

Investigating The Role of Marketing Activities of Social Media in The Company's Image and Customer Response (Case Study: Hotel Industry)

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Abstract

Marketing through social media includes activities in line with long-term and affordable communication developments between organizations and their customers in order to make mutual interests for both parties and also continuous maintenance and reinforcement of the relations with customers. The current study is done with the aim of investigating the effect of marketing activities in social media on customer response and the mediator role of company's image in hotel industries. The statistical society of this study includes the customers in hotels and residential centers in Shiraz that the sample size is determined using Cochran Formula for unknown societies. The data collecting tool in this study is questionnaire and to determine its validity and stability we respectively used content and structure validity and Cronbach Alpha Test. We used the SPSS software for Exploratory Factor Analysis and Correlation Test Lisrel software for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (measurement and structure pattern tests). The results show that marketing activities in social media has a positive and meaningful effect on company's image and customer response. Also the company's image (the hotel image in customer mind) has a positive and meaningful effect on hotel industries. Additionally, we found that although the entertaining marketing activities in social media has not a meaningful effect on company's image and customer response, up to date information and interaction have a positive and meaningful effect on customer response through company's image.

Keywords: Marketing, Social media, Company's image, Customer response.

1. Introduction

In the world of today, the development of information technology has lead to many changes in different dimensions of human life. The range of influence is so high that many experts believe that marketing zone regarding the significant changes in the life style, business methods and daily customer behaviors in response to environmental motivators and studying on these changes seems unavoidable. Social media is one of these influential phenomena in the field of marketing activities.

These media outdated traditional methods of finding information and purchasing items and creating new social and economic phenomena. Social media marketing has attracted considerable attention due to this fact. Today, many companies use social media in external advertising, marketing, customer relationship management, and so on; Because they have learned from experience that marketing activities in social media play an important role in communicating individually with customers and providing opportunities for them to access customers (Bench, 44: 2010). One of the applications of using social media in the field of marketing activities is the hotel industry, which benefits from such opportunities, has a significant role in highlighting and introducing the accommodation, hotel facilities, Exterior spaces and outer attractions, along with short and concise information, can play an important and important role in encouraging and stimulating the tourists. However, it is

important to note that in each industry and business, depending on the nature of the industry, the type of need and purpose of using the social media, the choice of media and materials is different and sometimes complex. Especially when it comes to content, content content, content type, cost of content creation, and content usage strategy varies for each business. Therefore, in developing a strategy for marketing social media in hotels, attention is paid to the choice of the platform. The hotel industry is recognized as one of the important infrastructures of the tourism industry. Which in the last decade has become one of the most productive industries.

In this research, considering the necessity of identifying the effective factors and factors of marketing activities in social networks in the hotel industry, we examine the importance of these factors on the image of the hotel (hotel) and the response of the customers in this industry.

1-1. Social media marketing

One of the unique features of today's world is the existence of massive and extensive human contacts. The development of communications, especially electronic communications, has made the new society so different from the earlier societies that the modern age has been called the information society as the "era of communication" and society today. In such a society, Media and mass media play a key role in communications. The mass media, among all the new tools and techniques, have the most cultural impact on the behavior of the society. These media have an impact on the emergence of new habits, changes in beliefs and mood and behavior of human beings (Rahimnia, 70: 2012).

Social media is a description of online tools, which people use to share content, profiles, opinions, views, experiences and thoughts. Therefore, social media facilitates online conversations and interactions between groups of people. Currently, social media has a much greater potential for access to the general public than traditional media such as radio, television and magazines (Jalilian, 63: 2012). In addition, Internet users are moving away from traditional media and are increasingly using social media to look for information. Another benefit of social media to customer loyalty is that social media allows and allows direct marketing and one-to-one interactions between vendors and customers, and the use of this will enhance customer loyalty (Lindsey, 121:

2012). One of the reasons for the rapid popularity of corporate social media is the dissemination of information through the Internet. In fact, marketing social media, creating website traffic or getting attention to an issue through social media. This method is an attempt to attract the mass audience to gain more profit at small scales (Fatholhzadeh, 49: 1394). In these media, users are involved with two concepts of creating new content or content created by others, which contain content, ideas, and individual features that can be analyzed for specific purposes (Coltter, 83: 2012).

