A REVIEW ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNEL CHOICE DETERMINANTS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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A REVIEW ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNEL CHOICE DETERMINANTS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Research in Progress

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Abstract

Social media engagement has become a global phenomenon, changed the way of interactions and are attracting attention from companies that aim to build relationships with users. However, practical case experiences emphasize the challenge for companies to effectively cope with the individual requirements of social media channels. Accordingly, we suggest that the current general academic conceptualization of social media ‘per se’ is too broad for guiding managerial strategies. In fact, a key managerial decision lies in making the right platform choice that fits into an organization’s specific social media activity. We use an affordance lens as it emphasizes the individual differences in interpreting technology by users. In this research-in-progress paper, we contribute a first step towards a more systematic consideration of platform differences as well as emerging specific use cultures within a platform by evolving a series of influence factors on managerial selection choice of appropriate social media channels.

Keywords: Social media management, social media, literature review, affordances, user behavior, use culture.

1 Introduction

Social media (SM) represent online communications technologies that enable users to interact, share content and collaborate via smart phones, PCs etc. (Montalvo, 2011, p. 91; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 60f., Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). A wide variety of different social media platforms (SMP), such as Facebook (Tosun, 2012; Joinson, 2008), Instagram (Hu et al., 2014; Hochman and Manovich, 2013), Twitter (Marwick and Boyd, 2010) and others established as a result of the second evolutionary stage of the World Wide Web - the Web 2.0 and are continuously transforming.

These social media platforms are becoming increasingly important not only for individuals, but also for organizations in order to address users online via brand building campaigns (Lysyakov et al., 2019; Kane et al., 2014, p. 276; Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010; O’Riordan et al., 2012, p. 1001). One important related challenge emerges from the need of multichannel communication along the customer journey (Kotler et al., 2017), which increasingly involves social media platforms (Hanna et al., 2011; Colliander and Dahlén, 2011). A customer journey is the path of multiple touchpoints over the course of a customer's interaction with an organization (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 85). We adopted the term of social media channels – which grounds in the widespread notion of media channels and multichannel communication – in order to articulate our focus on different alternative platforms in a bundle (as well as differences between these platforms) rather than focusing on one individual platform. While customers interact in social media, they create diverse emerging usage patterns and consider trust as an important determinant that influences their online behavior (Ngai et al., 2015, p. 38). In order to identify the subtle differences between use patterns on different platforms, we use the affordance perspective (Treem and Leonardi, 2012) with its focus on the relation between the technological
artifact and its users. This view also enables us to better derive differences between platforms as emerging from the interpretations of the users in a social context.

Next to customer-facing multichannel communication, the more recently emerging cooperations between organizations and channel-specific influencers emphasize the importance of the right channel choice (Goodman et al., 2011, p. 185f.). This new role of corporate communications towards networked consumers calls for effective management of social media strategies and strategic channel choice in organizations (Ngai et al., 2015, p. 32; Peters et al., 2013). Social media management (SMM), in this regard, is the collaborative process of using Web 2.0 platforms and tools to reach the business goals (Montalvo, 2011, p. 91).

Social media is a mature research topic, but the perspective of managers is not widely studied even though organizational perspectives are a common topic in information systems (IS) research (Trier and Jensen, 2018; Miller and Tucker, 2013; Montalvo, 2011; Smith and Wollan, 2011; Gallaugher and Ransbotham, 2010, Culnan et al., 2010). Organizations increasingly recognize the need to develop customer relationships in social media environments in order to build up trust and promote their brands or gain recognition for their products and services (Laroche et al., 2013; Steinberg and Schultz, 2011, p. 1; Porter and Donthu, 2008; Davenport and Harris, 2007, p. 16). Academic and anecdotal evidence suggests that organizational difficulties in social media management are still prevalent and that organizations miss guidelines about how to interact in social media channels (Influencer Marketing Hub 2020; Sharma, 2019; Parsons and Lepkowska-White, 2018; Stenmark and Zaffar, 2014) so that the effective management of such environments is still an open question.

