

Predictors of Social Media Utilization as a Tool for Communication in Hospitality Industry: A Case Study of Accra Metropolis

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Abstract

The study focused on examining the extent of social media usage in the hospitality industry; determine the factors influencing the utilization of the social media (SM) as a marketing tool; identify the most frequently used social media network; and, finally, examined the examine the benefits of utilizing the social media as a communication tool in the hospitality industry, in the Accra Metropolis, Ghana. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a total of 500 participants. Data collected was analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics. Results revealed that that majority of the employees use the social media as a communication tool to a large extent. Also, the study also established that the factors influencing the utilization of the social media as a marketing tool in the hospitality industry in the Accra Metropolis, were “Perceived usefulness”, “Perceived ease of use”, “Social influence”, “Availability of internet facility”, “ICT knowledge of staff”, “Low charges from internet service providers”, “Management support”, and “Entrepreneurial orientation”. Furthermore, findings indicate that employees in the study area generally agreed that the most frequently use social media network for marketing in the hospitality industry are more related first to Facebook, secondly to WhatsApp, followed by Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, with Flickr been the least use social media for marketing in the hospitality industry. Finally, “SM helps hotels to advertise to customers”, “SM utilization reduce costs and increase productivity”, “SM provide platform for obtaining feedback”, “SM utilization increase brand awareness and loyalty”, “SM provides platform for engagement with customers”, “SM helps in disseminating information faster”, “SM increase the visibility of hotels”, and “SM utilization improve customer experience” were the benefits of utilizing the social media as a communication tool. It was however recommended that, management of hotels should endeavour to provide communication devices that will enable employees to exchange information about hotel services, provide critiques of ambiance, and share service experiences.

Keywords: Predictors, Social-Media, Communication, Tool, Hospitality

1. Introduction

In today’s competitive world, businesses need to think of new ways to make their business processes more flexible to avoid being placed at a competitive disadvantage (Leung & Bai, 2013). In view of Teixeira (2014) this could be done through information technology initiatives that can reduce cost of internal or in-house operations and generate a competitive advantage. According to Gretzel, Kang, and Lee (2008) the rapid changes in information technology, online activities such as searching for and sharing information, discussing communal issues, and making inquiries are now performed via a new form of communication technology known as web 2.0 or social media. Social media are defined as a second generation of web development and design, that aims to facilitate communication, secures information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web (Paris, Lee, & Seery, 2010). There are numerous social media sites; among the most popular are Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (Jain, 2010).

On average, consumers spend more than 5.5 hours per day participating on social media Websites (Nelsonwire, 2010). With their increasing use, these sites are perceived as tools for creating online communities of users who share interests, activities, and objectives (Bolotaeva & Cata, 2010). Many companies view the use of online communities as a profitable marketing tool from which they can derive several benefits. First, companies can obtain vast amounts of feedback regarding their products and brands by monitoring consumers’ online conversations, thus enabling them to resolve problems quickly and work to improve future brand performance (Madupu, 2006). Second, online communities provide a real-time resource regarding market trends and consumer needs. Companies can use these resources to modify advertising messages and develop special targeted features for future products. Third, companies can observe whether their brands are truly suited to consumers’ lifestyles and can learn which features of their products make them special or unique in consumers’ eyes (Kozinets, 1999).

Pearson (2013) argues that organizations that can adapt to trends, preferences and issues ahead of their competitors can create a defensible advantage. Pearson, (2013) further explains that social media offers organizations a platform to improve the communications supporting process. This has led to leading organizations using the power of social media to shape their business process management agendas (Kaplan &

Haenlein, 2010). According to Leung and Bai, (2013), the emergence of Web 2.0 allows internet users to create, edit, share, and view information online. This phenomenon has led to the popularity of social media channels such as; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs and forums (Leung & Bai, 2013). Social media is changing the lifestyle of all age groups and across all social economic groups (Lewis, 2010; Assenov & Khurana, 2012). Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013) assert that in recent times the online social media have revolutionized communications and consequently the marketing of tourism destinations and businesses. The area is rapidly evolving and the challenges and opportunities arising from it for tourism and hospitality industry are already apparent (Leung & Bai, 2013). Electronic word-of-mouth and online reviews are increasingly used regarding tourism and hospitality services that are high involvement services (Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013). Social media has become the focus of much attention from the business environment as one of the ways to create awareness of their product or services and to build long term mutual relationship with the customers (Sullivan, 2013). According to Hamid, Akhir, & Cheng (2013), the advent of social media has changed the way customers seek information for their purchase decisions. The mobility and how time is scarce for today's consumers, traditional mode of communication is no longer sustainable, hence the appropriateness of social media as a communication tool (Poalses & Joubert, 2014; Teixeira, 2014). Again, the cost of advertising is increasingly rising and consistently in the past decades and consumers are devoting less attention to traditional advertising due to advertising clutter, distrust and media proliferation (Poalses & Joubert, 2014; Teixeira, 2014). This study is thus aimed at establishing the predictors of social media utilization as a tool for communication in hospitality industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Social Media