Marketing using social media involves the use of social networks, online consumer activities in brand-brand communication, and oral-to-mouth advertising for successful online advertising. Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter provide advertisers with information about the likes and non-likes of consumers. Thus, using social networks, the business community provides information about what the user likes, and they advertise on the same information. For example, in a hotel, hotel officials will have two types of feedback on the basis of the services they provide: the provision of good services that will give customers a positive view of the website and will promote the hotel's free advertising through social media. And, on the other hand, poor services that negatively impact customers and potentially damage the hotel's reputation (Kitsman, 49: 2013).

Social media marketing has many effects, such as time savings, economical cost-effectiveness, the availability of a wide range of social media for marketing, collaboration between the company and the consumer, and the lack of time constraints in business. (Junován, 38: 2018).

Marketing in social networks has a variety of different types depending on the company's goals, some of which include:

- 1) Direct supply of goods and services: In this way, the goods and services of the company are displayed on the social networking pages so that users who welcome this product or service can contact manufacturers and suppliers of those goods and services to make your own. So in this way, the social network is used as a showcase of the shop, users are attracted to them by the showcase of the shops and they are contacted to buy goods or ask for specifications and prices.
- 2) Advertise the company site in social networks: In this way, social networks are used as a showcase for the

supply of goods and the transfer of users to the sales site. In this way, the company often abandons the user from the social network advertising cache by transferring the user from the social network to the website, creating a quiet environment for the user and finally selling his goods and services (Gutliius, 143: 2011).

3) Content Marketing: One of the most important features of social media is the ability to share content. By doing so, it can quickly get involved with any user's social media with a targeted marketing campaign. In this way, social media is used as a tool to explain the benefits of its products and services through high-quality educational articles.

4) Influencer Marketing: In this way, the company wants to promote people who have a lot of social networks to promote our products and services. These ads are usually

the way that a person identifies himself as a user of our goods and services and defines the quality of it (Zarella, 218: 2009).

1-1-1. Social Media Marketing Approaches

Social networks have changed the power structures in the marketplace. In fact, given the power of these media in their viral nature, their ability to widely disseminate marketing messages, have been able to play a significant role in analyzing the opinions of users of these media, have a positive impact on the formulation of marketing strategies, guiding orientations and buying decisions (Nov. 41: 2014). In general, the approaches to using these networks for marketing purposes in different research groups are divided into three categories, summarized briefly in Table 1:

Table 1.Social Media Marketing Approaches

The basis of analysis	Definition	Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The structure of social networks and relationships between its nodes; ✓ Review the ideas and content shared in this environment from different aspects. 	The use of social networks is a source of information.	Inactive
Advanced linguistic techniques are used to identify positive, negative, terminology, and other affective words to detect the polarity of a sentence.	Using social networks as a public relations tool, direct marketing, as well as a tool for personalizing customer experiences and exploiting their creativity.	active
By analyzing information in social media, its knowledge is used to formulate marketing strategies.	Social networking is used as a source of rich and key information for direct and indirect marketing.	hybrid

1.Social media marketing and corporate image

The company image is the mental image that the audience has about a company (Bench, 89: 2010). The corporate image is the result of a process. This process emanates from the ideas, feelings and experiences of consumers from the services received by a company, these ideas, emotions and experiences are retrieved from memory and form a mental image of the company in question. Therefore, the corporate image is the result of an evaluation process. Although it may be that a customer does not have enough information about a company, the information received from various sources,

such as commercial ads and oral advertisements, affects the process of shaping the image of the company (Rahimnia, 99: 1391). The company's good image gives credibility to consumers or industrial buyers, and as a result, customer perceptions of brand quality increase. The image of the company is a key factor in creating the right mindset in the minds of industrial buyers (Martinson, 87: 2007).

