

The missing link: creating value with Social Media use in hotels

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Abstract

Social Media has totally transformed the way firms relate to the market. Hotels all over the world are increasingly using these tools, integrating them in their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies to engage customers in active conversations. The use of Social Networking and Review Sites has become pervasive, and hotels are investing large sums of money in their implementation. However, there is a certain degree of skepticism about its real impact on value creation. To shed light on the topic, based on a sample of 222 Spanish hotels, the present study examines the real impact of Social Media use. By building on the Resource-based theory, the proposed model shows the pathway between Social Media tools and organizational performance, highlighting the mediating role of Social CRM capabilities. Findings highlight the strategic relevance of Social CRM capability building, which appears as real antecedent of value creation with these initiatives.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Networking, Social CRM, value creation, hotel sector.

1. Introduction

Social Media use is revolutionizing the way we communicate, collaborate, share and consume (Aral et al., 2013). Social Media refers to a “set of online tools that supports social interaction between users, facilitating the creation and sharing of knowledge, and transforming monologue (company to customer) into dialog” (Hansen et al., 2011; p. 12). It includes diverse Internet-based applications based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlin, 2010). They appeared as “game changer” tools, placing the customer at the center of the organization. Social Media has transformed how firms relate to the market, creating a new array of possibilities and challenges (Kaplan and Haenlin, 2010) Initiatives based on Social Media use are becoming increasingly popular among organizations as they allow firms to better know its customers, facilitating increased revenue, personalization and cost reduction (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). The proliferation of Social Media promises numerous commercial advantages for companies, and its use is creating a substantial change in consumer behavior, so it is having a considerable impact in business (Heidemann et al., 2011). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Flickr have millions

of daily users and are said to capture the “wisdom of the crowd” (Luo et al., 2013). Social media platforms can facilitate business transformation, improving the management of customer relationships, brand assets, and business processes.

In this new 2.0 environment, traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies are morphing into Social CRM. The latest trend in CRM is to integrate Social Media tools in these initiatives, taking advantage of its relational properties to nurture customer interactions (Harrigan et al., 2015). Social CRM can be defined as a business strategy, sustained by technological tools, designed to engage customers in collaborative conversations that provides both parts beneficial value in a trusted and transparent environment (Greenberg, 2010). Social Media allows firms to contact customers in a personal way, capturing their personal preferences and needs, so they have become a key weapon to reinvent customer relationships. However, despite the eagerness on the part of firms to embrace Social Media tools to connect with customers, there is also much skepticism about its efficacy (Rishika et al. 2013).

In particular, hospitality has been one of the industries that have been greatly transformed by the emergence of Social Media. The use of these tools has become increasingly relevant as part of tourism experiences, because it has changed the way that information about travel is disseminated (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014). More than one third of online travelers are somewhat influenced by Social Media, with Facebook and TripAdvisor being the main platforms, referring millions of visitors each day (Cabiddu et al., 2014). As Social Media is becoming increasingly important for the hospitality industry, in the last decade there has been an upsurge of research on the topic. Leung et al. (2013), examining hospitality research on Social Media, observed that it can be classified in two basic groups: Consumer-centric studies and Supplier-related studies, which focused mainly on how firms are using these tools for management or promotion. Despite the wide popularity of these tools, limited research has been developed, from an organisational perspective, examining the impact of Social Media use on hotel performance (Anderson, 2012; Kim et al., 2015). Diverse authors suggest that there is a great requirement for additional insight into how hotels can leverage Social Media tools for effectively improving customer relationships, creating value for the firm (Chan and Guillet, 2011; Jung et al., 2013).

This paper addresses this literature gap by empirically investigating Social Media use in a sample of 222 Spanish hotels. We address two research objectives: (1) Examining if the use of Social Media tools (Social

Networking and Review Sites) is directly related to value creation; (2) Analyzing if there are some firm capabilities, related to customer knowledge, that intermediate this process. We built on the Resource-Based View to analyse if Social Media use can be source of competitive advantage and how it can enhance or complement firm capabilities for customer management.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. In the next section, based on the conducted literature review we propose the theoretical framework, our research hypotheses and describe the conceptual model. Then, we describe the methodology, data analysis and discussion of the results. To close the study, we include the concluding remarks and implications for future research.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

2.1 Social Media use and performance from the Resource-Based View

The Resource-Based View (RBV) constitutes the theoretical foundation of this research. Prior studies focusing on Social CRM implementation and Social Media use have also applied this theory to examine how these technologies can create value for the firm (Harrigan et al., 2015; Palacios-Marqués et al., 2015; Trainor et al., 2014).

The RBV of organisations, holds that an organisation's ability to leverage internal resources that are valuable, rare, non-imitable and non-substitutable, allows it to differentiate itself from competitors and perform better (Barney, 1991). This perspective suggests that performance is derived from the firm's resource endowment and effective they are at transforming these resources into effective capabilities (Barney, 1991; Day, 1994). Prior research on marketing and Information Technology (IT) has found that, to provide significant performance improvements, resources need to be combined and transformed into distinctive capabilities (Trainor et al., 2014). Consequently, it can be asserted that the mere use of Social Media applications cannot be a source of sustainable competitive advantage, because any possible advantage gained through it can be easily and rapidly copied by competitors and become a general practice in any specific industry (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2015). However, in the context of a Social CRM initiative, these technologies can be used to establish conversations with customers and capture valuable knowledge to personalize service and differentiate from competitors. In this vein, Tanriverdi (2005) with empirical data of 1.000 firms confirmed that knowledge management capabilities acted as a critical mediator between IT

use and firm results. Consistent with this view, in our study we will examine the impact of Social Media on value creation considering Social CRM capabilities as a valuable mediator. Those capabilities refer to a firm's competency in "generating, integrating and responding to information obtained from customer interactions that are facilitated by Social Media tools" (Trainor et al., 2014, p. 1202).