Social media are primarily internet and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information by users. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction, as well as the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio (Social Media Online, 2011).

Social media refers to a set of online tools that support social interaction between users. According to Hansen, Shneiderman and Smith (2011), social media is about transforming monologue (one-to-many) into dialog (many-to-many). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) on the other hand define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Web 2.0 is platform on which social media is based (Carlsson 2010). Social media can take many different forms, including social networks, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro blogging, wilds, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Weber, 2009). Weber also includes search engines in the definition of social web, and describes them as reputation aggregators with the task of aggregating sites with the best product or service to offer and usually put things in order of reputation (Weber 2009).

In the view of Miguéns *et al.*, (2008) social media are online communities of people who share common interests and activities. They provide a user with a collection of various interaction possibilities, ranging from simple chats to multiple video conferences and from the exchange of plain email messages to the participation in blogs and discussion groups. Social media roughly means different ways in which internet users interact with one another online, and involves activities like creating and commenting on blogs, sharing content or communicating with friends (Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011). A study by Bowman *et al.*, (2012) also contend that social media is a group of channels and applications that are largely user-driven where both the creation of content and the utility of channels themselves are determined by users. Social media is thus the latest generation of network-based applications and content that have brought about a revolution in participatory communications, building communities, and creating and sharing information (Cant & Van Heerden, 2013). It refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment contents among themselves in virtual communities and networks (Anon, 2013).

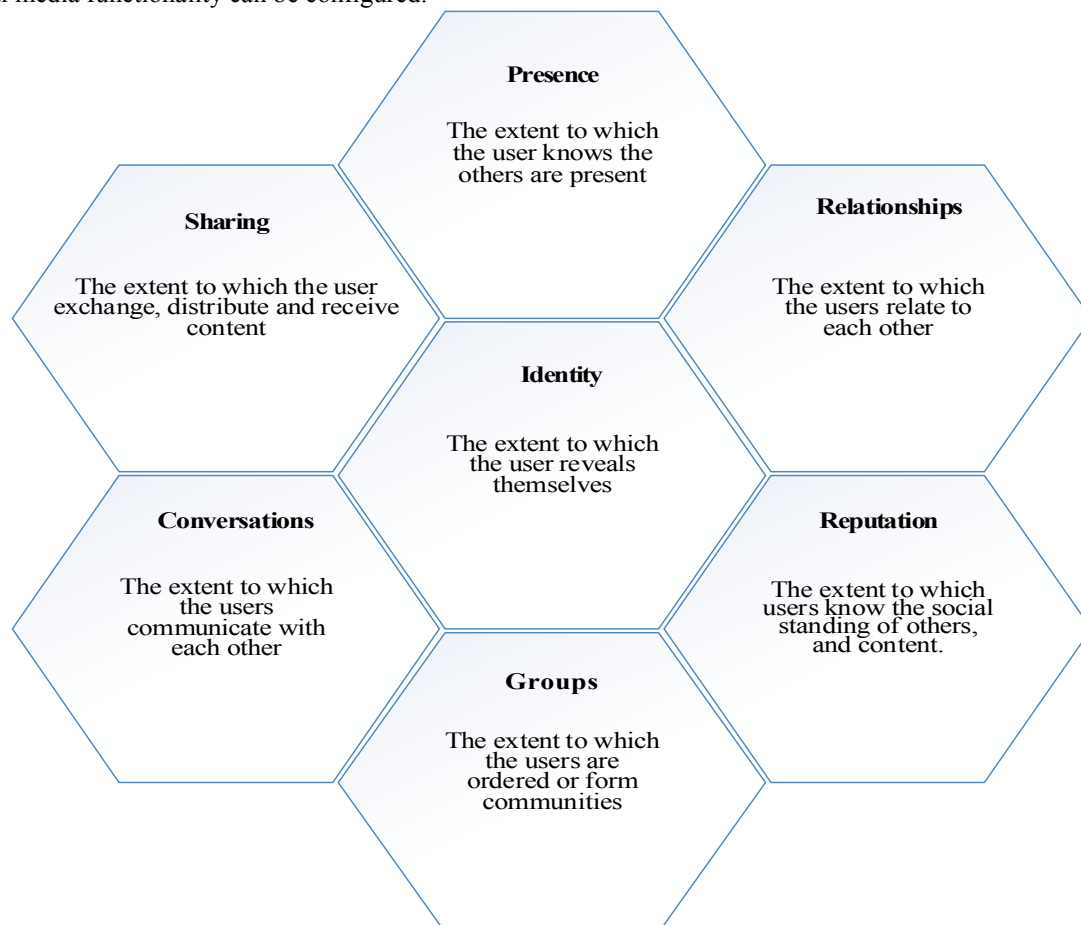
According to Aggarwal (2011) web-based social media systems such as blogs, wikis, media sharing sites and message forums have become an important new way to convey information, engage in deliberations and form groups on the Internet. Their influence and effect is vital, to tens of millions of people providing content on a regular basis around the world (Finin *et al.*, 2008). Fischer and Reuber (2011) note that Social media channels are user-friendly, inexpensive, scalable internet- and mobile based technologies that allow for the sharing of user-generated material. On their part Social media refers to a set of online tools that are designed for and centred on social interaction (Bertot, Jaeger, Munson, & Glaisyer, 2010). Yates and Paquette (2011) explain that social media consists of tools that enable open online exchange of information through conversation and interaction. However, Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011) contend that social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and groups exchange, co-create, deliberate and transform user-generated content. Mangold and Faulds (2009) further describe social media as the set of online word of mouth forums which includes blogs, discussion boards, forums or social networks to name a few. Using all mobile and web-based technologies, social media creates highly

