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Research Paper

Product and Service Orientation on Social Media in Restaurant Communication

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ABSTRACT

Social media are a significant marketing communication tool used to establish a relationship with consumers. With the advent of the Internet, social media have become an invaluable source of acquiring new customers. They provide restaurant, bar or cafe owners with the opportunity to communicate with existing and potential clients by publishing posts on social media. Such posts frequently vary in terms of form and relate to different areas of activity. Therefore, the present study aims to enhance the understanding of how different types of posts affect communication efficiency. Content, interesting from the recipient's point of view, is a key factor contributing to success in building social media presence. Hence, the purpose of this article is to compare product and service-oriented communication. To this end, a quasi-experiment has been conducted over the course of 10 months. The results provide evidence that content directly referring to dishes offered at a restaurant is more effective at various levels. The study findings provide useful advice for companies operating in the catering industry and indicate a relationship between the product and other elements of the 7P marketing mix. The results are liable for assisting owners of food and beverage companies in improving customer relationships and increasing their engagement in response to content posted on social media.

Keywords: Social media marketing, food marketing, catering industry, consumer behaviour, content marketing

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the popularity of social media (SM) (Statista, 2022). Social networking sites (SNS) have become an inseparable part of the lives of many people around the world, thus, their transfer therein has contributed to the network development. According to 'Internet World Stats', in January 2022 a total number of over 5.2 billion internet users could be registered (Internet World Stats, 2022).

Technological progress has resulted in changes regarding marketing communication, which is the more and more present on the Internet. This occurs at a time when the market starts to increasingly change into a low-trust environment. As a result, people trust other consumers, forming part of a social network more than companies or experts. Companies take advantage of this fact by transferring a significant part of their communication to SM.

The power of SM is considerable. They were considered a strategic contribution and a tool influencing the 2016 US presidential elections (Enli, 2017; Grover *et al.*, 2019). In comparison to TV, radio or the press, they represent a more innovative, interactive and less expensive communication channel (Leeflang *et al.*, 2014). It is SM that are becoming a platform for exchanging views, obtaining new information, communicating with customers and sharing opinions (Haudi *et al.*, 2022; Notarmuzi *et al.*, 2021). They have also become an important source of information on customer buying behaviours (Ji *et al.*, 2022; Kalinin *et al.*, 2020), market trends as well as competitors' actions and feedback about their own activities (Brem & Bilgram, 2015). This is largely due to their ability to rapidly obtain feedback from users (Shilbury *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, the relatively low cost of using the tool as well as promoting products and services on the Internet result in its popularity, performance and power to influence users (Alalwan *et al.*, 2016; Algharabat *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, SM facilitate the reception of feedback from users within a short period of time (Shilbury *et al.*, 2014). They are also used to increase the level of cooperation with customers, accelerate innovation (Shaltoni, 2017), exchange customers' opinions and knowledge as well as receive their recommendations

on business operations (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017). Currently, they are considered as the main source of information about customer purchasing decisions (Haudi *et al.*, 2022; Sangwan *et al.*, 2022).

Companies are becoming more and more present on SM. They are also an essential tool for companies operating in the catering industry. Many of them began to understand this importance quite early. For example, in 2009 in the U.S., PepsiCo decided to invest \$ 20 million in a new SM campaign (Pepsi Refresh Project) rather than broadcast their annual Superbowl advertisement. The project related to "refresh the world" ideas that consumers could share with the company (Ehrlich, 2020).

It is the strength of SM that has led many organisations and companies around the world to start considering how to use them strategically to reach customers and contribute to their experience (Cartwright *et al.*, 2021; Nuseir & Qasim, 2021; Pardo *et al.*, 2022) Bennett claims that about 93% of business companies worldwide use various Internet platforms and tools to communicate with and serve their customers. In this way, many of these platforms have become an influential medium, through which large numbers of advertising campaigns are conducted (Duffett, 2015), and on which many marketing strategies are focused (Jami Pour *et al.*, 2021; Virtanen *et al.*, 2017). SM have undoubtedly become a meaningful element of the marketing mix (Erdem & Jiang, 2016). Moreover, it has been proved that companies use SM for such purposes as marketing research, sales promotions, customer relationship management, launching new products, acquiring new customers, maintaining communication with existing ones, as well as undertaking actions affecting the company's reputation (Filo *et al.*, 2015; Saxena & Khanna, 2013). Kim *et al.*, (2015) have examined actions performed on SM to increase customer loyalty, providing evidence of their significant impact on both customers' shopping intentions and their loyalty. They are already used by many managers and marketers who, by creating societies focused on a particular brand, can communicate their strategies and marketing plans more effectively (Ismail, 2017; Tourani, 2022).

