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EXPLORING HOW HOTEL ORGANIZATIONS USE SOCIAL MEDIA – AN INTERNATIONAL QUALITATIVE STUDY

Research full-length paper

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Abstract

Social media has changed how both individuals and organizations communicate and interact online. It is argued that social media has had major effects on the hospitality and tourism industry, changing how organizations market themselves, provide service and create relationships with customers. Overall, there is little empirical evidence on how and why organizations use social media. Existing research is rather fragmented, focusing on specific social media use such as marketing or internal communication. More research with a holistic view on social media usage is therefore needed. The present study investigates how 14 hotel organizations in seven European countries within an international hotel chain use social media and what effects the use has on the organizations. The result shows that the hotels use social media for both internal and external communication. However, there is a large focus on managing User-Generated Content.

Keywords: social media, organizational social media, hotel organizations, enterprise social media, social media marketing

1 Introduction

The research field of Information Systems (IS) has a long tradition of conducting research on organizational adoption and use of Information Technologies (IT) and Information Communication Technologies (ICT). In recent decades, the challenge of implementing social media in organizational work practices has been highlighted as an important research venue that needs further investigation (Kane et al., 2014; Aral, 2013). The rapid evolution of social media, often defined as Internet-based communication channels (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) has considerably changed how we interact, communicate, discuss and share content online (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Aral et al, 2013). Hence, social media has affected customer behaviour and decision making, but also how customers share and gain information about firms (Minazzi, 2015) and consequently the way firms communicate, create relationships with customers and provide service (Aral et al, 2013; Sigala and Gretzel, 2017). Furthermore, social media have transformed industries (Aral et al, 2013). This is particularly evident in the hospitality and tourism industry. In response to the environmental change and pressure spurred by social media, the hospitality and tourism industry is adopting social media in order to increase their chance of survival and to meet new customer demand such as more personalized service (Law et al., 2014; Sigala and Gretzel, 2017). The hospitality and tourism industry has a long tradition of adopting and implementing Information Technologies (IT) and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) with the aim to increase service and stay competitive (Buhalis and Law, 2008). Law et al (2014) describes the relationship between technology and the hospitality industry as a synergistic interaction that has transformed the nature of the industry and its products, processes and also competitiveness. Social media can be argued to be a disruptive innovation that has changed the industry in several ways, for example, social media has been an important catalyst for the emergence of the room-sharing digital platform Airbnb which has become a new competitor for hotels, in particular hotel chains (Salvioni, 2016). Furthermore, social media has changed how the industry handles marketing and de-

livers service, while also shifting power from the industry to customers in that by sharing travel and service experiences, complaints and online reviews the relationship between the industry and its customers has been made more transparent and interactive (Minazzi, 2015). Even though social media implementation is rapidly increasing in hotel organizations, compared to other industries, the use of social media have been restricted in hotel organizations (Sigala et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2013) e.g. due to the fear of losing control over brand reputation (Vuori, 2011; Sigala et al., 2012).

Despite the increased adoption of social media in organizations there is still a research gap concerning how social media technologies are used in organizational settings, the impact the use has on workplace practices and processes, and how organizations interact by social media (Aral et al., 2013; Treem and Leonardi, 2013; Kruse and Baumöl, 2016). There is also a lack of research with a holistic perspective answering why and how organizations use social media and how or if the use of social media is affecting organizational performance (Van Ousch and Coursaris, 2013; Schlagwein and Hu, 2016; Chung et al., 2017). Against this background the present paper aims to provide some initial empirical evidence of social media usage in hotel organizations by taking a holistic approach and thereby contribute to the understanding of how social media is used by hotel organizations and the organizational effects. Hence, the research questions of this study are: RQ1: How can social media use and purpose in a hotel chain be described and categorized? RQ2: What organizational effects does social media use have on the studied hotel organizations? Bearing in mind the impact of social media and the lack of research with a holistic perspective, both internal and external, i.e., public use of social media will be explored. An explorative, qualitative case study was conducted and 22 interviews were carried out. An interpretative approach was chosen when analysing the overall use of social media in 14 hotel organizations in seven European countries, all belonging to an international hotel chain. The study shows that the social media use in the studied hotel organizations can be categorized in six categories, and includes both internal and external communication and management of User-Generated Content. The following sections describe related research on social media use in and by organizations. Next, the chosen methodology is presented followed by the findings of the study. Finally, the findings are analysed and discussed and a conclusion is presented with potential areas for further research.