interactive platforms by bringing together individuals and creating communities. Internet has a lot of websites; each of them has different functional attributes and caters to different sections of society. Websites like facebook are for general masses but LinkedIn is focused on professional networking. Media sharing sites (i.e. YouTube, Picassa and Flickr) or blogging platforms (i.e. blogspot, wordpress) are also members of this ecosystem called social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media has equipped the organization to establish a direct relationship with the consumers. Both of the organizations and consumers are free to generate content on the web pages, which further leads to conversations and discussion. Organization on one end are provided with an opportunity to share their information with a large base of customers and on the other end consumers are also free to publish any content whether positive or negative regarding the information.

2.2 Honeycomb Model of Social Media

Honeycomb model of Smith (2007) identifies seven functional blocks of social media websites: identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups.

Each block in figure 1 below allows us to understand the structure of the social media site based on the facilities it provides to its users. This study attempts to understand the functions of the social media websites and their role in social media marketing. These building blocks are not mutually exclusive and also they are not part of every social media site. These building blocks are the constructs which helps us to understand how different levels of social media functionality can be configured.



1. Identity: The identity dimension is about the extent to which individuals or organizations make their identity public by disclosing personal or corporate information (i.e. name, age, gender, profession, location) in a social media setting. Individuals also tend to reveal other information – consciously or unconsciously – about themselves that makes them portrayed in certain ways through self-disclosure of subjective information such as thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
2. Conversation: The conversations dimension of the Honeycomb Model is about the extent to which each individual communicates with one another in a social media setting. Most social media sites primarily purpose is to facilitate conversation among individuals and interest groups (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
3. Sharing: The sharing dimension is about the extent to which an individual ex-changes, distributes and receives content in a social media setting. As the term social implies, exchange between individuals is a crucial functionality on social media sites. At the end of the day, social media is about people sharing