Despite this growing importance of Social Media use in the tourism industry there are few studies that analyse the effect of its use on firm performance (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2015). Table 1 summarizes the recent research on the topic in the main hospitality and tourism journals. It is noticeable how the study of Social Media has gained popularity recently, but prior research has failed to clarify the specific mechanism through which the use of these tools transforms into real value creation. Also, most studies focused exclusively or in the use of Social Networks or in Review Sites like Tripadvisor, but did not analyse the phenomenon in a comprehensive way. In our study, we will divide Social Media use into two large categories, according to their differential characteristics: Social Networking and Review Sites. Additionally, we have found also that, although Spain is one of the largest tourist destination in the world and Social Media has a strong presence in hospitality enterprises (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2015), there is limited empirical research on the topic. So we will focus on this specific market to conduct our empirical study. Our study is a first effort to address all the mentioned research gaps.

Table 1: Recent hospitality research examining the impact of Social Media use on performance

Authors	Topic/title	Social Media examined	Method	Main findings
Chan and Guillet (2011)	Use and impact of social media marketing in the Hong Kong hotel industry	Blogs, Microblogs, SN sites, virtual worlds, content community sites, sites for feedback	Descriptive research: hotels' performance was assessed by observing their actions on Social Media sites.	Results confirm that hotels generally have a poor performance when using Social Media for learning about customers
Anderson (2012)	Impact of user generated content and hotel performance in US	Aggregated data from five travel-related platforms including Tripadvisor	Logistic regression	Findings provide a numerical confirmation of the positive relation between review score (hotel reputation) and revenue per available room (RevPAR).
Leung et al. (2013)	Marketing effectiveness of two Social Media sites (Facebook and Twitter) in the US hotel industry	Facebook and Twitter	Structural equation modelling (SEM)	Results confirm that social media experiences of hotel customers' significantly influence their attitudes toward the brand, positively affecting booking intention and Ewom.
Sparks et al. (2013)	The effects of content type, source, and certification logos of online travel reviews on consumer behaviour, in the Australian market	Online review sites (platforms not specified)	Factorial analysis of variance (three way ANOVA)	Customer purchase intentions were influenced principally by their overall attitude toward the resort and their trust in its corporate social responsibility policies.
Jung et al. (2013)	The role and the use of online social networking as a relationship marketing tool in the context of luxury hotels in UK	Online Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Triadvisor...)	Semi-structured interviews and qualitative analysis (constant comparative analysis)	Findings revealed that online social networks provided hotels with marketing opportunities (related to customer feedback and service personalization) and increased business value.
Tsao et al. (2015)	The influence of hotel reviews on booking intention from the perspective of consumer conformity, in Taiwanese hotels	User generated reviews on Tripadvisor	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	Findings indicate that positive reviews significantly increases booking intention. They also confirmed that this influence was strengthened with the number of reviews
Alluri et al. (2015)	The effectiveness of embedded social media on hotel websites and the importance of social interactions and return on engagement, in US hotels	Facebook, Twitter and Youtube	Univariate statistics and ANOVA	The study proved that the embedded Social Media channels on the hotel Web site enhanced travelers' social gratifications. However, traveler satisfaction and purchase intentions were not increased by the presence of Social Media.
Palacios-Marqués et al. (2015)	The effect of online social networks on firm performance and how this technology can help to create value, in Spanish hospitality firms.	Online social networks (platforms not specified)	Structural equation modelling	Results show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between online social networks and innovation capacity and that the relationship between online social networks and firm performance is fully mediated by innovation capacity
Philips et al. (2015)	The relationships among user generated online reviews, hotel features and Revpar, in Swiss hotels	User generated reviews on Tripadvisor	Artificial Neural Networks	Results further indicate that positive reviews can effectively contribute to hotel's financial performance
Kim et al. (2015)	Effectiveness of managing online reviews on hotel performance	Online reviews from different platforms	Multiple regression analyses	Findings indicate that overall ratings are the most relevant driver of hotel performance, followed by hotel response to negative comments.
Neirotti et al. (2016)	Customer reviews and value creation in the Italian hospitality industry	User generated reviews on Tripadvisor	Regression analysis	Results suggest that online ratings from user-generated reviews on TripAdvisor have a positive effect on hotel revenue growth, so greater visibility online has a positive impact on sales revenue

2.2 Social Networking Use

Online social networks have become a global phenomenon which holds an immense social and economic impact (Heidemann et al., 2012). Social Network sites can be defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; p. 211). The popularity and strength of social networks continue to revolutionize communication, information accessibility, and the Internet itself; and its use presents multiple opportunities for hotels (Jung et al., 2013). While the specific functions of the different social networking sites vary, most of their key technological features are rather consistent. Essentially, these platforms enable users to manage friendship, finding contacts with similar interests, and locate content that has been created by other users (Heidemann et al., 2012; Hu et al., 2015). Based on prior studies (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Cha et al., 2012; Hu et al., 2015), we will follow a wide categorization of social networking sites, including also in this category content-oriented sites such as Twitter, YouTube or Flickr, as they also enable social interactions and connections.