2 Research Background

2.1 Social media use by organizations

The concept of social media is widely used as an umbrella term, bunching together a large variety of social media technologies such as social networks like Facebook or microblogging like Twitter. The social media landscape is continuously developing, introducing new channels. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) define social media as ‘a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content’. Social media includes a wide range of tools with different characteristics. Social media are also flexible, and different tools can be used for different purposes at the same time in an organization (Schlagwein and Hu, 2016). Unlike other IT and ICTs used by organizations, social media technologies do not have a dedicated purpose, that is, their features do not fully determine how they can or should be used, therefore, their features can be described as flexible and open (Richter and Reimer, 2013; Kruse and Baumöl, 2016). Social media technologies were not originally designed to be used as organizational tools (to be compared e.g. to Customer Relationship Management systems) but as online networks for leisure and private use (Friesen, 2010; Treem et al., 2015; Leonardi et al., 2013). Additionally, as social media technologies lack clear features for organizational use, they are also unstable and undergo constant development and changes (Kallinikos et al., 2013). Existing research on social media often has a deterministic approach, arguing that social media is interactive in nature, giving organizations and customers a possibility to interact and co-create value (Mangold and Faulds,

2009). Researchers also argue that social media can increase organizational innovation and refine products and services (Standing and Kinting, 2011). Researchers have also emphasized that social media can increase an organization's ability to source new ideas and to refine products and services based on external perceptions (Kiron et al., 2012) and thereby improve organizations' innovativeness (Standing and Kiniti, 2011). Social media technologies are often described as essentially different from organizational processes and structures (Mansour, 2013). Grudin and Poole (2010) point out that in contrast to organizations social media consists of a flexible and non-hierarchical structure (Grudin and Poole, 2010). Some researchers also discuss that social media challenge earlier conventional organizational structures like roles, tasks, control and organizational hierarchy that need to be re-defined with the use of social media in the organizational context (Fuchs-Kittowski et al., 2009; Ford and Mason, 2013). Treem and Leonardi (2013) point out that researchers treat social media as a new class of technologies that essentially can change organizational processes. However, researchers also point out that the assumption that social media technologies automatically change processes of communication, consumption and interaction is problematic since it has little empirical grounding (Aral et al., 2013; Mansour, 2013). Social media has become an important research topic in several fields, such as organizational communication, marketing, advertising and public relations.

2.2 Categorizations of social media

Due to the interdisciplinary research, social media are categorized in a number of ways. Earlier research often categorize social media depending on whether it is used for internal or external organizational activities. Social media used internally by organizations is often referred to as Enterprise Social Media (ESM) (Leonardi and Treem, 2012) and describes social media used for example in knowledge management or knowledge sharing within organizations (Leonardi and Treem, 2012; Mansour, 2013). Van Osch et al (2015) and (Reimer et al, 2010) discuss the organizational changes ESM can cause. Furthermore, a lot of research has focused on ESM use in relation to organizational knowledge management and knowledge sharing (Faraj et al, 2011; Leonardi and Treem, 2012; Treem and Leonardi, 2013). Figueroa and Cranefield (2012) investigated the effectiveness of ESM in the process of creating and managing organizational knowledge with focus on employee's use of ESM. Also the implementation process of ESM has been investigated. Bala et al's (2015) case study of ESM implementation revealed that although earlier research point out the value of ESM, there was a lack of both interest and use by employees, and also lack of fit between present organizational and individual processes.

Social media used by organizations for external communication often goes under the term Public Social Media and often refers to Social Media Marketing (SMM) or external communication conducted by organizations through social media channels (Minazzi, 2015). Existing research of organizational use of public social media is fairly fragmented (Van Osch and Coursaris, 2015; Kruse and Baumöl, 2016; Schlagwein and Hu, 2016) and has focused on specific use of social media e.g. how organizations are using social media to create closer relationships with customers through relationship marketing (Berthon et al., 2013) and communicate a positive impression of the organization towards their customers and stakeholders (Benthaus et al., 2016), or how organizations anticipate strategic benefits from social media use (Kane et al., 2014; Leonardi et al., 2013). Public social media, have been given less attention within the IS research field (Van Osch and Coursaris, 2015; Kruse and Baumöl, 2016). Researchers has focused on the effects of social media marketing (De Vries et al, 2012; Minazzi, 2015), how the Return on Investment can be measured (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010) and the possibilities of evaluating marketing activities in social media channels (Keegan et al, 2017). Also how social media effect customers brand loyalty has been of interest to researchers (Phan et al, 2011), the effect of online review (Orlikowski and Scott, 2013) and how brand reputation can be managed in social media channels (Barnes et al, 2008).

