THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2020

(word count: 99,998 words)

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of social media (SM) technologies is changing the way in which companies conduct their business. Customers utilize these technologies as a means of finding information about products, services or companies, in order to help them to make purchase decisions. For instance, customers are able to find reviews of products or services on blogs on Facebook and Twitter. These reviews can be positive, negative or neutral. The available information on social media is often considered to be coming from trustworthy sources of information compared to information provided by companies. Thus, customers are increasingly turning to social channels to seek information from trusted sources. For instance, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer, which is a measure of trusted sources of information, 47% of the respondents surveyed in 2009 claimed to trust "a person like me" compared to 62% in 2014 (Edelman, 2014).

The emergence of social media has empowered customers, allowing them to express their opinions and feelings on social media. Customers also interact with firms on their own terms. Firms have no control over the conversations taking place between and among their customers, but less control those between the firm and its customers. To respond to these empowered customers, firms have integrated social media technologies and customer relationship management (CRM) to form a strategy called social CRM, which serves as a means of customer engagement (CE).

Social CRM and CE are both relatively new concepts (Greenberg, 2010). Although there is literature emerging in both fields, they so far remain separate concepts both conceptually and/or empirically. Therefore, this exploratory study aims to understand the concept of social CRM and answer the following three research questions, which guide the research process:

RQ1: What is a social CRM?
RQ2: What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?
RQ 3: How do hotels practise social CRM?

The study employs qualitative research involving social CRM expert interviews and case studies to examine social CRM in the context of the Malaysian tourism industry. It adopts a processual approach for theory development based on a research design consisting of five stages: (i) pre-understanding, (ii) exploration of concepts, (iii) framework development, (iv) framework development and refinement, and (v)

framework finalization (adopted from Payne, Storbacka, Frow and Knox, (2009), Roberts and Palmer (2012), and Frow, Nenonen, Payne and Storbacka (2015)).

This study's intended theoretical contribution is to help to advance our knowledge of social CRM and the relationship between social CRM and CE. The research contributes to the literatures on social CRM and CE by developing an empirically informed framework showing the dimensions and constituent parts for consideration when managing social CRM from the firm's perspective.

In terms of the intended practical contribution, the research offers insights for managers into the role of social CRM in CE. Furthermore, they can apply a framework to their organisations to help enhance performance and competitive advantage. Finally, the research will help to advance knowledge about social CRM in the tourism industry context, which is particularly important for economic development in developing countries like Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise to Allah for the strengths and blessings of completing this thesis. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Sally McKechnie and Professor Deborah Roberts who have continuously inspired and encouraged me to explore a qualitative study for my PhD. Without their endless guidance, tremendous knowledge and patience, this thesis would not have been possible. I could not have imagined having better supervisors for my PhD study.

To the Ministry of Higher Education and Universiti Malaysia Sabah which offered me a scholarship to pursue my PhD, thank you.

My deepest gratitude to the dean of PPIB, my friends, family members, especially my husband, mum and not forgetting my little stars, Syafiyya and Suhayl for their encouragement when things got tough.

Thank you,

Nur Thara Zainal

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2C	Business to Customer
B2B	Business to Business
C2C	Customer to Customer
CE	Customer Engagement
CEB	Customer Engagement Behaviour
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTA	Call to Action
DR3	Defect Reporting, Recording and Resolution process
eWOM	Electronic Word-of-Mouth
GC	Golden Circle
QR	Quick Response
IT	Information technology
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
SM	Social Media
SMCEB	Social Media Customer Engagement Behaviour
SPG	Starwood Preferred Customers
UGC	User Generated Content
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter begins with the research background to the study, how it was designed and key findings and implications. It then outlines how the thesis is structured.

1.1 Research background

The proliferation of social media has changed the nature of engagement between firms and their customers, where engagement means two-way communications (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Lee and Choi, 2014; Dijkmans, Kerkhof and Beukeboom, 2015). Customers are empowered to express their opinions and experiences by creating and sharing content online. Additionally, social media enables customers to reach organisations, brands and marketers directly (Chau and Xu, 2012). Firms no longer have control over the conversations taking place about their products, services or brands between customers and customers, as well those between firm and its customers. The customers are driving the conversations (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). These customers, who are called "social customers" (Leary, 2008; Greenberg, 2010), look beyond the transactional benefits in the firm-customer relationship (Bowen and McCain, 2015) and are difficult to manage. Social CRM strategy emerged recently among practitioners as a response to these empowered social customers (Greenberg, 2010). It integrates social media and customer relationship management (CRM) and serves to engage social customers.

Customer engagement (CE) is an emerging concept in marketing (Hollebeek et al., 2014). It has received attention from both practitioners and academic researchers who are now recognising the importance of CE in building stronger firm-customer relationships for future growth (Kumar, Aksoy, Donkers, Venkatesan, Wiesel and Tillmanns, 2010). According to a survey of top three digital trends at 850 respondents' companies by McKinsey and Company (2014), digital engagement of customers was ranked by 69% of executives as one of their top three strategic priorities and by 62% as a share of overall digital-budget spending. The Marketing Science Institute (2010, 2014) has similarly stressed the importance of CE by making it one of their research priorities, arguing that CE is essential in building firm-customer relationships. They defined CE as "*customers' behavioural manifestation toward a brand or firm beyond purchase, which results from motivational drivers including word-of-mouth (WOM) activity, recommendations,*

customer-to-customer interactions, blogging, writing reviews, and other similar activities" (MSI, 2010, p. 4).

In the academic field, CE has received attention in special issues of journals, e.g. Journal of Academy of Marketing Science (2017), Journal of Service Research (2010, 2011), Journal of Strategic Marketing (2010), Journal of Marketing Management (2016), Journal of Services Marketing (2017), and Journal of Advertising (2017). Furthermore, CE is linked to sales growth, customer involvement in product development, customer feedback and referrals (Sawhney, Verona and Prandelli, 2005; Bowden, 2009; Bijmolt, Leeflang, Block, Eisenbeiss, Hardie, Lemmens and Saffert, 2010; Kumar et al., 2010; van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner and Verhoef, 2010). Additionally, in the tourism context, it has been shown that CE increases loyalty, trust and brand evaluations (So, King, Sparks and Wang, 2016). Although this highlights the importance of CE, there is little empirical research which identifies what firm-based activities drive CE and how they affect CE in this particular context.

1.1.1 Research gap and Research questions

Social CRM and CE are both relatively new concepts (Greenberg, 2010; Leary, 2014). Recently, there has been a rise of CE studies in the online context, especially ones that cover CE on social media in response to MSI's (2014) further call for attention to be paid to answering the questions: "How should engagement be conceptualised, defined, and measured? How do social media and other marketing activities create engagement?" Still, only a few studies have investigated the relationship between social CRM and CE empirically (e.g. Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan, Soutar, Choudhury and Lowe, 2015). Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015) have theoretically contributed to the literature by including the CE construct into their CRM model, that was built on Jayachandran, Sharma, Kaufman and Raman's (2005) CRM model. The findings show that social media plays a role for CRM technologies that enable firms to engage customers (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, and Agnihotri, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015); thus, providing significant support that social CRM enables the firm to engage customers.

Specifically, the findings by Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015) showed how social media drives the social CRM processes consisting of CE initiatives and relational information processes. However, little is known about how firms define social CRM and how firms integrate and use social media in the social

CRM strategy. Furthermore, these particular studies were mainly analysed quantitatively and from the firm's perspective. They do not offer deep insights into social CRM and its relationship with CE.

Although there is some emerging literature relevant to the concepts of social CRM and CE, both conceptually and empirically, limited attention has so far been paid to the relationship between these two concepts. Further qualitative empirical studies, from the firm's and customers' perspective, are needed to inform a rich understanding of these concepts. Furthermore, there is a need to understand and examine how firms practise their social CRM. Dolan, Conduit and Fahy (2016) and Dolan, Conduit, Fahy and Goodman (2016) identified seven types of customer engagement behaviours (CEBs) which can be influenced by social CRM initiatives (content marketing), but their work is of a conceptual nature. The present study applies Dolan et al.'s (2016b) research to the tourism context and investigates how social CRM influences CEBs for hotels. Hence, the broad aim of this study is to understand better the concept of social CRM and answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is social CRM?
RQ2: What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?
RQ 3: How do hotels practise their social CRM?

To address these questions, the study adapted a research process for theory and framework development outlined by Payne, Storbacka, Frow and Knox (2009), Roberts and Palmer (2012), and Frow, Nenonen, Payne and Storbacka (2015). The research process includes five stages: (i) pre-understanding; (ii) exploration of concepts; (iii) framework development; (iv) framework development and refinement; and (iv) finalising framework.

Specifically, at the third stage, a preliminary framework was developed based on eight expert interviews. Then, in the remaining stages, the study developed and refined the framework. This process enabled the researcher to develop a final framework, which shows how hotels practise social CRM within the tourism industry. At the fourth stage, the researcher employed multiple methods of data collection: semi-structured interviews with 33 participants, social media and on-site hotel observations, as well as taking field notes and document analysis. The final framework provides further understanding around the social CRM and CE theories. Additionally, it can provide useful guidance for hotel managers to engage

social customers meaningfully, whether to initiate personalised engagement or respond to their social customers' engagement. Thus, expanding previous research by Harrigan et al.'s (2015) and Choudhury and Harrigan's (2014) quantitative study around these two concepts. This research contributes to refining the social CRM definition, which has previously been defined differently and vaguely by practitioners and academics. Furthermore, based on the findings, the study developed a set of research propositions that provide a platform for future research in this area.

1.2 Organisation of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 critically reviews literature on the key concepts, which are social CRM, CE and the relationship between social CRM and CE. This chapter develops an initial conceptual framework to guide the research focus.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used to achieve the research aims and objectives. The chapter covers the philosophical assumptions of the study, the research approach, the research design and study context, data collection process and approaches to data analysis, and the rationale for the chosen approach.

Chapter 4 presents an overview of findings from the exploratory expert interviews with three academic experts and five CRM experts in order to answer the first two research questions. A preliminary framework is developed based on the findings.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of a within-case analysis of Case Study A (i.e. Hotels 1 and 2) in order to address the third research question. Changes to the framework are described.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the within-case analysis of the comparative Case Study B (i.e. Hotels 3 and 4). The framework is further refined.

Chapter 7 explains the key findings from the cross-case analysis of Case Studies A and B/

Chapter 8 discusses the findings of the Case Studies A and B against relevant literature, and finalises the social CRM framework.

Chapter 9 draws some overall conclusions from the study and addresses the research contributions, limitations and areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to social CRM and CE to answer the first two research questions: RQ1: What is social CRM? and RQ2: What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?

The chapter begins by examining the construct of social CRM from a historical perspective and then provides an overview of social CRM. Next, it provides an overview of the construct of CE. Lastly, it examines the relationship between social CRM and CE.

2.1 Social CRM

2.1.1 Historical perspective of social CRM

2.1.1.1 Relationship marketing

In 1983, Berry (1995) coined the term "relationship marketing" and described it as attracting, maintaining and enhancing customer relationships. Relationship marketing focuses on customer retention as attracting new customers is more costly than retaining customers, ensuring long term customer relationships. The key to implementing relationship marketing theory and practice is that a firm needs to understand the preferences, needs and expectations of its current and potential customers in the firm-customer relationship (O'Malley and Mitussis, 2002). In other words, the firm needs to understand and communicate with '*real* customers on an *individual* basis' (Sisodia and Wolfe, 2000, p. 551). Specifically, relationship marketing requires information technology (IT) such as database marketing to gather, access and use customer information to facilitate customer relationship development and retention (O'Malley and Mitussis, 2002).

2.1.1.2 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

CRM emerged in mid-1990s and used the relationship marketing theoretical foundation (Reinartz, Krafft and Hoyer, 2004; Payne and Frow, 2005). CRM refers to the managerial application of relationship marketing that leverages *information technology* to manage customer relationships in practice (Gummesson, 2008; Palmatier, 2008). Previous authors have defined CRM differently, for example, as a strategy (Payne and Frow, 2005; Greenberg, 2009a) or a process (Reinartz et al., 2004). Payne and Frow (2005) refer to CRM as *'a strategy that incorporates relationship marketing and IT to manage long-term relationships with customers and key stakeholders that requires a cross-functional integration of processes,*

people, operations, and marketing capabilities that is enabled through information, technology and applications' (p. 168). Similarly, Greenberg (2009a) defines CRM as '*a philosophy and a business strategy supported by a system and a technology designed to improve human interactions in a business environment. It is an operational, transactional approach to manage customers which involves customer-facing departments (sales, marketing, and customer service)'.* However, Reinartz et al. (2004) define CRM as a systematic process for managing and improving customer relationship initiation, maintenance, and termination across all customer contact points to maximise value of the customer base. These definitions all show that CRM is used to manage customer relationships. Following the definitions of Payne and Frow (2005) and Greenberg (2009a), this study views CRM as a strategy.

CRM strategy is supported by IT but is not a technology. IT is a key enabler for CRM (Gummesson, 2002; Boulding, Staelin, Ehret and Johnston, 2005; Coltman, 2007). Integrating IT into a firm's existing CRM strategy expands the reach of relationship marketing to a wide range of different customers. This enables employees to improve communication, manage customer relationships, understand customer needs and create personalised solutions for customers, hence customer management (Hunter and Perreault, 2007). The Internet and IT have helped to increase communication between firms and customers, thus facilitating CRM evolution from CRM to electronic CRM (e-CRM), and mobile CRM (mCRM) (Awasthi and Sangle, 2012). These are all considered as traditional CRM. The emergence of SM such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and TripAdvisor transform passive customers to active customers by enabling them to engage with firms (Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege and Zhang, 2013). Firms' traditional CRM cannot manage these newer kinds of customers who use SM, the social customers. Traditional CRM uses IT support which is less interactive and not in real-time, such as e-mails. Therefore, to respond to social customers, practitioners suggest social CRM as a strategy that integrates SM with existing CRM (Greenberg, 2010). This study describes social customers as active users of SM when they act as customers (Morgan, Chan and Lieberman, 2010; Trainor, 2012; Simon, 2013).

2.1.1.3 Social Media (SM)

The World Wide Web (or Web) evolution has influenced interactions between firms and their customers in transitioning from the static, read-only Web 1.0 to the interactive Web between machines and humans, Web 5.0 (Patel, 2013; Tavakoli and Mura, 2018; Tavakoli and Wijesinghe, 2019). It is Web 2.0; however, which provides interactive opportunities for developers and consumers to create content

and connect with online communities (Tavakoli and Wijesinghe, 2019). Additionally, it enables users to interact using mobile applications to access platforms from any web-connected devices (Tavakoli and Wijesinghe, 2019).

Web 2.0 and SM are often used interchangeably, but it is essential to distinguish between them as both terms are conceptually different (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). Web 2.0 serves as a platform for SM evolution, and SM is defined as *'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content'* (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). This content created by the public is referred to as User Generated Content (UGC) (Daugherty, Eastin and Bright, 2008), the digital content marketing on behalf of marketers.

In tourism context, social networking sites such as Facebook, microblogs such as Twitter, content communities such as Instagram, and review sites such as TripAdvisor are used among tourism firms (Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli, 2014; Leung, Bai and Stahura, 2015). SM provides opportunities for firms to have interactive and two-way communication with their potential and current customers (Vivek et al., 2012; Lee and Choi, 2014; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Dijkmans et al., 2015; Sawhney et al., 2005). SM helps firms with information dissemination, interactive CE, customer data collection and service recovery (Begwani and Pal, 2015; Guha, Harrigan and Soutar, 2018). Research has found that firms use SM to engage customers and create awareness (Guha et al., 2018). SM also creates challenges for firms to manage their customer relationships with social customers as they are empowered to communicate with firms at any time they want.

From the customers' perspective, SM has enabled them to communicate with other customers in a bigger space. They can exchange comments and share their experiences of tourism venues or hotels on SM, and this platform provides a significant source of information which influences customers' behaviour and choices (Ahani, Nilashi, Ibrahim, Sanzogni and Weaven, 2019). As the tourism industry sells experiences, customers can leave positive or negative feedback about their hotel experience (Kim, 2010). The SM importance in the tourism industry cannot be ignored (Cabiddu et al., 2014; Dijkmans et al., 2015; Munar and Jacobsen, 2014; Cheng and Edwards, 2015) especially by marketing and CRM practitioners (Harrigan et al., 2015). It has changed customer's behaviour and CRM in the hotel industry (Ahani et al., 2019; Garrido-Moreno, García-Morales, Lockett, King, 2018). However, there are various types of SM (Bernoff and Li, 2008). This study looks at

how tourism industry classifies SM and uses it in social CRM strategy by first clarifying the different SM classifications in earlier literature.

SM is classified differently by practitioners and academics. Practitioners have classified SM based on its accessibility to the public such as public and private SM communities (Goldenberg, 2015), and based on the ownership of the social channel (Evans and Cothrel, 2014). From an academic perspective, Tuten and Solomon (2015) categorise SM space differently into what they call the 'Four Zones of SM' which include a social community zone, a social publishing zone, a social entertainment zone and a social commerce zone. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) distinguished SM based on its media research and social-related perspective. Media research refers to SM channel's characteristics, whether it can reach individual users synchronously or asynchronously, enabling communication at different levels of information richness. Social-related perspective represents an individual's ability to impress other users on SM, and the level to which an individual has to disclose personal information on SM channel. Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) suggest the importance of distinguishing SM according to the marketing objectives. The authors identified various SM based on two factors: half-life and depth of information. The half-life of information refers to how long the information appears on SM screen, while the depth of information is the content's richness (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) and Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) similarly distinguish SM based on its information. However, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) did not focus on information longevity on different SM channels. Furthermore, Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) did not focus on SM user's presentation and disclosure. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) categorised different types of SM including blogs, micro-blogs, collaborative projects, social networking sites, content communities, virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds. Notably, the terms 'social network' and 'social media' are often used interchangeably. However, they differ in that social networking is an SM sub-component and focuses on the relationship between an individual and other users in his/her SM communication network.

Practitioners and academics categorise SM differently, but there are a few concerns about the current literature. First, this SM categorisation, particularly by the academic authors (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011; Tuten and Solomon, 2015) was mostly conducted conceptually. This study has yet to identify academic papers that have investigated the classification of SM empirically, particularly in the tourism industry. Second, Begwani and Pal (2015)

suggest that each SM type can be applied at a different stage of the tourism firm customer lifecycle which comprises pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. However, there is less understanding of the important differences of each SM type according to the marketing objectives (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011) at different stages of the cycle. The varied SM platforms and formats have caused difficulties in tracking and coordinating their marketing efforts (King, Racherla and Bush, 2014; Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann, 2015). It questions whether tourism firms understand various forms of SM and develop strategies to engage effectively on them (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, et al., 2011). Therefore, there is a need to understand the differences and strengths of each SM type to enable firms to identify which SM type to use in engaging potential and current customers throughout the customer lifecycle. This would provide opportunities for firms to tailor their marketing strategies depending on the type of SM to enhance firm–customer relationship. This study focuses on firms' SM usage to engage customers rather than firms' presence or their presentation on SM. Hence, following Goldenberg's (2015) SM classification, this study divides SM into public and private SM. Next, in order to begin to address the first research question (RQ1: What is social CRM?), this study will next provide an overview of how social CRM has been conceptualised since its emergence.

2.1.2 Social Customer Relationship Management (Social CRM)

2.1.2.1 Theoretical foundation of social CRM

Previous social CRM studies have used different theoretical foundation theories such as the resource-based theory (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014), dynamic capabilities theory (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015) and equity theory (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014). However, this study adopts relationship marketing as a theoretical foundation. Social CRM is underpinned by relationship marketing principles (Reinartz et al., 2004; Payne and Frow, 2005; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). Relationship marketing can be defined as '*attracting, maintaining and – in multiservice organisations – enhancing customer relationships'* (Berry, 1983, p.25). According to Gummesson (2008), relationship marketing is a concept, whereas CRM is a technique to manage customer relationships in practice supported by human action and IT. Therefore, social CRM, as an evolution of traditional CRM, is the managerial application of relationship marketing that focuses on attracting new customers but also retaining customers by developing and enhancing relationships with them.

2.1.2.2 Social CRM Definition

Since the rise of social CRM, practitioners and academics have conceptualised social CRM in different ways. Fundamentally, social CRM terminology comprises SM and CRM. Recognising the critical role of social CRM, the research will first explore definitions of social CRM from different perspectives to understand the concept. Table 1 and Table 2 provide an overview of practitioners' and academics' social CRM definitions, respectively.

It can be observed from Table 1 that social CRM definitions vary among practitioners. Practitioners define social CRM as a strategy (Greenberg, 2009b, 2010; Wagner and Hughes, 2010; Morgan et al., 2010; Morgan and Chan, 2011; Baird and Parasnis, 2011b; Gartner, 2013; Sage CRM, 2015), a philosophy (Greenberg, 2010), a paradigm (Samvatsar and Pydimarri, 2011), as tools (Fauscette, 2009), processes (Fauscette, 2009; Morgan and Chan, 2011), an operating model (Wagner and Hughes, 2010), and an approach (Morgan and Chan, 2011). Furthermore, other practitioners suggest social CRM is an extension of CRM by adding social dimension into the CRM (Morgan et al., 2010; Rouse, 2010; Goldenberg, 2015; Salesforce, 2015; Wang and Owyang, 2010; Sage CRM, 2015; Greenberg, 2009b). Collectively, most practitioners agree social CRM is a strategy that adds social channels to CRM.

Second, practitioners define social CRM as being designed to enhance or support CE (Fauscette, 2009; Greenberg, 2009b, 2010; Oracle Marketing Cloud, 2010; Wagner and Hughes, 2010; Baird and Parasnis, 2011b; Samvatsar and Pydimarri, 2011; Woodcock, Green and Starkey, 2011; Gartner, 2013; Goldenberg, 2015). Some practitioners highlight the collaborative conversation that social CRM facilitates (Greenberg, 2010; Baird and Parasnis, 2011b), as a response to customers' ownership of the conversation (Greenberg, 2010; Wagner and Hughes, 2010). Additionally, they highlight how social CRM improves the relationship, with more meaningful interactions which mean social CRM facilitates personalised CE (Wang and Owyang, 2010; Sage CRM, 2015; Wagner and Hughes, 2010; Samvatsar and Pydimarri, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011). It focuses on customer needs, wants, and expectations, thus, social CRM moves beyond customer management and transactional relationships (Morgan et al., 2010; Morgan and Chan, 2011). It appears that most practitioners define social CRM as being used for CE and that it supports firms in creating meaningful or personalised conversations with their customers. Furthermore, the literature above suggests social CRM requires an understanding of customers to achieve personalised CE.

Third, social CRM is supported by technology platforms (Greenberg, 2010; Wagner and Hughes, 2010). Greenberg (2009b) notes these platforms include traditional CRM tools such as e-mails and telephones and social tools such as social networking tools and blogs. In contrast to Greenberg (2009b), other practitioners only highlight that social platforms support social CRM (Wang and Owyang, 2010; Rouse, 2010; Morgan and Chan, 2011; Samvatsar and Pydimarri, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011; Salesforce, 2015). Fauscette (2009) further divides social platforms into public and private. Overall, these definitions indicate that technology platforms support social CRM, but there are distinct views on whether social CRM includes both traditional and social platforms, or only social platforms. Furthermore, most of the definitions indicate that social CRM is not technology itself but rather is supported by technology platforms.

Fourth, social CRM is supported by business processes (Wagner and Hughes, 2010; Greenberg, 2010). Gartner (2013) defines social CRM as an extension of marketing, sales and customer service process to the Internet channels, thus viewing these CRM key activities (marketing, sales, customer service) as processes that can be extended to any online channels such as websites, mobiles, and SM, to foster customer participation. Other practitioners note that social CRM uses customer data and information collected from SM and integrates it into existing CRM systems to understand customers' needs (Fauscette, 2009; Goldenberg, 2015; Sage CRM, 2015). Additionally, Fauscette (2009) highlights that this collected social 'intelligence' is derived from different touchpoints, such as sales and customer service interactions. However, Sage CRM (2015) outlines that social intelligence is integrated with information derived from sales and customer service interactions. Thus, there are conflicting views about the source of social 'intelligence' and what information it integrates with.

Overall, the practitioners' definitions were less explicit in stating their emphasis on engaging potential customers. Furthermore, fewer practitioners have emphasised the importance of gathering information from SM to leverage firm's customer intelligence, which can be used to enhance CE (Fauscette, 2009; Goldenberg, 2015; Sage CRM, 2015). Moreover, only some of them stress the importance of engaging customers when, where, and how they want to (Fauscette, 2009; Morgan and Chan, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011). This suggests that customers' preferences in the firm–customer relationship should be considered in the social CRM strategy, as current or potential customers may not choose to engage or be engaged with the firm. Only one practitioner emphasises that such engagement could occur in public

or private social channels (Fauscette, 2009), indicating that a firm should take into account the differences between SM channels and where their customers are. Customer intelligence may be useful to know customers' preferences to engage or to be engaged, to know which SM channels they utilise and how to engage them in a way that they prefer. As the saying goes, ‘fish where the fish are, but use the right bait’ (Evans and Cothrel, 2014).

Table 1 *Social CRM definitions from the practitioner perspective.*

Authors	Definition	Type of Source
INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE		
Fauscette (2009)	'Social CRM is the tools and processes that encourage better, more effective customer interaction and leverage the collective intelligence of the broader customer community with the intended result of increasing intimacy between an organisation and its prospects and customers. The goal is to make the relationship with the customer more intimate and tied to the company by building a public ecosystem to understand better what they want and how they interact with the various company touchpoints like sales, customer service etc. This is done in a way that empowers customer to interact more interactively with Web 2.0 and allows the customer to interact when, how and where they choose. The tools themselves are user-driven, collaborative and social in design, promote interaction and focus on user-driven innovation. They may include linkages to public social networking environments as well as private company owned systems'.	Website: (www.mfauscette.com/ 2009/01/what-is-social-crm-anyway.html)
Greenberg (2009c)	Social CRM 'is the use of social and traditional CRM tools and processes to support a strategy of customer engagement'.	Website: (www.zdnet.com/article /samsung-sds-oracle-to-add-biometric-security-on-iam/)
Greenberg (2010)	'Social CRM is a philosophy and a business strategy, supported by a technology platform, business rules, processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment. It is the company's response to the customer's ownership of the conversation' (p. 413).	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing
Oracle Marketing Cloud (2010)	'Social CRM drives the totality of the customer's interactions with the company' (p. 3).	White paper:

		Grande Guide to Social CRM
Accenture (Wagner and Hughes, 2010)	'Social CRM strategy is an operating model, supported by technology and business processes, that is designed to engage customers in a mutually beneficial two-way conversation. It is a company's necessary response to its customers' transformation from spectators … to participants … and their subsequent co-ownership of the company's brand' (p. 7).	White paper: Social CRM : The New Frontier of Marketing, Sales and Service
Morgan et al. (2010)	Social CRM is an extension of CRM, one part of the social business strategy that adds value back to the customers. With a focus on strategy, customer engagement and relationship, social CRM moves beyond management of customers, transactions, and money.	White paper: Guide to Understanding Social CRM
Wang and Owyang (2010)	'Social CRM augments social networking to serve as a new channel within existing end-to-end CRM processes and investments. Social CRM enhances the relationship aspect of CRM and builds on improving the relationships with more meaningful interactions' (p. 4).	White paper: Social CRM: The New Rules of Relationship Management
Rouse (2010)	'Social CRM is CRM fostered by communication with customers through social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook'.	Website: (http://searchsalesforce.techtarget.com/definition/social-CRM)
Morgan and Chan (2011)	Social CRM is the strategy, process and approach to conduct your business through new social and collaborative technologies while keeping the customer needs and wants and expectations as the firm's focal point.	White paper: An Introduction to Social CRM for the Travel Industry
IBM Global Business Services (Baird and Parasnis, 2011b)	Social CRM is a new strategy that recognises the role of business is to facilitate collaborative experiences and dialogue that customers value, instead of managing customers.	White paper: From Social Media to Social CRM: What Customers Want

Infosys (Samvatsar and Pydimarri, 2011)	'Social CRM is a paradigm that can provide next-generation personalised customer engagement experience by bringing real-time sense of customer centricity and by harnessing the power of social network economy' (p. 2).	White paper: Social CRM – Dealing with the Change Within
Woodcock et al. (2011)	'[Social CRM] is how we: help you engage with us, whenever you need to, wherever you are, in ways that are convenient to you; provide you with the personal experience you need to keep you engaged, informed, interested and maybe even entertained; transact with each other, or through third parties, in ways that are mutually valuable; get to know each other over time so that we can tailor what we do (and how we do it) with you in mind' (p. 52).	Journal: Journal of Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management
Gartner (2013)	'Social CRM is a business strategy that entails the extension of marketing, sales and customer service processes to include the active participation of customers or visitors to an Internet channel (Web or mobile) with the goal of fostering participation in the business process'.	Website: (www.gartner.com/it-glossary/social-crm)
Goldenberg (2015)	Social CRM is 'the intersection of SM and CRM. It consists of the ability to harvest information from SM communities, integrate this information into customer profiles, and use the expanded profile for engagement with customers' (p.243).	Book: Definitive Guide of Social CRM
Sage CRM (2015)	'Social CRM is a business strategy that enables the forgoing of richer, deeper and more intimate relationships with customers and prospects. It takes the valuable customer insight and conversations you may be gathering on SM and customer communities and it layers them on top of e-mails, sales calls and customer service interactions, which you have stored in [CRM]'.	Website: (www.sagecrm.com/what-sage-crm-can-do-for-you/social-crm/)
Salesforce (2015)	'Social CRM simply adds a social dimension to the way you think about customers and your relationships with them'.	Website: (www.salesforce.com/uk/crm/social-crm/)

Although academic literature is scarce on social CRM, there are some research papers on this area. Some academics do not define social CRM but adopt Greenberg's (2010) definition (see Table 1), which is widely quoted and supported by other researchers in this field (e.g. Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015; Guha et al., 2018). Nonetheless, there are social CRM researchers who define social CRM in their papers (see Table 2). First, academic researchers define social CRM as a strategy (Askool and Nakata, 2010; Faase, Helms and Spruit, 2011), and as a system (Askool and Nakata, 2010), with most of the academics agreeing that social CRM is a strategy.

Second, academic researchers define social CRM as being used to enhance CE and customer relationships (Askool and Nakata, 2010; Faase et al., 2011; Cappuccio, Kulkarni, Sohail, Haider and Wang, 2012; Trainor, 2012). Additionally, Askool and Nakata (2010) and Faase et al. (2011) see social CRM as also encouraging customer involvement, which suggests a difference between CE and customer involvement. Only Askool and Nakata (2010) report social CRM as creating meaningful conversation. This literature indicates the importance of social CRM to CE and customer involvement for meaningful conversation, thus helping to improve customer relationships.

Third, academics highlight that SM is incorporated with CRM (Askool and Nakata, 2010; Cappuccio et al., 2012; Trainor, 2012), with some only stating that this strategy uses SM (Faase et al., 2011). Therefore, there are contrasting views on whether social CRM incorporates SM with CRM, or only uses SM. Furthermore, only Cappuccio et al. (2012) mention that social CRM improves CE using customer information derived from online customer profiles and SM, which means few academics stress the use of customer information in defining social CRM.

Hence, academics' definitions of social CRM in Table 2 are similar to Greenberg's (2010) definition. This is because most of the definitions in this table have four common elements in defining social CRM. First, social CRM is a CRM strategy. Second, social CRM incorporates SM with existing CRM. Next, the purpose of social CRM is to engage customers. Lastly, social CRM focuses on engaging in a meaningful conversation that provides beneficial value to customers.

Table 2 *Social CRM definitions from the academic perspective*

Authors	Definition	Journal
ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE		
Askool and Nakata (2010)	Social CRM is a new strategy and system that integrates SM with traditional CRM systems to encourage the customers' involvement with a firm in making decisions that influence a particular customer. Furthermore, it creates meaningful conversation and high-value relationships between firms and customers.	AI and Society
Faase et al. (2011)	Social CRM is a CRM strategy that uses SM technologies to encourage active customer engagement and involvement. It is about creating two-way communication between the customer and the firm.	International Journal of Electronic Customer Relationship Management
Cappuccio et al. (2012)	Social CRM is the incorporation of SM with CRM to help businesses manage and build customer relationships using customer information from their online profiles. It also includes using social networking resources to help improve customer dialogue.	Contemporary Research on E-Business Technology and Strategy
Trainor (2012)	'Social CRM is the integration of traditional customer-facing activities, including processes, systems, and technologies with emergent SM applications to engage customers in collaborative conversations and enhance customer relationships' (p. 321).	Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management

From the practitioners' (Table 1) and academics' (Table 2) definitions above, there appears to be no standard definition of social CRM but rather different viewpoints from which this term can be addressed. Their definitions remain simple and are vague about whether SM is used as the only channel to engage customers in social CRM, or whether SM is added into the set of traditional CRM channels. Furthermore, fewer academics' definitions emphasised the importance of customer information in social CRM (e.g. Askool and Nakata, 2010; Faase et al., 2011; Trainor et al., 2014). The conceptualisation of social CRM without an emphasis on managing customers is not in line with the current study (e.g. Harrigan et al., 2015). This is because customer information is essential for a firm to understand their customers and improve their relationships with them.

However, the definitions above provide an idea of what social CRM is. First, social CRM is an extension of CRM strategy that adds SM as an additional channel along with traditional CRM channels (Morgan et al., 2010). Although traditional CRM channels are capable of using databases to improve customer conversations, these channels are not capable of enabling interactive engagement with social customers, unlike SM which is a significant enabler for CE (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). SM adds value by enhancing and expanding the traditional CRM and consequently enables a firm to build collaborative and meaningful relationships with customers. However, a firm has to use these channels to build a collaborative conversation with customers and not push messages to them, otherwise, firm may be perceived as having a lack of sincerity (O'Malley and Mitussis, 2002; Mitussis, O'Malley and Patterson, 2006). Social customers look beyond the transactional benefits in a firm–customer relationship (Bowen and McCain, 2015) and they expect firms to provide personalised customer service on any device, in any place and at any time (Sigala, 2015). This raises the question of how SM is integrated into existing CRM and used to engage customers.

Second, social CRM is used to engage customers, as conceptualised by researchers and professionals. It is not the same as an SM strategy because social CRM focuses on CE, while an SM strategy focuses on the application of SM for customer communication (Baird and Parasnis, 2011a). Fundamentally, social CRM aims to meet customers' needs and wants and to build meaningful relationships with social customers (Leary, 2008; Morgan and Chan, 2011). Research has found that social CRM adoption positively affects a company's customer service activities (Parveen, Jaafar and Ainin, 2015) and customer relationship performance (Trainor et al.,

2014; Parveen et al., 2015). Particularly, it is reported that social CRM facilitates acquiring, retaining and terminating customer relationships (Malthouse et al., 2013; Buzzetto-More, 2013), which indicates that social CRM can be used throughout the customer lifecycle. Researchers are still debating the conceptualisation of social CRM due to new technological advances and customer trends (Sigala, 2016). There is a lack of empirical research with in-depth investigations on how firms use social CRM to engage their customers, especially throughout the customer lifecycle. Therefore, this study explores the conceptualisation of social CRM, its relationship with CE, and how it is used to engage customers.

Recognising the vital role of social CRM in engaging active customers, this study defines social CRM as an extension to firm's existing CRM strategy. It adds SM channels (private or public social channels) into the existing set of traditional CRM channels which facilitate firms in engaging customers in a two-way relationship. Furthermore, it gathers customer insight from SM and integrates it into the existing CRM to engage customers, consequently enhancing firm–customer relationship (Greenberg, 2010).

2.2 Customer Engagement (CE)

2.2.1 Theoretical foundation of CE

In CE research, other theoretical lenses have been adopted such as service-dominant logic (Chathoth, Ungson, Altinay, Chan, Harrington and Okumus, 2014; Vivek, Beatty, Dalela and Morgan, 2014; Hollebeek, 2011c; Hollebeek, 2012: Hollebeek, 2016), social exchange theory (Hollebeek, 2011b; Harrigan, Evers, Miles and Daly, 2017), customer culture theory (Leckie, Nyadzayo and Johnson, 2016) and gratification theory (Dolan et al., 2016b). Nonetheless, in this study, CE's theoretical foundation lies within relationship marketing (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Ilic, 2011; Hollebeek, 2011b; Sashi, 2012; Vivek et al., 2012, 2014). Vivek et al. (2012) stress the CE importance in relationship marketing paradigm as it provides firms a better view of the relationship between them and their networks and with current and potential customers.

2.2.2 CE Definition

Engagement is defined as the act of engaging (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). CE could refer to the action of customer engaging the firm, customers or other stakeholders. It is an emerging concept in marketing (Hollebeek et al., 2014) which has received attention from both practitioners and academic researchers. CE papers have

increased since its emergence, especially papers that conceptualise and define CE. However, practitioners were among the earliest to develop an interest in the CE concept (Gallup, 2001) and they have attempted to understand, define and measure CE (e.g. Advertising Research Foundation, 2008; Forrester Consulting, 2008; Sorenson and Adkins, 2014). This section presents the CE literature of both practitioners and academics to gain a better understanding of this concept, before exploring its relationship with social CRM. Hence, this study will first review practitioners' views about CE, followed by academic views about CE.

The CE definitions put forward by practitioners are shown in Table 3. These definitions differ. Most of the definitions describe CE as creating a connection with customers (Voyles, 2007a, 2007b; Forrester Consulting, 2008; Sorenson and Adkins, 2014), and most focus on customers' non-transactional perspective of CE, such as interaction and participation (Voyles, 2007a, 2007b; Greenberg, 2014; Evans and Cothrel, 2014). However, only Forrester Consulting (2008) explicitly defines CE as enhancing both customers' transactional behaviour (purchase decisions) and non-transactional behaviour. Similarly, Sorenson and Adkins (2014) state that CE drives business growth. These definitions show that CE is an active behaviour (Voyles, 2007a, 2007b; Evans and Cothrel, 2014), and a few practitioners highlight that CE is continuous (Voyles, 2007a, 2007b; Greenberg, 2014). Furthermore, Greenberg (2014) highlights that customers can choose the engagement preferences firm offered to them, emphasising the customers' empowerment in the firm–customer communications.

Although these definitions may differ, there are some similarities. Most practitioners view CE from firm's perspective with the action of firm engaging customers, particularly in building deep and meaningful relationships (Voyles, 2007a, 2007b; Forrester Consulting, 2008; Sorenson and Adkins, 2014; Greenberg, 2014).

Despite the initial interest shown by practitioners in CE from 2007 onwards, it is only recently that research on this concept has attracted attention in the academic marketing literature (van Doorn et al., 2010). Table 4 provides a list of definitions of CE from the academic perspective.

Table 3 *CE definitions from the practitioner's perspective*

Authors	Definition	Type of Source
Economist Intelligence Unit (Voyles, 2007a)	'…engagement refers to the creation of a deeper, more meaningful connection between the company and the customer, and one that endures over time. Engagement is also seen as a way to create customer interaction and participation' (p.2)	White papers: Beyond Loyalty: Meeting the Challenge of Customer Engagement Part 1
Economist Intelligence Unit (Voyles, 2007b)	'… engagement refers to the creation of experiences that allow companies to build deeper, more meaningful and sustainable interactions between the company and its customers or external stakeholders.' (p. 2)	White paper: Beyond Loyalty: Meeting the Challenge of Customer Engagement Part 2
Advertising Research Foundation (2008)	'Turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context' (n.p).	Website (http://mobdev.thearf.com/research-arf-initiatives-defining-engagement)
Forrester Consulting (2008)	'Creating deep connections with customers that drive purchase decisions, interaction, and participation over time' (p. 3).	Whitepaper: How Engaged are Your Customers?
Gallup (Sorenson and Adkins, 2014)	'A customer's emotional or psychological attachment to a brand, product, or company. [It] is the definitive predictor of business growth' (n.p).	Website (www.gallup.com/businessjournal/172637/why-customer-engagement-matters.aspx)
Greenberg (2014)	'The ongoing interactions between customer and the company, offered by the company, chosen by the customer' (p. 39).	Magazine article: CRM in the Age of Customer Engagement in the CRM Magazine
Evans and Cothrel (2014)	Engagement on the social web means that customers or stakeholders become participants rather than viewers (n.p)	Book: Social Customer Experience: Engage and Retain Customers through Social Media

In contrast to the practitioners' definitions, the academics' definitions show similarities in defining CE as a multidimensional concept which includes cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions (Patterson, Yu and de Ruyter, 2006; Brodie et al., 2011; Brodie, Ilic, Juric and Hollebeek, 2013; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Hollebeek, 2011a; Hollebeek, 2011b; Hollebeek, 2016;

Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel, 2009). These three dimensions vary across the context of engagement research (Brodie et al., 2011). However, several authors conceptualise CE as a one-dimensional concept, the behavioural dimension. This behavioural manifestation of CE is called 'customer engagement behaviour' or CEB (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016). Studies by Hollebeek and Chen (2014) and Harrigan, Evers, Miles and Daly (2018) show that cognitive and emotional dimensions drive the behavioural dimension. Nonetheless, previously published studies are limited to offline CEB, and there is a need to investigate customers' engagement behaviour on SM (SMCEB) as today's empowered customers may engage on SM.

CE is seen as an interactive process (Kumar et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011, 2013; Vivek et al., 2014; Hollebeek, 2016; Wirtz, den Ambtman, Bloemer, Horvath, Ramaseshan, van de Klundert, Canli and Kandampully, 2013) that plays a central role in a nomological network with antecedents and/or consequences (Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2013; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Pansari and Kumar, 2017). However, it is important to note that most of CE definitions differ, as shown in Table 4.

In contrast to CE definitions by the practitioners in Table 3, the academics define CE from customer's perspective, regarding being engaged with a focal object such as a firm (Patterson et al., 2006; Kumar et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Sashi, 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan, 2014; Groeger, Moroko and Hollebeek, 2016), a firm's offering or activities (Vivek et al., 2012, 2014), a brand (Bowden, 2009; van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011a, 2011b; Groeger et al., 2016), a product (Groeger et al., 2016), new customers (Bowden, 2009), prospects and other customers (Kumar et al., 2010), an online brand community (Sashi, 2012; Brodie et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2013) or stakeholders (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). These academic definitions consider the subject and object of engagement. In other words, who is engaging with what? From this review, the engagement subject and engagement object should explicitly represent the nature of the engagement. However, Alvarez-Milán, Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2018) argue about the distinction between engagement subjects (e.g. customers) and engagement objects (e.g. firms), suggesting that customers and firms are equitable actors that can initiate CE relationships. For example, firms encourage customers to create brand videos on

YouTube or to 'like' brands on Facebook (Beckers, van Doorn and Verhoef, 2018). Thus, a firm can also initiate engagement.

From the practitioners' perspective, the definitions in Table 3 show that firms are the subjects, while customers or stakeholders are the objects of engagement. However, the academic definitions put less emphasis on CE through an organisational lens (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010; Chathoth et al., 2014) compared with the CE definitions from the practitioners' perspective. The practitioners are more focused on the importance of firms in engaging customers particularly in building a meaningful firm–customer relationship (Voyles, 2007a, 2007b; Forrester Consulting, 2008; Greenberg, 2014; Sorenson and Adkins, 2014).

Hence, there is inconsistency in how CE is conceptualised (Dessart et al., 2015), particularly in how firms conceptualise CE in their social CRM strategy. Only Greenberg (2014) looks at the concept of CE from the social CRM perspective. Still, this is a practitioner's conceptualisation. Further empirical research is needed to investigate CE concept and its relationship with social CRM from firms' standpoint. Following van Doorn et al. (2010), this study looks at the notion of CE through an organisational lens. Next, in order to begin to address the second research question (RQ2: What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?), this study will next provide an overview of CE as conceptualised by academicians since its emergence.

Table 4 *CE literature from academic perspectives*

Authors	Construct	Research type	Context	Dimensions	Subject / Object	Definition
Customer/consumer engagement						
Patterson et al. (2006)	Customer engagement	Conceptual	• offline • B2C	• absorption • dedication • interaction • vigour	Subject: Customer	The level of a customer's physical, emotional and cognitive presence in their relationship with a service organisation.
Bowden (2009)	Customer engagement	Conceptual	• offline • B2C	• cognitive • affective	Subject: Customer	'A psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand, as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand.' (p. 65).
Kumar et al. (2010)	Customer engagement	Conceptual	• offline • online • B2C	• behavioural - customer purchasing behaviour - customer referral behaviour - customer influence behaviour - customer knowledge behaviour	Subject: Customer	CE is defined as the active interactions of a customer with a firm, with prospects and with other customers, whether they are transactional or non-transactional in nature.
Brodie et al. (2011)	Customer engagement	Conceptual	• offline • B2C	• cognitive • emotional • behavioural	Subject: Customer	'CE is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, [co-creative] customer experiences with a focal agent/object (i.e., a brand) in focal service relationships. It occurs under a specific set of context-dependent conditions generating differing CE levels; and exists as a dynamic, iterative process within service relationships that co-create value. CE plays a central role in a nomological network governing service relationships in which other relational concepts (i.e., involvement, loyalty) are antecedents and/or consequences in iterative CE processes. It is a multidimensional concept subject to a context- and/or

						stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and/or [behavioural] dimensions' (p. 260).
Brodie et al. (2013)	Consumer engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• online • B2C • C2C • brand communities	• cognitive • emotional • behavioural	Subject: Consumer	'Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community involves specific interactive experiences between consumers and the brand, and/or other members of the community. Consumer engagement is a context-dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement processes. Consumer engagement is a multidimensional concept comprising cognitive, emotional, and/ or behavioural dimensions, and plays a central role in the process of relational exchange where other relational concepts are engagement antecedents and/or consequences in iterative engagement processes within the brand community' (p. 3).
Sashi (2012)	Consumer engagement process	Conceptual	• B2C	-	Subject: Consumer	'CE embodies interactive consumer experiences where ICTs such as SM act as tools that can enable and facilitate these experiences. The level of consumer engagement is calculative and affective commitment to an active relationship with a firm or the firm's online community' (p.267).
Vivek et al. (2012)	Customer engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• offline • online • B2C	• cognitive • affective • behavioural • social	Subject: Customer	'The intensity of an individual's participation and connection with the organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates" (p. 133).
Chathoth et al. (2014)	Customer engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• B2C • tourism	-	Subject: Customer	CE occurs by virtue of interactive co-creative consumer experiences with a focal agent/object in focal service relationship; through association and activities established by the consumer and/or the firm.
So, King and Sparks (2014)	Customer engagement	Empirical: Quantitative	• online • B2C • tourism	• enthusiasm • attention • absorption • interaction • identification	Subject: Customer	'A customers' personal connection to a brand as manifested in cognitive, affective, and behavioural actions outside of the purchase situation' (p.310).

Vivek et al. (2014)	Customer engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• B2C	• consumer attention • enthused participation • social connection	Subject: Customer	'CE goes beyond purchase and is the level of the customer's (or potential customer's) interactions and connections with the brand or firm's offerings or activities, often involving others in the social network created around the brand/offering/activity' (p. 406).
Dessart et al. (2016)	Consumer engagement	Empirical: Quantitative	• online • B2C • C2C	• cognitive: - attention - absorption • emotional /affective - enthusiasm - enjoyment • behavioural - sharing - learning - endorsing	Subject: Consumer	'Consumer engagement as 'the state that reflects consumers' individual dispositions toward engagement foci, which are context-specific. Engagement is expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive, and behavioural manifestations that go beyond exchange situations' (p. 409).
Hollebeek (2016)	Customer engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• offline • B2C	• cognitive • affective • behavioural	Subject: Customer	'The level of perceived cognitive, emotional and behavioural investment in, and ensuing perceived returns extracted from, a customer's interactive brand experience.' (p. 74).
Pansari and Kumar (2016)	Customer engagement	Conceptual	• offline • online • B2C • B2B	-	Subject: Customer	'The mechanics of a customer's value addition to the firm, either through direct or/and indirect contribution' (p. 2).
Harrigan et al. (2017)	Customer engagement	Empirical: Quantitative	• online • B2C • tourism • social media	• absorption • identification • interaction	Subject: Consumer Object: Brand	-
Customer Brand Engagement						
Hollebeek (2011a)	Customer brand engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• offline • B2C	• cognitive • emotional • behavioural	Subject: Customer Object: Brand	'A customer's level of cognitive, emotional and behavioural investment in specific brand interactions' (p. 565).

Hollebeek (2011b)	Customer brand engagement	Conceptual	• offline • B2C	• immersion • passion • activation	Subject: Customer Object: Brand	'The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions' (p. 790).
Gambetti, Graffigna and Biraghi (2012)	customer-brand engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• B2C	• experiential • social	Subject: Customer Object: Brand	-
Wirtz et al. (2013)	Online brand community engagement	Conceptual	• online • C2C	• cognitive • affective • behavioural	Subject: Customer Object: Online brand community	Online brand engagement as an identification with the online brand community that results in interactive participation in the OBC (p. 230).
Hollebeek et al. (2014)	Consumer brand engagement	Empirical: Qualitative and Quantitative	• online • B2C	• cognitive • affective • activation • processing	Subject: Consumer Object: Brand	'A consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions' (p. 154).
Harrigan et al. (2018)	Consumer brand engagement	Empirical: Quantitative	• online • B2C • tourism • social media	• cognitive • affective • activation	Subject: Consumer Object: Brand	-
Brand Engagement						
Hollebeek and Chen (2014)	Brand engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• online • B2C • social media	• immersion • passion • activation	Object: Brand	-
Customer Engagement Behaviour						
van Doorn et al. (2010)	Customer engagement behaviour	Conceptual	• offline • online • B2C	• behavioural	Subject: Customer	'CEB goes beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioural manifestations that

						have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers' (p. 254).
Verhoef, Reinartz and Kraft (2010)	Customer engagement	Conceptual	• B2C	• behavioural	Subject: Customer	-
Jaakkola and Alexander (2014)	Customer engagement behaviour	Empirical: Qualitative	• offline • B2C • C2C • public transport services	• behavioural - augmenting behaviour - co-developing behaviour - influencing behaviour - mobilising behaviours	Subject: Customer	'CEB in value co-creation as the customer provision of resources during non-transactional, joint value processes that occur in interaction with the focal firm and/or other stakeholders, thereby affecting their respective value processes and outcomes' (p.254)
Verleye et al. (2014)	Customer engagement behaviour	Empirical: mixed methods	• nursing homes	-	Subject: Customer	CEB refers to voluntary, discretionary customer behaviours with a firm focus. The firm focus differentiates CEB from more traditional relational concepts as customer participation and involvement
Online Engagement						
Mollen and Wilson (2010)	Online engagement	Conceptual	• online • B2C	• cognitive • instrumental value • experiential value	Subject: Customer	'A customer's cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value' (p. 923).
Social Media Engagement						
Dolan et al. (2016b)	SM engagement	Conceptual	• online • B2C • SM	-	Subject: Customer	'SM engagement behaviours go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioural manifestations that have a SM focus [adapted], beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers' (p. 265)
Social Brand Engagement						
Osei-Frimpong and McLean (2018)	Social brand engagement	Empirical: Quantitative	• online • B2C • SM		Subject: Brand	'The connection, creation and communication of the brand's story between the firm and consumers (both existing and prospects), using brand or brand-related language, images and meanings via the firm's social networking site.' (p.12)
Engagement						

Higgins and Scholer (2009)	Strength of engagement	Conceptual	-	• cognitive • emotional • behavioural	Subject: Customer	'A state of being involved, occupied, fully absorbed, or engrossed in something (i.e. sustained attention), generating the consequences of a particular attraction or repulsion force.' (p. 112)
Calder, Isaac and Malthouse (2016)	Engagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• advertising	-	Subject: Customer	'Engagement is a multilevel, multidimensional construct that emerges from the thoughts and feelings about one or more rich experiences involved in reaching personal goal. Having different experiences makes engagement multidimensional. The aggregate of the experiences is the second-order engagement construct, making it multilevel.' (p.2)
Disengagement						
Bowden, Gabbott and Naumann (2014)	Disengagement	Empirical: Qualitative	• offline • B2C	-	Subject: Customer	'A process by which a customer-brand relationship experiences a trauma or disturbance which may lead to relationship termination; which involves a range of trigger-based events; which varies in intensity and trajectory; which occurs within a specific set of category conditions and which is dependent on prior levels of CE.' (p.6)
Non-paying Customer Engagement Behaviour						
Groeger et al. (2016)	Non-paying customer engagement behaviour	Empirical: Mixed methods	-	-	Subject: Non-paying customer	'A non-paying consumer's motivationally-driven, positively-valenced behavioural manifestation toward a product, brand or firm, which is predicated on consumption of free offerings.' (p.192)

Note. Adapted from Brodie et al. (2011), Hollebeek (2011a), and Hollebeek (2011b)

2.2.3 Overview of CE research

2.2.3.1 Behavioural manifestation of CE

Since the emergence of CE concept, different engagement variants have been developed (see Table 4). These variants demonstrate the increased attention being paid to different aspects of CE. However, there is a lack of empirical research focusing on engagement on SM (i.e. Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Dolan et al., 2016b; Harrigan et al., 2017, 2018; Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018), particularly research focusing on CEB on SM (i.e. Dolan et al., 2016b). Furthermore, most of these variants were explored quantitatively (i.e. Harrigan et al., 2017, 2018; Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018) and conceptually (Dolan et al., 2016b). These studies would have been of more interest if qualitatively investigated, which could provide an in-depth understanding of firms' engagement and SMCEB.

The behavioural manifestation of CE would be the basis of differentiation between customers who engage with a focal object and those who do not (Marbach, Lages and Nunan, 2016). Hollebeek and Macky (2019) refer to CEB as resulting from customers' 'functional and hedonic motives that collectively, inspire brand-related activity' (p.30) such as responding to firms' content. This study will focus on the non-transactional behaviour side of CEB such as customer-to-customer interactions, co-creation, customer rating, blogging and eWOM, such as online reviews (van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010). These behaviours can be categorised in different ways and may differ across contexts (see Table 5).

Table 5 *Behavioural manifestation of CE*

Author	Behavioural manifestation	Context
Verleye et al. (2014)	• cooperation • feedback • compliance • helping other customers • positive WOM	nursing homes
Jaakkola and Alexander (2014)	• augmented behaviour • co-developed behaviour • influencing behaviour • mobilising behaviour	public transport services
Dessart et al. (2015)	• Sharing (e.g. posting, commenting, sharing and replying to content) • Learning (e.g. passive or active information-seeking) • Endorsing (e.g. liking, suggesting others to follow a brand)	Social media
Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b)	• co-creation behaviour • positive contribution • consumption behaviour • dormancy behaviour • detachment behaviour	Social media

	• negative contribution behaviour • co-destruction behaviour	
Triantafillidou and Siomkos (2018)	• Consuming • Contributing	Social media
Gummerus, Liljander, Weman and Pihlström (2012)	• Visiting the community • Liking its content • Commenting • Reading news posted by the community	Social media
Hoffman and Fodor (2010)	• Customers' awareness (number of fans) • Customers' engagement (number of likes, comments on posts received) • Customers' eWOM (i.e. post shares)	Social media
Barger and Labrecque (2013)	• Expressing agreement (i.e. the number of likes per post) • Voicing opinion (i.e. the number of likes per post) • Sharing (i.e. the average number of shares a post receives)	Social media
Pentina, Guilloux and Micu, (2018)	• Following or liking the brand • Commenting on a brand's posts and ads • Liking, tagging and sharing • Mentioning friends in comments • Tagging brand names and using fashion-related names • Publishing photos of brand's products • Publishing photos of oneself with the brand • Explicitly soliciting comments to brand selfies • Initiating and maintaining brand-related conversations in personal social networks • Publishing multimedia shopping stories • Modifying branded product or suggesting a new interpretation	Advertising social media

According to Table 5, there have been many CEB manifestations conceptualised by previous researchers, perhaps because CE is context-dependent (Brodie et al., 2011).

CEB research has been conducted in different contexts (see Table 4), including different business markets (B2B, B2C and C2C); different industries (advertising, nursing homes, public transportation services, tourism); and different platforms (offline or online). CE is shown to be an interesting topic in service contexts (Hollebeek, 2011a; Viswanathan, Malthouse, Hoornaert, and Van den Poel, 2018) due to its high interactivity between customer and the brand throughout the customer lifecycle (Hollebeek, Juric and Tang, 2017). Extensive research has been

carried out conceptually and empirically in different contexts, but there is limited qualitative research in tourism industry (Ahn and Back, 2018). Most of the studies in the tourism and SM context were conducted quantitatively (So et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2017, 2018).

Therefore, what is the CEB manifestation in the SM and tourism context? There is a need to understand the CEBs manifested in the context of SM and tourism, as Brodie et al. (2011) posited that CE could be context-dependent. These behaviours are discussed in section 2.3.3.

2.2.3.2 Dimensions of CEB

Academic researchers conceptualise CEB dimensions differently as presented in Table 6 (van Doorn et al., 2010; Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger, 2016; Dessart et al., 2015; Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b). However, these dimensions do not shed light on understanding the nature of CE, especially the ways customers may want to engage with the focal firm that can be positive, negative or neutral. Customers may behave positively, negatively or neutrally on SM. Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) addressed valence and customers' SM usage intensity in their SMCEB conceptualisations.

Most of the CE research has focused on positive expressions of engagement (e.g. Hollebeek, 2011a, 2011b; Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018). The positive valence of CEB is when favourable behaviour is exhibited, and the content expressions have positive financial and non-financial effects in the short or long run for firms (van Doorn et al., 2010; Wei, Miao and Huang, 2013; Dolan et al., 2016a). However, customers can also be negatively engaged with a firm or a brand (van Doorn et al., 2010; Higgins and Scholer, 2009). Another empirical study has suggested further investigations into negative SMCEB (Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018). Negative CEB reflects unfavourable behaviour, a misalignment between customer's and firm's goals which can ultimately have a negative impact on the firm (van Doorn et al., 2010; Wei et al., 2013; Dolan et al. 2016a). Hollebeek and Chen (2014) explored the positive and negative valence of CEB. Nonetheless, Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) suggest further research to explore positive, negative and neutral valence CEB. Customers can also express both positive and negative engagement at the same time. Neutral behaviour could also be considered as a valence of CEB. This shows that CEB can occur in any context, particularly in SM, as it is more transparent for the public to see. Firms should acknowledge that CE could be positive, neutral or negative, as the latter may have a significant effect on firms.

Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) categorise consumption, positive contributions and co-creation behaviour as having a positive valence, while detachment, negative contributions and destruction have a negative valence. Dormancy is noted as being neutral (having neither a positive or negative valence). Therefore, this study conceptualises valence as positive, negative and neutral and considers valence of CEB as one of the essential aspects in understanding how customers may choose to engage with a firm.

Some academic researchers use intensity to determine CEB with brand-related activities (Vivek et al., 2012; Malthouse et al., 2013; Dijkmans et al., 2015; Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b). In the SM context, Dijkmans et al. (2015) identify that customer's SM usage intensity influences their engagement with firm's SM activities. Malthouse et al. (2013) posit that SM CE intensity level is a continuum from passively consuming content (low) to active co-creating (high). Similarly, Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) note that CEB behaviour varies based on intensity of customers' SM usage from neutral, low and medium to high for different types of valence. However, Malthouse et al. (2013) highlight the influence of these different CEBs on the CRM customer lifecycle (acquisition, maintaining and terminating customers). They suggest that firms determine a social CRM strategy according to the customers' level of engagement, for example, creating awareness to turn low-level engaging prospects into new customers. The literature shows that CE is valuable to firms in engaging customers from a relationship marketing perspective (Berry, 1983; Payne and Frow, 2005).

There is empirical research regarding CEB dimensions in the context of SM and tourism (i.e. Harrigan et al., 2017, 2018). However, this was conducted quantitatively and from the perspective of customers as the subject of the engagement. There is less empirical research exploring CEB from the firm's perspective. Therefore, this study adopts Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) dimensions of CEB. Their seven types of SMCEB is used in this study, mainly as applied in the SM context and considering valence and intensity of the SMCEB. However, this study also considers the link between personal goal relevance and SMCEB (van Doorn et al., 2010; Maslowska et al., 2016). These behaviours will be explored further in section 2.3.3.

Table 6 *Dimensions of CEB*

Author	Dimensions of CEB
Van Doorn et al. (2010)	• Valence • Form or modality • Scope • Impact • Customer goals
Maslowska et al. (2016)	• Interactivity • Personal goal relevance
Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b)	• Valence - positive - neutral - negative • Intensity - active - neutral - passive

2.2.3.3 Central role of CE in a nomological network

Brodie et al. (2011) posit that CE plays a central role in a nomological network (a representation of concepts) in a service relationship that includes antecedents and consequences. Firms are one of the actors that create engagement (Wei et al., 2013; Maslowska et al., 2016). Examples of firm-based factors that influence CE are brand characteristics, firm's reputation, size/diversification, information usage and processes, the industry (van Doorn et al., 2010), CRM/customer intelligence (Verhoef et al., 2010; Stone and Woodcock, 2013; Malthouse et al., 2013; Maslowska et al., 2016), channel strategies and media strategies (Verhoef et al., 2010), monetary incentives (Wirtz et al., 2013), creating contests (Malthouse, Calder, Kim and Vandenbosch, 2016a), creating content to engage with customers (Panagiotopoulos, Shan, Barnett, Regan and McConnon, 2015; Kao, Yang, Wu, and Cheng, 2016; Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b), and providing effective platforms to promote CE (Sawhney et al., 2005; Kao et al., 2016). Hence, given the importance of firms engaging customers in the firm–customer relationship, scholars suggest that a firm's strategy such as social CRM may directly influence CEB (Verhoef et al., 2010; Malthouse et al., 2013; Maslowska et al., 2016). In earlier literature, traditional CRM was found to include two processes, customer communication and customer information management (Jayachandran et al., 2005). The customer communication process considers channels and content for communication which are therefore considered as factors of social CRM that influence CEB.

The consequences arising from CEBs may be financial, such as future purchases, higher sales, profits, revenue and market share (van Doorn et al., 2010; Wirtz et

al., 2013; Cantallops and Salvi, 2014; Filieri and McLeay, 2014; Groeger et al., 2016; Pansari and Kumar, 2017); reputational, such as awareness and influence, attracting and retaining new customers for the long run, improving brand image and relationship with customers (van Doorn et al., 2010; Wirtz et al., 2013; Groeger et al., 2016); regulatory; competitive; employee-related (van Doorn et al., 2010); beneficial for product development, such as information or knowledge from customers' feedback or idea-generation for improved products and services (van Doorn et al., 2010; Wirtz et al., 2013; Groeger et al., 2016; Pansari and Kumar, 2017); or beneficial for improving marketing messages, making them more relevant (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). CEB thus can provide information to firms to improve their relationship with their customers. The literature also suggests that CEB can affect a firm's social CRM.

This study notes that previous research has investigated and demonstrated the importance of understanding firms' activities that drive CEB and what CEB contributes to the firm. Although there are many studies relating to the antecedents and consequences of CE (Pansari and Kumar, 2017), this study focuses on social CRM as the driver of CEB in a firm–customer relationship, and how CEB can provide information with the firm's social CRM.

To date, CE research has covered CE conceptualisation (Hollebeek et al., 2014), fundamental propositions of CE (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen, 2016), measurement instruments applicable to particular CE contexts (Sprott, Czellar and Spangenberg, 2009), initial insights into CE antecedents, dynamics and consequences (van Doorn et al., 2010) and the effect of CE on firm performance (Kumar and Pansari, 2016). Nonetheless, among the CE literature, little empirical research has investigated CE and its relationship with social CRM. Hollebeek et al. (2016) expanded the fundamental propositions of CE concerning CRM, using the qualitative approach from the managers' perspective. The study explored how CE is applied to CRM but covered little on the SM dimension of the CRM concept.

To conclude, the study conceptualises CE as customer's engagement with the firm's SM activities, while SMCEB is customer's engagement behaviour with the SM firm's engagement efforts. This conceptualisation shows the CEB perspective, which is similar to Dolan et al.'s (2016b) SM engagement definition (see Table 4). However, the firm's strategic efforts in engaging customers are defined as CE initiatives in this study. This conceptualisation, therefore, represents firm's engagement

perspective, consistent with Osei-Frimpong and McLean's (2018) social brand engagement definition (see Table 4). The following section aims to address a gap in the literature by focusing on the relationship between social CRM and CE in order to answer the second research question (RQ2: What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?).

2.3 The relationship between social CRM and CE

Social CRM is designed to engage customers (Greenberg, 2010). From a relational marketing perspective, highly engaged customers are more inclined to develop long-term relationships with firms, and they are willing to share information, advocate and promote firms' brands (Kumar et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the relationship between social CRM and CE is under-researched. While there is literature relevant to these two concepts, conceptually or empirically, there is limited empirical and in-depth literature covering the relationship between the two concepts (Malthouse et al., 2013; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). Recent empirical studies by Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015) provided a social CRM model showing CE initiatives, SM use, and relational information processes relationship. This model showed an empirical test of the SM effect on CE initiatives and relational information processes. Although their model is from the company's perspective, the main weakness of their studies appears to be the quantitative approach used when little is known about how firms initiate engagement and influence CEB, and the importance of CEB to social CRM strategy. Hence, this section addresses the second research question of the study: What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?

2.3.1 Social CRM as an antecedent

Social CRM is a firm-based antecedent of CE (Verhoef et al., 2010; Malthouse et al., 2013; Stone and Woodcock, 2013; Maslowska et al., 2016). However, social CRM concept is underexplored in terms of how firms should exploit SM and implement a social CRM strategy to engage customers (Malthouse et al., 2013; Küpper, Lehmkuhl, Jung and Wieneke, 2014).

Social CRM is related to customer-facing departments, and is supported by the elements that engage customers. It includes customer-facing activities such as social sales, SM marketing and social customer service (Yonatan, 2018). Furthermore, like CRM strategy, social CRM requires people, processes and technology (Chen and Popovich, 2003; Payne and Frow, 2005; Malthouse et al.,

2013; Pozza, Goetz and Sahut, 2018). This section explores the social CRM activities and key elements of CE.

2.3.1.1 Social CRM activities

Social CRM activities include social sales, SM marketing, and social customer service. Social sales use SM to create relationships with potential customers and turn them into paying customers (Bitrix24, 2019). In CRM-related tasks, firms use SM for selling activities such as sharing product information and collecting feedback (Panagopoulos, 2010). Second, SM marketing enhances firms' visibility and reach targeted customers on a personal level, efficiently and in a timely manner, and consequently pulling them to the business (Bakshy, Rosenn, Marlow and Adamic, 2012; Agnihotri, Trainor, Itani, Rodriguez, 2017; Salesforce, 2019). Additionally, SM marketing enables firms to track customers, measure marketing outcomes, and use results as information for CE decision-making (Salesforce, 2019). Consequently, SM marketing can lead to upselling and cross-selling (Jelinek, 2013). The literature, therefore, suggests that SM marketing can support firms' social sales.

Third, social customer service enables firms to respond promptly and personally to their customers, across different channels (Salesforce, 2019). It is related to responses to customers' positive, negative and neutral feedback on SM (Dholakia, Blazevic, Wiertz, and Algesheimer, 2009; Barger, Peltier and Schultz, 2016). Wei et al. (2013) found management responses to positive reviews are seen as a sign of appreciation. Customers may feel valued and, consequently, it may influence their trust in the business (Sparks, So and Bradley, 2016) and their performance (Xie, So and Wang, 2017). This shows the importance of responding to customers' positive SMCEB.

Negative feedback could give firms a bad image, it is often due to service failure. If left unresolved, customers may discontinue their relationship with the firm (Kelley and Davis, 1994; Yoo, 2018). Additionally, a customer's negative feedback can affect other customers (Shin, Casidy and Mattila, 2018) as customers are receptive to comments by other customers (Erkan and Evans, 2016). Hence, firms need to understand service recovery strategies in response to different types of negative experiences. This is a way of correcting the service failure. Firms' online responses provide opportunities to rebalance their relationship with complainants (Weitzl, Hutzinger and Einwiller, 2018). Weitzl et al. (2018) posit that there are

three types of responses to service failure, which are 'defensive responses', 'accommodative responses', 'no response'.

Recent studies have shown that management tends to use accommodative responses and it significantly mitigates negative CEBs compared with no response at all (Li, Cui and Peng, 2018; Weitzl et al., 2018). Accommodative responses use apologies or monetary compensation, which indicate firm's acknowledgement and acceptance that they caused the failure. Complainants expect firms to acknowledge their mistakes rather than keeping quiet about them. These responses seem rewarding for the customers (Hart, Heskett and Sasser, 1990) as it addresses the complainants negative expectations or attitudes (Atkin, 1973), thus, influence their perceptions and experience (Potdar, Joshi, Harish, Baskerville and Wongthongtham, 2018). This provides opportunities for firms to satisfy dissatisfied customers, to prevent from the spread of negative eWOM, and keep them in the firm–customer relationship (Michel, Bowen and Johnston, 2009; Cambra-Fierro, Melero-Polo and Sese, 2016; Shin et al., 2018) particularly in the tourism industry (Begwani and Pal, 2015). If customers are satisfied with the service recovery process, they are likely to convert customers' negative CEBs to positive CEBs (Choi and Choi, 2014; Cambra-Fierro et al., 2016; Yoo, 2018) which may influence potential customers' perceptions of the firm's credibility. However, if customers are dissatisfied with the service recovery, they will update their reviews. However, it was found that management responses to negative feedback tended to be standardised and conventional, using common moves such as thanking and apologising to customers (Zhang and Vásquez, 2014) to recover their service failure on SM (Jeong and Lee, 2017).

The question is how accommodative responses can mitigate negative CEBs, despite being standardised and conventional. Weitzl et al. (2018) posit that the ability of service recovery to mitigate negative CEB depends on complainant's history with the firm. This is supported by CRM technologies. Responding to customers in a timely manner is crucial in the customer–firm relationship to increase satisfaction and customer loyalty (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Agnihotri et al. (2017) did not find that social CRM helped with firms' timely responses to customers, but their research was conducted quantitatively. The study would have been more convincing if the authors had interviewed their samples of salespeople and customers to gain better understanding of their responses. Additionally, it was found that there was more literature focusing on social customer service and its influence on CE, particularly negative CEB. There is a need to explore how firms use their social customer service

to respond to positive or negative or even neutral CEB, and whether this helps in terms of responses and personalising firms' engagement.

The literature suggests that firms need to respond not only to negative customer feedback, but also positive customer feedback at a personal level (Agnihotri et al., 2017; Potdar et al., 2018; Weitzl et al., 2018). A small number of empirical studies have explored social CRM activities and how they can be used to engage customers (e.g. Agnihotri et al., 2017). Therefore, this study will look into how firms use SM marketing, social sales and social customer service to engage their customers.

2.3.1.2 CRM key elements

As mentioned, a social CRM strategy requires people, processes and technology (Chen and Popovich, 2003; Payne and Frow, 2005; Malthouse et al., 2013; Pozza et al., 2018).

*People***.** Employees are the key to a firm's successful CRM strategy (Malthouse et al., 2013; Cambra-Fierro, Centeno, Olavarria and Vazquez-Carrasco, 2017). Specifically, frontline employees represent the 'face and voice of the firm' to the customers and also act as the 'voice of the customers' to managerial level (Hauser and Clausing, 1988; Bettencourt, Gwinner and Meuter, 2001; Motamarri, Akter and Yanamandram, 2017). Employees are thus the medium between the management and customers. They also play a role in delivering value throughout the customer lifecycle. Pozza et al. (2018) found that the role of employees is key in attracting, retaining and winning back customers, particularly when customers want to return and see familiar faces that make their visit more pleasant, suggesting that employees treat their customers like family and friends (Rahimi and Kozak, 2017).

Employees can influence CE through interaction, service customisation, and through the collaboration of internal actors within the firm. They can use SM and CRM technologies to respond to customers with knowledge and in a timely way, being empathetic to their welfare (Agnihotri et al., 2016, 2017). Studies found that hotel employees' interactions with personal care or social interaction, recognising customers and being friendly, can affect the customer experience and consequently lead to positive customer behaviour such as loyalty and recommendations (Stein and Ramaseshan, 2016; Cetin and Dincer, 2014).

Employees can customise the service process and service offering (e.g. products or services) to cater to customers' needs, which can lead to customer satisfaction and

positive evaluations (Bock, Mangus and Folse, 2016). Consequently, customers may create positive reviews on SM.

Lastly, frontline employees need other internal actors within the firm in other departments to collaborate on providing value (Verhoef and Langerak, 2002; Kumar and Reinartz, 2006) to different customers (Reinartz et al., 2004). This collaboration requires the dissemination of customer information within the firm (Slater and Narver, 1995) and the development of customised marketing strategies throughout the customer lifecycle (Peppers and Rogers, 2004). All departments within a firm have an important role in supporting the firm's social CRM to share the same understanding of their customers and deliver value.

*Processes***.** Social CRM is supported by business processes (Greenberg, 2010; Wagner and Hughes, 2010), including two key processes which are the communication between firms and their current or potential social customers (CE initiatives), and the gathering and analysing of big data through SM (relational information processes) (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Woodcock et al., 2011; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015;). Additionally, Malthouse et al. (2013) conceptualise a process in which CRM comprises three stages of the customer lifecycle, which are acquisition, retaining and winning back customers. From a relationship marketing perspective, strategising marketing activities based on customer lifecycle is important (Sigala, 2011; Malthouse et al., 2013). Studies have found that CE happens throughout the customer lifecycle phases (Stein and Ramaseshan, 2016) and it affects or is affected by a firm's approach at these stages (Malthouse et al., 2013). The firm's approach includes CE initiatives. Consequently, the social CRM processes of CE initiatives and relational information can go in a cycle, although further research is needed to explore this notion. The CE initiatives and relational information processes are discussed further in the following sections.

*Technology***.** Social CRM is supported by a technology platform (Greenberg, 2010; Wagner and Hughes, 2010; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). This is supported by Ahani, Rahim and Nilashi (2017) that social CRM is a combined business strategy which includes technology. There is also research evidence that SM complement CRM technologies (Trainor et al., 2014; Agnihotri et al., 2017). For example, firms use dedicated CRM software packages that have extended to include SM such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Google (Harrigan et al., 2015). Furthermore, SM analytics facilitate data-driven decision-making for social CRM success (Tafesse and Wien, 2018a). These CRM

and SM facilitate firms in managing customer relationships effectively (Malthouse et al., 2013; Ahani et al., 2017). Although social CRM is not itself a technology, it uses technology to facilitate the firm–customer relationship.

Researchers have also emphasised the role of technology in supporting CRM processes (Assimakopoulos, Papaioannou, Sarmaniotis and Georgiadis, 2015; Rahimi, 2017b). Technologies such as SM are used to monitor, capture and analyse information to understand customers and help personalise engagement with them throughout the customer lifecycle (Küpper et al., 2014; Dolan et al., 2016a). Social CRM studies have shown that SM drives the two social CRM key processes of CE initiatives and relational information (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014). However, some research found that SM drives better responses to customers' reviews (Agnihotri et al., 2017), and contrary findings where SM did not facilitate relational information process (Harrigan et al., 2015). It could be that Harrigan et al.'s (2015) study did not explore the notion qualitatively suggesting a need to explore it further to gain a richer understanding.

Therefore, technology helps in engaging customers and managing customer information, thus supporting social CRM. The emergence of SM creates challenges and opportunities to engage customers and manage customer collected social data (Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy and Skiera, 2010; Harrigan et al., 2017). Technology in itself is not sufficient to engage customers effectively. Social CRM requires the support of people, processes and technology elements to engage customers and gather information to understand them better (Chen and Popovich, 2003; Rahimi, 2014, 2017a). This study suggests that social CRM activities (social sales, media marketing and customer service) are supported by social CRM people, processes and technology elements to engage customers. Next, it will look at CE initiatives and relational information processes.

2.3.2 CE initiatives

Firms will attempt to proactively seek CE by initiating interaction with their potential and current social customers (Kunz, Aksoy, Bart, Heinonen, Kabadayi, Ordenes, Sigala, Diaz and Theodoulidis, 2017; Viswanathan et al., 2018). Firms can initiate marketing efforts to drive CE (Harrigan et al., 2015; Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Scholars suggest that firms facilitate CE by engaging on SM platforms (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015) and through their content (Malthouse et al., 2013; Tafesse and Wien, 2018b). Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) built their social CRM model based on Jayachandran et al.'s (2005) CRM model and contribute

valuable insight by adding CE initiatives as a construct in their social CRM model. Nevertheless, how firms practise CE initiatives is less clear (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014), and little is known about firms' CE initiatives as part of the social CRM strategy. Many researchers have suggested more empirical studies in this area (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker and Bloching, 2013; Hollebeek, 2013).