Against the backdrop of an increasing range of available communication options, this article presents a descriptive literature review in order to identify a set of key categories and (high-level) factors that influence managers’ channel selection choice. The focus is on platform differences which then can be empirically analyzed in future research. The contributions to the field are (1) a taxonomy of factors and dimensions related to social media channel choices that social media managers should consider and evaluate in formulating and implementing their use of social media in an organization and (2) the identification of new directions for further research on key differentiating factors between social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram and Twitter).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly introduces into the theoretical framework. Section 3 details the research method for the literature review. Section 4 presents the main findings from the literature review. In section 5, we discuss the results of the review and finally section 6 concludes the paper with an outline how our findings motivate our future research work aiming to extend the managerial perspective in academic social media studies by comparing similarities and differences of affordances and use cultures of leading social media platforms.

2 Theoretical Framework: Affordances

The wide variety of social media channels offers different functionalities such as focusing on video, text, pictures or offering a mix of these elements. In order to better understand the role of social media from a management perspective, that aims to target engaging customers in technological environments, we adopt the concept of affordances. We suggest that applying this approach to social media can advance the understanding of social media beyond the comparison of different or overlapping ‘set of functions’ to grasping the interpretational differences across social media alternatives.

The concept of affordances was initially introduced by Gibson (1986) by explaining how animals perceive their environments based on different functional requirements and opportunities. This theoretical lens became one of the most fundamental concepts in human computer interaction and interaction design (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 2012). An affordance refers to possibilities for action offered to an individual by the design aspect of an object which suggests how the social and physical construction of the IS should be used. Norman (1999) suggests that affordances should be designed into an object in that way that users understand how to act just by looking at the object. However,
different perspectives held by users raise the possibility for the same object to evoke a variety of different actions (Markus and Silver, 2008). These perceived differences by actors depend on the context in which an object is utilized (Majchrzak et al., 2013; O’Riordan et al., 2012).

In the IS literature, several scholars have proposed the concept of affordances as a useful theoretical lens to provide an understanding of technology design and social media in social and organizational contexts (Namisango et al., 2020; Sæbø et al., 2020; Leidner et al., 2018; Bucher and Helmond, 2018; Chouikh et al., 2016; Stenmark and Zaffar, 2014; Leonardi, 2013; Gibbs, 2013; Majchrzak et al., 2013; Treem and Leonardi, 2012; O’Riordan et al., 2012; Markus and Silver, 2008; Gaver, 1991). In this context, the concept of affordances is a useful approach that emphasizes the individual differences in interpreting technology by its users. As such, it also presents a suitable basis for studying subtle differences across platforms that arise from these use interpretations (e.g., how hashtags are used).

3 Research Method

In this section, we will explain the adopted review method and the main steps that lead to the set of selected publications. Figure 1 depicts the phases and specific tasks in each phase for this study. As a first step towards an improved understanding of channel choice from a manager perspective, this paper employs a descriptive literature review. We followed the methodological guidelines and steps that have been presented for conducting literature reviews in the field of IS (Schryen et al., 2020; Paré et al., 2015; vom Brocke et al., 2015; Rowe, 2014; vom Brocke et al., 2009; Levy and Ellis, 2006; Webster and Watson, 2002; Cooper, 1988) and set our main focus on the literature search process.

As Webster and Watson (2002) suggest querying scholarly databases by using keywords and backward and forward searches, we started with a keyword set that we used to crawl the Google Scholar database and we used a backward orientation to identify extant literature and trends over time and a forward orientation to develop recommendations for future research.

