

**Value Co-creation through Social Media Platforms in
Hotel Industry: Constructivist Grounded Theory**

*خلق القيمة المشتركة من خلال منصات التواصل الاجتماعي فيما يخص قطاع
الفنادق النظرية البنائية المجدرة*

by

AMANY ABDELKADER ABELAATY MOSA

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
at
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ABSTRACT

This research is carried out to explore the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry. For this purpose, a critical review of academic literature is conducted to understand the past research and use the theoretical frameworks of service-dominant logic, absorptive capacity theory, value co-creation, and the use of social media to develop a conceptual framework. The study is aimed at the hotel industry which provides a clear focus to the study and the performed analysis, allowing theory development.

The study uses constructivist ground theory methodology to explore value co-creation in the context of the hotel industry. Primary data is collected through semi-structured interviews with 24 experts from six luxury hotels in the UAE. The primary data is analyzed through three-stage coding represented by initial line-by-line, focused, and theoretical coding employed in the data analysis process, in line with the postulates of the Constructivist Grounded Theory paradigm. The secondary research is based on qualitative content analysis of secondary data, represented by 960 social media posts from 12 social media accounts of six luxury hotels in the UAE, characterized by extensive social media activity.

The findings of the study present evidence of the influence of social media platforms on value co-creation by combining the SDL and ACT perspective. Furthermore, this research has also acknowledged the importance of social media activities and how it has challenged conventional organizations to react to a co-creation experience. The findings of the study also emphasize the interaction of the 3 components - social media platforms, customer engagement and organizational strategy - through the absorptive capacity theory dimensions can only lead to effective value co-creation in the context of service-dominant logic.

The findings of the study have both theoretical as well as managerial implications which are discussed. In the hotel industry, the findings of the study present a strong case for use of social media platforms and for value co-creation in hotel industry.

ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

يكمُن الهدف الأساسي لهذه الأطروحة في اكتشاف الفرص لخلق القيمة المشتركة والحفاظ على القيمة التي تشكلها منصات التواصل الاجتماعي بالإضافة إلى قابلية التطبيق على أغراض وغايات إعداد وتطوير استراتيجيات المؤسسات فيما يخص قطاع الضيافة والفندقة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. ولهذا الغرض، يتم إجراء مراجعة نقدية للمراجع الأكاديمية لفهم واستيعاب الأبحاث السابقة واستخدام إطارات العمل لنظرية منطق الخدمة ونظرية الطاقة الاستيعابية وخلق القيمة المشتركة واستخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لإنشاء وخلق إطار عمل نظري. تستهدف هذه الدراسة قطاع الفندقة وترتكز على تحليل الأداء مما يسمح بخلق واستحداث نظريات أكثر فاعلية.

تم انتهاز نموذج النظرية البنائية المجذرة والتي يتم جمع البيانات الأولية الكيفية من خلال إجراء مقابلات شخصية شبه منظمة مع عدد 24 خبيراً من قطاع الضيافة والفندقة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. لقد أسهم المشاركون في هذه الدراسة في تقديم معلومات ورؤى مستقبلية فيما يخص الفرص المتاحة للقيمة المشتركة والاحتفاظ بالقيمة من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في هذا القطاع الحيوي. يتم تدوين مخرجات ونتائج المقابلات الشخصية أثناء المقابلات الشخصية. لقد استخدمت ثلاثة مراحل أساسية لتشفير المعلومات وهي التشفير الأولي والتشفير لكل سطر والتشفير المركز والتشفير النظري بالتوازي مع نمط فرضيات النظرية البنائية المؤسسة. لقد استندت نتائج الدراسة الثانوية إلى تحليل المحتوى الكيفي للبيانات الفرعية من خلال الاستعانة بنحو 960 منشوراً على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة من إجمالي 12 حساباً من حسابات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لعدد 6 فنادق فاخرة من فئة الخمس نجوم في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة والتي تزخر بأنشطة وفعاليات تُنشر على صفحات منصات التواصل الاجتماعي.

نتائج الدراسة أسفرت عن أدلة دامغة على مدى تأثير منصات التواصل الاجتماعي على خلق القيمة المشتركة من خلال الدمج بين منطق الخدمة وكذلك نظرية الطاقة الاستيعابية. بالإضافة لذلك، لقد أقرت هذه الدراسة بأهمية أنشطة قنوات التواصل الاجتماعي وكيف أنها مثّلت تحدياً غير تقليدياً للمؤسسات للاستجابة لخبرة خلق القيمة المشتركة. تؤكد نتائج الأطروحة أيضاً على التفاعل بين الثلاث عناصر؛ ألا وهي منصات التواصل الاجتماعي ومشاركة العملاء والاستراتيجية المؤسسية من خلال نظرية الطاقة الاستيعابية التي تؤدي في نهاية المطاف إلى خلق القيمة المشتركة للمؤسسة.

ثمة تأثيرات إدارية ونظرية لنتائج هذه الأطروحة ولقد تم طرحها وفي قطاع الضيافة والفندقة، تعكس نتائج الأطروحة قرائن وثيقة لأهمية وتأثير استخدام منصات التواصل الاجتماعي على خلق القيمة المشتركة في قطاع الفندقة.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT: Absorptive Capacity Theory

CGT: Constructivist Grounded Theory

DCM: Digital Content Marketing

GDAR: Gerunds-Doing-Act-Routine

GDL: Goods Dominant Logic

SDL: Service Dominant Logic

VCC: Value Co-creation

VoE: Value of Experience

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides detailed introduction to the research topic. This chapter outlines the background and the context of the present research, research statement and the identified research gap, as well as the research aims, objectives and research questions defined for the study. The significance of the study and research propositions are also exposed, followed by an overview of the employed research methodology and the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Research Background:

This section presents the theoretical background of the present thesis. It reviews value co-creation, value capture and ACT theory, Goods and Service Dominant logic, as well as the role of technology in the value co-creation.

1.1.1. Value Co-creation

The strategic concept of Value Co-Creation (VCC), initially coined “*the Future of Competition*,” was first referenced in the late 1970’s (Bendapudi & Leone 2003). According to the core definition, provided by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p. 5), VCC is an “*altogether new approach to value creation based on an individual-centered co-creation of value between consumers and companies*”. It emphasizes the mutually benefitting partnership between individuals and business organizations which accounts for the advancement of value for both sides. It allows organizations to collaborate with customers in the innovation and production of their product or service offerings, and their brand image. The concept of VCC has been studied in a vast diversity of theoretical disciplines including customer engagement (Brodie et al. 2013; Hollebeek & Macky 2019), knowledge management (Guan, Xie & Huan 2018; Xie, Guan & Huan 2019), innovation (Parida,

Sjödín & Reim 2019; Skálén et al. 2014), sustainability (Biggemann, Williams & Kro 2014; Perano, Casali & Abbate 2018) and service eco-systems (Hein et al. 2019; Meynhardt, Chandler & Strathoff 2016) among others. The VCC concept is studied across different service sectors like sports entertainment (Erhardt, Martin-Rios & Chan 2019; Horbel et al. 2016), health care (Hardyman, Daunt & Kitchener 2015; Osei-Frimpong, Wilson & Lemke 2018), the sharing economy (Akhmedova, Mas-Machuca & Marimon 2020; Yin, Qian, & Shen 2019) and tourism (Cabiddu et al. 2013; Dolan, Seo & Kemper 2019).

Academic literature on VCC incorporating technological digital platforms reveals the advent of several available methodologies (Pongsakornrunsilp & Schroeder 2011; Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2013; Shamim & Ghazali 2014; Xie et al. 2016, etc.). Significantly, recent knowledge is fundamentally grounded on the acquisition of customer value assessment, examining how customers and organizations are co-producers in value creation. This understanding is necessary because organizations produce products and services that transfer value to the customers, whereas customers produce value after using these goods and services, which are of value to the organization (Lusch, Vargo & OBrien 2007). Therefore, VCC occurs not only when value is transferred from an organization to a customer, but also when value is transferred from the customer back to the organization (Lusch, Vargo & Gustafsson 2016) for incorporation into its operations. Following this chain of thought, the customer is considered an intangible marketing asset of the organizations.

1.1.2. Value Capture and Absorptive Capability Theory

The concept of VCC is a complex notion often connected to a number of other concepts including value capture, Goods Dominant Logic (GDL) and Service Dominant Logic (SDL). The concept of

value-co-creation is also connected to the value capture which is value-co-creation is also connected to the VCC is defined by Priem (2007, p. 221) as *“the appropriation and retention by the firm of payments made by consumers in expectation of future value from consumption”*. Therefore, value capture is understood as the critical ability of a business entity to effectively utilize the value created and co-created with the help of the customers.

Furthermore, absorptive capacity theory (ACT) helps in better understanding how the value-capturing process benefits all participants. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2008), ACT examines the extent to which a firm can identify the value of new information and proactively leverage the organizational resources to acquire value and apply it towards executing the organizational strategy. Addorisio et al. (2014) argued for organization-level adoption of ACT and asserted that organizations should conceptualize ACT as a capability, rather than an asset. Adding to this, Volberda, Foss and Lyles (2010) stated that most attention of ACT is focused on tangible outcomes and organizational design and individual level antecedents have been relatively neglected in past studies. Based on this, the authors call for identification of multilevel antecedents, process dimensions and organizational adaption of ACT for both tangible and intangible benefits. Similar findings have also been reported by Bozic and Dimovski (2019) in their study of business intelligence and analytics for value creation. The authors reported that absorptive capacity underlie the process of knowledge generation from business intelligence and this is facilitated when the technological, human and relationship assets complement each other at the organizational level.

1.1.3. Goods Dominant Logic and Service Dominant Logic

In addition to that, Service Dominate Logic (SDL) which evolved as closely linked to the VCC concept sets the foundation of a paradigm shift away from the historical marketing belief that

organizations are the key influencers of value creation, as opposed to the customer, while the lifetime value of a customer is understood as a summing-up of their total money spent throughout the course of their patronage (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). Hence, as paraphrased by Emerson, the Goods Dominant Logic (GDL) is basically what enabled the Industrial Revolution and the science of manufacturing, while SDL is what happened as customers, supported by new technology, began to assimilate the nuances and unintended consequences of a world seen through GDL (Lienhard 2003). Thus, the question on the customer's mind has now become, "*who is this organization and what can they do for me*" (Lafley 2009, p. 57) which is the basic concept behind the emergence of VCC.

In the late 19th century, the American Ralph Waldo Emerson advised businesses to "*build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door.*" (Lienhard 2003, p. 204). In any free market economy, organizations have consistently sought ways to improve their product or service line-up to maintain their revenue stream and expand their market. This approach resulted in a GDL strategic position, where the purpose of economic exchange was focused on the utility – to the customer - and value – to the organization - of an identified product.

Traditionally, the organization and the customer have had very well defined and distinctive purposes within the production and consumption process, keeping the provider separate from the value creation process, while allowing the customer no role in value creation, other than agreeing to purchase the product, which can be simply defined solely as value exchange and extraction, as shown in Figure 1.1 (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004).



Figure 1. 1: The traditional Concept of Market (Parhalad & Ramaswamy 2004, p. 7)

Indeed, in the purest GDL perspective, the organization views its market as an aggregation of customers identified as “targets”. Such view creates the “organization-centric” business model, in which the customers need to go to the firm and not the other way round, since the customer is not understood as a starting point for value creation (Kohtamaki & Rajala 2016). Historically, marketing models have been based on product development and innovation, again a solid GDL strategy, with products developed within the organizational structure and to the advantage of the organization, as noted by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). In addition to that, unlike the VCC, the GDL presents the product view, related to the concept of “embedded value” or “value in exchange”, placing the business organization and its products in the center of the value-creation process (Vargo & Lusch 2008). In contrast, the SDL which evolved as closely linked to the VCC concept, presents the service perspective towards value creation and lays the foundation of a paradigm shift away from the historical marketing belief that the organization is the key value-creation actor, as opposed to the customer (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012). The SDL perspective emphasizes the importance of "value in use" and "co-creation of value" as the core building blocks

of value (Brodie, Löbner & Fehrer 2019).

Organizations are now driven, either opportunistically or by default, into a joint venture relationship with customers who desire to create value together, by either expressing their needs or desires, sharing information, or even actively partaking in the production process (Darmody 2009). Therefore, organizations nowadays need to provide the channels and resources allowing customers to share. According to Darmody (2009), the novel collaborative spirit is being enhanced by the increasing readiness of business entities to share the control over their resources with their clients.

Nevertheless, simply allowing customers to make statements about an organization and its products does not automatically result in creating value for either the organization or the customer. VCC only occurs when the organization has the ability to absorb and utilize the information its customer base provides. As stated by Porter (1996), the value chain represents a concise view of the unilateral part an organization plays in the value creation process, as otherwise their customers' values are neither acknowledged nor incorporated. For instance, the one-dimensional understanding of the GDL places the focus on value exchange and value extraction that happens outside of any value-creation process (Vargo & Lusch 2008). Even though there has historically always been the opportunity for an organization to communicate with customers, the GDL limits this communication and its value-creation potential to the mere act of the market transaction (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012). With the shift to SDL thinking, the focus is moved to active communication with customers perceived as value-creation agents (Brodie, Löbner & Fehrer 2019). Therefore, to maximize their profits, business organizations need to work with instead of for their clients and to encourage the customers to contribute to the efficient value-creation process. SDL encompasses much more than the value exchange proposal found with GDL, essentially

becoming more holistic and including stakeholders in its value creation. This is due to the increasing complexity and competitive nature of the marketplace, extending beyond the traditional product-for-value mechanism. McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012) substantiate this belief by finding that value creation does not occur in a vacuum, but includes the organization, the customer and others within the customer's service network, or its stakeholders. The expanded sphere of influence in the transition from GDL to SDL is graphically represented in Figure 1.2.

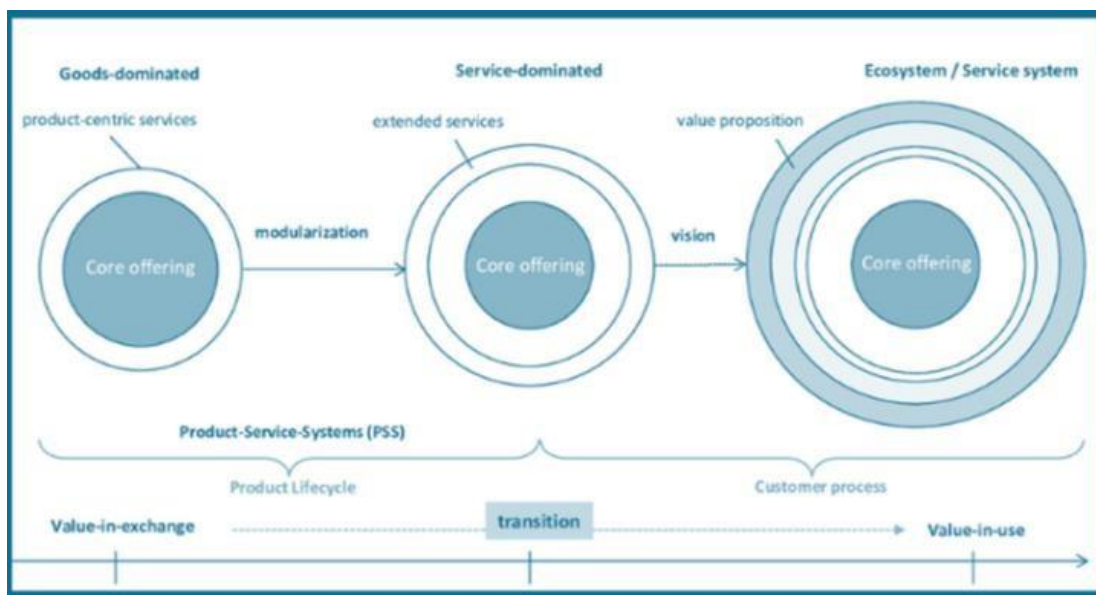


Figure 1. 2: Transition from GD Logic based Value-in-Exchange to SD Logic based Service Ecosystems and Value-in-Context (Weiss, Koelmel & Bulander 2016, p. 278).

With the advent of VCC and its associated SDL strategy, organizations recognize their customers' greater power and benefit, or "softer value," in their success, requiring their need to be mindful of and responsive to their customer's knowledge, commitment and how they interact and collaborate with the organization and its resources (Vargo & Lusch 2008). As such, the marketer's job is to open-up the heretofore tightly held reserves of organizational know-how onto a free-flow platform for cultural exchange, *"where organizations offer customers resources to create and where customers offer to organization the connection with the quick changing world of knowledge and*

information sharing” (Lusch, Vargo & OBrien 2007 p.7). Co-creation engagement works as the interface and pre-qualification prior to the extended co-creation stages with more direct, in-depth customer interaction, which is supported by technology.

In this respect, A.G. Lafley, former CEO of Procter and Gamble noted in 2009 that, “*customers are beginning in a very real sense to own our brands and participate in their creation*” (Kotler et al. 2009, p. 397). Lafley adds that “*we are on a learning journey together, with the customer choosing when to tune in and when to tune out*” (Kotler et al. 2009, p. 397). This view is also consistent with SDL which argues that customer's experience of service is a new way of synthesizing a view of exchange which contributes towards value creation in markets. From this perspective, marketers in both private and public organizations are looking for new methodologies beyond traditional focus groups and product sampling to engage and better forecast the needs of the customers. Steve Jobs said it well, “*some people say, give the customers what they want. But that is not my approach. Our job is to figure out what they are going to want before they do*” (Sarkar 2019, p. 10). However, a contrary view in terms of academic perspective was provided by Sindhav (2011) who argued that social validation, social information, and social inspiration are crucial for co-creation by customers during the new product development phase. This implies that the viewpoint and feedback of the customers are important for new product in order to ascertain and assess the acceptability of the product.

1.1.4. The Role of Technology for Value Co-Creation

The role of technology for co-creation has been well acknowledged in academic literature. In this regard, Pena, Jamilena and Rodríguez (2014) studied the role of technology towards co-creation and competitive advantage for firms and reported that technology capabilities have a direct effect

on value co-creation. This research also applies the service dominant logic and examines the firm's capabilities towards co-creation. These findings are also supported by Caputo, Perez and Giacosa (2019) who investigated the role of human resources and technological infrastructures towards co-creation and business performance and reported that the behavior of the workforce and the technological infrastructure of the organization have a direct effect on business performance.

In addition to that, Karpen, Bove and Lukas (2012) and Polo Peña, Frías Jamilena and Rodríguez Molina (2014) emphasize the important role of information and telecommunication technologies for effective VCC. Furthermore, authors like Piller, Vossen and Ihl (2012), Martinez-Canas, García-Haro and Martinez-Ruiz (2014) and Cheung and to (2016) specifically focus on the utilization of social media platforms for VCC. Even though these technological aspects have been studies, the process of VCC remains difficult to understand, with particular regard to the relationship between the technological mechanism employed and the equivalent value derived from the interaction. This requires a more detailed investigation of the mechanisms for VCC through social media, which is a core aspect of the present study.

The evolution of technology has changed the mechanism by which people communicate, exchange ideas, acquire information and make decisions. It has further changed the structure of market power which in fact represents a paradigm shift in power from manufacturers or organizations to customers (Brodie et al. 2013). There is now a mutual communication channel between organizations and customers, an open and two-way process of engagement, collaboration and information sharing between an organization and its customers, which can jointly define and solve problems in a shared distributive environment. Such is the process of VCC. VCC can serve as the primary focus of any organization, since its focus continues to be the discovery of customers' interest and value. Therefore, it is similar to the GDL except for the use of technology.

The impact of technology on the value co-creation has been studied by researchers with mixed results. On one hand, Zhang et al. (2020) asserted that use of technology influences co-creation process by empowering consumers and offering a platform which facilitates co-creation. This view is also supported in the findings of Balaji and Roy (2017) where the authors draw upon the SDL and reported that co-creation is dependent on the customer interaction on the technology platform. On the other hand, Breidbach and Maglio (2016) argued that technology enabled co-creation leads to complex interactions between the interdependent actors.

The primary change in technology which supports VCC is the social media platform, an internet-based channel of communication and collaboration that has been widely used since around 2005 (Brodie et al. 2013). However, while technology has increased the participation and sharing of information, the social media plays a role in enhancing the VCC from customers. Therefore, the core source of VCC is the customers and the technological platform only acts as a catalyst. Although originally designed primarily for leisure activities, currently more and more social media platforms are used for organizational purposes (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010), with more than two-thirds of Fortune 500 organizations estimated to embrace social media system use within the next five years (Barnes, Lescault & Holmes 2015). However, the use of social media platform as an interaction platform is more widely acknowledged in academic literature (Ariel & Avidar 2015). This is also consistent with the findings of Kim and Lee (2019) who reported positive effects of social media interaction on luxury brand communities with respect to brand attitude, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions.

The major reasons behind these trends are presented below:

1. First, social media can certainly be characterized as undergoing a constant state of change;

a condition of “permanent beta” (Kelemen & Rumens 2011), always reinventing themselves.

2. Second, social media is a broad term used to explain a variety of technological options and unique contents, namely online tools, which are similar but also differ. For example, external and internal internet options: LinkedIn or text and immersive (visual reality) content (Labrecque et al. 2013). Twitter or Second Life represent additional online tools (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

3. Third, the use of social media is very flexible (Schlagwein, Schoder & Fischbach 2011). Social media is widely used, if not by all organizations and professions, in all countries and borders. Social media is an inexpensive virtual bridge for connecting people, culture, nations, organizations in real time, even if there are physical barriers.

Social Media continues to change our surroundings rapidly through framing economics and societies. It affects the way of how people, groups, organizations, and the public sphere communicate with each other, unlike the traditional medium. In 2021, above 71 percent of the internet users were social network users, meanwhile, social media represents the most well-liked online activities with high user engagement rates to hit 4.59 billion social media users across the world, with over 1.86 B active users in monthly bases in January 2022 (Statista 2022).

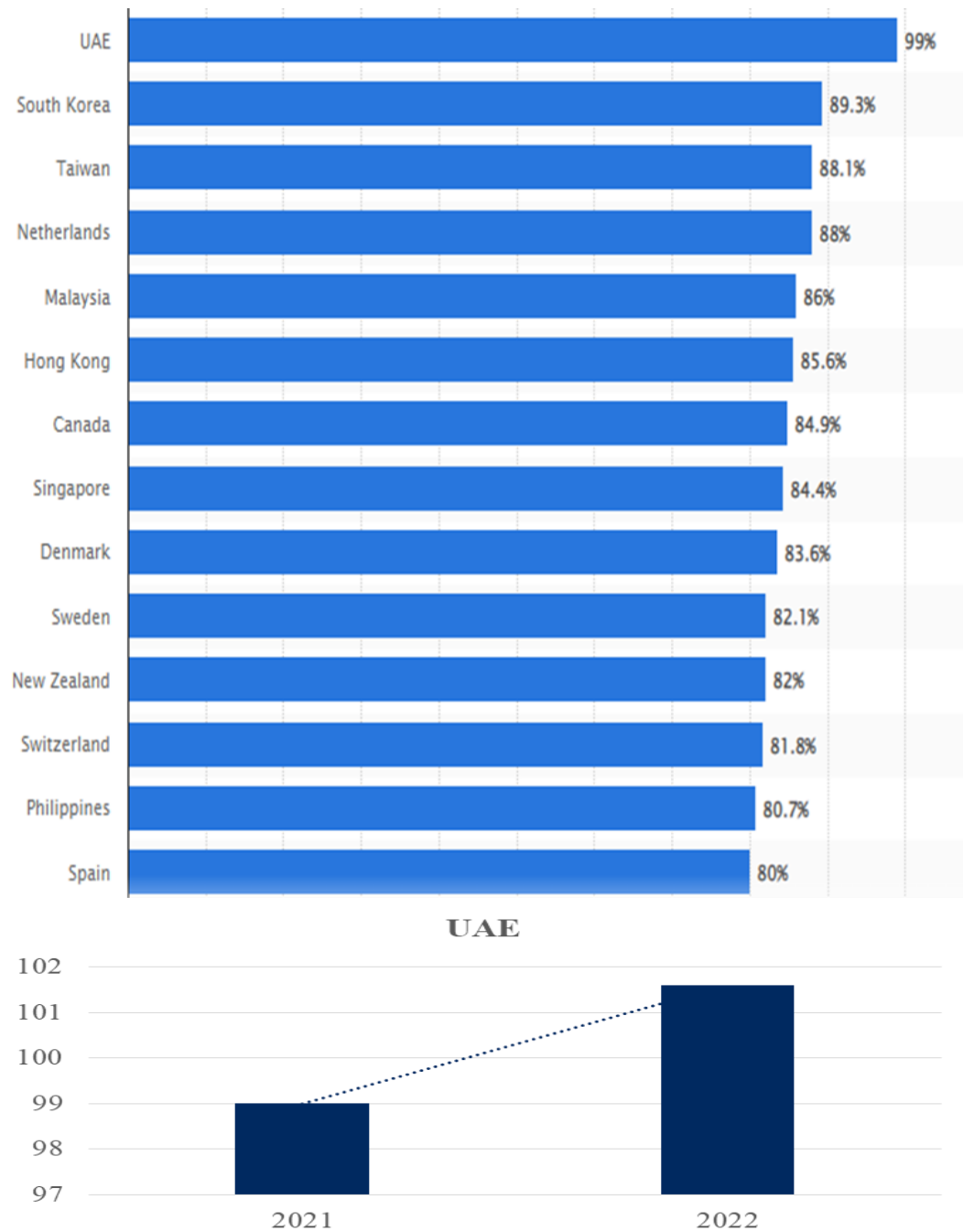


Figure 1. 3: Social Media usage penetration across the world 2021 (Statista 2021a, 2022).

One of the platforms is Facebook which represents the leading platform in the world. As illustrated in Figure 1.3, the U.A.E ranked first in both January 2021 and January 2022. In the UAE, 99% of the population used to have active social media accounts which has increased to 106% in 2022

(Statista 2022). In 2021 South Korea ranked the second with 89.3%, whereas Western societies like the U.S (70%) and the U.K (66%), score quite lower. The social media diffusion in Asian countries showed high penetration since mobile-first connectivity in these markets (Statista 2021a). The above statistics indicate that social media penetration has increased considerable across different countries.

With the advent of social media platforms, customers have become well-informed, interconnected, empowered, aware of their own power beyond that available at traditional exchange points (Van Dijck & Poell 2013). Communication and dialogue between customers themselves, represented by reviewing, analyzing and evaluating the organization's value creation process, provides another source of perspective, all performed outside of organizational communication (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019). With the free-flowing information found in today's increasingly open business environment, customers are not shy about negotiating fees, product specifications, and other product or service terms with organizations. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, p.6) claim that *"we are shifting to a world where value is the outcome of unspoken negotiations between the customers and the organizations"*.

The consequences of not acknowledging this shift can be significant. Again, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) suggest that if the organization continues to believe that the market can be separated from the value creation process, they are forced into the traditional GDL environment, extracting as much of the cost from its value chain activities. Similarly, along with the impact of technology on commerce, globalization, the elimination of trade barriers, and outsourcing make it difficult for managers to distinguish among their competitors, with all products and services facing unprecedented competition (Harrysson, Schoder & Tavakoli 2016). Thus, organizations can hardly evade this new attribute of customer input, even if it is unsolicited, since a) if customers do not

sense any product differentiation, they are more often opt for buying the more GDL “valued” goods or services that is least expensive, and b) it is be exceedingly difficult to attract new customers to what is perceived as an unimproved product.

In behavioral economics, SDL is but a theoretical framework for explaining value creation using value exchange among several configurations of participants, with the underlying premise that customers can apply their values for the common benefit of all users and additionally benefit from others' applied values (Grönroos & Gummerus 2014). While organizations must avoid their old organization-centric view and find value with customers through tailored collaboration using various social media platforms. Additionally, organization marketing managers must move away from product-centric thinking and focus on creating with customer. While the ability of the organization to seize customer value has led to increased social interaction, which innovative techniques deployed to team-up and co- create with the customers, are yet poorly defined (Fernandes & Remelhe 2016; Roggeveen, Tsiros & Grewal 2012).

Therefore, marketing objectives associated with VCC can be broader in nature dependent upon the programs that provide customers and the public the freedom to evolve in ways that harness their capabilities. This is due to the ability of existing co-creation techniques involving social media platforms that enable customers to share technical, social and cultural knowledge that affect organization-generated environments, or its ecosystem (Lenka, Parida & Wincent 2017). However, even though organizations have been able to embrace technology and communication innovations that encourage customer engagement, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to how organization may engage in co-creation, what objectives can be addressed, or which social media platform to be deployed. Therefore, organizations strive to provide interactive platforms that encourage user imagination, socialization and free expression, where the customers are able to

envision potentially new offerings using organization-provided raw materials, or include themselves in brand-specific platforms, making the experience more attractive. There are also other platforms which are more constrained with limited options for customer interaction.

According to Lenka, Parida and Wincent (2017), customer consumption experiences tailored around themselves are more meaningful than consistent organization offerings because the goods or services are more in line with the specific needs and wants of the clients. Furthermore, customer interaction of merit is only possible through the inclusion of customers in strong knowledge ecosystems where they can express their creative side to act as innovators and idea generators (Lenka, Parida & Wincent 2017). Therefore, the customer is instrumental in the creation and development of product adjusted to their individual preferences. Co-creation not only encourages customers to work indirectly for the organization, but also allows the organization to place a premium on the resultant offerings, even though value co-creation is positioned as beneficial to the customer. Research indicates that the building and growing of creative relationships with customers is actually much more valuable for the organization, in that it permits the organization to maintain a level of market control and thereby becomes a key competitive strategy (Lenka, Parida & Wincent 2017). A survey conducted by the Arab Social Media Report provided many useful findings, such as reducing costs, enhancing service delivery, co-creation, and co-delivery. The reducing cost through social media hits 80%, services delivery reached 78%, co-delivery 55%, and 76% improvement can be found in value co-creation (ASMR MBRSG 2018).

1.2. Research Context:

The use of social media for generating value and co-creation presents an interesting concept which is the core focus of this study. Although prior research has been carried out to highlight the use of

social media platform for co-creation, there is lack of consensus on the use of such platforms as the primary criteria for value creation. The study by Rashid et al. (2019) has emphasized on the importance of customer motivation and online communities for presenting useful insights which lead to co-creation. However, the study by Kim and Choi (2019) reported that the core drivers which contribute towards successful co-creation involve customer experience, customer satisfaction, expression and sharing ability. Although this study is based on the use of social media by startups, there is a common understanding that small businesses suffer from lack of understanding and utilization of the social media platform and various tools associated with it for co-creation. In fact, a more relevant study is that of Piller, Vossen and Ihl (2012) where the authors used the social exchange theory to explain the customer co-creation involving an active, creative and social collaboration process which is facilitated by the companies.

Currently, organizations utilize the social media as part of the communication tools in supporting a direct conversation with their customers. Evidence has shown that the actual process of using social media and practicing co-creation as part of the organization's internal process has triggered vast research (Bradley 2011). Therefore, to formulate a value co-creation framework within the customer field interactions context, the research carefully selected the organizations to meet the research needs which is to explore the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry. Specifically, the characteristics of the chosen organizations are well considering before enacting the proposed research. First, the organizations are categorized as within the limit of the hospitality sector in the United Arab Emirates. In this respect, the hotel and tourism literature provides evidence of the importance of the value co-creation and, the theoretical basis of e-conversation on tourism applications in this area (Chathoth et al. 2016). For example,

Trip Advisor publishes all user reviews and ratings for each hotel. Therefore, we can distinguish between a key interactive platform through which participants can participate in interactive authoring practices, and it supports an interactive platform which extends the ability to interact with the organization (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018). In the extant literature, it has been reported that higher order customer engagement is essential to enhance value co-creation (Chathoth et al. 2016). Furthermore, simply initiating dialogue is not meaningful towards a positive engagement and co-creation but the factors of access and transparency are crucial while also considering the willingness of the customers to co-create (Sarmah, Kamboj & Rahman 2017; Solakis et al. 2021). Social Media platforms as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram can have a huge influence on the perception of hotels. It has now been shown that more than 70 percent of all consumers consult with a social media outlet before committing to get a hotel service (Waechter 2020).

The second characteristic is to ensure the co-creation is initiated as part of a regular marketing activity within the organization. This would allow more exploratory and in-depth knowledge for the data collection procedure. With these characteristics are expected to lead to a better understanding of the value co-creation and its capture within social media use and support to a value co-creation framework within online interaction context and stand out on the unique cultural attributes that impact value capture.

The scope of the present research is limited to the hotel industry in the UAE. This scope is defined on the grounds of recent data, showing that the U.A.E and Dubai specifically ranks third among the top 10 fastest growing hotel destinations globally with a score of 11.8%, following Washington which ranks first with 14.1% and London ranking second with 11.9%, as depicted in Figure 1.4 (Luxury Hotels Index Reports 2020).

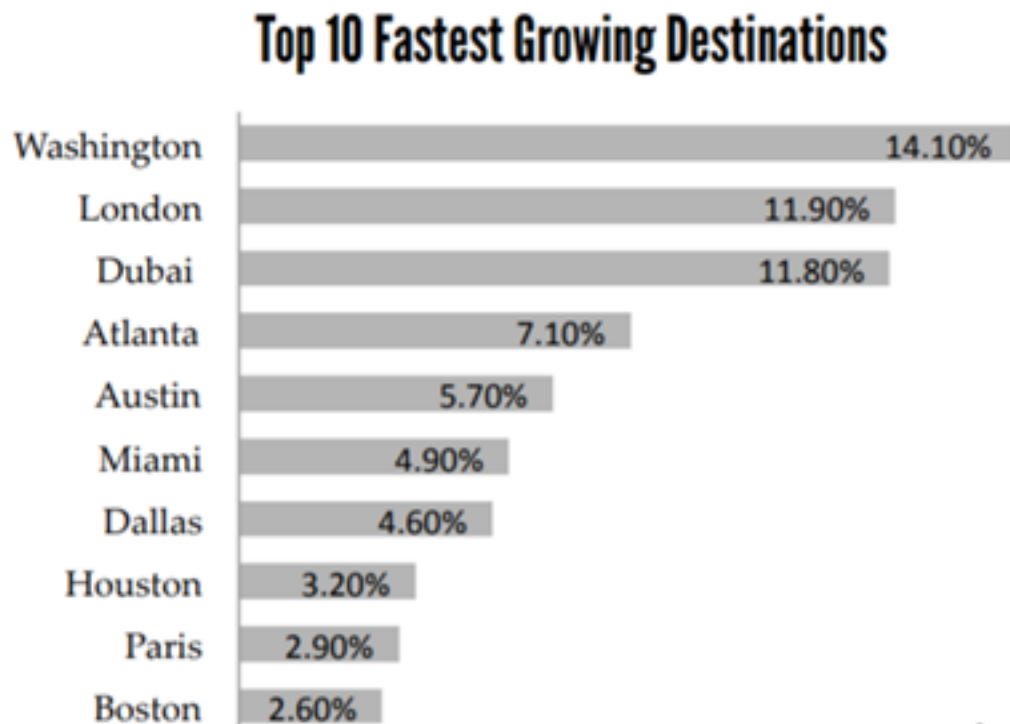


Figure 1. 4: Most popular hotel destination (Luxury Hotels index Reports 2020)

In addition to the above facts, 99.98% of the UAE population is actively using social media with an average of 7 hours and 24 minutes spent in social media platforms, which places the country among the global leaders in this category (Global media insights 2021). This data shows that the application of social media in diverse business contexts in the country, including the hotel sector provides an abundant ground for detailed research.

Furthermore, Facebook and Instagram are among the most popular social media platforms globally as depicted in Figure 1.5. They have fair popularity in the specific context of the UAE with 79% of the population actively using Facebook and 67.1% - Instagram (Global media insights 2021).

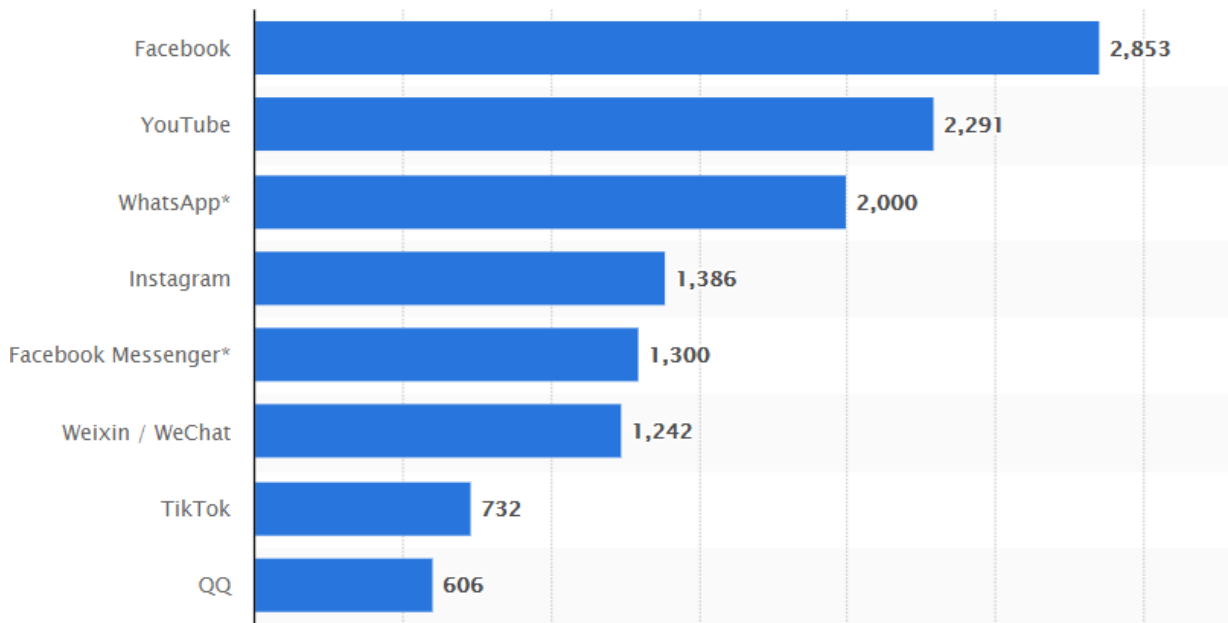
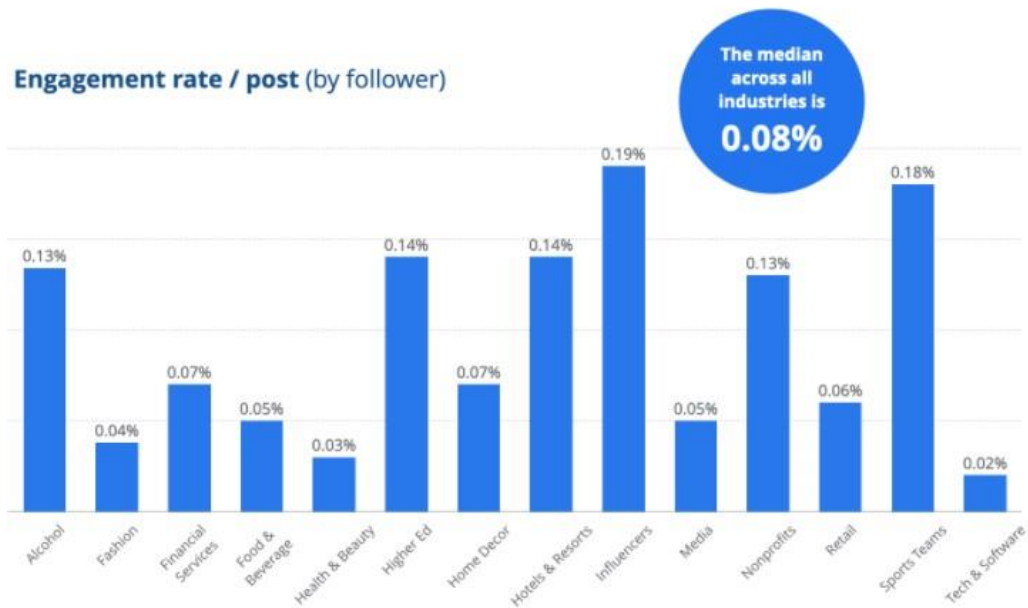


Figure 1. 5: Most popular social media platforms globally, millions of users July 2021 (Statista 2021b)

What is more, the data regarding the average engagement per social media post, shown in Figure 1.6 uncovers the potential of the two social media platforms - Facebook and Instagram, to attract considerably higher engagement per post compared to the median across all industries (Feehan 2021). These findings additionally justify the feasibility of the present research. Facebook and Instagram are chosen as the social media for the data collection due to their wide adoption in both Global and UAE aspect (Global media insights 2021). While these are most popular social media platforms, there is an academic gap which focuses solely on the use of these platforms for co-creation as it is observed that the prior research have focused on general data collection across social media platforms and smartphones (Cheung et al. 2020; Zadeh, Zolfagharian & Hofacker 2019).

Facebook engagement

Engagement rate / post (by follower)



Instagram engagement

Engagement rate / post (by follower)

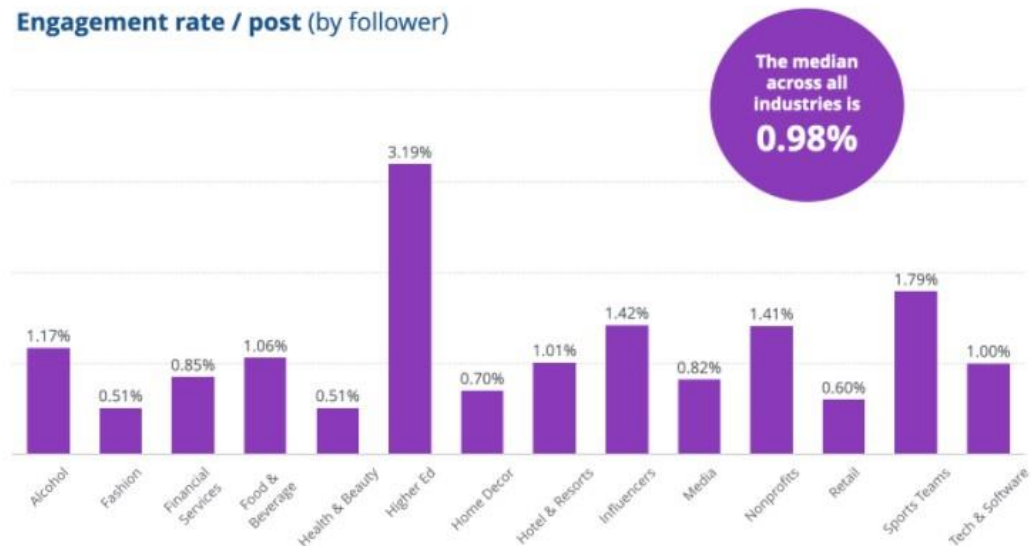


Figure 1. 6: Average engagement rate per post – all industries (Feehan 2021)

1.3. Problem Statement and Research Gap:

Previous research including Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2018), Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli (2014) has addressed that further investigation on different organizational backgrounds may it is needed to improve the concept of value co-creation within the existence of social media and digital platforms. In addition to that, in a recent paper by Brodie, Löbler and Fehrer (2019) have addressed the importance of having an applicable and testable model of the VCC concept as the SDL still in its fancy. Furthermore, the author highlights while service dominant logic aligns with the metaphysical and sociological conditions for the paradigm which explains the VCC, there is need for further development to meet the conditions for an artefact. Based on this, it is envisaged that a VCC framework would address this gap and would explain the VCC using the social media platform for the hospitality industry. Considering SDL and Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) perspective is therefore clearly defined as an online activity involving organizational and online customer engagement towards a mutually beneficial outcome. The research addressing this problem is necessary because the online engagement activities have challenged the conventional organizations to react to a co-creation experience (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2016).

Digitalization has become ubiquitous today and almost every activity can be done within our digitized world. Therefore, a comprehensive view of the roles of digital platforms and their background is necessary for the sake of the customers (Lenka, Parida & Wincent 2017). The acceptance of technology such as social media can be explained using the technology acceptance model which states that the acceptability of an information system is based on two main factors - perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Marangunić & Granic 2015). In social media, the TAM is quite evident due to the ease of use, connectedness, enjoyment and perceived trust factors

(Al-Qaysi, Mohamad-Nordin & Al-Emran 2020). Other studies have also supported the application of TAM in the context of social media (Choi & Chung 2013; Dutot 2014; Rauniar et al. 2014). Another theoretical model which explains the adoption of social media platform is the social exchange theory which proposes that social behavior is the result of social exchange process in which the participants minimize costs and maximize benefits (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu 2018). By using the social media platform, the users are provided with a convenient platform through which they can view and share content of their interest. Moreover, understanding the use of value co-creation perception and the online networks role along with its managerial consequences is worth to address (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018; Edvardsson & TronVoll 2019). However, there is only a relatively small body of literature that is concerned with value capture on co-creation experience of value field in the interaction environment (Schryen 2013).

The value co-creation literature reports that co-creation is difficult to understand especially when value is transferred from an organizational to a consumer perspective respectively (Vargo & Lusch 2017). Therefore, managerial effort and action is bounded with the rationality and notion of value capture. A more detailed understanding of the value capture process, as well as the transfer of value in the online engagement platforms and the factors determined such a strategy is worth addressing in order to formulate an effective strategy (Chen et al. 2018; de Oliveira & Cortimiglia 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2016).

Previous research like Lepak, Smith and Taylor, (2007), Pitelis (2009), Agafonow (2014) and Brodie, Löbler and Fehrer (2019) among others, has focused on explaining the theoretical concept of VCC and value capture, its meaning and definition, the mechanisms associated with it, and how it is used by the organizations. On one hand, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) argued that value

co-creation is not entirely dependent on customers and could be done either through an individual, organization or society. However, the role of technology is not covered by the authors. Similarly, Pitelis (2009) argued that value co-creation is dependent on nature, determinant and trade-offs under the aegis of the business environment and can be strengthened by learning, adaptive and proactive behavior. The author also asserted that firm differentiation can be considered as a major strategy for value capture, which is again dependent on the learning and proactive behavior of the firm. On the other hand, Brodie, Löbler and Fehrer (2019) argues for the use of service dominant logic towards creating foundations for value co-creation. Nevertheless, additional research has highlighted and addressed the need for future investigation which questions VCC, seeking a more definitive concept of value (Ranjan & Read 2016):

- How do actors describe the value and the process of value co-creation?
- What mechanisms best create and capture value?

While it is established that customer engagement can lead to value co-creation using the resources and capabilities of the organization through its customers and online network relationships, precisely how it can be accomplished remains vague (Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen 2016). Then, further examination of the characteristics of co-creation in an increasingly digitalized world of interactions is required (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018). Further, Eggert et al. (2018) state that the mechanisms that can be used to assess the value of common experience is an important area for more research in the context of online VCC. Additional evidence on the need for further research on value capture mechanism through Technology use in the organization, is documented by James, Leiblein and Lu (2013, p. 1124) in their detailed literature review of 186 articles, written between 1980 and 2011, regarding value capture and innovation, where the author points out that “*we lack*

a cohesive logic that identifies and explains how specific causal mechanisms link different institutional, industry, firm, and technological characteristics with the selection of particular value capture mechanisms". While Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) have acknowledged the influence of marketing and customer relationship through the use of digital platforms, this study highlights the challenges for firms to adopt a full-fledged social media presence. This leads to the conclusion that the existing literature does not fully reflect the adoption of social media platforms or identify the mechanism of technology in value capture. In other words, all work to date is theoretical in scope and has not fully described the appropriate value capture mechanisms, with several articles calling for further discussion of value capture in social media-based value creations as being critical (Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen 2016).

1.4. Research Aim and Objectives:

The focus of this research is how the organization can develop a VCC framework based upon interactive experience with customers within an online co-creation context. It reflects how value is co-created starting with engagement, adaption and resource integration through online platforms by exploring and defining elements for discussion within this mechanism. To address the stated problem, this research involves a sequence of goals and objectives that support the arguments and justification for the study.

The overall aim of the research is:

To explore the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry.

In addition, four objectives have been developed in order to fulfill the aforementioned main aim.

Firstly, to establish how the implementation of social media platforms in the organization affects

its value co-creation and value capture capabilities.

Secondly, to determine the impact of social media platforms' diversity on the value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations.

Thirdly, to investigate the impact of social media platforms on organizational strategy towards its beneficiary.

Fourthly, to provide recommendations for effective application of social media for enhancing the value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations.

The focus is on how the organization can employ knowledge to develop a VCC framework based upon interactive experience with customers within an online co-creation context. It reflects how value is co-created starting with engagement, adoption, and resource integration through online platforms. Therefore, this thesis tries to explore and define the elements for discussion within this mechanism.

1.5. Research Questions:

The present study attempts to address the following research questions in order to support bridging the identified research gap and to enable the fulfilment of the above research objectives:

1. How value is co-created and captured through social media platforms in the organization?
2. How does the social media platforms diversity enable the co-creation and value capture within the organizations?
3. How does the network platform affect organizational strategy towards its beneficiary?
4. How can organizations effectively employ social media for enhancing their value co-creation and value capture capabilities?

The implementation of the research objectives and addressing the research questions contribute to

bridging the identified gaps in both practical and theoretical aspect.

1.6. Significance and Contribution of the Study:

As stated earlier, this thesis aims to explore the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry.

The study attempts to develop a comprehensive framework that better defines VCC applications, providing a map for marketing strategists that enables a more efficient and effective management of the value co-creation process, targeting service delivery and value capture. The study shows which SDL applications work as the sought-after interface prior to hit-and-miss stages, essentially a menu of what social media platform is best suited to obtain a more complete and detail conversation with the customer in order to meet a defined strategic objective.

In doing so, this study establishes a rich understanding of how each component in the value capture is related and interlinked with each part of the organization and the online customers.

This study has empirical contribution which is expected to enable the organizations to understand:

- The role of social media in supporting value co-creation and capture through meta data and collaborative platforms in the organization;
- How does social media support in designing efficient process and mechanisms to co-create through differentially?
- The strategic use of social media to connect with the desired customer, for the right purposes and at the right time.

Furthermore, the present research contributes to the body of knowledge in three different and practice in different ways: First, the current study contributes to knowledge by having a new

conceptualizations of value co-creation and value capture between the organization and the use of social media by co-constructing the process through constructivist grounded theory (CGT) approach. This approach is selected as preempt initiative to address value co-creation and social media with CGT, which provides the originality of this research. That is, the research contributes to the SDL by providing a clear approach of co-creation and value capture mechanisms and address the questions raised by Brodie, Löbner and Fehrer (2019) by having a focused and applicable model of the co-creation and value capture with the help of technological means within the organization. Even though the strength of technology to enhance the VCC process the present study provides a novel perspective due to its focus on one specific type of technology – social media. Furthermore, it allows development of the SDL theoretical framework which represents another critical theoretical contribution of the present research. Nevertheless, their research provided a general focus on technology, while the present study adds a clear understanding about the role of specific technological aspect – the use of social media.

Second, filling the research gap through substantive theory, which is defined as a specific theory, specifically developed for the individual needs of the present research (Charmaz 2014) enables the combination of the research findings into robust theoretical frameworks and perspectives. The grounded substantive theory provides a critical contribution of the theory development process, as it provides further avenues for the transformation of the context specific substantive theory into a well-established formal theory.

Third, the thesis develops a maturity model for VCC through social media and a theoretical framework linking business strategy, social media platforms and customer engagement with the theoretical concepts of service dominant logic, value of experience and absorptive capacity theory provide useful direction to business practitioners. Regardless of the focus on the UAE hospitality

industry, the findings from the present study provide new knowledge and starting point for further advancement of the current marketing and management in the context of diverse sectors, geographic, cultural, and temporal settings.

1.7. Research Propositions:

Six research propositions, presented in the following lines have been developed with reference to the CGT methodology adopted for the needs of the present research. The six propositions are defined as follows:

RP1: Social media has an impact on value co-creation in the hospitality sector in UAE

RP2: The use of social media has an impact on the value capture through collaboration with customers

RP3: The digital media content influences customer engagement and co-creation benefits

RP4: The diversity of social media platforms influences the process of value capture and value co-creation in the hotel industry

RP5: The process of value capture through the social media platforms has an influence on organizational strategy

RP6: Value co-creation using the social media platform has significant implications in the hospitality industry

1.8. Research Methodology:

This research follows a qualitative inductive research approach which can provide insights into the subject rather than focus on quantitative studies of statistical synopsis. The research selectively chooses to adopt the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) method by Charmaz (2006). The choice of method is consistent with the interpretivist paradigm used in this study (Alemu, Stevens

& Ross 2012). As per interpretivist paradigm, researchers and participants work together to co-construct meaning, rather than trying to objectively validate the substantive theory developed on the basis of the research results (Charmaz 2006). Therefore, it is argued that interpretivism and inductive approach support to go in-depth and formulate a value co-creation mechanism and its capture within a social interaction framework. The UAE has been selected as the field for the present investigation due to its developed hospitality sector and the extensive adoption of social media in the country (Global media insights 2021). The 6 luxury hotels (3 in Abu Dhabi - Emirates Palace, Sofitel Corniche Abu Dhabi, Fairmont Bab Al Bahar and 3 in Dubai - Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Rixos Premium Dubai JBR, and Jumeirah Beach) have been selected due to their active use of social media platforms ranked high by Hotel de Tech (2021a; 2021b).

The study employs 24 Semi-structured interviews performed face-to-face and via zoom for data collection. This sample size is reached through theoretical saturation. Multinational hotels that are using social media and engage in value co-creation have been selected for the present research. The sample for the interviews consists of 24 experienced middle management and directors from six UAE hotels working at various departments who are directly involved in their organization's social media, value co-creation processes and can therefore provide a holistic view on the research topic. This composition of the sample allows for reaching diversified opinions and theoretical sufficiency. The interviews are performed over the 6 months' period between August 2020 and January 2021, through both face-to-face and zoom meetings with respect to the social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with the adopted CGT research, the data collection and data transcription process flows simultaneously for better accuracy.

Furthermore, secondary data in the form of qualitative content analysis of social media posts from 6 UAE hotels, gathered from 12 different social media accounts (6 Instagram and 6 Facebook)

collected between January and June 2021 is also utilized to supplement the interview findings. Social baker analytics is also employed as a credible source of social media usage data from the UAE hotel industry, in order to enhance the credibility of the research findings. The approach of combining social media analysis (namely Facebook) with Social Bakers Suite platform has previously been employed by Maresova, Hruska and Kuca (2020) and Cazorla Milla, Mataruna-Dos-Santos and Muñoz Helú (2020). These two social media – Instagram and Facebook have been preferred for the secondary data collection as the most popular social media platforms globally and in the UAE context, which is expected to provide rich information basis for the analysis (Global media insights 2021). As shown in Table 1.1 below, Sofitel Corniche Abu Dhabi and Fairmont Bab Al Bahr rank at the first two positions based on their Instagram activity. In addition to that, all the six hotels score well in both selected social media platforms among the 50 most active hotels in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Table 1. 1. Selected hotels – social media performance

Hotel	Location	Instagram	Facebook
		Rank	rank
Sofitel Corniche Abu Dhabi	Abu Dhabi	1	19
Fairmont Bab Al Bahr	Abu Dhabi	2	33
Emirates Palace	Abu Dhabi	9	7
Sofitel Dubai the Palm	Dubai	2	30
Rixos Premium Dubai JBR	Dubai	16	23
Jumeirah Beach	Dubai	28	13

(Hotel de tech 2021a; 2021b)

In selecting large multinational hotel organizations with astute managers and directors, this research combined purposeful sampling (Patton 2017) with the theoretical sample (Charmaz 2006) to test the boundary conditions and ensure the overall validity of the results (Busse, Kach & Wagner 2016). This research provides a case for the use of the CGT method proposed by Charmaz (2006) for qualitative research aimed at the value co-creation through social media platforms. The CGT approach is employed by authors like Muninger, Hammedi and Mahr (2019) and

Wunderlich, Wangenheim and Bitner (2012) in the investigation of the strength of social media in the value creation and VCC process. Even though CGT is not very popular in the business field, a recent publication by Troisi, Visvizi and Grimaldi (2021) presents another example of the adoption of CGT in the investigation of the value co-creation in the context of innovation and smart services for aerospace technology clusters. A qualitative inductive research approach is adopted in this research in order to provide insights into the subject rather than focus on quantitative studies of statistical synopsis (Charmaz 2006).

The researcher incorporates three staged coding represented by initial line-by-line open coding, focused coding and theoretical coding to simultaneously analyze the collected data to avoid mistakes and use it as a heuristic device (Bryant & Charmaz 2019). The initial line-by-line open coding is aimed at identification of critical issues in the semi-structured interviews' transcripts. The second coding stage - focused coding, is used to detect the main categories and relationships between the main categories, identified in the qualitative data. The last, theoretical coding stage ensures saturation of the detected categories. The social media posts collected in this research are also coded through the same three-stage coding procedure, composed of initial line-by-line coding used for breaking down the data into discrete excerpts and preparation of code labels, focused coding aimed at the categorization of the identified posts into meaningful categories, and theoretical coding connecting the developed focused codes to theoretical concepts (Johnson 2014). Furthermore, the collected social media posts from the six hotel organizations are analyzed through content analysis and descriptive analysis following the approach proposed by Yost, Zhang and Qi (2021).

1.9. Thesis Structure:

The present thesis is divided into six separate chapters. As the noted, it starts with introduction of the thesis, which covers the research background, research context, research problems, research question, research aims and objectives and research methodology. The introductory chapter is followed by literature review aimed at providing a starting point to theoretically develop a VCC framework based on previous studies through the lenses of SDL and ACT. Also it addresses main concepts of value co-creation, absorptive capacity (acquiring new value, assimilate value and exploit value), online customer engagement, social media platforms (engagement platform). With several examples in real world, this chapter introduces the significance of co-creation in service organization. It allows creating an understanding and conceptualization of co-creation, customer activities in social media and their active participation in an engagement platform. A theoretical framework is developed to get a starting point of how we can target the sampling chosen (Charmaz 2019). The framework assists the researcher to have some starting point to go further from the existing literature and collect data. It developed through two steps: first develop a conceptual relationship in the reviewed literature of value-co-creation, second develop a conceptual framework of value-co-creation process in social media.

The Methodology chapter presents the research methodology employed in the performed research. The study adopts a qualitative research approach a constructivist grounded theory as a primary research methodology. The research entails three (3) different features of data collection. First, the choice of active online interaction customer in service sectors as hotels. The second stage is primary data collection- semi-structured interviews, conducted with invited managers and senior executives to participate in the study. The interviews are designed as semi-structured to allow more extended exploration of co-creation in social media and enable an understanding of customer

engagement with a managerial perspective. Secondary data is collected in the form of social media posts and analytics.

The fourth chapter outlines the data collection process and presentation of the research findings. It can be logically divided into two parts related to the primary and secondary data collection respectively. The chapter represents the qualitative data collection process and response rate, the theoretical saturation and sufficiency reached in line with the CGT approach in this study, as well as the data analysis process employed. The chapter continues with overview of the demographic characteristics and the three stage coding of the primary qualitative data gathered through the performed semi-structured interviews, entailing initial line-by-line, focused and theoretical coding. The theoretical coding presents the 5 main concepts and 15 categories identified in the interview data.

The secondary data analysis is represented, together with the content analysis process and the sampling procedure employed.

The fifth chapter presents discussion of the research findings. It presents the approach taken for triangulation of the findings from the primary and secondary analysis in the light of the extant literature related to the topic of the present thesis. The discussion of findings is organized around the key concepts outlined in chapter 4. The chapter continues with substantive theory related to VCC and value capture, customer engagement, social media platforms and organizational strategy, as well as situating the theory. VCC Social Media Maturity Framework for organizations, as well as theoretical framework developed on the grounds of the primary and secondary research findings is also presented in this chapter.

The final chapter of the present thesis exposes reflection and implications of the research. It begins with researcher's reflection of the performed GCT research, followed by discussion of the

fulfillment of the research objectives developed in the introductory chapter. The substantive theory is evaluated in the light of its strategic implications for the business sector, practical implications for management and marketing specialist, theoretical implications for academics, as well as implications and areas for further investigation. The limitations of the performed research are also discussed in the final chapter of this paper. This structure of the present thesis provides logical flow of the narrative, discussing the opportunities for VCC through social media in the UAE hotel industry. The clear identification of implications and limitations allows the reader to clearly understand the logic of the performed research and the value of the research findings for the management and marketing theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter addresses the fundamentals of developing a value co-creation framework through reviewing SDL, ACT, co-creation, social media, and engagement platforms. Specifically, in this chapter, the study aims to explore the mechanisms and processes within the organizations to achieve co-creation and value capture by recognizing the central concepts around social media and the co-creation literature. This chapter presents a critical argument of the role of online engagement to obtain knowledge towards value creation and competitive advantage to illustrate the significance of using social co-creation in the organization. Prior to developing the value co-creation framework, understanding the context of the key components of the framework is essential. Therefore, this chapter provides useful reviews on some of the critical topics of debate within the social media and value co-creation, including value, value creation, and value of experience and service dominant logic. Furthermore, a discussion of the present knowledge related to VCC in the context of the hospitality sector is also presented in this chapter. The business and strategic implications of social media for VCC and value capture is also reviewed with a focus on their implications on brand value and competitive advantage, as well as the capabilities of social media platforms and their role as a tool in the SDL. The questions of customer engagement, organizational arrangements, value capture and absorptive capacity theory are also presented in the review of literature. Eventually, in the final sections of this chapter is proposed a framework of the value-co-creation process in social media grounded on the conceptual relationship in the reviewed literature of value-co-creation are conceptualized in the review of academic literature. A summary of explaining the developed conceptual framework, and relevant propositions developed for the present research are presented in the end of this chapter.

2.2. Identification and Description of the Key Concepts:

The present literature review begins with the conceptualization of key concepts for this dissertation. First of all, the concept of value has received vast research interest from authors like Etgar (2008), Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), Vargo and Lusch (2008). It takes a fundamental role in understanding the value as a core component of every market transaction and a critical cornerstone of the value co-creation concept. In addition to this, the present section reviews the value creation concept, available in the works of researchers including Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007), Wang, Hsieh and Yen (2011), Töytäri and Rajala (2015), Vargo and Lusch (2016). The last concept included in this section is value of experience (VoE) which connects the value creation process with the emotions created in the customer's experience (Holbrook 1994). Scholars like Gilovich et al. (2015), Grönroos (2011), Wang, Hsieh and Yen (2011) work on the problems related to the VoE concept.

2.2.1. Value

The first core concept reviewed in the present chapter is value, which lies at the heart of any marketing equation. Whether it is considered from the revenue stream of the organization or the value derived by the customer's point of value, is key to any market. The views of diverse authors on the conceptualization of value focal for the present study are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2 1. Definitions of Value

Concept	Author, year	Approach	Conceptualization
Value	Marx (1990)	Conceptual	Value in use presents <i>"the physical properties of the commodity"</i> while value in exchange is <i>"the exchange relation of commodities.... characterized precisely by its abstraction from their use-values"</i>
	Schechter (1984)	Descriptive/Explanatory	Value means all factors that make up the overall shopping experience: quantitative and qualitative, subjective and objective <i>"Value means all factors that make up the overall shopping experience: quantitative and qualitative, subjective and objective"</i>
	Meglino and Ravlin (1998)	Objectivist approach	<i>"Value is what an individual places upon an object or an</i>

			<i>outcome, i.e. the value one places on pay”</i>
	Töytäri and Rajala, (2015)	Conceptual	<i>“Value is future oriented, as many of the benefits and incurred costs will be realized only over a long period of time.”</i>
	Etgar (2008)	Descriptive/Explanatory	<i>“Intrinsic values imply that an experience is appreciated for its own sake, while extrinsic values serve as means to an end.”</i>

(Compiled by the author)

Schechter (1984) presents value as the complex of factors composing the experience of the shopper. In contrast, Meglino and Ravlin (1998) define value as an objective assessment of the expected outcomes from the purchase. This view is supported by Marx (1990) who distinguishes between value in use connected to the quantitative subjective assessment of the ability of a product to serve its purpose, and value in exchange that presents the quantitative assessment of the consumer of a good, or the amount of money they are willing to sacrifice for a good. The utility is placed in the center of the value concept. Etgar (2008) divides the values into intrinsic (internal to the consumer) and extrinsic (means to an end). Holbrook (1994) further emphasizes the multidimensional nature of the value concept in their typology of the values distributing 8 different values over the extrinsic and intrinsic value dimensions. According to the author, the extrinsic

values include efficiency, excellence, status, and esteem, while the intrinsic category entails the values of play, aesthetics, ethics, and spirituality. In contrast, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) present a multi-level perspective of value, dividing the value concept into the cost of goods, the perceived value of the organization, the customer perceived value as well as experience value. The consumer perceived value, in turn, is defined by Zeithaml (1988) as “... *the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given*”, while the value perceived by the organization is related to the profits generating potential of the relationship between the business entity and its clients. This view presents the interplay between benefits and sacrifices that lead to the complex process of consumers’ value perceptions. Furthermore, Töytäri and Rajala (2015) emphasize the future orientation of the value concept, as a multitude of the benefits, as well as the costs of a product or service can be derived in the long run.

The present review uncovered the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the value concept, justified by the diverse views and classification of values. It can be defined from the perspective of the interplay between costs and benefits, while the value perceived by the customer and the business organization varies. Upon the discussion of the value concept, the discussion in the following sub-section continues with a multi-layered perspective of the value creation.

2.2.2. Value Creation on the Multi-Layered Perspective

The creation of value is a problem covered in the works of different authors. For instance, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) believe that value is created from a multi-layered perspective of individuals, organizations and societies. Organizations are thought to create value when they develop new strategies or designs and customers create value when they buy or use this product

or service, creating the value experience for the customer (Ramaswamy 2008). The authors also point out that creating value is the result of interactions between the organization and the customer, and further notes that value creation is an important strategic concept in the field of management and organization literature. They further differentiate between the individuals and groups providing value at the micro-level (SDL), and the ability to absorb this value information at the macro level to enable better strategic management and organizational strategies involved (ACT). To define value creation, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) emphasize certain conditions and objectives based on conceptual studies and expert analysis, such as that value creation depends to a large extent on the participants involved. Popular definitions of value creation and value co-creation are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2 2. Definitions of Value Creation and Value Co-Creation

	Author, year	Approach	Conceptualization
Value Creation	Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007)	Descriptive/Explanatory	<i>“Value creation depends on the relative amount of value that is subjectively realized by a target user (or buyer) who is the focus of value creation? Whether individual, organization, or society? And that this subjective value realization</i>

			<i>must at least translate into the user's willingness to exchange a monetary amount for the value received."</i>
	Wang, Hsieh and Yen (2011)	Conceptual	<i>"Value creation activities in which both the service provider and customer collaborate in the customer's consuming and experiencing particular services."</i>
	Helkkula and Kelleher (2010)	Empirical/Qualitative	<i>"Value is created by the customer based on the "value-in-use". While the firm can create and communicate value propositions, it is the customer, not the firm that creates value through dynamic situational specific value creating</i>

			<i>processes.”</i>
	Sashi (2012)	Conceptual	<i>“Customers often add value by generating content and even become ardent advocates for the seller’s products and can influence purchase decisions of others in peer-to-peer interactions.”</i>
Value co-creation	Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004)	Descriptive/Explanatory	<i>“Armed with new tools and dissatisfied with available choices, consumers want to interact with firms and thereby “co-create” value. Value exchange and extraction are the primary functions performed by the market, which is separated from the value creation process.”</i> <i>“Co-creation experiences</i>

			<i>are the basis of value”</i>
	Breidbach and Maglio (2016)	Empirical	<i>“Service systems embody an abstraction on value co-creation, and consist of entities or configurations of resources (including people, information, and technology) that are connected by value propositions.”</i>
	Vargo and Lusch (2016)	Descriptive/Explanatory	<i>“Most important among the extensions has been a general zooming out to allow a more holistic, dynamic, and realistic perspective of value creation, through exchange, among a wider, more comprehensive (than firm and customer)</i>

			<i>configuration of actors.”</i>
	Vargo and Lusch (2008)	Descriptive/Explanatory	<i>“The customer is always a co-creator of value. Value networks and constellations, as we later argued, will continue to mask the fundamental nature of exchange.”</i>

Compiled by the author

Customers have been actually identified as the main factor in value creation. According to studies by Vargo and Lusch (2016), customers not only provide value but rather participate in value creation, with engagement being the main concept of value creation. Customer engagement both enhances the emotional and interactive relationships of the customer and helps the organization in the long run (Ahn & Rho 2014).

Based on service orientation, Grönroos and Voima (2013) distinguish between the concepts of "value creation" and "value co-creation". The former relies on the customer's activities as economic participants, while the latter consists of the interaction of two or more economic participants (providers and customers). Grönroos (2011, p. 280) had earlier conceptualized value co-creation as "a collaborative process that adds value to one or two participants through direct interaction". The framework by Grönroos and Voima (2013) employs three key areas in which

value can be created and co-created together, with the provider, jointly with the customer, as shown in Figure 2.1. It defines the role of the provider and the customer, as well as the boundaries, location and nature of value creation, where value creation refers to the use of value and value co-creation as a function of interaction.

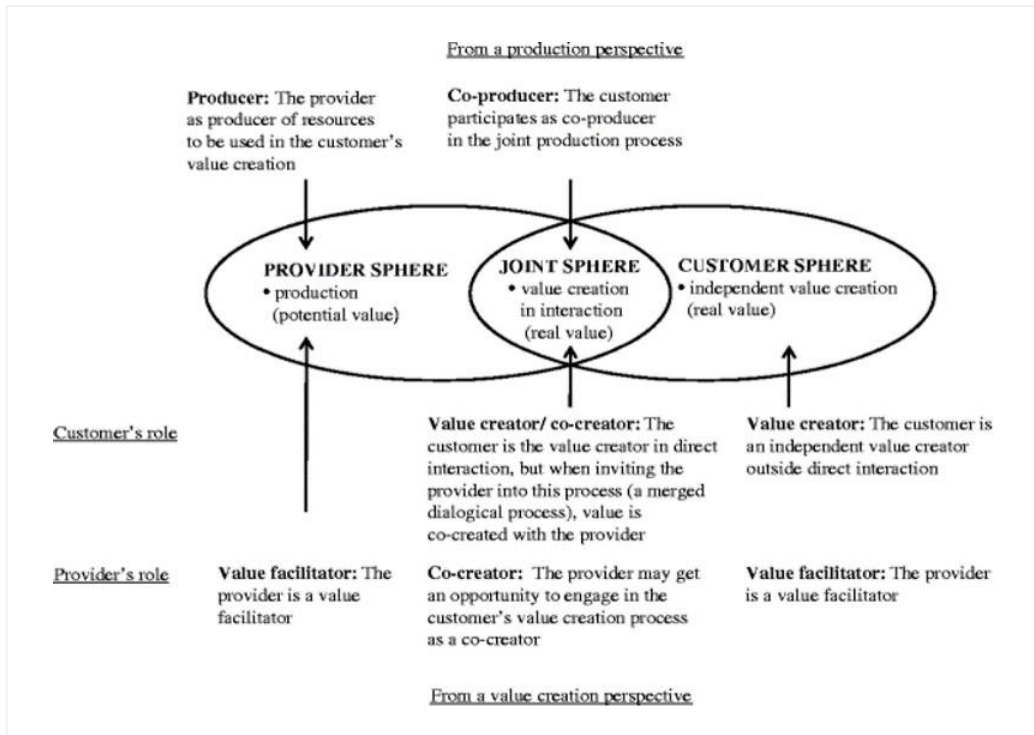


Figure 2. 1: A framework of value creation spheres(Grönroos & Voima 2013, p. 141).

With regard to value co-creation, the cooperation between different participants helps to create value (Arkadan et al. 2013). In order to effectively seize the value created, organizations need to understand their target customer (Lepak, Smith & Taylor 2007). The value of experience can only be generated after the customer has purchased and gained knowledge of the product “Thus, it can be said that every time a customer buys any product or service, they both acquire value and deliver value to the organization through the exchange, making value multifaceted” (Zhang & Lin 2015). This combination of experience value and exchange value creates the empirical value.

On the basis of research cited, the main conditions necessary for the value creation include interaction between the organization and the customer, through the platform allowing the mutual creation of value. Furthermore, co-creation is presented as one of the external values that helps to obtain value. The value co-creation concept is reviewed in further details in section 2.4 of the present chapter to provide a thorough understanding of this notion, which is fundamental for the research problem in the present study.

2.2.3. Value of Experience (VoE):

The concept of value of experience (VoE) is specifically connected to service industries. Therefore, it requires a special attention in the present study aimed at the hospitality industry. Definitions of VoE are depicted in Table 2.3.

Table 2 3. Definitions of Value of Experience

Concept	Author, year	Approach	Conceptualization
Value of Experience	Brodie et al. (2011)	Conceptual	“ <i>Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.</i> ” Specifically, Premise 10 emphasizes the highly experiential, inherently subjective, and contextual nature of the value co-creation concept. This particular premise has its roots in the notion of the “experience economy”.”

	Grönroos (2011)	Conceptual	<i>“The value that the subject gains from the consumption experience is created through that interaction.”</i>
	Wang, Hsieh and Yen (2011)	Empirical/Quantitative	<i>“Customer value is generated from the customer’s experience in consumption, while a supplier’s service offerings are of value only through the customer’s cooperation in consuming and experiencing the offerings.”</i>
	Grönroos and Voima (2013)	Conceptual	<i>“Value as value-in-use cannot exist before it is created (or emerges) from the usage process, where it is accumulating, and therefore cannot be assessed before usage.”</i>
	Gilovich et al. (2015)	Explanatory	<i>“Purchases do not come stamped as “experiences” or “possessions.” Instead, it is the set of psychological processes that tend to be invoked by experiences</i>

			<i>and material goods that determine how much satisfaction they provide.”</i>
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(Compiled by the researcher)

VoE is considered to be the insight customers gain based on their previous personal experience in communicating and consuming products or services, either individually or collectively, incorporating the emotions, knowledge and feedback from the customer (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). Gummesson and Mele (2010) claim that these activities related to value-added experiences help shape the skills and knowledge of customers.

The concept of VoE is represented in the seminal academic paper by Holbrook (1994) where the author emphasizes the ability of the consumption process to trigger emotions, which in turn result in consumer behavioral responses, based on the interactive relativistic experience. According to the author, the focus in the value creation process is shifted away from the act of the purchase and connected with the determinants of the consumer experience, including the views of the customer, their extrinsic or intrinsic, active or reactive, orientation towards self or others.

Therefore, VoE is understood as the value created on the grounds of the knowledge or information about a product/service, acquired by a customer and the respective experience related to it (Helkkula & Kelleher 2010). This is primarily influenced by the customer's level of self-understanding and other skills developed by the customer through experience with the product or service. This statement is supported by Wang, Hsieh and Yen (2011), who noted that customers can consume and create value experiences with the help of co-creation.

VoE is rooted in multi-dimensional psychological processes undergoing in the consumer's mind.

Experience, in turn is related to considerable hedonic effects, which result in higher satisfaction, as compared to the mere consumption of tangible goods, while at the same time it also has a significant socializing dimension, as it is very likely for the experience to become a topic of discussions between the consumer and their social environment (Gilovich et al. 2015).

Gilovich et al. (2015, p. 155) point out the significant value-creating potential of experience *“psychologically, it is the experience that lives on and the possession that fades away...as consumers are a total sum of their experiences”*. Similarly, Wang, Hsieh and Yen (2011) clearly point out that this promotes individualism and enhances the knowledge and information that customers acquire, with value experience having a direct impact on customers and organizations. Brodie et al. (2011) point out that the success of the organization depends primarily on the customer’s knowledge and skills, in concert with the organization’s skills and expertise.