2.3.2.1 SM as an engagement platform

CEB can take place offline and/or online (Maslowska et al., 2016). Alvarez-Milán et al. (2018) found that firms' engagement with customers is not only relevant to SM but also highly relevant in traditional channels. Hence, these engagement platforms (Breidbach, Brodie and Hollebeek, 2014) can be a mix of digital and non-digital platforms and can be developed to help customers throughout the customer lifecycle. Using SM alone in a social CRM strategy is not sufficient to engage customers, which raises the question of how firms use a mix of digital and non-digital platforms to engage customers. However, as SM is leading the adaptation of social CRM strategy, this study will focus on SM as part of the engagement platform.

From firm's perspective, SM is an interactive technology that enables them to create content and develop networks with customers (Agnihotri et al., 2017). Studies have found that SM positively influences CE initiatives (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015) and the incorporation of SM and CRM can enhance the communication process. Therefore, firms can use SM as a platform for promoting engagement with their customers, or between customers and other customers (Chathoth et al., 2014; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Verleye et al., 2014; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016; Dolan et al., 2016a).

The provision of a social CRM platform enables firms to attract the attention of potential customers and establish a relationship with them where information can be exchanged and feedback obtained (Chathoth et al., 2014; Kao et al., 2016). SM can also help firms to ensure that their information reaches the target market using specific filters set by the different SM platforms, paid or organic posts. Firms can post information more efficiently by targeting the right audiences and in a timely manner (Bakshy et al., 2012; Agnihotri et al., 2017). Additionally, customers can choose what information they want to receive on SM. Firms can thus have real-time, two-way communication with their customers in a personalised interactive manner (Moore, Raymond and Hopkins, 2015), although other studies have shown contrary findings where firms do not view SM as a relevant platform to engage customers (Lipiäinen, 2015).

Agnihotri et al. (2017), however, found that the relationship between social CRM and information communication was not supported, which could be because SM does not help firms to create reliable communication. There is recent evidence that firms restrict the discussion to closed groups or direct communication at a personal level to counter the openness of SM platforms (Guha et al., 2018). However, the authors' research used a qualitative approach in the SME context, which does not reflect how firms communicate with their social customers in bigger organisations. Thus, the role of SM and how it is used for CE initiatives in larger firms remains unclear. Moreover, SM, as a CE enabler, has not been well researched in the tourism context (Harrigan et al., 2017). There has been a call for future studies on how firms integrate SM into existing CRM (Harrigan et al., 2015) and how they create, track and measure CE on SM (Barger and Labrecque, 2013; Barger et al., 2016), for example, the type of SM that is used by tourism firms, and how they use it to engage with their customers. Therefore, in this study, the researcher will conduct a qualitative study to explore the use of SM to engage customers within the tourism context.

2.3.2.2 Content marketing strategy

Communication effectiveness depends on the content and creativity of marketing to attract customers' attention (Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018). Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman and Kannan (2016) refer to firms' generated content as a multifaceted construct with messages posted on their official SM pages which can influence SMCEB. The content may reach customers who are interested in the brand and who are likely to act (Malthouse, Calder and Vandenbosch, 2016b). Although, content marketing can attract, create and retain customers' long-term engagement, trust and relationship, it does not necessarily include selling products directly (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Kim, Spiller and Hettche, 2015; Ahmad, Musa and Harun, 2016; Tafesse and Wien, 2018b; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Hence, the content can either be direct selling (hard-selling) or indirect selling (soft-selling), which is a subtle way of promoting the brand. Firms that create content that connects with customers' life goals/values, which also reflects their experiences will foster engagement (Malthouse et al., 2016b), and strengthen the firm-customer relationship (Wirtz et al., 2013; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2015). One study reported that customers who had positive experiences with a firm were likely to engage with them, for example by 'liking' the firm's SM page (Beukeboom, Kerkhof and de Vries, 2015). They are less likely to interact with SM content that does not relate to them (Wagner, Baccarella and Voigt, 2017). Additionally, studies suggest that organic or paid content that uses interactive and vivid media and

casual language rather than corporate voice, stimulate effective CE (Calder et al., 2009; Alvarez-Milán et al., 2018; Barcelos, Dantas and Sénécal, 2018; Viswanathan et al., 2018). This casual communication style allows firms such as hotels to build trust and a close relationship with their customers (Gretry, Horváth, Belei and van Riel, 2017). Interactivity and vividness of the content can be achieved by incorporating videos, photos, statuses and links (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Sabate, Berbegal-Mirabent, Cañabate and Lebherz, 2014). Recent work by Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) explored different elements such as media type, posting time and content type that may influence SMCEB.

Kujur and Singh (2017) show the importance of vividness in SM content in influencing SMCEB. SMCEB can be positively influenced by content like videos (Sabate et al., 2014; Luarn, Lin and Chiu, 2015; Tafesse, 2015; Lin, Swarna and Bruning, 2017; Schultz, 2017), photos (Sabate et al., 2014; Luarn et al., 2015). Cvijkj and Michahelles (2013) empirically found interactive and vivid posts like photos, videos and links are more appealing than statuses. Videos were found to influence greater SMCEB than photos (Tafesse, 2015), but it garners fewer likes compared with photos (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Luarn et al., 2015). Contrary to the above, evidence suggests interactivity of the message does not affect SMCEB (Kujur and Singh, 2017) in terms of customers' likes and shares (Tafesse, 2015), and comments (Schultz, 2017). Furthermore, Tafesse (2015), found that brand post vividness did not affect the number of 'likes'. For example, findings show that photos (Gutiérrez-Cillán, Camarero-Izquierdo and San José-Cabezudo, 2017), and links did not affect SMCEB (Sabate et al., 2014). Additionally, Swani and Milne (2017) found fewer customer comments for SM content with corporate brand names, images and videos.

Panagiotopoulos et al. (2015) suggest that firms should consider the right time to create the content and the accessibility and format of the content across different devices such as smartphones or tablets. CE with firms' SM content depends on the timing (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013). Studies suggest that firms' regular engagement such as repetition of content on SM may encourage customers to engage (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015; Harrigan et al., 2018), because the more that customers are exposed it, the more they are likely to respond to it because of the mere-exposure effect (Zajonc, 1965). For example, delivering content throughout the week, especially weekdays significantly influence SMCEB such as comments (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). Viswanathan et al. (2018) found volume of firms' SM posts positively influenced the customers' volume of creating content. Therefore, delivery

time of firms' SM content can affect SMCEB. However, other recent evidence suggests that timing does not influence SMCEB (Schultz, 2017). Viswanathan et al. (2018), for instance, found that a firm's volume of SM posts does little to increase consumption SMCEB (i.e. reading, viewing SM brand content), especially in real-time. Some studies have also found that posting by the day of the week does not influence SMCEB (de Vries, Gensler and Leeflang, 2012; Sabate et al., 2014; Schultz, 2017). There is, therefore, some disagreement about whether SM content timing influences SMCEB.

Luarn et al. (2015) found that a firm's strategy in posting different types of content is important for online SMCEB. Gavilanes, Flatten and Brettel (2018) conceptualised social network advertising content into seven categories: new product announcements, current product displays, sweepstakes and contests, sales, customer feedback, infotainment and organisation branding. Although this was in an SM context, it was conceptualised from an advertising perspective. Dolan et al. (2016b) proposed four types of content to influence SMCEB: (i) entertaining content, (ii) informational content, (iii) relational content, and (iv) remunerative content. These content types represent the nature of SMCEB that is in line with this study. It is evident that SM content complements traditional CRM to create better collaborative CE (Marolt, Pucihar and Zimmermann, 2015). This study conceptualises firms' content into four different types: entertaining, informational, relational and remunerative content (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015; Harrigan et al., 2018). They are described as follows:

Entertaining content. Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) defined entertaining content as posts that did not refer to a brand or a particular product but instead were written in the form of a teaser, slogan or wordplay. On SM, the element of fun, pleasure, excitement and enjoyment can be felt through entertaining content (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Gavilanes et al. (2018) suggest that customers are looking for entertainment on SM. However, some studies found that customers see entertainment as a less important component for content (Seo and Park, 2018).

Informational content. Customers become fans of hotels' SM pages to get information (Lin and Lu, 2011; Gavilanes et al., 2018). Informational content is resourceful and delivers clear and detailed information about products or services to enhance customers' cognition (Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018). This information can be updates on products or services, pricing, or certain customised

solutions for customers. Firms communicate information regularly about products or services to customers (Ahearne, Jelinek and Jones, 2007). Seo and Park (2018) found that customers prefer the newest information and trending messages on SM.

Relational content. Relational content refers to integration and social interaction and social benefits such as content that asks customers questions and seeks feedback (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler, 2004). This suggests that relational content encourages customers to act upon the content by including calls to action (CTA) (Ashley and Tuten, 2015) such as the use of hashtags (Viswanathan et al., 2018), asking customers to tag other friends or family in the comments section, and to share the brand's post on their SM account.

*Remunerative content***.** Remunerative content includes offers, competitions, sweepstakes and rewards (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Offers, particularly, are considered as a hard-selling technique which can be less appealing on SM because it can make customers feel it is forced or aggressive (Kwek, Wang and Weaver, 2014). Gavilanes et al. (2018) suggest that customers are not looking for explicit advertising on SM. This ties in with Dolan, Conduit, Fahy and Goodman (2017) findings that firms posted less remunerative content compared with other types of content. Nonetheless, evidence shows that monetary rewards drive engagement, especially when combined with interactive concepts and keeping the brand subtle, and that creativity enhances content's effectiveness (Gavilanes et al., 2018). This brings into question what elements enhance not only remunerative content's effectiveness, but also entertaining, informational and relational content's effectiveness.

It is therefore suggested these four types of content (i.e. entertainment, informative, relational and remunerative) may influence SMCEB. However, it should be noted that not all content will exert the same degree of influence on SMCEB. The firm's engagement initiatives this study will focus on are SM posts via Facebook accounts.

2.3.3 Social media customer engagement behaviour (SMCEB)

Managing SMCEB is a strategic priority for firms to build and sustain long-term customer–firm relationships (Roy, Balaji, Soutar, Lassar and Roy, 2016). Previous studies have focused on firms' marketing and employees' engagement to influence SMCEB (Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold and Carlson, 2017; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Seo and Park, 2018).

Evidence has shown that an engaged customer's messages are more powerful than a marketer's (Goh, Heng and Lin, 2013). Osei-Frimpong and McLean (2018) found that customers who are highly engaged actively share their eWOM (e.g. brand knowledge and experiences). In tourism industry, SMCEB is significant, as tourists share their experiences by writing online reviews and recommendations, and other tourists are looking for suggestions to help them in their decision-making process (Bilro, Loureiro and Guerreiro, 2019). Viswanathan et al. (2018) suggest that SMCEB frequency, sentiment and richness can influence other customers' propensity to engage in SMCEB. The literature shows the importance of SMCEB and how it may encourage other customers to engage.

Research suggests that SM users who reach out to firms on SM are those who have experienced the service or are engaged with the brand (Stephen and Galak, 2012; Kumar et al., 2016;). Customers' behaviour is observable to others on SM (Viswanathan et al., 2018), thus providing opportunities for exploring the influence of social CRM and SMCEB. Researchers have developed models to measure SMCEB, but these studies evaluate CE through questionnaires or metrics-focused measures (i.e. number of likes, shares, comments) (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018). Previous empirical studies suggested different online SMCEB (see Table 5).

The research should focus on understanding SMCEB metrics, why customers engage in different ways on SM, and how social CRM is related to SMCEB. This study will look at SMCEB from the perspective of Firms and customers. It also acknowledges SMCEB that several researchers have adopted in their studies (de Vries and Carlson, 2014; Barger et al., 2016; Dolan et al., 2016b; Tsai and Men, 2017), and that customers usually engage in non-purchase behaviours with firms' SM content (Maslowska et al., 2016), while firms prefer measurable SMCEB (Bolton, 2011) which can easily be quantified (Gummerus et al., 2012). Following Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) conceptualisation, seven types of SMCEB were considered (i.e. creating, positive contribution, consumption of content, dormancy, detachment, negative contribution and co-destruction). The intensity (active, neutral or passive) and valence (positive, neutral or negative) of the engagement determine these SMCEB. Additionally, Dolan et al. (2016b) suggested that content, which is part of CE initiatives, influences these SMCEB types. Nonetheless, Dolan et al. (2016a) recommended further empirical exploration of the relationship between different types of SM content and SMCEB. Table 7 presents the seven SMCEB, but they can be considered in terms of valence (i.e. positive, neutral or negative) as follows:

a. positive CEB

Positive SMCEB can influence customers' decisions because it decreases the possibility of purchase failure (Cheung, Luo, Sia and Chen, 2009). In this study, positive SMCEB includes creation, positive contribution and consumption.

*Creation***.** Creation behaviours refer to the customer-generated content on SM, and it refers to a higher level of positively valenced SMCEB (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b). A recent study by Guha et al. (2018) found that customers create content about firms, products and services on SM, for instance, creating blogs, posting on a brand's page, writing reviews, and providing recommendations to other SM users. Consequently influencing SMCEB organically, and Alvarez-Milán et al.'s (2018) findings show it as a natural process where firms do not pay for it. Pentina et al. (2018) revealed that customers who create stories using photos and videos to describe their experiences with luxury brands are SMCEB that show more effort and creativity compared with other SMCEB such as liking, sharing, commenting, or uploading brand-related visuals. Findings suggest that SMCEB with non-verbal information such as photos and videos can further influence customers' decisions (Yoo, Kim and Sanders, 2015). Additionally, customers who create content which includes hashtags will increase the content's visibility to broader and more focused audiences (Pentina et al., 2018).

Research has also found that customers engage in a deeper brand-related conversation by modifying the firm's product and suggesting novel uses or image interpretation (Pentina et al., 2018). This suggests that customers show co-creating engagement behaviour, rather than creating content to communicate. The content-creating behaviour and giving recommendations for a firm are examples of co-creating behaviours as conceptualised by Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b). All of these behaviours show that customers can initiate engagement with firms and some customers intentionally initiate brand-related conversations to promote the brand on their SM (Pentina et al., 2018).

Writing reviews for firms is another proactive form of CE (Kannan and Li, 2017), and evidence shows that customers especially loyal customers are more likely to write reviews if they have engagement with the firm (Beckers et al., 2018; Thakur, 2018). Research by Bilro et al. (2019) found that customers are more engaged in creating positive reviews than negative reviews. This positive behaviour was found to significantly affect other customers' engagement (Kim and Johnson, 2016). This is possibly because customer-generated content is deemed trustworthy as it is

created by 'people like me', and this content is popular on SM (Zhang, Ye, Law and Li, 2010).

The above behaviour is important for firms who therefore need to formulate strategies to get customers to create content and promote the brand. Firms also need to translate this unstructured text with meaningful information into actionable knowledge (Fan, Wallace, Rich and Zhang, 2006). The question is how firms encourage this SMCEB and use it for their decision-making process. In this study, the behaviour of creating content, and even suggesting improvements on firms' products or services is referred to as creating behaviour rather than 'co-creating' behaviour as conceptualised by Dolan et al. (2016b, 2017).

*Positive contribution***.** Positive contribution is a moderately active form of positively valenced SMCEB where users positively contribute to content on the brand's SM page (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018). Findings have shown that customers engage on brands' SM pages by writing comments (Guha et al., 2018) and 'liking', tagging and sharing the brand's content.

These behaviours are the most frequent SMCEB (Pentina et al., 2018). Such behaviours require more than a click of a button, but can be beneficial to firms (Guha et al., 2018). For instance, customer comments on firms' SM posts provide online feedback to firms, and are visible to all (Yoon, Li, Ji, North, Hong and Liu, 2018). Pentina et al. (2018) found that customers respond to a brand's posts by giving feedback and asking questions, but they do not expect any response from the brand or other brand followers, although luxurious brands such as a 5-star hotel can respond them. Nonetheless, positive contribution behaviour is one way for customers to respond to a brand's SMP post. It enables firms to understand the customers' perspective on their SM content effectiveness. Therefore, positive contribution behaviour is beneficial to firms in terms of giving information.

*Consumption***.** Consuming is a low, passive and positively valenced engagement behaviour, for example visiting brand pages on Facebook, reading brand posts (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018). This also includes reading other customers' posts on the SM page. This behaviour requires a lower level of participation and does not impact on other members (Dolan et al., 2016b). However, it can be influenced by other types of SMCEB depending on the richness, valence, and frequency of the other behaviour (Goh et al., 2013). While this is an interesting

notion, this study will only investigate the effect of firms' CE initiatives on this behaviour.

b. neutral SMCEB

Dormancy. Dormancy is an inactive (neutral), passive engagement behaviour with a brand that can be positive or negative (Brodie et al., 2013). The users do not engage by creating SM content or contributing to and consuming it on the SM brand page.

c. negative SMCEB

Customers may express negative SMCEB due to service failure and wanting to share their experiences so that other customers do not face the same situation as they did (Weitzl et al., 2018). Negative SMCEB may pose a threat to firms as it can symbolise service failure, and negative SMCEB attracts more attention than positive SMCEB (Lee, Park and Han, 2008). Additionally, it can cause customers to cease their relationship with the firm and can effect customers' decision-making as it seems to be more credible and diagnostic (Lim and Chung, 2011). Nevertheless, some customers can act as an advocate, helping with other customers' questions and defending firms against dissatisfied customers which is an act of positive SMCEB (Weitzl et al., 2018). There are three different types of negative SMCEB (detachment, negative contribution and co-destruction) as conceptualised by Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b).

Detachment. Detachment refers to SM users' low, passive action in removing themselves such as 'unliking' or 'unsubscribing' from brands' SM pages and related content. This detachment SMCEB is similar to termination of a firm–customer relationship on SM. Hence, it is lower-level and negatively valenced SMCEB (Dolan et al., 2016b). This behaviour does not impact other users (Dolan et al., 2016b).

Negative contribution. A negative contribution is moderately active and negatively valenced SMCEB, with negative comments or 'angry' or 'sad' emoticon reactions on SM content posted on brands' SM pages (Dolan et al., 2016b). Sharing negative SM content about firms is also considered as negatively contributing to the firms. This is similar to negative eWOM and SMCEB that can influence other SM users.

Co-destruction. Co-destruction is a highly active level of negatively valenced behaviour on SM that includes creating negative content on SM brand pages, intended to engage the brand's other customers or the public (Dolan et al., 2016b).

This behaviour includes posting negative reviews on firms' SM pages, or their own pages to harm the firm.

Table 7 *SMCEB*

SMCEB	Definition	Supporting literature	Examples
Creation	The highest possible level of positive, active SMEB whereby users initiate unprompted, positive and active contributions to SM communities	Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011)	•Publishing a brand-related weblog •Uploading brand-related video, audio, images •Writing brand-related articles, reviews and testimonials
Positive contribution	A moderate level of positive, active behaviour whereby users make a positive and active contribution to existing content on SM brand pages	Muntinga et al. (2011) Brodie et al. (2011)	•Rating products, brands •Contributing to brand forums •Commenting positively on posts, blogs, videos, pictures
Consumption	The minimum level of positive, passive behaviour whereby users consume content without any form of active reciprocation or contribution	Muntinga et al. (2011)	•Viewing brand-related videos •Listening to brand-related audio •Viewing pictures and photos posted by the brand •Reading brand posts
Dormancy	A temporary state of inactive, passive behaviour by users who have previously interacted with SM community	Brodie et al. (2011)	•Brand-related content is delivered to the user, and the user has no response
Detachment	The minimum level of negative, active behaviour whereby users temporarily or permanently end their membership	Brodie et al. (2011)	•'Unliking' or 'unfriending' SM brand page •'Unfollowing' brand on SM •Terminating a subscription for further updates and content from the brand
Negative contribution	A moderate level of negative, active behaviour whereby users make negative contributions to existing content within SM community	Hollebeek and Chen (2014)	•Conversing negatively on brand-related content •Making negative contributions to brand forums •Publicly rating products and brands negatively
Co-destruction	The highest possible level of negative, active behaviour whereby users initiate unprompted, negative contributions to SM community	Hollebeek and Chen (2014)	•Publishing a negative brand-related blog •Initiating adverse SM brand pages for fellow community members to join (e.g. 'I hate Apple Facebook Page') •Reporting the brand for the misconduct of use on SM

Note. Adopted from Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b).

2.3.4 SM content and engagement behaviour

While studies posit that a firm's SM content can influence SMCEB (Vivek et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2016b; Kao et al., 2016; de Vries, Peluso, Romani, Leeflang and Marcati, 2017; Gómez, Lopez and Molina, 2019), in order to understand how the above-mentioned types of content influence SMCEB, each type will be examined in turn.

i. Entertaining content and SMCEB

Some studies have found that entertaining content does not positively affect the numbers of likes (de Vries et al., 2012; Gutiérrez-Cillán et al., 2017), and comments (de Vries et al., 2012). In other studies, however, content affects positive contribution SMCEB such as likes, comments and shares of entertaining content (Luarn et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2017; Gavilanes et al., 2018; Le, 2018; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018). However, Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) only found that entertaining content positively influences likes. Specifically, evidence showed numbers of shares are associated with the uniqueness of a brand post (Tafesse, 2015). Furthermore, entertaining content has been shown to positively influence consumption SMCEB such as reading, viewing, clicking on the content (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018), and creation SMCEB (Muntinga et al., 2011; Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). This suggests that entertaining content influences consumption, positive contributions and creation SMCEB. This is supported by previous studies' findings that entertaining discussions and content on SM influence SMCEB (Kujur and Singh, 2017; Heinonen, 2018;). So, there are conflicting arguments about whether entertaining content positively influences certain SMCEB.

Entertaining content may be a reason for customers to engage with firms' SM activities (de Vries et al., 2017). Entertaining content, can drive engagement, especially when combined with creativity (Gavilanes et al., 2018) and interactive concepts, and keeping the brand subtle. Entertaining content that uses creative videos may quickly attract customers' attention (Luarn et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2017). Thus, interactivity of the content helps to create a higher level of engagement (Calder et al., 2009). Furthermore, entertaining content that keeps brands subtle or that uses soft-selling of the brand in the content can influence CEB. Customers do not want to feel pushed into purchasing products or services in entertaining content. Thus, Dolan et al. (2016b) note that entertaining content facilitates active, positively valenced SMCEB. This study conceptualises entertaining content as positively influencing active SMCEB (creation), and passive SMCEB (consumption and positive contribution SMCEB).

ii. Informational content and SMCEB

Many recent studies (e.g. De Vries et al., 2012; Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Kujur and Singh, 2017) have shown that informational content for example about the brand or product, influences SMCEB. Informative content enables customers to evaluate the content that attracts them to engage on SM (Osei-Frimpong and McLean, 2018). According to conceptualisations by Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) and Dolan et al. (2016b), customers can engage with informational content by clicking and reading the content without 'liking' it, commenting on it or sharing it. Recent evidence shows that informational content influences customers' positive contribution SMCEB such as likes and comments (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Gutiérrez-Cillán et al., 2017; Gavilanes et al., 2018), clicks and shares (Gavilanes et al., 2018). Other studies have found no significant relationship between informational content and positive contribution SMCEB, such as the number of likes or comments (de Vries et al., 2012). Hence, there is disagreement about whether informational content influences positive contribution SMCEB.

It is interesting to note, however, in previous research, that informational content about the brand results in a lower level of engagement compared with entertaining content (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). This is because this kind of content could be seen as pushing customers to buy, which can be less appealing on SM because it can appear forced or aggressive (Kwek et al., 2014). However, informational content was found to enhance the content's engagement, particularly when coupled with creative, interactive concepts and indirect selling of the brand. Therefore, it is important to understand informational content and other elements (for example, interactivity and soft-selling) that may influence SMCEB, particularly positive contribution behaviour. This study suggests that informational content influences positive SMCEB and passive, moderately active SMCEB such as likes, comments, clicks and sharing of content.

iii. Relational content and SMCEB

Researchers have suggested that relational content positively influences positive contributing behaviour such as likes, comments, shares, tagging someone in the content (Muntinga et al., 2011; Dolan et al., 2016b; Lin et al., 2017), and 'liking' a SM page (Ko et al., 2005; Dolan et al., 2016b). Recent studies support this by Jeon, Ahn and Yu (2016) and Schultz (2017) that SM posts with interactive characteristics affect SMCEB (e.g. likes, comments and shares). Ashley and Tuten (2015) found that brands use interactive characteristics such as CTA to encourage customers to engage, after reading the content. CTA include hashtags (Viswanathan et al., 2018)

and encouraging customers for comments, prompting discussion on SM. Asking customers for feedback also effectively drives engagement (Gavilanes et al., 2018). Hence, relational content includes elements that encourage customers to act after reading it, facilitating active, positively valenced SM engagement behaviour (Dolan et al., 2016b).

iv. Remunerative content and SMCEB

Firms can use remunerative content to influence SMCEB (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Scholars have suggested that SM content with remuneration may result in lower levels of engagement, compared with informational content (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). Muntinga et al. (2011) and Dolan et al. (2016b) suggest that such content leads to consumption SMCEB such as viewing, reading or clicking behaviour rather than positive contribution or creation SMCEB. Gavilanes et al. (2018) found that remunerative content positively affects clicking behaviour and many recent studies have shown that remunerative content influences positive contribution SMCEB such as likes (Luarn et al., 2015), comments (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Gavilanes et al., 2018) and shares (Gavilanes et al., 2018). Remunerative content that includes, for example, sweepstakes offers interactivity and entertainment, and economic rewards which attract customers to click the content. They engage cognitively, commenting on the content and promoting the brand by sharing the content (Gavilanes et al., 2018). However, other studies have found the contrary. Remunerative content is negatively related to the number of likes (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013), comments (Luarn et al., 2015) and shares that a post receives (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Luarn et al., 2015). Particularly, Kujur and Singh (2017) found that remunerative content that includes incentives does not affect SMCEB. Therefore, there is some disagreement on whether remunerative content affects SMCEB. This study suggests that remunerative content facilitates consumption (passive, positively valenced) and contributing (active, positively valenced) SMCEB (Dolan et al., 2016b).

In conclusion, there are various theories of content marketing and its effect on SMCEB, but more qualitative research is needed in this area (Barger et al., 2016). There has been little research exploring the firm's actions on SMCEB (Viswanathan et al., 2018). These behaviours are represented by a few SM engagement metrics (e.g. likes, shares, comments). Expanding on previous literature about the CE nomological network (Brodie et al., 2013), this study also identifies SMCEB as a consequence of social CRM contributing information.

2.3.5 Relational information processes

Social CRM's relational information processes facilitate harvesting of the available information from SM and transforming of it into customer insight, which can be used to understand customer needs and to develop appropriate marketing strategies to engage and satisfy them throughout their customer lifecycle, to generate positive eWOM (Stone and Woodcock, 2013; Chang, Wong and Fang, 2014; Rodriguez, Ajjan and Peterson, 2014). In the tourism context, relational information processes may help hotels to satisfy customers and encourage long-stay customers to revisit the hotel and this process requires collaboration among the various functions (Chang et al., 2014) to engage customers. Relational information processes (information reciprocity, information capture, information integration, information access, and information use) are outlined below (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Trainor et al., 2014).

Information reciprocity. Information reciprocity is a relational information process that supports social CRM strategy (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Ahani et al., 2017; Guha et al., 2018). Information reciprocity is where customers interact and can share information with firm and the firm can respond to customers (Jayachandran et al., 2005). It can also be referred to as information sharing. SM help customers share information and interact with firms (Ahani et al., 2017). However, Harrigan et al.'s (2015) findings excluded information reciprocity from relational information processes construct, suggesting it was similar to CE. They called for further empirical investigation into this construct in a social CRM study.

Information capture. Jayachandran et al. (2005), Harrigan and Miles (2014) and Ahani et al. (2017) found that information-gathering influences a firm's social CRM capability. Information capture is about acquiring or collecting information about customers from various resources (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Guha et al., 2018) such as SM channels. Peppers and Rogers (1998) suggest that firms who collect data about their customers can preserve long-term relationships with them. Information from SM helps firms to understand their customers (Harrigan et al., 2015).

Information collected from SM is different from information gathered from traditional channels such as mail and email; firms can gather real-time, sentimental and intimate customer information such as important customer dates from SM (Goldenberg, 2015; Agnihotri et al., 2017). Other information from SM also includes

content, comments, posts and online reviews is called social data (Ahani et al., 2019). In the tourism context, it is a source of tourism data and is essential for firms to identify information that can influence SMCEB, for effective decision-making (Ghani, Hamid, Hashem and Ahmed, 2018). However, privacy issues need to be addressed during information gathering on each of the different SM (Leung, Law, van Hoof and Buhalis, 2013), and this creates a challenge for firms gathering data from different SM platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). However, different contexts may have different preferences in terms of collecting data for the social CRM strategy. In the SME context, Guha et al. (2018) found that collecting customer information via traditional channels was more dependent than SM and that it was also challenging to identify and extract data from SM. From a B2B perspective, Lipiäinen (2015) found that firms do not use SM as a platform to gather information about their customers. However, these studies were conducted within the SME and B2B contexts, and not within bigger and B2C organisations. As social CRM incorporates SM with traditional CRM channels, it would have been useful if the studies had used larger organisations in the B2C market to understand how these firms collect data from social CRM channels, and in particular which SM channels were the most effective and how they extracted data from them.

Information integration. The social CRM studies posit that information integration facilitates social CRM strategy (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Ahani et al., 2017). Information integration is where the firm assimilates the information collected to develop a detailed history of customer relationships (Jayachandran et al., 2005). Stone and Woodcock (2013) refer to social data that is integrated into customer intelligence in the CRM system as social intelligence, and only social businesses are capable of it. Guha et al.'s (2018) study found that firms incorporate their social data manually into their existing CRM. However, this study was conducted in the SME context. Little is known about what social data is incorporated into firms' CRM systems and how they integrate it into the system in large organisations. Most social CRM studies were conducted using a quantitative approach, and there is a lack of insight into 'how' firms integrate information into the CRM system (e.g. Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015).

Information access. Information access refers to customer-facing employees and strategic marketing decision-makers' access to customer information (Jayachandran et al., 2005). This could be a complex process depending on where the data are stored, and who handles them. There can be difficulties where some

lose access to the data (Bijmolt et al., 2010). Relevant employees need to have access to information to avoid data silos across the firm in this social CRM strategy (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Ahani et al., 2017).

Information use. Information use phase is the foundation of social CRM (Malthouse et al., 2013). It is when firms leverage customer information that was integrated into the CRM system to make strategic decisions (Jayachandran et al., 2005). For instance, information is used to discover customers' preferences (Wagner et al., 2017), feelings, opinions and reactions (Taecharungroj, 2017). This process enables firms to personalise their products or services according to their customers' demands (Trusov, Bodapati and Bucklin, 2010; Stone and Woodcock, 2013; Ahani et al., 2017; Guha et al., 2018). Furthermore, the process helps firms to make their CE initiatives and responses more engaging on SM. For instance, information enables firms to make their SM content feel personalised (Zahay, Peltier and Krishen, 2012; Assimakopoulos et al., 2015; Mastorakis, Trihas, Perakakis and Kopanakis, 2015; Cabiddu et al., 2014). Recent evidence shows that customers prefer personalised SM content as it reflects their demands and tastes (Seo and Park, 2018) and it influences SMCEB (Tafesse and Wien, 2018a). However, there is a need to understand how firms use customer information to personalise their SM content in their social CRM strategy. Furthermore, it is found that information management is vital for creating strategies such as responding to customers (Sigala, 2016). A timely, responsive manner is crucial in the firm-customer relationship to increase satisfaction and customer loyalty (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Agnihotri et al., 2017). However, Agnihotri et al. (2017) found that social CRM does not necessarily assist employees in making timely responses to customers. They suggest that customer information captured from SM could be personal, and thus may not support sales employees with their responses. Hence, it is questionable whether customer information facilitates firms in responding to customers, and in a timely manner.

A study by Harrigan et al. (2015) had to omit information use in their findings as their respondents may see it similar to SM technology use, which the researchers suggest the need for empirical research on this construct within the social CRM study. Additionally, another study by Guha et al. (2018) demonstrated that firms do not rely on social data to make strategic marketing decisions. Possibly this is because of the capability needed to quantify and analyse it (Bijmolt et al., 2010). However, their study explored relational information process in the SME context. Therefore, the question remains how larger organisations, primarily in the tourism

industry, use information. As few empirical papers investigate this social CRM process in relation to engaging social customers (e.g. Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015), it needs to be explored in depth using a qualitative approach. Overall, relational information processes highlight the importance of knowledge-sharing and understanding (Hibbert, Winklhofer and Temerak, 2012) and SM.

2.3.6 This study's conceptual framework

CE is a nomological network that has antecedents and consequences (Brodie et al., 2011). Considering the second research question regarding the relationship between social CRM and CE, this study focuses on social CRM as an antecedent of SMCEB, with SMCEB leading to the contribution of information for social CRM.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of social CRM and CE from the theoretical discussions. Conceptual frameworks and theory are typically based on combining previous literature, common sense and experience (Eisenhardt, 1989). The conceptual framework represents a firm-centric view of the relationship between social CRM and CE consisting of social CRM as the firm-based antecedent and SMCEB as the consequences of the social CRM strategy.

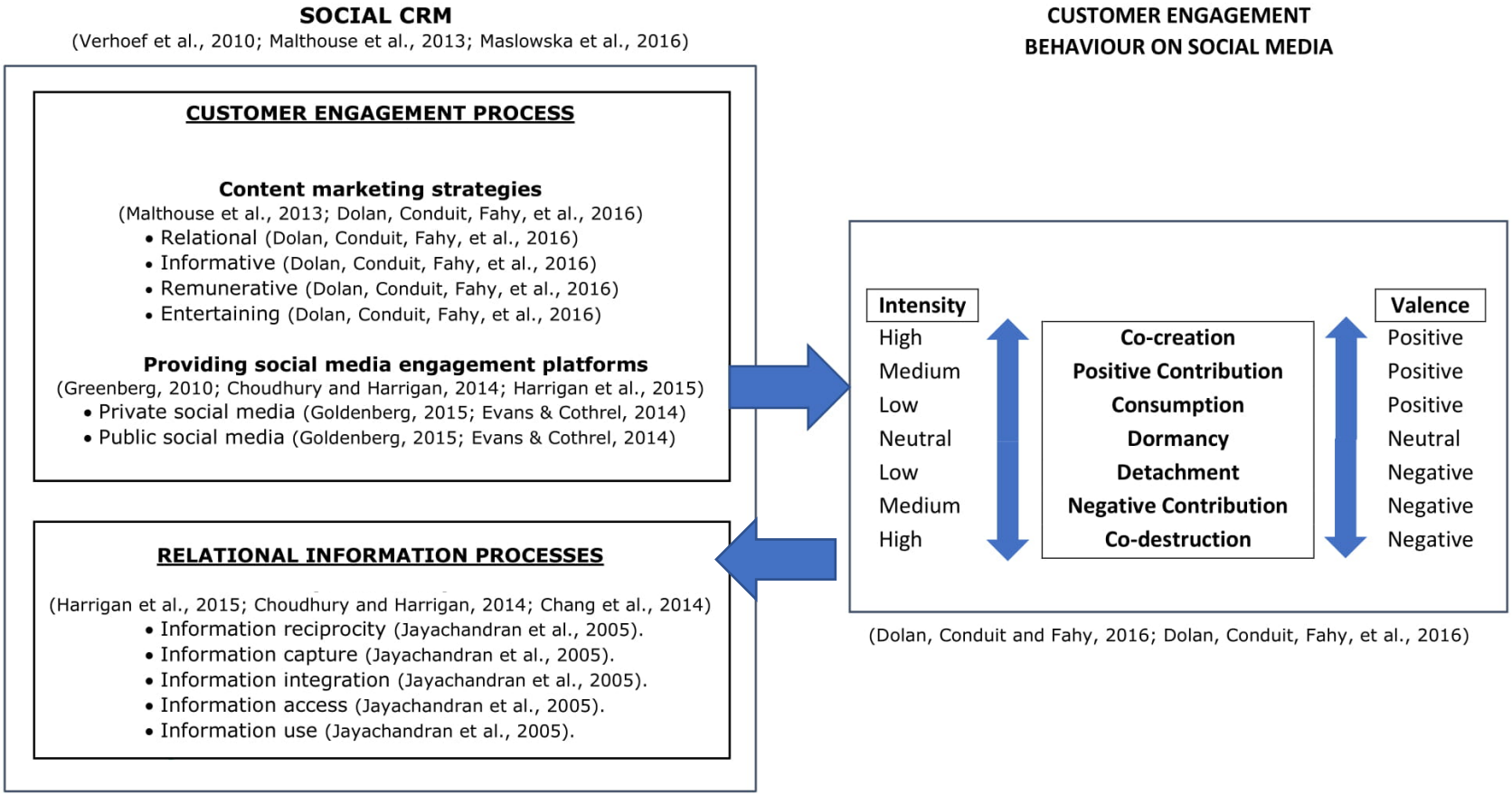


Figure 1 The conceptual framework

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to social CRM and CE to answer the first and second research questions. The chapter identified the need to further understand the social CRM concept and the relationship between social CRM and CE. Hence, a conceptual framework was developed to provide an initial understanding of social CRM and its relationship with CE, providing a focus for this research.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study, which is used to achieve the study's research aim and outlined in Chapter 1. It outlines the rationale for the chosen approach. This chapter is structured into seven main sections. Firstly, it provides the research objectives, followed a section about the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research. The next section explains the relationship between theory and research and the research strategy of this study. Then, the study outlines the research design of the research in the next section, which includes the five-step research process and the research methods. Consequently, the next section explains the data collection process. Next, the chapter deals with the data analysis of the study. Lastly, the final section concludes this chapter.

3.1 Research objectives

The broad aim of this study is to understand the concept of social CRM. The methodology adopted in this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is a social customer relationship management (CRM)?
2. What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?
3. How do hotels practise their social CRM strategy?

3.2 Philosophical assumptions

3.2.1 Ontology

The ontological position determines how the research questions are formulated and how the researcher conducts the study (Bryman, 2016). This concerns how the researcher views the nature of reality. In this study, social CRM and CE are the social phenomena being investigated. The researcher adopted the constructionist stance, which perceives that there are multiple realities and that social actors influence the social phenomena and their meanings (Bryman, 2016). The social CRM and CE notions were created by social actors such as CRM experts and academic experts. The notions have changed over time. Both concepts have meanings, connected to people and which are not objective. CRM is dynamic and has continued to evolve since the emergence of the Internet (Awasthi and Sangle, 2012). After that, industry has continuously tried to keep up with customers who have become empowered. Hence, there is a need to understand CRM and social CRM has changed over time. To understand these two concepts, the researcher

needed to understand, reconstruct, analyse and critique the views of the research participants in a way that constructed meaningful findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The constructionist research aimed to gain a rich understanding of social CRM and CE to generate a working definition and framework of the concepts.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is associated with the nature of knowledge and methods of acquiring knowledge. It addresses the questions of 'how we know what we know' or 'how we gain knowledge of social phenomena' (Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This philosophical stance influenced the researcher's methodology in acquiring and constructing or perpetuating knowledge about social phenomena (Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). There are two main epistemological positions, positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2016). Based on the research questions, the researcher had to interpret the meanings and understand firms' actions in managing relationship with their customers. Therefore, this study adopts an interpretivist epistemology.

In the social CRM and CE field, most researchers have taken a positivist epistemological position, that test theories (e.g. Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). In contrary, several marketing researchers have taken a constructivist stance, namely Hollebeek (2011), Brodie et al. (2011), and Vivek et al. (2012).

Interpretivism, aims to investigate the social phenomenon by understanding the subjective meanings from those who live in it (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). For example, social CRM and CE concepts can be understood by investigating the meanings from those who are involved in the practice. Interpretivism requires *"a constant process of interpretation and reinterpretation"* of a social actor's action, and this includes the researcher's as well (Smith, 1989). This stance depicts interpretivism as a constructive process, and the researcher is not independent of the social phenomenon being investigated (Smith, 1989).

3.3 Research approach

3.3.1 The relationship between theory and research: deductive or inductive approach

There are generally two main strategies leading to acquisition of knowledge: (i) deductive; (ii) inductive (Saunders et al., 2007; Bryman, 2016); and (iii) abductive (Dubois and Gadde, 2002).

Deductive approach is a 'top-down' approach, where the researcher deduces hypotheses from established theory and designs a research study to verify the theory (Bryman, 2016). Contrary to the deductive approach, inductive approach is a 'bottom-up' approach or theory building approach, where the researcher collects empirical data and develops a theory (Saunders et al., 2007; Bryman, 2016). It provides more explanation of what is going on (Saunders et al., 2007). Another approach is the abductive approach, involves continuous interaction between the theoretical framework and empirical evidence (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009)

This study adopted abductive reasoning, which begins with a degree of an inductive approach where the researcher collected data from expert interviews to explore social CRM and its relationship with CE. Consequently, the study developed a framework and contextualised it in two case studies within the Malaysian tourism industry. Thus, the study employed the framework developed in Stage 3 as a foundation for the case studies in Stage 4 of the research process.

3.3.2 Research strategy: quantitative or qualitative approach

This study adopted a qualitative research strategy. As there is a dearth of academic research on social CRM and CE concepts, the researcher needed to conduct qualitative research rather than quantitative research. Although social CRM literature has mostly focused more on quantitative studies (e.g. Baird and Parasnis, 2011; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015) and less on qualitative ones, the researcher still lacked a deeper understanding of these key concepts. Furthermore, based on the literature review, there is a growing need for more in-depth qualitative research in these areas of study.

The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to answer the first two research questions. It provided an in-depth understanding of social CRM and CE that a quantitative research study cannot accomplish as it can only generate numerical

evidence to prove theories. Moreover, qualitative research can answer the 'how and why' questions rather than giving a brief view of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.4 Research design

The research design is the detailed plan for conducting the data collection and analysis, aiming to answer the research questions (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This study explored the social CRM and CE concepts through a five-stage research process. Figure 2 presents the research process for this study.

3.4.1 Research process

This study adapted a research process outlined by Payne et al. (2009), Roberts and Palmer (2012), and Frow et al. (2015) for framework development.

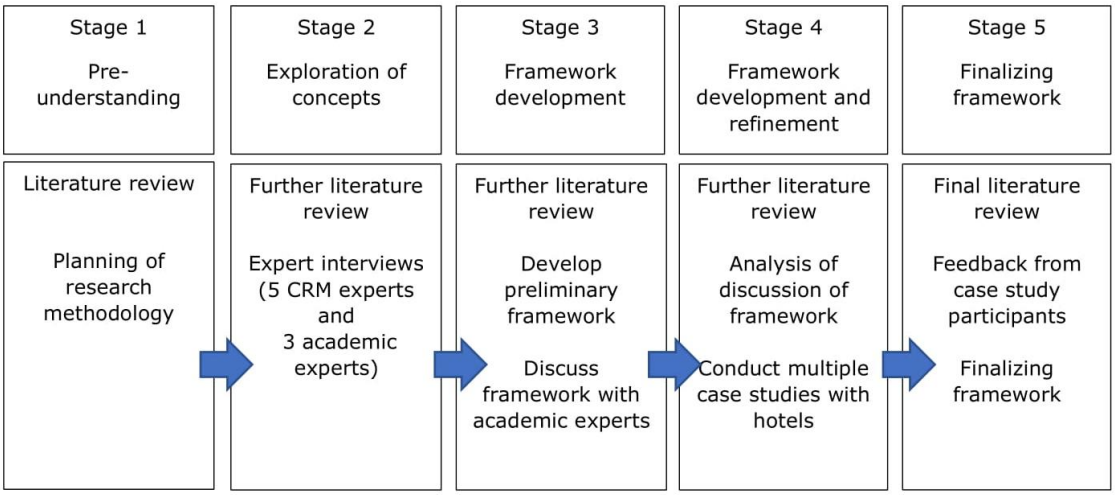


Figure 2. Research process. Adapted from Payne et al. (2009), Roberts and Palmer (2012) and Frow et al. (2015).

Stage 1: Pre-understanding

The researcher reviewed extensive literature relevant to social CRM and CE to understand the concepts better. Then the researcher developed a research methodology and a conceptual framework to answer the research questions.

Stage 2: Exploration of concepts

The second stage involved a further review of the current literature, exploring the concept of social CRM and how it can be used for CE from both managerial and academic perspectives. It also involved conducting interviews with expert CRM practitioners and academic researchers. This stage enabled the researcher to gain

a deeper understanding of social CRM and CE and address the first and second research questions.

Stage 3: Framework development

The third stage included a further literature review and analysis of the expert interviews using thematic analysis to bring out the main themes. This aided the development of a preliminary framework to show social CRM's dimensions and how firms can use social CRM for CE. After the framework had been developed, the researcher presented a brief report to the academic experts who had taken part in the previous stage via email. This step was necessary as a sense-making check and for confirmation. However, only one academic expert responded and validated the framework. This response helped in refining the framework, thus providing the validity and verification of the findings.

Stage 4: Framework development and refinement

This stage also involved a further literature review before the framework was applied to the tourism industry through a case study.

A case study is a common approach in qualitative research. It refers to an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of the study (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, Yin (2014) describes a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p.16).

There are differing perspectives of the case study held by researchers, namely Stake (1995) and Yin (2014). Stake (1995) takes a constructionist standpoint, while Yin (2014) takes a positivist position. Their distinctive philosophical stances have an impact on their views on the methodology, principles and steps of the case study, which they recommend to other researchers. For instance, Yin (2014) suggests the combination of quantitative and qualitative data sources, but Stake (1995) emphasises collecting qualitative data sources. Stake's (1995) perspective is suitable for this research as the researcher is adopting a constructionist ontological position in viewing reality and an interpretivist epistemological stance to understand social CRM and its relationship with CE.

This study involved a detailed and intensive analysis of multiple hotels (Bryman, 2016), classified into two case studies (Case Study A and Case Study B). The hotels are referred to as cases which represent the problem of the study. Multiple case studies were considered an appropriate approach that would allow the researcher to yield a more holistic and robust view and rich understanding of social CRM and its relationship with the CE concept from multiple hotels. This is because the researcher can have access to larger number of key informants from multiple hotels.

Case studies provided the opportunity to employ multiple methods of collecting data. These methods included semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, field notes, and retrieving documents from participants and a third-party website (https://socialinsider.io). Thus, having multiple pieces of evidence allowed triangulation of the data, which increased its reliability and validity. The researcher was then able to refine the developed framework from Stage 3.

Stage 5: Finalising the framework

The last stage involved a final literature review for the study. Having undertaken within-case study analyses for the hotels in stage 4, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis to refine the framework. This was followed by retrieving feedback from the Digital Marketing/Communications Manager of each case to validate and finalise the framework.

3.4.2 Research methods

3.4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews can be classified into three types: (i) structured, (ii) semi-structured and (iii) unstructured. However, this study employed semi-structured interviews as the main data collection method. It is a qualitative research method that consists of several open and probing questions as a reference frame in an interview (Bryman, 2016). The questions were derived from the literature review, and two sets of interview questions (for hotels and customers) were pilot-tested, before the interviews took place. The interview guide (see Appendix 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) enabled the researcher's interviews with the participants to flow. The researcher had sufficient space and flexibility to add or remove interview questions during the interview process when appropriate. Furthermore, the researcher could make discoveries based on participants' unexpected responses and make immediate verbal clarification during the research process. Hence, the semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to gain rich and in-depth information regarding

social CRM and its relationship with CE from key informants. It allowed for an analysis of the meanings, processes and normative understandings of the participants (Creswell, 1998). Thus, it was the appropriate method of collecting data for the phenomenon being studied (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002; Voss, Tsikriktsis and Frohlich, 2002). As bias can happen during interviews (Yin, 1994), this study gathered information from different perspectives (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

In this study, the semi-structured interviews were conducted differently at the different stages (Stage 2 and Stage 4). In Stage 2, the researcher interviewed CRM experts from the practitioner field and the academic field. The interviews were conducted through the use of information and communication technology, Skype video calls and telephone calls. In Stage 4, however, information was gathered from digital marketing managers, frontline hotel employees, and customers, face-to-face in their natural setting or via telephone calls.

3.4.2.2 Non-participant observations

Observation is where the researcher records the behaviours of participants in their natural settings. There are two types of observation, participant observation and non-participant observation.

In Stage 4 of this study, the researcher employed non-participant observation which required limited interaction with the participants while they were being observed. Hence, it was a non-obtrusive observation.

The researcher observed the hotels' channels of communication that were involved in their social CRM practice, such as their traditional and SM channels. After gaining permission from the hotels, the researcher observed the interaction of the frontline hotel employees with their customers at the hotels, and the interaction on their SM, specifically Facebook.

Most of the hotels used public SM (see Table 8). However, this study focused on observing Facebook for several reasons. First, Facebook has the highest active users compared to other SM platforms (see Figure 3) (Statista, 2017). Second, customers of different generational cohorts (i.e. Millennials, Generation X and Baby boomers) use Facebook, and the hotels prefer using Facebook page to engage their customers (Halaszovich and Nel, 2017). Figure 4 shows that Facebook has the highest number of users and is the preferred platform for Millennials, Generation X

and Baby Boomers, but also that Facebook has a larger audience of Generation X users (Sprout Social, 2017). The four hotels of this study cater to all types of customers from different generations, unlike Hotel Jen of Shangri-La that caters to the younger generation. Hence, all four hotels strongly prefer to use Facebook to reach an audience from different generational cohorts.

Table 8 *SM profile of each hotel*

Hotel	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	TripAdvisor	Google +	YouTube	Foursquare	Weibo	WeChat	Youku
1	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
2	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
3	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		
4	√	√	√	√	√		√			

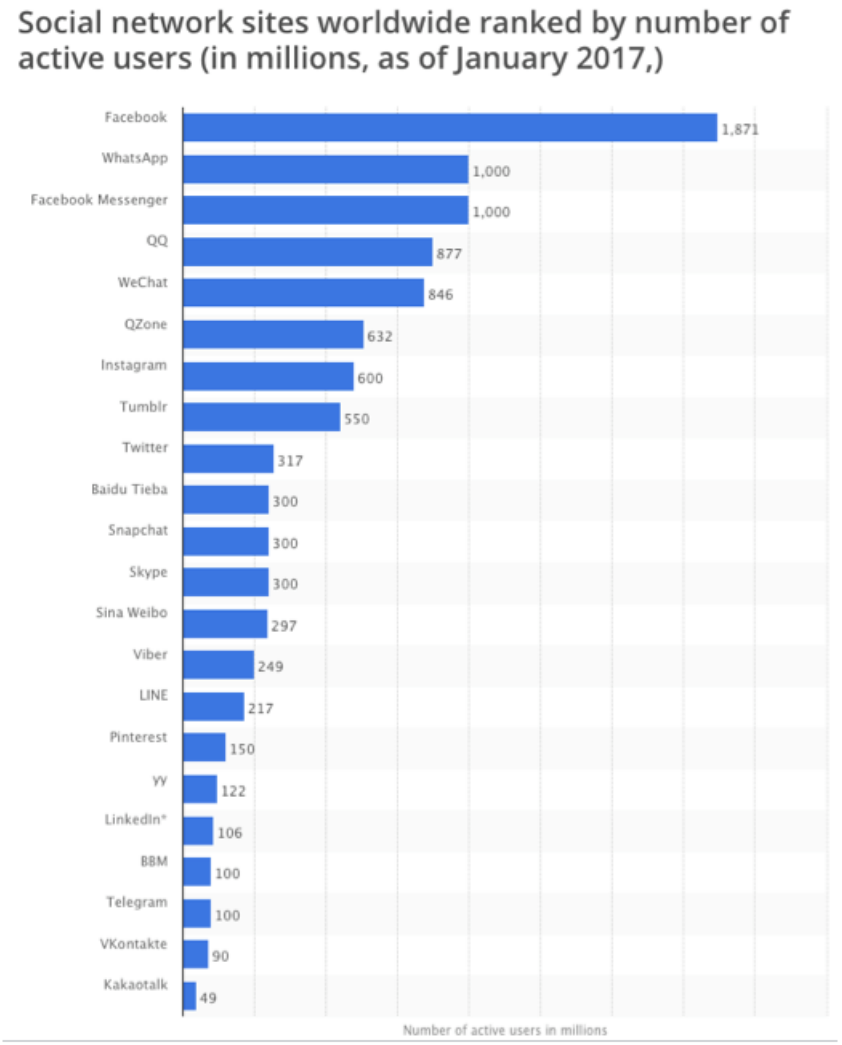


Figure 3 Social network sites worldwide ranking. From Statista. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

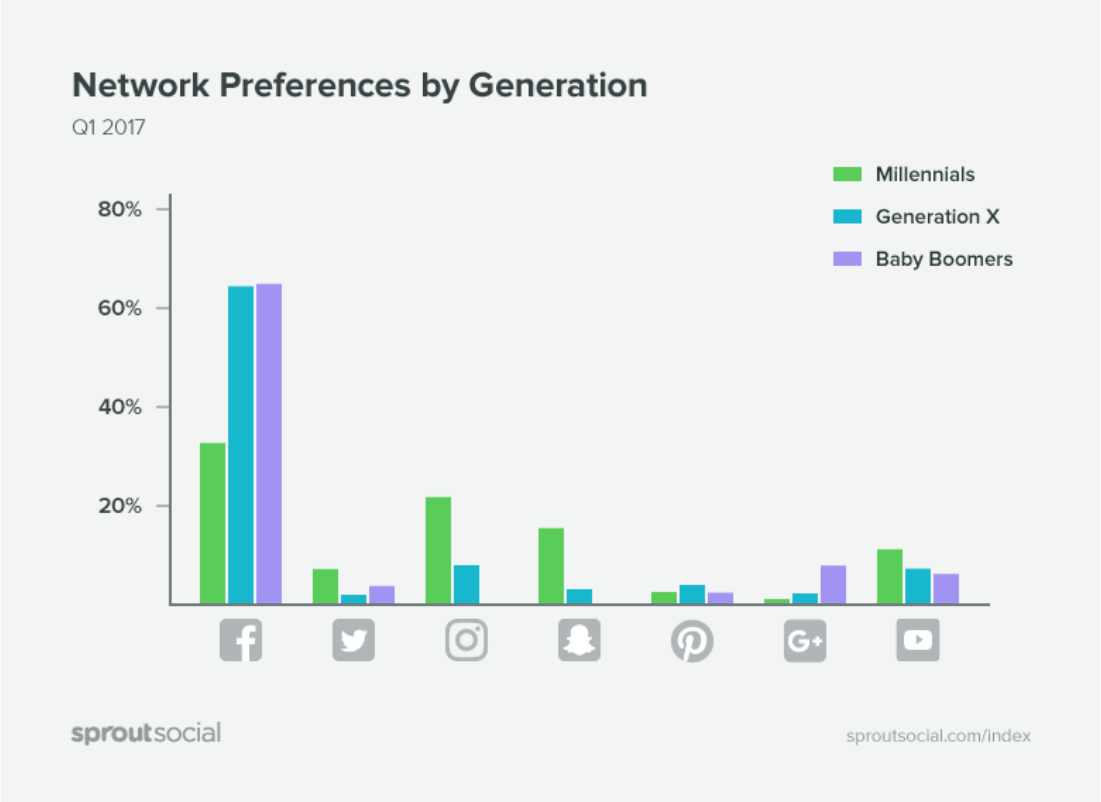


Figure 4 Network Preferences by Generation. From Sprout Social. Retrieved from https://sproutsocial.com/insights/data/q1-2017/

Hospitality firms in the tourism industry generally post a high level of content and receive a high number of reviews and comments on Facebook. Since the hotel customers for the four case study hotels are quite engaged with the hotels' Facebook pages, it was deemed appropriate to study the hotels' Facebook engagement, especially when Malaysia is a tourism destination. When users 'like' a Facebook page, it indicates they like the brand's Facebook. This enables the users to receive new content (status, photos, videos, links, events) posted by the brand on their personal Facebook newsfeed, and the users can respond by reading, liking, commenting or sharing the content within their social network. These users are called social customers. Therefore, for the present study, the researcher solely observed content posted on the Facebook platform and excluded other SM platforms (e.g. Instagram, Twitter, TripAdvisor, Google+, YouTube, Foursquare, Weibo, WeChat and Youku) due to the low number of followers, inactivity, language barriers, and accessibility of the SM from the researcher's country (Malaysia). The researcher also excluded observing private SM channels as none of the four hotels used this kind of SM.

Additionally, this was also a netnography approach in which the researcher adopted a passive engagement in observing an SM community (e.g. Mkono, 2011, 2012).

Other researchers have observed SMCEB using a non-participant approach (e.g. Potdar et al., 2018) in the context of banks. Netnography is a qualitative, naturalistic and unobtrusive approach for studying the cultures and communities through the internet (Kozinets, 1998, 2002). It requires less time than ethnography, more in-depth analysis, and it is cost-effective (Potdar et al., 2018). By adopting this approach the researcher was able to observe Facebook users' interaction in an uninhibited manner (SMCEB) and gain an open and rich Facebook first-person account of guests' experiences with the hotels (Mkono and Markwell, 2014). Additionally, the present study facilitates in improving the understanding of tourists' experiences posted on SM as well (Thanh and Kirova, 2018).

3.4.2.3 Field notes

Field notes (Appendix 16) were also taken during the data collection process to record the activities and reflections of the researcher. Particularly, the field notes recorded ongoing thoughts, ideas and analysis. This enabled the researcher to be guided throughout the research.

3.4.2.4 Documents

The gathered documents (Appendix 20) enabled the researcher to corroborate the multiple sources to understand social CRM and its relationship with CE. Additionally, collecting documents allowed the researcher to collect manageable and practical data to support and strengthen the research. In Stage 4, the researcher collected non-confidential documents from the hotels and a third-party website (https://www.socialinsider.io). These documents provided by the hotels included a sample of a SM post calendar and SM insights, and organisational structure. The documents acquired from the third-party website included SM statistics for each hotel in the case study.

3.5 Data collection process

3.5.1 Sample selection

3.5.1.1 CRM experts and academic experts

In Stage 2 of the research process, the research adopted purposive sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994), a non-probability sampling approach where the researcher intentionally chose the sample intending to maximise the opportunity to understand social CRM and its relationship with CE. The researcher would not have been able to gain such an in-depth and rich understanding of the social phenomena if the research participants had been chosen randomly from a research population.

In 2015, a list of CRM experts was obtained from personal recommendations and well-known websites, particularly www.crmsearch.com. The researcher listed CRM experts that had published at least one book or journal article on social CRM, had contributed to a CRM magazine, or who had been listed as thought leaders in the industry. Meanwhile, the researcher listed academic researchers who had published journal articles or books about social CRM. Unfortunately, there was only a small number of academic experts who met the requirements.

3.5.1.2 Hotels

In Stage 4, the study was contextualised in the tourism industry and focused on hotels that practise social CRM. Tourism has become one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries globally and contributes to economic enhancement and quality of life. This industry involves selling experiences to the customers (Kim, 2010). Additionally, the tourism industry has become an important sector in developing countries such as Malaysia, and CRM is essential for this industry. This context seems to be ideally positioned to take advantage of research on social CRM. Furthermore, hotels appear to be the driving force in tourism success (Chathoth et al., 2014).

The researcher used theoretical sampling when selecting the participants, following Brodie et al. (2011), as the present study was focusing on refining the working definition developed at the beginning of the research.

The researcher built an initial database of 64 global chain hotels (see Appendix 1), which was derived from the website of the Malaysia Association of Hotels directories (https://www.hotels.org.my/directories.html). These hotels included ten global hotel brands. There was no pre-existing list of Malaysian hotels that had the resources for handling social CRM. Hence, the researcher had to qualify them by confirming their social CRM practice upon contacting them to seek participation in this research. The hotels were selected based on three criteria. The first criterion was their resources to handle social CRM to engage customers. The samples are all chain-brand hotels under global hospitality companies. With their global image and presence, it is reassuring these hotels had the resources to practise social CRM. For example, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts and Marriott International are known to monitor and interact with their guests on SM platforms (WIT, 2011; Morgan, 2015; Hudson, 2016). Second, the hotels had a SM presence such as on Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor and Twitter. Third, the researcher chose hotels based on being able to gain access to them.

Starting from November 2015, the researcher contacted 64 global chain hotels through emails and Facebook instant messaging. However, only 6 per cent responded and were interested in participating in the study. Since two of these hotels belonged to Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts and two to Marriot International, these two global chains were classified as the cases in the multiple case study (see Table 9 and Figure 5).

Table 9 *Summary of the case study*

	Case study A		**Case Study B**	
	Hotel 1	**Hotel 2**	**Hotel 3**	**Hotel 4**
Global chain brand	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts	Marriott International	Marriott International
Star rating	5	5	5	5
Hotel type	Beach Resort	Beach Resort	Beach Resort	City Hotel
Location	Kota Kinabalu, Sabah	Tuaran, Sabah	Langkawi, Kedah	Kota Kinabalu, Sabah
Social media presence	Facebook Instagram Twitter TripAdvisor Google + YouTube Weibo WeChat Youku	Facebook Instagram Twitter TripAdvisor Google + YouTube Weibo WeChat Youku	Facebook Instagram Twitter TripAdvisor Google + Foursquare Weibo	Facebook Instagram Twitter TripAdvisor Google + Foursquare



Figure 5 Locations of the hotels in Malaysia. From Worldwintours.com. Retrieved from http://worldwindtours.com/maps/malaysia-map

3.5.1.3 Customers

Although this study adopted a firm-based perspective to investigate the social phenomena, the researcher contacted customers who were actively engaging with the hotel on the hotel's Facebook page to enrich understanding of the SMCEB. Hence, at Stage 4, based on theoretical sampling (Brodie et al., 2011), the researcher recruited these customers. The researcher approached customers who had either posted a review on the Facebook page and/or who had liked, commented on, or shared the hotel's Facebook posts.

Earlier studies suggested investigating social CRM from the customer's perspective (Ahani et al., 2017). Tourists use SM to post their experiences throughout their travel journey, consequently providing researchers with the opportunity to understand tourists constructs and perspectives related to social CRM and CE (Thanh and Kirova, 2018), and minimize biases that only use an employee's perspective (Agnihotri et al., 2017).

3.5.2 Gaining access

3.5.2.1 CRM experts and academic experts

The researcher approached the CRM experts and academic experts at the beginning of November 2015. On contacting these experts, the researcher sent them short yet personal emails (see Appendix 2). Attached to each email was an information sheet explaining details about the study and ethical considerations relating to the study (see Appendix 3).

Gaining access to the CRM experts in the CRM industry was relatively straightforward as they were keen to discuss their area of expertise. All of the CRM experts showed a positive response and they were willing to participate in this study. However, only one CRM expert did not reply to the email.

Most of the academic experts responded to the researcher's email. However, only a small number of academic experts were willing to participate in the study. Fifteen out of the eighteen academic experts could not participate in the research due to their busy schedules, or retirement from the education field. Most of the experts referred the researcher to the main author of articles they had published.

Five CRM experts and three academic experts agreed to be interviewed. Table 10 presents profiles of the CRM experts and academic experts who were willing to participate in the study.

Table 10 *Profile of the CRM experts and academic experts*

Experts	Profile
CRM Expert 1	• CRM thought leader • Authored whitepapers on social CRM
CRM Expert 2	• Published journal articles in Journal of Strategic Marketing, and Journal of Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management. • Chairman of a customer management consulting firm.
CRM Expert 3	• Published a book on social CRM • A regular columnist to a CRM magazine. • President of a customer-centric business strategy consulting firm
CRM Expert 4	• CRM thought leader • A regular columnist for a CRM magazine • A founder and principal of a customer strategy consulting firm
CRM Expert 5	• CRM thought leader • Published a book on social CRM and a journal article in Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing. • A regular columnist for a CRM magazine • President of a customer strategy consulting firm
Academic Expert 1	• Published journal articles in Journal of Strategic Marketing, and Australasian Marketing Journal
Academic Expert 2	• Published journal articles in Journal of Service Research, and Journal of Interactive Marketing
Academic Expert 3	• Published a journal article in Computers in Human Behavior

3.5.2.2 Hotels

Each communication (see Appendix 2) with the selected hotels included a letter and an information sheet addressed to the hotel executive who handled social CRM (see Appendix 3). These documents facilitated the researcher in gaining the cooperation and confidence of the gatekeepers. The information sheet emphasised explicitly what participants would be asked to do, and what the researcher would observe, and that all collected data would be confidential, stored securely and the analysis would remove individual names. The researcher managed to gain access to gather data from four global chain hotels (see Table 9). Consequently, the researcher gathered information from the following respondents:

i. Digital Marketing/Communications Managers

Once the hotels had agreed to participate in the study, each gatekeeper directed the researcher to the Digital Marketing/Communications Manager who handled social CRM; this included managers from the Communications department or Digital Marketing department. The researcher was able to gain more interviews with other managers based on referrals after each interview. Thus, the researcher interviewed six Digital Marketing/Communications Managers from the case studies (three from each case study) in 2017.

ii. Frontline hotel employees

The researcher interviewed 17 frontline hotel employees: 14 frontline hotel employees from Case Study A and three frontline hotel employees from Case Study B. Furthermore, the researcher was able to observe Case Study A's frontline hotel employees' interactions with their customers. However, after multiple efforts through email and phone call communications, the researcher faced a challenge in gaining access to interview Hotel 3's frontline hotel employees and observe both Hotels 3 and 4 due to its policy on sharing information. Thus, the researcher was only able to interview three of Hotel 4's frontline hotel employees, resulting in only three frontline hotel employee interviews for Case Study B. Nonetheless, the researcher managed to get multiple interviews with the Digital Marketing Managers to overcome the lack of data collection from Case Study B.

The researcher approached these employees through each hotel's Human Resources Manager. The staff were selected based on their experience in the hotel and being from frontline departments such as the Front Office Department, Recreations Department, Events Department, Spa Department, and Food and Beverage Department. These departments were chosen based on the interviews with Digital Marketing/Communications Managers, where they mentioned these departments were involved in the social CRM strategy. For example, the hotels post content related to food and beverages, the spa, recreation activities and events on their SM. Another example was if the hotel received a negative customer review about a dining experience, Digital Marketing/Communications Manager would liaise with the food and beverage department to investigate this issue. Additionally, a previous study suggested exploring social CRM from the employee perspective to prevent cognitive biases from only interviewing or observing managers (Ahani et al., 2017).

3.5.2.3 Customers

In September 2016, the researcher sent private messages to 112 guests who showed different kinds of SMCEB on the hotels' Facebook page. However, only 11 guests agreed to participate in this research, six guests from Case Study A and five guests from Case Study B. The researcher faced challenges in recruiting participation from the guests via Facebook's instant messaging tool. Some guests blocked the researcher from any further communications, declining to participate in the research, and some guests did not read the Facebook private messages the researcher had sent.

3.5.3 Data collection methods

3.5.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interviewer read published works relevant to social CRM and CE such as books, online articles and magazines, white papers and blogs. Moreover, the researcher prepared an interview guide before each interview. This interview guide helped the researcher to direct the conversation towards topics that she wanted to explore.

In Stage 2 of the research process, the researcher interviewed CRM experts and academic experts in early November 2015 after receiving the Nottingham University Business School's research ethics approval. Five CRM experts and three academic experts had agreed to be interviewed. The interview process ended in late March 2016, thus, the experts were interviewed within five months. The semi-structured interviews were carried out via Skype video calls and telephone calls, according to each interviewee's preference. Each participant was assured full confidentiality. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. On average, each interview lasted for 45 minutes. Before the interview commenced, the participants were asked whether they minded being audio-taped. All participants permitted the researcher to audio-record the whole interview. The researcher mainly developed questions that addressed the research questions in the study, which enabled the researcher to gain rich and in-depth insights into particular topics. Stage 2 of the research process led to the development of further interview questions before interviewing the hotel participants and customers in Stage 4. Appendix 9 presents excerpts from interview transcripts with an academic expert and a CRM expert.

Before proceeding to contextualise the research within the tourism industry in Stage 4, the researcher conducted a preliminary face-to-face interview with Digital Marketing manager of Hyatt Hotels & Resorts (see Appendix 10). This interview enabled the researcher to test the interview questions, before commencing Stage

4. After the pilot interview the researcher rephrased some of the questions that were difficult to understand.

In the Stage 4 research process, 43 interviews were conducted with 33 participants from May 2017 to December 2017 (see Table 11). These participants included Digital Marketing/Communications Managers, frontline hotel employees, and customers. The researcher interviewed Digital Marketing/Communications Managers and frontline hotel employees face-to-face at the hotel and via phone calls. A few interviews with frontline hotel employees were conducted in Malay or English based on their preference. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and 90 minutes. The researcher was allowed to audio-tape the whole interview. Appendix 11 and Appendix 12 show sample excerpts of interview transcripts with a Digital Marketing/Communications manager and frontline hotel employees respectively.

Before interviewing the customers, in October 2017, the researcher conducted pilot interviews with three SM users (see Appendix 13 for the transcript sample excerpts) through emails, phone calls and instant messaging. These users were recruited from a support group the researcher belongs to. These interviews aimed to test the interview questions on different communication channels, i.e. email, instant messaging and telephone. After the pilot interviews, the researcher rephrased some of the questions that were difficult for SM users to understand and also to have less assumption about whether the hotel or users did certain things. For instance, the question "How does the hotel make their service more personal to you?" was rephrased to "Did the hotel personalise their services to you? If yes, in what way did they personalise their services to you? If no, how did this make you feel?" Through these pilot interviews, the researcher was able to realise that some questions were not general enough, making assumptions, and some were ambiguous for the users. Additionally, the researcher learned the users might be nervous about being interviewed by phone or video calls and that interviews through instant messaging and emails might receive short responses. Hence, the researcher needed to be aware of this and build rapport to make the users feel comfortable during the interviews and use prompts and probing techniques to gain more responses from the interviewees.

The researcher then interviewed ten customers who were SM users. Most of them preferred to be interviewed through instant messaging (via Facebook messenger), emails, telephone calls and Facebook video calls. Each interview lasted between 30

and 90 minutes. All of the participants agreed to allow the researcher to audio-tape the whole interview. Appendix 14 presents a sample excerpt from a customer interview transcript.

Table 11 *List of participants for Stage 4 of the research process*

	Case Study A		**Case Study B**		**Total**
	Hotel 1	Hotel 2	Hotel 3	Hotel 4	
Digital Marketing/ Communications Managers	1. Director of Communications 2. Marketing Communications Executive	1. Director of Communications	1. Digital Marketing Manager	1. Digital Marketing Manager 2. Marketing Communications Manager	**6**
Frontline hotel employees	1. Front Office Service Leader 2. Recreation Manager 3. F&B Service Manager 4. Spa Manager	1. Senior Events Manager 2. Local Catering Event Manager for Government 3. Assistant Front Office Manager 4. Guest Relations Officer 5. Guest History Manager 6. Guest Experience Manager 7. Assistant Recreation Manager 8. Activities Officer and Recreation Admin 9. F&B Service Manager 10. Spa Manager	-	1. F&B Venue Manager 2. Deputy Manager 3. Experience Specialist	**17**
Guests	1. Guest 1 H1 2. Guest 2 H1 3. Guest 3 H1	1. Guest 1 H2 2. Guest 2 H2 3. Guest 3 H2	1. Guest 1 H3 2. Guest 2 H3 3. Guest 3 H3	1. Guest1 H4	**10**
Total participants per hotel	**9**	**14**	**4**	**6**	**33**
	23		**10**		

i. Confidentiality of interviewees

When approaching the samples, the researcher provided an information sheet (see Appendix 3) to every potential participant explaining necessary background information about the research project as required by the School's Research Ethics policy.

ii. Creation of rapport

To create rapport, in each interview for experts and hotel participants, the researcher asked them to outline their experience of their work. From observations, it seemed that most of the participants were keen to share their experience. This helped build rapport during the interviews. It was quite hard to build rapport when conducting interviews via Skype or phone calls with the experts, compared with face-to-face interviews. Nonetheless, the researcher tried to make the experts comfortable by showing positive responses or expressions during each interview on digital channels.

3.5.3.2 Non-participant observation

i. SM observation

The researcher was only able to start observing each hotel's Facebook page upon confirmation of their willingness to participate in the study. Three of the hotels (Hotel 1, Hotel 2, and Hotel 3) confirmed their participation in April 2017, while Hotel 4 confirmed their participation in late June 2017. The researcher was able to observe each hotel's Facebook activities from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2017 as Facebook is public space for the hotels. This period of observation was important as, during the interview, the participants tended to describe their recent SM activities as examples. Furthermore, the two years of observation data helped to triangulate the research findings from the interviews held from May 2017 to December 2017, particularly if the hotels hesitated to share non-confidential documents to support their statements during the interviews.

In the Facebook observation, the researcher observed the hotels' SM posts and SMCEB on each hotel's Facebook page. Table 12 shows a sample of Facebook observation for each case's number of fans, and the number of posts observed.

To improve the reliability of the data collected, the researcher rejected postings and reviews in languages other than English or Malay because the author is not proficient in other languages (Thanh and Kirova, 2018). Furthermore, Facebook automatic translation is not dependable.

The researcher observed 1,763 posts from Case Study A and 1,425 posts from Case Study B (Table 12). Appendix 15 shows screenshots of each case's Facebook page.

Table 12 *The Facebook profile for each case.*

	Hotel	**Location**	**No. of page fans at time as of 31st December 2017**	**No of posts**	
				Jan 16 – Dec 16	Jan 17 – Dec 17
Case Study A	Hotel 1	Sabah, Malaysia	83,740	425	408
	Hotel 2	Sabah, Malaysia	83,400	547	527
Case Study B	Hotel 3	Langkawi, Malaysia	25,000	160	146
	Hotel 4	Sabah, Malaysia	19,010	593	526

ii. Hotel observations

Between September and December 2017, the researcher observed different frontline departments for Case Study A (Table 13). Case Study A's Human Resources permitted non-obtrusive observation, as they do not want the researcher to obstruct their service delivery. However, Case Study B did not provide any access for the researcher to observe their guest-facing staff because of their confidentiality policy.

Table 13 *List of departments observed for each case*

Case Study A		**Case Study B**	
Hotel 1	**Hotel 2**	**Hotel 3**	**Hotel 4**
• Recreations Department • Spa Department • Front Office Department • Food and Beverage Department	• Events Department • Recreations Department • Spa Department • Front Office Department • Food and Beverage Department	Human Resources Manager did not allow observation	Training manager did not allow observation

3.5.3.3 Field notes

The researcher gathered information on activities and her thoughts, ideas and analysis into the field notes. These field notes were mainly created in Stages 2 and 4 of the research processes. In particular, the notes recorded her hotel observations which showed descriptive illustrations of the hotel employees' activities and interactions with customers in a natural setting. Appendix 16 shows a sample of field notes from observing Hotel 1's frontline hotel employees.

3.5.3.4 Non-confidential documents

In Stage 4 of the research process, the researcher requested supporting documents for all the interview participants after each interview (see Appendix 20). Case Study A's Digital Marketing/Communications Managers provided multiple non-confidential documents to support interview statements. However, Case Study B's Digital Marketing/Communications Managers hesitated to share documents relevant to their SM activities for reasons of confidentiality. Nevertheless, the researcher gathered SM analytics reports from a third-party website, Socialinsider. The researcher purchased analytics of the Facebook page of each case dating from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2017. These documents enabled the researcher to triangulate the findings from the interviews and SM observation.

3.5.4 Validation of understanding

In Stage 2 of the research process, a couple of the Skype interviews were interrupted with the Internet connection cutting off or bandwidth problems that occurred on both sides, for the interviewer and the interviewee. This was a risk of conducting online interviews. For this reason, there were two particular experts (CRM Expert 1 and Academic Expert 1) whom the researcher had to contact again to check understanding of some answers to questions asked in the previous interviews and also give opportunities to ask them further questions. Hence, there are a total of 10 transcripts from the semi-structured interviews from eight experts between November 2015 until March 2016 (Table 14).

Table 14 *List of interviews for Stage 2 of the research process*

Reference codes	Experts	Number of interviews
CRM 1	CRM Expert 1	2
CRM 2	CRM Expert 2	1
CRM 3	CRM Expert 3	1
CRM 4	CRM Expert 4	1
CRM 5	CRM Expert 5	1
AC 1	Academic Expert 1	2
AC 2	Academic Expert 2	1
AC 3	Academic Expert 3	1

After developing the preliminary framework in Stage 3, the researcher emailed her understanding of the phenomenon being studied to the eight experts who had been interviewed at the earlier stage. However, only one academic expert responded and confirmed the framework.

At Stage 4 of the research process, the researcher managed to interview Digital Marketing/Communications Managers, and a few of frontline hotel employees and customers twice to validate her understanding from earlier interviews and/or observations. It also enabled her to ask further questions about the hotels' social CRM practices. Hence, there are a total of 43 transcripts from interviewing 34 participants in the multiple case studies from May 2017 to December 2017 (see Table 15).

After refinement of the developed framework at Stage 5 of the research process, the researcher validated her framework with the Digital Marketing/Communications Manager via email.