It should be noted that several researchers are critical towards this categorization and focus on specific usage of social media in organizations. For example, Bughin and Chui (2010) use a categorization

based on the ‘social media purpose of use’, that is, what goals and gains the organization achieves from their usage of social media. They have created three levels. First, organizations that are ‘developing’, that is organizations that have a low level of internal collaboration and information sharing within the organizations but also with their stakeholders and customers. Second is the group of organizations referred to as ‘internally networked organizations’ that achieve benefits from using social media, especially internally. Third, the group of ‘externally networked organizations’ which achieve benefits from external interactions with customers and stakeholders. Bughin and Chui (2010) state that these organizations use social media in a revolutionary way, developing large benefits from the usage both internally and externally. Also, Van Osch and Coursaris (2013) argue that social media used by and in organizations could be referred to as Organizational Social Media (OSM). Van Osch and Coursaris (2013) emphasized the need for a more holistic view and research on social media used by organizations but also a wider definition of the use of social media in and by organizations. Therefore they define Organizational Social Media (OSM) as:

technology artefacts, both material and virtual, that support various intra- and extra-organizational actors—including management, employees and external stakeholders—in a multiplicity of organizational communication activities for producing user-generated content, developing and maintaining social relationships, or enabling other computer-mediated interactions and collaborations in the context of a specific organization and its environment.

A key gap in the literature on social media is, however, a lack of analysis that considers the total impact of all these social media uses on the organization (Larson and Watson, 2011; Michaelidou et al., 2011).

3 Research Method

3.1 Case study and data collection

As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of empirical knowledge on the use of social media in organizations and therefore the present paper used an exploratory research approach. That is, the social media use in the studied organizations were explored inductively (Trauth, 2001). Also, in order to create an understanding of how hotel organizations use social media and its effect, an interpretative qualitative method has been used due to its strengths in providing insights in individual experiences and life settings (Walsham, 1995; Rowlands, 2003; Ritchie et al, 2013). Furthermore, a case study research strategy has been used (Walsham, 1995; Yin, 2003; Sarker et al., 2013) and was motivated by the aim to increase the empirical knowledge on social media use in organizations. The empirical investigation took place in 14 hotels in seven European countries, all part of an international chain with hotels all over the world. Therefore, the hotel chain and the hotels studied represent the case organizations (Yin, 2003). The decision to implement social media was taken by the hotel chain, not the individual hotels. Therefore, all of the hotels started to use social media at the same time with shared guidelines. The hotels set up and manage their own social media channels and all of the hotels have one or two individuals who are in charge of the social media usage.

The main data sources are semi-structured interviews with hotel employees. By conducting interviews it was possible to develop an empirical foundation in order to understand and answer the research questions. During 2013-2014, 22 interviews was conducted. First, the hotel chain’s Social Media Manager was interviewed and thereafter employees responsible for using social media at each hotel. The hotel chain’s e-commerce manager was also interviewed. The respondents in the studied hotel organizations are all in charge of social media use at each hotel. They have different titles, such as marketing manager or sales manager, and social media use was mandatory for these individuals. The respondents were chosen based on their responsibility for social media use in the organizations. The interviews, mostly conducted at the hotels, lasted 60-90 minutes and were recorded and transcribed.