2.Social media marketing and customer responses

The customer response consists of a set of psychological and physical processes that are pre-purchase and

continue to run after consumption. This behavior involves the knowledge and feelings and actions that people experience or are doing in the process of using products or services (Juanwan et al., 2016). Today, customers are significantly changing their behavior in line with the technology and the global economic environment. They get a lot of information, get acquainted with the products, and they lose their trust in advertising. On the other hand, they prefer custom products and services and change their shopping channels. Therefore, businesses have to reform or even change their advertising strategies in order to survive changes and demand and the needs of their customers (Jalilian et al., 2012).

In other words, today's social networks have a huge impact on how Internet users interact. Internet users are looking for research and sharing their information. The results show that when most users are not involved in social networks, those who transact and trade with their friends through social networks usually get important benefits in the form of a higher satisfaction of users. Users join these networks, publish and support their profiles, and communicate with their friends. The result

of these social relationships is a document that is indicative of the level and amount of trust created between users (Fatholahzadeh, 1394: 4). Marketing activity in social media allows the organization to save time and money by using statistical techniques and field studies of its target market into smaller groups and categories that describe the behavior or characteristics of the community. Have a similar cognition. Then, for each group, explain the specific sales plan. The function of these studies is not limited to determining sales or marketing plans, but also the design of products or services based on the information obtained. Marketing and sales plans can predict the potential behavior of potential customers for new products and services, targeting targeted advertising campaigns. The magic of these studies is when the company discovers the opportunities that were previously unknown to them. This happens when, after studying customer behavior and identifying categories and market segments, the company will find groups that have not yet put them in their marketing plans. So, with targeted programs, they can lead them to their product or service.

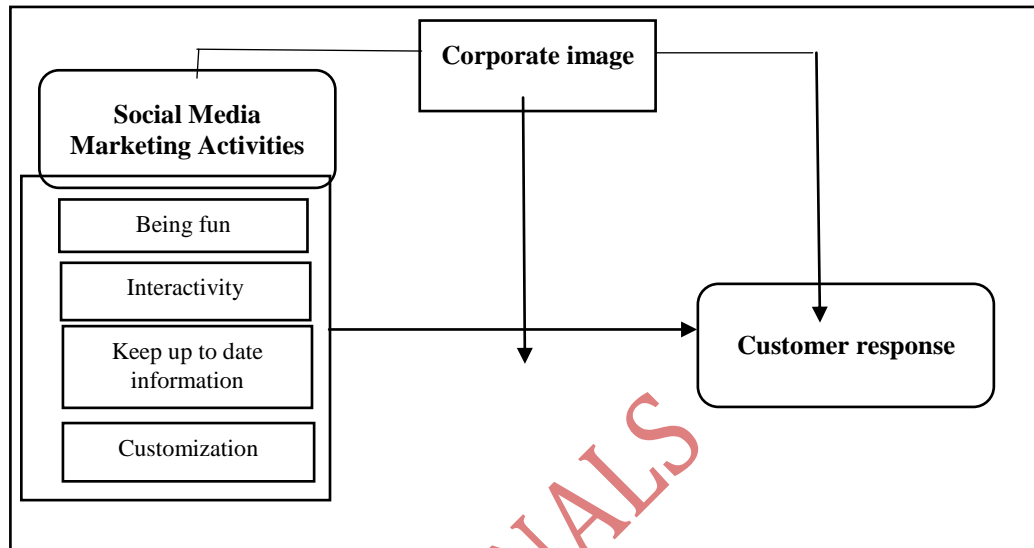
Table 2. Research background

Results	research fellow	Row
The social media marketing activities are categorized into four levels of fun, interactivity, up-to-date information and customization.	Yun Jo Su (2018)	1
The social media marketing division divides social media marketing into four factors: functional interactions, stylishness, customization and perceived risk.	Li (2017)	2
SNS marketing activities categorized companies as incidents, information and advertising	Kim (2017)	3
Features SMMA to Fun, Interact, Stylish, Customization and Word Words (WOM) and categorize them into luxury brands..	Sano (2015)	4
The social media activities in communications, information provision, support for daily living, promotion and sales, and social response and activity in their study of the importance of corporate social media activities that compare consumers and companies, Classified	Joe (2013)	5