Table 15 *List of interviews for Stage 4 of the research process*

Reference codes	Participant	Hotel	Number of interviews
DOC H1	Director of Communications	Hotel 1	2
MCE H1	Marketing Communications Executive		1
FOSL H1	Front Office Service Leader		1
RM H1	Recreation Manager		1
FNBSM H1	F&B Service Manager		1
SPA H1	Spa Manager		1
G1 H1	Guest 1 H1		1
G2 H1	Guest 2 H1		2
G3 H1	Guest 3 H1		2
DOC H2	Director of Communications	Hotel 2	2
SEM H2	Senior Events Manager		1
EM H2	Local Catering Event Manager for Government		1
AFOM H2	Assistant Front Office Manager		1
GRO H2	Guest Relations Officer		1
GHM H2	Guest History Manager		1
GEM H2	Guest Experience Manager		1
ARM H2	Assistant Recreation Manager		1
AORA H2	Activities Office and Recreation Admin		1
FNBSM H2	F&B Service Manager		2
SPA H2	Spa Manager		2
G1 H2	Guest 1 H2		1
G2 H2	Guest 2 H2		2
G3 H2	Guest 3 H2		2
DMM H3	Digital Marketing Manager	Hotel 3	2
G1 H3	Guest 1 H3		1
G2 H3	Guest 2 H3		1

G3 H3	Guest 3 H3		1
DMM H4	Digital Marketing Manager	Hotel 4	2
MCM H4	Marketing Communications Manager		1
FNBVM H4	F&B Venue Manager		1
FODM H4	Front Office Deputy Manager		1
ES H4	Experience Specialist		1
G1 H4	Guest 1 H4		1

Therefore, the researcher used multiple methods of data collection for the study (as shown in Table 16).

Table 16 *Summary of data collection for the study.*

Research process stage	**Respondent / Department**	**Data collection methods**	**Approach**
Stage 2	- CRM experts - Academic experts	- Semi-structured interview - Field notes	- Skype video calls - Telephone calls - Field notes
Stage 4	Pilot interview Digital Marketing Manager	- Semi-structured interview	- Face-to-face
	Digital Marketing/ Communications Department	- Semi-structured interview - Non-confidential documents - Field notes	- Face-to-face - Telephone calls -
	Frontline hotel employees - Events Department - Recreations Department - Spa Department - Front Office Department - Food and Beverage Department	- Semi-structured interview - Non-participant observation - Field notes	- Face-to-face - Telephone calls
	Pilot interview customers	- Semi-structured interview	- Facebook messenger - Telephone call - Email
	Customers	- Semi-structured interview	- Facebook messenger - Facebook video calls - Telephone calls - Emails

3.6 Approaches to data analysis

3.6.1 Transcribed Interviews

This study aims to understand the fundamental meaning behind the conversations about social CRM and CE. Thus, the interview data were transcribed non-verbatim. Appendices 9, 11, 12 and 14 are examples of interview transcripts.

The researcher did her own transcribing to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and organisations in this research. To preserve anonymity, the transcribed interviews removed any individual names. Each of the transcriptions was named according to the participant's position in the field such as 'Academic Expert 1', 'Consultant 2' or 'Director of Sales and Marketing Hotel 1'. If the participant named a specific person or organisation in the interview, the researcher assigned a pseudonym in the final transcription of the interview data.

In Stage 2, the researcher transcribed the expert interviews. In certain interviews, the researcher faced difficulties in transcribing as the participants had different accents. The transcribing process was time-consuming, particularly when the researcher's main language is not English. However, the researcher transcribed the interviews as accurately as possible. This is to ensure the validity of the research, which is important in such research.

In Stage 4, the interviews were conducted in Malay or English and transcribed. The transcribing process was time-consuming because 41 recorded interviews were collected. Nonetheless, the researcher transcribed them and followed up with some participants for some terms she did not understand (e.g. DR3, OPERA). After clarifications with the participants, the researcher understood that DR3 stands for defect reporting, recording and resolution process, while OPERA is Shangri-la's Central Reservations and Customer Information Systems.

3.6.2 Supporting tools for data management

The research employed NVivo 11 to manage the data collected. This tool was not used to analyse the data, but it still facilitated the researcher to ensure that data management was more systematic and supported the data analysis process.

3.6.3 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a widely used approach that can be used with many kinds of qualitative data (Bryman, 2016). This analysis aims to identify, analyse and report themes within the collection of data, such as interview data, field notes, documents

and observations (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Due to its ability to identify themes from qualitative data, it is often associated with other types of qualitative data analysis such as grounded theory, discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis and narrative analysis (Bryman, 2016).

From the collected data, the researcher reviewed the interview transcripts iteratively to look for emerging themes. The researcher was able to identify themes through a six-stage process that captures significant findings as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Additionally, the researcher adopted the coding approach of Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013) and Patvardhan, Gioia and Hamilton (2015). The researcher analysed the data using an open coding method or first order codes, as part of the data analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994), where the researcher produced codes for data that appeared interesting to the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This was followed by grouping the codes into higher-order themes (see Table 17). Consequently, the grouped themes could form overarching dimensions or general theoretical concepts. It should be pointed out that the researcher derived codes deductively and inductively.

In Stage 3 of the research process, the deductive codes were generated from the literature (e.g. SM content, CEB), and inductive codes emerged from the expert interview dataset (e.g. SM context, time, devices). See Chapter 4 (section 4.1) for the themes, sub-themes and codes generated from the analysis.

In Stage 5 of the research process, the thematic analysis facilitated the researcher in the within-case analysis and cross-case analysis techniques (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994). The unit of analysis was the social CRM strategy. Each case was analysed following the same structure (see Table 17), which enabled the researcher to compare and contrast how the hotels used social CRM in each case before generalising patterns across the cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). In the thematic analysis, codes were generated deductively and inductively. The deductive codes were derived from the literature, and from findings of the expert interviews (e.g. SM context, time, devices), while the inductive codes emerged from the case study dataset (e.g. customer journey, video, photo, hard-selling content). Thus, cross-case analysis was carried out to identify cross-case patterns at company-level (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994). After comparing the social CRM strategies between the two cases, the framework was refined.

Table 17 *Coding structures for Case Study A and Case Study B*

Themes	Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A Sub-codes	Case Study B Sub-codes
SOCIAL CRM	**Social CRM definition**	Uses SM	- As CRM - A strategy - To engage customers	- CRM system - To engage customers - To understand customers
		Attracts customers	- Attracts new fans - Attracts customers to visit the hotel	- Attract followers - Attract past customers to visit the hotel
		Maintains customers	- Recover service - Respectful language - Using SM content - Loyalty extended to SM	- Using SM content
		Disengaged SM users	- Do not win back - But would be useful to have information	- Do not win back - Rather attract new customers
	Social CRM activities	SM marketing	- Post SM content	- Post SM content
		Social selling	- Make enquiries - Make bookings	- Generate sales enquiries - Book with the hotel
		Social customer service	- Hotels respond to reviews - Service recovery	- Monitor customer reviews - Respond customer reviews - online social care
		Department	- Communications team	- Digital Marketing team
	Social CRM key elements	People	- hospitality culture - Features employees on SM - Authority to engage on SM - Collaboration between departments	- Delivers hospitality - Features employees on SM - Authority to engage on SM - Collaboration with other departments
		Technology	- SM technologies - Traditional technologies	- SM technologies

				- Traditional technologies
		Process	- Customer lifecycle process - CE process - relational information processes	- Customer lifecycle process - CE process - relational information processes
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT (CE) PROCESS	**CE with the hotels**	Customers initiate engagement	- Direct message enquiries - Personal SM post - Write reviews	- Direct message enquiries - Personal SM post - Write reviews
		Customers' responses to hotels' engagement	- Response to SM post - Response to SM page	- Response to SM post - Response to SM page
		CE valence	- Positive behaviour - Negative behaviour - Neutral behaviour	- Positive behaviour - Negative behaviour - Neutral behaviour
	Hotels' engagement with the customers	Hotels CE Initiatives	- Post SM content	- Post SM content
		Hotels' responses to CE	- Response to customers' personal SM posts - Response to direct messages - Response to customer comments - Response to customer reviews	- Response to customers' personal SM posts - Response to direct messages - Response to customer comments - Response to customer reviews -
SM CONTENT	**SM campaign topic**	Corporate campaigns	- Loyalty programme - Couple contest	- Celebration - Other brand campaigns
		Hotels' campaigns	- Location - Products and services - Stakeholders - Trends - Repost customers' experiences	- Location - Products and services - Stakeholders - Trends - Repost customers' experiences
	Media type	Photos	- Photo quality - Fewer likes compared to videos	- Photo quality - Photo angles - Photo is static
		Videos	- Time-consuming - More likes for videos compared to photos - Short video with music - Video quality	- Video music - Interactive

		- Not all are engaging	
	Links	- Direct customers to website - Measure no of website visits/bookings -	- Direct customers to website - Measure conversion
	Events		- For promotions
SM content type	Entertaining content	- Trends - Fun video - Customer perception	- Trends - Fun video - Customers' perception
	Informational content	- About products and services - Educational - tips	- Products or services - Updates
	Relational content	- Relevant to customers - Encourage customers to engage	- Relevant to customers - Encourage customers to engage
	Remunerative content	- Promotions or offers - Rewards - Hard-selling	- Promotions or offers - Hard-selling content
SM content strategy	Different channels, different content	- Based on different age groups - Based on different SM features	- Based on different age groups - Based on different SM channel
	Post more soft-selling content	- Increase engagement - Feels forced	- Increase engagement - Hard-selling blunt marketing
	Paid SM posts	- Aim specific audience	- Reach who are followers and non-followers
	Personalised SM content	- Relevant to customers -	- Feel content is personal - Determine content based on channel audience and timing - Hashtags to target customer segment
	Include calls to action (CTA)	- Questions - Hashtags - Tag your friends - Visit website - Call hotel	- Questions - Share this - Click this
	Repost customers' SM content	- Repost customers' SM posts	- Repost customers' SM posts - Repost customer reviews
	Post less formal content	-	- Less formal copywriting
	Create content based on branding strategy	-	- Luxury collection core value - Le Meridien passion points

SM CONTEXT	**Channels**	SM channels	- Social networking - Microblog - Media sharing - Messaging applications - Review platform - Online travel agents	- Social networking - Microblog - Media sharing - Messaging applications - Review platform - Online travel agents
		Extend to traditional channels	- Email - calls	- Emails - Calls
	Time	Time to post	- Time of the day - Days of the week - Season of the year - Frequency posting	- Time of the day - Days of the week - Season of the year - Frequency posting - Urgency to post
		Time to respond	- Within 48 hours - Real-time	- Within 48 hours
RELATIONAL INFORMATION PROCESSES	**Information reciprocity**	Hotel provide information		-
	Information capture	Ways of gathering information	- SM channels - SM analytics	- SM channels - SM analytics
		Types of information gathered	- Hotels' SM post engagement - SM trend - competitor's SM performance - About customers	- Hotels' SM post engagement - About customers
		Customer privacy	- Personal act data	- Privacy enhancement
	Information integration	Integrate reviews	- Customer complaint history	- Customer profile
		Integrate preferences		- Customer preferences
	Information access	Access to SM information	- Inform marketing departments - Communications team inform relevant departments	- Inform marketing departments - Digital marketing team inform relevant departments
		Access to traditional information	- Staff has limited access - Front office Inform relevant departments	- Front office informs relevant departments - Employee with username able to access CRM system
	Information use	To engage on SM	- Create engaging SM posts - Response to CE appropriately	- Create engaging SM posts - Response CE appropriately
		To improve products and services	- Improve products or services - Staff training - Service recovery	- Improve products or services - Maintain products or services - Staff training

		- Motivate employee	- Motivate employee
	To customise service delivery	- Use reviews to customise service in the future	- Satisfy customer upon arrival - Service customisation - Understand customer expectation

3.7 Conclusion

This underlying philosophical assumption that facilitated and directs the research design and process for this study are based on constructionism. Furthermore, the study adopted abductive reasoning to understand the concept of social CRM. Particularly, a five-stage research process of Payne et al. (2009), Roberts and Palmer (2012), and Frow et al. (2015) was adapted. Multiple data collection methods were employed, and participants from different backgrounds were interviewed (experts, managers, frontline employees and customers) to understand this social phenomenon from different social actors. Thematic analysis was applied to identify themes from the collected data and facilitate the development and refinement of a framework showing the phenomenon being studied.

CHAPTER 4 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of findings from the exploratory expert interviews with three academic experts and five CRM experts. The purpose of these interviews was to answer the first two research questions: (i) what is social CRM?; and (ii) What is the relationship between social CRM and CE?

This chapter first presents the key findings, which found seven themes from expert interview analysis and provides a definition of social CRM which answers the first research question. Then, it introduces a preliminary framework depicting the relationship between social CRM and CE, which answers the second research question.

4.1 Findings

This section presents emerging themes and concepts that were identified in the semi-structured interviews with eight experts (five CRM experts and three academic experts) Coding of the interview transcripts revealed seven emerging themes (Table 18). Each theme is examined in turn.

Table 18 *Themes from the expert interviews.*

Theme	Description
Social CRM	The key elements of social CRM, such as processes and technologies. The type of customers the firms engage, firm's relationship with them and their control in the relationship.
Social media (SM)	The relationship of SM with CRM, the classification of SM into public and private SM, and communication on SM.
Customer engagement (CE)	The process of understanding by engaging them effectively, handled by the front office.
Social media customer engagement behaviour (SMCEB)	The dimensions that determine SMCEB.
SM content marketing	The dimensions that determine the right SM content.
Context of delivering SM content	The dimensions that determine the right context to deliver SM content.

Relational information processes	Processes involved in managing customer information: information reciprocity, information capture, information integration, information access; and information use.

4.1.1 Social CRM

The social CRM theme revealed four sub-themes (Table 19):

Table 19 *Social CRM sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	Codes	Description
Social CRM key elements	• Processes	• Social CRM comprises a CE process and a relational information process, which goes in a cycle.
	• Technologies	• Social CRM as technology or supported by technologies such as CRM systems and SM.
Social CRM purposes	• To understand customers • To engage customers • To manage customer relationships • To improve human interactions • To maintain dialogue • Mutual benefit • Personalised customer relationship • Firm–customer relationship	• Social CRM enables firms to understand, engage, manage customers, and improve and maintain relationships with customers. It also enables mutually beneficial and personalised firm–customer relationships.
Customers	• Who purchases the products or services • Outside of the firms • Known customers • Unknown customers • Potential customers • Current customers	• Customers viewed differently as those who purchase products or services, who are outside of the firm, whom firms know and do not know, and who are potential and current customers.
Control	• Customer's control • Firm's control • Nobody controls conversation	• Different views, whether the firm–customer relationship is controlled by the customers or firms, or whether nobody has control of the conversation in the relationship.

4.1.1.1 Social CRM key elements

i. Processes

Academic Expert 1, CRM Expert 1 and CRM Expert 5 described how social CRM has two processes: a CE process and a relational information process. Academic Expert 1 stated:

> *"…there's two main processes. The front office …is CE and the back-office ones are relational information processes."*
>
> (Academic Expert 1)

Both of these processes where firms engage customers and manage their information are essential in managing relationships with their customers. The result is in line with previous research where social CRM consists of two key processes: CE initiatives and relational information processes (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015).

Additionally, Academic Expert 1 highlighted that these two processes go in a cycle, which allows firms to understand their customers through engaging with them. In turn, this enables firms to enhance their CE.

This finding does support previous research where CE initiatives were found to have a positive influence on relational information processes. This is an important finding and a contribution to this study as it highlights the connection between CE process and relational information processes in social CRM. Engaging customers increases the likelihood of firms gathering better information about social customers. This information will enable the firms to understand their customers and improve their CE initiatives.

Therefore, social CRM includes two cyclical processes, which are CE, and relational information processes.

ii. Technologies

CRM Expert 5 stated that the industry defines social CRM as a customer-facing technology that does operational tasks. Similarly, CRM Expert 1 described social CRM as a tool and technology to understand and engage customers.

> *"So, companies have to be cautious about how special they treat restaurants, treat influencers... But it's important for them to know it. Social CRM is one of the tools and technologies that can be used."*

(CRM Expert 1)

In contrast, Academic Expert 1, Academic Expert 3 and CRM Expert 2 emphasised that social CRM is supported by technologies such as CRM systems to engage customers:

> *"Social CRM aims to enhance CE, as you said before, through the use of social media and technologies."*
>
> (Academic Expert 3)

Firms can effectively engage customers with the support of data and technology (CRM Expert 2). This substantiates findings by Choudhury and Harrigan (2014), Trainor et al. (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015) that technologies support social CRM. Specifically, Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015) view SM as social CRM technologies that drives CE and relational information processes. SM is an interactive tool that enables firms to engage customers in a two-way relationship and consequently enables firms to gather customer information from this engagement (see section 4.1.2). Thus, this study refers to social CRM as being supported by technologies such as SM and CRM systems.

4.1.1.2 Social CRM purpose

Results from the expert interviews suggest social CRM is designed to understand customers (CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 4) to engage them (Academic Expert 1, Academic Expert 3, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 2, CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 5). However, Academic Expert 2 and CRM Expert 4 described social CRM as managing relationships on a social channel.

The first process is a CE process; Academic Expert 1, Academic Expert 3, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 2, CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 5 highlighted that social CRM is designed to engage customers. CRM Expert 5 emphasised that social CRM incorporates communication, which is key to engaging customers. This makes social CRM an operational tool for CE:

> *"What we define as CRM [social CRM] is encompassed in CE on a bigger scale… CRM is a core component of CE, and that's the way we look at it. Again, the operational core, you can't do without it".*
>
> (CRM Expert 5)

This finding supports previous thinking, that social CRM is designed for CE (e.g. Greenberg, 2010), the act of firms engaging customers. This is because social CRM

uses SM as a channel and also technology which is an enabler to engage customers (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). This is an important finding and a contribution to this study that social CRM is an operational core for CE.

Social CRM enables firms to improve (Academic Expert 3 and CRM Expert 5) and maintain relationships (Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 2) with current and potential customers. Particularly, it enables mutually beneficial (Academic Expert 1, Academic Expert 3, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 5) and personalised relationships between firms and customers (Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 5):

> *"…gets information they [customers] want. When they want it. Now it's personalised some way for them so you can write your… offers or information, based on that you make notes… You could provide to both preferred customer service…."*
>
> (Academic Expert 1)

The finding that social CRM enables personalised relationships between firms and customers is an important point. This may be due to the emergence of advanced technology such as SM that empowers customers to control the relationship (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Firms need to use this technology to personalise their communication to improve their relationships and retain their customers.

Social CRM enables firms to understand their customers to engage with them. Subsequently, it enables firms to improve and maintain a personalised and mutually beneficial relationship.

4.1.1.3 Customers

CRM Expert 4 referred to customers as being divided into current customers and potential customers. Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 3 classified customers in the same way. This supports previous thinking on developing marketing activities such as social CRM to engage and manage relationships, particularly to acquire potential customers and retain current customers (Sigala, 2011; Vivek et al., 2012; Malthouse et al., 2013).

Alternatively, CRM Expert 2 and CRM Expert 4 classified customers into known and unknown customers. Firms may have information about known customers and can interact with them (CRM Expert 4). CRM Expert 2 emphasised that CRM systems enable firms to identify known customers. In this case, on SM, known customers could be firms' current customers. Their information would be available in the CRM

system from previous transactions with the firm, such as purchases of products or services. However, firms may have difficulties identifying social customers, whether they are current customers or potential customers. CRM Expert 2 emphasised that a CRM technology such as the Data Management Platform (DMP) allows firms to identify unknown customers. Firms may not know who their customers are online, particularly on SM (CRM Expert 2 and CRM Expert 4). Hence, this study categorises customers as current or potential customers, which the firms may or may not know on SM.

4.1.1.4 Control

Most of the experts described how customers have control over the firm–customer relationship. However, CRM Expert 1 noted, "*nobody controls the conversation*" between the firms and customers.

Nonetheless, results suggest firms still have some control in the firm–customer relationship compared with the degree of control they had before SM emerged. Firms can exercise some control by participating in conversations among customers (Academic Expert 2 and CRM Expert 3). Furthermore, firms can create content and deliver it in a specific context to their customers (CRM Expert 2). For example, firms can control the number of offer choices they make to their customers (CRM Expert 5). Hence, firms can control by making the interaction with their customers more engaging (Academic Expert 2 and CRM Expert 2). CRM Expert 2 mentioned:

> *"…the brands and corporations have some control in the messaging, and they have total control over how… when customers want to talk to the brand, how easy they make it, and how engaging they make that process. They've total control over that. But in the relationship, they have less control than they had."*
>
> (CRM Expert 2)

Firms still have some level of control in the relationship but in a different way. Previous research only focused on the shift of control to the customers (e.g. Baird and Parasnis, 2011), but firms still have some control in the firm–customer relationship in terms of making the interaction process engaging. Firms can participate in conversations among customers.

In conclusion, social CRM includes two processes. The first process is CE, which is handled by the firm's front office, while the second process is relational information process, handled by the firm's back office. These processes are supported by

technologies such as the CRM system. Social CRM aims to engage current and potential customers, which the firms may or may not know, on SM. It enables firms to understand who their customers are and how to better engage with them, thus enabling them to develop a personalised and mutually beneficial relationship with their social customers, where firms can still exercise some level of control.

4.1.2 Social media (SM)

Based on the interviews, experts spoke about the relationship between social media and CRM, the classification of SM, and the nature of communication through SM (Table 20).

Table 20 *SM sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	Codes	Description
SM extends CRM	• SM as channels • SM added to CRM • Monitor customer's social behaviour	• SM is another set of channels added into CRM; firms can monitor customers' engagement behaviour on SM.
Classification of SM	• Public SM • Private SM	• SM classified into public and private SM channel based on the ownership of the channel.
Communication on SM	• Real-time • Less structured • Two-way communication • Public communication • Private conversations	• The communication on SM can be on real-time, less structured, and two-way communication between firm and customers. Nonetheless, communication can be argued to be 'social' whether it is public or private.

4.1.2.1 SM extends CRM

Most of the academic experts and CRM experts described social CRM as CRM using a SM channel (Academic Expert 1, Academic Expert 2, Academic Expert 3, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 3, CRM Expert 4, and CRM Expert 5). They described SM as another set of channels added into CRM along with other traditional channels such as emails, telephone calls and mail. Hence, social CRM is one part of CRM.

Half of the experts suggested that social CRM addresses customers' social behaviour on SM. Through social CRM, firms can identify customers' social behaviour such as their needs and demands (CRM Expert 1 and CRM Expert 4),

particularly how customers think or feel about the firms (CRM Expert 3). SM has empowered customers to show their behaviour, and this is publicly visible to firms, whether on public or private SM channels. Hence, firms can monitor, evaluate and measure SMCEB (Dolan et al., 2016a) that cannot be controlled by the firms. This means that social CRM enables firms to focus beyond transactional behaviour (Academic Expert 3).

> *"… traditional CRM, focuses on transactions but the purpose for social CRM is not only to involve customer participation in transactions but beyond that in all customer touchpoints… It's to basically exploit customer from all points of viewing in different customer touchpoints…"*
>
> (Academic Expert 3)

CRM Expert 1 proposed that social CRM is considered 'social' only when the interactions between firms and customers are public, that is, where other users can view them. However, this study refers to social CRM as one part of CRM which uses SM as a channel that enables firms to focus on customers' social behaviour, whether the public can view it or not.

4.1.2.2 SM classification

In the findings, only CRM Expert 3 classified SM into two types: public and private SM. The classifications are based on the firm's ownership of the SM channel. CRM Expert 3 stated:

> *"I see SM and private communities, maybe some public too, as a very good … another way of listening and gathering insight about that customer. So that I can bring back into my social CRM system."*
>
> (CRM Expert 3)

Similarly, Evans and Cothrel (2014) and Goldenberg (2015) have also classified SM based on the ownership of the channels. For example, Goldenberg (2015) states that Social CRM is:

> *"…the intersection of SM and CRM. It consists of the ability to harvest information from SM communities, integrate this information into customer profiles, and use the expanded profile for engagement with customers" (p.243).*

Hence, SM is classified into public and private SM.

4.1.2.3 Communication on SM

SM enables a real-time and less structured dialogue between customers and the firms, and between customers. Firms can participate in conversations among customers by listening and responding to them. This indicates that SM allows the communication between firms and customers to be two-way, which means the communication is interactive (Academic Expert 1, CRM Expert 1 and CRM Expert 5). Academic Expert 1 emphasised that relationships and customers are naturally interactive and that SM has enabled them to be so as it is an "*interactive tool*":

> *"So, you have to use interactive tools, and SM is the most interactive tools, and that's what the customers are".*
>
> (Academic Expert 1)

This appears to substantiate the previous research view of social CRM (e.g. Faase et al., 2011). Faase et al. (2011) posit:

> "*Social CRM is about creating a two-way interaction between customer and firm. It is a CRM strategy that uses Web 2.0 services to encourage active CE and involvement*." (n.p.)

This may be because SM is a technology that enables fast communication, where customers no longer receive information from firms but can communicate directly with them, unlike communication through traditional channels such as mail and e-mail. Hence, SM enables two-way communication between firms and customers.

However, CRM Expert 1 highlighted that conversations between firms and customers are considered 'social' only when they are public. Thus, the conversation is not 'social' if it moves from public to private conversation through direct messages on SM.

> *"The social aspect starts … to describe how many other people can hear the conversation. So, if we are on Twitter, it is open for anybody to see or who wants to listen. On Facebook, it might be restricted to my group of friends, and it may not be public."*
>
> (CRM Expert 1)

Thus, the experts view communication between firms and customers as interactive on SM, and it remains social only if it is a public conversation. However, this study considers private and public conversations between firms and customers as 'social' as they involve two-way communication that is interactive. Furthermore, these

conversations are considered as an exchange of UGC between firms and customers on web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

4.1.3 CE process

In this section, Table 21 presents the CE process sub-themes. Each sub-theme will be discussed in turn.

Table 21 *CE process sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	Codes	Description
Engage customers to understand them	• without asking threatening questions • monitor and capture engagement behaviour	• Firms can understand customers through engaging them without asking threatening questions, monitoring and capturing CEB
Handled by the frontline departments	• sales department • marketing department • customer service departments • communication skills • creative skill to create content	• Frontline departments handle CE, including the sales, marketing and customer service departments, which need communication and creative skills to engage customers
Engaging customers effectively	• trust • identifying different levels of SMCEB	• Firms can engage with their customers effectively when they develop trust with their customers and identify different levels of SMCEB.

4.1.3.1 Engage with customers to understand them

Academic Expert 1, CRM Expert 2, CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 5 commented that firms could understand about customers through engaging with them:

> *"So to engage with customers, you have to think about the value. That's through the value of the content that they will search for, read and share, and as they do that you can learn from what works and what doesn't work. Who is sharing the most, and that's the most interesting side of it. So it's kind of the more you engage, the more you learn, the better engaging that you get."*
>
> (Academic Expert 1)

CRM Expert 3 emphasised that SM enables firms to understand more about customers without asking questions that may be "*threatening*" and "*disrespectful of customers' privacy*". In other words, firms could understand their customers on

SM, without being invasive. This is because customers can show their social behaviour, for example, their preferences, on SM. Social behaviour can also be shown through their engagement behaviour such as liking, commenting and sharing certain content firm has published on SM. Firms can monitor and capture this information on SM, so they can understand their customers by engaging with them on SM.

4.1.3.2 Handled by the frontline departments

The front office or departments such as sales, marketing and customer service departments (CRM Expert 3, CRM Expert 4 and CRM Expert 5) handle the CE process. These departments are the frontline departments, and communication skills are essential in these departments. Academic Expert 1 observed the front office must be creative in creating content to engage customers:

> *"… you need a creative person on your team that's good at coming up with ideas for content, and it's basically about telling stories. You have to write it in a particular way as well..."*
>
> (Academic Expert 1)

Therefore, the front office or customer-facing departments such as sales, marketing and customer service departments are involved with CE.

4.1.3.3 Engaging customers effectively

There are ways to design appropriate CE. First, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 4 highlighted that trust is an important factor to create effective CE and particularly to gain loyalty. This is important as trust in a firm–customer relationship affects the firm's engagement with customers.

> *"… bottom line, it's about interaction. Your goal as a company is to have the most amazing interaction that you can with your customers. So that generates relationships, trust and eventually the outcome of engagement."*
>
> (CRM Expert 4)

Second, Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 1 stated that by identifying different levels of SMCEB (see section 4.1.4) on SM, it enables firms to design appropriate engagement with customers:

> *"So there are different levels. That's different segments. So, segmentation comes into it where marketers have to segment and say,*

'well this person is just listening and engaging with me, but this person is heavily engaged with me, are they also influential?' Then I need to engage them more."

(Academic Expert 1)

In other words, identifying different levels of SMCEB will enable firms to design more targeted marketing activities on SM.

This is important because firms can create the right content (see section 4.1.5) and deliver it in the right context (see section 4.1.6) after identifying the different levels of SMCEB. It allows firms to provide appropriate CE, which can be done using data and technology (CRM Expert 2). This means that to engage customers effectively, firms need to understand their customers, supported by technologies. This is discussed in the social CRM definition theme (section 4.1.1) and relational information processes (section 4.1.7).

"If we hit them with the right content at the right time, they're in the mood for whatever message we are giving them, which could be information or an offer, then that's more engaging. The only way you can do that is through data and technology."

(CRM Expert 2)

Therefore, firms can engage with their customers effectively when they develop trust with their customers and identify different levels of SMCEB, which consequently enables firms to develop appropriate CE initiatives by creating the right content and delivering it in the right context.

4.1.4 Social media customer engagement behaviour (SMCEB)

Findings highlighted the different ways of identifying SMCEB to create appropriate CE: through the intensity and the valence of the engagement behaviour (Table 22).

Table 22 *SMCEB sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	Codes	Description
Intensity	• Interactivity with the brand • Intensity using SM • Relevancy of content with personal goal • Low to high-intensity level	• SMCEB is determined by customer's interactivity with the brand, the intensity of SM usage and relevancy of content with the customer's personal goal. Additionally, intensity could be described as different levels ranging from low, medium to high.
Valence	• Positive behaviours • Negative behaviours • Neutral behaviours	• SMCEB could be classified into positive, negative and neutral behaviours.
Different behaviours on different SM channels		• Each customer may show different engagement behaviours on different SM channels.

4.1.4.1 Intensity of the SMCEB

Regarding the intensity, SMCEB is determined by the (i) customer's engagement with the brand (Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 1) or customer's interactivity with the brand (Academic Expert 2); (ii) customer's engagement with technology (Academic Expert 1) or intensity of SM usage (Academic Expert 3); and finally (iii) relevance of content to customer's personal goals (Academic Expert 2). The intensity can be described at different levels ranging from low and medium to high. For instance, low-level behaviour includes observing SM posts, where customers post on SM but do not follow the brand. The low-intensity behaviour could be due to the SM post not being relevant to their personal goals. Medium-level intensity behaviour could include observing SM posts, and following the brand on the SM page as it may be relevant to customers' personal goals. High-level intensity behaviour includes those who show co-creation behaviour with firms, advocate the firms, actively participate, share information and comment on SM as they find it relevant to their personal goals. This supports previous findings and thinking where intensity is used to determine SMCEB (e.g. Malthouse et al., 2013; Dijkmans et al., 2015; Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b).

4.1.4.2 Valence of the CEB

Another dimension in determining SMCEB is the valence of the behaviour. Valence is used to characterise the degree of customers' emotion towards a product, service, brand or firm. Findings suggest that SMCEB could be classified into positive, negative and neutral behaviours. This supports previous thinking by Hollebeek and

Chen (2014), Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b.

4.1.4.3 Different behaviour on different SM channels

While most of the experts described different CEBs on SM, CRM Expert 1 suggested that each customer may show different engagement behaviour on different SM channels:

> *"I think people have different… social personalities on different channels. You may choose to share certain things on Instagram, which are just pictures and tags, or places you've been or interesting artwork."*
>
> (CRM Expert 1)

The reason for this may be that different SM channels have different functionalities and target markets.

Consequently, SMCEB can be differentiated based on its intensity and its valence, and CEB may be different on different SM channels.

4.1.5 SM content marketing

This sub-section presents SM content marketing sub-themes, which are SM content type and personalisation of the content (Table 23).

Table 23 *Content marketing sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	**Codes**	**Description**
SM content type	• Informational content • Entertaining content	• SM content types include informative and entertaining content
Personalisation of the content	• Interesting content • Feels personal • Relevant to the customer's needs, wants, and personal goals • Content delivers value	• Personalised content that determines whether it is interesting, feels personal and relevant to the customers' needs, wants and personal goals, and the value of the content.

The experts noted different SM content, such as informational content and entertaining content, and there are different dimensions in determining the right content on SM. CRM Expert 2 highlighted that delivering the right content to

customers can create effective CE on SM. This is because SM content may affect SMCEB.

The personalisation of the content can determine the right content. This is an important finding as Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 5 explained about providing personalised content to customers to engage them. Personalised content is authentic (Academic Expert 2) and makes customers feel as if firms "*care about them*" or are "*responding to them personally"* (CRM Expert 5). This includes offering customers content that will allow them to choose (CRM Expert 5).

The personalised content determines whether the content is interesting and relevant to customer's needs, wants and personal goals. Nearly all the experts emphasised the relevance of the firm's content.

> *"Now there's going to be activities… a well-targeted email. If Amazon knows that you like certain books and your favourite author just came out with a new book, and they sent you an email saying your favourite author has just published his book, do you want to order it? It's a well-targeted email. It's relevant to a personal goal."*
>
> (Academic Expert 2)

Moreover, the personalised content determines whether the content delivers value to customers (Academic Expert 1). This supports the idea that SM content facilitates SMCEB (Vivek et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2016b; Kao et al., 2016). Firms use SM content as a means to connect with customers' experiences and reflect their needs, wants, personal goals and values.

To summarise, delivering the right content may influence SMCEB. The right content is considered to be personalised content that determines whether it is interesting, feels personal and relevant to customers' needs, wants and personal goals, and the value of the content.

4.1.6 SM context

Table 24 presents the sub-themes of the SM context, which include time and place.

Table 24 *Context sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	Codes	Description
Time	• real-time • frequency	• Engage customers on real-time, and deliver content not too regularly
Place	• device • channel	• Deliver content to the right devices such as mobile phones and also deliver it through the right channel such as SM

There are different dimensions in determining the right context to deliver SM content. CRM Expert 2 described how delivering the content in the right context will enable firm to engage with customers effectively. This means delivering at the right time and place. CRM Expert 2 stated:

> *"If appropriate. It's all about the right content in the right context. Context is time and place."*
>
> (CRM Expert 2)

In terms of 'time', Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 1 described interactions between firms and customers on SM channel as engaging, as it is real-time. Consequently, firms can respond to customers quickly. CRM Expert 1 described real-time engagement as synchronous engagement, as one level of CE.

> *"There's two forms of engagement. There's asynchronous and synchronous. We're having a conversation right now in real-time, so that's one level of engagement. A company and a customer having communications that are near real-time – phone, text message – then that's an engaging conversation."*
>
> (CRM Expert 1)

However, Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 2 highlighted that delivering the content at the wrong time, for example posting too often, could lead customers to disengage from the firm. Hence, the frequency of delivering SM content is also considered as 'time'. Yet, the 'right time' is still subjective, which warranted further investigation in the next data collection phase. CRM Expert 4 emphasised that engaging customers at the wrong time is not considered as engagement:

> *"… if your phone rings, and they say, 'it's your bank', … I'm not talking to them. They just want to sell me something. Right? It's not on your terms. It's not engagement. This is the company trying to engage."*
>
> (CRM Expert 4)

'Place' includes different devices and channels. CRM Expert 2 stressed the importance of delivering the content to the right devices, such as mobiles and personal computers. Additionally, most of the experts emphasised the use of different channels to have appropriate engagement. In particular, CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 5 emphasised engaging on customer's chosen channels, including the SM channel.

As SM has empowered customers, they expect firms to listen and engage with them on the platforms (Leary, 2008). Therefore, SM is considered to be the right channel and the right context for firms to engage with customers. Academic Expert 1, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 4 and CRM Expert 5 stressed the need to respond to customers' social behaviour by providing interactive platforms and giving value to them:

> *"So, by giving your customers a platform to interact, you are providing value to them to learn from each other. That's probably the biggest thing to it. Goes into value co-creation… you can think all you like about review sites or SM platforms, TripAdvisor for hotels or Booking.com or Yelp for restaurants, but if you are on there as a business, you are giving your customers a platform to interact. That's providing great value to them."*
> (Academic Expert 1)

Therefore, delivering SM content in the right context may influence SMCEB. Interacting on SM may be the right context to provide value to customers.

4.1.7 Relational information processes

The second social CRM process is relational information processes (see Table 25).

Table 25 *Relational information process sub-themes and codes*

Sub-themes	Codes	Description
Back office		• Relational information process is a back-office process of managing information.
Information reciprocity		• Customers share information such as their preferences on SM, and firms can respond them.
Information capture	• Monitor customers • Listen to customers • Gather customer information • Social data	• Information capture includes monitoring, listening, and gathering customer information from SM channels. This data is called social information that is dynamic and sentimental.

Information integration	• Enhance customer profile • Data from different systems	• Integrating information gathered from different systems such as SM into the social CRM system enhances the customer profile.
Information access	• Different departments should have the same access • Technological support to share information	• Different departments in a firm should have the same access to the same customer profiles, and this needs technological support to share information.
Information use	• To understand their customers to engage effectively • To identify the customer's degree of being social • To create the right content and deliver in the right context • Measure the value of customers' engagement	• To identify different degrees of SMCEB, create the appropriate content and deliver it in the right context to customers, and measure the value of the customers' engagement.

4.1.7.1 Information reciprocity

Firms can respond to customers who share information such as their preferences on SM. Information reciprocity is similar to CE, and interaction is essential (Harrigan et al., 2015). SM facilitates this interaction between firms and customers where customers share information, and firms respond them.

> *"The hotels are always challenged with 'how do I get deeper information about [CRM EXPERT 3] without being offensive?'. There are different ways of doing this, and SM can play a role because if I'm [customers] encouraged to get on a SM site to say what I like or dislike, or what's important and unimportant to me, and [HOSPITALITY COMPANY NAME] listens to what I say because they are scraping and harvesting information, they can learn a whole lot about me."*
>
> (CRM Expert 3)

4.1.7.2 Information capture

This phase includes monitoring, listening, and gathering customer information from SM. Monitoring customers' posts on SM provides value to firms as it allows them to gather customer information (Academic Expert 1). As customers can communicate back to firms via SM, firms must listen to them (Academic Expert 2, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 3) and gather that information to respond them appropriately (Academic Expert 1, CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 3, CRM Expert 4, CRM Expert 5). As previous research has shown, information capture is the collection of customer information from SM (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015).

Information gathered on SM is called social information. It could be the form of information customers share on SM or their engagement behaviour on SM. Social information is dynamic and sentimental information. It enables firms to understand how customers feel about the firms, products or services.

> *"We had the sentimental side, and we had the transactional side. Now we could engage customers more effectively because we understood not only what they buy, and what they like, and what they want, but we also have an insight into how they feel about doing business with our company."*
>
> (CRM Expert 3)

This makes clear that information gathered from SM is different from information gathered from traditional channels such as mail and email; firms can gather sentimental and intimate customer information from SM (Goldenberg, 2015).

4.1.7.3 Information integration

Information gathered from SM can enable firms to enhance the customer profile by adding it to the transactional information (CRM Expert 3 and CRM Expert 4):

> *"…then we can put that inside the profile, and have a more comprehensive profile that contains not only the traditional static information about what they bought, when they bought, what they want, what they said, what's their value, that's kind of transactional or static information as I call it. But now we can have the dynamic or sentimental side of how people view the company. We can add to the profile. Now we can have a more robust profile… the sentimental side, and the transactional side."*
>
> (CRM Expert 3)

Information integration is important, so that customer information gathered from different systems is not lost. Customer information gathered from SM is integrated into the social CRM system to develop a detailed history of customer relationships (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015).

4.1.7.4 Information access

The different departments in a firm should have the same access to the same customer profile to prevent data silos (CRM Expert 1 and CRM Expert 3). Providing frontline employees with access to the same customer information (social information and transactional information) is necessary to satisfy customers during

the engagement. However, as CRM Expert 1 stressed, this need "*technology and discipline to share information*" across different departments.

4.1.7.5 Information use

The customer-facing departments also use customer information for customer insight, to enable firms to understand their customers (CRM Expert 1, CRM Expert 4 and CRM Expert 5). This means that firms can identify different degrees of SMCEB (Academic Expert 1 and CRM Expert 1) and create appropriate content and deliver it in the right context to customers (CRM Expert 2). Firms can engage with their customers effectively. Having customer insight will help the customer-facing departments to make customers feel as if firms understand them and care about them. This will help them to attract potential customers (CRM Expert 1) and retain current customers (CRM Expert 4). So information use is the use of customer information for relationship marketing purposes (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). The more firms understand their customers, consequently, they can engage with them effectively. Academic Expert 1 noted, "*the more you engage, the more you learn, the better engaging that you get.*" Another use of customer insight is to measure the value of customers' engagement (CRM Expert 4) or their CE effectiveness.

Ultimately, relational information processes (information reciprocity, information capture, information integration, information access and information use) drive social CRM, which may positively influence CRM performance (Harrigan et al., 2015). They enable firms to engage with their customers better and to measure their CE effectiveness.

4.2 Social CRM definition

The present study defines social CRM as:

> *One part of CRM which uses SM, both public and private, as a channel. It includes two processes, CE and relational information processes, that are supported by technologies. It is designed to understand the social behaviour of current and potential customers to engage them in a personalised and mutually beneficial relationship, where firms still have some control.*

The next section presents a framework based on the key findings from the exploratory expert interviews and the literature review.

4.3 Preliminary framework: The relationship between social CRM and CE

The preliminary framework (Figure 6) shows the relationship between social CRM and CE. The elements in black indicate concepts that were developed in the literature review chapter, while the elements in blue indicate key findings derived from the exploratory expert interviews.

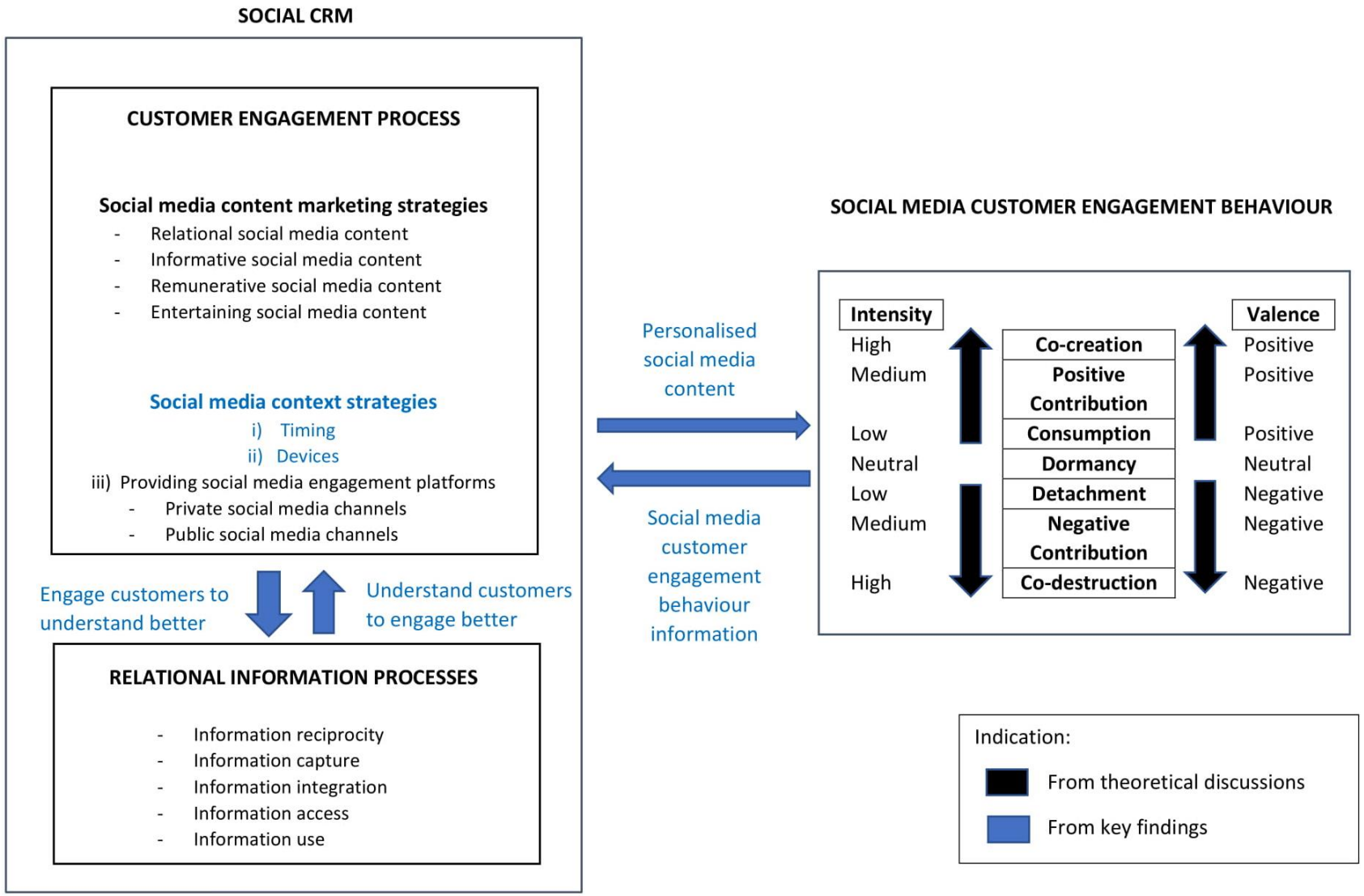


Figure 6. Conceptual framework from Stage 3

4.3.1 Social CRM's two processes

The framework presents social CRM as consisting of two processes: CE process and relational information process (Chen and Ching, 2007; Jayachandran et al., 2005; Harrigan et al., 2011; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). CE is handled by the firm's front office, while relational information process is handled by the firm's back office and these two processes form a cycle.

4.3.1.1 CE process

This study defines CE as the act of firms engaging customers. CE initiatives are handled by the firm's front office, which involves departments such as sales, marketing and customer service. These departments are important in firms as they are the frontline departments that communicate with customers.

In this process, the frontline departments engage with social customers. Firms can effectively engage with customers by providing personalised content that makes the customers feel as if the firm cares about them and promoting personalised relationships (Malthouse et al., 2013). This supports previous thinking, but also contributes in terms of the integration of personalised content into the framework. SM content such as relational content, informational content, remunerative content and entertaining content affect SMCEB, which also supports previous thinking by Vivek et al. (2012), Dolan et al. (2016b) and Kao et al. (2016).

This also provides value to customers. Personalised content allows firms to engage with different SMCEB. Consequently, firms can understand customers by gathering customer information from SM. The more firm engages with their social customers, the more they can understand about them from the information gathered. Furthermore, firms need to use the right content and context to engage customers effectively.

i. SM content marketing strategies

The right content appears to be personalised content that is interesting and relevant to customer's needs, wants and personal goals, to be of value to customers. Such content, including relational content, informational content, remunerative content and entertaining content, is a means of engagement with customers. SM content that links to customers' experiences will reflect their needs, wants, personal goals and values (Malthouse et al., 2016a).

ii. SM context strategies

The right context includes having the right time and place. Delivering SM content in real-time and posting it regularly constitutes the right time. 'Place' concerns the use of devices and channels. In this case, the study will only be focusing on SM, particularly private and public SM channels. The analysis has shown the importance of providing SM as a platform to interact in the firm–customer relationship. Therefore, a SM platform is the right channel to provide the right context for the engagement initiatives. Nonetheless, customers may have different engagement behaviours on different SM channels. Different SM channels have different target markets. Therefore, SM content should be tailored to the target market and the functionalities of each SM channel. For example, a piece of SM content may engage customers effectively on SM channel A, but not on SM channel B.

A contribution of this study is the addition of context strategies into the framework. Particularly the use of real-time and the frequency of posting SM content determine the right time, and that certain devices and channels determine the right place.

4.3.1.2 Relational information process

By comparison, relational information process is a back-office process that handles the information part. Findings show that this process comprises five phases, which are: (i) information reciprocity, (ii) information capture, (iii) information integration, (iv) information access, and (v) information use.

Aside from information that customers share on SM, SMCEB is also considered as customer information. This information is gathered from SM and integrated into the customer profile in the social CRM system and is social information that is dynamic and sentimental. This contributes to the integration of social information into the framework. Once integrated into the customer profile, it will produce a robust profile containing transactional information and social information. This will provide firm with customer insight, which will help in engaging customers effectively. For example, customer insight will help the customer-facing departments in creating the right content and context for personalised interaction with customers via SM. The more the firm understands their customers, the more they can engage with their customers effectively.

4.3.2 Social media customer engagement behaviour (SMCEB)

SMCEB can be categorised into seven types of engagement behaviour: (i) Co-creating, (ii) positive contribution, (iii) consumption, (iv) dormancy, (v) detachment

(vi) negative contribution, and (vii) co-destruction (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b). This segmentation of SMCEB is based on valence (positive, neutral and negative) and intensity (high to neutral to low). In this case, the intensity is determined by the relevance of customer's personal goals and engagement with the brand and technology (i.e. SM usage). From these determinants, firm can only influence the intensity of customers' engagement behaviour by providing content that is relevant to their personal goals and provides value for customers.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings from the exploratory expert interviews. Themes and concepts were identified, and later a social CRM definition and framework was developed.

Regarding the relationship between social CRM and CE, that firms can create personalised content to engage customers effectively. This is determined by creating the right content and delivering it in the right context (time and place). 'Place' includes devices and channels. SM is considered as the right 'place' to engage with customers, hence the importance of providing SM platforms to engage customers.

Additionally, findings show that social information is gathered from the SMCEB shown on SM. It enables firms to understand their customers and identify different degrees of SMCEB, allowing firms to engage with their customers effectively, thus attracting potential new customers and retaining current customers. For example, the insights from SM will help firms' customer-facing departments in creating the right content and delivering it in the right context to make their customers feel as if firms understand them and care about them.

Findings appear to substantiate that social CRM includes two processes, a CE process and a relational information process. Interestingly, key findings suggest these two processes form a cycle. The more the firm engages with customers, the more the firm understand about the customers, and enhance the level of CE. This highlights the importance of knowledge sharing and understanding (Hibbert et al., 2012) as a connection between CE process and relational information processes in social CRM. Engaging customers increases the likelihood for firms to gather better information about social customers. Subsequently, this information will enable firms to understand their customers and improve their CE initiatives.

The conceptual framework will be used for further investigation in Stage 4 of the research process, which involves contextualising the framework in multiple case studies in the tourism industry.

CHAPTER 5 CASE STUDY A ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents empirical evidence of Case Study A, Hotel Group Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts (Hotels 1 and 2). This chapter aims to understand social CRM strategy of Case Study A, which addresses the third research question of this study: How do hotels practise their social CRM?

5.1 Case Study A background

In 1971, Shangri-La brand was founded in Singapore. James Hilton's 1933 novel, Lost Horizon inspired the name. It is a well-known brand in the world and is a leading brand in Asia Pacific's hotel industry, managed by Shangri-La group based in Hong Kong. Shangri-La strives to please customers with its philosophy "Shangri-La hospitality from a caring family" encapsulating Asian hospitality, in contrast with Western hospitality that focuses on discipline, control and order. In Malaysia, Shangri-La Hotels (Malaysia) Berhad (SHMB) owns the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts chain which includes Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort, Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa, Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur, Traders Hotel Kuala Lumpur, Hotel Jen Penang, Golden Sands Resort, Penang, Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa and Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour Johor.

5.1.1 Hotel background

Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort and Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa are both in Sabah, Malaysia. Both aim at similar target markets which are travellers from China, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Brunei, Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK).

5.1.1.1 Hotel 1: Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort

Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort is a 5-star hotel in Tuaran, Sabah Malaysia. It was established in 1996 and offers 499 rooms, five restaurants, ten function rooms, a spa, recreation facilities and a nature reserve within its grounds where customers can experience wildlife. In this study, Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort is referred to as Hotel 1.

5.1.1.2 Hotel 2: Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa

Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa is a 5-star Shangri-La Resorts brand established in 1983. It has 492 rooms, seven restaurants and bars, 18 function

rooms for meetings and banquet events, a spa, and recreation facilities. In this study, Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa is referred to as Hotel 2.

Hotels 1 and 2 have a similar organisational chart (see Appendix 17). Each hotel is led by a General Manager and has a Sales and Marketing department, led by a Director of Sales and Marketing. This department includes Sales, Marketing, Communications, and Revenue. The Communications department, headed by a Director of Communications, and supported by the Digital Marketing Coordinator, Marketing Communications Executive and Graphic Designer, handles the social CRM of each hotel.

5.1.2 CRM background

Hotels 1 and 2 deliver consistent quality and value for all products and services to satisfy their customers during their stay. They engage with their customers to build and maintain good relationships that deliver value to customers. Shangri-La utilises different tools to achieve this. For example, "Your Voice", a mobile application which allows customers to scan a quick response (QR) code to inform the hotel about their staying experiences. Consequently, the hotel can act based on these shared experiences before the customers leave the hotel. Next, the hotels utilise the Defect Reporting, Recording and Resolution process (DR3), which allows them to gather customers' complaints, identify them and reduce defect trends recurrences. All Shangri-La employees have access to the DR3 system. Furthermore, they have a guest preference slip where hotel employees record customers' preferences while guests are at the hotel and share it with the Front Office department. These data and other guest information collected at different touchpoints at the hotel (Eaton, 2016), are then stored in MICROS-Fidelio's OPERA Central Reservations and Customer Information Systems (Benady, 2015). The OPERA system is used by the Front Office department during check-in and check-out process, and for sending targeted messages to Golden Circle members via regular email communications (Benady, 2015).

Golden Circle is Shangri-La Hotels loyalty programme that offers staying and non-staying customers exclusive privileges and benefits with its philosophy 'to strive for continuous improvement to deliver unforgettable experiences for their valued customers' (Shangri-La International Hotel Management Ltd, 2018). The loyalty points are referred to as Golden Circle Award Points (GC Award Points).

5.1.3 SM background

SM enables Shangri-La to engage with their customers and, thus, provide a better customer experience (Eaton, 2016) and build a relationship with them (WIT, 2011). The SM channels of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TripAdvisor, Google +, YouTube, WeChat, Weibo and YouKu are the main ones utilised by Shangri-La. Table 8 lists the SM channels used by Hotels 1 and 2.

Shangri-La uses different SM platforms to reach different market segments. For example, Instagram aims at a wider and younger market. Twitter is used to reach its Western market, while TripAdvisor aims at travellers who trust reviews. YouTube, however, is used to reach a market that prefers to watch video content. WeChat, Weibo, Youku are used to reach their Chinese market. Hotels 1 and 2 have started to utilise WeChat, Weibo and Youku due to the increase of Chinese outbound tourism market into Sabah. The Sabah Tourism Board (2017) reported an increase of 51.8 per cent Chinese tourist arrivals in 2016 (Sabah Tourism Board, 2017). Nonetheless, they mainly use Facebook and Instagram to reach their customers, and these platforms are used by global travellers (Statista, 2017). Facebook, particularly, is used to reach a more global audience regardless of their age (Sprout Social, 2017). Tables 26 and 27 shows the distribution of Hotels 1 and 2's Facebook page fans, by country.

Table 26 *Top ten Facebook fans country distribution of Hotel 1 on the 31st December 2017*

Country	Fan count	Percent of total fans
Philippines	30883	37.5
Malaysia	26019	31.6
Indonesia	5940	7.2
United Kingdom	2820	3.4
United States of America	2763	3.4
Australia	1917	2.3
Saudi Arabia	1566	1.9
Singapore	1506	1.8
Hong Kong	1051	1.3
United Arab Emirates	883	1.1

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

Table 27 *Top ten Facebook fans country distribution of Hotel 2 on the 31st December 2017*

Country	Fan count	Percent of total fans
Malaysia	54686	66.4
Philippines	6882	8.4
Thailand	2645	3.2
Singapore	2125	2.6
Indonesia	1864	2.3
United States of America	1829	2.2
Brunei Darussalam	1724	2.1
Australia	1559	1.9
Hong Kong	1243	1.5
Saudi Arabia	986	1.2

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

Hotels 1 and 2 have over 80,000 fans on the Facebook page. Based on Tables 26 and 27, most fans for these two hotels come from Malaysia and the Philippines, which suggests that both Hotels 1 and 2 have similar fans from different countries.

On Instagram, Facebook and WeChat, the Shangri-La needs engaging content to reach a wide number of customers organically. However, on Facebook, Shangri-La could better reach target audiences with paid and personalised posts (Facebook Ads), as Facebook newsfeed competition has intensified. Thus, different SM platforms use different strategies (WIT, 2011).

Moreover, the hotels yielded data from multiple sources for their marketing strategies, monitoring positive, negative and neutral customer reviews about their experiences on SM using listening software, to maintain their reputation (Boxever Team, 2016).

Shangri-La, therefore, used SM platforms for its CRM strategies to engage their customers. This study explores Shangri-La's strategy of using its SM platforms to build and maintain customer relationships. The next section explores the empirical findings of Case Study A.

There were 23 participants for Case Study A, including 17 hotel employees (Table 28) and six hotel customers (Table 29).

Table 28 *The employee profile of Hotel 1 and Hotel 2*

Hotel	Job Category	Reference code	Respondents' job title	Department	Years of Experience working at the hotel	Gender	Age
Hotel 1	Digital Marketing/Communications Managers	DOC H1	Director of Communications	Communications	21	Female	48
		MCE H1	Marketing Communications Executive	Communications	1	Female	34
	Frontline hotel employees	FOSL H1	Front Office Service Leader	Front Office	18	Male	45
		RM H1	Recreations Manager	Recreations	20	Male	38
		FNBSM H1	F&B Service Manager	Food and Beverages	21	Male	41
		SPA H1	Spa Manager	Spa	10	Female	34
Hotel 2	Digital Marketing Managers	DOC H2	Director of Communications	Communications	7	Female	35
	Guest Contact Hotel employees	SEM H2	Senior Events Manager	Events	4	Female	36
		EM H2	**Event Manager**	Events	34	Male	54
		AFOM H2	**Assistant Front Office Manager**	**Front Office**	6	Female	32
		GRO H2	**Guest Relations Officer**	**Front Office**	12	Female	35
		GHM H2	**Guest History Manager**	**Front Office**	6	Female	26
		GEM H2	**Guest Experience Manager**	**Front Office**	17	Female	36
		ARM H2	Assistant Recreation Manager	Recreations	23	Male	41
		AORA H2	Activities Office and Recreation Admin	Recreations	18	Female	39
		FNBSM H2	F&B Service Manager	Food and Beverages	10	Male	32
		SPA H2	Spa Manager	Spa	11	Female	38

Table 29 *The customer profile of Hotel 1 and Hotel 2*

	Reference code	Respondents' Name	Country of Origin	Country of Residence	Gender	Age	Occupation	Preferred social media
Hotel 1	G1 H1	Guest 1 H1	Malaysia	Malaysia	Male	33	Businessman	- Facebook - Instagram - Twitter - Discord, - Hello App - Fundeavour - Twitch
	G2 H1	Guest 2 H1	Malaysia	Malaysia	Male	26	Quantity Surveyor	- Facebook, - TripAdvisor
	G3 H1	Guest 3 H1	Malaysia	Malaysia	Female	62	Management Consultant	- Facebook, - Instagram -
Hotel 2	G1 H2	Guest 1 H2	UK	Brunei	Female	35	Consultant	- Facebook - Instagram
	G2 H2	Guest 2 H2	UK	UK	Male	58	Retired	- TripAdvisor - Facebook
	G3 H2	Guest 3 H2	Malaysia	Malaysia	Female	27	Clerk	- Instagram

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Theme: Social CRM

5.2.1.1 Social CRM definition

i. Social CRM uses SM

Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 defined social CRM as CRM that uses SM to manage their followers who may or may not be their customers (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). She added that social CRM created awareness about the hotel and allowed the hotel to interact with current and potential customers. Director of Communications Hotel 1 defined social CRM as engagement with the people on SM (Director of Communications Hotel 1). Therefore, social CRM uses SM to engage with followers or non-followers who are not necessarily their customers.

Similarly, Director of Communications Hotel 2 defined social CRM as a strategy that uses SM platforms to engage current and potential customers and gather information from these platforms. Thus, it shows that Hotel 2 uses social CRM which includes two processes: to engage customers but also collect "actionable intelligence". This definition is similar to that of Hotel 1, as they defined social CRM as engaging current and potential social customers, but Hotel 1 included SM users who were not necessarily their customers.

ii. Social CRM attracts customers

Both Hotels 1 and 2 attracted new fans and customers using SM content to their customers' preferences which drew their attention, and gained new fans and interest, thus getting them to either like the SM page or visit the hotels. The influence of SM content on SMCEB is discussed in section 5.2.3.

iii. Social CRM maintains social customers

Both hotels interacted with their social customers to maintain customer loyalty, using interesting SM content in line with their customers' preferences to maintain loyalty. Additionally, Hotel 2 uses respectful language to maintain customers' loyalty on SM. Director of Communications Hotel 2 noted:

> *"Customer loyalty. Because SM works so fast, everything is instantaneous. We do something bad; they have no problems with unfollowing us. You have to maintain basically the language we use. We must be respectful. We have to put out content that is interesting for them. That is how we keep track of our followers."*
>
> (Director of Communications, Hotel 2)

The hotel uses content with a respectful tone in engaging with their customers. However, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 suggested that customers may have experienced Shangri-La's hospitality and extended their loyalty by following the brand's hotel SM pages. Thus, SM content can help to maintain customer loyalty, but customers may also extend their loyalty to SM if they have experienced Shangri-La's hospitality.

iv. Disengaged SM users

Hotel 1's SM content may also influence customers to 'unlike' their SM page (see section 5.2.3). However, neither hotel focused on winning back customers who 'opt-out' of the firm–customer relationship on SM. This is because it is hard to trace them. Director of Communications, Hotel 2 unlikely to know who had 'unliked' their page. Nonetheless, it would be useful to have this insight to identify the total of disengaged customers and their countries of origin.

5.2.1.2 Social CRM activities

Findings indicate that social CRM involves SM marketing, social selling and social customer service. SM marketing uses SM content to attract new fans to 'like' the SM pages and visit the hotels. Social selling refers to generating sales enquiries from SM, and leading SM users to click the website link to make bookings. Social customer services respond to customer reviews and respond to negative reviews with strategies for service recovery. These activities will be explored in the SM content section (section 5.2.3), and the CE process section (section 5.2.2).

5.2.1.3 Social CRM key elements

i. People

a. Provide hospitality for customers

Hotels 1 and 2 hotel employees play a key role in satisfying customers and representing the hotel in service delivery. Guest 3 Hotel 1 stated that employees are the backbone that ensures the hotel's success.

The employees demonstrated Shangri-La's Asian hospitality culture, where customers were treated as if they were friends and family (Guest 3 Hotel 1). Furthermore, Hotel 2 highlighted that returnees preferred to be treated as friends and family (Guest Relations Officer Hotel 2). The Recreations Manager Hotel 1 noted that most of the employees were locals and were more likely to serve their customers as they would if welcoming them in their own homes. He added that

their aim is to deliver hospitality that differentiates their hotel from other hotels. Hotel 1 emphasised that employees would 'go the extra mile' to satisfy their customers (Director of Communications Hotel 1). This could encourage customers to mention the hotel employees' friendly hospitality on the hotel's SM page. The employees' hospitality could also encourage customers to revisit the hotel, or to other Shangri-La brands (Director of Communications Hotel 1).

The hotels feature the employees on their SM pages using storytelling techniques (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2) (see section 5.2.3.3).

The hotel employees are a key element in engaging customers though not all of them are authorised to initiate engagement on SM. Communications department employees also had limited authority to respond to negative reviews (Director of Communications Hotel 1). Only top management, such as the Regional Digital Manager, General Manager, Resident Manager, Director of Sales and Marketing, and Director of Communications had this authority. It shows a lack of empowerment to lower-level employees to respond to their customers. However, it shows the top management takes CE seriously and wants to maintain that 'voice' in all responses. The hotels' initiatives and responses to CE will be discussed in the CE process section (section 5.2.2).

b. Intercompany collaboration

The Communications departments of Hotels 1 and 2 work with the Sales and Marketing departments to create a marketing plan and close sales from customers who have posted inquiries on SM (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1).

Furthermore, the Communications department collaborates with the head and employees of the relevant frontline departments and top management. The department shares social information, particularly reviews, with them to carry out investigations and/or integrate information into the CRM system. This will be discussed in the relational information processes section (section 5.2.5).

ii. Technology

Both hotels use *Socialbakers*, SM insights (e.g. Facebook insights), and *TrustYou* to monitor the SM CE initiatives and measure their SM content effectiveness. They use these tools because the Communications department is unable to create their analytics due to vast amount of unstructured data on SM, and they may not have

SM analysts to create the reports. Thus, these tools are used to help in producing analytic reports and in decision-making.

Hotels 1 and 2 also use a CRM system to store information gathered from SM and traditional channels for their social CRM strategy (see section 5.2.5).

iii. Processes

This section discusses the customer lifecycle process; CE process will be discussed in section 5.2.2. Relational information process will be discussed in section 5.2.5.

Spa Manager Hotel 2 described the pre-arrival, arrival, departure and post-departure process as the 'customer journey' process (Spa Manager Hotel 2).

Hotels 1 and 2 used SM before customer's arrival (for example to create awareness or sales through their SM content), and post-departure (for example to handle service recovery) in the customer lifecycle process (pre-arrival to post-departure). Specifically, the hotels used the pre-arrival phase to attract customers to visit the hotels. However, only Hotel 1 used SM to influence CE at the arrival stage (for example, to inform customers about current activities in real-time).

5.2.2 Theme: CE process

5.2.2.1 Customers' engagement with the hotel

i. Customers initiate engagement

The customers initiated engagement by making enquiries about information (Guest 2 Hotel 1), sharing their SM posts by tagging or hashtagging the hotels (Guest 1 Hotel 2), and writing reviews (Guest 3 Hotel 1) on SM. Guest 1 Hotel 1 commented:

> *"Usually, I will leave feedback or a review on TripAdvisor or their Facebook after staying there. It is a way to let them know how they fare and how they can improve further. I don't follow any hotels on SM."*
>
> (Guest 1, Hotel 1)

Customers provided reviews on either Facebook or TripAdvisor for hotels to know and improve their services. Thus, the reviews help the hotels and might influence a wider audience's decision-making process, whether through positive or negative reviews (Food and Beverage Service Manager Hotel 1).

ii. Customers' responses to hotels' engagement initiatives

Customers also responded to the hotels' SM engagement with various SMCEB, for example, reacting (e.g. 'like', 'love'), commenting, sharing, viewing, reading, clicking on the website links in the hotels' SM content, and 'liking' or 'unliking' the hotels' SM pages.

These behaviours were treated as a measure of the effectiveness of the hotels' SM content. Both Hotels 1 and 2 referred to them as useful feedback and information to facilitate developing and maintaining their SM content (for example, People of [HOTEL 1], Wildlife Wednesday, Flash Mob). A flash mob comprises a large group of people gathering to perform a random performance and then dispersing (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2018). Director of Communications, Hotel 1 observed:

> "*…based on the engagement. The number of likes (reactions) and the number of shares. So now we know how People of [HOTEL 1] works (content). We would keep that. The Wildlife Wednesday (content) also works, so we will keep that, and the flash mob (content) kind of information or posting works for us. We are hoping to do another one."*
>
> (Director of Communications, Hotel 1)

This shows that hotels' marketing is data-driven. They measure the number of views to indicate awareness of their videos on SM. Customers also mentioned reading Hotel 1's SM content in response to the hotel's engagement (Guest 3 Hotel 1). However, the hotels only measure views that indicate the number of SM users reached or viewed it. Hotel 1 also received reactions to its SM content, but they had hoped to get more comments (Director of Communications Hotel 1).

The hotels use website link clicks to measure conversion. It is the desired outcome of the SM content to attract SM users to visit the hotels' websites. Additionally, it enables the hotels to measure the total numbers of website visitors and customer behaviours on the website after clicking the link, whether they look for information or make bookings (Director of Communications Hotel 1 and Director of Communications Hotel 2). SM users who visit the website are potential customers. Those who make purchases turn into purchasing customers, so the link can lead SM users to become purchasing customers. Director of Communications Hotel 2 mentioned:

> *"… for example, two months ago, we ran a wedding ad campaign on Facebook. We put a tracking link there (in the content). We saw X number of people going into the link. We saw where they went after that.*

We saw about four pages that they would go on until they asked for a proposal."

(Director of Communications, Hotel 2)

They use these tracking links to help understand SMCEB and to make informed marketing decisions about their content and their website. The links can encourage customers to engage SM content, or even visit hotels' websites.

Additionally, the hotels measure the numbers of followers on their SM page, to find out if their SM content has attracted new fans (Director of Communications Hotel 1). However, the hotels do not measure the number of customers who 'unlike' the SM page as they would rather invest their time into winning new fans than winning back the disengaged customers (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). Hotel 2 reasoned that they do not have any way of finding out who disengaged from the SM page, although they thought this information might be useful. For instance, there were two posts containing Easter Sunday content on Hotel 1's Facebook page which might have caused 274 fans to 'unlike' Hotel 1's Facebook page within a week after they were posted. Possibly, the fans did not celebrate Easter or are not interested with the hotel's page. Figure 7 shows one of the Easter Sunday postings, which invites customers and their families for Easter Sunday brunch and activities.



Figure 7. Easter Sunday content of Hotel 1. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

iii. Customers' engagement valence

Customers showed different SMCEB to the SM content and SM pages of Hotels 1 and 2. SMCEB could either be positive, negative or neutral. Table 30 presents a summary of the CE valence.

Table 30 *CE valence of Hotels 1 and 2 customers*

SMCEB	Customers engage on	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Reactions	SM content	/	/	
Comments		/	/	
Shares		/		
Link clicks				/
Views				/
Read				/
Like	SM page	/		
Unlike			/	
Reviews		/	/	/

5.2.2.2 Hotels' engagement with customers

i. Hotels' CE initiatives

Hotels 1 and 2 initiated engagement with their customers with SM content (see section 5.2.3). This content is based on informed choices, which will be discussed in the relational information processes section (section 5.2.5).

ii. Hotels' responses to customers' engagement

a. Hotels' responses to customers' SM posts

Hotels 1 and 2 reposted customers' SM posts on the hotel's SM page. Hotel 2 responded further by commenting on customers' SM posts, to show their appreciation for tagging or hashtagging the hotels on SM, which makes customers feel acknowledged.

b. Hotels' responses to customers' direct messages

Hotels 1 and 2 responded to customers who asked for information through the SM direct messaging (for example Guest Hotel 1, Director of Communications Hotel 2). Typical enquiries would be about hotel bookings or recreation activities at the hotel.

c. Hotels' responses to customers' comments on the hotel's SM posts

Both Hotels 1 and 2 responded to customers' comments on their SM content by commenting back (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2) or 'liking' them. Figure 8 shows a Hotel 2 Facebook post about its newly renovated room. However, a customer commented negatively about her current room at the same time as the hotel uploaded the post, and the hotel responded to the customer. It is interesting that this post still garnered a high positive response (2,200 reactions including 'likes', 'loves', and 'wows') on Facebook.

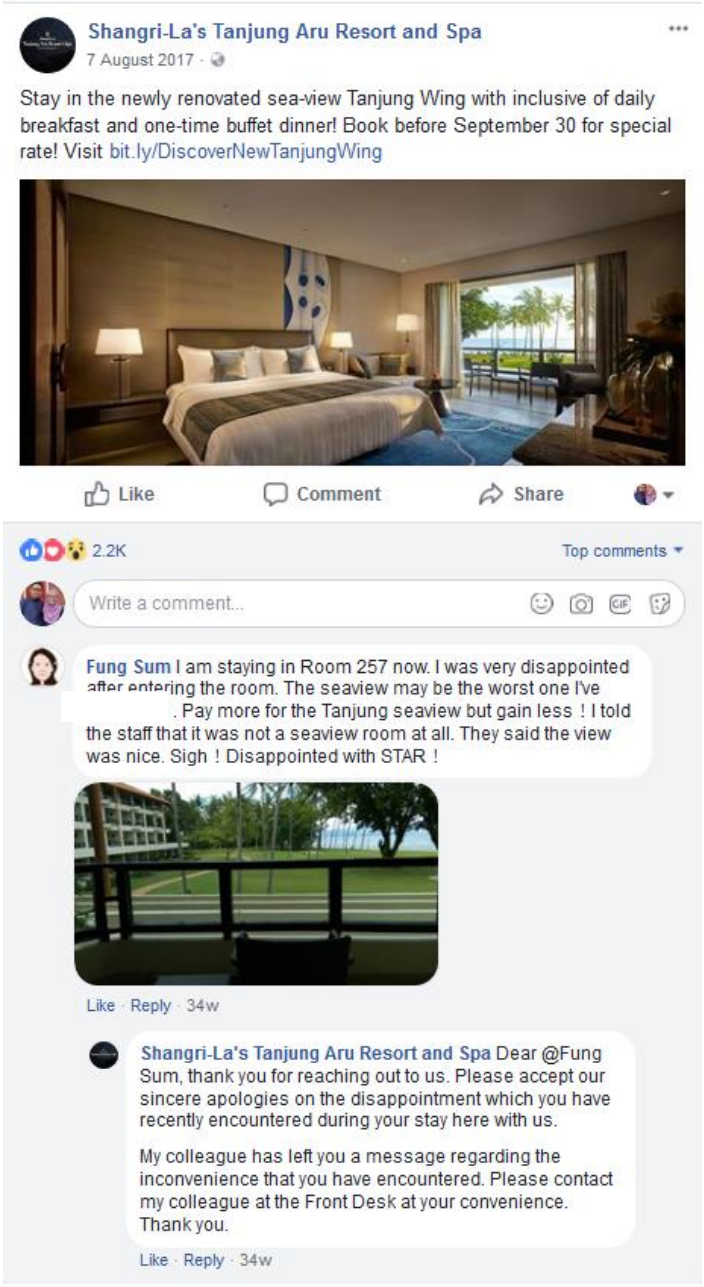


Figure 8. A negative comment on Hotel 2's Facebook post. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

However, further Facebook observation showed the hotels could not respond to all customer comments. Perhaps hotel standards do not require them to reply to all comments (Director of Communications Hotel 2):

> *"… in Shangri La we have to reply to every single bad and good review. That's the brand standard but not for these comments (on the SM content)."*
>
> (Director of Communications, Hotel 2)

d. Hotels' responses to customers' reviews

- Responses to positive reviews

Hotels 1 and 2 had a similar standard response to positive reviews. The hotels thanked customers, welcome them back to the hotel or say they will inform the hotel employees mentioned in the reviews. Furthermore, Hotels 1 and 2 responded to the reviews by 'liking' them. It might be more convenient for the hotels to respond by 'liking' the reviews rather than commenting on them, although it would only be appropriate to 'like' the review when it is a positive review. Hotels are less active in responding to positive reviews.

- Responses to negative reviews

Both hotels would also reply to negative reviews with standard content. The hotels' reply by thanking them, apologising for any problems the customers experienced, noting the hotel cares about their concern by assuring them that the hotels will investigate the problem to improve their service, and leaving an email or contact number for the customer to discuss the matter further. The Guest Experience Manager Hotel 2 explained the engagement feels personalised because the customers can communicate with the General Manager, Resident Manager, Director of Communications and Digital Marketing Coordinator via email (Guest 3 Hotel 1, Guest Experience Manager Hotel 2). Hotel 1 also responds to customer reviews via private messaging on SM to discuss the negative ones (Director of Communications Hotel 1). Their service recovery involves a personal level of communication which is more direct and private.

A negative review that is not responded to quickly might escalate if other SM users also engage in the review. Figure 9 shows an example of a negative review with a customer's dissatisfaction about the service and the treatment they received from an employee working at Hotel 2. This review gained the attention of other users, who commented on having had similar experiences. Thus Hotel 2 needed to take steps for effective service recovery. In this case, the hotel had to provide a response within 48 hours to any negative reviews. This standard response timeframe to CE for Case Study A hotels is discussed further in the SM context section (section 5.2.4).

