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The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Relationships

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Author: **Romina Cheraghalizadeh**
Thesis Supervisor: doc. PhDr. Ing. Jaroslava Dědková, Ph.D.
Department of Marketing and Trade

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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 Used Abbreviations

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

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Introduction

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.

Customers are crucial since they are the source of revenue; without them, businesses would struggle to exist. To attract customers, all businesses compete with one another. Some businesses keep a close eye on their interactions with clients to find opportunities to enhance their offerings in order to better meet customer needs. Customers' behavior is routinely studied by businesses to determine marketing strategies and modify the goods and services to attract the most customers. In order to boost income, organizations can use this understanding to strengthen current client connections and connect with unexplored market segments. Businesses can gain a competitive edge by treating customers well.

Knowing that customers are by far one of the most important aspects of the business, and that a business would not exist without them, hotels must focus on their customers at all times. Hotels must also show their clients that they are important to them, and hotels do their best to meet their needs.

Customers' satisfaction is a priority that every company strives to maintain, and in the hospitality sector, doing so is crucial to the development and success of the company. Hotels need to provide their higher level of hospitality to their customers to create a good connection with them. The quality or disposition of greeting and treating people with warmth, friendliness, and generosity is known as hospitality (Golubovskaya et al. 2017). Moreover, it is critical to have a customer-oriented mindset in order to be successful in the hospitality industry. Customers will be sure about the quality of services provided by the service provider once they believe their expectations are going to be fulfilled (Zahara 2021).

Customer service is an important part of the hotel sector, and everyone who works in this business is expected to provide a good service or present a good behavior with customers. Customer service usually entails being responsive, attentive, and cheerful and this approach

can be applied in various aspects of business such the way of communicating and connecting with customers and responding to customers' requests (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022).

Everyone working in the hotel industry is expected to deliver great customer service. Customer service frequently comprises providing timely, pleasant, and enthusiastic treatment to consumers as well as making sure that customers' needs are met in a way that promotes the business.

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 oneshotels 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 be closed.

When hotels offer highest customer service, guests may recommend them to their friends (Zainol et al. 2016). These crucial connections will directly affect company. On the other side, bad customer service might have a similar negative impact. It will result in losing not only the dissatisfied consumers but also the potential clients. Because dissatisfied clients could spread negative comments about the hotel service, which might discourage new guests from staying there.

Customers who don't like their experience or feel they've been treated unfairly may tell others about it or write negative reviews, which may result in a loss in business. This is why boosting the guest experience is crucial for the hotel industry. This covers all of a hotel's interactions with a visitor, from the moment they check in until the moment they check out.

A few researchers recognized customers' trusts, 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 provide a proper framework for better understanding of the complex marketing strategy (Hyun and Perdue 2017).

Social media has become one of the most effective tools for attracting clients in recent years. Social media are internet-based tools that users can use to create and share information. They were built on the technological underpinnings of the web (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Social media help the marketers to create, communicate, and deliver the contents about products or services which have values to customers.

The tools of communication with customers have significantly changed after introduction of social media, and as a result, traditional form of interactions 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).

The effect of technologies on marketing and social networking now provide different forms of marketing opportunities like rates and reviews, influencer marketing, creating forums and so on. With the increasing importance of the internet, digital trends do not only change consumer expectations regarding the interaction with a company, but also advance the way a company can market in the social media platforms. This makes social media a significant marketing tool.

Traditionally, companies had only two main options to attract customers, to pay for advertising or to link with a third party in the media. Emersion of social media solved this problem, and gave more space to companies to keep their own connection with customers. In recent years, messages can be designed in a way to stimulate the audience faster, and also build connection with people more properly (Zainol et al. 2016; Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022).

Currently, the growing demand for social media among people is increasingly affecting the marketing strategies in the hotels (Leung and Bai 2015). Social media marketing contains various aspects such as users' reviews, ratings, forums, referrals, recommendations, and shopping. These facilitate interaction, transferring information among users, and spreading word of mouth (WOM) towards products or services. 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 the businesses. Therefore, social media is becoming a mainstream concern among marketers, managers, and scholars.

Since social media are popular platforms applied by hotel customers, hotels can apply these platforms in order to create connections with their existing and potential customers and also improve the customer-hotel relationships (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022). Application of platforms such as Facebook and Instagram can help hotels to facilitate their connection with customers and benefit from it. This can be also explained by three theories, social exchange theory, uses and gratification theory as well as theory of communication. Based on social exchange theory, people engage in an exchange process after weighing the benefits and costs, and if they perceive the benefit they may receive is higher than the costs they may need to spend, they are willing to choose the alternative. Social media marketing gives the opportunity to people to spend less time, cost, and effort in collecting information and that may encourage people to choose the alternative (Luo 2002). Moreover, uses and gratification theory seeks how and why people search for specific social media in order to satisfy a specific need (Moon and An 2022). Social media has several benefits such as accessibility to up to date information easily and fast, being in contact with the service provider and so on, which encourages people to apply these media. These in turn, can enhance the demand of customers for social media, and if service providers can provide what customers demand they can eventually benefit from it. Furthermore, theory of communication explains what can be communicated and by who and through which channel. Social media provides this opportunity to people and businesses to directly connect to each other through social media platform and they can deliver their messages directly.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to evaluate whether there is a positive effect of social media in the formation of relationship with hotel customers in the Czech Republic. Regarding the content of the dissertation, the first chapter includes the research philosophy, the rationale of the study, the purpose of the dissertation, and the theoretical underpinnings. The chapter also includes the overview of how entire research was conducted.

Chapter 2 which is titled literature review provides detailed information and elaboration of existing studies in the research domain of the dissertation. The theories used as the framework for the study (Social Exchange Theory, Uses and gratifications theory, and

communication theory), and all the constructs under investigation are highlighted in detail in this chapter.

Chapter 3, explains the importance of tourism in the Czech Republic, diversity of tourism in this country, and proves the argument about the current situation of hotel industry and the place of social media in this industry.

In chapter 4, research design is covered. Topics like sample selection, data collection, measurement of constructs, and analysis of data are explained. Specifically saying, the chapter focused on the methodology of the study. In this chapter the information about how data was collected from both hotel customers and hotel employees are provided. The statistical methods applied in this dissertation are also discussed in this part. The methods to test the quality of data such as reliability and validity tests are explained, and the statistical methods conducted to test the hypotheses are also discussed in this chapter.

In chapter 5, the research presents the results of the study. Demographic details of participants, the results of testing data quality, and eventually, the results of proposed relationships are given in this chapter. Research results are discussed to explain how the research's goal is obtained. This provides the argues about findings and significance of the results

The conclusion of the study and contribution to literature and industry is also provided in the last section of this research. Contribution to theories and practice are discussed in this part. Concerns with research designs and opportunities for future research are also provided.

1 Aim of the Dissertation and Concept

This chapter of the dissertation describes the research approach and the study's premise. The chapter also discusses the aim, emphasizing its significance in the research. It contains research objectives, research questions, and research concept. Indeed, this chapter provides a general review of the research as a whole.

This dissertation describes the issues considering how hotels can efficiently apply social media to help targeting the right audience, and apply the proper social media platforms, which in turn can lead to creating better relationship with the customers. It is a contemporary issue which 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 in 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 relationships outcomes in the territory of the Czech Republic.

The Sub-Objectives (SO) of the dissertation have 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 which must be specific and precise, whereas the purpose might be wider. Basically, sub-objectives are defined based on what are 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 in achieving the dissertation' 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 and its 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 relationships 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 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 what the researcher is trying to find out. These questions are listed below:

Research question 1. What is the perception of hoteliers towards 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.

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 were conducted. To explore more about how hoteliers perceive about 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.

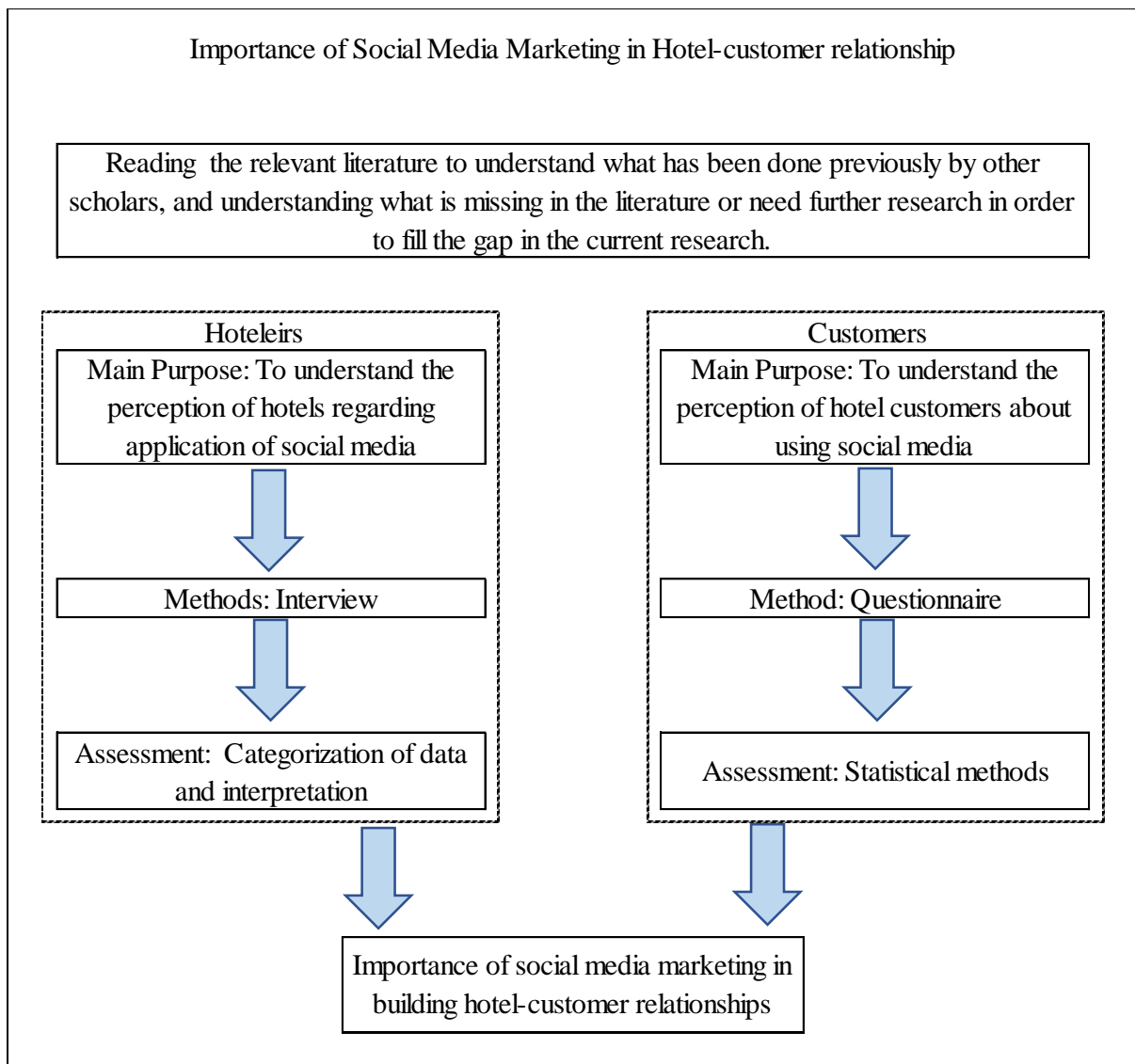


Figure 1: Research Concept

Source: Own

Regarding the research method, the characteristics of the phenomenon being examined determined the methodology. Methods and tool procedures make it possible to effectively control research operations while maintaining objectivity. To carry out this dissertation, both quantitative and qualitative technique was applied. Within the characteristics of theoretical approach, statistical techniques and interpretation were applied. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive explanation of the methodology.

According to the study's outcomes, social media is important from the viewpoint of hotel guests in order to create relationship with hotels. Results showed how various facets of

customer relationship behavior in this research have been impacted by social media marketing.

The findings of this study further emphasized the importance of social media from hoteliers' point of view. According to findings, hotels may use social media to deliver their messages to clients and gain from the advantages of social media to strengthen their ties with customers.

Summary of Chapter 1

The main purpose of this study is to empirically evaluate whether there is a positive effect of social media in the creation of relationship with hotel customers in the Czech Republic. For this purpose, this research triggers both hotel customers and hotel managers to understand their point of views about application of social media in order to create customer-hotel relationships. To do so, both qualitative and quantitative research method were applied to reach out to both parties (hotel customers and hoteliers). The research on hotel customers is quantitative, and the research on hoteliers is qualitative.

2 Literature Review

In order to fully comprehend the concept and the current state of knowledge in the field of this research, the earlier studies that were relevant to this dissertation have been studied in this chapter. This chapter's goal is to provide a concise review of the statements related to the use of social media and business-customer relationships.

This chapter starts with a theoretical overview to indicate the importance of social media and its effect on building relationship with customers. The main theories applied in this research are social exchange theory, uses and gratifications theory, and theory of communication which describe the phenomenon related to the current research assumptions.

The next part of the chapter gives a description and critical review of what other authors have written on the importance of social media, and customer relationship outcomes (engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection). Social media has become more popular subject among scholars in last years and several studies have been done to find out the outcomes of social media. Furthermore, maintaining relationship with customers has always been of special interest to marketers, and several studies have been conducted in order to understand the factors affecting customer relationship. This chapter will review the literature and try to build a logical overview of what have been proposed in conceptual framework of this research.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Social media can be described as a set of interactive Internet apps that enable user-generated content creation, editing, filtering, and sharing (Betton et al. 2015). There are a variety of examples of social media networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and so on.

Social media platforms are widely used for communication. It promotes the interchange of knowledge and information among diverse groups of individuals and businesses. Social media bridges the gap between people, allowing them to contact others who have similar interests and build virtual communities around those shared interests (Baruah 2012).

Given that it is affordable, social media marketing is crucial for business operations due to decreasing the costs of personnel, and enhance the profitability for various reasons such as availability of information, building relationship with customers, and creating customer to customer connections and so on (SI 2016).

Several researchers believe that social media marketing activities need to be considered as multi-dimension construct to indicate customers' behavioral intentions. Kim and Ko (2012), Sano (2015), Kim and Ko (2012), Ibrahim and Aljarah (2018) and Chen and Lin (2019) considered different aspects of social media marketing activities in their research. For instance, Kim and Ko (2012) categorized the features of social media marketing activities into entertainment, trendiness, interaction, customization, and word of mouth, as well as their applications in luxury brands. Sano (2015) identified four social media marketing activities components in insurance services: interaction, customization, trendiness, and perceived risk. However, Seo and Park (2018) defined social media marketing features in airlines as entertainment, trendiness, interaction, customization, and perceived risk.

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 first dimension of social media marketing activities is connected to brand's efforts to offer interesting and fun contents 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 which 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 level of uncertainty for users since the purchase or transaction may create loss or benefit (Permatasari and Kartikowati 2016; Permatasari and Kuswadi, 2017).

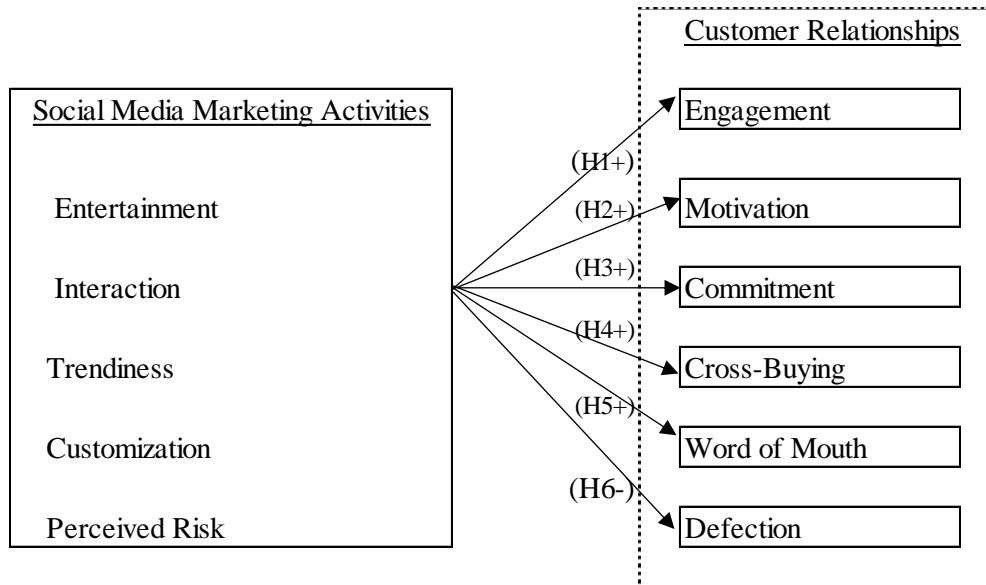


Figure 2: Hypotheses Effects

Source: Own

One of the core focus of marketing activities is to build and manage customer relationships, and most of hospitality companies invest their marketing resources into building relationships with their customers (Hyun and Perdue 2017). The strength and depth of these relationships are therefore a key measurement of a long-term marketing achievement (Josiassen et al. 2014).

Based on Rust et al. (2004), the marketing activities of a company contribute to below:

- Contribute to progress customer preferences and attitudes which leads to
- Influence on the strength and stability of the relationships between the company and its customers
- Enhance the customers' lifetime financial value
- Leads to customer equity, and marketing investments return

Social media as marketing instrument help companies to deal with above mentioned contents, understand customers' attitudes and preferences and also affect them, create relationship with clients and reinforce this relationship, and benefit from this connection financially overtime.

Previous studies on customer behavior focus on various aspects of customers' outcomes such as satisfaction, loyalty, engagement and so on. However, there is no specific dimensions in those research to provide what exactly mean by customer relationships outcomes (a brief review of the relevant literature is provided in Table 1). Hyun and Perdue (2017) conducted a comprehensive research on dimensions of customer relationships in hotel and restaurant industries.

As shown in Figure 2, Hyun and Perdue (2017) have indicated six dimensions of customer relationship named: engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. Customer Engagement refers to the emotional attachment which a person can experience during the ongoing and repeated interactions (Bansal 2016). Consumer motivation can be understood of 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 affectively 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 which can be assumed independent from commercial influence (Litvin et al. 2008). These communication between people provide the accessibility to the 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). When other brands appeal more to customers, then they may show switching intention. More detailed information is provided further in this chapter.

Table 1: Overview of Literature on Social Media Marketing

Research Title	Year	Country	Industry	Brief Finding
Do service quality and social media marketing improve customer retention in hotels? Testing the mediation effect (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022)	2022	Czech Republic	Hotel industry	Social media marketing and service quality improve customer retention.
The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Loyalty amongst University Students: Evidence from the Fashion Industry in Kuala Lumpur (Jawid and Rajadurai 2021)	2021	Malaysia	Fashion industry	Social media marketing positively affect customers loyalty.
Online reviews and purchase intention: A cosmopolitanism perspective (Tran 2020)	2020	Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam	Hotel industry	Online reviews positively affect purchase intention through social media platforms and online trust.
Examining the impact of luxury brand's social media marketing on customer engagement: Using big data analytics and natural language processing (Liu et al. 2019)	2019	Not specified	Luxury brands, fashion industry	In social media marketing activities only aspects of interaction, entertainment as well as trendiness affect positively on customer engagement. Customization does not.
Understanding the effect of social media marketing activities: The mediation of social identification, perceived value, and satisfaction (Chen and Lin 2019)	2019	Not specified	Not specified	Social media marketing activities affect on social identification and perceived value, leading to satisfaction, continuance, participation and purchase intentions.

Research Title	Year	Country	Industry	Brief Finding
Dataset of relationships among social media marketing activities, brand loyalty, revisit intention. Evidence from the hospitality industry in Northern Cyprus (Ibrahim and Aljarah 2018)	2018	Northern Cyprus	Hotel industry	Social media marketing activities influence brand loyalty and revisit intention.
A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry (Seo and Park 2018)	2018	Korea	Airline industry	Social media marketing activities has significant effects on brand awareness and image.
The effect of social media marketing activities on brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty (Bilgin 2018)	2018	Turkey	Automotive, airline, jeweler, communication industries etc.	Social media marketing activities affect brand awareness, image and loyalty.
The effect of social media on firm performance (Tajvidi and Karami 2017)	2017	UK	Hotel industry	Positive relationship between social media application and firm performance (online more than offline).
The influence of perceived social media marketing activities on brand loyalty. The mediation effect of brand and value consciousness (Ismail 2017)	2017	Malaysia	Not specified	Social media marketing enhances brand loyalty.
Analysing the Effect of Social Media on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention: The Case of Iran Khodro Company (Abzari et al. 2014)	2014	Iran	Automotive	Traditional advertising and social media affect brand attitude, and social media have a greater effect.

Research Title	Year	Country	Industry	Brief Finding
Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand (Kim and Ko 2012)	2012	Korea	Luxury fashion brand	Social media marketing enhances value equity, as well as relationship and brand equity.
Impacts of Luxury Fashion Brand's Social Media Marketing on Customer Relationship and Purchase Intention (Kim and Ko 2010)	2010	Korea	Luxury fashion brand	Social media marketing affects both customer relationships and buying intention.

Source: Mentioned in the Table 1

This research contributes to expand the knowledge by investigating the application of social media marketing in order to build better customer relationships in hotel industry.

This study expands the relevance of social media marketing activities in predicting behavioral outcomes in hotel customers.

2.1.1 Social Exchange Theory

In the field of tourism, the social exchange theory has made some progress. In tourism research, it is a widely utilized theory (Ward and Berno 2011). It is frequently utilized to provide support to people behavior, estimate future tourism growth, and other difficulties, and it has a lot of explanatory power.