Social Network sites have become incredibly popular in recent years. Facebook is globally considered the leading platform. It brings people together to share experiences, photos, likes, and is useful for tracing consumer preferences and attitudes toward a product (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). Twitter has become increasingly popular as it allows sharing relatively shallow information with a short half-life. This tool has proven to be a useful channel for marketing purposes in the hotel sector (Leung et al., 2013). Hotels can use YouTube as a useful commercial platform, to present guests their products and services, and also to engage them in specific initiatives to personalize their experience (Chan and Guillet, 2011). Finally, Flickr is a photo sharing platform which includes social networking features, and hotels can explore its potential by posting photos of their facilities or encouraging customers to share their own pictures.

In sum, social networks have become incredibly significant in tourism, as consumers lean towards trusting other users and their recommendations as opposed to marketing messages (Jung et al., 2013). Online content is now a primary source of travel information, and using these platforms customers expect to become active firms’ partners for creating and consuming their personalized product (Sigala, 2011).

By using social networks, firms can capture valuable information about their customers’ preferences that can be used to personalize the service and create unique experiences. Social media technologies have

become a rich source of information for companies, because every ‘tweet’, ‘like’ or ‘comment’ can be analyzed to better understand the market (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014). Hotels are now integrating social networking use with current CRM systems in order to create valuable Social CRM capabilities. By combining social networking use with other customer-centric technologies, firms will be able to build Social CRM capabilities based on customer information, and enhance customer relationships (Trainor, 2012). In this vein, Palacios-Marques et al. (2015) empirically confirmed that using Social Networks, hotels can get the required knowledge from the customer’s perspective to personalize and improve their service. Hence, it can be argued that:

Hypotheses 1A: Social Networking Use will positively affect Social CRM Capabilities.

Social networks offer firms the possibility to establish multiple contacts with customers at a global level, and at lower cost than with other traditional communication tools. Consequently, social networks use offers significant benefits, including the enhancement of economic value for organizations (Michaelidou et al., 2011). For all the above, hotel brands are integrating social networking platforms in their marketing strategies to reinforce consumer networks, and to improve performance in terms of sales and cash flows (Su et al., 2015).

Hoffman and Fodor (2010) emphasized that returns from Social Media investments cannot be measured exclusively on financial terms, but they impact customer behaviors. Specifically, they noted that social networking use will translate into brand awareness, customer engagement and word-of-mouth, which in turn will enhance economic value creation. In this vein, Trainor et al. (2014) confirmed that investment in Social Media technologies provide firms with substantial customer relationship management benefits, in terms of customer loyalty, satisfaction and retention. Additionally, Jung et al. (2013) observed how hotels are starting to recognize the potential of social networking as a key tool for improving customer relationships. Examining a sample of hotels from the UK, they noted that the use of social networks seem to raise brand awareness, customer retention and increase sales.

We consider Social CRM Performance as the outcome of properly using Social Media for improving customer relationships, which will bring value and profits to an organization and its customers; and based on prior evidence we will suggest that:

Hypotheses 1B: Social Networking Use will positively affect Social CRM Performance

2.3 Review Sites Use

The growing use of Social Media tools in tourism has multiplied the influence of electronic word-of-mouth in consumer decision-making (Philips et al., 2015). This phenomenon has prompted the emergence of diverse platforms capturing online reviews and recommendations shared by customers. The hotel industry delivers experience products, so customers are not able to judge their attributes until they purchase it. Thus, word-of-mouth (WOM) plays a critical role in this industry (Tsao et al., 2015). Recently, review sites like TripAdvisor have gained relevance as the main platforms for guests to communicate with each other.

TripAdvisor has become the largest community for travellers in the world. On its database it includes customer testimonies and evaluations of their real experiences with hotels and destinations (Melián-González et al., 2013). This platform offers users 'independent' travel reviews and comments written from other members, so it has become a powerful platform for sharing experiences (Cabiddu et al, 2014). For this reason, hotels are significantly using these sites, to gain customer insight that allow them to personalize its service and improve customer experience.

Through analyzing the comments on online communities such as TripAdvisor, hotels are able to better understand customer preferences and complaints (Leung et al., 2013). Additionally, by responding publicly to comments, interacting with reviewers, and demonstrating empathy and corrective actions, a positive company image can be restored and potential customers will regain confidence in the brand (Jung et al., 2013). Consequently, most hotels are engaged with creating discussion and responding to comments via review sites to enhance customer relationships. By properly managing review sites, hotels will improve their competency in generating, integrating and properly use valuable customer information. As we have commented previously, Social CRM capabilities are defined as marketing capabilities, based on customer knowledge, which involves the ability to understand the customer and develop products or services that fit with their requirements (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2015). Therefore, by capturing customer preferences derived from online reviews, hotels can personalize its service and improve guest experience. As Park and Allen (2012) observed, for hoteliers, the use of review sites has become an effective mechanism for problem-solving and a way to engage customers in deeper relationships. Consequently, its strategic use will enable the development of valuable capabilities in managing customer knowledge. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypotheses 2A: Review Sites Use will positively affect Social CRM Capabilities