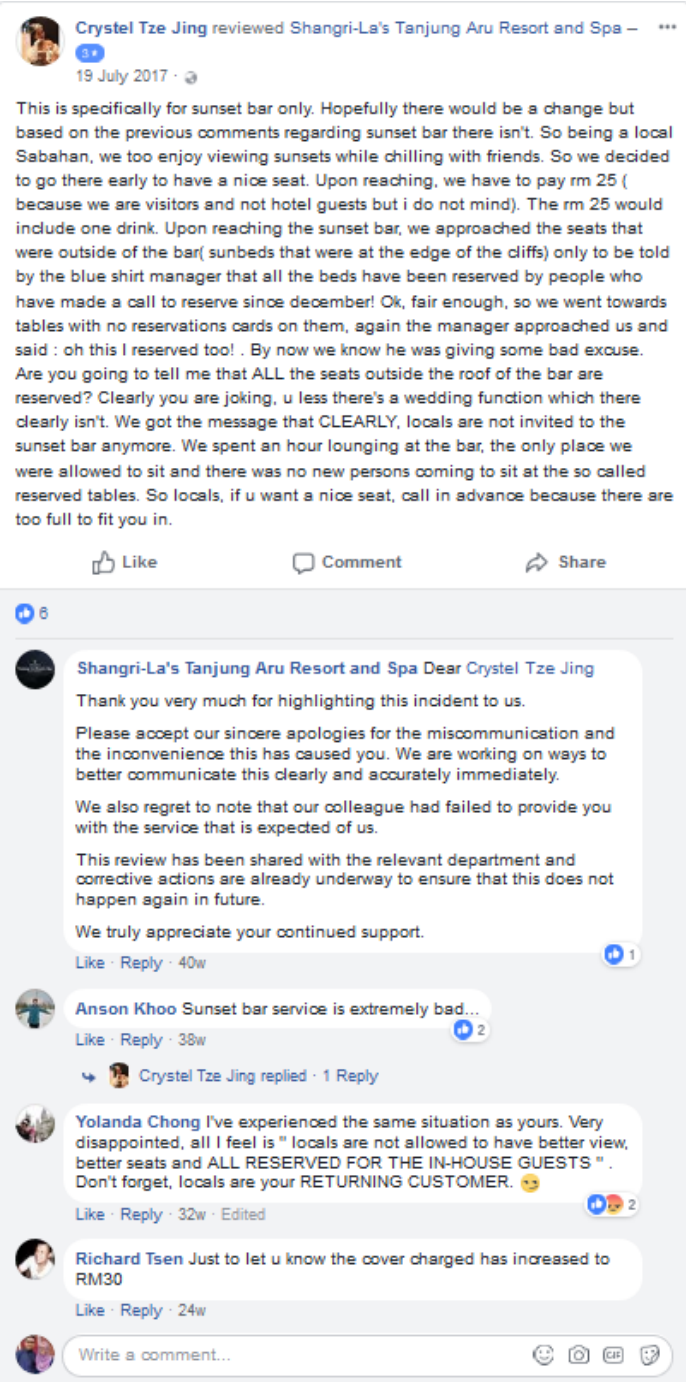


Figure 9. A negative review responded by Hotel 2. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ShangrilaTAH/reviews/

- Responses to neutral reviews

The hotels also responded to neutral reviews, which were neither positive or negative. They replied to neutral reviews similarly to how they replied to a negative review. They apologised, acknowledged the customer's concern, assured them they would improve their service, and thanked them for sharing their experience. Even if the customer mentioned positive experience in the review, it was mainly the negative experiences that are addressed by the hotels.

- Personalised responses to reviews

The responses to the reviews seem formulaic. Guest 2 Hotel 1 commented that Hotel 1's responses to reviews were "pretty standard" (Guest 2 Hotel 1). From one customer's perspective, the hotel's response to a customer review only feels personalised if the hotel remembers his name and preferences during his stay:

> *"It depends on the level of communication involved. If they put in the effort to remember the small little things like my name and my preference for the room or dining in restaurants at their property it goes a long way, as compared to a standard reply that carries no impact once it is being repeated too many times [….] It doesn't feel special. It does not leave a lasting impression. In this era, the personal touch makes the difference between good and excellent."*
>
> (Guest 1, Hotel 1)

To summarise, the hotels did respond to customer reviews. However, as mentioned, they did not respond to all customer reviews.

5.2.3 Theme: SM content

5.2.3.1 SM campaign topic

Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 mentioned that Shangri-La corporate office handled SM content related to the Golden Circle programme, and each hotel only needed to focus on promotional SM content related to their hotel:

> *"It's a responsibility of [HOTEL 1], some of it goes back to our corporate office, where they'll talk about our loyalty member programmes, and they'll create the content or either post it for us, or they'll send it to us and tell us to post it, but usually these kinds of things, 'The Table' or what benefits you get as a Golden Circle Member, our corporate office handles it. They leave it to us to concentrate more on trying to promote the whole company."*
>
> (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1)

i. Corporate campaigns

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts corporate office handled SM content on its loyalty programme and engaged in marketing contests. During the observation period for the study five corporate campaigns were posted on each of the hotel's Facebook pages: four campaigns in 2016 (Loyalty Is, Double Up, From the Table, Luckiest Couple), and one in 2017 (Warmer Welcomes). In 2016 both hotels posted corporate campaigns relating to the Golden Circle loyalty programme, namely the

"Loyalty Is" contest (see Figure 10) between January 2016 and March 2016. This campaign featured different celebrities (e.g. actresses and photographers) and was executed in Chinese and English via video and photo promotions. Figure 10 shows how the campaign appeared on Hotels 1's and 2's Facebook page, using the same video and copywriting.

Hotel 1 Hotel 2

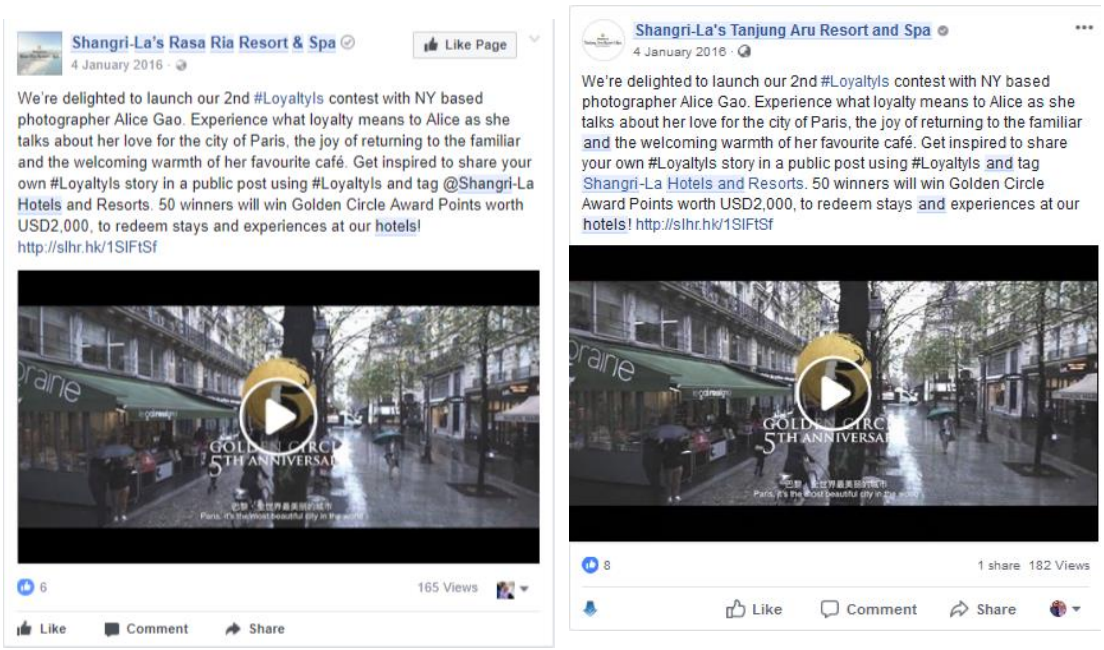


Figure 10 Loyalty Is campaign on Hotel 1's and Hotel 2's Facebook page. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ *ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/ and https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/*

These corporate campaigns nonetheless were among the weakest posts from both hotels except for Hotel 2's "From the Table" (43 reactions) and "Luckiest Couple" (over 1,000 reactions) although these posts still had less engagement (reactions, comments and shares) from the Facebook users.

ii. Hotel campaigns

Hotels 1 and 2 (see Appendices 18 and 19) launched campaigns about their location, products and services, hotels' stakeholders, trends and reposts of customers' hotel experiences (see Table 31).

Table 31 *List of hotel campaigns*

Category	Hotel campaigns
locations	Borneo Island, culture, nature, tropical weather
products and services	events and functions, food and beverages, hotel facilities, hotel packages, recreation activities, rooms and suites, spa and seasonal offers
hotels' stakeholders	hotel employees and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities
trends	the finger-lift challenge, flash mob dance, and the mannequin challenge
reposts of customers' hotel experiences	e.g. photos

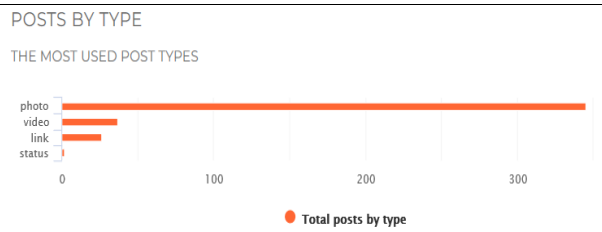
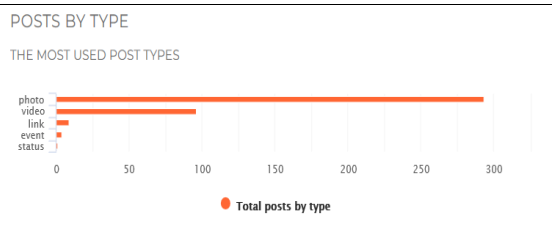
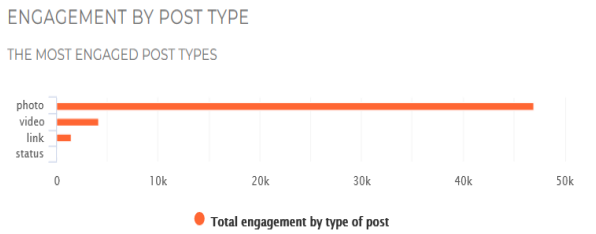
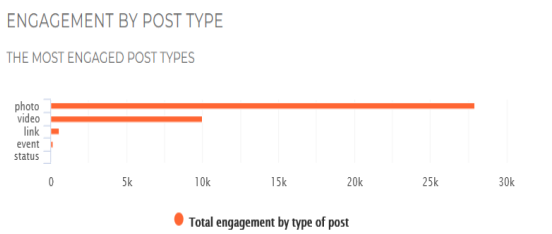
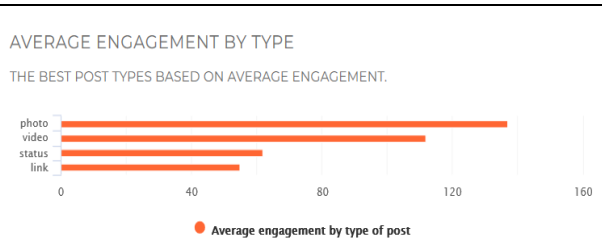
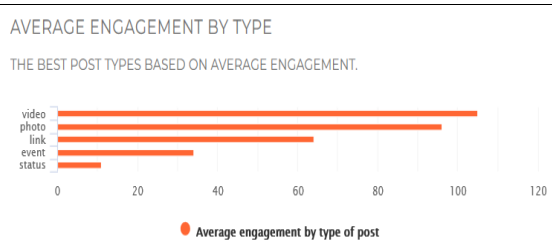
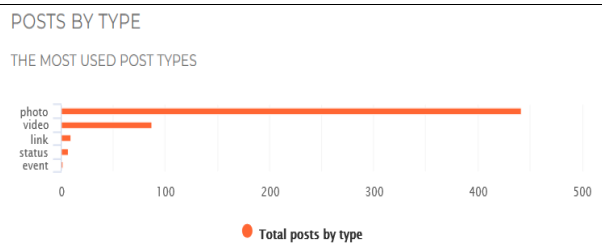
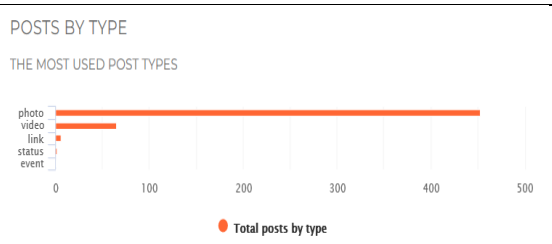
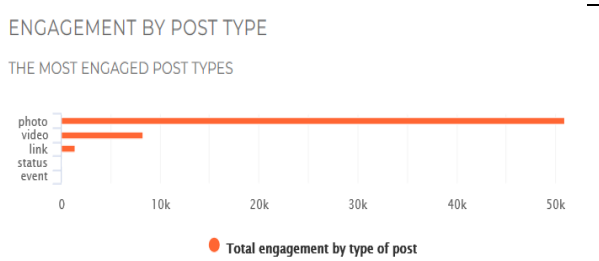
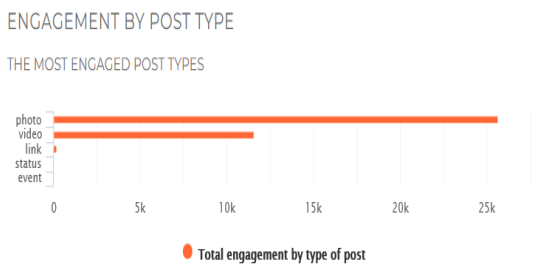
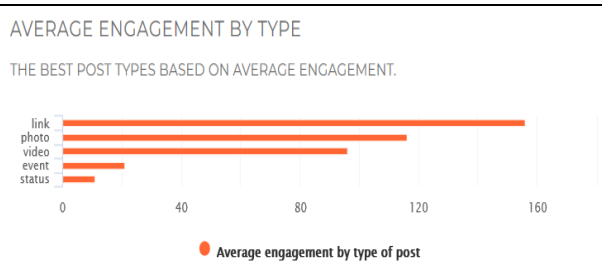
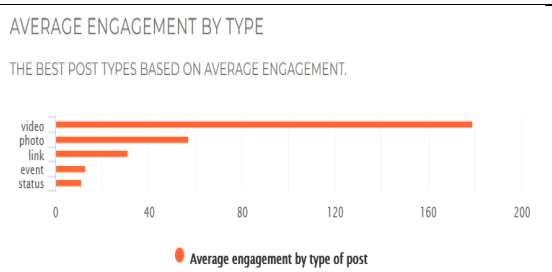
These campaigns were consistently posted on each hotel's Facebook page. The SM content type section (section 5.2.3.3) presents more findings on the hotel campaigns which received more engagement such as reactions, comments, shares and views on Facebook.

Hence, the hotels do not have control over the creation of all SM content, but the hotels' own campaigns were more engaging compared with the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts corporate campaigns.

5.2.3.2 Media Type

Table 32 shows that the hotels posted different media types: videos, photos, links, statuses and events.

Table 32 *A summary of media type*

2016	2017
Hotel 1	
	
	
	
Hotel 2	
	
	
	

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

i. Photos

Photos are easier to create compared with videos. Hotel 1 noted the photo quality of its SM posts (Director of Communications Hotel 1).

The average engagement by type can be calculated by dividing the number of engagement by post type with the number of post type. For example, if Hotel 1 posted 350 photos in a year, and the total engagement for all those photos was 50,000 engagements (40,800 reactions, 150 comments, 50 shares), the average engagement figure for each photo would be 142 engagements. It was apparent that in 2016, Hotel 1 received more average engagement using photos, compared with other media types. Possibly, this was because all the photos Hotel 1 posted were of high quality, which quickly captured their customers' attention (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). Nonetheless, Director of Communications Hotel 1 noted that photos gained fewer 'likes' compared with videos:

> *"We realised when we post pictures, we have fewer likes (reactions), but when we post videos, we have more likes (reactions). People have the time to watch a video."*
>
> (Director of Communications Hotel 1)

It is suggested that photos "would not hold" much of their customers' attention (Director of Communications Hotel 2), leading the hotels to post more videos.

ii. Videos

Creating a video is a time-consuming process that involves filming and editing to produce high quality and entertaining videos (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). However, it can gain more SMCEB as they had found customers have the time to watch it on SM (Director of Communications Hotel 1). Hotel 2 highlighted that videos could be entertaining with the right music and up to one minute in duration (Director of Communications Hotel 2). Both Hotels 1 and 2 highlighted that video quality could attract customers' attention quickly. Director of Communications Hotel 2 said:

> *"Basically, to make better videos so that they won't look at them for two seconds and then go away. We want them to experience the whole moment with us."*
>
> (Director of Communications Hotel 2)

The videos for Hotels 1 and 2 received higher average engagement compared with photos. Both hotels posted videos of an educational nature and with trending topics (see entertainment SM content, section 5.2.3.3) and attractive offers on SM. For example, Hotel 2 upon posting a video of their First Giant Pizza offer that could cater for up to eight people (see Figure 11) attracted a high level of engagement with the post, and new fans on their Facebook page (see Table 33). Table 33 shows that videos get more views than reactions, shares and comments. Hence social customers show less active behaviour (consumption SMCEB) rather than moderately active behaviour (positive contribution SMCEB).

Table 33 *Examples of videos gaining high SMCEB*

Hotel	Content	Reaction	Comment	Share	View	New fans
Hotel 1	Flash Mob	988	95	685	35,000	155
Hotel 2	Flash Mob	501	42	525	28,000	210
Hotel 2	First Giant Pizza	2,000	976	3,414	171,000	350

These videos were entertaining and interactive and could thus engage customers and new fans. However, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 stated that not all video posts could equally increase SMCEB.

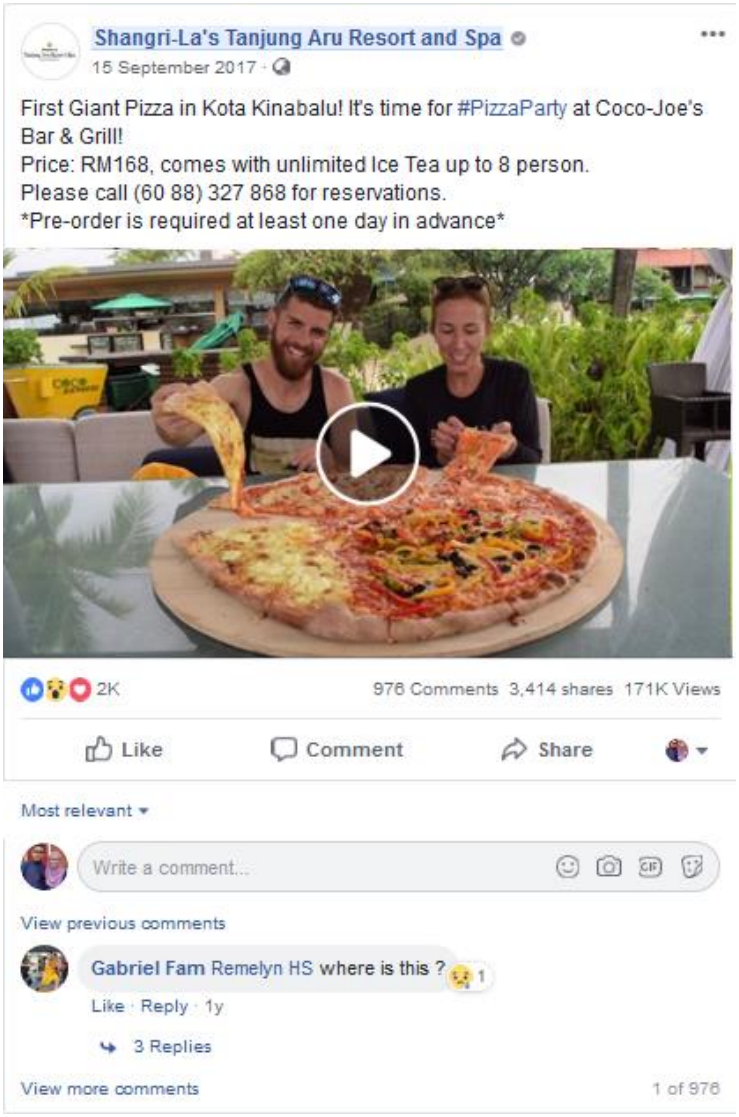


Figure 11. A First Giant Pizza video of Hotel 2.
From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

Hence, videos can influence customers' reactions, comments, shares and views of the content and attract new likes for the hotels' SM pages.

iii. Link (Website link)

Although Hotels 1 and 2 posted fewer website links on Facebook, the links were the top three media posts for engagement between 2016 and 2017 on their Facebook (see Table 32).

For example, Hotel 2 posted content on Facebook, which included a website link leading the customer to an e-book list of Hotel 2's Christmas holiday events (see Figure 12). This content received over 9,000 engagements (8,900 reactions, 40

comments and 134 shares). Thus, there were more reactions than shares and comments.



Figure 12. Informative content about Hotel 2's Christmas holiday events. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

5.2.3.3 SM content type

i. Entertainment SM content

a. Trending

Both Hotels 1 and 2 posted entertaining content related to trends at the time it was posted on SM. For instance, the flash mob dance (see Figure 13), the mannequin challenge, the finger lift challenge and Vogue's 73 questions (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 stated:

> *"…it's different now. SM evolves so fast. It has to do with trends, and sometimes you must keep up with whatever is trending on all those hashtags trends... Like when we did the Finger Lift Challenge. We knew people were on to this. We need to do this right now before other hotels in KK (Kota Kinabalu) post about it, and then you seem like a follower..."*
>
> (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1)

For example, both Hotels 1 and 2 posted flash mob videos of their hotel employees dancing on Facebook. Hotel 1 (see Figure 13) created a flash mob for its ice-cream bar grand opening. It received 988 reactions, 95 comments, 685 shares and over 35,000 views. Hence, there were more views than reactions, shares and comments. In contrast, Hotel 2 created a flash mob to welcome a famous American celebrity, RedFoo.

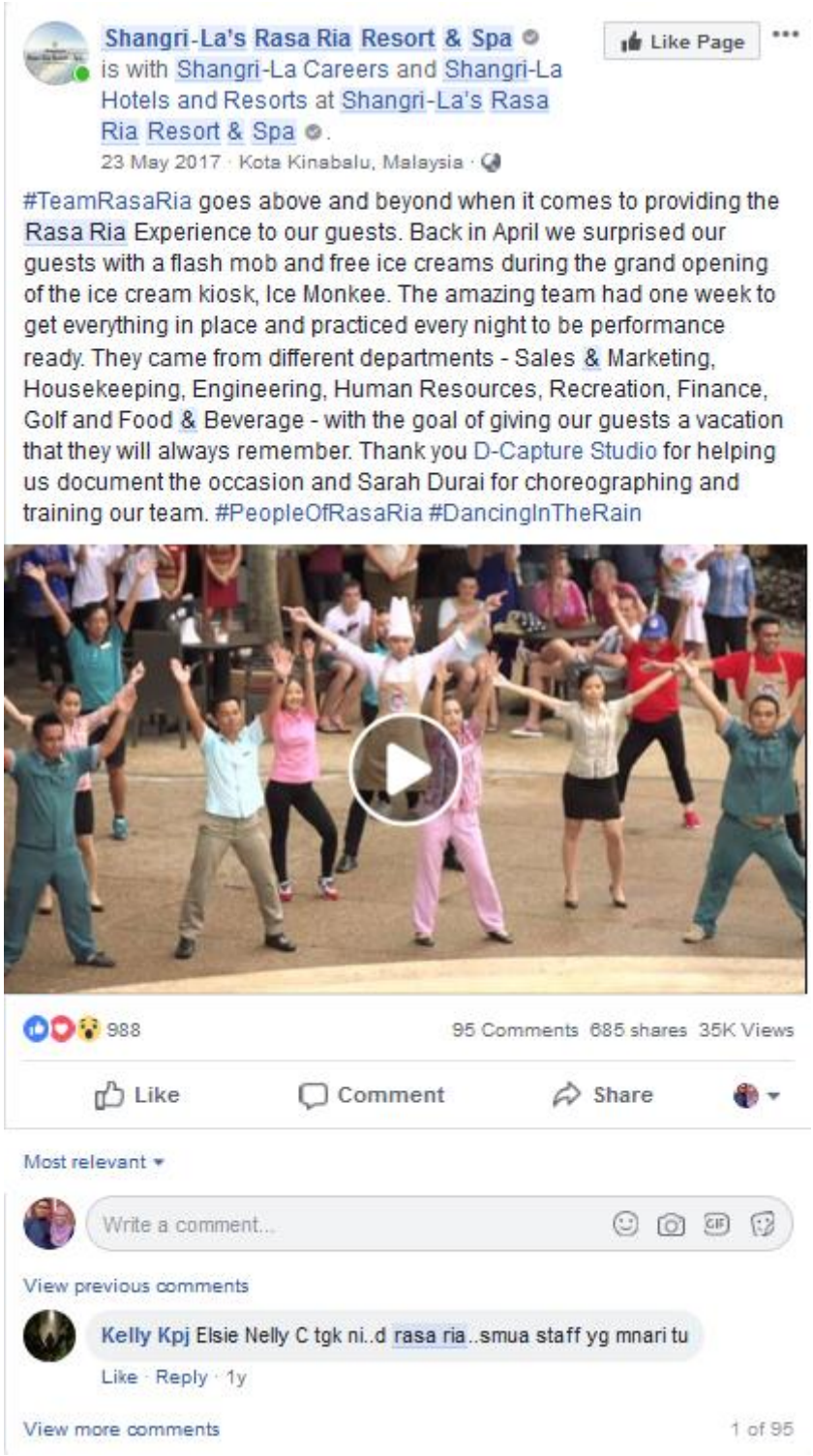


Figure 13. A Flash Mob dance video of Hotel 1. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

b. Fun videos

Entertaining content appealed to Facebook customers. All the content had a fun aspect, which can be captured using video. Director of Communications Hotel 2 posited that an entertaining video should be less than a minute and come with the right music. The Director of Communications Hotel 2 and Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 wanted their entertainment to be fun (like the flash mob dance video), but it does not happen often, as entertaining videos are time-consuming to create. The entertaining content may have attracted high engagement because customers utilised SM to keep up with trends (Guest 1 Hotel 1) and to feel close to the hotel's SM page community. These videos received high numbers in terms of engagement for its SM post and SM page, as shown in Table 33. Thus, the video element stated in section 5.2.3.2 plays a role in making the content entertaining.

c. Customers' interest in entertaining content

It comes down to customer's interest and whether the content on SM is entertaining. Customers may relate entertaining content to events or concerts, or to customer participation, such as competitions (Guest 2 Hotel 1).

ii. Informational SM content

a. Create awareness about the experience customers can get

The hotels created informational content about their products, services and local attractions that represented the hotel experience (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1, Guest 2 Hotel 1). Guest 2 Hotel 1 thought a business should capitalise on SM to market their services, facilities and products.

Informational content that raised awareness was shown to increase SMCEB (i.e. Facebook). For example, Hotels 1 and 2 posted informational content related to their wedding campaigns. Hotel 1’s content showed they had the best wedding venue in South East Asia and provided a website link, and Hotel 2 mentioned their participation in a local bridal event. This content garnered engagement from customers, as shown in Table 34. However, the table shows more reactions than shares and comments.

Table 34 *Examples of informational content gaining high SMCEB*

Hotel	Content	Reaction	Comment	Share
Hotel 1	Wedding soft-selling content	1,849	10	38
Hotel 2	Local bridal event participation	1,186	14	22

b. Educate SM users

Hotel 1 created educational SM content related to nature to inform SM users and customers (Director of Communications Hotel 1). The content (see Figure 14) engaged customers (66 reactions, 18 comments, 9 shares) as it used a storytelling technique. Possibly, Hotel 1 customers were nature lovers (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1) and were interested in the topic of tarantulas.



Figure 14. Informational content of Hotel 1's nature. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

c. Provide relevant tips

Hotel 1 also posted informational content providing tips for recreational activities such as golf (Director of Communications Hotel 1). Features of SM such as Twitter might have influenced Hotel 1 in providing informational tips on SM. Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 explained:

> *"So that's where we're trying to switch things around with Twitter and focus more towards microblogging and be more informative as opposed to be a story like the way Facebook and Instagram are."*
>
> (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1)

Informational content can increase engagement. Most of it used photo media.

iii. Relational SM content

a. Relevant to customers

Hotels 1 and 2 posted SM content that might be relevant for customers such as content about celebrations, the hotel employees and nature.

- Celebrations

Hotels 1 and 2 posted content about seasonal events such as the Chinese New Year, Easter, Mother's Day, Ka'amatan Harvest Festival, Ramadan, Halloween and Christmas (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2, Food and Beverages Service Manager Hotel 2), and this influenced SMCEB in different ways. This is relevant to the hotels' posting time (section 5.2.4.2)

Table 35 *Examples of celebrations content gaining high SMCEB*

Hotel	Content	Reaction	Comment	Share	New fans
Hotel 1	Easter campaigns	40	4	26	(-) 274
		141	3	4	
Hotel 2	List of Christmas events	8,900	40	134	
	Seven days countdown to Christmas	5	-	1	887

As mentioned, Hotel 1 posted an Easter campaign in 2017 (see Figure 7). There was not much engagement for this content, which may have contributed to 274 SM

users deciding to 'unlike' Hotel 1's Facebook page. This finding was unexpected as fans had effective detached themselves from the hotel's SM page.

However, Hotel 2 posted Christmas campaigns (see Figure 15), and the content about their Christmas events significantly increased SMCEB on the SM post and SM page 'likes'.



Figure 15. A relational content of Hotel 2's 7-day countdown to Christmas. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

- Hotel employees

Hotel 1 had two posts about their hotel employees in August and September 2016. This content received more engagement than other posts in these two months (see Table 36). The well-received engagement for this content may have resulted in Hotel 1 introducing their "People of [HOTEL 1]" campaign every Tuesday, starting in October 2016 (see Figure 16).

Table 36 *Examples of content about employees gaining high SMCEB*

Hotel	Content	Date	Reaction	Comment	Share
Hotel 1	Chef	August 2016	59	4	1
Hotel 1	Nature Ambassador	September 2016	76	5	5
Hotel 1	Doorman	October 2016	359	43	45
Hotel 2	Guest Experience Manager	May 2017	79	10	1

Hotel 1 thought this campaign might have influenced SMCEB (SM page likes, reactions, comments, views) as customers wanted to see people's stories. Director of Communications Hotel 1 emphasised:

> *"When we did the first story on [DOORMAN HOTEL 1] […] because he was our first story, right? There was a massive jump of likes (reactions), a massive jump of comments and views of [DOORMAN HOTEL 1], compared to the average view of 40 likes (reactions). It became like 500 likes (reactions). Then, my team realised that we are on to something here. People want to see people. Want to see the story of people, not anything else."*
>
> (Director of Communications Hotel 1)

Hotel 2 also introduced a "STARS of [HOTEL 2]" campaign about their employees in January 2017. Perhaps, they wanted to follow the trend of posting employees' stories on SM. However, Hotel 2 stopped posting this content on their Facebook page by July 2017.



Figure 16. A relational content of Hotel 1's employee in October 2016. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

Customers are likely to engage with these stories as they evoke emotions or memories of the hotels (Director of Communications Hotel 1, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1, Guest 3 Hotel 1). Guest 3 Hotel 1 explained that past customers who have stayed at the hotel could relate to such content on SM. Thus, customers of Hotels 1 and 2 engaged with the content with comments

such as “everything and everyone is so perfect in Hotel 1”, or “one of my favourite resorts on the planet”.

Past customers also commented on the hotels' SM posts about the environment (e.g. wildlife and sunset) as it similarly evokes emotions or memories. For instance, photos or videos of a parrot eating from a customer's hotel room balcony might have encouraged past customers, who had a similar experience at the hotel, to comment on the content (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1).

Additionally, both hotels realised that their posts regarding sunsets at their hotels (see Figure 17) attracted engagement (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 and Director of Communications Hotel 2). Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 mentioned how such content evokes emotions or memories and creates a sense of a ‘call to action’ (CTA).

Figure 17 shows an example of a sunset post by Hotel 2, which had more than 100 reactions. Furthermore, a social customer also posted a photo of a sunset in the comment section to reciprocate. Thus, relational content creates engagement.

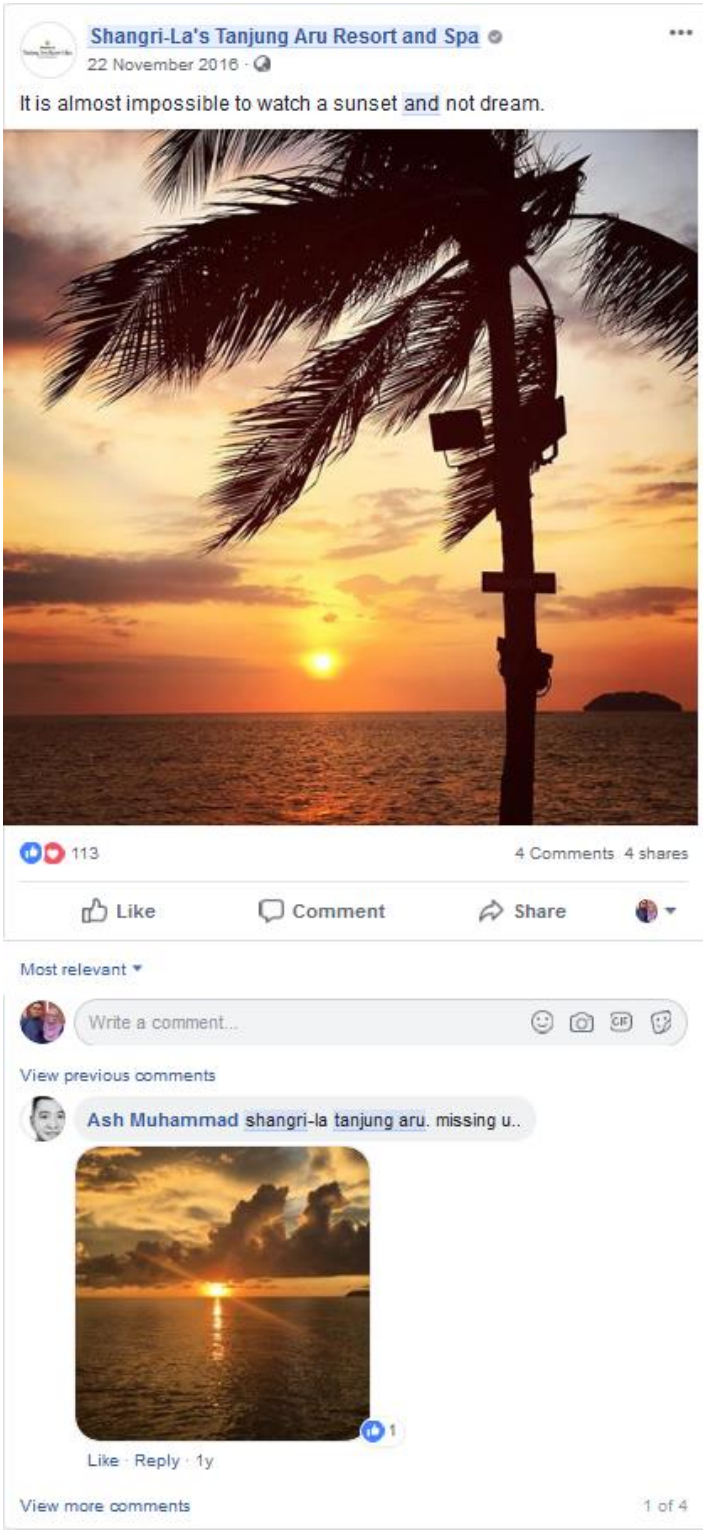


Figure 17. A relational content of Hotel 2's sunset. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

b. Encourage customers to participate

The hotels also posted content that encourages their customers to engage with the SM content (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2, Guest 2 Hotel 1). For example, content that asks questions encourages SM users to tag or nominate their

friends, to use the certain hashtags, to visit the hotel's website and call the hotels, all influence customers to act upon the content. Results suggest that a CTA can encourage customers to engage with the hotel online. Director of Communications Hotel 2 provided the example of Hotel 2's Ramadan buffet contest which asked customers to tag three people:

> *"Number one would be, questions. 'This is our favourite cocktail, what's yours?' That's one. The other one would be campaigns contests, online SM contests that we have. 'Give us whom you would like to come for Ramadan buffet, tag three people', that's one."*
>
> (Director of Communications Hotel 2)

iv. Remunerative SM content

a. Promotions or offers

Both hotels related remunerative SM content such as promotions or offers (Guest 3 Hotel 1, Director of Communications Hotel 2) to bonuses (Director of Communications Hotel 2), and discounts (Guest 1 Hotel 1). This content can achieve high engagement. Figure 18 shows, for example, Hotel 1's promotional room and suite offer, which gained 2,600 reactions, 31 comments and 127 shares. Thus, there were more reactions than shares and comments.

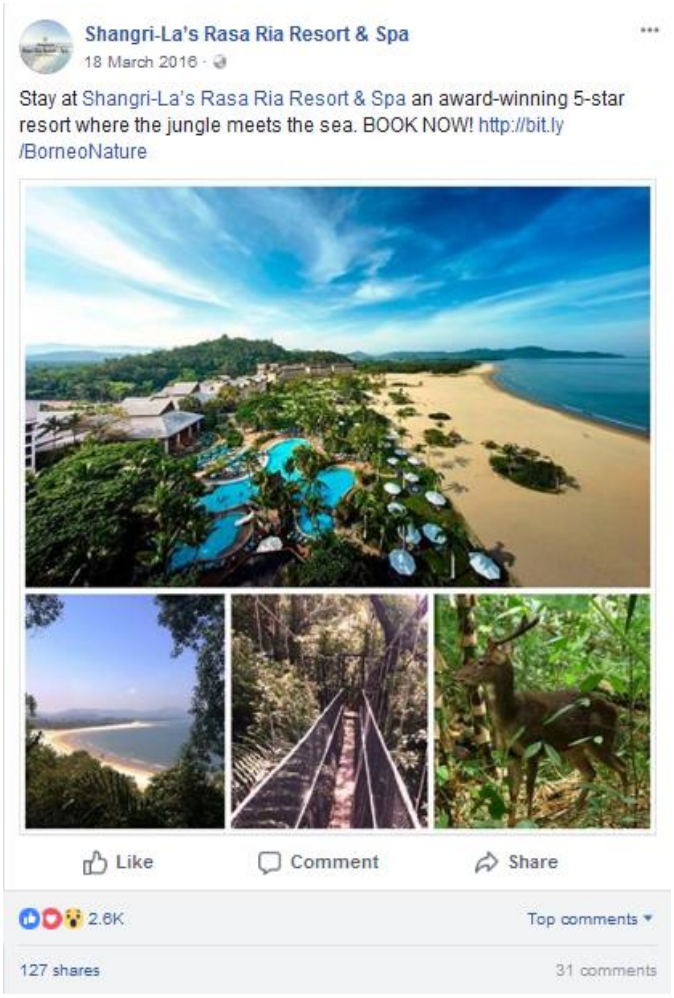


Figure 18. An example of Hotel 1's use of remunerative content in promotions and offers.
From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

b. Rewarding content

Remunerative content also relates to rewards such as a free spa, a free buffet lunch or dinner, or free night stays at the hotels (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2, Guest 1 Hotel 1, Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). Customers could buy two buffet dining vouchers and get a free dinner voucher, or similarly get a voucher for room stays (Guest 1 Hotel 1). It could also mean customers win prizes such as a massage at the spa, a night's stay, or a buffet lunch, by participating in a competition. Remunerative content such as competitions providing rewards encourage customers to engage with the posts (Director of Communications Hotel 1 and Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). Both Hotels 1 and 2 posted content that provided rewards and gained SMCEB. For example, Director of Communications Hotel 1 said that their Mother's Day competition received a positive response on SM, and provided rewards for their followers:

"On Mother's Day recently we said 'post a picture of you and your mum. Tell us why your mum deserves to have a free stay at [HOTEL 1] and a free Mother's Day lunch. If yours get the greatest number of likes, you'll get a 2-day overnight stay. You and your family and your mum, your wife and your mother. Your family will be treated with a Mother's Day lunch.' The response was good. It's a reward for our followers…"

(Director of Communications Hotel 1)

Figure 19 shows another example of remunerative content by Hotel 2, encouraging SM users to engage with the post. Hotel 2 rewarded participants with vouchers for the Borneo Seafood Paradise Buffet Dinner. It encouraged SM users to like the post, and tag and name three types of seafood in the comment section. This video post garnered over 800 reactions, 400 comments, 200 shares and 40,000 views, showing that remunerative content such as promotions and offers, or rewards, influences SMCEB. Thus, this is another example of a promotion resulting in more views than reactions, comments or shares.



Figure 19 An example of Hotel 2's use of remunerative content in a competition From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

c. Hard-selling content

Hotels 1 and 2 posted remunerative content several times a month and referred to these as hard-sell posts, but this content still received customers' reactions, comments and shares on SM (see Figures 18 and 19). Although such content can feel forced (Director of Communications Hotel 2), the hotel needs to post it to inform their social customers who follow their SM page about getting updates on offers or rewards. This is relevant to the next section.

5.2.3.4 SM content strategy

i. Creating different SM content for different SM channels

Hotel 1 posted different SM content on their different SM channels. For example, they posted their Easter campaigns (i.e. brunch) and Mother's Day content on Facebook and not on Instagram (Director of Communications Hotel 1).

Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 explained that due to Twitter's functionality as a microblogging SM platform, the content should be more informative, while Facebook and Instagram should use content that tells stories.

ii. Post more soft-selling SM content

Hotels 1 and 2 used a strategy of posting more soft-selling content than hard-selling content (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2). Director of Communications Hotel 2 described soft-sell content as organic posts that could capture a moment that is special to their customers. Customers are marketing savvy and are less likely to prefer seeing hard-sell content frequently. Director of Communications Hotel 1 mentioned that since she started posting more soft-selling content about the hotel employees and about nature, the numbers of types of engagement had increased "two to three hundred per cent".

iii. Paid SM posts

Hotels 1 and 2 also used paid SM postings to boost or advertise their content to reach a specific target audience. For example, Hotel 1 boosted its Mother's Day lunch competition to SM users in Sabah, Malaysia (Director of Communications Hotel 1), while Hotel 2 paid for targeted ads for their Summer fun offers to reach SM users in Korea (Director of Communications Hotel 2). However, Hotels 1 and 2 need to understand certain information about their target market to ensure the SM content reaches them, so that the hotels make informed choices in doing this.

iv. Personalised SM content

Hotels 1 and 2 posted content that was relevant to their SM users where they used information to find out about their target audience, and their likes (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2). Thus, they developed personalised SM content, which created a more streamlined marketing effort to gain engagement on SM.

v. SM content with CTA

This content included a CTA to engage SM users. Examples were content that encouraged social customers to answer questions, use brand hashtags and click website links (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2). Hotel 2 highlighted encouraging customers to tag other SM users on its SM posts to win prizes (Director of Communications Hotel 2), thus making the SM content more engaging and influencing SMCEB. This is relevant to relational content in section 5.2.3.3.

vi. Reposting customers' SM content

The hotels also relied on the strategy of reposting customers' Instagram photos or videos on their SM pages. For example, the hotels reposted photos that appeared in their hashtag, such as (#HOTEL1 or #HOTEL2), which influenced SMCEB. Director of Communications Hotel 1 explained that the content owner would thank the hotel for recognising and reposting the photos.

5.2.4 Theme: SM context

5.2.4.1 SM channels

As discussed, both Hotels 1 and 2 used different content for different SM channels because of the SM functionalities and different audiences. The hotels tailor their content according to the SM's functionalities and the audience's geographic and demographic features.

However, the hotels also relied on traditional channels to support their social CRM activities. They were likely to extend the relationship from SM to traditional channels such as emails, phone calls, and instant messaging for more personalised engagement.

5.2.4.2 Timing

i. Time to post

a. Time of day

Both Hotels 1 and 2 regarded any time as the best time to post their SM content (Front Office Service Leader Hotel 1, Director of Communications Hotel 1, Guest 2

Hotel 1, Guest Relations Officer Hotel 2). Thus, hotels did not consider whether posting at a certain time in a day affects SMCEB. Figures 20 and 21 show the timing of the Facebook postings for Hotels 1 and 2 between 2016 and 2017.

However, observation and documents showed that Hotel 1 posted its SM content between 9am and midnight and frequently posted content at 4pm (in 2016) or 6pm (in 2017). Table 37 shows the user comment activity on Hotel 1's posted content. Customers commented on Facebook in response to Hotel 1's content at 5pm in 2016, and at 4pm, 7pm and 10pm in 2017. Possibly, the hotels posted frequently during these times as customers are actively commenting then. Thus, the hotels in fact posted at specific times, although employees claimed that they posted at any time of the day.

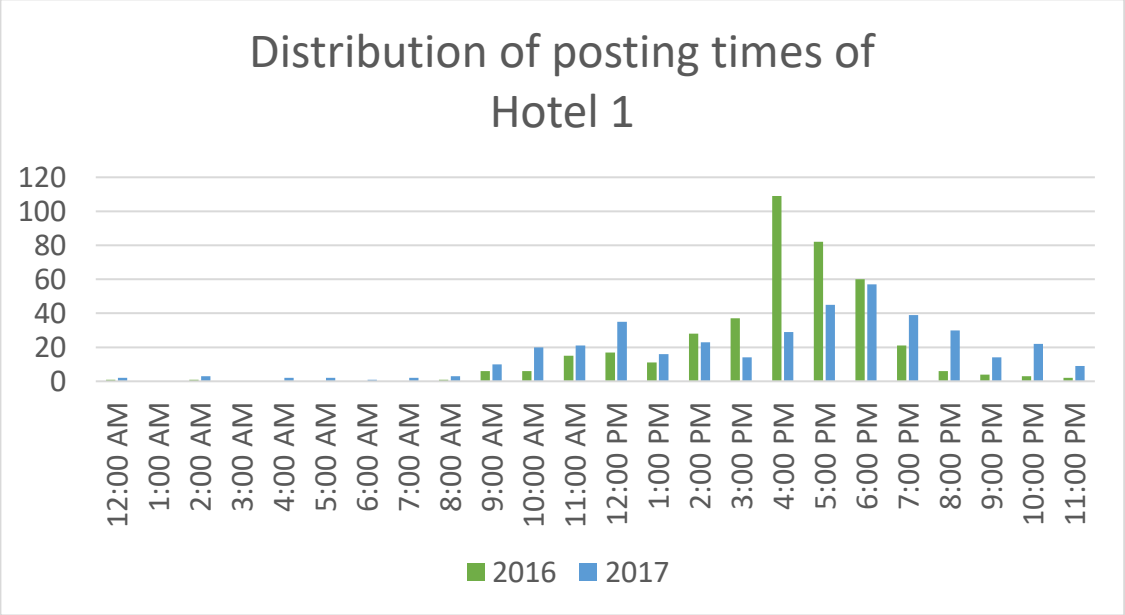


Figure 20. Distribution of posting times of Hotel 1. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io

Additionally, Hotel 1 posting in real-time also may have influenced SMCEB. Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1 commented that posting a live video also played a role in gaining SMCEB not only to attract social customers but also to encourage staying customers to join an event in the hotel.

In contrast, Hotel 2 posted their SM content between 9am and 6pm, and frequently posted at 11am (in 2016), and 10am and 12pm (in 2017). While the hotel posted from the morning until the evening, Table 37 shows that Facebook users frequently commented between 3pm and 5pm in 2016, and at 4pm in 2017, suggesting that Hotel 2's postings were timely, aiming for the lunchtime audience.

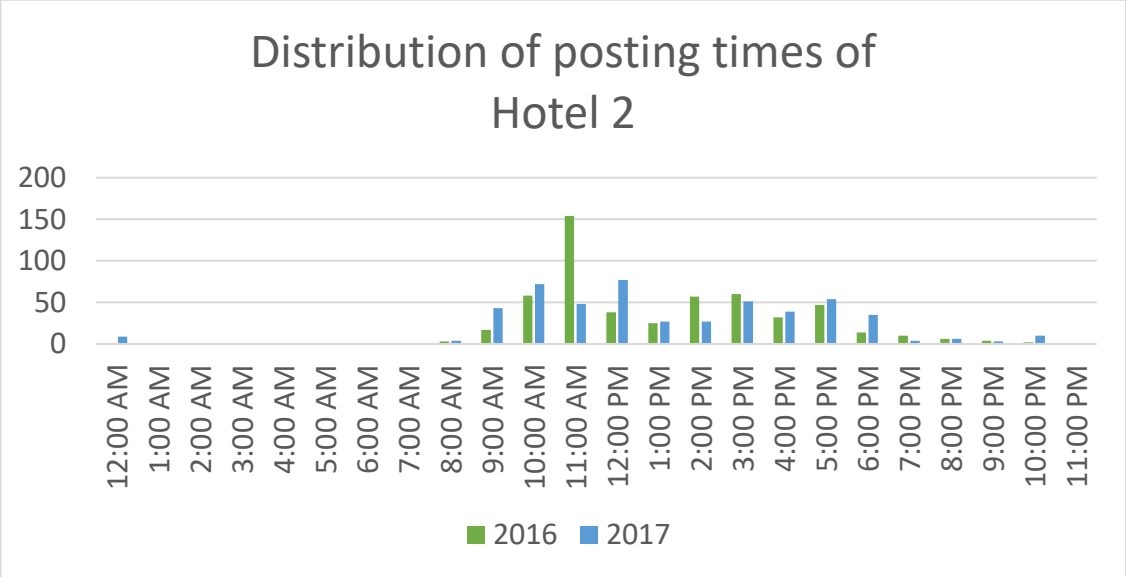


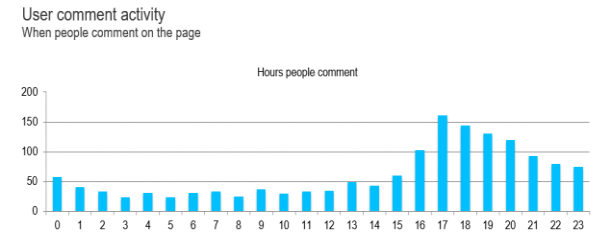
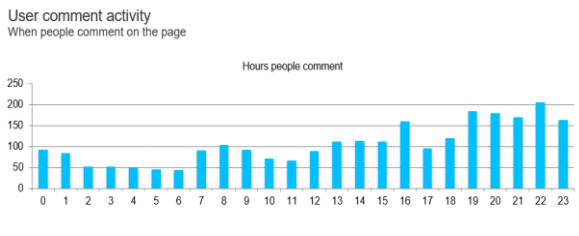
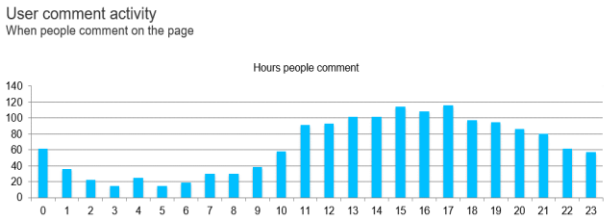
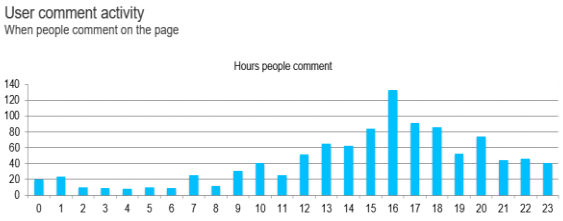
Figure 21. Distribution of posting times of Hotel 2. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io

The hotels also used information to help in post timing (see section 5.2.5.5)

Hotel 2 may have focused on posting their content to reach customers in Malaysia and other Asian markets such as Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines. The hotel aimed to reach their Asian customers during the lunch hour, after lunch, and after working hours. Observation of the hotel's posting activity showed Hotel 2 was concerned with reaching its Asian customers.

Thus, there was a difference between the timings of daily postings by Hotels 1 and 2.

Table 37 *Distribution of Facebook user comment activity*

2016	2017
Hotel 1	
	
Hotel 2	
	

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

b. Days of the week

Customers did not seem to place importance on the day the hotels posted on SM (Guest 1 Hotel 1). However, Hotels 1 and 2 posted equally from Monday to Sunday (see Figures 22 and 23).

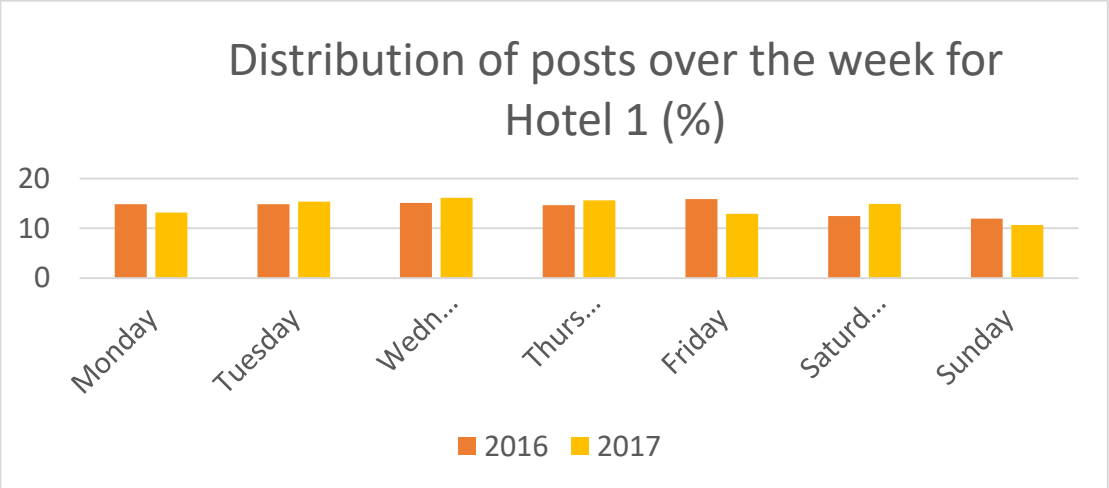


Figure 22. Distribution of posts over the week for Hotel 1. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io

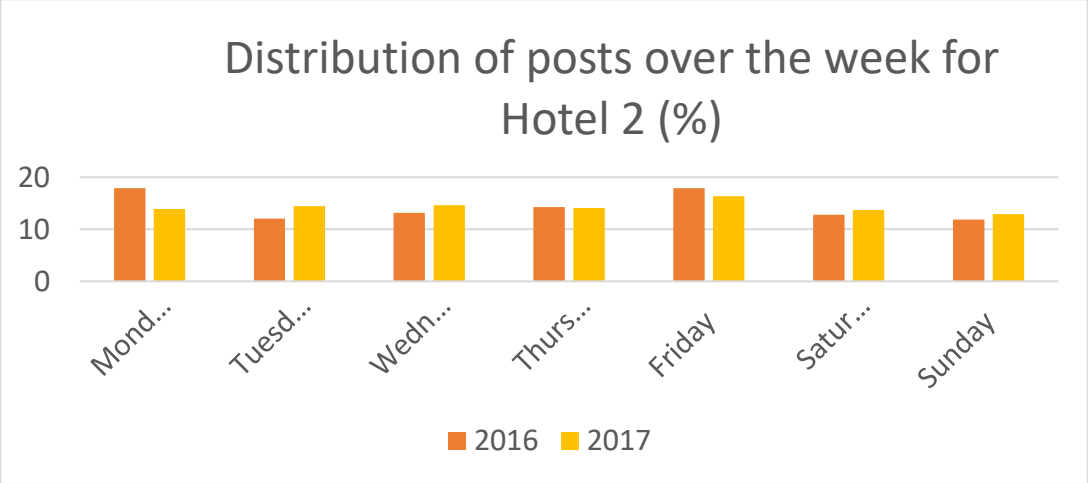


Figure 23. Distribution of posts over the week for Hotel 2. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io

Hotels 1 and 2 had scheduled their SM postings. Hotel 1 developed themes for their Facebook page postings for each day:

Table 38 *Daily themes to post on Hotel 1's Facebook page.*

Days	**Campaign**
Monday	Recreation activities, bars and lounge
Tuesday	Hotel employees
Wednesday	Wildlife Wednesday (Nature)
Thursday	Thirsty Thursday (Beverages)
Friday	Golf and Spa

Thus Hotel 1 posted content according to specific themes (see Table 38). Hotel 2 meanwhile scheduled their SM posts using the monthly SM calendar approach (see Figure 57 in Appendix 20). Hotel 2's approach was more planned and specific. Nonetheless these content planning strategies enabled the hotels to target different campaigns on the days when customers were more likely to want to see them. This was a strategy for the hotels' CE initiatives to stay consistent and engage their audience on SM daily. Furthermore, it is supported with information (Director of Communications Hotel 2).

c. Seasons of the year

Hotels 1 and 2 posted consistent campaigns every year (see Table 39) to build a presence and relationships with their local customers who celebrate these events and festivities. This is relevant to the relational content section 5.2.3.3.

Table 39 *Seasonal campaigns of Hotels 1 and 2 throughout 2016 –2017*

Month	**Seasonal campaign Hotel 1**		**Seasonal campaign Hotel 2**	
	2016	**2017**	**2016**	**2017**
January	- New Year	- Chinese New Year	- New year - Chinese New Year	- Chinese New Year - Christmas
February	- Chinese New Year - Valentine's day	- Chinese New Year	- Chinese New Year - Valentine's day	- Valentine's day
March	- Easter Sunday	- St. Patrick's day - Earth Hour - Easter Sunday	- Easter Sunday - Earth Hour -	- Earth Hour
April		- Easter Sunday		- Easter Sunday - Ramadan
May	- Mother's Day - Harvest Festival	- Mother's Day - Harvest Festival	- Mother's Day - Harvest Festival - Ramadan	- Mother's Day - Harvest Festival - Ramadan

June	- Ramadan - Father's Day	- Ramadan - Father's Day	- Ramadan - Father's Day	- Ramadan - Father's Day - Eid Al-Fitr
July	- Eid Al-Fitr		- Ramadan - Eid Al-Fitr	-
August	- Malaysia's Independence Day	- National Independence Day/ Malaysia Day	- National Independence Day	- National Independence Day
September			- Malaysia Day	- Mid-Autumn Festival
October	- Halloween - Diwali	- Halloween - Diwali	- Halloween - Diwali	- Halloween
November				- Christmas
December	- Christmas	- Christmas	- Christmas - New Year's Eve	- Christmas

d. Frequency of postings

Hotels 1 and 2 regularly posted on their Facebook pages to build a presence through regular interaction with their Facebook community. Food and Beverages Service Manager Hotel 2 stressed the need to be cautious with the posting frequency on SM to prevent overwhelming customers with the same content multiple times.

ii. Time to respond

As mentioned earlier, Hotels 1 and 2 had a standard SM response timeframe, which was within 48 hours (Director of Communications Hotel 1). This was because their customers would expect a fast response time to their inquiries, comments and reviews (Guest 2 Hotel 1). The hotels could thus maintain their reputation on SM even when customers posted negative reviews.

Additionally, Hotel 1 responded to their customer comments in real-time (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1), suggesting their response was quick. The hotels could respond quickly to their customers due to the SM functionalities.

5.2.5 Theme: Relational information processes

5.2.5.1 Information reciprocity

Hotels 1 and 2 reciprocated information when customers privately messaged the hotels to ask for information. They provided recommendations and updates to social customers as this was part of the engagement process. For example, when customers contacted the hotels to make inquiries, the hotels would quickly respond to them (Food and Beverages Service Manager Hotel 2). Thus, information

reciprocity was part of their CE process whereby the hotels responded to customers with information, as discussed in Section 5.2.2.2.

5.2.5.2 Information capture

Hotels 1 and 2 collated information about their SM post engagement (e.g. weakest and best posts, number of posts reached), SM trends (trending topics and trending hashtags), and their competitors' performance on SM. The hotels also gathered information about their social customers, such as their SMCEB (link clicks, reviews, likes, comments, views), demographic information (e.g. gender, age), socio-economic information (e.g. education level, occupation), psychographic information (e.g. lifestyle and interests), country of origin, and contact details (e.g. email address). Nonetheless, the hotels need to be aware of the Personal Data Protection Act (2010), which applies to the SM users' privacy and confidentiality of information in Malaysia (Assistant Front Office Manager Hotel 2). Specifically, it relates to social information gathered using SM analytics such as *Socialbakers*, Facebook Insights, *TrustYou* and through private messages on SM.

Traditional channels (e.g. email or phone calls) were also used by the hotels to gather further information to resolve problems if customers posted negative reviews on SM. For example, the hotel would extend the conversation with their customers from SM to email for further investigation about their poor experiences. Therefore, the traditional channels extend the channels for customer information gathering.

5.2.5.3 Information integration

The Front Office department manages the CRM system, where customer information is stored. Particularly, the Guest History Manager records customer information in the system (Guest History Manager Hotel 2). Only certain information gathered from SM (e.g. negative reviews) is integrated into the hotel's CRM system.

5.2.5.4 Information access

The Communications department, General Manager, Director of Sales and Marketing, and Regional Director of Digital Marketing all have access to information gathered from SM analytics (Director of Communications Hotel 2).

Although accessibility to the CRM system is limited to the Front Office department, housekeeping has access to the system as well (Guest History Manager Hotel 2).

The limited accessibility is due to privacy and confidentiality regulations regarding customer information (Guest Relations Officer Hotel 2).

Nonetheless, the Front Office department and Communications department are responsible for sharing relevant customer information at their daily briefings, executive meetings, and via emails with relevant heads of department, including the food and beverages, spa, housekeeping, and recreation departments. Furthermore, the heads of department will share customer information via instant messaging (i.e. WhatsApp) with their employees.

5.2.5.5 Information use

i. To engage on SM

SM analytics information is used to understand customer behaviours. It is used to develop engaging SM content that shows a hotel's unique selling points, targeted to their customers (Director of Communications Hotel 2). Furthermore, information is used to deliver the content at the appropriate time (e.g. weekdays or weekends, morning or evening). However, the best time to post also depends on the target audience.

Additionally, Hotels 1 and 2 may retrieve customer profiles to gather information to help respond to customer complaints on SM.

ii. For products and services, and hotel employees

Both Hotels 1 and 2 use negative reviews (from SM) to improve the products and services by training their employees (e.g. Food and Beverages Service Manager Hotel 1). This reflects co-creation behaviour by the customers. Customers post reviews on Facebook to let the hotels know how they performed, and whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied. From this, the hotels can determine the satisfaction levels of customers and rectify any service failures. Furthermore, the hotels may also use customers' suggestions about service improvements, posted in the Facebook review section, to improve their products and services. Consequently, customer satisfaction and loyalty can be enhanced.

Guest 2 Hotel 2 hoped that negative reviews would 'provide learning' for the hotels to handle service failure and better manage customer service at the hotel (Guest Hotel 2). However, if a negative online review is received, the Communications department collaborates with the relevant departments to investigate the service failure and gather information (Director of Communications Hotel 1 As previously

mentioned, a response should be posted on the SM review page within 48 hours.

If positive reviews mention a department or employee by name, this information is forwarded to the relevant departments. The hotel employee is recognised and often rewarded if past customers mention their name in the reviews. Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts has a 'guest engagement programme' whereby hotel employees are acknowledged and rewarded for their best CE, motivating the hotel employees to engage more with customers.

iii. To customise products and services

The customer profile allows the hotels to obtain information to understand a customer's history (e.g. negative experiences during their stay or dining experience) and preferences. It helps to enhance customer experience at any of the Shangri-La brand venues by delivering customised services without the need for direction, thus keeping them satisfied (Guest History Manager Hotel 2).

5.3 Framework changes after Case Study A analysis

This study aimed to answer the third research question: how do organisations practise social CRM? Since case Study A has investigated social CRM from the perspective of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, the framework developed in Stage 3 (Framework Development) can now be refined. Figure 6 presented the preliminary framework (section 4.3), while Figure 24 presents the framework after the Case Study A analysis.

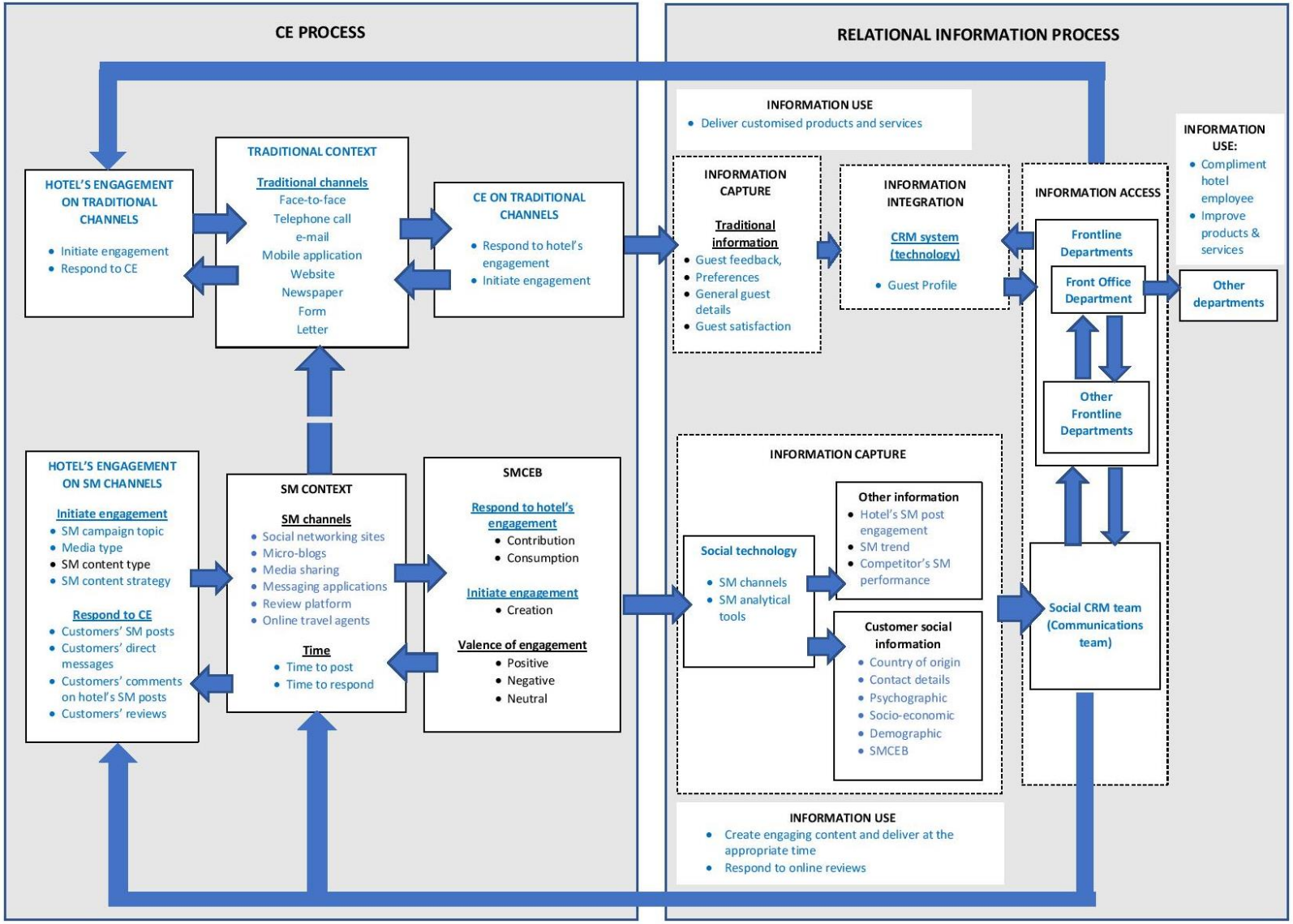


Figure 24. Case Study A analysis framework

The refined framework shows the relationship between social CRM and CE. The blue fonts indicate the key findings developed from the Case Study A analysis, while the black fonts indicate the earlier findings from the expert interviews and theoretical discussion in Stage 3 (Framework Development).

Similar to the preliminary framework in Stage 3 (Figure 6), this framework still comprises of two processes: CE process and relational information processes.

5.3.1 CE process

CE process focuses on the communication aspect of the social CRM strategy. The framework's CE process is more comprehensive than the one outlined in the earlier framework in Stage 3 (Framework Development). This framework also includes the traditional context and SM aspects of CE, as the CE process can move from SM to traditional channels.

5.3.1.1 Hotels' engagement

i. Hotels' engagement via SM channels

a. Hotel initiates engagement via SM channels

The CE initiatives via SM were determined by the (i) SM campaign topic, (ii) media type, (iii) SM content type, and (iv) SM content strategy, most of which were derived from the findings. Particularly, SM content strategy includes 'creating different SM content for different SM channels', 'post more soft-selling SM content', 'paid SM posts', 'personalised SM content', 'SM content with CTA' and 'reposting customers' SM content'. Only the SM content type was derived from the earlier findings in Stage 3 (Framework Development). This is because Hotels 1 and 2 created different content (entertaining, informational, relational or remunerative). These content strategies enabled the hotels to influence SMCEB and deliver it in the right SM context (SM channels and time).

b. Hotel responds to CE via SM channels

The hotels responded to SMCEB such as SM posts, private messages, comments and reviews. They responded to positive, negative and even neutral reviews and comments with standardised responses. While the hotels' responses to these reviews are considered formulaic, they nevertheless provide the hotels with guidance and a safer structure with which to respond to customer reviews, particularly the negative ones. Nonetheless, there is a personalisation in their response in terms of it being a one-to-one communication.

ii. Hotel engagement via traditional channels

In this respect, the hotels' engagement is straightforward. Emails and telephone calls can expand communication and information-gathering from SM.

iii. SM context

The framework extends the 'SM context strategies' from the preliminary framework in Stage 3. In this framework, 'devices' were excluded as the hotels did not focus on the devices used by customers to deliver SM content. Instead, they focused on the SM they were using, the timing of the postings and responses to CE.

a. SM channels

The hotels used different SM according to the required functionalities and target audience (e.g. Malaysian, Chinese, Korean, American). By knowing who their target segments are, the hotels can make more informed content choices and determine the appropriate SM to use for each segment. Additionally, the CE process can move from SM to traditional channels (traditional context), particularly in a service recovery situation.

b. Time

The present framework refers to time as 'time to post' and 'time to respond'. This expands the definition of 'time' from the preliminary framework in Stage 3. Hotel engagement involves initiating CE and responding to CE. Case Study A used different posting time strategies such as 'time of the day', 'day of the week', 'season of the year', and the 'frequency of posting'. Additionally, the framework categorises 'time to respond' to CE as being within 48 hours.

5.3.1.2 Customer Engagement (CE)

The framework includes CE via SM and traditional channels. Unlike the previous framework described in Stage 3, this framework investigates the social CRM comprehensively from both perspectives (the hotel's and customer's).

i. CE via SM channels

In contrast to Stage 3, the framework does not utilise the scale of seven SMCEB indicating its intensity (high, medium, low and neutral) and valence (positive, negative and neutral). SMCEB in this current framework has been simplified into 'customer responds to hotel's engagement' and 'customer initiates engagement' and these behaviours are positive, negative or neutral. Customers can respond to the hotel's engagement through these SMCEB: (i) contribution behaviour (i.e.

reaction, comment, shares SM posts, and likes or unlikes the SM page), and (ii) consumption behaviour (i.e. view, read, and click website link of the SM posts). Conversely, customers can initiate engagement with the hotels by creating SMCEB (i.e. direct message, share personal SM posts, write reviews).

5.3.2 Relational information processes

The preliminary framework in Stage 3 described relational information processes as straightforward information reciprocity, capture, integration, access and use. In this framework, however, relational information processes are more comprehensive than in the Stage 3 framework. It does not include information reciprocity, because this is where customer engages with the hotels and they reciprocate with information. Thus, in the final study, information reciprocity is similar to hotel's response to SMCEB.

5.3.2.1 Information capture

Information capture means the gathering of information from SM and traditional channel. Information is gathered differently in each situation. Briefly, information captured in the traditional context is integrated into the CRM system. In the SM context, data is channelled through SM technologies (i.e. SM channels and SM analytics).

5.3.2.2 Information integration

The hotel integrates customer information from traditional channels into the customer profile within the CRM system. Customer information captured from SM (i.e. negative reviews) is the only information from these channels that is integrated into the customer profile within the CRM system. Other Shangri-La brands would have similar information about customers, integrated by Hotels 1 and 2. Thus, other Shangri-La brands could use for decision-making process.

5.3.2.3 Information access

The communications department is responsible for sharing information from SM with the relevant departments, particularly the frontline departments. Mostly the department will share customer reviews with other relevant departments to facilitate service delivery, service recovery and employee motivation.

The Front Office is responsible for integrating information into the customer profile within the CRM system. It plays a key role in informing other frontline departments. This information can be used by the Communications department to respond to negative reviews posted on SM. Furthermore, the Front Office can gather

information from the Communications department and share it with the relevant departments for further investigation and improve products and services, while positive reviews are used for employee motivation.

5.3.2.4 Information use

In this current framework, the hotels use information gathered to engage better with their customers, whether creating SM content or responding to CE. The information improves products and services and motivates hotel employees to deliver customised services to their customers.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings from Case Study A analysis. Five themes were identified, and a framework was developed.

This framework provides a comprehensive view of Case Study A's interactive social CRM practice. They initiate engagement using SM content and respond to SMCEB. Furthermore, the hotels use information to help them to create engaging SM content and respond to CE. Therefore, this framework supports previous findings covered in Stage 3, whereby the social CRM comprises two processes and the CE process and relational information processes complement each other.

CHAPTER 6 CASE STUDY B ANALYSIS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of Case Study B analysis of Marriott International. The study took a within-case analysis approach to explore and address the third research question: How do organisations practise social CRM?

6.1 Case Study B background

Marriott International Inc. (Marriott) is a global hospitality company founded in 1927. In 2015 Marriott acquired the Canadian hotel chain Delta Hotels, and in 2016 Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide. These acquisitions made Marriott one of the world's largest hotel companies (Primrose and McLemore, 2016) with over 6,000 properties in 122 countries and a portfolio of 30 brands.

6.1.1 Hotel background

Hotels 3 and 4 are both brands of Marriott International. Before the Marriott acquisition, both hotels were under the management of Starwood Hotels.

6.1.1.1 Hotel 3: The Andaman Langkawi, A Luxury Collection

The Luxury Collection is now distinguished as a Distinctive Luxury brand of Marriott. Its strategy is to deliver products and services that are 'indigenous, rare, and an experience'.

The Andaman Langkawi is a 5-star Luxury Collection brand hotel in Langkawi, West of Malaysia. The main tourist attraction in Kedah. A total of 3.63 million tourist arrivals in 2016 compared with 3.62 in 2015 (Langkawi Development Authority, 2017). This may be attributable to the direct flights introduced by Malaysia's AirAsia from Guangzhou China to Langkawi, Kedah (Chan, 2016). In 2016 Langkawi also recorded a total of RM4.25 billion tourist receipts (as of September 2016).

This hotel targets the high-income segment that seeks luxurious amenities and services. Its customers include local Malaysians and international tourists from places such as Australia, Europe and Singapore. Herein, The Andaman Langkawi refers to Hotel 3.

6.1.1.2 Hotel 4: Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu

Following its acquisition of Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide in 2005, Le Meridien brand underwent an image makeover into a contemporary lifestyle brand that now aims to attract global creative travellers. Along with the rebranding strategy, it introduced its brand promise "Destination Unlocked" and in 2014 introduced the Three Cs brand filters - 'coordinate, culture and cuisine'. These aim to enable the brand to unlock the destination for customers.

The 5-star Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu is a Le Meridien brand of Marriott International. It opened in 2005 and is ideally located in the city centre of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, a state in East Malaysia that received 3.43 million tourist arrivals in 2016.

The hotel has a mix of customer types: corporate, business, leisure, local, international, dining and event attendees with its corporate market one of the most important. Other than catering for local Malaysians, the hotel has international customers including from China, South Korea, Taiwan and Australia. Herein, Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu refers to as Hotel 4.

6.1.2 CRM background

Marriott International's primary culture is "take care of your employees, and they'll take care of your customers", a belief held by the founder of Marriott, the 'people' were the hotel. Hence, it relies on its hotel employees to build and retain its customers in long-term relationships.

Marriott offers rewards through its loyalty programme that includes Starwood Preferred Customers (SPG), Marriott Rewards and Ritz-Carlton Rewards to increase loyalty of its customers. The programme offers members opportunities to earn and redeem benefits (e.g. free breakfasts and room upgrades) across Marriott's brands worldwide.

Marriott aims to define the experience it delivers to customers throughout its brands. To assist its sales and marketing employees, the company built a data warehouse to store a large amount of customer information (e.g. past behaviour and past preferences) gathered from its various hotel systems. For example, Marriott gathers customer information via guestVoice, a unified customer feedback system, and from customers' membership accounts (Carroll, 2011). A customer who has a membership account will have a profile within their CRM system. The

information is stored in Marriott's CRM system which allows the sharing of relevant information about its members across Marriott's brands to recognise them, facilitate their check-in process and deliver personalised services (Carroll, 2011). Consequently, this recognition makes the members feel special and gains their loyalty to revisit the hotel.

The hotel engages customers using different communication channels such as newsletters, magazines, publications, direct mails, instant messaging (i.e. Apple Business Chat) short-term messages (SMS), telephone calls (e.g. with Marriott's Customer Engagement Centre), face-to-face interaction at the hotel, websites, emails, mobile applications (i.e. Marriott Mobile App) and SM. Specifically, hotel employees try to engage with customers face-to-face to get to know them and how best to interact with them.