According to Nunkoo (2016) in an exchange process, actors are reliant on one another for the outcomes they need. They act in a way that enhances positive outcomes and decreases poor results, and if the advantages of the exchange outweigh the costs, actors participate in repeat exchanges over time. Indeed, based on this theory, everyone's decision to participate in an interaction process is based on a cost-benefit analysis and an assessment of alternatives. Individuals engage in an exchange process after weighing the benefits and costs, and they form connections that allow them to maximize benefits while minimizing costs.

This theory explains how human connection can be viewed as an exchange of resources (Luo 2002). The resources do not need to be necessarily tangible such as money, but rather

intangible such as a connection or friendship. According to social exchange theory, It can be deemed undesirable if the costs of the transaction are more than the benefits one receives (such as saving in time and money), and not reimbursed as expected (Emerson 1976). Social media enables companies to provide information to the users with lesser effort and cost. Individuals can receive greater amount of information in a lesser time, and more conveniently. Users of social media might so gain from its application.

Actors in business will participate in a transaction if the rewards are valuable to them and the perceived costs will not exceed the perceived benefits. Only if both parties believe they gain more from the trade, then they will continue the interaction. Indeed, when individuals receive benefits from other parties, they may want to give it back or compensate (Emerson 1976; Rasoolimanesh et al. 2015). Accordingly, in business when customers are satisfied with the service provider in terms of products, services, process and relationship, they may show loyalty or repurchase intention in return as a part of this exchange. As social media can facilitate the process of getting connected with the companies, and the information provided by them, therefore, it brings benefit for customers and as a result, can be considered as a source of positive outcomes for the company.

Moreover, the act of exchange is possible when there is trust among two sides. This is not only to facilitate the exchange, but also to connect more customers by word of mouth marketing. Social media seems to be a proper platform in order to deal with social exchange not only with company, and also with other users. This gives people the chance to establish and sustain social connections more affordably than they could with offline interactions.

2.1.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

This theory is considered as a view of understanding how and why people continuously search for specific media in order to satisfy specific needs. Further than the concepts have been discussed in other theories about what media does to people, this theory further considers what people also do with the media. Uses and gratifications theory is an approach to understand the function of mass communication between two parties (Moon and An 2022).

Based on Moon and An (2022), the major purpose of this theory is to define an individual's social and psychological reasons for using a certain media, as well as how that media satisfies their intrinsic needs and desires. This theory assumes that:

- Everyone is an active audience in media situations; in the context of tourism, travelers are seen as active smartphone users to fulfill their needs (social interaction, entertainment, convenience, and information), obtaining satisfaction while on the move.
- People are goal-directed and highly motivated; in other words, unlike traditional media users who unconsciously watch TV and listen to the radio, travelers are goal-directed and highly motivated. They can search for the information they are looking for, rather than passively listening to news or watching programs on TV .
- People interact with media communication. Social media are inherently interactive, blurring the line between sender and recipient;
- Users know their own requirements and choose a certain media to satisfy them. In the context of tourism, tourists recognize their wants and choose their devices and platforms to meet what they need.

This theory argues that how users intentionally choose media which will meet their given needs and allow them to boost social interaction, knowledge, relaxation, companionship etc. It indicates that people are not passive users of media. They have the power and important role in understanding and interpreting media in their routine lives. Social media enable people to interact to one another and contribute to each others' decision-making. This is in addition to the information that people can receive from the company itself, and can be considered more reliable (Moon and An 2022).

Based on this theory, users are responsible for selecting their preferred media to satisfy their desires and therefore achieve gratification. That is, companies usually do not speak up about the weaknesses they may have in their businesses, however, social media gives this opportunity to users to have access to the positive and negative opinions of other users.

Social interactions are fundamentally different from economic exchanges in various ways. While benefits are explicit and often contractual in economic exchanges, rewards and their exact nature are rarely bargained in social exchanges. Benefits interchange is a voluntary action with unspecified future obligations. Although the specific nature of the returns is not known or bargained in social exchanges, there is an anticipation of some future returns for contributions between the trade participants (Blau 1964).

Social media attracts people for a variety of reasons (Mason et al.,2020). Malik et al. (2016) looked at the benefits that Facebook users obtain from their social media participation, based on the Uses and Gratification Theory. They discovered six different forms of gratifications from uploading images. Affection, seeking for attention, habits, sharing information, disclosure, as well as social influence all contribute to user gratification, according to the researchers.

2.1.3 Theory of Communication

Scholars had clear views about how a communication should work, or who should say "what" to "whom" and through what "medium" and for what "outcomes" (Miller 2005). The use of communication theory allows for the discussion and analysis of the crucial connections, procedures, and events that make up communication.

It is feasible to think of theory as a method for mapping and navigating the world. Communication theory addresses the means to respond to concerns about communication that are empirical, intellectual, or practical. Communication theory highlights the symbolic and social process elements from two viewpoints. Information exchange (from the point of view of transmission) and the work done to connect and facilitate that exchange.

By like or boosting information, replying to updates, and commenting on posts, social media users can communicate with one another. In addition to the search function, interesting contacts can also be located in other people's contact lists, as contributors of pertinent topics. Links to social media profiles can be shared and it enables others to connect and stay up to date with others. It is crucial that the internet is a public forum where remarks may be archived, shared, and spread to others when taking part in online discussions (Osterrieder 2013).

Based on Wang et al. (2012), through the growth and rising popularity of social media, consumer socialization through peer contact via social media platforms has emerged as a significant marketing topic. Online consumer socialization through peer communication affects behavior both directly (conformity with peers) and indirectly (by enhancing product involvement).

2.2 Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA)

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) He defined social media as web-based applications that enable users to generate and exchange content. These applications are built on the ideological and technological web. Social media marketing describes the use of social media technology to carry out marketing efforts for businesses (Dahnil et al. 2014). Social media marketing is important in business process as the cost is efficient due to decreasing the costs of personnel; and enhance the profitability for various reasons such as availability of information, building relationship with customers, and creating customer to customer connections etc. (SI 2016).

In 1997, the first recognizable social networking site was founded. First social network websites are such as SixDegrees.com and Classmates.com. Several community technologies started to enable different combinations of profiles and stated publicly Friends between 1997 and 2001. SixDegrees.com enabled users to set up profiles, make list their Friends, and browse the Friends lists beginning in 1998. In fact, even prior to SixDegrees. Most major dating sites and several community sites had profiles. Classmates.com allowed users to sign up for their high school or college and browse the network for other members, but building profiles and adding Friends wasn't possible until much later. The first to combine these attributes was SixDegrees (Boyd and Ellison 2007).

Through virtual communities and networks, social media are interactive tools that promote the development and sharing of information, ideas, hobbies, and other kinds of expression. Social media features include (Obar and Wildman 2015):

- Interactive web-based applications are social media.
- User-generated material, such as written posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data produced by all online activity, is what social media is all about.
- Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app, which is designed and maintained by the social media platform.
- By linking a user's profile with the profiles of other people or groups, social media helps online social networks flourish.

Based on Statista (2022), there are 4.59 billion people worldwide who use social media in 2022 which makes social media important marketing tool. The number of social media users worldwide is provided in Figure 3.

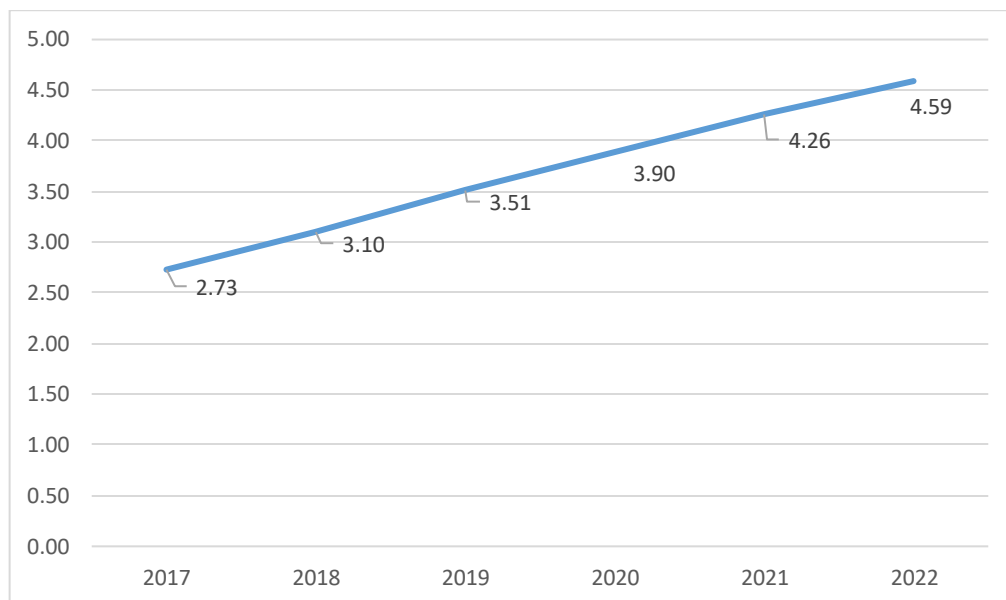


Figure 3: Number of Social Media Users Worldwide (in Billions)

Source: Statista, 2022d

There are many different social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and others, and people may use one or various social media based on their desires. The number of social media users based on various social media platforms is provided in Figure 4. For instance, Facebook with the most number of users has wider range of audience.

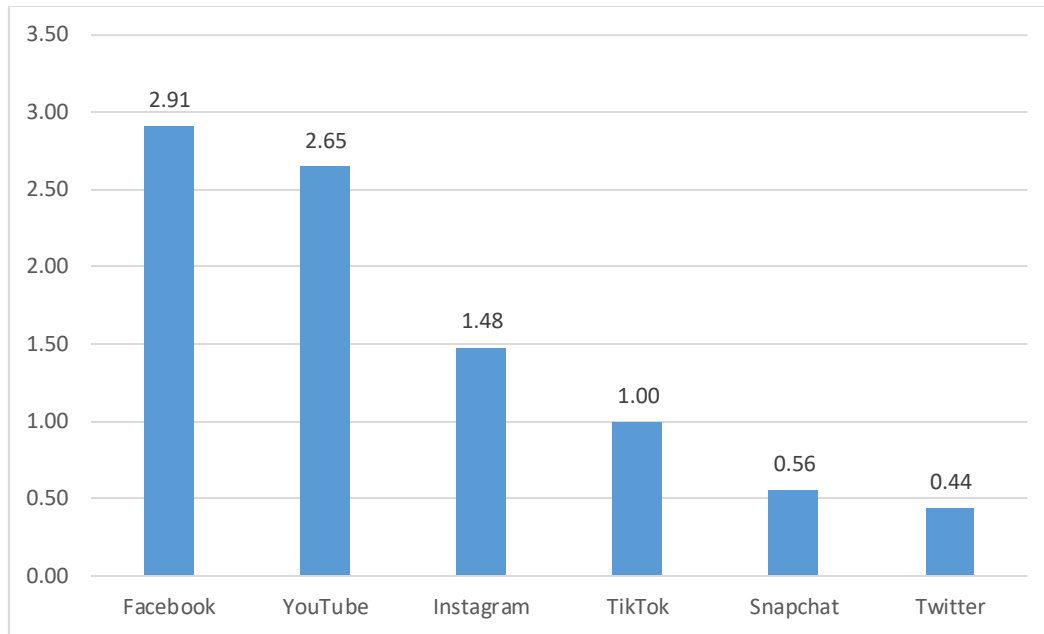


Figure 4: Popular Social Media, Monthly Active Users Worldwide (in Billions) in January 2022

Source: Statista, 2022c

According To Boyd and Ellison (2007) since customers connect with various communication channels, these platforms develop a high level of interactivity, allowing users to exchange, co-create, discuss, participate in, and edit user-generated or self-curated online material. Social media is also used to develop ideas through the creation of blogs, podcasts, movies, and gaming websites, as well as to keep track of memories, learn about and investigate themes, advertise oneself, and forge friendships.

Social media platforms enable online interaction and the formation of communities and interactions between people, businesses, and other organizations. When businesses join such social media platforms, customers can communicate with them straight. Users may find that relationship more personalized than more conventional marketing.

Social networks further serve as electronic word of mouth. The flexibility of the Internet to connect people all around the world has given online word of mouth a powerful voice and a wide audience (Chang et al., 2010). Network has the capacity to quickly shift how a growing number of consumers behave in terms of their spending habits, product choices, and service usage. Re-sharing comments made by other users about a brand is allowed on social networking platforms. By reiterating the message, the user's connections can view it, expand its audience, and more people can visit the brand (Jansen, et al. 2009).

According to Osterrieder (2013) the ability to share content with others is the fundamental idea behind social media. User registration and profile creation are typically required in order to upload material. Users are free to decide whether their entire profile or specific content will be public or private to chosen audience, depending on the platform and the purpose of use. Short updates, long text, links, photographs, audio or video files, and publications are all examples of content types. Therefore, social media enable people to use these platforms in a way which is the most convenient for users.

According to Nadda et al. (2015) social media can be used by marketers to create and carry out marketing campaigns, which is a low-cost marketing method. Marketers' primary goal when using social media is to create attention-grabbing content. Furthermore, marketers concentrate on creating material that can provide individuals with motivational incentives. Indeed, user motivation and loyalty, as well as involvement are the cornerstones to social media success. The main elements that can attract users to social media are the development of social networks, cooperative content creation, user-centered content, and the facilitation of flexible design.

Social media, like any other kind of media, may also present obstacles to businesses. Social media systems may have substantial interruptions from user privacy invasion, aggressive advertising, a lack of e-commerce capabilities, a lack of brand management, and various legal issues (Nadda et al. 2015). People may not like obtrusive marketing and communications, and they are unwilling to reveal their privacy, which can be compromised on an internet platform.

Social Media and Decision-Making process

Social media is used effectively to assist people in their decision-making processes. Need identification, information search, alternative evaluation, and purchase decision are the steps in the decision-making process. Every stage benefits from social media. The result of user participation and involvement in multistage problem-solving activities is shopping behavior (Edgett and Cullen 1993).

Marketing through social networks informs customers, allowing them to help the learning process through which they obtain consumption knowledge. Consumers' understanding,

perspective, and motivation might change as a result of new information gathered through reading, observing, discussing, and virtual experience. Social media platforms can influence consumer perceptions towards desired and existing states, as well as generate active or latent issue recognition and propose solutions to problems (Nadda et al. 2015).

By affecting consumers' learning, motivation, and attitudes through experiences, consumer's decision-making process can benefit from the assessment of alternative phases. The consumer evaluates a product's entire performance in relation to expectations, word of mouth, and channel audience opinions during the decision-making process. The proper evaluation not only assists in choosing brand items or places, but it may also encourage cross-purchasing, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth. (Nadda et al. 2015).

Social networks can foster a level of customer interaction and engagement with a product or service. The quantity of psychophysical energy expended by the consumer in the purchasing process is referred to as the level of customer involvement. Across cultures, higher degrees of participation are related with use of emotive and decision-making techniques.

When buying or consuming, some people may utilize various criteria, look for more information, count on fewer alternatives, process pertinent information precisely, and establish attitudes that are more stable. As a result, levels of involvement can influence information processing decisions and advertising reactions (Nadda et al. 215).

The following describes how social media can affect decision-making process:

Recognizing Product Needs: The realization of a need for a product is the initial step in the decision-making process for consumers. (Mason et al. 2021). According to Thota (2018), businesses can use social media to stimulate consumer demand for their products by starting brand conversations that promote favorable perceptions of their goods, services, or concepts. Social media is an effective tool for disseminating ideas. Social media thus offers a platform for companies to increase brand recognition for their goods or services. Businesses, for instance, can post brand content about their goods and services on owned media. Furthermore, peer and opinion leader posts may produce stimuli that influence brand perception. According to Jashari and Rrustemi (2017), every image, video, post, review, and content published on social media that consumers have access can serve as a stimulus to

identify a new demand. Therefore, application social media is important in need recognition stage.

Information Search: When a consumer searches for product information, the second step of the decision-making process takes place. In other words, a consumer is motivated to look for information about how to meet an expectation when a perceived need is aroused. Throughout this process, consumers learn about the comparative features of rival brands or products. People can start their information search by asking their network for recommendations on products or services. Positive brand content produced by a business may be viewed with suspicion. However, because people see product reviews as being more credible than information offered by marketers, they are viewed more favorably. (Jin and Lee 2014).

Social media platforms also offer the opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings that may have delayed clients' purchasing decisions. Because of the availability of prompt information, societies have evolved the raising awareness, disseminating it via the Internet and social media platforms, and further making purchase (Nadda et al. 2015). Therefore, application social media is important in information search stage.

Alternative Evaluation: Customers analyze products as well as brand selections from a collection of options during this stage. People evaluate product selections using a variety of decision criteria. Customers, for example, may utilize price to find the least priced product alternative. Businesses can utilize social media channels to spread favorable news and address problems with consumers' decision-making processes. Social media allows a company to conduct two-way dialogues with its customers. Potential customers can contact the business directly through direct messaging or post comments on product or brand sites to learn more about product offerings. Customers may ask questions about products on social media. In turn, the business can respond immediately to inquiries from customers on the same post. (Mason et al. 2021). Therefore, application social media is important in alternative evaluation stage.

Purchase Decision: At this point, the buyer decides what to buy. An important factor in the decision to buy a product is the people's perception of the risk that it won't operate as planned. People typically sought product validation from family, friends, respected

authorities, and others in order to reduce their perceived risk. Thankfully, social media platforms allow users to speak with a wider audience without actually seeing them face-to-face. Social media applications are crucial at the point of making a purchase.

Dimensions of Social Media Marketing Activities

Social networks deliver a higher value experience compared to other forms of entertainment. According to Yadav and Rahman (2017) social media marketing contains various aspects such as users' reviews, ratings, forums, referrals, recommendations, and shopping. As can be seen in Figure 5, rates and reviews can be seen on social media platforms. These can facilitate interaction, transferring information among users, and spreading word of mouth towards products or services.

This dissertation took into account prior social media research to determine the aspects of social media marketing efforts. Kim and Ko (2012) considered the effect of social media marketing activities on customer equity. According to the research, social media marketing efforts comprised of five aspects named entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, as well as word-of-mouth. Furthermore, Sano (2015) discussed how social media marketing activities affect customer satisfaction, positive word of mouth and commitment. He has used dimensions applied by Kim and Ko (2012); however, removed entertainment and word of mouth and added perceived risk. Ibrahim and Aljarah (2018) have considered the social media marketing in hospitality industry and in Northern Cyprus applying the aspects of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization and word of mouth for social media marketing activities. Chen and Lin (2019) also considered entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, word-of-mouth as five aspects of social media marketing activities.

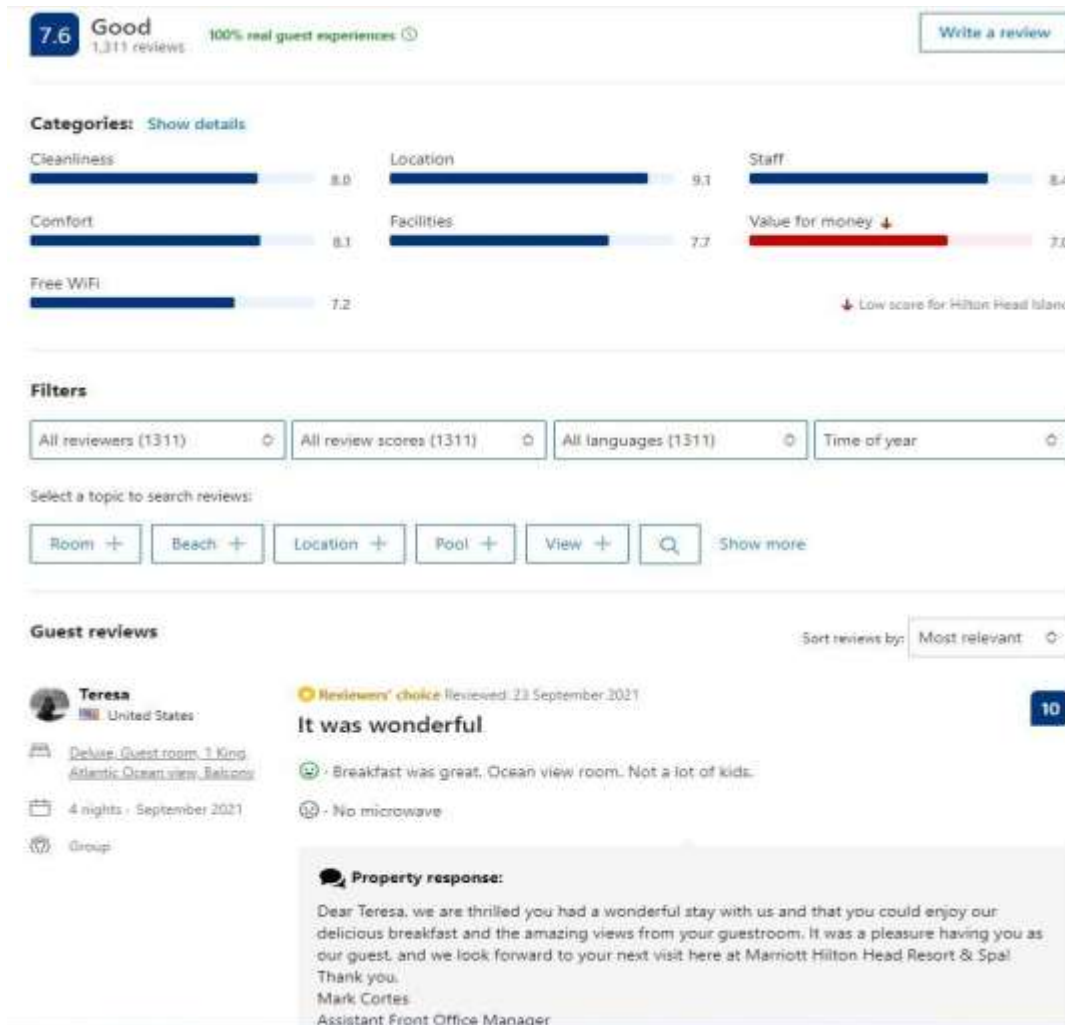


Figure 5: Example of Rating and Review of a Hotel

Source: Booking.com, 2022

To attain more comprehensive view on aspects of social media marketing activities, this research considered the above mentioned literature, and applied five aspects of social media marketing activities named entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, as well as perceived risk. These five dimensions have been also applied by Seo and Park (2018) and tested previously in the literature. This is shown in section 2.1 and in Figure 2.