The use of review sites like TripAdvisor, has evolved from novelty to turning into a common practice in the hotel sector (Baka, 2016). These platforms multiply the power of electronic word-of-mouth at an exponential rate, disseminating recommendations and travelers' reviews, so its use is strategic to create business value. Positive comments can enhance the market reputation of the company as well as promote repeat purchase, so the fact of properly handling customer reviews will increase customer loyalty (Serra-Cantallops and Salvi, 2014). Jung et al. (2013) also noted that carefully managing customer reviews and paying attention to opinions in review sites can contribute to the consumer–firm relationship, maintaining a positive hotel image, which will translate into better value creation. In this regard, Philips et al (2015) empirically examined a sample of Swiss hotels and confirmed how the effective management of reviews can contribute to hotels' financial performance. Additionally, Baka (2016) noted how hotel managers recognize that using TripAdvisor was a powerful tool to boost their reputational impact. Xie et al. (2015) also found a positive relationship between online reviews in Tripadvisor and offline hotel performance. Hence, it can be argued that:

Hypotheses 2B: Review Sites Use will positively affect Social CRM Performance

2.4 Social CRM Capabilities and performance

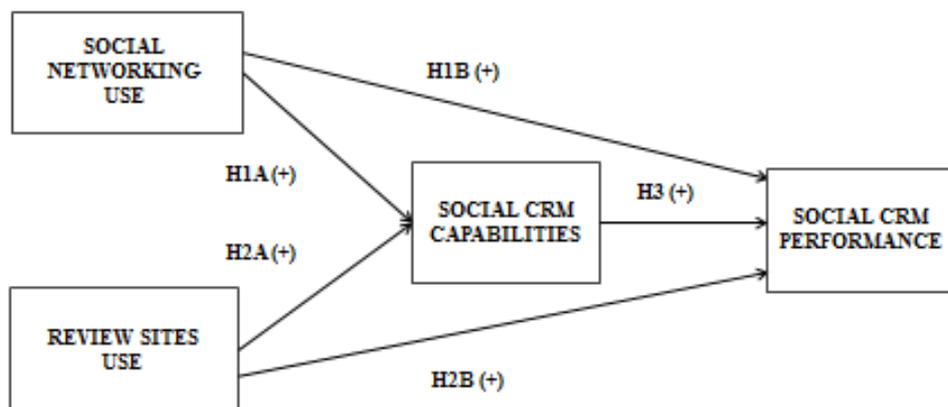
As previously mentioned, Social CRM Capabilities can be defined as the hotel's competence in generating customer information by using Social Media tools, integrate it across the organization and use it to better meet customer needs. These capabilities, which refer to firms' ability in using and leveraging Social Media for improving customer relationships, are key mechanisms that help firms to create value (Braojos-Gómez et al., 2015). Prior research on CRM (Coltman, 2007) emphasized that the use of technological tools per se was not always sufficient to impact performance, but it has to be transformed into distinctive capabilities. Consequently, we propose that the use of Social Media tools need to be combined with other complementary organizational resources to create distinctive capabilities based on customer knowledge. Social Media platforms allow hotels to know the preferences of the customer, but this knowledge has to be transferred to different areas in order to obtain products or processes that fit these preferences. If those tools are used to create and manage new knowledge, it will help organizations to successfully innovate and face the challenges of the competitive environment (Palacios-Marqués et al., 2015). Rapp et al (2010) observed that

customer-linking capabilities effectively mediated the impact of CRM technologies on Customer Relationship performance. These capabilities, which included the ability to identify customer preferences to improve customer service, will become distinctive capabilities that can create a competitive advantage for firms. Likewise, Trainor et al. (2014) empirically confirmed that the use of Social Media tools facilitates the creation of Social CRM Capabilities, which provide firms with substantial benefits, in terms of improved customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention. Thus, we hypothesized that:

Hypotheses 3: Social CRM capabilities will positively affect Social CRM performance

Figure 1 presents our conceptual model with the mentioned hypotheses.

Figure 1: Conceptual model.



3. Method

3.1 Sample and procedure

Based on the analysis of the literature, a qualitative pilot study was conducted with personal interviews to academic, consultants and general managers with knowledge about Social Media Use. Building on the interviewees' suggestions an initial structured questionnaire was developed to perform this research. Second, a pilot test with twelve general managers of hotels was conducted to determine the clarity of the

questions. Based on the feedback gathered, some of the items were slightly modified and refined. Third, the final research model was empirically tested through data collected from general managers in Spanish hotels of three-star to five-star rating. Hotel general managers were selected because they are knowledgeable about, and representative of, the beliefs, values, and ideas embraced by the firm (Trainor et al, 2014).

The tourism and hospitality industry is an economic driving force in Spain. Spain is the third largest tourism destination at a worldwide level, recording more than 66 million international arrivals in 2014 (WTO, 2015). To collect the data, we established a reliable list of hotels in Spain drawing on a database provided privately from Turespaña (organization attached to the Spanish Ministry of Tourism). Several calls and e-mails invitations to complete the survey were sent to the sample of 900 Spanish hotels selected randomly from June to October 2015 (Table 2). We obtained 222 valid responses (24,66% response rate). To reduce a possible desirability bias and to increase the response rate we offered participants the option to receive the results of the investigation once it completed, assuring the anonymity and using the data in an aggregate level. No significant differences (through t-statistics and chi-square) were found between early and late respondents, between the type/size of hotel, or between the sample and respondents (Armstrong and Overton, 1977).