Smartphones and SM further support Marriott throughout the customer lifecycle enabling them to respond to and engage with customers while they are at the hotels and after their stay (Mehta, 2014).

6.1.3 SM background

Marriott uses SM for its CRM strategies to increase its presence among SM users, in turn, encouraging their customers to buy more and become brand advocates (Matthew, 2014). The use of SM has increased the loyalty programme's membership (Liyakasa, 2012) and offers customers special deals at its hotels. Starwood awarded its SPG members 'Starpoints' for those who checked into any Starwood Hotel (before the acquisition) with their Foursquare or Facebook. SM users with the most check-ins are appointed as 'SPG Mayor' and are responsible for sharing travel tips on Foursquare (Begwani and Pal, 2015).

The hotel actively engages with its social customers. Marriott uses these channels as part of its CRM strategy to track online activity using HYP3R (Golden and Caruso-Cabrera, 2016). HYP3R is a geo-social marketing platform that helps Marriott to track customer interaction, activity and engage its global customers. However, the hotel can only engage customers whose posts are published publicly (HYP3R, 2018).

Marriott International uses social CRM to understand how it can improve the interaction with its customers, not only on SM but at the hotel properties. In this way, it can tailor how it interacts with them at the hotels (Mehta, 2014). The hotels

gather structured and unstructured data from their internal systems, purchase data from data services and gather data from the Internet.

Digital Marketing Manager and Marketing Communications Manager handle the social CRM strategies for Hotels 3 and 4. Appendix 21 presents the general organisation chart of Case Study B.

Hotels 3 and 4 use similar SM (see Table 8). Both hotels use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TripAdvisor, Google + and Foursquare, but Hotel 3 is the only hotel in this Case Study B that uses Chinese SM platform, Weibo. They prefer to use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as their main markets use these channels, with different generations using Facebook, the younger generations (Millennials) using Instagram and the Western market (including the United States of America, herein USA) using Twitter. The hotels, therefore, choose each SM platform for its functionality and the target market that uses it. This study focuses on the hotels' Facebook pages and provides a brief description of the Facebook features of both Hotels 3 and 4.

Facebook is the social networking platform that both hotels of this case study prefer to use. Most of the fans of Hotels 3 and 4 (see Table 40 and 41) are from Malaysia, and Indonesia, which shows that these two hotels have similar fans from different countries.

Table 40 *Facebook fans of Hotel 3*

Country	Fan count	Percent of total fans
Malaysia	15482	64.2
Indonesia	1728	7.2
United Kingdom	949	3.9
Singapore	866	3.6
Australia	836	3.5
India	440	1.8
United States of America	439	1.8
Germany	295	1.2
Thailand	280	1.2
Philippines	203	0.8

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

Table 41 *Facebook fans of Hotel 4*

Country	Fan count	Percent of total fans
Malaysia	15005	80.0
Indonesia	1171	6.2
Brunei Darussalam	624	3.3
Philippines	233	1.2
Australia	224	1.2
Singapore	206	1.1
Taiwan	158	0.8
India	134	0.7
United States of America	110	0.6
Thailand	79	0.4

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

There are two types of participants for this case study; the researcher interviewed six hotel employees (see Table 42) and five customers (see Table 43).

Table 42 *The employee profile of Hotel 3 and Hotel 4*

		Reference code	Respondents' name	Department	Years of Experience working at the hotel	Gender	Age
Hotel 3	Digital Marketing /Communications Managers	DMM H3	Digital Marketing Manager	Marketing	4	Female	29
Hotel 4	Digital Marketing /Communications Managers	DMM H4	Digital Marketing Manager	Marketing	5	Female	confidential
		MCM H4	Marketing Communications Manager	Marketing	1	Female	confidential
	Frontline hotel employees	VM H4	Venue Manager	Food and Beverages	1	Male	confidential
		DM H4	Duty Manager	Front Office	7	Female	confidential
		GES H4	Guest Experience Specialist	Front Office	3	Male	confidential

Table 43 *The customer profile of Hotel 3 and Hotel 4*

	Reference code	Respondents' Name	Country of Origin	Country of Residence	Gender	Age	Occupation	Preferred SM
Hotel 3	G1 H3	Guest 1 H3	Malaysia	Malaysia	Male	30	Businessman	- Facebook - Twitter
	G2 H3	Guest 2 H3	UK	Brunei	Female	38	Confidential	- Instagram - Twitter - Facebook - LinkedIn
	G3 H3	Guest 3 H3	UK	China	female	35	Consultant	- Facebook - WeChat
Hotel 4	G1 H4	Guest 1 H4	Singapore	Australia	Female	50	Manager	- Facebook

6.2 Findings

This study identified five themes, and each theme was explored in depth. Sample excerpts of the interview transcripts are provided to lend support to each of the themes.

6.2.1 Theme: Social CRM

6.2.1.1 Social CRM definition

i. Social CRM uses SM

Both hotels defined social CRM as engaging their followers on SM. Specifically, Hotel 4 defined social CRM as CRM that uses SM to reach out to its followers with information and create interaction to gain feedback from the followers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). Similarly, Hotel 3 defines it as CRM of staying engaged with its social customers. Hotel 3 would, therefore, need to collect information to understand its customers.

The hotels use social CRM to create CE initiatives (see section 6.2.2.2), getting them to interact, for example, by giving feedback to the hotel. Therefore, the hotels need to understand the appropriate way to respond to these customers or followers, which also involves providing them with information.

ii. Social CRM attracts customers

Both hotels use social CRM such as their SM content (see section 6.2.3) to attract new fans to 'like' their SM pages. Specifically, Hotel 3 viewed social CRM as important to stay engaged with its customers by understanding "what they want to see" and thus increase the number of followers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3).

Hotels 3 and 4 also showed that their social CRM strategy such as their hotel campaigns attracted past customers to revisit the hotel (Guest 2 Hotel 3, Guest 1 Hotel 4).

However, Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 stated that if SM content does not engage social customers, then a relationship cannot be built with them.

iii. Social CRM maintains social customers

Both Hotels 3 and 4 maintained their customer connections on SM. Specifically, Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 highlighted that social CRM is about staying engaged not to lose their social customers.

Hotel 3 maintains customers by understanding what content they want to see on SM and the appropriate way to respond them (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). Similarly, Hotel 4 maintains social customers by providing the latest updates that benefit them, such as offers, special rates and discounts in return for their "time investment" on SM. Hotel 4 also focuses on responding to customers appropriately to keep them on SM.

iv. Disengaged SM users

Neither hotel focused on winning back disengaged SM users who had 'unliked' their SM pages, but rather concentrated on winning new fans. Hotel 3 reasoned that disengaged users may no longer be interested in the page (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). Nonetheless, it does not necessarily mean that customers are also disengaging from traditional channels. Hotel 4 mentioned that they must respect users' option to opt-out from the SM page. Instead, they focus their energy and time on attracting and maintaining new customers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). However, if customers decide to like Hotel 3's SM page again, it provides the opportunity for the hotel to reestablish relationship with them (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3.

6.2.1.2 Social CRM activities

Both hotels' social CRM are handled by the Digital Marketing team, consisting of one or two managers. The social CRM includes SM marketing (for example SM content attracting new fans to 'like' the SM page and past customers to revisit the hotel), social selling (generating sales enquiries and directing room bookings from SM to the relevant department), and social customer service (monitoring and responding to customer reviews) on SM.

SM marketing facilitates the generation of sales enquiries and, thus, social selling. Additionally, the hotels use it to monitor and respond to their customer reviews and for service recovery. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 highlighted that it makes customers feel that they care about them, which Hotel 3 referred to providing as 'online social care'.

6.2.1.3 Social CRM key elements

i. People

a. Provide hospitality to customers

Both hotels' employees have essential roles in delivering service to customers to encourage them to return (Guest 1 Hotel 4). The employees' hospitality of Hotels 3

and 4 makes their customers "feel they belong" (Duty Manager Hotel 4). This includes being caring and informative (Guest 2 Hotel 3), welcoming (Guest 1 Hotel 4), friendly with smiles (Duty Manager Hotel 4, Guest 1 Hotel 3, Guest 1 Hotel 4), helpful (Guest 1 Hotel 3, Guest 1 Hotel 4), and professional (Guest 1 Hotel 3, Guest 2 Hotel 3). The employees' hospitality may result in customers posting positive, negative or neutral reviews on SM.

The employee essentially represents the hotel, which is why Hotel 4 featured their employees on their SM page. The hotel explained that content about their employees makes the place "more relatable". Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 explained:

> *"When we share these (SM post about hotel employees) and then people (customers) like it, we want to tell them, or we want to interact with them, telling them that it's more than brick-and-mortar, this place. There is human value, which makes a place more relatable."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 4)

The employees play an important role in shaping a customer's experience at the hotel and their intention to engage on SM. However, only Digital Marketing team has authority to handle the social CRM activities to engage customers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3, Guest Experience Specialist Hotel 4). Perhaps this is because Digital Marketing managers are trained and have the skills to initiate engagement and respond to SMCEB.

b. Intercompany collaboration

Each Digital Marketing Manager collaborates with relevant departments (e.g. Front Office, Engineering, Housekeeping, Food and Beverages, Guest Experience, Marketing) to facilitate their social CRM activities. For example, the Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 shares data with the Marketing team to identify customers to target. Digital Marketing team also shares information such as customer reviews and preferences with the relevant departments. The Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 stated:

> *"Sometimes they (customers) will send a message like 'I want my kids to have these toys during the stay'. When you see that comment on your post… you can internally talk to your team and tell them 'I saw on the comment of my customer, can we do something special for them?' So, we can do that. We can arrange a special amenity upon their arrival."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 3)

ii. Technology

Both hotels use SM to initiate and respond to CE. They believe SM insights (e.g. from Facebook) allow the hotel to gather information about customers who 'like' their SM page, and their SM posts effectiveness. The hotels use this as a tool to help them create analytics.

Furthermore, the CRM system was used by the hotels to store information for the social CRM activities (see relational information processes section 6.2.5).

iii. Processes

This section discusses the customer lifecycle process. Both hotels utilise SM to engage with their customers at the pre-arrival stage (for example, responding to customer enquiries and messages or comments about their preferences), and post-departure (receiving and responding to customer feedback). The engagement at the pre-arrival stage attracts customers to the hotel and enables the hotel to deliver customised service on their arrival.

Hotel 4 also encourages its customers to write reviews on their SM on check-out (departure phase), which is a face-to-face interaction (Duty Manager Hotel 4). This may get customers engaging with the hotel on SM.

6.2.2 Theme: CE process

6.2.2.1 Customer's engagement with the hotel

i. Customers initiate engagement

a. Customers' enquiries and information

Customers directly message on SM to ask for information as they may be interested in knowing more after reading the hotels' SM posts and may want to inform the hotel about their preferences before they arrive (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4, Duty Manager Hotel 4).

b. Customers' SM posts

Customers upload their SM posts and tag or hashtag the hotels (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3, Duty Manager Hotel 4). The customers may believe the hotel should see their photos or videos and get recognition.

c. Customers' reviews

Customers of both hotels posted reviews on the hotel's SM page, for example on TripAdvisor, Facebook and the online travel agents' websites such as Booking.com,

Agoda and Expedia (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4, Guest 1 Hotel 3, Duty Manager Hotel 4, Guest 1 Hotel 4, Venue Manager Hotel 4). Most of the reviews were about the dining experience, environment, hotel employees, management, rooms and the service received. They posted reviews to share their hotel experiences with potential, current and past customers.

ii. Customers' responses to the hotels' engagement initiatives

Customers responded to hotel's engagement on SM through reacting, commenting, sharing, viewing and clicking website links on the hotels' SM posts or 'liking' the hotel's SM page. Specifically, Hotel 4 measured their social CRM effectiveness based on awareness, conversion and interactions (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4).

Both hotels measured awareness by trying to determine whether their SM content reached their target audience and evaluating the number of posts reads/views. However, Hotel 3 highlighted that this behaviour is hard to track, while Hotel 4 felt it did not provide any "value" to CRM. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 explained that responses such as reactions, comments, sharing or discussions on SM posts provide "value" for the hotel's social CRM:

> *"In any online communication, the value is interaction. If you do anything online, and there is no interaction, good or bad, there is almost no value. If you put something online, and people start to like it, comment, share, or talk about it …that is the value in (social) CRM."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 4)

This shows Hotel 4 focuses on more than creating awareness on SM. Less-active SMCEB has no value for Hotel 4.

Link clicks enable the hotels to measure conversion, the desired outcome, which is to lead customers to the hotel's website for further information and/or to make bookings. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 mentioned that any purchases made from link clicks are considered a success in terms of what they have invested in the advertisement budget.

The hotels also use reactions, comments and shares of the SM post to measure interactions. For example, if a customer is happy about a SM post of Hotel 3, they will respond to that post (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). Hotel 4 mentioned that customer responses such as comments allow the hotel to collect information to facilitate their marketing plans (e.g. creating packages).

Customers also respond by 'liking' the hotels' SM pages and by direct messaging the hotels on SM (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). Hotel 3 measures the 'likes' on their SM page to see whether their CE initiatives have attracted new fans.

However, the hotels do not measure the numbers of SM page 'unlikes' (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4) as they rather focus on attracting more new customers and fans.

iii. Customers' engagement valence

Although the managers of Hotels 3 and Hotel 4 only described the valence of SMCEB as either positive or negative, the behaviour can also be neutral (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3) (see Table 44).

Table 44 *CE valence of Hotels 3 and 4 customers*

SMCEB	Customer engages on	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Reactions	SM content	/	/	
Comments		/	/	
Shares		/		
Link clicks				/
Views				/
Like	SM page	/		
Unlike			/	
Reviews		/	/	/

6.2.2.2 The hotels' engagement with their customers

i. Hotels' CE initiatives

The hotels initiated engagement with their customers by creating SM content (see section 6.2.3). The Venue Manager Hotel 4 saw it as the "first step" to social customers. These CE initiatives are related to the earlier social CRM section 6.2.1, which includes SM marketing and social selling activities.

Further, both hotels collected information from SM to help them create engaging SM content. This shows relational information processes importance (see section 6.2.5) to support the hotels' CE initiatives.

ii. Hotels' responses to customers' engagement

Both hotels responded to SMCEB to stay engaged (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3, Guest 1 Hotel 3) or keep the interaction going (Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4) with their customers.

a. Hotels' responses to customers' SM posts

Hotel 3 responded to customers' SM posts by commenting and 'liking' them (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3, Guest 3 Hotel 3). It also responded by following customers' SM accounts. This response influenced comments on the hotel's SM posts, as the hotel made customers feel that they cared about them.

b. Hotels' responses to customers' direct messages

Hotels 3 and 4 both responded to customers' private messages (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4). Hotel 3 responded to customers' questions in a way that might encourage them to make bookings (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). Hotel 4 responded by asking for information about customers and their experiences (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4).

c. Hotels' responses to customers' comments on the hotels' SM posts

The hotels responded to customers' comments on their SM posts by commenting back and 'liking' their comments (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4, Guest 3 Hotel 3). Hotel 4 also directly messaged customers to respond to comments on their SM posts (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4, Guest 1 Hotel 4). However, the SM observation indicated that the hotels were unable to respond to every comment.

d. Hotels' responses to customers' reviews

- Responses to positive reviews

Only Hotel 3 responded to customers' positive reviews by 'liking' the review. Further, both hotels responded similarly in acknowledging customers and thanking them, reiterating the positive experiences and welcoming them back in the future (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4, Venue Manager Hotel 4). Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 stressed that this is "free marketing" where customers say positive things about them, and Hotel 3 wanted to "reaffirm the positive things" in their response. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for the hotel to serve the customer again in the future (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 and Venue Manager Hotel 4).

- Responses to negative reviews

Both hotels responded to negative reviews on SM and had a similar and standard way to respond them: showing appreciation for choosing the hotel and for writing the review. This was followed by an acknowledgement of the customer's negative experience, confirming the feedback would be shared with the team to help the hotel improve its products and services. Finally, the hotels said they hoped to welcome back the customer, providing an email address should they wish to make further contact. The hotels want and need to quickly take comments about negative experiences offline. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 added that if the hotel could get further information about the customer's experiences, this might help it to provide a better response, recover and improve its service and encourage customer loyalty.

Negative reviews need to be resolved promptly before they escalate and impact the hotel’s reputation. Figure 25 shows a negative review, with the customer citing a negative experience at Hotel 3's restaurant and providing suggestions for improvement, with the customers showing co-creation behaviour. The review attracted comments from other customers, but by responding to this review, the hotel managed to get the customer to further engage in their response. The hotels need to respond to negative reviews to recover their service levels (Digital Marketing Manager 3).

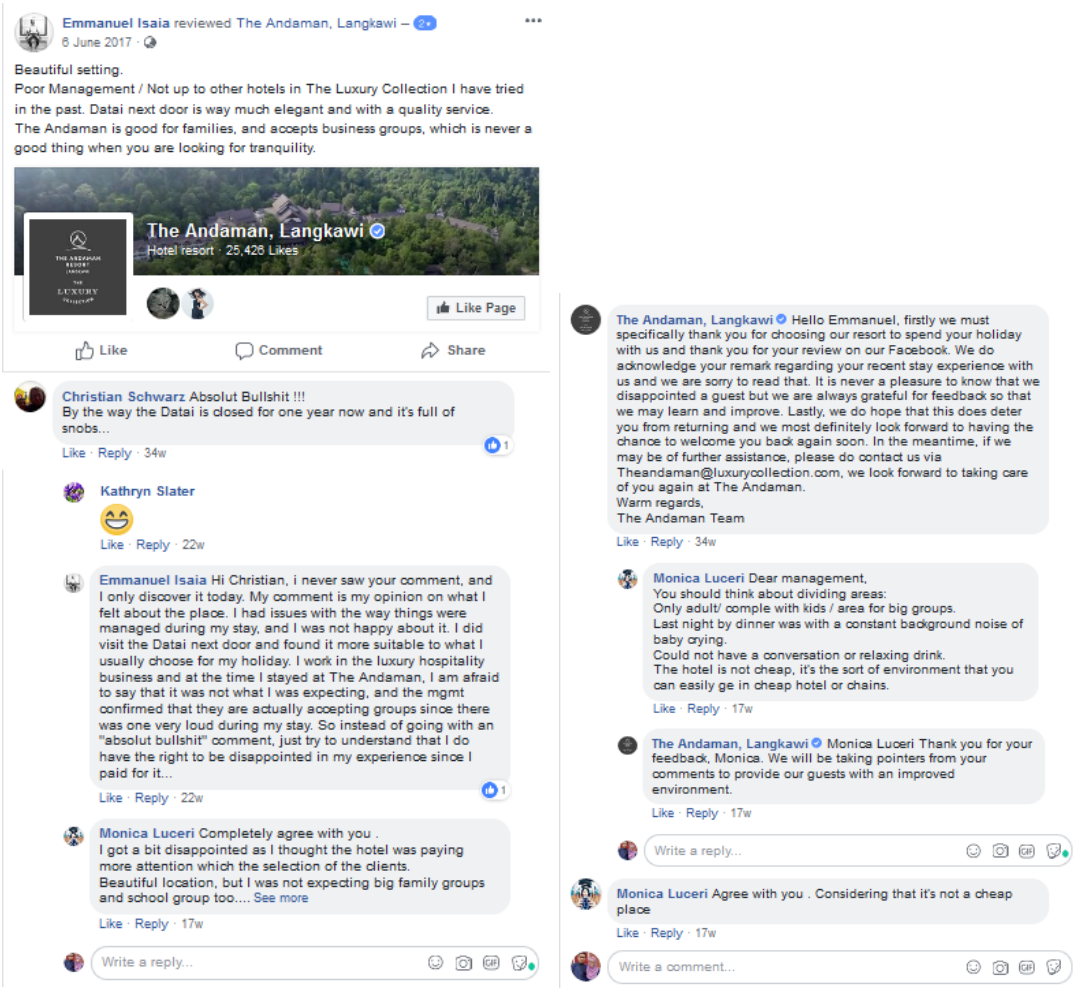


Figure 25. A response to Hotel 3's customer negative review. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheAndamanLangkawi/reviews/

- Responses to neutral reviews

Both hotels responded to neutral reviews, but they responded differently depending on the content. Hotel 3 responded by thanking the customer for the review and saying it looked forward to welcoming the customer again in the future but did not discuss the issue about the products or services (i.e. room) or any plans it might have to improve it.

Hotel 4 replied by thanking the customer for the review, highlighting its plans to improve the products or services (i.e. outdoor environment) and said it looked forward to welcoming the customer again in the future. Thus, on neutral reviews, the hotels may address the reviews differently depending on the issues and whether the negative experiences described were overshadowing the positive ones.

Although Hotels 3 and 4 responded to positive, negative and neutral reviews, observation indicated they were unable to respond to all the reviews. Nevertheless, they tried to respond to all SMCEB (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3).

6.2.3 Theme: SM content

The hotel posted SM content from year 2016 until 2017, depicted in Appendices 22 and 23.

6.2.3.1 SM campaign topic

Hotels 3 and Hotel 4 created different SM campaigns that generally included campaigns designed by Marriott and campaigns designed by each hotel (see Appendices 22 and 23).

i. Corporate campaigns

Both hotels posted similar corporate SM campaigns about International Women's Day in March 2017. This is depicted in Figures 26 showing corporate SM content has similar captions, images and videos. Neither hotel had changed or edited the SM content. The posts talk about the percentage of women in Marriott and encourage customers to support International Women's Day and take a pledge. While they publicised a positive stance towards empowering women in management positions within Marriott, the posts themselves were among the weakest between 2016 and 2017 with Hotel 3 attracting 13 likes and Hotel 4 only 3 likes.

Moreover, Hotel 3 posted on the Marriot loyalty programme regarding SPG and Marriott rewards and other Marriott brands such as W and St. Regis (a concert and yacht show in Singapore).

Hotel 3 Hotel 4

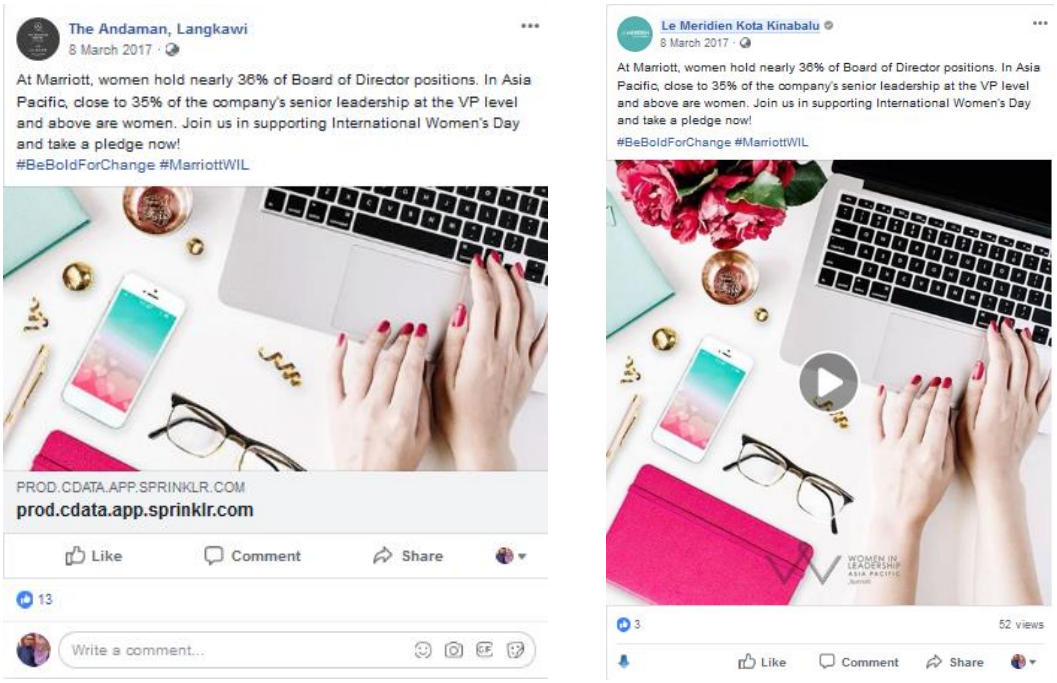


Figure 26 International's Women Day campaign on Hotel 3's and Hotel 4's Facebook page.
From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/

Hotel 4 posted seven campaigns based on SM content related to their corporate brand competition (Destination Unlocked Contest), corporate promotions (school holiday rooms and suites offer, 30% off at Asia Pacific SPG hotels) and other Marriott brands (W Bali Seminyak, Sheraton Towers Singapore, Le Meridien Xiamen). However, these SM posts were not sufficiently engaging.

ii. Hotel campaigns

Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 explained that if the hotel posts campaigns about experiences in and around the hotel, this might remind customers of the memories they had of the hotel and thus make them want to return there.

Between 2016 and 2017, Hotels 3 and 4 both posted different categories of campaigns (see Table 45). Some campaigns were consistently posted on their Facebook pages, while some were not. Hotel 4's posts were mainly about its offers on food and beverages, rooms and suites, events and functions, while Hotel 3 posted fewer offers on its Facebook page.

Table 45 *List of hotel campaigns.*

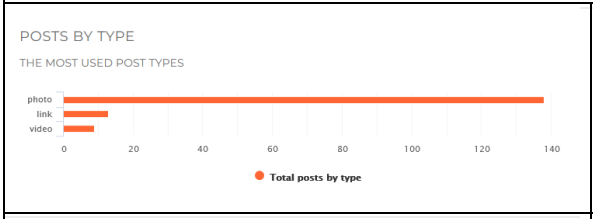
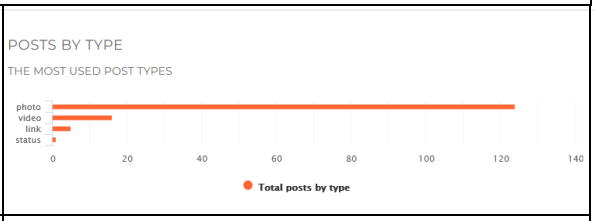
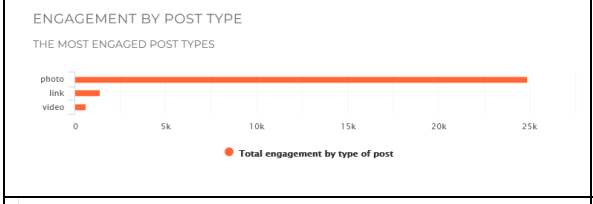
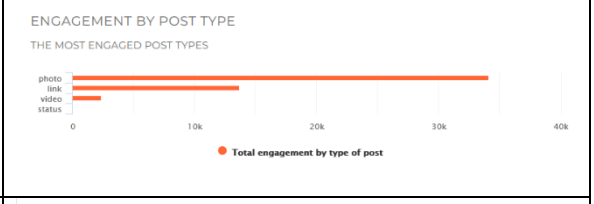
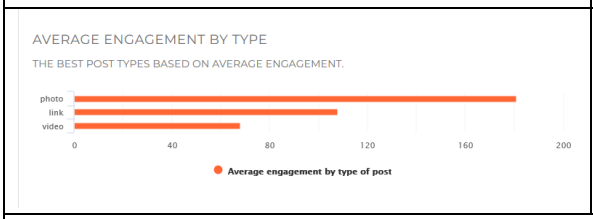
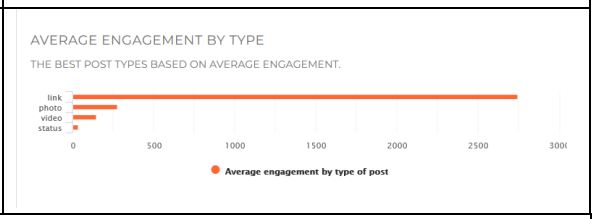
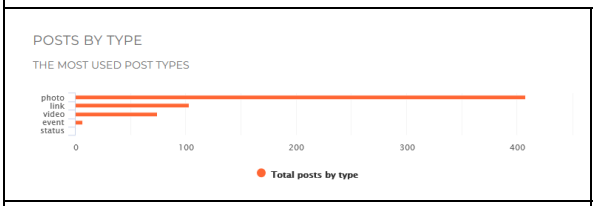
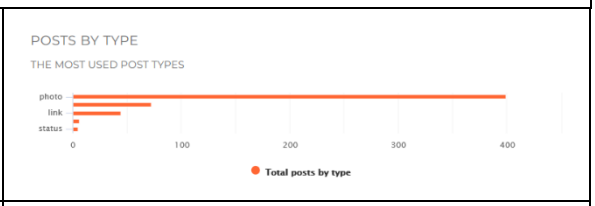
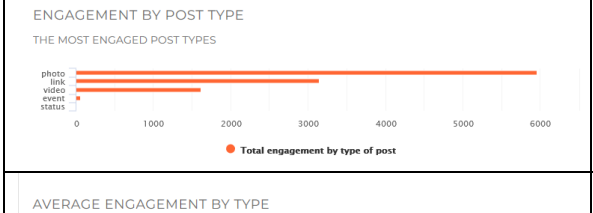
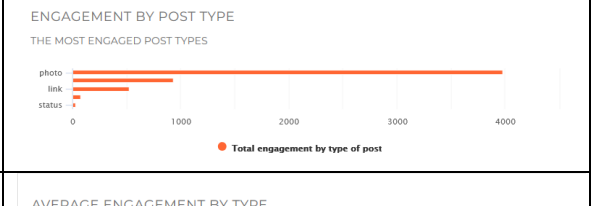
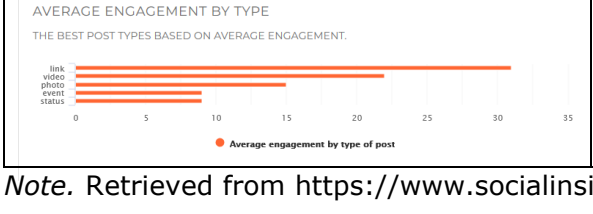
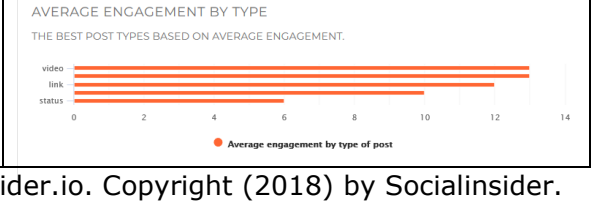
Category	Hotel campaigns
Location	Langkawi Island, Datai Bay, Kota Kinabalu, culture, nature
Products and services	Events, functions, food and beverages, hotel facilities, recreation activities, rooms and suites, spas and seasonal offers
Hotels' stakeholders	Hotel employees, CSR activities
Awards campaigns	Requesting customers to vote for the hotel
Trends	Mannequin challenge
Repost of customers' hotel experiences	Instagram photos, positive reviews

Nevertheless, the hotels' own campaigns were more engaging than the corporate campaigns created by Marriott or campaigns about its other brands. Overall, corporate campaigns were less engaging than the hotel ones.

6.2.3.2 Media type

Table 46 shows that Hotels 3 and 4 mainly posted photos, videos and links rather than events, as these were the most engaging media on their Facebook pages.

Table 46 *A summary of media type for Hotels 3 and 4*

2016	2017
Hotel 3	
	
	
	
Hotel 4	
	
	
	

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

Hotel 4 highlighted its use of photos and videos as part of its visual marketing which has "value" on SM (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). This might be why the photos and videos were engaging. Similarly, Hotel 3 mentioned that engaging content, and photos or videos, can attract customers' attention because they are "eye-catching" (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). These are discussed in turn.

i. Photos

Hotels 3 and 4 posted more photos than other content on their Facebook pages (see Table 46). Findings showed that customers engaged with photos by reacting, commenting, sharing them on SM, or 'liking' the hotels' SM pages. Photo caption could also influence SMCEB.

Although Hotel 4 posted 50 per cent more photos between 2016 and 2017 compared with Hotel 3, the photos of Hotel 3 were more engaging. Furthermore, Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 highlighted that photo quality and different photo angles of a product or service can attract customers' attention on SM. However, she further reasoned that photos are static, unlike videos.

ii. Videos

Both hotels posted videos that attracted SMCEB. Hotel 3 described their videos as interactive and with accompanying music. This can attract customers' attention within five seconds and influence them to 'like' it. Guest 1 Hotel 4 liked the videos of Hotel 4's food and beverages on SM:

> *"I like the videos of the food because … we have to go back there, especially when they had the parfait thing. […] it's amazing what they can post there, it's more to my liking ... I said, 'well if you keep posting like that we're going there'."*
>
> (Guest 1, Hotel 4)

Examples of the hotels' videos that caused new fans to 'like' the SM page and engaged on the post are shown in Table 47. For example, Hotel 3 posted a video of an employee who had won an award, while Hotel 4 posted a promotional video about their hotel and local attractions. The videos gained more views than reactions, shares and comments, showing more consumption SMCEB (views) than contribution SMCEB (clicking reaction and share button, and writing comments).

Table 47 *Examples of videos gaining high engagement*

Hotel	Content	Reaction	Comment	Share	View	New fans
Hotel 3	Hotel employee	181	37	41	4,200	44
Hotel 4	Hotel and local attractions	302	28	324	16,000	60

iii. Link (Website link)

Both hotels posted links on their Facebook pages to attract customers to their websites. The links also encouraged customers to engage with the posts by reacting, commenting or sharing them, or 'liking' the hotels' SM pages.

Hotel 3's link received significantly higher average engagement compared with Hotel 4's link. Possibly Hotel 3's copywriting, which illustrates the hotel's unique location, provides information and includes CTA, were therefore more engaging.

iv. Events

Hotel 4 highlighted the use of paid 'events' media for promotions on its Facebook page, as results showed that it did not much increase SMCEB compared with other media. Furthermore, events are not their main priority for media. Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4 stated:

> *"You can do Facebook events, you can actually do many promotions and all that, as long as it is paid for. We don't go into detail, because this is not the only thing we do; it's not our priority."*
>
> (Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4)

6.2.3.3 SM content type

i. Entertaining SM content

a. Trending

Hotels 3 and 4 posted trending SM content such as the mannequin challenge in November 2016 (see Appendices 22 and 23). Perhaps the hotels wanted to follow the trend with everyone on SM being interested in the mannequin challenge, so that they remained relevant in the SM community. They may have hoped that this content would increase the numbers of SMCEB.

b. Fun video

Both hotels' entertaining content includes videos that can capture entertaining elements. Guest 1 Hotel 4 referred to entertaining SM content which included videos about the hotel's food and beverages, and this made her want to revisit the hotel (see Section 6.2.3.2). Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 highlighted that videos accompanied by music could attract the attention of customers within five seconds. She mentioned that a video capturing monkeys interacting with each other can be funny and this content can gain SMCEB.

c. Customers' interest in entertaining content

Guest 3 Hotel 3 referred to entertaining SM content that was of interest to him and that he would want to attend to if he had the opportunity. Guest 1 Hotel 4 viewed entertaining content promoting happy hours and weddings, or videos about food and beverages. These customers saw entertaining content as relating to different activities such as events and promotions. It depends on the customers' interests what defines content as entertaining.

Thus, entertaining content gained reactions, comments, shares and views, and attracted new fans to 'like' the SM page.

ii. Informational SM content

a. Create awareness of the experience around the hotel

Hotels 3 and 4 posted informational SM content that was mostly related to the hotel, services and local attractions, creating awareness for social customers. For example, Hotel 3 provides customers with information about the experiences they can have within and outside the hotel and supports one of the hotel's core values. It also updates past customers about the hotel (Guest 1 Hotel 3, Guest 2 Hotel 3, Guest 1 Hotel 4). Guest 1 Hotel 4 said:

> *"… tasteful posting and informative, up to date; that's important […] it gives me an insight of what they do […] every day, sometimes two or three times a week I get a posting from [HOTEL 4] about their activities […] That's why…customers like me, like to be informed because if they had a good day, a happy stay, happy memories in the hotel itself, it's important […]. It's memorable. It's something you can remember."*
>
> (Guest 1 Hotel 4)

Thus, informational content can evoke positive memories about past customers' stays at the hotel. Both hotels' content could influence SMCEB and attract new fans to 'like' the SM page. For example, Hotel 4's brand new room may have received

customers to engage with this post (1,343 reactions, 34 comments), and attracted new fans to its Facebook page. Thus, there were more reactions than comments.

iii. Relational SM content

a. Relevant to the customers

- Celebrations

Hotels 3 and 4 posted content related to seasonal events such as the Chinese New Year and Christmas, and they may also post seasonal campaigns to build a presence on SM. This is also relevant to having a seasonal posting time strategy (see section 6.2.4.2). This content influences SMCEB, and one of the top seasonal content topics that positively increases SMCEB is Christmas.

- Hotel employees

Both hotels posted content regarding their hotel employees and gained SMCEB, including attracting new fans to 'like' their SM page. For example, Hotel 3 posted content about an employee who had won an award (see Figure 27), and this garnered 181 reactions, 37 comments, 41 shares and over 4,200 views and may have also attracted 44 new fans to 'like' the hotel's Facebook page.



Figure 27. A relational content of Hotel 3's employee. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheAndamanLangkawi/

The posts about employees were to show the human value behind its products and services, making the post more relatable and engaging for its social customers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). Customer comments on this content indicated that they value the 'human experience' of the hotel. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 explained:

"When someone comments, interacts with them (SM post), it feels that their values are the human experience. So, they appreciate human experience beyond physical. That is (why) […] we acknowledge their feedback, but we understand that human experience is important for them, these customers."

(Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 4)

b. Encourage customers to engage

Both hotels tend to include CTA in their content to influence SMCEB (see section 6.2.3.4). For example, both hotels posted content that asked questions. One example was Hotel 3 asking its customers to vote for the hotel for an award (see Figure 28). This post encouraged customers to participate in the award voting, which made this post one of those receiving the highest engagement in 2016 and 2017, with 4,590 reactions, 12 comments and 10 shares. Therefore, there were more reactions than comments and shares. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 developed this content based on what the hotel's customers were interested in, which may have encouraged them to comment on the post.

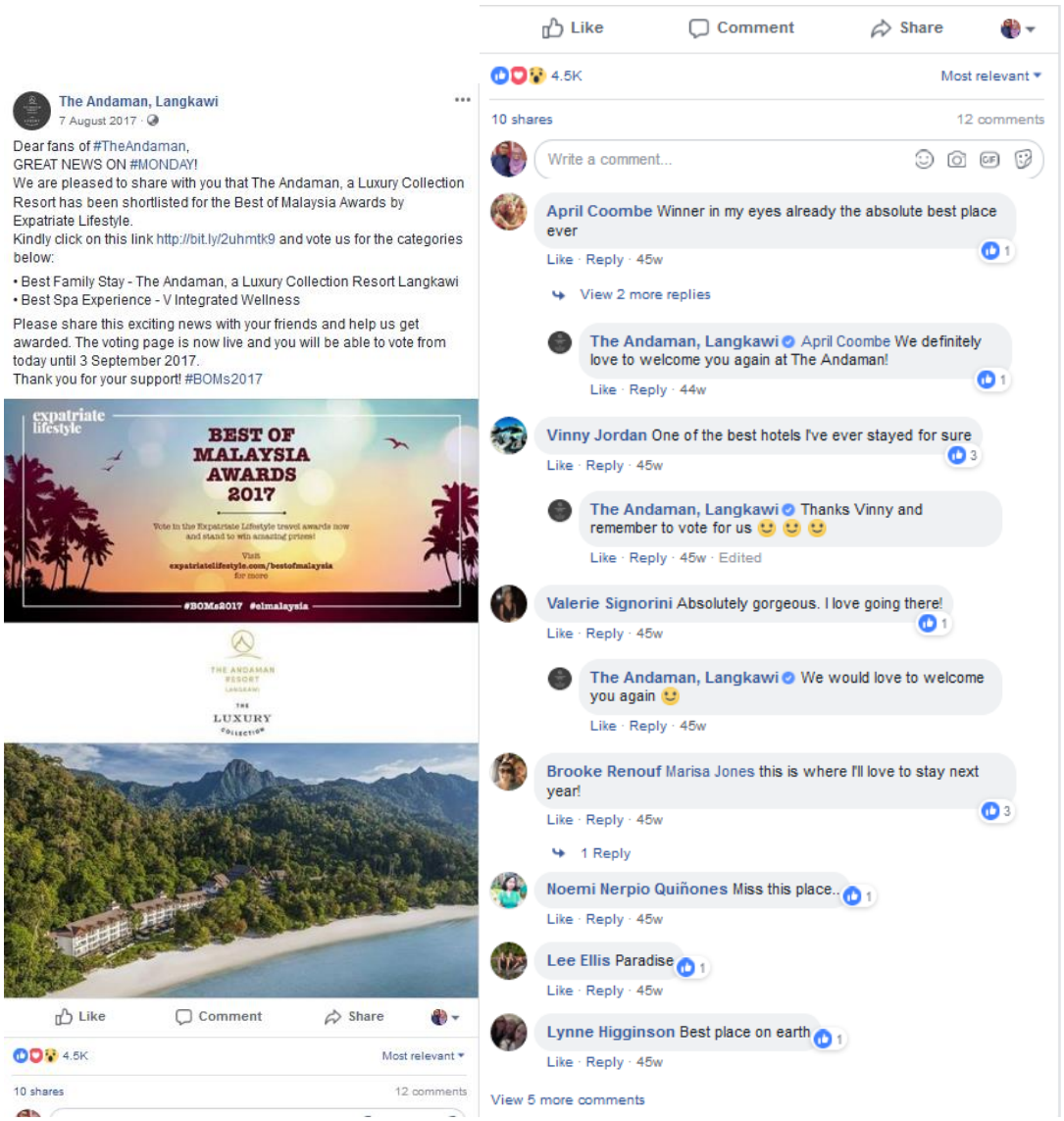


Figure 28. A relational content of an award voting for Hotel 3. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/TheAndamanLangkawi/

iv. Remunerative SM content

a. Promotions or offers

Both hotels posted remunerative SM content, such as offers and discounts. This content can influence SMCEB on the post and attract new fans to 'like' their SM pages. For instance, Hotel 3 posted about its limited-time room offer, inviting customers to react, comment and share it (see Figure 29), receiving 4,449 reactions, 17 comments and 71 shares. Thus, it showed more reactions than shares, or comments. Additionally, the post attracted 284 new fans to 'like' the hotel's Facebook page.



Figure 29. A remunerative content of Hotel 3's promotions and offers. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/TheAndamanLangkawi/

b. Hard-selling content

Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 described how offers are mainly associated with hard marketing which is "blunt" and does not appeal so much on SM compared with soft-selling content (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). This suggests remunerative content may engage with fewer social customers. As they mainly posted offers about their products and services, rooms and suites on their SM page, this may explain their lower average numbers of SMCEB received for their photos compared with Hotel 3 (see section 6.2.3.2).

However, remunerative content for Hotel 3 can positively gain many SMCEB on their post, and new 'likes' for their SM page (see Figure 29).

Thus, both hotels' remunerative content encouraged reactions, shares and comments on the SM posts, and received more 'likes' on the SM page.

6.2.3.4 SM content strategy

i. Creating different SM content for different SM channels

Both hotels posted different SM content on different SM. Hotel 4 considers which SM channel to use before creating its SM content, so it tailors its content to the SM platform it wants to use. Hotel 3 believes different channels need different SM content to stay engaged with customers. The user may not want to see similar posts on two different SM channels. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 explained:

> *"These three different SM channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) … I'll do a different post. […] if you're saying all three channels you're posting the same thing, think for yourself, will you follow it? Because all three channels I'm posting the same thing. I can go to either one channel and I see the same stuff. If you post different SM content on three channels, people will stay engaged."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 3)

ii. Post more soft-selling SM content

The hotels posted both hard-sell and soft-sell SM content. Hotel 3 posted less hard-selling content compared with Hotel 4, which frequently posted hard-sell content relating to its food and beverages and room offers. Further analysis shows Hotel 3's SM posts on average received higher numbers of SMCEB compared with Hotel 4. Hard-sell content did not increase much SMCEB, unlike soft-sell content, which can get more interaction (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). This influenced the level of engagement for Hotel 4's SM content. Nonetheless, Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 believes the hotel still needs to promote its products and services using this technique, to create awareness of their products and services.

Although offers and promotions may increase engagement (see section 6.2.3.3), posting more hard-selling posts might not, as users may prefer to see other types of content on the platform.

iii. Paid SM posts

Hotels 3 and 4 used paid SM posts to reach the target market, including those who are the hotels' followers and also non-followers. Both hotels pushed their posts based on the target markets' country, demographic and time of activity (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4). In this way, content can be more targeted and reach a wider audience.

iv. Personalised SM content

Hotels 3 and 4 both created personalised SM content which made customers feel as if the content was personal and represented the hotel (Guest 3 Hotel 3). Hotel 4 specifically considers which SM channels it will use before creating SM content. It then creates the content based on the audience of each channel's country of origin as this determines the language used (e.g. English, Chinese), gender (male, female), preferences, lifestyle (e.g. interests, lingo) and age. The hotel also takes into consideration the timing of the SM content. Thus, they look into the context and other information to personalised the content.

Nonetheless, Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4 noted the difficulty of personalising content for different customer segments on SM because it is public. She suggested using hashtags to reach specific target market. This approach reduces the possibility of attracting customers who are not their intended audience, avoiding customers' disappointment and perceived service failure among its customers.

v. SM content with CTA

Hotels 3 and 4 included CTA in their SM content to encourage SMCEB. This is related to relational content (see Section 6.2.3.3). For example, both hotels posted content asking questions such as "It is a decent way to start your week, would you agree?", or "How is your day?" (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3, Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4). Hotel 3 also used phrases such as "click on this link", "share this exciting news with your friends" to create engagement. Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4 suggested using content that customers can relate to and will talk about. This content strategy keeps the interaction going between the hotel and customers.

vi. Reposting customers' SM content

Both hotels also reposted their customers' content, for example, their reviews and SM posts. Hotel 3 posted positive customer reviews that were posted on its SM page to let their other customers know about past customers' experiences. Hotel 4 also reposted their customers' SM posts (e.g. tweets, photos), but with permission from customers. Customers feel good about seeing their photos reposted on the hotel's SM page, and this was one way to interact with social customers (Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4).

vii. Less formal SM content

SM content which was "lively and lovely" and used "funky words" attracted customers' attention and engagement (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). She believes if the content is too formal, no customers will engage with it. Using content with less formal language is a suitable approach on SM to engage customers as it attracts and makes them interested in reading it.

viii. Creating SM content based on branding strategy

Each hotel created SM content based on its branding strategy. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 confirmed that Hotel 3 develops its SM content based on the Luxury Collection's core values of "exceptional experience, rare experience and indigenous". Hotel 4, however, creates its SM content based on its "passion points" which are "coordinates, culture and cuisine".

The core values or passion points set the guidelines to help create more targeted SM content relevant to the customer segment and, therefore, making it more engaging for them.

6.2.4 Theme: SM context

6.2.4.1 SM channels

The hotels determine which channels to use as the first step before developing SM content. For example, if Hotel 4 uses Facebook, they create content based on five categories (country of origin, age, gender, lifestyle and preferences) of their customers making it more personalised content (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). Similarly, if Hotel 3 uses Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, which they refer to as 'casual channels', the content should be less formal using "funky words" to get customers to engage with the content. This suggests different SM channels cater to different audiences (see section 6.2.3.4).

However, Marketing Communications Manager Hotel 4 observed that the hotel should not focus on building and maintaining customer relationships only on SM, believing the real experience is at the hotel and SM is an extension of the traditional relationship, face-to-face. The relationship can also extend from SM into traditional channels, particularly in situations when the hotel needs to manage service recovery from its SM. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 stated:

> *"Because the majority of my reviews say, 'please contact', it will be my General Manager's email address. If, the customer is not happy, […] they will send it to the email... […] From there, my General Manager will*

contact (respond to) them. That is how we bring it offline. We do not want to expose it too much (on SM). We'll try to bring it down (to traditional channels)."

(Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 3)

6.2.4.2 Timing

i. Time to post

a. Time of the day

Both hotels used information about the customer's country time zone and the time of their engagement on the SM page to deliver their content (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4).

Hotel 3 posted their SM content between 9am and 8pm, and frequently posted content at 5pm (in 2016) and 4pm (in 2017) (see Figure 30). Hotel 3 uses SM insight to determine the "hour people will be engaged" on SM (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). For example, the Facebook customers frequently commented on Hotel 3's content at 9am in 2016, and at 11am in 2017 (see Table 48). Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 explained:

"… from your Facebook you'll have the full access to see insights of your whole account […] from Monday to Saturday, which day you'll get the most traffic, from which hour to which hour people will stay engaged more. So, based on the data, then you do your posting. So that is how you get the engagement […] majority of our data is from Western countries, local (Malaysia) and then Singapore. The time zone is different. […] I would say it depends on which market you want to tap into, then only you do your posting."

(Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 3)

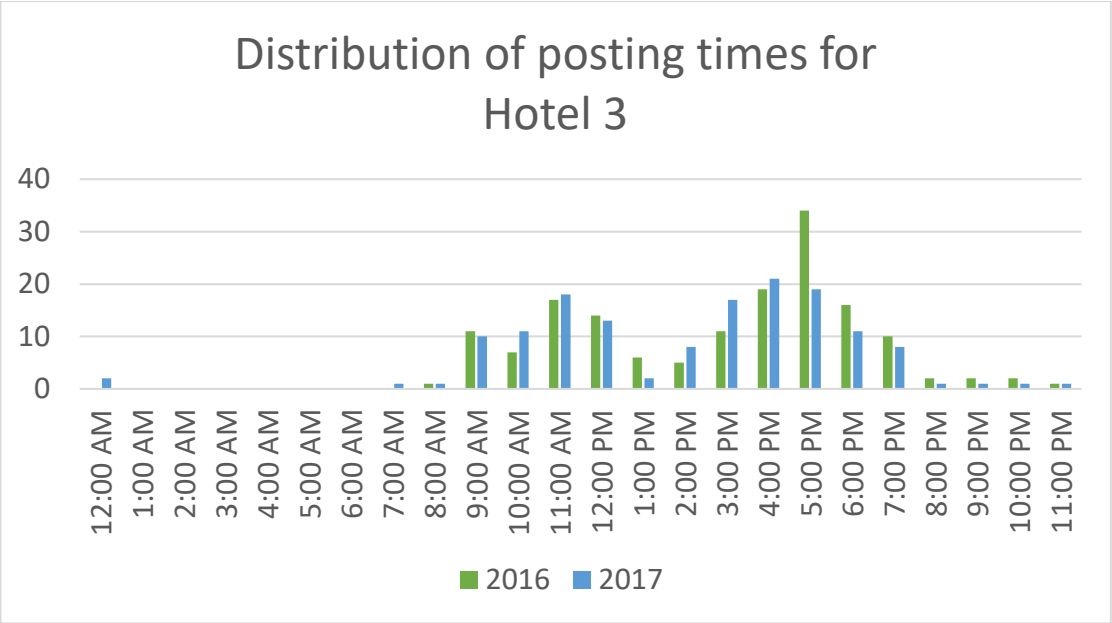


Figure 30 Hotel 3's distribution of posting times. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io.

Hotel 4 posted their SM content from 8am until 10pm, and frequently posted at 12pm and 6pm (in 2016), and between 10am and 11am (in 2017) (see Figure 31). However, Facebook users would often comment at 4am and 3pm in 2016, and at 4am and 1pm in 2017 (see Table 48).

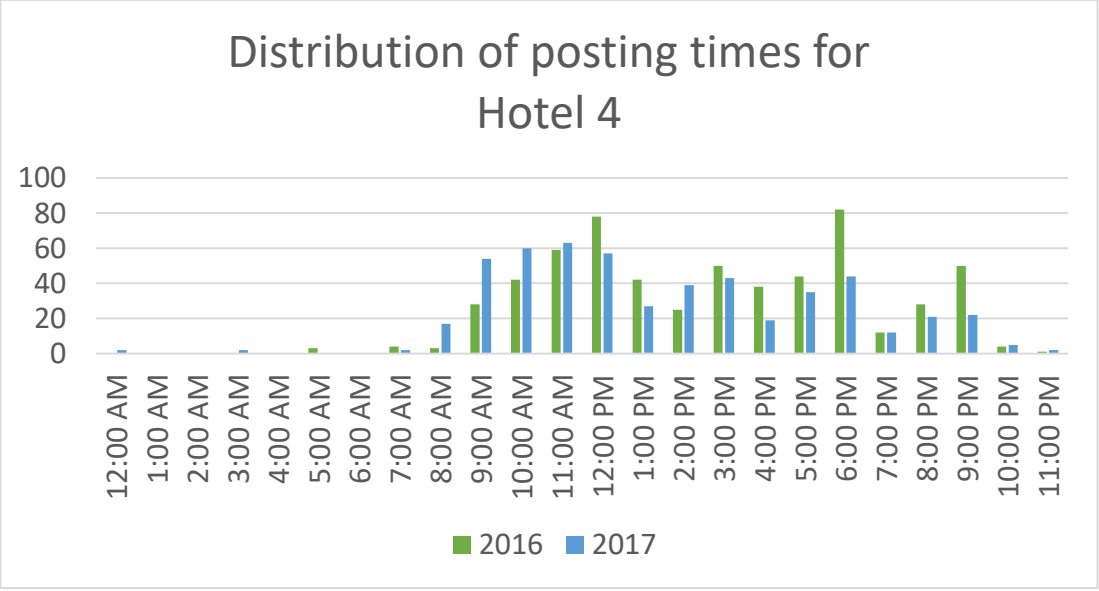
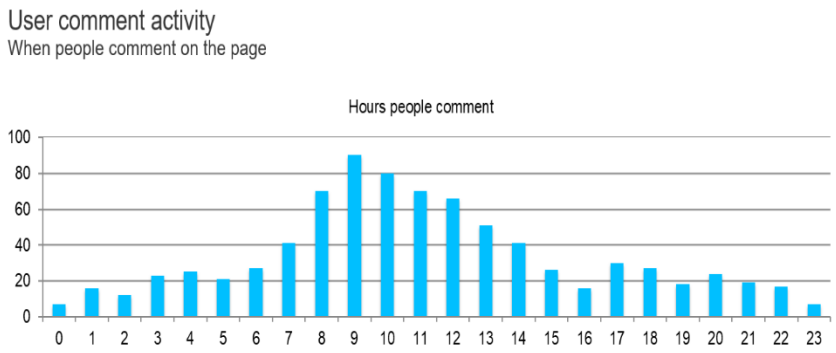
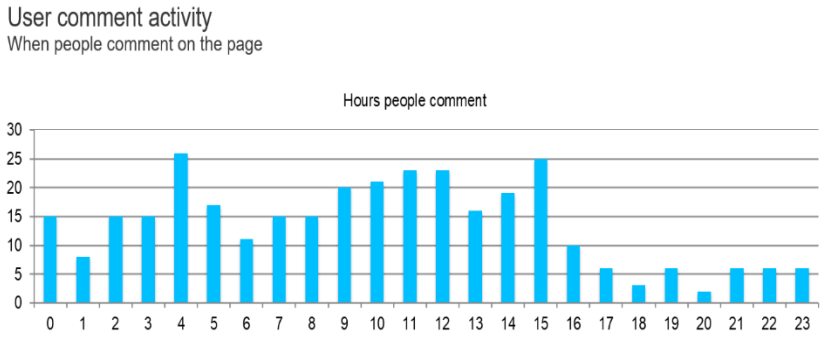
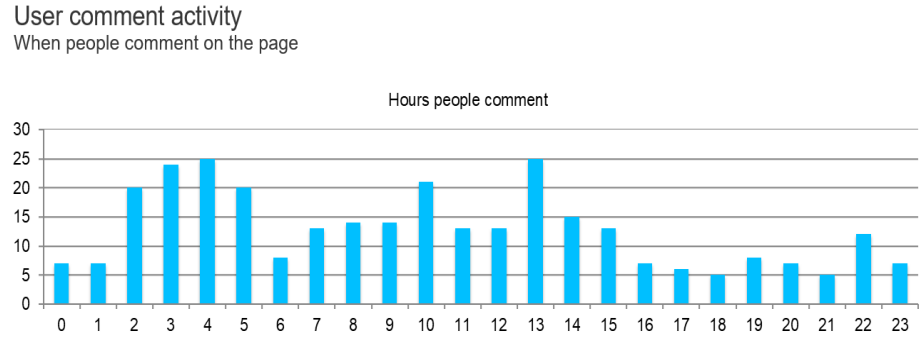


Figure 31. Hotel 4's distribution of posting times. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io.

This suggests differences between Hotels 3 and 4 in their timing strategy for posting their SM content. The hotels use information to facilitate them in this strategy, which will be discussed in the relational information processes section (section 6.2.5).

Table 48 *Distribution of Facebook user comment activity for Hotels 3 and 4*

2016	**2017**
Hotel 3	
	
Hotel 4	
	

Note. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io. Copyright (2018) by Socialinsider.

b. Days of the week

Figure 32 (Hotel 3) and Figure 33 (Hotel 4) show that both hotels posted from Monday to Sunday, but findings indicate Hotel 3 posted more on Fridays and less on Saturdays and Sundays. Hotel 3 may have used information about the 'day' to create engaging SM content to post on Fridays (see section 6.2.5). Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 stated she looks into the SM insights to understand "from Monday to Saturday, which day you will get the most traffic".

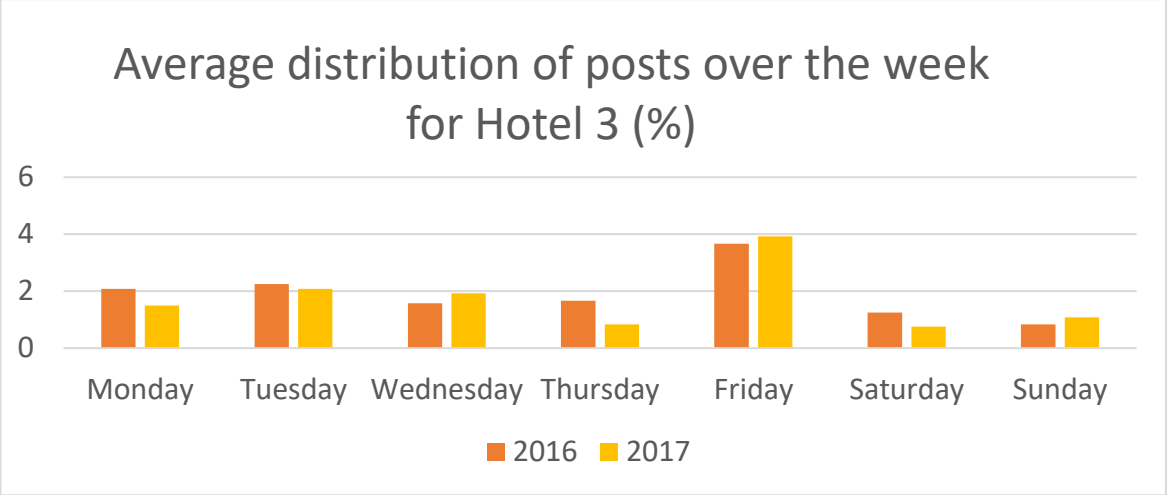


Figure 32. Distribution of posts over the week for Hotel 3. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io.

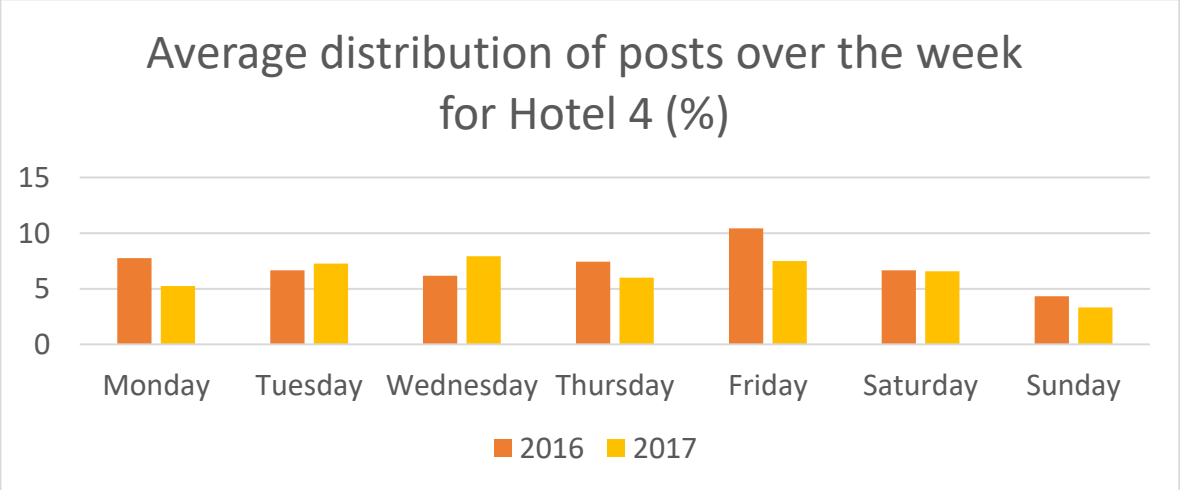


Figure 33. Distribution of posts over the week for Hotel 4. From Socialinsider. Retrieved from https://www.socialinsider.io.

c. Season of the year

Both hotels posted seasonal campaigns over the year from 2016 to 2017 (see Table 49). Findings show that Hotel 4 posted more seasonal posts and was more consistent with its seasonal campaigns compared with Hotel 3. This provides an insight into the use and timing of celebrations or festivities on SM which influenced the hotels, specifically Hotel 4, to post their offers regarding food and beverages, rooms and suites, and events. This is relevant to relational content (see section 6.2.3.3).

Table 49 *Seasonal campaigns of Case Study B throughout the year 2016 - 2017*

Month	**Seasonal campaigns Hotel 3**		**Seasonal campaigns Hotel 4**	
	2016	**2017**	**2016**	**2017**
January	- Chinese New Year	- Chinese New Year	- New year - Chinese New Year	- New year - Chinese New Year
February	- Chinese New Year - Valentine's day	- Valentine's day	- Chinese New Year - Valentine's day	- Chinese New Year - Valentine's day
March	- Earth Hour - Easter Sunday - Earth Day	- International Women's Day	- Easter Sunday - St Patrick's Day - Ravioli Day - Earth Hour - Water Day	- Easter Sunday - Earth Hour - ANZAC Day
April	-	- Easter Sunday	- April Fool's Day - Easter Sunday - Earth Day - ANZAC Day - Harvest Festival - Mother's Day	- Easter Sunday - Ramadan
May	- Mother's Day	-	- Mother's Day - Harvest Festival - Ramadan	- Mother's Day - Harvest Festival - Ramadan
June	-	- Father's Day	- Ramadan	- Ramadan - Eid Al-Fitr
July	- Eid Al-Fitr	-	- Ramadan - Eid Al-Fitr	-
August	-	- National Independence Day	- National Independence Day	- National Independence Day
September	-	-	- Mid-autumn festival - Coffee day	- Malaysia Day - Housekeeping week - Coffee Day
October	- Halloween - Diwali	- Diwali	- Diwali	- Coffee Day - Breast Cancer Awareness - Mid-Autumn Festival - Diwali
November	-	-	- Global rooms week - Christmas	- Christmas
December	- Christmas - New year	- Christmas - New year	- Christmas - Winter solstice - New year	- Christmas - New Year

d. Frequency of postings

Both hotels regularly posted SM content on their SM. One customer Hotel 3 noticed its regular postings (Guest 2 Hotel 3). Hotel 3 posted fewer SM posts, including fewer with hard-selling content compared with Hotel 4. However, Hotel 3 received higher numbers of average engagement compared with Hotel 4, which shows the quantity of SM posts may not necessarily lead to greater SMCEB.

The hotels also used a retargeting strategy where they posted a campaign at different times, using similar SM content to gain SMCEB. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 used different media types at different times for similar content. Additionally, she mentioned that the first SM post created awareness and the second post retargeted the previous audience to remind them and gain SMCEB. Figure 34 shows two Facebook posts by Hotel 4 with similar content posted seven days apart, about an offer in conjunction with their newly opened pool bar. These posts garnered more than 100 likes. Hence, the retargeting strategy did not negatively affect SMCEB.

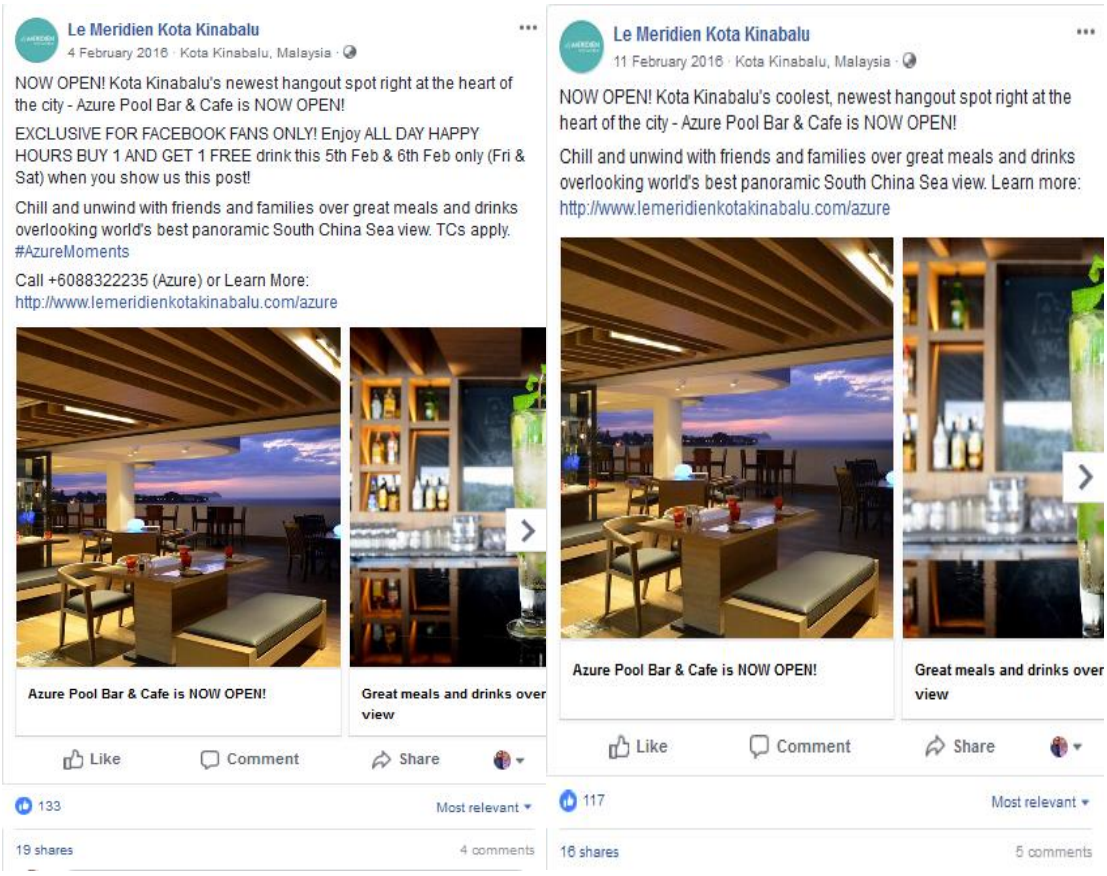


Figure 34. Similar remunerative SM content on two different dates. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/lemeridienkotakinabalu/

e. Urgency to post

Hotel 4's strategy is either to post a last-minute deal or post it months before the event (time to post), depending on the campaign topic (SM content) and to whom it is targeted (country) (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). The hotel puts importance on considering the urgency of posting a campaign and how this may affect SMCEB.

ii. Time to respond

Hotels 3 and 4 have a standard SM response timeframe set by Marriott International, which is within 48 hours (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3, Duty Manager Hotel 4). Hotel 4 noted they could get penalised if they did not respond within the standard timeframe. This also applies to the pre-arrival of their customers. The hotels need to provide a fast response, particularly for negative reviews to prevent them from escalating quickly (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4).

6.2.5 Theme: Relational Information Processes

6.2.5.1 Information reciprocity

Customers communicate personally with the hotels on SM for help or information. Hotels 3 and 4 respond to their customers' enquiries with information that they want. This is similar to responding to SMCEB, as discussed in section 6.2.2.2.

6.2.5.2 Information capture

The hotel gathers information such as the hotels' SM post engagement (e.g. low and high engaging posts), and about their customers' SMCEB (i.e. reviews, link clicks, time of activity, comments, shares, views, reactions), demographic information (e.g. gender, age), socio-economic information (e.g. occupation), psychographic information (e.g. lifestyle and interests), country of origin, and special occasions information (e.g. birthday, wedding anniversary). The hotels gather these social information using SM analytics such as Facebook Insights and through SM private messages. For example, Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 explained:

> *"If I go to Insights (of) Facebook page. I would see all these things, age, time, country and all that. However, if a person messages me personally, I would ask them for their consent for more information about them and their experience… "*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 4)

Furthermore, the hotels gather information when customers inform them of their wants on SM, including questions before their arrival (e.g. about transportation, room conditions, activities), and after their departure (e.g. stay experience, satisfaction level, recommendations for hotel activities and hotel settings). Thus, the hotels can gather customer information from initial engagement on SM and throughout the customer lifecycle, before their arrival and after their departure.

However, managers need to be mindful of privacy issues when gathering information on SM. Privacy enhancement of SM may limit the hotels' ability to collect information about their customers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4).

6.2.5.3 Information integration

Front Office departments of Hotels 3 and 4 are in charge of integrating customer's social information into the customer profiles within the hotels' CRM systems (e.g. Duty Manager Hotel 4). This information includes customers' preferences (e.g. food allergies) and negative customer feedback.

6.2.5.4 Information access

The Digital Marketing teams at Hotels 3 and 4 and the regional team of Marriot have direct access to the gathered social information (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4). However, Digital Marketing Managers of both hotels generally share any customer's social information (e.g. allergies, celebrations, service failure experiences from negative reviews, and positive reviews), with the relevant departments (e.g. food and beverages, rooms, reservations, marketing, guest experience). They also inform the relevant employee or department through meetings and instant messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp).

Unlike the accessing of information derived from SM, "everyone" in Hotel 4 can access customer information integrated into the CRM system, provided they have the username. This may facilitate the hotel's understanding of its customers through a 360-degree view, including from SM.

6.2.5.5 Information use

i. To engage on SM

The hotels understand that customers' SM post preferences are based on their SMCEB (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 and Hotel 4). Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 added:

"I have analytics that tell me what things people are engaging in. For example, pictures of sunsets and others. If I have more comments on sunsets, I would be posting more on sunsets. So that would be a strategy for me to post what things I should."

(Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4)

Additionally, Hotel 4 personalised their content based on information about SM channel's target audience (e.g. age, lifestyle, preferences, country and gender). This was discussed in section 6.2.3.4 (SM content strategy).

Similarly, both hotels use information about a customer's country time zone and time of engagement on SM to deliver the relevant content on SM (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4). Hotel 3 uses this information to create engaging SM content and post it at the right time and on the right day.

Other than focusing on creating engagement that customers "want to see", Hotel 3 also focuses on using information to understand how to respond to SMCEB. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 stated:

"…you have to understand what they want to see from your channel, that's important, and then the way that you respond them is also important. Are you using appropriate way to respond to your customers? Are you rude, or you're trying to chase them away, which we are not allowed to do because we need the business."

(Digital Marketing Manager, Hotel 3)

ii. For products and services, and hotel employees

Both hotels used customer reviews to provide information to motivate hotel employees (e.g. by complimenting them), to improve its products and services (e.g. by employee training). For example, the Duty Manager Hotel 4 explained:

"… any negative feedback we'll share with the team for the point of improvement and then train them. For the positive feedback, […] we compliment them. When there's a compliment, we share with them, so they will keep doing good with their service (delivery)."

(Duty Manager, Hotel 4)

The hotels train their employees to prevent them from repeating the same mistakes, especially if a customer who has previously had a negative experience at

the hotel returns. Therefore, negative reviews allow the hotels to identify the performance of their products and service delivery, consequently enabling them to identify which areas to improve on (e.g. by training their employees).

iii. To customise service delivery on traditional channels

Hotels 3 and 4 used information provided by social customers to personalise their service delivery for celebrations or room preparations, upon their arrival, during their stay and for future visits. For example, Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 would inform the relevant team to prepare sparkling wine or a birthday cake upon a customer's arrival.

Providing customised products or services can enhance customers' experiences at the hotels and consequently influence their SMCEB. Guest 1 Hotel 4 received a personalised room set-up for her wedding anniversary. This satisfied her, and she had a positive experience at the hotel, which made her want to return there. Furthermore, she showed an interest in staying engaged with Hotel 4's Facebook page, where she mentioned seeing updates about the hotel (e.g. on food and beverage posts and Ramadan).

6.3 Framework After Case Study B Analysis

This study aims to answer the third research question on how firms practise social CRM, and this case study has explored social CRM from the Marriott International perspective. A framework was developed which refined the previous framework developed in Case Study A (see section 5.3 in Chapter 5). Figure 35 illustrates the further refinement of this framework following the analysis of Case Study B.

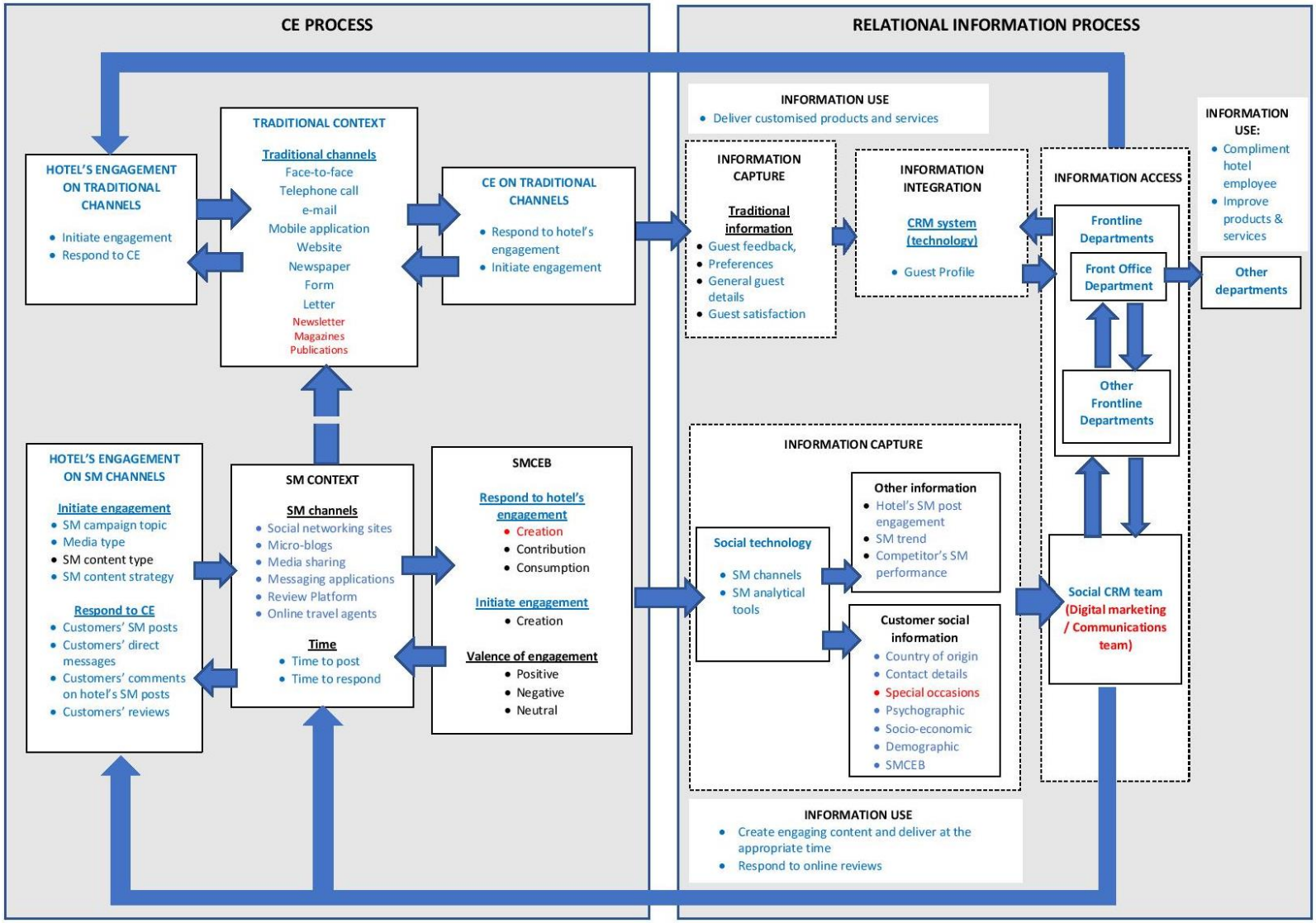


Figure 35. Case Study B analysis framework

The framework represents the refined relationship between social CRM and CE and includes the two processes of CE and relational information. The red font indicates the critical findings from the Case Study B analysis. This chapter will highlight any changes to the framework. Notwithstanding the above, social CRM still comprises the two processes of CE and relational information.