An interview guide was used in the interview process and included questions and themes about the overall social media use in the hotel organizations, what social media channels were used and why. Furthermore, the questions included themes concerning organizational routines and processes and how these were affected by the implementation and use of social media. The interview process can be described as flexible since new questions were asked depending on the flow of the interview allowing relevant, unanticipated topics as they appeared (Ritchie et al, 2013). Also, when the interviews at the hotels took place, field notes and observations were made and included reflections about the hotel environment and information about social media at the hotels (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Furthermore, participatory observations were made during the interviews when the respondents often used their smart phones or tablets to show how they use social media, which gave insight into the organizational use of social media and the respondent’s daily work practices (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Online observations were also inspired by Kozinets’ (2010) ‘Netnography’ method, an ethnographic approach adjusted to the online world such as social media environments. Kozinets (2010) emphasizes that netnography can give researchers important insights into online worlds by being participants, however, the approach can also be used when studying online material that is ‘archived’. The researchers then have the ‘voyeur’s gaze’ (Kozinets, 2010: 55) which was the case in the present study. Online observations were made to gain more insights into how the hotels use social media, without the researcher participating.

Data sources	Outcome
Semi-structured in- interviews	22 interviews at 14 hotels in seven European countries
Online observations	Non-participatory observations (netnography) of social media content published in social media channels by the hotel organizations.
Workplace observa- tions	Non-participatory observations e.g. of respondents showing how they use social media.
Written material	Social media policy and guidelines created by the hotel chain. Schedules and strategic plans for social media use.

Table 1 – Summary of data sources

3.2 Analysis

The process of analysing the empirical data follows the hermeneutic tradition (Cole and Avison, 2007) in order to help understand the respondents’ understanding of the meanings and interpretations of social media and in so doing develop an understanding of how the hotel organizations use social media (Klein and Myers, 1999; Cole and Avison, 2007). The data analysis also involved coding the raw data in order to reveal how social media are used in the hotel organizations and what effects the use has on daily work practices (Bryman, 2003; Miles et al., 2013). The data was coded with focus on what social media technologies the organizations used, which also involved how the social media channels were used and for what purpose. After going back and forth through the data (Cole and Avison, 2007) six categories emerged (see table 3). Furthermore, by going back and forth through the categories, the use of social media and its organizational effects were identified. The present study focused on identifying and categorizing the organizational purpose of organizational use of social media (see Schlagwein and Hu, 2016). The analytical processes enabled the identification of categories of organizational social media use and interpretation of the daily work practices described and performed by the respondents (Klein and Myers, 1999; Bryman and Bell, 2015). The categorization process can be demonstrated by using quotes from the semi-structured interviews: ‘We want to express joy and personality in everything we do on social media. We also want to demonstrate our unique design and give the hotel an identity’. This was coded as belonging to the category of ‘Inspiration and brand value’, while the quote: ‘I have an employee who scans the internet for interesting business customers and we use that information when we call potential customers’, was coded as belonging to the category of “Collecting information and knowledge”. These categories are presented in the following section.

Research questions	What to look at in the data	Empirical sources
How can social media use and purpose in a hotel chain be described and categorized? (RQ1)	Social media technologies used by the organizations and the purpose of using them.	Semi-structured interviews, documents, social media policies, online-observations
What organizational effects does social media use have on the studied hotel organizations? (RQ2)	Organizational effects of social media. Employee’s descriptions and interpretations of organizational social media use. Hotel management of social media channels, e.g. TripAdvisor.	Semi-structured interviews, online-observations

Table 2- Overview of research questions and analysis

4 Findings

This section presents the empirical findings of the research concerning six categories of organizational purpose of the use of social media. When the hotel chain took the decision to implement social media all hotels were encouraged to start using Facebook and Instagram, but beyond that they are free to decide what kind of social media to use. Hence, all of the hotels use Facebook and Instagram, ten hotels use Twitter, three hotels use Pinterest, and one hotel uses YouTube. All of the hotels also have a LinkedIn page. It should be noted that the use of social media was mandatory for the respondents and each hotel is in charge of its own social media activities. The findings show that it is the sales or marketing manager at each of the 14 hotels that is in charge, or allowed to use social media at the hotels.

Other employees at the hotels were allowed to like and share social media content published by the hotels but were not encouraged to comment. The E-commerce manager and social media manager are in charge of the guidelines and policies that are distributed to the hotels.