Etgar (2008) points out that value creation depends on both customer interaction and resource integration, while value creation can only be accomplished if there is a continuous interaction between the organization and the customer, now technically available through the social network. Co-creation scholars also believe that continuous interaction helps build a personal experience that is achieved through the consumption of products or services (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). Thus, value creation requires development of a co-creation strategy, a two-way communication platform, between the organization and its customers, which enables the transfer of value concepts. Furthermore, both value recognition and value assimilation are equally important to the organization. Therefore, the consumer experience can be defined as an important channel for development of value co-creation and value acquisition. New marketing approaches to the development and promotion of products or services, organizations are adapting their knowledge and skills to the day-to-day use of the same product or service (Vargo & Lusch 2008). Thus, a

product or service combines value into its actual use, or use-value, rather than through its sales price or exchange-value. Yet, while researchers are united on the importance of a more active role of customers, there is no consensus on defining terms and potential mechanisms to do so. On this basis, understanding the value acquisition strategy requires comprehension of the meaning of value, the different types of value and the different conditions that guide the process of value acquisition. Participation, customer buying behavior, management behavior and other organizational factors form part of the value acquisition process.

2.2.4. Summary and Synthesis of Research Gaps

The discussion in this section of the literature review chapter evidences that the concepts of value, value creation and co-creation, as well as VoE are considerably covered in diverse research. With respect to the focus of the present research on a service sector - the hospitality industry, the VoE concept takes a critical role. Experience takes a central role in the services and in the tourism industry specifically (Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie 2011). Nevertheless, the evidence related to the creation of value and the VoE in the geographical and industry context selected for the present research is limited. This emphasizes the need for bridging the identified gap through the present study.

2.3. Service Dominant Logic Conceptualization

This section is focused on a review of the conceptual basis related to SDL, aimed at providing a detailed understanding of this logic as the basis of VCC (Brodie, Löbner & Fehrer 2019). The research problem related to SDL is detected in the research by scholars like Vargo and Lusch (2017), Brodie, Löbner and Fehrer (2019) and Grönroos (2000). This section presents the theoretical background of SDL, followed by an introduction to service marketing from the

perspective of SDL and competing views related to the SDL. The section concludes with a summary of identified research gaps.

2.3.1. Theoretical Background of Service Dominant Logic:

To begin with, SDL is defined as the “*process of one actor using its resources for the benefit of another*” (Vargo & Lusch 2008). In order to provide detailed understanding of the service dominant (SD) logic, the historical review, published by Vargo and Lusch (2004a), is summarized in Table 2.4.:

Table 2 4. SDL Historical Review

Author	Conceptualization
Bastiat (1848) in Arksey and Knight (1999)	The great economic law is that service is exchanged for service. It is trivial, it is normal. Nevertheless, it is the starting point, the middle and the end of economic science.
Alderson (1957)	What is needed is not an explanation of the utility of marketing creation, but a marketing explanation of the whole process of creating utility.
Kotler (1977)	The importance of physical products lies not only in owning them, but also in accessing the services they provide.
Gummesson (1995)	Customers do not purchase goods or services. They buy products that provide services and

	create value. Activities can provide services; things can provide services.
Grönroos (2000)	Focus shifted from the product to the customer's creation of value. The customer creates value for the customer, and they are aware of it. Marketing focuses on value creation rather than value distribution.

(Based on: Vargo and Lusch (2004a))

According to Vargo and Lusch (2017, p.48), S-D Logic strategy is an understanding of the intention of the organizations, society and markets - *“The main premise of the SDL is that organizations, society and markets are all essentially anxious with the exchange of service.”* Lusch and Nambisan (2015) went on to say that: services are exchanged; all organizations are service companies; all markets are service-based; and all economies and societies are service-based.

Therefore, marketing thoughts and practices should be based on SDL principles. As a result, service marketing, like the sub-disciplines that have pursued service marketing for decades, is not about “breaking free” from tangible goods marketing, but that all marketing needs to move away from commodities and manufacturing-based models or the SDL, because of the inherent value to all parties with SDL. This is because SDL and VCC include the concept of using value and creating value together, not the concept of embedded value in the exchange of GDL. Therefore, instead of organizations marketing “to” the customers, they alternatively market “with” the customers, as do with the other value-creation allies in the organization’s value network, moving from Product-Centricity to Customer Focus (Brodie et al. 2011). The shift from product centrality to customer

focus is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

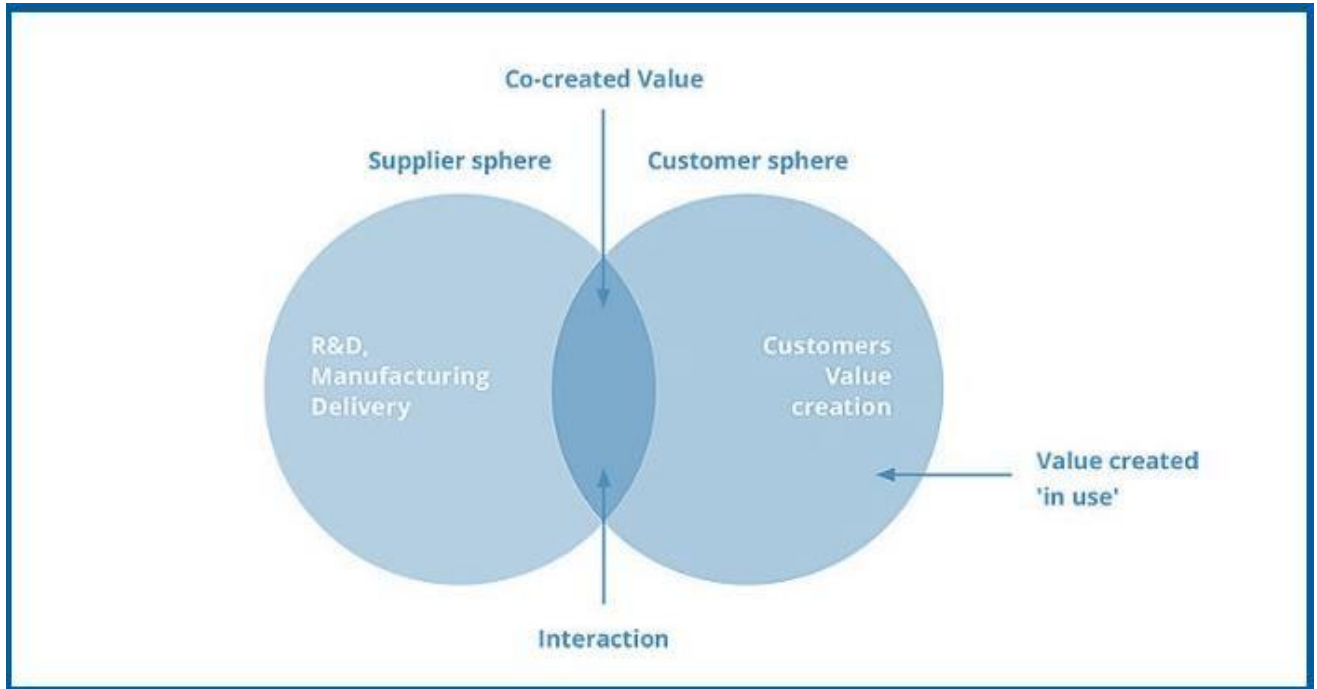


Figure 2. 2: From Product-Centricity to Customer Focus. (Adopted from Vargo & Lusch 2008).

SDL contains the concepts of "value in use" and "co-creation of value", as opposed to the typical "value in exchange" and "embedded value" in GDL. As Vargo and Lusch (2008) point out, instead of telling the organization about the customer, it is better to instruct the market of the customers and other value co-creation partners within the organization value network towards the organization beneficiary.

The discussion presents the importance of SDL for the VCC process. Considering that the tourism industry selected as the setting of the present research belongs to the services sector, additional insights into the service marketing grounded on SDL is presented in the following section.

2.3.2. Introduction to Service Marketing and Service Dominant Logic:

The evolution of SDL came as a result of intense focus on service marketing that emerged as a separate field of study in the early 1980s (Vargo & Lusch 2016). Its premise is that unique

characteristics of services require different strategies compared to the marketing of physical goods. Service marketing can apply to either business-to-consumer (B2C) or business-to-business (B2B) products and services, and historically focused on, simply enough, the marketing of services (Lusch & Nambisan 2015).

SDL literally changes marketers' and marketing researchers' approach and understanding of value- creation and the customer's role in the value delivery processes, focusing on relationship value- based marketing. Vargo and Lusch (2004a) further suggest that SDL strategy is the intrinsic "perspective for all of marketing". Marketing scholarship has consistently embraced the importance of SDL, with Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2016) going so far as to state that *"increasingly, all marketing will be largely similar to previous service marketing areas of expertise."* Maglio and Spohrer (2008) suggest *"SDL strategy is the philosophical underpinning for service marketing."* While the application put forth by Vargo and Lusch (2004a) was new, the idea that services are exchanged for services was first posited by Bastiat in 1848, over a 170 years ago (Arksey & Knight 1999). Similarly, research indicates Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) had been promoting VCC many years before Vargo and Lusch (2004a) work on SDL strategy. Hence, the concept of SDL is studied and contemplated over many years.

For instance, Vargo and Lusch (2004a) have published a popular article in Marketing Magazine that provided thoughtful impact on marketing theory, and has not been well echoed in marketing textbooks. They point out that:

"Marketing inherits an exchange model from economics that has a dominant logic based on the exchange of goods, usually manufactured goods. The dominant logic focuses on physical resources, embedded value and transactions. Over the past few decades, new ideas have emerged, and the revised logic of these views has focused on intangible resources, the co-creation of values

and relationships. New ideas are converging to the new marketing- led logic in which services, rather than goods, are the basis of economic exchange” (Vargo & Lusch 2004a, p. 328).

At this point, the transition from a GDL to a SDL was fully developed in conjunction with Vargo and Akaka (2009) who continue to further summarize SDL pointing out that there is no “service” but service is the act of performing a task for another party, either directly or through good deeds. Additionally, there is not a notion of the “new” service economy because since the beginning of time services have been the basis of communication. The authors also emphasize the deep interconnection between the concepts of “value” and “co-creation”. Vargo and Akaka (2009) believe that if goods are used as service tools, they may be co-produced, but creating value together is not optional.

Service in SDL means the use of specialized abilities; knowledge and skills based upon unique behaviors, processes and performances to benefit the participant. While it has traditionally been associated predominantly with service models in information technology (such as software-as-a-service), data analysis and broader service computing it also applies to businesses, governments, and non-profit organizations, as well as social entities such as families or workgroups (Lusch & Vargo 2011).

These studies present an overview of the primary research directions currently being explored, but the dissemination of the SDL and theoretical application construction accelerates as the strategic narrative evolves into a systematic view focusing on the service ecosystem (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012). Of major importance here is the establishment of a “service science” concept, refining GDL’s definition of value into that of an intangible concept of service, validating increased demand for intangible assets, completing the circle of SDL and expanding the application of VCC throughout the organization ecosystem – Figure 2.3 (Vargo & Lusch 2016).

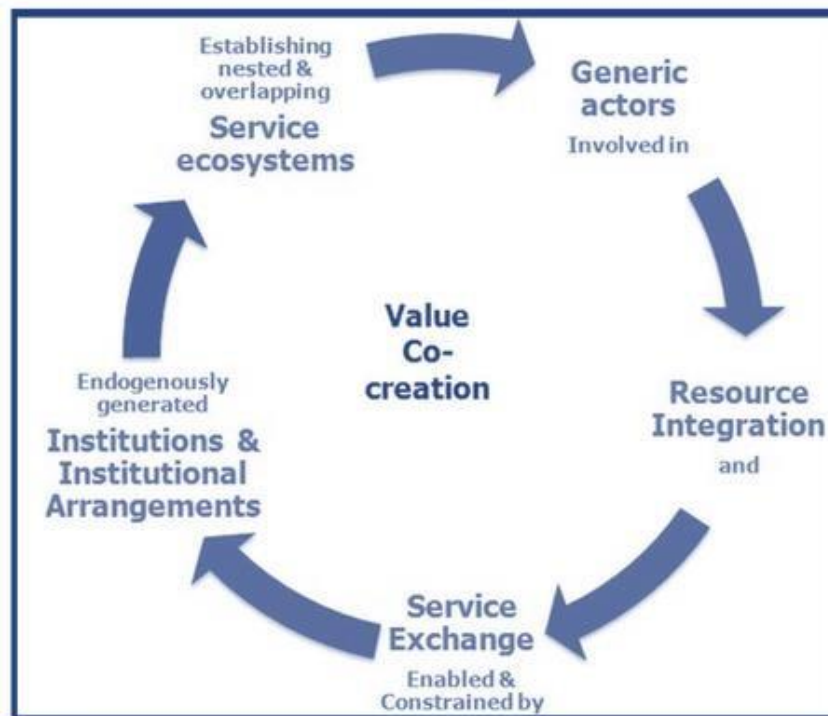


Figure 2. 3: Narrative aspects of S-DL(Adopted from Vargo & Lusch 2016)

Vargo and Lusch (2004a) were the first, however, to organize the concept of SDL, establishing axioms of the strategy which came to be known as Foundational Premises (FPs), all the while stating that SDL is not owned by them and encouraging further research, stating it was open sourced. Originally, there were only eight FPs, with FP 9 and 10 added at a later date.

Foundational Premise	2004	2008	Update
FP1	The application of specialized skills and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange.	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange	No Change AXIOM STATUS
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange.	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.	No Change
FP3	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision.	No Change	No Change
FP4	Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage.	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage.	Operant resources are the fundamental source of strategic benefit.
FP5	All economies are service economies.	No Change	No Change
FP6	The customer is always the co-producer.	The customer is always a co-creator of value.	Value is cocreated by multiple actors, always including the beneficiary. AXIOM STATUS
FP7	The enterprise can only make value propositions.	The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions.	Actors cannot deliver value but can participate in the creation and offering of value propositions.
FP8	Service-centered view is customer oriented and relational.	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational.	A service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational.
FP9		All social and economic actors are resource integrators.	No change AXIOM STATUS
FP10		Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.	No change AXIOM STATUS
FP11			New Value cocreation is coordinated through actor-generated institutions and institutional arrangements. AXIOM STATUS

Figure 2. 4: Foundational Premise (FP)(Vargo & Lusch 2016).

Furthermore, Vargo and Lusch (2015) feel the urgency to provide additional information which is necessary to some of the original FPs. Figure 2.4 represents the updated Foundational Premise (FP) development by Vargo and Lusch (2015). Selected important FP changes are explained below:

FP4: Operational resources are the basic source of competitive advantage - Vargo and Lusch (2008), used the word competitive advantage to mean the beneficial impact of operational resources. And strategic interests highlight the important implications of the conceptualization of “on-demand” services in SDL strategy, such as the role of service providers as beneficiaries in the case of mutual exchange of services. This shift does not mean that competition is irrelevant. We believe that understanding the source of alternative services for beneficiaries is important for the

service.

FP6: Customers are always value creators - perhaps no other FP would cause as many misunderstandings as FP6 and, in some cases, be as controversial. The first misconception is that Lusch and Vargo (2006) theoretically link value creation with active participation in the organization's design, definition, creation, or value proposition. As Vargo and Lusch (2008) acknowledge, since they used the term "co-production" in the original FP6, they likely caused this confusion (Vargo & Lusch 2004a). However, the basic intention of the original FP6 was to acknowledge that the benefactor was always an actor-party to its own value creation, but in doing so it might inadvertently convey that value co-creation was binary. On the contrary, it is neither singular nor binary, but rather a multi-role phenomenon, with ten large-scale emergences. The FP10 shows, that the beneficiaries are centered and play key roles in all cases of integration (and evaluation) roles. Since this is essential for any important conceptualization of service- value creation logic.

This thinking was reinforced in Rindfleisch and Morman (2003), who define customer orientation as the interaction of actions and beliefs that put the interests of the customer first and continuously create superior customer value where value creation is transferred to the customer. In addition to that, Grönroos and Voima (2013, p. 138) state that:

"Interaction is the situation in which the interaction parties participate in each other's practices. At the heart of the interaction is physical, virtual, or spiritual contact, which enables providers to create opportunities to interact with customer experiences and practices that affect their processes and outcomes. The opportunity for interaction is a natural phenomenon in service contact, but can also be created in a commodity marketing environment, such as through pick-up, logistics, problem diagnosis and call centers."

As such, the opportunity for electronic interaction is deemed a possibility, with the term interaction not implying full face-to-face or repeated contact. It only represents mutual or influential interaction. That is, value is often created and anticipated by multiple participants, including not only participants in the binary exchange, but also tangential participants (Lusch & Webster 2011). The present discussion uncovers the fundamental role of SDL in the marketing of services. Yet, specifics with regard to the interactive platforms necessary to support such collaborative interaction remain undefined and we believe that further clarification is needed to examine how the concept of SDL can create value through co-creation and capture value using specific social media platforms that enable the development of a co-creation strategy framework.

2.3.3. Summary and Synthesis of Research Gaps – SDL

Regardless of the importance of the SDL in the marketing theory and practice, presented in the above section, there is no universal definition of SDL. The concept is characterized by a wide diversity of views presented from authors like Brodie et al. (2011), Lusch and Webster (2011).

In the beginning, while there was growing recognition that brands play an important role in the value of the organization, SDL rarely mentioned brands with marketing scholars citing traditional models of service brands as either theoretical or empirical (Brodie et al. 2011). The traditional service model holds that a brand is a “good will” asset, with the brand itself having value (Brodie et al. 2013). The authors agree that SDL based on the idea of value co-creation in which organizations are driven by service providers that in turn drive value creation, using an analytical approach that significantly reshapes marketing by creating value across the customer process, with value creation being customer driven (Brodie et al. 2013; (Lusch & Webster 2011). The table in Appendix 5 delineates the various contributions by scholars as defined by their theoretical or

empirical approach.

With respect to the aim of the present research, the reason why SDL is significant to the development of a value capture framework is because the notion of co-creation is closely related with the customer's role as a value creator. In addition to that, a research gap related to the specific platforms needed to support the collaborative interactions between customers and business organizations was identified in the above discussion. Therefore, the present research attempts to bridge this gap by a study of the interconnections between SDL, VCC and value capture through specific social media, with a focus on the development of a strategic framework for VCC through social media.

2.4. Value Co-Creation in Academic Literature

The present section of the literature review chapter is aimed at providing more detailed understanding of the VCC concept and the application of social media. The works of authors like Vargo and Lusch (2016), Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011), and Brodie et al. (2013) among others, are reviewed in the present section. The section presents a discussion of the VCC concept, types of co-creation, as well as a discussion of the interplay between social media and VCC. The remaining sub-sections of this section provide a specific focus on the hospitality sector selected for the thesis research by providing discussions of value co-creation in the hospitality industry, hospitality experiences and role of online communities in VCC, and specialized mobile-apps for VCC in the hotel industry.

2.4.1. The Concept of Value Co-Creation

Value co-creation is a complex concept, combining the components of value, concepts relate to main idea of relation between customers and organization and the importance of existing

relationships to produce the interaction as presented by Vargo and Lush (2007). Over the past decade, most research in marketing has emphasized the role of organizations as service providers, establishing a widely held view that service is the way of “reconceptualization and repositioning” (Vargo & Lusch 2016) the organization which acknowledges the customer’s influence on economic change that enriches the markets. It also drives a provision for the organization to become more customer centric. However, research also acknowledges that the organization plays an important role in the discussion of SDL, since they can improve their market stature only they are capable of capturing this value.

While VCC is suggested through the service logic literature, Grönroos (2012) clarifies co-creation as a direct channel of interactions between co-creator (customer) and the organization, with the organization maintaining control over the integration of the data acquired. In addition, phenomenological characteristics mean that the service experience is “*internal, subjective, event-specific, and context-specific*” in the customer's daily life (Helkkula & Kelleher 2010, p.37). In addition, Meyer and Schwager (2007) point out that while service experiences may be based on internal experiences, they need to be associated with direct experiences in which service providers and customers interact directly. Therefore, we define indirect use experience as an experience that does not interact directly with the service provider and the customer. Some of the indirect outlets are corporate advertising, news reporting, commentary, and electronic word-of-mouth (Meyer & Schwager 2007). Therefore, although a customer of the Experience Service is part of the service phenomenon, the customer may not be in direct contact with the service provider. For example, one customer may be affected by being informed of another customer's experience, which means that the customer may also be indirectly using the service (Helkkula & Kelleher 2010). Therefore, the indirect experience that still exists in the customer's daily life should include the analytical

service experience and value creation.

While value co-creation may not be new, what is new is the increase in the possibilities brought by the internet. In the past, value co-creation needed to be done in the same place and at the same time, such as the retail shopper had to be physically in the store to be helped by a sales person, which no longer applies, with shopping platforms such as Amazon freeing such exchange from the constraints of both time and space. International trade that formerly required letters of credit and time-consuming customs clearance can now use Automatic Clearing House (ACH) transactions that make payment instantaneous with service providers, such as FedEx, clearing customs while shipments are in the air. Hence, it is no longer true that people need to be in the same room at the same time in order to co- create value. Technology has freed co-creation from constrains of time and space to anytime anywhere co-creation of value.

While the graph of published research on co-creation from 2004 to 2014 below demonstrates the interest in the concept of VCC and its impact on SDL strategic thinking has been a topic of research for a decade longer (Figure 2.5).

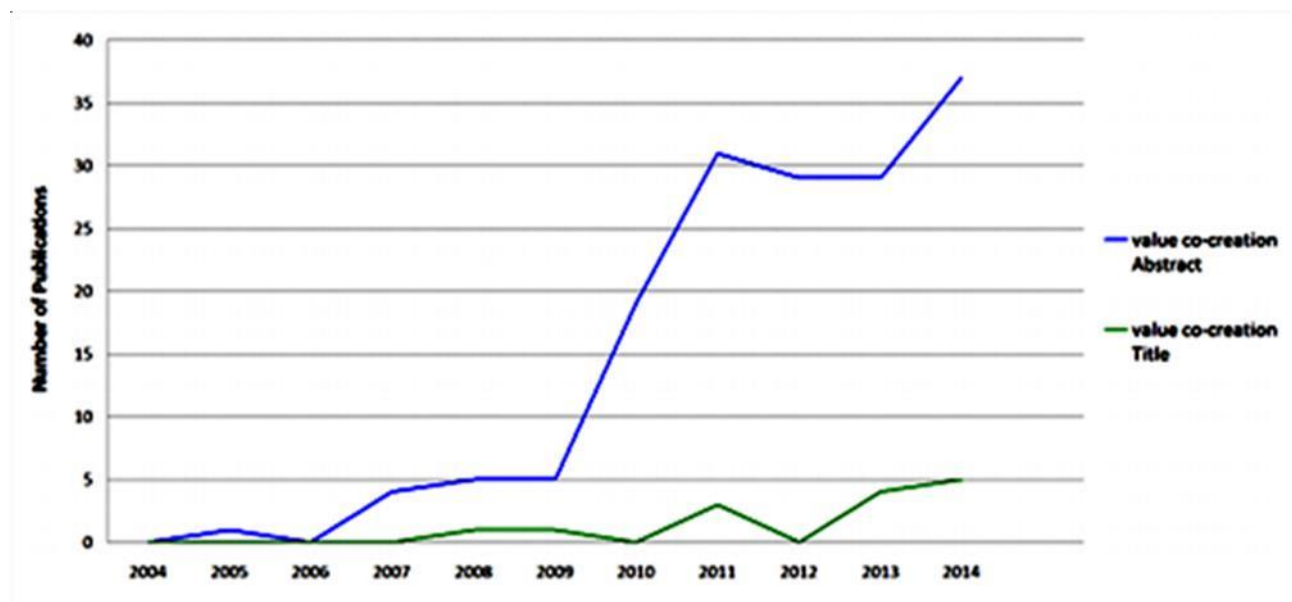


Figure 2. 5: Published Research on Co-Creation from 2004 to 2014(Adopted from Gummesson, Kuusela and Närvänen (2014))

The events regarding the conceptual evolution begin with the publication of Czepiel (1990) in which the author suggests that customer's participation may lead to greater customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Kelley et al. (1990) propose that quality, emotional responses and employee's performance are another way to view customer participation. The evolution continues with the publication by Normann and Ramirez (1993) in which the researchers note that successful companies focus on a value-creating system more than on themselves or even their industry. Furthermore, Venkatesh et al. (1998) introduce the concept of "customerization" as a form of buyer-centric mass-customization, while explicitly stating for the first time that it would enable consumers to act as a co-producer. The aforementioned authors emphasize the important role of the customer as an actor in the value creation process, which contradicts the prior marketing views. Nevertheless, Schrage (1995) argues that not all customers have the same capacity to bring some kind of knowledge to the organization. On a similar note, Bendapudi and Leone (2003) later conclude that *"the assumption of greater customization under co-production may hold only when the customer has the expertise,"* however. This critique of the new focus on the customer provides a different viewpoint that the business organizations need to consider when devising their marketing efforts.

In two articles, Kambil, Ginsberg and Bloch (1996) and Kambil, Friesen and Sundaram (1999) ultimately phrase the term "co-creation". The first, "Reinventing Value Propositions", they presented the concept of co-creation as a strategy supporting the transformation of value propositions from working with customers or complementary resources. The latter, *"co-creation: a new source of value"* presented co-creation as an important source of value enabled by the

internet and analyzed what risks companies should consider when utilizing this strategy.

In the line of the evolution, the theoretical understanding of the customer's role in the value creation process is enhanced through more detailed studies. In this respect, Bendapudi and Leone (2003) found that the first academic literature concerning *"customer participation in production"* dates back to 1979. In addition to that, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) popularized the concept of co-creation. In their book *"The future of competition"*, they further defined co-creation as the *"joint creation of value by the company and the customer; allowing the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit their context"*. At the same time, Vargo and Lush (2004a) introduced their "service-dominant logic" of marketing, with one of its *"foundational premises"* being *"the customer is always a co-producer"*. According to the SDL strategy concept, value creation was now wholly the result of a collaborative production process involving customers. More than a decade later, Sjödin et al. (2019) present the contrasting view that the concept of value creation should not be a manufacturing process that customers control on their own. Conceptually, SDL describes service as *"in its own right where the process of one actor using its resources for the benefit of another"* (Vargo & Lusch 2008). A customer's role is not only for purchasing the goods or services and consuming, but also to contribute to the organization through their experience. It is important that the information gathered from sharing experience is used to produce a better response in the market - ideas, feedback, recommendations; but the challenge is to improve the customer's best interest. Social media enables the key survival for most organization to be informed with their customer virtually.

Furthermore, Kalaignanam and Varadarajan (2006) made the first analysis of the implications of advancing information technology as it applied to co-creation, stating that developments in IT considerably support the co-creation process. Another important contribution to this evolution is

provided by Grönroos (2012) who regarded the idea of utility-oriented co-creation as a dominant value principle. The author took over the lead in marketing literature further stating that during the purchase process, value is balanced at one stage, according to the previous definition of value. Another key finding of Grönroos (2012) is that the value of use changes throughout the life-cycle of the product. Moreover, Saarijarvi and Hannu (2013) found that value co-creation is not only a key concept in service marketing and organizational management, but also a concept that is often described as a shift in the definition of value. In the same vein, Ind and Coates (2013) point out that this participatory phase creates meaning for individuals and organizations together. This understanding emphasizes the fundamental role of VCC in the marketing knowledge and practice. There were also some disagreements among several authors, with some defining value as a concept, while others did not. Hence, the concept of Saarijarvi and Hannu (2013) is very important as a holistic approach that can be used in future research projects. Additionally, the next year Saarijarvi and Hannu (2013) said the organization's role is to ensure that the value creation process supports the customer, integrates the right customer resources, and provides the right mechanism such that resource integration is enabled.

A continuing concern is that regardless of the value creation mechanism in place, managers should carefully evaluate whether it is appropriate to integrate customer resources into the organization's customer value proposition. Aligning additional customer resources with the organization's processes should always be considered a strategic issue and is closely related to the customer value the company is putting to the market.

There is also an abundance of co-creative research, with differing points of view. The majority of scholars look at the co-creation of service theory and innovation research from the perspective of service science (Saarijarvi & Hannu 2013). Service science is a term introduced by IBM (2011)

with an interdisciplinary approach to the study, design and implementation of service systems, where specific arrangements for people and technology take action to add value to each other.

Services are the only means by which value can be transferred and enable customers to take advantage of their organizational skills, and co-creation is an essential part of the theory, as cooperation enables access to suppliers and beneficial markets (Vargo & Lusch 2004b). In a separate research, Vargo and Akaka (2009) also maintain that all economies have become service economies and that competitive advantage is based on all social and economic entities that become resource integrators. In fact, organizations cannot provide value, but only value solutions that customers are always interested in as value creators.

The co-creation method adds an additional macro perspective to explain how co-creation occurs within different systems. The service perspective also depends on the difference between the customer service philosophy and the service provider philosophy. Within the framework of day-to-day operations and value-building procedures, customers are responsible for creating value by combining their resources with suppliers. This allows the provider to create value as long as the customer can participate in the value creation activities of the provider (Grönroos 2011).

Researchers have explored the aspects of what could be termed virtual innovation, where technology enables customers to participate in the creation of value creators (Gustafsson, Kristensson & Witell 2012) and discussed how co-creation activities, such as innovations, relate to co-creation. Similarly, Singaraju et al. (2016) refers to value co-creation as an innovation that takes place not only in the activities of the organization, but also in the co-creation of self-employed organizations, where people and communities, even if they voluntarily create value-added work, are funded by the organization as a forum. The customer's new role in these processes is defined by Bourdreau and Couillard (1999), where the customer/employee is considered the

primary source of value and is responsible for creating value. These new customers are neither partners nor co- producers, but unnamed resources whose work benefits other customers and ultimately gain market advantage. Shamim and Ghazali (2014) note that while customers are motivated by co-creation activities businesses are engaged in productive activities.

Conversely, Waseem, Biggemann and Garry (2017) argue that customers decide whether and when to interact with brands interact, and also point out that the customer's participation is not entirely neutral, but rather stems from the notion that the customers' interests benefit even if financial reasoning does not always inspire these causes (Healy & McDonagh 2013). Hence, simple feedback or interaction with the organization makes sense. Brodie et al. (2011) argue that the focus should be on the discovery of the creative process itself, especially in the process of interaction (Healy & McDonagh 2013). Customer engagement is the secret to this engagement and innovation experience.

Ultimately, co-creation and relationships bring together a set of participants that focus on the relationships between the organization and its customers, whether it is between the organization and business, business-to-business (B2B), or the organization and its end customer (B2C), and that the benefits that these relationships can bring in value-added resources and benefits. Cheung and To (2016) point out that value creation between organizations is the result of the development of relations, and Bourdreau and Couillard (1999) further proposed to include not only participants in the vendor network, but to extend the network to stakeholders.

For these authors, the lack of advantage for B2B suppliers is to create value within the customer network. In terms of B2C relationships, Payne and Holt (1999) believes that the experience of relationships with brands is critical to co-creating and managing brand experiences, emphasizing the need for customer support to create experiences through emotional stimulation, awareness, and

the promotion of communication of action to achieve the process.

Pathak, Ashok and Tan (2021) suggest a framework for value co-creation based on four specific groups of factors – customer context, organizational context, technology context and environmental context or C-O-T-E, which result in diverse forms of co-creation – co-creation of ideas, co-design, co-research, co-marketing and feedback loop, which are leading to co-conception for competition (Figure 2.6). Co-conception of competition is understood at the deep constructive relationship between the organization and its customers which leads to advancement of the organizational capabilities and offering, which allows the business organization to evolve and strengthen its competitive power (Frow et al. 2015). Even though the C-O-T-E framework is empirically validated in the context of service industries, its main limitation is that it is developed from B2B perspective.

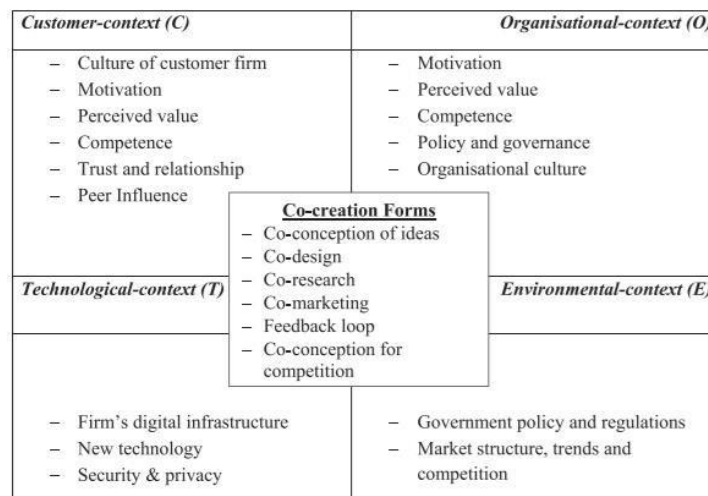


Figure 2. 6: Value Co-Creation Framework(Pathak, Ashok & Tan 2021, p. 19)

2.4.2. Types of Co-Creation

Understanding the different types of co-creation is important to understanding the different roles that co-creation plays, with how customers and organizations work together determining the type

of co-creation. Past researchers have argued that co-creation is not just about building customer relationships but focuses on the active participation of customers and user-generated content (Hollebeek & Macky 2019; Lusch & Nambisan 2015; Muntinga, Moorman & Smit 2011). Brodie et al. (2013) highlight the importance of user-generated content and active participation in social media.

The importance of social media has become ever more obvious, allowing customers to create, modify, access, and link content to support the creation of experience value, a common idea is a way for customers to come up with innovative ideas that can help an organization gain a competitive advantage (Cabiddu, De Carlo & Piccoli 2014). Today, with the incorporation of two-way real or virtual communication between organizations and their customers, the ability to tailor products to their needs in a collaborative design is a reality (Payne, Storbacka & Frow 2008).

In addition to product customization, there are numerous other applications found within the customer digital platform arena. Co-production is where customers and organizations work together to produce products and services, and aims to reduce prices by engaging customers in the organization processes (Saarijarvi & Hannu 2013). In contrast, co-promotion as a way a customer participates in an organization's promotional activities through a partnership with an organization (Payne, Storbacka & Frow 2008). Furthermore, co-pricing is where customers and organizations make pricing decisions together while co-distribution is evident when customers work with the organization to distribute products (Payne, Storbacka & Frow 2008).

Without question, research shows that co-creation can be a source of value; new value that can be gained by transferring ideas, knowledge, information and experience from one actor to another. Therefore, the mechanisms that can be used to assess the value of common experiences are an important area of research in the context of online co-creation.

2.4.3. Co-Creation and Social Media

By definition, social media refers to “*web-based and mobile technologies that allow the creation and generation of user-generated content*” (Choi, Seo & Yoon 2017). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe social media as “*a group of internet-based applications based on the ideological and technical basis of Web 2.0*”. At the same time, Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli (2014) calls social media a mobile phone or browser app that allows users to “*create, edit, access, and link content with others.*” Some typical examples of social media are blogs, wikis and social networks. Similarly, social media is the medium for effective communication and collaboration between organizations and individual customers (Rathore, Ilavarasan & Dwivedi 2016). Moreover, social media has an impact on business models in which integrating such technologies enhances organizational capabilities and provides greater opportunities for interacting with customers (Guha, Harrigan & Soutar 2017). The advantages of using social networks also allow organizations to remain in their “physical worlds” while continuing to interact with virtual worlds (Nambisan 2002). Curran and Lennon (2011) also recommend that that organizations include social media in all of their functions.

Conceptually, social media is a platform for providing communication assistance to users from different backgrounds, experiences and values (Abeza et al. 2017). However, because most social media platforms today adopt an open concept, it can affect how organizations get value (Cheung et al. 2020). The implementation of the social media is opening new opportunities for business organizations to effectively include their clients in the value co-creation activities (Martini et al 2014). Clearly, customers are the main players in creating value in social media. Though, this may provide different levels of personal interpretation based on personal experience that encourages

value creation on social media. However, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) explain that that value creation depends on how much “value” an individual user contributes. Customers with different backgrounds, knowledge and even experience in social media may stay in touch for longer. In addition, new content creates a way to develop new value that organizations can use and prepare (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010). From a co-creation perspective, social media ensures that users not only generate content, but also share personal insights into products and services.

It is useful to draw attention to how co-creation platforms actually work. As an example, take Apple Inc., a well-known brand in the field of communications technology. Apple is introducing a platform through content applications that allows customers to develop their own applications. Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2014) further explain Apple’s partnership with potential developers to participate in creating communities and brainstorming, in a book called “The Power of Co-Creation.” It allows developers to share their information with designated teams, personalize interactions with specific topics of interest, and analyze the user experience. Using their own skills, knowledge and design, they can develop their own applications and submit them to Apple (Ramaswamy & Gouillart 2014). Based on the value of using value and exchanging value creation experience, it is possible to address and identify current trends and generate new ideas and new adventures through their personal experience. In this sense, the customer becomes a developer.

ThinkLab, InnovationLab, and Ideation platforms are also common examples of creative paradigm-based designs. It represents the internal media operating under the “oversight” organization. When compared to other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, they are the basis of marketing. As creation, participants are customers who understand the organization’s products and services, have knowledge, and are interested in being part of the community. As a result, customers in online platforms and co-creation activities (Zwass 2010)

have created an interactive way to collaborate and communicate between businesses and customers (Liang et al. 2011).

Known for its wish cards, Hallmark uses the co-creation concept, which allows customers to submit ideas through interactive ideas that are the interactive platform for Hallmark customers (West 2018 in ed. Illouz 2018, pp.123-144). On the same platform, Hallmark received a high level of engagement from the virtual community (Healy & McDonagh 2013). This co-creation of knowledge has generated some innovative ideas that encourage and attract the interest of groups within the community.

As a service provider, Dell operates a co-creation platform for its customers to participate in online discussions. Dell's IdeaStorm is a place to explore thousands of new ideas based on the interests of contributors. As customers become value creators through shared content, Dell becomes a value acquisition mechanism for following up on thought development. The value co-creation approach of the two companies that has allowed effective co-creation of knowledge, is contributing to the co-production of new products. These industry examples evidence that social media not only allow business organizations to capture the ideas and input provided by their clients, but also helps them turn the customers into active participant in the innovation and co-production processes (Saarijarvi & Hannu 2013).

According to the characteristics of the co-creation presented in Figure 2.7, there are some lessons learned in relation to co-creation motivation, product life cycle stages, what co-creations are initiated, co-creation types, and platforms for co-creating plans.

Example	Motives	PLC stage	Type	Platform
Milk and yoghurt packaging	Reward, Curiosity	Maturity	Crowd of people	Facebook
Car souvenirs	Reward, Curiosity	Introduction	Crowd of people	e-mail
Great cooking adventure	Reward, Curiosity	Maturity	Crowd of people	company's web platform
Communications	Innovation, Reward	Growth	Crowd of people	e-mail
Logo design	Reward, Curiosity	Maturity	Crowd of people	e-mail and Facebook
New ice-cream taste	Reward, Curiosity	Maturity	Crowd of people	company's web platform
Fan photo	Reward, Curiosity	Maturity	Crowd of people	Facebook
T-Shirt design	Reward, Curiosity	Maturity	Crowd of people	Facebook

Figure 2. 7: Co-creation Characteristics(Adopted from Orcik, Stojanova and Freund, 2013, p. 41).

2.4.4. Value Co-Creation in the Hospitality Industry

VCC denotes a reciprocal interaction between service providers and customers in what Vargo and Lusch (2016) refer to as a multi-factor but not dyadic relationship. Customer centricity is gaining traction with organizations now paying more attention on the value, quality and satisfaction of customer needs and their interaction with the business as a whole (González-Mansilla et al. 2019). This is particularly true in the area of service marketing whose activities are centered on VCC. Even so, the question on the extent to which this concept has been researched by scholars in the hotel industry with regard to social media use still remains unclear. For instance, while assessing how value creation and development of knowledge on customers create a tourism experience, Sørensen and Jensen (2015) found out that if tourism service encounters are integrated into experiences to which they are associated, there will be more value in experience for tourists as well as increased knowledge creation by the use of mobile devices (McGarvey 2014). However,

Sørensen and Jensen (2015) present a field experiment that incorporated a small boutique hotel. Therefore, these findings could not be automatically generalized to the hotel industry as a whole. Solakis et al. (2021) using the DART (Dialogue, Access, Risk, and Transparency) model, evaluate guest experience and customer satisfaction in hotels as a result of VCC. Having sampled 484 international tourists from Greek hotels, the study found that Dialogue has no positive influence on experience, while Transparency, Risk Assessment and Access portrayed a strong impact on tourist satisfaction. The component of dialogue is however not seen to have played a part in enhancing VCC because while customers may be limited by skill and attitude to engage employees in a meaningful talk, the employees would also lack the knowledge to reciprocate customer dialogue which Vafeas, Hughes and Hilton (2016) regards as useless in provoking engagement. All the same, both studies ignore the use of social media as a medium of communication which may create a more interactive session between customers and the hotel organization. The current research thus seeks to look into the potential effect that social media would have on value co-creation in the industry.

From the perspective of VCC in the hotel sector, Morosan (2015) closely relates to Value co-creation in the hospitality industry using mobile commerce which is seen as a tool creating considerable substantial benefits to all stakeholders. The study bases its analysis on data collected from U.S. hotel guests which indicated that the use of mobile devices in hotels is intentional in having customers engage in VCC. However, while the findings presented in this study relate to the U.S. hotel context culture as opposed to the UAE context that this research focuses on. Nevertheless, scholars like Morosan (2018) and Chathoth et al. (2016) emphasize the need for more and expansive research in the Hotel and Tourism sector particularly on value co-creation despite the significant impact it has had on consumer assessment for the services they receive

(Heidenreich et al. 2015) and the value created with respect to the services (Ranjan & Read 2016).

2.4.5. Hospitality experiences and role of online communities in VCC

The experience economy is rapidly evolving and thus creating valuable and memorable experiences for customers in the service industry is paramount (Roeffen & Scholl-Grissemann 2016). Other than being exclusively created in the service sector, VCC is now more predominant in the interaction process through which customer service is tailor-made to the uniqueness of the needs and customer experiences (Morosan 2018). With increased website advertisements and online booking coupled with use of specialized mobile apps for hotels, customers now have a chance of posting reviews and opinions about their past service experiences (Roeffen & Scholl-Grissemann 2016). This is not only a source of information for marketing the specific hotel outlets through customer experience reviews but also a VCC tool. Arguably, according to Roeffen and Scholl-Grissemann (2016), by sharing their hospitality service experiences through social media platforms, hotel customers are positively involved in co-creating value for other customers in the same way they are doing for themselves and the hospitality organizations.

Similarly, online communities have largely been outlined as key factors in playing the quality check responsibility by reporting any deficiencies or defects of various hotel service providers (Piller, Vossen & Ihl 2012). On the grounds of a single individual's customer experience, innumerable members of the community are informed thus having their future purchase decisions of the hotel services influenced by the other's experience (Roeffen & Scholl-Grissemann 2016). Therefore, the online reviews by online communities allow the organizations to equally adjust their services.

Studies in the hospitality industry evidence of value co-creation in an interactive context with

service providers between the service provider's system and the customer's scheme (Canestrino, Bonfanti & Magliocca 2019). In their view, based on the Vascitour case, value co-creation is informed by how local culture, the hosts, service provider and other guests/travelers interact with the physical structure related to service. Nevertheless, the authors propose that VCC can be achieved by customers into the service delivery process as well as the local culture creating experiences with the people. While the findings presented in this study add knowledge in the context of value creation within the hospitality industry, it is limited by its methodology of focusing on the Vascitour case-study analysis. Furthermore, the study is conducted in European country – Italy, thus its findings may not be generalized to the case of the present research that is scoped to the UAE hospitality industry.

2.4.6. Specialized Mobile-Apps for VCC in the Hotel Industry

As technology continues to advance consumers are now being exposed to a wider range of mobile applications and therefore there is need for hotel organizations to understand customer value and determine the process through which value can be co-created with online bookers (Wu, Law & Liu 2018). According to the authors, three forms of customers values are related to the use of mobile apps; customer knowledge value (CKV), customer influencer value (CIV), customer referral value (CRV) and customer lifetime value (CLV). This implies that hotel service providers should promote value for their customers on a usability, perceived value and functionality perspective. However, this study focused on customers with experience in mobile hotel bookings in China. Furthermore, the study relies on secondary data with no primary research conducted to relate with real-time activities.

In a survey conducted by Morosan and DeFranco (2016) on emergence of m-Tourism to evaluate

the role of mobile applications in VCC through virtual tourism experiences during a hotel stay, guest-hotel interaction was found to significantly influence customers' holistic stay at the hotels with hotel reservation experience receiving little attention. The authors identified that until the shift is implemented, hotels still lag behind on the use of mobile apps for customer value co-creation. The study finds a lack of evidence in literature on the use of mobile-app customer interactions and their VCC potential.

2.4.7. Summary and Synthesis of Research Gaps –Value Co-Creation

Research over the past decade has established the significance of SDL with regard to value co-creation strategy, since it defines the customer's role as a value creator and its importance in modern marketing applications. Vargo and Lusch (2008) first identified individual customers as an asset, citing their ability to create value and noting they must be motivated by embedding their practices into a value-rich social environment. The literature review further demonstrates that VCC reflects a shift from "old" to "new" marketing applications, finding that with the old market dominant logic, GDL - the process of market and value creation is separated from that of the customer (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012). In the new marketing applications or SDL, the customer is essential to the process of value creation with two-way interaction, the source of VCC and customer interaction the basis of value (Brodie, Löbler & Fehrer 2019). But while the literature review establishes this close link between VCC and SDL, it also calls for further investigation of the organization's readiness in absorbing captured values within existing the new virtual sphere of social media.

The role of social media for value co-creation is recognized in past research (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010; Cheung et al. 2020; Abeza et al. 2017). Martini et al. (2014) argues that due to the

novelty of social media in the VCC context, the focus of further research should be shifted from what to how value is co-created in this medium. Therefore, the present study would focus on bridging this research gap by identification of the

In hotel

All the same, both studies ignore the use of social media as a medium of communication which may create a more interactive session between customers and the hotel organization. The current research thus seeks to look into the potential effect that social media would have on value co-creation in the industry.

From the present literature review, only a few studies have focused on the hospitality industry (Sørensen and Jensen 2015; Solakis et al. 2021) with Morosan (2015) providing having studied the hotel sector. Notwithstanding, none of the studies was conducted in the UAE. The studies also show no evidence of linking the use of social media to value co-creation in hotels. The studies also have varied in the methodologies used and sampling hence no clarity of measurement of the study variables. This research gap emphasizes the need to carry out a study on value co-creation through social media in the UAE hotel industry, which corresponds to the primary aim of the present study.

2.5. Business and Strategy Implications of Social Media for Co-Creation and Value Co-Creation

The business and strategic implications of social media which is covered in the present section, has been covered in the publications of different researchers including Cheung et al. (2020), Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2010), Guha, Harrigan and Soutar (2017), Shin et al. (2021).

Social media is a highly interactive platform that allows individual users and communities to share, create, discuss and modify user-generated content (Piller, Vossen & Ihl 2012) across channels such as blogs by Huff Post; microblogs by Twitter; social networking sites by Facebook and LinkedIn,

and collaboration platforms and user forums, great amounts of data is exchanged and made available (Cheung et al. 2020). Social media fundamentally changes the way organizations and their customers interact within and outside the organization by providing broader opportunities to interact, therefore they are characterized by significant strategic business implication (Frutos, Giones & Miralles 2014). They also represent a large amount of data and business intelligence in the form of market insights and customer feedback that can inform different stages of the value creation process (Roberts et al. 2012). Specifically, the use of social media in the innovation process may be actively employing online content and word-of-mouth campaigns, or passive, which uses applications such as surveillance and data mining, depending on the objective of their application (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010).

Recently, social media platforms have emerged that provide customers with a channel of communication by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). It is worth noting that the customers in the social media space who continue to exchange services with the organization and its brands are the result of the organization building or maintaining strong social media influence (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). In addition, organizations recognize the impact of social media and the importance of influencing the lives of customers, and the features that social media platforms provide enable them to be consistent in the increasingly digital business environment (Guha, Harrigan & Soutar 2017).

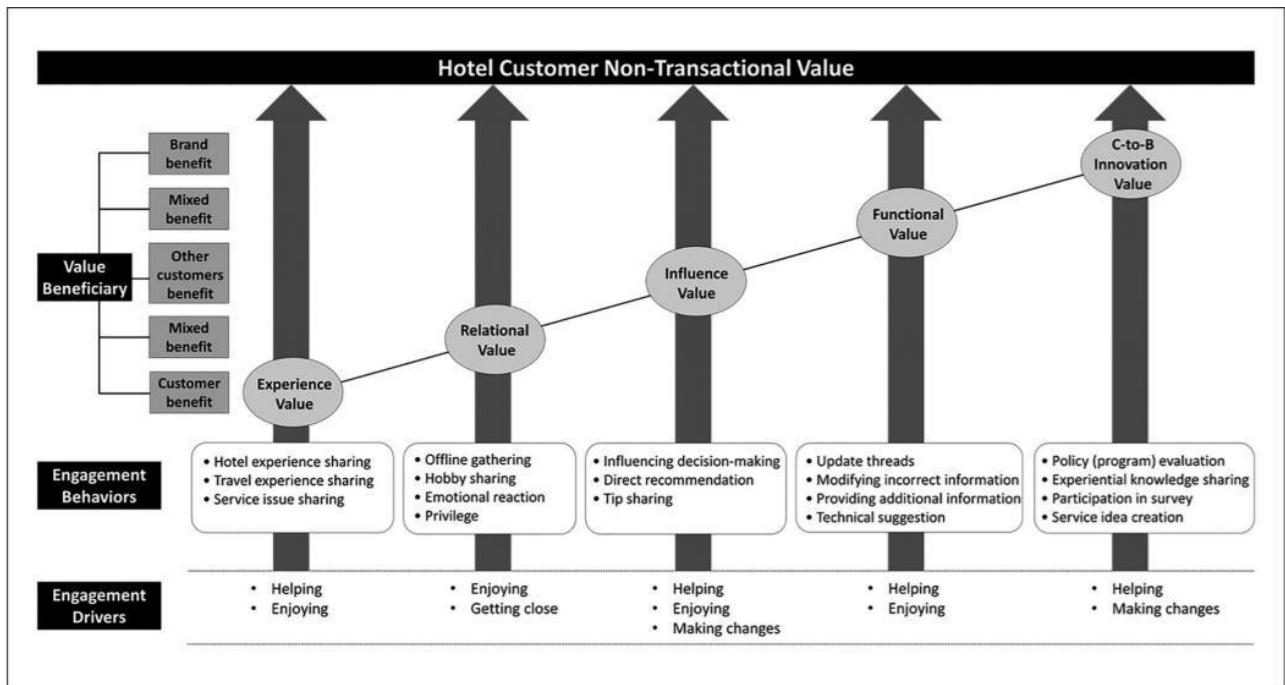


Figure 2. 8: Co-created value via customer engagement and its drivers(Shin et al. 2021, p. 8)

Shin et al. (2021) emphasize the critical part played by social media in the process of VCC and the enhancing the engagement of customers. According to the authors, different engagement drivers are associated with diverse engagement behaviors which result in five key value types – experience value, relational value, influence value and customer to business (C-to-B) innovation value, as depicted in Figure 2.8. As illustrated, the beneficiaries of this co-created value can be both the business organization, the customer and other parties. It is important to point out that the findings by Shin et al. (2021) have been derived from the hotel industry, which falls into the focus of the present research study. The strength of social media for boosting customer engagement and its beneficial impact on the company financial and market performance in the hospitality sector has been additionally justified by Yost, Zhang and Qi (2021) and Lei, Wang and Law (2021).

Until recently, social media platforms (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), were not seen as academically suitable modes for knowledge exchange (Xiang &

Gretzel 2010). Therefore, academic literature on possible resources rarely values the social media platform and its contribution to service exchanges. However, there is emerging research that identifies technology platforms such as social media platforms as other systems, actors by value proposition (Vargo & Lusch 2008). This view points out an important flaw of the previous research in the VCC field, presented by Pinho et al (2014). Regardless the importance of networks in the VCC process, the conceptualizations presented by earlier studies (e.g. Vargo & Lusch 2008) fail to cover critical aspects of systems. For instance, systems are dynamic and capable of adjusting and reconfiguring themselves (Pinho et al. 2014). Therefore, it is necessary for research to undertake a dynamic approach to the investigation of value networks. With the development of new technologies and the advent of multi-channel and e-commerce, the way service providers and customers are relationships has recently been modified (Yen & Lu 2008).

Customers tend to evaluate the online experience based on their perception of global services, rather than because of a single online visit or transaction (Gwo-Guang & Hsiu-Fen 2005). Customers who use traditional channels to build relationships analyze the different technical characteristics of a product or service, such as cost, more than customers who use traditional channels. Thus, in this sense, an important element is the provision of electronic services (Santos 2003; Ahn & Rho 2014).

2.5.1. Social Media and Brand Value:

Previous studies in the online community area have shown that engaging in brand communities can create brand value (Schau et al. 2009). On social media, the involvement of the brand

community is achieved by posting comments, reviews, ratings, and shared experiences. As a result, customer participation in any brand community discussion forum may have a positive or negative impact on an organization's reputation and image (Veloutsou & Moutinho 2009). Research also supports the idea that customer engagement can influence brands in all areas, such as brand trust, brand loyalty, brand assets, and brand social responsibility.

But while there is a great deal of research on brands, there is little empirical research on brand co-creation in the social media environment (Buhalis & Park 2021). Previous studies (Hajli et al. 2017) have highlighted the effectiveness of the online community as an important marketing tool for co-branding. Academics have been interested in the role of the online community in strengthening customer-brand relationships on social media (Kang & Kim 2017). Brands have established their own brand communities on social media sites to connect with new customers and promote their new products, and encourage them to engage to build customer-brand relationships (Zaglia 2013). Brand communities serve as a marketing tool to promote social interaction between customers (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann 2005). In addition, the increasing penetration and usage of social media among users in emerging countries such as the Middle East and specifically, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) provides a broad space for research into issues related to brand in the social media community (Hajli et al. 2017).

2.5.2. Social media towards Competitive Advantage:

More organizations are also building comprehensive long-term databases. However, there is a growing recognition that, despite the fact that traditional databases technologies are in principle scalable and useful for many things, they do not deliver basic knowledge about what the database

contains and important relationships and trends (Ribarsky, Wang & Dou 2014). In addition, the emergence of social media and online resources suggests that useful data can come from anywhere, within or outside the organization. As a result of the availability of all this data, there are increasing calls for additional data-based decisions, but as noted earlier, this is hampered by the lack of knowing what actionable information the data contains. Finally, business studies have shown that the timely and effective use of data-driven knowledge is a competitive advantage, while failure to use it is a competitive disadvantage (Ribarsky, Wang & Dou 2014).

In the long run, organizations that do not employ data resources will be at risk, while organizations that find data or other data for new purposes will be the biggest winners. Another reason for the durability of big data analytics is that it is building a strong infrastructure. According to a U.S. survey, McKinsey estimates that by 2023 there will be a shortage of nearly 500,000 professionals with deep analytical skills, and that 1.5 million managers will need to be retrained to understand the value of data and the right questions that can be asked (Harrysson, Schoder & Tavakoli 2016). Pettley (2017) estimates that by 2025 the U.S. will create 2.5 million big data jobs. For data analytics professionals, today's productivity is hard to meet a fraction of this need. In essence, visual analysis supports the exploration, discovery, and complex reasoning of data and data-driven problems. Statistics, data mining, machine learning, signal processing and other deep analysis methods are tightly integrated with interactive visualization.

Ribarsky, Wang and Dou (2014) visual analytics is designed to put people in the right place to discover key insights, deepen understanding, make decisions, and take effective action. In terms of visualization and analysis, visual analytics is positioned to effectively manage and support an understanding of scalable big data, and this hope is being materialized as new technologies evolve. Because of the central role of visual analysis, there is also an opportunity to fill a large number of

new data analysis professionals with visual analysis knowledge through courses and training. This should definitely be a key part of the academic agenda for visual analysis.

2.5.3. Social media and Innovation:

The proliferation of social media platforms coincides with the expansion of the open innovation paradigm, where organizations integrate new ideas and feedback from a variety of internal and external sources (Lee, Hwang & Choi 2012). The new insights and gain more knowledge, the organization opens-up value creation processes and work with a variety of customers, including different aspects of customers, suppliers and employees (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch 2017). In addition, a recent survey found that 82% of organizations use social media to enhance their innovation processes (Piller, Vossen & Ihl 2012), its appreciated to have user-generated content and social networks that reflect customer preferences (Fjeldstad et al. 2012). As an example, the My Starbucks Creative Platform generated more than 300 ideas from the organization's online community for managers to focus on (Piller, Vossen & Ihl 2012).

In turn, social media can uniquely benefit different stages of the innovation process. Organizations can create crowd-sourcing platforms to collect ideas during the beginning phase. Nike uses toolkits to enhance product designs during their development phase (Dahlander & Wallin 2006). However, understanding of the best ways to use social media at all stages remains limited, fragmented and mostly anecdote (Bashir, Papamichail & Malik 2017).

Efficient insights are needed to help organizations manipulate the transition to individuals and online customers inherent in social media (Labrecque et al. 2013). For example, organizations must create conditions and incentives to enable customers to work together to create products or help them launch products as brand ambassadors. They also need to address the risks of active

participation through social media, including coordination mechanisms and control considerations, which are especially difficult when we notice the complexity of today's platforms and organizations. Muninger, Hammedi and Mahr (2019). In social media platforms are highly interactive, feature-specific and social platforms are growing rapidly and have no control over their authorized users (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Organizations need to carefully plan their digital resources, processes and capabilities to guide social media practices, especially for the innovation process, which requires rigorous action, including step-by-step approval, long development cycles, and regular measurement of key factors (Muninger, Hammedi & Mahr 2019).

Trying to find ways to interact with customers has become an extremely important goal of brand marketing (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie 2014) and created user-generated brands (UGB), which can obviously be used to create customer-related background brand-conscious content (Muntinga, Moorman & Smit 2011). Nevertheless, UGB's rising marketing penetration is often seen as one of the major changes in marketing. While marketers worry that UGB has lost control of its brand and even that customers would create negative UGBs, many have seen it as a potentially powerful new tool. UGB is a form of user-generated content called user-created content (UGC). UGC usually appears as an extension of online platforms such as social media sites and may include resources such as blog posts, wikis, videos or comments (Daniasa et al. 2010). UGB responsibilities include troubleshooting, journalism, culture, advocacy, vulnerabilities and analysis (Chin-Fook & Simmonds 2011).

Over the past decade, the term "UGB" has gained popularity with the advent of Web 2.0, but due to the continuous development of the structure, there does not appear to be a uniform definition of UGB (Christodoulides, Jevon & Bonhomme 2012). The previous definition focused on the transfer of control from organizational content to the UGB (Daugherty, Li & Biocca 2008). According to

Christodoulides, Jevon and Bonhomme (2012) UGB is defined as content provided through publicly accessible transmission media reflecting a degree of creative work, and is created for free external professional practices and practices.

Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) in the Context of Online Customer Product Activities (COCPA), divided COCPA into three types: “customers, contributions and production”, which corresponds to increased brand engagement. Customer activities involve the use of branded content and the creation and contribution of participating activities. Sources of contribution activities include engaging in conversations with other customers or brands on social media or participating in brand forums. Create more active forms of engagement, such as brand-related blogs, photos, or brand-related videos.

DART, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) introduced the DART model (Figure 2.9) – concerning the Dialogue, Access, Risk Assessment, and Transparency – and suggesting that co-creation in a digital environment is more cumbersome than in a traditional environment. Although the technology is closely related to at least three of the four building blocks of the DART model, the model underestimates their centrality, as shown in Figure 2.9.

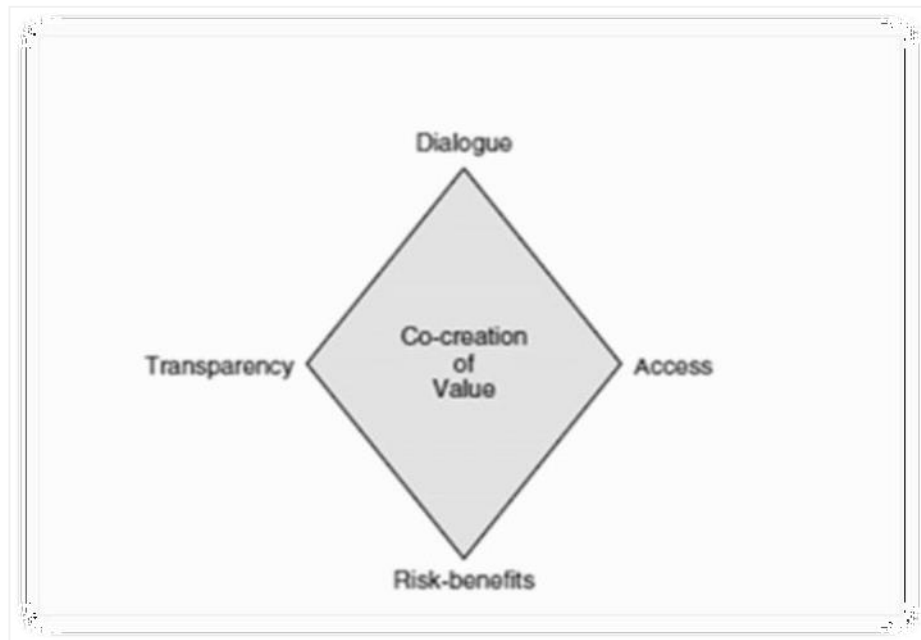


Figure 2. 9: DART Model(Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004, p. 9).

The DART model summarizes the value creation process of innovation in the four basic “components” of customer-organizational relationships. In virtual environments such as social media, the lack of innovation is particularly important. The first element of the model is Dialogue. This element *“means interaction, deep engagement and the ability and willingness of both parties to act”* (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). The second component is access to customer information which depends on the situation. Co-creation can be counter-productive if customers cannot access basic product information. The following element, risk assessment refers to the sharing of information, the lack of information asymmetry between the organization and customers. The pre-requisite for conversations and obtaining information is this building block. The final building block of the framework is transparency. Through dialogue, access and transparency, co-creator customers have a better understanding of the organization’s products. As a result, customers can better assess the potential risks and benefits of goods and services.

The DART model concerns the dialogue between actors as active engagement between equal partners. The referenced dialogue is defined as “*the deep engagement, live interactivity, understanding and willingness on common agreement by both parties*” (Albinsson, Perera & Sautter 2015). For instance, when two parties engage in a dialogue, the feedback relating to the service provision can be shared between the actors, and that leads to the co-creation of value. However, in order to practice co-creation in an organizational environment, there must be an open dialogue between participants. Without the ability to access information, it is difficult to demonstrate VCC, which, from a building block perspective, is limited to front-line employees who have immediate and timely access to organizational service providers and resources to facilitate the exchange of information (Albinsson, Perera & Sautter 2015). In such cases, it is the responsibility of the internal service provider to assist front-line employees by providing information and support when necessary. Such access should be provided at all stages of the process, from the initial design to the end user experience, otherwise co-creation would become ineffective if front-line employees do not have access to information about products and/or services (Schiavone, Metallo & Agrifoglio 2014). Similarly, this approach enhances a sense of equality among front-line employees (Solakis, Peña-Vinces & López-Bonilla 2017) and makes them better co-creators.

Furthermore, organizations must allow access to tools in order for customers to both contribute and collaborate, enhancing the sense of equity for the actors, while transparency on the part of the organization’s operations enhances trust (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004).

With technology inherent in at least three of the four building blocks of the DART model, it is designed to be a platform for co-creating activities through which businesses and customers can share information about new products and services, rather than simply targeting a market by the

organization. Organizations should provide a built-in experience environment to build value and innovation growth. Time, space, and events are critical to personalizing the customer experience (Bagdare 2015). Products can be commoditized, but the experience forged together is personalized. Creating interaction is the cornerstone of meaning. Each customer determines how to interact specifically with the organization. However, a personalized experience does not limit the likelihood of customer aggregation, the authors claim. The customer community is critical to co-creation. Conversation blocks are a prerequisite for technical management in each industry, not overlapping components. Technology management becomes a critical tool due to user-organizational contacts and interactions (McLean & Wilson 2016). The script cannot be created together without a conversation with the customer that develops and controls the appropriate technical infrastructure, such as a Web platform, in an organization.

The intention of the users (individuals or businesses) to post content on the social media platform and co-create is also explained using the theory of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior explains the intention of an individual to engage in any behavior at a specific time and place (Quintal, Lee & Soutar 2010). The engagement of individuals on the social media platform can also be explained using this theory which argues that the behavior of an individual is dependent on the intention as well as ability to use the social media platform. The first phase of the intention is through awareness of the content on the social media platform. Awareness is key in the start-up phase (Hoyer et al 2010); it can be created by posting information to the online community to reach the mass market (Dahlander & Wallin 2006). Kim and Hanssens (2017) believe that investing in blog activity in the pre-launch phase is more effective than traditional advertising because it encourages customers to search for new products and cause viral effects. After the release, social media also enables organizations to get more feedback, thereby increasing

community awareness and customer engagement with the brand or its products (Mangold & Faulds 2009). For example, Audible offers more than 470,000 audiobooks and partnerships with influential YouTube contributors through word-of-mouth advertising and social media marketing campaigns to increase other customers' understanding and engagement with their products. However, to achieve these goals, organizations must use social media strategically, supported by their unique capabilities. In particular, organizations must acquire the ability to create value and distribute value (Mizik & Jacobson 2003). Organizational competence is the cornerstone of any effective strategy that promotes the creation and acquisition of value, which is at the heart of strategic management (Bowman & Ambrosini 2010).

The micro-application of the DART concept creates interactions between all participants, and continuous interaction can lead to an enabling environment for co-creation because of the dialogue between the two participants (Zorn et al. 2010). Therefore, organizational support is important for micro-level co-creation practices (Yoo & Arnold 2015).

The DART model is considered to be an essential and valuable step by enabling a value co-creation attitude of the actors (Mazur & Zaborek 2014), which further propagates a value co-creation attitude and enhanced value co-creation behavior (Shamim & Ghazali 2014), making the practice of value co-creation at a micro-level ecosystem attainable.

2.5.4. Social Media Capabilities:

Singaraju et al. (2016) are exploring the diverse forms and capabilities of different social media platforms and proposed a cellular framework as a model for explaining the social media ecology. They further note that social media platforms typically offer seven functions: identity: the degree to which the user presents himself (by name, nickname, etc.); conversations: the degree to which

the user communicates with each other (example VoIP, instant messaging, etc.); sharing: the user exchanges, distributes and receives content (example text, pictures, Video, etc.); presence: how much the user knows who else are participating; relationship: the nature of the user's contact with other social media users in their contact list; reputation: degree of reach (available status: leave, do not disturb, not visible, online, offline), and groups: the extent to which users are classified or the extent to which communities are formed (example family, friends, colleagues, professional associations, etc.). These functions contribute to the wide applicability of social media in the marketing field.

Singaraju et al. (2016) explain that most social media platforms have different degrees of these features. However, the importance of each feature varies depending on the primary purpose of a given social media platform (Kietzmann et al. 2011). Facebook, for example, is acclaimed for its relationship features, while YouTube is known for its power of sharing video content (Laroche, Habibi & Richard 2013). By using these social media capabilities provided by social media platforms, customers and companies can more seamlessly integrate their resources, making all participants in service exchanges mutually beneficial. Researchers believe that the features provided by social media platforms are different from the resources provided by customers and companies, and that they are not resources or functionalities in themselves, but rather technical features that are actually modular (Meyera & DeToreb 2001). In describing the modular nature of social media, Meyera and DeToreb (2001) use definition of modular functionality as *“a technical logical unit that provides the specific functionality required for the entire system”*. Furthermore, Sanchez and Collins (2001) believe that the social media platform features are modular because each feature plays a special role in synthesizing information through social media platforms. Singaraju et al. (2016) discusses the capabilities of “information” through quality in the service

exchange process. For example, when a customer logs into a social media platform (example Facebook) and browses the company's brand page, provides comments, shares photos or experiences, interacts with brand marketers by asking questions about a brand or product, or answers comments from other customers (i.e., interactions between customers). In these interactions, as information is passed through social media platforms, it is synthesized and organized into a functional container of identity, presence, group, relationship, reputation, sharing, and dialogue. Therefore, if a customer and company does not register a Facebook account and provide basic information (example, name, age, occupation, date of birth, etc.) for an individual, then the functionality of identity on social media platforms such as Facebook is meaningless; and for customer (company name, nature of business, year of establishment, etc.) as pointed out by van Dam and van de Velden (2014).

In other words, information provided by customers and companies is mobilized to populate these modular features on social media platforms, effectively "breathing" life as a technical feature and transforming what was otherwise worthless "functions" into "resources" (Singaraju et al. 2016). Furthermore, information converts these technical features into resources. Due to the "open system" nature of the social media platform, these modular resources are accessible to other interaction participants (i.e. customers and companies), Kietzmann et al. 2011. This enables customers and companies in the enterprise network to actively participate in the process of establishing a resource interface between modular resources in the social media platform (Dubois & Araujo 2006). Social media platforms have provided modern customer-centric toolkits that allow customers to work together with others in their social network, and the organization becoming equal network members (Kietzmann et al. 2011). The web empowers customers through two main processes: redefining the identity of each user through interaction with other users,

learning processes, or creating social links and improving user efficiency and skills. These tools also play a vital part in helping the organization gain the advantage of designing and delivering customized products, thereby maximizing customer satisfaction. Still, more intelligent customers need social media to help them proactively generate and evaluate new ideas, improve product details, personalize prototypes, share product information and participate in the development of new products and services.

2.5.5. Social Media Platforms are an Essential Tool for Service-Dominant Logic:

Previous studies have shown that customer behavior differs from typical behaviors in online stores (Alba et al. 1997). The world of online products is called virtual intermediaries, markets and environments, without actual sellers, but through the Web as well as the latest systems and technologies to connect. Online strategies have been used to overcome limitations compared to online shopping, personalization, interactivity, referral systems or shopping experiences, such as payment and electronic transfer (Ni et al. 2009). The ensure customer setup for better decision-making efficiency (Peterson & Merino 2003).

With the help of digitalization, organizations can consolidate their resources in a way that can help organizations achieve the desired results. In addition, it helps organizations achieve transparency in their activities and operations through the use of digital platforms for important management activities (Osburg & Lohrmann 2017). Based on the SDL strategy, we have found that the organization's active involvement on digital platforms increases their presence on such platforms, so more customers know how the organization works (Hollebeek & Macky 2019).

According to Lusch and Nambisan (2015), the services provided by the organization help the organization build its capacity to benefit its customers and organizations. Resource integration is

used to enhance innovation and develop frameworks that contribute to the value creation process. Technology plays a very strategic role in leveraging all these factors through the platform and forms the framework, thereby enhancing and developing the value creation process and value acquisition process (Lusch & Nambisan 2015).

Value creation is done by the two participants involved in the process, but value assessment should be conducted strategically by the organization. Therefore, organizations are recommended to develop powerful digital platforms to analyze and document customer responses or value created. Digital service innovation helps organizations in many different ways. For example, when creating value, evaluating value, and recording value, and then making further use of it in a strategic manner (Lusch & Nambisan 2015).

The SDL theory supports the use of digitalization to facilitate communication between organizations and customers. Furthermore, it supports the organization's service perspective, which is considered to add value to the organization and customers and therefore has a direct impact on customer satisfaction (Lusch & Nambisan 2015). However, customers are the source of every strategy and activity in your organization, so all policies and frameworks should be developed accordingly. Ultimately, Osburg and Lohrmann (2017) believe that the only viable way to use a co-creation path is to use online platforms and social media. Therefore, it is important to use social media to effectively implement SDL strategy, then both are inseparable. Throughout practice, these almost simultaneous independent ideas are interdependent in order to realize their potential.

2.5.6. Summary and Synthesis of Research Gaps – Social Media

Social media represent a specific technological advancement that is gaining wider popularity in

the business field (Brodie et al. 2013). As a result, there is an extensive selection of literature that focuses on the emerging phenomenon of using digital social media platforms in the market or product development equation. The use of digital platforms is helping savvy organizations gain a competitive edge through technology (Gouillart 2011; Kristensson, Gustafsson & Archer 2004; Ribarsky, Wang & Dou 2014; Gouillart 2014). Nevertheless, there are few systematic studies on VCC and its reliance on specific social media platforms that boost and enhance interaction with the customers (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018).

Earlier research indicated that social media and co-creation are among the opportunities for organizations to gain a competitive advantage and therefore, increase value with some scholars describing customers' active participation in social media as virtual communities (Brodie et al. 2013). With the shift to SDL, it has been reported that the stakeholder is also a contributor, (Lusch & Webster 2011) whose role is not about acquiring goods or services, but contributing to the organization through their experience with the information gathered from sharing experience producing better ideas, feedback, and recommendations. The challenge is to focus on the customer's best interest, with social media enabling the key mechanism for most organizations to understand their customers virtually.

Hence, social media offers accessibility for customers to create, edit, access and link content in platforms such as blogs, Wikis, social networks and UGC, as illustrated conceptually in our framework. This new marketing application represents the latest shift in the field, with the key assumption being that the organization treats customers as individuals that are intelligent, spiritual, and with a soul (Kotler et al. 2009). This marketing shift is becoming increasingly important among customers who are more and more aware of the impact of increasing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Previous examples include fundamental marketing techniques used since the industrial revolution, which was a "product centric" era and focused on large-scale sales of goods. The focus was based on functional value propositions with the marketing department's activities simply targeting the sale of products or services. An enhanced version of marketing techniques emerged in the information age, enabling organizations to adopt an emotional value proposition, based not on product transactions, but rather on relationships that allow organizations to attract customers through messaging and personalized services and products (Wang & Hajli 2015). This new paradigm of marketing means that we are at the dawn of a "value-driven" era, characterized by people who want to consume in order to meet their functional, emotional, and spiritual needs. As stated by Kotler et al. (2009), *"customer preferences vary, so organizations must segment and develop unique products for different customers"*.

Features may be appropriate to use social media to support the innovation process. However, there is a lack of an overall framework for specifying and detailing these various uses. In particular, the shift of users from passive readers to active contributors (Labrecque et al. 2013) undermines their role at every stage of the innovation process, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Traditionally, organizations have been looking for features such as development sensing, learning, integration, and coordination (Pavlou & El Sawy 2011) to capture customer preferences and create value (example, through market research). However, through social media, individual users or communities can express their preferences in a variety of ways, such as posting content in text, pictures, or videos. All these different sources of value creation can benefit the innovation process, but organizations need strong capabilities to identify, interpret, and use relevant information.

The positive impact of social media on VCC has been witnessed in different economic sectors including the tourism industry. Though no evidence from the UAE hotel context is identified at

present. Therefore, the present study will focus on this research context to explore the research proposition that social media has an impact on value co-creation in the hospitality sector in UAE. Based on the identified gap and research direction, the present study is aimed at the introduction of a practical framework for effective VCC through social media in the context of the tourism industry. In this way, the results of the present study would benefit both academics and practitioners in the fields of marketing and hospitality management. Based on the previous research identifying the wide application of social media in the hospitality sector, the study will also investigate whether value co-creation using the social media platform has significant implications in the hospitality industry.