6.3.1 CE process

In this framework, the process includes the components of SM content marketing strategies and SM context marketing strategies and SMCEB in both SM and traditional channels. Compared with the previous framework (Case Study A), this framework (Case Study B) includes additional changes to these components: 'the hotel's engagement on SM', 'SM context', 'customer's response to hotel's engagement' and 'traditional context'.

6.3.1.1 Hotel's engagement

i. Hotel's engagement on SM

a. Hotel initiates engagement on SM

Similar to Case Study A's framework, Case Study B's framework also includes SM content strategy (creating different SM content for different SM channels, posting more soft-selling SM content, paid SM posts, personalised SM content, SM content with CTA and reposting customers SM content). Nevertheless, Case Study B's SM content strategy also includes 'create less formal content', and 'create content based on the brand's strategy'. Case Study B hotels created less formal which suits the nature of SM as 'casual' and 'social' channels. Additionally, each hotel created content based on its brand strategy as guidance in creating its SM content aimed to represent the brand's image.

b. Hotel's response to CE on SM

The hotels responded to different types of SMCEB such as enquiries, comments and reviews. In general, this is a standardised response to comments and reviews. Similarly, to the findings in Case Study A, this response seemed formulaic and lacking the personal touch. However, Case Study B highlights the use of traditional channels to extend communication about a customer's negative experience.

ii. Hotel's engagement on traditional channels

Case Study B hotels initiated and responded to the traditional channels. Moreover, unlike those in Case Study A, Case Study B hotels also used newsletters, magazines and publications. Case Study B hotels extended communication from SM channels

to the traditional channels, such as emails and telephone calls, mostly to recover service following a negative review on SM.

iii. SM context

a. SM channels

Marriott uses different SM channels to engage with and receive engagement from its customers. The use of different channels determines the SM content Case Study B hotels want to create and deliver, believing that SM channels are extensions of the relationship with the traditional channels (e.g. face-to-face) and the relationship from SM channels can extend to traditional channels.

b. Time

The framework is similar to Case Study A's framework and includes time to post (i.e. time of day, the day of the week, the season of the year and the frequency of posting). However, Case Study B also highlight 'urgency of posting' as part of their time to post. This highlights the importance of the hotels planning the timeframe for each campaign to leave sufficient time for customers to be aware of the campaign and to plan ahead.

6.3.1.2 Customer Engagement (CE)

The framework includes CE on both traditional and SM channels and is similar to the framework in Case Study A.

i) CE on SM

In contrast to Case Study A framework, customers can respond to Case Study B's CE initiatives through direct messages on SM. This is posited as creation SMCEB in which customers create their content (Dolan et al., 2016b). This is the only change to this framework.

6.3.2 Relational information processes

The framework is similar to that of Case Study A and not only shows information capture, integration, access and use. Neither study explicitly includes information reciprocity.

6.3.2.1 Information capture

On the traditional and SM channels, Case Study B hotels gather similar information to those in Case Study A's framework. Case Study B hotels also use customers' special occasion requests for room set-ups or cakes. However, those in Case Study

B only used SM insights such as Facebook Insights, unlike Case Study A that also used *Socialbakers* and *TrustYou* tools.

6.3.2.2 Information integration

In this case study, the Front Office departments were responsible for integrating customer preferences and feedback, gathered from SM, into the customer profile respectively within the CRM system. The framework is similar to that of Case Study A's where Shangri-La integrated customer preferences and customer feedback into its CRM system.

6.3.2.3 Information access

The 'social CRM' team includes the Digital Marketing Manager and/or the Marketing Communications Manager, both of whom have direct access to the SM technologies within their hotels and are responsible for sharing information with the relevant departments (i.e. frontline departments). Therefore, the framework is slightly different from that of Case Study A, where the social CRM team in the hotels included two managers who can access social information.

6.3.2.4 Information use

Case Study B hotels used information to create engaging SM content and deliver it at the appropriate time, to respond appropriately, motivate and train their employees and improve their products and services. Lastly, they used information about customers' preferences, captured from private messages and SM posts, to deliver personalised services upon arrival at the hotel. In this respect, Case Study B framework is similar to Case Study A's framework.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings of Case Study B analysis with themes identified and discussed and developed a comprehensive framework based on this analysis.

Findings appear to support the belief that social CRM involves both CE and relational information processes. Furthermore, the CE process and relational information processes complement each other. This substantiates the earlier findings, in Stage 3 of the exploratory expert interviews, suggesting the two processes form a circle, where organisations engage with social customers to gather information and then use information to understand customers and create better engagement on SM. Additionally, this framework shows the interactive social CRM practice of the hotels

in Case Study B, whereby they initiate engagement and respond to their SMCEB. This framework, therefore, provides a clearer understanding of social CRM, the relationship between social CRM and CE, and social CRM practices in Marriott hotels.

CHAPTER 7 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the cross-case analysis of Case Study A (Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts) and Case Study B (Marriott International).

7.1 Findings

Five themes were identified across the cases, which are social CRM, CE, SM content, SM context and relational information processes. The next section discusses the details of each theme.

7.1.1 Social CRM

7.1.1.1 Social CRM definition

Both case studies view social CRM as a CRM strategy to attract and maintain customers by engaging them and gathering information from SM (see Table 50).

Table 50 *Social CRM definition cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Social CRM definition	**Social CRM uses SM**	Social CRM as a CRM strategy that engages customers (potential and current customers) and SM users and collects data from SM.	Social CRM as CRM that engages customers or followers and collects data from SM to understand them.
	Social CRM attracts customers.	SM content attracts new fans to 'like' their SM page, and encourages customers to visit the hotel.	SM content attracts new fans to 'like' their SM page and encourages past customers to visit the hotel.
	Social CRM maintains customers.	Posting SM content and maintaining "respectful language" throughout the engagement. Customer extends their loyalty to SM if they have experienced Shangri-La's hospitality.	Posting SM content and responding to SMCEB
	Disengaged SM users	Does not win back customers who 'unlike' their SM pages	Does not win back customers who 'unlike' their SM pages, but focuses on attracting and maintaining more new customers to their SM pages

i. Social CRM uses SM

Both case studies define social CRM as CRM that engages their social customers. Case Study A engages not only with customers (current and potential customers), but also SM users. Similarly, Case Study B's social CRM engages its customers or followers on SM. This is related to CE process section 7.1.2.

Both case studies collect data from SM. For instance, Case Study A gathers "actionable intelligence" from conversations, behaviours and preferences. While Case Study B gain information from their customers' feedback. This is relevant to relational information processes section 7.1.5.

Thus, for both case studies, social CRM is similarly viewed as engaging customers and gathering data from SM. Therefore, for both case studies, social CRM involves two processes: the CE process and relational information process, which is discussed further in this chapter.

ii. Social CRM attracts customers

SM content of both case studies was used to attract new fans to 'like' their SM pages. Additionally, SM content of Case Study A encouraged their customers to visit the hotel, while the content of Case Study B encouraged past customers to re-visit the hotel. Hence it indirectly benefits firm's sales. SM content is discussed further in section 7.1.3.

iii. Social CRM maintains customers

Both case studies similarly kept their customers by posting SM content in line with their preferences. Case Study B posted content that provided benefits such as offers, rates and discounts. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4 argues that customer loyalty is a "time investment" thus the reason for posting SM content about these benefits and to update them first:

> *"Loyalty is usually linked to benefits; there is no point for someone to be loyal if they don't have a benefit or any return. Because loyalty is a time investment – so for us social CRM, they would be the first person to know everything… if we have a special offer… special rate… special discount … special free night, everything that is special or new, or offers, they would be the first person to know…."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4)

Case Study A also highlighted the need to use "respectful language". Case Study B stressed the importance of appropriately responding to their customers as well, to stay engaged with them. This suggests the importance of being respectful and having the right tone of voice, even on SM.

Case Study A argued that customers are loyal if they have experienced the Shangri-La hospitality, then extending their loyalty to the hotels' SM page (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1).

iv. Disengaged SM users

Case Study A's SM content may have played a part in customers 'unliking' the hotel's SM page. Although Case Study B's content did not appear to influence disengagement SMCEB, their customers might decide to 'unlike' their SM page if they were no longer interested in the page (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 explained:

> *"... if your number of friends (fans) is dropping; it could be another reason that they are no longer interested in your page. They do not want to continue to follow […] your Facebook or Instagram or Twitter."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3)

Neither case study focused on winning back customers who had lapsed and may have 'opted-out' of the firm–customer relationship on SM. They would rather focus energy and time on attracting and maintaining customers on their pages. Neither of the case studies had data on those who had disengaged from their SM pages, although it could be useful information for the hotels (Director of Communications Hotel 2).

7.1.1.2 Social CRM activities

Table 51 *Social CRM activities cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Social CRM activities	**SM marketing**	SM content attracts new fans to 'like' their SM pages, and attracts customers to visit the hotels	SM content attracts new fans to 'like' their SM pages, and attracts customers and past customers to visit the hotels
	Social selling	SM content generates sales enquiries and clicks on website links to make bookings.	SM content generates sales enquiries and directs room bookings to the sales team.
	Social customer service	Responds to customer reviews and fulfils service recovery	Responds to customer reviews and fulfils service recovery. Engages customers to gain feedback and refers to social customer service as "online social care."
	Department	Managed by a Communications team for each hotel consisting of four employees	Managed by a Digital Marketing team consisting of one or two managers

Social CRM activities for both Case Study A and B involve SM marketing, social selling and social customer service. Therefore, the social CRM team focuses more on SM marketing and social customer service activities, having limited authority to process sales enquiries or even bookings.

For Case Study A, social CRM is managed by the Communications team of each hotel, while social CRM activities of Case Study B are managed by the Digital Marketing team (a Digital Marketing Manager and/or Marketing Communications Manager). Case Study A thus seems to have a larger team and a standardised organisational structure for handling social CRM for each of their hotels.

However, the teams in both case studies collaborate with different departments to facilitate handling the social CRM activities.

7.1.1.3 Social CRM key elements

i. People

The hotel employees of both case studies provide hospitality for customers and collaborate with different departments to provide customer information.

Table 52 *People element cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Social CRM key elements	**People**	- The portrayal of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts' Asian hospitality culture (e.g. treat like friends and family), pleases customers, encourages customers to engage on SM (e.g. write reviews, engage with SM posts about hotel employees).	- Delivers hospitality that makes customers feel they belong, making the place more relatable, and this influences customers to engage on SM (e.g. write reviews).
		- Features employees on a SM page	- Features employees on a SM page
		- Not all hotel employees have the authority to initiate engagement on SM	- Digital Marketing and Communications Managers are authorised to initiate engagement on SM.
		- Communications team employees have limited authority to respond to CE.	- Digital Marketing Managers are authorised to respond to engagement on SM.
		- Collaborate with sales and marketing department to handle sales	- Collaborate with the marketing department to identify customers to target
		- Collaborate with relevant departments to make investigations and/or integrate into CRM system.	- Collaborate with relevant departments to investigate complaints and compliment employees
			- Collaborate with relevant departments to deliver customised service

a. Provide hospitality that influences customers' engagement on SM channels

Both case studies' hotel employees have essential roles in influencing SMCEB.

Although the case studies originated from different cultures (Case Study A from Asia and Case Study B from the West), their hospitality culture makes their customers feel welcomed and comfortable. The hospitality of both case studies'

employees at the hotel contributed to customer satisfaction, and the friendliness of the employees was noted in reviews, for example, on the Facebook pages.

Both case studies' hotel employees featured in their SM, an approach to tell customers about their human stories behind the hospitality. This is relevant to the type of SM content posted by the case studies, which will be discussed in section 7.1.3.

Not all employees had the authority to initiate or respond to engagement on SM, for both case studies. Only the Communications team (Case Study A) and Digital Marketing team (Case Study B) handled the CE initiatives and responses on these channels. The higher management of both case studies handled the negative reviews on SM.

b. Inter-company collaboration

It was apparent that the Communications/Digital Marketing team works closely with Sales and Marketing department for developing marketing or sales strategies. The Communications team or Digital Marketing team of each case study also collaborates with other frontline departments (e.g. sales and marketing, food and beverages, front office department) to info. For Case Study A, the relevant departments are told to make investigations and/or integrate into the CRM system. Similarly, Case Study B collaborates with the relevant departments to investigate complaints, but they also highlighted collaboration with the departments that deliver a customised customer experience (e.g. food and beverages, housekeeping):

> "*…if someone says, 'oh I am coming for my honeymoon' I need to use that information and share it with my Guest Experience team and tell them 'X person is coming for a honeymoon if we can do something special for them'."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4)

ii. Technology

Table 53 *Technology element cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Code	Case Study A	Case Study B
Social CRM key elements	**Technology**	- SM help initiate engagement and response to SMCEB. - SM analytics (e.g. *Socialbakers*, SM insights and *TrustYou)* used to monitor and gather information. - CRM system to store information about customer feedback	- SM help initiate engagement and response to SMCEB. - SM analytics (e.g. Facebook insights) used to gather information. - CRM system to store information about customer feedback and preferences

Both case studies use SM, enabling the CE initiatives and responses to CE, but use different SM analytics to facilitate their social CRM strategy. Case Study A and B similarly use SM analytics to measure SM engagement of their posts and pages. However, Case Study A further use it to monitor customer reviews and competitors' SM performance.

Lastly, both case studies collate social data and integrate them into customer profiles of their CRM systems. Additionally, Case Study B collects customer preferences shared via SM.

iii. Processes

Different processes support social CRM strategies for the case studies: the customer lifecycle process, CE process and relational information processes. This section discusses the customer lifecycle process, while the CE process will be discussed in section 7.1.2, and relational information processes will be discussed in section 7.1.4.

Table 54 *Process element cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Social CRM key elements	**Process (Customer lifecycle process)**	**<u>Customer lifecycle process</u>** <u>Pre-arrival</u> Engage using SM content to create awareness or sales <u>On arrival</u>	**<u>Customer lifecycle process</u>** <u>Pre-arrival</u> Engage using SM content and respond to customer enquiries about information and preferences. <u>On arrival</u>

	Engage to disseminate current activities in real-time.	Pre-arrival engagement used to facilitate customised service on customers' arrival. <u>Departure</u> Engage customers at the hotel to write reviews on SM
	<u>Post-departure</u> Engage to handle service recovery and maintain customer loyalty.	<u>Post-departure</u> Engage to receive customer feedback
	CE process Initiate engagement and respond to SMCEB	**CE process** Initiate engagement and respond to SMCEB
	Relational information processes Gather information from SM to facilitate engaging social customers, improve services and customise services at the hotel.	**Relational information processes** Gather information from SM to facilitate engaging social customers, improve services and customise services at the hotel.

Both case studies reported using their SM for CE (to initiate or respond to engagement) at the pre-arrival phase, and both used SM content to attract customers to the hotel. Case Study B also mentioned gathering customer preferences at this stage so they could deliver customised services to their customers on arrival. Case Study A utilised SM to relay the activities to their customers in real-time at the arrival stage.

At the departure stage, neither of the case studies used SM to influence their CE. However, Case Study B encouraged its customers to write reviews on SM on checking out of the hotel (Duty Manager Hotel 4). Finally, in the last phase of the customer lifecycle, both case studies dealt with CEBs on SM.

7.1.*2* CE process

7.1.2.1 CE with the hotels

i. Customers initiate engagement

a. Customers' enquiries and information

Customers ask for information (e.g. hotel bookings and recreation activities at the hotel) through direct messages. Additionally, Case Study B customers inform the hotels about their preferences before their arrival at the hotel. This allows the hotels to tailor the service upon their arrival.

b. Customers' SM posts

Customers of both case studies share their SM posts by hashtagging or tagging the hotels. This enables the hotels to see their customers' hotel experiences based on what is shared on SM. Marketing Communication Executive Hotel 1 described these kinds of posts as "real-life feedback":

> *"…but this is from real-life feedback from a real-life person who has stayed here, and they're sharing their pictures. This is what they did when they're on vacation. This is what they saw. This is not something that came from the hotel that they could hire professional photographers to make things look amazing, when it's not."*
>
> (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1)

This could be advantageous for the hotels as the content is user-generated and supported by visuals such as photos or videos, which may influence other SMCEB.

c. Customers' reviews

Customers of both case studies write reviews on their hotels' SM pages such as Facebook and TripAdvisor to let the hotels know their performance and how they can improve or to let other customers know about their experiences. However, Case Study B customer had no expectations of the hotel to "follow up" his review (Guest 1 Hotel 3). The case studies' reviews were mostly about the rooms, customers' dining experience, hotel employees and the service.

ii. Customers' responses to hotels' engagement initiatives

Customers of both case studies respond to the hotels' CB initiatives by engaging on the hotels' SM posts, SM pages, and by direct messages on SM. Table 57 summarises their responses.

Table 55 *Customers' responses to hotels' CE initiatives - cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Case Study A	Case Study B
Customers' responses to hotels' engagement initiatives	<u>Engage with SM content</u> - Reactions - Comments - Shares - Link clicks - Views - Reads <u>Engage with the SM page</u> - Like - Unlike	<u>Engage with SM content</u> - Reactions - Comments - Shares - Link clicks - Views <u>Engage with the SM page</u> - Like <u>Engage with direct messages</u> - Message

Customers of both case studies showed similar SMCEB (see Table 55) on the SM post and SM page as responses to the case studies' CE initiatives.

These customer responses are used as the case studies' CE initiatives success measurement. The measures are based on customer awareness, conversion and their interactions. Case Study B described how its engagement measures depended on the social CRM objectives.

Case Study A's customers also responded to the hotels' SM posts by reading them (Guest 3 Hotel 1). 'Reading' SM posts is another SMCEB, but neither Case Study A nor Case Study B measured the numbers of reads. This type of response may be harder to track compared with 'views' of the SM posts.

Both case studies measured customer awareness by the number of views of SM content. The 'views' were considered valuable information for Case Study A to show that their SM posts were reaching SM users.

However, Case Study B had a different opinion about 'views', as they are hard to track and do not provide value to the case study's social CRM (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4). Customers who showed reactions, comments, shares and link clicks on the SM content, and 'likes' or 'unlikes' on the SM page expressed their feelings or opinions on the hotels' CE initiatives. This may be why Case Study B considered this behaviour, particularly reacting, commenting, sharing or talking about the SM content, as providing value for the hotel's social CRM (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4). Case Study B refers to this as the 'engagement rate' (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). However, these behaviours show different levels of intensity. Nevertheless, Case Study A preferred comments to reactions on their SM content (Director of Communications Hotel 1). Case Study B, however, highlighted that customers comment on the content if it makes them happy (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). The behaviours provide insight for both case studies about their SM content effectiveness and the customers' sentiments.

Both case studies also measured the number of website link clicks to measure conversion, a desired outcome for the case studies. Specifically, Case Study B considered that link clicks represented success for their advertisement budget.

Customers also responded to the hotels' SM content by 'liking' or 'unliking' the SM page. Both case studies measured the numbers of SM page followers, to find out if

they had attracted new customers to their SM page through the page likes or unlikes.

Customers may have disengaged themselves or 'unliked' Case Study A's SM page as a response to particular SM content (see Figure 7). However, no data could show this, and neither of the case studies measured this disengagement behaviour. Despite this, only Case Study A suggested that it might be useful to know who was 'unliking' the hotels' SM pages.

Customers may also respond by directly messaging the hotel (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3). It may indicate they are interested in the hotels' CE initiatives, but they would rather respond privately and quickly through SM private messages rather than publicly.

iii. CE valence

Both case studies mentioned that SMCEB could be positive, negative or neutral towards SM content and SM page (see Tables 30 and 44).

7.1.2.2 Hotel's engagement with customers

i. Hotels' CE initiatives

Both case studies initiated engagement using SM content to provide information to customers, to create awareness. This is closely related to social CRM attracts customers, under social CRM definition section 7.1.1.1, and social CRM activities section 7.1.1.2.

Both case studies' CE initiatives also helped with understanding their customers' SMCEB. Hence, the CE initiatives may not only focus on attracting new customers or making sales but also creating interactions on SM to gain information.

ii. Hotels' response to customers' engagement

These responses were important to maintain the firm–customer relationship on SM. Case Study B highlighted to respond appropriately and stay engaged with them.

a. Hotels' response to customers' SM posts

The case studies responded similarly to their customers' SM posts by commenting on them. However, Case Study A also reposted to the SM pages, showing they were active in responding to them.

Furthermore, Case Study B also like or follow their customers' SM accounts. Case Study B's responses appear to be less active but faster.

b. Hotels' response to customers' direct messages

Both case studies are responsive to SMCEB through personal messages on SM. Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3 noted:

> *"Facebook, we have messengers. When you do the post on your SM channel, if the guest is interested, they will message you. Then you reply to the message from the question they asked […] they can feel your sincerity, and then they will directly book with you."*
>
> (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3)

c. Hotels' response to customers' comments on the hotels' SM posts

Results showed both case studies responded to customers' comments on their SM posts by commenting in the comments section or by 'liking' the comment. Case Study B additionally responded by privately messaging social customers.

It was noted a negative customer comment on one of Case Study A's SM posts may not have influenced other customers' reactions to the post. It could have been because Case Study A addressed the issue professionally and with a neutral voice, thus, influencing other SMCEB.

Although the hotels cannot respond to all the comments, Case Study B did try to respond to all SMCEB. Case Study A responds to comments, but it is not their policy to reply to customers' comments, which may suggest it is less responsive towards customers' comments than Case Study B.

d. Hotels' response to customers' reviews on SM

The case studies responded similarly to positive, negative and neutral reviews. Table 56 shows the similarities and differences in how both case studies respond to their customers' reviews.

Table 56 *Hotels' response to customers' reviews*

Type of reviews	Case Study A	Case Study B
Positive review	Response - comment - like	Response - comment - like

	Structure: - thank customers - welcome customers in the future - inform the hotel employees mentioned in the reviews	Structure - acknowledge customers - thank customers - reiterate customers' positive experiences - welcome customers back in the future -
Negative review	Response - comment Structure: - thank customers - acknowledge customers - apologise to customers - assuring they will investigate by sharing with the team and improve - provide contact details (i.e. email address, phone number)	Response - comment Structure: - thank customers - acknowledge customers - apologise to customers - assuring they will investigate by sharing with the team and improve - provide contact details (i.e. email address, phone number) - Welcome back customers in the future
Neutral review	Response - comment Structure - apologise to customers - acknowledge the customer's concern - assure them that they will improve their service - thank them for sharing their experience	Response - comment Structure: - depends on the content

Both case studies are active in responding to negative reviews. They both wanted to extend their service recovery process by getting more information from customers and carrying out investigations. Both also showed that they take negative reviews seriously, by leaving the email address of their General Manager or Resident Manager in their responses, so the customer can discuss it further with the top management, through private messages, or email or phone calls.

Both case studies' responses to customers' positive, negative or neutral reviews or comments seem standardised, which is less likely to make customers feel the reply is personal. A customer of Case Study A stated that the hotel's response to a customer review only felt personalised if the hotel showed they remembered the customer's name and their preferences during the stay (Guest 1 Hotel 1).

7.1.3 SM content

SM content is part of the CE initiatives that show "things that they (customers) like" (Director of Communications Hotels 1 and 2) or what they "want to see" (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3), things that appeal to them. The content allows the hotels to build and maintain their relationships with customers. Content that does not appeal to customers does not build relationships with them (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3).

7.1.3.1 SM campaign topics

i. Corporate campaigns

Case Study A posted five SM corporate content campaigns created by Shangri-La corporate office, while Case Study B posted a few corporate campaigns created by Marriott International and promotions by other Marriott International brands. Overall, the SM content created by the corporate office, and SM content about other brands, were less likely to appeal to customers.

ii. Hotel campaigns

The case studies posted SM campaigns related to their hotels which included details of the location, products and services, stakeholders, trends and reposts of customers' experiences (see Tables 31 and 45). Case Study B also posted about winning awards where they had invited customers to vote for them.

Hotel campaigns were more likely to gain high numbers of SMCEB than corporate campaigns. Engagement with SM content is discussed further in this section, as is the frequency of Case Study A and B's SM posts (section 7.1.4).

7.1.3.2 Media Type

The observations showed both case studies mainly posted photos, videos or links on Facebook. These three media were more engaging than the other media type. Case Study B utilised photos and videos for visual marketing.

Both case studies also posted other types of media on Facebook, such as events and status posts, but these were less likely to influence SMCEB compared with other media types.

i. Photo

Table 57 *Media type cross-case comparison*

Media Type	Case Study A	Case Study B
Photo	• Photo quality can attract customers to engage with SM content • Photos gain fewer likes than videos.	• Photo quality attracts customers to engage with SM content. • Photo angles attract customers. • Photos are static

Both case studies posted more photos than other media types. They both highlighted the photo quality could attract customers. Moreover, to attract more attention, Case Study B suggested posting different photo angles of a product or service.

The evidence shows that Case Study B's photos influenced SMCEB and attracted new fans to their SM page. However, Case Study B noted photos are static while videos are more interactive, which can positively influence SMCEB. Nonetheless, Case Study A highlighted that photos gain fewer likes than videos.

ii. Video

Table 58 *Video media cross-case comparison*

Media Type	Case Study A	Case Study B
Video	• Video is time-consuming • Gains more engagement from customers on SM compared with photos. • A one-minute video can be entertaining with the right kind of music • Quality of videos on the SM • Not all video posts can increase SMCEB	• Videos with the right music attract the attention of customers within five seconds on the SM • Video is an interactive media type which can gain engagement from customers who like it.

Both case studies posted videos on SM and noted they could influence SMCEB more than photos. However, Case Study A noted videos can be time-consuming, while Case Study B suggested that videos are more interesting and interactive than static photos.

Both case studies highlighted the use of video attracts social customers quickly. Case Study A stressed that the quality, video length (ideally under one minute) and music are all factors in attracting customers' attention within two seconds. Similarly, Case Study B highlighted that the right kind of music for the video can attract customers' attention within five seconds.

The videos of both case studies positively influenced SMCEB (e.g. reactions, comments, shares, views and page likes). However, findings showed that not all video posts could equally increase SMCEB.

iii. Link (Website link)

Table 59 *Link media cross-case comparison*

Media Type	Case Study A	Case Study B
Link	• Direct customers from SM to their websites to get information • Measure the number of people going to the website via the link and then measure their behaviour on the website	• Direct customers from SM to their websites to get information. • Measure conversion

Both case studies used website links to direct customers from SM to their websites to get information and to measure activity. They could log the number of people going to the website via the link and their behaviour on the site, in other words, measuring the conversion.

Website links for both case studies were an engaging media type compared with other media types such as events and status. This suggests that website links can influence SMCEB (i.e. reactions, comments, and shares on SM posts). Furthermore, Case Study B's website links also increased the number of new fans for their SM page.

iv. Events

Table 60 *Events cross-case comparison*

Media type	Case Study A	Case Study B
Events		• For promotions on its Facebook page, but not their main priority media type.

Only Case Study B used 'events' media for promotions on its Facebook page, but it was not their main priority, as it does not influence SMCEB like the other media types.

7.1.3.3 SM content type

i. Entertainment SM content

Table 61 *Entertaining content cross-case comparison*

Codes	Sub-codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Entertainment SM content	**Trending**	Post trending content such as the flash mob dance, mannequin challenge, finger lift challenge, and Vogue's 73 questions	Post trending content such as mannequin challenge
	Fun video	A fun video holds attention, with the right music and length	Fun video about the hotel's food and beverages and monkeys
	Customers' perspective of entertaining content	Involves customer participation on SM (e.g. competitions), or entertainment events (e.g. events or concerts).	Content with customer interest such as events (e.g. weddings) and entertaining promotions (e.g. happy hours).

First, both case studies developed entertaining content that was trending at the time it was posted on SM (see Table 61). Case Study A had four posts with trending content posts, while Case Study B only had one. This shows that Case Study A was responsive to trends to stay relevant and close to the SM community, thereby actively influencing SMCEB.

Second, the case studies link fun entertaining content with video in which factors like music attract social customers. Furthermore, Case Study A adds video length as another factor influencing the content's effectiveness.

However, entertaining content depends on the customer's view of what is entertaining. One Case Study A customer saw entertaining content as involving customers' participation in SM, for example, with competitions, and SM content about events or concerts (Guest 2 Hotel 1). In the same way, Case Study B customers saw entertaining SM content as being concerned with events of interest (e.g. weddings) and entertainment activities (e.g. happy hours) (Guest 3 Hotel 3, Guest 1 Hotel 4).

The entertaining SM content of both case studies was found to influence SMCEB with the hotels' SM posts and SM pages. It also brought new fans who 'liked' the SM page.

ii. Informative SM content

Table 62 *Informational content cross-case comparison*

Codes	Sub-codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Informative SM content	**Create awareness about the experience customers can get**	Content about products and services which represent the hotel experience	Content about the hotel, services and local attractions
			Update previous customers about the hotel.
	Educate SM users	Educate SM users and potential customers	
	Provide relevant tips	Content that provides tips	
		SM functionality influences using informational content	

a. Create awareness about the experience customers can get

Both case studies created informative SM content to raise awareness. This content provides customers with information about the experiences they can get at the hotels of Case Studies A and B. Furthermore, Case Study B indicated that informative SM content is a way to update past customers about the hotel and remind them of memories of their stay (Guest 1 Hotel 4). This can influence engagement and SMCEB and encourage return visits to the hotels.

b. Educate SM users

Case Study A also posts informational content that provides tips and educational content. Specifically, the educational content is related to nature, and it uses a storytelling technique. This can attract customers who are nature lovers and influence their SMCEB.

c. Provide relevant tips

Case Study A provides informative tips for their social customers, for example tips on Twitter.

This informative SM content can positively influence reactions, comments, and shares of SM posts, as with Case Study B's informative SM content which also attracted new fans to their SM page.

iii. Relational SM content

Table 63 *Relational content cross-case comparison*

Codes	Sub-codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Relational SM content	**Relevant to customers**	<u>Celebrations</u> • May influence SMCEB <u>Employees</u> • Customers want to see stories of people <u>Nature</u> • Evokes emotions or memories for past customers • Attracts potential customers to engage with content	<u>Celebrations</u> • May influence SMCEB <u>Employees</u> • Show human value behind its products and services, thus making the post relatable
	Encourage customers to participate	• Content that asks questions • Tag or nominate customers' friends. • Use hashtags • Visit the hotels' websites. • Call the hotels	• Content that asks questions • Participate in the award voting.

Case Study A hotels posted relational content that was relevant to customers, encouraging them to engage on SM.

c. Relevant to customers

Both case studies posted SM content relevant to customers, such as posts about celebrations, hotel employees and nature.

First, SM content about seasonal events can positively or negatively influence SMCEB. Both case studies' posts drew reactions, comments and shares on the SM post, and even attracted new fans to their SM page. However, as mentioned earlier, Case Study A's Easter campaign (see Figure 7) may have prompted disengagement SMCEB.

Second, posts with relational SM content concerning hotel employees could evoke emotions or memories of customers of when they were at the hotel, encouraging engagement. The case studies described how customers who knew the employees, could relate to the posts. Case Study B's content highlighted the human value side of the hotel.

Case Study A's SM content about nature, for instance, about the sunsets and wildlife affected SMCEB, as it reminded past customers about their visit, and they reciprocated in the content by posting their photos when they were at the hotels.

d. Encourage customers to participate

Case Study A's SM content included asking questions, encouraging SM users to tag or nominate their friends, to use specific hashtags, to visit the hotels' websites and to call the hotels.

Similarly, Case Study B's relational SM content included asking questions and encouraging customers to vote for the hotel with the phrases "click on this link" and "share this exciting news with your friends".

iv. Remunerative SM content

Table 64 *Remunerative content cross-case comparison*

Codes	Sub-codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Remunerative SM content	**Promotions or offers**	Bonus and discounts	Offers and discounts
	Rewarding content	Free spa, free buffet lunch or dinner, or free night stays at the hotels	
	Hard-selling content	It feels 'forced' for customers	It does not appeal to social customers.

a. Promotions or offers

Case Study A associated remunerative SM content with promotions or offers with bonuses and discounts. Similarly, Case Study B's content included offers and discounts. This content type was shown to influence customers' reactions and attract new fans to Case Study B's hotel SM pages.

b. Rewarding content

Case Study A used remunerative content with rewards such as a free spa, free buffet lunch or dinner, or free night stays at the hotels, which seemed to encourage CE on SM.

c. Hard-selling content

Both case studies described remunerative content as hard-selling content. Case Study B saw this as hard marketing which is "blunt", and Case Study A said it can make customers feel "forced". Both case studies observed that this type of content does not appeal on SM, thus, posted more 'soft-sell' content. However, such remunerative content posted by both influenced SMCEB and gained new fans for Case Study B's SM pages. However, other factors may have influenced this, such as the frequency of posting, which will be discussed in the next section (section 7.1.4.2).

7.1.3.4 SM content strategy

Table 65 *SM content strategy cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
SM content strategy	**Creating different SM content for different SM channels**	• Different SM channels have a different age group audience • SM functionality determines content.	• Tailors SM content to the SM platform it wants to use, to engage with customers on that channel
	Post more soft-selling SM content	• Soft-selling content increases engagement, storytelling techniques affect their soft-sell posts • Hard-selling feels "forced" to customers.	• Soft-selling content increases engagement because hard-selling content can be less appealing on SM, but the hotel still needs to promote its products and services. • Hard selling is "blunt marketing".
	Paid SM posts	• Pay the SM (e.g. Facebook) to boost or advertise their SM content to reach a specific target audience.	• Paid SM posts to reach a target market, that is, the hotels' followers or SM users who are not the hotels' followers.
	Personalised SM content	• Use information to understand customers and facilitate posting relevant content to their SM users	• Feels as if the content is personal and that it represents the hotel • Considers which SM platforms it will use before creating SM content based on the target audience's country of origin, gender, preferences, lifestyle and age. The hotel also takes into consideration the timing of SM content. • Uses hashtags to target a specific target customer segment.
	SM content with calls to action (CTA)	• Encourage SM users to answer questions, use brand hashtags, tag other SM users and click the website links	• Encourage customers to engage on SM by asking questions, or phrases "click on this link", "share this."

	Repost customers' SM content	• Repost customers' Instagram photos or videos on the hotels' SM pages	• Repost customers' SM posts or reviews
	Less formal SM content		• Use less formal copywriting to attract customers' attention and engagement.
	SM content based on branding strategy		• Develops its SM content based on the Luxury Collections' core values and Le Meridien's passion points

i. Different SM channels, different content

Both case studies posted different SM content on their different SM channels. Case Study A posted more informational content on Twitter and stories on Facebook and Instagram. Case Study B chooses the SM first before creating its SM content. Each has a different age group audience and functionalities. SM users may not want to see similar things across the SM channels such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 3).

ii. Post more soft-selling SM content

Case Studies A and B posted more soft-selling content than hard-selling content which influenced SMCEB. Case Study A tended to use storytelling techniques to do their soft-selling. Case Study B noted hard-selling does not appeal to social customers (Digital Marketing Manager Hotel 4).

Case Study A reasoned that customers could be savvy and less likely to look at this content on SM. However, Hotel 3 of Case Study B highlighted that they still needed to promote their products and services using hard-selling techniques.

iii. Paid-for SM posts

Both case studies used paid-for SM posts to reach their target audience. Case Study A used SM such as Facebook to boost or advertise its SM content to reach an audience based on a specific country or location.

Case Study B used paid-for SM posts to reach their followers or non-followers, reaching a targeted audience in a specific country, demographic or time when customers were active on SM.

iv. Personalised SM content

Both case studies personalised their SM content for their customers. Case Study A used the information to find out about their target audience and their preferences, making their content more personalised. Case Study B took into consideration information about their customers' country of origin, determining the language used (e.g. English, Chinese), their gender, preferences, lifestyle (e.g. interests) and age. They also considered SM content posting time to make it feel personalised for their customers. Case Study B determined which SM to use before creating the content, to make it feel personal (e.g. Guest 3 Hotel 3). Thus, it used more information and consideration to personalise its SM content compared with Case Study A.

However, Case Study B noted it is hard to personalise SM content for different customer segments suggesting hashtags could target a specific target market.

v. Include CTA in SM content

The case studies included CTA in its SM content to encourage customers to engage. This is similar to CTA mentioned in relational content in section 7.1.3.3. They commonly used CTA such as answering questions and clicking on website links on its SM posts.

vi. Repost customers' SM content

Case Study A actively reposted their customers' SM posts on their SM page. Additionally, Case Study B reposted reviews written by their customers.

vii. Post less formal SM content

Case Study B used less formal content using "funky wording" and "lovely and lively" copywriting to make it sound more casual and interesting to encourage customers to engage on SM.

viii. Create SM content based on branding strategy

Case Study B used its branding strategy of the Luxury Collection and Le Meridien to set the guidelines to create more targeted SM content relevant to the customer segment and make it more engaging.

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7.1.4 SM context

7.1.4.1 SM channels

Different SM influenced how the case studies determined the use of different SM content type and/or language as mentioned in section 7.1.3.4.

However, Case Study B believes in the importance of traditional channels to deliver the real experience to their customers, and considers SM as an extension of the traditional relationship. Notably, both case studies extended their firm–customer relationships from SM to traditional channels such as emails, phone calls, and instant messaging platforms to have more personalised engagement (Guest 2 Hotel 1), especially in service recovery situations. Case Study B saw this extension to "offline" or traditional channels as necessary for managing service recovery after negative reviews on SM.

7.1.4.2 Timing

i. Time to post

a. Time of the day

In terms of average frequency of postings, the case studies revealed that SM posts are strategically scheduled before and during lunchtime (10am until 12pm), and in the afternoon (4pm-6pm). Nonetheless, the case studies decided on the best time to post based on information gathered from SM. This is related to the relational information processes section 7.1.5.5. Both Case Studies posted their SM content between 9am and midnight.

Case Study A also mentioned posting their SM content (i.e. live videos) in real-time, enabling their customers at the hotel to know about ongoing events.

b. Days of the week

Case Study A posted their SM content from Monday to Sunday equally. A customer of Case Study A put no importance on the day the hotels posted such content (Guest 1 Hotel 1) and the day of the week may not have influenced SMCEB. However, Case Study A has content planning for every day throughout the month with their themes (see Table 38) and a monthly SM calendar (Figure 57) to engage their customers. Similarly, Case Study B posted SM content throughout the week, although one of its hotels posted more content on Fridays. Their postings are determined using information which is related to relational information processes section 7.1.5.5.

c. Season of the year

Both case studies posted seasonal campaigns (see Tables 39 and 49), but in comparison with Case Study B, Case Study A was more consistent in its seasonal campaign postings and posted more content as well. Posting in the different

seasons may have helped build their presence and relationships during the celebrations and festivities. However, Case Study A's campaigns may have caused customers to disengage from the SM page (see Customers' responses to hotels' engagement initiatives in section 5.2.2.1). Thus, the effect can be negative and positive.

d. Frequency of posting

Both case studies regularly posted on SM. Case Study B highlighted their retargeting strategy for posting the same content. Their regular postings were noticed by one of their customers (Guest 2 Hotel 3). However, Case Study A stressed the importance of avoiding overwhelming customers with the same SM content multiple times. Hotel 4 of Case Study B may have posted SM content too frequently, which may not have increased SMCEB.

e. Urgency to post

Case Study B also posted SM content based on the urgency of the post, whether the hotels needed to post it at the last minute or months earlier, depending on the campaign topic and target market, mindful of its effect on SM engagement.

ii. Time to respond

Table 66 *Time to respond cross-case comparison*

		Case Study A	**Case Study B**
Time to respond	Timeframe	Response timeframe within 48 hours	Response timeframe within 48 hours
	Real-time	Respond in real-time, thus quick communication	
	Purpose	To ensure SM users who engaged with the hotels would feel acknowledged	To provide a fast response particularly for negative reviews to prevent them from escalating quickly

For both case studies, the standard response timeframe was within 48 hours. Furthermore, Hotel 1 of Case Study A also responded to customers' comments on SM in real-time, which positively influenced SMCEB.

Thus, both case studies had similar standards for responding to SMCEB, but Case Study A responded quickly as a sign of appreciation to their customers, while Case Study B responded quickly to prevent any problems escalating.

7.1.5 Relational information processes

7.1.5.1 Information reciprocity

Both case studies similarly reciprocate customers' private messages. It is similar to the hotel responding to SMCEB.

7.1.5.2 Information capture

Table 67 *Information capture cross-case comparison*

Sub-theme	Codes	Case Study A	Case Study B
Information capture	**Types of information gathered**	<u>Information about others</u>	<u>Information about others</u>
		- hotels' SM post engagement (i.e. weakest and best posts, number of posts reached) - SM trends (i.e. trending topics and hashtags) - competitors' performance on SM	- hotels' SM post engagement (e.g. low and high engaging posts)
		<u>Information about their customers</u>	<u>Information about their customers</u>
		- SMCEB (i.e. link clicks, reviews, likes, comments, views) - demographic information (e.g. gender, age) - socio-economic information (e.g. education level, occupation) - psychographic information (e.g. lifestyle and interests) - country of origin - contact details (e.g. email address)	- SMCEB (i.e. reviews, link clicks, time of activities, comments, shares, views, reactions) - demographic information (e.g. gender, age) - socio-economic information (e.g. occupation) - psychographic information (e.g. lifestyle and interests) - country of origin - special occasions information (e.g. birthday, wedding anniversary)
	Social, personal act data	Aware of the personal data act on SM	Privacy enhancement of the SM may limit the hotels' collection of

		information about their customers
Tools used to gather social information	SM analytics such as *Socialbakers*, Facebook Insights, *TrustYou*	SM analytics (e.g. Facebook Insights)
	Private messages and reviews on SM	Private messages and reviews
	Extend communication from SM to traditional channels to investigate customer problems	Extend communication from SM to traditional channels to investigate customer problems

Based on Table 67, both case studies similarly capture information about their SM post engagement and about their customers (i.e. SMCEB, demographic information, socio-economic information, psychographic information and country of origin). Case Study A also collects information about SM trends, competitors' performance on SM, and their customers' contact details. Case Study B additionally gathers information about customers' special occasions.

Both gather information from different resources (i.e. SM analytics, private messages, reviews, and from the extended communication from SM to traditional channels). Nonetheless, the case studies are mindful of the privacy issue on SM, which may limit information Case Study B can collect about their customers.

7.1.5.3 Information integration

The case studies integrate negative reviews gathered from SM into customer complaint history of the customer profiles within the CRM system. Additionally, Case Study B incorporates customer feedback and customer preferences into the customer. The Front Office of both case studies is responsible for integrating this information into their CRM system. However, not all SM information is integrated into the CRM system.

7.1.5.4 Information access

For Case Study A, SM analytical tools that hold information gathered from the SM of this case, can only be accessed by the Communications department, General Manager, Director of Sales and Marketing, and Regional Director of Digital Marketing. Furthermore, SM insights are only accessible to the Communications department, which is responsible for informing the different departments about relevant customer information, particularly when there is a negative review and

they need to investigate. Findings of the investigation have to be presented within 24 hours. The Front Office department manages the CRM system and is responsible for informing other hotel employees about relevant customer information. Housekeeping also has access to this system (Guest History Manager Hotel 1).

Similarly, only the Digital Marketing Manager and the regional team of Marriott have direct access to information gathered from SM. However, Case Study B's Digital Marketing Managers are responsible for sharing customer information gathered from SM with the relevant departments, such as allergies, celebrations, service failure experiences in negative reviews, and positive reviews. For Hotel 3, the CRM system is only accessible to the Front Office department, but at Hotel 4 of Case Study B, everyone who has a username is allowed to access the system (Duty Manager Hotel 4).

Both case studies inform the relevant department through meetings and instant messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp). Moreover, Case Study A also uses emails to forward any information.

7.1.5.5 Information use

Table 68 *Information use cross-case comparison*

		Case Study A	Case Study B
Information use	Engage on SM	To create engagement using SM content that highlights their unique selling points, delivered at the appropriate time.	To understand customers' preferences and needs on SM to create SM content and post it at the right time.
		To respond to customers using information gathered from SM and stored in the CRM system.	To understand how to respond to SMCEB channels.
	For products and services, and hotel employees	Uses negative online customer reviews (from SM) to improve the products and services by training their employees.	Uses negative online customer reviews (from SM) to improve the products and services by training their employees.
		Uses positive reviews to motivate employees by forwarding to the relevant departments.	To motivate hotel employees.
	Customise products and services	Uses information stored in the CRM system to enhance customers' experience at the hotel	To tailor and personalise their service delivery for celebrations, upon guests' arrival, during their stay and for future visits.

i. To engage on SM

Both case studies use relevant social information to create engaging SM posts and appropriately respond to SMCEB.

Case Study A uses information (see Table 68) gathered from SM, which enables the hotels to create targeted content that customers find interesting and is trending, for campaigns and to write better captions. Additionally, information enables the hotels to highlight their unique selling point and can be used like a 'roadmap' to help create targeted SM content. Director of Communications Hotel 2 mentioned:

> *"It is like a roadmap […] but when we look at the insights … analytics, we know that we should stay away from some because it is not particularly interesting. That is when we go like, 'okay, this one should be repeated'. 'This campaign should not be repeated'. That is how we come up with calendars, with strategies for the future."*
>
> (Director of Communications Hotel 2)

Case Study B uses social information (Table 68) to create targeted SM content for customers so that their marketing strategies are strategic. The hotels use specific information to help create SM content to determine the language and visuals the hotels post on SM. It also allows the hotels to understand customers' needs and what they want to see.

Case Study A also uses information such as the 'best time to post' to help deliver SM content at the right time (Marketing Communications Executive Hotel 1). Similarly, Case Study B uses information to understand the right timing (e.g. country time zone, customers' usual time of engagement) for delivering SM content (Digital Marketing Manager Hotels 3 and 4).

Both case studies also use information to understand how to respond to their social customers appropriately.

ii. For products and services and employees

The case studies use negative online reviews to improve its products and services by training its employees. Through the training, the employees can improve the guest experience delivery and handle service failure. Particularly if a customer returns who previously had a poor experience at the hotel. Guest 2 Hotel 2 hoped

that negative reviews would 'provide learning', for the hotel to handle service failure and better manage customer service at the hotel.

Both case studies also use positive reviews from SM to motivate hotel employees. The Guest Relations Officer Hotel 2 mentioned:

> *"…like TripAdvisor, everyone can see it. TripAdvisor is big. It has a big impact on the hotel's image, and then if there are good comments, it will be good for the staff, but if it shows bad comments, it will be embarrassing."*
>
> (Guest Relations Officer Hotel 2)

Furthermore, Case Study B use them to maintain products and services.

iii. To customise products and services

Case Study A uses information from customer profiles to deliver customised services, thus satisfying the guests especially during their stay. Case Study B particularly uses customer preferences (e.g. celebrations) which have been shared by the customers on SM to customise their service delivery. The customer preferences are channelled to the relevant departments to personalise the experience for them on arrival, and for use on future visits. This personalised or customised service delivery satisfies customers and encourages them to revisit the hotel and engage with the hotel's SM posts (e.g. food and beverages posts, Ramadan posts). Guest 1 Hotel 4 stated:

> *"… more than personalised our stay there. […] we said it is for our wedding anniversary … it is a surprise when we walk into the room and it is beautified (with) a fruit basket, towels into swans, and flowers and alcohol … we could not thank them enough, a surprise we did not expect […] I have stayed in many hotels before, and my husband worked for the 5-star Versace and Sheraton, Hilton but we never had service with a welcome when we stayed there and a good experience. We loved it. 10/10 I should say. Yes, and we would like to go back there again."*
>
> (Guest 1 Hotel 4)

7.2 Conclusion

Both case studies showed similarities and differences of their social CRM strategies, but both are used to engage customers. They use information to help them to be more engaging and targeted on SM. The social CRM strategies even support service delivery on traditional channels (face-to-face). Notably, the social CRM strategies of both are extended to the traditional channels (i.e. emails and phone calls)

especially in cases where the hotels need service recovery after negative feedback. The CRM system is also used to support social CRM strategies, particularly to respond to customers' negative reviews appropriately on SM. Hence, traditional channels also support social CRM strategies and that social CRM is not a stand-alone strategy.

CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION

8.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the cross-case analysis findings presented in the previous chapter. It begins by discussing the main emerging themes, so that a final framework can be presented for Stage 5 of the research process.

8.1 Finalising Framework

In order to address the third research question, "how do hotels practise their social CRM?", the cross-comparison between the findings of Case Studies A and B resulted in five main themes. Each of these themes is discussed in turn.

8.1.1 Social CRM

8.1.1.1 Social CRM definition

Social CRM is still under debate due to new technological advances and customer trends. All case studies define social CRM as a CRM strategy that engages customers and gathers data from SM. This study supports social CRM as a strategy for CE (Askool and Nakata, 2010; Faase et al., 2011), and uses customer information (Cappuccio et al., 2012). The present finding, therefore, offers further support for the work of Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015) that CE and relational information processes are part of a social CRM strategy. The results, however, do not support the study by Lipiäinen (2015), who found that firms consider SM as an invalid medium to perform these two social CRM processes. The case studies are set in the service industry that serves hospitality experiences, and customers are empowered to find decision-making information on SM. There is, therefore, a need for an interactive strategy to communicate information, listen and understand their customers' needs on SM. Consequently, such a strategy would enable the case studies to gather information from their engagement on SM, and thus be able to better engage them. Therefore, social CRM can be proposed as a strategy involving the processes of engaging customers and handling customer information.

The current study found SM content attracts new fans to their SM page. The social CRM strategy, like CRM strategy, also attracts new fans who are potential customers of the hotels to visit the hotels as well as persuade past customers to return to the hotels. It also accords with earlier findings that SM posts are more likely to affect purchasing intention of past customers who have had a positive brand evaluation (Beukeboom et al., 2015). This social CRM strategy can be said

to occur at most stages of tourism customer lifecycle (pre-arrival, and post-departure).

Both case studies post SM content according to their customers' preferences or content that provides benefits to maintain social customers in exchange for their time investment. Case Study A also highlighted using respectful language, while Case Study B emphasised the need to respond to customers in a timely manner to stay engaged on SM. First, these findings suggest that social CRM strategy focuses on the beneficial value for both firms and customers. Therefore, it supports Greenberg's (2010) conceptualisation that social CRM provides 'mutually beneficial value'. Second, findings suggest the importance of maintaining the tone of voice and the value of firms' responses to retain customers. The findings support the idea that firms' responses to customers in social customer service aim to retain customers in the firm-customer relationship (Michel et al., 2009; Cambra-Fierro et al., 2016; Shin et al., 2018). The reason could be that customers would remain loyal to hotels that provide value to them and show their appreciation by responding to them, and not by pushing messages to them. This reflects the importance of firm-customer collaboration that strengthens the relationship between both parties (Trainor, 2012). The current study found SM loyalty is extended from traditional channels and only occurs when the service has been encountered by customers (i.e. Shangri-La hospitality). This finding reflects those of Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) and Cetin and Dincer (2014) who found the experiences of customers with the hotels could lead to loyalty.

Although SM content may cause social customers to disengaged from a firm's SM page, the case studies have no strategy to win back these customers. The social CRM of these hotels focuses on the relationship marketing aspect of attracting and retaining their customers. Therefore, the hotels do not strategize marketing activities for the termination stage of the customer lifecycle (Malthouse et al., 2013; Sigala, 2011). However, it should be noted that from the hotels' perspective, customers may choose not to receive any information from hotels through SM, but they may still be their customer on traditional channels. This implies that they are only disengaged in the SM firm-customer relationship.

8.1.1.2 Social CRM activities

Social CRM for both case studies involves SM marketing, social sales, and social customer service which is managed by the Communications team (Case Study A) or the Digital Marketing team (Case Study B). The 'social CRM' teams highly focus

on SM marketing and social customer service activities, however they have limited authority to process sales enquiries or even bookings. They initiate CE and respond to CE to draw customers' attention to engage on SM, visit the hotels and keeping them in a firm-customer relationship. These teams, however, do not process sales derived from SM, as this requires certain skill sets such as the sales closing skills. It can be suggested that SM marketing and social customer service impact social sales. This is consistent with a previous study that SM marketing results in upselling and cross-selling (Jelinek, 2013).

8.1.1.3 Social CRM key elements

i. People

Hotel employees play a vital role in delivering hospitality to make customers comfortable. The employees were featured on the SM pages of the case studies. These employees may have affected SMCEB (e.g. writing reviews and commenting on the hotel's SM content). This may due to their friendliness, and that treat their customers like family and friends (Rahimi and Kozak, 2017). This substantiates the findings by Cetin and Dincer (2014) and Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) that hotel employees interactions such as personal care, customer recognition and friendliness influence customer experience, loyalty and behaviour. Employees are, therefore, essential in the social CRM strategy (Malthouse et al., 2013; Cambra-Fierro et al., 2017). Hence, the importance of not only retaining customers but also retaining employees. According to Schultz (1998), the value of marketing and marketing communications can be enhanced or destroyed by employees. This is important for the hotels as it is the employees who represent them to provide hospitality to their customers, particularly when past customers want to revisit the hotel and see familiar faces (Pozza et al., 2018). This could be the reason why the case study hotels feature their employees on their SM.

Although the 'social CRM' team is in charge of the CE initiatives and responses to CE on SM, not all employees in the team are authorised to do so. Furthermore, they collaborate with the Sales and Marketing department and frontline departments to drive the CE process and also relational information processes. Findings support the ideas on the distribution and collaboration of customer information across departments (Slater and Narver, 1995). Case Study B also collaborates with other departments to customise their services. The customisation of the service would, therefore, have a positive influence on the overall customer experience and how they evaluate firms (Bock et al., 2016). This helps the researcher to understand

how teams within firms work together to ensure the effectiveness of social CRM strategy not only on SM but also on traditional channels.

ii. Technology

Both case studies use (i) SM to initiate and respond to CE, (ii) SM analytics to monitor and collect information and (iii) CRM systems to integrate the information collected. It is only Case Study B, which does not use SM analytics to monitor competitors' SM performance and customer reviews. Hence, the social CRM strategy is supported by technologies (Assimakopoulos et al., 2015; Rahimi, 2017b). This study confirms previous findings that SM enables CE initiatives (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015). However, the finding is contrary to previous work that found no relationship between SM and information communication (Agnihotri et al., 2017). Thus, SM facilitates firms to engage customers.

These findings are also consistent with earlier findings that SM facilitates relational information processes (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014). The current study, however, does not support the finding by Harrigan et al. (2015) that SM does not facilitate these processes. Overall, SM complemented the CRM system in which supports past evidence by Trainor et al. (2014) and Agnihotri et al. (2017).

iii. Processes

The social CRM strategy for both case studies involves the customer lifecycle process, CE process and relational information processes. In particular, they engage and respond differently to CE on SM at every stage of the customer lifecycle (pre-arrival, on arrival, post-departure). Case Study B also engages customers face-to-face at the departure stage to encourage their SM participation. Furthermore, customer information management occurs at the beginning and last stage of the customer lifecycle of both case studies. The finding suggests that in tourism, the customer lifecycle differs from what was proposed in the literature, which involves attracting, maintaining and terminating (Malthouse et al., 2013). It could be explained that as the customer lifecycle in tourism is specific to the stages of before, during and after customers receive the experience. This includes communication between hotels and customers. Hotel 2 of Case Study A describes this process as the 'customer journey process'. Nevertheless, the study confirms that CE occurs throughout the customer lifecycle phases (Stein and Ramaseshan, 2016), and affects or is affected by a firm's approach at the phases (Malthouse et

al., 2013). SM provides the opportunities for customers to communicate their needs, and for firms to listen and satisfy their customers throughout their 'journey'.

Consequently, findings show that social CRM requires the people, process and technology like the CRM approach (Chen and Popovich, 2003; Malthouse et al., 2013; Payne and Frow, 2005; Pozza et al., 2018). Therefore, it supports the idea that social CRM strategy includes the social CRM activities facilitated by the people, process and technology elements to engage and understand customers (Chen and Popovich, 2003; Rahimi, 2014, 2017a).

8.1.2 CE process

8.1.2.1 CE with the hotels

The CE process can be distinguished into customers' and hotels' engagement. Furthermore, each of them can initiate and respond to engagement.

i. Customers initiate engagement

Customers of both case studies initiate engagement on SM by making enquiries through private messages, sharing their SM posts and writing customer reviews. Particularly, the reviews can be positive, negative and neutral. Hence, customers create SM content about the hotels (Guha et al., 2018). They may have reached out to the hotels on SM as they have experienced the hospitality service (Kumar et al., 2016; Stephen and Galak, 2012) or they are already engaged with the hotels on SM (Thakur, 2018), and they want to promote the brand (Pentina et al., 2018). These results suggest that customers of these case studies were actively engaging with them on SM, in particular sharing their experiences through SM posts and reviews. These findings are consistent with earlier findings where highly engaged customers actively make more effort (Pentina et al., 2018) and share their eWOM (Osei-Frimpong and Mclean, 2018). It could be assumed that these initiation engagement behaviours are similar to creation SMCEB where customers generate SM content (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b).

ii. Customers' responses to hotels' engagement initiatives

The customers similarly showed reactions, comments, shares of the SM post, and these behaviours are the most frequent SMCEB (Pentina et al., 2018). 'Reactions' only require a click of a button to choose the emoticons they want to express when reacting to the SM post. These reactions can be positive (e.g. like, love, haha) or negative (e.g. sad, angry). The results support findings by Guha et al. (2018) that customers comment on the SM post of hotels. The customer comments can also be

positive or negative. Case Study A particularly prefers comments rather than reactions. This suggests that they want to understand customer feelings through writing rather than the 'quick' reactions. Consequently, intense behaviour, such as customer comments on SM posts, may allow hotels to understand the interests and preferences of their customers. These behaviours such as reactions, comments, and shares of SM posts were used to measure their engagement interactions, suggesting that these behaviours may be beneficial to the hotels (Guha et al., 2018). This may due to these behaviours revealing customers' feelings, opinions and reactions (Harrigan et al., 2017; Taecharungroj, 2017). In particular, reactions and comments allow hotels to identify positive or negative SMCEB. Therefore, these behaviours (reactions, comments and shares) are positively or negatively contributing to the SM content.

Customers of both case studies also like the SM pages in response to SM posts of the hotels. The case studies measure the effectiveness of SM posts in attracting new fans through the growth of new fans (or likes) on their SM pages. This behaviour presents a positive SMCEB on the hotels' SM page. Customers may have liked the SM page as they consider SM posts are relevant to their goal/preferences, or that they want to find details about hotel offers on the page, or that they had positive experiences with the hotels. Additionally, customers may have disengaged themselves or 'unliked' the SM page of Case Study A as a response to a specific SM post. This symbolises the negative SMCEB towards the SM page. Possibly customers no longer find any interest in following hotels on the SM page or the SM post may not have appealed the customer preferences. However, the disengagement activity cannot influence SMCEB of other customers since no SM features are able to notify who and how many customers disengage, unlike the SM page (Dolan et al., 2016b). Thus, it may be the reason not winning back these customers. However, there were no SM insights to show this. This suggests the weakness of the SM analytical tool. Such insights may shed light into the reason for losing them and facilitate the development of strategies to retain these social customers. This finding is an important issue for future research to understand customers' disengagement behaviour and firms' strategies to maintain customers from opting out of the firm-customer relationship on SM. Therefore, 'liking' and 'unliking' SM page behaviour can positively or negatively contribute to the hotels' SM page but are less likely to influence other SMCEB.

Moreover, customers of both case studies demonstrated behaviours, such as viewing and clicking links on the hotels' SM posts. However, other customers also

read SM posts (Case Study A). This is a prerequisite behaviour before deciding to react, share or comment on the SM post. Nevertheless, reading/viewing SM posts for a moment indicate customers' behaviour before choosing to ignore it or to act further. It can, therefore, be suggested that these consumption SMCEB may show positive behaviour towards the SM post in terms of their responses to the hotels' engagement (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018). The case studies use these SMCEB to assess the hotels' engagement awareness (views) and conversion (link clicks). Nevertheless, they do not measure numbers of readings, and Case Study B does not find value in measuring the numbers of content 'views'. These behaviours do not reflect customers' feelings or expressions of views towards the hotels' SM post. They prefer to understand customer sentiments through more active behaviour. Furthermore, SM analytics cannot display the number of customers who 'read' SM post. This type of response may be more difficult to track compared with 'views' of the SM posts because they are difficult to track and do not provide value to the social CRM.

Customers of Case Study B also showed response behaviour by sending private messages to the hotels. This relates to creation SMCEB whereby customers generate content to respond to hotels' SM posts (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b). Furthermore, the finding indicates that customers opted to engage with hotels instead through closed and direct communications. Possibly, customers prefer to privately discuss their interests and visit intentions rather than letting other customers know about them. It is unlikely that this behaviour would influence SMCEB of other customers.

Overall, the case studies evaluate SMCEB such as reactions, comments, shares of SM posts and the likes of SM page using metrics to measure their engagement effectiveness. This supports the idea that firms prefer measurable SMCEB (Bolton, 2011) that can be easily quantified (Gummerus et al., 2012). Furthermore, these behaviours can contribute positively or negatively to the hotels' SM post and SM page (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016a, 2017; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018).

iii. CE valence

Both case studies mentioned that SMCEB could be positive, negative or neutral towards the SM content and/or SM pages. The findings above suggest that it would be valuable to understand the sentiment of SMCEB, particularly, on how social customers talk or react about the hotels on SM.

8.1.2.2 Hotel's engagement with customers

i. Hotels' CE initiatives

All case studies use content to encourage engagement on SM, to attract their customers, and to understand their customers' SMCEB. Both case studies post various SM posts of different content and media (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015; Harrigan et al., 2018). The CE initiatives may not only focus on attracting new customers or making sales but also measure their SM marketing efficacy, such as their content marketing to create engagement. SM content is further discussed in section 8.1.3.

ii. Hotels' responses to CE

*Customers' SM posts. B*oth case studies responded by commenting on their customers' SM posts. Case Study A was also active in reposting their customers' SM posts on their SM pages. Reposting their customers' SM posts benefits the hotels using this 'real' customer experience on their SM page and shows appreciation for their customers' active UGC. Nonetheless, hotels should be mindful of their customers' SM privacy and seek permission before reposting customers' SM post. The active approach of Case Study A could have encouraged other customers to share their SM posts. Case Study B, however, was less active by liking their customers' SM posts or following their customers' SM accounts. Nonetheless, both case studies acknowledged and embraced their customers' UGC about the hotels.

Customers' direct messages. All case studies responded to customers' direct SM messages, suggesting that both cases studies are responsive to SMCEB through personal communications. It could be that hotels do not want to lose potential customers who were interested in making bookings or existing customers who intend to revisit the hotel. Hotels' responses will affect SMCEB, knowing whether the hotels would respond specifically to private messages.

Customer comments on hotel's SM posts. All case studies responded to comments on their SM posts by writing in the comments section or by 'liking' the comments. Writing comments are their active responses while 'liking' the customer comments are their less active behaviours that require just a click of a button. Nevertheless, they could not respond to all comments, although Case Study B tries to. Case Study A followed their policy which does not focus on replying to customer comments, which demonstrates how Case Study A's standard is less responsive. This may be due to customer comments in the SM posts being less likely to influence other SMCEB as the hotels' posts can be less noticeable among the other posts in the

customers' newsfeed. Unlike customer reviews, customers tend to search for reviews before making any travel decisions. Another reason could be that Case Study A is more likely to respond to negative customer comments.
For example, they showed a response to a negative comment on their post to mitigate complaints before they escalate and affect other customers. Case Study A addressed the comment professionally and with a neutral voice. Other customers were not influenced by negative customer comment. Thus, it is important to respond to negative comments.

Customer reviews. The case studies responded to positive reviews by liking and commenting on them. Only the negative and neutral reviews are commented on. Their responses to all positive, negative and neutral reviews seem standardised. In the case of positive reviews, the case studies thanked customers for the reviews and welcomed them to return to the hotels. The hotels would like to show appreciation to customers and make sure they revisit the hotels, knowing that they had had a positive hotel experience. This finding is consistent with that of Wei et al. (2013) who noted that responses from management to positive reviews show appreciation. Therefore, customers may feel appreciated and consequently, their trust in the hotels may be influenced (Sparks et al., 2016). Nonetheless, in the responses to the positive reviews, Case Study A highlighted that they relayed them to the employees who were mentioned in the reviews. This finding showed that they value feedback about their employees because of the importance they attached to employees in their hospitality services. In contrast, Case Study B re-emphasised the positive experiences of customers and would like other SM users to be influenced by them (Kim and Johnson, 2016). A possible explanation is that other customers may find the reviews to be trustworthy (Zhang et al., 2010).

In the case of negative reviews, both cases have similar accommodative standard responses to show their concerns toward their customers' problems. This finding substantiates the findings by Zhang and Vásquez's (2014) that showed management responses to negative reviews are somewhat standardised and conventionalised using common moves such as thanking and apologising to customers. The hotels used these service recovery accommodative responses to mitigate the negative reviews and maintain a relationship with the complainants, and do this before the reviews attract more attention from other customers (Lee et al., 2008). The results, thus, confirms that management uses the accommodative response for product failure reviews (Li et al., 2018) and to mitigate them (Weitzl et al., 2018). Furthermore, the case studies take the service recovery conversations

to private channels by giving contact details in their responses. Possibly, the hotels prefer to recover the service in a closed and direct communication at a personal level, preventing the public from seeing their conversation. Thus this is similar to the finding by Guha et al. (2018) that firms prefer to have closed discussions on SM. However, their finding did not explicitly mention whether the discussion was about complaints. Nonetheless, the present study could not offer further support as to whether this type of response could substantially alleviate negative reviews and whether customers were satisfied with the recovery. This remains an important issue and further work needs to be done to understand dissatisfaction with hotel services from the customers' perspective.

In the case of neutral customer reviews, Case Study A mainly addressed the negative experience. However, neutral reviews may be addressed differently by Case Study B hotels. It depends on the reviews, whether the negative experiences highlighted in the review overshadow the positive experiences. The case studies' responses show the importance of resolving the negative experience in neutral reviews. Findings could be explained as negative experiences in neutral reviews could affect other customers' purchasing decisions or the reputation of hotels (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2016; Yoo, 2018).

However, observations showed that both case studies were unable to respond to all customer reviews or comments on their SM. The hotels could have replied to the customer reviews via private messages and not in public, or ensure that only certain employees are authorised to address the reviews. Nonetheless, these active responses to SMCEB is considered a tactic for the hotels to establish a long-term relationship with their social customers (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2016). Thus, hotels' responses to customer reviews or even comments should be considered as customer experience management (positive, negative or neutral), and it could influence SMCEB.

Both case studies, therefore, show that they respond to SMCEB whether it is positive, negative or neutral (Dholakia et al., 2009; Barger et al., 2016). The hotels showed that they are responsive to customers' creation SMCEB (create SM posts, private messages, and customer reviews), and to customers' contribution SMCEB (comment on hotels' SM posts) (Dolan et al., 2016b, 2017). Hence, the case studies are likely to respond to active SMCEB (i.e. SM posts, reviews, messages and comments) compared to less-active SMCEB (i.e. reactions, shares, views of SM posts, and likes on the SM page). Subsequently, this suggests that responding to

customer reviews is part of the social customer service activity to maintain customers in the relationship and stay engaged on SM. Although both case studies seem to have structured responses to customer reviews, that feels less personalised, the personalisation for service recovery can take place beyond the public view of SM, for instance, on traditional channels or even through the top management. Still, personalised engagement relies on customers' perspective, which calls for future research into firms' perspective and customers' perspective of personalised engagement on SM.

8.1.3 SM content

8.1.3.1 SM campaign topic

Evidence revealed that corporate campaigns of both case studies were less engaging than the hotel campaigns. Corporate campaigns, thus, were less likely to appeal to customers; perhaps they find them irrelevant. This finding is consistent with previous results where SM content that included corporate brand names, images and videos had fewer SMCEB, particularly customer comments (Swani and Milne, 2017). The corporation could have created these campaigns probably to ensure standardisation across its brands, specifically to portray a single image. Furthermore, this finding is also in line with Wagner et al. (2017), who found that customers are less likely to interact with unsatisfactory SM posts. Nonetheless, customers were unlikely to engage in this type of campaign because they seek content that is directly related to the hotels they follow on SM. This is because the hotel campaigns reflect customers' life goals/value and thus, motivate them to engage (Vivek et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2016b; Kao et al., 2016; Malthouse et al., 2016a; Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Additionally, hotel campaigns may strengthen the relationship between the hotel and their customers (Gensler et al., 2013). These findings enhance existing research through the understanding that the campaign created by a corporation and a hotel may differently influence SMCEB.

8.1.3.2 Media Type

This study found photos, videos and links were the most engaging media and influence SMCEB. These findings are in line with Cvijikj and Michahelles's (2013) findings that photos, videos and links are more appealing than status. Specifically, earlier studies found that photos (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Luarn et al., 2015), and videos (Luarn et al., 2015; Tafesse, 2015; Lin et al., 2017; Schultz, 2017; Sabate et al., 2014) influence SMCEB. However, these findings do not support previous results that photos (Gutiérrez-Cillán et al., 2017), videos (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Luarn et al., 2015) and links (Sabate et al., 2014) have a

negative impact on SMCEB. Therefore, unlike previous findings, there was no evidence that these interactive and vivid media negatively influence SMCEB, such as reactions, shares and comments (Tafesse, 2015; Kujur and Singh, 2017; Schultz, 2017). Hence, the reason for the case studies to post these media types more frequently. Particularly, the case studies posted better quality photos that can attract and engage customers (Sabate et al., 2014; Luarn et al., 2015). Photos can be produced quickly, and their vividness, specifically high-quality photos, can quickly attract customers' attention within seconds. Nonetheless, it was found that photos gain fewer likes compared to videos, and this is contrary to the findings by Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) and Luarn et al. (2015) that photos garnered more likes than videos. Videos were found to positively affect SMCEB, such as reactions, comments, shares and views of the hotels' SM posts, and likes on hotels' SM pages. Both case studies highlighted the importance of music in videos to draw customer attention within seconds. The music may have enhanced the interactivity of videos and stimulates the sense of hearing and seeing of the SM users, thus influencing CE. Mainly, if hotels used music, storytelling techniques and professional cinematography for their videos, customers could be more engaged. However, not all videos increase SMCEB equally. Customers may not be interested in specific topics featured in the videos, as they may not be relevant to their personal goal. Next, the length of the video loading and playback may take longer, depending on the speed of the Internet. Thus, customers may lose interest to engage. Findings enhance existing research by suggesting that hotels highlight the importance of video and other elements. Further research should be undertaken to investigate this in relation to SMCEB.

Lastly, it was found that events were rarely posted on the SM of the case studies, and this is in line with Schultz's (2017) findings. This study confirms that events were less likely to be used and that they gained fewer SMCEB compared to the other three media (photos, videos and links). This finding may be explained by the fact that events (e.g. bridal fair, charity and seasonal events) target specific audiences at specific dates, which may not be relevant to customers and influence their engagement (Schultz, 2017)

8.1.3.3 SM content type

The study found entertaining content is related to trends (i.e. flash mob, mannequin challenge). Moreover, if it uses videos coupled with the right music, length and fun, it was found to influence SMCEB to hotels' SM posts (reactions, comments, shares, views of the SM posts) and likes on hotels' SM pages. This study confirms that

uniqueness of the entertaining SM content is associated with the positive contribution SMCEB (Tafesse, 2015). Furthermore, this finding is consistent with that of Gavilanes et al. (2018), who found entertaining content with interactive elements and creativity, increase its effectiveness to drive engagement. Thus, this supports the idea that entertaining content using creative video attracts customers to engage (Luarn et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2017). This suggests that content effectiveness also depends on the media associated with the content. Nonetheless, it depends on the customer's perspective on what determines a piece of content to be entertaining. Additionally, customers would have read or viewed the content before contributing to the SM post. The results, therefore, indicate that this content also influences consumption SMCEB. These results confirm earlier findings that this content can affect on the positive contribution SMCEB (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Luarn et al., 2015; Kujur and Singh, 2017; Gavilanes et al., 2018; Heinonen, 2018; Le, 2018; Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018), and consumption SMCEB (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018). Hence, the findings do not support previous evidence that this content does not affect positive contribution SMCEB (de Vries et al., 2012; Gutiérrez-Cillán et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the study was not able to infer whether entertaining content influences creation SMCEB. Still, findings show that entertaining content influences the consumption SMCEB of SM posts and positive contribution SMCEB to SM posts and the SM page.

Both case studies created informational content to raise awareness, educate and provide tips to their customers. This affects the reactions, comments and shares of hotels' SM posts, and new likes of their SM pages. Therefore, this content affects positive contribution SMCEB, which supports previous studies (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Gutiérrez-Cillán et al., 2017; Gavilanes et al., 2018). However, findings do not support the results of de Vries et al.'s (2012) where this content does not affect positive contribution SMCEB. In a sense, customers would not have shown any reactions, comments or shares of the content without reading or consuming the content. The findings, therefore, also indicate that content influences consumption SMCEB. The results support the conceptualisations of Ko et al. (2005) and Dolan et al. (2016b) by which customers may engage with the content by consuming it. Possibly, customers value information, updates and useful tips so that they engage in the content. Furthermore, it could be because the hotels used storytelling techniques in their content to educate customers, which could have made the content interesting and interactive. Therefore, informational content affects consumption and positive contribution SMCEB.

The case studies created relational content that is relevant and that encourages customers to participate on SM. Consequently, the content influenced positive contribution SMCEB such as reactions, comments, shares of hotels' SM posts, and influenced new fans to like their SM pages. These findings support the idea that this content influences the positive contribution SMCEB (Ko et al., 2005; Muntinga et al., 2011; Dolan et al., 2016b; Lin et al., 2017). Such results can be explained as the content evokes the feelings of the customers or their memories about the hotels. They could find the content meaningful, thereby engaging in the content. This finding enhances the understanding that content reflects positive and meaningful customer experiences that customers would have or have had in hotels, and these customer experiences can positively influence their SMCEB. The previous study showed that positive customer experiences with firms influence their SMCEB (Beukeboom et al., 2015). Additionally, this study supports recent evidence that this content coupled with interactive characteristics such as CTA has a positive impact on the positive contribution SMCEB to SM content (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Jeon et al., 2016; Schultz, 2017; Gavilanes et al., 2018). However, it could also be suggested that customers clicked, read or viewed the content before contributing to the content. Findings showed that the content encourages customers to click the website links in the content to vote or visit the hotel websites. Furthermore, the content also influenced customers to create SM posts and use specific hashtags, indirectly encouraging creation SMCEB. Although these results were mainly from the managers' perspective, the study was unable to further support the investigation of the content efficacy in motivating customers to visit the website or to create content. Therefore, further work is required to investigate whether relational content effectively encourages website visits and the creation of SM content. Additionally, the content also encourages customers to act on traditional channels such as calling hotels and visiting their websites. Hence, there is a link between SM and traditional channels. Surprisingly, the study found content about celebrations may have caused customers to unlike the SM page. Perhaps this was because customers no longer found the SM posts of the hotel appealing or maybe they did do not celebrate the holiday featured in these posts. It is, therefore, possible that relational content could also negatively affect SMCEB, specifically the disengagement SMCEB.

Lastly, findings showed remunerative content is considered as hard-selling content, and influences the positive contribution SMCEB, such as reactions, comments and sharing of the content, and new fans to like their SM pages. These findings are contrary to a previous study that this content does not affect SMCEB (Kujur and

Singh, 2017). However, it partially supports previous findings that remunerative content positively affects the positive contribution SMCEB (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Luarn et al., 2015; Gavilanes et al., 2018). Findings suggest that if customers could have positively contributed to SM posts and pages, it could have meant that customers could have consumed the content before engaging any further with the hotels (e.g. reacting, commenting or sharing the content). Accordingly, this study also suggests that customers portrayed consumption SMCEB to remunerative content. Consequently, the findings support the idea put forward by Muntinga et al. (2011) and Dolan et al. (2016b) that customers may read or view the remunerative content. Although findings showed that some remunerative content influence SMCEB, the hotels said that the content is still less appealing to social customers. This content may be aggressive and push customers to purchase from hotels (Kwek et al., 2014). In line with previous findings by Dolan et al. (2017), the case studies posted less remunerative content compared to other types of content.

Therefore, entertainment, informative, relational and remunerative content can influence SMCEB post or SM page. Thus, the case studies stress the importance of SM content type to engage their social customers. This finding confirms the findings by Luarn et al. (2015) who identified the importance of the content type in firms' posting strategies to influence SMCEB. Thus, it lends further support to the theory that SM content can influence SMCEB (Dolan et al., 2016a, 2016b).