Many bar and restaurant customers are increasingly following SNS, including Facebook. Customers wish to acquaint themselves with the quality of the meals served, the atmosphere and opinions on whether a bar or a restaurant is worth visiting. Within this context, regularly updating a fan page has become a necessity for most food and beverage catering companies. Furthermore, it is necessary to manage the fan page properly, to communicate with customers

and to quickly respond not only to positive, but also to negative feedback. It is essential to build long-term customer relationships and acquire as many loyal customers as possible. However, acquiring a new customer is an increasing challenge, but at the same time, a necessity for many companies.

This need has been studied by Kim and Koh (2015), who claim that positive customer engagement through SM may significantly affect the value of restaurants. SM influence many aspects of human life, including eating habits (McHale *et al.*, 2009) as they enable consumers to share information on restaurants (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Positive consumer experiences emit strong feelings that may have impact not only on future behaviour (Smith, 2013), but also purchasing decisions. Therefore, the buzz created around SM may be a factor attracting customers to visit a particular bar or restaurant. Hence, changing human habits has serious consequences for people's behaviour and interaction in their daily lives (Nielsen, 2009).

Considering the above-mentioned factors, the authors have focused on how content based on elements of the classical 7P marketing theory engages audiences to interact on SM. Therefore, the section "Literature review" refers to the marketing theory of the 7P as a background for marketing content published on SM in the food catering industry. In the following part, the methodology of the analysis conducted for the purposes of this study is assessed. The results are presented in the following section. The limitations and the scope of future research are also discussed afterwards. The article ends with a short conclusion of the most important insights.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As the catering industry is a highly competitive market, meeting the needs of customers is becoming a priority for many bar and restaurant managers. Each restaurant operates on a very volatile and unexpected market experiencing rapid changes. Thus, a properly built marketing mix strategy plays an important role in implementing marketing plans and meeting customer needs. The marketing mix itself is a combination of factors created and controlled by the company to encourage customers to buy its products (Mohammadi *et al.*, 2017). It is also known as a marketing composition of related elements (tools and activities, processes, methods and techniques), creating an integrated system having impact on the market environment of an enterprise (clients, competitors and other entities). Among the numerous theories on this topic, the Booms and Bittner classical theory of the 7P marketing mix (Booms & Bitner, 1981) has

been selected for the purposes of this analysis. According to Kotler and Keller, the marketing mix is a combination of marketing activities for certain goods or services over a given period of time and on a given market (Kotler & Keller, 2018). Agic (2016) claims that the realisation of a marketing strategy consists in the creation of the marketing mix as a path to achieve its target objectives on a target market. What became the main elements of the 4P Marketing Mix's development into a 7P model, were changes in consumer behaviour and the development of services (Harrigan *et al.*, 2017).

Service marketing is fundamentally based on relationships and values and thus, it is different from product-based marketing. It requires cooperation between marketers and managers to improve business and human resource management (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2019). As its proper use poses a challenge, managers of service companies need to control them properly, continuing their operation in current competitive and rapidly changing market conditions. Marketing-oriented organisations having managed to implement service marketing may have a competitive advantage and higher organisational performance compared to other companies (Abidemi *et al.*, 2017; Kumar *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, marketing orientation may be described as a valuable, albeit rare and difficult to imitate, organisational ability, which places the customer at the centre of business activity (Polat & Mutlu, 2012). Thanks to cooperation with clients and obtaining opinions on selected marketing activities, companies become more marketing-oriented and innovative (Aziz & Omar, 2013). Such activities may create positive buzz about the companies which have implemented service marketing rules. The buzz may be converted into a WOM (word-of-mouth) factor, playing a crucial role in relations between a company and customer attitudes and behaviours, also having potential positive impact on the sales of products and services (Gu *et al.*, 2012).