2.6. Customer Engagement:

Customer engagement is another concept of critical importance for the present thesis. Bowden (2009) points out the important role of customer engagement for value co-creation within the service relationship between the business organization and its customers. Numerous scholars like Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012), Kumar et al. (2010), Naumann and Bowden (2015) and Saarijarvi & Hannu (2013) also agree that customer engagement encompasses co-creation activities researchers Therefore, the focus in this section is placed on a discussion of the customer engagement concept, followed by a review of the interconnection between digital content marketing and customer engagement, as well as an investigation of the present knowledge on the role of social media posts for enhancing customer engagement.

2.6.1. The Concept of Customer Engagement:

Mitussis, O'Malley and Patterson (2006), and Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) described customer engagement as a psychological state of mind that occurs through the customer experience

created by interacting with a focus agent or object in a focus service relationship, such as a brand. It occurs under a specific set of context-sensitive conditions, generating different engagement levels. On the other hand, Bowden (2009) sees customer engagement as a process of ones' feeling. Although these scholars emphasize all aspects of customer engagement, the basic philosophical structure of the definition receives little attention.

The topic of customer engagement is gaining increasing attention in the context of the tourism and hospitality sector over the last decade, as depicted in Figure 2.10. According to So, Li and Kim (2019), the concept of customer engagement has evolved from a mere focus on customer management to a complex construct with deep psychological roots and significant impact on the organizational performance far beyond the act of purchase. The present views in the academic literature (Aluri, Price & McIntyre 2019; Ye et al. 2019; So, Li & Kim 2019) present the inseparable link between customer engagement and VCC.

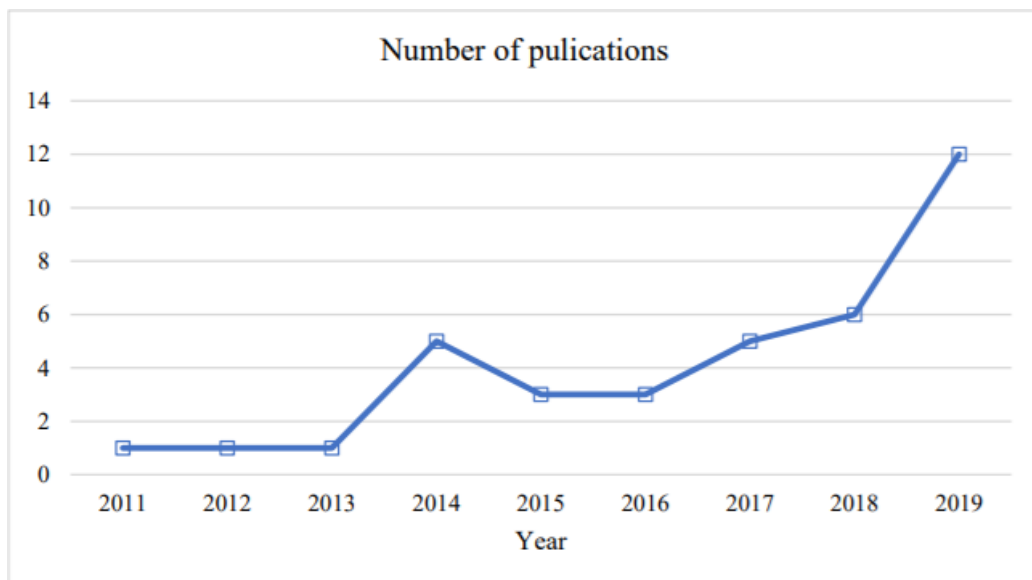


Figure 2. 10: Number of engagement-related publications in hospitality and tourism journals(So, Li & Kim 2019, p.9)

Current studies have shown that the model of customer engagement is expected to help deepen the understanding of the customer experience and/or retain dynamics (Bowden 2009). Amazon's recent promotion of the brand's slogan "*Serving the world's largest online engagement community*" and the latest Brand Keys, featuring brands that successfully engage customers, build loyalty and drive profits within the program, are further evidence of growing interest in customer engagement and its potential contribution. However, despite the rapid development of the practitioner environment, academic inquiries to client participation have lagged behind, leading to limited knowledge of concepts to date (Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft 2010). Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) points out that further academic research on customer engagement is promoted, especially from the logical point of view of relationship marketing (RM). Customer engagement plays an important role in the psychological network of service relationships that manage other relationship concepts, such as loyalty. It is a multidimensional concept that is influenced by the expression of context and/or customer-specific cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral dimensions (Bowden 2009). Different levels of engagement are presented in Figure 2.11.

Table 1 Overview—engagement conceptualizations in the marketing literature.				
Author(s)	Research type	Concept	Definition	Dimensionality
Brodie et al. (2011)	Conceptual	Customer engagement	A motivational state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g. a brand) in focal brand relationships.	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive; 2. Emotional; 3. Behavioral
Hollebeek (2011a)	Conceptual	Customer brand engagement	The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in brand interactions.	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive; 2. Emotional; 3. Behavioral
Hollebeek (2011b)	Empirical: Qualitative	Customer brand engagement	A customer's level of cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions.	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive; 2. Emotional; 3. Behavioral
Phillips and McQuarrie (2010)	Empirical: Qualitative	Advertising engagement	'Modes of engagement' are routes to persuasion.	Multidimensional: Consumers engage ads to: 1. Immerse (C); 2. Feel (E); 3. Identify (E); 4. Act (B)
Brodie et al. (2013)	Empirical: Qualitative	Consumer engagement	A multidimensional concept comprising cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral dimensions, [which] 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.	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive; 2. Emotional; 3. Behavioral
Calder, Malthouse, and Schaedel (2009)	Empirical: Quantitative	Online engagement	A second-order construct manifested in various types of first-order 'experience' constructs, with 'experience' being defined as "a consumer's beliefs about how a (website) fits into his/her life."	Multidimensional: 1. Stimulation & inspiration (E); 2. Social facilitation (E); 3. Temporal (C); 4. Self-esteem & civic mindedness (E); 5. Intrinsic enjoyment (E); 6. Utilitarian (C); 7. Participation & socializing (B); 8. Community (E)
Avnet and Higgins (2006a)	Conceptual	Engagement	When people pursue a goal in a manner that sustains their orientation (e.g. eagerly if they have a promotion focus; vigilantly if they have a prevention focus), they experience their engagement in that goal pursuit more strongly than they do when pursuing the goal in a way that is at odds with or disrupts their orientation (e.g. pursuing a goal eagerly if their orientation is more preventative). When the manner of their goal pursuit fits their orientation, they experience a stronger evaluative reaction to the activity.	Multi-dimensional (inferred): 1. Cognitive; 2. Emotional; 3. Behavioral
Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Hermann (2005)	Empirical: Quantitative	Brand community engagement	Positive influences of identifying with the brand community through the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact/co-operate with community members.	Multidimensional: 1. Utilitarian (C); 2. Hedonic (E); 3. Social (B/E)
Abdul-Ghani, Hyde, and Marshall (2010)	Empirical: Qualitative	Engagement	Requires consumer connection (e.g. with specific media).	Multidimensional: 1. Utilitarian (C); 2. Hedonic (E); 3. Social (B/E)
Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg (2009)	Empirical	Brand engagement in self-concept	An individual difference representing consumers' propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves.	Unidimensional (E)
This study	Empirical	Consumer brand engagement	A consumer's positively valenced cognitive, emotional and behavioral brand-related activity during, or related to, specific consumer/brand interactions.	Multidimensional (*): 1. Cognitive processing (C); 2. Affection (E); 3. Activation (B)

Figure 2. 11: Different Levels of Engagement (Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioral)(Adopted from Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen (2016, p. 165).

Persistent Engagement	Continuous conversation with customer without physically presence
Customised engagement	The organisation communicate with customer based on 'individual-level information'
Triggered Engagement	Rapid respond from customers.

Figure 2. 12: Types of Customer Engagement(Cabiddu, De Carlo & Piccoli. 2014, p. 178)

Furthermore, as presented in Figure 2.12, in their recent study of customer engagement in the tourism industry Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli (2014) categorize customer engagement into three major categories: – persistent, customized and triggered. The persistent engagement is related to the ongoing communication with the customers while it does not require physical contact. The

second type of engagement, customized engagement is being established through the communication between business organizations and their clients which is grounded on individual information regarding their needs, preferences and characteristics. The third engagement type is defined by the authors as triggered engagement, which is related to the organization inducing a quick client's response. There are also other classifications of the different engagement levels which can be found in the marketing literature. For example, Hollebeek (2011) also suggests three engagement levels but in this case they are defined as cognitive, emotional and behavioral.

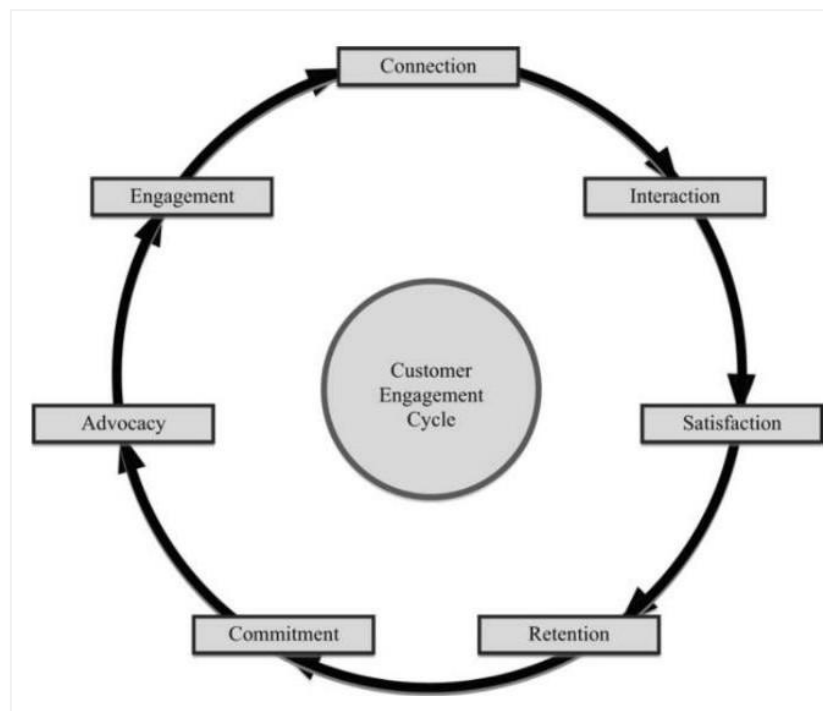


Figure 2. 13: Customer Engagement Cycle(Sashi 2012, p. 261)

In addition to that, Sashi (2012) presents customer engagement as a cyclical process, which passes through the phases of Connection, Interaction, Satisfaction, Retention, Commitment, and Advocacy to evolve into Engagement (Figure 2.13).

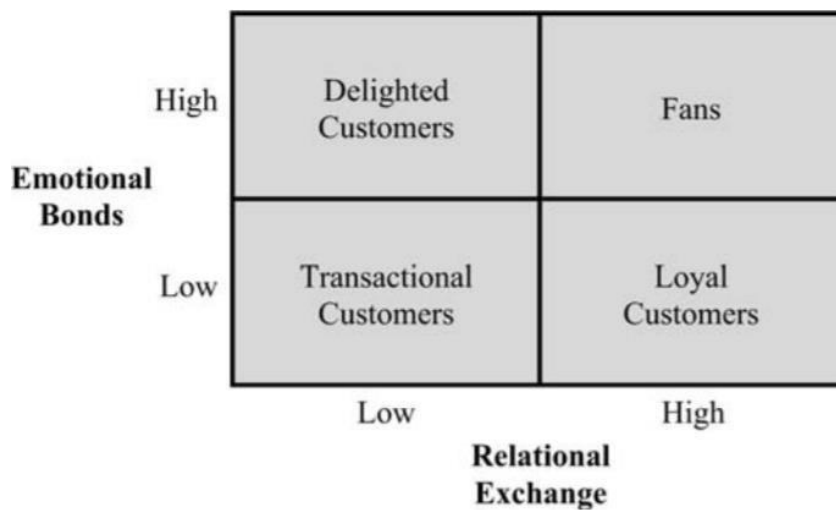


Figure 2. 14: Customer Engagement Matrix(Sashi 2012, p. 265)

The author also presents the customer engagement matrix, illustrated in Figure 2.14 which classifies customers, based on two dimensions – emotional bonds and relational exchange. As presented below, this categorization results into the definition of four groups of customers, presented in the four quadrants of the matrix: transactional customers, scoring low on both dimensions, loyal customers who have low emotional connection to the business organization, delighted customers with high emotional bond but low relational exchange, as well as fans, showing high scores on both aspects. These different theoretical viewpoints emphasize the complex and multidimensional nature of the customer engagement concept.

This evolution towards a customer-centered value proposition is shaping the future of marketing in three main ways (Kotler et al. 2009). First, the large-scale engagement and co-creation through cooperative marketing reflects how modern social media and the internet have taken advantage of human’s natural desire for connectivity and interactivity. As a result, the organization works with customers, employees, channel partners and other firms with similar goals and values to pursue collaborative marketing strategies. Second, technological advances have truly created “global

citizens” who still want to be nevertheless viewed as individuals. Therefore, marketing needs to address both local and global communities. Third, the rise of the creative and customer-centered marketing has encouraged innovative people who are more likely than others to innovate, collaborate and express themselves, and pursue self-actualization, while also insisting that the goods and services they consume are original, trendy and personable.

One of the customer relationships is to promote their growth on an interactive platform, which Mano (2014) considers “pro-social behavior” for customers. Cheshire, Antin and Churchill (2010) describes pro-social behavior as a place where customers have a sense of belonging and self-fulfillment. Cheshire, Antin and Churchill (2010) argue that this form of voluntary participation is compatible with co-creation activities.

Besides, theoretical perspective of social communication is presented to enable individual customers to be provided by enterprises a platform for better communication (Jones, Temperley & Lima 2009). In this sense, by providing a social platform to enable a high degree of customer participation and spontaneous participation. Design an infrastructure specifically for value creation. It has been argued that the organization, as a “provider” of value creation platforms, has promoted better channels of exploratory communication, such as social media applications.

Many studies also agree that customer involvement includes co-creation activities (Frow et al. 2011; 2015). Understanding customer engagement is important because organizations should know what they think and behave (van Doorn et al. 2010). Although Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli (2014) argued that this approach to participation is not conducive to social media methods in organizations, but the study suggests that further research on different organizational backgrounds may be effective in improving the applicability of current social media. In short, co-creation requires active participation of both the business organization and the customers, as pointed out

by Naumann and Bowden (2015, p. 56):

“Traditional measures of customer loyalty have been criticized for being too static and one-dimensional in nature and as such, customer engagement, or CE, has surfaced as a more dynamic and interactive concept through which to understand the nature of the customer-brand relationship.”

At the same time, the organization seeks to determine the extent to which customers need to interact with them (Kumar et al. 2010) to increase the level of desired participation (Kumar & Bhagwat 2010). *“In the active customer engagement, the organization needs to increase profits by maximizing the value of customer engagement”* (Kumar et al. 2010). In addition, *“the mechanism by which customers create value for the organization is more sophisticated than the mechanism by which they buy alone”* (Kumar et al. 2010).

2.6.2. Digital Content Marketing and Customer Engagement:

Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral customer engagement is the first-tier, intra-interaction digital content marketing (DCM). Brodie et al. (2011) defines engagement as an interactive experience between a customer and an object (example, DCM content). In addition to that, Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen (2016) represent this concept as an input into the customer’s interaction with the DCM (example, cognition, behavior). Despite the lack of a definitional consensus, the existing views focus on customer object interactions (Hsieh & Chang 2016) and also include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Harmeling et al. 2016).

Below is detailed the impact of DCM on customer awareness, emotion, and behavioral engagement. Cognitive DCM participation refers to the interaction between the customer and the DCM, involving brand-related thinking and psychological statements (see Figure 2.15).

Brodie et al.'s (2011) FPs of CE	Hollebeek et al.'s (2016) Revised FPs of CE
<p>FP1: CE reflects a psychological state, which occurs by virtue of interactive customer experiences with a focal agent/object within specific service relationships.</p> <p>FP2: CE states occur within a dynamic, iterative process of service relationships that cocreates value.</p> <p>FP3: CE plays central role within a nomological network of service relationships.</p> <p>FP4: CE is a multidimensional concept subject to a context- and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions.</p> <p>FP5: CE occurs within a specific set of situational conditions generating differing CE levels.</p>	<p>FP1: CE reflects a customer's motivationally driven, volitional investment of specific operant and operand resources into brand interactions in service systems.</p> <p>FP2: The CE benefits of customer individual and interpersonal operant resource development and cocreation result from CE within service systems.</p> <p>FP3: The CE foundational processes of customer resource integration, knowledge sharing and learning represent either necessary (i.e., for customer resource integration), or conducive (i.e., for customer knowledge sharing/learning) factors for the development of CE in service systems.</p> <p>FP4: CE reflects a customer's investment of focal cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social resources during, or related to, specific brand interactions in service systems.</p> <p>FP5: CE is contingent on focal context-specific characteristics in service systems. Customer manifestations (including intensity, valence) of CE, the CE foundational processes and CE benefits may thus vary across contextual contingencies.</p>
Notes - FPs: Fundamental Propositions; CE: Customer engagement (included/adapted from author working paper).	

Figure 2. 15: Adjusted SDL FBs with relation to social media(Hollebeek 2019, p. 2)

Figure 2.15 presents adjusted SDL FBs with relation to social media (Hollebeek 2019). Cognitive engagement stems from the customer's functionality. *"As a result, customers need to obtain brand- related information (i.e. functional motivations) and their desire for authenticity (i.e. authentic motivation) that injects their cognitive engagement"* (Pronschinske, Groza & Walker 2012). For example, customers can search the internet for information about Nike's shoe quality (i.e. functional motivation) and the organization's social responsibility (i.e., authentic motivation). In Cognitive DCM involvement creates the customer's brand-related senses to indicate *"the process by which the customer develops a brand-related cognitive graph over time,"* (Liu, Lischka & Kenning 2018). Theoretically, the process of cognitive participation to sensibility reveals the cumulative learning or knowledge development effects of participation (Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen 2016).

Furthermore, while the focus of cognitive engagement is on DCM communication, meaning formation is focused on the object of the brand, so as cognitive engagement shifts to brand-related meaning under multiple interactions (Dessart, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas 2016). Brodie et al.

(2013) define emotional input as the positive price of the customer and the degree of emotion associated with the brand that interacts with the DCM. However, this effect may also be negative (example, through adverse brand-related word-of-mouth) or differentiated prices (example, through active or negative participation through co-existence with different brand elements (Bowden et al. 2017). Therefore, we extend the definition of these authors by expressing emotional DCM participation at a neutral price.

Accordingly, we define DCM's emotional engagement as the impact of customer-branding during interaction with DCM. In this framework, DCM's emotional involvement stems from the customer's hedonism and real motive motivation. In other words, the individual's desire for emotional satisfaction (example entertainment) through DCM, as well as the need for real brand-related information, results in an emotional input from DCM (Pagani & Malacarne 2017). For example, the My Starbucks Rewards game content provides a star rating for each customer who buys a product, who can later redeem a specific item or prize. The framework also demonstrates the ability to engage in DCM derived brand recognition, with customers re-representing their brand quality or characteristics to their processes by repeating DCM interactions (Pansari & Kumar 2016).

2.6.3. *Social Media posts:*

Brands like Nike have used Instagram to increase the level of engagement in previous years showing that social media posts have considerable strength for globally renowned brands (Balan 2017). There are five basic social and psychological motives for using Instagram (Lee, Hwang & Choi 2012). Lee, Hwang and Choi (2012) stated that social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escapism, and peeking are the five primary motives of using Instagram. Most of the people say

they use Instagram to escape from their routines and as a source of connections with their family, family members, and with other people. Target market of the brands are usually given visual communication through Instagram. Many brands use viral marketing in form of videos like luxury brands of the fashion sector (Wolny & Mueller 2013). Target customers and influencers are usually attracted by brand-sponsored videos. Social media is used as a communication channel by world famous brands like Zara, Mango, and El Corte Ingles (González-Mansilla et al. 2019).

Taylor (2017); De Vries, Gensler and Leeflang (2012); Chauhan and Pillai (2013); and Tafesse and Wien (2017), Beukeboom, Kerkhof and de Vries (2015) are some of the studies conducted on Facebook which show that brand content influences engagement on social media. These studies also concluded as the audience exposure of these Facebook posts enhance brand evaluations. Nevertheless, more exposure to the same content does not change the consumers' brand evaluation.

Coelho, Oliveira and Almeida (2016) conducted research on 680 Facebook posts and 1169 posts on Instagram focusing on measuring the effect of post type like advertising, events, information, and promotion on likes and comments by the people. Higher involvement of the people on social media like Instagram is attracted by the posts having information of events and promotions of brands.

Valuable functional or hedonic content generated by brands is significant for attracting users to their fan pages on social media (Jahn & Kunz. 2012). However, the content needs to be attractive, entertaining and impactful for social media users. Another study by Luarn, Lin and Ciu (2015) recommends that the engagement of users is expected to be influenced by the type of post content like information, entertainment, remuneration, and social content. This study concluded that the posts related to entertainment are expected to get higher levels of commenting and sharing that

other types mentioned above. Yuki (2015) conducted a similar survey on Facebook and other social media posts concluded that the posts having emotions of happiness were shared commonly. For men and women above 55 years of age, it was found that the content having useful information had more chances of being shared by them. It can be concluded from the above studies that the posts related to branded content on Facebook and other social media like Instagram are widely read and shared and lead to better levels of engagement. This conclusion leads to development of hypothesis that Instagram content differs in its level of engagement for the followers. Therefore, the effective application of social media platforms for strategic company purposes, including those related to VCC and value capture requires diversification of the social media employed based on factors such as the characteristics of the target audience and the content to be published (Coelho et al. 2016; Yuki 2015). This emphasizes the important role of social media platform diversity in the VCC and value capture.

As social media platforms can be taken as a committed and interactive platform for brands to interact with their customers and have a positive brand communication (Tafesse & Wien 2017). The social media posts provide brands an allowance to build an online community for their users to interact and have a direct and personalized communication with them (Ashley & Tuten 2015; Kim, Spiller, & Hettche 2015).

The consumers, fans, influences, employees and other stakeholders of the brand create a community which can interact on social media pages and subscribing their brand's updates (Zaglia 2013). Brand which attracts consumers to like or subscribe to their pages not only provide consumers a source of brand's regular communication but also get an access to other consumers' posts, comments and feedbacks. The social media pages use various interactivity tools including like, comment, share, leaving private and public messages which are useful in voicing their

opinions, showing their feelings and sharing their experiences about the brand. Studies by Tafesse and Wien (2017) and Zaglia (2013) show that this opportunity of real-time interactivity of brand with consumers creates an environment of co-creating positive brand experiences. Brand posts are a channel for brands to communicate comparatively regular, concise and unpaid updates from the brands to their consumers. Customers are able to receive these updates in their newsfeeds or also by visiting the brand page.

Tafesse and Wien (2017) suggested a categorization method in their study which provides a conceptual framework for coding, categorizing and analyzing brand posts on social media. According to Gensler et al. (2013) and Peters et al. (2013) this categorization can be used to test various, advanced models of consumer engagement. This method of categorization also emphasizes the strategic value these brand pages hold for their specific brands. This method of categorization is helpful for marketers to design marketing strategies by deriving specific marketing objectives which can be about enhancing brand awareness through functional and educational posts, increase sales by having promotional posts and leading all this to post-purchase services by customer-relationship posts on the social media pages. This categorization can also help in building a strong brand community through brand community and events related brand posts. Brand managers can also take help from these brand pages to get a more personal and affection-based connection with posting emotional, customized and issue-based brand posts and simplify authentic brand experiences including brand resonance and experiential brand posts. Therefore, the above studies suggest that marketers take these brand pages as strategic tools enhancing strategic orientation leading to fulfilment of marketing objectives.

2.6.4. Summary and Synthesis of Research Gaps – Customer Engagement

Even though customer engagement has been studied by multiple authors, there is still a lack of exploration of customer engagement in co-creation activities (Quinton 2013). Considering this gap, it is recommended that other potential structures for networking with partners are considered, and the exploration of “participation activities” is still insufficient. As mentioned earlier, SDL strategy has become an important meta-theoretical perspective. Given the current context of study in VCC, these engagements may be useful to test the condition of engagement required engaging in co-creation since it requires active engagement. At the same time, organizations seek to identify how far customers need to engage with them to promote the necessary level of involvement. Within customer active engagement, organizations can increase their bottom line by maximizing customer engagement value. Furthermore, the creation of value by customers for organizations occurs through a more elaborate mechanism than the purchase of goods or services alone (Kumar et al. 2010), making the driver of customer value, by definition, the intensity of customer engagement through either the organization’s product or services.

Notwithstanding the increasing importance of the terminology “participation”, only few authors have tried to come up with a definition or conducted a research on how it actually differs from similar related concepts. The current study acknowledges the needs for the organization to co-create and value capture. Capturing customer value is applicable only if the right platform is adopted to maximize the value of experience. Our study supports Sawhney, Verona and Prandelli (2005) noting that with value co-creation, the customer or consumer is able to connect directly with the organization. The study addresses the importance of a value co-creation platform not only to encourage the consumer to produce ideas, feedback and share new knowledge, but also to strengthening consumer communication. In addition, value capture reveals that low-level engagement and a high level of engagement makes a difference to co-creation activities. Based on

research by Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) the organization only caters for co-creation if it constantly receives high level engagement from the consumer. It is most prevalent and practical for the organization to acquire value especially in a VCC context.

In addition to that, previous research identifies the beneficial impact of DMC on the engagement of customers (Liu, Lischka & Kenning 2018). Nevertheless, Bowden et al. (2017) argue that the impact could also be negative. Guided by these findings and the lack of evidence related to the impact of customer engagement and DCM on VCC and value capture, the next research proposition defined for the present research is: The digital media content influences customer engagement and co-creation benefits.

In addition to that, the functionalities vary between different social media platforms, as identified in the previous section 2.5. Furthermore, the levels of engagements and target audience for different platforms also vary as emphasized in sub-section 2.6.3 above. In this light, the scarce research on the role of social media platform diversity in the tourism industry opens another important research gap. Therefore, the present study will also attempt to establish whether the diversity of social media platforms influences the process of value capture and value co-creation in the hotel industry.

2.7. Organizational Arrangement:

This section of the literature review is focused on the organizational arrangements in order to clarify the role of the business entity in the context of the service marketing and VCC. This understanding provides foundation for the investigation of research of the VCC in the case of hotel organizations in the present research. Works by authors including Bendapudi and Leone (2003), Vargo and Lusch (2016), Rathore, Ilavarasan and Dwivedi (2016), are employed in the discussion.

In recent years, most marketing studies have concluded that organizations play a role in service providers (Kotler et al. 2009). This is because services are considered to be factors that contribute to the reconceptualization and repositioning of (Vargo & Lusch 2016).

SDL theory is still in its infancy. *“As with all meta-theoretical frameworks, the uniform paradigm and meta-theory of SDL strategy may never be complete. On the contrary, the future development of SDL strategy may follow an iterative process that involves the refinement and expansion of meta-theory, which is inspired by midrange theory and evidence-based research. From a philosophical point of view, as well as ontology, epistemological and methodological assumptions, we should find well-equipped SDL strategy to provide further guidance for the development of “more specific, empirically tested and practically applicable midrange theories” (Vargo & Lusch 2017).*

In this case, the organization acts as a service provider while treating the customer as society. This is because customers have the ability to bring about significant economic change and guide many marketing factors. This is the main reason why many organizations are customer-centric (Brodie, Löbner & Fehrer 2019).

Therefore, an organization can be considered in a good shape only if it is able to capture the value generated by the customer (Kuzgun & Asugman 2015). Such an ability shows that the SDL strategy is best suited to the organization, helping it get into a state of promoting its market and economies of scale. In short, the exchange of services between customers and organizations helps the companies obtain information about the economic and marketing strategies that they can use. Vargo and Lusch (2008) point out that the SDL allows one participant to use their knowledge and other resources to benefit another participant in the process. According to Healy and McDonagh (2013) the experience shared by customers is important to the organization because it provides

feedback and suggestions that can be used to further enhance products and services. For instance, social media provides a platform for customers to connect with their organizations, which allows the entities to track the changing needs of their clients (Rathore, Ilavarasan & Dwivedi 2016).

In addition to this, co-creation is an important concept identified in extensive SDL literature that promotes the relationship between customers and organizations (Grönroos 2012). Co-creation is an important part of the value acquisition process, which identifies the customer's role as a value creator (Priem 2007). Due to the strategic role of co-creation, external factors affecting the process of value acquisition are included in the theoretical approach of the study.

Forward-thinking organizations often serve individual customers in the form of customized bundled goods or services, which increase the “value provided” to the customers and therefore improve their competitiveness (Bendapudi & Leone 2003). These complications mean that services created to support one customer's value proposition, may not necessarily be applicable to the results of another customer. Therefore, the challenges and moral hazards associated with the context provided by the service still need a mitigation approach (Schiavone et al. 2020). Forward-thinking or advanced services also mean greater and better service. However, this adds to the increasing complexity and challenge of delivery, therefore a focus on supporting the functionality and efficiency of the product offering. In short, advanced services focus on helping customers achieve the desired results. As a result, advanced services require closer relationships with customers and a higher degree of customization, with a focus on enhancing the customer's value co-creation process and ultimately creating value together (Vargo & Lush 2008; Schiavone et al. 2020). Therefore, understanding the meaning of value co-creation in the service and identifying the capabilities that are critical to helping the social media processes within the organization, provide the organization with a deeper understanding of the marketing strategy.

2.8. Value Capture:

The organizational arrangements discussed in the above section emphasize the critical role of the relationships between the organization and its customers for effective value co-creation. Nevertheless, in order to benefit from their VCC efforts, business entities need advanced capabilities to capture the value created. The problems of value capture are covered in an inseparable relationship with value creation in the works of scholars like Agafonow (2014), Bowman and Ambrosini (2000), Pitelis (2009). Furthermore, Lepak, Smith and Taylor (2007) present a multi-level perspective towards value capture, emphasizing the complex nature of this concept. Therefore, the present section is aimed at the concept and present knowledge related to value capture. Sjödin et al. (2019, p. 161) define value capture as *“the process of securing profits from value creation and the distribution of those profits among participating actors such as providers, customers, and partners”*. According to the authors, this definition is grounded on the works of Chesbrough, Lettl and Ritter (2018) and Dyer, Singh and Hesterly (2018).

The topic of value capture in social media has captured the research interest of authors like Wamba and Carter (2013). On the one hand, Agafonow (2014) presents the economic perspective toward value capture focused on the ways in which business organizations capture value through social media, sales, profit generation, quantitative economic value and network economy. On the other hand, Wamba and Carter (2013) present the technological perspective towards the focal concept, aimed at the value co-creation and social network through social media. This perspective is connected to technology related development, the likes of search engines, better interfaces, peer-to-peer communication tools, and social networks, all of which improve marketers' ability to communicate and engage the customers through these new point of interest (Shankar et al. 2011). Previous studies on social media supporting co-creation activities place the focus on content

sharing, organization and collaborative works among customers (Agafonow 2014; Bashir, Papamichail & Malik 2017). Therefore, the social media are seen as the medium for value creation (Majchrzak et al. 2009). However, besides the user generated content and communication, there are also other forms of value creation through the application of social media like electronic commerce (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010; Grönroos 2012). In the light of the SDL theoretical logic, scholars describe customer as value co- creators (Vargo & Lusch 2008; Brodie, Löbner & Fehrer 2019). In contrast, Rashid et al. (2019) present a platform approach towards the study of VCC. The authors emphasize the impact of the specific social media platform employed by the business organization for its VCC activities, which provides a meaningful rationale for a study with a specific focus on individual social media platforms.

This relationship between the customer and the organization in social media allows customers to become more motivated to use the social media platforms for developing value, providing self-discovery, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity, and providing social enhancement and entertainment value (Rathore, Ilavarasan & Dwivedi 2016). To satisfactorily maintain these benefits, however, marketers need to become adept at ensuring a relationship adjusted to the specific characteristics of the consumer behavior. Nadeem (2015) advises business organizations to provide a better offer as the “core set of motivation” for customers’ delight, or *“exceeding customer's expectations to create a positive customer experience with a product or brand.”*

It is important for organizations to cope with the updated technology to both increase and motivate customers (Fischer & Reuber 2011). While the social media platforms are central enablers, their ultimate power is presented by the co-creation opportunities in the organization’s internal sales, service, marketing and its customers (Gouillart 2011; Curtis 2013). The awareness of the organization to use social media leads to increases in customer participation such as word-of-

mouth, user generated content and social commerce (Liang et al. 2011). These advantages allow organizations to improve their potential for value capture.

This study proposes that social media not only works for providing resources for the organization through customer contribution, but also as platform for value creation. The presented review emphasized the positive impact of social media on the value capture based on the interactive relationships between the business organization and its customers. Nevertheless, the presence, type and direction of the relationship between the social media and the value capture through social media based on the collaboration between business and customers has not been studied in the context of the UAE hotel industry. This leads to the identification of another research gap that can be addressed through the present research. Based on the findings drawn from the available literature basis, we can define another research proposition that social media is positively related to value capture through collaboration with customers.

2.9. Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT):

Absorptive Capacity Theory (ACT) is another attribute that adds to the theoretical approach of the study and helps in better understanding how the value capturing process benefits all participants (Cohen & Levinthal 1990). The conceptual importance of ACT in the context of VCC and SDL is acknowledged by different authors including Ortega-Gutiérrez, Cepeda-Carrión and Alves (2022) who emphasize the important role of ACT as a cornerstone of effective generation and utilization of value through social media with a specific focus on business organizations with SD orientation. The interconnection between ACT and VCC through social media is also recognized by Turner (2013) and Schlagwein and Hu (2018) in the business context, as well as in public organizational setting (Osborne, Radnor & Strokosch 2016; Butler & Ferlie 2019). It is acknowledged that no value can be extended to any participant in the value creation process in case the value acquired

cannot be adequately put to an effective purpose (Zou, Guo & Guo 2016). Therefore, the focus of this section is to discuss the organization's capability to integrate information at the time of value capture.

Therefore, the present section is aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of ACT. The section is structured in conceptualization of ACT, the importance of internal and external factors of act in value capture, and the organization's capability on acknowledging the value in co-creation.

2.9.1. ACT conceptualization

The present sub-section is focused on the concept of ACT, its importance and building blocks. The absorptive capacity concept is introduced by Cohen and Levinthal (1990, p.128) as” *“the ability of a firm to recognize the value of new, external information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends”*. This fundamental definition is detected in diverse works including the publications by Rumbaugh et al. (2012), Zou, Guo and Guo (2016), Butler and Ferlie (2019). With respect to the above definition of the absorptive capacity concept, ACT is presented as the theoretical branch aimed at the investigation of the absorptive capacity of a firm Cohen and Levinthal (1990). The importance of ACT theory is cited as where the organization can excel or fail to achieve the competitive edge sought through the use of SDL. Researchers have identified numerous criteria necessary for the fulfillment of objectives employing ACT. They include strategic innovation, the role of social media (Scuotto, Del Giudice & Carayannis 2016), and technological advancements (Roberts et al. 2012).

A majority of recent research regarding ACT has understandably focused on technological advancements as well as the role of social media in facilitating the integration between the

participants, along with the development process within the organization. It has been noted that the increased use of new technologies allows the organization to boost their performance and productivity, as evidenced by Schlagwein and Hu (2018) who recognize the concept of international diffusion and linked it with internal validation through digital platforms. Supporting this validation process were three studies that focused on the assimilation process of technology as an external factor that impacts the organization and its performance (Cohen & Levinthal 1990). This research was important to the development implications of technology on the value capture concept in that supported three qualifications important in the development of the ACT theory; identification, assimilation and transformation. By 2002, research began re-conceptualizing ACT as a means of further facilitating the improved performance of the organization (Zahra & George 2002). The approach of Todorova (2007) to ACT combined the work from Cohen and Levinthal (1990) and Zahra and George (2002). The components of ACT remain the same (Cohen & Levinthal (1990) and Zahra and George (2002) (recognize – assimilate – exploit). It also includes and highlight each component within the value capture framework. First, it is recognized the customer as the actor that produces the value of experience, thus posit knowledge activation. Next, further clarification of the social co-creation role as a platform which is triggered via the co-creation paradigm is needed. It is consistent with Bowman and Ambrossini (2000) studies, value capture established by economic factors and the perceived power relationship. Value capture is referred as *“the appropriation and retention by the firm of payment made by customers in expectation of future value from consumption”*, (Priem 2007).

Lane, Koka and Pathak (2006) undertook a systematic study of the diverse research works related to ACT finding that nearly 289 research papers had been published in 20 different journal articles showing that the interest in ACT and the organization was growing. The value capture topics

collected from previously published literature focused on Value of Experience (VoE) are discussed below. The research work undertaken by Todorova (2007) has brought the ACT framework into the limelight. Reconceptualization and reintroduction are an important part of the ACT theory on the basis of the components mentioned by different authors. On the basis of the above studies, the customers are first studied as a producer of the value of experience and hence, they are regarded as the active participant of knowledge facilitators in the value process. This is followed by the role of social co-creation which is used as a platform for gathering information and using it in the transformation process. Bowman and Ambrossini (2000) mentioned that economic factors, as well as the power relationship, shared between the actors majorly impact the value capturing process. The authors have further elaborated the concept of value capturing the retention process that is used by the organization.

Yet, because of the analysis undertaken by these authors, several concerns were uncovered related to the ACT approach, with several experts documenting how differences between internal as well as external factors could have a direct, negative, impact on the absorptive capacity of the organizations (Enkel, Groemminger & Heil 2017).

The constructs of the ACT have also been closely examined due to their 1) strategic role in the theoretical approach adopted by the organization in identifying the external factors that add to its knowledge, and 2) major role in accumulating as well as transforming the knowledge achieved in a manner that it can be utilized for the betterment of the organizations (Sun & Anderson 2008).

To further enhance the absorptive capacity of the organization, the application of this theory has been suggested using social media. Though, many studies have supported the fact that technology is one of the most important factors that impact the ACT, social media is also one of the new factors that help in developing a new business model. Therefore, it is believed that the different

elements of ACT offer different outcomes. ACT's main point is to fully understand the valuable new knowledge outside the organization through exploratory learning. *"Thus, as long as learning involves new and external knowledge of the organization, the ability to absorb is the learning of the organization"* (Sun & Anderson 2008). Figure 2.16 depicts the organizational use of social media with the integration of ACT.

<i>Absorptive capacity processes</i> (Lane et al., 2006)	<i>Organisational uses of</i> <i>social media (examples)</i>	<i>Sources (examples)</i>
<i>Exploratory learning:</i> Searching, understanding, recognising and acquiring knowledge.	To patrol user-generated content and trends effectively To take up marketplace information more quickly To communicate between businesses more effectively	Berinato (2010), Larson and Watson (2011) Jansen <i>et al.</i> (2009), Schweidel and Moe (2014) Levy (2009), Michaelidou <i>et al.</i> (2011)
<i>Transformative learning:</i> Interpreting, assimilating, maintaining and reactivating knowledge.	To store and search for knowledge more easily To enable crowdsourcing To leverage collective intelligence	Gray <i>et al.</i> (2011), Levy (2009) Tang <i>et al.</i> (2012), Turban <i>et al.</i> (2011) Chen <i>et al.</i> (2012), Standing and Kiniti (2011)
<i>Exploitative learning:</i> Transmuting, applying, exploiting and maximising impact of knowledge.	To develop new business applications or business processes To access the market more easily To create viral word-of-mouth	Andriole (2010), Koschmider <i>et al.</i> (2010) Dhar and Ghose (2010); Standing and Kiniti (2011) Li and Du (2011), Rui <i>et al.</i> (2010)

Figure 2. 16: Organization uses of social media with integration of ACT (Schlagwein & Hu 2017, p. 200)

2.9.2. The Importance of Internal and External Factors of ACT in Value Capture:

The internal and external factors of ACT play a very important role in the development of co-creation within the organization. One of the most important tasks of the organizations is to collect the value from the customers with the help of the social platform. The external conditions include acquiring and assimilation whereas the internal conditions include transformation as well as exploitation.

Many studies have been undertaken that distinguish ACT by these two internal and external components. We know that information technology is used by the organizations for enhancing their absorptive capacity for further development as well as for maintenance of the organization (Roberts et al. 2012). Even though many authors have claimed that ACT is generated by the organization as a result of the external conditions contributing to creating competitive advantage, others argue that the absorptive capacity is a result of the amalgamation of the internal and external conditions that facilitate social integration as well as innovation within the organization (Enkel, Groemminger & Heil 2017). Schlagwein and Hu (2017) support this statement with the help of empirical and theoretical studies undertaken by them. The absorptive capacity also enhances the innovation strategies adopted by the organization that facilitates the learning process and as a result it influences the capability of the organization. Therefore, the literature evidences that there are many different ways in which ACT can be utilized by the organization.

Social media integration is an important factor in ACT and is believed to offer valuable information that gives in-depth analysis on the use of social media in favor of the organization (Schlagwein & Hu 2017). According to Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2010) social media implementation is an important strategy that can be adopted by the organization to develop the opportunities that are followed by the information gained from the customers. Co-creation encourages the organization to keep track of their customers and their activities that help in developing and managing the content of the organizational development. ACT can be the bridge for SDL. Absorptive capacity has the ability to obtain customer's knowledge through digital platforms. Lane, Salk and Lyles (2001) build upon this concept of ACT to include cultural compatibility. There are three dimensions of ACT, and they are: identification, assimilation, and application. The first two dimensions are relational, while the third, application of ACT is mainly

organizational. Whereby, SDL fall short of the specifics, as it pertains to the organization. ACT on the other hand, can be the bridge for our research of value co-creation and capture framework. Limited evidence is available on how the organization uses the value gained through social media in co-creation. Therefore, it is worth noting that ACT theory as well as SDL helps in value capturing by identifying the factors that facilitates value capturing.

2.9.3. Organization Capability on Acknowledging Value in Co Creation:

In order to capture value, it is first important to recognize the value, which is done with the help of value expectation studied through co-creation. Once customers start to interact with the organizations via social media platforms, they tend to share their ideas as well as experiences with the organization. Then, the social media manager recognizes these ideas and experiences on the basis of the co-creation ranks and also tries to identify that how well the social media platform has helped in receiving these ideas.

Research undertaken by Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2010) illustrated the importance of Twitter and Facebook in Fortune 500 companies, and found that social media helps in enhancing the business value by facilitating the decision-making process, community building, as well as the absorptive capacity of the organization. Further, customers tend to record their value processing manually and in an unstructured manner. The organizations require these values in a more structured manner and hence, a report base is produced. The study thus focuses on the organizations' capacity for capturing value from unstructured value, with co-creation coming into picture that helps in better collaboration between the customer and the organization (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010). Recording the data collected through social media in a structured manner and continuous monitoring of this data are important suggestions that should be adopted

by companies.

2.9.3.1. Acquiring Value

The identification of value is followed by acquisition from a value experience and this is the main feature of ACT. Also, the information and ideas follow through the social media platform to the organizations if the customer has a registered account and through that account tries to connect with the organization. And from here, the organization collects and uses the information as and when required (Todorova 2007). This is supported by the work of Enkel, Groemminger and Heil (2017) who say that in order to gather external information collaboration needs to be developed. Though a cluster of information is available through social media platforms, it is important to use co-creation to identify the relevant information and use it to the favor of the organization (Töytäri and Rajala 2015). The type of customer engagement is also crucial in this process as it influences the organizations' value capturing activity. On the basis of the 2011 study conducted by IBM, the lowest customer engagement type identified was of engaged authors. This category of customer responded actively along with additional comments posted on their own post. The highest category identified was of the casual participant where customers responded occasionally (IBM 2011). This study was based on online platform and hence, can be used for online customer identification.

2.9.3.2. Absorb and Exploit Value of Experience into the Organization

Absorb here identifies the organization's ability to detect information and then transform it in a meaningful manner. In order to achieve this, different processes are involved which is based on the organization's co-creation strategy. The beneficial role of the social media interactions as a determinant of VCC and value capture are identified as an important factor for the creation of organizational strategy (Kuzgun & Asugman 2015). In this respect, Todorova (2007) has

suggested analyzing the factors that facilitates correlation between assimilation and exploitation as an internal factor of ACT.

Customer relationship management is an alternative approach that has been suggested for enhancing the efficiency of the organization as this facilitates customer engagement. Though, this study limits the research work to co-creation. Experts have suggested that internal social media management should be adopted by the organization for identification and capturing of value as this helps in studying the unstructured value in easier manner (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010).

The use of internal social media by the organizations has not been focused by experts. Wamba and Carter (2014) stated that once the organization is capable of identifying and assimilating the value many new opportunities can be grabbed by the organization. Here, ACT's internal condition is utilized for evaluating and managing the value. Managerial role is of utmost importance here and Todorova (2007) has suggested certain managerial concerns impacting their role.

The first concern is regarding the failure in identifying the new knowledge that is required for further improvement Todorova (2007). The second concern is that in order to utilize the ACT theory at its best, it is important to use all its components and coordinate them. The third concern is related to the empirical study that should be conducted to enhance the efficiency of information absorbed externally. Therefore, the actions adopted by the organization influence the value capturing process to a great extent. So, many internal processes are required to be put in place so that the effectiveness and efficiency of the process is maintained. Like, the managers should decide over the level of customer engagement or the steps that are essential for absorbing the value, etc.

2.9.4. *Summary and Research Gap - ACT*

The value capture informed by ACT relates to the relation between participation to obtain knowledge towards value creation and competitive advantage. The above study shows that the customer plays a very important role in the value capturing process as he/she is one of the active contributors in the co-creation process. Also, the customer is an active participant in all the processes that include creating, collaborating, as well as sharing relevant information, through the social media platform (Heinonen 2011). This means that whether it is an absorptive capacity theory or the dominant theory, the customer has always remained the main locus of the value-capturing process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) acknowledge that SDL is the basis that forms the context of the theory of interaction, since SDL's definition of value creation differs from its definition, it is considered to use commodity-led logic. According to the SDL strategy, organizations cannot embed value in a product or distribution process, but rather create it with customers (Vargo & Lusch 2007). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) proposed the DART model, which can be used to conceptualize the creation process and enhance understanding of customer behavior and cognitive processes. As a result, the model remains the most popular framework for guiding the creation of value scoundrels (Mazur & Zaborek 2014). It was, therefore, suggested that it was necessary to further explore the DART model, particularly in the area of conceptual and quantitative research (Mazur & Zaborek 2014). However, Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2018) cited a need for future research concerning the institutional arrangement of utilizing VCC applications based solely on digital interactions.

Also, it has been identified that the challenges related to the co-creation process is not identified easily as the value is continuously transferred from one actor to the other (Gustafsson, Kristensson & Witell 2012). One of the most important facts that have been studied is that, if the competitors use these values and information in their favor, then there are very high chances that the value

would be diminished. Therefore, this is an important challenge that should be taken care of by the organizations as this would directly impact the competitive role of the company in the market. Hence, in order to manage this, it is important to reduce the gaps that have been identified after adopting the absorptive capacity theory. Furthermore, the identified beneficial role of the social media and the collaboration with customers for the VCC and value capture are creating new avenues for the development of organizational strategy (Kuzgun & Asugman 2015).

This finding opens the door for the definition of another proposition for the present research, related to the influence *that the process of value capture through the social media platforms has on organizational strategy*. This direction would contribute to filling the gap connected to the lack of empirical evidence created in the selected research context. After presenting an overview of concepts and the existing relations of VCC, the researcher intends to extend and adapt the value co-creation concepts offered in SDL, ACT. Furthermore, the researcher will add the social media concepts with its sub-titles to provide a conceptual framework of value co-creation through social media.

2.10. Conceptualizing Theoretical Insight into a Framework:

The purpose of this subsection is to present the development of a conceptual framework for value co-creation and value capture, based on the theoretical understanding presented in the present review of literature. The conceptual framework is designed to allow investigation of the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry.

The literature review shows the current frameworks and models on value co-creation within the various management disciplines, such as marketing and social media. While existing frameworks and current perspectives are useful, each provides somewhat different perspective and a distinct

degree of perception, the existing frameworks do not provide the overall and holistic perspective our study is incorporating. Our framework is therefore designed by extending and adapting the value co-creating concepts presented in SDL, ACT and social media literature. The resulting framework is designed to refine and clarify the VCC and value capture applicable to the organization in order to answer the research questions:

1. How value is co-created and captured through social media platforms in the organization?
2. How does the social media platforms diversity enable the co-creation and value capture within the organizations?
3. How does the network platform affect organizational strategy towards its beneficiary?
4. How can organizations effectively employ social media for enhancing their value co-creation and value capture capabilities?

The present literature review creates the foundation for the proposed research output, a comprehensive framework for value co-creation between the organization and the online interaction of customers through the integration of SDL with ACT, enabling co-creation and value capture process using social media. As illustrated below, the creation of this complex framework requires a step-by-step explanation to ensure that each component is defined, since each component plays such an important role in ensuring that the final theoretical framework is meaningful.

Due to the complex mechanisms associated with value co-creation in the digital arena, this study carefully evaluates each component before determining the importance of its functionality within the framework. Based on previous discussions of ACT, this study includes both internal conditions and external factors. External factors contain two important elements: the customer (as an online

contributor) and the social media platforms (medium of integration). The internal is made up of three major elements: the organization, the value capture mechanism deployed and the theoretical views of ACT.

At this point, social media platforms serve as the link between the two conditions of internal and external conditions, and as discussed, the development of the framework is influenced by our detailed literature review regarding the organizational, online customer interactions, social media platforms, technology, value co-creation, value capture and theoretical research. The role of this work is to identify the social media capabilities that enabling co-creation and value capture with showing the different phases of co-creation towards organization beneficiary.

To summarize, the objective of the framework is to fill the research gaps in co-creation and value capture literature that are highlighted earlier in this chapter, establishing the role of the platform as a means to enable and promote a two-way engagement between the customer and organization and vice versa. A well-defined framework that is a complement to its analytical tools, can be a source of customer insights, motivations and behavior. With such co-experience, both customer and the organization are enabled to co-create and promote bilateral value benefits, and as such value creation (McColl-Kennedy, Cheung & Ferrier 2015).

Value co-creation and value capture begins with active customer participation in the organizational social media platform, it is the role of the platform to promote active participation, customer engagement and the sharing of experience through discussion. While theoretically, this is where an organization evaluates active engagement by the customer, analytically the organization is enabled to determine customer motivation and behavior. Thus, with co-creation, both customer and the organization can create value, promoting value capture.

The first part of the framework describes the basic elements that trigger and influence the co-

creation process. In particular, the development the internet enables organizations to use social medial platforms and help customers interact extensively and easily with other agents and organizations to create new offerings. These new interactive spaces also support strong relationships and a sense of social community through easier, enhanced interactions with others, learning processes and social connections. The framework also includes motivational factors that may lead to customer participation in co-creation activities. Creative customers prefer to follow spiritual, social or moral motivations rather than simply achieving material or personal goals (Kotler et al. 2009). In this sense, customer participation in value creation activities is more likely to reflect beyond motivation to increase the usefulness of products or services and provide value to society. In a value-centric era, ethical values provide guidance to customers, such as sharing knowledge, experience, skills or contributions to the common good can be a transcendent motivation for customers to participate in joint creative activities.

The second part of the framework highlights the positive impact of the co-creation process by social media on customers and the organization. Thus, value co-creation is a process based on customer and organizational-promoted interactions in which valuable resources are integrated and value is distributed among agents. As a result, customers are part of a “workforce” that voluntarily adheres to the social media community in order to promote the organization. It is clear from these processes that the core outcomes for the customer are empowerment, transcending self-decision and customer participation, enabling them to build relationships and have a beneficial impact on themselves. These include shared customer learning and personalized experiences that are created together, establishing synergies and benefits such as trust, commitment and brand loyalty to the organization (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004).

Then ACT dictates how the external influencers affect how the organization acquires and

assimilates the value into a useful form and the internal elements demonstrate how the organization transforms the value in order to exploit customer experience. These, however, are all functions achievable through the co-creation activities and are solely impacted by the organization's managerial roles. To identify the full potential and the most effective and efficient internal processes of social media by the managerial roles, further research is needed.

The capability of the organization to capture VoE through social media is thus determined by the absorptive capacity of the organization in the application within the organization. The framework highlights the important the co-creation process and value captured that customers and organization generate within online interactions. Organizations should take advantage of the process that promotes customer empowerment and online participation in the co-creation process. While continuous improvements to the framework would help drive the customer co-creation process, the framework would prove useless if customers do not continue to participate in future value co-creation activities. We brought the social media to take the traditional co-creation to new insights of having a fresh model assuring the need of having such tools if not a must.

To summarize the visualization of the conceptual framework for the present study, four major elements are determined. They are illustrated in Figure 2.17 below:

1. The online interactions by the customers towards co-creation concept
2. Social media concept as the integrated platform,
3. The organization employee as actors for co-creation to capture value
4. The value capture concept towards value creation

2.11. Research Propositions:

After reviewing the relationships of VCC and Social Media concepts the following research propositions are defined for the present study:

RP1: Social media has an impact on value co-creation in the hospitality sector in UAE

Prior studies such as those of Morosan (2015) focussed on value cocreation through the use of mobile commerce by collecting data from US hotel guests, which focussed on the factors of personalization, trust in the hotel, and their personal innovativeness. On the other hand, Chathoth et al. (2016) highlighted the challenges of capturing value cocreation and emphasised on the modalities of service transactions which varies based on boundary conditions, enablers, and use of technology platform. Therefore, these findings highlight the gap in literature which specifically focuses on the use of social media platforms for value cocreation. Moreover, the lack of studies related to value cocreation in UAE also highlights the literature gap which presents an interesting area of study. Therefore, this proposition is expected to contribute to bridging the research gap related to the lack of evidence from the UAE hotel industry, which was identified in the present review of literature.

RP2: The use of social media has an impact on the value capture through collaboration with customers

This research proposition is grounded on the detected positive interconnection between the application of social media by business organizations and value capture (Agafonow 2014; Bashir, Papamichail & Malik 2017; Majchrzak et al. 2009). However, while these studies provide evidence of the usefulness of customer engagement with organisations, these are related to product development and leveraging social feedback, there is a gap related to the engagement of customers towards creating value in the context of hotel industry. This proposition is aimed at addressing the gap in the present knowledge connected to the viability, type and direction of the relationship between social media and the value capture through social media based on the collaboration between business and customers in the case of the UAE hotel industry.

RP3: The digital media content influences customer engagement and co-creation benefits

Prior studies such as those of Mahrinasari (2021) and Weerasinghe (2019) have revealed a positive influence of digital content marketing and online customer engagement. However, the research of Mahrinasari (2021) is focussed on user and generation theory (UGT) and user generated content, and hence presents a limited view of the influence of digital content marketing which lacks linkage to value co-creation. Similarly, the study of Weerasinghe (2019) focussed solely on the relationship between content marketing and customer online engagement without focus on value co-creation in any industry. A more focussed approach was provided by Terho et al. (2022) who identified factors which enhance the performance outcomes of customer-centric DCM, however the study is inclined towards theory building by undertaking qualitative research design. Hence, even though there is evidence of influence of digital content on customer engagement, there is a gap associated with the influence of DMC and customer engagement on the VCC and value capture. The present proposition is developed based on this gap, while the identified beneficial relationship serves as the basis for its main assumption.

RP4: The diversity of social media platforms influences the process of value capture and value co-creation in the hotel industry

This research proposition is proposed considering the beneficial impact of social media platforms on VCC and value capture processes (Solakis et al. 2021; Agafonow 2014; etc.), as well as the diverse capabilities (Kietzmann et al. 2011; Laroche, Habibi & Richard 2013; etc.), audience and engagement levels of different social media platforms (Lee, Hwang & Choi 2012; Coelho et al. 2016). However, while the studies identified the different elements of social media such as likes and comments and the influence of brand communities towards customer relationships, there is a visible gap towards emphasis on value co-creation. Furthermore, these studies are either focussed

on social media adoption at initial stage (Lee, Hwang & Choi 2012) or the role of content towards involvement of followers across different social media platforms (Coelho et al. 2016). Hence, the lack of strong evidence in academic literature which explains the influence of diverse social media platforms along with their content attributes (such as posts, videos, and images, among others) presents a compelling case to delve into the issue. The study will address the gap connected to the impact of the social media platforms' diversity on VCC and value capture processes, detected in the performed review of academic literature).

RP5: The process of value capture through the social media platforms has an influence on organizational strategy

Organisational strategy relates to the holistic perspective of managing resources and adding value. Previous studies (Hajli et al. 2017) have highlighted the effectiveness of the social media as an important marketing tool for co-branding (Hajli et al. 2017), use of social media insights for developing competitive advantage (Ribarsky, Wang & Dou 2014), and importance of communication between organisations and customers using social media platforms (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Furthermore, researchers have also drawn upon the service dominant logic to examine the relationship of customer's social media interactions and behavioural engagement (Clark, Black & Judson, 2017; Onofrei, Filieri & Kennedy, 2022). However, it has been also pointed out that understanding of the best ways to use social media at all stages remains limited, fragmented and mostly anecdote and does not cover a holistic perspective of the influence on organisational strategy (Bashir, Papamichail & Malik 2017). Hence, the study aims to address this research gap by understanding and exploring the process of value capture through the social media platform which can support organisational strategy. The knowledge related to the present proposition would provide novel knowledge related to the UAE hotel industry which is currently

scarce.

RP6: Value co-creation using the social media platform has significant implications in the hospitality industry

The vast implementation of social media in the hospitality industry has been identified in previous studies (Sørensen & Jensen, 2015; Solakis et al. 2021; etc.) but there is a gap related to the context of the UAE hospitality sector. Therefore, this research proposition has been defined to leverage the findings of the study and provide recommendations for use of social media platform to capture value and value co-creation. The findings of the study have the potential to provide useful insights in the specific context of hospitality sector in the UAE by leveraging the social media platforms. ~~It will support the efforts to address the gap related to the specific context provided by the UAE hospitality sector.~~ Furthermore, the research is aimed at the introduction of a practical framework for effective VCC through social media in the context of the hotels industry.

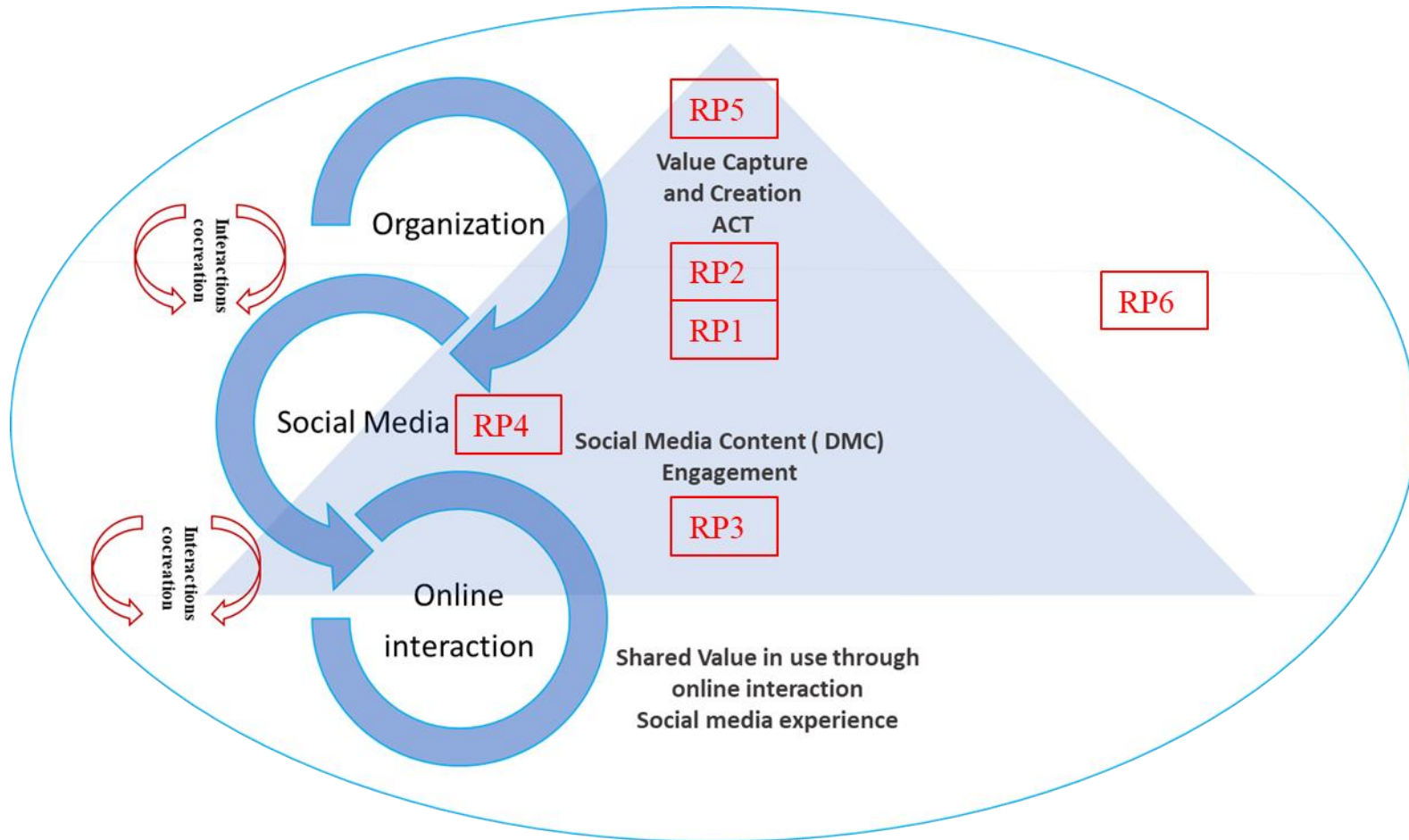


Figure 2. 17: Author's Conceptual Framework of Value co-creation in digital era(Compiled by the researcher)

2.12. Conclusion:

This chapter has shown that knowledge on the use of social media for value capture value co-creation and even access to social media within organizations is limited and fragmented. Consequently, in this chapter the researcher put forth a conceptual framework to investigate and explore how value co-creation, value capture it is organized within the organization. Also, how social media is interrelated at the organizational purposes. The researcher proposed a framework by extending and adapting the value co-creating concepts presented in SDL, ACT and social media literature. The proposed framework is designed to refine and make clear the value of co-creation and value capture how presented in literature to support CGT as starting point of theoretical sampling and collecting data to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter begins with an outline of the research questions and then the research purpose of the study. A discussion of the methodological foundation for this research then follows. The researcher also provides an overview of the research paradigms and a rationale for the approach adopted in this study. The chapter then leads on to a discussion about the characteristics of the researcher and the approaches implemented to enhance methodological quality. Finally, issues and details concerning ethical research governance are outlined.

The purpose of this study is to explore the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry.

Collecting such insights requires qualitative research that can provide insight into the subject rather than focusing on quantitative studies of statistical synopsis. This research selectively chooses to adopt the CGT method by Charmaz (2006). Charmaz has stated that CGT support to explore the phenomenon within an interaction world, in other words, the data should be co-constructed through the researcher and the interviewee. Moreover, Charmaz (2014) argues that CGT is a systematic and rigorous method for studying the process and interaction between the departments and people in business. She shows how to conceptualize real-world interaction with view of researcher through theoretical sampling and simultaneous data analysis to avoid errors.

The research methodology is summarized in Figure 3.1. The choice of method is consistent with the interpretivist paradigm used in this study (Alemu, Stevens & Ross 2012). It says that in the interpretivist paradigm, researchers and participants work together to co-construct meaning, rather

than trying to objectively validate existing assumptions (Charmaz 2006). The study is grounded on the qualitative research tradition which allows the implementation of the exploratory research purpose and inductive mode of inference (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). The study combines qualitative primary with secondary research. It is luring to investigate how each element of research tradition, research purpose and research mode of inference blend into a thorough research design. However, qualitative and quantitative research traditions can each follow causal, descriptive, or exploratory research purpose, as much as they can be designed to be inductive or deductive. All and all, there is no limitation in designing one's own research approach as long as it is theoretical and worthwhile (Welch 1999; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016).

The research employs CGT approach. The application of the CGT approach to studies in the business field with a specific focus on VCC is justified by the works of authors like Muninger, Hammedi and Mahr (2019), Wunderlich, Wangenheim and Bitner et al. (2012) and Troisi, Visvizi and Grimaldi (2021).

The primary qualitative research is based on semi-structured interviews performed between August 2020 and January 2021 through face-to-face and zoom meeting with middle management and directors from various hotel departments who are directly involved in their organization's social media, value co-creation processes. Therefore, these interviewees have a holistic view of the real implementation of social media and value-co-creation. This sample is selected on the grounds of the proposition by Charmaz (2006) that such highly qualified respondents are capable of providing detailed insights into the research problem. In line with the selected method, the present study employs the following sampling procedure, outline in more details in section 3.4 in the present chapter. Selecting large multinational hotels in the U.A.E that are using social media and engaging in VCC; 6 luxury hotels with active social media activity are selected for the study

- Emirates Palace, Sofitel Corniche Abu Dhabi and Fairmont Bab Al bahar in Abu Dhabi and Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Rixos Premium Dubai JBR, and Jumeirah Beach in Dubai. The final sample size of 24 interviewees is reached through purposive and theoretical sampling (Dyson & Brown 2020). In consideration to the CGT approach adopted in the present study, the interviews are performed and transcribed simultaneously. Chosen of CGT support to answer the questions of how and what is happening at this point it was clearly discussed by Charmaz (2014), through having Initial coding which represents (Gerunds-Doing-Act-Routine) process through people actions and line-by-line coding which represents the voice of data to lead to advance level of writing data in constant comparison, continuing with focused coding to support pushing the past to future and ending with theoretical coding producing the concepts or relation links, theories behind the interactive incidents not behavior. The collected primary data is analyzed through qualitative analysis presented in the next chapter using the NVivo tool for qualitative analysis and identification of themes using grounded theory research strategy.

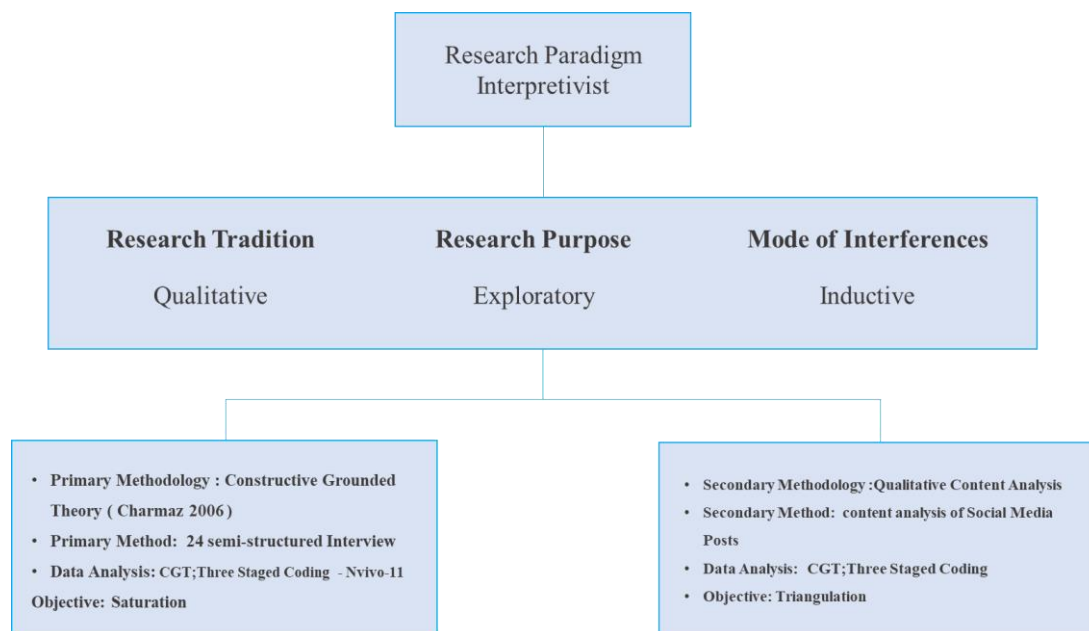


Figure 3. 1: Summary of research methodology (Compiled by the researcher)

The second research component - secondary qualitative analysis based on the collection of secondary data in the form of social media posts from 12 social media accounts of the same 6 UAE luxury hotels and data from the Social Bakers Suite platform collected between January and June 2021 (Maresova, Hruska & Kuca 2020; Cazorla Milla, Mataruna-Dos-Santos & Muñoz Helú 2020). A total of 450 Facebook and 510 Instagram posts were analyzed and the frequency of posts among the separate hotels is presented in Table 4.9 in section 4.8.2 in the present thesis. The same coding procedure is employed for the secondary data, which is analyzed through content analysis of social media posts and descriptive analysis (Yost, Zhang & Qi 2021). The social media posts data for the six hotels in the two social media platforms is coded following the same 3-stage coding procedure as adopted for the analysis of the primary data from the performed interviews with industry experts. It entails three consecutive stages of coding: initial line-by-line coding, focused and theoretical coding. The findings from the secondary data analysis are triangulated with the semi-structured interviews' findings in order to provide thorough understanding of the VCC through social media in the UAE hotel industry. The details related to the employed research methodology are presented in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

3.2. Alternative Methodologies: An Overview

To identify an appropriate methodology, PhD students and researchers are often faced with various challenges (Blaikie 2019). There are an abundance of options of methodologies and analytical strategies that can be adopted. One option requires the researcher to start by identifying their theoretical perspective, and this involves starting the research by identifying assumptions the researcher brings to the research (Crotty 1998). This approach is governed by the concepts of epistemology and ontology. Epistemology is defined by Blaikie (2019) as "*the possible ways of*

gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be. In short, claims about what is assumed to exist can be known". Whereas, ontology addresses conceptions and theories of how we, as researchers, understand the concept of reality where:

'...claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. Thus, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality.' (Blaikie 2019, p. 8).

Therefore, within this thesis epistemology is understood as how humans know what they know whereas ontology is the means by which researchers describe phenomena and the nature of relationships that might exist between various things. Different approaches to conducting research exist because of the beliefs that researchers bring to their discipline and research (Lyons 2018). These 'researcher beliefs' were described or coined as paradigms (Smith 2019). Paradigms represent different views of the world, where we belong and how we, as humans and researchers, communicate with it (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Crotty (1998) explains that paradigms *"[establish] the parameters and [set] the boundaries for scientific research and, in the ordinary course of events, scientific enquiry is carried out strictly in line with it"* (Crotty 1998, p. 35). Traditionally, positivism and interpretivism have been the most influential and dominant paradigms and thus influence the methodological decisions about how data is collected and analyzed.

3.2.1. Positivism – The Quantitative Approach:

Objectivism is the idea that everything exists independent of human consciousness. This assumption underpins positivism and is regarded as a research method that involves the development of knowledge in a way that is not subjective (Crotty 1998) and is replicable through

a process of logically deduced hypotheses and verified evidence (Charmaz 2006). Through the lens of this paradigm reality is understood, by students and researchers, as being on the principles of cause and effect and the idea that reality is quantifiable and or measurable. Thus, positivist research involves investigate causal explanations through testing hypotheses, using method that yield figures and statistics to quantify variables (Charmaz 2014). This type of data collection is most suited to testing pre-determined theories, frameworks, and hypotheses, and it emphasizes the prudence of the researcher being objectively removing and remaining detached from the research topic (Smith 2019). It is argued that this paradigm is unsuitable for capturing the complexity of human social interaction and behavior (Smith 2019).

3.2.2. Interpretivist: The Qualitative Approach:

Interpretivism is the belief that reality exists and is measurable, but are cognizant that interpretations of information are inconsistent and not entirely objective: rather researchers must have controls that minimize biases in research (Henderson 2015; 2020). Thus, underpinning the interpretivist research is the idea that there are multiple interpretations of realities instigated by time and place (Willig 2018). Interpretivist research often begins with an attempt to understand the context and then to make interpretations based on experiences. Qualitative methodology is the most commonly used approach when researchers know “*little about a phenomenon*” (Willig 2018) and in situations where researchers aims to compile detail rich data (Patton 2017). In its broadest sense, quantitative research methods are defined as “*any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification*” (Strauss & Corbin 2015, p17). Thus, in qualitative method data is commonly collected via conducting observations and interviewing, and the analytical process entails exploring the words that are

recorded during researcher and subject interactions (Willig 2018). Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approaches are considered subjective where the researchers own beliefs and interpretations of the subject matter are recorded to address “*research questions that require explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their contexts*” (Snape & Spencer 2003, p. 5).

Since the 1970s there have been many debates about the validity of different methodology paradigms in scientific research (Smith 2019). The conceptual idea that a researcher must take one perspective or another was and still is a view of many scholars (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016; Smith 2019). However, over the past 10 years, there is a growing movement towards an understanding that ‘the struggle for primacy of one paradigm over others is irrelevant as each paradigm is an alternate offering with its own merits’ (Smith 2019, p. 30). From these debates and new era movements a ‘third methodological movement’ (Creswell 2018) arose. Although philosophical issues are important, there is now less focus on attempts to certify that one paradigm has primacy over another and is now more acceptable to use a mixture of methods (Fields 2018).

3.2.3. The Pragmatist Epistemology:

Pragmatism is deemed a theoretical and philosophical approach that is widely considered and referred to as the ‘third paradigm’ (Fields 2018). Research conducted in business and marketing, where research objectives often mirror the goals of the funders often adhere to this paradigm (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Willig (2018) and Fields (2018) argue that a methodological approach should be selected based on the rationality and desirability of a methodology. Studies show that in business and marketing research, a PhD student’s choice of selecting qualitative and or quantitative methods is likely to:

“...rest on the degree of knowledge of the phenomenon to be studied. The more that is known about a programme and its underlying theories, the more possible and logical it becomes to use experimental [quantitative] design. The less that is known, the more it makes sense simply to try to understand the basic components [qualitative]” (Murphy 2015, p. 221).

Pragmatists promote the idea that when researchers make decisions about methods to adopt, the limitations and opportunities in which the study is being conducted (e.g., cultural and legislative restrictions) should be of primary importance (Greene 2017). Smith (2019) advises researchers to not get ‘bogged down’ deciphering the similarities and differences between various paradigms but to employ pragmatism, focusing and reviewing the context of the study being conducted. Unlike the positivist and interpretivist paradigms that delineate between their use and perspectives about quantitative and qualitative methods, the pragmatist paradigm uses and is associated with both (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2017). Although the pragmatist paradigm does not promote the use of one method over the other, it is not a paradigm where anything goes (Denscombe 2018, p. 274), instead it prompts flexibility in approaches of collecting and analysis of data (Feilzer 2019).

This thesis is aimed at generating a framework for the use of social media for value co-creation, by quantifying the quality of data gathered across various social media platforms, in selected cultures, supporting a specific organizational goal. In respect of this, the aim of the study, is to evaluate the pros and cons of several potential methodologies and methods for this research. Although the theoretical underpinning of a methodology and methods are of equal importance, research shows that *“we need to use our study of methodology to connect issues in epistemology with issues in research design rather than separating our thoughts about the nature of knowledge and from our efforts to produce it”* (Morgan 2007, p. 68).

3.3. Methodology Adopted in this Study:

Reviewing various possible methodological options revealed that to meet the goal of this thesis, to explore how social media can be used for value co-creation, that an interpretative approach was the most appropriate choice. Adopting a qualitative interpretivist approach aids the research with exploring the behaviors of managers and would allow for the process of value co-creation via social media to be explored. Further, this study investigating value co-creation via social media required a qualitative interpretivist research approach because the interaction of organizations and consumers via social media are units of analysis that occur in the social phenomena best explained through "*natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them*" (Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 3). Thus, a qualitative interpretivist approach facilitated this study of the manager's experience and use of social media for value co-creation. This paradigm addressed the research gap by exploring and describing how managers construct and re-construct their use of social media for value co-creation.