Entertainment as first dimension of social media marketing activities is connected to brand's efforts to offer interesting and fun contents to customers through social media. It is considered as a main motivator for users to generate and share content (Phelps et al., 2004) and encourage them to be part of social media community (Liu et al., 2019). Information obtained from social media is more entertaining, amusing, interesting, and exciting when they are virally spread (Golan and Zaidner, 2008; Liu et al., 2019), and this can be also seen

in Figure 6. Hotels can compete to provide the best quality entertainment and engaging conversation to their current and potential users.

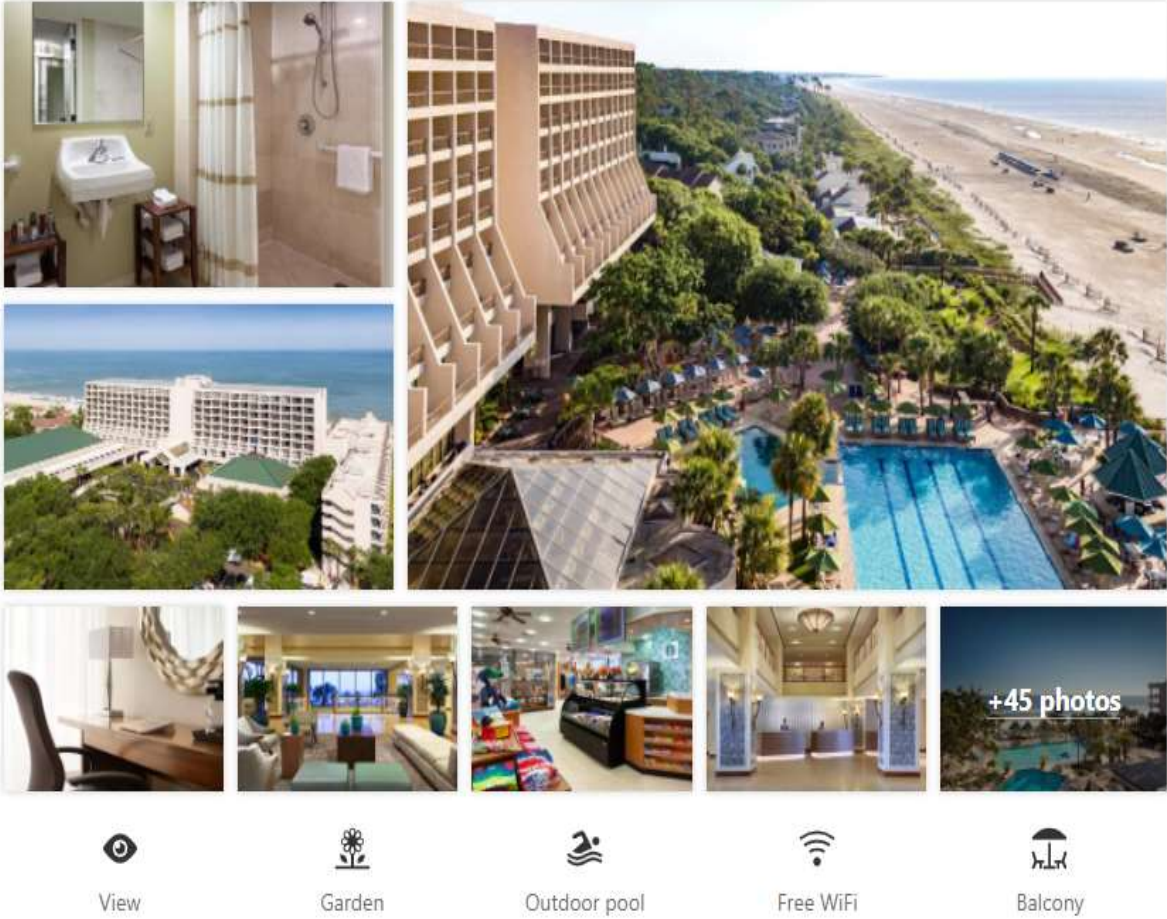


Figure 6: Example of Information Collected from a Hotel’s Social Media

Source: Booking.com, 2022

As powerful marketing tools for hotels, social media platforms can be used for video content, video chat communications, music, social networking services, communities, reviews, and ratings. These are just a few forms of online social entertainment.

Social media platforms highlight a shift in both where people go for leisure (Hruska and Maresova 2020) and how businesses and individuals utilize stories to advertise a product or service. Storytelling can do a variety of factors that make it a proper example of marketing through entertainment. First, the viral films expose the hotels' product to millions of people while also informing them of the product's quality and the footage it can take. Second, the

videos don't try to persuade people to buy the product; instead, they allow the footage and stories which can provide speak for itself. Finally, contests can be held to find user-generated contents for the website to build a greater user community.

Interaction occurs when a company allows individuals to access the exchanging and sharing of information with other audience on social media (Liu et al. 2019). Social media has participatory nature which users can get connected to information they are looking for, and also communicate and connect with others such as service provider and other users. Also they find the information they receive from other users more trustworthy.

Users can engage, provide comments, receive information, and exchange ideas through social media (Farook and Abeysekara 2016), which is a collection of online communication tools. Social media helps people to save up, enhance customer communication, have a better target their customers, and generate feedback and loyalty which in turn can help hotels to create a better connection with customers and in turn improve the relationship with them.

Moreover, interaction can be accelerated through social media influencers. Social media influencers are characterized as third-party endorsers who assist shape their audience's attitudes (Freberg et al. 2011). Influencers on social media typically have a stronger connection and interaction with their followers and are consequently regarded as having high levels of reliability, credibility, and expertise (Lim et al. 2017). People can choose to follow influencers online, and because they share aspects of their lives and communicate with followers frequently, people believe them to be more accessible, trustworthy, close, and better to relate to.

Another significant change driven by the use of social media is that peoples' opinion is no longer filtered (Sawyer and Chen 2012). People can share their ideas with a much larger audience through social media networks. People could not get their messages across in the past unless they spoke directly to one another. However, social media has dissolved this barrier to free speech.

Trendiness is the aspect of social media, which is connected to releasing the trendiest, latest and most updated information. With enhancing social media popularity, users demand immediate and quick access to brand information. Social media gives the opportunity to

service providers to share latest information, changes, offers, and deals and so on immediately; and this enables customers to have more recent information about services and products. This aspect of social media eliminated the probability of making undesired decision by receiving updated information; and removing outdated and expired ones (Seo and Park 2018).

Maintaining up to date on a variety of social media platforms allows hotels to develop a connection with customers and interact with their target audience. People can see the information shared by a hotel on social media more often, which enables people to be informed about latest updates and news about the hotel. Hotels can constantly inform their customers about their current and upcoming services, discounts, events and improving their social media in terms of usability for their customers.

Customization refers to the extent that social media deals with customized information. According to Zhu and Chen (2015) customization refers the specific messages or information which target group of users. There are two categories of posting. In one type, messages are customized for specific group of people, and the second type contains messages which are for everyone who is concerned (Zhu and Chen 2015). Social media enable users to reach and customize information in a more efficient and cost-effective way comparing other forms of traditional media. Personalization or customization is crucial for companies because it improves users' overall commitment to a brand (Lacey et al. 2007); and minimize the search time and efforts. Therefore, hotels social media enable people to filter or customize information based on what they are searching, and minimize the search time to find the information. On social media, data can be filtered to find the most useful information for users, and this can be seen in Figure 7.

Filter by:		Star rating		Meals	
Your previous filters		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 star	6	<input type="checkbox"/> Self catering	403
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 stars	48	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 stars	22	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast included	429
<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast included	429	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 stars	362	<input type="checkbox"/> All meals included	1
Your budget (per night)		<input type="checkbox"/> 4 stars	369	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast & dinner included	19
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set your own budget		<input type="checkbox"/> 5 stars	48	Entire places	
<input type="checkbox"/> £0 - £50	155	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrated	70	<input type="checkbox"/> Entire homes & apartments	334
<input type="checkbox"/> £50 - £100	582	Distance from centre of Prague		Property type	
<input type="checkbox"/> £100 - £150	481	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1/2 mile	218	<input type="checkbox"/> Hotels	492
<input type="checkbox"/> £150 - £200	290	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 mile	470	<input type="checkbox"/> Apartments	317
<input type="checkbox"/> £200 +	186	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 miles	665	<input type="checkbox"/> Guest houses	58
Popular filters		Distance from centre of Prague		<input type="checkbox"/> Hostels	43
<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast included	429	Fun things to do		<input type="checkbox"/> Homestays	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotels	492	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiking	226	Show all 12 ▾	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 stars	369	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking tours	184	Landmarks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Old Town Square	292	<input type="checkbox"/> Massage	124	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Town Square	292
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking	638	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf course (within 3 km)	123	<input type="checkbox"/> Charles Bridge	235
<input type="checkbox"/> Superb: 9+	232	<input type="checkbox"/> Bike tours	118	<input type="checkbox"/> Prague Castle	74
Based on guest reviews		<input type="checkbox"/> Hot tub/Jacuzzi	65	<input type="checkbox"/> Vysehrad Castle	18
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1/2 mile	218	Deals		Bed preference	
Distance from centre of Prague		<input type="checkbox"/> All deals	169	<input type="checkbox"/> Twin beds	455
<input type="checkbox"/> Private bathroom	801	Cancellation policy		<input type="checkbox"/> Double bed	605
		<input type="checkbox"/> Free cancellation	830		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Book without credit card	1		

Figure 7: Example of Filters Can Be Used on Social Media

Source: booking.com, 2022

Perceived risk refers to level of uncertainty for users since the purchase or transaction may create either loss or benefit (Permatasari and Kartikowati 2016; Permatasari, and Kuswadi, 2017). The capacity to lower customers' worries or anxieties about their decisions to purchase particular goods or services from providers is known as perceived risk. Customers are more satisfied with goods and services when they do not incur additional costs or have any negative effects on them after the purchase. Therefore, social media help users to receive more information about available choices and brands; and make the best decisions based on that. This minimizes the sense of regret after usage since customers are already aware of other choices; and they chose the service and product which better matches their criteria. Regarding the hotel industry, customers can check the social media of the alternative hotels, compare the alternatives, and make their decisions based on what they see on social media

(for instance rates and reviews). This makes the customers to minimize their perceived risk in making the wrong decisions.

Social media is important platform for both company and hotels. Hotels can provide better information regarding the product and services they offer; the process of transaction, and the benefits customers may receive from during their stay or while using the services provided by the hotels. They can easily update their customers about latest changes in products, services, price and so on; and can keep their connections with current users; as well as obtaining new and potential customers. However, using social media is beneficial for customers as well. Social media is considered as public forum, where hotels and other users respond to one another. This enables other customers to have access to reviews and comments. They are mostly affected through what they can find on hotel's social media or website. Users can also receive more information in shorter time and can compare various alternatives. They can also obtain real experience of other users towards the hotels and make their final decisions more confident. Furthermore, customers can receive information about latest offers and changes; and get informed when there are events or deals. This may affect customers' decisions to disregard the brand or make the purchase.

2.3 Customer Relationships

Customer relationships are the bonds that a business creates and keeps with its clients (Muhtaroglu et al. 2013). Hyun and Perdue (2017) expanded a scale which considers the constructs to evaluate customer relationship buildings for hotels and restaurants which are engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. The current research applied these six variables in order to evaluate the application of social media on customer relationship. It gives a better and broader understanding of customer relationships outcomes. This is shown in section 2.1 and in Figure 2.

2.3.1 Engagement

Customer engagement refers to a psychological process that leads to customer loyalty (O'Brien and Toms 2010). Customer Engagement has been defined as an association between a company and its customers with concentration on collaboration and support. Indeed, social media is a fact which enables companies to have such extended customer relationships leading to strategic advantages (Siriwardane and Dissanayake 2018; Dissanayake et al. 2019)

Engagement is an important parameter of customer relationship building. In a dynamic business environment, there are benefits of customer engagement which help companies toward sales promotion, quality improvement of products, enhance in customer satisfaction, reduction in risk and costs, and improvement in competitive advantage (Brodie et al. 2013; Banyte and Dovaliene 2014).

Due to the interactive nature of social media, predictors and outcomes of engagement may be considered in light of social media usage parameters such as statement of agreement, comments, ratings, and shares (Barger and Labrecque 2013; Barger et al. 2016). Potential outcomes of social media engagement include increasing in consumer satisfaction, retention, loyalty, lifetime value, and profitability.

According to Kim and Ko (2012) social media is considered as one of the highly used instruments in marketing communication which result in brand awareness as well as customer engagements (Bento et al. 2018). Influenced by advertising strategies, social media content provides interaction possibility to users to connect with companies, brands and other related communities without the complexity of time and place barriers.

Constantin et al. (2014) mentioned that the need for knowledge about consumption decisions is the primary driver of customer interaction with brand communities (learning). Customers can make additional contributions to the public community by sharing their personal information and making recommendations (advocating). These elements will encourage consumer participation in brand communities (Mohammad 2020).

According to Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022) customer engagement in hotel can be considered as one of the most important predictors of customer loyalty which indeed is the indicators of customer relationship in the literature. For instance, in a research on customer engagement on social media done by De Vries and Carlson (2014), it is indicated that there is positive connection between customer engagement and loyalty. The research done by Pansari and Kumar (2017) mentioned that customer satisfaction is a driver of customer engagement. Furthermore, Greve (2014) indicated the moderating role of customer engagement in effect of brand image and loyalty. Moreover, Hollebeek (2011) explained that increasing customer loyalty can be attained through the improvement of customer engagement. Based on above mentioned literature, customer engagement seem to play an essential role in creating customer relationship. Social media of the hotels enable customers to be more engaged with the hotel and this can lead to creation of customer-hotel relationship.

2.3.2 Motivation

The term of motivation appeared into psychologists vocabulary in the early 1880s (Durmaz and Diyarbakirlioglu 2011). Motivation is connected with effort, which is specified by an ability to insist during difficult situations, deal with necessary tasks to get the work done, and not engage in a more desirable tasks (Richardson et al. 2012).

People can have a variety of needs at once. Some of the needs are biogenic which arise due to physiological states of tension. Other kinds of needs are considered as psychogenic which arise due to psychological states of tension. In most cases, motivation drives from some need which leads to behavior, and that results in some kind of reward after the need is fulfilled. Regarding social media, Davis et al. (1992) indicated that both extrinsic (such as usefulness) and intrinsic (such as enjoyment) factors affect the motivation to apply information technology system. Lin and Lu, (2011) mentioned that enjoyment (as intrinsic motivation) is the most effective factor to motivate people to continue using social network sites, followed by usefulness (as extrinsic motivation) (Ugur, a7 Basak 2018).

The processes that lead people to behave the way they do are referred to motivation. This happens when a consumer has a need and desires to fulfill. Motives cause purchases and other human behaviors (Mcneal 2007). In last decades, people use internet every day.

Internet turned out to be part of people's routine life. When a need is created, a condition of tension is built which drives the customer to try to diminish or remove the need. The main part of motivation component is the goal structure. The goals can provide the motivation to search for and buy the product or service that will satisfy the consumer needs. That is, the goal of buying is to satisfy the needs, and this satisfaction can provide a motivation towards the customer shopping activity (Durmaz and Diyarbakırlioğlu 2011). When people demand to be connected with service providers and receive information through social media, therefore companies need to provide them in order to remain competitive.

A community may provide significant values for motivation. Social media give hotels the ability to create online communities, which gives them access to consumers, helps them understand why people join social media through the questions they may ask, and gives them a direct path to customer feedback.

Intrinsic Motivation: Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that drives from inside rather than any outside or external rewards, such as money (Zaman et al. 2013). Meanwhile, motivation refers to an inner drive which reflects goal-oriented stimulus. This motivation comes with the feeling of pleasure a person may receive from a task itself, or from the satisfaction due to completing or working on it (Cameron and Pierce 1994). Intrinsic motivation does not exclude one from seeking rewards, though. It simply means that external rewards cannot be enough to motivate the person. This motivation is an internal force which directs one's activities toward meeting needs as well as achieving goals. Application of social media enables people not to limit their knowledge from what they receive from service provider, but be more proactive and influential (Heinonen 2011). Social media help people to share their experience, affect each other's decision, and feel more effective towards people and society. This may help them to have sense of fulfillment after sharing their experience and knowledge.

Extrinsic Motivation: This motivation drives from outside. Most common extrinsic motives are rewards such as money (Ryan and Deci 2000; Putra et al. 2017). Competition is also in general extrinsic since it persuades the person to win (Amjad and Zamir 2020), and not to consider the intrinsic rewards obtained during the activity. Social psychological studies indicated that extrinsic motives can result in over-justification as well as subsequent decrement of intrinsic motivation (Tohidi and Jabbari 2012). It is possible to internalize the

extrinsic motivation if the task fits with one's beliefs and values (Legault et al 2006), and therefore fulfills the initial psychological needs. Social media enables people to financially benefit from it; they pay less in order to obtain the required information, and also can compare the deals and offers and make the best choices (Baruah 2012). Time saving aspect of social media is also an important element to stimulate extrinsic motivation for users (Barush 2012).

2.3.3 Commitment

Commitment refers to customers' willingness to remain in a long-term relationship, and stay engaged with the brand community, and advocate for the brand. Based on De Oliveira Santini et al. (2020), interactions create satisfaction and positive consequences, and form the basis of commitment and emotional connections. Therefore, commitment can positively influence satisfaction and emotions.

According to Lacy (2007) long-term desire to uphold a beneficial relationship with a business is known as commitment. It has to do with the relationships that a customer can have with a brand on an emotional, financial, and psychological level (Evanschitzky et al. 2006). Committed customers are mostly willing to stay in an exchange relationship and also try to keep it.

Based on the study done by Turri et al. (2013) customer commitment is linked with loyalty. According to their study, improving consumer-company relationships can be a complex process, but it is also a worthwhile endeavor. Marketers try to develop committed customer-company relationships, and use social media in order to achieve such connections. Moreover as mentioned by Punjaisri and Wilson (2007), to gain customer loyalty, a company must consistently deliver on its brand promise.

Client commitment is characterized as the extent of individual interest and relationship with the offers and practices started either by the customer or by the company. Indeed, commitment is the desire to continue with the same brand and willingness to consume from the same service provider. Beliefs, shared values about the difficulties of changing products or services may be common values for commitment (Osuna Ramirez et al., 2017). It is a long-term connection of customer and service provider in order to secure a shared

commitment. Indeed, the term commitment refers to the consistency of a customer-supplier relationship (de Ruyter et al. 2001).

Customer attitude and behavior is important in the business (e.g. de Ruyter et al. 2001). Increasing customer satisfaction can develop long-term connections, promote loyalty and ensure customers turn into repeat buyers (Ranaweera and Prabhu 2003). In some circumstances, a company's success is determined by its ability to connect with customers (Schoder & Madeja, 2004), and the strength of a brand is often determined by how successfully that connection is made.

When customers are satisfied with the hotel and the offer they receive, they create the necessary commitment and trust and widen their relationship. According to Kelley and Thibaut (1978), increased commitment to a relationship results in such behavioral outcomes as expanding the scope of the connection. Before customers risk into various categories, they must first gain the company's trust and commitment. (Drèze and Bonfrer 2008).

According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016) customer commitment stresses the customer experience, from first contact to after-sales service. Establishing commitment requires considerable time and resources (Melander, 2018), and as a result, it involves, among other things, investing in new technology, educating employees about company practices and values, forming partnerships with other organizations that share similar values, and engaging in charitable endeavors in order to ensure that products meet customers' needs and expectations.

In addition to delivering on its brand promise, a hotel that practices customer service establishes long-term connections with its customers. This strategy is predicated on the idea that retaining existing consumers costs less than acquiring new ones (Alshurideh 2016).

According to Lujja and Özata (2017) commitment is very important for long-term relationships. That is, committed customers typically feel a sense of belonging to the brand, which in most cases links them to that company, because the relationships are easy with having the right attractive platform.

It's crucial to try to form relationships with hotel customers for various reasons:

- It makes customers more loyal to the business.
- Customers feel cherished and respected.
- They are less likely to give criticism.
- They are more likely to recommend the business to others.

2.3.4 Cross-Buying

Cross-buying refers to frequency of products and service categories which a customer purchased from a company since first time of purchase (Ngobo 2004). In this case, customers may need to maximize the utility they attain from a specific company (Oliver & Winer, 1987).

According to Bolton et al. (2000) cross-buying has been connected with greater level of customer retention, loyalty, and revenue generation. The rationale about this expectation is if customers buy from various categories offered by the same company, they should experience higher attachment to that company.

In the literature, revisit intention has been considered as an extension for satisfaction resulting from initial usage (Um et al. 2006; Huang and Hsu 2009). Destination marketers try to understand the antecedents of tourist revisit intention, since they believe the cost of retaining customers is lesser than the cost of attaining new ones (Gholipour Soleimani and Einolahzadeh 2018; Um et al. 2006).

Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022) explained that maintaining good relationships with clients can improve hotel customers retention. For this reason, businesses must better understand client needs and interactions with the brand in order to meet their needs. In order to improve customer retention, customer relationships are linked to the use and analysis of information related to customers' demands, as well as providing consumers with the appropriate goods and services. The use of social media by hotels can help them understand their clients in this matter.