3.1 Planning Phase

We adopted vom Brocke et al.’s (2015) guidelines for planning and organizing the literature search. The purpose of this study is to integrate and synthesize extant research on social media management to identify a set of key categories and (high-level) factors influencing channel selection grounding on platform differences. Thus, the study is seeking to identify the research questions: (1) What research has been conducted on social media affordances by which authors and when? (2) what social media affordance categories are focused in the research? and (3) what are the main findings and consequences of social media affordances influencing social media channel selection choice? In order to develop our protocol and set the boundaries for the search process, we defined the review scope,

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**Figure 1. Methodological review process.**

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inclusion (and exclusion) criteria and keywords, being in line with the purpose of our study, which will be presented in the following sections.

3.2 Literature Search and Identification Phase

As most adopted literature review approaches suggest that the major contributions are likely to be in the leading journals (Rowley and Slack, 2004, p. 32; Webster and Watson, 2002, p. xvi) and also due to the relative newness and changing potential of the domain of social media, we mainly included journals and proceedings that are a common outlet for providing insights into trends. Multiple sources were consulted in the literature search process: (1) Association for Information Systems (AIS) Basket Journals, to target papers of an appropriate standard (e.g., MISQ), (2) Google Scholar, since social media belongs to an interdisciplinary research area (e.g., IS and Marketing) and due to a high accessibility of papers as well as (3) Google, to get insights on actual challenges on social media management from an organizational perspective. Lists of journal quality rankings can be found online, e.g., Association for Information Systems (AIS) Senior Scholar’s Basket of Journals (2020), Scimago Journal and Country Rank (2020) or Financial Times (FT) Research Rank (2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword Set</th>
<th>Relevant Hits in Google Scholar</th>
<th>Backward Search</th>
<th>Investigation of Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miller &amp; Tucker, 2013, ISR</td>
<td>Munir &amp; O’Guinn, 2001, JCR</td>
<td>Social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smith and Wollan, 2011, Book</td>
<td>Gallaugher &amp; Raurbottam, 2010, MISQ</td>
<td>Social networking sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parsons &amp; Lepkowska-White, 2018, IJIM Commerce</td>
<td>Kietzmann et al., 2011, BH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heinonen, 2011, JCB</td>
<td>Hanna et al., 2011, BH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laroche et al., 2013, IJIM</td>
<td>Joinson, 2008, CHI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kane et al., 2014, MISQ</td>
<td>Collander &amp; Dahlén, 2011, JAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ngai et al., 2015, IJIM</td>
<td>Porter &amp; Doutlin, 2008, Mangan Sc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grever, 1991, CHI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daft &amp; Lengel, 1986, Mangan Sc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable of social media</td>
<td>Majchrzak et al., 2013, JCMC</td>
<td>Markus &amp; Silver, 2008, JAIS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gibbs et al., 2013, JCMC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chouilhi et al., 2016, ICEGOV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steunamark &amp; Zaffar, 2014, AMCSIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sabo et al., 2020, ISJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Namisango et al., 2020, PACIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Literature search and identification phase (excerpt of relevant hits and keywords).