- their identities and lives by sharing relevant content (i.e. groups, text, videos, pictures, audio, links) (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
4. Presence: The presence dimension is about the extent to which an individual can know whether his/her peers are available online. Presence dimension includes information as to where each-individual-in-one's-network is in the virtual world and/or in the real world. In a way presence dimension functions as a bridge that connects the real and the virtual realities (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
 5. Relationships: The relationships dimension is about the extent to which each individual can be related to other individuals in a social media setting. The word relates is used to indicate the type of association formed between individuals (i.e. befriending, joining groups, co-presence on a social media site) which in turn may lead to conversation and shares (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
 6. Reputation: The reputation dimension is about the extent to which each individual is able to identify one's relative position (including one's own position) in the society in a social media setting. In social media, reputation is not something granted to people through their disclosed identities but it is something that can be earned through shared content, expressed thoughts, likes and dislikes. The same is true for organizations seeking to build or strengthen their reputation through implementing social media strategies (Kietzmann et al., 2011).
 7. Groups: The Groups dimension is about the extent to which each individual can form communities and sub-communities in a social media setting. The more social's network is, the higher the number of groups, communities, followers and contacts (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

2.3 The Concept of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a new marketing strategy which almost every business is adopting to reach their consumers on the virtual networks. If you have an idea and you want it to reach millions, at a very little cost, then social media is the only way-out. Entertainment companies were the first to adopt the social media as a promotional tool. Weinberg (2009) has defined social media marketing as the process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels. So if we keep it simple, social media marketing is the process where organizations use social media websites to build rush on their company official websites. It does not stop here but organizations also inform the potential customers of happenings in the organization, launch of the new model or product and latest news about the organization through social media applications.

Gordhamer (2009) has related social media marketing to the relationship marketing where firms need to shift from "trying to sell" to "making connections" with the consumers. This explanation of social media marketing takes us to the other side of marketing, where building relations with the potential consumers is the key to repeated purchases and enhanced brand loyalty. Social Media is an innovative tool that organizations use for creating a very strong public relation with the customers on the virtual networks (Jan & Khan, 2014). Maintaining public relations through social media has become easy because a large number of potential consumers are available on the virtual networks. And making connection with consumers using social media is only some clicks away. Today's customers are more powerful and busy; therefore, companies should be reachable and available in every social media communication channel such as Face book, Twitter, Blogs, Forums at any time (Gordhamer, 2009). Exploiting the opportunities provided by the social media communication channels is important for every organization.

2.3.1 Dimension of the Social media marketing

There are five dimension of the social media marketing, which means these five things are required to create connections with consumers or to building traffic to company websites (Asa'ad, &Anas, 2014).

1. Online Communities: A company or business can use the social media to build a community around its products/business. Vibrant communities create loyalty and encourage discussions, which can contribute towards business development and improvement. (Taprial, & Kanwar, 2012).
2. Interaction: A Facebook page or Twitter account can notify all its followers of specific subject quickly and simultaneously (Berselli, Burger, & Close, 2012). Social networking sites enable greater interaction with the online community through broadcasting up-to-date, consumer relevant information. (Fischer, & Reuber, 2011).
3. Sharing of Content: The sharing dimension is about the extent to which an individual ex-changes, distributes and receives content in a social media setting. (Babac, 2011).
4. Accessibility: The social media is easily accessible and takes minimal or no costs to use. Social media is easy to use and does not require any special skills, knowledge to use. (Taprial, & Kanwar, 2012).
5. Credibility: It is all about delivering your message clearly to the people, establishing credibility for what you say or do, connecting emotionally with your target audience, motivating the buyer and generating loyal customers. The social media provides a very good platform for all businesses (big or

small) to network and reach out to their target audience, connect with them directly and generate trust by listening to what they have to say. (Taprial, & Kanwar, 2012).

2.4 Factors Affecting Implementation of Social Media in Hospitality Operations

The sustainability of the hospitality industry depends heavily upon the economy and environment for which they are built. Organizations that set forth defined positions for each employee may be necessary for the organizational structure but those definitions may not be enough to guarantee the organization's success. Tracey and Nathan (2002) stated that many views and policies in the hospitality industry are archaic and inflexible. Specifically, in the hospitality industry, Raub (2008) found that a centralized organizational structure, where one individual was responsible for all decision making, lead to negative impacts on organizational citizenship behavior which is said to be essential for service delivery. While hotel employees are empowered with frontline service practices, some decision-making process regarding staffing or handling critical marketing strategies may still be centralized (especially when it deals with a complex ownership situation). Effective implementation of a marketing strategy can prove difficult, as it requires coordinated and appropriate efforts of individuals throughout an organization. Accordingly, a critical task for senior managers is to define the key success activities for their organization's strategy and develop an organizational system that promotes those same activities (Olson et al, 2005). In their 2005 study, Law and Jogaratnam found that many hotel managers did not understand the importance of information technology in the purpose of making decisions so it is safe to assume that many of these decision makers do not actively empower their employees to use information technology for business purposes. The main finding in Raub's (2008) study was a suggestion that hotels de-centralize their organizational structure and replace with a more employee empowerment practice. This idea is useful in the current study to examine whether or not the lodging industry has taken this recommendation with their social media management practices by assigning social media management to an employee within the organization who may be a part of a successful strategic planning model.