Social media is considered as marketing effort in order to attract customers. Companies use cross-selling approach since when customers buy across various categories have higher switching costs, longer connection with the company, and they also contribute greater toward company's profitability (Kumar et al. 2008; Kumar et al. 2016). When a consumer switch a service, it reduces the level of cross-buy comparing to the previous period since cross-buying is assessed as the distinction in the mount of products and services which a customer may purchase in at least two sequential periods.

Individuals use social media in order to search information about companies, services, and products, and further make their purchase decisions (Schivinski and Dabrowski 2016; Mainardes and Cardoso 2019). Van der Heijden et al. (2003) indicated that there are several structures of customer behavior leading to purchase decision such as need recognition, research, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Mainardes and Cardoso 2019). Social media facilitate this process by providing easy access information, and with the minimum efforts. Therefore, when the process is easier and more convenient, it may enhance the level of satisfaction among customers and they want to repeat the purchase.

Technology eliminates the difference between physical and online markets. It directly affects the communication channel among companies and consumers, and builds new ways to create perceived value and further effect the expectations (Brynjolfsson et al. 2013). These elements are highlighted as important factors and considered to be central in purchase intention which are highlighted in literature (Bagozzi et al. 2016; Change and Wildt 1994; Mainardes and Cardoso 2019).

2.3.5 Word of Mouth

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) defined word of mouth as positive or negative statement or expression made by former, real, or future (potential) customers towards a product, service, or company, created over the Internet for many individuals and companies. Word of mouth is a natural expression of individual's feeling and ideas towards a brand (Pace et al 2014). With the introduction of interactive pattern and social media, role of word of mouth have become more important and new generation of online communities have shaped. These forms of changes influenced the ways which hotels can utilize the power of word of mouth

for their marketing purposes and on businesses. By application of social media, word of mouth can deliver fast. The extent, speed and real time characters of social media as well as increased possibilities for users to express and share themselves play the key role social media.

According to Hernández-Méndez et al. (2013) word of mouth marketing is considered as a powerful marketing instrument, it has an important effect on customers' decision-making. At the same time, the cost of online word of mouth is often much lesser than other forms of marketing (Latvin et al. 2008). Using social media helps users to have access to the information provided by other users (Wijayaa et al. 2021). Therefore, social media enables hotel customers to personalize the messages, and making available information more relevant to what is searched for, and thus building effective way of communication

Pace et al. (2014) mentioned that individuals may experience social media for variety of drivers. First, the user-created online content is perhaps more emotional comparing to neutral or official news broadcasted by traditional form of media. This can stimulate emotions in the users, and emotions in turn may result in word of mouth. Other users' recommendations can be more reliable comparing to commercial sources of information such as sales representatives or advertisements (Dulek and Aydin 2020).

Berger and Milkman (2012) discussed that contents which stimulate positive or negative emotions can even circulate more rapidly. This encourages word of mouth because it illuminates the situations at risk. Moreover, word of mouth in social media is very easy such as Like, Share, or Retweet (Pane et al. 2014).

Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is often triggered in considering word of mouth. Concerning electronic word of mouth, the key motives for people to engage in online word of mouth are the tendency for economic incentives, social interaction, concern for other customers, as well as the potential to boost the self-worth (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004).

With the application of social media, the customers experience and opinion regarding the products or services is no longer bounded to one to one conversations only. Many people can be involved in a conversation regarding a brand, all at the same time. Hotel customers can go through the rates and reviews, read the positive and negative comments in the area

that matters the most to them (for instance food, room, other facilities and so on), and based on that make their final decisions.

2.3.6 Defection

Customer defection or customer decision toward termination of the relationship with a company (Portela and Menezes 2011) is one of the major concerns of companies. According to Abubakar et al. (2017) consumers for tourism services are classified into two classes; the initial and returning consumers (Huang and Hsu 2009). Initial customers make their decision based on information collected from several sources which leads to a specific level of expectation from the service provider (Abubakar et al. 2017). While, returning customers have already experienced the services offered by service provider. Revisit intention in tourism services triggers the consumers who have already encountered the services provided by company (Abubakar et al. 2017) and can compare the level of expectation with their experience.

According to Ismail (2017) application of social media can improve loyalty, and this is also confirmed by Jawid and Rajadurai (2021). When customers use social media to explain their dissatisfaction, they expect their messages will be taken into consideration, understood, and being responded. Furthermore, by empowering the application of social media, the comments can affect initial customers. However, if the complaints can creatively and empathetically be responded can help to turn the negative feedback or incident into positive experience.

Some research discussed that service quality has high effect on loyalty (Poku et al. 2013; Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022); however, based on Donio et al. (2006) service alone might not be sufficient to affect repurchase behavior. This can encourage researchers to achieve additional information to find out what exactly leads to customer loyalty. This highlights the importance of existing alternatives in customers' decision-making process. Empirical studies highlighted the linkage between customer satisfaction and purchase intention (Konuk 2019; Tsiotsou, 2006; Fernandes and Calamote 2016); as well as negative connection between customer satisfaction and switch intention (Line et al. 2016). However regarding hotel industry the consequences might be different. That is, people may show willingness to stay in another accommodation in next holiday trip, and the reason is simply

just to experience something new. However social media can help hotels in order to reinforce the bond with current customers.

According to the literature, consumers' intention to switch the service provider is characterized by the costs and benefits connected with switching (eg. Wathne et al. 2001, Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova, 2022). Therefore, when the cost of switching increases, this cost must eventually outweigh the switching benefits perceived to make consumer finding an alternative. On the contrary, when switching costs decline, customers may leave the current service since they perceive that switching benefits will outweigh switching costs.

Kranton (1996) proposed that new potential service providers offering economic benefits over competitors enable buyers to immediately realize cost savings opportunities. Therefore, if customers are concerning to the costs, and they need more economy products or services, they may switch to other service providers offering lower prices. Social media can play an essential role in this matter by providing the real time and updated information which gives customers the opportunity to compare services offered by various hotels.

Farrell and Rusbult (1981) indicated that when alternatives are rare and there are not many choices, the possibility of termination and switching to other service providers declines. However, when several suitable alternatives are perceived to be existed, consumers may grow the demand to switch. When the perceived attraction of competitors as alternative choices is low, therefor, the likelihood that the customers leave the current company become lesser (Wang, 2009; Kim et al., 2018). Social media enables customers to find more information about alternatives and decide to repeat their stay in the previous hotel or switch to a new hotel.

2.4 Contribution to the Literature

The research deals with social media as a new phenomenon in the hotel marketing activities that appeared with the use of internet and new technology. Findings of this research can contribute to expand the existing knowledge in social media marketing in several ways.

First, since research on social media does not have a long background and its importance has more been considered in the last decades, there is yet need for further empirical studies in the literature (Sano 2015), and specifically in the hotel industry. Moreover, technology is developing fast and considering the importance of social media is becoming bolder. Only understanding the importance of social media is not enough. Converting their application into real business is a crucial task for hotels.

Second, there are studies related to the effect of social media marketing on customers outcomes in the literature. These research are conducted in various fields such as luxury brands (eg. Kim and Ko 2010; Wong Abdullah and Lui 2018; Liu et al. 2019), airline (Seo and Park 2018), insurance (Sano 2015), and hotels (Ibrahim and Aljarah 2018). However, importance of social media may vary in different industries. The internet, as the most momentous technological phenomenon, creates completely new competitive opportunities to the tourism and hospitality companies (Verman and Verma 2017). However, due to its focus on leisure, the hotel industry may be unique from other industries. Customers might, therefore, be pleased with the services offered during their stay, but they may not have any plans to return. Since people may wish to try something new during their travel even if they are happy with what they have already experienced during a previous hotel stay. There is a need for more study, to examine this area more, and to determine the relationship between the constructs because there are only few studies in the hotel business that link social media to customer outcomes.

Third, studies on social media have been considered on various factors of customer outcomes. For instance Tajvidi and Karami (2017) indicated the positive effect of social media on business performance outcomes. As social media is an instrument to build and maintain relationship with customers such as customer engagement, loyalty, revisit intention, brand awareness, brand image, performance; more comprehensive research needs to be done in order to cover broader aspects of customer relationship building. For instance, based on Tran (2020), online reviews positively affect purchase intention through the perceived effectiveness of social media platforms and online trust. According to Ibrahim and Aljarah (2018) social media marketing activities affect brand loyalty and revisit intention, and based on Seo and Park (2018), social media marketing activities has significant effects on brand awareness and brand image. However, Hyun and Perdue (2017) expanded a scale which considers the constructs to evaluate customer relationship buildings for hotels and

restaurants which are engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. The current research applied these six variables in order to evaluate the application of social media on customer relationship. It gives a better and broader understanding of customer responses.

Forth, a significant sector of the Czech economy is tourism. This country attracts a large number of tourists from all over the world and is one of the most desirable travel destinations in all of Europe. Czech Republic makes a substantial income from the hotel business and the tourism sector as a whole. Only a few studies, nevertheless, have focused on the hotel industry in this country and the tourism sector in general and in fields of social media marketing. The current study intends to take into account how social media affects hotel guests' behavior, which in turn may also affect the economy of the country.

Summary of Chapter 2

This chapter discusses the relevant theories to the study context as well as existing literature in the field of this dissertation. After reviewing the literature, this study applies social media marketing with five dimensions by Seo and Park (2018). These dimensions are entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, as well as perceived risk. This provides more comprehensive view social media and its importance as marketing tool. Moreover, customer relationship building was considered with six constructs by Hyun and Perdue (2017). The constructs are customer engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and customer defection. This gives a better and broader understanding of customer relationships outcomes.

3 Tourism and Social Media

This chapter of the dissertation discusses the various types of tourism in the Czech Republic, the importance of the tourism industry in the country, and the role of tourism in the economy and society. This chapter also discusses how social media as a modern marketing tool seems to be more popular than traditional marketing methods.

Tourism is defined as the behaviors of people visiting and staying in locations other than their usual surroundings for a period of no longer than one year in a row for leisure, business, or other purposes (Camilleri 2018). The main goal of the tourism industry is to benefit travelers as well as host nations. As a result, effective relationships across all of its divisions are crucial to the success of tourism. According to the discussion, each tourist will have a satisfying vacation as a result of the cooperation between the tourism service providers. Tourism generally has an impact on a number of industries, including those involved in transportation, lodging, ancillary services, and sales and distribution (Lin et al. 2021).

Tourism is a significant economic industry in the Czech Republic. It is classified as a multi-sector industry (Jurigova 2016). Tourism industry includes variety of services such as lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, event Management, travel and tickets, and other societies. The type of hotel is decided mostly by how it will operates and what services are provided. Additional characteristics include size, location, service levels, and business type or target market segments.

The function and significance of tourism in the national economy are focused on highlighting its contribution to the development and growth of the economy and society. The tourist movement takes many different forms, from promoting economic growth to enhancing social structures, from better resource management to economic and social advancement (Moisă 2015).

The significance and function of tourism in terms of its macroeconomic characteristics were stressed by the authors such as Muntean and Moisă (2014) and Moisă (2015), who referred to it as an industry with a dynamic profile, a comprehensive aggregate with various services

and activities, with ramifications in all social and economic sectors. The global economic system operates as a stimulant for the national economy through tourism.

Innovative developments in communication and information technology have created new channels for the global marketing of travel and hospitality services. Transparency, community, and interaction would all be promoted. All of the different types of information that make up social networks are included in social media, including blog or forum posts, photographs, audio, video, links, profiles, status updates, and more. Anyone may easily generate, upload, post, and distribute content throughout the world. Social media platforms enable the creation and dissemination of online user-created content and experiences. So, any type of information that we share with our social network through the usage of social networking websites and services is referred to as social media (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022).

In the tourism industry, social media offers a proper of information about experiences and reviews of the location, property, services, and restaurants. Social media has opened up new channels of connection for tourists. Travelers often utilize the internet to research and make decisions about their destinations. Tourist boards, travel agencies, tour operators, hotel and restaurant owners, destination management companies, and municipal tourism management organizations all use social media platforms to contact potential customers (Nadda et al. 2015).

Social media marketing boosts a company's visibility, search engine ranks, and publicity, which generates more leads and sales at a lower cost. Social media is changing how consumers discover, assess, and produce knowledge about tourist providers and other players in the value chain. As a result, travelers are evolving into clients who not only purchase but also actively engage in the marketing of tourist goods. By producing user generated content and social intelligence, travelers who utilize social media become co-producers, co-marketers, and co-consumers with the business (Bolotaeva and Cala 2010).

Users can trust the facts and opinions provided by users in the user-generated content of online comments, profiles, and photographs. User-generated content affects travelers by generating interest, involvement, willingness, and action, as well as information sources and

their evaluation, networks for booking and purchasing travel products, like travel itineraries and reservations, and spreading experiences through word of mouth after the trip (Nadda et al 2015).

As hotel industry is related to leisure, hotel visitors can come with various demands. For instance, they could be willing to pay more for a room with a better view to hotel surroundings. Travelers on business might need lodging close to their places of business. While location is typically thought to be the most essential factor in determining the profitability of a lodging unit, other aspects, such price and amenities, are also acknowledged significant in the hospitality industry (Camilleri 2018). According to Nadda et al. (2015) People may seek to distribute to the users content for a variety of reasons. These motivations may include ego, hedonistic and social reasons, self-identity as a pleasure, pursuit of a status seeking, social support, selflessness, having fun and passing time, and so on. Reasons for not sharing information, on the other side, may include a wish to stay anonymous owing to privacy concerns, security concerns, time restrictions, and worries, sloth and shyness, and anxiousness.

3.1 Forms of Tourism in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is one of the popular tourist destinations within the Europe. This country attracts tourist for variety of features. Novotna et al. (2019) addressed the potential and attractions of special interest tourism in the Czech Republic in five aspects (Entertainment, Adventure, Nature, Industrial, Cultural).

3.1.1 Entertainment Tourism

Travelers may have their own tastes and distinct features when they travel, and their focus may shift to more gratifying leisure activities. In the Czech Republic, there are various activities and entertainments which can cover diversity of tastes that travelers might have. There are a number of zoos, aqua parks, research centers, entertainment resorts in the style of western cities, and a series of tiny amusement parks, the most popular of which are so-called Din parks, can be found in this country. These parks and facilities have the ability to grow and develop further (Novotna et al 2019) and attract visitors from all over the world.

There are other events and programs that are held throughout the year, or seasonally such as festivals, theater, opera, and cruise trips and so on. Moreover, certain hotels have incorporated entertainment into their programs which can be open to public or only organized for hotel customers. Concerts, clubs, casinos, bars, are all examples of entertainment venues that can be found in a particular location in the Czech Republic.

3.1.2 Adventure Tourism

The pursuit of amusement may motivate special interest visitors to engage in unusual adventurous behaviors. The goal of this adventurous tourist motivation is to have new experiences. Hot air ballooning is an uncommon and non-standard hobby that draws visitors. Diversification and securing new and more profitable markets are aided by the development of similar specialized items (Novelli 2005). This type of flying is normally only done on rare occasions, and it occurs in a variety of locations, mostly near popular tourist spots such as Karlstejn Castle located in the Czech Republic, Cappadocia located in Turkey etc. Sightseeing flights in less suitable for tourist area areas utilizing a smaller balloon with a capacity of, for instance six seats (comparing to large-capacity balloons with seats for up to 24 passengers) can also be coupled with other, gentler types of tourism. For individuals interested in participating in this hobby, specialized centers provide all of the necessary services. Moreover, camping, skiing, rock climbing are other examples of adventure that tourists can experience in the Czech Republic.

3.1.3 Nature Tourism

People who seek to disconnect from their hectic urban lifestyles are flocking to natural places. Geomorphological, climatic, hydrological, and bio geographical factors all influence the natural potential as a critical localization factor for recreation activities. Natural regions have recreational potential that can help create health tourism and meet people's physical, emotional, social, cultural, economic, and physiological demands. Some natural attractions in the Czech Republic might be protected in some way. Visitors, cyclists, and other people flock to natural parks, protected landscape areas, and other spots.

According to Vystoupil et al (2017) natural attractions of villages are crucial for regional tourist development in the Czech Republic. The mountainous regions make up 17% of the Czech Republic territory in the geographical representation (containing the big sand rocks), 35% of the rural regions have favorable natural conditions for tourism and leisure, and 29% of the rural locations have average conditions. The remaining portion share of the Czech Republic territory are made up of urbanized areas and rural regions with a low expectation of being used for natural leisure (mainly highly farmed arable land).

According to Novotna et al. (2019) geoparks contribute to the preservation of heritage by emphasizing its worth and significance. The geoparks not only promote geological heritage, but they also raise public knowledge of Earth sciences, stimulate special tourism, and promote regional sustainability. The Czech Republic is home to a diverse spectrum of geological, mineralogical, and archaeological sites, as well as some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

3.1.4 Industrial Tourism

Industrial production facilities and associated infrastructure frequently attract interest from people. There is a highly unique and interesting tourist industry that is frequently referred to as industrial tourism. This type of tourism allows visitors to visit various industrial locations and familiarize themselves with the usual industrial setting and the growth of industry.

Czech Republic has been dealing with the subject of industrial heritage management (in the context of industrial tourism) for a few decades. New technologies have partially reformed heavy industry, and abandoned areas are now being used for industrial tourism, exhibitions, events, tourism conferences, and the entertainment.

According to Klempa et al. (2016) the topic of industrial heritage is extremely broad, as evidenced by more thorough consideration; it can include buildings, transportation, timber, power and electrical engineering, mining, metalwork, manufacturing facilities, mechanical engineering, devices of the leader, chemical, ceramic, paper, textile and nourishment industries, oil business, crystal, water, or army facilities. But not every theme is as appealing as another.

Klempa et al. (2016) further mentioned that wine tourism is closely related to culinary tourism, and also cycling and water tourism, both of which are growing in popularity, can be derived from the tourist activities in the industrial sector. The growth of industrial tourism, which uses the Bata's channel as a waterway, is strongly related to the development of tourism in the Czech Republic.

3.1.5 Cultural Tourism

The cultural and creative industries constitute one of the most dynamic areas of the EU economy, encouraging innovation, growth, job creation, and social cohesion. As a contribution to the regeneration and branding of creative cities, the creative industries have been at the forefront of many urban regeneration programs.

Some of the Czech Republic's cultural and artistic assets include:

Prague: Prague is the largest and capital city of the Czech Republic with hundreds of concert halls, museums, galleries, movie theaters, music clubs, and globally famous festivals, is the most vibrant city in the world.

According to Novotna et al. (2019) Prague is the most popular attractions of the Czech Republic which amuses many tourists worldwide. Prague is central center of Europe's politics, culture, and economy, which has a lengthy history and stunning Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque structures. It served as the seat of the Holy Roman Emperors, including Charles IV, and was the capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia. The Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Habsburg monarchy both valued this city highly. The city had a significant impact on the Protestant and Bohemian Reformations, the Thirty Years' War, and the history of the twentieth century as Czechoslovakia's capital between the two World Wars and the Communist era. Prague Castle, Charles Bridge, St. Vitus Cathedral, Old Town Square, and National Museum and so many more are part of Prague attractions. The Prague astronomical clock (figure 8) is the third-oldest astronomical clock in the world and the oldest one that is still operational. It was initially installed in 1410.



Figure 8: Prague Attraction, Astronomical Clock

Source: The Official Tourist Website for Prague, 2022

Karlovy Vary: Karlovy Vary is a cosmopolitan city that introduces to the wonders of spa architecture in the city and also hosts the International Film Festival, Central and Eastern Europe's premier film events. Main attractions of this city are Mlýnská kolonáda, Stará Louka, Pravoslavný Kostel Svateho Petra a Pavla, Vřidelní kolonada, and Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

The most important film festival in Central and Eastern Europe is the Karlovy Vary Film Festival, one of the oldest in the world. Since 1946, the week long festival has taken place annually, and usual during the first week of July. Numerous cinematic and social superstars, thousands of moviegoers, concerts, awards ceremonies, parties, press conferences, and

hundreds of more activities are all part of the festival. The Thermal hotel serves as the festival's hub, while screenings take place almost everywhere throughout the city. Figure 9 shows the logo of the Karlovy Vary Film Festival



Figure 9: Karlovy Vary attraction, International Film Festival

Source: Tourism Information Center of Karkovy Vary, 2022

Ostrava: Ostrava was named European Capital of Culture in 2015. The attractions of Ostrava are Silesian Ostrava Castle, Mining Museum Landek Park, Ostrava Museum, Zoo, Dino park and so on. As shown in Figure 10, Ostrava also hosts the Czech Republic's largest international music festival. Indeed, a wide variety of festivals are held all year round in Ostrava. Ostrava has a very strong connection to musical events and festivals in a variety of musical genres, including classical music. It has its own philharmonic orchestra.

Ostrava is creating a brand-new contemporary concert hall to accommodate all the interest in music. Despite the fact that there are already a lot of venues where to go and listen to performances, some of which are particularly unusual from an architectural standpoint.

Ostrava is well known across the world for hosting a number of enormous summer music festivals, including Colours of Ostrava as well as Beats for Love, which draw tens of thousands of visitors over the course of several days. There are other additional music festivals, including MichalFest Oldies Festival and Ostrava v Plamenech.



Figure 10: Ostrava Attraction, Štěrkovna Open Music

Source: The Official Guide of Ostrava, 2022

Brno: City of Brno is renowned for its modernist structures. It has a vibrant cultural scene with a variety of cultural institutions and facilities. The second-largest city in the Czech Republic, Brno, offers a wide variety of activities. Visitors can engage in enjoyable activities, visit a number of historical sites, enjoy a variety of exquisite cuisine, and view stunning castles.

There is a striking point of attraction in Brno's central square. There is a monument which is actually an astronomical clock (shown in Figure 11) that every day at 11 a.m. discharges a torrent of glass marbles.