However, consistent with the work of Kenneth (2018), it is recognized that adopting the interpretivist qualitative approach does not equate to the data and findings from this thesis remaining situated within the interpretivist paradigm. Kenneth (2018) and Laungani (2018) argue that qualitative research can sometimes partly fall within the positivist realm: "*It can attempt to document practices that lead consistently to one set of outcomes rather than another, to identify characteristics that commonly are related to some policy problem, or to find strategic patterns that hold across different venues and with different actors.*" (Kenneth 2018, p. 170). This issue demonstrates that there are matters that might require mitigation when including process-tracing techniques. Therefore, data collected from this research might be constructed as the content of the interviewees' thought processes and such causal relationships might induce a more holistic

understanding about the decision-making process behind the use of social media for value co-creation, as proposed by Charmaz (2014).

Although the qualitative interpretivist approach may help in providing an explanatory account for the observed connections between factors (casual mechanisms), examining the data from a quantitative positivist approach aids in identifying patterns (casual relationships) from within the organization that instigate various processes and decisions concerning the use of social media for value co-creation. So, also examining the data from positivistic viewpoint may aid providing more a comprehensive, or holistic, picture about the process and outcome of the use of social media for value co-creation. The potential for value co-creation using social media has also been highlighted in academic literature by Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) who analyzed the customer engagement and interactions towards co-creating personalized customer service and acknowledged the crucial role played by social media in achieving the same. Similar findings were also reported by Lin et al. (2018) who reported that brand engagement on social media leads to co-creation and positively influences advertising effectiveness.

In addition, Kenneth (2018) stresses the importance of researchers being cognizant of both casual mechanisms and relationships within organizational research in order to:

- Provides a better understand the general phenomena.
- Provides a deeper conceptual and nuanced understanding of factors that are likely to instigate particular outcomes and to garner reliability and strength of observations.
- By using different approaches to analyze data it may help unearth issues that might have otherwise remained unknown.

3.3.1. Qualitative Interviews:

Interviewing is an integral aspect of the interpretivist research paradigm, and was deemed an appropriate method for exploring manager's use of social media for value co-creation. In the past it has been argued that observational and survey data do not capture the types social media used for different aspects of value co-creation, interviews are now widely used in business research to capture dynamic aspects of social media usage in order to understand what people do, believe and think (Fields 2018).

An interview is described as a form of conversation that is *"initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused on content specified research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation"* (Cohen & Minion 1989, p. 307). Interviewing provides a means to explore concepts that cannot or are not easily and directly observed from a participant's point of view, not how they are understood by the researcher (Marshall & Rrossman 2019).

Interviews can take a variety of formats including structured and semi-structured, however many researchers argue that the flexibility of a semi-structured interview garners a *"rich and illuminating data"* (Robson 1993, p. 229), which makes it suitable for understudied topics and new ideas. In semi-structured interviews an interview guide outlining open ended questions are used. When conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer based on their own perceptions, has the ability to alter the wording of questions, modify the sequence in which questions are asked, include additional questions if further exploration of an idea is needed or leave out a question if it is deemed inappropriate. Jonson (2017) argues to obtain the most benefit from semi-structured interviews researchers must conduct the interviews in a face-to-face manner where

the researcher has the ability to better respond to interviewee's visual cues to modify the interview guide accordingly. When conducting interviews, Britten (1995) stresses the significance of not deferring from the interviewees views and stated that:

“In a qualitative interview the aim is to discover the interviewee's own framework of meanings and the research task is to avoid imposing the researcher's structures and assumptions as far as possible. The researcher needs to remain very open to the possibility that the concepts and variables that emerge may be very different from those that might have been predicted at the outset.” (p. 251).

Structured interviews, however, are widely criticized for not acknowledging the views of the participant appropriately and not considering the context in which they were developed (Mishler 2018). Employing a semi-structured interview approach helps with this issue but it is also imperative that the researcher uses a good interview technique. To ensure that the data collected is a true representation of participants' views, Tong (2020) advises researchers to build a rapport with the participant, ask straightforward questions in a non-threatening and non-judgmental way, and listen and respond appropriately. Lofland et al. (2020) stress the importance of recording interviews for an in-depth analysis of interview data. Additionally, recording interviews allows researchers to be more responsive to interviews during the interview process, which is important when sensitive business matters are discussed (Smith 2019). Many researchers also advise for the application of MEMOS, which allow the researcher to reflect on their role in the interview process, and how this may have shaped interviewee responses (Bradley 2018; Jacobs 2019; Naipaul 2018).

These two steps are accurately followed in the present research. The semi-structured interviews employed for gathering the qualitative primary data were performed over the 6 months between

August 2020 and January 2021. Interviewees have been asked to suggest at least 3 30-45 minutes' slots in order to cover the research objectives. The interviews were promptly performed one by one. They were recorded and transcribed in order to eliminate the risk of any mistakes. The data analytical process was starting during the interviews when the researcher was looking into the data collected. MEMOS were extensively employed in the present research. A number of MEMOS are presented throughout the thesis.

Memo 1. Analytical memo – Qualitative interviews

Analytical memo – Qualitative interviews

The interview process took place over a period of 6 months from August 2020 until January 2021. During this temporal frame 24 interviews with managers from the UAE hospitality industry were performed. These interviews provided valuable information regarding the opportunities for VCC through social media in the focal industry sector. The research participants were sharing excessive amount of information. On the one hand, it was deemed fruitful for the research. On the other hand, it was challenging to process all the information during the interviewing process. Therefore, each of the interviews was transcribed in details so that no important details are missed. Transcribing the interviews one by one was lengthy and uneasy task, but it provided a better chance for the researcher to clearly understand the stance of each interviewee during the interviews, due to the combination of data processing in both verbal and written form. The preparation of the memos was another useful approach, which allowed the researcher to reflect upon the separate cases and the thorough research experience in the light of theoretical frameworks and models studied before. This approach was like linking the separate dots into a holistic picture representing different shades of the VCC through social media in the UAE hospitality sector.

3.3.1.1. Transcription:

To prepare interview data for analysis it is common for researchers to transcribe the data into written form (Bazeley 2017). The researcher transcribed the interview data herself, as the data collection and analysis were being conducted at the same time. Following the work of Waitzkin (2019), transcription rules have been employed to guarantee that slang, pauses and whispers used by the interviewees were recorded ensuring that the data analyzed reflects a true representation of the interviewees and that possibility of misinterpretation and misrepresentation was minimized. By following the standardized rules for transcription it ensures that all transcripts follow the same presentation layout and format, and some researchers describe this as ensuring that participants speak for themselves (Keats 2020).

3.3.1.2. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS)

To manage a large qualitative data set in a systematic fashion and to ensure the secure storage and retrieval of the data various computer software's have been created. Although such software's help to assist researchers with the data analysis process, they are not a better alternative to the traditional time, effort and skill of a trained researcher but are understood as a tool to enhance the rigor of qualitative research (Bazeley 2017) and can instigate proximity for the researcher and the data (Mays & Pope 2018). Consequently, following transcription of interviews, data is stored and managed through a specialized software for qualitative data analysis namely NVivo-11.

The use of NVivo was justified based on its utility as data management tool for organizing data and making sense of the data during the analysis process (Bergin 2011). NVivo was used for initial coding for the dataset comprising of 24 participants as it proved to be helpful towards content analysis for multiple codes which proved to be helpful to identify the key concepts for the study.

The use of NVivo also provided an organized and structured approach to analysis of the primary data. However, the researcher then shifted to manual coding with the objective to identify the specific concepts which related to the core area of research and helped in filtering the interview data to generate information consistent with constructivist grounded theory. This computer assisted data analytical process presents the initial stage of coding used to show initial codes. After such are identified, the data analysis process continues with manual coding and analysis for increasing the reliability of the primary research findings (Jonson 2017).

3.3.1.3. Interview Observations

Research shows that taking field notes during interviews can instigate “*distraction or distrust*” (Mills & Jonson 2019, p. 150). Accordingly, MEMOS are created following all interviews. MEMOS include information about the researcher rapport with the participant, main or key issues raised by the managers during the interviews (also taking into account any new unexpected points identified) and any factors about the context and or environment that may have impacted the interview process. The purpose of the employed MEMOS in this study is threefold. First of all, MEMOS allow for reflection about the setting and context of the interview. In addition to this, MEMOS allow for the investigation and identification of aspects of the interview that went well and badly, thus informing how to approach subsequent interviews. Furthermore, MEMOS also assist with the early stages of identifying key concepts and issues from the data.

These MEMOS are added to a reflexive diary used to record the researcher’s personal reflections. In addition to MEMOS, the researcher engages with relevant literature throughout the data collection process. Consulting extant literature (additional sources of information) as new concepts

emerge enhances data collection by informing how to approach subsequent interviews (Tuckett 2017).

3.3.2. Adopting Grounded Theory as a Research Approach:

This research utilizes grounded theory (GT) as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (2010). GT was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (2010) but was later revised by Strauss and Corbin (2015), Charmaz (2006), among many others. At the core of GT is the principle of deriving theory from systematic data collection and analysis processes (Strauss & Corbin 2015).

In GT methodology, data collection and analysis occur concurrently and thus stand in close proximity to each other. There are various ways that GT can be used in research. Glaser and Strauss (2010) coined the concept and approach of grounded theory, but later diverged in their perspectives about the concept of methodology and its use. The Strauss and Corbin (2015) approach allowed for the use of a pre-determined research problem or framework, and this perspective was argued against by Glaser (2010) because he believed that it would pre-empt the development of an emergent theory (Fisher 2019).

Charmaz (2014) outlines the process of discovering a theory, in which researchers are required to be reflexive and to make personal (researcher) interpretation to unearth a theoretical framework and implication. Thus, a study using GT does not necessarily start with preconceived conceptual frameworks but instead with a general topic of study. In this thesis, the way organizations use social media and how that shapes value co-creation defined the topic area. GT is considered to be a qualitative data analysis approach that is open in nature, and thus it is appropriate for handling transcripts of in-depth interview data (Tong 2020). Smith (2019) supports the use of GT because it allows for openness to new concepts not predicted in the beginning of the study.

3.3.3. Traditional and Constructive Grounded Theory Approaches

There are critical perspectives and objections to the use of GT. The Glaser and Strauss (2010) classic approach of GT is underpinned by positivist and essentialist assumptions, which do factor the importance and processes of researcher reflexivity, instead allowing a theory to be produced through rigid data analysis procedures. Constructivist GT, as developed by Bryant and Charmaz (2019), addresses the connection between the data and the researcher in shaping the findings of research.

Social Constructionism in Grounded Theory Explicating a Basic Social Process Studying a basic social process is—or was—a fundamental objective of classic grounded theory method. How do grounded theorists conduct research? How might a social constructionist approach influence their research? Several studies in the sociology of science adopt a social constructionist approach in grounded theory (see, e.g., Shen, Qin & Luo 2020; Chen & Lou 2021). As a case in point, Chamaz (2006) analyzed Susan Leigh Star's (1989) grounded theory in *Regions of the Mind: Brain Research and the Quest for Scientific Certainty*. In this book, the author uses social constructionist process to support hypothesis about how scientific theories become entrenched. By looking at scientific work in a specific area and era, Star (1989) simultaneously reconstructs what happened and how it occurred, and a theoretical argument about scientific theorizing. The author pieces together how 19th-century brain researchers, localizationists, constructed certainty about their theory. They contended that local areas of the brain controlled specific neurological functions. Consistent with classical grounded theory (Glaser 2010; Glaser & Strauss 2010), the author defines a process, “*creating and maintaining certainty*” (Glaser 2010, p. 87), and identifies sub-processes constructed through individual and collective actions that constitute the major process.

Localizationist transformed the uncertainty that they witnessed in their laboratories and clinics into what Star calls “*global certainty at the institutional level*” (1989, p. 87). The author addresses what and how questions here. In examining the mechanisms of transformation, Star (1989) analyzes the process and actions that localizationists used to create their certainty. Her analysis demonstrated how localizationists’ ordinary actions accomplished this institutional transformation while rendering local contradictions invisible. Glaser (2010) defined a set of actions that, taken together, accomplished the hegemony of localization theory of the brain. To create and maintain certainty, localizationists engaged in the following actions:

- Borrowing evidence from other fields
- Evaluating their operational procedures rather than actual technical failures
- Substituting ideal clinical pictures for anomalous findings
- Generalizing from case results

Using social construction with grounded theory allows the researcher to address a particular hypothesis through complexity of each individual’s complex social life. Grounded theory provides a context for understanding research participants’ social constructions and is a method that researchers update throughout inquiry. Grounded theorists adopt strategies to focus data gathering and analysis, but what, how, and why things are done emerges through interaction within the research setting, with their data, colleagues, and themselves. How, when, and to what extent grounded theorists invoke social constructionist premises depends on their epistemological stance and approach to research practice. Grounded theory provides explicit guidelines that promise flexibility and encourage innovation. Paradoxically, the direction provided by these limitations has encouraged some researchers to treat this method as a means for rapidly creating qualitative

studies. These researchers emphasize application of the method, means rather than focusing on the end result, limiting the potential of grounded theory and fostering the production of superficial studies. In contrast, a social constructionist approach encourages innovation; in that each study is tailored in response to the subjective experience of each individual within the study. By accounting for experience based on the unique social constructions between individuals and groups, researchers may develop new understandings and novel theoretical interpretations of the studied life. Distinguishing between a social constructionist and an objectivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; 2014; 2019) provides a heuristic device for understanding divisions and debates in grounded theory and indicates ways to move the method further into social constructionism.

Consistent with the work of Hennink (2019), the researcher proposes that constructivist GT (CGT) aids a rigorous systematic scientific approach, while also remaining consistent and nuanced with the interpretative nature of qualitative research. CGT takes an epistemological perspective of subjectivism, meaning that the researchers cannot be objective observers of phenomena, rather it acknowledges the researchers background (e.g., cultural and religious identity and education and training background etc.) and how this may have shaped the research data collection and analysis process, and thus the overall findings and presentation of the research (Mills & Jonson 2019). Ontologically CGT assumes a relativist position, meaning that we, as humans, can only understand reality from within our own frame of reference, which is contextual to time, place, religion and culture (Charmaz 2006; Naipaul 2018). Thus, methodologically CGT conforms to the interpretivist paradigm, and this means that the meaning and truth of reality as a research finding is nothing more than an interpretation by a researcher and that “...*reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts.*” (Charmaz 2006, p. 523).

CGT is consistent with the interpretivist epistemological position and assumption that there is no

objective reality, rather than reality and the self-products of socially construction and we, as humans, develop shared meanings of truth and reality by process of social interaction (Gardner & Khan 2020). Therefore, CGT is also the most suitable approach to exploring social media and value co-creation because it facilitates the researcher understanding how humans negotiate social structures and how customers and organizations created shared reality in respect of value and the meaning of value is developed through social interaction within the context of social media.

Further, Charmaz's (2006) CGT also supports the use of semi-structured interviews as an appropriate data type for GT. Therefore, the decision to use interviewing as the primary data collection instrument in this thesis is consistent with CGT as the chosen methodology. In the context of CGT, interviewing is deemed an interactional process because it involves an exchange of information, feelings and beliefs (Stewart & Cash 2018), and can be used to explain life experiences and characteristics of participants (Keats 2020). Following the work of Rubin and Rubin (2018), the complex nature of interviewing as done in this thesis is defined as responsive interviewing. Advice about conducting interviews is provided by Burton and Bartlett (2019). They caution researchers about the possible risk of influencing and or leading interviewees, the time-consuming nature of qualitative research, and the possibility of variations in responses of interviewees, which makes the process of collation difficult. Hammersley (2019) describes the outcome of interview data in CGT as highly contextual and as a tool that provides 'moderate enlightenment' (p. 20). Policymakers, managers and directors are as per Hammersley's (2019) description 'in the dark' (p. 21) and research is required to better understand the reality of what is happening and how people are doing it. Moderate enlightenment, as defined by Hammersley (2019), steers away from the strong sweeping generalizations that are generated and displayed in the research from the natural sciences (e.g. biology, physics and chemistry) and their widespread

espousal of positivist epistemology. The rationale for applying Constructivist GT in this research is presented in Figure 3.2.

This CGT research employs the constant comparison method, ensuring the development of the conceptual framework on the grounds of detailed analysis of the information which is being collected, as an essential component of the present CGT study, with reference to the propositions by (Charmaz 2014). In turn, it is needed to point out the importance of substantive theory as a critical component of the CGT research toolset. In contrast to the format theory, substantive theory has been developed on the grounds of present research, which reflects the specific context and research objectives. Even though the specific focus of the substantive theory might restrict its application to settings that differ from the specific research, the emergent grounded substantive theory constructed on the basis provided by empirical data, offers solid grounds for the creation of formal theory (Kearney 1998). This theoretical evolution enhances the generalizability and transferability of the research findings to other context and their further transformation into a well-established formal theory.

CONSIDERATION	CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY
KIND OF KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and explaining contextualised social processes • Concepts and categories emerge from the data and are identified by the researcher • Produce theory grounded in the data
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE WORLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at how humans negotiate and manage social situations and processes • Studies the changing world as a product of human participation and negotiation • Focuses on process and change • Subscribes to the symbolic interactionist perspective and relativist ontology (realities that are locally and specifically constructed or co-constructed)
TYPE OF ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iteratively moving between data, codes, concepts and categories to result in a theory.
CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher actively constructs understanding about the phenomenon under investigation • Questions participants to understand what they are doing and why • Researcher tries to clarify own assumptions and expectations while analysing
MODE OF WORKING IN THIS RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research problem + opening research questions • Data collection + initial coding • Initial memo writing + raising codes to tentative categories • Further data collection + focused coding • Advanced memos + refining conceptual categories • Theoretical sampling + seeking specific new data • Adopting certain categories as theoretical concepts + theoretical memo writing and sorting + further refining of concepts • Writing the first draft + further theoretical sampling if needed • Writing the final grounded theory
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumptions and background of researcher can be too dominant in the analysis if not properly acknowledged • Study is very time consuming
APPLICATION TO THIS RESEARCH	Constructivist GT seemed to be very appropriate to apply to the research questions raised about the social media and the way it is used for value co-creation. Particularly the social processes that the businesses are involved in could be described and explained by adopting a CGT approach.

Figure 3. 2: Rationale for Applying Constructivist GT (Adapted from Smith, 2019, p. 232)

3.4. Sampling and Data Collection

The UAE is chosen as the setting of the present research because of its role as a renowned global tourist destination and the wide social media penetration in the country (Global media insights 2021). Six hotel organizations – 3 in Dubai (Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Rixos Premium Dubai JBR, and Jumeirah Beach) and 3 in Abu Dhabi (Emirates Palace, Sofitel corniche Abu Dhabi, Fairmont Bab Al bahar) are chosen for their social platforms activity is ranked high by Hotel de Tech (2021a; 2021b).

The final sample for the interviews consists of 24 experienced middle management and directors from the various departments who are directly involved in their organization's social media, value co-creation processes and can therefore provide a holistic view on the research topic. All interviewee participants for the present study are astute managers with deep and broad knowledge of the organization, its human capital, its technologies, products and services, and its customers. This sample size is reached after meeting the conditions for theoretical saturation in line with the CGT research (Glaser & Strauss 2010). The quantity of interviews for this thesis follows theoretical saturation of interview data, which happens when no new concepts or issued emerge from each new interview that is conducted (Dyson & Brown 2020). Very important to the use of GT is reaching the point of theoretical saturation. The concept of theoretical saturation was coined by Glaser and Strauss (2010) and refers to the point when a researcher should cease the collection of data when the collection of data leads to no new findings. Following the findings of Guest and Namey (2018) and Smith (2019), constructivist GT support smaller population of participants, however, it requires more detailed and intensive interviews methods. As such, one may infer that the number of interviewees in this PhD research is comparatively less when compared to other

research methods, such as surveys. The focus of the constructivist GT methodology is on identifying and developing concepts on the basis of a not too broad but concentrated data collection, rather than targeting at representation and generalization that forms the essence of other research approaches (Charmaz 2006). Moreover, Guest and Namey (2018) conducted a meta-systemic of grounded theory methodologies and reported that concepts tend to emerge after 11 interviews, and that most researchers obtain theoretical saturation after 24 interviews (Guest & Namey 2018). According to Razavi and Iverson (2006, p. 461), in GT *“participants chosen for interviewing must be expert, with rich, extensive prior experience with the phenomenon, in order to be able to provide the researcher with a valid account of their experience.”*

In selecting large multinational hotel organizations with astute managers and directors, this research begins with the implementation of purposive sampling (Patton 2017) which is developed into theoretical sample through the development of theoretical sensitivity in the process of simultaneous collection and analysis of information in line with the CGT (Charmaz 2006). The diverse composition of the sample – combining experts holding different positions within the hotel industry (Marketing, Digital, Foods and beverages, etc.) also contributes for getting diversified view and promotes the opportunities for creating theoretical sufficiency later in the research process, in order to allow the collection of a wider primary qualitative information pool for the analysis (Johnson 2014).

The theoretical sampling employed allows for testing the boundary conditions and ensure the overall validity of the results (Busse, Kach & Wagner 2016). This research provides a case for the use of Charmaz’s (2006) CGT method for qualitative research value co-creation through social media platforms. The researcher incorporates three staged coding, initial coding, line by line coding, focused coding and theoretical coding to analyze the data collected simultaneously to

avoid mistakes and use it as a heuristic device (Bryant & Charmaz 2019). The hotels are in the category of four – five star hotels - popular multinational luxury hotel with different branches. The hotels are selected due to their high scores in the active social media usage within a co-creation context, presented by Hotel de Tech (2021a; 2021b). The hotel and tourism literature has begun to provide evidence of the importance of the value co-creation and in particular, the theoretical basis of e- conversation on tourism application in this area (Chathoth et al. 2016).

The UAE is deemed an appropriate setting for the present research because of the wide penetration and extensive use of social media in the country with 99.98% of the population actively using social media (Global media insights 2021). This extensive social media use in the country provides beneficial opportunities for the investigation of the opportunities for VCC and value capture through social media. Six individual hotels managed by four hotel managements in the UAE have been employed for the purposes of this research- Abu Dhabi: Emirates Palace, Sofitel corniche Abu Dhabi, Fairmont Bab Al bahar and Dubai: Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Rixos Premium Dubai and Jumerah beach (JBR). They are considered appropriate field for both the interviews and for the social media posts analysis, because of the effective application of social media channels in their marketing communication activities with customers. For that reason, their management is expected to provide valuable knowledge about the VCC through social media in the UAE hospitality sector. Furthermore, secondary data in the form of social media platforms observations, reports and verbal communications of both internal and external sources is also collected to supplement the interviews. The social media activity of the selected 6 separate hotels in 2 social media platforms, represented by a total of 12 social media accounts (6 Instagram and 6 Facebook) offer a rich pool of social media posts to be analyzed in the secondary data analysis within the present research. In addition to that, analytics provided by Social baker which is a reliable source of social media data

have been utilized for the purposes of the present study as a source of detailed social media insights (Maresova, Hruska & Kuca 2020; Cazorla Milla, Mataruna-Dos-Santos & Muñoz Helú 2020).

In choosing such, the researcher looked at the historical experience of the hotels, their organization and management, as well as at their activity on social media, including Instagram and Facebook. Facebook and Instagram are selected for the research because of their wide popularity in both Global and UAE context, due to which they are expected to provide abundant data for the present study (Global media insights 2021). Permission to study this organization in the present PhD research was granted by the hotel managements.

The interview guide (Table 3.1) and the interview agenda (Appendix 3) were designed to encourage managers to talk about their use of social media for value co-creation but without missing to address other issues related to the research aims and objectives. Following the work of Rubin and Rubin (2018), the researcher outlined a set of core interview questions and then created follow-up questions orientated towards the responses of interviewees.

Table 3. 1. Proposed Interview Questions

Concept	Questions	literature
Deconstructing Value co-creation	Have you heard the term “value co-creation”? What do you know about value co-creation? Would you please try to define the co-creation concept from your experience? How it looks like in your organization? When do you use value co-creation? Please explain and, if possible, give some examples.	(Frow et al. 2015, Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004, Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010) (Guha, Harrigan & Soutar 2017)

Social Media Platforms Usage	<p>What are the social media platforms that are being used in your organization? How do you see social media?</p> <p>What are the benefits and advantages of using social media in your organization? What is the Purpose to use social media? (Innovation - Branding - Engagement - New Customers or retaining Costumers)</p> <p>Do social media support value co-creation? How do social media enable co-creation and collaboration with your customers?</p> <p>Do you recognize any differentiation between the nature of the objective and the type of social media platform used? Is your organization using different social media for different aims?</p>	<p>(Yates and Paquette 2011, Wamba and Carter 2013)</p> <p>(Guha, Harrigan & Soutar 2017)</p> <p>(Brodie et al. 2011, Brodie et al. 2013, Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli. 2014)</p>
Social Media Content	<p>How would you explain the process of gathering information from customers to collaborate with them?</p> <p>Please explain it.</p> <p>What is the strategy in place for the content published in social media?</p> <p>Do you differentiate the content from each platform used? How do you differentiate it?</p> <p>Why do you differentiate the contents from the different social medial platforms</p>	<p>(Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie 2014, Hollebeek 2011) (Guha, Harrigan & Soutar 2017)</p>
Social Media customer Engagement	<p>How do you enable social engagement with customers?</p> <p>How do you maintain customer engagement? What is the different engagement aspects?</p> <p>In your understanding, how important is this engagement</p>	<p>(Schlagwein & Hu 2018)</p> <p>(Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie 2014, Hollebeek 2011)</p>

	to value co-creation? Can you elaborate?	
Social Media Capabilities	<p>What are the capabilities that support co-creation and value capture? Can you elaborate more?</p> <p>How your organization support that in developing, managing, and unit specific? How? What is for?</p>	(Singaraju et al. 2016)
Value Capture	<p>For what objective(s) have you used social media in value gathering?</p> <p>How is this influencing the value creation process?</p> <p>How do you acquire the new knowledge/new value created from the users (customers) what is the capability in place to identify and acquire new external value?</p> <p>What is the process to analyze, process, interpret and understand the new information?</p> <p>How do you transform this new information/new knowledge that has been created early to be employed within your organization/department? How you get exploit this new knowledge? What is the strategy that your department/organization used to refine, extend, and leverage these new values?</p>	(Turner 2013, Todorova 2007, Sun and Anderson 2008, Roberts et al. 2012) (Guha, Harrigan & Soutar 2017)

(Compiled by the researcher)

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria – Following the extant literature, the current study aims to use a minimum of 15 participants. Moreover, Guest and Namey (2018) conducted a meta-systemic of grounded theory methodologies and reported that concepts tend to emerge after 11 interviews, while most researchers obtain theoretical saturation after 24 interviews (Guest & Namey 2018). Again, the number of interviews conducted, is flexible with respect to maximizing the quality and depth of exploration and is largely be dependent on the quantity of data needed to reach saturation.

a. ***Inclusion Criteria*** – Managers and middle management - invited to participate were individuals who at the time of conducting this research were involved in the use of purposive and theoretical sampling (Patton 2017; Dyson & Brown 2020), experienced managers from various departments like Marketing, Food and beverages, Strategy and business, etc. participated in the in-depth, face-to-face and online interviews:

- i. direct customer area of interactions (beverage and food, room reservations, entertainment, and
- ii. corporate management departments (digital, marketing, innovation, general management)

According to Razavi and Iverson (2006, p. 461), GT requires “*interviewees chosen for interviewing must be expert participants, with rich, extensive prior experience with the phenomenon, in order to be able to provide the researcher with a valid account of their experience.*” The hotel and tourism literature has recently begun to provide evidence of the importance of the value co-creation and in particular, the theoretical basis of e-conversation on tourism application in this area (Chathoth et al. 2016). As social media presence fluctuates between industries and organizations, it was important to ensure that the chosen industry and MNCs were reasonably established in social media. If an organization has very little social media presence it is anticipated that its experience using social media for value co-creation would be difficult to

explore. In such cases, few representatives of the organization would have had hands-on experience using social media for value co-creation. That is why the extensive social media activity of the hotels is a primary concern in the selection of the research participants.

Exclusion Criteria – Potential respondents who do not have sufficient experience in the relevant phenomenon or who are not able to provide the researcher with sufficient details related to the value co-creation through social media in the UAE hotel industry are excluded from the research.

Recruitment Strategy – For the purpose of identifying potential participants for the present research several of approaches are employed. Previously, the researcher was involved in research aimed at the development of organization social media. This has opened opportunities whereby the researcher has attended conferences at established multinational corporations (MNCs) such as hotel & leisure organizations. With the researcher's past experiences, combined with business networking, the researcher was able to secure the opportunity to connect to gatekeepers at major hotels.

According to Dyson and Brown (2020), following saturation of interview data, which happens when no new concepts or no issues emerge from each new interview that is conducted, should add to the validity of conducting the study through large hotels like Fairmont Hotel in the UAE. Initial contact was made with the regional directors of the selected hotels that was followed by initial conversations over the email:

- The researcher scheduled in-person meetings after Covid-19 quarantine or zoom meetings to discuss the research and what their involvement is likely to involve,
- during the initial face-to-face or zoom meetings, the researcher has outlined aims and objectives for the research,

- the number of management level personnel needed for interviewing,
- the rationale for the study, its methodology and justification of the need for the present research is explained in details to the gatekeepers.

A letter of confirmation was obtained from the gatekeepers at the selected hotels as evidence that the organizations have approved the researcher using the organizations for the purposes of the present PhD research.

Managers within the selected hotels are recruited into this research by an opt-in procedure. This procedure is favored by research ethics committees and involves only contacting participants referred to by the gatekeeper as qualified interviewees, meeting the inclusion criteria and willing to participate in the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). Potential participants have been approached by the gatekeepers at the organizations and they have been provided with a study information sheet and invitation letter.

3.5. Grounded Theory analysis of Interview Data:

The data analysis in this thesis follows the steps outlined by Charmaz (2014) and it deals with a vast quantity of findings (transcripts). The analysis begins with reading and re-reading the transcript data and then coding the first few transcripts for important issues mentioned by interviewees. In GT, the analytical process of coding is devised into a set of iterative phases. Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist GT entail different phases and terminology for coding. The data analysis employs coding divided in three-stages. In line with the CGT, the analysis proceeds in an iterative sequence of data collections and analysis. Memo writing is central to this process (Charmaz 2014; Strauss & Corbin 2015). Diverse coding approaches and written memos formats are employed during the analysis phases in order to support the identification of concepts

and categories. According to Charmaz (2006, p. 43),

“...coding is the process of labelling a line, sentence or paragraph of interview transcripts or any other piece of data (such as segment of audio tape, video record, etc.) with a short and precise name. During coding, the researcher generates the bones of analysis which will then be integrated and assembled at the stage of theoretical coding, which is crucial for identifying emergent concepts for further analysis and subsequent theory development Charmaz” (2006 p. 45)

Constructivist GT involves a process of initial line-by-line, focused and theoretical coding, and these coding terms are based on levels of conceptual analysis and development (Charmaz 2014).

Below is a summary of the steps outlining the purpose of coding:

1) Initial Line-by-line Coding - to identify key issues that appear within the transcript.

Identification of Codes and Concepts - the first of the three stages of coding, initial coding, lead to the creation of codes (or labels) that are important to the complete body of the data collected. As the open coding stage evolves, the same labels are re-utilized to code similar responses of new interviewees. It allows identifying useful initial codes (based on their frequency and significance) to formulate categories. When the open coding phase is complete, the emerging core categories are identified using focused coding. How to encode interview data as open code and then focused encode an example with a specific category.

2) Focused Coding - relates relationships between categories. Focused coding helps organize code and concepts established in the open coding phase into higher-level categories, while the final stage of coding is the theoretical coding which makes the core categories identified during the focus coding process more saturated. The use of memos, which include reflections on concepts and categories and constant comparisons between key codes are useful for the theoretical coding.

In each refinement and status ration process, the analysis changes from a simple description to a conceptualization.

3) Theoretical coding – it allows identification of emerging concepts which provides the basis for the process of theory development. The theoretical coding does not rely on preliminary conceived codes but on the ones which emerge in the data under investigation. In this way they allow clear conceptualization of the new knowledge into connected theoretical concepts and their inclusion in thorough frameworks.

The constant comparison method is a very important component of the CGT studies because it allows the progression of the conceptual framework development exceeding the analysis of qualitative data beyond mere description into the development of substantive theory (Charmaz 2014).

Following the procedure proposed by Birks and Mills (2015), in the present research the analysis entails constant comparison between coding results at the same analytical levels (inter-code, inter-category, inter-concept comparison, as well as comparison between categories and codes, concepts and categories, and comparison between concept and the existent theoretical foundations).

To record the process of CGT, coding and analyzing the data flow simultaneously. A three-column table is employed where the first column holds transcripts divided by questions from the topic guide and interviewee responses, the second column contains information about the researcher's interpretation of the text and the third column presents the code label, which has been used as a reference point to identify similar patterns in proceeding transcripts.

Based on the original table used for coding, the researcher has created a second table by collecting her interpretations column two of the original table and assembling them into a new table under

the code labels from the code label section of the original coding table. This procedure allows creating a more refined table illustrating the interpretations from each individual interview and the code labels associated with those interpretations. The codes identified have been described using reflexivity with the meaning the researcher has ascribed to them and with information about how extant literature helped define those particular codes.

When analyzing transcripts, the researcher has simultaneously written memos that represent the researcher's own thoughts that were triggered from the interviewees' story lines. Bryant and Charmaz (2019) advises researchers to begin compiling memos immediately after the initial coding phase. Following the work of Saldana's (2020, p. 33), the researcher approached writing memos as *"whenever anything related to, and significant about the coding or analysis of the data comes to mind, stop whatever you're doing and write the memo"*.

When coding interview data, the researcher has searched the literature with the aim of validating the codes and their descriptions and exploring their fit within extant literature and knowledge about value co-creation via social media. While coding, the researcher has written memos that materialize the author's individual understanding and analytical trends induced from the analytical experience attained from this research. The entire process has been iterative and on-going. The process has been iterative and involving repeated reading and re-reading the data transcripts and codes, as well as further refinement of the codes and memo writing, while developing the knowledge on the research topic. Certain codes have been modified by comparing content to later interviews and by reading extant literature related to the code identified.

The process is completed upon attaining theoretical saturation, and by integrating memos and concepts. The researcher then moves towards intermediate coding, which involves integrating categories of codes.

Upon finishing the analysis of the first interview transcript, the researcher has created categories that hold the various codes identified and their meaning. Upon completion of coding for the first interview, the researcher has continued coding and reflecting all subsequent interviews. This process has allowed for the refinement of codes and categories. When new codes have emerged, the researcher has been cognizant that there might be some overlap between existing and new codes and that some codes might need to be merged. The final coding frame received after review and refinement of the codes is presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3. 2. Coding Frame.

Code	Conceptualization	Example from interviews	Frequency	
			Discussed by N participants	Discussed across the interviews
Value co-creation understanding	Defining and clarifying the concept of co-creation	<i>“Co-creation is working together toward expected service” Interviewee 6</i>	24	49
Value co-creation mechanism	Explanation of how VCC works	<i>“It involves working on the ideas provided by the customers and</i>	18	26

		<i>users of social media and collaborating with the internal team to execute those ideas” Interviewee 22</i>		
Use of technology	The implementation of technological solutions in the VCC process	<i>“Modern technologies like the Internet and social media allow effective co- creation of value in our industry” Interviewee 18</i>	24	67
Role of employees	The importance of employees needed for the effective VCC process	<i>“You need young skillful employee with creative attitude” Interviewee 8</i>	14	28
Teamwork and Innovation	The abilities of employees to support innovation through collaboration	<i>“collaborating with the internal team to execute those ideas” Interviewee 22</i>	18	46

	between team members			
Online comments on experience of service	The comments posted by users related to their experience with the service	<i>"They directly share what they think about their stay"</i>	24	63
Online engagement	The engagement of customers created through digital medium	<i>"70% is the increased average for the engagement and co-creation after using the social media"</i> <i>Interviewee 18</i>	24	72
Insightful suggestions	Recommendations from customers on the advancement of the touristic service	<i>"Our customers want to help create an experience they want, with a hotel they already like".</i> <i>Interviewee 6</i>	12	22
Participation in contests	Diverse contests and rewards used as a means for	<i>"competitions and rewards to increase the engagement rate"</i>	11	14

	enhancing the VCC potential	<i>and collaboration ...” Interviewee 17</i>		
Social Media Analytics	The capabilities to analyse data from social media	<i>“the analysis of the social media data” Interviewee 23</i>	23	36
Real time interaction with customers	The ability to connect to real and potential customers.	<i>"Live interaction with attractive content – its real time and the friendly space that give to all users that you can present it as your customers want". Interviewee 14</i>	24	54
Instant Feedback	The hotels quickly receive feedback and information from their guests.	<i>"Real time response for the Quick Clarifications and requests (Water – Reservations- Beach access)" Interviewee 13</i>	22	39
Data Collection and Analysis	Gathering information	<i>“Data collected through social media</i>	15	21

	through social media and analysing it for the hotel's purposes	<i>platforms are very useful. These are analyzed from the perspective of revenue generation, improvement in service delivery, branding, and gaining visibility, among others. All of these contribute to value creation".</i> <i>Interviewee 23</i>		
Periodic Monitoring and Review	The ability to monitor and review the customers' opinions	<i>"Social media technology has various aspects such as tracking, monitoring, etc."</i> <i>Interviewee 23</i>	12	15
Informed decision making	Strategic and tactical decisions grounded on the	<i>"... decisions to implement the new strategies - they all</i>	18	41

	available information basis	<i>are targeted towards co- creation”Interviewee 23</i>		
Brainstorming	Collective effort to generate and discuss ideas	<i>“co-creation is about brainstorming together” Interviewee 7</i>	10	19
Inter- departmental collaboration	The collaboration between employees from different departments	<i>“Through digital team and PR, we design the posts” Interviewee 7</i>	14	31
Innovation from hotels	Implementing innovation from the hotel organizations	<i>“It is mandatory tools for innovation.” Interviewee 1</i>	15	21
Engagement progress	The evolution of the engagement levels	<i>“differentiation between the levels of engagement” Interviewee 20</i>	21	48
Feedback	The mechanisms	<i>“we also collect</i>	17	33

mechanism	employed to get feedback from customers	<i>physical feedback from the customers which is then merged with the reviews obtained through the direct feedback” Interviewee 21</i>		
Interactive Communication	Interactive communication with customers through social media platforms	<i>“enable your customer to co-create through interactive way and sharing their experience” Interviewee 2</i>	18	23
Content strategy	The strategy employed for creating and managing content in social media	<i>"Content strategy offers the different insights and attracts different audiences".Interviewee 13</i>	8	15
Influencers and Bloggers	The use of influencers and bloggers in the	<i>“through the influencers and bloggers.”</i>	14	23

	social media activities of the hotels	<i>Interviewee 2</i>		
Audience characteristics	Characteristics of the audience crucial for the marketing strategy	<i>“Demographics and your audience styles” Interviewee 12</i>	7	12
Experience sharing	Users share their experience in reviews, comments, posts in social media	<i>“The people write their review without asking them even!” Interviewee 5</i>	11	38
Credibility of information through user interaction	Information shared between users is considered more trustworthy than from businesses	<i>“customer interacts together and asking about their experience, the best example UGC is Abu Dhabi Bites” Interviewee 5</i>	8	10
Online word - of -mouth	The online generated content	<i>“They share and interact, and others</i>	13	19

	by customers that spreads over the internet	<i>come through them” Interviewee 6</i>		
Social Media Insights	Insights from customers gained through social media as a basis for customer engagement	<i>“We use different ways for engaging based on the audience insights” Interviewee 7</i>	19	26
Accessibility	The easy access to the platform from the customers side that provides the basis for effective VCC	<i>“customers and we become one thing no boundaries to ask or suggest what they want and how” Interviewee 10</i>	18	34
Content differentiation	The specific content appropriate for each platform	<i>“Each platform has its own ... content, plan.” Interviewee 7</i>	19	43
Audience Differentiation	The specific audience that can be effectively	<i>“The audience are different on each platform”</i>	11	38

	reached through each platform	<i>Interviewee 8</i>		
Analytics from social media platforms	Data analytics capabilities provided by the platforms	<i>“and also the analytical options through different systems” Interviewee 20</i>	16	19
Functionality differentiation	Different functionalities included and available through each platform	<i>“Each platform has its ways” Interviewee 7</i>	16	31
Effectiveness of platform	The effective reach of customers provided by the platform	<i>“the social media conversations which is 24/ 7 working” Interviewee 20</i>	21	53
Easy communication with Stakeholders	The ease of communication offered by the platform.	<i>“To meet together on one table (employees, customers and stakeholders)” Interviewee 15</i>	19	27

Branding	Enhancing branding through social media	<i>"This improves their perceptions of our brand". Interviewee 9</i>	20	38
Personalized experience	Individual and personalized service experience provided to each customer	<i>"helps to create personalized services for the customers"</i> <i>Interviewee 21</i>	14	18
Promotional Content	Promotional contents published in social media	<i>"no hard promotion in LinkedIn"</i> <i>Interviewee 20</i>	22	47
Emotional Connect	Connection based on emotions, feelings	<i>"they share information about their feelings and experiences"</i> <i>Interviewee 8</i>	13	14
Team Collaboration	The mutual efforts of the team towards enhancing the	<i>"it's engaging people to create valuable experience between us as employee"</i>	15	26

	experience	<i>Interviewee 11</i>		
Competitiveness	The connection between the social media strategy, VCC and competitiveness	<i>"Social media strategy it is a must. You can't stand in the market and to be competitive".</i> <i>Interviewee 21</i>	12	18
Retaining customers	Retention of customers through social media	<i>"retaining customers"</i> <i>Interviewee 17</i>	14	22
Two-way engagement	The engagement is flowing in both directions - from customers to the organization and vice versa	<i>"Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube and TripAdvisor are our main platforms of social media through which we engage with customer"</i> <i>Interviewee 12</i>	18	33
Enhancing profitability	Increasing the profit generating	<i>"convert it into revenues and</i>	8	11

	potential of the business	<i>profitability”</i>		
Data driven decisions	Decisions supported by data (e.g. social media analytics)	<i>“social media analytics and is very useful for us to make decisions” Interviewee 21</i>	10	16
Idea for service improvement	Collective effort to generate and discuss ideas	<i>“Some products and services are initiated, mended or extended based on the customer feedback” Interviewee 18</i>	14	30

(Compiled by the researcher)

3.6. Qualitative Content Analysis:

The qualitative content analysis examines the relationship between the audience, media and contextual factors. It is not limited only to analysis of the text itself. According to Neuendorf (2002, p. 5) “*qualitative content analysis relies heavily on researcher ‘readings’ and interpretation of media texts*”. In short, content analysis is consistent with scientific methods and produces reliable findings. This type of analysis is relatively complex and might not suite different research methods. However, qualitative analysis of text is necessary to understand the deeper meaning and possible interpretation of the audience, which is undoubtedly the ultimate goal of analyzing media content.

When combined the two, qualitative and media content analysis form a powerful research technique. Media content analysis is a special subset of content analysis and a popular research method. Neuendorf (2002) describes content analysis as a “*major information-centric approach*” (p. 9) and cites studies such as Riffe and Freitag (1997), “**which have reported on the fastest-growing technology of the past 20 years**” (Neuendorf 2002, p. 1) and have developed five main reasons for content analysis as follow:

1. Describe the substantive characteristics of the content of the message;
2. Describe the formal characteristics of the message content;
3. The producer of the inference content;
4. The audience of the inference content;
5. Predict the impact of content on the audience.

The application of computer software is divided into two levels. The researcher is focusing on the first level of storing, analyzing and reporting research data, such as the coding, including constructing tables, charts, and graphs. An example of a software product used for data analysis is Excel which allows the creation of data lists and data calculations, such as pivot tables. In addition, a range of specialized commercial media content analysis tools can be used to store, analyze and report research results, such as NVIVO, TextSmart, INTEXT, TextAnalytics, TEXTPACK, CATPAC, DICTION, DIMAP and VBPro which perform a variety of content analysis functions. Computer programs and artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly used to code contents (Satpathy. & Patnaik 2021). Neuendorf (2002), however, states that “*human contribution to content analysis remains crucial*” (p. 40). Bryant and Charmaz (2019) also emphasize that regardless of the development of the available computerized data analysis solutions, the researcher

needs to constantly review the transcripts/data and amend the results from the computer-assisted coding in order to ensure higher accuracy. Most content analysts agree with this view on the basis of professional experience because automated (fully computerized) content analysis poses risks of arbitrary association between words and phrases. Therefore, computer software is employed in the present research for storing, analyzing, and reporting research data. The software product NVIVO is used for the purposes of data analysis, including the coding, and construction of tables, charts, and graphs. Though, as recommended by Bryant and Charmaz (2019), and Neuendorf (2002), the outputs of the software are constantly reviewed for consistency.

The researcher adopts the content analysis procedures for the data analysis for the secondary data within the present research. This is adopted by the technique proposed by Yost, Zhang and Qi (2021) for the analysis of the secondary data within the present research. The same three-stage coding procedure employed for the primary qualitative data from the conducted interviews is selected for the analysis of the social media posts for the chosen six UAE hotels in the two selected social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram). The coding process begins with initial line-by-line coding followed by focused and theoretical coding. The focused coding relies on the theoretical framework for the categorization of social media posts proposed by Tafesse and Wien (2017). The secondary methodology entails a content analysis of social media posts. Secondary data has been collected from 12 social media accounts (6 Facebook and 6 Instagram accounts) for 6 different Hotels in the UAE under four corporate hotel managements in the form of six-month observation taking place between January 2021 and June 2021. In addition to that, social media reports from Social Baker over the same period and the same hotels have also been employed for the purpose of the data collection as a credible data source in order to enhance the credibility of the present study (Maresova, Hruska & Kuca 2020; Cazorla Milla, Mataruna- Dos-Santos &

Muñoz Helú 2020). The hotels are selected because their active social media platforms are ranked highest in the UAE context by Hotel de Tech (2021a; 2021b). The hotels are chosen according to their trending activity as follows: Abu Dhabi: Emirates Palace, Sofitel corniche Abu Dhabi, Fairmont BabAl bahar Dubai: Sofitel Dubai the Palm and Rixos Premium Dubai JBR. The researcher generated public key performance indicators through using social media Baker analytics in order to acquire a meaningful understanding of the outcome of the hotels' use of social media for value co-creation through all avenues explored. In this thesis, triangulation is employed to explore the similarities and possible contradictions between interviews versus content analysis of social media content.

3.7. Issues of Quality in Qualitative Research:

The quality of qualitative research is a complex and emerging area, and such research has long held a reputation for lacking scientific rigor (Jonson 2017). There continues to be much debate about whether the principles of reliability, validity and generalizability, which are rooted in positivist (quantitative) research, can be employed in qualitative research (Marcus 2017). Researchers have developed alternative criteria that are believed to be more applicable to qualitative research including credibility, conformability, and transferability, which are believed to be more reflective of an interpretivist paradigm and outlook to research (Jones 2019). Others, however, argue that the principles of reliability, validity and generalizability can be applied to qualitative research but need modification to account for the differing features of this research approach and interpretivist paradigm (Mays & Pope 2018). Whilst the views of researchers such as Jones (2019) are acknowledged, the latter perspective is adopted in this thesis. The use and application of the concepts of validity, generalizability (external validity) and reliability within this thesis are outlined. **Generalizability (External validity)** – Morse (1999, p. 7) opines that “if

qualitative research is considered not generalizable then it is of little use, insignificant and hardly worth doing". Although quantitative research is not considered generalizable, qualitative studies have qualities that are of value. Ritchie et al. (2003) explain that the concept of generalizability can be incorporated in qualitative research in various ways. One approach is to inferentially generalize the findings of one study to the context of another. However, for this approach to be effective, a researcher is required to provide 'thick description' (Murphy 2015) of the original research setting and procedure. Further, representational generalization is important in situations where there is clear evidence that the sample is a true representation of the population under investigation and that the researcher has drawn conclusions from accurate reflections and depictions of the data collected (Stewart & Cash 2018; Geertz 2019).

In the context of this thesis, interview data has been used in its entirety in order to elevate the strength of interpretations depicted in the analysis chapter. This has involved demonstrating that any and all diversity within the dataset has been incorporated within all analytical reports. Using CGT has also facilitated an appropriate level of interpretation at every level of the analytical hierarchy (Fields 2018). To further enhance the generalizability of the findings, scrutiny has been placed on the way the research is conducted, such as the sampling strategy, which may impact the way inferences can be made.

3.7.1. Validity

Tanveer, Bashir and Azeem (2008, p. 35) define validity in terms of whether research truly *"measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are"*. There are various potential methods for ensuring that the research is a true representative of the reality. Mays and Pope (2018) outline six methods of enhancing validity in qualitative research –

triangulation of data from various data sources; requesting that interviewees validate the trustworthiness of the findings from the study; being cognizant of the aspects of the research that may shape the type of data collected and how it has been analyzed e.g., researchers' characteristics; reporting fully about contradictory data and finally taking into account a variety of perspectives regarding the phenomena into consideration. For example, five interviewees are asked to send their answers through emails right after their interview, while other three research participant were asked to send their replies via email upon additional two months after the session. In addition, the researcher has followed up with phone calls and sending email to reconfirm the information received during all the interviews. The main idea was to validate the consistency in response of the participants before proceeding for data analysis. This was done on a pilot basis for 8 participants.

3.7.2. Triangulation

Where a combination of study populations or/and methods is involved, triangulation becomes important component of the researcher's toolset. Within this thesis the integration of managers' interview data and social media performance reports is needed in order to acquire a meaningful understanding of the use of social media for value co-creation from all avenues explored. Even though the triangulation of managers' interview data and performance reports does not ensure validity it is "*a way of ensuring comprehensiveness and encouraging a more reflexive analysis of the data*" (Mays & Pope 2018, p. 51). Thus triangulation in this thesis is used to explore similarities and possible contradictions between the two primary sources of information. To triangulate the findings, the researcher has developed an overall interpretation of the findings which is presented in the discussion chapter 5 focused on the amalgamation of findings from the

analysis of social media accounts and participants' interviews.

Following the approach proposed by Charmaz (2014) the software product NVIVO was used for the initial coding on interview data in order to allow the identification of initial concepts, which was followed by manual coding and analysis procedure, allowing more accurate and detailed identification of concepts and categories in the available qualitative primary data. The findings from the interview data were then triangulated with the results from the secondary analysis of social media contents to provide a thorough understanding of the value co-creation processes and opportunities in the case of the UAE hotel industry. Triangulation involves the process of combination of methodologies or data sources for studying the same phenomenon while focusing towards strengthening the research findings (Heale & Forbes 2013). In this study, data triangulation of the primary data from interviews and secondary data source from the social media analysis was used to increase the validity and reliability of the results and to create a more in-depth picture of the research problem. The process involves identifying the themes in the analysis of qualitative data which was collected through interviews and also relating the data from the social media to corroborate the findings of the former.

3.7.3. Reliability:

“The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.” (Taylor 2017, p. 30)

Reliability in qualitative studies is a challenging concept to determine because data is often collected from face-to-face and 1-2-1 interviews where interviewees disclose information about

themselves and their real-life experiences. However, interviewing as a data type is often predisposed to analytical misinterpretation (Fields 2018; Willig 2018). Thus, for qualitative researchers to demonstrate reliability it is imperative for them to disclose the processes involved in their research. Various methods have been proposed for qualitative researchers to demonstrate reliability such as conducting and reporting research systematically and ensuring and demonstrating that all interpretations are supported by the data collected (Smith 2019; Mishler 2018).

In this thesis the concept of reliability was addressed with the goal of minimizing the risk of misinterpretation. The researcher address reliability issues by conducting interactive interviews to allow interviewees to readily discuss the use of social media for value co-creation and obtaining clarification about ambiguities in terminology from interviewees. In addition to that, the accuracy of the analysis of transcripts is ensured by reviewing the interpretations of experts with a PhD supervisors and formatting the research findings systematically with direct comparison to Harvard formatting and extant literature. To ensure high quality throughout this research project, the researcher has ensured that these principles have been adopted in context and have been strictly followed throughout the study.

While the authenticity and credibility of the primary data has been verified at the time of data collection, one of the main challenges was to address the credibility of social media information. This includes topic credibility, source credibility, and content credibility (Sun 2021). The topic credibility was ascertained by using the posts from the different social media pages of the hotels, thereby ensuring that the post was relevant to the research area. This meant that social media posts which were a potential source for value co-creation in the context of hotel sectors was only

considered for analysis in this study. Finally, for the content credibility, an analysis of the content was carried out to ascertain on whether it met the criteria of co creation. However, the grammatical composition of the feedback was discarded considering that the users were not obliged to present a structured post on the social media pages.

3.8. Ethics

Several ethical issues may arise through the data collection procedure. The legal ethics form for the study is presented in Appendix 1. The study has considered each before, during and after data collection ethical conduct has been implemented. For instance, before the interview can be conducted, the researcher has sent a letter of consent and participation information sheet to the potential research participants. The participant information sheet provides important information about the study. Participant information sheet is presented in Appendix 2. For example, it exposes the purpose of the study, characteristic of the chosen participant, the duration for each interview, etc. All participants have been informed that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw at any time. The researcher has also discussed with participants their comfort with the interview being audio-recorded and has disclosed all data protection and safeguarding measures. Participants have been notified that no personal identifiers would be included in the data transcripts. Respondents have also been informed that everything they say is confidential and would not affect their work and job security at the organization. Each of the participants has remained anonymous. However, because the study considers the participant's role in the organization which requires analysis, the study has coded their name. The study has been reviewed for ethical approval by the British University of Dubai.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter of the present paper represents the analysis of the data, collected through semi-structured interviews with professionals in the UAE hotel industry, as well as a discussion of the main results from the study. The chapter begins with an overview of the data collection process and response and continues with demographic representation of the interviewed research participants. In addition to this, the three-stage coding procedure, represented by initial line- by-line coding, focused coding and theoretical coding which has been employed in the current study is discussed in the chapter. Constant comparison method is employed in the research process, as a fundamental component of the present CGT research. The main concepts and categories identified within the interview results are also presented in the present dissertation chapter. This component of the current PhD thesis uncovers the implementation of the constructivist grounded theory approach in the primary research design, which serves the nature of the research topic aimed at the study of the organizational value co-creation through social media platforms in the context of the UAE hotel industry. The second component aimed at qualitative analysis of contents from social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram are also presented in this chapter. The collected secondary qualitative data from the social media posts have also undergone the aforementioned three-stage coding, after detailed descriptive statistics is presented about it. The qualitative research methodology, combining both primary and secondary data collection focused on the organizational level of the UAE hotel sector contributes to accurate and thorough investigation of the role of social media platforms for value co-creation in the specific case of the UAE hotel industry.

4.2. Primary Qualitative Data Collection Process and Response

In line with the research objectives and research questions defined in the introductory chapter of the present paper, the present study is based on qualitative data, gathered through the semi-structured interviews with professionals in the UAE hotel sector. For collecting data, 6 hotels in the UAE were contacted. A preliminary enquiry was conducted on whether the hotels used social media for customer engagement. After the confirmation, the participants across different levels of management were contacted to obtain their views regarding the value co-creation and the role of social media for creating value for the respective hotels.

According to Charmaz (2006), the most optimal way of utilizing data for Constructivist Grounded Theory is to co-construct the data through the researcher and the interviewee. Considering this, the participants were informed about the data collection process so that the data pertaining to the research objectives could be collected.

Since the aim of the study is to explore the use of social media towards value co-creation and value capture and the strategic purposes of using it in hotel sector, it was imperative that the data is collected from the participants who had worked in the hospitality sector and had direct interactions with the customers with respect to the different services offered by their respective organizations. In addition, it was also essential to select the participants across different corporate management departments (digital, marketing, innovation, general management). Considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria presented in Table 4.1., it was envisaged that a sample of at least 24 participants would be considered for data collection through interviews. In order to protect the confidentiality of respondent's opinions, no identifiable vulnerable and personal information is collected at any point during the interview sessions. Each interviewee is assigned unique code like Interviewee 1,

Interviewee 2, etc., and referred to with this code throughout the interview session.

Table 4. 1. Primary research inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Middle and top management positions	Lack of experience with customer interactions
Direct customer area of interactions (beverage and food, room reservations, entertainment, and	Inability to participate in the study
Corporate management departments (digital, marketing, innovation, general management)	

(Compiled by the researcher)

One of the key constraints was that due to the widespread pandemic, it was not possible to meet all the participants in person. To overcome this, whenever face-to-face interviews were not possible, the participants were contacted over Zoom meeting through prior appointment. However, due to time constraints, only 24 interviewees could commit to the pre-agreed schedule. The response to the interview questions is summarized in Figure 4.1 below. An interview agenda is presented in Appendix 3.

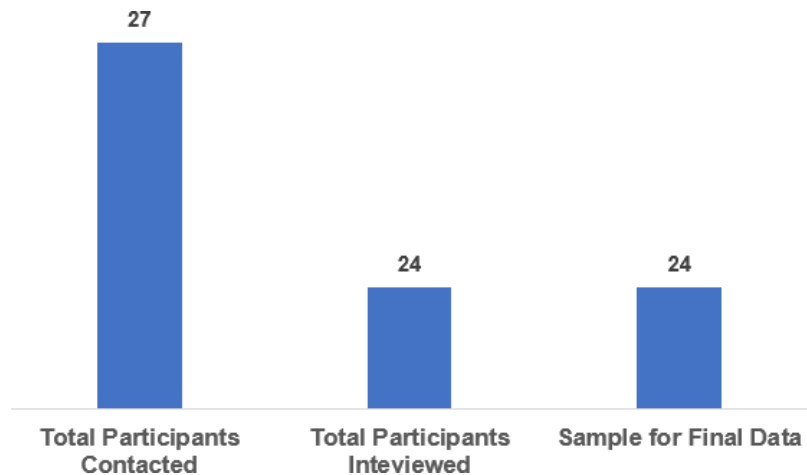


Figure 4. 1: Primary research participants (Compiled by the researcher)

4.3. Theoretical saturation and sufficiency

Even though the sampling procedure followed might seem as a purely purposive sampling at a first glance, the simultaneous processing of data collection and data analysis characteristic for this CGT research, allows for the development of theoretical sensitivity and termination of the research process at the point of reaching theoretical saturation (Charmaz 2006). Therefore, it is important to highlight the key difference between the two sampling procedures. While in the case of purposive sampling, the researcher contacts preliminary decided number of accessible respondents, in the present CGT study, the sample size is defined by the moment of reaching theoretical saturation, rather than a specific number, as proposed by Charmaz (2006).

The theoretical saturation is presented as the moment in which the collection of new information does not provide novel insights or information about the studied research phenomenon (Bryant & Charmaz 2019). Therefore, at this stage, the data collected provides adequate basis for the development of new theories and models. Nevertheless, Bryant and Charmaz (2019) points out that the evolving contextual conditions, diverse factors and even changes in the researcher's viewpoint pose significant obstacles to thorough coverage of all aspects of the research problem

into a single theory. In line with the constructivist grounded theory research, the author proposes theoretical sufficiency within a qualitative study to be considered when the relationships between the different categories have been captured and explained. The presence of evidence for conceptual depth shows that the research has reached theoretical sufficiency (Bryant & Charmaz 2019).

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), on the other hand, suggest that theoretical sufficiency is not an indicator of the research study, but a point in an on-going process, allowing the addition of any emerging new information to the identified categories and relationships. From this perspective, theoretical saturation is reached upon the performance of 24 semi-structured interviews with hotel managers from different hotel departments. The saturation was signaled by the repetitive and similar response obtained in the interviews with very little new insights or themes being generated. Furthermore, the frequency of the codes also increased to 46 thereby indicating the saturation as the interviews progressed further.

The discussion in Chapter 5 of the thesis represents the analysis and discussion of the interview results generated from this sample in the light of the reviewed literature basis.

The storyline presented in the following theoretical memo justifies that theoretical saturation has been reached after the 24th interview.

Memo 2. Theoretical memo: Theoretical sufficiency

Theoretical sufficiency was reached during the last 24th interview. Interviewee 24 did not provide new information after mentioning a Facebook group for hotel guests called Abu Dhabi bites, where they can share their comments in a friendly way, making the customer the content creator. Even though the specific platform for customer generated social media content emerged for the first time, no new categories or relationships regarding the role of social media for value co-creation were detected during this interview. The conceptualizations and interconnections presented by this participant replicated the opinions of previous interviewees. This justifies that theoretical saturation has been reached at this point of the primary qualitative research.

Nevertheless, the present PhD thesis presents the basis, the foundational theory outlining the role of social media in value co-creation.

4.4. The Analysis Process

According to Bryant and Charmaz (2019), constructivist grounded theory research involves constructing the meaning of the phenomena while discussing with the participants and understanding their views. Hence, the basic premise of using this methodology is the reconstruction of experience and meaning with respect to the topic under study. Furthermore, Guba (1990, p. 43) argues that the objective of constructivism is not to investigate an objective reality but “*asserting instead that realities are social constructions of the mind, and that there exist as many such constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)*”. Considering these aspects, the current study explores the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry. Hence, it becomes crucial to focus

around the concepts of co-creation, social media applications usage, social media content, social media engagement, social media capabilities, value creation, and value capture. Hence, the interview questions were focused around these areas and the concepts which emerged have been analyzed. Furthermore, grounded theory has been used to construct theory about issues of importance in peoples' lives. Since the concept of co-creation has gained considerable importance in the hotel industry which has further increased due to the widespread adoption of social media, this research strategy has been applied to achieve the research objectives.

The initial sample comprised of 6 hotels -3 hotels located in Abu Dhabi (Emirates Palace, Sofitel corniche Abu Dhabi, Fairmont Bab Al) and 3 hotels in Dubai (Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Rixos Premium Dubai JBR, and Jumeirah Beach). All these hotels were 5-star hotels and the reason for choosing these hotels was to assimilate information about their knowledge of value co-creation using social media platform. The 6 hotels are selected for the study because of their active use of social media as evidenced by Hotel de Tech (2021a; 2021b). A preliminary e-mail was sent with respect to the scope of the study and the expectations from the participants. After obtaining response from the hotels, it was requested that a minimum of 7-10 participants should be suggested for participation in the study. The inclusion criteria for the participants were also informed to the respective hotels.

After obtaining confirmation from the participants, a face-to-face meeting or an online appointment was scheduled with them. The online interview option was offered primarily to ensure the safety of the participants during the present Covid-19 pandemic situation and the social distancing measures which reduce the opportunities for face-to-face contact with them. The participants were asked for at least 3 time slots of 30-45 minutes each to cover the research objectives as identified in the study. The data was collected in the period between August 2020

and January 2021. The interviews commenced with the general information about the participants which was covered in the demographic profile. Thereafter, it gradually progressed towards more elaborate discussions. The interview questions were formulated based on the literature review conducted for the study.

4.5. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the participants who have participated in the study and whose response has been considered for further analysis. The main idea behind presentation of demographic characteristics is to analyze the suitability of the sample to provide information which can help in achieving the objectives of the research. The sample comprised of 24 participants and the demographic characteristics of the interviewees are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2. Sample characteristics – primary data analysis

Demographic Characteristics	Options	No. of Interviewees	% of Total Response
Age Range	21-30 years	5	21%
	31-40 Years	15	62%
	More than 40 Years	4	17%
Education	Bachelor's Degree	10	42%
	Master's degree	14	58%
Designation	Digital Marketing manager	8	33%
	Sales manager	4	17%
	Head of innovation	3	13%
	Head of Strategy and business	2	8%
	Food and beverage managers	2	8%
	Communication manager	5	21%
Years of Experience in Hotel Industry	0-5 Years	3	12%
	6-10 Years	4	17%
	11-15 Years	9	38%
	More than 15 Years	8	33%

(Compiled by the researcher based on interview data)

In terms of age range, it is observed that a majority of the participants (62%) were in the age range of 31-40 years with 21% of the participants being in the age range of 21-30 years while the remaining 17% in the age range of more than 40 years-old. This indicates that the sample consists of good mix of participants across different age groups. In terms of education, 42% of the participants had Bachelor's Degree while the remaining 58% of the participants had Master's Degree implying that the sample has good education background. Finally, in terms of experience in hotel industry, the participant profile consisted of 12% with experience between 0-5 years, 17% with experience between 6-10 years, 38% with experience between 11-15 years and 33% with experience of more than 15 years. Hence, based on the demographic characteristics of the sample, it can be concluded that the sample consists of a good mix of age, education, nationality and experience which can provide useful insights for achieving the objectives of the current study. Furthermore, all the participants are taking middle or top management level positions in their hotels. The inclusion of representatives from the Food and beverage management and Sales managers contributes to reaching theoretical saturation. This makes the present sample consistent with the proposition of Bryant and Charmaz (2019) stating that those experienced managerial professionals provide thorough insights into the social processes hidden behind the immediate job and hence provide appropriate ground for the performance of constructivist grounded theory research.

4.6. Coding

This section details on the coding procedure, selected for the analysis of the qualitative interview data, collected in the present study. In line with the constructivist grounded theory methodology, the data analysis flows simultaneously with the process of data collection, in order to reduce the

possibility of emerging errors. During the performance of the semi-structured interviews with the employed interviewees - professionals from the UAE hotel industry, the researcher relied on exploratory prompts and adaptation of the pre-defined interview questions, in order to attain detailed insights into the studied phenomena. The next stage of the data analysis consisted of a sequence of iterative cycles of collection and analysis of qualitative data. This approach allowed identification and additional clarification of the theoretical concepts emerging in the process of data gathering. Following the proposition by Charmaz (2014), the coding procedure, applied in the present analysis consists of three stages – initial line – by – line coding, focused coding and theoretical coding. The three coding stages are exposed in the following sub-sections.

4.6.1. Initial Line-by-Line Coding

The purpose of the initial coding is to allow detection of critical issues in the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews. This step of the coding process allows the development of appropriate codes or labels. Through the open coding step, already identified codes and labels are employed when coding the interview scripts of additional research respondents.

Table 4.3 below represents the initial coding stage of the qualitative primary data, gathered through the semi structured interviews. The represented initial coding approach requires the researcher to organize the responses from the semi-structured interviews transcripts around the questions from the topic guide. The researcher's interpretation of the interviewees' responses as well as their translation to key codes, employed in the initial coding stage of the present analysis is also exposed in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3. Initial coding

Interviewee #	Transcripts	Interpretation	Code label
Concept: Deconstructing Value co-creation Questions: Have you heard the term “value co-creation”? What do you know about value co-creation? Would you please try to define the co-creation concept from your experience? How it looks like in your organization? When do you use value co-creation? Please explain and, if possible, give some examples			
11	Yes, well! Co-creation is collaboration in social manner, its engaging people to create valuable experience between us as employee or between us and our customers We have to analyze all the data and then we do brainstorming with the team	The concept of co-creation involves the collaboration between employees and customers	Co-creation Concept Engagement with customers Valuable experience Teamwork
15	We have different strategies for value co-creation externally and internally. We have built a hotel community shared with our customers and employees.	Co-creation involves engagement with customers and a collaborative effort between employees and customers to find ideas for a better performance.	Two-way engagement Interaction with customers Idea generation Leading co-creation initiatives

17	<p>First of all we have to define the value co-creation in the market, well ... co-creation is the stage of collaboration and integration the business with their customers and the</p> <p>customers a partners become the real owner of your business.</p> <p>I think value co-creation has been bloomed in the appearance of social media and Technology.</p> <p>Technology has enabled the world to become a small village ...How come within one market and one organization?! We have the world here through social Media</p>	<p>Co-creation is done with the collaboration of the customers who are considered as partners.</p> <p>Technology</p> <p>has been an enabler towards co-creation and has been able to eliminate geographical boundaries</p>	<p>Co-creation Concept</p> <p>Collaboration with Customers</p> <p>Use of Technologies</p> <p>Adoption of Social Media</p>
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18	Co-creation is when businesses include external parties the ideation and development process. Most companies keep new products and processes strictly internal; while there is an attempt to protect the secret. Modern technologies like the Internet and social media allow effective co-creation of value in our industry.	Co-creation involves outsiders in the process of developing fresh ideas. By using technology, companies can include customers for co-creation for reviewing products and services	Collaboration with Customers Idea Generation Acknowledging in-house limitations Use of Technologies
<p>Concept: Social Media Platforms Usage</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>What are the social media platforms that are being used in your organization? How do you see social media?</p> <p>What are the benefits and advantages of using social media in your organization? What is the Purpose to use social media? (Innovation - Branding - Engagement - New Customers or retaining Costumers)</p> <p>Do social media support value co-creation? How do social media enable co-creation and collaboration with your customers? Do you recognize any differentiation between the nature of the objective and the type of social media platform used? Is your organization using different social media for different aims?</p>			
1	Instagram – Facebook – snap chat (there is a policy by the way through these platforms	Social Media has become an integral part of business	Use of social media platforms Sharing by

	<p>to accept hotels as well.</p> <p>People when they want to go out, they look to their Instagram and see what is happening in on the hotels area</p> <p>Digital and Technology we can't live without – All customers comes after review the reviews and feedback</p>	<p>operations of Hotel Industry. Customers are intertwined with social media and share their experience through reviews and posts</p>	<p>customers</p> <p>Reviews by customers</p>
6	<p>Social Media. is important ... It's everywhere at any time!</p> <p>We do use many social media accounts... we can promote offers and generate vouchers for them. Digital marketing become the main Marketing it's all about it. It covers all the aspect of marketing //</p> <p>Audience segmentation – culture – reach – visual with</p>	<p>Social Media adoption by tourism and hospitality industry is a commonly accepted practice. Digital marketing is now the preferred choice of marketing for hotel industry due to reasons such as all-</p>	<p>Social Media Adoption</p> <p>Use of popular platforms</p> <p>Promotional Offers</p> <p>Geographic reach</p> <p>Low Cost</p>

	less cost!	inclusive marketing, reach of audience, and low costs as compared to traditional marketing	
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(Compiled by the researcher)

The line – by – line coding is aimed at detection of initial codes, which can serve for formulation of categories based on their frequency in the interview transcripts and their significance. The percentage coverage of these codes is shown in Figure 4.2.

	Interview transcript	Line-by-line coding
Interviewee 7	Social Media support us to build our strategy through understanding the customers and we utilize the different platforms for different purposes for branding, innovation, engagement, retaining. But I prefer to say that 30 % for branding and 70% percent Tactical to core value- Also we used social media increased in COVID-19 towards innovation and ask them with new solutions and how they could be served in a safely manner.	Strategic implications of social media Understanding the customers Platforms differentiation Customer engagement Retaining Customers Enhancing brand value Strategic implications of social media Enhancing innovation Ensuring safety

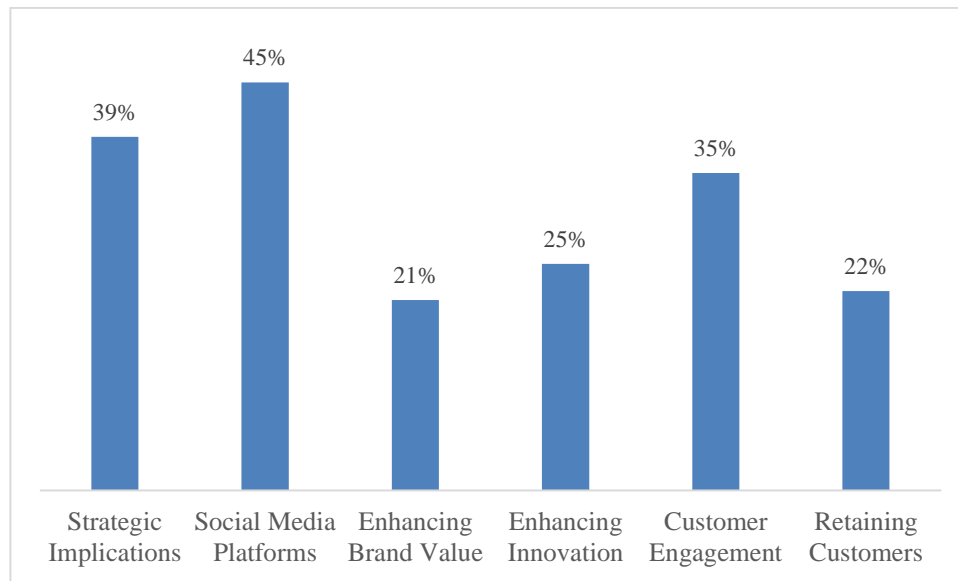


Figure 4. 2: Example of line-by-line coding (Compiled by the researcher using NVIVO)

An example of line-by-line coding of the interview transcripts is shown in Table 4.4 below is presented the analytical memo, related to this stage of the coding process.

Memo 3. Analytical Memo: Line by line coding

I learnt an effective method of coding interviews, namely, line-by-line coding. When I searched for analytical tools and techniques, this technique came up and I consulted my tutor, fellows, and some analytical experts for use of this coding. My analysis of interviews was really interesting in this manner as each line of the interview was being linked to some concept and by doing this, I was sure that nothing was being missed. Every single information given by the interviewees is being analyzed hence, these interviews are expected to provide insightful results. For instance, when the following statements were analyzed, “Social Media support us to build our strategy through understanding the customers and we utilize the different platforms for different purposes for branding, innovation, engagement, retaining. But I prefer to say that 30 % for branding and 70% percent Tactical to core value- Also we used social media increased in COVID-19 towards innovation and ask them with new solutions and how they could be served in a safely manner”; every line showed a corresponding code like strategic implications of social media, understanding the customers, platforms differentiation, customer engagement and retaining customers. I was amazed by this method and plan to learn and implement it in future projects too.

Following the approach proposed by Charmaz (2014) in the context of the constructivist grounded theory research, Gerunds-Doing-Act-Routine sequence is employed in the coding process in order to capture the actions within the discussed social processes. As suggested by the same author, at this coding stage, in-vivo codes like those shown in Table. 4.4 were used to uncover the unique viewpoint of the separate research participants.

Table 4. 4. In-vivo codes

Interviewee	Transcripts	In-vivo code
Interviewee 5	<i>We communicate differently in the different platforms. LinkedIn in English while twitter in Arabic Instagram speechless and Facebook more to tell stories with comics. Differentiating the contents is very important for the creation of an effective strategy using social media.</i>	Differentiating the contents
Interviewee 4	<i>Social media allow monitoring customer behavior in real time.</i> <i>Once you buy a voucher and scan it we know that customer was from this</i>	Monitoring customer behavior

	<p><i>app... It's easy to count the percentage but we need to see the weighting of it against other channels.</i></p>	
Interviewee 2	<p><i>As you know, social media provide a tracking system for negative and positive feedback "Thanks God! ... We have such Technology we cannot ignore any of the feedback. Add to the Your well -designed content enable your customer to co-create through interactive way and sharing their experience. Through digital team and PR, we design the posts and suitable content while considering feedback.</i></p>	Considering feedback

Interviewee 24	<p><i>Technology has changed the focus in the process of value creation from focus on the product into a focus on the consumer. Technology really supports us for better understanding the audience.</i></p>	Understanding the audience
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(Compiled by the researcher)

The coding scheme, reached in the end of the end of this coding stage, that outlines the major concepts and categories identified in the pool of interview transcripts gathered during the present qualitative primary research is presented in Figure 4.3. The categories have been divided based on the context in which the codes appear. The coding process continues and this initial coding is further reviewed for consistency and to ensure that the derived categories do not overlap.