4.1 Marketing

The use of social media in the hotels are essentially marketing activities. The respondents says that the primary purpose of using social media is to be 'where the customers are': 'we are expected to be out there' and to spread marketing messages and brand values. The marketing material that is published is both traditional marketing material that promotes the hotel chain but also material that is 'more suitable for social media'. The respondents says that there has been a shift in how they market themselves due to the introduction of social media and they explain that they no longer use traditional marketing channels such as newspaper advertisement. The hotel chain management has put a lot of focus on marketing the hotel brand as a whole. The different hotels have therefore been told to post marketing material produced by the hotel chain in their local social media channels. The respondents explain that the marketing in social media is focused on sale and they point out that their goal is to sell more hotel rooms by using social media channels.

One of the sales managers says:

We meet different customer groups in different ways [in social media channels]. The goal is to sell more because what we earn money on is hotel rooms.

Another marketing manager illustrates the new marketing landscape by saying:

I think the advertisement on social media will be very important in the future, we don't use printed media at all since this year because everybody buy hotel rooms online.

However, the respondents also illustrates the downsides of using social media as marketing tool. One of the sales managers says:

What is good about Facebook is that if you publish something that is good then people will like it and share it but if you post something bad then you'll be punished for it.

4.2 Information sharing and service

The hotels use social media technologies as an extension of their websites and therefore they put information such as addresses, relevant news and other practical information on their Facebook pages. The respondents express that this causes a lot of distress since the social media channels need to be updated and the fact that guests ask questions in social media channels. Furthermore the respondents express that being present in social media channels also creates the need to be present and provide service around the clock and that customers expect them to be present online to answer questions. One sales managers illustrate the use of social media by saying:

Customers want basic information on Facebook about the hotel such the address and when the restaurant is open and how they can contact us. (...) I think people use Facebook more and more and once you are there you can search for information there instead of opening a new web page. It takes three seconds to write something there. It is easy and you can write and get answers on Facebook. There are also many customers who write mail on Facebook.

However, the use of social media channels as a channel for communication also causes some problems for the organizations. The respondents point out that they are having problems deciding what language to use and what group of guest to focus on since they think different groups have different needs. Some of the hotels use two or three languages, depending on what kind of posts they are publishing. One of the sales managers says:

We try to post, not every day but three, four times a week. We post news about the hotel but I think it's not important to the ones who like our Facebook page to just see that we have a new menu, that we have new coffee...or this and that. I think it's important to publish what our city is about, if there is a conference this week, what will happen this Christmas, things like that.

4.3 Inspiration and brand values

The respondents express that they should use social media in order to engage with their customers and to create relationships. However, they also say that it is difficult to come up with and publish inspiring material suitable for social media channels. They underline the need to find a balance between promoting their individual hotels, promoting the hotel brand and creating stimulating, engaging content that is appreciated by customers. One of the sales managers says:

We want to express joy and personality in everything we do on social media. We also want to demonstrate our unique design and give the hotel an identity. We want to make ourselves available. Sometimes, the perception is that the more exclusive hotel brands require that you be a banker or wear a black suit to be a guest, but it is not like that at all.

The respondents at the local hotels also reflect upon the changes that social media has caused in their work practices. Some of them see a change in the identity of what a hotel is and talk about the hotel as a 'place for people to meet' and express that the services provided by the hotels are changing. Customers can for example check in and out with their smartphones at some hotels and that makes receptionist's work more as hostesses rather than administrative help at a front desk. One of the respondents says that social media has brought a transparency to the hotel industry that has changed their way of conducting business, for example pricing, but also changed the relationships with customers.

4.4 Collecting information and knowledge

A few of the hotels use social media in order to gain knowledge about their customers' needs and values. One of the respondents explains that he 'scans' social media channels, using hashtags related to the hotel in order to understand what the customers appreciate or not. One of the managers sees social media as a source of valuable information that he can use in order to improve customer service. He says:

I have one employee who do research in social media channels and look at what our competitors do and what the guests are doing and saying. When she finds something interesting, she gives it to the sales manager who calls up potential business customers and asks if they are interested in staying at our hotel.

Furthermore, the hotels use social media in order to gain knowledge about what is 'working or not' in social media by looking at competitors and how they use social media and what they publish online. One of the respondents says that he think it is important to know what the customers post in social media channels and he uses hashtags in order to find published material:

I look at hashtags with the hotel name and brand and our location. I can like and comment those pictures with our hashtags on, and it's often very nice pictures!