Initially, we started our literature search process on Google Scholar with a broad perspective using the keyword “social media management” to retrieve generic papers, then we extended this to “social media” to cover papers that do not necessarily touch management in order to focus on the user perspective. We also noted that “social media platforms” as a third keyword highlights yet different papers that focus more on the notion of affordances, which we then also researched in a separate step as it appeared to be one of our core concepts that we needed to focus on in more detail. To find out what has been written about the topic within the last years, we limited the results to the time period of 2010–2020, the publication language to English and sorted them by relevance (Figure 1). The first retrieved academic publication was the paper “Social Media Management” by Montalvo (2011). Taking this single paper as a starting point we relied on the method of citation chaining to
systematically develop and extend our keyword set by searching both backward and forward in the literature (Schryen et al., 2020, p. 136; Levy and Ellis, 2006, pp. 185ff.; Webster and Watson, 2002, p. xvi). With conducting a backward search, we investigated the cited references of a paper to find more relevant papers about the topic. With conducting a forward search, we investigated other papers cited the original paper by searching for the original paper in Google Scholar and investigating the total citation results. When conducting the backward search, we eliminated the limitation of the last ten years to be able to investigate the references of the relevant results (which we name as a “hit”). By keeping our approach dynamic and including the literature hits, we could add relevant keywords to our keyword set and develop a research path from a broad to a specific direction (Figure 2). The search for relevant literature was conducted in a continuous and repeated process after the saturation principle until we noted that no further relevant articles were listed. The databases identified above were searched using various combinations of the keywords “social media management”, “social media”, “social media platforms”, “social media channels”, “social networking sites”, “affordances”, “social media choice”, “social media campaign management”, “social media management metrics”, “social media fails”, “social media marketing challenges”. Google Scholar listed 10 results per page. We investigated up to 10 pages per searched keyword and 369 results in total. The results were initially examined by title, keywords, abstract snippet (shown in Google Scholar), publication and citation number before clicking on the result for further screening and then by full-text before being downloaded. The papers were cited in different ranges mostly between the ranges 0–1,000. Because latest publications have commonly no or less citations, we did not set a minimum citation number as an inclusion criterion. We used it as another indicator for the quality of the cited papers, e.g., Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) were cited 20,704 times in Google Scholar. The selection process resulted in 50 articles and with 27 of those we could attain initial insights to frame the key categories on social media channel selection choice (Table 1). Further investigations did not yield additional insights so that we stopped the sampling process (saturation principle).

### 3.3 Literature Analysis and Synthesis Phase

The next step of the review was to extract relevant data from the selected sources. A decision to include a publication was based on (1) the relevance and context of the paper to the topic being studied, (2) a clear description of the background paradigm and (3) a clear description of the research method. Papers that failed to meet the above criteria were excluded. Also papers with a technical focus were excluded. According to Cooper (1988) different taxonomies to organize, analyze and synthesize a literature search exist. We focused on theories to find central issues that are related to our research questions. We decided to analyze our literature by using a concept-centric approach enabling to create an overview about topically equal theories (Webster and Watson, 2002, p. xvi f.). To organize the central issues, we basically conceptualized a review scope from a neutral perspective.

At a first glance, we noted that the analysis of affordances and the creation of genres are resulting from the literature as effective approaches in order to identify user behavior in social media. After a deeper analysis of the literature, we detected that a series of influence factors on managerial choice of appropriate social media channels are existing and needed to be conceptualized much more efficiently. Thus, to conduct a more efficient qualitative data analysis, we used the software MAXQDA (MAXQDA, 2020) that enabled us to categorize our central issues that directly or indirectly express a requirement for social media managers (e.g., understanding brand post determinants) by the method of open coding (Saunders, 2009). The coding procedure was conducted by one person, only for academic literature and encompassed reading the full text of the sources with an emphasis on the theory, findings and discussion sections. In a second round the identified codes were grouped and ordered into a hierarchy and relation by adopting the method of axial coding (Saunders, 2009). Using this method, we could recognize the key categories, related affordances and determinants influencing social media channel selection choice.
4 Findings

From our literature review, we could attain initial insights about existing concepts framing the key categories and topic-related influence factors on social media channel selection (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Influence Factors</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Channel attributes</td>
<td>Choice of tools, tool integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General affordances, social affordances and content affordances</td>
<td>Visibility, editability, persistence, association, connectivity, interactivity, profile management, communication guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation of personas</td>
<td>Type of user (e.g., connected user, consumer, business partner, influencer), user personality, user behavior, user properties, user attributes, affordance perception, social factors (e.g., social influence, social capital), user experience, purpose of engagement</td>
<td>Leidner et al.; Huang &amp; Su; Kotler et al.; Ngai et al.; Hu et al.; O´Riordan et al.; Goodman et al.; Heinonen</td>
<td>2018 2018 2017 2015 2014 2012 2011 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genre analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer motivation and input</td>
<td>Entertainment, social connection, information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social media richness</td>
<td>Choosing more than one social media channel to communicate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational attributes</td>
<td>Level of customer and marketing orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determinants of brand post popularity</td>
<td>Vividness, interactivity, informational content, entertaining content, position, valence of comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social media metrics</td>
<td>Key metrics to measure success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social media monitoring</td>
<td>Frequency of data analysis, reaction, gaining insights, improvement (lessons learned)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Influences on social media channel selection choice for an organization.