2. Conceptual model and research hypotheses

The conceptual model of the present study is based on theoretical foundations and research background as follows:

Figure 1. Conceptual model of research



3. Research hypotheses

According to theoretical foundations and the conceptual model of research, the hypotheses of this research are:

3-1. Main research hypotheses:

- 1) Social media marketing activities have a significant effect on customer responses in the hotel industry
- 2) Social media marketing activities have a significant effect on the image of the company in the hotel industry.
- 3) The image of the company has a significant effect on customer responses in the hotel industry
- 4) Social media marketing activities have a significant effect on the customer response in the hotel industry by mediating the image of the company.

3-2. Sub-assumptions of research:

- 1) The fun of social media marketing activities has a significant effect on the image of the company in the hotel industry.
- 2) The ability of the parties to engage in social media marketing activities has a significant effect on the image of the company in the hotel industry.
- 3) The up-to-date information on social media marketing activities has a significant effect on the image of the company in the hotel industry.

- 4) Customization in social media marketing activities has a significant effect on customer response in the hotel industry.

- 4-1. The fun of social media marketing activities has a significant effect on customer responses in the hotel industry.
- 4-2. The interaction of the parties in social media marketing activities has a significant effect on customer responses in the hotel industry.
- 4-3. The up-to-date information of social media marketing activities has a significant effect on customer response in the hotel industry.
- 4-4. Customization of social media marketing activities has a significant effect on customer responses in the hotel industry.

4. Research method

The present study is essentially a descriptive-survey research in terms of the purpose of research and the method of data collection. Also, considering that it seeks to investigate the relationship between the hidden variables and their obvious components with each other and examine the fit and the degree of model approximation, it is a type of correlation research based

on structural equation modeling. The data gathering tool was a standard five-point Likert scale theoretical basis.

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test was used to determine its validity. The validity of content validity and construct validity were used. In this regard, in order to confirm the factual validity of the faculty members and experts, in order to verify the factor's validity through exploratory factor analysis, the whole scale of research and confirmatory factor analysis were used for the measurement models of each variable. The statistical population of this study is customers of hotel services (including residential centers, passenger and tourist offices and resorts) in Shiraz.

Due to the lack of access to all customers in the community, the Cochran formula was used for unknown (N) communities. (N) was used unknown and the sample size was 385. Sampling method is available in this non-randomized study. Correlation between variables was also determined by Pearson correlation coefficient and for testing of hypotheses, structural equation modeling technique was used using Lisrel software.

5. Exploratory factor analysis and coefficient

As stated in this study, factor validity is calculated through exploratory factor analysis for the entire

research scale and the confirmatory factor analysis, which includes the measurement parameters of each variable. The results of exploratory factor analysis for the whole scale were calculated using the principal components and varimax rotation method. Accordingly, 6 hidden variables and indicators related to each variable were identified; indicators with an inappropriate factor structure and their extractive shares were less than 0.5; these six factors explained 763.76% of variance. According to the data adequacy test, the KMO value is 0.924, which indicates that the number of data is appropriate for performing factor analysis; Also, since the "Bartlett test" meaningful factor is zero, a factor analysis for identifying the structure is appropriate. After analyzing an exploratory factor for the whole scale, the confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the measurement patterns for each of the hidden variables, which was followed by the removal of some indicators whose factor load was less than 0.5. The fitting of each of the variables was verified. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated before and after the validity of each variable and the total of the questionnaire, the results of which are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient before and after factor analysis

α after factor analysis	Number of questions after factor analysis	α before factor analysis	Number of questions before factor analysis	Variables
0/827	3	0/827	3	Being fun
0/888	6	0/972	12	Interactivity
0/931	4	0/923	8	Keep up to date information
0/893	2	0/879	6	Customization
0/930	4	0/930	4	Corporate image
0/935	3	0/935	3	Customer response
0/965	22	0/965	36	Whole scale

5-1. findings

5-1-1. Descriptive findings

Demographic characteristics of the research sample indicate that 42.38% of women and 57.62% of men, 45.61% of them are single and 54.35% of them are

married. Of respondents in this study, 26.33% were less than 30 years old, 44.67% were between 31-60 years old and 28.6% above 61 years old. Also, 32.8% of graduate students were less educated, 42.77% were bachelor and 24.83% were graduate students and higher. In the

following, Table 4 shows the correlation matrix of variables (correlation coefficient and significance level).