Although the marketing mix theory began to develop in the 1950s, its beginnings are associated with the axis of Borden and McCarthy in 1964 and their ideas consisting of 12 and 4 elements of the marketing mix. Their concepts were accepted by various scientists and marketing specialists and were further developed as shown below (Constantinides, 2006):

Table 1. Service marketing mix development

Concept owner	Concept elements
(Borden, 1964)	12 elements – product planning, pricing, branding, channels of distribution, personal selling, advertising, promotion, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, fact finding and analysis
(McCarthy, 1964)	product, price, place, promotion = 4P classical marketing mix concept
(Booms & Bitner, 1981); also supported by (Cowell, 1984)	4P + people, processes, physical evidence = 7 P classical service marketing concept
(Bruner, 1989)	concept mix, cost mix, channel mix, communication mix
(Rushton & Carson, 1989)	the development of new instruments and concepts to explain and manage the instability of services
(Fryar, 1991)	services marketing mix requiring differentiation based on segmentation and positioning, customer contact and unique perception of quality
(Heuvel, 1993)	4P + personnel
(Doyle, 2006)	product, price, communication, distribution
(Melewar & Saunders, 2000)	4P + publications
(English, 2000)	relevance, response, relationships, results
(Grove <i>et al.</i> , 2000)	7P + services experience
(Beckwith, 2001)	price, brand, packaging, relationships

Source: Own study

The key elements of the 7P marketing mix theory are: product, price, place, promotion, people, procedures and physical evidence, all of which are shortly described below.

Product is a physical good or service for which a consumer is willing to pay. According to Kotler, this is the first and most important element of the 4P theory (Kotler & Keller, 2018). The product is an element for which the company is known and can be described as an effort associated with everything offered to meet customer needs (Kotler & Keller, 2018). It consists

of such factors as quality, design, completeness, brand name, packaging, size, product service, warranty and replacement (Kukanja & Gomezelj Omerzel, 2017). According to the marketing mix, it is food and beverage that constitute the product of restaurants and bars. Therefore, assuming that the success of each bar is reflected by, *inter alia*, what it sells and how, then the food it offers becomes a particularly important element of the whole 7P theory. Publishing posts with food images is an emanation of what can be expected at a given place – an emanation of size, colour and appearance of a particular dish. It is also a source of information about the available offer. Based on the photo, customers can create their own vision of product quality. Therefore, in the present paper, the authors describe customers' reactions to posts, some of which contain images of food, while others present different elements of the 7P marketing mix.

Price includes costs and reflects the value of a product or service for which a customer is willing to pay (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Decisions about price are influenced by various inner and outer factors, including those environment-related. It is the only marketing mix element that provides profits denominated in money. Furthermore, price is a relatively flexible element and a fair asset of a product (Ehmke *et al.*, 2013), considered as an important factor attracting customers. Nevertheless, there are many other elements, such as welcoming atmosphere or good location of a restaurant, which may significantly affect its perception. Price-related posts allow Internet users to compare the perceived value of an offer with its cost expressed in a monetary unit. If the price of the product is lower than the perceived value, the potential customer feels encouraged to visit a given place.

According to Cowell, place is the most market-oriented element of the marketing mix as a reference to product distribution medium (Cowell, 1984). Developing effective distribution is a key element, thanks to which products or services become available to customers. It encompasses decisions regarding means of product or service distribution, processing of orders, storage of semi-finished and finished goods, as well as the delivery of goods and services to the location at which they are to be sold (Kushwaha & Agrawal, 2015). Distribution can be described either as the process and methods by which products or services reach customers (Luenendonk, 2014), or as a marketing mix element including decisions and actions related to the movement of goods from producer to customer (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012). As such, it may include physical or electronic distribution channels. It has been shown that in the case of products or services, customers want to acquire easily available information (Armstrong &

Kotler, 2017; Goetzinger *et al.*, 2007). In the case of the catering industry, not only is the location a building where food is served, but it also offers the possibility of personal pickup, placing orders by phone or referral to a website with the offer.

Promotion can be described as communication with target recipients to provide information on products, services or the company in order to convince a customer to make a purchase. According to Marques *et al.*, it is “an effort to communicate between traders and consumers with the aim of disseminating information, influencing, persuading and reminding target markets in order to create demand for products or services offered by traders” (Marques *et al.*, 2010). Among the major promotional tools are sales force, advertising, sales promotion and public relations (*Promotion*, 2022). A successful promotional campaign contributes to an increase in customer loyalty and the demand for a product or service. As even the best product may not sell easily if it is not known to consumers, the significance of promotion is constantly increasing. Bars and restaurants should also be promoted if they aspire to be more easily recognised on the market. For example, they can do this through promotion on SM, reaching new customers with information about their products, or old ones by informing them about novelties. In the case of posts, promotion may relate to such aspects as pricing policy or organised events.

What distinguishes service from product marketing is not just 3P added to the classical 4P model. Its elements allow companies to become closer to the market and the customer (Abidemi *et al.*, 2017). This model also stands out due to the human factor and the personal nature of the services. Additionally, staff is a crucial factor responsible for delivering the service itself. They ensure interaction and quality, both of which constitute factors not easily placed within a standardised framework (Beckwith, 2000; Fryar, 1991; Rushton & Carson, 1989). An important element of service marketing related to people is one-on-one communication (Doyle, 2006). People are becoming the main success factor for many service providers, including small restaurants and bars (Mandabach *et al.*, 2011; Perry, 2014). The American National Restaurant Association claims that 63% of sales for small dining restaurants operating in the first year are regular customers (*Repeat Customers Integral to Success, Study Finds*, 2012). Hence, customer loyalty becomes a strategic competitive advantage leading to higher sales and overall success of a restaurant (Ma *et al.*, 2014).

The first service-related 3P element of the whole 7P marketing mix idea is people, which can be defined as the staff working at the company, representing it and supplying services to customers

(Goldsmith, 1999). According to Kukanja *et al.*, (2017) this is the equivalent of a “role of humans in the delivery of goods or services that can affect consumer perceptions” (Kukanja & Gomezelj Omerzel, 2017). Additionally, it is widely known that all companies should rely on people. For many companies providing services, people can be just as valuable as the services themselves. That is why it is paramount to employ the best possible staff to represent the company in the most desirable ways. There is no denying that service is inseparable from the service provider. The use of the employees' images can both influence their involvement and build a lasting relationship between them as the brand's face and the employer, for it entails showing the human factor involved in the service. Furthermore, there is a certain level of trust in customers who, seeing an attractive waiter/waitress, consider the place more pleasant. Similarly, posts about kitchen staff, especially a professionally dressed chef, give the impression that, far from being accidentally selected, employees are specialists in what they do.

Another 3P element is process, namely “the complete flow of activities through which a product or service is provided to the customer” (Cowell, 1984). Process may also be described as “the method and sequences of necessary steps to be taken in order to create a promised value to the customer” (Kushwaha & Agrawal, 2015). In other words, process means all the elements that influence customers from arousing their interest in products or services to their purchase, and further onto after-sales services. Even the best food may taste worse if served with delay or cold. Therefore, managers of restaurants can issue SM posts informing about positive aspects of the process. They can provide information on the short waiting time for snacks/appetizers, on the possibility of booking a table by phone or of organising events at the restaurant. Hence, process as a 7P marketing mix element is crucial in the catering industry, as many bars and restaurants rely on good opinions shaped over a prolonged period of time.

Physical evidence is the last 3P element, described as all non-human elements playing a meaningful role in the delivery of services (Cowell, 1984). It refers to the physical environment experienced by a customer, namely all elements of the company's image indicative of its quality and professionalism. According to Khan, “physical evidence focuses on the physical conditions in the place of business including the surrounding area” (Khan, 2014). Thus, such elements as logos, company offices, noise, hygiene and hygiene equipment, auxiliary equipment (e.g. toilets), and parking areas may be considered as physical evidence (Kukanja & Gomezelj Omerzel, 2017). Its significance in the catering industry lies in the fact that customers buy not only

products or services, but also prestige, atmosphere and brand. Provided with a choice of several restaurants serving high-quality food, people frequently choose the one with a good brand. Taking care of the brand and image of a bar or restaurant may therefore be far-reaching. Posts may help to achieve this goal by assisting a customer in forming an opinion about a given bar or restaurant, arousing positive feelings regarding the safety of the place, its warm atmosphere and friendliness as well as professionalism of the staff. Thus, this can refer to interior design, prizes awarded to the premises or simply to the recommendations by other customers.

The effectiveness of posts on SM can be identified at various levels. Such levels are understood as the number of people having displayed the post, the affective engagement measured by the reactions and cognitive engagement measured by interest in the post. The authors aimed to focus on all elements demonstrating a customer's commitment. Brodie *et al.*, (2013) define customer engagement as "a mental state based on interactive co-creation of customer experience". Appropriate motivation is needed to engage a client in any activity. Hence, the awareness of the customer needs is essential to offer them what they expect. Therefore, the authors decided to investigate the range of posts. They have assumed that product posts are more effective than non-product posts, as presented in the following hypothesis:

H1 Product posts have a larger range than other types of posts.

The authors are also convinced that customers are more likely to respond to posts showing food. Thus, it may be assumed that it is the product which attracts attention of network users. This assumption is presented in the hypothesis below:

H2 Product posts have higher numbers of reactions compared to non-product posts.