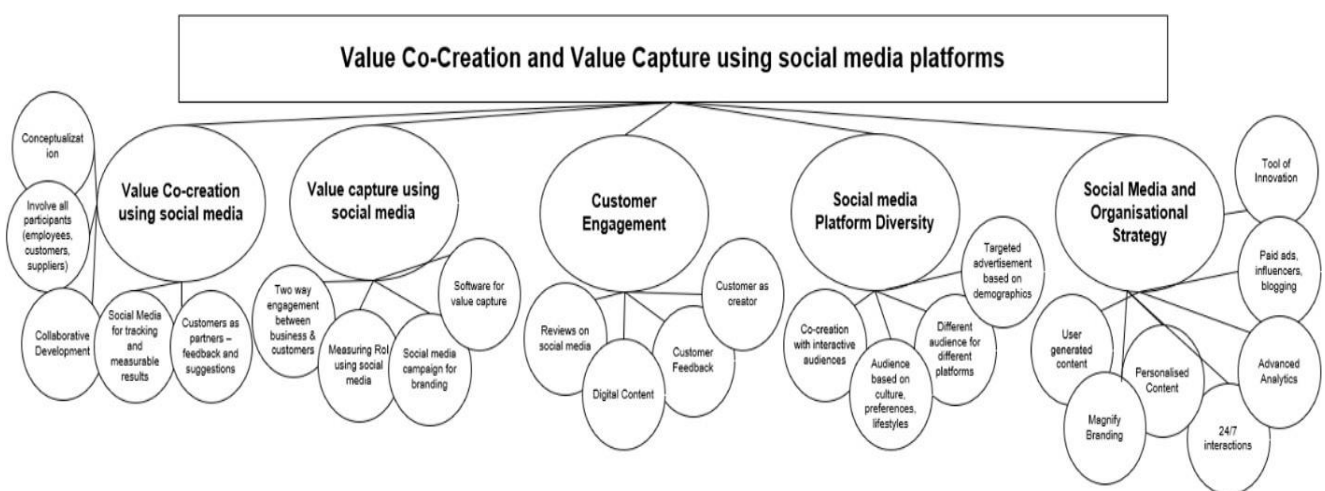


Figure 4. 3: Interview coding (Compiled by the researcher)

4.6.2. Focussed Coding

Upon completion of the open coding stage, focused coding is employed for identification of the core categories and the relationships between the core categories, detected in the qualitative data, gathered through the performed semi-structured interviews. The focused coding allows organization of the identified concepts and codes into categories of higher level. At the theoretical coding stage, additional and repeated review and analysis of specialized marketing sources was allowing identification of new concepts and relationships in the interview data, which have been missed during the initial stages of the coding process.

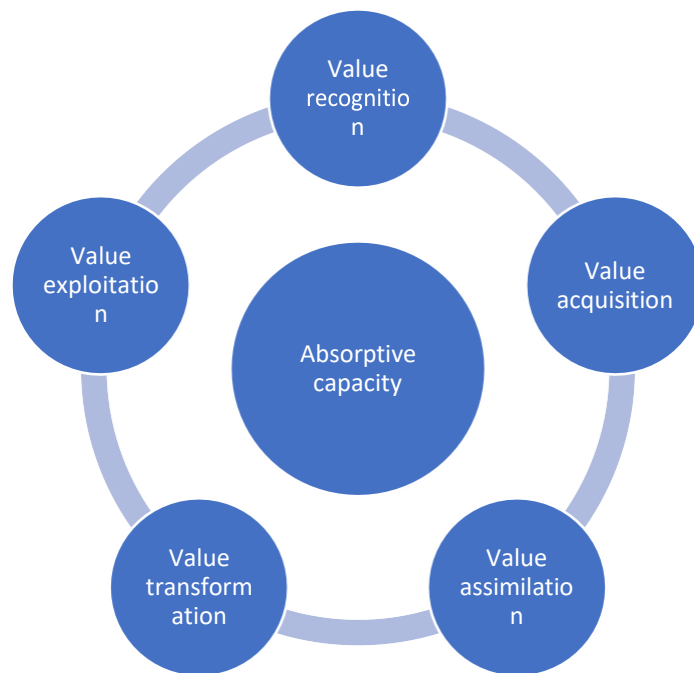


Figure 4. 4: Absorptive capacity dimensions (Roberts et al. 2012).

The repeated analysis of literature against the interview transcripts provided clear and accurate

explanation of the identified marketing notions and interconnections instead of linking them artificially with one-another. Iterative cycles of continuous comparison between key marketing theories, transcripts of the semi-structured interviews with industry experts, their initial coding and prior memoing allowed refinement of the marketing concepts detected within the qualitative primary data gathered and analyzed within the present study. Visual tools like tables, diagrams and flip charts were found useful in the process of repeated comparative review of theoretical concepts and links between them, present in the existing marketing knowledge. Figure 4.4 exhibits the dimensions of the ACT theory which were employed in the coding process.

Table 4.5 shows the process of transition from the initial, through focused coding to the definition of the meaningful category “value co-creation through social media” during the performed analysis. This category is produced when focused coding of the initial codes of the interview data in line with the ACT, which is a cornerstone of the theoretical framework for the present dissertation study. A storyline based on the ACT theory is presented in the theoretical memo below. The ACT theory emphasizes on the strategic innovation, technological advancements and role of social media towards realizing commercial ends. This is also emphasized in the coding structure as illustrated in Table below.

Table 4. 5. Example of focused coding

Initial Codes	Focused Codes (categories)	Theoretical codes (Concepts)
Collect information Preferences data Tools for data collection Data monitoring tools Data analysis techniques Technological Means Engagement Company units Collaboration New Ideas New products New services	Social Media Analytics Real time interaction with customers Data Monitoring Data Collection (Value Acquisition) and Analysis Two-way engagement Informed decision making (Value Exploitation, Transformation) Brainstorming (Value Recognition) Inter-departmental collaboration Innovation from hotels (Value assimilation)	Value capture through social media

(Compiled by the researcher)

Memo 4. Theoretical memo: ACT

Interview 17 presented an example, of their hotel having a platform called chatting area where clients are encouraged to share their ideas for advancement of the hotel services. Though this social media channel, a past guest of the hotel has recommended a more appealing design of the lobby and a way to rearrange the flowers present there. The recommendation has been transferred to the management and a new re-design project was started. Even though the process took 6 months, but it considerably contributed to its value creation. In addition to this, the customer has been awarded a certificate for their engagement with the hotel design and the value co-creation efforts.

This storyline supports the viability of the ACT, pointing out the importance of all dimensions from value recognition to value exploitation.

4.6.3. Theoretical Coding

The final stage of the coding process – theoretical coding – ensures saturation of the identified categories. Theoretical coding relies on the application of memos, comprising of constant comparison between key concepts and theoretical codes, as well as a reflection on important concepts. This coding process allows a shift in the analysis from description of the research findings to their theoretical conceptualization. The theoretical coding allowed identification of the following concepts Value Co-creation through social media, Value capture through social media, Customer Engagement, Social Media Platform Diversity, Social Media and Organizational Strategy.

The employed constant comparison method is a cornerstone of grounded theory methodologies which accounts for effective theory development, based on the creation of theoretical frameworks

(Glaser & Strauss 2010). The constant comparison is grounded on continuous comparison between different codes, categories, concepts detected in the new data with the already existing knowledge, represented by secondary data and academic literature. A sample of analytical memo, related to the interview process in the present research is exposed beneath.

Memo 5. Analytical Memo: Interview process

My interview with the Interviewee 1 was an exciting experience in conducting interviews and transcribing them simultaneously. I planned to note down the expressions, pauses and ups and downs of the voice. When the interview with Interviewee 1 started, I realized it is not easy to note all this altogether. Here, my focus changed from writing down what is being said to analyze the expressions and tone. I had a recorder with me so that I can record the interview which has helped me in listening to it again and analyzing the answers. Interviewee 1 was a young, energetic person with a work experience of 5 years. The answers were too the point and I thought that he is providing relevant information but very to the point. He can explain certain answers, but I did not force him much. His expressions were calm, and he was confident in answering the questions hence, I noted these features which has helped me in analysis.

Theoretical memos are useful for connecting the primary qualitative data with existing theoretical bases in order to provide a higher level of abstraction (Birk, Chapman & Francis 2008). Below is presented an example of theoretical memo, related to two main components of the theoretical framework of this research. Understanding concepts of SDL and VCC helped in development of first concept of Value co-creation and value capture through social media and its categories of value co-creation conceptualization and value co-creation drivers. The detailed study of SDL and VCC defined codes of these concepts and categories.

Memo 6. Theoretical Memo: Service Dominant Logic (SDL) and Value Co-creation (VCC)

In the beginning of this research, I had theoretical perspective of the service dominant logic and its link with value co-creation. For me, the concept clearly presented in books and academic articles were clear theoretically and previous studies explained that SDL forms a base for the concept of VCC, but I was excited to see the real implementation of these concepts and their interconnections from the viewpoint of hospitality marketing management practice.

SDL is built on the concept of Good dominant logic (GDL) and was formed with the industries development towards service provision. SDL is basically exchanging services or resources for a mutual benefit. VCC is about creating value by exchanging services for both the parties. These concepts provide a base for my research and central to the research aimed at value co-creation and value capture in the specific case of the UAE hotel industry, which is being carried out. These theoretical concepts allow adequate identification of codes in the interview transcripts.

Another technique useful for the analysis in the present constructivist grounded theory research is storyline analysis. A storyline is defined as an extended version of a theoretical memo in which a story of the case is written to uncover the initial substantive theory considered for the study (Birk, Chapman & Francis 2008). Examples of a storylines are presented in the theoretical memos in the *Theoretical saturation and **Focused coding sections above.

4.7. Qualitative Analysis Interviews

This section summarizes the defined concepts and sub-concept in the analysis. As a result of the employed three-step coding procedure, four main concepts consistent with the research objectives defined in the present dissertation have been defined, as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6. Qualitative Analysis Interviews

Research objective	Concepts	Categories	Codes	Frequency	
				Discussed by N participants	Discussed across the interviews
To establish how the implementation of social media platforms in the organization affects	Value co-creation using social media in hotels	Conceptualization Organisational Arrangements	Value co-creation	24	49
			Understanding		
			Value co-creation	18	26
		Employee Skills Abilities	mechanism		
			Use of technology	24	67
			Role of employees	14	28
		Online customer activities	Teamwork and Innovation	18	46
			Online comments on	24	63
			experience of service		
			Online engagement	24	72
			Insightful suggestions	12	22
			Participation in contests	11	14
			Social Media Analytics	23	36
			Real time interaction with	24	54

its value co-creation and value capture capabilities.	Value capture through social media	Real time insights	customers		
			Instant Feedback	22	39
		Data Driven Strategy	Data Collection and Analysis	15	21
			Periodic Monitoring and Review	12	15
			Informed decision making	18	41
		Inspire Actions	Brainstorming	10	19
			Inter-departmental collaboration	14	31
			Innovation from hotels	15	21
			Engagement progress	21	48
			Feedback mechanism	17	33
			Interactive Communication	18	23
		Social Media Content Strategy	Content strategy	8	15
			Influencers and Bloggers	14	23
			Audience characteristics	7	12

		User Generated Content	Experience sharing	11	38
			Credibility of information through user interaction	8	10
			Online word -of -mouth	13	19
To determine the impact of social media platforms' diversity on the value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations.	Social Media Platform Diversity	Popularity of the Platform	Social Media Insights	19	26
			Accessibility	18	34
		Platform Capability	Content differentiation	19	43
			Audience Differentiation	11	38
			Analytics from social media platforms	16	19
		Platform Suitability & benefits	Functionality differentiation	16	31
			Effectiveness of platform	21	53
			Easy communication with stakeholders	19	27
		Fulfilling Strategic Marketing	Branding	20	38
			Personalized experience	14	18
			Promotional Content	22	47
			Emotional Connect	13	14

To investigate the impact of the social media platform on organizational strategy.	Social Media and Organisation al Strategy	Objectives	Team Collaboration	15	26
		Developing Competitive Advantage	Competitiveness	12	18
			Retaining customers	14	22
			Two-way engagement	18	33
			Enhancing profitability	8	11
			Data driven decisions	10	16
			Idea for service improvement	14	30

(Compiled by the researcher)

The presentation of the concepts and discussion are carried out in the below sub sections:

4.7.1. Main Concept 1: Value Co-creation through social media

The concept of "Value Co-creation through social media" was one of the main concepts that have been identified in the study with the objective of understanding of how value is co-created in the hotels in UAE. Under this main concept, the categories that have been identified include Conceptualization and Organizational Arrangements, Employee Skills and Abilities, as well as online customer activities.

4.7.1.1. Category 1: Conceptualization and Organizational Arrangements

This category relates to the understanding of co-creation and how it is viewed in the context of the hotel business organization. It reflects the understanding of hotel employees of the VCC concept and the arrangements of the organizations in this respect.

The understanding of value co-creation was one of the key aspects in understanding how organizations viewed it with respect to the engaging with customers and achieving organizational objectives. When asked from the interviewees, it was observed that most of the participants were aware of the concept of co-creation and involvement of all participants (predominantly employees and customers) towards generating value for the organization. As pointed out by Interviewee 6, *"Co-creation is working together toward expected service. We all are working together with customers to create value. They are not any more users only"*.

Similar experience was pointed out by Interviewee 12 who stated that

"... co-creation is a collaborative development towards new value, shared idea and solutions towards implementation. We are working together with our customers and stakeholders".

Also, Interviewee 21 asserted the meaning of co-creation as below:

"I believe value co-creation means involving all the stakeholders towards creating value for the organization. In our organization, value co-creation is carried out by collaboration with customers, suppliers and the internal marketing team to obtain insights which can help in improving the operations of the business".

A more detailed explanation of co-creation was highlighted by Interviewee 18 who stated that

"Co-creation is when businesses include external parties the ideation and development process. Most companies keep new products and processes strictly internal; while there is an attempt to protect the secret. Modern technologies like the Internet and social media allow effective co-

creation of value in our industry".

These responses indicated that the Interviewees in the sample understood the meaning of co-creation and its importance towards adding value to their respective organizations. Moreover, the importance of collaborative effort was also highlighted by majority of the participants, although, the extent to which the stakeholders could be consulted were also indicated.

While the concept of co-creation was broadly understood as working together, few participants also interpreted co-creation as internal collaboration among different teams in the organization.

This was highlighted by Interviewee 7 who stated that:

"In communication and marketing, co-creation is about brainstorming together, planning for campaign as one big team instead of the campaign being owned by one team or person. Whenever we have a new campaign, we meet altogether studying all the aspect to get the best out of it".

The main understanding was that team collaboration led to co-creation. Another interpretation was to analyze the data collected from the customers and identify different ways of creating value for the organization. This was pointed out by Interviewee 11 who stated that

"Co-creation is collaboration in social manner, its engaging people to create valuable experience between us as employee or between us and our customers...We have to analyze all the data and then we do brainstorming with the team".

Moreover, Interviewee 22 related co-creation to service delivery and pointed out that

"Co-creation, in my understanding, is working with the consumers to identify ways in which the service delivery of the hotel can be improved. It involves working on the ideas provided by the customers and users of social media and collaborating with the internal team to execute those ideas. So, it basically means generating useful insights through customer interaction, whether it is online or offline".

Nevertheless, there was a common understanding among the interviewees that co-creation involves the stakeholders such as employees and customers in order to generate value for the organization. The response indicates that the overall understanding was that the value co-creation was from the perspective of the organizations. This is based on the argument that the collaboration with external stakeholders is for the benefit of organizations through the contribution such as brainstorming on feedback and ideas from customers and other stakeholders. This was also evident from the response of the participants that they may not have all the answers to enhance customer experience and the feedback and comments provided by customers makes it easier for the internal team to work towards value co-creation from the perspective of organizations.

This concept was explored in the context of the different aspects of social media and how value co-creation could have strategic implications for the organization. The participants were clearly unanimous in highlighting the importance of linking value creation and use of social media with the organizational strategy. As pointed out by Interviewee 10,

"Social media strategy it is a must. You can't stand in the market and to be competitive".

This underlines the importance of having a coherent strategy for creating value by leveraging the social media platform. Another key strategic implication is the transformation of branding and marketing strategy due to the use of social media platforms. This was highlighted by Interviewee 6 who stated that:

Another important aspect which can be connected to strategic implication was pointed out by Interviewee 20 who stated that the core objective of organizational strategy in the hotel industry in the UAE should be to connect with the consumers while also striving for innovation, branding, and new solutions:

"Social Media support us to build our strategy through to understand the customers and we utilize

the different platforms for different purposes for branding, innovation, engagement, retaining. But I prefer to say that 30 %for branding and 70% percent Tactical to core value- Also we used social media increased in COVID-19 towards innovation and ask them with new solutions and how they could be served in a safely manner".

All the above aspects have strategic implications for the organizations towards value co-creation in the UAE hotel industry.

This concept was explored with respect to the process improvements that can be suggested for the organizations in the hotel industry in the UAE based on the value co-creation and use of social media. One of the dominant concepts that emerged was the collaboration with the customers in a structured way for value co-creation using social media platforms. This was explained by Interviewee 7 who stated that brainstorming and collaboration led to process improvements which was beneficial for the organization. As stated by Interviewee 7,

"In communication and marketing, co-creation is about brainstorming together, planning for campaign as one big team instead of the campaign being owned by one team or person. Whenever we have a new campaign, we meet altogether studying all the aspect to get the best out of it"

The focus on value creation in a structured way was also highlighted by Interviewee 15 who stated that

"To meet together on one table (employees, customers and stakeholders) and share ideas to create value for us as a firm and create value for the customers as well...We are working to create values for all parties".

The second area of transformation related to the shift from product centric approach to the customer centric approach due to which customer engagement became a key aspect of organizational processes. This was highlighted by Interviewee 24 who also stated that

“Technology has changed the focus in the process of value creation from focus on the product into a focus on the consumer. Technology really supports us for better understanding the audience.”

Moreover, the participants acknowledged that there was a shift in processes towards offering personalized services for higher engagement. As pointed out by Interviewee 15,

"Social media and digital platforms transformed the classical approach from service -centric process to a guest -centric approach".

The process of customer services improvement also shifted from being reactive towards being proactive. This has brought about a major process transformation in the different hotels in the UAE. This was highlighted by Interviewee 8 who stated that

"Proactively monitoring, and dynamically analyzing data, facilitates predicting issues beforehand".

Similar response was pointed out by Interviewee 13 who stated that the organizations are now well equipped to handle the real time requests raised by customers. As stated by Interviewee 13,

"Real time response for the Quick Clarifications and requests (Water – Reservations- Beach access)".

Similar response was provided by Interviewee 9 who stated that

"Real time interaction! They tell what they want, how, why and when".

Furthermore, Interviewee 23 added that social media helps in improvement in service delivery along with other value additions

“Data collected through social media platforms are very useful. These are analyzed from the perspective of revenue generation, improvement in service delivery, branding and gaining visibility, among others. All of these contribute to value creation”.

Hence, the organizational processes have considerably evolved towards engagement of the

customers and responding to their requests quickly in order to stay competitive in the hotel industry.

4.7.1.2. Category 2: Employee Skills and Abilities

This category relates to the contribution of employees with respect to value co-creation in the organization. It is perceived as the skills and abilities that an employee possesses and which facilitates co-creation.

Based on the response of the interviewees, it was observed that the skills and abilities of employees – both immediately expressed and through the results of their work, are among the main factors related to value co-creation. The role of employees is well acknowledged in the process of value co-creation. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 15 who stated that

"To meet together on one table (employees, customers and stakeholders) and share ideas to create value for us as a firm and create value for the customers as well... We are working to create values for all parties".

The role of employees was also highlighted by Interviewee 8 who stated that

"You need young skillful employee with creative attitude... Social media need to be always updated with Technology and visual effects".

Interviewee 11 also added to this by stating that brainstorming with the team is an important part of co-creation as is evident from the response

"Co-creation is collaboration in social manner, its engaging people to create valuable experience between us as employee or between us and our customers... We have to analyze all the data and then we do brainstorm with the team".

In terms of online interaction, the participants were unanimous in their response and explained that

online interaction with customers made it easier and more frequent for understanding the requirements and ways in which service can be improved. This was reflected in the response of Interviewee 18 who stated that

"It is now easier to bring the clients into the action of the development process. They interact in different platforms with us. This is very useful because they are engaged through the whole way, they give us ideas at the beginning, then they assess how we have done when we launch those new offers to the market".

Adding to this, Interviewee 1 also pointed out that

"Most of the time, Technology makes the conversation continue and the employees need to be able to ensure that flow".

This clearly indicates that the online interaction requires specific skills and capabilities from hotel employees. While the participants acknowledged that social media platform was crucial towards engaging with the customers, the participants also highlighted the importance of social media analysis in order to make progress towards value co-creation.

One of the key benefits was identified by Interviewee 22 who stated that

"By using the social media platforms, we can clearly identify where our customers are coming from. After using social media, we have seen a major uptick in the increase in customers who have come to know about us. This has increased the number of customers. Once we have the customer information (we maintain a CRM system) we can send them promotional offers on a regular basis. It also helps in personalized service offerings (for example couples, family, etc.)".

Another important factor was quick feedback from the customers. In this regard, feedback was one of the factors which needed to be analyzed towards generating value. As stated by Interviewee 15:

"Feedback is imperative to any business. We deal with people every day. Our customer reviews

are invaluable – they help us grow as individuals and as a team".

This implied that the analysis of the feedback was important towards understanding the value drivers. Adding to this, Interviewee 7 stated that

"Sometimes, we do polls on social media, or we post like a teaser to get their feedback, also after each campaign we create end of campaign report where sentiments are analyzed and studied".

This presented useful insight wherein the analysis of data from the social media contributed for value co-creation. The importance of social media analysis was further highlighted from the response where participants stated that understanding the audience and segregating the audience was crucial towards generating value in collaboration with the customers. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 9 who stated that

"Segmentation of your audience and their taste according to platforms types and categories". The same interviewee further stated that analysis of data facilitated in capturing value as indicated in the response,

"Driven data – analytical tools capture co-creation and the value there".

4.7.1.3. Category 3: Online customer activities

This category relates to role of social media and the consumer activities such as posting content or feedback on the online platforms. The main objective is to understand the impact of such content towards co-creation.

This category was explored in the context related to the role played by social media for value co-creation. Based on the response of the participants, it is observed that social media platforms play a dominant role in engaging the customers and encouraging them to participate in value co-creation. This is evident in the response obtained by Interviewee 2 who explained that there were

multiple aspects of social media that help in value co-creation. As stated by Interviewee 2,

"As you know, social media provide a tracking system for negative and positive feedback "Thanks God! ...We have such Technology we cannot ignore any of the feedback. Add to your well - designed content enable your customer to co-create through interactive way and sharing their experience. Through digital team and PR, we design the posts and suitable content. We cannot neglect the influencers and bloggers (we paid for them) to create the content with us. These steps and strategies are enabling co-creation".

The response provided by Participant indicates that the use of social media platform, coupled with the well-designed content, helps the company to create value through an interactive way. The importance of social media towards the collaboration of customers as partners was highlighted by Interviewee 6 who stated that

"Your customers become your partners... They share and interact, and others come through them... Our customers want to help create an experience they want, with a hotel they already like".

Another key aspect which was revealed was the availability of data to create personalized content for the customers. This was highlighted by Interviewee 10 who stated that:

"Social media platforms are very useful towards personalized co-creation. In another meaning the customers and we become one thing no boundaries to ask or suggest what they want and how in real time ... Techniques like: Hashtags – mention and Tags!"

Moreover, the use of social media platform to facilitate live interaction was also acknowledged by majority of the participants as a key aspect of value co-creation using the social media platform.

This was highlighted by Interviewee 14 who stated that

"Live interaction with attractive content – its real time and the friendly space that give to all users that you can present it as your customers want".

Similarly, Interviewee 17 also pointed out that the engagement of customers was enhanced to a great extent by using social media platform. This also helps the organizations to come out with innovative content such as rewards to attract and engage customers. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 17 who stated that

"Real time interaction – competitions and rewards to increase the engagement rate and collaboration ... we can reach any country by share and mention through other customers".

The capability of social media platforms to track and monitor the customer interaction for value co-creation using social media was also highlighted by Interviewee 23 who stated that

"The different feedback that we get from customers, the analysis of the social media data and the decisions to implement the new strategies - they all are targeted towards co-creation. Social media technology has various aspects such as tracking, monitoring, etc. which makes it easier for collaboration with the customers".

Hence, overall, social media played a dominant role in value co-creation for the organizations in the hotel industry in the UAE. Similar views were also expressed by Interviewee 20 by stating that *"Content is always the king. It represents you in the market and you always study your customers' needs through their interactions between the online communities. Add to that, there is different strategies as you can go and ask them friendly through: videos and posts and content relevant to their experience".*

Similar response was also provided by Interviewee 22 who argued for the need for personalized services and stated that

"By using the social media platforms, we can clearly identify where our customers are coming from. After using social media, we have seen a major uptick in the increase in customers who have come to know about us. This has increase the number of customers. Once we have the customer

information (we maintain a CRM system) we can send them promotional offers on a regular basis. It also helps in personalized service offerings (for example couples, family, etc.).”

4.7.2. Main Concept 2: Value Capture through social media

This main concept appeared when the interviewees were asked about the way they capture value in their business practice. Three categories have emerged from this discussion: real time insights, data driven strategy and inspire actions.

4.7.2.1. Category 1: Real time insights

This category relates to the importance of real time insights with respect to the implications for the organizational strategy. It also explores how real time insights, aided by technology, is making an impact towards collecting data and analyzing them from the perspective of value co-creation.

The use of technologies was accepted as the most important catalyst which facilitated the co-creation process and made it easier for the organizations to collaborate with customers to generate value. The acknowledgement of use of technology and social media in particular as a game changer in hotel industry was clearly evident in the response obtained by the participants. As pointed out by Interviewee 10,

"Social Media strategy has transformed the Hotel industry" indicating that technology has become the mainstay for engaging with the customers and generating value for the organization. Interviewee 4 also replied that

"Technology made co-creation all the time and customers have become partners and advisors, not just end users".

However, monitoring the engagement with the customers through data collection and analysis to

generate value for the organization was a key aspect in addition to the use of technology. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 15 who stated that

"Now we are using social media in a different way. Before we used to use them for communication with our guests and promotions. Now we have live dashboard analytics trends to track the social media efficiency and effectiveness, this is very good development".

Similar response was obtained by Interviewee 20 who stated that

"Social Media support us to build our strategy through to understand the customers and we utilize the different platforms for different purposes for branding, innovation, engagement. This is made possible using of immediate data collected from the customers on the social media and analyzing the influence of these on our organization".

In terms of speed of incorporating the customer feedback, Interviewee 24 pointed out that

"One such benefit is the quick feedback and comments that we receive from our customers, just after their experience with the hotel services. We are able to reach out to the customers in a quick and efficient manner, without much hassles to the customers"

Therefore, based on the response obtained by the interviewees, it can be said that many value co-creation drivers could be identified when using social media platform.

4.7.2.2. Category 2: Data Driven Strategy

The data driven strategy means that organizations are dependent on data for making informed decisions. The main objective in the emergence of this category is how it translates to tangible returns for the hotel business. In addition, it also highlights the potential of data and its use for various activities in the organization.

This concept was explored to determine the extent to which the value is generated through

collaborative efforts of the stakeholders and the employees. As per the response obtained from the participants, the organizations use different strategies for capturing value. As pointed out by Interviewee 15,

"We have built a hotel community shared with our customers and employees. Now we are building very tight relationships and the engagement flows from both them to us, and from us to our guests. In the hotel sector, innovative ways of engaging customers is a prerequisite of success, as we have evidenced from many companies".

This response indicates that co-creation is an inherent part of value capture for the organizations. A majority of the participants acknowledged the importance of social media towards creating value. One of the common responses among the interviewees was the measurement of the return on investment from social media which help the organizations in creating value. As pointed out by Interviewee 2,

"... we can measure some RoI from social media through the influencers and bloggers. And here we can quantify somehow the return ... There is a rapid change we can notice and quantify – we can say 50% or 40% know us about digital platforms".

This response indicates that the participants were excited about social media for generating value for the organization. A more detailed process of value creation through social media was pointed out by Interviewee 20 who stated that:

"through matured engagement as we know that there is differentiation between the levels of engagement and the collaborative communication between us and the customers (clients- business clients) provide real insights not just comments and texts, and also the analytical options through different systems support to steer our position in the market and increase our tangible and intangible assets through. There is a direct relationship between engagement and value co-

creation through the different actors - More engaging customers more co-creation process".

The same participant further added that value creation could be measured in tangible terms which was evident in the response –

"Our ROI is increasing through 50% to 40% by providing and generating voucher on social media can be accounted but at the same time, it is in its early stage to be measured and structured from which medium".

Similar response was obtained from Interviewee 21 who stated that:

"We try to measure the RoI for the social media engagement and we were surprised to find that more than 50% of the customers come to us after they have heard positive reviews on the social media. We constantly monitor the social media metrics and conversion rates and they are very positive. Also, we get very insightful suggestions from the customers based on their experience and we constantly try to enhance our service experience, which leads to value creation."

The response from the participants indicate that the process of value capture happens in multiple ways. One of the ways is to facilitate a two-way engagement between customers and businesses. This proved to be effective as the feedback from the customers provide useful indicators on improving the performance of the business. Secondly, the efficiency of the value capture is enhanced by measuring the RoI from social media through influencers and bloggers. This indicates that the value capture efforts were significantly improvised through the use of social media platforms. Furthermore, encouraging the customers to be a part of the conversation itself led to opportunities to engage with the customers directly and also analyze their comments to improve upon the service offering, thereby leading to increased efficiency of value capture.

4.7.2.3. Category 3: Inspire Actions

This category has been explored with the objective to understand the actions taken by organizations due to the content which are posted on social media. Moreover, it also explores the usefulness of the content in various activities and how it contributes to value co-creation.

This category emerged when the participants were asked about how social media led to value capture. The response of the participants indicated that value capture resulted is a structured process of value recognition, value acquisition, Value assimilation, Value transformation, and value exploitation. The value captured involved the key concepts related to value creation such as innovation, branding, and customer engagement. As pointed out by Interviewee 1,

"Social media is not for engaging only. it is a source to know your position and retaining again... Add to that we can count our customers that know about from social media".

The process of value acquisition and value assimilation were also explained by Interviewee 7 who stated that:

"We have big campaign on social media only sometimes for branding. As a service provider we need always to create this connection with our customers delivering that message that we are not only there to gain revenues. Also, we have dedicated team to answer customer questions and handle the complaints so we make sure that our customers are satisfied and retained. We use Clarabridge software so all posts by customers are captured and handled in short response time".

The response indicated that customers were aware about how to identify value creation and the process of value captured using the social media platform. A similar response from Interviewee 22 reiterated the process of value creation as it was stated that:

"Social Media support us to build our strategy through to understand the customers and we utilize the different platforms for different purposes for branding, innovation, engagement, retaining. But

I prefer to say that 30 %for branding and 70% percent Tactical to core value- Also we used social media increased in COVID-19 towards innovation and ask them with new solutions and how they could be served in a safely manner".

Also, the ability of the social media platforms to track the customer visits and analytics was well acknowledged by participants. In this regard, Interviewee 21 pointed out that

"Nowadays all the major social media platforms offer analytical and tracking capabilities. This has made it easier for us to quantify the experience of the customers while also monitor the extent of traffic on our channels on the different social media platforms. We also use Hotsuite which presents the social media analytics and is very useful for us to make decisions and modify our marketing strategy so as to reach out to a larger audience. The analytics obtained from the social media platforms also helps to create personalized services for the customers such as food preferences, room preferences, etc. for customers who are regular to our hotels".

Similar response was obtained by Interviewee 23 who stated that:

"...social media platforms provide analytical tools through which businesses can monitor the visits to their websites or social media pages. Some of these include tracking, setting up KPIs, analytics, real time interaction, etc. which have become an inherent part of any social media strategy. The technology facilitates the analysis of large volume of data and makes it simple for management to make decisions".

These responses indicated that the value capture was a result of the combined processes of value recognition, value acquisition, value assimilation, value transformation, and value exploitation. In addition, the analytical and monitoring capabilities of the social media platform also facilitated the value capture process for the organizations. As they stated that process of reviewing the value added by customers and developing new ideas and action plans, is *flexibility and open-mindedness*

to test and implement new ideas. It is crucial to “*adapt what is new to be competitors*” (Interviewee 3), and “*you have to be flexible with all new information*” (Interviewee 6) to react quickly and, based on the gathered data, implement ideas into practice.

4.7.3. Main Concept 3: Customer engagement

This main concept is among the critical aspects related to the aims of the interactions between business organizations and their customers through social media. The customer engagement concept is divided into three categories: engagement aspects, social media content strategy and user generated content.

4.7.3.1. Category 1: Engagement Aspects

This category relates to the different aspects of engagement between the organization and the users of the social media platform. It also highlights the relevance and importance of two-way communication towards value co-creation in the organization.

The category of engagement aspects emerged when the participants were asked about the evolution of customer engagement in their experience. As pointed out by Interviewee 3,

"...we get 50% of our customers who come to us after reading reviews on social media".

As per the response provided by the participants, social media offers a huge potential to engage with the customers and convert it into revenues and profitability for their respective organizations. Another potential benefit of using social media for consumer engagement was obtained the feedback from the customers so that the hotels can improve upon their performance. This was highlighted by Interviewee 7 who stated that:

"Customer interaction and engagement, it is a two-way communication you can get your customers feedback on the spot and analyze campaigns instantly".

Similar response was provided by Interviewee 15 who stated that *"Feedback is imperative to any business. We deal with people every day. Our customer reviews are invaluable – they help us grow as individuals and as a team.... By using social media, we are able to collect feedback in a convenient way and analyze them for business operations"*.

The ability of using social media was evident in most of the hotels. As pointed out by Interviewee 21,

"In our hotel, we use social media extensively. The data is collected from the customers through their social media posts, feedback regarding their experience, response of online competition or polls conducted on social media and real time interactions with customers. This way we ensure that social media is utilized to the maximum extent for gathering information from the customers. By ensuring the involvement of the customers, we make sure that they add value to our engagement, and we can learn a lot from them".

Interviewee 18 emphasizes the process of customer engagement as a process which evolves with the strength and intensity of the interactions:

"We first need to reach the customers and interact with them in order to gain them as customers, and win their loyalty and commitment. Loyal customers are very engaged with the hotel and they have a tendency to say a good word for our services and facilities to others".

The response from the participants clearly indicate that online interaction with customers is greatly facilitated by the social media platform and enhances the engagement of the customers with the hotels.

The process of online engagement was a common factor as observed by the response of the participants and this serves as useful metrics. In this regard, Interviewee 21 replied that

“Engagement with customers is mainly through the online mode on the social media platforms. However, we also collect physical feedback from the customers which is then merged with the reviews obtained through the direct feedback of the customers which is sent on their email and WhatsApp. We also engage with customers through our content on the different platforms. For example, we monitor the review comments posted on YouTube and Facebook to understand the extent of customer engagement. Also, likes and shares become important metrics for us”.

This was also confirmed by Interviewee 24 who stated that they managed the online experience of the customers through multiple social media platforms. As stated by Interviewee 24,

“There are many ways in which social engagement is facilitated. One is the direct post by the hotel on the social media platforms such as Facebook, Trip Advisor, etc. We also used paid influencers to attract audience to our social media page and create a buzz. Also, our marketing team continuously works on attractive content to make sure that the posts get a lot of attention on the social media platforms.”

However, some participants also reflected on the need to create personalized content with respect to the audience rather than having a general content on the social media platforms. This was highlighted by Interviewee 16 who stated that

"There is different Strategies for the content such as: We have to understand our audience. The number of Fans is not important as the engagement level".

4.7.3.2. Category 2: Social media content strategy

This category is related to the use of content by the organizations so that it generates useful insights for co-creation. The social media content strategy is important considering that the data generated is huge and requires the organizations to synthesize the data and formulate a strategy which proves

beneficial for co-creation.

Another key aspect was the use of social media for carrying out digital marketing using influences and bloggers attract the customers and engage with them. As pointed out by Interviewee 2, *"...add to the well -designed content and enable your customer to co-create through interactive way and sharing their experience. Through digital team and PR, we design the posts and suitable content. We cannot neglect the influencers and bloggers (we paid for them) to create the content with us"*.

The concept of co-creation was explored in the context of use of social media content and how it led to co-creation of values for the organization. A majority of the participants replied that the social media platform provided the opportunity for the customers to engage with the organization, which in turn leads to value creation for the organization. In one of the examples pointed out by Interviewee 1, it was stated that:

"Without content engagement no interaction no co-creation, the co-creation depends mainly on effective collaborative engagement – I will give one example on of the engaged customer shared a nice post of the sushi restaurants and we tag for him".

This implies that the when the customers have a positive experience with the service of the hotels, they feel compelled to share the experience as their stories, which generates a positive user review and leads to value enhancement for the organization. However, Interviewee 4 pointed out that the co-creation concept is important, and organization should not be dependent on the customers alone to create visibility on the social media. This is evident by the response of Interviewee 4 where it is stated that:

"The engagement is the core of co-creation – without engaged customers in our platforms. The customer cannot create value for themselves or for us".

Going by the same view and extending it further, Interviewee 5 argued the need for engaging the customers with some rewards so that they are motivated to engage with the organization with respect to their experience, which can lead to value creation. As stated by Interviewee 5, *"Customer become in social media as they want something on return directly like Trip Advisor app: They share experience, and we have to provide complementary dinner for example"*.

Here, it is observed that are complementary dinner provided by the organization can lead to positive and genuine reviews from the customer wherein both the parties work towards the co-creation of value for the organization. A similar response was provided by Interviewee 13 who stated that *"Co-creation created with interactive audiences"* implying that when the organization provides interactive facilities to their customers, it is considered as a positive experience and hence, the customers are also willing to work with the organization (hotels) for co-creation.

Although it was observed that social media exerted a positive influence on customer engagement, the participants were also asked about the techniques for enhancing customer engagement using this platform. In response, majority of the participants replied that planning and continuous monitoring was essential towards effective customer engagement on a regular basis. As pointed out by Interviewee 5,

"Much better to have constant plan for your content and action plan for monitoring the effectiveness of the user engagement on social media".

Similar responses were also obtained from Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 4 who stated that weekly plan and event calendars were useful in ensuring that there was continuous attention from the organization towards engagement with the customers through the social media platforms.

Add to that most of participants have agreed on posting organic posts and stories to achieve the highest level of engagement, as stated by Interviewee 13, 24 and 5,

“Organic post is the secret of social media content strategy”

4.7.3.3. Category 3: User generated content

User generated content refers to the content which is posted on the social media platforms by the users. The importance of user generated content needs to be understood by organizations as it provides useful information on the perception and experience of the customers with respect to the consumption of service.

The present category emerged when the participants were asked about the role of social media towards engaging the customers and the contribution of these customers towards generating content, visibility and ultimately value for the organization. A majority of participants were of the view that customer engagement was enhanced using the social media platforms, which provided higher opportunities for organizations to generate value as a result of the content and feedback provided by the customers. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 3, who stated that: *"We are having direct communication; even they are becoming one of the contents through sharing experience with the interactive community"*.

This indicated that there was a continuous engagement with the customers through interactive community on the social media platform. The value of customer engagement was also acknowledged by the participants and the participants replied that the customers were the most important partners for generating value to the organizations. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 6 who stated that,

"Your customers become your partners... They share and interact, and others come through them... Our customers want to help create an experience they want, with a hotel they already like".

Some participants also quantified the extent to which the customer engagement improved as a

result of using social media. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 18 who stated that *"70% is the increased average for the engagement and co-creation after using the social media"*. Other response also included that more than 30% of the Instagram stories content is from UGC. This was observed from the response of Interviewee 8 who stated that *"30% from our stories is a repost of our customers' stories"*.

This approach often creates a user generated content is found to be more effective than the direct marketing approaches by the organization. This view was evident from the response of Interviewee 5 who stated that

"The people write their review without asking them even! And then the customer interacts together and asking about their experience, the best example UGC is Abu Dhabi Bites. This community has been created by the Abu Dhabi online customs to tag, mention, like and share their experience on hotels and food restaurants".

Moreover, participants also responded that engaging with customers on social media brings in more innovation and creativity for their marketing team. As replied by Interviewee 17,

"Real time interaction – competitions and rewards to increase the engagement rate and collaboration ... we can reach any country by share and mention through other customers".

Some of the participants also replied that customers play a more active role towards engaging with the organization as they become content creators wherein other people ask about their experience of a hotel or any other service. This was explained by Interviewee 5 who stated that

"The customer become the creator. I guess no need to ask them about their experience. They directly share what they think about their Stay".

Similar response was provided by Interviewee 6 who stated that

"No need to encourage our customers to interact or ask them. They share what they experienced in public".

4.7.4. Main Concept 4: Social media platform diversity

Since the core focus of this research is to explore the role of social media for value co-creation and value capture, it was imperative to understand the different aspects of social media and how they influence the value generation for the organization. Considering this, the main concept of use of social media platform diversity was identified from the response of the participants and the categories of popularity of the platform, platform capability and platform suitability & benefits were further explored.

4.7.4.1. Category 1: Popularity of the Platform

This category relates to the popularity of the platforms and how influential are the comments of the users posted on these platforms. The popularity of the platform is an indicator of the number of users and therefore, it is imperative for the hotels to review the content posted on these platforms and focus on the perceptions and experience of the customers.

These responses indicate that adoption of social media was crucial towards managing different business aspects which could be beneficial for the organization. In this regard, Interviewee 20 linked the use of social media to the core business aspect of hotels and tourism as they stated that *"I believe in social media and visualizing your thoughts to have a two way of communication Channel Before you need to go travel agent now you the stream in your hand and decide which beach, place you want to spend time with your favorite food and friends".*

Also, it was found that popular social media platforms were the preferred choice for hotels. This

was observed in the response of Interviewee 22 who stated that

“We use Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Trip Advisor as our main social media platforms. In our organization, social media is slowly becoming accepted as a very powerful platform which can significantly transform the way we do business. Hence, there is overall acceptability of the social media platforms in our organization, right from the top management to the operational and marketing levels”.

Similarly, Interviewee 23 pointed out that

“We use social media platforms of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram mostly. However, we also monitor the most popular websites for hotels such as Trivago, Trip Advisor, etc. The main idea is to collect as much data from the customers so that it can be used for improvement in our services. We view social media platform as a very powerful technology tool which has made our tasks to engage with customers much easier, although also more dynamic. Therefore, social media is at the crux of our customer strategy”.

The above responses indicate that social media and hotel and tourism industry have become inseparable, and the use of social media is proven to be a potent tool towards realizing the marketing objectives of the hotels.

4.7.4.2. Category 2: Platform Capability

The platform capability refers to the features offered by the platforms which can be used by organizations to carry out the analysis of the content posted by the users. The capabilities of the platforms such as ease of integration, dashboard facility, analytical capabilities and ease of use are essential for the platform to be useful for the organizations.

The concept of social media platform capabilities was explored using the characteristics of real

time interaction with customers, social media insights, and easy communication with stakeholders. With respect to real time interaction, a majority of the participants agreed that this feature helps them to instantly understand the customer requirements and quickly adapt to the requirement. The participants pointed out that social media have become a mandatory tool for innovation and engagement with customers. As pointed out by Interviewee 1,

"It is mandatory tools for innovation. Engaging better, helps to improve your service with real time Ex: some customer shy to ask a towel in front desk but with one click we answer".

Other participants replied that live conversations help them to identify areas where value can be created. This was highlighted by Interviewee 12 who stated that

"Live conversations with real time value. Social media has affected the business extremely".

Similar response was obtained by Interviewee 17 who stated that

"Real time interaction – Redesigning – revenue (retaining and gaining new customers – 50% of our customers come from social media platforms and know about us".

These responses present useful insights from the participants with respect to the capabilities of the social media platform.

For the information generated through social media insights, the participants found it to be a very useful feature of the social media platforms. One of the main revelations was that the audience insights were captured using the social media platforms. This was explained by Interviewee 7 who stated that:

"Each platform has its ways of targeting, in case of paid ads, and the audience plays a vital role for us. We use different ways for engaging based on the audience insights".

A similar response was provided by Interviewee 13 who stated that

"Content strategy with skilful young people knowing how to talk about you offers the different insights and attracts different audiences".

This essentially related to the content strategy which is used along with the social media platform and leads to enhancement in capabilities of the social media platform. Another major finding was that a mature engagement between the organization and customers was made possible due to the capabilities of social media platform. This was highlighted by Interviewee 20 who stated that: *"through matured engagement as we know that there is differentiation between the levels of engagement and the collaborative communication between us and the customers (clients- business clients) provide real insights not just comments and texts, and also the analytical options through different systems support to steer our position in the market and increase our tangible and intangible assets through".*

To add to this thought, Interviewee 16 also highlighted the capabilities of social media through advanced analytics and pointed out that:

"...detailed and elaborate analytics nowadays use modern means like AI. These can be used to improve the journey of our customers and to give us better understanding of the customers, while attracting them to act".

In addition, Interviewee 22 highlighted the ease with which KPIs can be defined to monitor the progress of social media engagement and stated that:

"Different social media sites have different capabilities but all of them are useful for us. All the sites offer a tracking facility such as likes, posts for positive/negative comments, etc. All the data is available to us in real time so we can analyze them and make quick decisions. The analytics aspect is present in all the social media platforms, so the analytical tools form the basis for our

decisions. Also, we can define our own KPIs so that the entire use of social media becomes a key asset in our marketing strategy”.

A similar response was provided by Interviewee 23 who stated that

“Nowadays all social media platforms offer analytical tools through which businesses can monitor the visits to their websites or social media pages. Some of these include tracking, setting up KPIs, analytics, real time interaction, etc. which have become an inherent part of any social media strategy. The technology facilitates the analysis of large volume of data and makes it simple for management to make decisions”.

Hence, overall, the interviewees were quite confident in the capabilities of the social media platform as it generated valuable insights which led to improvement of the services offered by the hotels in the UAE.

Finally, the characteristic of easy communication with stakeholders was also highlighted by the participants as an important capability of social media platforms. As pointed out by Interviewee 8: *"Real-time engagement real interaction real-time value capture real time creation!"*

This response indicates that communicating with stakeholders had become easy and engaging them in real time help the organization to create value. Similar response was obtained by Interviewee 12 who stated that the entire process of capturing the feedback and other aspects of marketing had become easy for the organization:

"No cost – Real-time – data analysis – documentation –

Doing the core business of classical marketing “Demographics and your audience styles “I guess even that was difficult in classical marketing".

4.7.4.3. Category 3: Platform Suitability & Benefits

Platform suitability refers to the capabilities of the platform as well as its relevance for analyzing the social media data so that it is useful for the organization for generating insights with respect to co-creation. It also highlights the most commonly used platforms by the organizations to analyse the content posted by the users for incorporating their feedback and considering for co-creation.

The response from the participants clearly indicated that they used the most popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Most of the participants also replied that the organization also facilitates booking using these platforms. As pointed out by Interviewee 7,

"We mainly use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. YouTube, Snapchat as well".

When asked about the main reason of using these platforms, Interviewee 7 replied that

"Each platform has its own audience, content, plan. In the past few years' social media have gained attention as the preferred mode for customer engagement and visibility of the organization".

Similar response was obtained by Interviewee 12 who stated that

"Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Trip Advisor are our main platforms of social media through which we engage with customer".

Also, the reason that was pointed out by Interviewee 10 was

"...these are the tools that business cannot stand without... These platforms strengthen the relationships and creation of value".

This implies that social media is inherent to the customer facing operations of the organizations.

Another key reason that came out while exploring social media adoption was the competitive pressure faced by the organizations to leverage the social media platform for generating value for the organization. This was highlighted in the response provided by Interviewee 14 who stated that

"Hotel industry has introduced since 10 yrs. back so it's a must in the marketing".

Similar response was obtained by Interviewee 18 who stated that

"Every business which wants to be up to date needs to effectively use social media in its marketing communications. In a digitalized world, the inability to build social media strategy is a recipe for complete failure".

4.7.5. Main Concept 5: Social media support organizational strategy

The main concept of "Social media support organizational strategy" was explored to understand its contribution towards value creation and capturing and meeting the organizational strategy requirements. Under this main concept are identified the following three categories: fulfilling strategic marketing objectives, promoting organizational values and developing competitive advantage.

4.7.5.1. Category 1: Fulfilling Strategic Marketing Objectives

This category is associated with the extent to which the marketing objectives of the organizations are achieved with respect to the use of social media platforms and analyzing the content posted on the platforms. Moreover, it also discusses how the marketing strategy translates to leveraging the use of social media platforms.

This category emerged when the participants were asked about how social media is used in the organizations and the process of segmentation of customers in order to generate effective results. A majority of the participants replied that the main reason for differentiation was due to the needs of the different audience based on culture, preferences, lifestyles, and nationalities, among other criteria. As pointed out by Interviewee 8,

"The audience are different on each platform, their lifestyle and their nationalities and therefore it is important that different strategies with respect to the content used on the different social media platform is adopted".

This view was reiterated by Interviewee 15 who stated that

"As we said everyone is different ... we have to utilize the differentiation according to the audience insights".

An example was provided by Interviewee 20 who stated that

"Different nationalities have different culture Facebook more to Egyptian and Indian community and the population...Tik Tok for example uses different ads based on demographics - no hard promotion in LinkedIn we need to be very smart with our customers".

The need for targeting different types of audience on the different social media platforms was well acknowledged the participants. As pointed out by Interviewee 7,

"Yes, each platform has its ways of targeting, in case of paid ads, and the audience plays a vital role for us. We use different ways for engaging based on the audience insights".

Another such example was provided by Interviewee 11 who stated that demographics played a crucial role towards identifying the right social media platform and ensuring the effectiveness of a differentiated strategy. This was evident in the response of Interviewee 11 who stated that

"Yes each one has different nature for example: Instagram audience are young and fun while Facebook +35 more educated, LinkedIn for business professional".

Similar response was also provided by Interviewee 17 who stated that

"...each platform has different type of customers as example Instagram for young 15 to 28 / twitter and linked in for professional / Facebook for communities and more matured".

Also, Interviewee 22 stated the diverse audience across different social media platforms and the need for differentiated content. As stated by Interviewee 22,

“If you see the different social media platforms, you can find different types of audience. Facebook has a typical audience which is in the age group of 30+, Instagram is for much younger audience, typical youth in their teens and 20s, similar for Instagram. YouTube you can find all types of audience. So the content needs to be changed based on the type of social media platform”. Hence, there was a broad understanding about differentiated strategy used across different social media platforms for leveraging the capabilities of social media and working towards value creation for their respective organizations.”

4.7.5.2. Category 2: Promoting Organizational Values

Promoting organizational values is associated with the linkages of the use of social media platforms and value co-creation with the organizational values. It basically encompasses the need for developing a strategy which is coherent with the organizational values and achieving the organizational strategy.

The posts in social media is at the heart of any social media platform as it allows effective promotion of the company's values. The response provided by the interviewees also broadly concurred on the importance of content adjusted to the company's values for any social media strategy and its role in fulfilling the marketing objectives of the organization. As pointed out by Interviewee 9,

"We need to establish such a strategy for our social media efforts that the contents is appropriate to reach and appeal to our guests, while boosting our corporate values. This improves their perceptions of our brand".

A similar response highlighting the importance of value presented in the social media activities is that provided by Interviewee 14 who stated that

"Live interaction with attractive content – its real time and the friendly space that give to all users that you can present it as your customers want, which is our primary goal as an organization".

Another important aspect that emerged during the data collection with respect to the content was that the changes in business environment (primarily induced due to the widespread pandemic of Covid-19) were also being addressed by the appropriate posts on the social media platforms used by the organizations. This was highlighted by Interviewee 20 who stated that

"Through the social media conversations which is 24/ 7 working and increased in these days due to COVID-19 allows our company to show the customers that we are there for them regardless of all".

One of the important aspects that also emerged during the data collection with respect to the importance of reflecting organizational values was that the participants highlighted that the content must be creative, especially when the user attention span is less and when the competitive of organizations are also using similar strategies. This was highlighted by Interviewee 18:

"...your content should be creative and should stand out so that the customers can remember the message conveyed through your content".

4.7.5.3. Category 3: Developing Competitive Advantage

This category refers to the extent to which the use of social media platform for value co-creation through customer engagement contributes towards developing competitive advantage. The assessment of the findings for developing competitive advantage is crucial so that the capability can be developed for the hotels to understand consumer behavior and create value for its

stakeholders.

This category emerged when the participants were asked about the usefulness of social media towards the marketing efforts of the teams in their respective hotels. As pointed out by Interviewee 11:

"...social media facilitates the branding and enhances the competitive advantage of the organization and helps it to reach wider customers as your customer start to do thematic communities of your brand through hashtags and Tags".

The main implication is that by using social media and use of techniques such as tagging (commonly seen in Tweets, Facebook and Instagram tags), the marketing team is able to magnify the organization's branding efforts.

The main reason behind why social media is effective towards branding efforts was explained by Interviewee 8:

"Customers use shares and tags they show that they are engaged with the company and its brand. Therefore, they share information about their feelings and experiences. This promotes the competitiveness of the hotel."

When asked whether the branding strategy was focused on leveraging the social media platform, Interviewee 20 concurred that:

"Social Media support us to build our strategy and competitive edge through to understand the customers and we utilize the different platforms for different purposes for branding, innovation, and customer engagement".

Hence, the common response was that social media is considered as a potent platform for branding of the organization. Similarly, other benefits were also identified by participants across different

hotels. In this regard, Interviewee 21 stated that:

“I can think of many benefits for using social media. The first one is that it helps in connecting with the consumers based on their experience with the hotel. So, we understand like what went good and where we need improvement in our business operations. Also, through social media we can reach out to a large number of consumers without having to expand resources or spend a lot of money. The use of social media also facilitates conversations with the consumers so we get to know their expectations, experience and feedback. Hence, overall, it helps in increasing the competitive advantage of the hotels”.

Interviewee 24 also had a similar response and stated the benefits as being consistent with the social media strategy of the organization. The response was stated as,

“I can confidently say that social media provides many benefits. One such benefit is the quick feedback and comments that we receive from our customers, just after their experience with the hotel services. We are able to reach out to the customers in a quick and efficient manner, without much hassles to the customers. Apart from customer interaction, there are benefits such as wide reach of promotional offers, branding opportunities and monitoring the effectiveness of our social media strategy, which drives our competitiveness”

Interviewee 13 pointed out:

“...we interact with the result of customer interactions to be competitive in the market”.

As demonstrated earlier, new ideas and innovations are being implemented based on customer feedback, which increases competitiveness of the business, also leading to increased revenue.

“Some products and services are initiated, mended or extended based on the customer feedback” and “we have to adapt what is new to be competitors” (Interviewee 18).

4.8. Secondary data analysis

The analysis of the secondary qualitative data, gathered from UAE hotels' social media profiles is presented in the following sections of this chapter. The secondary data collection was performed over the period between January and June 2021. This second general component of the qualitative research methodology allows better understanding of the role of social media for value co-creation in the UAE hotel industry.

The analysis of the secondary qualitative data from UAE hotels' social media profiles is presented in the following sections of this chapter. The secondary data collection was performed over the period between January and June 2021. This second general component of the qualitative research methodology allows better understanding of the role of social media for value co-creation in the UAE hotel industry.

Memo 7. Reflective memo: Secondary research

The secondary data comprised of analysing the content published by the leading hotels in the UAE on the social media platforms of Facebook and Instagram pages over a duration of six months. One of the main benefits of using the secondary data was to analyze the messaging strategies applied by the leading luxurious hotels through the social media platform and also compare them to the primary data collected from the research participants. Secondly, the use of secondary data helped in focusing on the two leading social media platforms and their role towards Value co-creation for the hotels under consideration. Another key strength of using secondary data was that it emphasized the specific aspects and categorization of the social media posts into social and emotional posts; functional and promotional posts, and informative posts. This led to identification of important focus areas and linking them to consumer feedback in order to enhance the experience of the consumers. However, the main limitation was that data was available only with respect to the two platforms which presented a challenge of limited data set. Moreover, there was no information available with respect to the analytical tools applied by the hotels under consideration, thereby leading to reliance on the primary data for understanding the ways in which the content posted on the social media platform were analyzed by the respective companies.

4.8.1. The Sampling Procedure:

To explore social media co-creation activities related to 6 individual hotels - Sofitel Abu Dhabi Croniche, Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Jumerah beach, Emirates palace, Rixos Premium Dubai and Fairmont Bab Al Bahr. The data is collected between January and June 2021 from 12 social media accounts – 6 Facebook and 6 Instagram, as well as data from the Social Bakers Suite platform (Maresova, Hruska & Kuca 2020; Cazorla Milla, Mataruna-Dos-Santos & Muñoz Helú 2020). These hotels have been selected due to their active social media usage and high ranking in terms of Instagram and Facebook activity among the 50 most active hotels in Abu Dhabi and Dubai (Hotel de Tech 2021a; 2021b). Facebook and Instagram are chosen as the social media for the data collection due to their wide adoption in both Global and UAE aspect (Global media insights 2021). Two steps of analysis, entailing content analysis of the posts followed by descriptive analysis were

conducted between January and June 2021. In the content analysis, the author investigated how these hotels communicate their corporate brand to consumers using Facebook and Instagram. Secondly, through the descriptive analysis the researcher attempted to find out how consumers perceive the UAE-based luxurious hotel brands and what specific value they attach to them (Yost, Zhang & Qi 2021).

Drawing on this preliminary search, 450 Facebook and 510 Instagram posts published by the six hotels in a six-month period, were chosen for analysis. The sampling details of the Facebook and Instagram posts are depicted in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 respectively. The data shows that over the research period, Rixos Premium Dubai has scored the highest growth of 11.26% followers in Facebook among the six hotels in the sample. On the other hand, Sofitel Abu Dhabi Croniche has increased its Instagram followers by an incredible score of almost 26% during the focal period of the research, which is considerably higher compared to the other hotels in the sample. Detailed social media analytics for the 12 platforms of these 6 hotels regarding the research period are presented in Appendix 4.

Table 4. 7. Facebook posts data

Facebook	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Croniche	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumerah beach	Emirates palace	Rixos Premium Dubai	Fairmont Bab Al Bahr
Change in follower's in six month	+0,86%	+0,14%	+0,93%	+1,72%	+11,26%	+0,51%

Number of posts	50	82	75	115	57	71
Collected						
Number of comment s/ share/ comments	104/124	430/213	1249/723	967/1055	166/203	142/170

(Compiled by the researcher)

Table 4. 8. Instagram posts data

Instagram	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Croniche	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumerah beach	Emirates palace	Rixos Premium Dubai	Fairmont Bab Al Bahr
Change in follower's in six month	+25,97%	+9,99%	+4,7%	+5,4%	+8.46%	4,26%
Number of posts collected	63	86	69	110	69	113

Number of comment s/ share/ comments	4572	1685	1099	1048	863	290
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(Compiled by the researcher)

4.8.2. Descriptive statistics

The first stage of the secondary data analysis is represented by descriptive statistics. The main criteria for the descriptive statistics is the location of the hotels included in the sample – 3 located in Abu Dhabi and 3 located in Dubai. The approach proposed by Yost, Zhang and Qi (2021) is employed in the descriptive statistics presented in this section.

Table 4. 9. Descriptive statistics

Facebook	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumeirah Beach	Emirates palace	Rixos Premium Dubai	Fairmont Bab Al Bahr
No of Followers	31,894	154,230	281,603	114,513	21,743	38,459
No of Posts	50	82	75	115	57	71
No of Likes	3,727	3,573	28,215	24,971	2,807	5,946
No of Comments	104	430	1,249	967	166	142
No of Shares	124	213	723	1,055	203	170
Engagement Total	3,955	4,216	30,187	26,993	3,176	6,258

Engagement Rate	12.40%	2.73%	10.72%	23.57%	14.61%	16.27%
Moving 7 Day Avg of Interaction per 1000 Fans	0.87	0.15	0.92	1.33	1.05	0.92
Moving 30 Day Avg of Interaction per 1000 Fans	0.93	0.16	1.04	1.46	0.75	0.92
Instagram	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumeirah Beach	Emirates palace	Rixos Premium Dubai	Fairmont Bab Al Bahr
No of Followers	6,918	74,193	168,359	146,513	149,161	15,545
No of Posts	63	86	69	110	69	113
No of Likes	6,448	33,002	52,799	70,013	57,241	8,033
No of Comments	4,572	1,685	1,099	1,048	863	290
Engagement Total	11,020	34,687	53,898	71,061	58,104	8,323
Engagement Rate	159.29%	46.75%	32.01%	48.50%	38.95%	53.54%
Moving 7 Day Avg of Interaction per 1000 Fans	10.59	2.73	1.87	2.74	2.22	3.03

Moving 30 Day Avg of Interaction per 1000 Fans	10.2	2.78	1.91	2.8	2.2	3.00
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(Compiled by the researcher)

The descriptive statistics (Table 4.9) about the use of social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) were collected for all the 6 hotels (Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche, Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Jumeirah Beach, Emirates palace, Rixos Premium Dubai and Fairmont Bab Al Bahr). These were then analyzed to understand the key metrics of social media usage. For this purpose, quantitative data was collected from the two main social media sites - Facebook and Instagram - during the period January 2021 to June 2021. The key metrics that were collected included number of followers, number of posts, number of likes, number of comments, number of shares, moving 7-day average of interaction per 1000 fans, and moving 30 days' average of interaction per 1000 fans. Prior studies have highlighted the usefulness of these metrics in order to assess the effectiveness of social media strategy (Peters et al. 2013) and therefore these were analyzed to understand the extent of social media adoption and effectiveness of the strategy of the hotels in UAE and Dubai. Based on the information, engagement total and engagement rate were calculated as below:

Engagement Total (For Facebook) = No. of posts + No. of Likes + No. of Comments + No. of Shares

Engagement Total (For Instagram) = No. of posts + No. of Likes + No. of Comments

Engagement Rate (For Facebook) = No of Interactions (Comments, Shares, Likes) / No of Followers

Engagement Rate (For Instagram) = No of Interactions (Comments, Likes) / No of Followers

As observed from the table, the engagement rates were considerably higher for Instagram in comparison to Facebook. For Instagram, the engagement rates were Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche (159.29% - highest among the sampled hotels), Sofitel Dubai the Palm (46.75%), Jumeirah Beach (32.01%), Emirates palace (48.50%), Rixos Premium Dubai (38.95%) and Fairmont Bab Al Bahr (53.54%). In comparison, the corresponding engagement rates for Facebook were Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche (12.4%), Sofitel Dubai the Palm (2.73%), Jumeirah Beach (10.72%), Emirates palace (23.57% - the highest identified), Rixos Premium Dubai (14.61%) and Fairmont Bab Al Bahr (16.27%)

Secondly, to further examine the engagement of the hotels of UAE on the social media platforms, the trends for the six hotels in a six-month period for the posts were analyzed and presented in Table 4.9. It is observed that both the social media platforms of Facebook and Instagram displayed a positive trend in the number of followers with the maximum growth being observed for Instagram (highest of 25.97% for Sofitel Abu Dhabi Croniche and lowest of 4.26% for Fairmont Bab Al Bahr) whereas Facebook posts demonstrated a low growth rate (highest of 11.26% for Rixos Premium Dubai and lowest of 0.14% for Sofitel Dubai the Palm). Overall, this indicates a positive trend in the adoption of social media platforms for the different hotels in the UAE. The present descriptive statistics evidences that Emirates palace is most active in Facebook among the hotels in the sample with 115 posts which are almost double the number of posts of the other hotels. The shares per post are also the highest for this business organization. Though, the fan mass of this hotel is remaining relatively unchanged, while Rixos has increased its fans by 11.26% over the 6-month period of the secondary data collection.

Even though Fairmont Bab Al Bahr is most active in Instagram with 113 unique posts over the 6 months, Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche has increased its fan mass by more than a quarter between January and June 2021. Furthermore, the number of comments, which exceeds 4500 is far above the results of the other hotels in the sample. This data shows a real social media evolution in this hotel. The results would be interesting to observe in a further research.

Memo 8. Reflective memo: Data collection methods

The application of two qualitative data collection methods in the employed research methodology was invaluable experience for the author of the present thesis. First of all, I had to understand how sampling of interviewees is different from social media posts. The work was interesting yet challenging. Even though getting posts from social media platforms of the selected UAE hotels was expected to be easier than the performance of interviews, the reality was different. Shortlisting them for analysis was a difficult thing. After going through similar research, posts with branding elements and those showing engagement with the brand were considered apt for the research. The key aspect in which the two data collection methods differed were the communication tools employed by the individuals. While the personal communication during the interview sessions required the researcher to establish appropriate atmosphere for respondents to feel free to share their perceptions, the interactions between the hotels and their audience in their social platforms evidenced for a completely different interaction between the two sides accommodated by the social media platforms medium.

4.8.3. Qualitative Analysis of Posts

The second phase of the secondary data analysis is presented by qualitative analysis of the gathered social media posts following the approach proposed by Yost, Zhang and Qi (2021).

The social media posts data for the six hotels in the two social media platforms is coded following the same 3-stage coding procedure as adopted for the analysis of the primary data from the performed interviews with industry experts. It entails three consecutive stages of coding: initial line-by-line coding, focused and theoretical coding.

4.8.3.1. Stage 1: Initial Line-by-Line Coding

Initial coding is the first step in the coding process where the qualitative data is broken down into discrete excerpts and coded labels are prepared to interpret the data. The main purpose of coding is to generate theories by undergoing the process of conceptual abstraction of data and its reintegration into concepts which lead to theory generation (Belotto 2018). Moreover, the process of line by line coding leads to constant stimulation of conceptual ideas which is

essential for theory generation and understanding the research phenomenon under study from a multiple interpretation perspective. The entire process is facilitated by the grounded theory framework which helps the researcher to alleviate uncertainty and capture the conceptual ideas from the original data source (Neuendorf 2018).

The initial coding of the secondary quantitative data has been carried out based on the posts of the hotels and the comments of the users of Instagram and Facebook collected over a period of 6 months. Examples of the performed initial coding of social media posts are shown in Table 4.10 below: The social media posts for this analysis were collected and analyzed upon completion of the primary qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews. Even though the coding is based on the approach proposed by Yost, Zhang and Qi (2021), the coding frame for the semi-structured interviews has affected the coding of social media posts in the analysis.

Table 4. 10. Initial coding

Posts	Interpretation	Conceptual Idea/ Code Label
Draw hearts in the sand with that special person this Valentine's Day and forever Say 'I love you' on the beach or in one of our private domes	This post calls out the general audience and customers to experience the occasion of Valentine's Day in particular on the beach and private domes. The main message is to highlight the romantic environment as a core part of service offering to the customers	Story-telling Emotional Messages Emotive Language Customer Segmentation Service Offerings Understanding the audience
This Mother's Day, treat your mum like a queen and let her enjoy uninterrupted	This post sends out an emotional message of celebrating an occasion and gifting one of the magnificent	Personalized approach Attracting Customer Interest Story-telling

sea view from one of our beach front suites	views from the existing service of the hotel. It makes an attempt to understand the pulse of the audience and connect with them in an emotional manner. Moreover, it also sends the message that personalized service offerings is an inherent part of services of the hotel and makes a connection with the hotel brand.	Emotive language Emotional Messages Enhancing brand value
Did you know that Emirates Palace is the host of thrilling range of water sports, motorized activities and heritage boat tours? From today until 21 November, enjoy an exclusive offer of a 10% off your bookings by presenting this post at us Water Sports Centre	This post by the hotel provides information about a range of services which can attract the audience on the social media platform and compel them to avail the services of the hotel. It tries to capture the attention of the customer and engage them to provide more information. Furthermore, it also leverages the brand value and brand recall of the hotel	Information about service offerings Information about the hotel Customer Attention Brand Value Promotional Offerings
We got nine hotspot dining destinations to suit every taste and vibe – from the trendiest Azure beach, the all-day dining restaurant Turquoise, to the fashionable Godiva Café.... and more! What's your favorite weekend scene in #RixosPremiumDubai?	This post provides information on one of the facilities which might be of interest to the audience. It also associates with the idea of spending weekend with the different facilities of the hotel and provides a compelling argument to explore the services of the hotel. It relates to the exception service and associates with the brand of the hotel so that customers can recall their experience and explore most of the services and facilities in their subsequent visits. Moreover, the	Information about service offerings Enhancing brand value Online Engagement Understanding the audience Social interaction with the customers

	list of facilities and services is also intended to enhance online engagement with the larger audience on the social media platform.	
Our pool is located right in the middle of 5 towers. It's something you can only experience when you stay with us. @_anyasworld_matt.iash captured it perfectly!	This post is intended to attract the interest of the larger audience on the social media platform about the magnificent view and the enthusiasm of few of the customers to post it. It essentially indicates the high level of customer engagement and sharing of content on the social media platform, which implies for a larger interest as in shared user content. It also explains that the hotel values the comments from the customers and indicates value co-creation.	Information about hotel facilities Information about buildings Information about pool Customer engagement Online engagement Collaboration with customers for value co-creation Use of social media platform

(Compiled by the researcher)

In this step, the researcher carries out a natural progression of the conceptual idea to a little more specific approach wherein the subjective information is proposed into codes that represent the core idea (Clarke & Braun 2013). It is an essential reflection of main messages, although pre-conceived categories are avoided at this stage. In this stage of coding, the main idea is to gain a greater conceptual clarity with respect to the empirical data from the data sources. The line-by-line coding for the secondary quantitative data has been presented in the

Table 4.11 below:

Table 4. 11. Example of line-by-line coding of social media posts

Post	Line by Line Coding
Draw hearts in the sand with that special person this Valentine's Day and forever Say 'I love you' on the beach or in one of our private domes	Emotional appeal Emotional appeal Emotional appeal Hotel facilities
This Mother's Day, treat your mum like a	Emotional appeal
Post	Line by Line Coding
queen and let her enjoy uninterrupted sea view from one of our beach front suites	Unique experience Hotel facilities
Did you know that Emirates Palace is the host of thrilling range of water sports, motorized activities and heritage boat tours? From today until 21 November, enjoy an exclusive offer of a 10% off your bookings by presenting this post at our Water Sports Centre	Informing customers Information about service offerings Information about the offer Promotional information Location information

<p>We got nine hotspot dining destinations to suit every taste and vibe – from the trendiest Azure beach, the all-day dining restaurant Turquoise, to the fashionable Godiva Café.... and more!</p> <p>What's your favorite weekend scene in?</p> <p>#RixosPremiumDubai?</p>	<p>Information about dining options Customer Engagement Enhancing brand value</p> <p>Online engagement</p> <p>Customer Sharing of Content Branding message</p>
<p>Our pool is located right in the middle of 5 towers. It's something you can only experience when you stay with us. @_anyasworld_matt.iash captured it perfectly!</p>	<p>Information about hotel facilities Emotional appeal</p> <p>Engaging customers Collaboration with customers</p>

4.8.3.2. Stage (2-3): Focused and Theoretical Coding

The next step in coding process is the focussed coding in which the researcher pursues a selected set of codes for the entire dataset. This process is aimed at providing meaningful categorization of the multitude of separate posts into logical categories which allows capturing of the information in the larger segment of data (Johnson 2014). The main theoretical foundation utilized in the focussed coding of secondary data is provided by Tafesse and Wien (2017). The authors provide a rigid framework for categorization of social media posts based on their inductive and deductive interpretation and the characteristics of the sample. Following our three-stage coding approach, we utilize the initial line-by-line codes as a foundation of the focussed coding in this stage. The authors provide a meaningful categorization of brand posts into a number of general categories, namely: Emotional brand posts, Functional brand posts, Educational brand posts, Brand resonance, Experiential brand posts, Current event, Personal brand posts, Employee brand posts, Brand community, Customer relationship, Cause-related brand posts, Sales promotions (Tafesse & Wien 2017, p. 9-10). In line with the CGT approach,

undertaken in the study, the analysis of posts has been flowing simultaneously with the data collection. In addition to that, considering the exchange of value and information between the hotel organizations and their social media audience, the SDL model (presented in Figure 2.2) are also accepted as cornerstones appropriate for the present focused coding. The concepts derived in the theoretical coding stage of the analysis are presented in details in the discussion in the next section.

The development of the coding process from initial line-by-line, to focused and theoretical codes is presented in Table 4.12

Table 4. 12. Focused coding and Theoretical codes of social media posts

Initial Codes	Focussed Codes	Theoretical codes (Concepts)	Number of posts	% of posts
Emotional Messages Emotive language	Audience's involvement	Social and emotional posts;	307	32
Personalized approach Attracting Customer Interest Story-telling Customer engagement Online engagement	Customer experience Value of experience Customer engagement Value co-creation Collaboration			

Promotional Offerings Attracting Customer Interest Enhancing brand value Social interaction with the customers Customer Attention Understanding the audience Brand Value	Service exchange drivers Customer motivation Value creation	Functional and promotional posts	202	21
Information about service offerings Information about the hotel facilities – dining options, leisure options, accommodation options, pools, buildings Customer Segmentation	Transparency Customer awareness Terms and conditions of use Resources Opportunities provided Institutional arrangements	Informative posts	451	47

(Compiled by the researcher)

4.8.4. Discussion of Qualitative Analysis Posts

As depicted in the above Table, the performed coding and categorization of the secondary data from the collected social media posts has resulted in the identification of three major concepts: Social and emotional posts; Functional and promotional posts; Informative posts.

4.8.4.1. Concept 1. Social and emotional Posts

The first concept identified through the qualitative analysis of secondary data from UAE hotels' social media posts is composed of two categories – social and emotional posts. The social posts by the UAE hotels in the sample are aimed at attracting the audience and asking for its involvement in the value creation process, while the emotional component relates to reaching out to the audience with emotional messages which are associated with the brand, experience, or occasion which can connect with the consumers (Tafesse & Wien 2017). A good example of such social post by Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche is presented below.



The language and topics employed in this category of social media posts affect the emotions of customers by a combination of communication tools – visuals, sound, music etc. This approach is exhibited in the post by Rixos Premium, as shown in the Figure below, which combines audio- visual contents with inspirational and engaging message.



4.8.4.2. Concept 2. Functional and Promotional Posts

The second major concept is composed of two logically inter-connected categories – promotional posts and functional posts. This concept represents the posts which are being published by the hotels organizations in their social media profiles with the purpose of providing information about promotional terms and attracting the interest of the audience to the hotel's offerings. Hence, these posts are related to triggering the attention and motivation of customers to take part in the service exchange process which, in turn, promotes the brand value perceived by customers (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2016). The functional and promotional posts related to the discount offered by the hotels. For example, the promotional post by Rixos Premium Dubai is shown below.



4.8.4.3. Concept 3. Informative Posts

The informative posts related to the specific information by the hotels which can prove to be attractive to the customers and the general audience on the social media platform. For example, the hotels could employ such posts in order to increase the awareness of the customers about what the respective hotel can offer. The analyzed qualitative secondary data from the collected social media posts presents example of information about the hotel facilities, including dining options, accommodation options, pools, buildings, leisure activities. The performed analysis shows that informative posts are the most widely utilized type of posts by the UAE hotels, as 47% of the analyzed individual posts are categorized as informative.

For instance, the Figure below exhibits an informative post by Rixos Dubai which provides information of the accommodation option – the 34 floor suite with gulf view. In this way, the hotel provides better understanding of its resources and opportunities to its clients.