We identified three central issues: (1) Social media managers (also named as online/content managers etc.) need to place the concept of affordances more central in their social media marketing strategies to understand how the functionality of social media channels is interpreted by users before being able to make an appropriate social media channel selection choice, (2) users in social media differ in their behavior that need to be understood in detail and (3) these issues have an impact on managing social media strategies and goals of a company and therefore need to be adapted to the chosen platform and its audience (e.g., users on Instagram put emphasis on filtered pictures whereas users on Twitter prefer short messages). For example, among the abundant articles discussing various aspects of affordances as a central construct, a few (e.g., Stenmark and Zaffar, 2014) indicate more or less implicitly that the
managerial perspective is not considering these affordances as an instrument to understand the social media channel differences, suggesting this gap as a relevant category. The second category shows that the literature also mentions use culture which is so far insufficiently connected to the affordance concept and thus, reveals the need for more theoretical work to integrate the two aspects theoretically.

5 Discussion

The channel choice for an organization arises due to already existing social media channels on the market, such as Facebook and Twitter (O’Riordan et al., 2012). These channels are becoming increasingly important, both for individuals and organizations (Montalvo, 2011). We noted in our review, that key determinants to choose one or more suitable social media channels are already mentioned occasionally in academic literature (Table 1). As one of the leading authors in this research area, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) early emphasized the importance of differences in social media channels in general. Later, this approach was elaborated into a more detailed categorization by Kietzmann et al. (2011), O’Riordan et al. (2012), Treem and Leonardi (2012) and Ngai et al. (2015) who explored differences of functionalities, attributes and affordances across channels. Next to using affordances as differentiating aspects of social media channels, the paper of Ngai et al. (2015) exemplifies user properties and behaviors, as important factors to attain corporate benefits. This notion of user properties and channel properties also reflects in Kotler et al.’s (2017) content marketing process, which explicates audience mapping/personas and content format as a major decision point in the process. The overview in Table 1 addresses our first two research questions.

Concerning our third research question, we noted that social media management requires specialized skills how to use and interact in the considered channels that differ from each other (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This implicates a deep understanding of social media channel differences, social media use culture as well as an understanding of how to analyze the key metrics of the respective channel to measure success. We noted that different aspects, related to social media strategies and goals, were expressed as key managerial implications for social media managers (e.g., Parsons and Lepkowska-White, 2018; Kane et al., 2014; Stenmark and Zafar, 2014; Ngai et al., 2015; O’Riordan et al., 2012; Heinonen, 2011). We represented this aspect of the literature as the third category in Table 1 (i.e., “key managerial implications”). The concept of media richness theory underlines the importance of using different channels to address a consumer because the power of a message, that is being sent, is dependent on the richness of the respective channel (Daft and Lengel, 1986). Kotler et al. (2017) also argue that a consumer is crossing through a path which they call the “customer journey” by facing different channels and messages within that journey with the purpose of finally making a conversion that is valuable for a company. While Daft and Lengel (1986) outlined the importance of media richness by communicating in more than one channel many years ago, Kietzmann et al. (2011) transfer this approach to the social media domain by highlighting that different social media channels should be used by organizations. De Vries et al. (2012) extend this approach to a more channel specific perspective by emphasizing that different factors such as vividness, interactivity etc. determine the quality of a brand post within a channel. Trier and Jensen (2018) and Montalvo et al. (2011) additionally underline the importance of investigating the existing key metrics of the respective social media channel when defining social media strategies and goals. In this context, we further noted that strategy development and content management for social media channels are dependent on the chosen channel because different functionalities enable companies to put more or less emphasis on specific aspects (O’Riordan et al., 2012; de Vries et al., 2012; Montalvo, 2011).