8.1.3.4 SM content strategy

The study found different strategies were used for various types of SM content. First, hotels tailor their content to SM channels. This also reflects an approach to personalising the content. Each SM channel has different functionalities and audiences with different demographics, preferences and locations. Past studies found that customers prefer customised SM content as it represents their demands and satisfies their tastes (Seo and Park, 2018), thus impacting SMCEB (Tafesse and Wien, 2018a). Nonetheless, Case Study B highlighted the difficulties in making their content sound personalised on SM to their customers. Hence, they propose the use of hashtags in the content. The hashtag strategy would allow hotels to target content to particular customers and that it could be searched on SM. Consequently, exposure of the content is increased to larger and targeted audiences (Pentina et al., 2018). Still, this personalising content requires information to understand customers' preferences and the many hashtags used or searched by customers. Although the case study participants link their content strategies according to

different SM, the study only observed content on Facebook. Thus, further investigations are needed on other SM channels to further support this finding.

Second, the study found hotels post more soft-selling SM content, such as stories and fewer hard-selling content, and this positively engages their customers. Hard-selling content relates to remunerative content. This finding supports the finding by Gavilanes et al. (2018), that keeping the brand subtle in entertaining content and informational content enhances its effectiveness in influencing SMCEB. This finding was also reported by Dolan et al. (2017), where firms posted less remunerative content. Hotels focus on socialising on SM rather than advertising on these platforms. Hard-selling content is less appealing to customers as they prefer to socialise on SM and look beyond the transactional benefits in the firm-customer relationship (Bowen and McCain, 2015). The customers are marketing savvy and could identify SM content that feels 'forced'. Although the firm needs to promote their products or services on SM, the findings enhance our understanding of the value of posting soft-selling SM content.

Third, both case studies use paid SM posts to reach a wider audience to influence SMCEB. Previous findings support the use of paid SM posts to encourage CE (Alvarez-Milán et al., 2018; Viswanathan et al., 2018). The hotels are likely to increase their reach and targeting, hoping to increase engagement and sales on the competitive SM. Hence, paid SM posts may influence SMCEB.

Fourth, the case studies use a CTA strategy (e.g. questions, brand hashtags, tag other SM users, or phrases such as “click this link”, or “share this”) in their SM content and this influence SMCEB. It appears that these CTAs increase the interactivity of the content, which may prompt or invite customers to respond to the actions they wish to take. The finding corroborates those of Ashley and Tuten (2015) and Gavilanes et al. (2018), who found that CTA drives SMCEB.

Fifth, the study found only Case Study B highlighted the use of less formal language on their SM to attract attention, create interest and influence SMCEB. Since customers may prefer to socialise on SM, using casual language on these channels can give hotels a human voice of hotels to socialise with customers rather than a corporate voice, which may hinder social conversations (Barcelos et al., 2018). Consequently, this style of communication helps hotels to build trust and close relationships with their customers (Gretry et al., 2017). The results, thus, highlight the significance of conveying the hotels’ human voice in their SM content to

influence SMCEB. Future studies on the communication style on SM are therefore recommended.

Additionally, Case Study B produces content based on its branding strategy to guide content development. The case study would like to standardise their SM content accordingly and represent the brand image as promised in their core value or passion points. Furthermore, the case studies repost their customers' SM posts or customer reviews on the hotels' SM pages, suggesting they reposted both positive and creation SMCEB. In the tourism industry, positive SMCEB can help other customers in their decision-making process (Bilro et al., 2019) and influence other SMCEB. It was found that creation SMCEB influences other engagement (Kim and Johnson, 2016), as it was created by "people like me" and deemed trustworthy.

These findings help us to understand that the case studies developed different content strategies to effectively engage on SM (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011). It complements the notion of social CRM for attracting and maintaining customers (Jackson, 2007).

Therefore, SM content can influence SMCEB on hotels' SM posts or SM pages. This finding corroborates with the findings by de Vries et al. (2017) as hotels' CE initiatives on SM influence SMCEB.

8.1.4 SM context

8.1.4.1 SM channels

As mentioned in the SM content strategy (section 8.1.3.4), the study found both case studies post different SM content on different SM channels, and Case Study B highlighted the use of less formal language on these 'casual channels'. Notably, Case Study B emphasised that SM is merely an extension of the customer experience from traditional channels. This could be explained as the traditional relationship is extended to SM to socialise with their customers. Furthermore, both case studies were found to extend their firm-customer relationships from SM to traditional channels, especially for social selling and social customer services. The relationship is extended to traditional channels for personal communications, possibly to avoid confidential and private information from being shared openly on the SM platform. Thus, traditional channels support the social sales and social customer service activities of hotels. These findings support the study by Alvarez-Milán et al. (2018), that firm-customer engagement was highly relevant on both SM and traditional channels. Thus, it supports the idea that engagement platforms

can be a combination of digital and non-digital platforms and can be developed to facilitate the customer's lifecycle (Breidbach et al., 2014). These findings may, therefore, help us to confirm that social CRM uses not only SM but also traditional channels for specific purposes.

8.1.4.2 Time

i. Time to post

SM content posting time may depend on the hotels' the posting patterns by time of the day, days, weeks, seasons, and the frequency and urgency of content posting. This timing strategy, especially posting content at a specific time of the day, is due to the competitive SM environment. So their content would appear at the top of customers' SM newsfeed, and not lost among the content of other brands. Additionally, Case Study A was also found to post their SM content in real-time to influence SMCEB. Some customers are likely to engage in real-time updates posted by hotels, as it may be enjoyable or thrilling to be among the first to receive updates. It can thus be suggested that case studies posted asynchronous and synchronous SM content to engage their customers.

Both case studies (except for Hotel 3) post their SM content equally from Mondays to Sundays, but this strategy may not have influenced SMCEB. This corroborates with previous findings that SMCEB is not influenced by the day SM content is posted (de Vries et al., 2012; Sabate et al., 2014; Schultz, 2017). However, Case Study A has SM content planning for each day in a month, indicating that it is a content marketing timing strategy. It could be a guide for hotels to avoid over posting, similar content in a week to maintain engagement with their customers. Nevertheless, these case studies may have posted SM content throughout the week to increase their presence and maintain consistency on SM, aiming to reach and influence SMCEB (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). This is related to the posting frequency on SM. The study found both case studies post regularly and may affect SMCEB. The findings are consistent with the idea that regular engagement on SM influence SMCEB (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015; Harrigan et al., 2018). In particular, Case Study B also uses the retargeting approach to influence SMCEB. Repetition can have a positive impact on SMCEB because of the mere exposure effect that the more customers are exposed to SM content, the more likely they are to like it (Zajonc, 1965). However, the high quantity of hotels' SM posts may not lead to a significant increase in the number of SMCEB. This does not support previous evidence by Viswanathan et al. (2018), that the frequency of firms' SM posts have a positive impact on the volume of SMCEB. Therefore, firms should focus

on developing SM content that effectively engages customers. The delivery of content at the right time will not be sufficiently engaging unless the content is engaging.

Furthermore, both case studies also posted seasonal campaigns on SM as they may want to develop their presence and relationships with their customers during the celebrations and festivities. Mainly, this can attract potential customers to purchase its products and services, and to visit the hotel during the celebrations and festivities, and maintain a relationship with them (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Kim et al., 2015; Tafesse and Wien, 2018b). Nonetheless, hotels need to be mindful that posting during certain seasons (e.g. Easter Sunday), as this may cause customers to lose interest on their SM page and lead them to disengage. The findings provide useful insight that seasonal campaigns may cause customers to negatively influence SMCEB.

Overall, the study only found posting content based on the day of the week may not have influenced SMCEB but facilitates the hotels' content posting time strategy. Other timing indicators may influence SMCEB. However, this strategy would need information in determining the best time to post on SM (see section 8.1.5). Hence, SM content posting time is essential to engage customers (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013). It complements the SM content and channel strategy to effectively engage customers. This is because these findings partially support previous research by Schultz (2017), that timing does not affect SMCEB.

ii. Time to respond

All case studies respond to their social customers within their standard response timeframe of 48 hours. Moreover, Case Study A also considers that it responds to customers (e.g. comments) in real-time. Thus, the case studies emphasised the need to respond to their customers quickly. A timely, responsive manner on SM is crucial to increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the customer-firm relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Agnihotri et al., 2017). This strategy, however, is guided by the hotels' policy to respond to customers. They are less likely to use information to guide the response timing.

8.1.5 Relational information processes

8.1.5.1 Information reciprocity

Both case studies reciprocate customer inquiries on SM with information. This finding suggests that this process is similar to the hotels' response to CE (see

section 8.1.2.2). Therefore, to avoid ambiguity, information reciprocity could be excluded from relational information processes. This finding corroborates with the finding by Harrigan et al. (2015) that this phase is removed from the relational information processes construct, thus suggesting it is similar to the CE construct. However, the finding does not support the conceptualisation of Jayachandran et al.'s (2005) relational information processes. This could be explained as their construct was built in the traditional CRM context, which only focuses on managing customers rather than engaging customers. This finding may help us to understand further the difference between social CRM and traditional CRM.

8.1.5.2 Information capture

The case studies collect similar kinds of data on SM engagement of their hotels and customers (i.e. SMCEB, demographic, socio-economic, psychographic, country of origin) using SM analytics, private messages, and customer reviews. Furthermore, as the communication on SM can be extended to traditional channels for investigations, data is also gathered from these extended channels. Case Study A also uses third party SM analytics to collect SM trends and competitors' performances on SM. These findings suggest that hotels gather various kinds of social data and traditional data from different sources for their social CRM strategy. Furthermore, technology facilitates the collection of information. The result also suggests that the focus of Case Study A is not only on recognising the efficacy of its SM content but also on assessing SM competitive advantage of its rivals. Findings support the idea that information capture process involves the collection of information from different resources, including SM and traditional channels (Guha et al., 2018; Jayachandran et al., 2005). The findings, however, are not consistent with the study by Guha et al. (2018) and Lipiäinen (2015) that SME and B2B firms rely heavily on SM to collect customer information. Such results help us to understand that in a different context, variations in the reliance on collecting social information exists. Furthermore, both case studies are aware of the privacy concerns on SM that may restrict the collection of social data. Managers must, therefore, be aware of what information they collect from SM and adhere to the personal act data. This finding reflects those of Leung et al. (2013), who addressed privacy concerns from engagement and presented the challenges for firms to collect social data (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

8.1.5.3 Information integration

However, not all collected information (see section 8.1.5.2) was integrated into the customer profiles within their CRM systems. The case studies only incorporate a

few SM data, such as negative customer reviews, into each of their CRM systems. Additionally, Case Study B also incorporates the customer preferences obtained from SM into their CRM system. Therefore, the case studies only select insightful customer information, to integrate into the CRM systems. Although the case studies have manually selected information, still, CRM technologies support this phase. This also accords to the findings by Guha et al. (2018) that firms such as SMEs manually incorporated social data into their existing CRM. This offers an understanding of the similarities of how firms operating with different contexts integrate social data into the CRM system. Firms similarly integrate information that only provides insight for their firms.

8.1.5.4 Information access

The 'social CRM' team handles social information in social technologies, while the Front Office department manages information in the CRM system. Such results support the idea that some departments do not have access to information (Bijmolt et al., 2010). However, for the social CRM strategy, it presents the complex process and collaboration between different departments for customer information access that prevent the presence of data silos (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Ahani et al., 2017).

8.1.5.5 Information use

The case studies use information gathered from SM (see Table 67) to understand their customers. Consequently, it facilitates the creation of engaging SM content and its delivery at the right time, thus, making it feel personalised. The finding supports the notion that social information enables firms to personalise their SM content (Zahay et al., 2012; Cabiddu et al., 2014; Assimakopoulos et al., 2015; Mastorakis et al., 2015; Kunz et al., 2017) to influence SMCEB (Cabiddu et al., 2014). Customers are looking for non-transactional benefits in the hotel-customer relationship, preferring personalised SM content (Bowen and McCain, 2015). This facilitates their social CRM strategy to attract customers and maintain their relationship with them (Jackson, 2007). Hence, information is used to have an in-depth understanding of customer preferences (Wagner et al., 2017), feelings, opinions and reactions (Sigala, 2003; Taecharungroj, 2017) for SM marketing purposes. Social and traditional information also facilitates case studies to respond to social customers. This finding is consistent with the finding by Sigala (2016), that information is essential to the development of strategic marketing decisions, such as customer response. Thus, the social and information from CRM system

facilitates firms to understand their customer's needs (Rodriguez et al., 2014) and consequently be better at responding to CE.

Additionally, the case studies use negative reviews in staff training exercises to improve their products or services quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). The case studies also share the collected positive reviews with relevant departments to motivate employees. Findings suggest that employees play a vital role in shaping the customer experiences of hotel products or services. Lastly, the information collected facilitates case studies to customise products and services to their customers. This finding supports the notion that social and traditional information in the CRM system is used to understand their customers. It, therefore, enables firms to personalise products or services according to the needs of their customer (Trusov et al., 2010; Stone and Woodcock, 2013; Guha et al., 2018), and to increase satisfaction and to recognise loyal customers (Ahani et al., 2017). It could lead customers to make a positive assessment of firms (Bock et al., 2016), and thus, to engage on SM. This is because loyal customers are more likely to engage on SM such as writing reviews (Beckers et al., 2018).

Therefore, the case studies use social and traditional information to drive the social CRM strategy on SM (i.e. developing SM content and responding to customers' engagement) and traditional channels (i.e. enhancing and customising products and services). These findings, however, are not consistent with the study by Guha et al. (2018) that firms do not rely on social data to make strategic marketing decisions.

Ultimately, it is information capture, integration, access, and use, which influences the hotels'social CRM capabilities (Jayachandran et al., 2005; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Ahani et al., 2017). This highlights the importance of deriving information (Malthouse et al., 2013), integrating information, knowledge sharing and understanding (Hibbert et al. 2012) as the foundation of social CRM.

8.2 The Social CRM framework

After discussing the key themes emerging from the cross-case analysis with reference to the literature, the final stage of the study involves validating and finalising the Social CRM framework after receiving feedback from the Digital Marketing/Communications Manager of each case. Figure 36, therefore, presents the final framework that has been refined from the preliminary framework developed in Stage 3 (Figure 6).

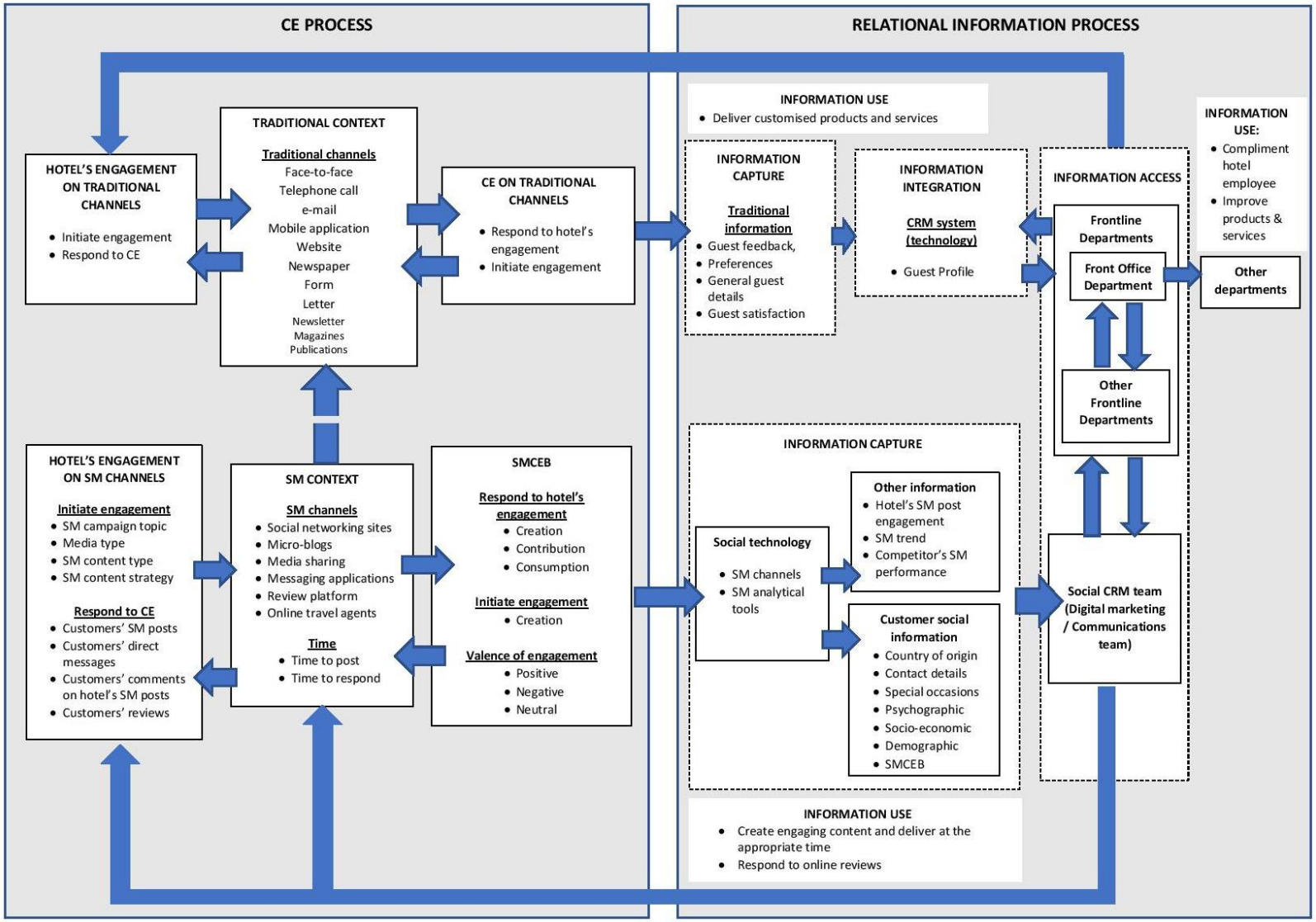


Figure 36. The final social CRM framework

8.2.1 Social CRM

The researcher refined and validated the working definition of social CRM. Thus, social CRM can be defined as:

> *CRM, a strategy that uses SM channels to attract and maintain engagement with customers (potential or current customers). It involves engagement (targeted CE initiatives and responses to CE) and information management on SM channels throughout the customer lifecycle, supported by technologies and people. Social CRM activities include SM marketing, social sales and social customer service, handled by a single department in a hotel. Furthermore, it requires collaboration between relevant departments not only to support the CRM activities on SM but also on traditional channels for further engagement, information gathering and delivery of customised or improved product/service.*

This definition and the experts' definition (section 4.2) show similarities and differences. First, both definitions highlight the use of SM channels in the social CRM strategy. Nevertheless, the experts categorised it into public and private SM channels. The current definition, however, simply defines it as SM channels. Second, the current definition suggests that social CRM uses not only SM but also traditional channels. Third, both definitions emphasise that the social CRM strategy includes CE and relational information processes. Nonetheless, the definition of experts focused on the firms' CE initiatives, while the current definition emphasised the firms' CE initiatives and responses to CE. This shows the interactive engagement between firms and customers. Fourth, the experts posit that technologies support the two social CRM processes. However, the current definition added 'people' as a key element that supports these processes as well. The current definition may, therefore, help us to understand how large firms define the social CRM strategy in the tourism context.

Thus, this definition summarises the complete view of social CRM in this final framework. It highlights that the firm-customer relationship can be extended from SM to the traditional channels for further engagement, information gathering and delivery of customised and improved product/service. Furthermore, social CRM involves collaboration between relevant departments, specifically, the frontline departments, to support the social CRM strategy. It highlights the importance of 'people' in this strategy. This suggests the following propositions:

P1: Social CRM involves two processes, the CE process and relational information process on SM and traditional channels.

This framework presents the two processes of social CRM, including CE process and relational information process, (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al. 2015). It shows that these processes are interactive as it goes in a cycle.

8.2.1.1 CE process

The CE process of the final framework is significantly different from the framework in Stage 3 (Figure 6). Previously, in Stage 3, the CE process only represents firm's CE initiatives, which included four SM content types (entertaining, informational, relational and remunerative), and SM context strategies (time, devices and SM platforms). The framework only indicated firms' CE initiatives. However, the final framework expands the CE process, which includes three key themes of hotel engagement, the channel context, and CE. The engagement of hotels and customers shows that they initiate and respond to each other's engagement on SM and traditional channels. This supports the suggestion by Alvarez-Milan et al. (2018) that customers and firms are equal actors that can initiate CE relationships.

In the current framework, hotels' engagement could be on SM and traditional channels. They tend to extend the engagement from SM to traditional channels. On these two channels, the hotels can initiate engagement with their customers (CE initiatives) and respond to customers' engagement (responses to CE). The CE initiatives are extended and include different types of SM campaigns, media, content, and content strategies (Table 69). Additionally, hotels' responses to CE depends on how their customers reach them. Hence:

P2: CE process includes hotels' engagement (initiatives and responses), channel context and CE (initiatives and responses).

Table 69 *Hotel's CE initiatives, and responses to CE*

	Types	**Details**
Initiate engagement	SM campaign topic	• Corporate campaign • Hotel campaign
	Media	• Photo • Video • Link

	Content	• Status • Event • Stories • Entertainment • Informative • Relational • Remunerative
	Strategies	• Different content for different SM channels • Post more soft-selling content • Paid SM posts • Personalised content • Content with CTA • Repost customers' SM post
Respond to CE		• Post less formal content • Create content based on brand strategy • Respond to customer SM post • Respond to direct message • Respond to customer comments • Respond to customer reviews

The engagement of hotels (i.e. initiatives and responses) on SM effectiveness also depends on the SM context, which includes channels and time. In the CE initiatives, hotels consider creating and delivering SM content based on the characteristics and audiences of SM at the right time. In contrast to Stage 3, the final framework distinguishes SM channels based on functionalities and not based on firms' SM ownership (private or public SM channels). SM content posting time has been further expanded to the time of the day, the day of the week, the season of the year, the frequency of posting, and the urgency of posting. Thus, it offers a specific posting time-setting strategy. Nonetheless, hotels require information as a 'road map' to produce engaging content and to post it at the best timing on SM (section 8.2.1.2). It leads to the following propositions:

P3: CE initiatives of a social CRM strategy consists of SM content marketing strategies (SM campaign topic, media, content and strategies) and SM context strategies (SM channels and posting time).

P4: CE initiatives of a social CRM strategy are driven by information to post engaging SM content at the right time.

Customers may respond to the hotels' CE initiatives by showing creation SMCEB (direct messaging the hotels), contribution SMCEB (reactions, comments, and shares of hotels' SM post, and like the hotels' SM pages) and consumption SMCEB (views, reads and link clicks on the hotels' SM posts). Nonetheless, the responses can be either positive, negative or neutral. Customers also initiate engagement on

different SM channels by showing the creation SMCEB (direct messages, shares personal SM posts and write reviews). Their engagement initiatives can also be positive, negative or neutral. Therefore, contrary to the seven different SMCEB in Stage 3's framework, this final framework distinguishes SMCEB to initiatives and responses to hotels' engagement, and valence of the engagement. Therefore:

P5: SMCEB can be categorised into initiating behaviour (creation) and responding behaviours (creations, contribution and consumption) which could be positive, negative or neutral.

The hotels may respond to customers' initiatives SMCEB (i.e. personal SM posts, direct messages, or reviews) or reply to customers' responses SMCEB (i.e. direct messages and comments), appropriately and within the standard response time (48 hours). In this matter, hotels may require information to facilitate an appropriate response to customers. However, they are guided by their policy to respond to customers in a timely manner. Moreover, their response can take place on traditional channels for a close and personal discussion. Thus:

P6: A firm is guided by information to create an appropriate response to CE, and their policy to respond to CE at the right time.
P7: A firm extends their responses to CE on traditional channels for a close and personal discussion.

The CE process also includes the engagement of hotels on traditional channels. This is because the hotels offer the hospitality experience on these channels (i.e. face-to-face) whether they initiate the engagement or respond to CE. Consequently, customers can extend the positive, negative or neutral evaluation of hotels on SM by initiating engagement (e.g. post reviews). Therefore, this final framework illustrates the engagement process between hotels and customers on SM and traditional channels.

8.2.1.2 Relational information processes

Relational information processes in this final framework include the collection, integration, access and use of information. In contrast to the Stage 3 framework, this final framework excludes information reciprocity as it is similar to the hotels' response to CE. This final framework presents comprehensive relational information

processes. First, it shows information and how hotels capture information for the social CRM strategy. The information collection phase is different from the preliminary framework in Stage 3, where firms gather only behavioural data to drive their CE initiatives. In this final framework, information gathered from SM is either shared directly by customers or gathered using SM analytical tools. This suggests the following proposition:

P8: Behavioural data drive the CE initiatives of a firm's social CRM strategy.

Second, it displays how hotels integrate information they gather into their CRM systems. The hotels need certain information (i.e. negative customer reviews and customer preferences) and incorporate it into the system. Third, we can understand who and how the employees access social information on SM and both social and traditional information are stored in the CRM systems. Lastly, the final framework shows how different departments in firms use information gathered and stored in the CRM system. The social CRM framework, thus, shows a complex process of social information flow from the phases when information is captured, accessed by relevant departments, and before the information is integrated into the CRM systems.

To conclude, the final framework provides a more comprehensive view of the engagement between customers and how firms manage information for the social CRM strategy.

8.3 Conclusion

The main findings of the cross-case analysis of Case Study A and Case Study B were discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, similarities and differences with those from the extant literature have been examined. It was demonstrated that social CRM is a strategy for interactive engagement with customers. In other words, social CRM is a CE strategy. The study has found a relationship between social CRM and CE (RQ2).

Moreover, findings support the conceptual framework (Figure 1) and preliminary framework (Figure 6) whereby social CRM includes two processes. This final framework (Figure 36), however, expands the CE process and relational information processes that demonstrates 'how hotels practise their social CRM ' (RQ3). The

main findings showed that not only does SM serve as an extension of the hotels' CRM strategy, but communication also extends from SM to traditional channels for personalised engagement (i.e. service recovery). Thus the contribution of this study is that it offers a comprehensive overview of how hotels practise social CRM to engage their customers.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

9.0 Introduction

Social CRM and CE are both relatively new concepts (Greenberg, 2010; Leary, 2014). However, the relationship between these two concepts has received limited attention, both conceptually and empirically. Thus, the broad aim of this study is to understand the concept of social CRM and to answer the three research questions: (i) what is social CRM? (ii) what is the relationship between social CRM and CE?; and (iii) how do hotels practise their social CRM?

The study adapted a research process for theory and framework development outlined by Payne et al. (2009), Roberts and Palmer (2012), and Frow et al. (2015). The research process included five stages: (i) pre-understanding; (ii) exploration of concepts; (iii) framework development; (iv) framework development and refinement; and (iv) finalising framework.

This final chapter concludes the thesis. This chapter starts with a summary of the research findings. It then presents the study's theoretical and practical contributions. Finally, the chapter discusses the limitations and identifies areas for future research.

9.1 Summary of the research findings

9.1.1 Pre-understanding (Stage 1)

The study reviewed extensive marketing literature related to social CRM and CE. This stage aimed to better understand these concepts. The initial review of the literature presented an initial conceptual framework (Figure 1), which represents a firm-centric view of the relationship between social CRM and CE. It conceptualises that social CRM may influence SMCEB and SMCEB can provide information to social CRM. This framework was used to discuss these concepts in the next stage (Stage 2).

9.1.2 Exploration of concepts (Stage 2)

The social CRM concept and how it can be used for CE from both a managerial and an academic perspective was empirically explored. This stage interviewed CRM and academic experts and developed a preliminary framework (Figure 6) to address the first and second research questions.

9.1.3 Framework development (Stage 3)

The first and second research question was addressed. The CRM and academic expert interviews provided an in-depth understanding of social CRM and CE. A preliminary framework (Figure 6) for these concepts was developed. The preliminary framework shows the social CRM dimensions and how it can be used by firms to engage customers in the next stage (Stage 4). Following the framework development, the researcher sent a brief report via email to academic experts who took part in Stage 2. This was a step for sense-making and to confirm the framework. Although, only one academic expert responded and validated it, this step provided validity and verification of the findings.

9.1.4 Framework development and refinement (Stage 4)

The academic expert's response in Stage 3 helped to refine the preliminary framework. The framework was then contextualised in the tourism industry through a case study between Case Study A (Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts), and Case Study B (Marriott International). This stage helped the researcher to address the third research question, which is "how do hotels practise their social CRM?" By employing a case study approach, the researcher was able to establish a comprehensive framework (Figure 36) based on multiple types of data gathered from two case studies.

9.1.5 Finalising framework (Stage 5)

The third research question was answered at this final stage. The case study summarised how hotels use social CRM to engage their customers. Consequently, a final framework was developed, which was validated by a Case Study A manager.

9.2 Contributions

This study's intended theoretical contribution is to develop theory and propositions for further research that bridge the literature on social CRM and CE.

9.2.1 Theoretical contribution

Definition. The study contributes to social CRM and tourism literatures by developing an empirically informed definition of social CRM. Since the emergence of social CRM, practitioners and academics have defined social CRM in their papers or studies in different ways. Their definitions remain simplistic and ambiguous as to whether SM is only a medium for CE, and less theoretical definitions highlight

the importance of customer information in social CRM (e.g. Askool and Nakata, 2010; Faase et al., 2011; Trainor et al., 2014). Thus, researchers are still discussing the conceptualisation of social CRM due to new technological advances and customer trends (Sigala, 2016). This definition strengthens the idea that social CRM is a strategy involving the CE process and relational information processes (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015), but also highlights the use of SM and traditional channels in this social CRM strategy.

Relationship. The current study makes a theoretical contribution to improve our understanding of the relationship between social CRM and CE. Scholars suggest social CRM is an antecedent of CE (Verhoef et al., 2010; Malthouse et al., 2013; Maslowska et al., 2016; Stone and Woodcock, 2013). Furthermore, there is a lack of conceptual definition of social CRM and its relationship with CE. Several studies have explored the relationship between these two concepts (e.g. Malthouse et al., 2013; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015), but the nature of the relationship was difficult to understand simply by examining these conditions. Hollebeek et al. (2016) have expanded the fundamental propositions of CE concerning CRM using the qualitative approach from the managers' perspective. However, little is known about the SM dimension in the social CRM concept. Thus, this study extends van Doorn et al.'s (2010) call for further investigation of CE from an organisational perspective, using empirical research. This study, therefore, contributes significantly to social CRM, CE and tourism literature.

Framework. Although limited studies have explored the relationship between social CRM and CE, this study extends the social CRM model by Choudhury and Harrigan (2014), and Harrigan et al. (2015) by gaining deeper insights into this relationship. The study proposes a social CRM strategy framework for engaging customers and refining the two social CRM processes (CE process and relational information processes).

The current study contributes theoretically to the expansion of the CE process, which includes hotels' engagement, channel context and customers' engagement, whether on SM or traditional channels. It also provides insights into the engagement initiatives and responses between the hotels and customers. It symbolises the two-way communication between both parties in the hotel-customer relationship. Existing practitioners and academic literature have focused on the

firm's CE initiatives or responses to CE. Nevertheless, little has been understood about how the CE process works in the firm's social CRM strategy. The researcher's treatment of this construct as a two-way process injects novelty into this discussion.

The study included SM content marketing strategies and SM context strategies in the CE process, as part of the CE initiatives of the hotels. Literature indicates that firms can initiate marketing efforts to drive CE (Harrigan et al., 2015; Pansari and Kumar, 2017) but it is unclear on how firms practise their CE initiatives within the social CRM strategy (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014). Particularly, content marketing theories and their effect on SMCEB exist, but qualitative research needs to investigate this notion (Barger et al., 2016). The results offer a deeper insight into the content elements for an effective CE initiatives (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). Moreover, the current study expands the research by Dolan et al. (2016a, 2016b) around content marketing influence on SMCEB. Furthermore, the SM context, such as SM channels and posting time, was found to facilitate the CE initiatives. Scholars propose firms promote CE by engaging on SM (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2015) and posting content at the right time (Chauhan and Pillai, 2013; Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Schamari and Schaefers, 2015; Harrigan et al., 2018; Panagiotopoulos et al., 2015). Recent evidence, however, suggests that timing such as the day of the week did not influence SMCEB (Schultz, 2017). This research builds on previous work and adds knowledge about the effect of CE initiatives on SMCEB, contributing to the lack of research in this context (Bruhn et al., 2012; Pentina et al., 2018). This study offers a new perspective on conceptualising CE initiatives.

Previous studies have called for future study of how firms use and incorporate SM into existing CRM (Harrigan et al., 2015) and for methods to effectively engage on SM (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011). Particularly, SM as a CE enabler is under-researched in the tourism context (Harrigan et al., 2017). Additionally, there was a need to consider how firms create, track and measure CE on SM (Barger and Labrecque, 2013; Barger et al., 2016). Findings of this research provide insights into the importance of SM not only as an enabler for CE initiatives but also as an enabler for CE responses. Furthermore, the findings confirm SM drives relational information processes. Hence, this study extends previous empirical work by Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) and Harrigan et al. (2015).

SMCEB. Following Dolan et al.'s (2016a, 2016b) conceptualisations, SMCEB was categorised based on its valence and intensity. However, the study has refined these SMCEB according to the initiating and responding behaviours that firms find valuable to measure. Furthermore, although there is a great deal of CE research (Ahn and Back, 2018), there is a dearth of qualitative research that explores tourism SMCEB. Majority of the CE studies have been conducted quantitatively in the tourism and SM context (So et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2017, 2018). Thus, the study provides a more sophisticated approach to explain customers' behaviours in the tourism setting. SMCEB is framed as creation, contribution, and consumption content could be positive, negative or neutral. However, in spite of earlier studies have investigated the tourism SMCEB quantitatively, limited studies have explored SMCEB construct at an in-depth level from firms' perspective and customers' perspective in the tourism industry (i.e. Harrigan et al., 2017, 2018). This refined understanding of SMCEB would benefit the CE and tourism literatures. Not only does it enable both researchers and managers to understand SMCEB better, it also provides a social CRM framework which can be applied within the tourism and hospitality context.

Relational information process. The evidence from this study suggests that relational information processes in the social CRM and tourism context are complex, and highlights knowledge sharing and access across hotel departments. Firms can use social data to track and analyse the needs and preferences of customers to facilitate real-time decision-making process to increase CE (Kunz et al., 2017). The different SM channels pose a challenge for firms to collect vast amounts of social data (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010), and capabilities are required to quantify and analyse the data (Bijmolt et al., 2010) for the decision-making process. Expanding on the previous CE nomological network (Brodie et al., 2013), this study also identifies SMCEB as CE consequences that provide information for the social CRM strategy. The study contributes to our understanding that certain collected social information is not shared across departments but are used by the 'social CRM' team to formulate SM strategies. Only several types of social information are shared, integrated into the CRM system, and used to improve and customise products/services on traditional channels. Agnihotri et al. (2017) found social CRM does not facilitate employees to make timely responses to customers. The study is useful in expanding our understanding that social information gathered only supports the hotels' decision to post SM content at the right time. It does not,

however, facilitate the hotels in their responses to CE as their policy guides them. Furthermore, the study confirms Harrigan et al.'s (2015) conclusion that information reciprocity is similar to engaging customers. Thus, it has been excluded from the relational information processes.

Reliability. This work explores this notion of social CRM and CE differently from previous studies by examining the perspective of CRM experts, firms and customers. The structured research approach, helps social CRM practices to be further understood from different perspectives, moving away from generalist umbrella definitions of what is social CRM and the strategies. In the tourism context, the study provides a classification that will allow future researchers to explore social CRM in tourism further from both the hotel and social customer perspectives.

9.2.2 Managerial contribution

In practice, the findings help to inform managers about the role of social CRM in CE. This research worked collaboratively with the hotels in the Malaysian tourism sector to create a framework showing the relationship between social CRM and CE. The framework (Figure 36) provides useful guidance for hotels that strive to engage social customers meaningfully, such as posting personalised SM content in the right channel and when customers are active. The framework also highlights the importance of SM response strategy within the accepted timeframe for hotels. The current study will provide managers with guidance on the importance of responding to different SMCEB, particularly in handling negative SMCEB during the process of service recovery (Yoo, 2018). Hence, it highlights the importance of establishing strategies for CE initiatives and responses to CE.

From a managerial point of view, tourism firms need to distinguish between valuable types of SMCEB in the tourism context. SMCEB can affect the decision-making process of other customers as they see it as a reliable source of information relative to the firm's information (Greenberg, 2010). Therefore, businesses need to focus and understand the important SMCEB and whether they are positive, negative or neutral behaviours. This allows firms to waste no time in formulating appropriate CE responses and CE initiatives strategies.

Furthermore, this study provides a clear picture of the social CRM strategy's relational information processes. SM can be a source of social information, and

when combined with CRM, the communication process and customer experiences can be improved (Trainor, 2012). However, few researchers have investigated the actual processes of social information management in hotels. This study identified social data drives CE initiatives, plus the combination of social and traditional data drives CE responses on SM and the improvement and customisation of products/services on traditional channels.

9.3 Limitations and areas for future research

The study experienced limitations which may affect the reliability and generalisation of the developed framework.

First, the study explored the relationship between social CRM and CE using a qualitative approach, which facilitates deeper insights to be gained of the nature of this relationship. However, further research should, therefore, continue to develop, refine, test and validate the findings through more case studies. Also, the study developed eight propositions based on the findings that can be empirically tested (see section 8.2) as a step to test this relationship. Then, the findings could be validated.

Second, the analysis was based on data collected from a sample of four global chain hotels in Malaysia. Another drawback of the study is that the findings may be different for smaller organisations hotels in Malaysia or indeed elsewhere. Therefore, when generalising results to other hotels in other countries, care should be taken. In other developing countries, the results may not be applicable as they may have different national proportions (Ahani et al., 2017). For example, there may be differences in the technological infrastructure that enables accessibility to social media, government regulations and cultural values that determine the use of social media (i.e. China prohibits Facebook and Twitter in the country, and each country has different social media preferences) (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro,2012). Brodie et al. (2011) suggest that engagement is highly context-specific. Future research should, therefore, investigate the social CRM practice in similar service-oriented industries such as telecommunications, banks, education, and travel industries. Additionally, a greater focus on other SM channels (i.e. beyond Facebook) could strengthen the framework. This might allow the framework to be extended across various SM channels.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of global chain hotels in Malaysia as of 2016

Table 70 *List of global chain hotels in Malaysia as of 2016*

No	Hotel	Star	Location	Type of hotel	No of rooms	Global chain brand
1	Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral	4	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	482	Marriott International
2	Avangio Hotel Kota Kinabalu	others	Sabah	City/Business Hotel	103	AccorHotels Group
3	Batang Ai Longhouse Resort	5	Sarawak	City/Business Hotel	100	Hilton Worldwide
4	Best Western I-City Shah Alam	3	Selangor	City/Business Hotel	244	Best Western International
5	Best Western Nexus Shah Alam	others	Selangor	City/Business Hotel	91	Best Western International
6	Best Western Petaling Jaya	3	Selangor	Hotel/service apartment		Best Western International
7	Best Western Premier The Haven Ipoh	5	Perak	City/Business Hotel	43	Best Western International
8	Best Western Sandakan Hotel & Residence	3	Sabah	City/Business Hotel	48	Best Western International
9	Century Four Points Resort	5	Kedah	Beach Resort	238	Marriott International
10	Century Langkasuka Resort	4	Kedah	Beach Resort	214	Marriott International
11	Doubletree by Hilton Johor Bahru	5	Johor	City/Business Hotel	335	Hilton Worldwide
12	Doubletree by Hilton Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	540	Hilton Worldwide
13	Four Points by Sheraton Kuching	4	Sarawak	City/Business Hotel	421	Marriott International
14	Four Points by Sheraton Penang	4	Penang	Beach Resort	220	Marriott International
15	Four Points by Sheraton Puchong	4	Selangor	City/Business Hotel	249	Marriott International
16	Four Points by Sheraton Sandakan	4	Sabah	City/Business Hotel	300	Marriott International
17	Four Seasons Resort Langkawi	5	Kedah	Beach Resort	91	Four Seasons
18	Golden Sands Beach Resort	4	Penang	Beach Resort	387	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
19	Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	412	Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
20	Hilton Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	510	Hilton Worldwide
21	Hilton Kuching	5	Sarawak	City/Business Hotel	315	Hilton Worldwide

22	Hilton Petaling Jaya	5	Selangor	City/Business Hotel	553	Hilton Worldwide
23	Holiday Inn Glenmarie Kuala Lumpur	5	Selangor	City/Business Hotel	260	Intercontinental Hotels Group
24	Holiday Inn Melaka	4	Melaka	City/Business Hotel	275	Intercontinental Hotels Group
25	Holiday Inn Resort Penang	4	Penang	Beach Resort	358	Intercontinental Hotels Group
26	Hotel Jen Penang	4	Penang	City/Business Hotel	443	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
27	Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour	4	Johor	City/Business Hotel	283	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
28	Hyatt Regency Kinabalu	5	Sabah	City/Business Hotel	288	Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
29	Hyatt Regency Kuantan Resort	5	Pahang	City/Business Hotel	330	Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
30	Ibis Styles Ipoh	others	Perak	City/Business Hotel	113	AccorHotels Group
31	Ibis Styles Kuala Lumpur Cheras	3	Selangor	City/Business Hotel	156	AccorHotels Group
32	Ibis Styles Kuala Lumpur Fraser Business Park	3	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	496	AccorHotels Group
33	Ibis Styles Sandakan Waterfront	3	Sabah	Boutique hotel	135	AccorHotels Group
34	Intercontinental Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	473	Intercontinental Hotels Group
35	JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur		Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel		Marriott International
36	Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu	5	Sabah	City/Business Hotel	306	Marriott International
37	Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	420	Marriott International
38	Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	643	Mandarin Oriental
39	Miri Marriott Resort & Spa	5	Sarawak	City/Business Hotel	220	Marriott International
40	Mulu Marriott Resort & Spa	5	Sarawak	City/Business Hotel	46	Marriott International
41	Novotel Kuala Lumpur City Centre	4	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	295	AccorHotels Group
42	Novotel Malacca	others	Melaka	City/Business Hotel	330	AccorHotels Group
43	Pullman Kuala Lumpur Bangsar	others	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	512	AccorHotels Group
44	Pullman Kuala Lumpur City Centre Hotel and Residences	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	600	AccorHotels Group
45	Pullman Kuching	5	Sarawak	City/Business Hotel	389	AccorHotels Group

46	Pullman Putrajaya Lakeside	4	Putrajaya	Lake Resort	281	AccorHotels Group
47	Putrajaya Marriott Hotel		Putrajaya			Marriott International
48	Putrajaya Shangri-La	5	Putrajaya	City/Business Hotel	118	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
49	Ramada Plaza Dua Sentral Kuala Lumpur	4	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	361	Wyndham Worldwide
50	Ramada Plaza Melaka	5	Melaka	City/Business Hotel	294	Wyndham Worldwide
51	Renaissance Johor Bahru Hotel	5	Johor	City/Business Hotel		Marriott International
52	Renaissance Kota Bharu Hotel	5	Kelantan	City/Business Hotel	298	Marriott International
53	Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	910	Marriott International
54	Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	662	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
55	Shangri-La’s Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa	5	Penang	Beach Resort	304	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
56	Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort, Dalit Bay Golf & Country Club	5	Sabah	Beach Resort	420	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
57	Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa	5	Sabah	Beach Resort	492	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts
58	Sheraton Imperial Hotel Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	398	Marriott International
59	The Andaman Datai Bay, Langkawi	5	Kedah	Beach Resort	186	Marriott International
60	The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur		Kuala Lumpur			Marriott International
61	The St. Regis Langkawi	others	Kedah	Island Resort	85	Marriott International
62	The Westin	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	443	Marriott International
63	The Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa	5	Kedah	Beach Resort	222	Marriott International
64	Traders Hotel Kuala Lumpur	5	Kuala Lumpur	City/Business Hotel	571	Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts

Appendix 2: Screenshot of e-mail to CRM and Academic experts

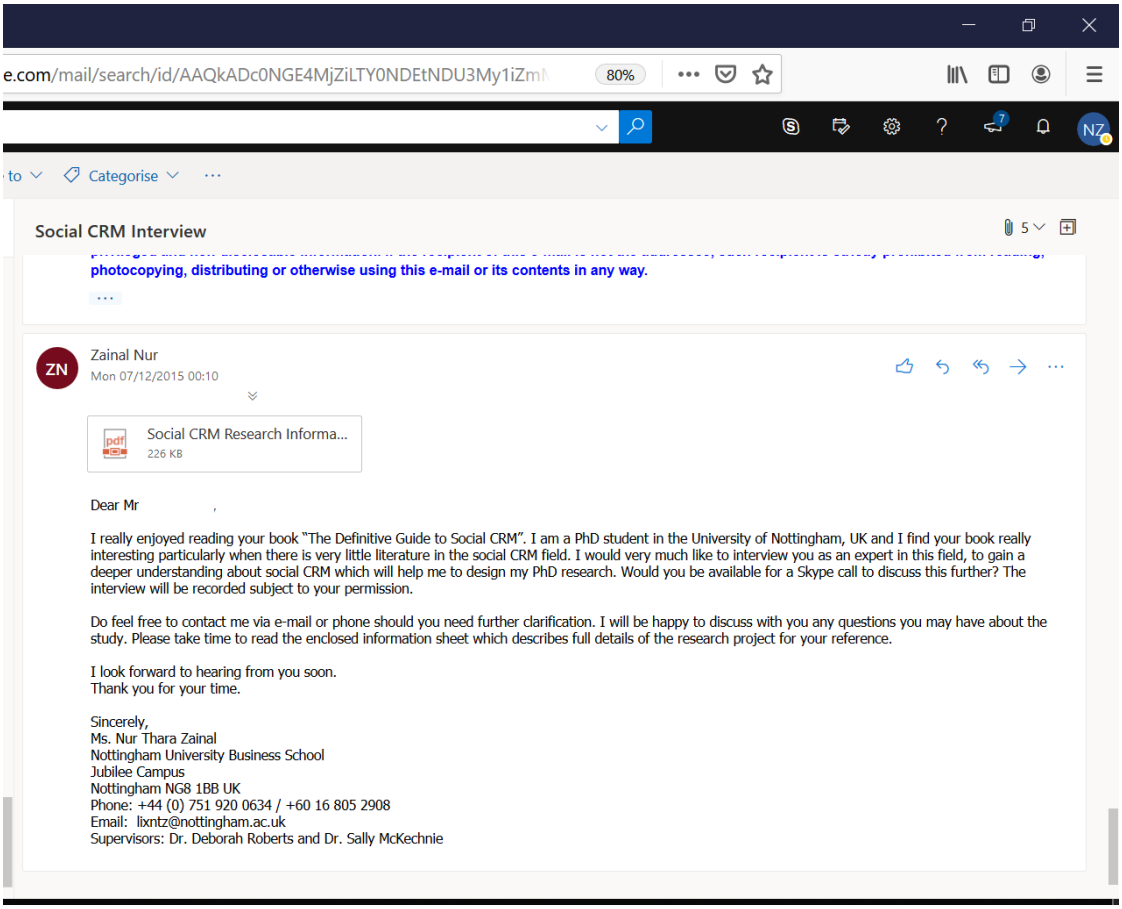


Figure 37 Screenshot of email communication with one of the CRM experts

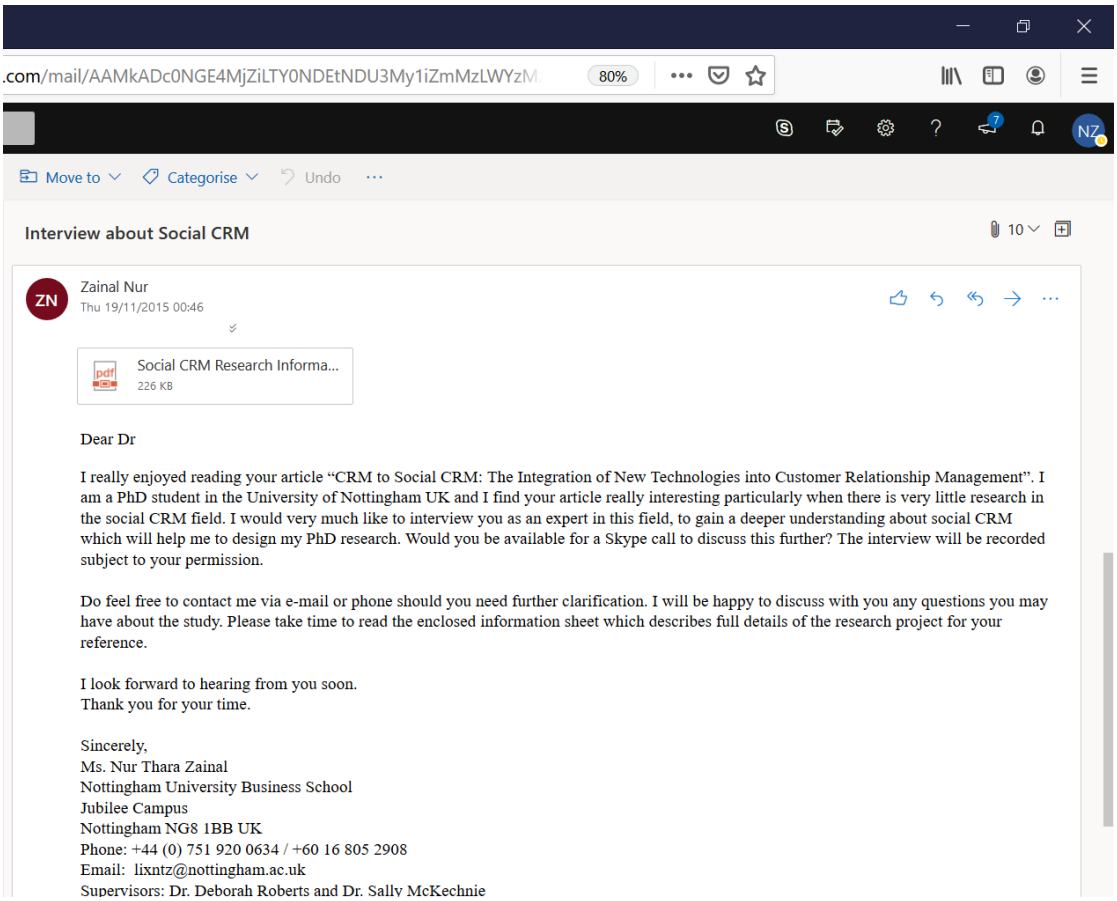


Figure 38 Screenshot of email communication with one of the Academic experts

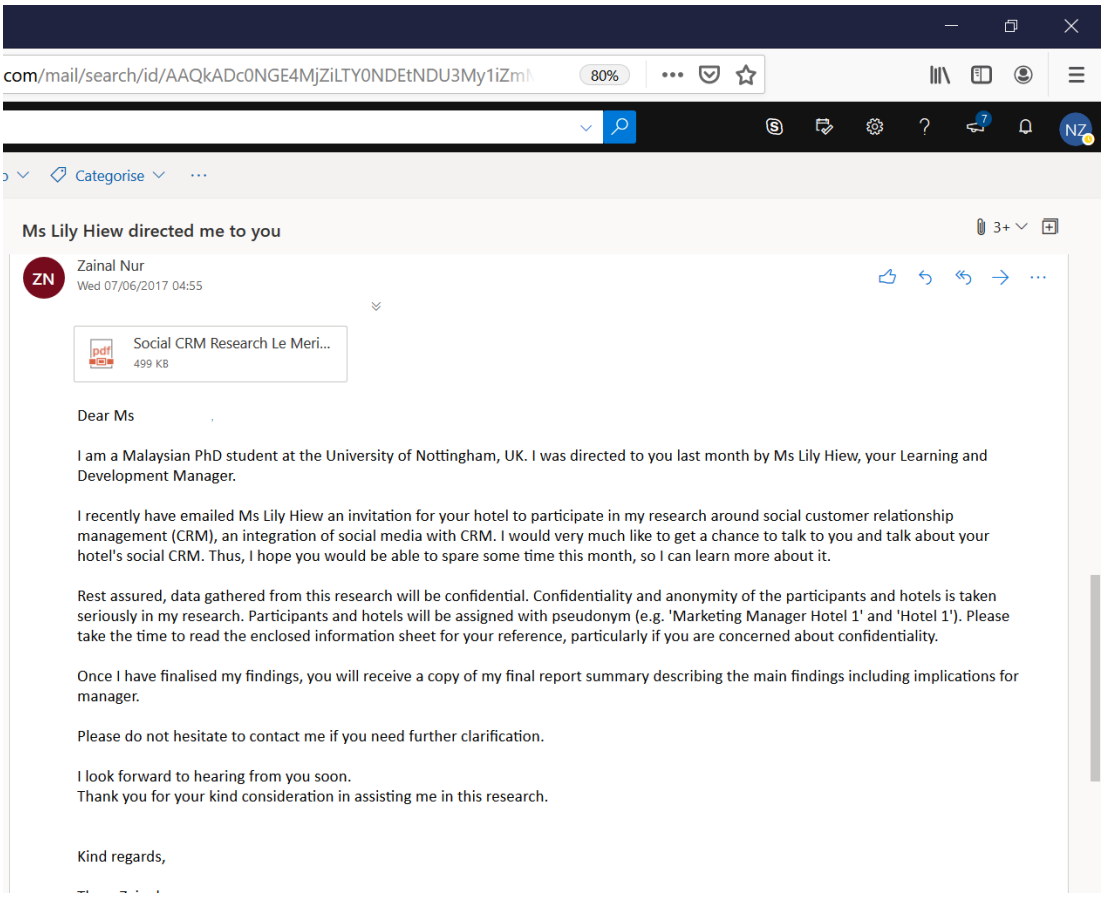


Figure 39 Screenshot of email communication with one of the Director of Communications manager

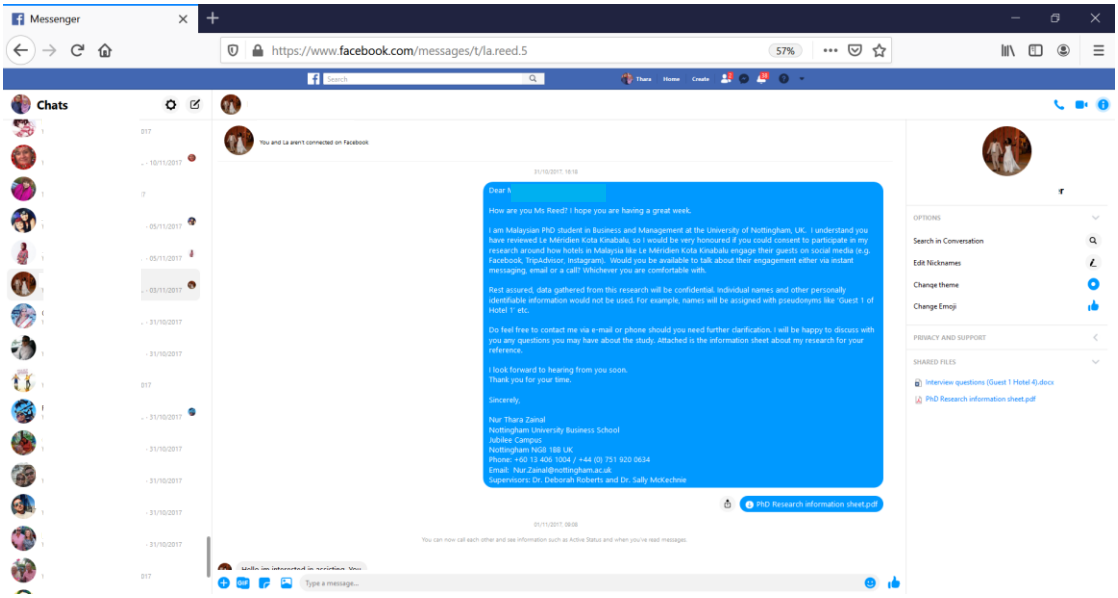


Figure 40 Screenshot of Facebook direct message to one of the hotel customers.

Appendix 3: Information for Research Participants

Nottingham University Business School
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Information for Research Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you may change your mind about being involved in the research at any time, and without giving a reason.

This information sheet is designed to give you full details of the research project, its goals, the research team, the research funder, and what you will be asked to do as part of the research. If you have any questions that are not answered by this information sheet, please ask.

What is the research project called?

The Relationship between Social Customer Relationship Management and Customer Engagement: An Exploratory Study

Who is carrying out the research?

Name : Ms. Nur Thara Atikah Binti Zainal
Qualification : PhD candidate in Business and Management
Project funder: This research is fully funded by the Ministry of Education Malaysia.

What is the research about?

Purpose of research The purpose of my research is to explore social customer relationship management (social CRM). Specifically, I am interested to understand what social CRM is and how organisations in this industry practise their social CRM strategy to engage their current and future customers, hence the term customer engagement. Also, I am interested in the relationship between social CRM and customer engagement. **General idea of social CRM** Social CRM is a new strategy that adds social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor, YouTube, etc.) as an additional channel apart from the traditional channels (i.e. e-mails and phone calls) to establish a company's relationship with its customers. It is a relatively new concept that focuses on engaging current and future customers in a two-way and interactive relationship, hence the term customer engagement. Organisations may well already be using social CRM but they may have a different term for this particular exercise.

What groups of people have been asked to take part, and why?

There are two groups of people:

1) Academic experts and CRM experts
   There are very few research papers and information related to social CRM in helping me to completely understand what the concept is to create a list of research interview questions and write a strong research paper. Hence, I need to gain a richer and in-depth understanding on social CRM by interviewing academic experts and CRM experts. This will later improve in creating credible interview questions before approaching hotels.

2) Hotel personnel
   The tourism industry plays an important role in a country's economic growth. In particular, hotels are one of the main components in the tourism industry. Hence, I find it important to explore the social CRM concept from the perspective of hotels by interviewing senior personnel who are involved in planning or implementing social CRM processes.

What will research participants be asked to do?

Academic experts and CRM experts
Academic experts and CRM experts will be interviewed individually via Skype to gain a better understanding on the concepts of social CRM. Each interview will take up to an hour and will be recorded subject to their permission. Follow-up interviews may be needed for added clarification to ensure clear understanding of the subject matter. Further communication will be done by e-mail/Skype/phone.

Hotels' personnel
After going through a filtering process of identifying suitable hotels who are willing to participate in the study, hotel personnel who are directly involved with social CRM will be interviewed individually. Each interview will take up to an hour and the interview will start with questions about the personnel's position in the hotel, hotel's profile (star ratings, type, and scope/reputation) and then questions about the nature of social CRM processes at their hotel, drivers for and barriers to social CRM implementation and key success factors. The interviews will be recorded subject to their permission. Follow-up interviews may be needed for added clarification to ensure clear understanding of the subject matter. Further communication will be done via email/Skype/phone. Additionally, the hotel personnel will be observed at their workplace and social media activities will be monitored. Non-confidential documents relevant to social CRM will also be required from them.

Benefits of participation
There are no direct benefits for participants who take part in this study, nor will, they be paid for taking part in this study. However the information I get from the study will help in providing a richer understanding of social CRM and customer engagement.

The participants will receive a copy of the final report summary, describing the main findings including implications for managers. This would be indirectly beneficial to the participants as the results may have practical applications. Particularly, the derived theory may help participants to develop or improve their social CRM strategy that enables engaging customers.

What will happen to the information I provide?

Data from the research will help me in understanding the link between social CRM and customer engagement.
The information that participants provide is strictly confidential and data collected will be stored securely. To maintain confidentiality of the participants and organisations, no names and direct identifiable information will be used in any publication or documentation in this research.

For analysis
Each academic expert or consultant will be identified as 'Academic Expert 1', 'Consultant 2' and etc. Hotels that agree to further participate in my research will be referred to as 'Hotel 1', 'Hotel 2' and etc.

However, each of the hotel personnel interviewed will be identified according to their position in the hotel such as 'Director of Sales and Marketing of Hotel 1'. Each of the hotel's profile (star ratings, type, and scope/reputation) and the personnel's position in the hotel are necessary to the analysis.

I cannot guarantee each hotel and its personnel full anonymity however I will guarantee that this research will use partial identification of each hotel and personnel by not revealing directly identifiable information such as hotel's location, number of rooms, and origin of brand and demographic details of the personnel in the analysis.

Storage of data
To minimize the risks of confidentiality, all documents (recordings, transcripts, observation notes and non-confidential documents) will be stored accordingly in the participant's file and no individual names will be used. All digital data will be encrypted and stored in password-locked computers while all physical data will be stored in locked cabinets. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data.

Transcribing
To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and organisations in this research, I will do my own transcribing. The transcribed interviews will remove any individual names. Each transcription will be named according to the participant's position in the field such as 'Academic Expert 1', 'Consultant 2' and 'Director of Sales and Marketing of Hotel 1'. Should the participant name specific person or organisation in the interview, these will be given a pseudonym in the final transcription of the data.

Using direct quotes
The use of direct quotes in this research will remove individual names and other directly identifiable information.

Publication
If or when results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other directly identifiable information of each participants will not be used.

What will be the outputs of the research?

The planned outputs are to use this data as the basis of primary research for my doctoral study, preparation of conference papers and a peer-reviewed journal article.

Contact details

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Complaint procedure

If you wish to complain about the way in which the research is being conducted or have any concerns about the research then in the first instance please contact the supervisors.

Or contact the School's Research Ethics Officer:

Dr. Chris James Carter
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Appendix 4: Interview guide for CRM experts and Academic experts' interviews

Before the interview:

- The interviewer read the interviewee's articles
- Tailor interview questions based on his/her work

During the interview:

- **Introduce myself as the interviewer**
  i) Name
  ii) PhD In Business and Management, University of Nottingham
- **The aim of the research**
  To explore social CRM
- **Purpose of the interview**
  To help me in understanding social CRM better to
  i) Create list of interview questions before interviewing the hotels
  ii) Write strong research paper
- **A statement of confidentiality**
  Please understand that the data from this interview is strictly confidential and will be stored securely.
- **Request for permission to use a tape recorder / record Skype interview**
  Would it be alright with you if I record this interview?
- **General questions about informants' backgrounds, role and experience of interviewee.**
  To start off this interview, could you tell me about yourself, particularly your experiences in the CRM and social CRM field?

After the interview:

- Permission to follow up interviews: If yes, great I will contact you through email to set up a date & time.
  i. Skype
  ii. Email
  iii. Phone
- Thank you so much for your time and cooperation. I truly value that you could spend some time off your hectic schedule for this interview.

CRM

1. How would you describe CRM?
2. Is CRM important to a company… If so how?

Social CRM

3. How would you describe social CRM?
4. Is social CRM important to a company. If so how?
5. In what industries does social CRM has an important role for a company?
6. How is social CRM different to the traditional CRM?
7. How is social CRM different to social media marketing?
8. In your opinion, what are the challenges in implementing social CRM?

Customer engagement

9. In the field (marketing field), there are multiple terms relating to engagement that I have come across. For instance: social media engagement, digital engagement, customer engagement, and social customer engagement. In your own opinion, from a company perspective, what is the suitable term that is related to engagement and social CRM?
10. How would you describe [interviewee's given term of engagement]?
11. Is the "interviewee's term of engagement" is important? If so, how?
12. How does this engagement is related to social CRM?
13. From a company's perspective, at what point you consider a company is "engaged" with a customer via social media?
14. At what point you consider a customer is "engaged" with a company via social media?
15. In your opinion, are there any other factors that may have influence a company's engagement with their customers?
16. How do you measure a company's engagement with a customer?

Appendix 5: Interview guide cover for case studies

Interview Guide

During the interview:

- **Introduce myself as the interviewer**
  iii) Name
  iv) PhD In Business and Management, University of Nottingham

- **The aim of the research**
  To explore how the Malaysian hotel industry, engage their guests particularly on social media

- **Purpose of the interview**
  To help me in understand how the hotels in the industry engage the guests.

- **A statement of confidentiality**
  Please understand that the data from this interview is strictly confidential and will be stored securely.

- **Anonymity of participants**
  Please understand any names in the interview will be assigned with a pseudonym. For example, Manager 1 of Hotel 1

- **Interview in different language**
  Would you prefer the interview to be conducted in English or Bahasa Malaysia?

- **Request for permission to use a tape recorder / record Skype interview**
  Would it be alright with you if I record this interview?

Interview Probes:

Clarify what they said:

- When you say, [phrase], what do you mean by that?

Get more details:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you give me an example?
- How do you do that?
- Why do you say so?
- Would you elaborate on that?

After the interview:

- Before we end this interview, do you have anything to add?
- Permission to follow up interviews:
  iv. Skype
  v. Email
  vi. Phone

Thank you so much for your time and cooperation. I truly value that you could spend some time off your hectic schedule for this interview. Thank you

Appendix 6: Interview guide for Digital Marketing/Communications Manager

Interview Questions

Social Customer Relationship Management

1. What do you understand by the term 'Social Customer Relationship Management' (social CRM)?
2. How important is social CRM?
3. How does it differ from traditional CRM?
4. Describe how social CRM works in your organisation?
    a. Who is involved?
    b. What is your strategy for social CRM?
    c. How long have you been running social CRM?
    d. How does it relate to your CRM strategy?

Social media

1. What do you understand by the term social media?
    a. What do you understand by the term 'private social media'?
    b. What do you understand by the term 'public social media'?
2. What are the important social media channels for your organisation?
    a. Which ones are useful?
    b. Why?
3. How do you use them?
    a. How do you measure their effectiveness?
    b. How do you measure their effectiveness in building relationships with existing customers?
    c. How do you measure their effectiveness in building relationship with potential customers?
4. How important is social media in your social CRM strategy?
    a. Why do you say so?

Engaging your guests

1. What do you understand by the term 'customer engagement'?
2. How do you use social CRM to?
    a. engage potential guests
    b. engage current guests
    c. engage returned guests
3. In your opinion, how do you use social CRM to engage guests who:
    a. Shows positive behaviour on social media (e.g. positive reviews, comments, reactions)
    b. Shows negative behaviour on social media (e.g. negative reviews, comments, reactions)
    c. Who only consume your social media content? (e.g. only view, listen and read your social media posts)
    d. Who are dormant? (e.g. no response to your social media posts)
    e. Who shows signs of detachment with your hotel (e.g. unlike, unfollow, terminate subscription)
4. How do you use social CRM to handle conversations among guests on social media?
5. How do you use social CRM to develop your social media content?

6. How do you use social CRM to personalise your social media posts?
7. Which social media platforms are useful for you to deliver content?
8. When is it appropriate for you to deliver the content?
9. In your opinion, how does engaging your guests allow you to improve your social CRM strategy?

Relational information processes

1. What information do you gather on social media?
2. How do you gather the information?
3. How do you store this information? (e.g. technologies, system)
4. For what purposes do you gather the information?
5. Who uses the information? (e.g. access)
6. How important is information from social media for your social CRM strategy?
7. How does the information about your guests allow you to improve your social CRM strategy?

Appendix 7: Interview guide for frontline hotel employees

General questions about participants and department

To start off this interview,

1. Could you tell me about yourself?
    a. How long have you been working for the hotel?
2. What does your department do?
    a. What is your role in the department?
    b. How do you aim to serve the guests?

Managing relationships with guests (CRM)

3. What do you understand by the term customer relationship management (CRM)?
4. How do you manage the relationships with your guests? (e.g. strategy, communication, technologies)
    a. How do you attract your potential guests?
    b. How do you maintain current guests?
    c. How do you enhance your relationship with your returned guests (returnees)?
5. How important is it to manage relationship with your guests?
6. Do you personalise your service to individual guests? If yes, in what way do you personalised your service to them?
7. How do you measure the effectiveness of your service delivery to your guests? (e.g. feedback online, on social media)

Social media

1. Do you use social media? If yes, what do you understand by the term social media?
    a. What do you understand by the term public social media?
    b. What do you understand by the term private social media?
2. What social media platforms does your hotel mainly use?
    a. Why does your hotel use these particular social media platforms?
    b. How does your hotel use these social media platforms?
3. Does the hotel's social media have any effect on your department? If yes, what effect does it has on your department?
4. How does the social media influence your operations?
5. How important is social media in managing relationships with your guests?
    a. With potential guests
    b. With current guests
    c. With returned guests (returnees)

Customer engagement

8. How do you engage with your guests?
9. In your opinion, how would you describe the way your hotel engages with the guests on social media? (content)
    a. When is it appropriate to engage your guests? (context)

10. In your opinion, how does engaging your guests allow you to improve your service to them? (e.g. understanding from engagement, personalised/customised service)
    a. In your opinion, how does engaging your guests on social media allow you to improve your service to them?

Information

11. Do you gather information about your guests? If yes, what kind of information do you gather? (traditional information)
    a. What information do you gather about your guests from social media? (social information)
12. How do you gather the information?
13. How do you store this information? (e.g. technologies, system)
14. For what purposes do you gather the information?
    a. What kind of analysis have you done with the information?
15. Who uses the information?
    a. How do you collaborate this information with your hotel?
16. How do you respond if a guest uploaded a review about your hotel on social media platforms?
    a. How do you respond if a guest uploads a positive review about your hotel on social media?
    b. How do you respond if a guest uploads a negative review about your hotel on social media?
17. How do you respond if a guest shows a moderately behaviour on your hotel's social media post?
    a. How do you respond if a guest shows a moderately positive behaviour on your hotel's social media post? (e.g. positive comments, likes and shares of your hotel's social media post)
    b. How do you respond if a guest shows a moderately negative behaviour on you hotel's social media post? (e.g. negative comments on your hotel's social media post)
18. How important is the information in managing relationships with your guests?
19. How does the information about your guests allow you to improve your service to them?
    a. How does the information about your guests allow you to engage them better?
    b. How does the information about your guests allow you to personalise service to them?

Appendix 8: Interview guide for customers

About the guests

1. How did you find out about this hotel? (e.g. traditional channels, social media)
    a. What was your purpose of your visit? (e.g. vacation, event, dining)
    b. How many times have you visited the hotel? If you will likely visit the hotel in the future, kindly refer to question number 6.
2. How would you describe your overall experience with the hotel?
    a. How would you describe your good experience with the hotel?
        i. Why do you say that?
        ii. What aspects of the experience are good?
        iii. How does this makes you feel?
        iv. Anything else?
    b. How would you describe your bad experience with the hotel?
        i. Why do you say that?
        ii. What aspects of the experience are bad?
        iii. How does this makes you feel?
        iv. Anything else?
3. What is your opinion of the way the hotel communicates with its guests?
    a. How would you describe the hotel's communications with you?
        i. Why do you say so?
4. Did the hotel personalised their services to you? If yes, in what way they personalised their services to you? If no, how does this make you feel?
    a. Can you describe how the hotel delivers personalised customer service to you?
    b. How does this makes you feel?
5. How likely are you to return to the hotel again?
    a. Why do you say so?

Social media

6. What social media platforms do you mainly (or normally) use?
    a. Any others?
7. Why do you use those social media platforms?
8. When do you normally use these social media platforms?
    a. When did you last use these social media platforms?
9. How do you use these social media platforms?
    a. What kind of activities do you do on these social media platforms?

Guest's engagement with the hotel

10. Do you follow the hotel on social media? If yes, why? If not, why not?
11. How do you engage with the hotel on social media? (E.g. upload reviews and/or comments, likes and shares). If not, kindly refer to the question
    a. On what social media platforms do you do this?
    b. Why do you engage with the hotel on these social media platforms?
        i. Why do you post a review of the hotel on their social media page?
        ii. Why do you comment on their social media posts?

iii. Why do you like (e.g. like, love, haha, wow, sad, angry) their social media posts?

c. How often would you say that you engage with the hotel on social media?
d. How does engaging the hotel on these social media platforms makes you feel?
e. In what other ways are you engaged with the hotel on these social media platforms?

12. How would you describe the way the hotel engages with guests on social media? (e.g. initiate engagement with guests and responds to their guest)

a. How would you describe their social media posts?
    i. The hotel posts different types of content on social media and I would like to know how these different types of posts make you feel? (e.g. liking or comment the posts in a positive or negative way, sharing the posts, or posts a positive or negative post about the hotel)
        - When the hotel puts up an informative post, how does this make you feel?
        - When the hotel puts up a post that encourages you to socialize (e.g. to comment, liking, to participate in a discussion) on the social media platform, how does that make you feel?
        - When the hotel puts up entertainment posts, how does this make you feel?
        - When the hotel puts up a post about offers (loyalty points, discounts etc.) how does that make you feel?
        - How would you describe the way they responded to your engagement? (e.g. reviews, comments, likes, shares)
b. How does the hotel's engagement on social media make you feel?

13. To what extent do you feel that the hotel's social media posts have a personal touch? If it doesn't, how does this make you feel?

a. Could you give examples?

14. When is it appropriate for the hotel to engage you on social media platforms?

a. When you have engaged the hotel (e.g. reviewed, commented, likes, or shares), when do you expect them to engage you back?

15. Do you engage the hotel in other channels aside from social media? If yes, how does the way the hotel engages their guests on social media differ to the way they engage their guests on these channels? (especially for potential guests)

a. How does this make you feel?

16. Does the way the hotel engages with guests on social media differ to the way they engage with guests when they are in the hotel? If yes, could you describe how it differs? If no, how does this make you feel? (for current guests).

a. How does this make you feel?

17. By engaging the hotel on social media does it influence their service delivery to their guests? If yes, how has it affected their service delivery?

18. In your opinion, what motivates the hotel to engage with you on social media platforms?

Information

19. Do you share information about yourself with the hotel? If yes, what kind of information do you share with the hotel? If not, why not?
    a. Do you share this information on social media with the hotel?
20. Do you share information about yourself with the hotel on social media? If yes, what kind of information do you share on social media generally?
    a. Do you share information with the hotel? If yes, what kind of information do you share with the hotel on social media? If not, why not?
21. What are your expectations for sharing the information?
    a. What are your expectations for sharing the information on social media?
    b. How has the hotel responded to any information you share?
    c. How does this make you feel?
22. By sharing information does it affect the way the hotel provides services to their guests? If yes, how so? If not, how does this makes you feel?
    a. How has this affected the way they engage you? (during your stay, dining or event)

Appendix 9: Sample of Stage 2 experts interview transcript

INTERVIEWEE : Academic Expert 1
DATE : 25th November 2015
DURATION **:** 00:31:05

Interviewer : How would you define social CRM in your own words?

Academic Expert 1 : Using social media to engage with…gather information from the customers.

Interviewer : Is social CRM important for an organisation? If so why?

Academic Expert 1 : Well a quote would be that about 15 years ago or 20 years ago, businesses were asked and people at work in businesses were asked to justify the expense of a mobile phone. Today you don't question that, everybody has a mobile. It's clear the value you get from it. This quote from [NAME], a social media expert, he said that social media is a (sin?). So today people keep saying 'oh what is the value', 'why should we be on it?' but in 10, 15 years it opens. I think any business has a marketing orientation is on social media. A business that is not on social media it tells you about their culture and their orientation and because the reason they don't go on is they're scared with what the customers would say or they are scared with the technologies, but if you are have a strong enough market or customer orientation you'll get over the fear of technology.

Interviewer : In what industries that social CRM has an important role for an organisation?

Academic Expert 1 : Service industry are more because they tend to long term relationships, tends to be intangible and so people are searching a lot online. So, I think the service sector but … I spoke to businesses in Mining and Engineering and they always just worry about, you just have to find types of content but (without to?) people. For example if you are in the hotel industry, you have to think about not selling your

hotel but what people are looking for your hotel want to know. If I am looking up for a hotel in Malaysia, I want to know like what to do when I'm there. What itineraries, I want to see short videos, I want to hear from locals. Tell me about that, you don't need tell me about your hotel. If you tell me, if you help me, I'll book your hotel.

Interviewer : So, customers will be researching about the experience that they will gain from that hotel.

Academic Expert 1 : Content marketing is the term or that … and CRM there's two processes, there's CE and then there's the information process. To engage with customers you have to think about the value and that's through value of the content that they will search for, read and share and as they do that you can learn from what works and what doesn't work. Who is sharing the most and that's the most interesting side of it. It's kind of the more you engage, the more you learn, the better engaging that you get.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE : CRM Expert 5

DATE : 26th January 2016

DURATION : 01:09:00

Interviewer : You were mentioning just now that customer wants personalised relationship, how far should a company be 'personalised' in that relationship?

CRM Expert 5 : Well again, it's personalised not personal meaning one-on-one service for every customer is not only ridiculous but even if you wanted to do it, it would be improbably that you have enough people to do it. If you see Citigroup for example, the banking organisation, financial organisation has 300 million customers. One-on-one service would need a lot of people [laughs] getting hired by the company. Personalised is a feel, right. You make the customer feel as if you are a company who cares about them. That's what it is. That's something… a smart company would be devoted to. In fact, I'm working on a new standard. I don't have it done yet. (I got to review it more detail) for… you always had products centric, company centric, then you had… (know) it's better be customer centric, and now I'm working one of that is customer engaged as a standard. It's going to be a new pat… If get my way, it'll be a new paradigm. Well, that if I get my way out. I'm a New Yorker so I'm a "bulldog", but that doesn't mean any listening to me anyway.

Interviewer : In CRM, the relationship between a company and also a customer, so you were saying that it is morphing towards CE, at what point a company is engaged with a customer?