Moreover, an underground ossuary can be found in Brno, Czech Republic. It was rediscovered in the city's historic district in 2001. The ossuary is thought to house the remains of around 50,000 people, making it the second-largest in all of Europe. The ossuary was established in the seventeenth century and expanded in the eighteenth. Since 2012, the public has had access to it.



Figure 11: Brno Attraction, Old Town Hall

Source: TIC BRNO, 2022

Pilsen: Pilsen is the fourth-largest city in the Czech Republic. The Pilsner Urquell Brewery and the Škoda automotive manufacturer were founded in this city, and made them the city's two main claims to fame.

The Pilsen historical center has the advantage of having all the major attractions close together, including the impressive Gothic cathedral (shown in Figure 12) with the longest

spire in the Czech Republic, the third-largest Synagogue in Europe, numerous art galleries and museums, and a number of stunning historical structures.



Figure 12: Pilsen Attraction, Cathedral of St. Bartholomew

Source: City of Pilsen Website, 2022

Czech Republic Properties Listed in UNESCO

Czech Republic Properties that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. The following section is based on UNESCO World Heritage Convention (2022g) to indicate that the Czech Republic has sixteen properties on the World Heritage list, fifteen of which are cultural and one of which is natural. Some pictures related to these properties are added to Appendix A.

Cultural Properties:

- 1) Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region
- 2) Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž
- 3) Historic Centre of Český Krumlov
- 4) Historic Centre of Prague

- 5) Historic Centre of Telč
- 6) Holašovice Historic Village
- 7) Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc
- 8) Jewish Quarter and St Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč
- 9) Kutná Hora
- 10) Landscape for Breeding and Training of Ceremonial Carriage Horses at Kladruby nad Labem
- 11) Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape
- 12) Litomyšl Castle
- 13) Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora
- 14) The Great Spa Towns of Europe
- 15) Tugendhat Villa in Brno

Natural Property:

- 1) Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe

Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region: The Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří (Ore Mountains) encompass a territory in south-eastern Germany (Saxony) and north-western Czechia that includes a wealth of numerous metals mined since the Middle Ages. Mining was the catalyst for technological and scientific discoveries that spread throughout the world. Tin was the second metal harvested and treated at the site in the past. The region became a major global producer of uranium at the end of the nineteenth century. From the 12th through the twentieth century, the Ore Mountains' cultural landscape was deeply affected by 800 years of practically continuous mining, with mining, pioneering water management systems, inventive mineral processing and smelting sites, and mining communities.

The structure and pattern of this mining region's relics are clearly discernible and are characterized by the distinctive and influential contributions made by the exploitation of various metals, at various times, in unevenly distributed locations defined by an exceptional concentration of mineral deposits. On either side of the Ore Mountains, distinct mining landscapes developed as Saxony and Bohemia traded technological know-how, miners, and metallurgists. These deposits developed into important economic resources that were

utilized during pivotal eras in world history. These events were influenced by new mineral discoveries, politics, and wars, as well as the successive discovery of "new" metals and their uses, as well as evolving empirical knowledge, exemplary practice, and technologies developed or improved in the Ore Mountains.

Between 1460 and 1560, the Ore Mountains were Europe's main source of silver, and silver also served as a catalyst for new organization and technology. Tin was consistently produced during the course of the Ore Mountains' lengthy history, and from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, this region was a leading producer in Europe, if not the entire world, because to its unique cobalt ore and silver ores. The area finally rose to prominence as a major uranium producer throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the early years being a time of initial discovery and development (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2022g).

The interaction between individuals and their environment is evidenced to by intangible characteristics like education and culture, traditions, conventions, and aesthetic developments, as well as social and political impacts. They collectively testify to the early stages of the early modern transformation of mining and metallurgy in the area in the early sixteenth century, when it went from a small-scale, craft-based industry with outmoded medieval origins to a large-scale, state-controlled industry powered by industrial capitalists. This industrialization was successful and continued into the twentieth century and was both a forerunner to it. All mining regions in continental Europe and beyond were impacted by state control of the mining industry, including all of its administrative, managerial, educational, and social components as well as openly arising technological and scientific advancements. An example of attraction in Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region is shown in appendix A in Figure A.1.

Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž: Kroměříž sits at the foot of the Chriby mountain range, which dominates the center line of Moravia. Kroměříž's gardens and castle are an exemplary and well-preserved model of a European Baroque princely house and its gardens.

The ensemble comprising the archiepiscopal castle, Podzámecká zahrada, and Kvtná zahrada is located in the historic center of KromKroměříž, in the Czech Republic's

Zlín region. The Gardens and Castle at KromKroměříž depict a type of early Baroque architectural ensemble that presented to war-ravaged Central Europe high architectural attributes of Italian origin, tied with high-quality sculpture, artwork, and artistry, and enhanced by the pinnacle of garden design where the technological possibilities of water use was formed with virtuosity. The Castle Garden exemplifies the inventive affinity between central European garden artwork and broader European themes in landscape park architecture in an amazing way. The Pleasure Garden impacted Moravian garden style, while the Castle's influence extended to the Danube region.

The 58-hectare Castle Garden features a variety of exotic tree species (coniferous and deciduous) that stand alone or in groups, as well as various significant architectural components. Among these, there is the Pompeian Colonnade, a semi-circular colonnade in classical style erected in 1846 to house sculptures from Pompeii. The Max's Farmstead, located on the western outskirts, is a sumptuous French Empire-style structure with a spectacular colonnade and projecting wings. The archiepiscopal foundry manufactured cast iron, which was utilized to construct three exquisite bridges: the Silver, Vase, and Lantern Bridges. This garden, which was planned with a Baroque design, was restyled under the influence of the late eighteenth and early and nineteenth century Romantic landscape architecture. An example of attraction in Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž is presented in appendix A in Figure A.2.

Historic Centre of Český Krumlov: The town was built on the shores of the Vltava river. It is a good example of a tiny central European medieval town where architectural history has been preserved due to the peaceful growth of the town through further than five centuries. This old town owned by prominent noble families who had a significant role in Central Europe's political, economical, and cultural history, was transformed during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Its street pattern, characteristic of planned medieval cities, has been preserved, as have many old sites, retaining its elements such as dome shapes, and original patterns and interiors. It has escaped the devastation of nineteenth-century industry, neglect during the communist era, and rash developments in recent decades. The dramatic setting of the urban townscape and its natural environment, as well as a great number of preserved historic details, contribute to the high level of authenticity. Building facade restoration is carried out in accordance with strict international heritage conservation requirements.

Traditional materials and techniques are employed exclusively. An example of attraction in Český Krumlov is presented in appendix A in Figure A.3.

Historic Centre of Prague: The historic center exemplifies the pinnacle of Medieval civilization. It has been spared large urban renovation or significant demolition of buildings, preserving its overall configuration, patterning, and space composition.

The Gothic Period (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the High Baroque (first half of the eighteenth century), and the emerging modernism around 1900 all influenced the development of Central European, if not all European architecture. The old city is also one of the world's most well-known creative life centers in the domains of urbanism and architecture spanning generations, human attitudes, and faiths.

Prague's evolution over the course of its 1100-year history may be seen in the architectural expression of various historical periods and styles. The city is overflowing with remarkable monuments from all across its history. Prague Castle, St Vitus Cathedral, Hradčany Square, the Valdštejn Palace, Charles Bridge, the Romanesque Rotunda, the Gothic arcaded house around the Old Town Square, the Church of Our Lady, St James church in the Jewish Quarter, and Old-New Synagogue.

Prague was a major cultural center in Christian Europe as early as the Middle Ages. The Prague University, founded in 1348, is one of Europe's oldest. The University milieu during the late 14th century and the early 15th century led to the formulation of notions of the Hussite Movement, which marked the initial stages of the European Reformation.

Historic Centre of Telč: Telč is located in an area that was heavily forested up until the thirteenth century. The property comprises of two bodies of water that served as defenses in the past, as well as the historic town center with the castle in the middle.

There is no denying Telč's exceptional qualities, including the high authenticity of its heritage and traditions, the visible signs of its history and development represented by its old layout and design, and its magnificent location. The city's heart is the Renaissance castle. It is a significant part of the urban city and clearly shows the influence of the earlier Gothic

style. The castle, with its original content composition and ornaments, represents a singular authentic structure. Italian art permeates its traditional interior.

A triangle-shaped market square in Telč's historic center is bordered by Renaissance- and Baroque-style townhouses. There is a continuous arcade connecting these homes. When it comes to the selection of decorative features, their facades exhibit a great deal of variation. The market square has a fountain and a plague column in the center. The town hall, the Holy Spirit Church, the Jesuit College, and the Gothic St. James parish church are all a short distance apart.

Moreover, the city's stone walls, which were initially constructed for its strategic security but whose functionality was later improved by a network of fishponds, serve as proof of the city's historical evolution and origins. An example of attraction in Telč is presented in appendix A in Figure A.4.

Holašovice Historic Village: The Holašovice Historical Village is located in the Czech Republic's South Bohemian Region. Holašovice is a particularly comprehensive and well-preserved illustration of a typical central European village and is home to a number of fine examples of regional architecture from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The majority of farms are constructed using the same structure; typically, they are U-shaped with a farm in the center. South Bohemian "Folk Baroque" is the architectural style used on the gables that face the village green. In fact, Holašovice master builders reproduced ornamentation from Austrian and Bohemian manorial houses on the exterior. The Holašovice Village also has some much modest farm dwellings in addition to enormous farmsteads.

A tall bell-shaped facade may be seen on the little chapel of St. John of Nepomuk. On one side, it has a hip roof, a gable roof, and a lantern-turret on four main pillars. Two lunettes serve as the interior's doors and are vaulted. The forge has a customary arched opening that looks out into the town green.

Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc: The Holy Trinity Column is the focal point of Olomouc's historic district. The Moravian Baroque style, which emerged in Central Europe during the eighteenth century, is best exemplified by this memorial column.

It has a significant symbolic meaning since it embodies the residents of this city's religious dedication and sense of pride, which are the reasons why this city exists. Additionally, the Holy Trinity Column is a unique example of this style of memorial column, which was typical of Central Europe in the Baroque era. It is without a doubt Václav Rindler's most innovative design.

The primary theme of this piece is the celebration of the church and of religion, which is connected in an unusual way to the reality of a work of monumental art by fusing sophisticated sculptural embellishment with architectural and town-planning solutions. The monument, which was constructed in the distinctive regional style known as Olomouc Baroque, embellished with several fine sculptures depicting religious themes.

By virtue of its massive size, the extraordinarily richness of its sculptural adornment, and the overall aesthetic execution, the Column is beyond comparison in any other town. The Holy Trinity Column is quite remarkable due to the inclusion of a chapel in the column's body and the variety of the materials utilized.

Jewish Quarter and St Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč: St. Procopius' Basilica, the Jewish Cemetery, and the Jewish Quarter (a former ghetto) are all on the land. The group is a superb illustration of the harmonious coexistence of Jewish and Christian people and cultures from the Middle Ages through World War II. The Jihlava River's side is where the Jewish Quarter evolved sporadically.

It provides evidence of numerous facets of this community's life that are forced to fit into a small area because of governmental restrictions. The Jewish Quarter still has its original street layout, characteristic physical configuration, and social amenities like temples, schools, and an old leather manufacturing.

A condominium structure, a very complicated form, and a variety of styles set apart a typical building in this area. The top levels were set out for residential use; on the street level, there was frequently a shop or workshop. Numerous historic characteristics, like the styles of roofing, the architectural work of the facades, and some authentic interiors, have been maintained (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2022g).

Kutná Hora: Since the end of the thirteenth century, Kutná Hora has grown as a result of the discovery and utilization of rich veins of silver mine. It developed into a royal metropolis in the fourteenth century, with structures that represented its immense prosperity. The dominating features of a well-preserved medieval town-planning system replete with Gothic and Baroque urban fabric are today's marvels of cathedral architecture. The church of Saint Barbara, a Gothic jewel with murals illustrating the common life of the medieval mining town of Kutná Hora, is the most outstanding structure in area. The historic center of Kutná Hora exhibits a very distinct medieval city ground layout that was defined by mining, with just a few isolated partial corrections made afterwards.

Despite its lengthy, rapid development, the town nonetheless follows an older communication pattern that predates the city's original beginnings. Additionally, the historical built-up region, which is composed of the finest examples of Gothic and Baroque architecture as well as the singularly stunning Kutná Hora panorama, is eminently connected to a lovely surrounding environment.

Kladruby nad Labem: The Polabská nížina, in the Stedn Polab region, is home to Kladruby nad Labem's Landscape for Breeding and Training of Ceremonial Carriage Horses. The land is flat, has sandy soils, and contains houses and farmlands as well as fields, plains, a landscaped park, a forest, and so on.

The landscape is an exceptional and good example of a horse-centered cultural landscape that has organically developed while also being purposefully and gradually developed as a highly specific ornamented farm, devoted to the breeding and preparation of ceremonial event carriage horses.

With its old meanders and oxbow lakes, which were transformed into a late romantic landscape, the classical fenced and tree-delimited farmland, the tree-lined streets, the connection of canals, to the north forest, providing a range of resources, the unique farmsteads, all trying to serve diverse functions, the stud architecture, and the dependent village, the historical tripartite structure of this fluvial area is still clearly discernible.

The unique use for which the environment was continuously transformed and adapted is horse-breeding, which can be considered as living monuments. The landscape elements, along with the local knowledge and way of life, exceptionally reflect this singular function. This property is a superb example of a landscape that reflects the growth of a particular equestrian culture in Europe during a period when absolute monarchies were on the rise.

Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape: The Lednice-Valtice valley is in South Moravia. The way architectural, ecological, and landscape aspects have changed over time gives this landscape its special qualities. The Liechtenstein family initially arrived in Lednice in the middle of the thirteenth century. By the end of the fourteenth century, the Liechtenstein family bought the neighbouring town of Valtice. The foundation of the family's vast collection of possessions was to be these properties. Lednice and Valtice, two country homes, serve as the foundation for the landscape's composition.

When looking at the entire property, the interplay and merging of Baroque and Romantic features give it a unique character: the architecture and landscape are closely related to one another. All of the structures are carefully placed at high points, intersections of major thoroughfares, or the border between Lower Austria and Moravia. Likewise connected are the view and vistas. Usually visitors can see the Kolonáda and the Minaret, which are the two prominent features.

The relatively diverse range of native and exotic tree species, as well as the planting strategy used, play a significant role in the beauty of the entire area. The parklands that are grouped around the two principal homes and along the banks of the fishponds between Lednice and Valtice offer the most variety. A significant hillfort from the Great Moravian era that dates to the eighth century is where the Pohansko Manor is now located. The quantity and variety of cultural and natural features present in the Lednice-Valtice Cultural area make it a unique

illustration of a designed cultural landscape. An example of attraction in Telč is presented in appendix A in Figure A.5.

Litomyšl Castle: The Litomyšl Castle is a good example of an arcaded Renaissance country house, a style of building that was first conceived in Italy and later refined in the Czech Republic to produce a mature form with unique architectural significance. Located as a key communications intersection on the primary highway between Bohemia and Moravia.

The castle is a three-story, four-winged building with an asymmetrical layout. The southern wing, which closes the second square courtyard, is a two-story arcaded gallery, whereas the western wing is the largest. The castle chapel is located in the southeast corner of the eastern wing. The beautiful neoclassical theater from 1796–1797 in the western wing of the castle is one of its most outstanding interior elements. Stage props, stage decorations, and the original painted painting on the auditorium's walls have all been preserved. The interiors of the home are lavishly ornamented, primarily taking the form of the Renaissance, and feature exquisite plasterwork, wall and ceiling paintings, and late Baroque or neoclassical embellishments.

Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk: The church was constructed between 1719 and 1727 and is devoted to the veneration of St. John of Nepomuk, a fourteenth century martyr who was made a saint in the eighteenth century.

The structure is made up of a circular cloister surrounding a church with a central plan. The ensemble is a superb example of architecture that combines Gothic and Baroque elements. Based on the aesthetic idea of a flawless center complex with an explicit central vertical dominating, the property's composition.

The ground plan, which is built on the parallel to two equivalent radials, highlights the design's centrality. The arrangement and proportions heavily emphasize the number 5, which alludes to the five stars in St. John of Nepomuk's halo, which stand for the saint's five virtues.

Two sets of five radial axes, upon which the fundamental components of the layout and the content of the mass are ordered, define the star-shaped ground plan of the church, which has

five points. The positioning of the chapels and gates of the cloister that encircles the pilgrims' area out of the church, which is located in its center, is determined by ten radials that join in the church's center. Ribbed arches with stucco patterns, influenced by late Gothic style, span the chapels and church portals. The presence of buttresses on the outer walls and the pointed shape of the windows and entrances both reflect this era's influence. An example of attraction in Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk is presented in appendix A in Figure A.6.

The Great Spa Towns of Europe: The Major Spas of Europe are a unique testament to the European spa phenomenon, which peaked between around 1700 and the 1930s. Eleven spa towns, spread over seven nations, make up this international series: Baden bei Wien, Spa, Karlovy Vary, Františkovy Lázně, Mariánské Lázně, Vichy, Bad Ems, Baden-Baden, Bad Kissingen, Montecatini Terme, and City of Bath. Among the many numbers of spa towns that contributed to the European spa trend, the series highlights the trendiest, vibrant, and worldwide spa towns.

Although each spa town is unique, they all grew up around springs of mineral water, which served as the impetus for a type of spatial organization centered on medicinal, therapeutic, recreational, and social purposes.

Baths, pump rooms, drinking halls, treatment facilities, and colonnades are examples of spa building ensembles made to harness the water resources and make it usable for bathing and drinking. Exercise and social activities needing guest facilities and accompanying infrastructures were a supplement to taking the treatment, both inside and outwardly.

All of them are included into a larger metropolitan setting that features a meticulously maintained leisure and thermal comfort is defined made up of park, promenades, sports venues, and forests. Buildings and places have a visual and physical connection to the landscapes that surround them. People frequently use these landscapes for recreation, relaxation, and sports as part of treatment plans.

Tugendhat Villa: A groundbreaking example of contemporary 20th-century residential architecture is the Tugendhat Villa in Brno.

It embodies cutting-edge spatial and aesthetic ideas that were created at the time in housing to meet the new demands brought on by the modern way of life, making use of the advantages provided by contemporary industrial production.

The main floor's floor area is almost entirely taken up by a winter garden. The welcome hall, the music area, and the library are discreetly divided from one another on the same floor by rosewood and onyx partitions. Large windows can be seen in the living space, which is immediately connected to the terrace and has a wide stairway that descends to the garden.

The primary structure of the home is composed of polished steel beams that support strengthened concrete slabs. The basement houses the home's mechanical components, including the central air conditioning and heating system as well as the electrically operated big windows.

Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests: The "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe" is an international serial property with ninety-four parts spread out over eighteen nations. They display a broad spectrum of complete ecological patterns and functions of mixed and pure stands of European beech across a variety of environmental circumstances, and they serve as an outstanding example of complex, relatively undisturbed temperate forests.

In refuge zones in the southern regions of the European continent, European beech survived the unfavorable environmental conditions during each glacial episode. Scientists have used palaeoecological research and the most recent DNA coding techniques to catalog these refuge places. Beech began extending its range from these southern refuge zones after the last Ice Age, eventually taking over much of the European continent. Beech established various kinds of plant communities despite living in largely different habitats during this continual growth process. This great degree of diversity in beech forest ecosystems has been shaped by the interaction of various habitats, climatic gradients, and species gene pools. These forests house a priceless population of ancient trees, as well as a genetic storehouse for beech and many other species that are related to and reliant on old-growth forest environments.

3.2 Social Media in the Hotel Industry

Tourism is one of the largest job creators worldwide, and technological advancements have brought about significant changes in the industry (Nadda et al. 2015). People now have more accessibility to information offered by various tourism organizations, may book flights and accommodations. Consumers play an active role in co-creating product design and promotional themes. According to Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022) Consumers utilize digital media not only to search for the products, but also to interact with businesses and other consumers. As a result of the role of social media in tourism, most tourism organizations have adopted internet technology as part of their marketing plan.

Hotel industry is critical and competitive sector, which is known by continuous transformation (Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson 2009). This industry is growing fast and it is connected with huge changes and high level of innovation. Technology in this industry is dynamic and fast which creates new trends. All these changes and new trends in this industry force hotels to modify their services and programs accordingly.

Hotel technology is critical for enhancing the visitor experience. In order to be competitive in a continuously changing industry, hotels must be willing to adapt to the market. Guests demand technology advancements to improve their hotel experience and hotels must be able to respond to this new way of life and adapt to meet trends as technology continues to advance in a rapid environment (Wang et al. 2012). Technology may assist in providing a cutting-edge experience, enhancing service, increasing retention, saving money, and increasing revenue in business (Chetioui et al. 2017).

Social networks are examples of technology that allow people to create, share, and recommend products. Content falls in line with connection and interactivity in a new social media-driven business model characterized by customer connectivity and interaction (Nadda et al. 2015).

Because there is internet access to hotels' websites and social media, customers may simply check the rates and reviews and manage their reservations (Verma et al., 2012). Customers

can also receive information about any new products and services, and they communicate with other people on online platforms (Kirtis and Karahan 2011).

Hotels can offer a virtual reality tour and 360-degree video of their amenities and rooms, which can be extremely helpful during the booking process. It may encourage people to choose the hotel because they know what to expect, and hotels are less likely to have dissatisfied customers as a result.

Communication is an important part of any hotel's marketing (Krizanova 2019). It can help consumers to communicate with hotels with no limitation in time and location. By communication on social media people can find the answer on common queries.