Table 4. Correlation coefficient matrix and significance level of variables

Customer response	Corporate image	Customization	Keep up to date information	Interactivity	Being fun		Variables
-	-	-	-	-	1	Correlation	Being fun
-	-	-	-	-	-	meaningful	
-	-	-	-	1	-0/007	Correlation	Interactivity
-	-	-	-	-	0/912	meaningful	
-	-	-	1	0/723	-0/08	Correlation	Keep up to date information
-	-	-	-	0/000	0/876	meaningful	
-	-	1	0/580	0/549	-0/6	Correlation	Customization
-	-	-	0/000	0/000	0/419	meaningful	
-	1	0/489	0/479	0/37	-0/12	Correlation	Corporate image
-	-	0/000	0/000	0/000	0/812	meaningful	
0/417	0/443	-	-	-	-	Correlation	Customer response
0/000	0/000	-	-	-	-	meaningful	

Considering that the significance level for all coefficients except for fun is equal to zero (Table 4), therefore, the correlation coefficients of the variables are significant at 95% confidence level.

5-2-2.Study hypotheses

In this study, structural equations and Lisrel software have been used to calculate the effect of variables that

are correlated. Subsequent studies of main and minor hypotheses have been done using two structural patterns. The first structural pattern examines the main hypotheses of the research. In this model, social media marketing activities are an external variable, and variables of perceived quality and customer response are endogenous hidden variables. The pattern fit results are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Structural model fitting indices Main hypotheses

AGFI	RMR	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	NFI	χ^2	df	
0/90	0/019	0/95	0/073	0/99	0/98	0/97	2/385	30	73/61

Table 6. Results from the structural model of the main hypotheses

Result	Sig	Path coefficient	Direction	Hypothesis
Confirmation	8/79	0/53	Marketing activities in social mediaCorporate image	1
Confirmation	6/07	0/41	Marketing activities in social mediaCustomer response	2
Confirmation	2/88	0/19	Corporate imageCustomer response	3

The results of the study of the structural pattern of the main hypotheses of the first, second and third hypotheses are shown in Table 6. Accordingly, marketing activities in social media, perceived quality, have a positive and significant effect on customer response. In addition, due to the mediating role of perceived quality, marketing activities in social media through the image of the company have an indirect and significant effect of 0.19

and a significant effect of 0.54 on the responses of the customers. In the following, to study sub-assumptions, a second structural model was used in this research. Interaction variable variables The up-to-date information and the possibility of customizing the endogenous variables and the company image and customer response variables are hidden variables. The results of fitting

structural model indices of sub-hypotheses are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Structural model fitting indices. Sub-hypotheses

AGFI	RMR	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	NFI	χ^2	df	
0/90	0/019	0/95	0/073	0/99	0/98	0/97	2/385	30	73/61

Table 8. Results of the structural pattern of sub-hypotheses

Result	Sig	Path coefficient	Direction	Hypothesis
reject	-1/94	-0/31	InteractivityCorporate image	2-1
Confirmation	3/95	0/57	Keep up to date informationCorporate image	3-1
Confirmation	4/78	0/38	Ability to customizeCorporate image	4-1
Confirmation	2/21	0/13	InteractivityCustomer response	2-2
Confirmation	1/98	0/22	Up to date informationCustomer response	3-2
Confirmation	3/96	0/31	Ability to customizeCustomer response	4-2

Table 8 shows the results of the structural model of sub-hypotheses in the standard estimation and significant numbers. According to the results, the path to the current information-image of the company has the highest

standard coefficient (0.57) And the variables of the possibility of interaction, updating of information and customization have a positive and significant effect on the company's image and customer response.