CRM Expert 5 : If the interaction is continuous. When I say continuous, I don't mean like not stop, I mean over time the customer has chosen to continuously to interact with the company. That's when you know the customer engaged. I haven't look at them, but there's some studies that have been done by Gallup. Have you seen those? They're really important to engagement. The Gallup people (had a

DC?). Just look up Gallup. Type in the word G-A-L-L..U-P comma CE, you'll find the study in two minutes. They talk about… there's some benefits of engagement, but they talk about how… they have an idea of what a fully engaged customers is. The fully engaged cust… I'm not… this is their definition, this is their concept. A fully engaged customer will be someone very close to an advocate, right? It's not only someone who continues to interact with you when it actually propagates for you as a customer, saying they become an extension of you… that's an advocate, really. But a fully engaged customer also provides a huge amount of additional value to a company and most places including… interactional value. Look at the study, its worth for you looking. You'll see what it means to a company when a customer is engaged and when a company can say 'that customer is engaged with us'.

Appendix 10: Sample of preliminary interview with a manager from Hyatt Hotels & Resorts (Excerpts)

INTERVIEWEE : Assistant of Public Relations Officer of Hyatt Hotels & Resorts (PR)

DATE : 8th August 2015

DURATION : 0:45:00

Interviewer : The next one is I want to know about engaging customers plus social media users. The first question is what do you understand by the term CE?

PR : CE is to build…not to say rapport...relationship with the guest via social media and to do that you have to always create interesting content through social media. You always want to intrigue their mind or say something like the something you ask a question…like you post something with a question, so you can always build engagement with the users. Yeah. In the social media.

Interviewer : What is the importance of engaging your customers who are social media users?

PR : What is the important?

Interviewer : Yeah, what is the importance.

PR : What is the importance of you engaging customers who are social media users

Interviewer : How do I say this…the importance like do you see the imp…

PR : (laughs)

Interviewer : Because it's a really open-ended question so I want to know what do you…

PR : Because the world is changing right now. Everybody is moving forward to social media, in fact our company is taking this very seriously. In May this year, we were called for a training. So, all they ask back Asia Pacific hotels. Hyatt hotels in Asia Pacific actually flew down to Singapore to attend this training. It's called "Social is

a Behaviour". So "Social is a Behaviour" is a training that focuses on social media, like why social media is very important. Why we are moving forward to social media, because the world is changing. Everybody is like always has phones in their hand and the moment they wake up they always check the phone and that's is why we all are moving forward social media instead of the traditional media like the print ads, billboards and all or whatsoever. With social media not only effective it's also free! Where else the traditional one is very expensive in newspaper it cost you RM2,000 for one day. For one day advertisement. As in social media is always there and people can refer back or as in Twitter they can always tweet. It is advisable to tweet. You can tweet the same content in every hour or every two hours just to remind your followers the fans whatever that you're tweeting as for example promotions. It actually works and with social media for example Facebook, like have you heard about Facebook boosting? Boosting post which you pay certain amount and you can reach certain amount of customer. It really works. Like for us, like I did this experiment for buka puasa (break the fast). This year, I convinced the management because this is a new thing. Everybody is quite new with social media and most of our team are quite not as the generation Y as we are so it's very hard to convince them. I said let's try and see how it goes. We did Facebook boosting for only one time and we paid RM220 and to a certain amount of target I think it's about 20 to 50,000 reach. With this Facebook boosting you can actually target who do you want to target. As for example, from what age to what age, female and male, and which states, which location, and then the interest. You can…For example for *buka puasa* (break the fast) I select Malay dishes that are local treats or whatsoever with this experiment, I target for 7 days and the feedback was overwhelming. We got few thousands of likes and shares and with that amount of spend we actually get the ROI (return of investment) like 120% in return. So that is why I think social CRM is very important in this stage right now.

Appendix 11: Sample of Stage 4 Digital Marketing/Communications Manager interview transcript (excerpts)

INTERVIEWEE : Digital Marketing Manager (DMM) Hotel 4
DATE : 9th June 2017
DURATION : 0:45:15

Interviewer : What do you understand by the term social CRM?

DMM : CRM in different industries mean different things, or defined differently for example, my first job where I was Social Media Advertising Corporations that really means reaching out to reaching out to people who opt for that information on social media. In that sense for advertising, if they want, if they are sign up with the certain websites, or they are signing up with the certain platform, we will use that platform to engage with these people. Social, using that platform to engage with them. Engage means any sense information, interaction, if we want some interaction, we want some feedback, we will use that is CRM in that sense.

Interviewer : You have been using a lot the word interaction. It's kind of important the word interaction. Could you explain why do you say interaction?

DMM : In any online communication, the value is interaction. If you do anything online, and there is no interaction, good or bad, there is almost no value. If you put something online in simple English, and people starts like it, commenting, sharing, or talking about it- that is basic interaction, and that is the value in CRM. If no one does anything, especially when they have seen it, there is no value. So, interaction is very important.

Interviewer : How important is social CRM generally?

DMM : generally. Today it is extremely important.

Interviewer : Why do you say so?

DMM : because... the basic one is the emerge of smartphone. Because of smartphones everyone has their own application. Because of that everyone has their own application yes. The accessibility to social platforms is- trifold every night. So that is the fastest way to reach for information.

Interviewer : So information then? And how actually this differ, this social CRM differ to your traditional CRM?

DMM : faster. Cost effective, and actually there are two ways. You can, in some ways, it's easier to control. Because if something is not right or whatsoever, you can just hide it. Even of those some who might has screenshot it or whatsoever you can just take it away from your own platform, as opposed to traditional. There's a lot of hands on and practicality that you have to do like you have to actually go to come to go to shop physically to remove the newspapers or whatsoever.

Appendix 12: Sample of Stage 4 Frontline hotel employees interview transcript (excerpts)

FILENAME **:** transcript - H1-GCS-RM H1-INTERVIEW (English version)
INTERVIEWEE : Recreation Manager Hotel 1 (RM H1)
DATE : 14th November 2017
DURATION : 00:34:00

Interviewer: It's interesting when you say, you attend to the guest, talk to them to know more about their whole experience. Why do you need to talk to the guest?

FNBSM H1: It's important to talk to the guest because sometimes if we did not do something to the guests like treating them like at the normal eateries, we serve the food and beverage without saying something like "please enjoy your food. Enjoy your drinks". If we let the guest be, have not interaction with the guests, guests will feel awkward, "eh, why they don't provide a 5-star service". The guests will voice it out. Once they leave the hotel they will give a lot of comments and a lot of channels to comment about it. For example, on TripAdvisor, I mean the whole world could see their comments. If a bad comment, "at [HOTEL 1] I dined at the restaurant, but their service is bad because their staff didn't engage with the guests." The importance of talking with the guest is to know about them. Whether they have received their food, there's a lot of importance there, we want to…whether their food is ok. So that is one of the reasons why we have to engage the guests and to…whether the guest feel the service is good, maybe they will return to us.

Interviewer: That is one of your strategy, to keep on engaging them so there's no problem so they can return back to the hotel.

FNBSM H1: Yes

Interviewer: Do you customize your service to the guests? If yes, how do you customize your service to them?

FNBSM H1: Do you mean personalise?

Interviewer: Yes

FNBSM H1: We have F&B outlets ambassador. These are the staff that focus on interaction with the guests. In terms of personalised, where you are the only guest and the ambassador will be the only one there, we don't do that. We will look into the whole thing, but if there is, for example, VVIP guest, we will assign a staff like a butler. I will assign my ambassador to be like the butler for the whole night if there's a dinner. "you have to focus with our VVIP guest." The butler will be the only one who takes care of anything that the VVIP asks, request, and order. We call them, ambassador. Dinner ambassador, breakfast ambassador, but normally personalisation we provide it to the VVIP guest. Normally the ambassador will meet all guests. Go to each table and ask them "how are you. How's the food" to all of the guests.

Interviewer: More attention to them. Interesting when you say about TripAdvisor. They will comment on TripAdvisor and other, social media. How does social media affect your department?

FNBSM H1: The effect is big because the whole world can see it, right? And any social media, will see it. There's a lot of effect, but if the effect is good, the guest will read it and others will read…they will come to [HOTEL 1], but if the comment is negative maybe others will see this hotel like, initially they want to come here but they change their decision. That is the biggest impact. Normally wen we will get comment, feedback from the guest that is less likely good or good, all of us will reply it. There is a specific person who will reply to their comments.

Appendix 13: Sample of pilot interview with customers in Stage 4

(transcript excerpts)

INTERVIEWEE : Pilot Participant 2 (PP2)

DATE : 24th October 2017

VIA : Facebook Messenger

Interviewer: Since you don't follow the hotel on social media, I understand you have posted a review on their social media platforms. What makes you do that?

PP2: Well as a review for future customer.

Interviewer: How does posting a review about the hotel on the platforms makes you feel?

PP2: it makes me feel good. Actually, more like I felt I might had helped or guide somebody.

Interviewer: how interesting, and how did the hotel respond to your review on the social media platforms?

PP2: they sent me a thank you email.

Interviewer: oh, they did not respond to you on that specific platform then. How would you describe their engagement to you?

PP2: formal and nice. It's more like an automatic reply machine who sent me the email

Interviewer: it sounds automatic like a common reply then am I correct? If so, how does that makes you feel?

PP2: Well for me it's fine. Because my goal is to spread the words to future customer. As long as they did not delete my comment or review its fine for me.

Interviewer: interesting when you say, "as long they did not delete my comment or review, its fine for me", why do you say so?

PP2: well I just want my words to be conveyed to future customers. People like me especially

Interviewer: And how does the way the hotel engages you on this platform differ to the way they engage with you when you were at the hotel?

PP2: well no difference. I feel good. They provide me with all information that I requested.

Interviewer: Alright, from your review about the hotel... how has engaging the hotel on this platform affected the hotel's services?

PP2: err I don’t quite understand your question.

Interviewer: Let me rephrase the question. By posting a review about the hotel on the social media platforms, how has this affect the hotel's services to their guests?

PP2: well I believe it should upgrade their services if there are any customer’s complaint. But is it like that in real, I am not sure.

Appendix 14: Sample of Stage 4 customer interview transcript (Excerpts)

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

FILE NAME : transcript – H1-GUEST-1-INTERVIEW
INTERVIEWEE : Guest 1 H1 (Guest 1 H1)
DATE : 26th October 2017 – 1st November 2017
VIA : Facebook Messenger

Interviewer : If I understand this, you're more active on Facebook then. Only use TripAdvisor when planning a trip. When did you last use these social media platforms?

Guest 1 H1 : Facebook almost every time unless I am working. Google every day. TripAdvisor maybe 2 weeks ago because I am traveling to Bangkok next month.

Interviewer : Oh wow, Bangkok should be fun! I hope you'll have a wonderful time in Bangkok [GUEST 1 HOTEL 1]. Moving into the engagement with the hotel. Do you follow [HOTEL 1] on social media? If yes, how do you engage with the hotel on social media? If not, why not?

Guest 1 H1 : Usually I will leave a feedback or a review on TripAdvisor or their Facebook after staying there. It is a way to let them know how they fare and how they can improve further. I don't really follow any hotels on social media. I will like their posts if I see it, but I won't purposely share their content unless they are having a promotion that is worth sharing.

Interviewer : What kind of their posts you'll 'like'?

Guest 1 H1 : If the posts are about a 50% discount or buy 2 free 1 buffet or stay 2 nights and free 1 night.

Interviewer : So normally you'll prefer to like or share hotel's posts about offers, and rewards. What about other posts like posts that is informative how does that make you feel?

Guest 1 H1 : I don't usually share unless it is worth sharing

Interviewer : What about other posts like posts that is entertaining, how does that make you feel?

Guest 1 H1 : Sometimes if I do come across or glimpse through an ad I might like it, but rarely will I comment on it unless I have been through the experience myself

Interviewer : When is it appropriate for the hotel to engage you on these social media platforms?

Guest 1 H1 : I guess if we are looking for something specific on Google the internet will recognise what we are looking for and link it with the other social apps. When we are using the other apps, similar ads will pop up. It is quite amazing how their engine works. They will narrow down your interest and focus it.

Appendix 15: Screenshots of each case's Facebook page

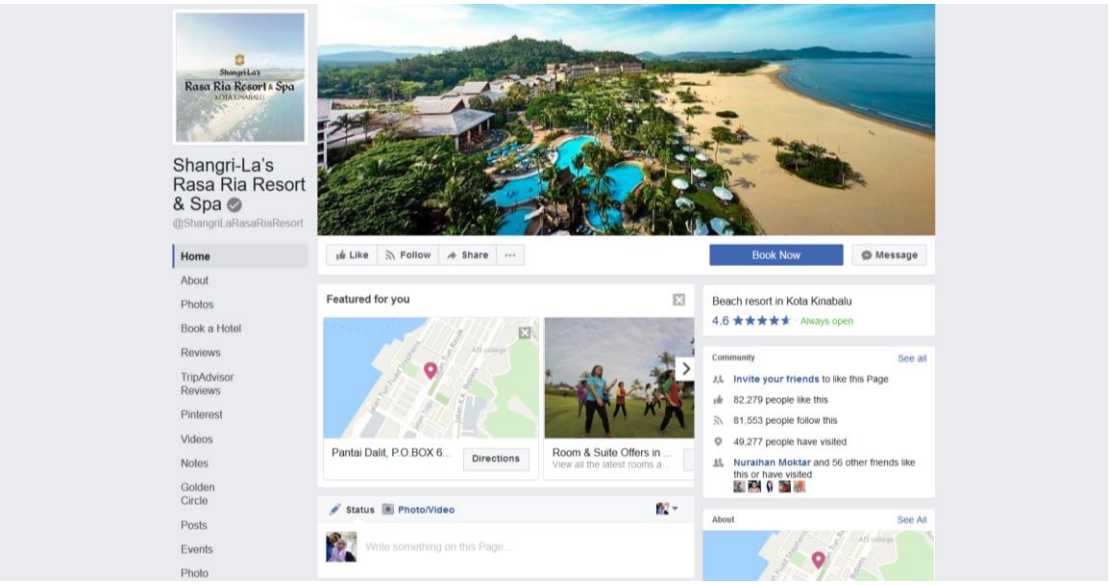


Figure 41. Hotel 1 of Case Study A Facebook page



Figure 42 Hotel 2 of Case Study A Facebook page

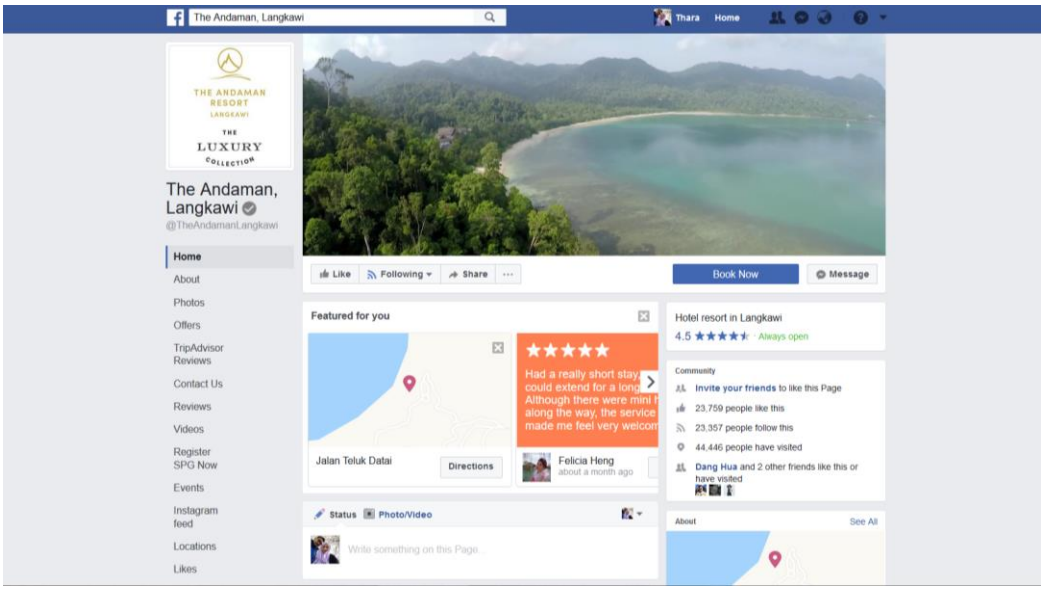


Figure 43 Hotel 3 of Case Study B Facebook page

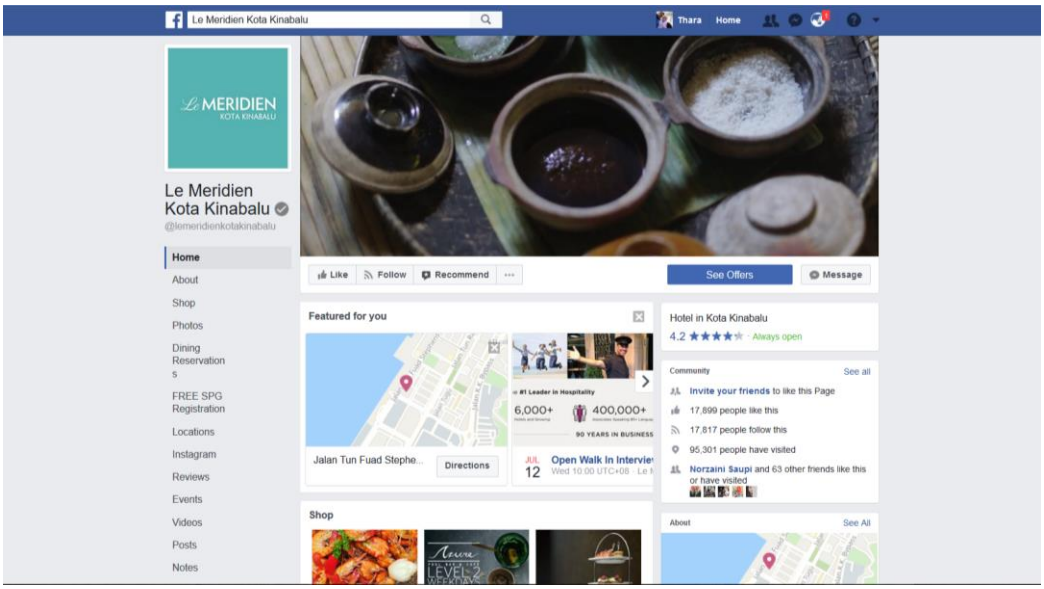


Figure 44 Hotel 4 of Case Study B Facebook page

Appendix 16: Sample of field notes

Filename : field notes – H1-OBS-FO
Title : Observing the Front Office Department Hotel 1
Date : 20th December 2017

[DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY]

The HR staff escorted me to the Ocean Wing Front Office Department and introduced me to the Service Manager at the front desk. The service manager announced to her staff about my presence. This may affect my observation as they are aware of me and may control what they do.

PROCESS

Check – in

From my observation, the check-in process is repetitive, the only difference are the guests, and the interactions.

When the guest arrives in a car, the staff will open the car door and welcome the guest at the entrance. Particularly when the staff has the attention of the guest, they hit the 'gong', a traditional instrument as a sign of 'welcome'. A video of the staff hitting the instrument was recorded. The staff will then take them to the lounge so they can relax while the staff process the check-in. While the guest relax, another staff will serve the guest with a refreshment drink and a cold towel.

The staff will ask for the guest's passport for the check-in process. The staff then will provide brochures and explain information to the guest, after processing their details. Information about the room and complimentary bath, restaurant, breakfast, leisure activities, hotel facilities (swimming pool), and transportation (shuttle bus). The staff will also provide a QR code for "your Voice", a medium where the guests could channel their feedback during their stay. Furthermore, the staff will provide brochures the guest's spoken language. For example, brochures in Chinese for a Chinese family's Afterwards, the staff take the guest to their room.

Check-out

The guest must notify the staff about their check-out intention. The check-out process is also repetitive as I could observe the guest is asked to sit at the front desk to make payment for their hotel bills.

I observed the staff sang to two families: a Japanese family and an American family upon them leaving the hotel. The reaction differs for both families. The Japanese family seemed happy when they heard the song. As for the American family, they cried while listening to the song. I think this is where language plays a role. I think the Japanese could not fully understand the meaning of the song, while the American family could. Thus, the different reactions. Furthermore, from observing Hotel 2 and Hotel 1 singing the "hurry, Hurry home" song, it leaves a last impression on the guest before leaving the hotel. I think this gives guest good memories. I asked one of the Front Office staff, why they sing "hurry, hurry home". He said the song was for the guests who are leaving the hotel, and make them remember the hotel. They don't choose which guest they're going to sing to. If there is an opportunity, they will sing it to each guest.

Once the staff have sung the "hurry, hurry home" song, the staff will take a picture with the guest in front of the 'gong'. This photo will be forwarded to the guest via email as a token from the hotel.

[PICTURES]



Figure 45. The Front Office processing a guest's room check-in, while another staff waits to serve refreshment drinks and cold towels.



Figure 46. A sample of small paper given to the guests upon check-in.



Figure 47. The Front Office staff bid farewell to the American family.



Figure 48 The Front Office staff bid farewell to the Japanese family.



Figure 49. A Front Office employee takes a picture of a Japanese family.

Appendix 17: Case Study A Organizational structure

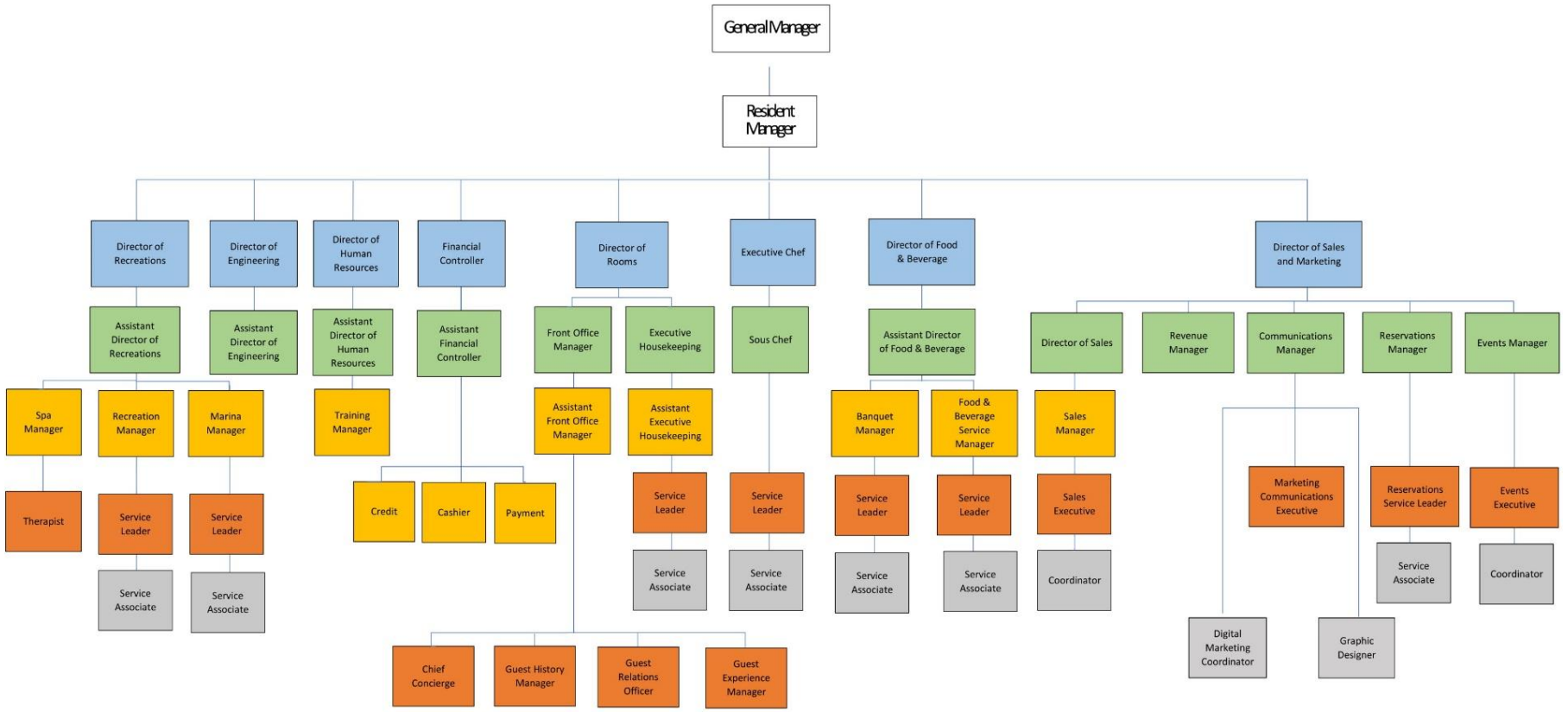


Figure 50 An organizational chart for Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts

Appendix 18: Timeline of Hotel 1's Facebook posts



Figure 51. Timeline of the Hotel 1's Facebook posts in 2016. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

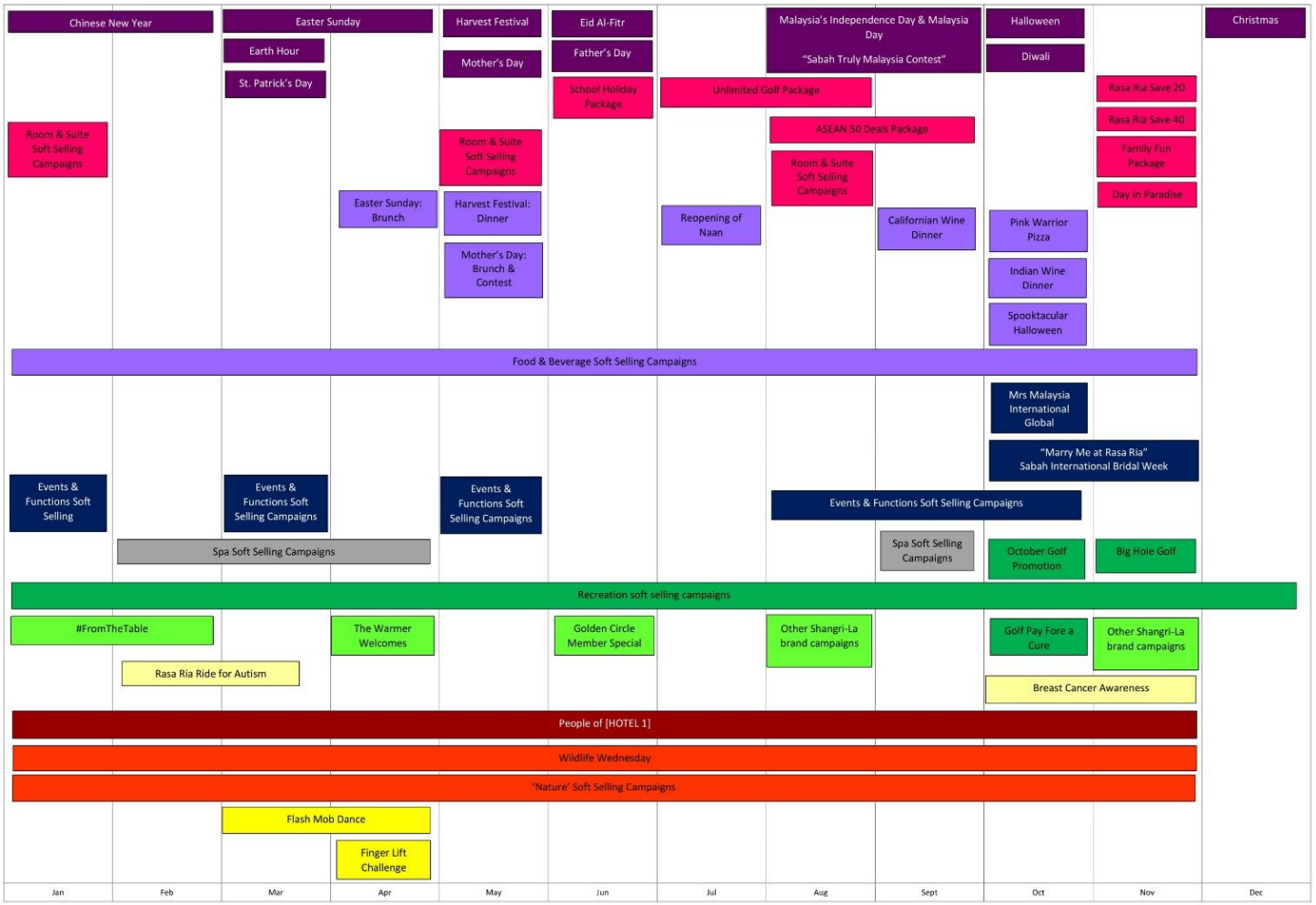


Figure 52. Timeline of the Hotel 1's Facebook posts in 2017. From Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/ShangriLaRasaRiaResort/

Appendix 19: Timeline of Hotel 2's Facebook posts

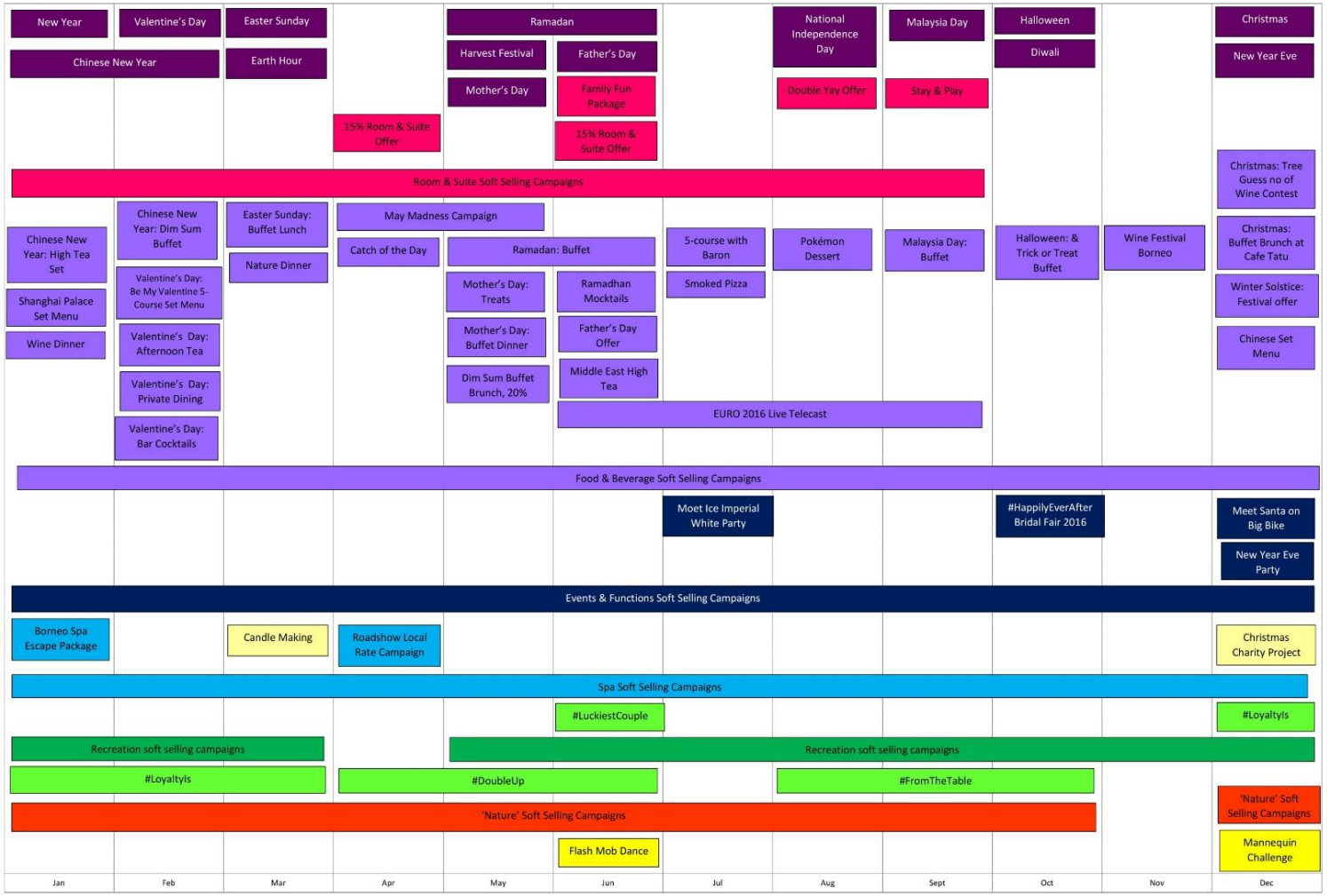


Figure 53. Timeline of the Hotel 2's Facebook posts in 2016. From Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/



Figure 54. Timeline of the Hotel 2's Facebook posts in 2017. From Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/ShangrilaTAH/

Appendix 20: Sample of non-confidential documents

i) Retrieved from Hotel 1

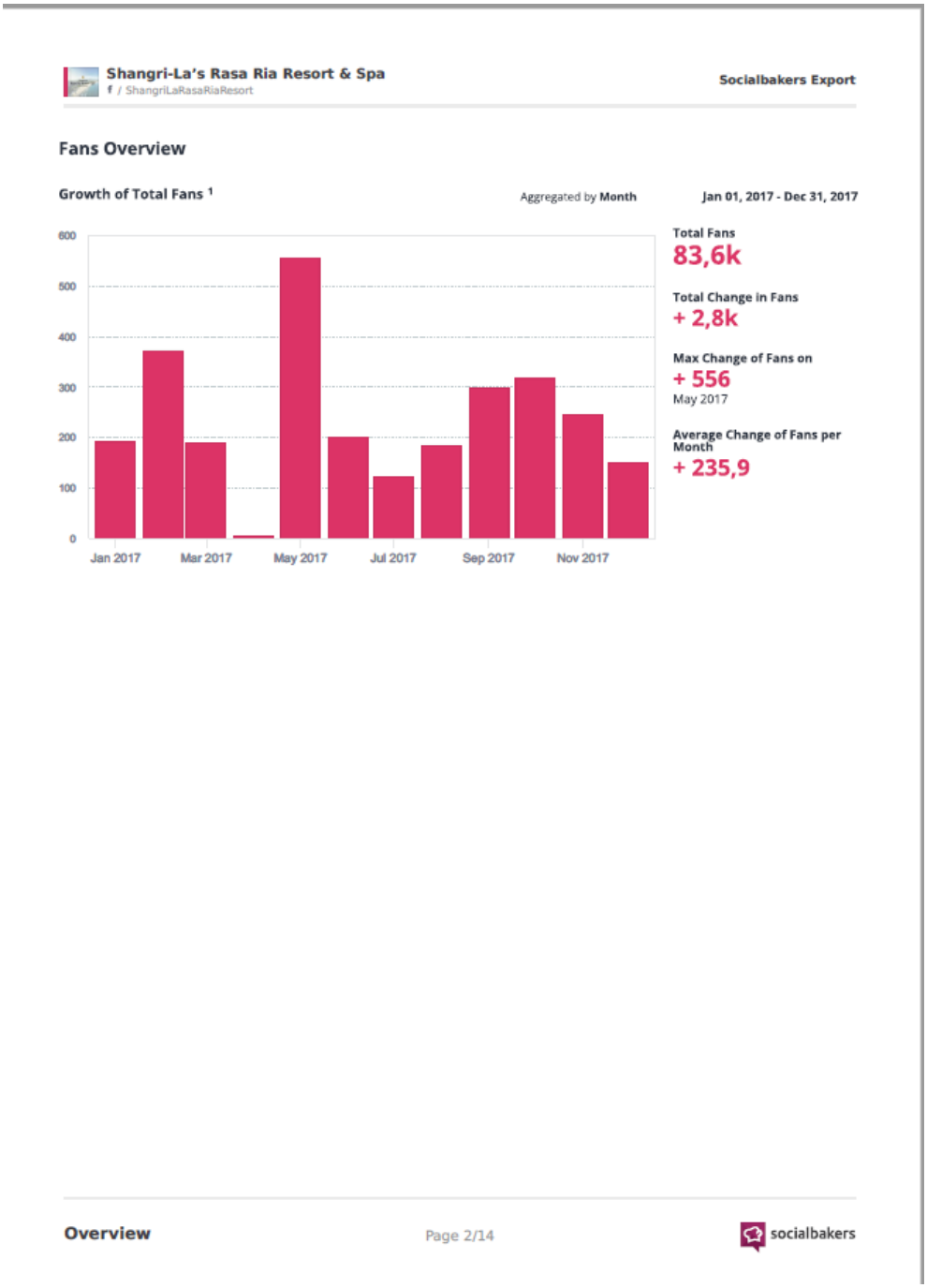
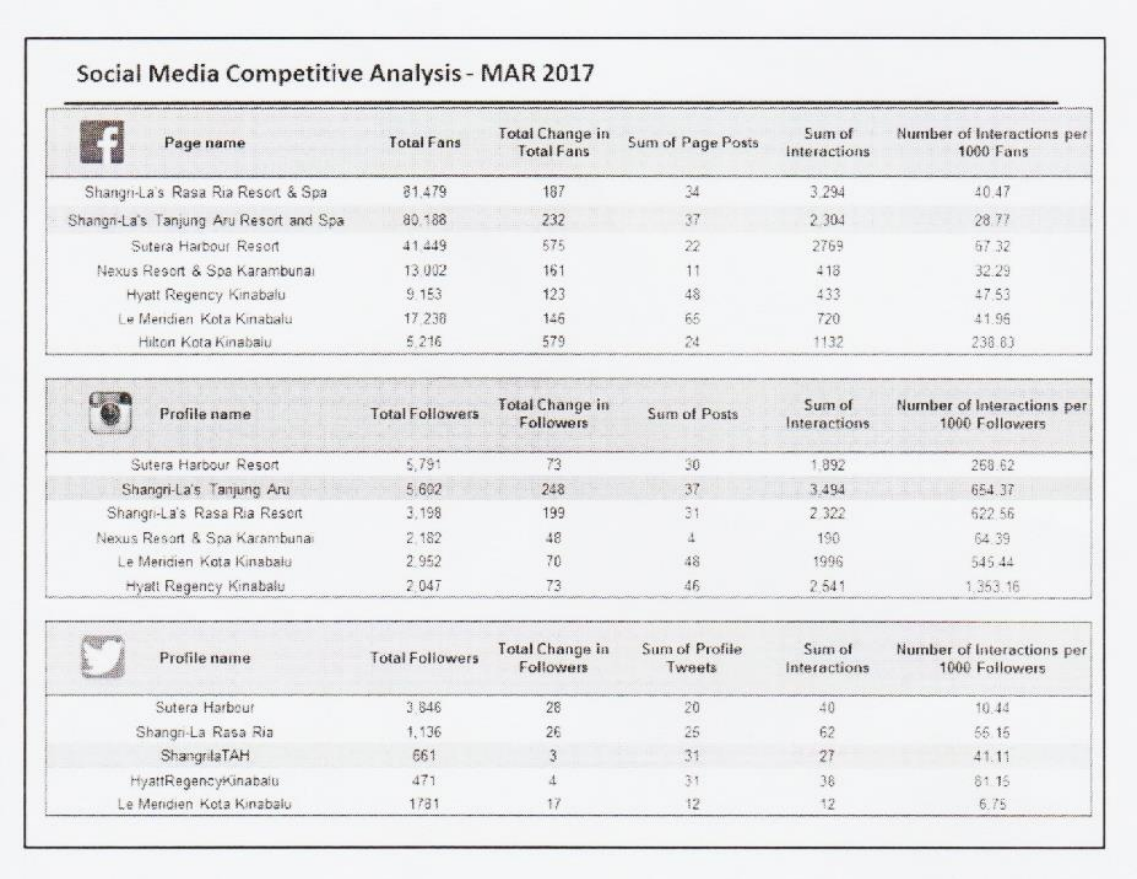


Figure 55. Growth of Total Fans document produced by Socialbakers

ii) Retrieved from Hotel 2



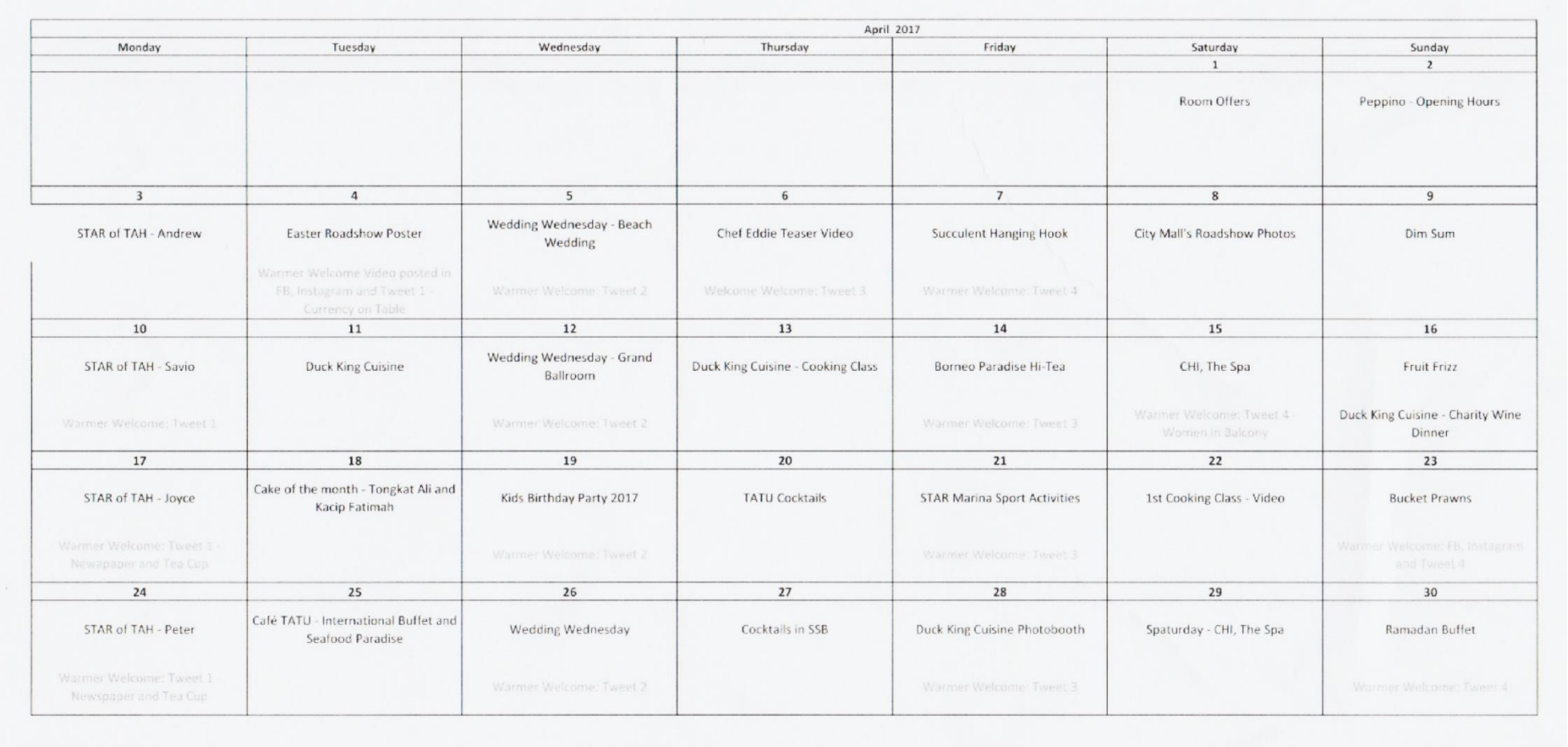
Social Media Competitive Analysis - MAR 2017

Page name	Total Fans	Total Change in Total Fans	Sum of Page Posts	Sum of Interactions	Number of Interactions per 1000 Fans
Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort & Spa	81,479	187	34	3,294	40.47
Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort and Spa	80,188	232	37	2,304	28.77
Sutera Harbour Resort	41,449	575	22	2769	67.32
Nexus Resort & Spa Karambunai	13,002	161	11	418	32.29
Hyatt Regency Kinabalu	9,153	123	48	433	47.53
Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu	17,238	146	66	720	41.96
Hilton Kota Kinabalu	5,216	579	24	1132	238.83

Profile name	Total Followers	Total Change in Followers	Sum of Posts	Sum of Interactions	Number of Interactions per 1000 Followers
Sutera Harbour Resort	5,791	73	30	1,892	268.62
Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru	5,602	248	37	3,494	654.37
Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort	3,198	199	31	2,322	622.56
Nexus Resort & Spa Karambunai	2,182	48	4	190	64.39
Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu	2,952	70	48	1996	545.44
Hyatt Regency Kinabalu	2,047	73	46	2,541	1,353.16

Profile name	Total Followers	Total Change in Followers	Sum of Profile Tweets	Sum of Interactions	Number of Interactions per 1000 Followers
Sutera Harbour	3,846	28	20	40	10.44
Shangri-La Rasa Ria	1,136	26	25	62	55.16
ShangriLaTAH	661	3	31	27	41.11
HyattRegencyKinabalu	471	4	31	38	81.16
Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu	1781	17	12	12	6.75

Figure 56. Social Media Competitive Analysis produced by Socialbakers.



April 2017						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2
					Room Offers	Peppino - Opening Hours
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
STAR of TAH - Andrew	Easter Roadshow Poster Warmer Welcome Video posted in FB, Instagram and Tweet 1 - Currency on Table	Wedding Wednesday - Beach Wedding Warmer Welcome: Tweet 2	Chef Eddie Teaser Video Welcome Welcome: Tweet 3	Succulent Hanging Hook Warmer Welcome: Tweet 4	City Mall's Roadshow Photos	Dim Sum
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
STAR of TAH - Savio Warmer Welcome: Tweet 1	Duck King Cuisine	Wedding Wednesday - Grand Ballroom Warmer Welcome: Tweet 2	Duck King Cuisine - Cooking Class	Borneo Paradise Hi-Tea Warmer Welcome: Tweet 3	CHI, The Spa Warmer Welcome: Tweet 4 - Women in Balcony	Fruit Frizz Duck King Cuisine - Charity Wine Dinner
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
STAR of TAH - Joyce Warmer Welcome: Tweet 1 - Newspaper and Tea Cup	Cake of the month - Tongkat Ali and Kacip Fatimah	Kids Birthday Party 2017 Warmer Welcome: Tweet 2	TATU Cocktails	STAR Marina Sport Activities Warmer Welcome: Tweet 3	1st Cooking Class - Video	Bucket Prawns Warmer Welcome: FB, Instagram and Tweet 4
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
STAR of TAH - Peter Warmer Welcome: Tweet 1 - Newspaper and Tea Cup	Café TATU - International Buffet and Seafood Paradise	Wedding Wednesday Warmer Welcome: Tweet 2	Cocktails in SSB	Duck King Cuisine Photobooth Warmer Welcome: Tweet 3	Spaturday - CHI, The Spa	Ramadan Buffet Warmer Welcome: Tweet 4

Figure 57. SM calendar of Hotel 2

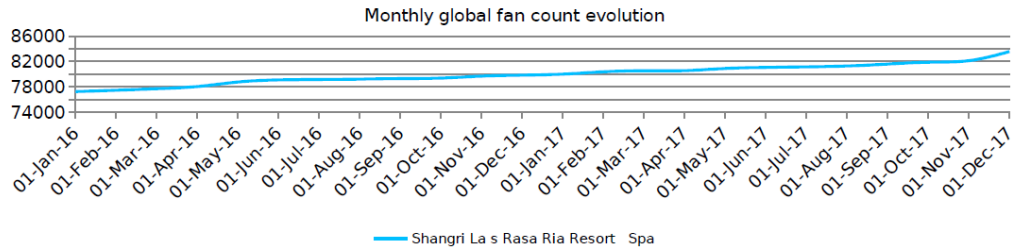
iii) Document retrieved from Socialinsider



Best posts

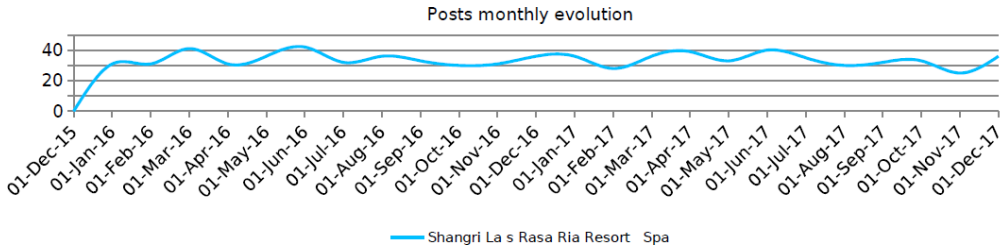
	Published	Post	Type	Engagement	Reactions	Comments	Shares
★	Mar 18 '16	Stay at Shangri-La's Rasa Ria Resort & Spa an award-winning 5-star resort where the jungle meets the sea. BOOK NOW! http://bit.ly/BorneoNature	photo	**2763**	**2,608**	**31**	**124**
	Jun 20 '16	No description available	photo	**1961**	**1,828**	**39**	**94**
	Mar 30 '16	Vows of Nature - Find the best wedding venues in South East Asia at weddings.shangri-la.com	photo	**1897**	**1,849**	**10**	**38**
	May 23 '17	#TeamRasaRia goes above and beyond when it comes to providing the Rasa Ria Experience to our guests. Back in April we surprised our guests with a flas...	video	**1758**	**989**	**95**	**674**
	Jun 16 '16	Celebrate with us to enjoy a 20% discount on nearly everything Rasa Ria has to offer, and commemorate our 2 decades of award-winning services! BOOK NO...	photo	**1286**	**1,250**	**6**	**30**

Fans evolution

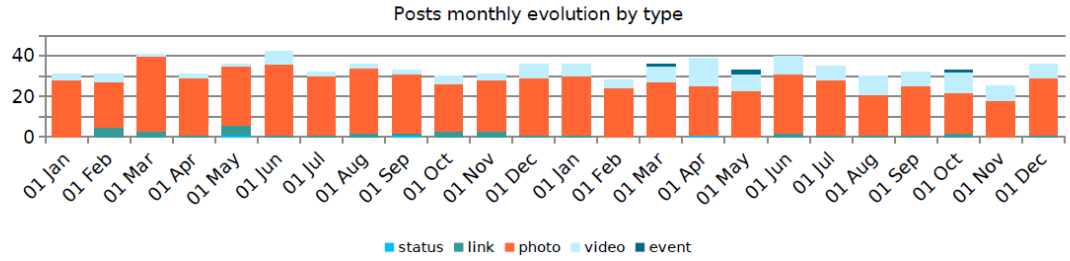


Monthly posts evolution

Variation of the number of posts per month from the selected time range

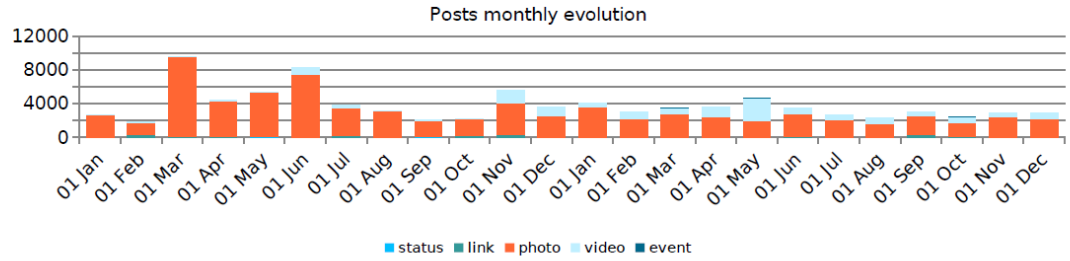


Monthly post evolution by type

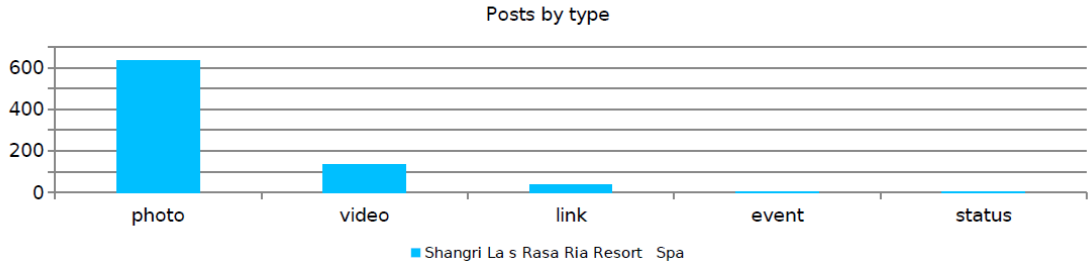


Monthly post engagement by type

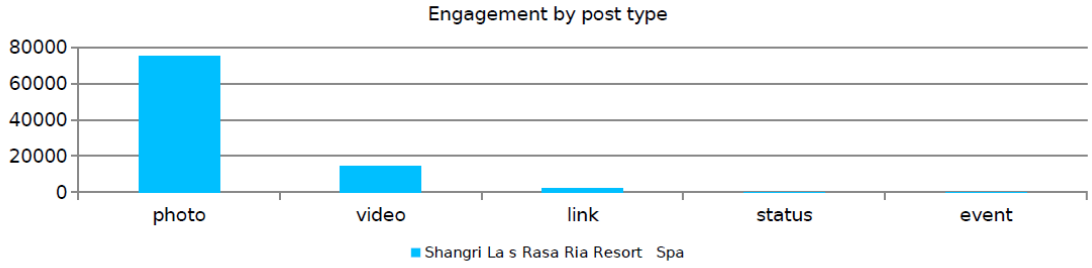
Indicates the evolution of engagement by type per month during the selected period



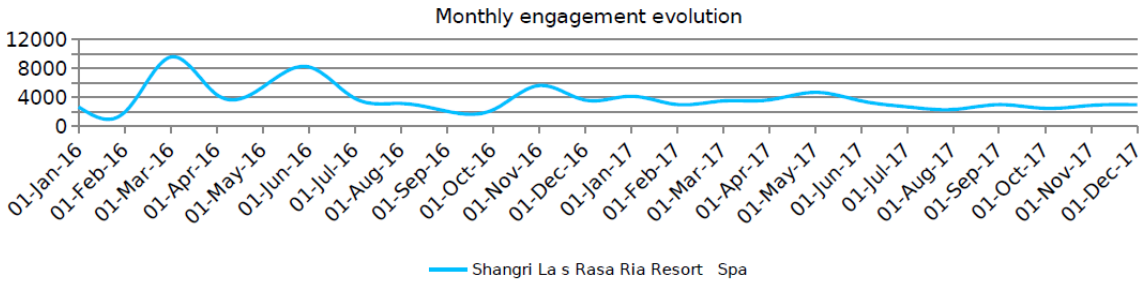
Total posts by type
Breakdown of posts by type



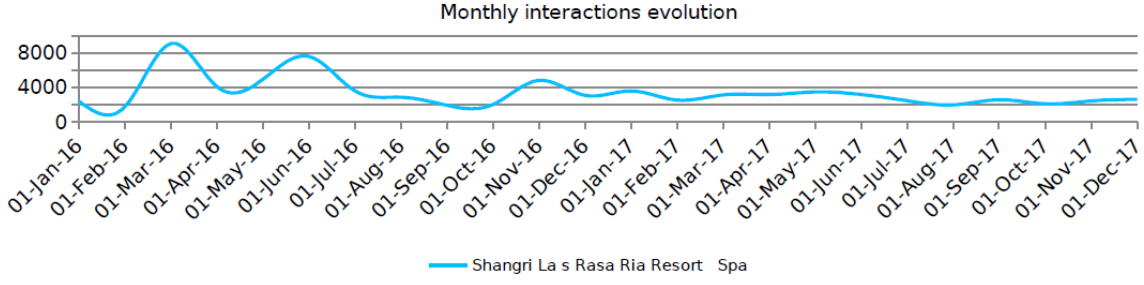
Total engagement by post type
Breakdown of engagement by post type



Monthly engagement evolution
Sum of likes, reactions, shares and comments for each month in the selected period

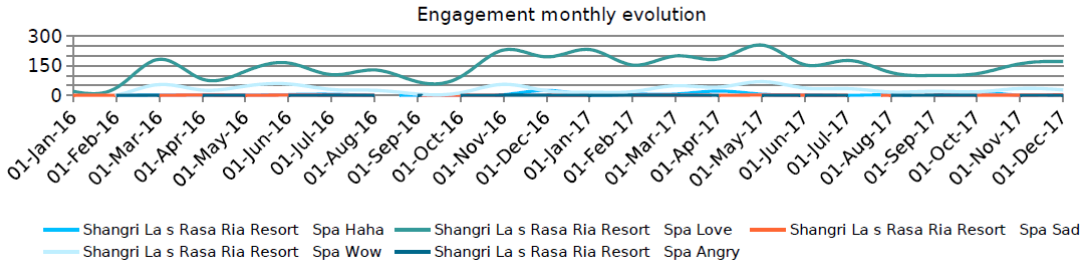


Monthly interactions evolution
Sum of likes, wow, haha, sad, angry, love for each month in the selected period



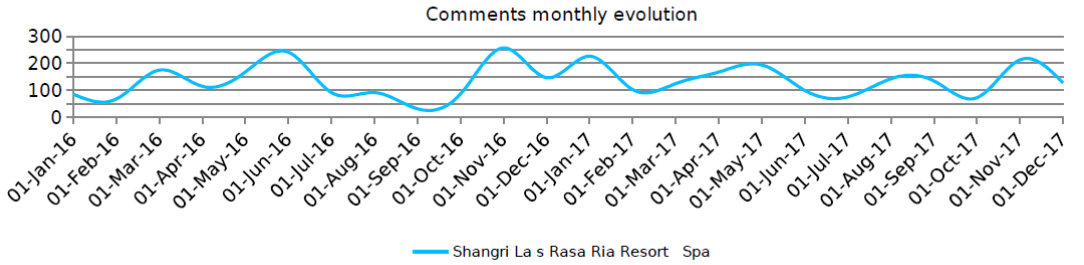
Monthly reactions evolution

Breakdown of haha, love, sad, wow, angry for each month in the selected period



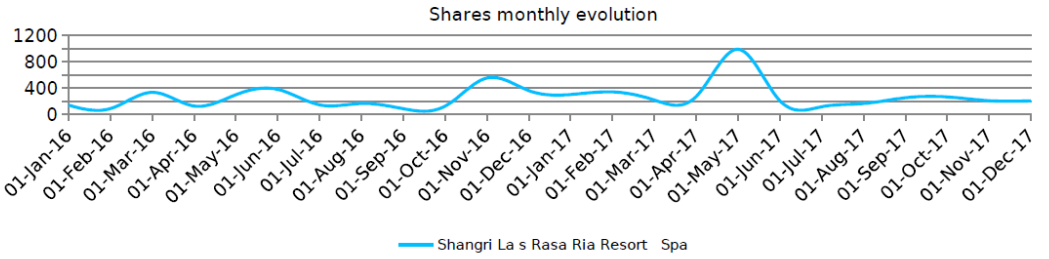
Monthly comments evolution

Number of comments from the page posts for each month in the selected period



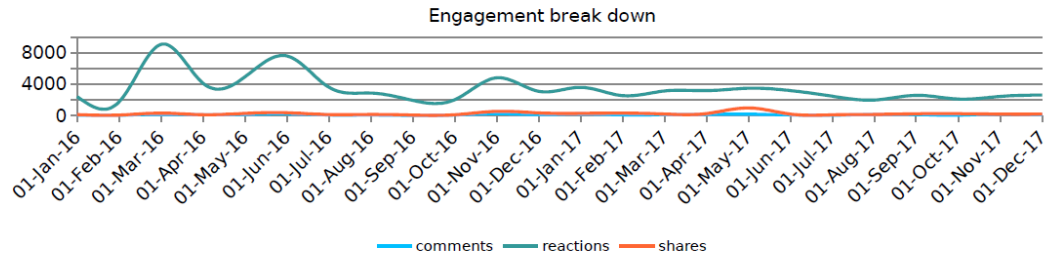
Monthly shares evolution

Number of shares from the page posts for each month in the selected period



Monthly engagement breakdown by type

Breakdown of interactions for each month during the selected period



Appendix 21: Case Study B Organization Structure sample

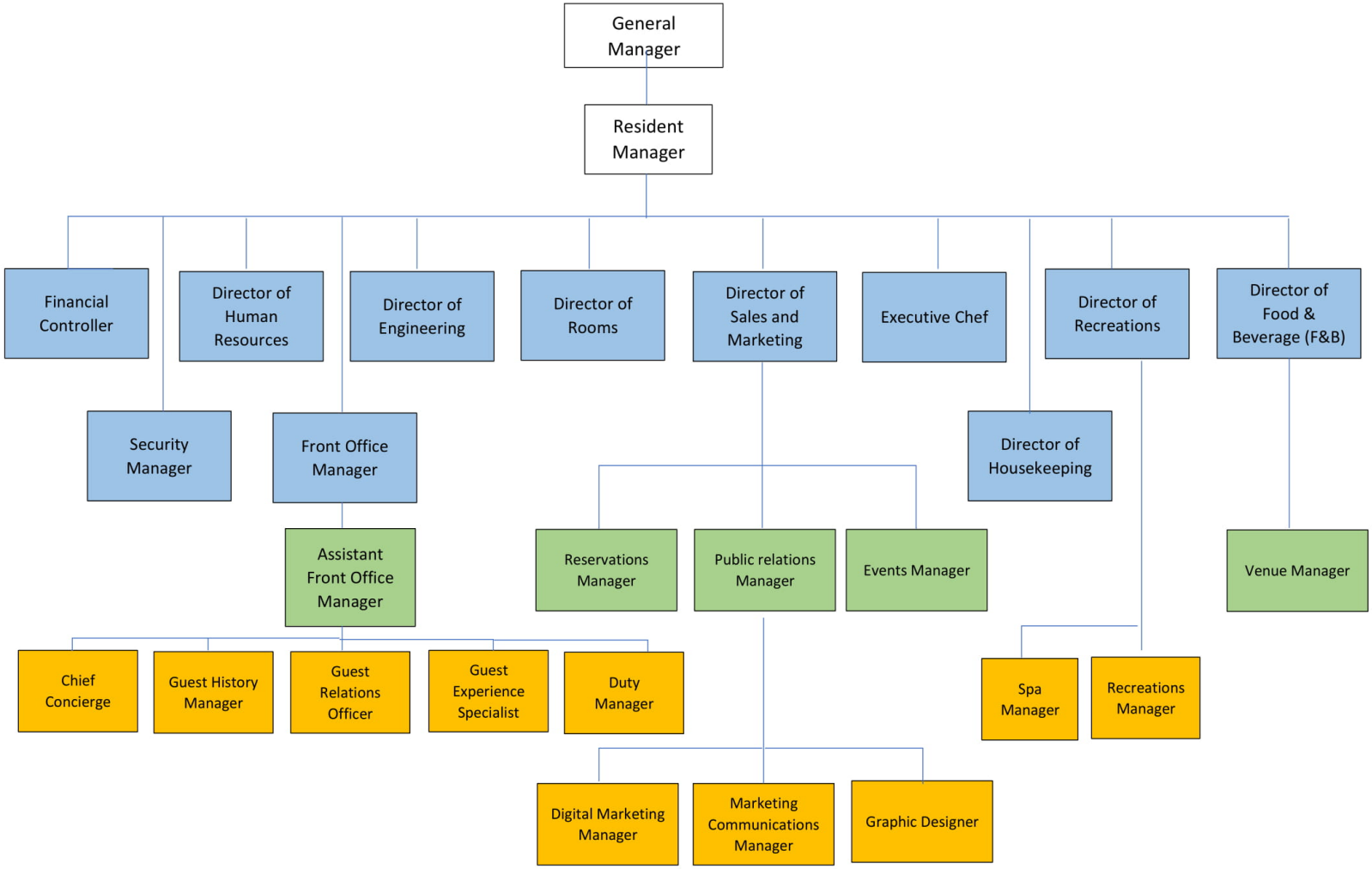


Figure 58. Case Study B general organization chart

Appendix 22: Timeline of Hotel 3's Facebook posts

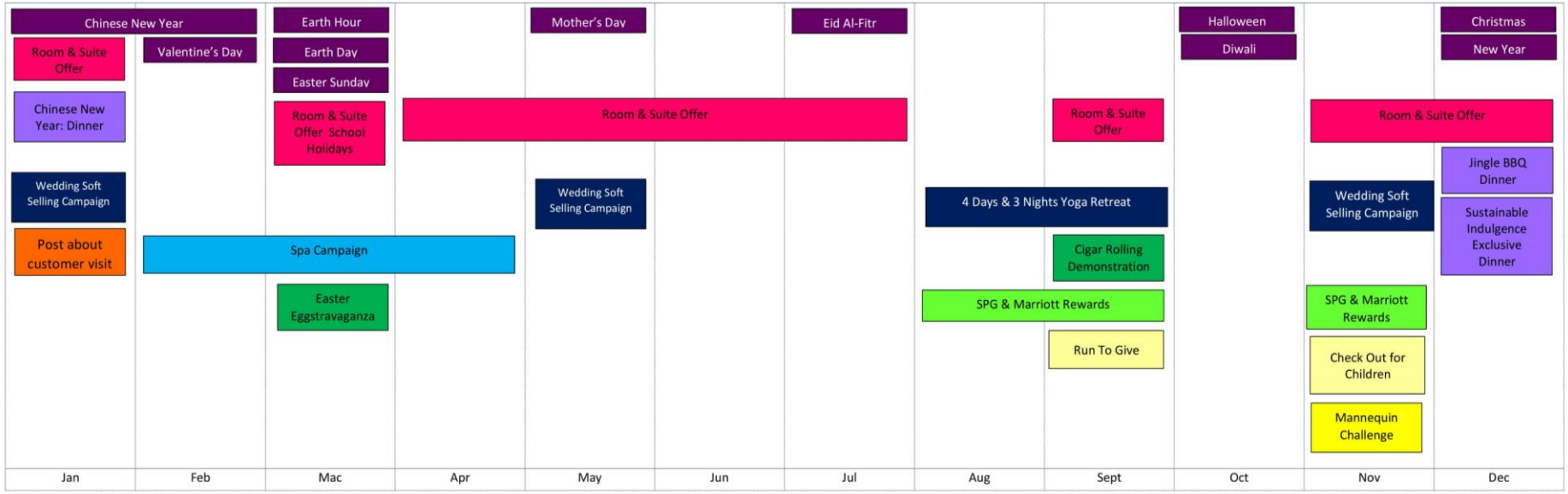


Figure 59. Timeline of the Hotel 3's Facebook posts in 2016. From Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheAndamanLangkawi

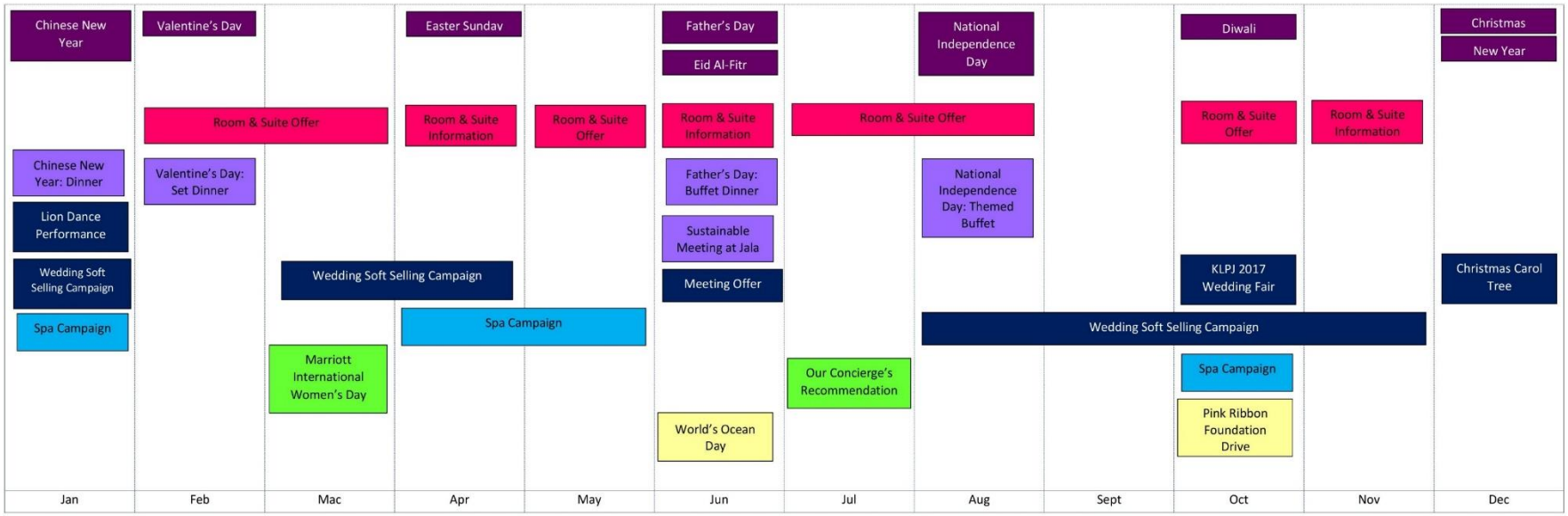


Figure 60. Timeline of the Hotel 3's Facebook posts in 2017. From Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheAndamanLangkawi

Appendix 23: Timeline of Hotel 4's Facebook posts

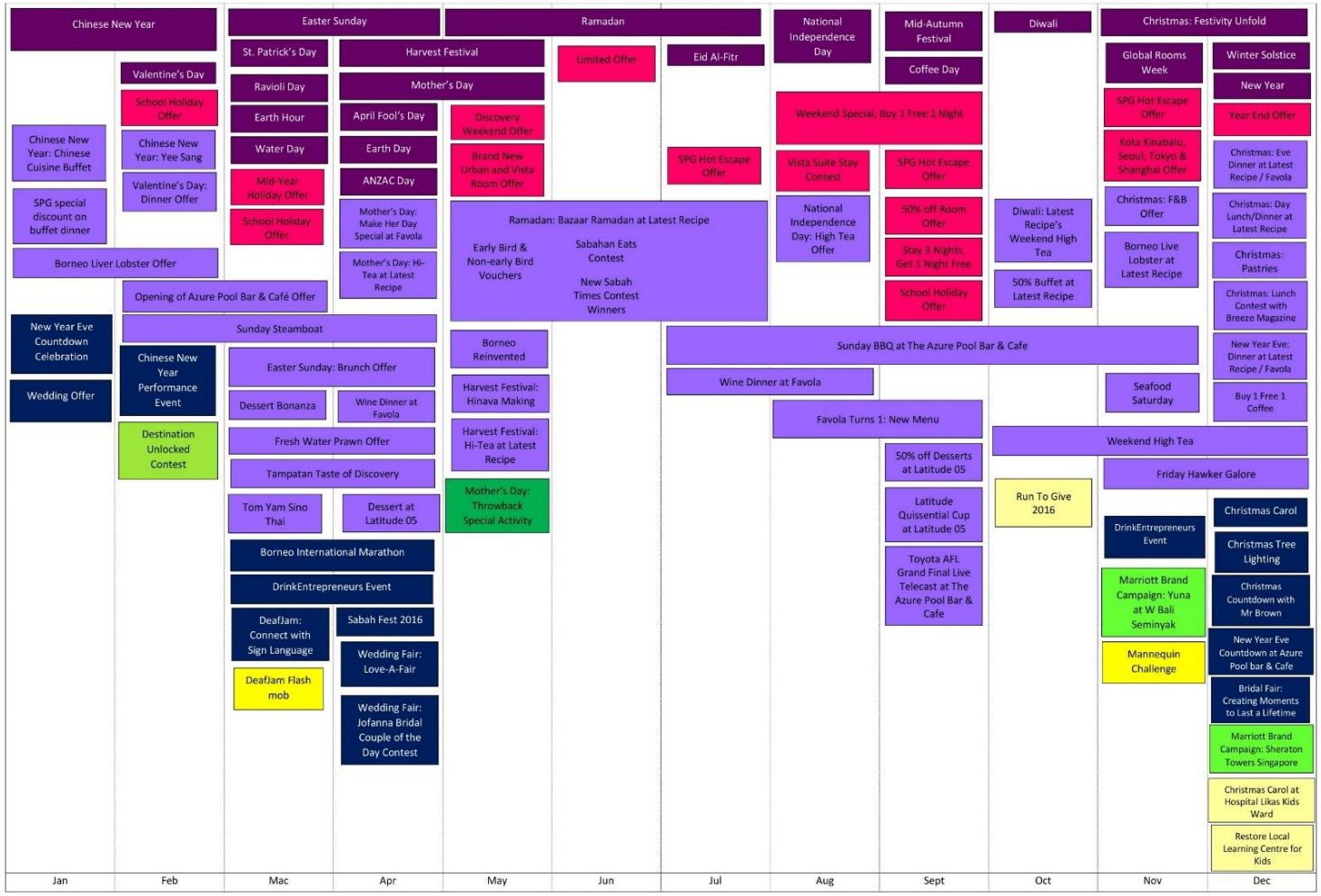


Figure 61. Timeline of the Hotel 4's Facebook posts in 2016. From https://www.facebook.com/lemeridienkotakinabalu/

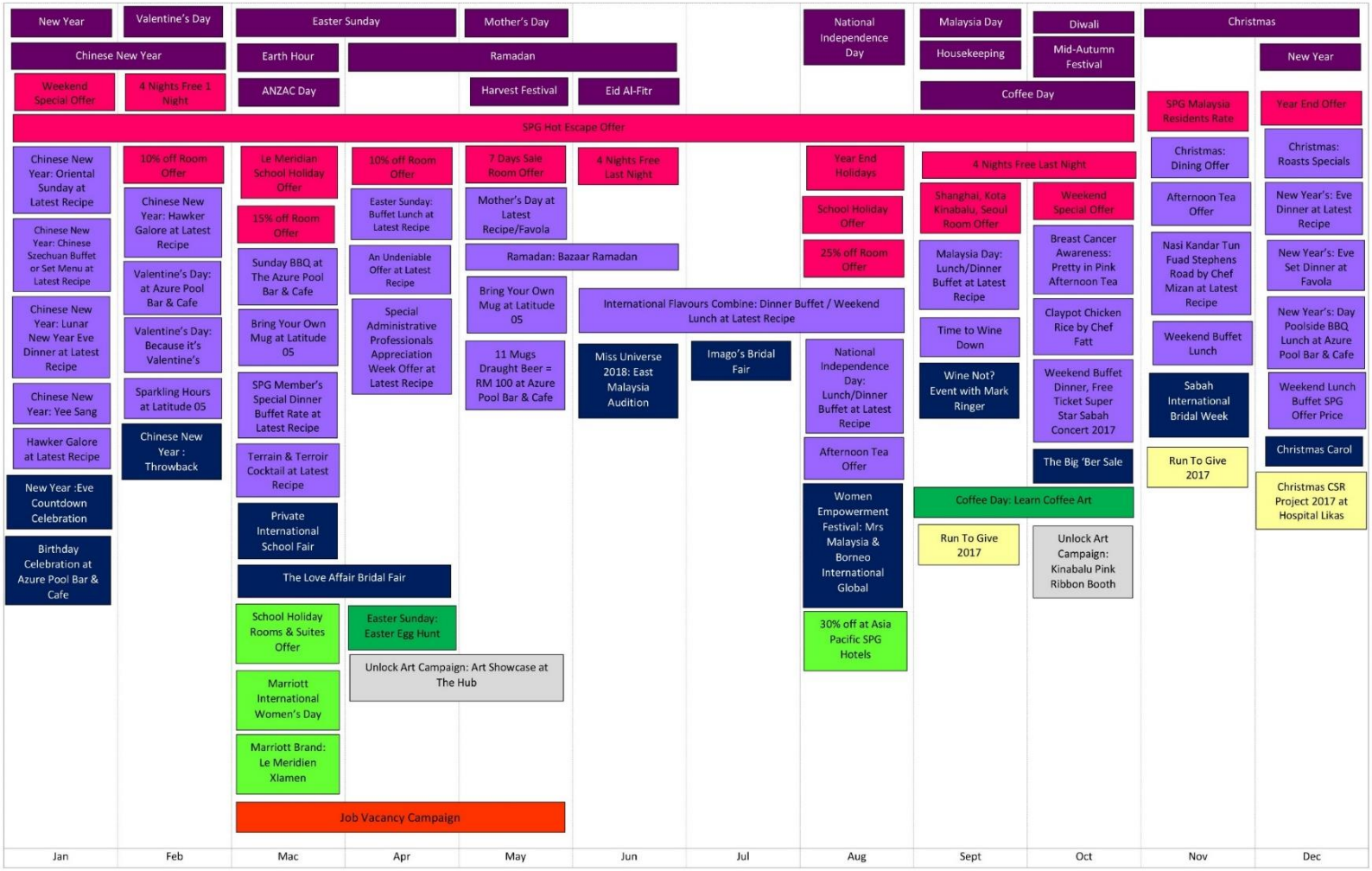


Figure 62. Timeline of Hotel 4's Facebook posts in 2017. From https://www.facebook.com/lemeridienkotakinabalu/