According to Tajeddini (2010) tourism and hotel industry is considered as leisure, relating to activities such as cultural or sportive and so on. This industry offers products in form of experience which are mostly intangible (Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson 2009). Hotels earn mostly by offering lodging services; however, people stay in hotels for different purposes such as vacation and business trips. Alongside with room services, hotels also provide several services such as food, beverage, transfer, and laundry services. Furthermore, the higher level hotels may offer a fitness center, swimming pool, conference room, beauty care salon, and other facilities to visitors (e.g. Correia Loureiro et al. 2013). Customers experience the services, keep them in memory, and will have some judgment accordingly. This affects their future behavior such as loyalty or intention to revisit. Therefore, making the proper impression on customers and creating a good experience for them are important issues for hotels which can be through offering innovative products and services and serving them properly. Information about the latest changes in products and services needs a platform in order for customers to be updated and informed, and social media enables this with the more convenient process and access (Kirtis and Karahan 2011).

On the other hand, internet and social media have changed the form of human interactions, and built new bridges leading to faster and easier communication. It has led to the multiplication of websites and online platforms and therefore shopping behavior, and expanded various forms of media over time. Application of social media enables people to have more information about latest innovative services offered by companies, and also

compare the services offered by various service providers. Especially in hotel industry with high level of change in technology and services, importance of social media can be vital, as the need for updated information increases (Milović 2012).

Application of social media provides benefit to both parties, hotels and customers. For customers, social media is a fast and affordable way of collecting information about hotels and accommodation providers by simply using a search engine. This enables customers to find wider and most updated information from accommodation service providers. It also connects them to other users (Bigne et al. 2014). Customers can communicate with other social media users and check the hotels ratings and reviews. This gives them the opportunity to receive more trustable information about the accommodation service providers. Consequently, customers can compare the real experience of users with the information received directly from hotels. Social media further facilitates the process of decision-making and booking for customers (Shyle and Hysi 2015).

For hotels, social media enables hotel managers to reach out to wider number of potential customers in a shorter time, to understand what exactly is demanded by clients, and receive direct and immediate feedback from customers (Kirtis and Karahan 2011). Connecting with people through social media is indeed one of the most important benefits for hotels, which enables them to send appropriate messages and content to clients on real time and create the most realistic expectations for their customers. Social media also enables hotels to provide better ways that customer can look for information (Varkaris and Neuhofer 2017). Social media provides the chance to create guest relationship and improve the reputation (Anggani and Suherlan 2020) and further improve the image of the hotels by delivering the message to users (Bilgin 2018).

3.2.1 Traditional Marketing Vs. Modern Marketing

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

maintaining their attention through engagement that incorporates traditional and social media (Nadda et al. 2015).

According to Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022) social media is seen as an evolution of digital media where people are not limited to one way relationship with the service provider, but they can also share content and discuss idea and information. Indeed, social media is based interaction among online communities. This can be through sharing picture, video, audio and text.

Baerd on a research done by Abzari et al. (2014), traditional advertising and social media have significant impact on brand attitude. However, the effect of traditional advertising is less than social media. Traditional marketing focuses more on sales, and modern marketing approach places more emphasis on promotion, people, after sale service connections and so on. Traditional marketing focuses on products which can lead to higher level of sales, while modern marketing triggers customers' satisfaction, needs and wants, while (Kehinde et al. 2016).

Any form of marketing that isn't conducted online is considered traditional marketing. Print, radio, direct mail, telephone, and outdoor advertising like billboards are all included in this traditional form of marketing (Sinha, 2018). This strategy of marketing helps reaching specific audience, whether this can also happen through radio or newspapers. Traditional marketing can be categorized in four categories:

- (1) Print: Includes newspapers, magazines, brochures, and other printed material;
- (2) Broadcast: commercials on radio and television, as well as other forms of on-screen advertising;
- (3) Direct mail: consists of leaflets, postcards, flyers, letters, or other printed and mailed items;
- (4) Telemarketing: includes phone calls to consumers (Sindha 2018).

Traditional form of marketing has several advantages:

- Linking businesses with regional consumers

- Building credibility with traditional marketing
- Recognizable and approachable.

There are also limitations of traditional marketing:

- It is costly.
- Very limited customer interaction
- Minimal targeted audience.

Some hotels may base their marketing strategy on traditional processes. This can be done by displays, banners, or newspaper. Advertisement can be also done in TV and Radio, or it can be through brochures or on billboards (Sinha 2018).

However modern marketing is about utilizing all of the business resources to give customers the best experience possible and business growth. Building relationships with customers, consistently adjusting to the new digital environments, and using many channels to advertise to different consumer demographics are all important aspects of modern marketing.

There are benefits of modern marketing which are listed below (Salehi et al. 2012):

- Up to date
- Affordable
- More convenient
- Targeting a larger group
- Increasing brand awareness and engagement
- Creating user generated content

Additionally, there are drawbacks of modern marketing.

- Demanding accessibility to internet
- Demanding basic knowledge of technology
- Visibility of negative feedbacks by everyone

The hospitality sector has undoubtedly benefited from the internet, increased accessibility to e-commerce, and improves way of communication (Matikiti et al. 2012). Hotels are able to promote to a wider audience because they are no longer constrained by geography or local

areas for their marketing activities. Therefore, without any restrictions, people from everywhere can connect to the hotel (Ufuophu-Biri and Ojoboh 2017).

3.2.2 COVID-19 Pandemic, Tourism, and Social Media

The COVID-19 pandemic, commonly termed as the coronavirus pandemic, is a worldwide breakout of the coronavirus epidemic, which severe acute respiratory syndrome. The virus was initially discovered in an outbreak that occurred in December 2019 and it quickly spread throughout the world. The World Health Organization announced a public concern in the early months of 2020 (Gul 2020). COVID-19 has restricted the social interactions; however, people engaged online more than ever. At the commencement of the pandemic, the necessity for expanded connectivity was clear. Users might need to stay engaged as they dealt with a new shared world.

The COVID-19 incident has highlighted one of the most important functions of social media. During the COVID-19 epidemic, it was critical for hotels to maintain the connections with their clients. During pandemic, hotels might have changed their hours of operation (for instance restaurants) to better fit the pandemic rules. Social media was an excellent technique to keep customers informed about the hotel's position.

The ability to keep connection with customers and inform them regarding the changes could be highlighted in the social media during pandemic. Hotels could use this period of time to work on the repair and redecorating of the hotels, and social media enabled them to share the changes with their customers.

Indeed, during COVID-19, social media was a crucial tool for businesses to reassure customers and let the clients know that they are doing everything in their power to limit the negative impact of pandemic while still successfully serving them. Hotels could adjust the messages and posts on social media which are more applicable with the current pandemic situation and could suit the needs of their targeted audience at the time. Using social media was a good opportunity for the hotels to communicate with their customers and assure them about hotels' responsibilities in customers' wellbeing.

3.2.3 Problem Identification

In traditional method of marketing, there was a limited interaction between the hotels and audience. Such methods were more dealing with one way of communication with existing or potential customers. These traditional forms were creating difficulties to target specific buyers with personalized messages. Therefore, it was hard to convey messages to specific target groups with such media. However, social media enables companies to deliver both general and specific messages to customers and build two-way relationship with customers which in turn expand consumers' feelings and attitudes about brands (Kim and Ko 2010).

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 for more convenient and cost-effective way of communication and collecting information, hotels need to satisfy customers' demands and deal with social media activities.

There are hotels which are active on their social media platforms. However, there are some other hotels that do not use social media actively. For instance, they might have Instagram and Facebook accounts, but they might not update them on a regular basis. Or they could be only active only on one specific social media platform and not others.

Even hotels that do update their social media platforms regularly, sometimes post low-quality content. They can be sharing the same news or information again while ignoring other facts and information they might be able to provide. For instance, hotels may only share information about their rooms while not talking about other facilities offered by the hotel through social media.

Hotels should think about the content they share on social media before they make it public. It ought to be consistent with their overall strategy, goals, message, and brand standards. Additionally, poor quality photos or videos may reflect negatively on their hotel. Hotels should take time to ensure everything looks good since in the world of social media, this is really important.

Through various platforms, social media can assist hotels in establishing a distinctive brand presence and being at the forefront of people's minds when planning a vacation. As a result, it may be easier to secure additional direct bookings, achieve greater independence, and increase revenue. Relationships and community are equally important aspects of social media. To create these, it's critical to engage customers proactively and provide them with something they can't obtain through other channels of communication.

Social networking should be taken seriously, and the task should not be given to the people who can't plan for it ahead of time. This wouldn't lead to a proper result, if they randomly post on their social media platforms. They need a plan, a vision, and the patience and accuracy to carry it out. This entails more than just the occasional tweet; it also entails a well-planned content schedule, engagement efforts, being competitive, influencers, and other tactics.

Hotels may struggle to attain consumers' attention, and competition may force them to search for new ways of getting their message delivered to their audience. Thus, there is a need to understand how social media works, and how this can affect the customer outcomes and building customer relationship.

Needs for the Study (for economy)

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.

The existence of hotels is not enough to boost the tourism in the region, and there are many other factors involved to advance this industry. It is necessary to use proper marketing instrument in order to attract and maintain customers. Hotels can provide sort of more updated and accurate information regarding the hotel itself and services, and further information about destination place and attractions can be also delivered.

It matters how many tourists are visiting a destination. The economy is boosted by tourism, which also generates numerous jobs, improves a country's infrastructure, and fosters cross-cultural understanding. Number of foreign tourists' arrivals visited Czech Republic is shown in Figure 13.

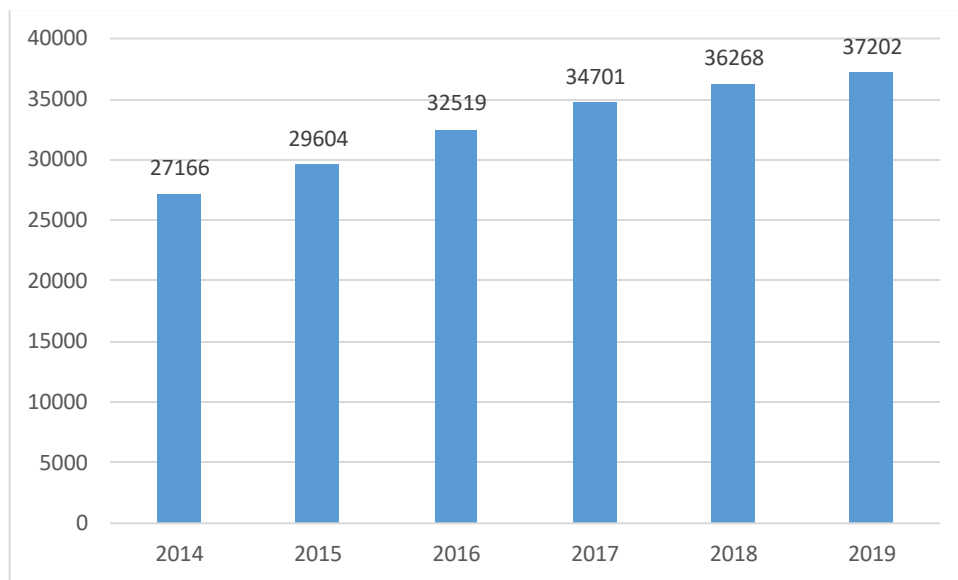


Figure 13: Number of Foreign Tourists Visiting Czech Republic in Thousand

Source: Statista, 2022b

Hospitality industry creates income for territorial economy directly when travelers spend money in the hotels, cafe and restaurants, as well as entertainment venues. This can also affect economy indirectly since tourists also spend on retail goods, souvenirs and handcrafts, pharmacy items and any other activities they may do in the destination. Tourism revenue in the Czech Republic by year is presented in Figure 14.

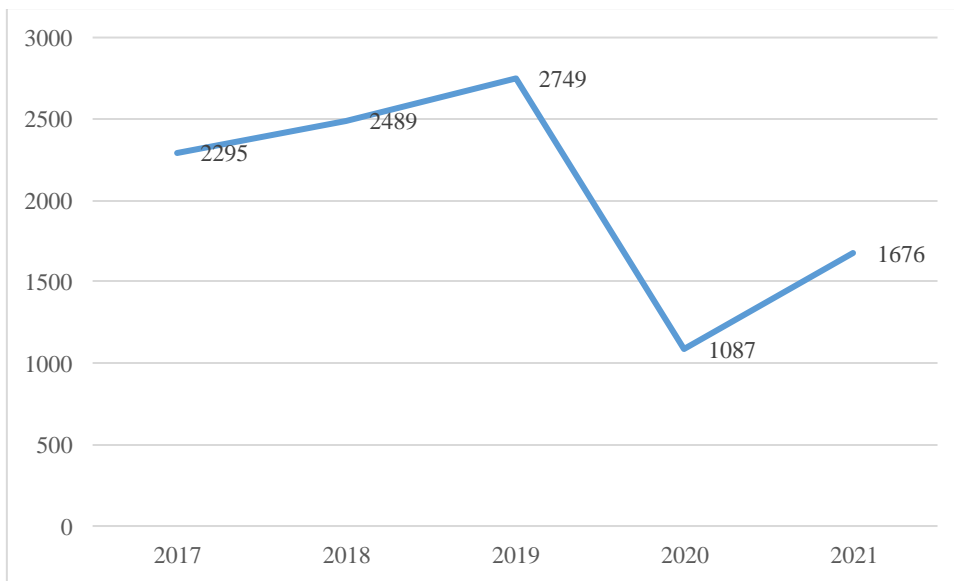


Figure 14: Czech Republic Earnings in Million Euro from the Travel and Tourism Industry

Source: Statista, 2022e

Needs for the Study (for Society)

The hospitality sector is a service industry that provides food, drink, and lodging to local and international leisure and tourism customers. Tourism and food service are examples of service industry jobs in the hospitality industry. The hospitality sector is one of the key movers in the expansion of local societies, enhancement of living standards, and decrease of crime rates in areas where it does business by giving jobs and contributing to the improvement of local infrastructure. Jobs in hotels, restaurants, casinos, theme parks, cruise lines, and other facilities that assist clients with their leisure and recreational needs are included. It can also include food service employment, such as wait staff and food preparation, abound in the hospitality business.

Tourism can be thought of as a framework through which hosts and visitors can learn more about each other through direct engagement. In order to deliver great services to tourists, tourism also necessitates a more responsive and educated host community. Furthermore, interactions between locals and tourists result in the formation of new ideas, values, and motivations for social and economic advancement.

As shown in Table 2, there are around nine hundred 4 and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic which shows the high capacity to allocate people. Progress in the tourism industry may happen with satisfied and loyal customers; and this brings benefits to society for the population who are employed in this industry. However, the benefits are not only limited to people who are directly connected to or work in tourism industry.

Table 2: Accommodation Establishment Capacity by Category in the Czech Republic in 2021

Accommodation Type	Number of establishments	Rooms	Bed places
Hotel *****	69	7,976	15,486
Hotel, motel, hotel ****	809	45,371	94,144
Hotel, motel, hotel ***	1,589	49,611	113,940
Hotel, motel, hotel **	211	5,488	13,884
Hotel, motel, hotel *	112	2,303	6,016
Hotel garni ****,***,**,*	159	3,541	8,349
Boarding House	4,736	47,179	130,583
Tourist camp-site	580	9,916	36,622
Holiday Dwelling	321	7,011	27,158
Hostel	754	11,713	38,043
Other	1,558	36,739	101,836

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2022

In addition to being a great job creator, this industry provides a valuable career path for professionals. It provides a wide range of career opportunities, ranging from event planner to higher positions such as hotel manager. Entrepreneurs can run their own business such as restaurants and hotels. Professionals also have the opportunities to work in attractive settings and environments all around the world. Table 3 shows the employment in tourism over the years.

However, the benefits are not only limited to people who are directly connected to or work in tourism industry. Tourism can improve the infrastructure such as public transports and roads. This may increase the number of events, and reduce movement of locals from rural to urban areas and so on (Zhuang et al. 2019; Zaei and Zaei 2013) and in general improve the quality of life for people living in the region.

Table 3: Enterprises and Employment in Tourism in Czech Republic

Indicator Tourism industries	Number of Employed			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
1 - Hotels and similar	41,814	42,560	43,135	36,757
2 - Restaurants and similar	67,733	68,881	68,692	60,365
3 - Railway passenger transport	12,486	12,787	12,701	12,596
4 - Road passenger transport	12,130	12,381	12,481	12,575
5 - Water passenger transport	50	52	52	48
6 - Air passenger transport	2,274	2,216	2,342	1,782
7 - Passenger transport supp. services	4,067	4,291	4,318	4,287
8 - Passenger transport equipment rental	136	140	143	145
9 - Travel agencies and similar	14,159	13,861	14,041	12,622
10 - Cultural services	12,471	12,492	12,511	11,970
11 - Sporting and recreational services	2,839	2,835	2,831	2,717
Tourism characteristic industries	170,160	172,496	173,246	155,866
Tourism connected industries	61,539	62,316	62,723	62,664
Tourism non specific industries	3,479	3,524	3,537	<u>3,483</u>
Total industries	<u>235,178</u>	238,337	239,506	222,013

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2022

3.2.4 Hotel Classification

The hotel associations of Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland established the Hotelstars Union in 2009 under the sponsorship of

HOTREC - Hospitality Europe. In the meanwhile, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have all become members of the star family. The Hotelstars Union was converted into an international non-profit organization under Belgian legislation over 12 years after its founding.

In order to establish and/or review national and regional hotel classification systems in Europe, the members of the Hotelstars Union are working to create a unified classification based on the "21 HOTREC principles."

All members of HOTREC are eligible to join the Hotelstars Union. It uses a dynamic system for classifying hotels collectively. Its standards and practices are continually reviewed and improved in accordance with visitor expectations. Basic classification standards are based on room sizes and other technical considerations. The amenities in the bathrooms, Internet access, minibars with price lists, reception hours, duration of breakfast service (1-star facilities are not required to serve breakfasts), restaurant working hours, frequency of room arrangement, laundry (available during the day), luggage trolleys, and doorman presence are the classification criteria for the various classes.

Benefits of strategic partnership for European hotel classification

- High standards;
- Subjective and objective components;
- International trademark and branding for hotels;
- Flexibility in every category;
- Transparency for visitors and hotels;
- Information for consumers;
- Quality Assurance
- Fair competition
- Common IT database
- Specialized brand for smaller hotels

Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter provided the importance of tourism in the Czech Republic, and indicated the different types of tourism in this country such as entertainment, adventure, nature, industrial, and cultural tourism. It also discussed the importance of social media in the hotel industry as a modern and fast-growing sector. This chapter highlighted the significance of social media during COVID-19 pandemic, and further discussed why social media is important in the hotel business.

4 Research Methodology

The current chapter explains the research method for this study. The methodology of this research is both quantitative (research of hotel customers) and qualitative (research of hoteliers). This chapter provides the information about the procedure of the study, questionnaire design, sampling method, and hypotheses.

The main objective of this study is to empirically evaluate whether there is a positive effect of social media in the formation of relationship with hotel customers in the Czech Republic. For this, this dissertation employs mainly primary source for data collection. Data was analyzed and synthesized for use in the empirical and theoretical parts of this dissertation.

Deduction: Deductive reasoning involves drawing conclusions by moving from broad premises to narrow ones (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018). It was applied in formalizing assumptions for empirical study through a review of the available research in the fields of marketing and management and interview with hoteliers. Deductive reasoning involves drawing conclusions by moving from broad premises to narrow ones (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018). The part of this dissertation that is associated with an interview with hotel managers can be related to this strategy since we tried to look deeper into comprehending the significance of social media from a hotel point of view and learned more specifically how this process works (e.g. Bilgin 2018; Seo and Park 2018; Tran 2020).

Induction The idea of inductive reasoning is to go from the particular to the generic. It may begin with a specific observation or statement that leads to the eventual finding (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach 2018). It was employed for generalizing the results of a questionnaire survey. Since we presupposed that social media may enhance customer relationship behavior with hotels and tested this in order to draw the appropriate conclusions, this assumption can be covered by this approach.

Processing methodology of this research is based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. 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 comprehensive and complete the examined field.

Quantitative part was done based on questionnaire. Before testing the hypothesis, reliability was checked by applying Cronbach's alpha as well as composite reliability (CR). Both convergent and discriminant validity were also tested. Testing the relationships were done by correlation and regression analysis.

Qualitative part was done by application of interviews and questionnaire surveys among hotel managers or employees with experience in social media of the hotel. Primary research was also carried out by looking at the hotels' social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram. Moreover, interview was conducted to understand the perception of hoteliers about importance of social media in their businesses.

4.1 Quantitative Research (Research of Hotel Customers)

This study was conducted in the Czech Republic, and researcher collected data from the people who stayed in the 4 and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic. To collect data, we went to Prague airport, and also visited historical places in Prague, Brno, Český Krumlov, Karlovy Vary, and Liberec where there is higher probability to reach out to travelers.

Data for this study was collected through questionnaire from respondents who have stayed at 4 and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic. Using questionnaires is a convenient technique to get individuals to provide quick answers to inquiries on facts, attitudes, and opinions. Questionnaires take less time and are simple to maintain anonymous.

Primary research was selected as resource in this dissertation since the can be more genuine and relevant to the objective of this research and result can be more and specific and explicit to the purpose of this research.

4.1.1 Procedure and Data Collection

Data of this study was obtained through questionnaire. To support which sampling method to apply, researchers need to select the respondents whom best fit the purpose of the research. In this study only customers of 4- and 5-star hotels in the Czech Republic was targeted for data collection. The reason to disregard economy hotels/hostels is because customers of low price and economy hotels and hostels are more concerned about cost comparing to quality, or their judgments toward the accommodation social media (Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022). However, in luxury hotels customers are more concerned to receive the information about services the hotels provide to them along with the cost they pay for those services. To ensure that only customer of 4 and 5-star hotels will be included in the research, there was a question added to the beginning of the questionnaire asking about in which type of hotel the respondent was stayed. Therefore, after collecting the questionnaires, we were able to filter based on hotel stars.