4.5 Internal communication

Social media is also used by the hotels, both on a corporate and local level, to create and reproduce organizational values and spread values and organizational mottos. By posting more personal, less strict pictures, the hotel chain has changed its image and brand which need to be communicated both to customers but also to employees. This is also a way of creating an organizational culture and spread it to employees. Many of the hotels also use social media in order to recruit internally, within the hotel chain. One respondent says:

We're in a phase where we are trying to change the brand, it has been very... very strict ... how should I put it ... very much dark suits...(...) We want to make ourselves available. Sometimes, the perception is that the more exclusive hotel brands you have to be a banker or wear a suit to stay here but that is not the case! We are a brand for everyone! On the weekend we have families here, and during the week everyone who needs to travel in the service. Our hotel is a meeting place where everyone is welcome, whether you live in the hotel or from outside.

4.6 Managing User-Generated Content

One of the greatest concerns for the hotels is to manage content created by customers. In order to keep track about what is written and said about the hotel and the hotel chain, the hotels use a digital tool that gives alerts whenever the hotel is mentioned e.g. in an online review, in a tweet or on a Facebook wall.

We have the tool from the hotel chain management, and it calculates and scans what people are talking about on blogs and so on. I look at it all the time, I have to because if I didn't use it I would have to spend much more time on all the [social media] pages.

The hotels put a lot of work into answering the online reviews and are encouraged by the hotel chain to answer all of the negative reviews. All respondents point out that it is important to answer comments and reviews made by customers. The hotel chain also encourage the hotels to find out more about why they have review a bad review, and if necessary, compensate the customer. One of the respondents explain:

TripAdvisor is the most used website in the world where people look when they are going somewhere. It is there number one place, where people are searching, ok let's see, I'm going to London, let's see the prices and what people say about the hotel and what the rating are.

The respondents emphasize that social media channels like TripAdvisor has changed the industry since customers look for information and reviews online. Also, the respondents describe that they used to have the policy of not answering online reviews but this has changed due to the increased customer use of TripAdvisor and the role online reviews has in customers decision-making processes.

Categories of social media use	Organizational effects of social media use	Social media technologies used
Marketing: the use of social media for publishing marketing messages online	Adjusting marketing material to social media channels and managing both hotel chain marketing and individual hotels marketing activities.	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube.
Information sharing and service: using social media as an extension of the organizational web page.	Pressure to be present and reactive in social media channels. Need for knowledge to know what group of customers and stakeholders that are reached in different social media channel.	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
Inspiration and brand value: engaging customers by communicating values connected to the organizational brand.	Creates need for new knowledge on what to post and how to manage and create relationships with customers.	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube.
Collecting information and knowledge: using User- Generated- Content for strategic purposes	Creates need for organizational resources such as time and economic resources but also knowledge on how to handle and use gained knowledge for strategic purposes.	Social media channels used by customers, e.g. blogs, Instagram, TripAdvisor.
Internal communication: using social media as an internal communication tool.	Creates a need to control and manage the transparency that social media channels can contribute with.	LinkedIn, Facebook.
Managing User-Generated-Content: answering and managing questions and reviews made by customers and stakeholders in social media channels.	Creates a need to be reactive and managing both the hotel brand as well as the local hotel's reputation.	Social media channels used by customers, e.g. blogs, Instagram, TripAdvisor.

Table 3 – Summary of categories of social media use by the hotel organizations

5 Discussion

In this paper, a qualitative case study of hotels and their use of social media has been presented. In what follows, the contributions of the study are discussed. The present study should be considered explorative in nature and it revealed how hotel organizations use social media and what organizational challenges that use brings. The first research question addressed how and for what purpose the hotels