While the above examples indicate the three concepts of social & emotional posts, functional & promotional posts, and informative posts, some of the content/posts by the hotels on the social media platform combine the concepts which can be more effective in the process of value co- creation. An example of such post (informative and promotional) is presented below:



The identified three major concepts in the secondary qualitative data are triangulated with the findings from the qualitative primary study based on interviews with industry experts, in order to provide more detailed understanding of the opportunities for value co-creation through social media in the UAE hotel industry.

4.9. Conclusion

The current chapter of the PhD thesis outlines the analysis of both primary and secondary qualitative data selected for the current research of the organizational value co-creation through social media. It represented the thorough process of gaining, coding and processing the information collected from the performed interviews with professionals in the UAE hotel industry framed by the Constructivist Grounded Theory paradigm. Furthermore, the text of the chapter also uncovers the approach towards sampling, collecting, coding and analyzing qualitative data from secondary sources represented by the social medial platforms of selected UAE hotels. The current chapter lays the foundations for the discussion of findings from the qualitative primary and secondary data, presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

The prior chapter focused on presentation of the qualitative data collected through interviews from the research participants, as well as the qualitative secondary data, represented by posts by the selected hotels, which was gathered from the UAE hotels' social media profiles. The data is exposing the outcomes of social media use on value co-creation. In this chapter, the discussion combining the findings derived through the two research methodologies has been carried out and a comparison with existing academic literature has been done in order to ascertain the extent to which the findings relate to the existing literature. The analysis presents triangulation of the five major concepts developed on the grounds on the performed semi-structured interviews and the three supporting concepts from the secondary qualitative analysis with the existing theoretical basis.

5.2. Triangulation of findings

According to Hussein (2009), the application of two different research methodologies within the present dissertation research requires accurate between-method triangulation of the findings, drawn from the qualitative primary data provided by hotel managers during the performed semi-structured interviews with the secondary data form social media posts of UAE hotels. Therefore, the results from the two samples are investigated for any similarities and cardinal differences. They are not going to be triangulated only at general basis, but also on case-by-case level. This triangulation strategy is designed to ensure thorough understanding of the role of social media for value co- creation and confirmation of the research findings derived through the application of the two methodologies.

5.3. Discussion of Concepts

5.3.1. Value Co-creation through social media

The analysis of the secondary data presents useful insights with respect to the use of social media platform for value creation through multiple ways. The use of social media platform by the hotels provides them with the advantage of marketing their hospitality offerings and creating opportunities for various occasions. For example, the core strength of luxury hotels such as Emirates Palace is in providing a superior service to the customers. This is leveraged using the social media platform wherein the hotel can attract customers. This was evident in the marketing messages such as *"Escape to Emirates Palace for a luxurious stay"* and *"Celebrate the happiest day of your life in the intimate setting of our opulent three-bedroom suite and enjoy a luxurious stay for up to six guests"*. By aligning the core competence of the hotels with the social media content strategy, the platform of social media provided an advantage to the hotels attract customers and send out their message of an assured and high-quality service.

The findings of the secondary data indicate multiple ways in which value co-creation can be facilitated using social media platforms. Firstly, the use of social media has provided a platform for the consumers to communicate with the hotel services. Secondly, the engagement with customers is significantly enhanced which implies that companies can stay in touch with the customers and develop a long-term relationship with the expectations of future revenues. Thirdly, the use of social media platforms provided a convenient and potent marketing platform for the companies to send out promotional messages and seek engagement with the customers, leading to value co-creation. This is evident from the marketing and informational message of Emirates Palace which states that *"Did you know that Emirates Palace is the host of thrilling range of water sports, motorized activities and heritage boat tours? From today until 21 November, enjoy an exclusive offer of a 10% off your bookings by presenting this post at our*

Water Sports Centre”.

Similarly, message from Rixos Premium Dubai also indicated a mix of informational and promotional message to capture the attention of customers to involve them in value co-creation

“We got nine hotspot dining destinations to suit every taste and vibe – from the trendiest Azure beach, the all-day dining restaurant Turquoise, to the fashionable Godiva Café.... and more! What’s your favorite weekend scene in #RixosPremiumDubai?”

However, it is to be noted that response to promotional messages might often not be subject to change and is mostly the end result of marketing strategies. Nevertheless, the companies still sought comments from the larger audience to make the promotional message more effective and contributing to the organizational value co-creation.

To combine the findings of primary and secondary data, it can be said that the social media platform has significant potential for value co-creation. The main argument is that the use of social media platform brings together both the consumers and the organizations on a common platform wherein interaction can be encouraged. The consumers feel free to express their opinion about their experience at a particular hotel which provides insights for the hotel management on ways for improvement in their service delivery. Considering that social media has become an inherent part of the life of the consumers, this is also provided tremendous benefits for the marketers to engage with the consumers and invite the customers to become a part of value co-creation through their participation. One of the main aspects of value co-creation has been to work together towards providing the expected service (Saarijarvi & Hannu 2013). Therefore, social media activity represents the attempt of the hotel organizations to enhance the application of digital platforms, strategies in policies by the implementation of appropriate systems in place. These views support the stance of Pathak, Ashok and Tan (2021) that the provision of adequate systems distributing the roles and responsibilities in an efficient way allows the effective absorption of value represented by company profits, revenues and

sales generated thanks to the effective retention of customers.

A topic emphasized by the primary research participant which corresponds to the view of Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) is related to the skills and abilities of hotel employees. The skilful utilization of social media for value co-creation purposes requires specific level of technological proficiency, problem solving and empowering decision-making, as well as human empathy and personable and approachable manner in order to induce collaborations with customers through the social media content (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019).

The very fact that the use of social media is very convenient and can be adopted with ease, value co-creation has become easier for the organizations. This way of value co-creation is made possible due to the optimal mix of service delivery, customer feedback, marketing analysis, and technology adoption by the companies, all of which form an inherent part of value co-creation. The online activities of customers including search for information (services, products, and prices), as well as their instant feedback and user-generated contents in which they have the freedom to express themselves with reference to their behavioral, social and emotional traits are presented in the form are very important aspects of the value co-creation process, as pointed out by Buhalis and Sinarta (2019). Furthermore, the study confirms the findings of Shawky et al. (2020) that these online customer activities could be managed through appropriate practical frameworks in order to move them to a new level of the engagement cycle. Moreover, the active participation of the organization on the social media platform and encouraging customers for participation through word-of-mouth, user generated content and social commerce allows the organization to have the potential on value capture.

Moreover, the VCC using social media is not only limited to enhancement of service delivery but can also be used for different purposes such as branding, promotional messages, innovation, and engagement with the wider audience. All of these is made possible due to the large amount of data collected from the customers using the social media platform and analyzing it as part

of the social media content strategy of the respective organizations. To conclude, value co-creation for the hotels in the UAE has been made effective using the social media platform, subject to the effort and involvement of the hotels to engage the customers.

Table 5.1 summarizes the contributors of value co-creation using social media. These findings in terms of concepts and categories also address the research proposition which states that “*RP1: Social media has an impact on value co-creation in the hospitality sector in UAE*”.

Table 5. 1. Findings – Value co-creation through social media

Value co-creation through social media		
Conceptualization and Organizational arrangements	Employee Skills and abilities	Online customers’ activities
<p>Clear understanding of the VCC concept “When and how often co-creation takes place”</p> <p>Organizational mechanism to facilitate the use of digital platforms and relevant effective strategies in place towards VCC</p> <p>Use of technology</p>	<p>Role of employees</p> <p>Technological traits no matter the years of experience</p> <p>A dedicated digital team or department “Teamwork and innovation”</p> <p>Flexibility and open-Mindedness</p> <p>Differentiating the content and skilful use of various social media platforms</p>	<p>Online customer experience</p> <p>Online engagement</p> <p>Participation in contests</p> <p>Instant feedback and insightful suggestions</p> <p>Online word -of -mouth</p> <p>Search for information (services, products, and prices)</p>

(Compiled by the researcher)

5.3.2. Value Capture through social media

The use of social media platform for analyzing and acting upon the preferences of the consumers has greatly enhanced the potential of value capture as observed in the analysis of secondary data. As observed in the data gathered from the content published by Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche, Sofitel Dubai the Palm, Jumerah beach, Emirates palace, Rixos Premium Dubai and Fairmont Bab Al Bahr on their Facebook and Instagram pages over the past 6 months, it was clearly evident that these hotels use the social media platform for different types of communication such as promotional content, informational content, events, and other types of communication. One of the most obvious advantages was the ease with which the information from the customers was gathered so that analysis can be carried out on multiple fronts. This was evident with respect to the posts related to food, exterior properties, and restaurant/bar and presented useful information about the preferences and the experiences of the consumers. The ease with which the data can be published and gathered for analysis itself implies that the social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram provided a convenient way to capture value by working upon the content posted by the users.

Furthermore, the content posted on the social media is known to have considerable implications which can attract the attention of the different users. Similarly, the promotional posts by hotels as analyzed in the secondary data also supports these assertions. For example, comments related to hotel features such as *“Our pool is located right in the middle of 5 towers. It’s something you can only experience when you stay with us”* (Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche) and *“Did you know that Emirates Palace is the host of thrilling range of water sports, motorized activities and heritage boat tours?”* (Emirates Palace) have the potential to attract the customers. Moreover, such favorable and enthusiastic comments also build the case for capturing leads and retaining current customers without much effort on the behalf of the hotels (Wamba & Carter 2014; Wang, Pauleen & Zhang 2015).

The findings of this study depict that social media has proven to be a useful platform towards

capturing value to the collaborative efforts of stakeholders and employees. The main argument is that a two-way engagement between the customers and businesses becomes a key source for value creation and capture. These findings are also broadly consistent with academic literature. In this regard, Agafonow (2014) reported that social media supports co-creation activities in terms of content sharing, organizing, and collaborative work among customers which leads to value creation. Similar findings were also reported by Singaraju et al. (2016) who stated that business value can be captured through participation of customers in co-creation so that it became enabler for business to sustain in competitive environment. The discussion above highlights the importance of engagement with customers for the purpose of value co-creation. As a secondary data, the common techniques used for value capture include the comments, images, and media posted by the hotels in the social media profiles. The content posted by the hotels are used to attract new users and served as a marketing platform for the hotels. For the primary data collected from the interviewees, the value capture through social media is highlighted as the most basic aspect for deriving insights. The interviewees acknowledged that the input from the social media help in assessing the return on investment with respect to the use of the social media platform of the respective organizations. However, such inputs may not yield much benefit unless they are analyzed from the perspective of benefits for the marketing team and generating new business opportunities. One of the ways in which this was done by the hotels was to use different software and technology platforms to assess the comments posted by the consumers and handling them in an appropriate manner. This indicates that the value capture is effective only when the data obtained from the customers are analyzed and actions are taken with the objective of achieving benefits for the company. With this respect, the present findings correspond to the opinion of Guha, Harrigan and Soutar (2017). That social media is the cornerstone of a strategy driven by the social media, which combines advanced search tools and software, allowing efficient control and monitoring of data. In turns, these

contribute to the effective capturing of value due to the abilities of the business organizations to provide tailor-made solutions, adjusted to the personal needs of their clients which are based on the needs' identification through social media analytics.

Moreover, based on the analysis of primary and secondary data, it is also observed that value capture through social media serves as an input for social media content strategy and the overall marketing strategy to attract and retain customers. In fact, the use of social media is prevalent across the world and the content shared by the consumers are considered authentic, which serves as word-of-mouth publicity for the hotels, thereby strengthening their social media promotions and creating a favorable perception in the minds of potential customers. In addition, value capture is also validated by using the content posted by the consumers for the purpose of branding, innovation, engagement, and improvement in service delivery. While the overall purpose for the hotels remains the same as to increase their visibility and provide an exceptional service for their customers, it is the social media platform which helps them to capture value and provide useful insights using the tools of technology, brainstorming, and innovation to create a perception of exceptional experience for the customers. However, it is also imperative that the value capture through social media is carried out in ways which can make it easier for organizations to derive meaningful insights. In this way the performed study supports the findings of Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) who claim that the real time interaction between the organization and its customers provided the opportunity for accessible insights from the clients, while also supporting immediate personalized and contextualized experience. All these contribute to the effective value capture (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019).

Another major implication of using social media platform for value capture is that it gets a higher visibility and the organization can reach out to a larger audience through campaigns, offers and other promotional messages. That is how, social media are effective source of inspirations for action, which allow the hotel organizations to adjust their marketing strategy

to the trends identified from tracking the customers, providing the clients excessive value, as pointed out by Agafonow (2014). Furthermore, social media allow the implementation of two-way innovation grounded on the ideas provided by customers in the process of customer-organization communication through the social media which further the company's value capture capabilities (Bashir, Papamichail & Malik 2017). Moreover, the use of social media also helps to assess the competitive position and the effectiveness of the marketing strategy as a structured process of value recognition, value acquisition, value assimilation, value transformation, and value exploitation.

The following Table summarizes the contributors of value capture using social media These findings in terms of concepts and categories also address the research proposition which states that “*RP2: The use of social media has an impact on the value capture through collaboration with customers*”.

Table 5. 2. Findings – Value capture through social media

Value capture through social media		
Real time insights	Data driven strategy	Inspire actions
Social media analytics	Data collection and Analysis	Brainstorming Activities
Real time interaction with customers	Periodic monitoring and review and developing short- and long-term action plans	Collaboration and knowledge exchange within the company
Responding to customers and considering their feedback 24/7	Informed decision making	Test and implement new ideas Having customized strategy

(Compiled by the researcher)

5.3.3. Customer Engagement

Customer engagement has been identified as a crucial aspect of social media marketing and value creation by the companies. In the analysis of secondary data, it has been observed that the interaction of the consumers leads to valuable insights and proactiveness towards adopting social media for marketing and promotional activities. The content published by the selected UAE hotels on their Facebook and Instagram pages over the past three months indicate the extent to which the customer engagement is useful and actionable to the hotel staff. One such illustration is with respect to the posts related to room, interiors, exterior properties, hotel building, hotel view and restaurant/bar. The content published by these hospitality companies indicate that customers interact with other users and with the hotel management to express their views about the hospitality services. It also highlights the importance of getting to know the social media audience which leads to social media content strategy on behalf of the different hospitality companies. For example, Emirates Palace Hotel demonstrated a proactive strategy to reach out to the customers and engage them with promotional messages such as *"Escape to Emirates Palace for a luxurious stay"* and *"Delve in the world of opulence in the heart of Emirates Palace"*. Similar promotional messages were also observed by Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche which adopted an engagement strategy by posting promotional messages such as *"Experience an exquisite Iftar and Suhour at Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche this Ramadan. Capture the essence of this time and share it with friends and family"* and *"Experience authentic Emirati cuisine at Corniche All Day Dining restaurant every day.... Spoil yourself and your family with this extravagant brunch experience with a diverse range of mouth-watering live stations, a chill ambiance and so much more"*. Moreover, emotional messages such those posted by Emirates Palace (*"This Mother's Day, treat your mum like a queen and let her enjoy uninterrupted sea view from one of our beach front suites"*) and (*"Draw hearts in the sand with that special person this Valentine's Day and forever Say 'I love you' on the beach or in one of our private domes"*) also enhance the appeal to the audience on the social media platform and

enhances the audience engagement. The use of social media platforms also helps in extending the value offerings and specialized services of the hotels and creates awareness about the different experiences. For example, Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche had posted promotional messages about food specialties by stating that "*Make sure to try our Sticky Date & Toffee Pudding with Vanilla Ice-cream when you visit Grills@Chill'O*".

The importance of customer engagement towards value creation is clearly observed in both the primary as well as secondary data.

The data shows that it is the customer's input which provides direction for the companies to take actions and review their service offerings. The engagement with the customer provides the basis for identifying specific areas of improvement and provides specific inputs in which organizations can improve upon their services and experience for the customers. Customer engagement has been found to be very crucial when using social media as the user generated content is the companies to engage with their customers and understand their behavior and preferences (van Doorn et al. 2010).

One of the most common form of customer engagement is the feedback from the customers in which customized questionnaire is asked and response is requested so that the doctors can improve upon their performance. Customer engagement in other forms such as blogs, media, and posts about their experience is another valuable input, considering that the customers spend time and efforts towards posting their experience on a public platform. This mode of communication with customers of direct communication channel with the customers and other users wherein companies can reach out to them through promotional messages, informational content, and issue resolution, through a platform which is easily accessible both the parties. Also, by engaging directly with the customers, the company is sending a message that they are open and willing to support and help the customers wherever possible and make their experience a memorable one while availing the services of their hotel.

Furthermore, another important aspect of the study is related to the level of engagement, generated through social media. The interview data suggests that the social media activities contribute to enhancing the engagement of customers, which evidences for the gradual development of customer engagement. In this respect, Hollebeek, Conduit and Brodie (2016) and Brodie et al. (2012) discuss the presence of cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement, which present the progression over the different stages of engagement of the customers. In this way the present findings support the view of customer engagement as a developing process, but at the same time upgrade the current knowledge, by pointing out the strength of social media as a tool for promoting customer engagement over the different phases, suggested by previous research. For example, Sashi (2012) defines the different stages of the engagement cycle as Connection, Interaction, Satisfaction, Retention, Commitment, Advocacy and Engagement, which to a high extent correspond to the view of Interviewee 18, stated in the previous chapter.

Another important aspect of customer engagement is that it creates an opportunity for new business by increasing the visibility of the hotels. This can be explained based on the argument that sharing content on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram attracts attention among the network community and serves as "word-of-mouth" advertising for the hotels. This is an important aspect of marketing as the companies do not have to be involved directly in attracting a larger audience about the experience of the customers and the different types of service offerings. The engagement with customers to the social media platform also helps the companies to assess the effectiveness of their service and sets the platform for further branding and visibility of the services. Moreover, customer engagement leads to a collaborative value creation in which the customer is made an inherent part of co-creation by motivating them to engage with the organization with respect to their experience. Such motivation can be in the form of tagging the customers or providing them promotional offers for their future visits

to the hotels. Hence, customer engagement becomes very useful towards providing inputs with respect to value creation and leveraging the social media platform for analyzing the contents posted by the consumers which can help the organization in increasing their branding, visibility, and service delivery.

Table 5.3 presents the drivers of customer engagement. These findings in terms of concepts and categories also address the research proposition which states that “*RP3: The digital media content influences customer engagement and co-creation benefits*”.

Table 5. 3. Findings – Customer engagement

Customer Engagement		
<i>Engagement aspects</i>	<i>Social media content strategy</i>	<i>User generated content</i>
Personalized approach	Having a strategy to encourage customers to engage (content personalization, influencers and promotions)	Real experience sharing and credibility of information
Act on Feedback		Authentic driven
interactive conversation		social marketing strategy
Engagement progress		UGC “online word of
Effective two-way engagement		mouth ”
	Having a special strategy and plan for posting content	
	Monitoring customer	

	behavior and interactions	
	Understanding the audience	
	Characteristics	

(Compiled by the researcher)

5.3.4. Social media platform diversity

The use of different platforms for customer engagement, content analysis and their influence on value creation is dependent on a multitude of factors. As observed from the content published by the sampled hotels on their Facebook and Instagram pages over the past 6 months, the popularity of the social media platform is one of the key factors which encourage the users to post content about their experience at the different hotels. A majority of the content posted by the users were on these two platforms, thereby indicating that the popularity of Facebook and Instagram was crucial towards encouraging the users to post content and thereby lead to value creation for the hotels.

Also, among these two platforms, it was found that higher efforts by the hospitality companies to engage with the consumers led to higher engagement and effectiveness of the social media platform. This was evident in the secondary data where the examined hotel brands were doing much better in Instagram in respect of engagement, especially in the case of Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche. The reason for the latter having a high engagement rate on Instagram was arguably that it invited its audience there to participate on competitions.

Another critical aspect was the focus of the hospitality companies across the different social media platforms in order to disseminate their promotional messages and work towards customer engagement. Based on the data collected across the above-mentioned hotels, it was clear that the Facebook platform was used for a mix of text, video and image related content. The use of Instagram platform was primarily for photo sharing. This again presents the

dilemma for the hospitality staff and their marketing team with respect to leveraging the diverse social media platforms so that they are effective towards value creation. However, certain aspects such as when the same message or competition was posted on both the platforms, the response rate varied, which calls for further insight for the marketing team of the hospitality organizations.

The data collected from the major hotels on their Facebook and Instagram pages also highlighted the differences in focus by the hotels which also has a potential impact on the value creation and effectiveness of social media strategy. The data showed that, while EM focuses more on Facebook (187 posts on Facebook and 81 on Instagram), the other two brands, FH & SA, seem to find Instagram more valuable in their marketing communications (FH & SA published 96 & 76 on Instagram, compared to 83 and 65, respectively, on Facebook). However, a further investigation on the effectiveness of the different social media platforms can be carried out with respect to value creation for the organization. Moreover, it has been found that higher number of posts led to higher engagement rate as the potential of the platforms was leveraged to attract the attention of the audience on the social media platform. For example, Emirates Palace had an engagement rate of 23.57% with 115 Facebook posts and 114,513 followers whereas Sofitel Dubai the Palm had a considerably lower engagement rate at 2.73% with 154,230 followers and 82 posts. Similarly, Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche had an engagement rate of 159.29% with 63 Instagram posts and 6,918 followers, whereas, Rixos Premium Dubai had a considerably lower engagement rate at 38.95% with 149,161 followers and 69 posts. However, a further investigation on the effectiveness of the different social media platforms can be carried out with respect to value creation for the organization.

In this study, the findings indicate that the adoption of social media is through the popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. The interviewees replied that social media adoption has helped to increase exposure and facilitate a two-way

communication between the business and customers. Moreover, it is observed that different platforms were used for different purposes for customer engagement, although through the process of segmentation of customers in order to generate effective results. These findings have also found considerable support in academic literature. In this regard, Ng (2014) reported that marketers must become adept at keeping the customers harmonized, especially when it involves customer behavior. This can be made possible through segmentation of the customers through the different social media platforms. This view of customer segmentation for effective results and competitive advantage has also been supported by Ribarsky, Wang and Dou (2014) who stated that the different platforms facilitate data-based decisions which can be a proven source of competitive advantage. Adding to this, Singaraju et al. (2016) stated that diverse forms and capabilities of different social media platforms lead to development of capabilities of “information” through quality in the service exchange process. Hence, the analysis of differentiated nature of the customers in the different social media platforms becomes a crucial aspect towards value co-creation and value capture.

The category of popularity of the platform, platform capability and platform suitability have been supported in academic literature. In this regard, Singaraju et al. (2016) pointed out that digital platforms support strong relationships and a sense of social community through easier, enhanced interactions with others, learning processes and social connections. Moreover, Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli (2014) pointed out that customized engagement represents the opportunity for the organization to interact with the customer and get further information, where undertaking the personalized communication level includes the profile visibility and preferences. This presents immense opportunities for the organizations to connect to individuals and customers and present their own value propositions. Further support is also provided by van Dam and van de Velden (2014) who linked digital platforms to customer satisfaction and stated that these tools also play a vital part in helping the organization gain the

advantage of designing and delivering customized products, thereby maximizing customer satisfaction.

Table 5. 4. Findings –social media platform diversity

Social Media Platform Diversity		
Popularity of the Platform	Platform Capability	Platform Suitability & Benefits
Facebook platform was used for a mix of text, video and image related content	Facilitating an effective two-way communication	Functionality differentiation
The use of Instagram platform was primarily for photo sharing	Segmentation of customer's / audience differentiation	Effectiveness of platform and optimizing the right mix to meet the hotel objectives
Age group preferences of social media platforms	Analytics from social media platforms	The range of available analytical tools
Accessibility		

(Compiled by the researcher)

Another category of platform suitability and benefits has also found considerable support in academic literature. In this regard, Grönroos (2012) stated that social media creates a “customer of value-in-use”, thereby developing value, providing self-discovery, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity and providing social enhancement and entertainment value. Similar views were also expressed by Curtis (2013) who stated that social media platforms support co-creation activities in terms of content sharing and collaborative works among customers, thus making it important for organizations to cope with the updated technology to

both increase and motivate customers. However, Gouillart (2011) cautioned against excessive reliance on social media platforms to generate value stating that the platforms are only an enabler and the ultimate power resides in the co-creation opportunities it forms between the organization's internal sales, service, marketing and its customers, the true revolution in marketing applications.

Table 5.4 summarizes the characteristics of social media platform diversity. These findings in terms of concepts and categories also address the research proposition which states that "*RP4: The diversity of social media platforms influences the process of value capture and value co-creation in the hotel industry*".

5.3.5. Social media support organizational strategy

As discussed above in the context of both secondary as well as primary data, the use of social media platforms provide medium of connecting with the consumers. Considering this in a broad context, the use of social media provides an effective medium to disseminate the promotional messages and facilitates engagement with the consumers, thereby leading to generation of valuable insights and value creation. This is consistent with the overall organizational strategy of providing enhanced service to the customers and work towards customer loyalty for generating higher revenues and profitability. The use of social media platform also fulfils many marketing objectives such as branding, customer engagement, and value creation.

In addition to the above, the use of social media platform also facilitates the organization to promote its service offerings and create a positive impression in the minds of potential customers. This is evident in the secondary data collected from the hotels where it was observed that the hotels found it easier to promote their experiences of luxury, uniqueness/authenticity, weather, and enjoyment. For example, promotional messages such as "*Book our award-winning Hammam treatment for absolute relaxation*" and "*Celebrate the happiest day of your*

life in the intimate setting of our opulent three-bedroom suite and enjoy a luxurious stay for up to six guests" are consistent with the overall organizational strategy in reaching out to a large audience with the potential to showcase their differentiated proposition and enhance the visibility of their respective brands. The marketing messages such as "*Mark the joyous holiday with your favorite Eid treats*" and "*This summer treat yourself to an oasis of indulgence*" also convey the organizational strategy of providing a warm welcome to the customers with the promise of enhanced service delivery and a memorable experience.

Another key aspect of generating insights through the user generated content and other analytics from the social media platforms is that it is consistent with the organization's view of adopting technology and making informed decisions by capturing the consumer experiences and their preferences. The data collected through the social media has the potential to generate valuable analytics which can provide an edge to the organizations to attract and retain customers (Saarijärvi 2012). This aspect is crucial towards achieving the organizational objectives as the social media platform offers a convenient and cost-effective way to capture the consumer behavior to generate insights which can be helpful for the organizations to make decisions (Nadeem 2015).

This study has the main focus on exploring the value co-creation using the social media platform. Hence, it was important to understand the role played by social media on organizational strategy. The findings of the study indicate that the content as well as the social media platform was crucial towards fulfilling the marketing objectives of the organization. Moreover, the interviewees pointed out the importance of innovation and creativity with respect to content on the social media platforms. In addition, the capabilities of the social media platform such as real-time data collection and data analytics were also found to be key contributors towards achieving the organizational strategy.

The analysis of both primary and secondary data indicates that the use of social media platforms

is very important towards executing the organizational strategy. The primary data indicated that the use of social media platforms facilitated the interaction with the consumers provided a medium through which organization can send out promotional and informational messages to its customers and other audience. Since the main objective of the hotels is to understand the consumer behavior and their expectations from the hotels, the social media platform provides a mode of communication to engage with their customers. This is done through the content posted by the users about their experience which is then analyzed by organizations to generate insights and make informed decisions. Since the analysis of consumer behavior and their expectations form the core aspect of any marketing strategy, the use of social media platform is the organizations to develop content strategy based on the opportunities that emerge. In addition, the use of social media also facilitates the organizations to carry out branding activities which is executed through the involvement of brand community by carrying out activities such as posting comments, reviews, ratings, and sharing the experiences of the customers. The category of fulfilling strategic marketing objectives, promoting organizational values and developing competitive advantage have also found considerable support in academic literature. In this regard, Schau et al. (2009) asserted on the use of engaging in brand communities on the social media platform to create brand value. This is based on the argument that a regular engagement with the audience on the social media platform can help the organizations in fulfilling strategic marketing objectives. Gouillart (2011) also agreed with this line of thought and highlighted that the ultimate power resides in the co-creation opportunities it forms between the organization's internal sales, service, marketing and its customers, the true revolution in marketing applications.

The hospitality industry, the brand name is synonymous with the experience of the service, which means that the customers can be assured of the service when they select any particular hotel. This also helps organizations to create a differentiated proposition about the service

offering and promote innovation in order to gain the attention of the customers on the social media platform. The data collection from the social media platform helps in gaining more knowledge about the competition as well as their own service offerings which opens up new ways for value creation by working in collaboration with the customers, employees, and the marketing team. Another key aspect in which the social media helps in executing the organizational strategy is that it integrates technology with the business operations so that the organizational staff and specially the marketing team can leverage the capabilities of technology to understand the different aspects of consumer behavior and their experiences. Moreover, marketing strategies such as ability of the organization to use social media platforms tends to foster increases in customer participation such as word-of-mouth promotion, user-generated social media content and social commerce. These advantages allow the organization to have the best potential for value capture (Piller, Vossen & Ihl 2012). In terms of promoting organizational values, social media helps the organizations to connect with individuals and enables them to develop relationships that allow organizations to attract customers through messaging and personalized services and products (Wang & Hajli 2015). The rapid adoption of social media across the world and the use of smart phones has made it necessary for organizations to leverage the capabilities of such technology advancements which can be used to generate business insight. In addition, an analysis of the data using advanced analytics provides useful information to the organization such as perception, competitive environment, and encouraging a long-term association with the consumers for creating business opportunities from the conventional techniques. Finally, the emergence of social media and online resources suggests that useful data can come from anywhere and analysis of data along with preparing customized marketing offers can help the organizations to achieve competitive advantage. This view is also supported by Lee, Olson and Trimi (2012) who stated that the proliferation of social media platforms coincides with the expansion of the open innovation

paradigm, in which organizations integrate new ideas and feedback from a variety of internal and external sources, thereby presenting new opportunities to create a sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, Ribarsky, Wang and Dou (2014) also added that timely and effective use of data-driven knowledge is a competitive advantage, while failure to use it is a competitive disadvantage

The following Table summarizes the role of social media to support executing organizational strategy. These findings in terms of concepts and categories also address the research proposition which states that “*RP5: The process of value capture through the social media platforms has an influence on organizational strategy*”.

Table 5. 5. Findings –Social media support organizational strategy

Social Media Support Organizational Strategy		
Fulfilling Marketing Objectives	Strategic Organizational Values	Competitive Advantage
Enhanced brand visibility	Promise of enhanced service delivery	Increased competitiveness
Generating insights through analytics	and a memorable experience (Improved customer experience)	and innovation
Promoting service offerings/	Emotional connect	Showcasing differentiated value proposition
Promotional content	Real time interaction	Capturing “top of the mind”
Informed decisions through technology adoption	Understanding customer needs	market share
Personalized experience	Team collaboration	Retaining customer
		Increased revenue

(Compiled by the researcher)

5.4. Findings Summary

The data collected from the 24 interviewees indicate similarities in their response towards the use of social media for value co-creation. However, the extent to which the different concepts identified in the findings differ for the different interviewees. This is demonstrated in the cross

case concept comparison in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5. 6. Summary of Findings

Concepts	Emirates Palace	Fairmont Abu Dhabi	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Rixos	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumeirah
Value Co-creation through social media	<p>Digital marketing become the main Marketing it's all about it... It covers all the aspect of marketing // Audience segmentation – culture reach – visual with less cost! Many benefits rapid increase of your audience and customers. Your customers become your partner. Your Branding your Marketing Strategy has been changed</p>	<p>Valuable interaction! We are working together with our customers We refer all the request with concerned department, and they stick to improve the services within short time. You must be constant with what you are posting. This is the power of social media</p>	<p>We are having direct communication; even they are becoming one of the contents through sharing experience with the interactive community Social media team not the only one responsible we are all in one ... social media make it one channel to communicate, interact and implement the interaction in new business experience to co-create the experience the value for them and for us</p>	<p>Social media platform is a strong enabler for value co-creation Hotels can capture the pulse of the consumers. The nature of content that you post on social media and the level of interaction with users/customers on social media enhances the level of co-creation</p>	<p>The relationship between us and customers has been changed (collaboration) and off course the revenue With the organic content sometimes paid ads Co-creation is a collaborative development towards new value, shared idea and solutions Towards implementation. We are working together with our customers and stakeholders</p>	<p>Real time interaction! They tell what they want, how, why and when. Your content is the king! But your customers become the content creator as well. Effective content strategy leads to effective two-way engagement. Users even repost other guests' stories demonstrating further engagement with the hotel.</p>

Concepts	Emirates Palace	Fairmont Abu Dhabi	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Rixos	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	The Jumeirah
Value capture through social media	<p>They share what they experienced in public and this is has positive and negative advantage! With different steps: Analyze – Referring – and action plan – Review Highly adaptive to emerging trends Current data – consumer’s social profile or real-time updates predictive data - patent recognition and forecasting of choice Experience enhancement Focus on real-time experience enhancement</p>	<p>Technology makes the conversation continues It is an integral part engagement means a caring customer about the service they got and received. Real time – the co-creation become even in real-time manner Analytical tool (segmentations and audience and Traits) which is the core concept of Marketing literature but without focus group or random marketing plan!</p>	<p>Pulling the feedback out, it is important to speed in reply. In some occasions, we offered prizes to engage customers first without competitions Genuinely engaging content is so appealing and interesting that it immediately grabs your attention and makes you want to learn more. Engaging means having the ability to stop someone in their tracks and draw them in by being informative and entertaining</p>	<p>Technology in the form of social media has been a key enabler for capturing customer feedback and voice post content in different social media platforms in the form of posts, offers, competition, videos, etc.</p>	<p>Live conversations with real time value ... Social media has effected the business extremely Facebook – Instagram – Snapchat – Youtube and Trip Advisor Tools that Business cannot stand without . These platforms strengthen the relationships and creation of value Analytical tools from the platforms and analyses that with the team to have the best use if it Driven data to be studied and referred Quick response for short actions and long term action for bigger service development ideas approved</p>	<p>Everywhere every time We co-create customer suggest (What we need to do / how we will do /and when and why “yes customers provide that all. We only need an effective system in place. Driven data – analytical tools capture co-creation and the value there Real time and flexibility good skills to read the analysis</p>

Concepts	Emirates Palace	Fairmont Abu Dhabi	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Rixos	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumeirah
Customer engagement	Be innovative. Personalize d. Attractive and reach the maximum Audience is very important, you have already your base of followers and fans, their insights etc. and via paid ads you can target a group of audience based on their location, interests, etc. Sometimes, we do polls on social media, or we post like a teaser to get their feedback, also after each campaign we create end-of-campaign report where sentiments are analyzed and studied.	Engaging better, helps to improve your service with real time Ex: some customer shy to ask a towel in front desk but with one click we answer Without engagement no interaction no co-creation, the co-creation depends mainly on collaborative engagement Posts and attractive content.	Real time interaction – competitions and rewards to increase the engagement rate and collaboration we can reach any country by share and mention through other customer's Organic content and customized one by us or our customers through asking them what a nice weather, share with us the awesome pic of the view to win a dinner	Without customer inputs, hotels would have nothing to analyze and nothing to add value to the organization Social media has literally transformed the whole customer engagement and all consumer facing businesses should use the social media platforms in their marketing strategy	Live interaction with attractive content – its real time and the friendly space that give to all users that you can present it as your customer's want The customers become the creators in social media	Ongoing interaction! They tell what they want, how, why and when. Immediate response and action effective plan leads to two-way engagement. We make sure that the caption (text that goes with the visual) capture attention and teasing them to comment, whether by asking them to comment or tagging other friends,..etc.

Concepts	Emirates Palace	Fairmont Abu Dhabi	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Rixos	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumeirah
Social media platform diversity	<p>Each platform has its ways of targeting, in case of paid ads, and the audience plays a vital role for us. We use different ways for engaging based on the audience insights. Yes there is different contents and feedback. but all real time response and active environment. The audience are different on each platform. Their lifestyle and their nationalities</p>	<p>Each channel has its own characteristic s and its own customers feature and culture and we have to adapt that. The age plays a role and the nationality as well. Instagram and Facebook are different from LinkedIn and Trip Advisor</p>	<p>LinkedIn for example for business purposes and even twitter, while snap chat. Facebook and Instagram are different audience and different styles in creating content to different age of people. LinkedIn for example for business purposes and even twitter, while snap chat. Facebook and Instagram are different audience and different styles in creating the content to different age of people.</p>	<p>The audience on social media cannot be generalized and one needs to consider the characteristics of the audience (such as age, cultural preferences, etc.) when formulating social media strategy. The different social media platforms have different level of audience. However, the core objective of organization remains the same but the content varies as per the social media platforms</p>	<p>Know your audience and share what they want to have what you want. Each platform has its own insights and to maximum your audience segments. Facebook – linked in – Insta – Twitter and Snap- Trip Advisor. Hotel industry has introduced since 10 yrs back so it's a must in the marketing</p>	<p>Each platform has its own nature and objective. For example, people on Instagram are there for fun more than taking an action. On Twitter we communicate in Arabic, on Facebook and LinkedIn in English and on Instagram in both languages based on our audience and the nature of the platform. LinkedIn more serious content, news and business stuff. Instagram more fun and visually friendly assets, it is more informative than call to action. Facebook and Twitter more call to action like visiting the website. etc.</p>

Concepts	Emirates Palace	Fairmont Abu Dhabi	Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche	Rixos	Sofitel Dubai The Palm	Jumeirah
Social media support organizational strategy	<p>It's a co-creation and value creation in real time with social Media!</p> <p>Competitive advantage stick with real-time interaction So we have to adapt what is new to be competitor's</p> <p>Immediate response and action plan</p> <p>Improve the experience and service Ability to recognize consumer needs proactively and co-create value with him in a timely manner</p>	<p>Social media Is not for engaging only. It is a lead source to know your position and retaining again... Add to that we can count our customers that know about from social media</p> <p>Business to Business and Business to customers – Digital Marketing, Research and Business development, Social media Executives working with all departments in our Hotel to represent us in way to the experience needed by the customers.</p>	<p>High level of engagement lead to co-creation We got 50% from social media (mainly our campaign became 90% digital campaign which is 0 cost .. Add to the that effect the revenue and retaining our customers Extract the data – share and brainstorming to have immediate action moderate action and long-term plans (innovation data reduction steps)</p>	<p>There are benefits such as wide reach of promotional offers, branding opportunities and monitoring the effectiveness of social media strategy</p> <p>The new knowledge generated is presented in different formats such as action items, decision items, dashboard information, KPIs, etc. The main idea is to convert the knowledge into action points in order to improve the service and experience of the customers.</p>	<p>Innovation behaviors – open to change and adapt the new ideas</p> <p>Branding – Relationship – and Roi</p> <p>Flexibility – mindset design s skills with technology and strategic planning with decision making</p>	<p>Tailored Products and services</p> <p>Uniquely based on consumer's needs.</p> <p>External context-aware.</p> <p>Personalization and contextualization</p> <p>Differentiation of service offerings in real-time</p> <p>Dynamic pricing and revenue management in real-time.</p>

(Compiled by the researcher)

5.5. Substantive Theory

The findings of primary and secondary data are applied using substantive theory and are compared with the existing literature to determine the extent to which they address the research gap and extend the current knowledge.

5.5.1. Value Co-creation and Value Capture

The interviewees' viewpoints allow the classical definition of value co-creation provided by authors like Bendapudi and Leone (2003) to be developed. Value co-creation can be defined as the interactions between companies and their customers which is made possible by the employed mix of service delivery, customer feedback, marketing analysis, and technology adoption by the companies. In addition to the innovation and production of their product or service offerings, and their brand image, companies can employ value co-creation for gathering new solutions and feedback for their promotional messages and engagement with the wider audience. These new aspects contribute to the development of the existing knowledge regarding the nature of the value co-creation concept.

The interviewees' construction of value co-creation was based on the main argument that the customers play a crucial role towards suggesting areas of value addition and process improvement which can lead to enhanced service quality by the hotels in the UAE. This was mostly facilitated by the social media platform which has become a preferred choice for consumer facing companies to interact with the consumers. The substantive theory provided arguments for engaging with customers to leverage the digital media comprising of social media platforms for value co-creation and capture (Table 5.7). Parallel line of thinking is also evident in academic literature where it has been reported that value co-creation and value capture is the core essence of relationship between

customers and organizations (Grönroos 2012). Furthermore, the secondary data also substantiated the importance of value co-creation through customers as they are the most reliable source of information for the larger audience apart from the customers providing feedback based on their first-hand experience.

Table 5. 7. Theory development

	Knowledge context	Practical context
Value co-creation	Customers are crucial agents in the value co-creation activities of a business organization (Bendapudi & Leone 2003)	Customers are a primary source of information for the mass audience based on their first-hand experience
Customer-company relationship	Business organizations can benefit from their relationships with customers for value co-creation and value capture (Grönroos 2012)	Customers create value through their social media activity and provide useful insights for business optimization

Social media platforms in value co-creation	Technological advancement enhances value co-creation rapidly and allows advanced transformation and thorough capture of this value for the business organizations	The social media landscape is rapidly changing which increases the opportunities for effective service delivery and customer value co-creation.
	(Andriole 2010; Levy 2009; Chen & Lou 2021; Schlagwein & Hu 2018).	
Value capture through social media	Capturing customer value is possible only when appropriate platform is adopted to maximize the VoE	Business organizations can transform any social media to an “appropriate” platform to enhance the VoE of customers.
	(Beatty et al. 2010).	

(Compiled by the researcher)

The findings of the data collected through interviews indicate the importance of social media as a platform which facilitates value co-creation. These findings are also confirmed with academic literature where Piller, Vossen and Ihl (2012) noted that social media provide a highly interactive platform that allows individual users and communities to share, create, discuss and modify user-

generated content. Moreover, the data collection brought out the finding that customer engagement was enhanced to a great extent by using social media platform. This is also supported in academic literature where it has been reported that social media platforms have emerged that provide customers with a channel of communication by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). As a result, organizations recognize the impact of social media and the importance of influencing the lives of customers, and the features that social media platforms provide enable them to be consistent in an increasingly digital business environment for customer engagement and value co-creation. Furthermore, Frutos, Giones and Miralles. (2014) also reported that social media fundamentally changes the way organizations and their customers interact within and outside the organization by providing broader opportunities to interact, thereby creating more opportunities for value co-creation using the social media platforms. The findings of primary and secondary data highlight the importance of the role played by social media platform. This is also supported by the absorptive capacity theory (ACT) which has focussed on technological advancements and also specific to value capture using social media platforms (Schlagwein & Hu 2018). It also calls for transforming the knowledge acquired to be synthesized so that they can be utilized for developing the competencies (Andriole 2010; Levy 2009; Chen & Lou 2021), an aspect which is also visible in the primary and secondary data wherein data captured through social media is used for analysis for improvement in service delivery. Furthermore, the SDL also argues for creating value together and recognizes the importance of collaboration with customers (Grönroos & Gummerus 2014), an important component in value capture and co-creation. Theoretical evidence about SDL is presented in Appendix 5. The theoretical foundation of value of experience can also be associated with value co-creation through customer collaboration as VoE argues for increasing the chances of success of an organization

based on the customer's knowledge and experience (Brodie et al. 2011; Wang, Hsieh & Yen 2011).

5.5.2. Customer Engagement

This section is focused on the importance and contribution of customer engagement on social media platforms. The importance of customer engagement has been well acknowledged by the researchers as being the key factor which leads to valuable insights due to specific feedback and user generated content. Similar findings have also been observed in the secondary data where specific feedback on the hospitality companies based on customer experience. The substantive theory sets the precedent for customer engagement as the primary factor for leveraging the social media platform and drawing useful insights.

The findings from the primary and secondary data also support the existing academic literature and the theoretical frameworks of ACT and VoE. The VoE theoretical framework argues for customer engagement to understand the experience of the customer and draw upon the customer's knowledge to enhance the service delivery (Helkkula & Kelleher 2010; Wang et al. 2011). This implies that customers experience becomes the focal point for measuring the service quality and this becomes possible only through customer engagement. Similarly, ACT can be used to explain the importance of customer engagement using the technology platform of social media as it may not be possible for organizations to stay connected with the customers or draw upon their experience without leveraging the digital platform of social media. Moreover, the feedback, input, or any type of interaction with the customers serves as the basis for social media content strategy for the hotel companies in the UAE. The substantive theory thus added to the growing interest and literature on engagement aspects relevant to content sharing by customers on the social media platforms, as pointed out by Bowden and Mirzaei (2021). This paper contributes with the

understanding that effective content strategy accounts for effective two-way engagement which lays the foundations of value co-creation. Furthermore, the substantive theory from the findings of this study thus addresses the research gap with respect to identifying the mechanisms that best create and capture value, with customer engagement and social media platform being the most preferred mode for hotel companies in the UAE for capturing value.

Past studies have shown that the model of customer engagement is expected to help deepen the understanding of the customer experience and/or retain dynamics (Bowden 2009), which is also highlighted in the findings of the study. Our study supports Sawhney, Verona and Prandelli (2005) noting that with value co-creation, the customer or consumer is able to connect directly with the organization. The study addresses the importance of a value co-creation platform not only to encourage the consumer to produce ideas, feedback and share new knowledge, but also to strengthening consumer communication. In addition, value capture reveals that low-level engagement and a high level of engagement makes a difference to co-creation activities. Based on research by Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012) the organization only caters for co-creation if it constantly receives high level engagement from the consumer. It is most prevalent and practical for the organization to acquire value especially in a value co-creation context.

5.5.3. Social Media Platform Support Organizational Strategy

This section is focused on the contribution of social media platform towards achieving organizational strategy of value creation. For any service-oriented business, it is imperative to seek a feedback from the customers and ensure that the service delivery meets the expectations of the customers.

However, in a competitive industry such as hospitality where the perception of customers with

respect to the unique proposition is supreme, the organizations find it difficult to differentiate their services, thereby unable to execute their organization strategy. Nevertheless, the use of social media provides the advantage of reaching out to a larger audience and create visibility and branding of their respective organizations. In addition to providing an easily accessible channel for customer value co-creation through user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video contents, social media platforms enhance the service delivery process for customers and their engagement with the organization, which can effectively serve the company's marketing purposes. The substantive theory provided arguments for adopting the social media platforms in such a manner that they are effective towards gaining the attention of the consumers while also encouraging repeat customers. This is evident from both primary and secondary data where social media platform has been acknowledged to be a potent tool for achieving multiple objectives of the organization such as serving as a medium for information dissemination, fulfilling marketing objectives, and promoting organizational values. Hence, the adoption of social media helps the hotels in showcasing the differentiated value proposition, enhancing the visibility of the brand, and providing opportunities for innovation and creativity through engagement with the customers.

The relevance and importance of social media towards supporting organizational strategy has also been supported in academic literature. In this regard, Frutos et al. (2014) pointed out that social media fundamentally changes the way organizations and their customers interact within and outside the organization by providing broader opportunities to interact, therefore they are characterized by significant strategic business implication. Furthermore, Culnan, McHugh and Zubillaga (2010) also highlighted that the use of social media in the innovation process may be actively employing online content and word-of-mouth campaigns, or passive, which uses

applications such as data mining, which are of strategic implications for the organization. Additionally, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argued that social media platforms have emerged that provide customers with a channel of communication by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video. Hence, it is worth noting that the customers in the social media space who continue to exchange services with the organization and its brands are the result of the organization building and strategic importance (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

5.6. Situating the theory

The above findings can be drawn in parallel with the existing academic literature where different theoretical frameworks can be applied the use of social media platform for achieving organizational strategy. Customer engagement has been identified as a crucial aspect towards cooperation and Value capture for the hotels in the UAE. The findings indicate that online interactions with the customers helps the hotel is to improve upon the performance (through feedback and comments). In addition, digital content also acted as a catalyst towards engaging the customers and identifying sources of value creation. These aspects are also reported in academic literature where Ko et al. (2013) reported that the social media platform engage customers for interactive communication and enable a high degree of customer participation and spontaneous participation. Past academic research has identified the need for customer involvement in co-creation and for better understanding the consumer behavior (to what they think and behave) (Frow et al. 2015; van Doorn et al. 2010). Another key aspect with respect to customer engagement is the expression of ones' feeling which can provide useful insights for the organization with respect to the services offered by them (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan 2012).

The findings of this study clearly indicate that the use of social media platform facilitates co-

creation through customer engagement while also supporting organizational strategy. Therefore, the gap in academic literature where it was stated that all work to date is theoretical in scope and has not fully described the appropriate value capture mechanisms has been addressed by triangulation of data from primary and secondary sources and analyzing the findings using constructivist grounded theory.

With respect to digital content, the academic literature has argued that the user generated content is essential for customer engagement (Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen 2016; Liu, Lischka & Kenning 2018). This is also observed in the findings of current study where interviewees have reported that digital marketing using influencers and bloggers attract the customers and engage with them. Moreover, the findings of the study also reported that engaging with customers on social media brings in more innovation and creativity for their marketing team. This again is supported in academic literature where it is pointed out that because of the relationship of customer-organization in social media, it allows customers to become motivated to use the systems, which in turn is effective for marketers to develop innovative content to engage the customers (Avram et al. 2006).

When compared to academic literature, academicians have pointed out that organizations can derive meaningful information through the features of social media (Singaraju et al. 2016). Furthermore, Lusch and Nambisan (2015) pointed out that the services provided by the organization help the organization build its capacity to benefit its customers and organizations and help in achieving the organizational strategy. In addition, academic literature also highlights the importance of value assessment that needs to be carried out strategically by the organization by developing a powerful digital platform to analyze and document customer responses or value created (Braschke et al. 2017; Osburg & Lohrmann 2017). Moreover, Ni et al. (2009) also

highlighted that technology plays a very strategic role in leveraging all these factors through the platform and forms the framework, thereby enhancing and developing the value creation process and value acquisition process. Hence, the beneficial influence and support of social media platforms for organizational strategy is well acknowledged in academic literature as well as reported in the findings of the current study as well.

Memo 9. Reflective Memo. Working theory

The interview with the participants for the primary data collection proved to be a challenging task in multiple aspects. Firstly, due to the widespread Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible in some occasions to travel to the individual hotels and collect data from the participants. To overcome this limitation, the researcher contacted the participants through professional connections and LinkedIn profile and explained them about the scope of the study. The process of obtaining consent from the participants was longer than usual as multiple follow-ups were required to bring the participants on-board in data collection. The second major challenge was to seek appointment for virtual interviews through zoom meeting as many of some participants faced the challenge of poor Internet connectivity at their respective locations. This was primarily due to the reason that many participants had moved on to their native places due to the closure of their hotels. Nevertheless, many participants were enthusiastic about sharing their viewpoint towards the research area. Also, few of the participants provided the contacts of their professional associations at other organizations due to which it became easier to increase the sample size which was sufficient for generating insights for the study. The third challenge was to define the data from the interviews through coding so that individual concepts could emerge which relate to research propositions and research questions. This challenge was addressed by reviewing the interview transcripts multiple times to ensure that the concepts that emerged were properly analyzed and presented so as to meet the research objectives. The use of substantive theory provided a "working theory" which paved the way for action for a specific context. The data collection from a small group of participants in the hotel industry with respect to value co-creation through the use of social media and customer engagement was instrumental in identifying the interpretation of other theories such as VoE and ACT and relate them in the context of hotel industry. Moreover, the substantive theory helped in identifying parallel arguments in academic literature with respect to customer engagement for leveraging the digital media and the growing interest for identifying mechanisms to capture value. This led to a comprehensive knowledge development on the use of social media in the UAE hotel industry.

In this regard, ACT argues that the technological platform can contribute towards strategy innovation and play a strategic role towards accumulating as well as transforming the knowledge

achieved in a manner that it can be utilized for the betterment of the organizations (McKelvey et al. 2015). Hence, ACT helps in relating to the adoption of social media platform by hotels in the UAE in executing organizational strategy, thereby adding to the existing literature and in coherence with the academic literature (Table 5.8). Furthermore, the SDL theoretical framework emphasizes on the service-oriented economy and argues that the marketing thoughts and practices should be focused on creating a better experience for the customers (Grönroos & Gummerus 2014). Hence, it is an inherent part of services marketing which is applicable to B2C businesses, such as those of hospitality, whereby emphasizing on value- creation and the customer's role in the value delivery processes. Hence, the use of ACT and SDL to explain the adoption of social media platform by the hotel companies in Abu Dhabi validates the organizational efforts of achieving its strategy using the technological platform and service- oriented focus for its customers. This also addresses the research gap with respect to the process of co-creation in an increasingly digitalized world of interactions by presenting findings which clearly indicated that value capture can be achieved through the use of technology in organizations.

Table 5. 8. Academic and novel knowledge about value co-creation through social media

Value co-creation literature		Substantive theory
Blue background emphasizes the differences between established and substantive theory about customer value co-creation through social media to uncover the original contribution of the present research.		
Customer value co-creation concept	Co-creation is defined as mutual participation allowing organizations to collaborate with customers in the innovation and production of their product or service offerings, and their brand image brand image (Bendapudi & Leone 2003; Singaraju et al. 2016; Waseem, Biggemann & Garry 2017).	Co-creation can be defined as the interactions between companies and their customers through the optimal mix of service delivery, customer feedback, marketing analysis, and technology adoption by the companies, providing novel solutions and feedback for the innovation and production of their product or service offerings, and their brand image, promotional

		messages, and engagement with the wider audience.
Value co-creation through social media	Social media platforms provide customers with a channel of communication by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010) and where they continue to exchange services with the organization and its brands (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Value co-creation is realized via actor generated institutions and institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch 2016).	Social media provide accessible channel for customer value co-creation through user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video enhancing the visibility, the service delivery process for customers and their engagement with the organization, which can effectively serve the company's marketing purposes.
Value capture efficiency	The capture of value created through applying SDL, based on the postulates of ACT depends on strategic innovation (McKelvey et al. 2015), technological advancements (Roberts	The understanding that a cohesion of the different factors including customer engagement, social media platform, organization strategy, and data analytics

		et al. 2012) and application of social media (Schlagwein & Hu 2018).	which work together for value co-creation and successful value capture extends the theoretical concepts of ACT, SDL and VoE.
VCC Media Maturity Framework	Social	The data VCC Social Media Maturity Framework provides a tool illustrating the evolution of a system from the current to a new advanced and more effective state (Thomas & Woodside 2016). Different views of the levels in the maturity matrix are presented in the existent academic literature – 5 maturity levels - Lee and Kwak (2012); 4 maturity levels - Thomas and Woodside (2016), Moi and Cabiddu (2021)	The value co-creation through social media model represents the dynamic development of the value co-creation through social media presented as a five-stage process.

Compiled by the researcher)

5.7. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework depicted in Figure 5.1 is based on the substantive theory derived from the qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data. It represents the integration between the

two key theoretical cornerstones adopted in the present study – ACT and SDL.

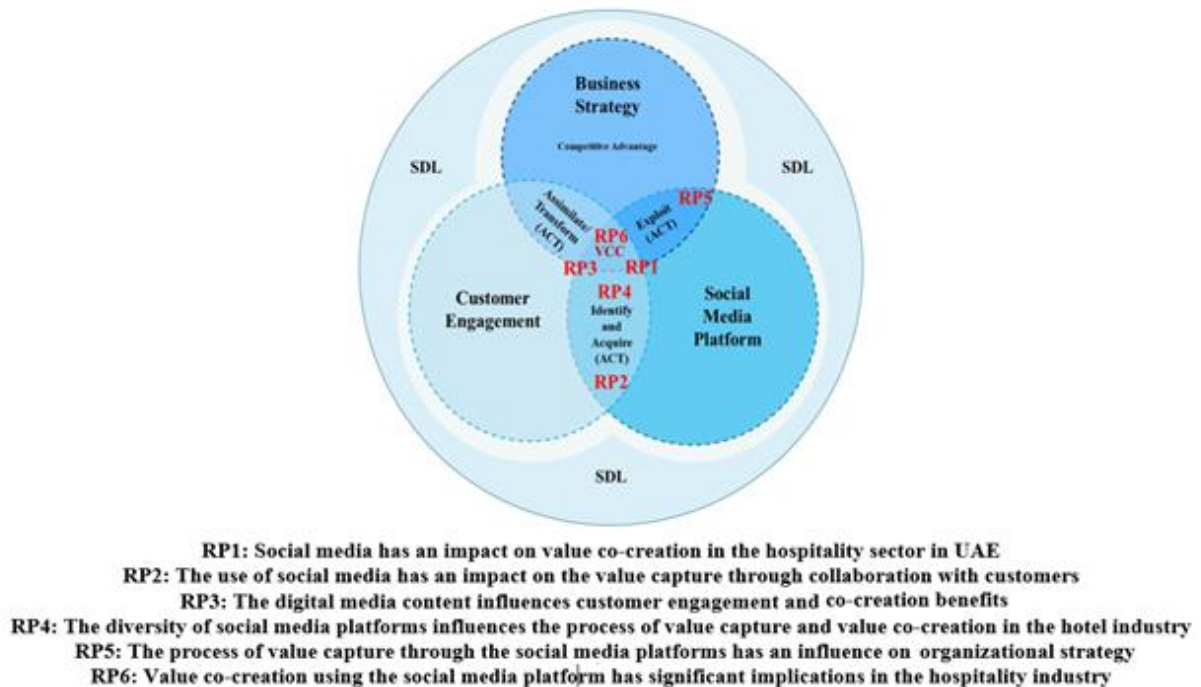


Figure 5. 1: Linking Theoretical framework with the research propositions (Compiled by the researcher)

The model is built on the interconnections witnessed between the 5 main concepts and the 15 categories identified in the present study, and supported by the three additional concepts drawn from the secondary data analysis.

The model presents the interplay between three critical components – social media platforms, customer engagement and organizational strategy in the field provided by the SDL, which leads to the co-creation of value. The three main components of the framework are interacting between each other through the dimensions of the ACT theory as presented in Figure 4.4 (Roberts et al. 2012).

The framework presents the identification and acquisition of knowledge in the overlap between social media platforms and online engagement of the customers. This interconnection serves as

the basis for data collection and analysis of the experience of the customers and defines the key role played by the clients through the "user generated content" on the platform. The new knowledge acquired by the organization is further assimilated by the company and transformed so that it can contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the business strategy for effective VCC. Finally, the business organization integrates the social media platforms with its business strategy in order to effectively exploit the knowledge gained through social media as a source of competitive advantage over rivals in the sector.

According to the theoretical framework, the interaction of the 3 components through the ACT dimensions can only lead to effective VCC in the context of SDL. The reason for that is that the VCC as a multi-faceted concept requires the interplay between a wide diversity of actors and systems, interconnected in the SDL service ecosystem (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012)

These findings have called for a revision of the initial conceptual framework developed for the present study (Figure 2.17).

The initial conceptual framework (Figure 2.17 above) proposes a linear process of creating and capturing value on the grounds of social media contents processed following the ACT process. The initial conceptual model represents a confluence of the different factors which lead to value creation by using the social media platforms. One of the key parameter is the online interaction which is facilitated by the social media platforms and this leads to value co-creation or interaction co-creation. This linear flow of the value co-creation process was based on the underlying argument that shared value is created through online interaction by the customers with respect to their experience with the hotels, as proposed by Singaraju et al. (2016). It is important to note that the role of the social media platform was perceived as a catalyst or facilitators, rather than being the key input for the co-creation of value. It was seen as one of the factors promoting value co-

creation, remaining outside the value co-creation process itself. Another key aspect is the social media content which facilitates the engagement between the hotels and the customers/users on the social media platform (Brodie et al. 2013).

The theoretical framework is also linked to the addressal of the research propositions as highlighted in Section 2.11. The first research proposition states that “*Social media has an impact on value co-creation in the hospitality sector in UAE*”. The triangulation of the primary and secondary data and the findings of data analysis revealed that the use of social media platforms facilitates value creation and helps in achieving the organizational objectives. This is justified by the argument that the use of social media platform brings together both the consumers and the organizations on a common platform wherein interaction can be encouraged. The skilful utilization of social media for value co-creation purposes requires specific level of technological proficiency which is demonstrated by the hotel employees to post relevant content and encourage collaboration with customers through the social media platform. Further evidence of this is provided by the utility of social media towards branding, promotional messages, innovation, and engagement with the wider audience. This is also supported by the stance that skilful utilization of social media by demonstrating technological proficiency, as well as well organised and captivating content leads to value co-creation through collaborations with customers through the social media content (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019). Furthermore, the study confirms the findings of Shawky et al. (2020) that these online customer activities could be managed through appropriate practical frameworks in order to move them to a new level of the engagement cycle. Moreover, the active participation of the organization on the social media platform and encouraging customers for participation through word-of-mouth, user generated content and social commerce allows the organization to have the potential on value capture (Martini et al., 2014). In the theoretical framework, this is

demonstrated by the convergence of customer engagement and social media platform as well as the ACT which examines the extent to which a firm can identify the value of new information and proactively leverage the organizational resources to acquire value. Furthermore, the findings also address the theoretical gap in literature which specifically focuses on the use of social media platforms for value cocreation. Hence, the research proposition of “*Social media has an impact on value co-creation in the hospitality sector in UAE*” is well justified based on the analysis of primary and secondary data as related to the hospitality sector in UAE as well as existing literature using the ACT.

The second proposition states that “*The use of social media has an impact on the value capture through collaboration with customers*”. This proposition was studied by the analysis of the secondary data from the select hotels revealed that the use the social media platform was prevalent for different types of communication such as promotional content, informational content, events, and other types of communication. The common techniques used for value capture include the comments, images, and media posted by the hotels in the social media profiles. The content posted by the hotels are used to attract new users and served as a marketing platform for the hotels. The analysis of primary data revealed that the input from the social media help in assessing the return on investment with respect to the use of the social media platform of the respective organizations. The findings are also supported in academic literature where Agafonow (2014) reported that social media supports co-creation activities in terms of content sharing, organizing, and collaborative work among customers which leads to value creation. Similar findings were also reported by Singaraju et al. (2016) who stated that business value can be captured through participation of customers in co-creation so that it became enabler for business to sustain in competitive

environment. The discussion above highlights the importance of engagement with customers for the purpose of value co-creation. Additionally, the findings are also consistent with those of Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) who claim that the real time interaction between the organization and its customers provided the opportunity for accessible insights from the clients, while also supporting immediate personalized and contextualized experience. All these contribute to the effective value capture (Buhalis & Sinarta 2019). The value capture through social media serves as an input for social media content strategy and the overall marketing strategy to attract and retain customers. This is demonstrated in the theoretical framework by interpreting the alignment of customer engagement and social media platform which leads to value capture and is also explained by ACT. Furthermore, the findings also address the literature gap related to the engagement of customers towards creating value in the context of hotel industry. Hence, the research proposition of *“The use of social media has an impact on the value capture through collaboration with customers”* is well supported based on the analysis of primary and secondary data.

The third research proposition states that *“The digital media content influences customer engagement and co-creation benefits”*. This proposition was examined using both primary and secondary data. The analysis of secondary data revealed that the interaction of the consumers leads to valuable insights and proactiveness towards adopting social media for marketing and promotional activities. The content published by these hospitality companies indicate that customers interact with other users and with the hotel management to express their views about the hospitality services. It highlights the importance of digital content and its role towards enhancing the appeal to the audience leading to audience engagement. Similar findings have also been reported in academic literature, for example, Coelho et al. (2016) reported that involvement

of the people on social media platforms is attracted by the posts having information of events and promotions of brands. Similarly, Luarn, Lin and Ciu (2015) recommended that the engagement of users is expected to be influenced by the type of post content like information, entertainment, remuneration, and social content. This study concluded that the posts related to entertainment are expected to get higher levels of commenting and sharing other types of content as mentioned above. Yuki (2015) conducted a similar survey on Facebook and other social media posts concluded that the posts having emotions of happiness were shared commonly. Therefore, the effective application of social media platforms for strategic company purposes, including those related to VCC and value capture requires diversification of the social media employed based on factors such as the characteristics of the target audience and the content to be published (Coelho et al. 2016; Yuki 2015). This emphasizes the important role of social media platform diversity in the VCC and value capture. The analysis of primary data also supported these arguments and it was found that social media activities contribute to enhancing the engagement of customers, which evidences for the gradual development of customer engagement. The engagement with customers to the social media platform also helps the companies to assess the effectiveness of their service and sets the platform for further branding, visibility of the services and improved co-creation. This is demonstrated in the theoretical framework which explains the proposition by using "Assimilate/Transform" and the ACT framework to demonstrate the role of digital media content towards influencing customer engagement, thereby leading to improved cocreation benefits. Furthermore, the findings from primary and secondary data also address the literature gap related to the influence of digital content marketing and customer engagement on the VCC and value capture. Hence, the research proposition of "*The digital media content influences customer engagement and co-creation benefits*" is well supported based on the analysis of primary and

secondary data.

The fourth research proposition states that "*The diversity of social media platforms influences the process of value capture and value co-creation in the hotel industry*". This proposition was examined using both primary and secondary data. The secondary data analysis revealed that the popularity of the social media platform is one of the key factors which encourage the users to post content about their experience at the different hotels. Furthermore, in the most popular social media platforms, the higher efforts by the hospitality companies to engage with the consumers led to higher engagement and effectiveness of the social media platform. However, it was also acknowledged that diverse social media platforms provided flexibility of content to engage with customers and work towards value co-creation. The different platforms were used for different purposes for customer engagement, although through the process of segmentation of customers in order to generate effective results. The use of different platforms and customer segmentation for effective results and competitive advantage has also been supported by Ribarsky, Wang and Dou (2014) who stated that the different platforms facilitate data-based decisions which can be a proven source of competitive advantage. Similarly, Singaraju et al. (2016) stated that diverse forms and capabilities of different social media platforms lead to development of capabilities of "information" through quality in the service exchange process. Hence, the analysis of differentiated nature of the customers in the different social media platforms becomes a crucial aspect towards value co-creation and value capture. Moreover, Cabiddu, De Carlo and Piccoli (2014) pointed out that customized engagement represents the opportunity for the organization to interact with the customer and get further information, where undertaking the personalized communication level includes the profile visibility and preferences. This presents immense

opportunities for the organizations to connect to individuals and customers and present their own value propositions. Further support is also provided by van Dam and van de Velden (2014) who linked digital platforms to customer satisfaction and stated that these tools also play a vital part in helping the organization gain the advantage of designing and delivering customized products, thereby maximizing customer satisfaction. In the theoretical framework, the proposition lies at the intersection of the customer engagement and social media platform with main alignment and cohesion of identifying and capturing value through the platforms. Furthermore, the findings also address the gap connected to the impact of the social media platforms' diversity on VCC and value capture processes. Hence, the research proposition of "*The diversity of social media platforms influences the process of value capture and value co- creation in the hotel industry*" is well supported based on the analysis of primary and secondary data.

The fifth proposition states that "*The process of value capture through the social media platforms has an influence on organizational strategy*". This proposition was examined from the perspective of relationship between value capture and organisational strategy. The examination is carried out mainly using the primary data where it has been reported that social media provides an effective medium to disseminate the promotional messages and facilitates engagement with the consumers, thereby leading to generation of valuable insights and value creation. This is consistent with the overall organizational strategy of providing enhanced service to the customers and work towards customer loyalty for generating higher revenues and profitability. The use of social media platform also fulfils many marketing objectives such as branding, customer engagement, and value creation. Apart from this, the secondary data also presents useful insights related to the relationship between value capture through the social media platforms and organisational strategy. It is found that that

the hotels found it easier to promote their experiences of luxury, uniqueness/authenticity, weather, and enjoyment. Moreover, marketing strategies such as ability of the organization to use social media platforms tends to foster increases in customer participation such as word-of-mouth promotion, user-generated social media content and social commerce. Multiple support has been found in academic literature highlighting the benefits of social media platform across different business functions and activities. Hajli et al. (2017) highlighted the effectiveness of the online community as an important marketing tool for co-branding. Zaglia (2013) also pointed out that brands have established their own brand communities on social media sites to connect with new customers and promote their new products and encourage them to engage to build customer-brand relationships. In terms of the use of data generated through social media platforms, Ribarsky et al. (2014) highlighted that the emergence of social media and online resources suggests that useful data can be leveraged to generate useful insights which a provide competitive advantage to organisations. In terms of innovation, the proliferation of social media platforms coincides with the expansion of the open innovation paradigm, where organizations integrate new ideas and feedback from a variety of internal and external sources (Lee, Hwang & Choi 2012). Finally, using these social media capabilities provided by social media platforms, customers and companies can more seamlessly integrate their resources, making all participants in service exchanges mutually beneficial (Laroche et al., 2013). Each of these benefits has the potential to contribute to organisational strategy. In the theoretical framework, this relationship is expalined using the intersection of the components of business strategy and social media platforms and is also explained by ACT framework to exploit and leverage the social media platforms for achieving competitive advantage and supporting the business strategy. The findings also address the research gap pertaining to the use of social media platforms for value capture and its role in influencing

business strategy related to the UAE hotel industry which is currently scarce. Hence, the research proposition of “*The process of value capture through the social media platforms has influence on organizational strategy*” is well supported based on the analysis of primary and secondary data.

The sixth proposition is “*Value co-creation using the social media platform has significant implications in the hospitality industry*”. This proposition was examined from the perspective of practical implications of the use of social media platform for value cocreation in the hospitality industry in UAE. For this purpose, the triangulation of the findings of primary as well as secondary data was used. It has been found that data collection from the social media platform helps in gaining more knowledge about the competition as well as their own service offerings which opens up new ways for value creation by working in collaboration with the customers, employees, and the marketing team. Another key aspect in which the social media helps in executing the organizational strategy is that it integrates technology with the business operations so that the organizational staff and specially the marketing team can leverage the capabilities of technology to understand the different aspects of consumer behavior and their experiences. Furthermore, use of social media also increases customer participation such as word-of-mouth promotion, user-generated social media content and social commerce. These findings are also reflected in the convergence of the components of customer engagement, social media platform, and business strategy in the theoretical framework, supported by the ACT and SDL theories. Hence, the findings present major implications for the hospitality industry in UAE and contribute to existing literature as well as lead to proactical implications for the industry. Hence, the research proposition of “*Value co-creation using the social media platform has significant implications in the hospitality industry*” is well supported based on the analysis of primary and secondary data and contributes

to practical implications as well as theoretical knowledge.

Nevertheless, the findings from the qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data in the context of the UAE hotel industry evidences for the inseparable interconnection between the aforementioned components. Therefore, the theoretical framework in Figure 5.1 above represents a confluence of components such as customer engagement, social media platforms and business strategy and competitive advantage, along with the theoretical frameworks of Service Dominant Logic and the Absorptive Capacity Theory. The unique combination of all these components culminates into value co-creation for the organization. This framework presents new theory development based on analysis of primary data (interviews from the participants in the hotel industry in the UAE) and secondary data (content published by six selected UAE hotels on their Facebook and Instagram pages and social media analytics over a period of six months). The process of value co-creation highlights the importance of technological advancements, most notably the social media in this case, and its role in leading to strategy innovation and meeting the strategy objectives of the organization.

5.8. VCC Social Media Maturity Framework

The problem of VCC has received significant research interest in the extant academic literature with the SDL perspective taking a central place in recent studies (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012; Vargo and Lusch 2017; Brodie, Löbler & Fehrer 2019). In addition to that, ACT presents a detailed understanding of the process of value capture which bares considerable theoretical and practical implications for organizations in both the private and public sector (Ortega-Gutiérrez, Cepeda-Carrión and Alves 2022). Prior research has acknowledged the interconnections between the SDL and ACT perspective due to the necessity to both co-create and effectively capture the value as a

pathway to creating competitive advantage (Turner 2013; Schlagwein & Hu 2018; Osborne, Radnor & Strokosch 2016; Butler & Ferlie 2019). Nevertheless, the SDL studies point out the inability of organizations to embed value in a product or distribution process, as well as the necessity to create it with customers (Vargo & Lusch 2007). Even though the existing theoretical frameworks and perspectives are valuable, they do not provide a thorough perspective on the VCC mechanisms in their entirety. Furthermore, the knowledge related to the specific case of the hospitality sector, focal to the present study is limited.

The VCC social media maturity framework addresses the research gap related to understanding the theoretical concept of value co-creation and its practical implications for the hotel industry. The researcher has discussed the practical implication in the hotel industry in the UAE and has therefore, addressed the gap from the prior work which was theoretical in scope (Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen 2016). In addition, the researcher has also highlighted the crucial aspect of the role played by social media platforms towards value capture and value co-creation as well as the importance of digital media for customer engagements, leading to improved co-creation benefits for the organization and stakeholders. The framework also links the business strategy to the operational aspects through which the marketing and operations business units can be aligned to achieve the goals defined in the business strategy and create competitive advantage.

The the theoretical framework presented in Figure 5.1 above and discussed in the above section of the present chapter, uncovers the interplay between elements including customer engagement, social media platforms and business strategy and competitive advantage in the context of the prevailing theoretical frameworks – SDL and ACT. The above theoretical framework emphasizes the critical role of technology for strategy innovation and for the fulfillment of the organizational

strategic objectives. In contrast, the present VCC Social Media Maturity Framework accounts for the precise evaluation of the development of the organizational capabilities to employ social media in its VCC incentives. Therefore, the maturity framework provides a new detailed roadmap towards the evolution of a business organization for effective VCC through social media. Based on the above analysis, the maturity framework below can be conceptualized.

The VCC Social Media Maturity Framework is derived from the social media maturity model proposed by Thomas and Woodside (2016) which included the phases of preparation, coordination, integration and coherence. However, the researcher improvised upon the social media model of Thomas and Woodside (2016) by conceptualizing a two-dimensional framework wherein the progress of social media adoption could be studied in the context of an organization, sector or country, as the case may be. The two dimensions include the extent of adoption (represented by the phase of maturity) and maturity level (represented by maturity parameter). The use of maturity models has been presented in different contexts in academic literature and has been reported as a tool which provides useful insights for interpreting the knowledge with respect to the topic under study (Comuzzi & Patel 2016; Kerzner 2019; Wendler 2012)

According to Merkus (2015) the data maturity framework is a valuable tool used to present the evolution of a system from the current to a new advanced and more effective state. Lee and Kwak (2012) develop a 5-stage maturity matrix tool in their study of social media based public engagement. In addition to these, Moi and Cabiddu (2021) propose a 4-stage maturity matrix, for the development of agile marketing capabilities in the specific case of the tourism sector.

Considering the interest into the topic of value co-creation through social media in the context of the UAE hotel industry, studied under the CGT approach in the present thesis, the maturity

framework is considered appropriate tool for illustration of the way the focal UAE hotels have gone towards the effective value co-creation through social media. As a result of the performed primary and secondary research, the theoretical approach of Merkus (2015), originally aimed at the governance of data, has been adapted towards the present research topic on the grounds of the qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data regarding the UAE hotel industry. The value co-creation through social media model represents the dynamic development of the value co-creation through social media in the UAE hotel industry. The separate maturity levels are described in Table 5.9, while the maturity matrix is depicted in Table 5.10.

Table 5. 9. Description of maturity levels

Maturity level	Description
Unaware	Limited social media presence
Aware	Some awareness but limited understanding of social media platforms' value co-creation
	Potential
Reactive	Extended use of social media by individual organizations
Managed	Growing awareness, learning from competitors about social media's value co-creation potential
Proactive /Effective	Thorough understanding and strategic use of social media for value co-creation

(Compiled by the researcher)

The developed maturity matrix comprises of 2 major components. The first one is represented by the five main concepts derived from the empirical analysis in the present study. The last theme, aimed at directions for the UAE hotel business organizations is not included in the matrix. The 5 concepts represent the different dimensions of the maturity levels. The second key component

included in the maturity matrix in Table 5.10 are the five developed maturity levels, namely “Unaware”, “Aware”, “Reactive”, “Managed” and “Proactive/Effective” stage of the implementation of social media in the focal business sector.