It is believed that customers select restaurants on the basis of available advertisements, a restaurant's reputation and food ratings (Harrington *et al.*, 2017). The analysis of other clients' comments – both positive and negative – helps them make decisions. Therefore, the authors have attempted to investigate whether product posts actually attract more comments than other posts regarding the remaining 7P marketing mix elements. Consequently, a further hypothesis has been constructed:

H3 Product posts attract more comments than other types of posts.

As Facebook provides the opportunity to share graphics and videos, posting photos has become one of the forms of increasing click-through rate. Customers willing to see a photo and the entire post content click on it to see an enlarged image in higher resolution. This type of response

constitutes one dimension of interest in the post, for, compared to range, it ensures that a user is interested in the viewed content. Therefore, the following fourth hypothesis regarding product posts and clicking rate has been adopted:

H4 Product posts have more clicks on the photo placed in the post than other types of posts.

3. METHODS

A quasi-experiment was conducted in a study on the impact of post marketing orientation on users of social media. Adopting such a methodological approach allowed to gather results in market conditions based on the real reactions of fans of a selected restaurant. In the study, the authors used the restaurant's fanpage, the restaurant agreeing to publish only the indicated content within 10 months and to discontinue other promotional activities on social media. The restaurant is located in the vicinity of the city centre with over 500,000 inhabitants, serves Thai cuisine, which by European's is considered oriental. Posts were published as part of the restaurant's business account on the Facebook platform, the social network being characterised by the highest level of social interaction and advertising engagement (Voorveld *et al.*, 2018). The profile had been previously managed by the owner since June 2010 and gathered over 2,300 fans: 62% women and 38% men. The largest share were women aged 25-34, 23% of the total population. Based on the fanpage history, a frequency was established that was consistent with the restaurant's current practice and was 1-2 posts per week. This allowed to limit the scope of modification in marketing communication via social media to the necessary minimum, which is related to data reliability as this eliminates the possible impact of, e.g. the intensity of communication on the involvement of recipients. Posts were also published at different times and days of the week, as was in the previous case. Each post consisted of a description and photo directly referring to the content. Posts did not contain any links that could redirect traffic to another page. During this period, the company also discontinued paid activities on the Facebook platform, both promoting the fan page or individual posts. Half of the posts focused directly on the offered products (menu), while the other half concerned other areas of the marketing mix. No other posts were published during this period. Customer responses were obtained from the administrative panel within two weeks of publication of the post. The data concerned the number of reactions understood as 'liking' a given post using any available icon within the Facebook infrastructure, the number of comments entered by Facebook users in response to the post, range

understood as the number of people who viewed the post regardless of whether they were brand fans or not, and the level of interest was measured by clicking on the post.

4. RESULTS

Based on the collected material, a series of variance analyses were conducted. In order to improve reliability of the obtained results, outliers (exceeding the level of triple standard deviations) were excluded from the analysis. As a result, bootstrapping (1,000 samples) was used in the research. The study was preceded by analysis of variance equality using Levene's test. The range level survey did not reveal significant differences between product-oriented and other types of posts: $F(1.44) = 1.114, p = 0.29$. Therefore, hypothesis H1 was not confirmed. Analysis of variance for response level revealed a large effect size for post type: $F(1.42) = 7.055, p = 0.011, \eta^2 = 0.144$. Posts that presented a product offer achieved an average of 63% more responses than other posts. On this basis, it may be concluded that hypothesis H2 was confirmed. This was similar in the case of comments, for which the effect size value was $\eta^2 = 0.138, F(1.42) = 6.75, p = 0.013$, confirming the importance of post orientation on recipients' willingness to engage. Therefore, hypothesis H3 was confirmed. What is more, it has been revealed that interest also depends on post orientation: $F(1.40) = 6.172, p = 0.017, \eta^2 = 0.134$. Finally, via the analysis, it was shown that product posts were clicked 96% more often than the ones containing other elements of the marketing mix. Therefore, hypothesis H4 was confirmed. Detailed values for the analysed variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Bootstrapped marginal means

Reaction		95% bca * CI			
	Marginal mean	Bias	SE	Lower	Upper
Service	11.955	0.011	1.801	8.857	16.010
Product	18.170	-0.027	1.558	15.389	21.410

Note. Bootstrapping based on 1,000 replicates.
 Note. Marginal means estimate is based on the median of bootstrap distribution.
 * Bias corrected accelerated.

Comments

Post orientation	Marginal mean	Bias	SE	95% bca * CI	
				Lower	Upper
Service	0.619	0.005	0.279	0.250	1.432
Product	1.714	-0.006	0.307	1.182	2.474

Note. Bootstrapping based on 1,000 replicates.

Note. Marginal means estimate is based on the median of bootstrap distribution.

* Bias corrected accelerated.

Cognition engagement

Post orientation	Marginal mean	Bias	SE	95% bca * CI	
				Lower	Upper
Service	11.297	-0.173	2.832	6.514	18.047
Product	22.140	-0.153	3.022	16.964	28.753

Note. Bootstrapping based on 1,000 replicates.

Note. Marginal means estimate is based on the median of bootstrap distribution.

* Bias corrected accelerated.

Source: Own study

5. DISCUSSION

The increased availability of Internet technologies has become an excellent tool for use in many business areas, including bars and restaurants (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Social media - an important part of this tool, are used in business in many ways, including communication with customers in a relatively inexpensive way (DiPietro *et al.*, 2012; Perlik, 2009). The marketing orientation of posts on social media affects the response of their recipients. In the research, the authors have in part confirmed the hypotheses adopted in this article. It was revealed that the orientation of a post largely determines recipients' propensity for various types of engagement. The division of reactions into external and visible (such as 'likes' or comments) as well as those only visible to content managers (range, clicking on the content of the post to enlarge it), is of particular importance not only for conducting reliable analyses but also in a situation where social media users are becoming more and more passive.

Interest in posts has a cognitive dimension because it allows a user to read the post in more detail which, in turn, may affect exposure time and thus, the content and their preferences can be remembered. This is worth considering in terms of future research. In the trial, it has been revealed that there is a lack of grounds for adopting the post range hypothesis depending on product orientation of the post. This can be explained by the lack of official information about the mechanisms guided by the portal, which has the ability to limit or increase the reach of a post for reasons known only to its administrators. However, it is particularly important to assume that the level of involvement measured with all the variables described did not result from the analysed reach level.

The results of the study prove that, as part of social media, focusing on product marketing orientation provides much better results in the form of consumer involvement. Similar results were obtained by the Vitruve company claiming that “posts containing an image register higher levels of engagement than posts containing a video or plain text”. According to the research, “Image posts obtained 136% more engagement than video, and 182% more than text posts” (Brandau, 2010).

According to the research carried out for the purpose of this paper, posts containing images of dishes sold at z restaurant comprised the vast majority of all comments. This is very important in light of the research conducted by Gu (2012), who stated that comments can create positive WOM (word-of-mouth) source, and thus, have positive impact on the product itself (Gu *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, it has been demonstrated in other studies that more and more customers rely on online reviews when making purchasing decisions (Cheung & Lee, 2012). To conclude, reviews and comments have positive influence on average meal prices (Kim *et al.*, 2016; Yim *et al.*, 2014), net sales and guest counts (Kim *et al.*, 2016).

In the authors’ research, it was also shown that product posts gained more reactions and clicks. This may be due to the fact that food is an element drawing the attention of consumers and, as such, is the basis for building deeper customer relationships. In the catering industry, food is a prime element attracting customers on social media.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We acknowledge several limitations of our research. In particular, they result from the adopted research scheme and the restaurant studied in the research. The application of the quasi-

experiment from one perspective provides a possibility for obtaining real and not only declared variables, however, it is possible to influence all of them, e.g. a situation in which the fan sees the post or changing the level of activity of using social media. A potential limitation of this study may consist in the examination of a restaurant serving non-local cuisine, for this may have aroused less interest and curiosity of the subjects. Thus, it would be worth conducting a similar study analysing the same parameters for restaurants serving local cuisine. Additionally, it should be emphasised that the study could have led to different results had the research been based on a fan page of a company from another industry. Investigating this may be an additional incentive for future research.

The conducted study undoubtedly has its benefits, showing the impact of the above-mentioned factors on the reaction of recipients and providing information on which published posts arouse the greatest interest. It provided evidence that posts containing the content of dishes sold in a given bar or restaurant are particularly popular among customers.

This study may serve as a significant clue for owners of catering establishments, helping them decide to what to special attention should be paid when publishing posts on fan pages. It may also become an important hint for scientist eager to conduct future research on product and service orientation on social media in restaurant communication. As the social media environment is highly volatile, future research might focus on updating the analysis based on new tools. This might also be run in different types of restaurants of various sizes and locations.

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