to follow the industry trending issues, check for related hashtags, gain insight from competitor channels, and keep an eye on industry leaders. This will contribute to the creation of a more comprehensive understanding of how audiences can interact with social media and what information hotels should supply to them.

Hotels must avoid releasing information at random or only specific types of information all of the time. Instead, they should focus on the issues that matter the most to customers, and also diversify the information they share. It could be discovered using the most commonly asked queries on platforms or social media direct messages or conversations on social media for example.

Furthermore, hotels should employ a range of social media channels to stay in touch with their consumers, as social media platforms are a significant tool for retaining customers. As a result of the enhanced availability and accessibility, clients will be able to find the corresponding hotels more readily and easily.

Customers can compare hotels using this shared data before making a final decision. On social media platforms, people may find some general information about the hotel's products and services. However, the information provided by the hotel's social media may not always be what customers are looking for, such as special offers, including services in price, park space availability, pet friendliness, and so on. Customers can be assured of the most up-to-date information by having an active social media by hotels. If customers can't obtain the information they are looking for on social media, they can look into alternative choices.

Managers can examine the information they receive from social media, such as evaluations and ratings and eventually reflect in their business strategy. Developing a relationship with consumers, understanding their positive and negative feedback, and responding to it helps managers reduce failure and reap higher rewards (Kim et al. 2015).

Hoteliers need to know how to improve the effectiveness of social media marketing. Social media can give material such as information about various activities, products and services, membership benefits, service improvement tracking, and customer service. Customers might be encouraged to discuss their experiences with hotel services and become involved in marketing efforts. Customers' involvement can be rewarded with points or discounts if they share their ideas with others (Chen and Lin 2019). Managers can use the trail of comments and reviews to reinforce the advantages and address the flaws by evaluating the trail of comments and reviews.

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Researcher's Publication/Research Activities

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| 1 | Do Service Quality and Social Media Marketing Improve Customer Retention in Hotels? Testing the Mediation Effect | | |
| Where: The journal E&M Economics and Management (E&M) | Year: 2022 | Share: 50% | Citation: _ |
| CHERAGHALIZADEH, Romina and Jaroslava Dedkova, 2022. Do service quality and social media marketing improve customer retention in hotels? Testing the mediation effect. The journal E&M Economics and Management (E&M), 2, 118-133. | | | |
| 2 | Impact of Social Media Marketing on improving customer Satisfaction in the Hotels | | |
| Where: 12th International Conference on Governance Fraud Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility 2021 | Year: 2021 | Share: 50% | Citation: _ |
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| 3 | Application of Social Media from Hotel Point of View: How to Retain Customers? | | |
| Where: 5th International Conference on Human Resource Management, Social, Culture & Social Works 2021 | Year: 2021 | Share: 33% | Citation: _ |
| CHERAGHALIZADEH, Romina, Jaroslava DEDKOVA and Julie HOLENDOVA. 2021. Application of Social Media from Hotel Point of View: How to Retain Customers?. 5th International Conference on Human Resource Management, Social, Culture & Social Works (HRMSC-DEC-2021). Spain. ISBN: 978-969-683-698-8 | | | |
| 4 | The effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Retention | | |
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| 5 | The Effect of Innovative Ability on Competitive Performance Through Problem Identification and New Idea Generation | | |
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| 7 | Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude Toward the Behavior, Subjective Norm and Behavioral Intentions of Guests of Green Hotels | | |
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| 9 | The effect of applied resources on competitive advantage in hotels: Mediation and moderation analysis | | |
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| 10 | The Effect of Organizational Supports on Job Performance in Construction Projects | | |
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| 11 | The effect of job commitment on job satisfaction: Mediation analysis | | |
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Curriculum Vitae

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- 2015-2017 School: International Business Management School of Cyprus
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- 2008-2010 School: Islamic Azad University
Subject: Accounting
Degree: Master's Degree
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Work Background

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- 2015-2019 Company: International Business Management School of Cyprus
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- 2012- 2015 Company: Mohafez Sanat Mamatir Co.
Job: Consultant
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- 2010- 2012 Company : Amir Mansour Aria
Job: Senior accountant
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Job: Accountant
Country: Iran

SKILLS

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|-----------------|--|
| Software Skills | IBM SPSS Statistics IBM SPSS Amos SmartPLS Microsoft Office |
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| Language Skills | Persian English Turkish |
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