Table 2: Technical details of the research

Sector	Hotel companies
Geographical location	Spain
Methodology	Structured questionnaire
Universe of population	4640 firms
Sample (response) size	900 (222) firms
Sample error	3.3%
Confidence level	95%, p-q=0.50; z=1.96
Period of data collection	From June to October 2015

3.2 Measures

All the items of the questionnaire were based on prior empirical studies and followed 7-point Likert type scales (Table 3). We measured Review Sites Use and Social Networking Use based on previous scales (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Sigala, 2011) about frequency/extent of use (from 1 “never” to 7 “every time”) and strategic importance of these tools (from 1 “not at all important” to 7 “extremely important”). We used the average of the standardized values of frequency/extent of use and the importance of use for Review Sites Use and Social Networking Use.

Table 3: Measurement items

Variable	Items	
Review Sites Use	REVISITE	Tripadvisor
Social Networking Use	NETWUSE1	Twitter
	NETWUSE2	Facebook
	NETWUSE3	Youtube
	NETWUSE4	Flickr
Social CRM Capabilities	CAPA1	In this business, we use Social Media (SM) to conduct market research
	CAPA2	We use SM to detect changes in our customers' preferences
	CAPA3	We use SM to detect fundamental shifts in our industry (e.g. competition)
	CAPA4	We integrate customer information from the various functions that interact with customers (such as marketing, sales, and customer service)
	CAPA5	We integrate internal customer information with customer information from SM
	CAPA6	We merge third party information (such as mailing lists) with our customer database
	CAPA7	We have frequent interdepartmental meetings to discuss market trends identified via SM
	CAPA8	Data collected using SM on customer satisfaction are disseminated at all levels on a regular basis
	CAPA9	When one department finds out something important about competitors using SM, it is quick to alert other departments
	CAPA10	We take action in response to changes in customers' needs detected via SM
	CAPA11	If a major competitor launched an intensive campaign targeting our customers, we would respond immediately using SM
	CAPA12	Customer complaints can be filed and tracked using SM in our firm
Social CRM Performance	PERFOR1	Customer acquisition
	PERFOR2	Customer retention
	PERFOR3	Customer extension (e.g. cross-selling or up-selling products or services)
	PERFOR4	Increase in sales
	PERFOR5	Increase in market share
	PERFOR6	Profitability (ROA)

Likewise, we made use of tested scales to measure Social CRM Capabilities including aspects such as responsiveness (Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Trainor et al., 2014), information generation (Trainor et al., 2014), information integration (Chuang and Lin, 2013; Jayachandran et al., 2005) and information dissemination (Trainor et al., 2014). A scale (1 “strongly disagree”, 7 “strongly agree”) of twelve items enabled to analyze Social CRM Capabilities (subsequent confirmatory factor analysis led to eliminate item 8).

Finally, based in previous studies (Keramati et al., 2010; Roh et al., 2005; Trainor et al., 2014) we drew up a scale (1 “Much worse than my competitors,” 7 “Much better than my competitors”) of six items to measure Social CRM Performance in comparison with the main competitors. We developed confirmatory factor analyses to validate the scales and they confirmed that the scales of Review Sites Use, Social Networking Use ($\chi^2_2=13.61$, Normed Fit Index [NFI]=0.97, Non-Normed Fit Index [NNFI]=0.93, Goodness of Fit [GFI]=0.99, Comparative Fit [CFI]=0.98, Incremental Fit Index [IFI]=0.98), Social CRM Capabilities ($\chi^2_{44}=126.38$, NFI=.97, NNFI=.98, GFI=.98, CFI=.98, IFI=.98), and Social CRM Performance ($\chi^2_9=53.74$, NFI=.98, NNFI=.97, GFI=.99, CFI=.98, IFI=.98) all presented unidimensionality, high validity and reliability.

3.3 Data analysis

The proposed research model was tested using structural equation modeling with the software LISREL 8.8. We used the two-step approach (Anderson and Gerbin, 1988) assessing first the quality of the measurements through the validation and reliability assessments of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2010) and then we test the hypotheses through the structural model.

4. Empirical analysis and results

4.1 Measurement Model

First at all, we analyzed the psychometric properties of the measures (see Table 4). We observed that all the items showed high factor loading ($\lambda > 0.70$) and statistically significant t-values ($t > 16.97$) reflecting convergent validity and unidimensionality (Bollen, 1989). Besides, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the different construct is higher ($AVE > 0.60$) than the recommend minimum value of 0.50 (Fornier and Larcker, 1981), being the items significantly related to their construct, supporting convergent validity.

Second, we tested that the squared multiple correlations (R^2) of the all the items were higher than 0.5, supporting reliability. The Composite Reliability (CR) of the constructs reflects the percent variance in a measurement captured by the trait variance and it is more rigorous estimate for reliability than the Cronbach's Alpha. The Alpha for the constructs in this research ($\alpha > 0.83$) and the CR ($CR > 0.86$) are higher than the recommended value of 0.70. The CR, AVE and the Cronbach's Alpha of this research support the internal consistency and reliability of the scales (Bagozzi, 1980; Fornier and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). The measurement model presents also a good model fit (χ^2 (204 d.f.)=604.81 ($p > 0.01$); NFI=0.95; NNFI=0.96; IFI=0.96; Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index [PGFI]=0.57; Estimated Non-centrality Parameter [NCP]=400.81; Relative Fit Index [RFI]=0.94; CFI=0.96; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA]=0.08).