3. Methodology

The study employed descriptive, cross-sectional survey design. The setting was the Accra Metropolis in the Greater Region, Ghana. The study was conducted on employees of hotels in Accra Metropolis, Ghana. The target population was hotel employees in Accra Metropolis, Ghana. A total sample of 500 was taken from the target population comprising 20 employees each from the 25 selected hotels in the Accra Metropolis.

The study employed a non-probabilistic sampling technique, precisely purposive sampling. This sampling technique was used due to the qualities the informant possesses. The study area is constituted by different locations within the study area. These locations of the hotels were considered as strata in the population and respondents were selected purposively. Data for the study was obtained by the administration of a questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections. The first section consisted of demographic information such as age, and monthly income level of respondents. The second section sought data on knowledge of the factors predicting social media utilization in the hospitality industry. Data was captured using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS v.23). Both descriptive and inferential statistics was computed. The descriptive aspect employed frequency tables whilst the inferential aspect of the analysis employed Kendall W test to used for assessing agreement among raters.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis in Table 1 below showed the distribution of respondents by the categories of hotels in which out of the 500 respondents about 283 of them which represent 56.6% indicated that their hotel is rated as 3-star hotel; 136 of them which represent 27.2% also indicated that their hotel is rated as 4-star hotel and finally, 68 of the respondents which represent 13.6% rated their hotel as 5-star hotel.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Categories of Hotels

	Frequency	Percent
3 star	283	56.6
4 star	136	27.2
5 star	68	13.6
Non response	13	2.6
Total	500	100.0

From table 2 below, response to how long participants were using the social media network as a communication tool revealed that about 45 of the respondents which represent 9% indicated that they have been using SM for less than a year; 86 of them which represent 17.1% had use it between 1 to 2 years; 185 of them which represent 36.9% had use it between 3 to 5 years. Also, 124 of the respondents which represent 24.8% had use it for about 6 to 8 years and finally, 61 of them which represent 12.2% indicated that they had use the SM for about 9 years and above.

Table 2: Response to Number of Years of using SM Network

	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	45	9.0
1 – 2 years	86	17.1
3 – 5 years	185	36.9
6 – 8 years	124	24.8
9 years and above	61	12.2
Total	500	100

Table 3 below indicates that there were 1602 responses to series of questions on type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry in the Accra Metropolis, Ghana. Results indicated that five hundred (500) respondents which represent 31.2% and 100% of all and response and respondents respectively indicated that the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “Facebook”; 439 respondents which represent 27.4% and 87.4% of all responses and respondents respectively also indicated that the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “WhatsApp”.

The table further reveals that 372 respondents which represent 23.2% and 74.4% of all responses and respondents respectively the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “Twitter”; while 31 respondents which represent 1.9% and 6.2% of all responses and respondents respectively the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “LinkedIn”; and also, 24 respondents which represent 1.5% and 4.8% of all responses and respondents respectively indicated that the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “YouTube”.

Furthermore, 19 respondents which represent 1.2% and 3.8% of all responses and respondents respectively indicated that the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “Flickr”; and finally 217 respondents which represent 13.5% and 43.4% of all responses and respondents respectively indicated that the type of social media network use currently for marketing in the hospitality industry is “Instagram”.

Table 3: Response to Social Media Network Currently Use for Marketing

	Responses		
	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Facebook	500	31.2%	100%
WhatsApp	439	27.4%	87.8%
Twitter	372	23.2%	74.4%
LinkedIn	31	1.9%	6.2%
YouTube	24	1.5%	4.8%
Flickr	19	1.2%	3.8%
Instagram	217	13.5%	43.4%
Total	1602	100.0%	320.4%

The next output table seeks to rank the 7 social media network mostly use for social media marketing in the Accra Metropolis. The attributes were ranked by employees on a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being the least important and 7 the most important. The order in which customers ranked the attributes came out as shown in Table 4 below. (Note: Mean importance is calculated with the values of 1 for least important and 7 for most important. Hence, a higher mean indicates a greater importance).