As it is impossible to collect and analyze the data from all media users, due to limited access, time and fund, convenience sampling method was considered as method of data collection to select the respondents. Data of this research was majorly collected from May to October 2021. Distribution of questionnaires was both online (electronically) and also paper-based. Questionnaire was posted in online platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn as well as researchers were administered the paper-based questionnaires at the airport and touristic places of the Czech Republic. Respondents were assured their privacy will be confidential, and their identity remains anonymous.

Before distributing the questionnaire, in April 2021, pilot test was conducted. Questionnaire was designed in English, and more than twenty questionnaires were distributed prior to conduct the data collection in a large scale in order to understand the questionnaire was clear and well designed. The pilot testing further determined whether more time or resources were needed on specific aspects in the research design such as length, timing, or method of engagement. There was no need for a major change, and only some minor changes in wording applied to ensure understandability of the questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was distributed in a large scale when the result of pilot test was satisfactory, and there was no difficulty in understanding the questionnaire, and all items were clear.

4.1.2 Measurements

The questionnaire consists of three sections: an introduction, scale items for study variables, and respondents' demographics. The purpose of the survey, statement on data confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents, as well as researcher contact are outlined in the introduction. Questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Items of questionnaire (with 30 main items in total) were obtained from relative literature, which have been applied and tested previously. Eleven items have been applied to assess social media marketing activities based on study done by Seo and Park (2018). To breakdown of these 11 items to 5 dimensions of social media marketing activities, two items have been applied to evaluate entertainment, three items for interaction, two items for trendiness, two items for customization, and two items for perceived risk.

Dimensions of customer relationships were assessed by items designed by Hyun and Perdue (2017). They identified the customer relationships dimensions named: engagement, motivation, customer commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection (Hyun and Perdue 2017). Based on their research, to assess these dimensions, 4 items were applied to measure engagement, 3 items will assess motivation, 3 items will be considered to evaluate customer commitment, 4 items will measure cross-buying. Moreover, 3 items will be considered to evaluate word of mouth, and also 2 items will measure customer defection.

Questions with a Likert Scale, ranging from 1 to 5, were asked (strongly disagree to strongly agree). A "Likert scale" is frequently used to evaluate changes in behavioral patterns, attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, and values. An array of statements from which respondents can choose to rate their answers to evaluative questions make up a Likert-type scale.

The questionnaire also asked about the demographic features of the individuals. The questionnaire was included specific questions about respondents' age, gender, marital status, and educational level.

Gender was measured as a binary variable (male or female), while age was measured using different age classification categories (18-27, 28-37, 38-47, 48-57, higher than 58). As a binary variable, marital status was also asked about (married or unmarried). However, the classification categories were used to assess educational level.

4.1.3 Hypotheses

The main objective of this dissertation is to empirically evaluate whether there is a positive effect of social media in the formation of relationship with hotel customers in the Czech Republic. This research considers social media marketing activities containing five components such as entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, as well as perceived risk (Seo and Park 2018).

Furthermore, this dissertation applied six determinants in order to better understand the impact of social media marketing actions on customer outcomes. Customer relationships in the hotel sector, according to Hyun and Perdue (2017), are related with six constructs: engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection which was covered in Chapter 2. These factors will be assessed in order to have a more thorough picture of how to create customer relationships as following.

The hypotheses of the study are provided below:

- H1. Social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' engagement.
- H2. Social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' motivation to stay in a hotel.
- H3. Social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' commitment.
- H4. Social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' cross-buying intention.
- H5. Social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' word of mouth.
- H6. Social media marketing activities have a negative effect on customers' defection.

4.1.4 Statistical Methods

The current section explains the statistical methods applied in this study. This section provides the information about the statistical methods conducted to test the instrument, explaining the techniques employed to assess the quality of the data (such as testing model fit, reliability, and validity). Moreover, the methods applied to test the hypothesized relationships are also discussed (such as correlation and regression analysis). The accepted level of each values are also presented.

Testing the Measurement

Before testing the hypothesized relationship, research instruments had to be analyzed. That is, 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 most generally used approach for estimating internal consistency dependability is Cronbach's alpha. Consistency can be known as reliability (Deniz and Alsaffar 2013). Cronbach's alpha tests are majorly used to determine the reliability of multiple-question Likert scale surveys. Cronbach's Alpha values of constructs need to be higher than 0.70 (Cho and Kim 2015).

Similar to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability is a measure of internal consistency in scale components. It is equivalent to the whole amount of real score variance divided by the total scale score variance. Composite reliability values between 0.60 and 0.70 are acceptable in research, they must be higher than 0.70 in more advanced stages (Hair et al. 2014).

Validity of the questionnaire was also tested. Validity relates to how successfully an instrument measure what it is supposed to measure. Indeed, the amount to which a concept is accurately measured in quantitative research is known as validity.

Validity is important because if a study's findings aren't regarded valid; they have no bearing on research objectives. The data cannot be used to answer the research hypotheses, which is the study's fundamental goal, if it does not measure what was meant to assess.

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the validity. Indeed, both convergent and discriminant validity of the study measures were confirmed prior to test the proposed relationships.

Convergent validity is one of the construct validity sub points. The same or similar constructs should be substantially associated, according to convergent validity. Average variance extracted (AVE) is commonly used to assess convergent validity. The purpose of convergent validity is to see how large indicators converge can or share in a single construct. Indeed, it is about the degree of variance that a construct captures to variance resulting from measurement errors (Fornell and Larcker 1981). It also has to be higher than 0.50 (Shrestha 2021).

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which one measure differs from another which underlying construct is conceptually unconnected to it. To determine 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).

Furthermore, the factor loading value displays the variance explained by the variable on that particular factor in the Structural Equation Modeling technique. Factor loading indicates the correlation between the item and the factor is represented by the factor loading; and the value greater than 0.30 usually implies a moderate correlation between the item and the factor (Tavakol and Wetzel, 2020).

Testing Hypotheses (Structural Equations Modeling)

To test the hypothesized relationship, the statistical tests (correlation and regression analysis) were conducted in this dissertation.

Using Structural Equations Modeling, the research model was tested. Structural Equations Modeling has emerged as a significant statistical tool utilized in social sciences research. Due to its various analytical and multivariate approaches (e.g., Factor Analysis and

Regression Analysis), Structural Equations Modeling provides a unique perspective, making it useful in the research (Hair et al. 2014).

Structural Equations Modeling is divided into two basic phases. The first step employs confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether the individual rating scales employed in the survey are latent variables and whether the data reliability and validity requirements are met (Novotova 2018). Testing model fit helps to figure out whether observed data match assumptions. Regression is used in the second phase to verify the existence of links between measured latent variables. The Structural Equations Modeling analysis in this study is carried out using the AMOS 27 software.

4.2 Qualitative Research (Research of Hoteliers)

In order to understand the perception of hoteliers towards application of social media, this part of the research considered hotel managers or those employees who were responsible for social media of the hotel in order to collect data. It is important to understand what information hotels share on their social media platforms in order to create relationships with their customers, and also to identify how hoteliers perceive the advantages of social media platforms in their business.

To conduct this part of the research, economy hotels were disregarded since customers of low price and economy hotels/hostels are more concerned about cost (compared to quality), while customers of luxury hotels are more conscious about the quality of services along with the cost they pay. In general, quality is more important in luxury hotels than economy accommodations (Lu et al. 2015).

Primary research was carried out by looking at a few hotels' social media platforms. Facebook and Instagram, as well as booking.com was looked to obtain an overview of what information hotels are intended to share, or how is the interaction of customers to one another or with the service provider.

The methods used to collect the data include interview and it was based on 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. 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. Quota was based on regions in the Czech Republics.

Following the selection of regions, the researcher moved on to the second phase, which was to identify hotels from each region. Hotels were divided to 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) accepted to participate in the interviews based on their preferred language (Czech or English). Hotels which accepted to participate in this research were located in Prague, Brno, Karlovy Vary, Český Krumlov, Karlovy Vary, Liberec but not limited to this city. That is, some of this hotels were chain hotels which they have another property in the cities of the Czech Republic. We provided hotels with assurances that their names would be treated confidentially and that the study would not publish their personal information in order for them to agree to participate in the study and provide the real information. Research was conducted during COVID-19 Pandemic where some hotels were working limitedly, or they were busy with reopening, and this narrowed down our access to the hotels.

Open-ended interview was applied in the research focused on the use and experience of the hotels with social media. Open-ended method enables respondents to contribute extra information such as feelings, attitudes, and understanding regarding the topic. While some questions could be planned, we were unaware of the contents of the response. Interviews started with some basic questions to gather factual information mainly focus on the participant's opinions, feelings, knowledge and ideas, experience and so on. For instance, question could start with "do you think application of social media is important for hotels in order to attract customers?". And based on the response the conversation could further continue to obtain more detailed information about perception of hoteliers toward application of social media and its importance for them in order to build relationships with their customers.

Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter explained the research methods applied to achieve the research objectives. Quantitative research was conducted to trigger hotel customers in order to understand their perspective towards application of social media and building relationship with hotels. The sampling method in this approach was convenience sampling and data was collected through questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the model fit. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were applied for reliability test. Convergent validity was tested by checking average variance extracted values, and discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of average variance extracted and correlation values. Correlation and regression tests were applied to test the hypotheses. Structural equation modeling was applied for regression test. Moreover, qualitative research method was conducted to collect data from hoteliers. Data collected through interview by quota sampling. Findings of qualitative research were analyzed based on categorization and interpretation.

5 Research Results

This chapter examines the qualitative and quantitative data results and analysis, testing the measurements, demographic information of respondents to the questionnaire, and the outcome of hypothesized relationships are all discussed. Moreover, the results of qualitative research are also provided in this part.

5.1 Results of Testing the Measurements

Model fit assessed how effectively the model can generalize the data compared to what it was developed for. A well-fitted model yields more accurate results and can match the data. Factor analysis confirmed the enough level of model fit. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Testing Model Fit

Index	Value	Acceptance level
CMIN/df	3.15	CMIN/df < 5.0, Acceptable fit (Al-Mamary and Shamsuddin 2015)
CFI	0.89	$0.8 \leq CFI \leq 0.9$, Marginal fit (good enough) (Wolor et al. 2020)
NFI	0.85	$0.8 < NFI < 0.9$, Acceptable fit (Al-Mamary and Shamsuddin 2015)
TLI	0.88	$0.8 \leq TLI \leq 0.9$, Marginal fit (good enough) Hair et al. 2009).

Source: Own (Analyzed by Amos 27)

5.1.1 Reliability

Reliability tests confirmed that the measurement model met the required internal consistency between the indicators. This shows that the questionnaire can provide similar results in repeated trials and this confirms the quality of the findings. As shown in Table 5, all Cronbach's alpha values are over accepted level of 0.70 (Hair et al. 2014). Similarly, after testing composite reliability, results show that all values were greater than 0.70.

Table 5: Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Item	SMMA	Engagement	Motivation	Commitment	Cross-buying	WOM	Defection
Value	0.95	0.93	0.86	0.92	0.93	0.89	0.86

Source: Resource: Own (Analyzed by IBM SPSS 16)

5.1.2 Validity

Testing convergent validity showed the existence of this validity. Average Variance Extracted values were higher than the accepted level of 0.50 (Shrestha 2021), and it shows scale that scale items in the same construct are associated to each other. As indicated in Table 6, the findings demonstrate convergent validity.

Table 6: Convergent Validity

Item	SMMA	Engagement	Motivation	Commitment	Cross-buying	WOM	Defection
AVE	0.77	0.77	0.67	0.80	0.78	0.74	0.76

Source: Own (Analyzed by Amos 27)

Table 7: Correlation Results, vs. Square Root of AVE

Item	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	0.7	1			
Cross-buying	0.55	0.58	0.63	0.73	1		
WOM	0.57	0.5	0.49	0.6	0.69	1	
Defection	-0.19	-0.2	-0.17	-0.16	-0.32	-0.31	1
Square root of AVE	0.88	0.087	0.82	0.90	0.88	0.86	0.87

Source: Own (Analyzed by Amos 27)

To test discriminant validity, the comparison between the square root of each latent construct's average variance extracted value and correlation showed that square root of each latent construct's average variance extracted is greater than the correlation between any of two latent constructs and this confirms the existence of discriminant validity. The findings are also shown in Table 7.

5.1.3 Factor Loadings

Results of factor loading show that all values are over accepted level of 0.30 (Tavakol and Wetzel 2020). As indicated in Table 8 all factor loading values meet the minimum level, however due lack of fit, one item from the social media marketing construct was removed. Other items were significantly loaded under assigned factors.

Table 8: Factor Loadings

Variables	Loadings
SMMA1	0.88
SMMA2	0.70
SMMA3	0.89
SMMA4	–
SMMA5	0.93
SMMA6	0.87
SMMA7	0.89
SMMA8	0.88
SMMA9	0.88
SMMA10	0.90
SMMA11	0.91
Engagement1	0.89
Engagement2	0.88
Engagement3	0.87
Engagement4	0.86
Motivation1	0.86
Motivation2	0.84
Motivation3	0.75
Commitment1	0.87
Commitment2	0.95
Commitment3	0.86
Cross-buying1	0.92
Cross-buying2	0.86
Cross-buying3	0.92
Cross-buying4	0.83
WOM1	0.73
WOM2	0.91
WOM3	0.92
Defection1	0.91
Defection2	0.82

Source: Own (Analyzed by Amos 27)

5.2 Findings of Quantitative Research (Research of Hotel Customers)

One part of this research is about perception of 4 and 5-star hotel customers about application of social media in order to create customer-hotel relationships. Below is the findings of the research from customers' point of view.

5.2.1 Respondents Demographics

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. The respondents' information is provided in Table 9.

Table 9: Respondents' Profile

	Frequency	Percent
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	123	51.7
Male	115	48.3
Total	238	100.0
<u>Marital</u>		
Married	127	53.4
Single	111	46.6
Total	238	100.0
<u>Education</u>		
High School/College	65	27.3
Bachelor's degree	109	45.8
Master's Degree	58	24.4
Post-Graduate Degree	6	2.5
Total	238	100.0
<u>Age</u>		
18-27	60	25.2
28-37	74	31.1
38-47	78	32.8
48-57	26	10.9
Total	238	100.0

Source: Own (Analyzed by IBM SPSS 16)

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.

5.2.2 Testing Hypotheses

First hypothesis proposed that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' engagement. Table 10 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, results shown in Table 11 indicates the regression result and represents the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' engagement ($\beta = 0.74, P < 0.01$). These results provide the evidence that social media marketing activities is the important antecedent of higher customers' engagement. Thus, H1 is supported.

Table 10: 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)

Second hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' motivation. Table 10 demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and customers' motivation ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, results shown in Table 11 represents the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' motivation ($\beta = 0.64$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide the evidence that social media marketing activities is the important antecedent of higher customers' motivation. Thus, H2 is supported.

Third hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' commitment. Table 10 demonstrates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and commitment ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, results shown in Table 11 represents the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' commitment ($\beta = 0.62$, $P < 0.01$). These results provide the evidence that social media marketing activities is the important antecedent of higher customers' commitment. Thus, H3 is supported.

Table 11: 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 10 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, results shown in Table 11 represents the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' cross-

buying intention ($\beta = 0.58, P < 0.01$). These results provide the evidence that social media marketing activities is the important antecedent of higher customers' cross-buying intention. Thus, H4 is supported.

Fifth hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on customers' word of mouth. Table 10 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, results shown in Table 11 represents the positive and significant effect of social media marketing activities on customers' word of mouth ($\beta = 0.59, P < 0.01$). These results provide the evidence that social media marketing activities is the important antecedent of higher customers' word of mouth. Thus, H5 is supported.

Sixth hypothesis suggested that social media marketing activities have a negative effect on customers' defection. Table 10 demonstrates that there is a negative and significant relationship between social media marketing activities and defection ($r = -0.19, p < 0.01$). Moreover, results shown in Table 11 represents the negative and significant effect of social media marketing activities on word of mouth ($\beta = -0.22, P < 0.01$). These results provide the evidence that social media marketing activities is the important antecedent of lower customer defection. Thus, H6 is supported.

Summary of Customers Gathered Data

The acceptance/rejection of hypotheses are briefly provided below. Moreover, it can be seen in Figure 15.

Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on customers' engagement. Therefore, **H1 is supported.**

Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on customers' motivation to stay in a hotel. Therefore, **H2 is supported.**

Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on customers' commitment. Therefore, **H3 is supported.**

Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on customers' cross-buying intention. Therefore, **H4 is supported.**

Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on customers' word of mouth. Therefore, **H5 is supported.**

Social media marketing activities have a negative and significant effect on customers' customers' defection. Therefore, **H6 is supported.**

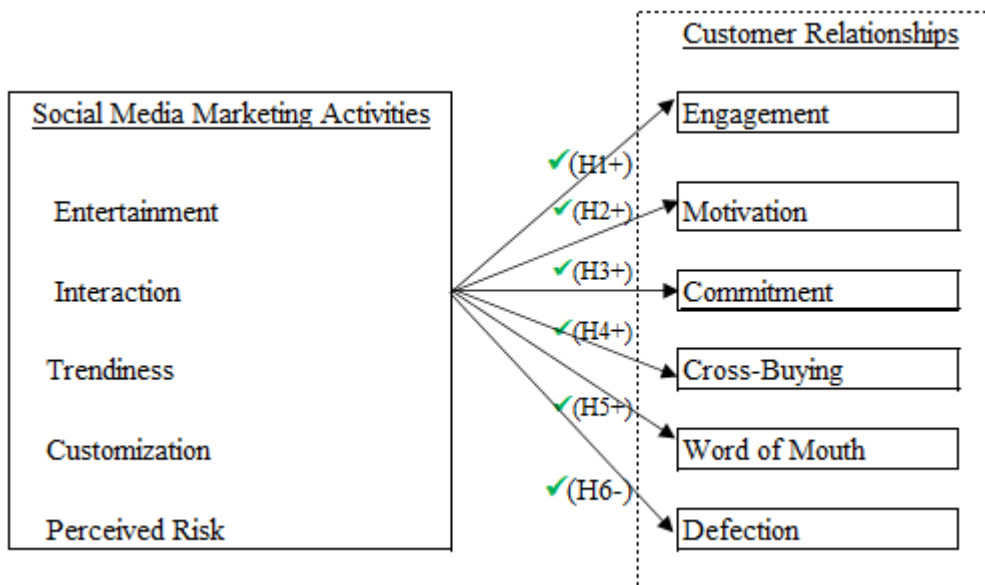


Figure 15: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Source: Own

5.3 Findings of Qualitative Research (Research of Hoteliers)

One part of this research is about perception of hoteliers about application of social media, such as what information they share on social media platforms and how they find these platforms useful. Below is the findings of the research from hoteliers' point of view.

5.3.1 Diversity of Information Shared by Hotels on Social Media

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, contents shared for this purpose can play a critical role in retaining customers.

Information about Surrounding and Attractions

There might be specific rules and regulation 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 sight-seeing 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, teachers' 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.

5.3.2 Importance of Social Media for Hotels

Hotels may use social media for a variety of reasons to improve their outcomes. There are a few key factors that have been identified through hoteliers in interview. Table 12 shows a summary of the findings.

Creating Connection

The usage of the internet and new technologies has resulted in the emergence of social media as a new phenomenon in hotel marketing efforts. Social media improves performance through fostering relationships between customers and service providers, as well as allowing users to engage with one another and share their thoughts and ideas (Kim and Ko 2010). Indeed, hoteliers consider social media to be a vital tool for connecting people. The greater the emotional bond a customer has with a hotel, the more likely that customer will return.

Being more accessible: In certain ways, social media can overcome the constraints of time, place, and language. People can ask questions via social media platforms from anywhere in the world, with little effort and expense. Messages do not necessarily need to be sent and responded during working hours in order to be considered. The barrier in language is minimized with social media, as it provides the possibilities of online translation simply by a click.

Table 12: 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 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 wide audience
7. Keeping customers	
8. Post-satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologizing and compensating • Providing Rewards

Source: Own

Responding the queries: Receiving a quick response to comments on Facebook or other platforms can increase the satisfaction of potential or existing consumers. It will demonstrate not only that the hotel values customers' thoughts and enquiries, but it will also portray the hotel as a responsible service provider which facilitates the transaction. People can use social media to obtain answers to their questions, which may have been discussed previously on the hotel's social media. If there are additional queries, the hotel's social media give a quick and easy access to contact the service provider and even other users.

Connecting people: The most significant distinction between social media and conventional media is that social media allows for two-way contact, whilst traditional media only allows for one-way communication. Human-to-human interactions are the purpose of public social networks. Users share user-generated content on these networks.

People can contact the hotel via social media when they need to. Furthermore, social media allows users to communicate with one another and receive feedback. People trust this source more because they are obtaining content from a peer. Clearly, hotels emphasize on their advantages, and usually do not speak about their disadvantages. Connecting with other users, on the other hand, provides more reliable information about the hotels, and provide both positive and negative feedbacks.

Involving Customers in Hotels' Marketing

Customers may pass their positive recommendations to others in their circle. However, it is not only limited to immediate surrounding of people. Social media enables people to share their experiences with a wider range of audience all over the world.

Rate and Reviews: Reviews are significant since they help the website rank higher in search engines naturally, without having to do any work. Customers that submit reviews unintentionally utilize keywords that help other customers locate the business more quickly online. Before making a purchase, customers examine customer reviews. If the hotel has internet reviews, it quickly establishes credibility and confidence. Online reviews give potential customers the impression that the hotel is authentic and offers a genuine product or service.

Tagging and Hashtagging: When a person, a business, or any other entity with a social profile is mentioned in a post, social media users can use tags to communicate with them. On social media networks, a hashtag is kind of a label which makes it simpler to find information with a sort of theme or substance. Hashtags encourage social media users to look into information that they find interesting. Associations can utilize hashtags to reach out to their target audience and to assist members to find one another. Anyone who can see a photo or video can see the individuals tagged in it.