Table 4: Measurement-model results

Latent Variables	Items	Completely Standardized Latent Construct Loading				R^2	C.R.	AVE
		Social Networking Use $\alpha=0.838$	Review Sites Use	Social CRM Capabilities $\alpha=0.936$	Social CRM Performance $\alpha=0.923$			
Social Networking Use	NETWUSE1	0.75***(17.26)				0.56	0.863	0.613
	NETWUSE2	0.80***(22.66)				0.65		
	NETWUSE3	0.80***(27.16)				0.63		
	NETWUSE4	0.78***(20.78)				0.60		

Review Sites Use	REVISITE		1.00***(29.73)			1.00		
Social CRM Capabilities	CAPA1			0.78***(25.34)		0.61	0.945	0.609
	CAPA2			0.86***(38.71)		0.74		
	CAPA3			0.84***(31.03)		0.71		
	CAPA4			0.76***(19.00)		0.57		
	CAPA5			0.83***(30.80)		0.69		
	CAPA6			0.72***(18.71)		0.51		
	CAPA7			0.75***(17.75)		0.56		
	CAPA9			0.71***(16.97)		0.50		
	CAPA10			0.81***(27.17)		0.66		
	CAPA11			0.77***(19.84)		0.59		
	CAPA12			0.74***(21.16)		0.55		
	Social CRM Performance	PERFOR1				0.81***(21.88)		
PERFOR2					0.75***(18.79)	0.57		
PERFOR3					0.80***(21.34)	0.64		
PERFOR4					0.93***(42.30)	0.86		
PERFOR5					0.91***(25.71)	0.83		
PERFOR6					0.88***(35.75)	0.77		
Goodness-of-fit statistics	$\chi^2_{204}=604,81$ ($P>0.01$) ECVI=3.18 AIC=702.81 CAIC=918.54 NFI=0.95 NNFI=0.96 IFI=0.96 PGFI=0.57 PNFI=0.84 NCP=400.81 RFI=0.94 CFI=0.96 RMSEA=0.08							

Notes: λ^* = Standardised structural coefficient (t-students are shown in parentheses); R^2 =Reliability; C.R.=Composite reliability; AVE=Average variance extracted; *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

Third, we examined discriminant validity (Table 5). The levels of AVE are higher than the squared correlation between each pair of constructs, the highest correlation between any two constructs had a value of 0.61 which is significantly different from unity. We observed also that no confidence interval in the estimation of the correlation between each pair of factors contains the value 1 reflecting that each construct differs from others supporting discriminant validity (Anderson and Gerbin, 1988; Fornier and Larcker, 1981). Likewise, we performed a chi-square difference test between the values obtained for an unconstrained model and a constrained model (a model that constrains the estimated correlation parameter between each pair of latent to 1.0) and its results reflected that the constructs are not perfectly correlated also supporting the existence of discriminant validity (Anderson and Gerbin, 1988).

Table 5: Discriminant validity

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Social Networking Use	0.613	(0.20, 0.49)	(0.50, 0.72)	(0.19, 0.47)
2. Review Sites Use	0.115	1.000	(0.38, 0.63)	(0.31, 0.57)
3. Social CRM Capabilities	0.372	0.260	0.609	(0.41, 0.63)
4. Social CRM Performance	0.108	0.193	0.270	0.122

Notes: Numbers on the diagonal show the AVE. Numbers below the diagonal represent the squared correlation between the constructs. Numbers above the diagonal represent the confidence interval between each pair of constructs (95%).

Fourth, we analysed the possibility of existence of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). To avoid it, we communicated the study goals, assured the survey's anonymity, used previous validated scales and used items with a random order. Additionally, we conducted a Harman's one factor test (the largest single component did not explain the majority of the variance in our data – 44.41% -

, and four components with eigenvalues of more than 1.0, globally explaining over 69% of the total variance). We also developed one-factor model and compared it with the measurement model (the fit was worse for the one-dimensional model than for the measurement model), and added a first-order factor (common latent factor) with all of the measures as indicators to the researcher's theoretical model (there were no differences greater than 0.200 between indicator loading before and after adding the common latent factor). All these tests indicated that common method bias was not a serious threat to our data.

4.2 Structural Model

We used a recursive structural model, with Social Networking Use (ξ_1) and Review Sites Use (ξ_2) as the exogenous latent variables, Social CRM Capabilities (η_1) as the first-grade endogenous latent variable, and Social CRM Performance (η_2) as the second-grade endogenous latent variables. We tested the structural paths proposed by our hypotheses and analyze the estimate direct, indirect and total effects with the covariance and asymptotic covariance matrix as input using SEM (Table 6).

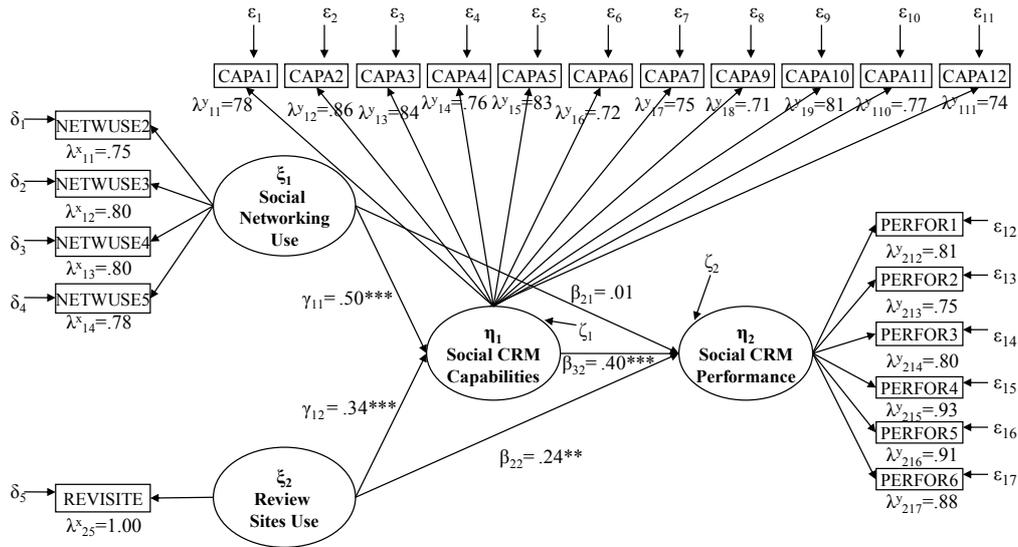
Table 6: Structural propose model result (direct, indirect, and total effects)

Effect from	To	Direct Effects ^a	<i>t</i>	Indirect Effects ^a	<i>t</i>	Total Effects ^a	<i>t</i>
Social Networking Use	→ Social CRM Capabilities	0.50***	6.43			0.50***	6.43
Social Networking Use	→ Social CRM Performance	0.01	0.03	0.20**	3.15	0.21*	2.42
Review Sites Use	→ Social CRM Capabilities	0.34***	5.04			0.34***	5.04
Review Sites Use	→ Social CRM Performance	0.24**	2.68	0.13**	3.06	0.37***	4.62
Social CRM Capabilities	→ Social CRM Performance	0.40***	3.86			0.40***	3.86
Goodness of Fit Statistics	$\chi^2_{204}=604.81$ ($P>0.01$) ECVI=3.18 AIC=702.81 CAIC=918.54 NFI=0.95 NNFI=0.96 IFI=0.96 PGFI=0.57 NCP=400.81 RFI=0.94 CFI=0.96 RMSEA=0.08						

Note: ^a Standardised Structural Coefficients; * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

The analysis of the fit of the structural model (Anderson and Gerbin, 1988) indicated that the model showed a good overall fit (χ^2 (204 d.f.)=604.81 ($p>0.01$); NFI=0.95; NNFI=0.96; IFI=0.96; PGFI=0.57; NCP=400.81; RFI=0.94; CFI=0.96; RMSEA=0.08). The standardized path coefficients of the structural model provide evidence of the hypothesized relationships (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Structural result of proposed model.



Regarding the hypotheses test, we observed that hypothesis H1a was supported and Social Networking Use was related to Social CRM Capabilities ($\gamma_{11}=0.50$ $p<.001$), but H1b was not supported ($\beta_{21}=0.01$ $p>.10$). Nevertheless, we found an indirect effect of Social Networking Use through Social CRM Capabilities (0.50×0.40) on Social CRM Performances (0.20 , $p<.01$, see Bollen (1989) for calculation rules). The total influence of Social Networking Use on Social CRM Performances is thus 0.21 ($p<.05$). The results supported H2a, evidencing how Review Sites Use is related to and affect Social CRM Capabilities significantly ($\gamma_{12}=0.34$ $p<.001$), and H2b was also supported reflecting how Review Sites Use directly affect Social CRM Performance ($\beta_{22}=0.24$ $p>.01$). Review Sites Use also impact Social CRM Performance indirectly (0.13 , $p<.01$) through Social CRM Capabilities (0.34×0.40). The total influence of Review Sites Use on Social CRM Performances is thus 0.37 ($p<.001$). Comparing the magnitudes of these effects, we observed that the effect of Social Networking Use on Social CRM Capabilities is larger than the one of Review Sites Use on Social CRM Capabilities, but the effect of Review Sites Use on Social CRM Performance is larger than that the effect of Social Networking Use on Social CRM Performance. Likewise Social CRM Performance is affected significantly for Social CRM Capabilities ($\beta_{21}=0.40$ $p>.001$) supporting H3. Globally, Social CRM Capabilities ($R^2=0.48$) and Social CRM Performance ($R^2=0.31$) are well explained by the model.

Finally, comparisons with alternative models are recommended to show that a hypothesized model is the best representation of the data (Hair et al., 2010). The structural proposed model is tested with alternative

models and is the most acceptable, parsimonious and preferable model, supporting the relationships among the constructs analyzed (Table 7). So, if we compare Model 1 (structural proposed model) with Model 2, we can see that the latter has a worse RMSEA ($\Delta=0.002$), ECVI ($\Delta=0.13$), AIC ($\Delta=29.63$), and NCP ($\Delta=30.63$). So results show that Model 1 is preferred to Model 2 ($\Delta\chi^2=31.63$) and to the other models.