Table 9. Investigating the indirect effect of marketing activities on social media on customer responses through corporate image

Result	Sig	Indirect effect	Direction
No indirect effect	-1/57	0/05	InteractivityCorporate imageCustomer response
The effect is indirect	1/98	0/09	UpdateCorporate imageCustomer response
The effect is indirect	2/12	0/07	CustomizationCorporate imageCustomer response

Based on the results in Table 9, we can conclude that the company's image variable can act as a mediator in the information update path and customization and customer response. Therefore, given the direct and indirect effect, the total effect of updating information and customization on the responses of customers is 0.28 and 0.37.

6. Conclusions and suggestions

The results of testing the main hypotheses of the research in the form of a structural pattern show that all three main hypotheses are confirmed. According to the path coefficients, marketing activity in social media has a positive effect on the image of the hotel (hotel) And answered the customers. The image of the company also has a positive and significant effect on the responses of hotel customers (travelers and tourists). Given the direct

effects and confirmation of the role of the mediating image of the company, Marketing activity in social media has a direct impact on customer responses. Also, the results indicate that the marketing activity in social media in total in relation to the company's image, there is a less positive effect on customer responses, but this difference is not as high as the direct and positive effects. These results are in line with the findings of Yun Joo Seo (2018), Benson & Headerson (2013) regarding the direct and indirect impact of social media marketing on customer responses. It should be noted that customization both indirectly and through corporate image has an impact on customer responses and has a direct impact more than indirect effect. Therefore, since the amount of indirect effects on the responses of customers is insignificant compared to the direct effects, it can be concluded that more should be focused on

direct impact. The amount of indirect impact is more up-to-date than the possibility of customization, and the proportion of the possibility of customization is less on the response of the customers than the total impact of the update. These findings are consistent with the results of Boone (2010) and Laroche et al. (2013) studies. Therefore, it can be said that social media in the hotel industry as a distribution channel in the tourism industry can help to improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies and provide appropriate services to tourists. And as a means of attracting or depriving tourists to the Hotel of the Resorts, because in attracting traffic to the website, attracting and becoming acquainted with the potential tourist with the website and hotel services, the presentation and transfer of value and quality of hotel services; Provide and transfer the value and quality of the hotel services; Social media act as an entrance gate. Marketing media activity in the social media environment therefore requires special attention because in this space Customers are far more powerful than before, and they can act like a double sword and publish their opposing views. Further, according to the results of the research, the potential and broad scope of the social media for reaching the audience and the possibility of interaction between the brand and its audience, as well as the success of past experiences abroad and the urgency of these types of interactions in our country, it is suggested In the first place, companies (hotels and resorts and tourism) in the use of social media for more marketing activities focus on developing and raising awareness of the audience. And the possibility of interaction between the brand and its audience, as well as the success of past experiences abroad, and the urgency of these kinds of interactions in our country, it is recommended in the first place, companies (hotels and resorts and tourism) In the area of using social media for more marketing activities, focusing on developing and raising awareness of the audience about the activities and services of these centers and sharing the experience of other customers from the special services and supermarket centers (residential-tourism). In addition, according to the results of the research and the importance of three factors for interaction, updating of information and the possibility of customization in the field of marketing activities in social media in the hotel industry is suggested. To enable marketing managers in this field of social media as a platform to interact with customers and provide special offers and discounts, and

by posting powerful posts, they share their opinions with customers because they are the best way to communicate directly. And instantly with past customers, Present and Future an important point in this interaction is the twofold achievement of the interests of customers according to the requirements of the day by residential institutions, on the one hand, which allows the customization and presentation of packages and discounts, diverse and tailored to different groups of customers for these centers. Provides and, on the other hand, allowing customers to access the information they need in a short time. In this way, it is possible to quickly respond to questions, complaints and requests from customers, which plays a significant role in maintaining and even attracting customers. Therefore, marketing activity in social media allows residential managers to provide feedback on hotel performance and improve its services. Another important factor in this area is the updating of residential information centers in these media, which allows customers to decide on and select these residential centers.

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