Although research on social media has been around for over a decade, we observed that there is still a necessity for managing social media efficiently on an organizational level. This need is expressed in recent research as well as in anecdotal reports of practical case experiences (Parsons and Lepkowska-White, 2018; Stenmark and Zafar, 2014). Consequently, this shows, that reaching a customer, who is passing the customer journey on ‘eye-level’ by multiple ways, is important. According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2020) and Sharma (2019) social media marketing challenges are (among others): (1) defining marketing goals (2) identifying the right platform and (3) understanding the target audience.
This is why we suggest to introduce the concept of use culture as another key determinant for social media channel choice. As our analysis of literature shows, from the vast body of literature on social media, only few contributions address relevant differences between major social media channels. Smith and Wollan (2011) mention that social media (channel) properties differ from past media in that they reduce the control over the communication, pointing to the need of a deep knowledge of how to strategically act on these channels. For example, ads should be considering the special properties of channels, e.g., story-based marketing (Belanche et al., 2019, p. 74). Kietzmann et al. (2011) further conceptualize special building blocks of social media and discuss their implications for managers. A closer look on Kietzmann et al.´s “functionalities” highlights the importance of social actions between interrelated users in conversations that develop certain group identities over time in the various channels. Beyond generally referring to social media as one homogeneous concept, Kietzmann et al. (2011) motivate a differentiation of available social media channels by emphasizing differences in their characterizing building blocks. However, the differences are not further conceptualized from a management perspective. O’Riordan et al. (2012) compared affordances of the social media channels Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, whereas Huang and Su (2018) and Hu et al. (2014) considered use culture in the social media channel Instagram, which shows, that the identified concepts have been considered only partially. We suggest, that this way of conceptualization is too broad to be effectively used by social media managers, especially when considering future research, because still new social media channels are being added to the wide variety of social media channels (Huang and Su, 2018; Hu et al., 2014; Hochman and Manovich, 2013). In result, the different social media channels target users and their behavior (Ngai et al., 2015; O’Riordan et al., 2012; Heinonen, 2011) which motivates us to consider use culture as another key determinant in social media channel selection choice.

6 Conclusion and Future Research

Arisng social media channels show that consumers have changed and undergone a shift from traditional media use culture to a more digitalized use culture adapting social media channels into their lifestyle. According to our findings, companies are aware of the importance of social media channels associated with an efficient social media management, but still lack a guideline of how to meet the ‘social customer’ throughout different social media channels, while others are not sure about key determinants to focus on or what to measure. From our analysis, we conclude that current research on social media management is not yet comprehensively and explicitly advancing a theory of social media management and their activities across concrete social media channels (e.g., in the context of omnichannel or multichannel strategies). We present a first step to organize the existing discourse and rearrange it to better address such needs of social media managers. This also implies, however, that intensive future research is required to move beyond the existing discussion by studying the detailed implications of choosing a concrete channel for some organizational social media activity.

This paper provides a starting point for further systematic comparisons of subtle differences and similarities of social media platforms, which are of current interest regarding their affordances and use cultures. Table 1 aims to serve as a framework that should be further extended and corroborated with existing examples of the selected social media channels to finally identify key differentiating factors. The concept of affordances indeed emerged as a useful and central concept to identify differences. We also identified use culture as a relevant element. It presents a contextual layer around the concept of affordances and the instrumental aspect of addressing these use cultures and affordances by social media managers, the strategic layer, is still around the contextual layer. Our future research will focus on how to highlight affordances as a key concept that should also concern managers as an instrument to identify differences and also how the affordance concept can be better linked to organizational strategy. Our findings can serve researchers and practitioners who are rather unfamiliar with social media to quickly grasp the differences and make decisions on which platform to choose and how to use it. Consequently, our research should contribute to eliminate strategical uncertainties and to avoid possible strategical decisions that could be less efficient for companies, e.g., following a copy-paste-principle on different social media channels (which would be contrary to media richness theory).
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