As evident from the maturity matrix in Table 5.10, the first stage of the model is the "Unaware" stage in which there is limited social media presence with no emphasis on leveraging the social media platform for value creation for the different stakeholders. The opportunities for capturing value and enhancing customer engagement through the means provided by social media are not yet understood to by the organizations. In this phase, there is limited understanding with respect to the potential of the social media platform and its benefits towards achieving the organizational objectives. Therefore, the variety of social media platforms has limited impact on value co-creation and value capture.

The second stage is characterized as "Aware" stage in which there is some awareness about the social media platform but limited understanding with respect to its potential towards value co-creation. Moreover, the organization does not feel any incentives for resource allocation for the social media platform in order to generate benefits for the organization. It is attributed to the fact that the mechanisms for value co-creation, value capture and customer engagement are still not well understood. That is why, the diversity of social media platforms has medium influence on the value co-creation and value capture within the organization. Nevertheless, the organization still lacks the capabilities and the strategic tools for employing the VCC potential of social media (Buhalis & Park 2021).

Table 5. 10.VCC Social Media Maturity Framework

Dimensions	Categories	Level 1. Unaware	Level 2. Aware	Level 3. Reactive	Level 4. Managed	Level 5. Proactive/Effective
/ Concepts/						
Value co-creation through social media	Conceptualization and Organizational arrangements	Unclear concept of value co-creation Limited understanding of the opportunities and mechanisms of value co-creation through social media.	Limited understanding is available Relative awareness about the social media platform but limited understanding on the application of social media platforms for value co-creation.	Initial conceptualization Increasing awareness about the use of social media platforms for value co-creation.	Developed conceptualization Efforts for advanced understanding of the mechanisms of value co-creation through social media.	Elaborate conceptualization Definition of clear value co-creation targets for the organization.

	Employee skills and abilities	Not present	Limited understanding	Attempts for identification of the needed skills and abilities and them development	Clear understanding of the organizational needs but insufficient capabilities for effectively utilizing them	Proactive approach enhancing the ability of employees to resolve problems, collaborate and their technological capabilities to support the effective VCC.
	Online customer activities	Not present	Lack of real online customer activities	Better understanding of the need for managed customer experience. Actions based on competitors' examples.	Strategic actions aimed at providing user-friendly customer activities.	Methodology for implementation and control of the efficient management of customers' activities online, like instant feedback and effective information search. Allowing customers to express themselves through UGC and Interactions

Value	capture	through social media	Real time insights	Lack of engagement in the interaction with customers and use of real time insights.	Limited utilization of the real-time insights provided by social media Unit level attention to customers	Outbound communication with customers. One-way communication	Establishment of two-way communication with customers. Partial customer experience. Development of strategies for the use of real-time consumer insights to enhance customer experience.	Effective two-way engagement with customers. Creating personalized and contextualized user experience utilizing the insights. Rigid strategy to promote real-time communication with customers.
			Data driven strategy	Lack of data driven strategy	Insufficient application of data driven strategy “ manual sheets”	Initial development of data search and monitoring tools	Broad application of search tools and software for identification of consumer needs	Advanced search tools and software for data control and monitoring. Instant personalized response to identified consumer needs.

	Inspire actions	Lack of understanding about customer experience and inspiring actions	Underdeveloped tools for managing customer experience	First attempts for enhancing customer experience through used data	Increasing expertise about the strength of data to allow strategy development and enhancing customer experience.	Effective use of data for tracking audience and enhancing customer experience. Two-way innovation. Futurizing Strategies
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Customer engagement	Engagement aspects	Lack of communication	Connect	Interact	Satisfy and Retain	Two way of effective Commitment and Engagement
	Social media content strategy	Limited understanding of the opportunities and mechanisms enhancing customer engagement through social media content	Relative awareness about the social media platform but limited understanding on the application of social media content for enhancing customer engagement.	Increasing awareness about the use of social media content for promoting customer engagement.	Investigation of the ways and opportunities for enhancing customer engagement via social media content.	Establishment of customer engagement objectives for the social media content strategy of the organization. Rigid toolset of approaches and indicators of effective use of social media content interactions for engaging stakeholders.
	User generated content	No Use of UGC	Limited use of UGC	Random use of UGC	Managed UGC	Effective use of UGC

Social Media Platform Diversity	Popularity of the Platform	Limited social media presence	Limited social media presence.	Initial diversification of social media employed by competitors.	Increasing importance. Organizations seek social media platforms diversification as a means for enhancing brand visibility and value co-creation.	Considerable importance. The diversity of social media included in the social media strategy are determinants of organizational success or failure. Social media platforms' characteristics are recognized as prerequisites of strategy success.
	Platform Capability	Low understanding of platforms capabilities	Moderate understanding of platforms' characteristics	Better understanding of social media platforms' diverse capabilities. Following competitors' choice of platforms.	Choice of platforms based on their capabilities for VCC purposes.	Effective choice of platforms based on the provided capabilities for enhancing communication with customers and platform diversification.

	Platform Suitability & Benefits	Lack of understanding of the suitability of different platforms to different purposes and their unique benefits.	Limited understanding of the suitability of different platforms to different purposes and their unique benefits.	Social media platforms diversity serves as a benchmark to competition. Limited attention to their characteristics	Attempt for strategic use of social media platforms based on assessment of their benefits and suitability for the strategic objectives.	Effective diversification of social media platforms for different content. Clear content strategy adjusted to the suitability and benefits of the social media platforms.
Social Media Support Organizational Strategy	Fulfilling Strategic Marketing Objectives	Inability to employ social media platforms for promoting organizational objectives.	Organizational awareness of the opportunities but lack of investments in social media platform capabilities.	Based on the opportunities for their effective application for value co-creation, value capture, and enhancing customer engagement.	Active utilization of social media platforms for promotional purposes. Investments in social media marketing. Social media strategy development and implementation.	Advanced capabilities to employ social media for strategic purposes. Promotional use of social media is a norm. Social media efficiency is a priority for the organization. Procedures for monitoring and advancement of the social management strategy efficiency of the fulfilment of organizational objectives. Significant social media investments.

Promoting Organizational Values	Underdeveloped	Limited understanding of the opportunities for promoting organizational values through social media	Organizations observe the application of social media by their rivals.	Careful selection based on the platform's characteristics and use for promoting organizational values	Strategic approach of social media platform selection based on a set of preliminary defined criteria and effective implementation of social media for the promotion of organizational values
Developing Competitive Advantage	Lack of understanding on the opportunities for managing stakeholders' relationships through social media and enhancing competitiveness.	Insufficient understanding of the strategic benefits for the organization from social media, inability to create competitive advantage through social media.	Enhancing value co-creation, value capture, and enhancing customer engagement, competitive parity.	Promoting the company's marketing and financial performance. Accounts for temporary competitive advantage.	Effective customer reach, promotion, contributing to the fulfillment of organizational financial and non-financial objectives. Sustainable competitive advantage.

(Compiled by the researcher)

The third stage is characterized as "Reactive" stage in which there is growing awareness about the use of social media platform. In this stage, the organization realizes that many of the industries and its competitors are contemplating the use of social media for wider reach and engaging the customers. Hence, this stage is mostly reactive wherein organizations explore the ways in which the social media platform can be leveraged for creating visibility of the brand and engaging with the customers. Therefore, the diversity of social media platforms utilized by the organization becomes an important indicator for benchmarking against sector competitors.

The "Reactive" stage involves the use of social media platform for gaining visibility and branding for the organization. In this stage, organizational resources are allocated and the social media content strategy is formulated identify ways in which organizations can derive value and understand consumer behavior and expectations which can provide useful insights to the organization. The organization works towards different ways in enhancing the visibility of the brand while also posting promotional messages on the social media platform.

The next stage is the "Managed" stage in which the use of social media platform for achieving organizational objectives becomes a priority. In this stage, defined targets are formulated and ways of engagement with customers and other stakeholders for value creation and capture are envisaged. Moreover, this stage is also characterized by continuous monitoring from the senior level management and investments in tools such as social media analytics becomes a priority. The marketing and promotional messages become a norm in this stage of VCC Social Media Maturity Framework.

In the context of the VCC Social Media Maturity Framework for the hotel industry, it can be said that the industry is in "Proactive/Effective" stage where the different organizations are using the

social media platform for gaining visibility and showcasing their brand. This phase is characterized by clear organizational arrangements related to the VCC and effective toolset employed for the VCC goals of the company (Pathak, Ashok & Tan 2021). Based on the primary data collected through the interview of the interviewees, it is clearly evident that organizational resources are allocated towards capturing value by encouraging customers to post their feedback and experiences. At this stage, the entire industry is able to achieve maturity and is able to highlight their differentiation while also generating useful insights from the social media platform on a consistent basis. This phase also required advanced skills and capabilities to be developed by the employees in order to allow the organization to effectively employ its value capture capabilities (Buhalis & Park 2021). In addition to that, at the final maturity level, the hotel organizations have well established methodology and toolset for managing customer activities, including instant feedback and effective information search, which significantly contribute to the effective VCC through social media (Buhalis & Sinatra 2019).

A considerable progress over the maturity matrix is evidenced in terms of the way business organizations employ the received real time insights from the social media. At the “unaware” stage, the company is not investing real efforts into the effective use of the social media insights for promoting VCC. This view supports the understanding of Moi and Cabiddu (2021), regarding the initial state of the capabilities development, even though their focus is on agile marketing capabilities, while the present is on VCC. With the progress over the maturity levels, the value capture capabilities through real-time insights evolve from limited utilization at the “aware” stage to outbound, one-way communication with customers at the “reactive” phase. The last two phases are related to gradually evolving progress in the company-customer relationship in the VCC process, represented by two-way communication and the establishment of clear and strict strategy

for promoting this communication at the last phase. At the proactive/effective level of VCC through social media, the company has well established strategies and procedures for maximizing the utility of the acquired information which allows it to provide contextualized and personalized user experience (Moi & Cabiddu 2021). The ability to provide this customer experience based on the real time social media insights evidences for the efficiency of the organizational value capture capabilities at this level of the VCC matrix.

A specific focus needs to be paid to the evolution of customer engagement over the phases of the maturity matrix. Employing the engagement cycle by Sashi (2012), the process of customer engagement evolves from thorough lack of engagement at the “unaware” stage”. The initial efforts of organizations to establish the first steps towards VCC through social media at the “aware” phase of the matrix result in the creation of initial connection with customers, which gradually evolves into interaction in the “reactive” phase. According to Sashi (2012), in this phase customers get involved in interactions. In the context of the hotel organization through social media comments and reactions, like likes and shares, in social media (Lee & Kwak 2012). The experience gained at employing the VCC potential of social media at the “managed” phase allows organizations to enhance their client’s satisfaction and turn them to loyal customers. At this stage, clients are gaining functional value from the interaction with the hotel organization, which is expressed by the input of ideas to the business organization through social media (Lee & Kwak 2012). The final “proactive/effective” phase is related to the commitment of customers earned by the business organization and their effective developed engagement. At this stage customer are deeply engaged with the company, and they take the role of co-creators of value, as well as active participants in the value-creation process (Lee & Kwak 2012).

Prior research has acknowledged the importance of VCC concept but it has also been pointed out that the model is still in its infancy (Brodie, Löbner & Fehrer 2019). Moreover, researchers have focused on explaining the theoretical concept of VCC and value capture, its meaning and definition, the mechanisms associated with it, and how it is used by the organizations with little or no discussion on how the use of online platforms contribute towards VCC (Agafonow 2014; Lepak, Smith & Taylor 2007; Pitelis 2009). This study has addressed this research gap by emphasizing on the relevance and influence of social media platforms towards value co-creation by combining the leading theoretical perspectives of the SDL and ACT. Furthermore, this research has also acknowledged the importance of online activities and how it has challenged the conventional organizations to react to a co-creation experience. While the focus of the research is on a specific platform, i.e., social media, it also highlights the need for technology for customer engagement and value co-creation. Finally, the findings of the study also emphasize on the interaction of the 3 components through the ACT dimensions can only lead to effective VCC in the context of SDL. The reason for that is that the VCC as a multi-faceted concept requires the interplay between a wide diversity of actors and systems, interconnected in the SDL service ecosystem (Lusch, Vargo & OBrien 2007; McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012; Weiss, Koelmel & Bulander 2016). The primary contribution of the current study is the introduction of a holistic VCC model applicable to the hospitality industry, drawn in the context of the UAE hotel sector. This framework is useful from the perspectives of both academics and professionals in the fields of marketing, management and hospitality as it accounts for overcoming the lack of thorough model of VCC through social media in the light of the extensive use of social media for marketing purposes in the focal industry.

Memo 10. Compiling the findings into the framework

The findings of the study were also analyzed with respect to the extent of adoption of social media platforms in the hotel industry in the UAE. This was then presented using the framework of VCC Social Media Maturity Framework (Table 5.10) which lists out the phases of maturity against the extent of maturity of adoption of social media with respect to the 5 key concepts. The key argument of using this model was to analyse the current phase of the adoption of social media platforms by the hotels in the UAE and the way forward for these organizations. Another strength of this model is that it highlights the path of continuous improvement which can be easily understood by the employees and managers and facilitates the understanding for the way ahead for the organization (Thomas & Woodside 2016). Furthermore, the inclusion of the VCC Social Media Maturity Framework for representing the value co-creation using the social media platform also has considerable implications for resource allocation and expectations of customer engagement as part of social media marketing strategy for the organizations. However, one of the main challenges which was encountered while using this model was to place the current phase of adoption for the hotels in UAE. Nevertheless, after a thorough review of the interview transcripts, this challenge was addressed, and it has been reported that the industry is in "Proactive/Effective" stage.

Thesis summary points:

Social media provide a novel and quickly developing avenue for value co-creation. Customers are a critical marketing asset for business organizations capable of providing information deemed reliable by the wide audience;

- Social media are inseparable component of an efficient marketing strategy, which allow customers' to become active creator of contents and feedback crucial for a company's marketing success;
- By enhancing the engagement of customers, business organizations contribute to the value co-creation potential of their social media channels;
- By implementing diverse social media in their business strategy and the application of efficient data analytics, business organizations can effectively capture the value co-created by their customers through social media.

5.9. Conclusion

The present chapter of the thesis outlined a detailed discussion of the findings of the performed primary and secondary research aimed at value co-creation through social media in the context of the hotel industry in the UAE. The findings from the performed interviews with industry professionals were triangulated with the analysis of social media posts of the focal UAE hotels. Based on the discussion of the separate concepts, identified in the employed qualitative data, substantive theory was developed. A new definition of value co-creation which extends the existing views of this concept provides a more thorough understanding of the nature of co-creation. In addition to this, the critical place of social media as a platform for value co-creation is analyzed which adds to the existing literature the aspects of accessibility, visibility and wide outreach generated through social media, as well as their important role for enhancing customer engagement with the business organization. Effective capture of the value co-created through social media can be performed by combining the theoretical foundations provided by classical theories like ACT and SDL. The VCC Social Media Maturity Framework, developed in this chapter provides both theoretical value and practical pathway for more effective value co-creation and value capture. The following final Chapter of the present thesis represents the conclusions drawn from the present research, reflection on the application of the CGT as well as strategic, practical and academic implications of the study, and detailed review of the research limitations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1. Introduction

This is the final chapter which concludes the entire thesis. The chapter is divided into four subsections. In the first section, the researcher evaluates and carries out a reflection on constructivist ground theory in terms of the research findings and its implications. In the second section, the researcher discusses the extent to which the research objectives have been fulfilled based on the analysis of primary and secondary data. The third section of this chapter essentially reflects on the application of substantive theory and ways in which these can be used to relate to real world in terms of value co-creation using the social media platform. This involves a critical assertion of the implications with respect to business practice and strategic implications, implications for marketing practitioners, theoretical implications and potential areas of future study. In the final section, the researcher highlights the limitations of the current study and ways in which these limitations could be overcome.

6.2. Reflection of CGT research

The Constructivist grounded theory proposed by Charmaz (2006) which presents an innovative way to conduct qualitative research and offers a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, is the core philosophical perspective for conducting this research. The use of this theory helped in assigning meaning to the social world in the context of the role played by social media platforms towards value co-creation for the hotel industry in the UAE. The main argument for choosing constructivist grounded theory was based on the argument that it applied the strategies of traditional grounded theory within a constructivist paradigm and provided a rigorous systematic scientific approach while maintaining the interpretive nature of the study (Charmaz 2014). One of

the key aspects of the study was that the understanding of the role played by social media towards value co-creation was carried out through an interactive process which helps in understanding the multiple perspectives and collecting data which led to the generation of theory suggesting that value co-creation is driven by the use of social media platform coupled with factors such as customer engagement and their implications on organizational strategy.

The application of constructivist grounded theory for the current study can be reflected on following the model proposed by Smith (2019) which is explained as per Table 6.1.

Table 6. 1. Research considerations

Consideration	Constructivist Ground Theory Reflection
Kind of Knowledge	This aspect refers to identifying and explaining contextualized social processes and relates to the concepts that emerge from the data collected by the researcher (Charmaz 2014). In this study, this is explained in the sections 5.3.1 which relates to the main concept and categories that have emerged through the collection of primary data through interviews. The knowledge relates to the development of theory which explains the process of value co-creation through the use of social media platforms
Assumption about the World	This aspect of constructivist grounded theory focuses on the process and change which explains how individuals negotiate and manage social situations (Fisher 2019). This has been explained in this study by associating the process of using social media platforms by the consumers and the hotel organizations and how the content posted on these platforms lead to value co-creation through the participation of both customers as well as other organizations. Hence, the assumptions about the world have been reflected upon through the use of interactionist perspective and relativist ontology which are specifically constructed in the interpretation of the role of social media platforms for value co-creation.

Type of Analysis	<p>This aspect of constructivist grounded theory relates to the iteration performed between the data, codes, and concepts related to the research phenomena (Smith 2019). In this study, this is explained in Chapter 4, where the researcher interprets the primary and secondary data to generate codes and relates to the key concepts with respect to the use of social media platform, value co-creation, value capture, importance of customer engagement, and social media platforms support organizational strategy. The analysis of these aspects have also paved way for providing directions for VCC framework in the hotel industry in the UAE as explained in Chapter 5</p>
Conceptualization of the role of researcher	<p>This aspect of constructivist grounded theory refers to the process of data collection in which the researcher actively constructs understanding about the phenomena in the investigation and tries to clarify own assumptions and expectations while analyzing the primary data (Glaser & Strauss 2010). In this study, the researcher interacted with the interviewees for collecting primary data through semi-structured interviews with the objective of understanding the intention behind the use of social media platforms and its contribution towards value co-creation. This is explained in Section 4.2. and based on this, concepts have been generated which explains the role of researcher in exploring different concepts for generating theory</p>
Mode of working in this research	<p>This aspect of constructivist grounded theory as proposed by Smith (2019) and Charmaz (2014) implies the entire process of conducting the research which comprises of different activities such as identifying the research problem, data collection and initial coding, writing memo and raising codes to tentative categories, complimenting the study with secondary data and finalizing the concepts and categories to present the findings of the study based on the grounded theory strategy. The activities have been covered in the different chapters such as Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 to combine the findings of primary and secondary data which address the research problem and provide directions for practical implications in the context of value co-creation through the use of social media platform in the UAE hotel industry</p>

Challenges	This aspect of constructivist grounded theory refers to the challenges that are faced by the researchers in collecting primary data which can be relevant for generating theories (Charmaz 2014). Moreover, it also acknowledges the fact that data collection and analysis can be time-consuming process. These challenges were also faced by the researcher in which a majority of the time was consumed in collecting primary data. Since it was essential that the key theme of use of social media platform for value co- creation was coherent throughout the study, the researcher presented specific questions to the interviewees (Appendix 3) and the response obtained from the participants was analyzed, even though there were multiple interpretations by the interviewees which is also acknowledged as an inherent part of grounded theory
Consideration	Constructivist Ground Theory Reflection
Application to this research	This aspect relates to the relevance of constructivist grounded theory in understanding and explaining the role played by social media platform towards value co-creation in the hotel industry. The social processes such as consumer behavior, perception of consumers towards their experiences of the hotels, and the social process of posting their experiences on social media were explained by adopting a CGT approach and has led to the evaluation of findings which are directly applicable to the hotel industry in the UAE with practical implications as discussed in the present chapter.

(Compiled by the researcher)

6.3. Discussion on fulfilment of the research objectives

This study has collected both primary as well as secondary data to fulfil the research objectives as defined in Section 1.5. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews from participants who are working in the hotel industry in the UAE and have considerable experience in the industry. Secondary data was collected in the form of social media posts from UAE hotels. The analysis of the data was carried out using interpretivism paradigm and constructivist grounded theory strategy which had led to emergence of different concepts and categories as highlighted in

Section 4.7. Based on the research findings, the extent to which research objectives have been achieved are discussed below.

To establish how the implementation of social media platforms in the organization affects its value co-creation and value capture capabilities.

This objective was identified to explore the different ways in which social media platforms contribute towards value capture and value co-creation. To achieve this objective, critical review of academic literature as well as analysis of primary data was carried out. The review of literature revealed that social media brings about a significant change in the way organizations interact with customers and it encourages continuous communication with the customers by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video (Schlagwein & Hu 2018; Smith 2019). Moreover, the use of social media platform facilitates open innovation paradigm, where organizations integrate new ideas and feedback from a variety of internal and external sources (Muninger, Hammedi & Mahr 2019) and work towards capturing the feedback of customers which lead to value co-creation (Bowden et al. 2017; Edvardsson & TronVoll 2019; Hollebeek 2019). Similar findings were also reported in the analysis of primary data where the participants pointed out the usefulness of the social media platform by identifying the categories of "adoption of social media" and "diverse platform characteristics" and reported that social media and hotel and tourism industry have become inseparable and the use of social media is proven to be a potent tool towards value co-creation and value capture for the hotels in the UAE. Some of the main ways in which social media platform was implemented included the use of advanced data analytics, analyzing the comments of the users and using different software such as Clarabridge to capture and create value. These observations fulfil the above defined research objective and also answers the research

question "*How value is co-created and captured through social media platforms in the organization?*"

To determine the impact of social media platforms' diversity on the value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations.

This objective was identified to determine the extent to which the diversity of the social media platform contributes towards value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations. To achieve this objective, primary data in the form of interviews was analyzed from the perspective of the utility of the different platforms. The response from the interviewees indicated that each platform had different types of customers and hence, it is imperative to carry out a segmentation of these customers and analyze the content posted by them which can be used for value capture and value co-creation. The main finding was that demographics played a crucial role towards identifying the right social media platform and ensuring the effectiveness of a differentiated strategy such as ways of targeting the audience and investment in paid advertisements. Moreover, the interviewees acknowledged that the different platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn had a different set of customers and it is important that different strategies with respect to the content used on the different social media platform is adopted for ensuring effective value capture and value co-creation. A similar observation was noted when analyzing the secondary data which was collected in the form of social media posts where interviewees replied that Facebook and Instagram were the two main platforms, although the contents posted on these platforms varied to a great extent, thereby creating a need for differentiated marketing strategy for value capture and value co-creation. Hence, these findings of primary and secondary data present useful insights which address the above defined research objective and also answers the research question "*How*

does the social media platforms diversity enable the value co-creation and capture within organizations?"

To investigate the impact of the social media platforms on organizational strategy towards its beneficiary

This objective contributes to the enhancement of both the theoretical and practical understanding of value co-creation within the context of digital platforms and social media through providing detailed understanding of value co-creation and its capture through online platforms and internally within the organization. This objective was identified to explore the extent to which the use of social media platforms contributed towards formulating the organizational strategy in order to create value for its customers. For fulfilling this objective, the primary data collected from the research participants were analyzed and their views with respect to the abilities of social media platforms to support organizational strategy and value creation was related. One of the categories which emerged was that the choice of social media platform was crucial in order to capture the comments by the users. The response from the interviewees indicated that social media provided an effective medium to disseminate promotional messages and facilitates engagement with the consumers, all of which are in inherent part of organizational strategy. Another key aspect of generating insights through the user generated content and other analytics from the social media platforms is that it is consistent with the organization's view of adopting technology and making informed decisions by capturing the consumer experiences and their preferences. These findings are also supported in academic literature where it has been pointed out that the social media platforms provide customers with a channel of communication by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Moreover, the data collected from the customers were used to create valuable analytics which led to informed decision

making by the different hotels. Hence, the findings of the study indicate that the content as well as the social media platform was crucial towards fulfilling the marketing objectives of the organization. In addition, the capabilities of the social media platform such as real-time data collection and data analytics were also found to be key contributors towards achieving the organizational strategy which is also supported in academic literature wherein the social media platform plays an important role towards brand enhancement, creating visibility and achieving organizational objectives of consumer-focused business (Hajli & Sims 2015; Kang & Kim 2017; Veloutsou & Moutinho 2009). Hence, the above defined research objective has been achieved by identifying the concepts using constructivist grounded theory and the achievement of this objective also addresses the research question "*How does the network platform selected affect organizational strategy towards its beneficiary?*".

To provide recommendations for effective application of social media for enhancing the value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations

The recommendations and practical implications for effective application of social media for enhancing the value co-creation and value capture capabilities of organizations have been covered with respect to strategic implications, marketing practitioners, theoretical implications and directions for future research in the current Chapter.

6.4. Evaluation of substantive theory

The rationale for choice of grounded theory is explained in detail in Section 3.2 and Section 3.5. This is based on the premise of observing data patterns of multiple interpretations and generating theories with procedural precision. In this section an evaluation of substantive theory has been carried out using the criteria of credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness (Charmaz 2014)

(Table 6.2.).

Table 6. 2. Evaluation of substantive theory

Criteria for Grounded Theory	Application of Criteria to Substantive Theory
Credibility	The research methodology comprising of paradigm, research strategy and data collection techniques were consistent with the constructivist grounded theory - Chapter 3.
	<p>The data collected in terms of the sample size was sufficient to identify patterns and generate theory and the researcher did not enforce theory generation - Chapter 4</p> <p>Concepts were identified based on data collection and analyzing the data for patterns - Chapter 4.</p> <p>The primary data comprising of interviews contained sufficient information and were presented with enough details for the thesis audience to form their own assessment and interpret the theory generation process - Chapter 4</p> <p>Key Evidence - The researcher adopted explicit methodological rigor with precision involving theme generation and memoing and presented the findings in a lucid manner which demonstrated the central research phenomenon in the substantive theory (Chapter 4).</p>

Originality	<p>The categories and concepts of the research were fresh in the context of the industry choice, although few theoretical concepts (such as SDL and ACT) were also used from existing academic literature - Chapter 2.</p> <p>The theoretical and practical implications and significance of the theory are explained clearly in this Chapter.</p> <p>The usefulness of constructivist grounded theory strategy was explained in the context of the study and how the researcher applied the various principles of grounded theory to arrive at theory generation – Chapter 5.</p> <p>Key Evidence - The research topic was contemporary and addressed a significant issue with respect to the adoption of digital and social media</p>
	<p>Platforms and their implications for organizational strategy and business processes. The research gap was addressed and the theory generated in this study made an original contribution to academic literature.</p> <p>VCC social media maturity level – while previous research (Vargo & Lusch 2016) points out that value co-creation is coordinated through actor generated institutions and institutional arrangements, the present study develops the substantive theory by pointing out the critical role of social media maturity level as effective arrangements and two-way engagement for effective VCC.</p>

Resonance	<p>The meanings attributed to the concepts of value capture, value co- creation and their influence on organizational strategy as a result of influence of social media platforms were interpreted and con-constructed which made sense to the people involved in the research - Chapter 4.</p> <p>The researcher has drawn upon linkages with respect to the academic concepts, primary data collected from interviewees and presenting of findings which indicated potential connections - Chapter 5</p> <p>The findings of the study presented practical implications for marketing practitioners to further reflect upon their activities - Chapter 6</p> <p>Key Evidence - The researcher demonstrated the co-construction of meaning through interview transcripts and memos (Chapter 4), reflecting upon the interviewees' experiences (Chapter 4) and also relating the secondary data with the concepts generated (Chapter 5).</p>
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Usefulness	<p>The research addresses the key role played by social media platforms towards value capture and value co-creation which has significant implications in the hotel industry chosen for the study - Chapter 5</p> <p>The findings of the study delved into the different ways in which value co-creation can be enhanced using the social media platforms. This also helped in understanding the social media adoption using the matrix consisting of quadrants of social media use and value co-creation - Chapter 5</p> <p>The theory can be tried out in other industries which have direct consumer facing business – in the present Chapter 6</p> <p>Key Evidence - The process of analyzing interview transcripts, memoing and generation of concepts confirmed that the constructivist grounded theory has a utility in addressing contemporary issues as demonstrated in the study of hotel industry. Furthermore, the reflections on implications of the theory and scope of future work, presented in this chapter, can be used to develop further knowledge in the subject.</p>
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(Compiled by the researcher)

The substantive theory related to the influence of social media platforms on value co-creation presents significant implications, both practical as well as theoretical. These implications are discussed in subsequent sections.

6.4.1. Implications for strategy

The findings of the study have considerable implications with respect to the organizational strategy and competitiveness of hotels. These findings correspond to the last research proposition for the study, defined as: *“RP6: Value co-creation using the social media platform has significant implications in the hospitality industry”*

Firstly, the use of social media platforms facilitates engagement with customers in a convenient way, leading to useful inputs from the customers which can be acted upon by the organizations. This is in line with the organizational strategy of any consumer facing business and especially hospitality sector, which thrives on customer feedback to enhance their service delivery and work towards customer loyalty. Secondly, the social media platforms provide a convenient and cost-effective way to promote their service offerings and reach to the larger audience. Organizations can use the substantive theory to identify their target segment of customers for achieving effective results through their marketing efforts using the social media platform. For example, hotels can highlight their differentiated service offerings such as experience of luxury, weather, festival and other aspects to relate to their core service offering in order to associate them with the positive experience of the customers. Thirdly, the capabilities of the social media platforms such as real-time data collection, ease of reaching out to customers and data analytics help the marketing team to achieve the organizational strategy of understanding the consumer behavior and working towards achieving customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and repeat business from the customers. Furthermore, organizations can assess the value co-creation using the VCC Social Media Maturity Framework which represents the dynamic development of the value co-creation through social media (Section 5.5). The substantive theory provides useful insights to leverage the

social media platform for generating insights which can help the organizations towards retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. Finally, the content posted by the users on the social media platforms forms the basis to understand the consumer behavior and their expectations from the hotels. Here, substantive theory offers insights for identifying authentic consumer behavior which contributes towards targeted marketing which is an inherent part of organizational strategy. The present research confirms the possibilities for managers to employ the social media platforms for process improvement in the UAE hotel industry. The findings of the study highlight that the use of social media platforms make it easy for hotels in UAE to interact with the customers. Furthermore, the use of social media also facilitates the use of analytical tools which helps in streamlining the various processes such as marketing strategy, advertising, pricing and other related processes. The findings of the data collected through interviews indicate the importance of social media as a platform which facilitates value co-creation. These findings are also confirmed with the academic literature where Piller, Vossen and Ihl (2012) noted that social media provide a highly interactive platform that allows individual users and communities to share, create, discuss and modify user-generated content. Moreover, the data collection brought out the finding that the engagement of customers was enhanced to a great extent by using social media platform. This is also supported in academic literature where it has been reported that social media platforms have emerged that provide customers with a channel of communication by exchanging user-generated content, incorporating text, image, audio and video (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Roeffen & Scholl-Grissemann 2016).

A key implication for the management of hotel organizations is that they can employ social media for facilitating customer engagement for value creation. The findings of the study present evidence of value creation using the social media platform. One of the ways is through customer engagement

which has also been acknowledged as a key factor which leads to valuable insights due to specific feedback and user generated content (Lee, Hwang & Choi 2012; Tafesse and Wien; 2017; Wolny & Mueller 2013). Previous studies on social media supporting co-creation activities place the focus on content sharing, organization and collaborative works among customers (Agafonow 2014; Bashir, Papamichail & Malik 2017). Therefore, social media are seen as the medium for value creation (Majchrzak et al. 2009). In the light of the SDL theoretical logic, scholars describe customer as value co- creators (Vargo & Lusch 2008; Brodie, Löbler & Fehrer 2019). In contrast, Rashid et al. (2019) present a platform approach towards the study of VCC. The authors emphasize the impact of the specific social media platform employed by the business organization for its VCC activities, which provides a meaningful rationale for a study with a specific focus on individual social media platforms. The findings of this study also support existing literature and has reported that social media platform has significant potential for value co-creation. The consumers feel free to express their opinion about their experience at a particular hotel which provides insights for the hotel management on ways for improvement in their service delivery. Considering that social media has become an inherent part of the life of the consumers, this is also provided tremendous benefits for the marketers to engage with the consumers and invite the customers to become a part of value co-creation through their participation (Roeffen & Scholl-Grissemann 2016). The very fact that the use of social media is very convenient and can be adopted with ease, value co-creation has become easier for the organizations. This way of value co-creation is made possible due to the optimal mix of service delivery, customer feedback, marketing analysis, and technology adoption by the companies, all of which form an inherent part of value co-creation. Furthermore, the study confirms the findings of Shawky et al. (2020) that these online customer activities could be managed through appropriate practical frameworks in order to move

them to a new level of the engagement cycle. Moreover, the active participation of the organization on the social media platform and encouraging customers for participation through word-of-mouth, user generated content and social commerce allows the organization to have the potential on value capture.

6.4.2. Marketing implications

The acknowledgement of social media platform as an effective way of value creation as reported in the findings of the study has considerable practical implications for the marketing specialists. Firstly, the marketing practitioners can use the substantive theory to formulate marketing strategies by leveraging the social media platform to maintain continuous communication with the customers and reach out to a larger audience. By engaging with customers on a regular basis, the feedback process becomes much easier through increased engagement rate of the customers and the marketing team can generate useful and specific insights with respect to the experience of the customers (such as room, interior of the hotel, and restaurant service, among others). Based on the feedback and the content shared by the customers on the social media platform, the internal marketing team of organizations can collaborate in order to generate fresh ideas to provide enhanced service delivery and superior experience to their customers. These findings are also supported in academic literature where it has been reported that business value can be captured through participation of customers in co-creation so that it became enabler for business to sustain in competitive environment (Agafonow 2014; Singaraju et al. 2015). By using the information provided by the customers, the marketing team can create a database or customer relationship management software where they can capture the behavioral aspects, preferences, and factors

influencing customer satisfaction. All of these have significant implications for marketing team in order to streamline their marketing efforts.

Secondly, the use of different analytics software for data capture and analysis facilitates the marketing team to figure out the relevant content and relate them to the actionable items in terms of business operations. The application of substantive theory relating to the use of social media platform implies that the marketing team need to continuously review the content posted on the social media platforms and accordingly collaborate with the operations team in the hotels to make specific changes which are aligned to the customer requirements. The analysis of primary data clearly revealed that technology has been the key enabler for value creation and has considerably enhanced the scope for innovation and creativity within the marketing team. By leveraging the analytical tools which support the social media platform, the marketing team can create personalized offers for the customers based on their past experience which can further contribute towards customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Hence, there is a clear implication for marketing team to adopt the software and analytical tools which support real-time data gathering and data analysis, ultimately leading to informed decisions by the marketing and operations teams in the hotels.

Thirdly, the formulation of the social VCC Social Media Maturity Framework provides significant information to the management and marketing practitioners. The VCC Social Media Maturity Framework can help the organizations to carry out a self-assessment regarding their present phase of maturity based on leveraging the social media platform for business activities. This can provide useful insights related to the expected benefits and resources required for moving on to the further stages in the VCC Social Media Maturity Framework. The interpretation and adoption of the value co-creation matrix provides insights on the directions for customer engagement and using the

analytical tools to generate actionable information which is aligned with the organizational strategy and leading to value co-creation. However, it is important to note that these models can serve as guidelines for creating and implementing a marketing strategy and the information could vary for different organizations.

Finally, the findings of the study present useful opportunities for the hotel organizations in the UAE to create brand awareness and visibility to a wider audience by leveraging the social media platform. The marketing team can devise strategies to roll out promotional content such as events and discount offered by the hotels in the cost-effective way such that the message is circulated to a larger audience and has a greater potential for converting leads. This also has implications towards the organizational strategy as the social media platform facilitates the alignment of core competency of the organization with social media content strategy for generating content which is effective and can resonate with the personal preferences of the customers. The marketing team is also presented with the opportunity of enhancing the brand of the organization, thereby leading to more site traffic which can contribute to higher conversions. Therefore, the use of substantive theory based on value co-creation has the potential to make the marketing department more effective in generating revenues and supporting business strategy.

6.4.3. Implications for academics / Theoretical implications/

Prior research has acknowledged the importance of VCC concept but it has also been pointed out that the model is still in its infancy (Brodie et al., 2019). Moreover, researchers have focused on explaining the theoretical concept of VCC and value capture, its meaning and definition, the mechanisms associated with it, and how it is used by the organizations with little or no discussion on how the use of online platforms contribute towards VCC (Agafonow, 2014; Lepak et al., 2007;

Pitelis, 2009). This study has addressed this research gap by emphasizing on the relevance and influence of social media platforms towards value co-creation by combining the SDL and ACT perspective. A key extract from the findings of the study is the development of the theoretical framework which represents the interplay of the three critical components which lead to co-creation of value - social media platforms, customer engagement and business strategy - supported by the theoretical underpinnings of ACT and SDL. The findings clearly indicate the important role of social media on value co-creation in the hospitality sector which is made possible through collaboration of customers, digital media content, and diversity of social media platforms. Moreover, the use of social media platforms is also highlighted as being crucial towards influencing organisations' strategy. Furthermore, this research has also acknowledged the importance of online activities and how it has challenged the conventional organizations to react to a co-creation experience. While the focus of the research is on a specific technology, i.e., social media, it also highlights the need for technology for customer engagement and value co-creation. Finally, the findings of the study also emphasize on the interaction of the 3 components through the ACT dimensions can only lead to effective VCC in the context of SDL.

The findings of the study revealing the importance of social media platform towards branding and customer engagement has considerable theoretical implications which address the research gap and add to the existing literature. The gap identified in existing literature related to describing value and the process of value co-creation. This has been addressed by the application of substantive theory which reveals that customer engagement, user generated content and use of social media platform for branding and promotional activities are inherent components of value co-creation. While prior research has acknowledged the need for value co-creation through the use of technology (Curtis 2013; Shankar et al. 2011), this study specifically contributes to academic

literature towards the importance of social media platforms in value co-creation. In terms of the importance of user-generated content on social media platforms for ensuring authenticity and credibility, this study also adds that user-generated content is the core aspect which facilitates customer engagement and leads to value co-creation. In addition, the findings of the study also support the theoretical framework of Service Dominant Logic which argues that the use of technology is integral towards understanding consumer behavior and capturing value through direct interaction with consumers (Kohtamaki & Rajala 2016). More specifically, the findings strengthen the argument of social media as a potent tool for exchange of services along with other stakeholders such as organizations, customers, and markets. In essence, this study has concurred with the academics' point of view that SDL forms the basis for all marketing and hence, needs to be integrated with the marketing strategy of the organizations. Finally, the adoption of substantive theory in this study supports the existing research on the importance of ACT theory which argues that social media and other technology platforms play a crucial role towards strategic innovation within the organization and provides impetus to development of capabilities which can lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Culnan, McHugh & Zubillaga 2010; Enkel, Groemminger & Heil 2017; Schlagwein & Hu 2018).

The implications were reflected upon how substantive theory could be relevant towards understanding the process of value capture and value co-creation in the hotel industry.

Contribution of social media platform towards organizational strategy with a focus on the hotel industry

The findings of the study indicate that use of social media platforms is inherent towards creating value through engagement with customers. This is also consistent with the academic literature where it has been reported that customer engagement is based on factors such as connection,

interaction, and satisfaction (Sashi, 2012). However, the findings of the study extend the theoretical concept of customer engagement cycle by emphasizing on the digital platform of social media as a catalyst for customer engagement. Furthermore, the findings of the study also concur with Lusch & Nambisan (2015) who reported that technology plays a very strategic role in leveraging all these factors through the platform and forms the framework, thereby enhancing and developing the value creation process and value acquisition process. Only in the case of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, the organizations can develop value specific to the experience of the customers with respect to their service offerings. Furthermore, the theoretical implication is that the use of social media platforms is essential to analyze and document customer responses or value created.

The findings from the primary and secondary data also support the existing academic literature and the theoretical frameworks of ACT and VoE. The VoE theoretical framework argues for customer engagement to understand the experience of the customer and draw upon the customer's knowledge to enhance the service delivery (Helkkula & Kelleher 2010; Wang et al., 2011). Since understanding the customers and attracting them with offers is one of the core marketing activities of the hotels, it has been presented that social media acts as a catalyst for improving business activities. The entire social media platform has made it easier for organizations to assimilate and analyze the data from the customers. For example, the feedback, input, or any type of interaction with the customers serves as the basis for social media content strategy for the hotel companies in the UAE. The substantive theory thus added to the growing interest and literature on engagement aspects relevant to content sharing by customers on the social media platforms.

6.5. Limitations and directions for future research:

The strength of this study lies in the use of interpretivist paradigm and constructivist grounded

theory research strategy to capture the subjective interpretation of the research participants with respect to the value co-creation in the hotel industry in the UAE using the social media platform. The consideration of the constructivist grounded theory has been adequately reflected in the study as shown in Table 6.1. However, there are certain limitations which need to be highlighted in order to capture the essence of this research. Firstly, the study has used semi structured interviews as the primary data collection in hotel industry only which poses the limitations related to the interpretation of the research results through hotel sectors which limit the possibility of generalization to other sectors. However, the selection of interviewees was also constrained with the defined inclusion and exclusion criteria across different corporate management departments (digital, marketing, innovation, general management, food and beverages) (Section 4.2). The employed theoretical sampling allowed theoretical saturation of the acquired qualitative primary data to be reached. In addition, the widespread pandemic which constrains the personal interactions partially prevented the face-to-face meetings with participants and visit to the hotel premises in some occasions which would have been more convenient and would have allowed the researcher to increase the sample size for data collection. Though, the researcher still managed to perform Secondly, the use of mixed methods approach involving both qualitative and quantitative data would have provided the potential of overcoming the limitations of both interpretivist and positivist paradigms while also presenting robust findings (Leech et al. 2010; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007).

Thirdly, the study was focused on 6 luxury hotels in the UAE. This implied that even though people who had higher experience and knowledge about the use of social media platforms in the hotel industry in the UAE but were not holding a managerial position in any of these hotel organizations did not participate in the study.

The fourth limitation of the study is that the content analysis using secondary data is carried out on a limited sample – 12 social media accounts (6 Instagram and 6 Facebook) of 6 UAE hotels. Moreover, the coverage of the content analysis was limited to the public information of the posts on social media platform of Facebook and Instagram only for the period of 6 months. Nevertheless, the main purpose was to identify the messaging strategies adopted by the six luxurious hotels and the perception of the consumers with respect to the dissemination of messages through the social media platforms. This was achieved by analyzing the customer engagement with respect to specific aspects of service delivery such as room ambience, hotel exterior and food service, among others. Additional limitation worth mentioning is the focus of the study performed from the organizational perspective. The service eco-system entails a broad number of stakeholders, which could provide a different viewpoint on the opportunities for VCC in the hotel industry. Therefore, future studies on this topic should consider employing more diversified samples of respondents from different areas in the hotel industry, as well as other stakeholders outside the immediate limits of this sector, like users of social media, bloggers, and social media influencers and outsource branding companies who have experience in the field of value co-creation in social media. In addition to that, different forms of data, including user generated contents could be employed for the purposes of future studies. Further research can be focused on the presence of hotel business organizations on other popular social networks such as Trip Advisor and You Tube, among others.

Another limitation of this study is that it is carried out only in the context of hotel industry in the UAE. Considering the constructivist grounded theory strategy used and the limited data collection using interviews, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to a larger population (of hotels across other countries or to any other service sector organizations in the UAE as well). This

limitation was also highlighted by Charmaz (2014) who stated that the primary objective of constructivist grounded theory research is not to generate findings which can be generalized based on a larger representative sample (as is the case in survey data collection).

The chosen area of study in the context of exploring the role of social media platforms towards value co-creation and the application of substantive theory presents numerous opportunities for further research. Firstly, the substantive theory could further develop into specific areas such as influence of user generated content towards attracting more audience and increasing chances of value co-creation. This can be built upon the research of value capture Grönroos (2012) which emphasizes on value co-creation and value capture as the core essence of relationship between customers and organizations.

Secondly, the utility of social media platforms towards value co-creation can also be explored for other direct consumer facing sectors airlines and tourist destinations, among others. The theoretical framework of SDL in conjunction with substantive theory can be further explored in other service industries to explore ways of creating a better experience for the customers through a collaborative engagement using the social media platform. The importance of SDL towards understanding and exploring consumer behavior has been acknowledged by Ramaswamy and Ozcan (2016), which is also a key finding of this study, and can be further built upon by exploring the value co-creating in an increasingly digitalized world of interactions. The fourth area of theoretical implication could be the use of substantive theory in the context of different B2C organizations provides further research opportunities which can strengthen the application of ACT framework to demonstrate the importance of customer engagement using the technology platform of social media. Since it is not possible for organizations to stay connected with customers without a platform which provides

convenient and continuous communication, further research can draw upon the findings of this study and generalize the importance of social media platforms as a whole to stay connected with the consumers and engage in value co-creation. The presented theory can be up-graded and additionally developed through further research. As a result of the relatively small sample of research participants and the focus on the UAE hotel industry, it is emphasized that the present thesis presents the foundational level of theoretical saturation.

Finally, considering the focus of organizations to enhance the efficiency of customer interaction while also considering the cost factor, future research priorities could be to focus upon performance indicators which relate to the efficiency of the marketing efforts using the digital platforms. A majority of this study is focused upon customer engagement and their contribution to value co-creation and the findings can be extended to explore critical factors of consumer behavior such as customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer expectations, among others. For achieving this, researchers can focus on combining substantive theory along with VoE framework to gain insights about the personal experience of the consumers which can help in strengthening the service delivery of organizations. Prior research by Brodie et al. (2011) has already highlighted the importance of leveraging customer's knowledge and experience about the product or service and this can be further extended to explore the factors of consumer behavior by leveraging the usefulness of social media platform by building upon the findings of this study

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Legal Ethics Form



23-07-20

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Miss Amany Mosa with Student ID number 20181344 is a registered part-time student in the Phd In Business Management offered by The British University in Dubai since September 2018. She is supervised by Professor Husam AlMalkawi

Miss Mosa is currently collecting data for her research (Organizational value Co-Creation for Social Media platforms). The objective of this letter therefore, is to please ask you to assist and facilitate in carrying out the interviews in your organization.

She is required to gather data through conducting interviews that will help her in writing the final research. Your permission to conduct her research in your organisation is hereby requested. Further support provided to her in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Any information given will be used solely for academic purposes. Responses obtained through the interviews will be voluntarily, anonymity and confidentiality.

This letter is issued on Miss Mosa's request.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Amany Mosa and I am Ph. D. student at The British University in Dubai. I would like to invite you to participate in my research which is a part of the preparation of my Ph. D. thesis. You can find more detailed information regarding my empirical study in the following lines. This information will allow you to better understand my research and to make an informed decision on whether you will agree to take part in my study or not. If you have any additional questions regarding my research, do not hesitate to contact me for clarification.

Study title: Value Co-creation through Social Media Platforms in Hotels: Constructivist Grounded Theory

Aim of the research:

The primary objective of my research is to explore the opportunities for value co-creation and value capture provided by social media, as well as their applicability to strategy development purposes in the context of the hotel industry.

Why have you been invited?

You have been invited to share your insights into the research topic, related to value co-creation through social media. You have been selected due to your practical experience in the field of social media marketing in the context of the hotel industry in the UAE. Your expertise is regarded as a very important source of information that would contribute to a detailed investigation of the research topic and to the development of novel knowledge and practical

directions for the UAE hotel sector.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is absolutely voluntary. You are free to decide whether to take part in this study or you would prefer to not be interviewed. I would like to emphasize that your expert input in my research would be highly appreciated. You are free to quit your participation in the study at any point.

What are the expectations to me?

You will be invited for an interview session in which you are expected to respond to a few questions related to the topic of my research. The responses should be based on your personal experience and your individual understanding. There will be no right or wrong answers, so you will be expected to share your honest opinion. You may be contacted for additional information within 2 months upon the interview session has taken place.

Costs and payments:

The interview sessions will be performed either face-to-face or online using Zoom in order to ensure your safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview sessions will be scheduled in a time that fits your schedule best. Therefore, the only expense you will be required to make with reference to this research study is to spend 30-45 minutes of your time. You may also be contacted for additional information after the completion of the interview research. The interviewees who agree to take part in the empirical research will not receive any payment, because this research is undertaken for academic purposes.

Potential risks and benefits:

There are no risks related to your participation in this study as all the information shared by you will be kept confidential. There is no risk of your personal opinion being connected to yourself

or your organization due to the strict confidentiality and data protection rules followed in this research. Even though you will not receive any monetary benefits from your participation in the study, your participation will be valuable for the development of the existing marketing and management knowledge.

Confidentiality:

No identifiable personal details will be collected during the interviews and the follow-up contact. You will be referred to as a code (e.g. interviewee 1) and your personal details, designation, and organization will not be connected to your responses in the analysis of your responses. All the raw data gathered through interviews will be stored on data storage devices protected with a password, which will be available only to the researcher. The raw primary information provided by you will be destroyed upon the completion of the thesis.

What will be done with the results from this research?

The responses you provide during the interviews will be transcribed and analyzed. The analysis of the interview data will be summarized and presented in my PhD thesis. The final version of the thesis will be reviewed for final approval by my supervisor Professor Husam Al-Malkawi. The results of my study will also be disseminated in the form of research publications in academic journals.

Organization and funding of this study:

Who is organizing and funding the research?

This research is organized within my Ph. D. program at The British University in Dubai. This educational institution is the only organization behind my research. No funding from any external parties has been or will be employed in this study. This guarantees that there is no risk

of any conflicts of interests between the researcher, the University, yourself, and any third parties to appear.

Additional information: In case you need additional information or clarification, in order to make an informed decision regarding your participation, please feel free to contact me at: 20181344@student.buid.ac.ae

I would like to cordially thank you for the time and effort you have invested in reading this information sheet and for taking your time to consider your possible participation in the study!

Appendix 3: Interview agenda

Preparation

Greeting the interviewee and introductory statement, clarify the process to the interviewee. Prepare for audio recording and taking notes during the interview, make sure the recorder is working properly.

Have a look at the participant information sheet.

Ask interviewee to re-state his/her consent to be interviewed, if they have additional questions and if they agree for the interview session to be recorded.

Opening stage of the interview session

Explain that you will start with demographic and background questions.

- What is your current position in the UAE hotel industry?
- Do you have previous experience in the hotel sector? How long is it? How many years?
- How old are you?
- Which is your country of origin? Where are you from?

Deconstructing Value co-creation

- Have you heard the term “value co-creation”? What do you know about value co-creation?
Would you please try to define the co-creation concept from your experience? How it looks like in your organization?
- When do you use value co-creation? Please explain and, if possible, give some examples.

Social Media Applications Usage

- What are the social media platforms that are being used in your organization? How do you see social media?

- What are the benefits and advantages of using social media in your organization? What is the Purpose to use social media? (Innovation - Branding - Engagement - New Customers or retaining Costumers)
- Do social media support value co-creation? How do social media enable co-creation and collaboration with your customers?
- Do you recognize any differentiation between the nature of the objective and the type of social media platform used? Is your organization using different social media for different aims?

Social Media Content

- How would you explain the process of gathering information from customers to collaborate with them? Please explain it.
- What is the strategy in place for the content published in social media?
- Do you differentiate the content from each platform used? How do you differentiate it?
- Why do you differentiate the contents from the different social medial platforms?

Social Media Customer Engagement

- How do you enable social engagement with customers?
- How do you maintain customer engagement? What is the different enagmnet aspects?
- In your understanding, how important is this engagement to value co-creation? Can you elaborate?

Social Media Capabilities

- What are the capabilities that support co-creation and value capture? Can you elaborate more?

- How your organization support that in developing, managing, and unit specific? How?
What is for?

Value Capture

- For what objective(s) have you used social media in value gathering?
- How is this influencing the value creation process?
- How do you acquire the new knowledge/new value created from the users (customers)
what is the capability in place to identify and acquire new external value?
- What is the process to analyse, process, interpret and understand the new information?
- How do you transform this new information/new knowledge that has been created early
to be employed within your organization/department? How you get exploit this new
knowledge? What is the strategy that your department/organization used to refine,
extend, and leverage these new values?

Exploratory probes – to be employed during the whole interview, wherever necessary:

- Could you, please, explain this in more details?
- Could you, please, give an example of.....?
- Please, elaborate more on....
- Could you, please, clarify.....?
- How is it connected to value co-creation?
- Have you experienced it in another organization? Do you know other people who have
experienced the same?
- Could you, please, clarify, why do you think so?
- Is that opinion based on your individual experience? Could you please provide us more

details of a situation which illustrates this aspect?

Cooling out prompts – to be used 10-15 minutes prior to the end of the interview session

- The time is passing so fast in this nice conversation. Would you allow our session to proceed by...? so that we can cover the remaining.... questions?
- Do you think we have missed to cover any important topic? Please suggest.
- Do you have any additional questions?
- Would you like to share anything else?

Closing of the interview session

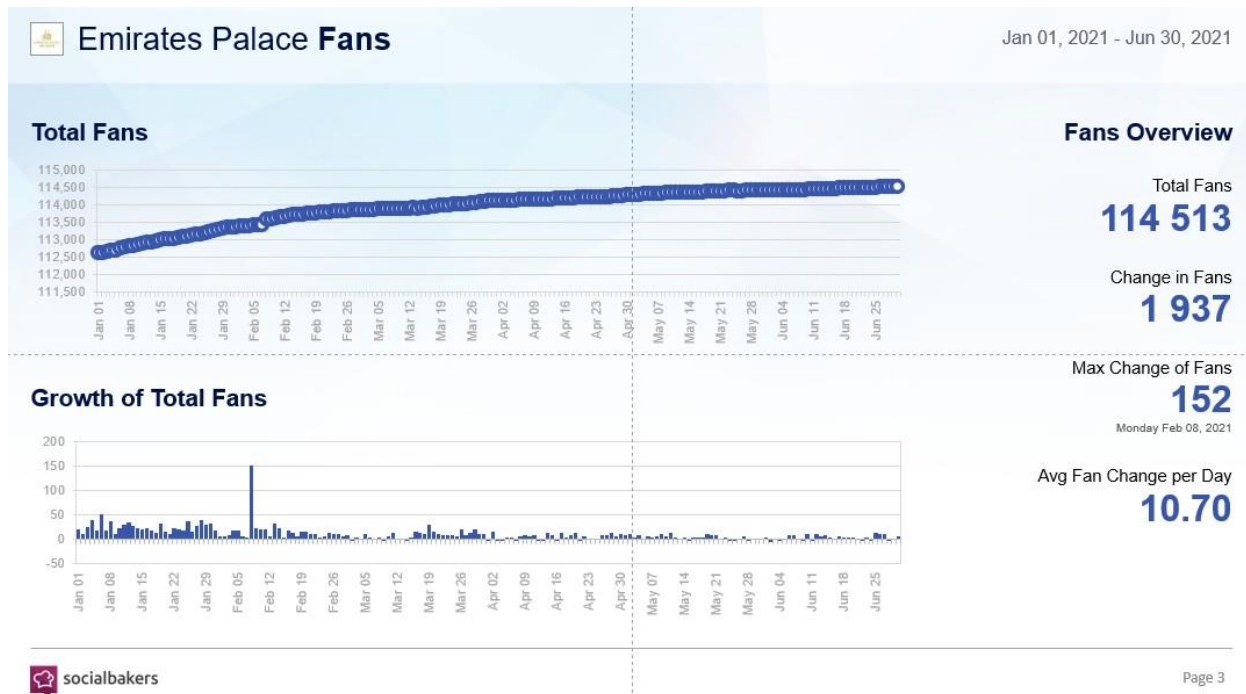
I would like to cordially thank you for your input in this study. Your insights into the topic of value co-creation and value capture through social media based on your personal experience in the context of the UAE hotel industry is highly appreciated!

Your personal details will not be included in the interview transcripts and the analysis of the qualitative primary data from this interview session.

In the following two months, I might get back to you in case I need additional clarification from your side. Would you allow me to contact you for further details or clarification withing this period?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Appendix 4: Social Media Analytics Reports

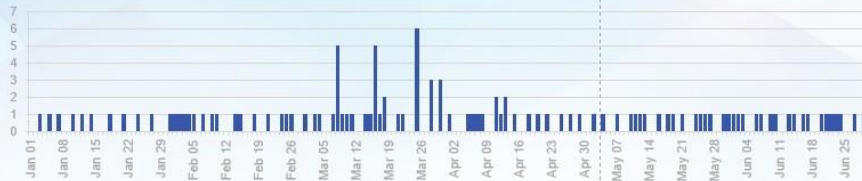




Emirates Palace Content

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Page Posts by day

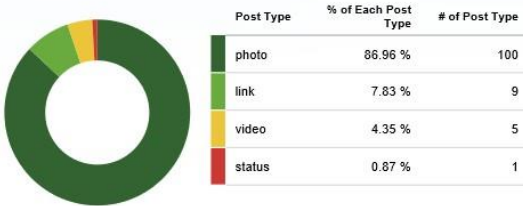


Content Overview

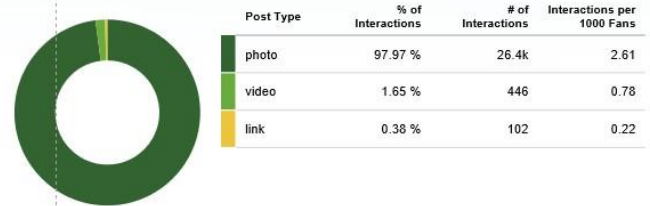
Total Page Posts
115

Avg Posts per Day
0.64

Post Types



Most Engaging Post Types



socialbakers

Page 4



Emirates Palace Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Fans



Activity Overview

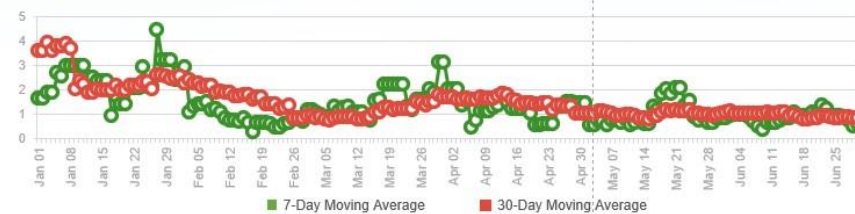
Max Interactions per 1000 Fans on
16.50

Wednesday Jan 27, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Fans on
0.26

Sunday Jan 31, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Fans



socialbakers

Page 5

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

26 993

Max Interactions

1 869

Wednesday Jan 27, 2021

Min Interactions

29

Sunday Jan 31, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

149

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Reactions	92.51 %	25.0k
Comments	3.58 %	967
Shares	3.91 %	1.1k



Page 6

Emirates Palace Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021



Organic



Did you know that #EmiratesPalace has 12 external fountains and 8 indoor water features.

 Total Interactions	1.9k
 Reactions	1.7k
 Comments	67
 Shares	60
 Interactions per 1000 Fans	16.50



Organic



Did you know that the Emirates Palace has over 114 domes, and the main dome is 72.6m high?

Total Interactions	1.1k
Reactions	1.0k
Comments	46
Shares	46
Interactions per 1000 Fans	9.84



Organic



The perfect spot to enjoy #breezy
#evenings

Total Interactions	1.1k
Reactions	1.0k
Comments	37
Shares	38
Interactions per 1000 Fans	9.69



Organic



No better place for a great #weekend than
The Palace.

Total Interactions	994
Reactions	934
Comments	20
Shares	40
Interactions per 1000 Fans	8.79



Page 9

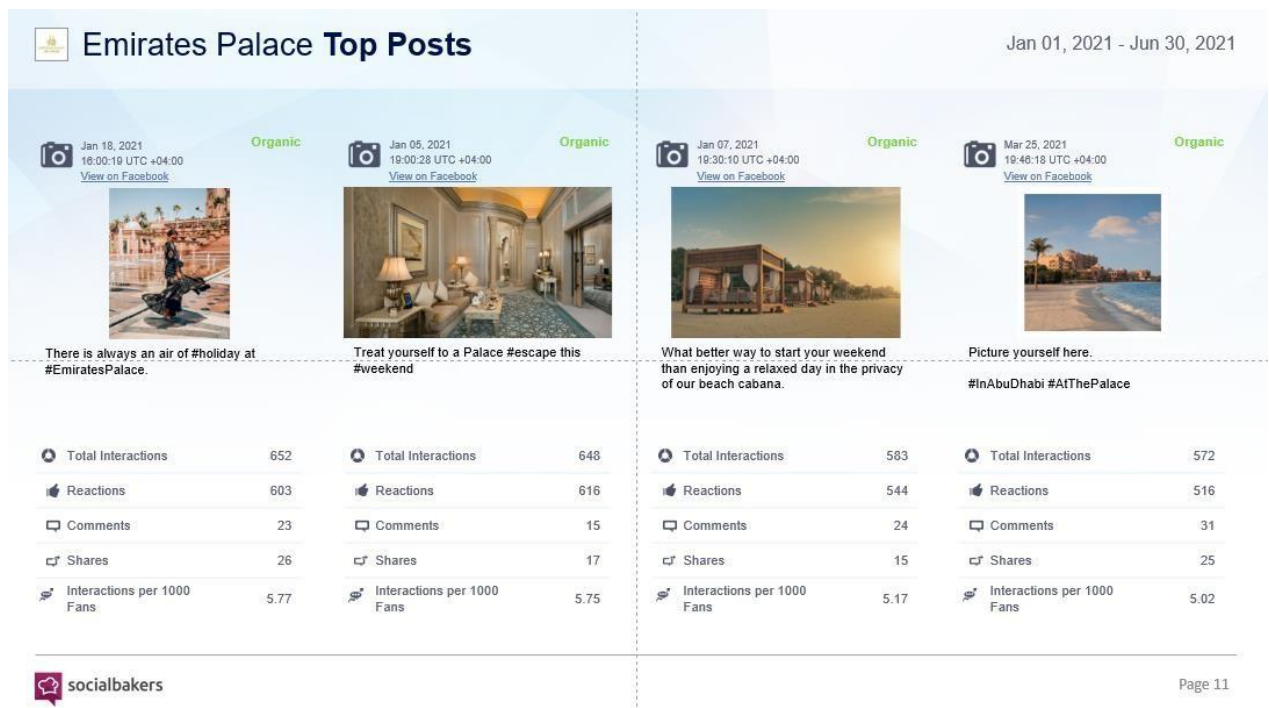


Figure of Report 1. Emirates Palace Facebook Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)

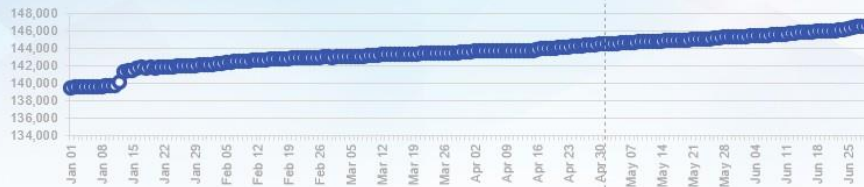




Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi Followers

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Followers



Followers Overview

Total Followers
146 513

Change in Followers
7 159

Max Change of Followers
1 174

Wednesday Jan 13, 2021

Avg Followers Change per Day
39.55

Growth of Total Followers



Page 3



Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Followers



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on
21.16

Wednesday Jan 27, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on
1.24

Monday Jun 07, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers



Page 5



Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

71 061

Max Interactions

3 002

Wednesday Jan 27, 2021

Min Interactions

181

Monday Jun 07, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

393

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Likes	98.53 %	70.0k
Comments	1.47 %	1.0k



socialbakers

Page 6



Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021



Jan 03, 2021
18:40:41 UTC +04:00



The perfect spot to enjoy #breezy #evenings

Total Interactions	1.5k
Likes	1.4k
Comments	17
Interactions per 1000 Followers	10.49



May 18, 2021
13:47:24 UTC +04:00



Lush retreat.
#InAbuDhabi #AtThePalace

Total Interactions	1.5k
Likes	1.4k
Comments	22
Interactions per 1000 Followers	10.12



Mar 18, 2021
18:55:51 UTC +04:00



At Emirates Palace, luxury is personalised.
#InAbuDhabi #AtThePalace

Total Interactions	1.3k
Likes	1.3k
Comments	17
Interactions per 1000 Followers	9.01



Apr 13, 2021
04:35:57 UTC +04:00



يتقدم فندق قصر الإمارات بأحر التهاني وأطيب التمنيات لكم ولعائلاتكم بمناسبة حلول شهر رمضان المبارك.

Total Interactions	1.3k
Likes	1.2k
Comments	22
Interactions per 1000 Followers	8.79

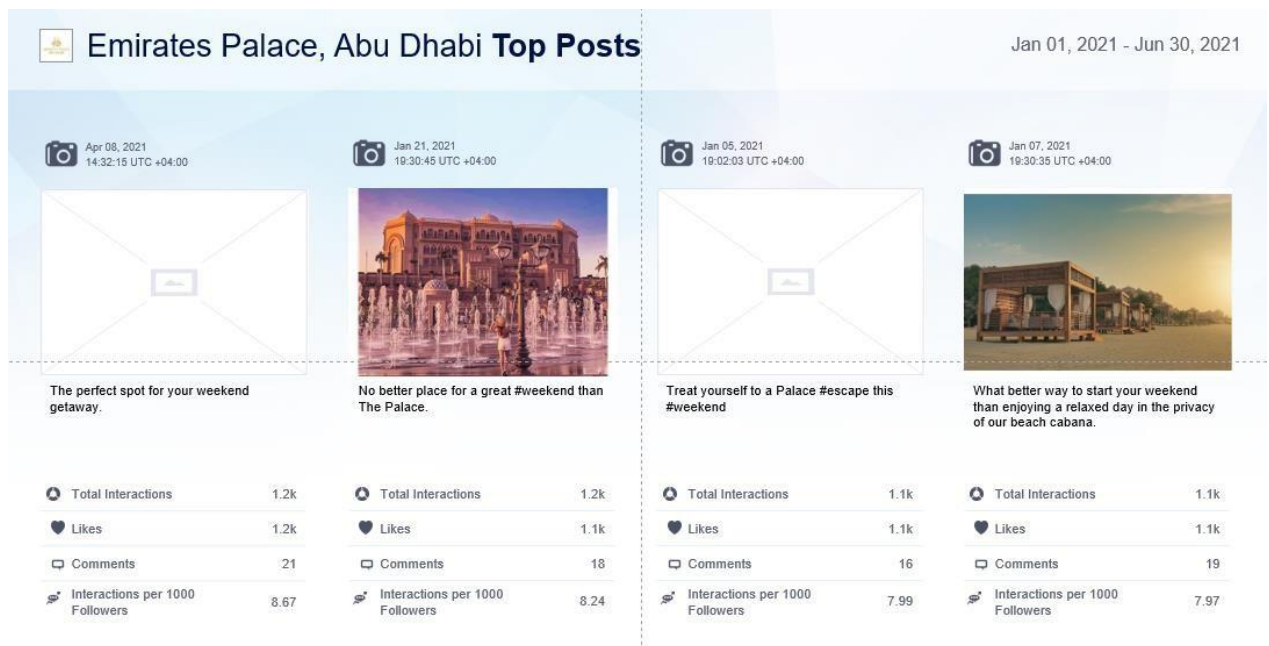


Figure of Report2. Emirates Palace Instagram Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Fans

Total Fans

38 459

Absolute Change in Fans

196

Relative Change in Fans

+ 0.51 %

Content

Page Posts

71

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.92

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.92

Response Rate to User Questions

N/A %

Average Response Time for User Questions

N/A

Interactions

Total Interactions

6 258

Reactions

5 946

Comments

142

Shares

170

User Posts

9



socialbakers

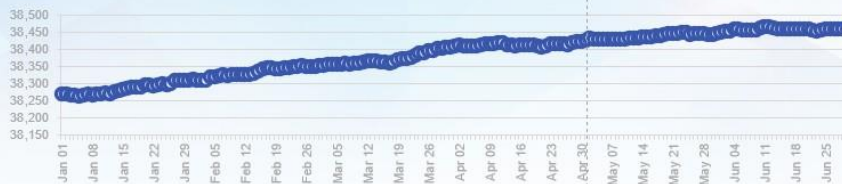
Page 2



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Fans

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Fans



Fans Overview

Total Fans

38 459

Change in Fans

196

Max Change of Fans

10

Wednesday Jan 27, 2021

Avg Fan Change per Day

1.08

Growth of Total Fans



socialbakers

Page 3



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Content

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Page Posts by day



Content Overview

Total Page Posts
71

Avg Posts per Day
0.39

Post Types



Post Type	% of Each Post Type	# of Post Type
photo	80.28 %	57
video	19.72 %	14

Most Engaging Post Types



Post Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions	Interactions per 1000 Fans
photo	91.61 %	5.7k	2.82
video	8.39 %	525	1.05



socialbakers

Page 4



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions
6 258

Max Interactions
1 543
Friday May 07, 2021

Min Interactions
0
Tuesday Jan 19, 2021

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Reactions	95.01 %	5.9k
Comments	2.27 %	142
Shares	2.72 %	170

Avg Interactions per Day
35



socialbakers

Page 6

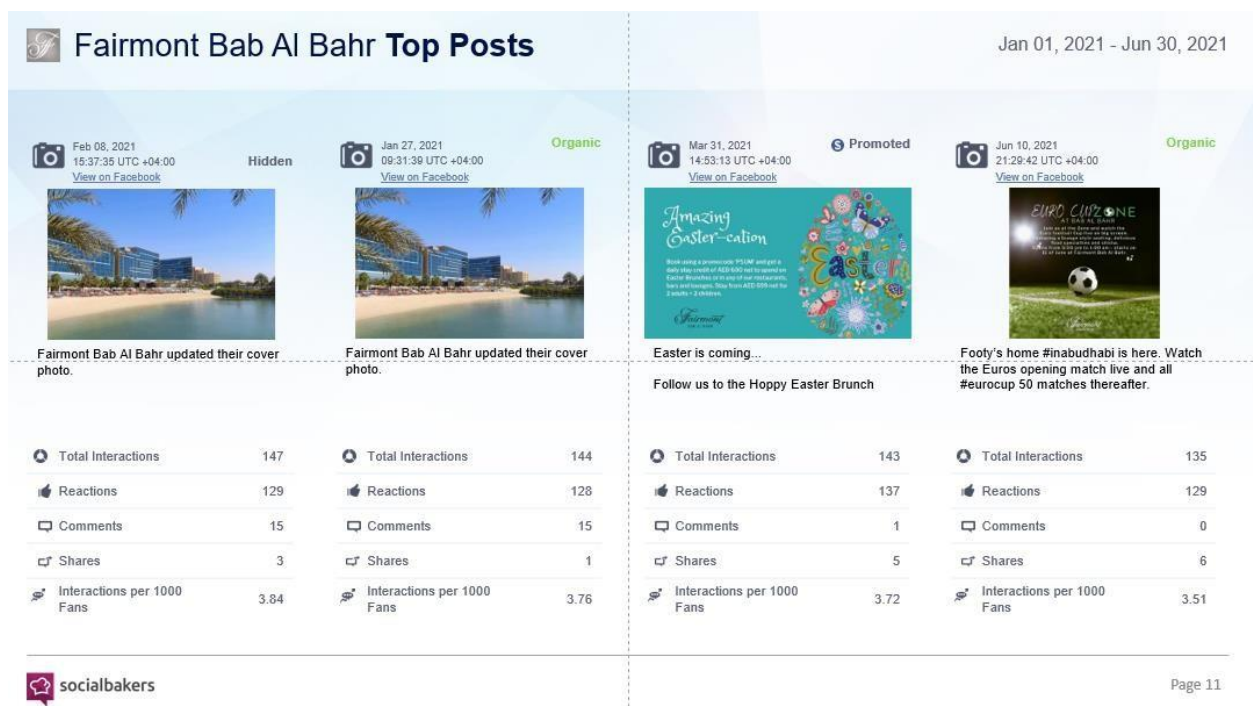
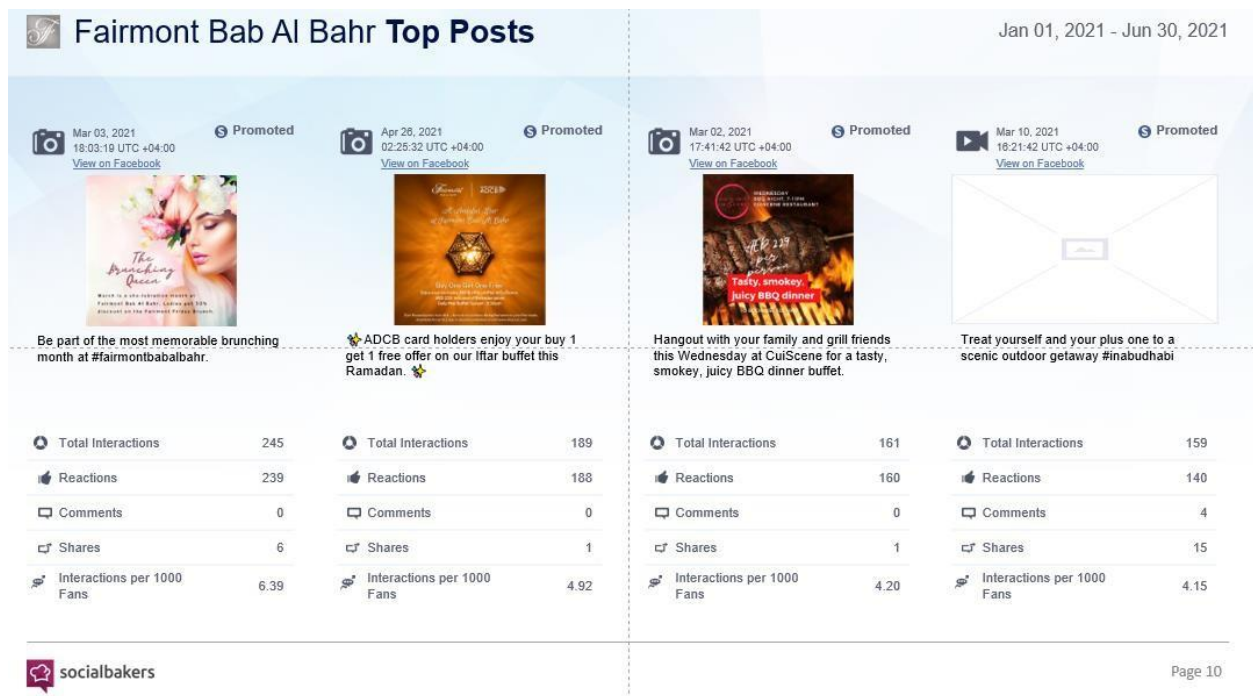


Figure of Report 3. Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Facebook Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Followers

Total Followers

15 545

Absolute Change in Followers

635

Relative Change in Followers

+ 4.26 %

Content

Total Posts

113

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers

3.03

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers

3.00

Interactions

Total Interactions

8 323

Likes

8 033

Comments

290



socialbakers

Page 2



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Followers

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Followers



Followers Overview

Total Followers

15 545

Change in Followers

635

Max Change of Followers

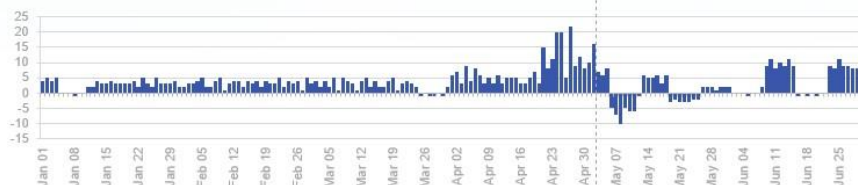
22

Tuesday Apr 27, 2021

Avg Followers Change per Day

3.51

Growth of Total Followers



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Page 3



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Followers



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on

25.05

Tuesday Jan 12, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on

0.47

Wednesday Feb 03, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers



socialbakers

Page 5



Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

8 323

Max Interactions

374

Tuesday Jan 12, 2021

Min Interactions

7

Wednesday Feb 03, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

46

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Likes	96.52 %	8.0k
Comments	3.48 %	290



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Page 6

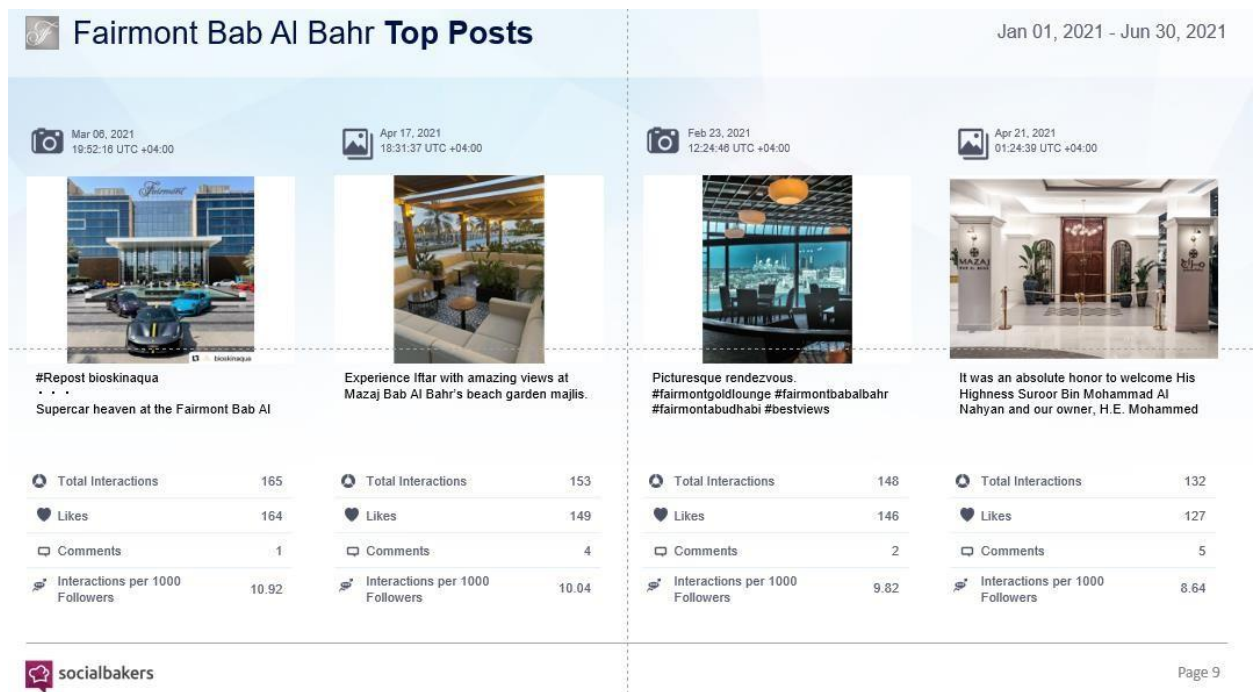


Figure of Report 4. Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Instagram Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)



Jumeirah Beach Hotel KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Fans

Total Fans

281 603

Absolute Change in Fans

2 588

Relative Change in Fans

+ 0.93 %

Content

Page Posts

75

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.92

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

1.04

Response Rate to User Questions

N/A %

Average Response Time for User Questions

N/A

Interactions

Total Interactions

30 187

Reactions

28 215

Comments

1 249

Shares

723

User Posts

0



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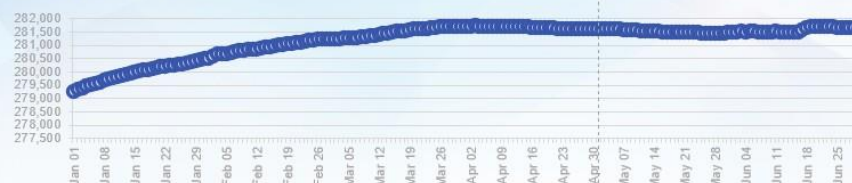
Page 2



Jumeirah Beach Hotel Fans

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Fans



Fans Overview

Total Fans

281 603

Change in Fans

2 588

Max Change of Fans

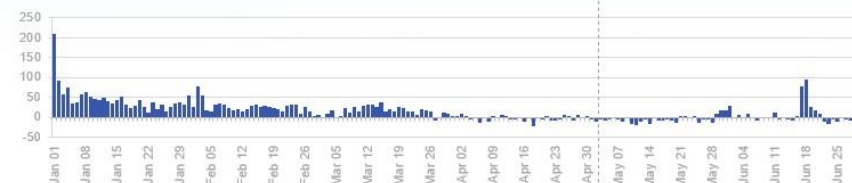
209

Friday Jan 01, 2021

Avg Fan Change per Day

14.30

Growth of Total Fans



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Page 3



Jumeirah Beach Hotel Content

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Page Posts by day

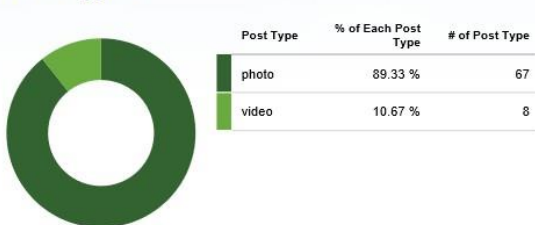


Content Overview

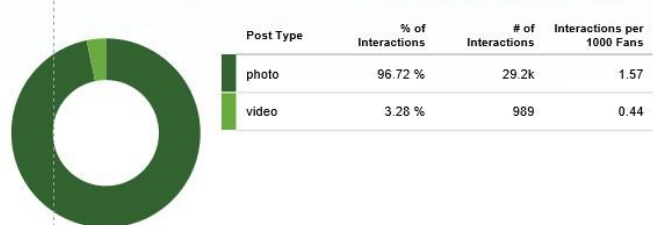
Total Page Posts
75

Avg Posts per Day
0.41

Post Types



Most Engaging Post Types



socialbakers

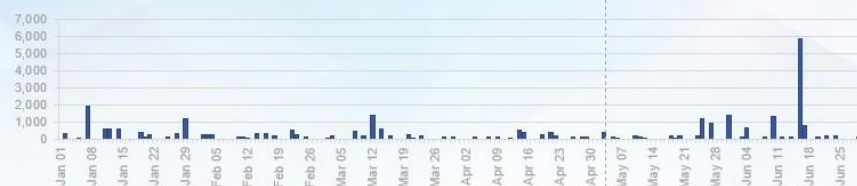
Page 4



Jumeirah Beach Hotel Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions
30 187

Max Interactions
5 837

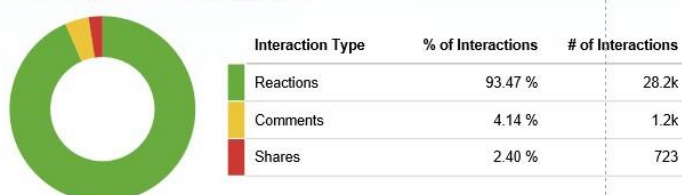
Wednesday Jun 16, 2021

Min Interactions
24

Friday Feb 12, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day
167

Distribution of Interactions



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Page 6



Jumeirah Beach Hotel Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

 Jun 16, 2021
17:49:07 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



Surrender to the enchantment of a beach day - picture-perfect skies, an unbeatable view of Burj Al Arab Jumeirah and the

Total Interactions	5.8k
Reactions	5.6k
Comments	83
Shares	135
Interactions per 1000 Fans	20.72

 Jan 07, 2021
17:12:38 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Promoted



Usher in a year of new beginnings and boundless hope while surrounded by a myriad of blue, from clear skies overhead

Total Interactions	1.9k
Reactions	1.8k
Comments	97
Shares	46
Interactions per 1000 Fans	6.82

 May 31, 2021
17:40:37 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



The pleasure of a summer's day is perfected when you spend it with loved ones, indulging in a dreamy afternoon by

Total Interactions	1.4k
Reactions	1.4k
Comments	27
Shares	26
Interactions per 1000 Fans	5.01

 Mar 12, 2021
17:44:39 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



Discover potential as unlimited and brilliant as the horizon, when you realise that the power to shape your tomorrow lies within

Total Interactions	1.4k
Reactions	1.3k
Comments	26
Shares	32
Interactions per 1000 Fans	4.86



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Page 9



Jumeirah Beach Hotel Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

 Jun 10, 2021
19:59:09 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



The exhilaration of #TimeWellSpent can be found in unforgettable aquatic adventures at Wild Wadi Waterpark.