Table 4: Relative Importance Rankings by Employees Mostly Used SM

	Mean Rank
Facebook	15.76
WhatsApp	12.81
Twitter	10.34
LinkedIn	3.17
YouTube	2.05
Flickr	1.91
Instagram	7.28

Table 4 above shows the various mean ranks of respondents on the social media network mostly use for social media marketing in the Accra Metropolis. It can be seen that “Facebook” recorded the highest mean, followed by “WhatsApp”; “Twitter”; “Instagram”, “LinkedIn”, “YouTube” and “Flickr” in that order. The next output table shows whether or not employees differentiate between these various social Media Usage

attributes.

Table 5: Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance for Mostly Used SM

<i>Test Statistics</i>	
N	500
Kendall's W	0.113
Chi-Square	173.912
Df	6
Asymp. Significance	0.000

The Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance (W) for the rankings of social media mostly used attributes as shown in table 5 above is 0.113. This means that the degree of agreement on a zero to one scale is 0.113. The degree of unanimity as measured by the W-statistics is about 11.3% since the score is zero for random ranking and 1 for perfectly unanimous ranking. Thus, to a large extent, there is agreement among respondents with regards to the rankings provided. The asymptotic distribution gave a significance level value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis (the rankings disagree) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (the rankings agree) is accepted.

Thus, employees in the study area can therefore, be said to generally agree that the social media mostly use frequently for marketing in the hospitality industry are more related first to Facebook, secondly to WhatsApp, followed by Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, with Flickr been the least use social media for marketing in the hospitality industry.

Table 6: Response to Extent of SM Use as a Communication Tool

	Frequency	Percent
Very large extent	106	21.3
Large extent	318	63.5
Moderate extent	76	15.2
Total	500	100.0

From table 6 above, response to the extent of social media use as a communication tool revealed that about 106 of the respondents which represent 21.3% indicated that they use the social media as a communication tool to a very large extent; 318 of them which represent 63.5% also indicated that they use the social media as a communication tool to a large extent; while the rest 76 of them which represent 15.2% indicated that they use the social media as a communication tool to a moderate extent.

Table 7: Response to Factors that Influence the Utilization of SM as Marketing Tool

	SA/A (%)	U (%)	SD/D (%)	Mode	Mean/Std.
Perceived ease of use	77.87	10.00	12.13	SA	4.26/1.29
Perceived usefulness	82.30	2.13	15.57	SA	4.35/1.09
Low charges from internet service providers	66.67	13.33	20.00	A	3.85/1.20
Social influence	75.83	5.83	18.33	SA	4.23/1.02
Availability of internet facility	70.7	18.7	10.6	A	3.98/1.02
Management support	71.67	6.67	21.67	SA	4.01/0.98
ICT knowledge of staff	78.71	4.10	17.19	SA	4.24/0.94
Boredom relief motive	25.00	55.83	19.17	U	2.01/1.23
Entertainment motive	12.51	18.48	69.01	D	2.57/1.81
Entrepreneurial orientation	75.12	9.48	15.40	A	3.87/1.22
Level of education	45.83	9.17	45.00	D	2.60/1.14
Market liberalization	30.83	59.17	10.00	U	2.42/1.29
Religion	7.7	14.3	76.7	SD	1.99/1.45

With the use of a five-point Likert scale, with one as "strongly disagree" and five as "strongly agree", respondents rated 13 possible factors that influence the utilization of social media as marketing tool in the hospitality industry. A higher mean score for a statement indicates greater importance. Results presented in table 7 indicate that majority respondents agree that "Perceived usefulness" is a factors that influence the utilization of social media as marketing tool in the hospitality industry with a mean score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 1.09. This was followed by "Perceived ease of use" with a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of 1.29. Also there was a unanimous agreement on "Social influence", "Availability of internet facility", "ICT knowledge of staff", "Low charges from internet service providers", "Management support", and "Entrepreneurial orientation". However, it was evident from the mean score of 2.01, 2.57, 2.60, 2.42 and 1.99 with a standard deviation of 1.23, 1.81, 1.14, 1.29, and 1.45 respectively that respondents expressed uncertain/disagreement opinion about these five factors, "Boredom relief motive", "Entertainment motive", "Level of education", "Market liberalization", and "Religion" as factors that influence the utilization of social media as marketing tool in the hospitality industry.