Table 7: Structural proposed model against alternative statistics model

Model	Description	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	ECVI	AIC	NCP
1	Structural proposed model	604.81		0.084	3.18	702.81	400.81
2	W.R. Social Networking Use to Social CRM Capabilities	636.44	31.63	0.088	3.31	732.44	431.44
3	W.R. Review Sites Use to Social CRM Capabilities	625.53	20.72	0.086	3.26	721.53	420.53
4	W.R. Review Sites Use to Social CRM Performance	614.57	9.76	0.085	3.22	710.57	409.57
5	W.R. Social CRM Capabilities to Social CRM Performance	615.47	10.66	0.085	3.22	711.47	410.47

Notes: W.R. = Without relationship

5. Discussion and conclusions

Social Media tools are revolutionizing the way companies relate to the market, and its impact is being particularly intense in the hospitality industry. However, despite the relevance of the phenomenon, empirical research on the topic remains limited and there is a call for additional research examining the effectiveness of Social Media use and its real impact on value creation in a hotel context. Our study is a first effort to comprehensively address this research gap. By building on the RBV and Social Media literature, we developed a research model to examine the effect of the use of Social Media tools in Social CRM Performance. We conceptualized Social CRM performance as a multidimensional construct including not only customer related measures like customer retention or loyalty, but also financial measures, like increase in sales or profitability. Attending to its different characteristics, we categorized Social Media use in two main groups: Social Networking Use and Review Sites Use. Drawing on a sample of 222 Spanish hotels, our study offers relevant insights related to the effectiveness of Social Media technology use. Considering that research on Social Media is still in its infancy, our results can provide a roadmap for successfully implementing these tools in the hotel sector.

This research has three key contributions to the field. First, regarding Social Networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr), we have observed that its use is not directly related to Social CRM Performance. Surprisingly, results show how the simple fact of having an active presence in these platforms is not translating into customer relationship performance. However, Social Networking Use proved to impact Social CRM Capabilities, which were antecedents of Social CRM Performance. Consequently, we

confirmed how the use of Social Networks can help to create valuable competences based on customer information. When information captured using these tools is integrated into the whole organization and is used to better understand customer needs and to personalize service accordingly, this will have a positive impact on value creation. Although initially surprising, our results are consistent with recent studies on the topic in a hospitality context. In this vein, Aluri et al. (2015) observed that traveler satisfaction and purchase intention were not directly increased by the presence of Social Media channels. Palacios-Marqués et al. (2015) also found that the direct relationship between online social networks use and hotel performance was not significant, and concluded that the main advantage provided by Social Media is its capacity to assist in the management of customer knowledge. Consequently, our findings confirm that only when appropriately used to detect customer needs and respond to them, Social Media would bring higher performance. Building on the RBV, our results support prior insight on IT literature (Wade and Hulland, 2004; Maklan et al., 2015) arguing that it is not the technology alone (in our case Social Networks) that generates a return, rather it is the development of capabilities enabled by the technology that together lead to the achievement of performance improvements.

Second, with regard to Review Sites Use, its use not only impacted the creation of Social CRM Capabilities, but also showed a direct effect on performance. These findings confirmed the strategic impact of Review Sites like TripAdvisor in the hospitality industry, evidencing how electronic word-of-mouth plays a fundamental role in this industry. Our results demonstrate that effective utilization and management of customer reviews can contribute significantly to value creation. If hoteliers analyze content in these platforms and remain conscious of customers' satisfaction levels; the potential damage of negative word-of-mouth on such websites can be restricted. As Kim et al. (2015) pointed out, results suggest that the way a hotel replies to negative reviews can have a key impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention. So, it seems fundamental that hotel managers properly address complaints to make customers feel that their problems are seriously taken into consideration. Such behaviour can release customer dissatisfaction, preventing also negative WOM. Additionally, positively interacting with reviewers can enhance hotel reputation and foster customer loyalty. Despite the relative novelty of the topic, our findings support recent research (Philips et al., 2015) which highlighted that the impacts of Review Sites Use on performance can be both direct and indirect (mediated by Social CRM Capabilities). Our results support prior research which

emphasized the strategic relevance of online reviews and review sites in hotel performance (Neirotti et al., 2016; Tsao et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2014).

Third, results emphasize the strategic relevance of Social CRM Capabilities, which appear as real antecedents of value creation with Social Media use. These capabilities can be considered as the missing link that connects Social Media use with real performance; as they will lead companies towards achieving business value with Social Media investments. Our findings confirm prior IT research supporting how is the effective development of a broad range of complementary capabilities, that results from IT implementation, which together improves business performance. These marketing capabilities, based on customer knowledge, allow hotels to better understand the customer and develop services that fit with their requirements.

Regarding the managerial implications, according to the results, practitioners should focus on the development of Social CRM capabilities, since they have a strong impact on firm performance. Social Media cannot be used exclusively as an additional channel for advertisement or promotion. So posting only promotional information and specific sales may not be the optimal strategy. Instead, these platforms need to be used strategically to foster connections between guests and hotels, engaging both in valuable conversations. Hotel managers should implement specific processes to capture customer information with Social Media, which can be useful for detecting changes in customer needs and preferences. In addition, this information should be shared and disseminated throughout the whole organization, so different departments can work together to improve customer interactions. Finally, it seems paramount to effectively use this knowledge to improve service and foster customer engagement, which subsequently will enhance customer relationship performance. Our findings emphasize also how Review Sites are a fundamental tool to create business value, so hotel managers need to pay special attention to these platforms and develop a specific strategy to manage customer reviews, measuring and monitoring these tools to understand its impact on reputation.

Despite the mentioned contributions to theory and practice, this study also has limitations. First, the use of a single source for both independent and dependent variables which could produce common method bias. Although different tests indicated no evidence of this problem, it would be interesting to strengthen the research with a collection of independent and dependent variables from diverse data sources (Podsakoff et

al., 2003). The second limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data, which makes it difficult to capture the dynamic nature of the phenomenon under study. Longitudinal studies are needed to reinforce the obtained results. The third limitation is that all hotels examined are based in Spain. Future research should validate the model in different countries. Future research replicating the study by using data in other geographic contexts are needed to test the generalizability of our findings.

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