Total Interactions	1.3k
Reactions	1.2k
Comments	53
Shares	32
Interactions per 1000 Fans	4.73

 May 25, 2021
17:45:16 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Promoted



Experience the magic of a summer by the beach, under the umbrella of brilliant blue skies and breezy palms.

Total Interactions	1.2k
Reactions	1.1k
Comments	34
Shares	29
Interactions per 1000 Fans	4.15

 Jan 29, 2021
18:16:55 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Promoted



Begin your day with precious moments of peace and reflection, settling in for a morning coffee accompanied by sights that

Total Interactions	1.2k
Reactions	1.1k
Comments	33
Shares	33
Interactions per 1000 Fans	4.11

 May 27, 2021
18:42:53 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Promoted



Take a leisurely stroll on the pristine white sand along the shoreline of our private beach, and enjoy #TimeWellSpent in your

Total Interactions	945
Reactions	870
Comments	54
Shares	21
Interactions per 1000 Fans	3.36



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Page 10

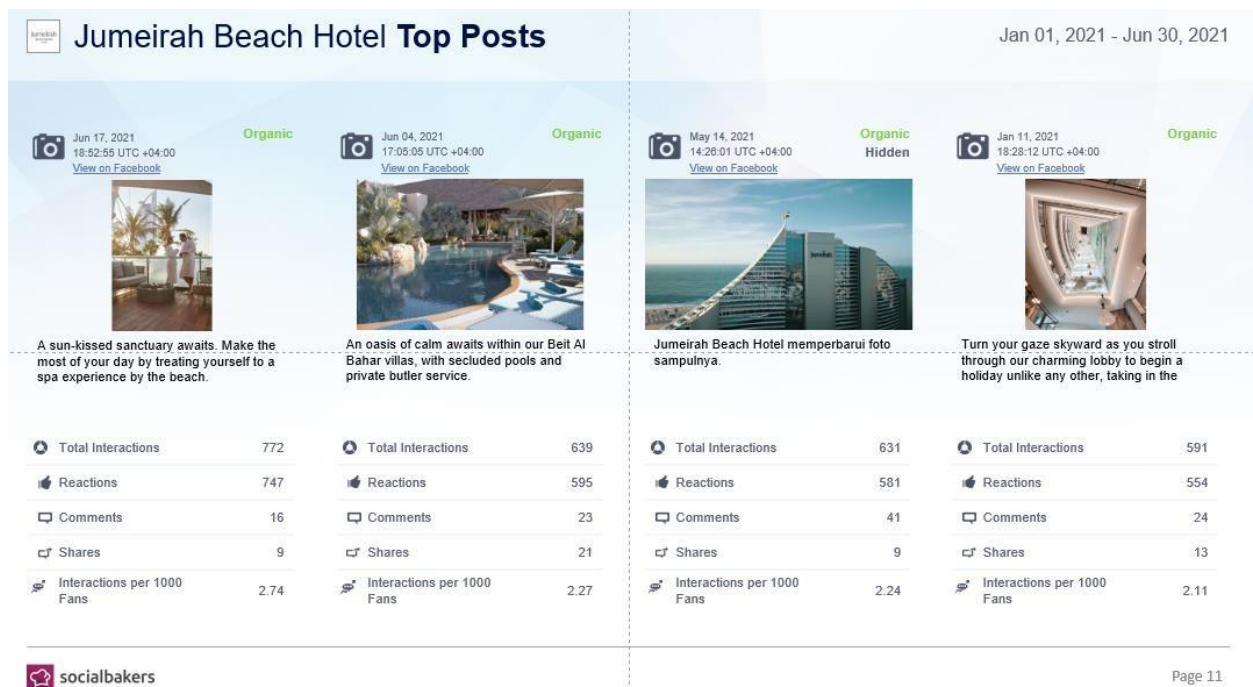


Figure of Report 5. Jumeirah Beach Hotel Facebook Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)





Jumeirah Beach Hotel Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Followers



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on

18.45

Saturday Jan 02, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on

1.14

Tuesday Jan 12, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers



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Page 5



Jumeirah Beach Hotel Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

53 898

Max Interactions

2 969

Saturday Jan 02, 2021

Min Interactions

185

Tuesday Jan 12, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

298

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Likes	97.96 %	52.8k
Comments	2.04 %	1.1k



socialbakers

Page 6

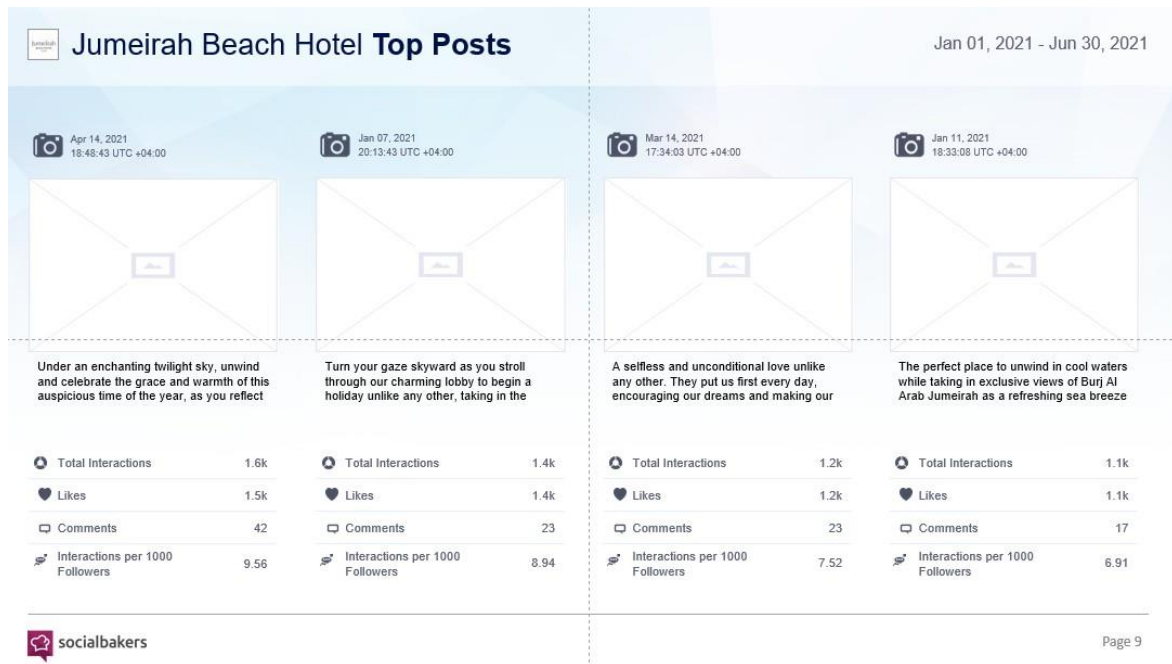


Figure of Report 6. Jumeirah Beach Hotel Instagram Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)



Rixos Premium Dubai JBR KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Fans

Total Fans

21 743

Absolute Change in Fans

2 200

Relative Change in Fans

+ 11.26 %

Content

Page Posts

57

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

1.05

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.75

Response Rate to User Questions

N/A %

Average Response Time for User Questions

N/A

Interactions

Total Interactions

3 176

Reactions

2 807

Comments

166

Shares

203

User Posts

1



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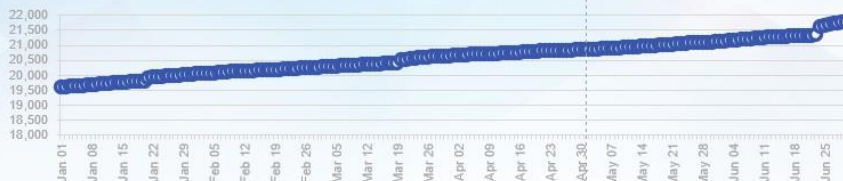
Page 2



Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Fans

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Fans



Fans Overview

Total Fans

21 743

Change in Fans

2 200

Max Change of Fans

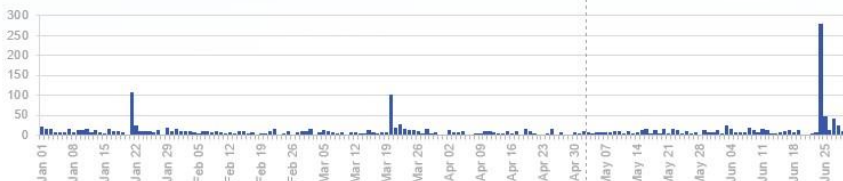
278

Thursday Jun 24, 2021

Avg Fan Change per Day

12.15

Growth of Total Fans



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Page 3

Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Content

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Page Posts by day



Content Overview

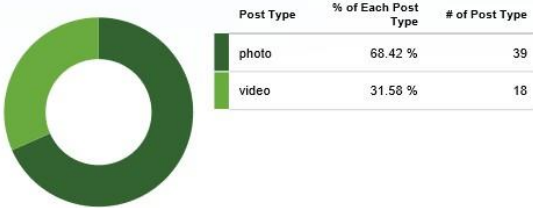
Total Page Posts

57

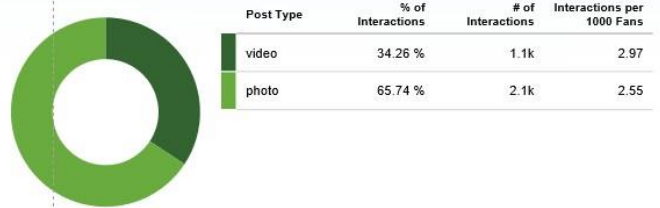
Avg Posts per Day

0.31

Post Types



Most Engaging Post Types



Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Fans



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Fans on

9.65

Tuesday Jun 15, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Fans on

0.52

Tuesday Jun 08, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Fans



Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

3 176

Max Interactions

205

Tuesday Jun 15, 2021

Min Interactions

11

Tuesday Jun 08, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

18

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Reactions	88.38 %	2.8k
Comments	5.23 %	166
Shares	6.39 %	203

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Page 6

Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Jun 15, 2021
20:28:10 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



Light up the night. #RixosMoments
#RixosPremiumDubai

Total Interactions	205
Reactions	188
Comments	11
Shares	6
Interactions per 1000 Fans	9.65

Feb 03, 2021
20:49:34 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



What better way to celebrate birthday than
at #rixospremiumdubai

Total Interactions	178
Reactions	131
Comments	30
Shares	17
Interactions per 1000 Fans	8.89

Mar 14, 2021
23:00:56 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



The sky is the limit. Here's some sunset
inspiration to kick off your week!

Total Interactions	174
Reactions	137
Comments	17
Shares	20
Interactions per 1000 Fans	8.55

Jan 04, 2021
19:40:28 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



Let's #throwback to our New Years Eve
Gala Dinner !
Wishing you a new year filled with happy

Total Interactions	121
Reactions	109
Comments	3
Shares	9
Interactions per 1000 Fans	6.17

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Page 9

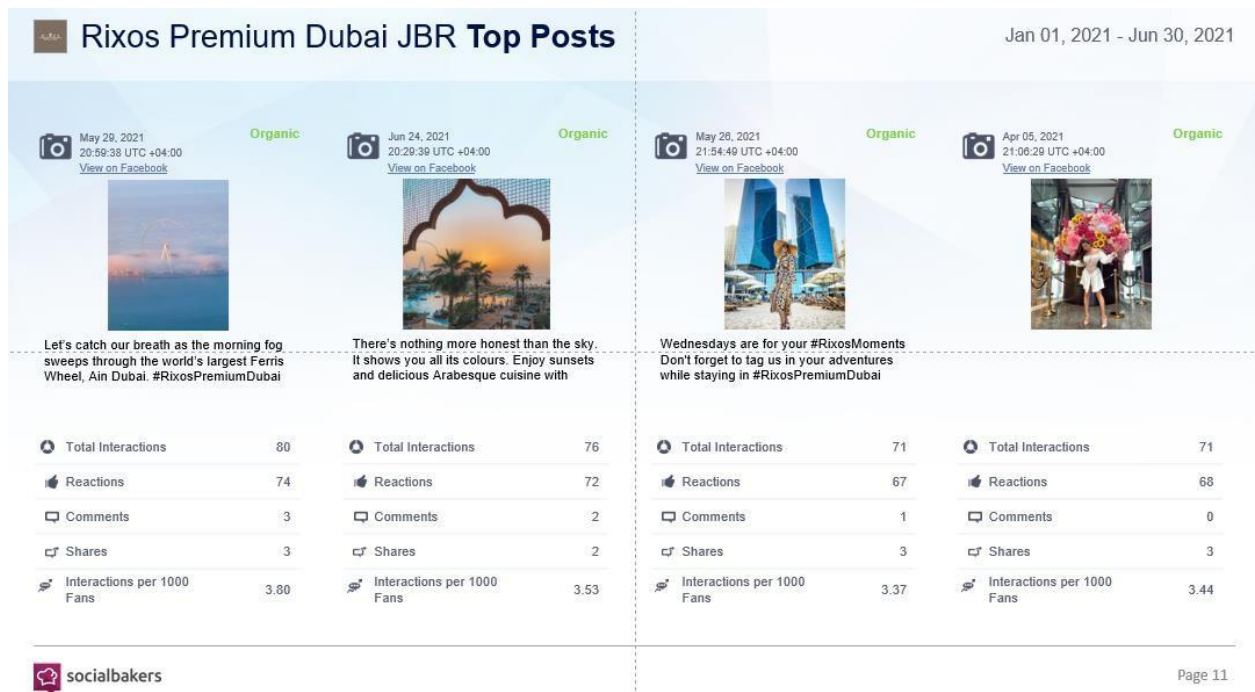
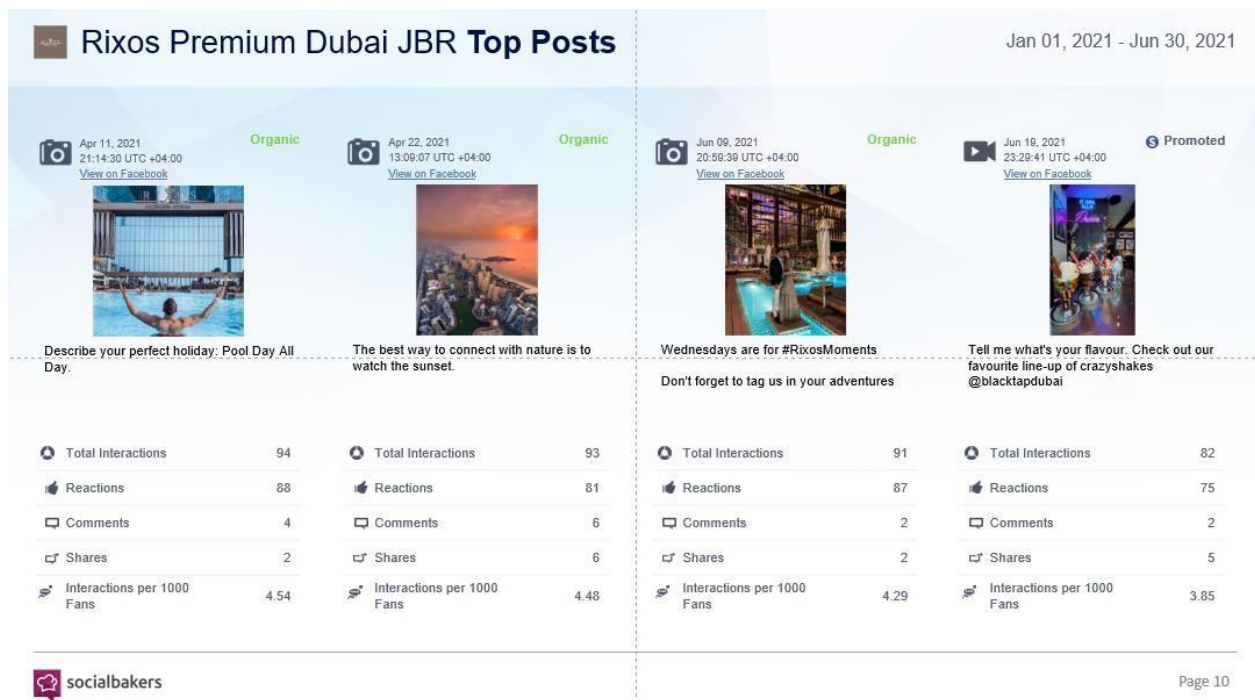


Figure of Report 7. Rixos Pemium Dubai Facebook Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)

Rixos Premium Dubai JBR KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Followers

Total Followers
149 161

Absolute Change in Followers
11 637

Relative Change in Followers
+ 8.46 %

Content

Total Posts
69

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers
2.22

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers
2.20

Interactions

Total Interactions
58 104

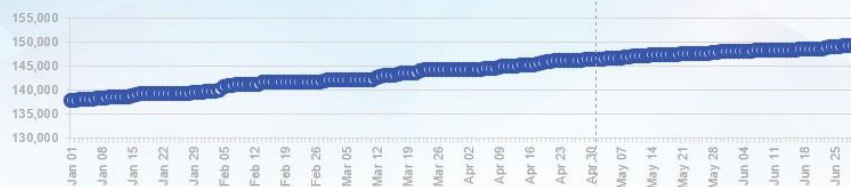
Likes
57 241

Comments
863

Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Followers

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Followers

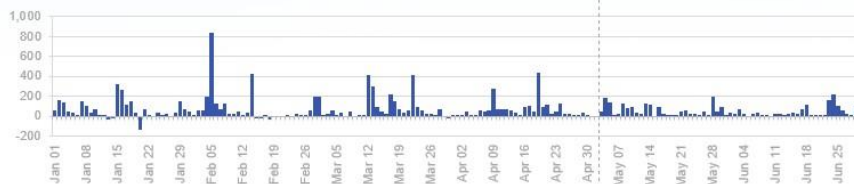


Followers Overview

Total Followers
149 161

Change in Followers
11 637

Growth of Total Followers



Max Change of Followers
840

Friday Feb 05, 2021

Avg Followers Change per Day
64.29



Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Followers



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on

24.38

Wednesday Feb 03, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on

1.66

Monday May 24, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers



socialbakers

Page 5



Rixos Premium Dubai JBR Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

58 104

Max Interactions

3 403

Wednesday Feb 03, 2021

Min Interactions

245

Monday May 24, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

321

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Likes	98.51 %	57.2k
Comments	1.49 %	863



socialbakers

Page 6

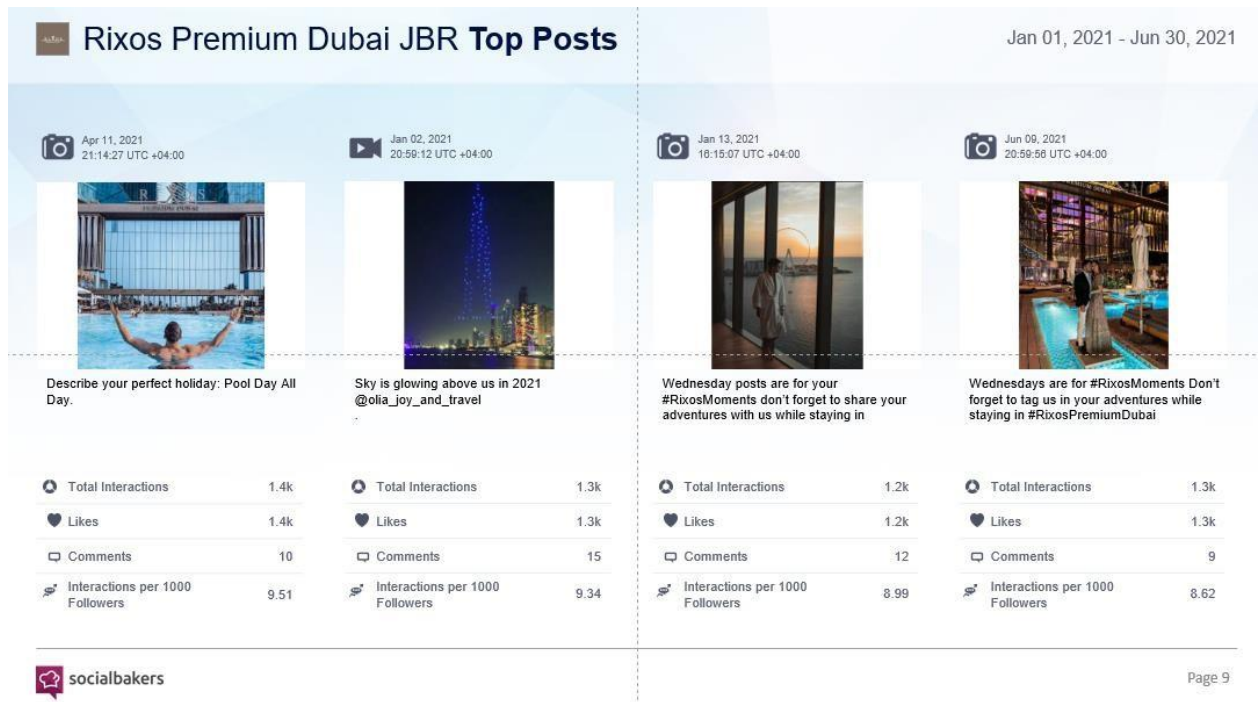


Figure of Report 8. Rixos Pemium Dubai Instagram Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)

Sofitel Dubai The Palm KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Fans

Total Fans

154 230

Absolute Change in Fans

222

Relative Change in Fans

+ 0.14 %

Content

Page Posts

82

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.15

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.16

Response Rate to User Questions

N/A %

Average Response Time for User Questions

N/A

Interactions

Total Interactions

4 216

Reactions

3 573

Comments

430

Shares

213

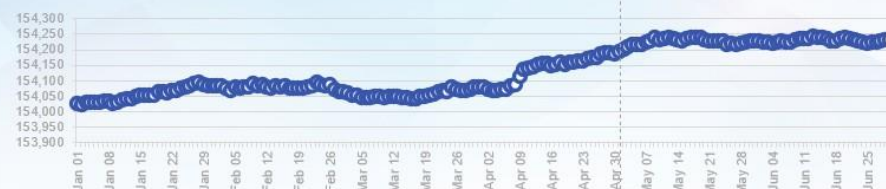
User Posts

0

Sofitel Dubai The Palm Fans

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Fans



Fans Overview

Total Fans

154 230

Change in Fans

222

Max Change of Fans

28

Friday Apr 09, 2021

Avg Fan Change per Day

1.23

Growth of Total Fans



Sofitel Dubai The Palm Content

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Page Posts by day



Content Overview

Total Page Posts
82

Avg Posts per Day
0.45

Post Types



Post Type	% of Each Post Type	# of Post Type
photo	70.73 %	58
video	19.51 %	16
link	7.32 %	6
carousel	2.44 %	2

Most Engaging Post Types



Post Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions	Interactions per 1000 Fans
photo	77.56 %	3.3k	0.41
video	15.94 %	672	0.27
link	5.88 %	248	0.27
carousel	0.62 %	26	0.08

socialbakers

Page 4

Sofitel Dubai The Palm Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Fans



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Fans on
1.35
Tuesday Apr 27, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Fans on
0.08
Tuesday Mar 23, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Fans



socialbakers

Page 5



Sofitel Dubai The Palm Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

4 216

Max Interactions

208

Tuesday Apr 27, 2021

Min Interactions

12

Wednesday Mar 10, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

23

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Reactions	84.75 %	3.6k
Comments	10.20 %	430
Shares	5.05 %	213



socialbakers

Page 6



Sofitel Dubai The Palm Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021



Apr 27, 2021
08:00:19 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



Be captivated by the azure hues that go as far as the eyes can see.



Total Interactions 208



Reactions 156



Comments 43



Shares 9



Interactions per 1000 Fans 1.35



Apr 24, 2021
08:00:25 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Promoted



A birds-eye view of our Polynesian paradise. Are you joining us to take a dip in the sea?



Total Interactions 201



Reactions 166



Comments 27



Shares 8



Interactions per 1000 Fans 1.30



Mar 24, 2021
13:03:56 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



How would you caption this view?
#soffitedubaipalm



Total Interactions 196



Reactions 147



Comments 34



Shares 15



Interactions per 1000 Fans 1.27



Feb 17, 2021
15:00:01 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)

Organic



A view we can never have enough of 🌴



Total Interactions 133



Reactions 118



Comments 12



Shares 3



Interactions per 1000 Fans 0.86



socialbakers

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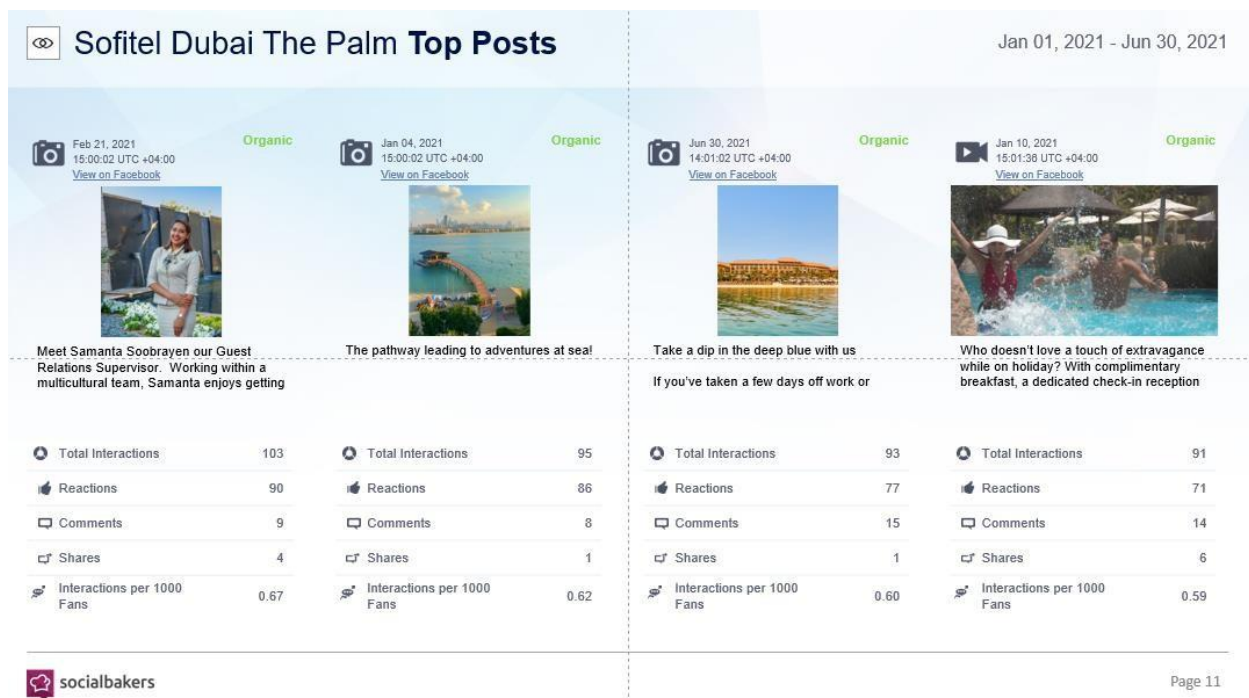


Figure of Report 9. Sofitel Dubai The Palm Facebook Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)



Sofitel Dubai The Palm KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Followers

Total Followers

74 193

Absolute Change in Followers

6 738

Relative Change in Followers

+ 9.99 %

Content

Total Posts

86

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers

2.73

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers

2.78

Interactions

Total Interactions

34 687

Likes

33 002

Comments

1 685



socialbakers

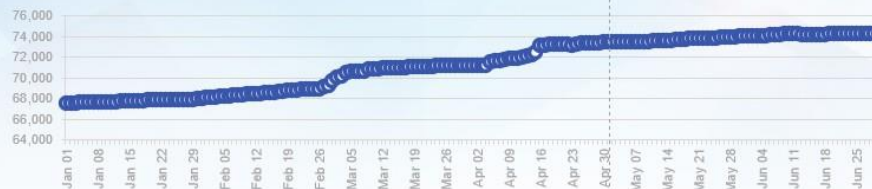
Page 2



Sofitel Dubai The Palm Followers

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Followers



Followers Overview

Total Followers

74 193

Change in Followers

6 738

Max Change of Followers

632

Friday Apr 16, 2021

Avg Followers Change per Day

37.23

Growth of Total Followers



socialbakers

Page 3



Sofitel Dubai The Palm Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Followers



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on

18.34

Tuesday Mar 23, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on

0.20

Thursday Jun 10, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers



socialbakers

Page 5



Sofitel Dubai The Palm Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

34 687

Max Interactions

1 303

Tuesday Mar 23, 2021

Min Interactions

15

Thursday Jun 10, 2021

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Likes	95.14 %	33.0k
Comments	4.86 %	1.7k

Avg Interactions per Day

192



socialbakers

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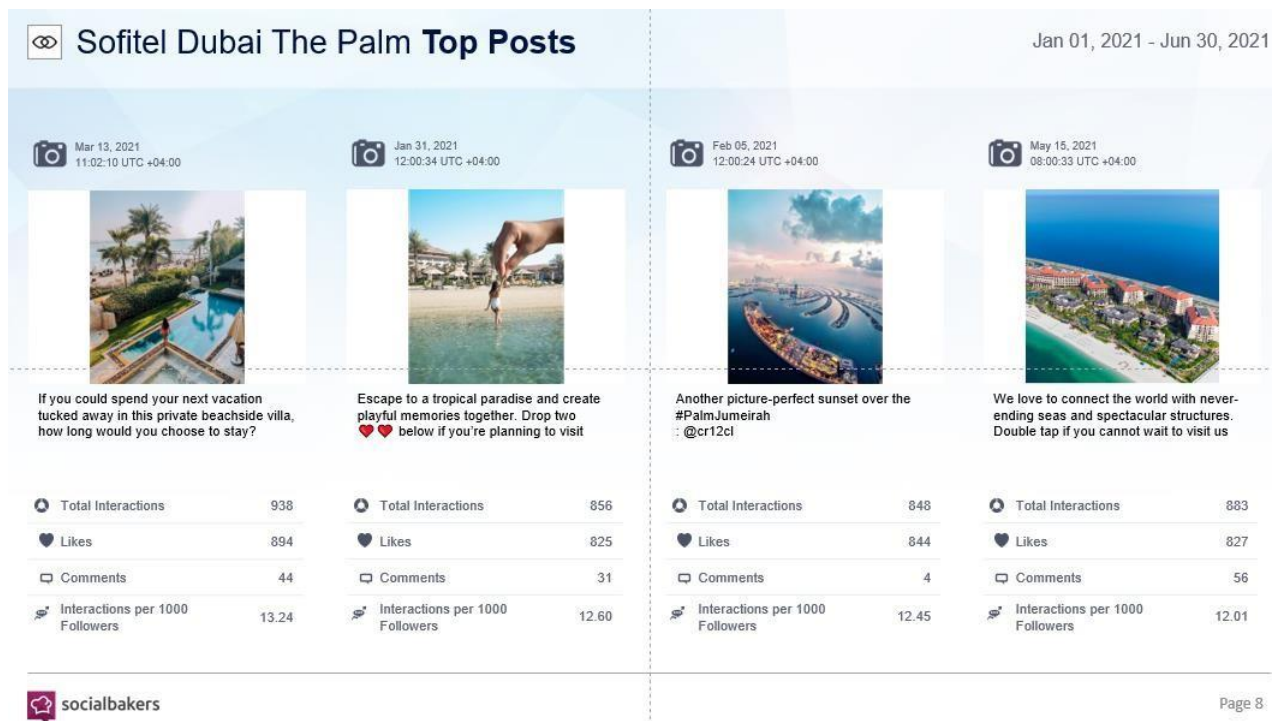
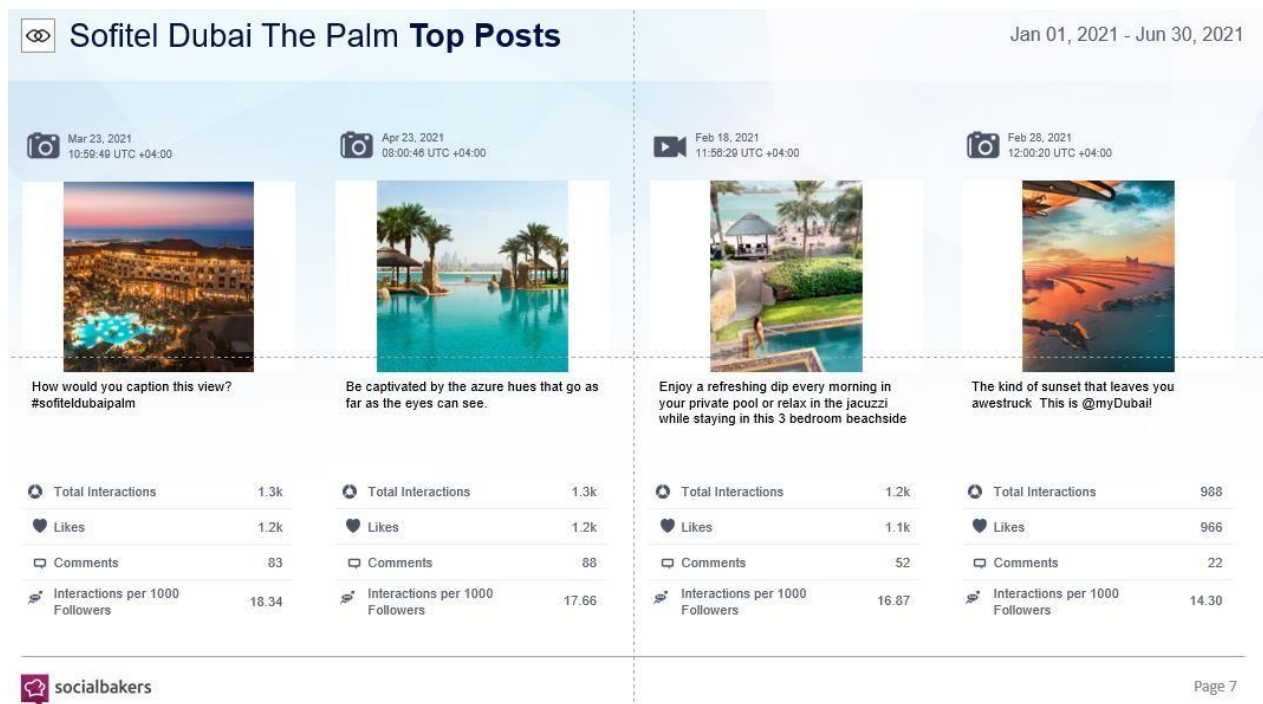


Figure of Report 10. Sofitel Dubai The Palm Instagram Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)

Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Fans

Total Fans

31 894

Absolute Change in Fans

273

Relative Change in Fans

+ 0.86 %

Content

Page Posts

50

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.87

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans

0.93

Response Rate to User Questions

N/A %

Average Response Time for User Questions

N/A

Interactions

Total Interactions

3 955

Reactions

3 727

Comments

104

Shares

124

User Posts

5

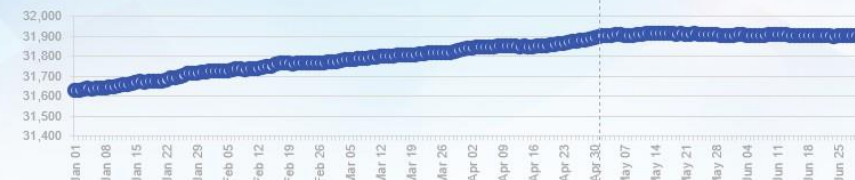


Page 2

Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Fans

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Fans



Fans Overview

Total Fans

31 894

Change in Fans

273

Growth of Total Fans



Max Change of Fans

12

Wednesday Jan 27, 2021

Avg Fan Change per Day

1.51



Page 3



Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Content

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Page Posts by day



Content Overview

Total Page Posts

50

Avg Posts per Day

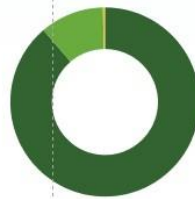
0.28

Post Types



Post Type	% of Each Post Type	# of Post Type
photo	64.00 %	32
video	34.00 %	17
link	2.00 %	1

Most Engaging Post Types



Post Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions	Interactions per 1000 Fans
photo	88.75 %	3.5k	3.68
video	10.92 %	432	0.85
link	0.33 %	13	0.41



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Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Fans



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Fans on

75.31

Friday Feb 05, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Fans on

0.22

Sunday Mar 21, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Fans

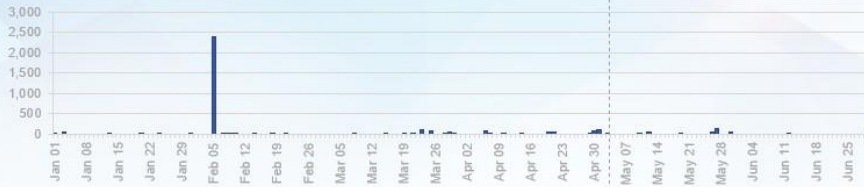


Page 5

Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

3 955

Max Interactions

2 389

Friday Feb 05, 2021

Min Interactions

7

Sunday Mar 21, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

22

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Reactions	94.24 %	3.7k
Comments	2.63 %	104
Shares	3.14 %	124

socialbakers

Page 6

Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Feb 05, 2021
12:41:40 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



Couples at Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche have crafted a stay to remember as we embark on a romantic cruise through the Corniche

May 27, 2021
14:11:58 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



On behalf of #sofitelabudhabi family and especially the Grills@Chill'O Team, we thank you all and @whatsonabudhabi for

Total Interactions	2.4k
Reactions	2.4k
Comments	5
Shares	20
Interactions per 1000 Fans	75.31

Total Interactions	139
Reactions	123
Comments	11
Shares	5
Interactions per 1000 Fans	4.36

May 01, 2021
15:14:32 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



#competition
Win a Suhour for 4 people at

Total Interactions	115
Reactions	64
Comments	44
Shares	7
Interactions per 1000 Fans	3.61

Mar 23, 2021
16:38:07 UTC +04:00
[View on Facebook](#)



Hope your week is starting great!
#sofitelabudhabi #sofitel

Total Interactions	115
Reactions	78
Comments	14
Shares	23
Interactions per 1000 Fans	3.62

socialbakers

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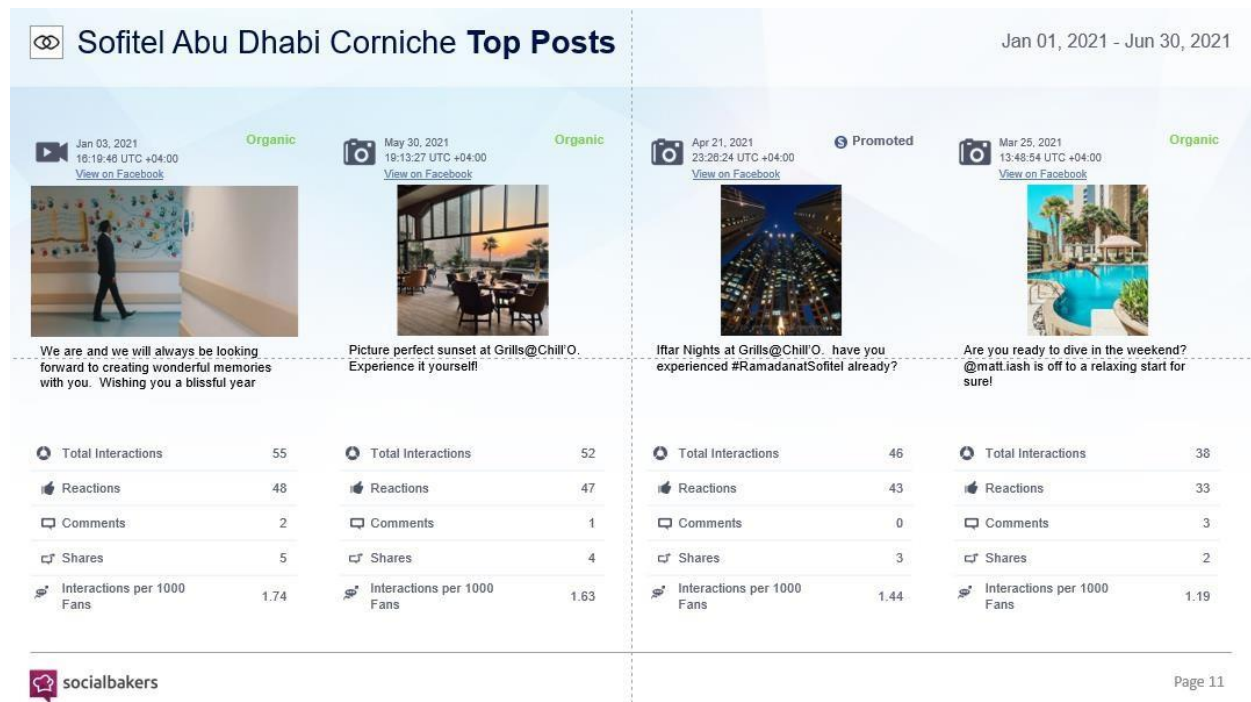
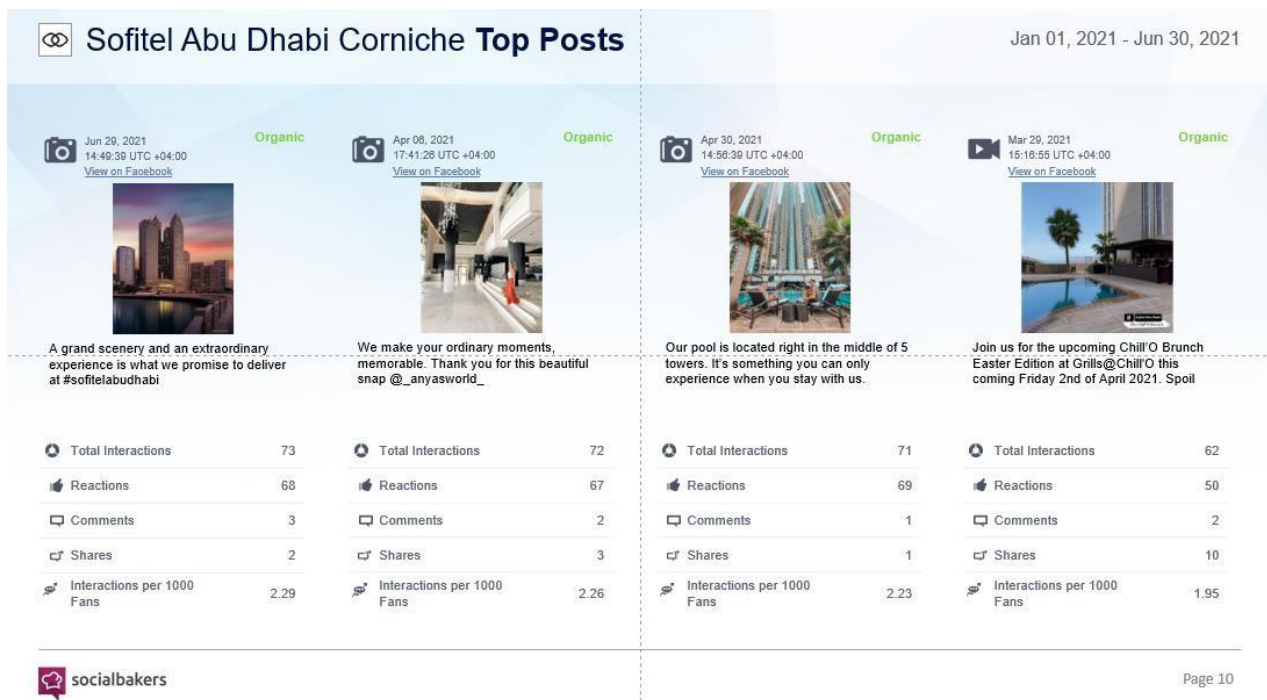


Figure of Report 11. Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Facebook Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)

Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche KPIs Overview

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Followers

Total Followers

6 918

Absolute Change in Followers

1 426

Relative Change in Followers

+ 25.97 %

Content

Total Posts

63

Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers

10.59

Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers

10.20

Interactions

Total Interactions

11 020

Likes

6 448

Comments

4 572

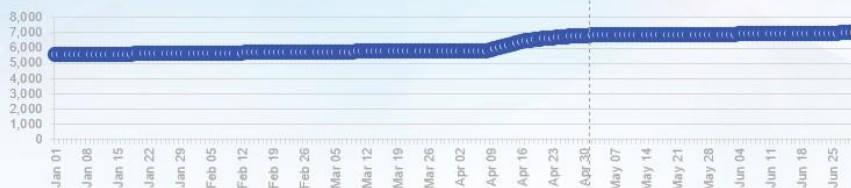


Page 2

Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Followers

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Total Followers



Followers Overview

Total Followers

6 918

Change in Followers

1 426

Max Change of Followers

89

Wednesday Apr 14, 2021

Avg Followers Change per Day

7.88

Growth of Total Followers



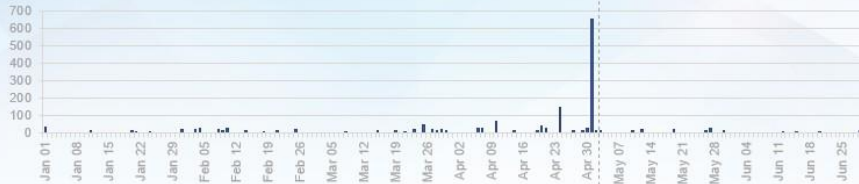
Page 3



Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Interactions per 1000 Followers



Activity Overview

Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on

652.01

Saturday May 01, 2021

Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on

3.05

Tuesday Jun 15, 2021

Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers



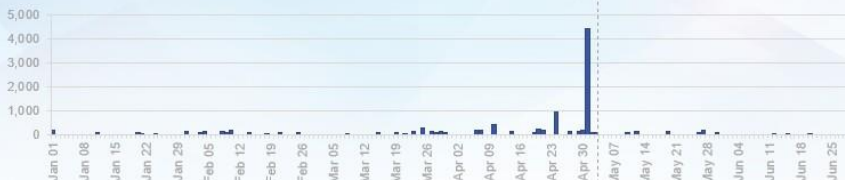
Page 5



Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Engagement

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Daily Interactions



Interactions Overview

Total Interactions

11 020

Max Interactions

4 403

Saturday May 01, 2021

Min Interactions

21

Tuesday Jun 15, 2021

Avg Interactions per Day

61

Distribution of Interactions



Interaction Type	% of Interactions	# of Interactions
Likes	58.51 %	6.4k
Comments	41.49 %	4.6k



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Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

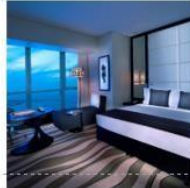
May 01, 2021
15:02:35 UTC +04:00



#competition alert closed
Win an Iftar Box for 4 people worth

Total Interactions 4.4k
Likes 557
Comments 3.8k
Interactions per 1000 Followers 652.0

Apr 24, 2021
10:15:02 UTC +04:00



#competition
Win a one night staycation for 2 people at

Total Interactions 966
Likes 436
Comments 530
Interactions per 1000 Followers 146.2

Apr 10, 2021
14:57:25 UTC +04:00



A feast for all, our special Ramadan Iftar in a box. We have prepared a special Iftar feast that you can unwrap at your dining

Total Interactions 185
Likes 173
Comments 12
Interactions per 1000 Followers 31.75

Apr 21, 2021
23:26:18 UTC +04:00



Iftar Nights at Grills@Chill'O, have you experienced #RamadanatSofitel already?

Total Interactions 193
Likes 183
Comments 10
Interactions per 1000 Followers 29.40



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Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Top Posts

Jan 01, 2021 - Jun 30, 2021

Apr 30, 2021
14:58:35 UTC +04:00



Our pool is located right in the middle of 5 towers. It's something you can only experience when you stay with us.

Total Interactions 198
Likes 192
Comments 6
Interactions per 1000 Followers 29.37

Apr 08, 2021
17:41:18 UTC +04:00



We make your ordinary moments, memorable. Thank you for this beautiful snap_anysworld_

Total Interactions 169
Likes 164
Comments 5
Interactions per 1000 Followers 29.33

Apr 07, 2021
14:05:22 UTC +04:00



Crazy about desserts like us?
Then our Chill'O Brunch should be on your

Total Interactions 161
Likes 159
Comments 2
Interactions per 1000 Followers 27.94

May 27, 2021
14:11:40 UTC +04:00



On behalf of #sofitelabudhabi family and especially the Grills@Chill'O Team, we thank you all and whatsonabudhabi for this

Total Interactions 185
Likes 173
Comments 12
Interactions per 1000 Followers 27.11



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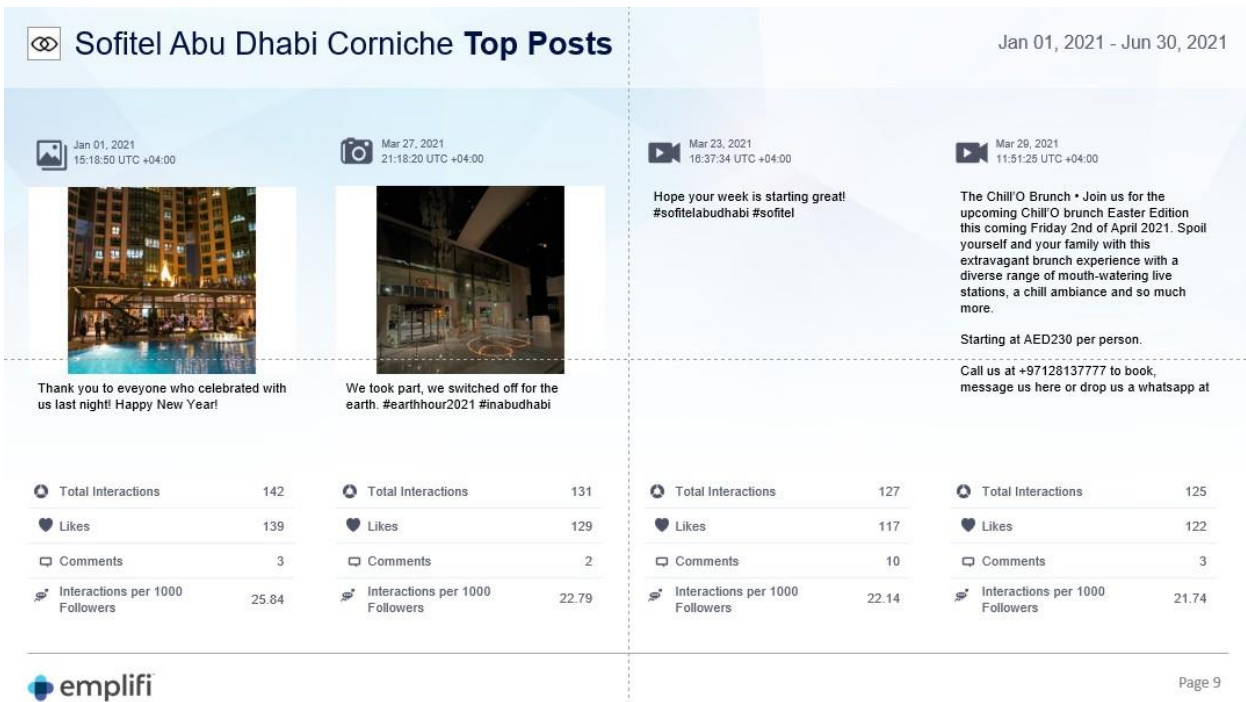



Figure of Report 12. Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche Instagram Analytics (Social Bakers 2021)

Instagram Metrics Explained	
<p>Total Followers The total number of followers on the last day of a selected time range.</p> <p>Absolute Change in Followers The sum of all daily increases and decreases in Followers during a selected time range.</p> <p>Relative Change in Followers The percentage of a Profile's follower base that has experienced a gain or loss in Followers.</p> <p>Total Posts The sum of Posts made by a Profile during a selected time range.</p> <p>Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers The total number of interactions per 1000 Followers for all Posts made during a particular week.</p> <p>Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Followers The total number of interactions per 1000 Followers for all Posts made during a particular month.</p> <p>Total Interactions The total number of Interactions (Likes, Comments) during a selected time range.</p> <p>Likes The total number of Likes during a selected time range.</p>	<p>Comments The total number of Comments during a selected time range.</p> <p>Change in Followers The sum of all daily increases and decreases in Followers during a selected time range.</p> <p>Max Change of Followers The day with the largest change in the number of a Profile's Followers, either an increase or decrease during a selected time range, and the numerical value of change on that day.</p> <p>Avg Followers Change per Day The average change in the number of a Profile's Followers per day, either an increase or decrease during a selected time range.</p> <p>Number of Profile Posts The number of Posts made by a Profile by day during a selected time range.</p> <p>Total Profile Posts The sum of Posts made by a Profile during a selected time range.</p> <p>Avg Posts per day The average number of Posts made by a Profile per day during a selected time range.</p>
	Page 10



Instagram Metrics Explained	
<p>Interactions per 1000 Followers The sum of interactions (Likes, Comments) divided by the number of followers a Profile has on the day of the Post, and multiplied by 1000.</p> <p>Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Followers Calculated from the sum of all daily values of Number of Interactions per 1000 Followers. For example, if in the last 7 days there are 4 days with Number of Interactions per 1000 Followers equal to 2, 3, 4, and 5, then the 7-Day Moving Average would equal $((2+3+4+5) / 7) = 2$.</p> <p>Max Interactions per 1000 Followers on The day with the highest amount of Interactions per 1000 Followers and the amount of interactions per 1000 Followers on that day.</p> <p>Min Interactions per 1000 Followers on The day with the smallest amount of Interactions per 1000 Followers and the amount of interactions per 1000 Followers on that day.</p>	<p>Daily Interactions The total number of Interactions (Likes, Comments) per day during a selected time period.</p> <p>Max Interactions The day with the highest <u>amount</u> of Interactions on that day.</p> <p>Min Interactions The day with the smallest <u>amount</u> of Interactions on that day.</p> <p>Avg Interactions per day The average number of Interactions (Likes, Comments) per day during a selected time range.</p> <p>Distribution of Interactions The distribution of Interactions (Likes, Comments) during a selected time range.</p>
	Page 11

Figure 1. Instagram Metrics Explained (Social Bakers 2021)

Facebook Metrics Explained	
<p>Total Fans Total number of a Page's Fans in a given point of time.</p> <p>Absolute Change in Fans The sum of all daily increases and decreases in fans during the selected time range.</p> <p>Relative Change in Fans Shows how many fans, as a percentage of a page's fanbase, a page has gained or lost.</p> <p>Page Posts The number of posts made by the page's administrators during a selected time range.</p> <p>Moving 7-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans The sum of Number of Interactions per 1000 fans for all posts made during a particular week.</p> <p>Moving 30-Day Average of Interactions per 1000 Fans The sum of Number of Interactions per 1000 fans for all posts made during a particular month.</p> <p>Response Rate to User Questions The percentage of user questions the page answered to during the selected time range. A user question is a user post on the company's page or a user post mentioning the company's Facebook page that contains a question mark in one of several possible languages (English, Armenian, Arabic, Japanese, and others). User questions that were either marked as spam, hidden, or deleted by the admin are not included.</p> <p>Average Response Time for User Questions The average response time it took the page to answer user questions during a selected time period. The response time is fixed to the day of the original question/post.</p> <p>Total Interactions The total number of Interactions (Reactions, Comments and Shares) during a selected time range.</p>	<p>User Posts The total number of posts made by users during a selected time range.</p> <p>Change in Fans The sum of all daily increases and decreases in fans during the selected time range.</p> <p>Max Change of Fans The day with the largest change in the number of fans (either increase or decrease) during a selected time range and the numerical value of change on that day.</p> <p>Avg Fan Change per Day The average change in number of fans (either increase or decrease) during a selected time range.</p> <p>Growth of Total Fans Shows the daily increase or decrease in fans during a selected time period.</p> <p>Page Posts by day The number of posts made by the page's administrators by day during a selected time range.</p> <p>Total Page Posts The sum of posts made by the page's administrator during a selected time range.</p> <p>Avg Page Posts per day The average number of posts made by a page administrator per day during a selected time range.</p>
<div>  socialbakers <div>Page 12</div> </div>	


Facebook Metrics Explained	
<p>Most Engaging Post Types This shows the average interactions per 1000 fans by post type (Status, Link, Photo and Video) during a selected time range.</p> <p>Interactions per 1000 Fans The sum of interactions (reactions, comments, and shares) divided by the number of fans a page has on the day of the post and multiplied by 1000.</p> <p>Moving Averages of Interactions per 1000 Fans Calculated from the sum of all daily values of Number of Interactions per 1000 Fans. For example, if in the last 7 days there are 4 days with Number of Interactions per 1000 Fans equal to 2, 3, 4, and 5, then the 7-Day Moving Average would equal $((2+3+4+5) / 7) = 2$.</p> <p>Max Interactions per 1000 Fans on The day with the highest amount of interactions per 1000 fans and the amount of interactions per 1000 fans on that day.</p> <p>Min Interactions per 1000 Fans on The day with the smallest amount of interactions per 1000 fans and the amount of interactions per 1000 fans on that day.</p> <p>Daily Interactions The total number of Interactions (Reactions, Comments and Shares) per day during a selected time period.</p> <p>Max Interactions The day with the highest amount of interactions on that day.</p> <p>Min Interactions The day with the smallest amount of Interactions on that day.</p>	<p>Avg Interactions per day The average number of interactions (comments, reactions, shares) per day during a selected time range.</p> <p>Distribution of Interactions The distribution of interactions (reactions, comments, shares) during a selected time range.</p> <p>Total User Posts The total number of posts made by users during a selected time range. User posts that were either marked as spam, hidden, or deleted by the admin are not included.</p> <p>Max User Posts The day during which the users posted most for a selected time range. Also shows the number of posts that occurred on that day.</p> <p>Avg User Posts per day The average number of posts users posted on the monitored page's wall per day during a selected time range.</p> <p>Highest Activity Weekday/hour This shows the weekday and hour with the highest number of User Posts during a selected time range.</p> <p>User Activity This graph shows the total number of all user posts (user posts, questions and comments) by day of the week and by hour of the day during a selected time range.</p> <p>Answered vs. Unanswered User Questions This graph shows the number of answered and unanswered questions and the response rates during a selected time range. A user question is a user post on the company's page or a user post mentioning the company's Facebook page that contains a question mark in one of several possible languages (English, Armenian, Arabic, Japanese, and others). User questions that were either marked as spam, hidden, or deleted by the admin are not included.</p>
<div>  socialbakers <div>Page 13</div> </div>	

Figure2. Facebook Metrics Explained (Social Bakers 2021)

Appendix 5. Theoretical Evidence about SDL

Theoretical Evidence About SDL					
Author(s)	Type Methodology: if its Applicable	Objective (s)	Unit of Analysis Area	Process	To What Extent the SDL has been used + Integration of other theories
Vargo & Lusch (2004)	Conceptual	The main goal is to demonstrate the evolution of marketing toward a new service dominant logic (SDL).	Tangible and intangible towards evolution of SDL	Service-Centered (Exchange processes, and relationships are central)	a new dominant logic for marketing Complexity Marketing literature and use of theories
Vargo,et al, (2008)	Conceptual	To explore the concept of value from the view point of SDL. Therefore, proposing a framework to understand the process of value creation in service ecosystems.	Provider and Customer service system CE	Evaluation, Proposition, Acceptance and of value	Value cocreation among services systems
Vargo & Lusch, (2015)	Conceptual	To improve this limitation and to facilitate a better understanding of cooperation (and coordination), an eleventh foundational premise (fifth axiom) is introduced, focusing on the role of institutions and institutional arrangements in systems of value cocreation: service ecosystems. Literatures on many social disciplines, including marketing, is reviewed and offered as additional support for the fifth axiom.	Axioms of SDL strategy + CE	Coordination and cooperation involved in the cocreation of value through markets and, more broadly, in society	Updated FBs FB4 &FB6
Arnould (2008)	Brief Report	Reviewing the role of resource theories from an SDL point of view.	Organisation & Customer	Resources	Brief review suggests that resource theory inspired by S-D logic could draw on numerous theoretical resources to focus on some of opportunities Absorptive Capacity Dynamic Capabilities marketing communications (onlinr communication)
(Madhavaram & Hunt 2007)***	Conceptual	The SDL and a hierarchy of operant resources: developing masterful operant resources and implications for marketing strategy building on resource advantage theory's notion of basic resources and higher-order resources, this article proposes a hierarchy of basic, composite, and interconnected operant resources. Second, reviewing research on business strategy and marketing strategy, several resources that correspond to the proposed hierarchy are identified and discussed. Third, the notion of developing masterful operant resources is introduced. Fourth, based on the proposed hierarchy and the notion of masterful operant resources, some exemplars of potential research avenues for marketing strategy are provided	operant resources and strategy	A hierarchy of operant resources	
Evardsson, et al, (2011)	Conceptual	To improve the knowledge of SDL's co-creation of value between customer and the organisation with key concepts from social construction theories	Social position and role of organisations and customer	Service exchange and value in social context	Social Construction Approach : to clarify the co-creation through social perspective
Gronroos & Gummerus 2014	Conceptual	To review the propositions generated by a service perspective. A conceptual analysis of two approaches to service logic (SL) and SDL, reveals direct and indirect marketing implications.	Organisation, customers and other actors	Value for customers	Co-creations concepts Interactions Managerial Implications Stand on unfinished area of Both logic

Theoretical Evidence About SDL					
***Wilden, et al, 2017 (add gap from this paper)	Meta analysis	To review the groundwork research and evolution of SDL through a systematic investigation, which co-creation analysis combined with a novel text mining tool, Leximancer. Specifically, investigate the research connected with SDL and compare core themes across two time periods (2004 to 2008 vs. 2009 to 2015)	Service Addressing SDL as strategic practices	Develop strategic approaches for SDL and advance a service ecosystems view	Resource and capability theories – open innovation Develop Strategic approach is a future area to be addressed
Perano, et al, (2018)	Conceptual	This work stresses the centrality of the SDL strategy point of view and the relationships between organisation and Open Innovation Intermediary in the knowledge development process providing a conceptual framework.	Organisation & Customer	Services to augment dynamic cooperation	Dynamic Capabilities Innovation Knowledge management
(Brodie, Löbler & Fehrer 2019)	Research Paper	Findings indicate that while SDL aligns with most of the metaphysical and sociological conditions for a paradigm, further development is needed for SDL to meet the conditions for an artefact	different philosophical perspectives or orientations, notably objective, subjective and inter-subjective.	offer a variety of ontological, epistemological and methodological questions	S-D logic references many different theories and methodologies, a situation that implicitly assumes To further develop S-D logic we also outline research directions that have the potential to move S-D logic towards a unifying paradigm.
(Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018)	Conceptual	Develop a definition of co-creation as enactment of interactional creation across interactive system-environments (afforded by interactive platforms)	Co-creation through platforms	apply our definitional framework to the practice of value creation as a co-creation, cutting across conventional "production", "exchange", and "use" activities.	Digital interactive platforms Aided by digitalized technologies, interactive platforms afford a multiplicity of interactive system-environments that connect creatural interactions with how experienced outcomes emerge from their underlying resourced capabilities. CE concept CRM
(Hollebeek, Srivastava & Chen 2016)	Conceptual	addressing the micro-foundational theoretical entity of customer engagement (CE) has proliferated in recent years. In parallel, the macro-foundational theory of service-dominant (S-D) logic is thriving. While the fit of CE/S-D logic has been recognized	CE and SDL FBs	micro-foundational theoretical entity of customer engagement (CE)	
(Hollebeek 2019)	Target and position article	An integrative S-D logic/RBV-informed model is developed, where BCE denotes an industrial customer's investment of operant/operand resources in supplier interactions via particular B2B engagement-platforms, including social media	Online engagement Business Relationship & Networks	The model considers business customer actors and resources in driving business customer resource integration, business customer resource integration effectiveness, and business customer resource integration efficiency, which act as BCE antecedents that extend to coincide with BCE. BCE Managerial implications focused on B2B social media marketing are discussed, before we conclude with an overview of research limitations and future research directions	Resource Based View Social Media concept

Empirical Evidence about SDL					
Cabiddu, Lui & Piccoli (2013)	Empirical Multiple case Studies	To understand the process by which partners co-create and share IT-enabled value. Examine how IT enables value co-creation in tourism through SDL and why some actors are appropriate towards value co-created compared to others	Tourism Services and travelers experience	Tourism Industry	General Framework no definite FBs Integrate concepts of RBV towards value creation and capture as definitions by Lepak (2007) and Bowman (2000) And Strategic fit through IT SDL with IT technology enabled SDL
(Xie et al. 2016)	multiple case studies	To better understand how big data interconnects firms and customers in promoting value co-creation, we propose a theoretical framework of big data-based cooperative assets	Clothing Brand Furniture In China	This study offers a new theoretical perspective on value co-creation and an alternative competitive strategy in the era of big data for firms.	
Vespestad & Clancy, (2019)	secondary analysis of the results from a Norwegian national survey on collaboration amongst professionals in primary health care services.	To explore perceptions of successful collaboration by a group of professionals in primary health care, using service-dominant logic (SDL) as a theoretical framework.	Primary health care services	Health and Social Care Applying principles from SDL as a theoretical framework for primary care services challenges the conventional understanding of marketing in health services	SDL
<u>Yiu, et al. (2019)</u>	<u>Empirical</u> <u>Quantitative</u> -	Study used relationship learning theory to examine the effects of service-dominant orientation (SDO), knowledge sharing, and external network on innovation performance through the mediation of relationship learning in technology organisations. Our analysis demonstrates that technology-enabled value co-creation processes are complex interactions between interdependent actors who performing of eight distinct roles. co-creation in complex B2B service systems. This exploratory study establishes a foundation for future research, and offers managerial guidance in this increasingly important area.	Technology organisation	Conducted in Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Organisations	SDL Relationship learning theory
<u>(Breidbach & Maglio 2016)</u>	multiple case study of the consulting industry to provide empirical insights	Our analysis demonstrates that technology-enabled value co-creation processes are complex interactions between interdependent actors who performing of eight distinct roles. co-creation in complex B2B service systems. This exploratory study establishes a foundation for future research, and offers managerial guidance in this increasingly important area.	IT strategy consulting consulting Development of infrastructure management framework Government Energy consulting Service customer Financial services Tourism	Specifically, our theoretical contribution consists of five propositions that define the roles of actors (who?), resources (what?), and practices (how?) underlying technology- enabled value	Value Co-Creation
(Oliveira & Panyik 2014)	qualitative methodology has been applied. content analysis of both the computer-aided	the tourist/traveller as an opinion maker with access to a plethora of information communication technologies to act as co-creators of brands. Therefore, it is wise to engage them and strategically integrate the content they generate into the whole destination branding effort.		The application of this methodology on online material could contribute to a refined destination branding initiative for Portugal by integrating user-generated and travel experts content into the strategy	Co-creation concept