Table 8: Response to Benefits of Using Social Media as Marketing Tool

	SA/A (%)	U (%)	SD/D (%)	Mode	Mean/Std.
SM helps hotels to advertise to customers	88.33	5.00	6.67	SA	4.43/0.89
SM provides platform for engagement with customers	70.00	8.33	21.67	SA	3.80/1.22
SM provide platform for obtaining feedback	79.17	10.00	10.83	A	3.99/1.04
SM increase the visibility of hotels	60.00	8.33	31.67	A	3.38/1.32
SM helps in disseminating information faster	65.00	10.00	25.00	A	3.53/1.20
SM utilization improve customer experience	65.00	5.83	29.17	A	3.58/1.37
SM utilization increase brand awareness and loyalty	74.17	8.33	17.50	A	3.86/1.15
SM utilization helps gain key information about your competitors	49.17	7.50	44.17	D	3.16/1.31
SM utilization reduce costs and increase productivity	80.83	7.50	11.67	A	4.06/1.03
SM utilization expose trade secrets	26.67	20.83	52.50	D	2.61/1.23

With the use of a five-point Likert scale, with one as “strongly disagree” and five as “strongly agree”, respondents rated 10 possible benefits of utilizing the social media as a communication tool in the hospitality industry. A higher mean score for a statement indicates greater importance. Results presented in table 8 indicate that majority respondents agree that “SM helps hotels to advertise to customers” with a mean score of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.89. This was followed by “SM utilization reduce costs and increase productivity” with a mean of 4.06 and standard deviation of 1.03. Also there was a unanimous agreement on “SM provide platform for obtaining feedback”, “SM utilization increase brand awareness and loyalty”, “SM provides platform for engagement with customers”, “SM helps in disseminating information faster”, “SM increase the visibility of hotels”, and “SM utilization improve customer experience”. However, it was evident from the mean score of 3.16 and 2.61 with a standard deviation of 1.31 and 1.23 respectively that respondents expressed disagreement opinion about these two factors, “SM utilization helps gain key information about your competitors” and “SM utilization expose trade secrets”.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

A functional structure made up of holons is called holarchy. The holons, in coordination with the local Firstly, it was apparent from the findings that majority of the employees use the social media as a communication tool to a large extent. More so, the factors influencing the utilization of the social media as a marketing tool in the hospitality industry in the Accra Metropolis, were “Perceived usefulness”, “Perceived ease of use”, “Social influence”, “Availability of internet facility”, “ICT knowledge of staff”, “Low charges from internet service providers”, “Management support”, and “Entrepreneurial orientation”. Furthermore, the study also established that employees in the study area generally agreed that the most frequently use social media network for marketing in the hospitality industry are more related first to Facebook, secondly to WhatsApp, followed by Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, with Flickr been the least use social media for marketing in the hospitality industry.

Concerning the benefits of utilizing the social media as a communication tool, it was found out that “SM helps hotels to advertise to customers”, “SM utilization reduce costs and increase productivity”, “SM provide platform for obtaining feedback”, “SM utilization increase brand awareness and loyalty”, “SM provides platform for engagement with customers”, “SM helps in disseminating information faster”, “SM increase the visibility of hotels”, and “SM utilization improve customer experience”.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Though results showed that employees use the social media as a communication tool to a large extent, management of hotels should endeavour to provide communication devices that will enable employees to exchange information about hotel services, provide critiques of ambiance, and share service experiences.
2. Furthermore, with Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter being the most frequently forms of social media used by employees in the hospitality industry for communication and marketing purposes, marketing managers should focus on the use of these three types of social media to communicate, interact and gather feedback with and from the customers to ensure building trust and relationships with customers, and to satisfy customers’ needs with regard to their use of social media for communication and marketing purposes.
3. Finally, hotel management should not impersonate themselves on Social Media platform when engaging with customers. Thus they should avoid push advertising strategies and using Social Media as a mass communication tool. This will help the organizations to gain trust and appear transparent and honest in the eyes of customers.

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