use social media. The findings show that the hotels use social media for six purposes: *marketing, information sharing and service, inspiration and brand values, collecting information and knowledge, internal communication and management of User-Generated Content*. While there are many different social media technologies, the study illustrates that Facebook and Instagram are the most commonly used social media platforms and that these are not chosen due to their in-built purposes (Richter and Riemer, 2013), but due to that they function as marketing tool and are recognized by the employees that are using them. Furthermore, the empirical data reveals that the use of social media are essentially driven by external pressure to be present where customer are and communicate marketing material (Minazzi, 2015). The empirical data illustrates that the use therefore involves both what researchers refer to as enterprise social media (Treem and Leonardi, 2013) as well as public social media or social media marketing (Minazzi, 2015). As suggested by Van Osch and Coursaris (2013), the categorization of social media as internal or external can be limiting when analysing organizational use. The present study illustrates that social media content that are published in public social media also can be used when establishing or changing the organizational culture or brand. The study also reveals that the hotels put a lot of emphasis on User-Generated Content published on e.g. TripAdvisor which also is pointed out by earlier research (Bughin et al., 2013; Minazzi, 2015). This also points out how social media has come to affect the hospitality and tourism industry where the customer has gained more power due to social media (Sigala et al., 2012). In contrast to what is suggested in earlier literature (see Minazzi, 2015; Berthon et al., 2012) the study illustrates that social media is not used to a great extent to create a more personalized service relationship with stakeholders and customers. Instead, the findings show that to a great extent the hotels are using social media channels in order to share traditional marketing messages such as offers and promotions and thereby have a rather passive approach towards the use of social media. By focusing on being reactive rather than pro-active, the studied organizations are not using the full potential of social media technologies.

The second research question addressed what effects the use of social media has on the studied organizations. The empirical findings illustrate the need for creating control and management around the use of social media. For example, the hotels need to manage who's responsible for and have access to the organizational social media channels but also manage and control what kind of material is published online. Similar to earlier research, the present study illustrates that the hotel organizations are afraid of losing control over social media content and the need to handle online reputation (Vuori, 2011; Sigala et al., 2012). In contrast to earlier research the social media use in the studied hotels is not driven by or managed like a bottom-up, flexible, open, non-hierarchical structure (Grudin and Poole, 2010). Instead, the use of social media in the hotels is quite hierarchical and only certain managers are allowed to use social media channels with guidelines from the hotel chain management. With the use of social media, several organizational departments but also individual employees competences, hierarchies and organizational structures have overlapped, which can be seen as an organizational challenge. The use of social media in organizations can therefore be said to challenge earlier organizational structures, but also service procedures and work descriptions (Sigala et al., 2012; Aral et al., 2013). The study reveals that the hotels puts most effort into managing User-Generated Content, which is also content they can't control or predict and thereby content that can have the biggest effect on the organizations, e.g. affecting brand image and customers' decision-making (Minazzi, 2015). Interestingly, what is suggested to be the strength and innovativeness of social media such as transparency, and the possibility of creating and sharing content is causing great challenges for the studied organizations (Leonardi and Treem, 2013, Sigala et al, 2012). As suggested above, User-Generated Content has a disruptive effect on the hotel organizations, and evidently affects how service is organized, managed and controlled.

6 Conclusion

Based on 22 interviews from 14 hotel organizations in seven European countries, the present paper examined social media use in and by organizations. The paper therefore adds to the emerging body of research on social media use in organizations and addresses the lack of empirical evidence of how and why organizations use social media (Aral et al., 2013). Furthermore, the study contributes to the IS research field by providing insight on social media use with a holistic approach, which is an understudied part in IS research concerning social media use by organizations as noted by Van Osch and Coursaris (2013) and Schlagwein and Hu (2016). The study has revealed how hotel organizations use social media and found that social media is used both for internal and external communication. However, the hotels focus on social media used by customers, or User-Generated Content to a great extent which also points at the disruptive nature of social media in the hospitality and tourism industry and the changed relationship between the customers and the industry. The analysis of social media use by the hotel organizations reveals six different social media use types: *marketing, information sharing in a service, inspiration and brand values, collecting information and knowledge, internal communication and management of User-Generated Content*. The empirical data illustrates two major organizational effects of social media. First, the need to control what is published in social media owned by the organizations channels and by whom. Second, there is a need to manage User-Generated-Content since this material is out of control for the organizations, and thereby also can damage the organizational brand and image (Sigala et al, 2012).

The study has several limitations such as the analysis draws on a case study of one hotel chain and 14 hotels and the findings are therefore not suitable for making generalizations. Further, the findings in the present paper give a snapshot of how the studied hotels use social media. Hence, future research could gain from using quantitative or mixed methods in order to present more generalizable results. Also, studies that follow organizational social media use over time can contribute to the IS research field, and can also give more implications about how the use of social media in an organizational context affects organizational routines, processes and structures over time.

7 References

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