Source of Information

Hoteliers may gain instant and direct feedback from their customers through social media. Demographics are a type of personalized data. Social media can be used to track audience behavior. Source of data that can be used to identify and find the mistakes. In real time, social media generates a massive amount of data about clients. Hotels can utilize that data to make more information about business decisions. This might assist you in better tailoring your social media marketing plan to communicate directly to your target demographic.

New products/services: Social media networks are a great method to inform people about goods and services. Attempts to promote goods and services in social media groups will inevitably yield better results. People can be informed about new products and services, along with photos or videos. Further information about products and services can be also provided by adding a link. Social media provides this opportunity to access to other accounts. For instance, there is the possibility to add a link in bio on Instagram. Companies and customers can also include links in their posts or comments, making the process of gathering information about new products and services easier.

Learning from customers: One of the most effective ways to learn about your clients' goals and needs is to speak directly with them, asking questions and receiving replies. People use social media to ask follow-up inquiries when they can't find answers on the hotel's numerous platforms or when they want a rapid and most updated response. This can serve as a signal to hotel managers about what is important to customers so that they can incorporate it into their services and offer more personalized information on social media.

All social media networks are open to the public, allowing businesses to track their customers' or potential buyers' activities. This enables marketers to have a better understanding of their target audience's interests, likes, and dislikes, as well as design a more effective marketing approach to attract them.

Customization: The target audience for social media is the exact group of people companies wish to reach through social media channels. They're the ones who'll be most interested in

specific information, products, or services. They are likely to be linked by some shared characteristics, such as demographics and behaviors.

On social media, people seek out a variety of information. It's critical to provide more relevant information to the intended audience. Companies can use social media to gather information about their audience's interests, preferences, and behavior in order to provide more relevant content. Customers can use social media to search for a term or filter information based on their needs. This makes the search more efficient because it takes less time and produces more accurate results.

Competing with Competitors

In any business, specially for service providing companies, it is vital for every company to recognize both their own and their competitors' strengths and shortcomings. It's critical to keep track of how hotels are performing in comparison to other competition and what this means for the brand. Knowing how hotels compare to other competitors may give insights into how each brand is perceived by customers and who has the most social media reach and share of voice.

Being attractive: Before making a final selection, customers always compare various service providers. They can look over the information provided by hotels and connect with other users to make the best decision possible. Hotels can use social media to compare themselves to other market competitors and improve their business. They can keep an eye on what other hotels are sharing on social media and aim to be more appealing. Hotels can share such information on their social media which make them more attractive than other competitors existing in the market.

Updating: Hotels can use social media to deliver the most up-to-date information to their guests. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when travel restrictions and rules were continually changing, hotels were able to keep their audience informed at all times. Furthermore, the most up-to-date information on new products and services, discounts, and special events can be published via social media platforms, allowing customers to stay informed about recent changes. There's also the option to monitor when material was shared

on social media, which may be quite useful to ensure customers are receiving the most recent information.

Visibility

Social media has evolved into a powerful tool for building brand awareness, interacting directly with customers and the market, launching promotions, updating news, generating leads, monitoring competitors, building links, learning how the market, and establishing thought leadership. Hotels are now more accessible to people comparing to previous forms of marketing. Traditionally, finding information about hotels, products and services, costs, and other information was more challenging. In last years, hotels can use a variety of platforms to increase the visibility.

Making the message visual: Social media provides the opportunities to hoteliers to share the information in various forms of text, picture, videos, and combination of them. Hoteliers believe that adding photo or video can explain the content better, and is more attractive. Furthermore, it can provide more detailed information just by sharing a photo or video. Customers can receive information in a variety of formats, and they can get a better visual representation of the services before real experience. Social media is enjoyable because it features more appealing design, sound and image, videos, and other features, all of which increase brand visibility. Experiences are more valued using social media, and it can motivate customers to spend more time on it.

Celebrities involvement: A celebrity endorsement can help a company gain credibility and reach more customers. The celebrity impact refers to a person's ability to influence others. Companies might take advantage of the celebrity's popularity and influence to promote their own goods and services. Celebrities may help a brand gain reputation.

Some hotels work with some celebrities in order to attract customers. Celebrities share the photos of videos of those hotels or recommend the hotels in the comments. This can help the information to be more visible, and also encourages the fans of those celebrities to use the same service provider.

Affordability

Despite social media covers wide variety of customers, however the cost of using the platforms are relatively affordable. There are platforms which companies and individuals can use completely free of charge. However, there are other platforms which may cost hotels in order to use. however, comparing to the coverage of audience, and also productivity of the platforms, using such social media are cost effective for hotels.

Low Cost: In comparison to traditional marketing, social media marketing is much less expensive. The money that would have been spent on traditional marketing can now be used for other purposes, such as improving the quality of services and products. Social media, on the other hand, does not completely eliminate all costs. People will be working on content that will be posted on social media. Hotels must budget for the employees who will manage and operate social media. As well as training. As a result, hotels should set aside financial resources and staff personnel to respond to unfavorable online comments from consumers on social media networks and other travel websites on a regular basis in order to meet their needs and improve customer satisfaction (Kim et al. 2015).

Covering wide audience: Using social media is one of the most popular internet activities. One of the most significant advantages of using social media is that it allows you to reach a larger audience in a shorter amount of time. People from all around the world may utilize social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Youtube and so on, which is beneficial to business owners. Hotels may use social media to reach out to a wide range of people and deliver information to them.

Keeping customers

You may discover more about the interests and backgrounds of your customers via social media. For real-time service, customers are increasingly using social media platforms. A pleasant customer experience can be facilitated by being responsive and active on various platforms.

Social media can provide an opportunity by allowing people to stay in touch with the hotel and communities, participate in online discussions, and keep up with news and current events. Hotels try to keep the connection with their customers on various ways. They

encourage their customers to follow them on special media, to keep updated about upcoming discounts and new services offered by hotels. Moreover, more customized information can be shared with them through private message or email.

Post-satisfying customers

Appropriate responses to online complaints improve customer satisfaction, which increases the likelihood of retaining unsatisfied customers. In addition, fast responses to customers help customers feel important to the firm and develop intimate relationships, both of which are key social media functions (Chan and Guillet 2011).

Apologizing and compensating: Based on the idea that sending a rapid response with an empathizing and apologetic message is a good method to handle customer complaints quickly and efficiently (Miller et al. 2000; Park and Allen 2013). It occurs when hotels are confronted with dissatisfied guests who leave poor ratings and unfavorable reviews. Hoteliers can use social media to reply to those consumers and develop ways to satisfy them. They can explain why they were unable to give satisfactory services and attempt to make amends. Depending on the nature of the complaint, hotels aim to satisfy their customers. They may compensate by issuing a refund (wholly or partially), providing a discount for future visits, providing free services, and so on.

Hotel managers should create operational manuals on how to respond to online reviews from customers. This is also suggested by Park and Allen (2013) hotel administrators need to devise a strategy for responding to online reviews (Kim et al. 2015).

Providing Reward for contribution (Points): It is impossible to overestimate the significance of ratings and reviews. Before making a decision, consumers' overview online ratings and reviews just as much as personal advice. Customers can be enticed to share their most recent experiences by offering them incentives. There are some cases which service providers encourage their customers to participate in rate and reviews. Regardless of positive or negative feedback, this contribution can be rewarded by the hotels through obtaining discount code, or some free services.

Summary of Hoteliers Gathered Data

The results of this study demonstrated the significance of social media for hotels. There are several ways that hotels can use social media to boost performance. Hoteliers viewpoints regarding application of social media was considered. Social media marketing was considered important due to several reasons such as creating connection between people, involving customers in the business, important sources of information, helping for competition, visibility, affordability, retaining customers as well as post satisfying customers. The results are summarized in Table 12.

5.4 Discussion

The results are discussed in this chapter. This chapter highlights how the conclusion serves the research's goal by reviewing the outcomes and how findings of this research can contribute to the theory and practice. Indeed, this chapter discusses the findings, emphasizes the significance of the results, and explains the contribution of this research in relation to past work.

Tourism is an important industry in the Czech Republic which brings economic and social benefits for the country and citizens. However, this industry can be reinforced as it has high potential of success in this country. On the other hand, social media become a crucial instrument in customer relationship management, and highly demanded by customers; especially in hotel industry. It expanded the interactions among people through different platforms. As people are seeking for more convenient and cost effective way of communication and collecting information, companies need to satisfy this request and deal with social media activities. Otherwise, they may lose of competition, reduce the number of customers, and also decrease the profitability and competitiveness. Therefore, this study tries to understand how social media marketing activities can be applied by hotels in building relationships with hotel customers in the Czech Republic.

Unlike several research done in field of social media marketing, this research considered the more comprehensive aspects of social media such as entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and perceived risk which were also applied by Seo and Park (2018). For instance, Kim and Ko (2012) considered the effect of social media marketing activities on customer outcomes considering social media marketing aspects named entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, word-of-mouth (perceived risk was not included in the model). Similarly, Ibrahim and Aljarah (2018) have considered the social media marketing activities on customer outcomes with aspects of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization and word of mouth (perceived risk was not included in the research model). Moreover, Sano (2015) applied interaction, trendiness, customization, and risk as dimensions of social media marketing (entertainment was not included in the model). Application of five aspects of social media marketing in this study (named entertainment,

interaction, trendiness, customization, and perceived risk) provides more understanding of what social media marketing does in order to create relationships with customers.

Moreover, even though the dimensions applied in this dissertation were previously used by Seo and Park (2018), however their research was done in a different sector (Airline industry). This dissertation is conducted in hotel industry which may comprise different characteristics and marketing requirements based on customers' demands. Due to various facets of social media marketing, hotels can deliver wider information regarding the products and services they offer; the process of transaction, and the benefits that's customers may receive. Hotels can provide up to date news about changes in products, services, price etc.; and can keep their connections with current users; as well as obtaining new and potential customers. In general, social media is considered as platform, where companies and other users can communicate. This enables other customers to have more source of information while making decision. Information can be found in a faster and more convenient way.

The findings of this study support earlier research's findings, which demonstrated the beneficial benefits of social media marketing on consumer responses (eg Kim and Ko 2012; Seo and Park 2018; Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova 2022). By utilizing social media, hotels can find out more about customer demands, the causes of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and moreover, connect with clients. The results of this study supports the importance of social media application in hotel industry, and necessity of social media marketing in order to create better relationships with customers.

This study further provides more comprehensive understanding of customer relationships consequences. Even though there are studies regarding the effect of social media application on customers' outcomes, there is no unity in the dimensions of customer relationships applied in the literature. This study applied the scale items by Hyun and Perdue (2017) comprising six dimensions of customer relationships building for hotels and restaurants which seems to be more relevant to the current study. These dimensions are engagement, motivation, commitment, cross-buying, word of mouth, and defection. Findings of this research will suggest the importance of dealing with social media marketing activities for hotels in order to build relationship with customers; and provide theoretical and managerial implications to the managers and industry.

Hotels must adapt to possible changes in visitor behavior as well as new trends in the hospitality sector in order to improve customer service. Hotels may receive clear and exact information on customers and previous stays by using social media platforms. Hotel employees also must put in consistent effort and work to provide exceptional customer service. They must be engaged, respectful, accessible, and most importantly, attentive to your visitors since any praise or complain may be share by customers on social media.

Excellent customer service can swiftly adjust to any scenario and has a thorough understanding of its customers' needs. Customers want to know that they've been heard and also understood. They will value the fact that hotel staff are aware of their circumstances and feelings, and that the treatment they receive is tailored to their individual requirements. As a result, they will be more likely to stay with the hotel.

Furthermore, empathy with unsatisfied customers is essential for not just solving the issues but also comprehending difficulties. In truth, hotels seek to learn about their visitors' wants and impressions in order to provide the best possible service. When consumers are dissatisfied with certain services and complain on the hotel's social media channels, it is beneficial to respond to all unfavorable comments in a kind and patient manner.

In addition, hotels should aim to find out how guests feel on a frequent basis by examining the results of hotel satisfaction surveys, online customer evaluations, or talking to them at the front desk. This will assist hotels in gathering additional information about how their guests enjoyed or disliked their stay. This can assist hotels in determining which areas they should concentrate.

Customer service that is responsive, efficient, and of high quality has become a requirement for properties. Excellent customer service will, without a doubt, improve the relationship between guests and the company. Satisfied visitors are also more likely to return and remain loyal to hotels, since they will act as true brand ambassadors.

As a result, customer service is critical to the hotel's growth plan since it allows it to build its reputation and set itself apart from the competitors.

Through training, hotels may teach their personnel the significance of delivering outstanding service and being hospitable to clients. These trainings will help them better understand their roles, encourage them to improve the service they give, and make them aware of the potential influence their actions may have on your property's image.

Summary of Chapter 5

Findings of this research confirmed the acceptance of all hypotheses. Results confirmed that social media marketing positively affects customers' engagement, motivation, commitment, and their cross-buying, and reduces their defection. However, the benefit of social media in the hotel industry is not limited to one party, and both sides of the business (customers and hotels) can benefit from these platforms. Findings show that hoteliers apply social media for various reasons such as creating connection, involving customers in marketing, using social media as source of information, being more competitive in business, for more visibility, for its affordability comparing to traditional form of marketing, for keeping customers and make loyalty as well as post-satisfying customers. Hotel managers need to be aware of this importance and apply this marketing tool more effectively and seriously. To do this, hotels can consider on various aspects of social media in order to be more efficient.

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 phenomena 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 announcement and appreciations on special occasions. However, the benefits of social media marketing is not only limited to the one-way connection with customers. The main benefits of social media in order to create the 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 of 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. Hotelier can also keep their connection with their current and potential customers and provide them the most recent information and respond to the questions whenever customers reach out. Both customers and hotels can benefit from this two-ways 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 phenomena, 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 the 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 expand the knowledge in this field in the Czech Republic.

Moreover, some researchers recognized customers' trusts, satisfaction and loyalty and so on as part of the critical customer outcomes for hotels. However, in order to define customers'

behavioral intents, researchers must use a conceptual model that explains customer relationship outcomes specifically in the hotel business and provides a good framework for better understanding the complicated marketing strategy (Hyun and Perdue 2017). According to Hyun and Perdue (2017), while hospitality marketing research has frequently focused on the relationship between various marketing actions and different dimensions of research examining customer relationships as a multi-dimensional construct, it has also looked at the relationship between various marketing actions and different dimensions of research. Hyun and Perdue (2017) further discussed that marketing firms are urged to create and maintain marketing intelligence dashboards, which are made up of a variety of such indicators. Marketing dashboards, in particular, track a set of interconnected marketing actions, consumer attitudes, customer behaviors, and performance metrics. Continuous improvement in marketing strategy and financial performance is the guiding principle of such dashboards. The breadth, strength, and resilience of client relationships are important components as a primary marketing concept. Understanding the effect of marketing actions on customer attitudes and behavior toward the firm, and ultimately, how customer attitudes create financial value, is critical to customer relationship management.

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 (Kim et al 2015). 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 (Kim et al. 2015). Therefore, dealing with various social media platforms for hotels provides a better opportunity for customers to find information about hotels that affects their purchase decisions.

Moreover, using various social media platforms is more likely to exhibit 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 service quality and social media marketing to enhance 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 audience 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 conversation 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, included 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.

Based on findings of the research from hoteliers we recommend managers the below:

- Hotel need to actively use social media platforms. They need to open accounts on different platforms, and do not limit themselves to a specific social media. For instance, Facebook seems to be a good choice for hotels to be active on. Based on Statista (2022a) as of January 2022, 31% of the Facebook users range between 25 to 34 years old, and in total 72% of Facebook users are 25 years old and older. Unlike younger generation under age 25 which might be more likely to choose economy hotels, age 25 and older are more financially stable or they may travel with family or for business purposes and they are more likely to stay in 4 and 5-star hotels. However, it is necessary for hotels to have accounts on various social media platforms, because people may use different social media, and hotels can provide them the accessibility.
- Hotels should actively share the most updated information. Hotel industry is very dynamic, and the level of competition is high. Therefore, it is necessary that hotels share contents about the new services they offer. Or they can also share information about new rules and regulations which may affect customers travel (such as restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic).

- Hotels can post greetings or appreciation on different occasions such as mother's Day, to show they care about people and events in their lives. By this, hotels can show that they are socially responsible towards their customers.
- Hotels need to share various contents and not limit their social media to a limited information only. People may visit the social media pages for various purposes, or different questions, and there should be able to fulfil their needs by visiting the page.
- Hotels can categorize the information they share. For instance, they can classify the information they share about the food and beverage separate than the rooms or other facilities. It helps customers to reach out to more relevant information
- Hotels can share combination of visual contents (video or picture) and some texts. It is important to provide the visual content as it may attract audience to read the post.
- Social media page can be interactive and entertaining in order to attract larger audience. For instance, there can be some competitions for hashtagging, or asking people for some idea about the services. There could be a prize in order to attract more people in attending in this interaction such as free spa or meal, or even some discount in booking a room.
- Hotels should actively monitor the messages they may receive on social media, try to be more specific when they respond to the questions and avoid answering so generic; since people usually contact directly when they are unable to find the answer of their questions on other platforms.
- Hotels should train employees who deal with their social media platform. They need to know what information to share, they need to have marketing knowledge, and they also have to learn how to respond messages and deal with positive and negative comments.
- Hotels need to react on negative comments on their social media. They need to respond nicely and ensure the person they care about the negative comments and they

do their bests to compensate. This act is necessary since they still have a chance to effect on customer return, and also other audience have the visibility on those comments. It is also necessary to fix the issue caused the negative comments.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The generalizability of this study should be considered, and the findings can be applied to similar situations and environments. This study focused on the hotel industry, which is associated with leisure. This industry is distinct from others that provide services such as fashion, insurance, and so on. As a result, the results of this study may not apply to other industries. In future research, it is suggested that consumer perceptions of service quality and social media be applied to diverse service sectors and the results compared.

This study's findings are also limited to hotel social media users, specifically 4 and 5-star hotels. The findings are not applicable to other businesses or budget motels. Customers' priorities in a hotel stay are mostly determined by market sector, whether luxury or economy. When it comes to picking a hotel, clients in all segments value pricing, reputation, room quality, and location, but the degree of importance varies by segment. Hoteliers must establish a comprehensive understanding of the type of customers they wish to attract in order to achieve long-term success, and then create an experience suited to that specific group of customers. It is advantageous for researchers to concentrate on economy hotel consumers and compare the outcomes.

The data for this study was primarily acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic; otherwise, the data could have been larger. Travel restrictions were imposed due to the situation at the time. However, in order to acquire valid results, this study attempted to obtain high-quality data (targeting diverse age groups, genders, and educational levels). A larger sample size is recommended for future study to represent a wider range of persons.

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Appendix A: Some Examples of Czech Republic Properties Listed in UNESCO



Figure A.1: Altenberg-Zinnwald Mining Landscape

Source: UNESCO World Heritage convention, 2022a



Table. A.2: Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž

Source: UNESCO World Heritage convention, 2022b



Figure A.3: Historic Centre of Český Krumlov

Source: UNESCO World Heritage convention, 2022c



Figure A.4: Historic Centre of Český Krumlov

Source: UNESCO World Heritage convention, 2022d



Figure A.5: Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape

Source: UNESCO World Heritage convention, 2022e



Figure A.6: Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora

Source: UNESCO World Heritage convention, 2022f

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

We invite you to participate in a research on application of social media in hotels. This survey is completely anonymous, and we will not collect any identifiable information. Responding this questionnaire will not take more than 10 minutes.

The aim of the research is to understand how application of social media can improve the hotel-customer relationships. You may only respond the questions if you already stayed in a hotel in the Czech Republic.

We appreciate your contribution and will be happy to share with you the findings. You may contact me at: romina.cheraghalizadeh@tul.cz

Romina Cheraghalizadeh,
PhD student at Technical University of Liberec

In the Czech Republic, I stayed in 4 and 5 star hotel 3 star hotel and below

My Gender is Female Male

My Marital status is Single Married

My age is 18-27 28-37 38-47 48-57 >57

Last academic degree I have achieved is

High School/college Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Post graduate Degree

Please mark the level of your agreement with the states below (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Social media	The social media of the hotel was enjoyable.					
	The content shared by the social media of the hotel was enjoyable.					
	It was possible to share the information in social media of the hotel.					
	The discussion and exchange of opinions in the social media of the hotel was possible.					
	The expression of opinions in the social media of the hotel was easy.					
	The information shared in the social media of the hotel was up to date.					
	The use of social media of the hotel was modern.					
	The information that you needed could be found in the social media of the hotel.					
	The social media of the hotel provided the information I needed.					
	The social media of the hotel alleviated my concerns regarding the hotel's service.					
The social media of the hotel alleviated my concerns about using the hotel.						
Engagement	I was satisfied with my first visit to the hotel brand.					
	My first interaction with an employee of the hotel was pleasant.					
	My first impression was that the staff at the hotel was friendly.					
	My first impression was that the hotel was appealing.					

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Please mark the level of your agreement with the states below (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).						
Motivation	The hotel's brand reputation encourages my visit.					
	The hotel's easy reservation process encourages my visit.					
	The hotel's customer service encourages my visit.					
Customer Commitment	When I travel, this hotel brand is my first choice.					
	I visit this hotel more frequently than other hotels.					
	I spend more money in this hotel than in other hotels.					
Cross-Buying	If this hotel brand opens a new hotel, I want to visit it.					
	I want to visit this hotel more frequently.					
	When I go to this hotel, I like to bring my friends/relatives/other people.					
	I would try other services/products (e.g. sports center) provided by this hotel.					
Word of Mouth	I would suggest this hotel to my friends/relatives.					
	I am willing to say good things about this hotel.					
	I mention this hotel to others quite frequently.					
Customer defection	I like this hotel, but I want to try different hotels next time.					
	Next time I travel, I will consider another hotel over this hotel brand.					

Nationality (Optional):

The country of residence (Optional)

If you have any comments please write here: