Hotels in Dubrovnik – Attracting Millennials Using Social Media Marketing

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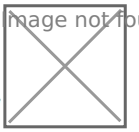
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Hotels in Dubrovnik –
Attracting Millennials Using Social Media Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays hotels are using social media marketing in order to attract their guests and engage with them. Since millennial generation is starting their work life, soon enough, they will be the ones with the most money to spend on travelling and accommodation. As a tech-savvy generation, social media marketing is a way to get to them and an opportunity, hotels should pay attention to. This research investigated to what degree are hotels in Dubrovnik region, positioning themselves in terms of attracting millennials, as a growing market. Content analysis was used as a method and it was applied on 37 different hotels. It involved examining their websites and tracking their social media platforms, meaning Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, in a two-week period. Results have shown that hotels in Dubrovnik region are not paying much attention to being active on social media and even those that showed certain level of activity, are not publishing content which millennials desire to see, while doing their research. More effort is directed towards hotels' websites, but these would still require some improvements, when looking at the points which were examined.

Keywords: *hotels, millennials, tourism, social media marketing, social media platform, website, Dubrovnik*

INTRODUCTION

Social media

Brief history

On 6th of August in 1991, World Wide Web was "released" to public and that was the start of online activities (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010). By 2014, more than 2 billion people started using Internet, and quickness of it was impacted by rise of social media. Social media is online communication people use to share content, ideas and connect with other people via messages, likes, comments etc. (Murray, Loftus & Dunklin, 2016). It began developing in 1997 with rise of webpages where people could make profiles and add "friends", first one being Six Degrees. In 1999 Live Journal was developed, which people started using to talk about their lives in a form of blogs. Four years later, idea of sharing was connected to business and it was a beginning of LinkedIn, which is still very popular during employment processes. What most people feel as social media being "born", is launching of Facebook in 2004, which made people more open to sharing and wanting to see what others shared (Ahmad, 2018). Internet and social media are now a part of, both our personal and business lives, and it became a necessity to be present and know how it works.

Social media platforms

There is currently a huge variety of social media platforms, varying in their functionality and purposes for which people choose to use them. According to a research published in Business Horizonts (as cited in Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011), each social media platform has its "blocks" of functionality, where one complements another. For example, LinkedIn's "blocks" relate to identity, reputation and relationships. YouTube is first for sharing and groups, while Facebook is all about relationships, presence and conversations. This shows that using only one platform is not enough, and each one should be used by the purposes of its "blocks" to be most effective (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Facebook offers different ways of interaction, by sharing photos, creating group discussions or even creating webpages. It also keeps the consumer informed, as reading posts from the local magazines, or news from companies they are following. Instagram is an extremely simple platform, which allows sharing of photos and videos, while also keeping track of comments, likes and followers etc. (Murray et al., 2016). Users can also explore different hashtags, use Instagram's camera to upload a "story", which lasts 24 hours once it is uploaded, or to create a "live" video and share the moment with their followers (Eyetotravel Team, 2018). Twitter is a

platform that allows getting in touch with others and being present while sharing concise content. It requires being creative and expressing a message without using too many words. Before 2017, number of characters used in a tweet was 140, but then it was doubled to 280 characters. Despite the change, users continued using less characters, which shows that they love to read brief texts and share the same (Perez, 2018). Twitter allows presence, without being intrusive and feeling as spamming others ("The complete guide", 2017). YouTube is a video-sharing platform, whose content "goes viral" extremely fast, with millions and even billions of views, likes and comments. On this platform, fast expansion happens for both, positive and negative content, which rises the importance of being present and keeping track (Murray et al., 2016).

Usage and elements

Report from Salesforce (as cited in "The complete guide", 2017) showed that 66% of overall Internet usage, is time spent on social media platforms, being mostly Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Pinterest. Pew Research center has done a study in U.S., in 2018, and results have shown that Facebook and YouTube are the most used social media platforms, being mostly a daily routine of those over 25 years old. In addition, 78% of younger than that, use Snapchat, 71% of them Instagram and 45% are Twitter users. Also, over 70% of correspondents, visit these platforms multiple times a day (Smith, 2018). Main purpose of using social media platforms besides being creative and sharing, is to get "likes", "comments" and most importantly "followers". These are different forms of social engagement and number of these per post or platform, has a significant meaning. Main form of engagement is "like" and even though it is a basic element, it shows how many people have an interest or just like the way the post looks. More emotional response is received with usage of "comments", since these are showing even deeper interest into the topic and allows ideas and opinions to be shared. But, all of these wouldn't be there in large numbers, if there are not many "followers" and it is important to know who they are and what they want to see, especially for companies. With followers comes the power of re-posting, since it increases numbers of potential users who might see the post (Roona, 2017).

Profiles of social media users

Main reasons why people spend time on social media is to socialize with people they already know, but also to find out more about unfamiliar ones. It is used for expressing creativity and expanding circle of knowledge and interest (Correa et al., 2010). A study done in the U.S. had

examined personality traits of those who expressed more need to use social media. Results showed that extroverted people, who are more willing to try something new and more creative ones, tend to use social media more frequently. More frequent usage is also connected to people being nervous and anxious, as they seek for comfort and company in social media platforms to forget about the "real" world (Correa et al., 2010). Pew Research Center has done a survey in 2012, showing that 83% of millennials, aged 18-29 in this survey, tend to use social media, which presents much higher level of their engagement when compared to other groups. Research also showed that women are spending more time on these pages than men, especially when it comes to Facebook and Pinterest. According to the results, level of education doesn't have an impact on frequency of time spent on these sites, but income does, since it showed that users earning less than $30 000 per year, tend use social media more than those with higher earnings (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Portal "The Statistics", showed that as of January 2019, countries with highest penetration of social media users are United Arab Emirates, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong, so these countries are catching up with European and American usage trends and everyone wants to be present (Statista, 2019).

Current trends

Social media, just as technology itself, is changing and upgrading fast. Famous sites, such as Facebook, are becoming over-used, so many users are moving towards Snapchat, Pinterest and Instagram. Another trend is usage of live videos on either Facebook or Instagram, because it allows more content to be shared at once and according to Salesforce report (as cited in "The complete guide", 2017) it shows an increase, in time of users' staying on the platform. Instagram became a leader in "influencer marketing", by paying celebrities, famous bloggers and those with high numbers of followers, to promote their products or services. This way companies are engaging customers and spreading excitement, which, according to Burst Media, brings return on investment of almost 6 times the amount spent (Murray et al., 2016).

Firms using social media

Social media is available 24/7 and with its rise, firms must be present in this "time interval". Many strong brands, but also smaller companies, started using social media platforms as an effective and less expensive way of marketing their products and services. The whole idea started moving in a faster pace in 2015, even though social media marketing was talked about couple years before as well, but knowledge about platforms and the way they function was

much poorer. Social media allows companies to connect to their customers more often than ever before, react in a quick manner and increase brand loyalty (Murray et al., 2016). Instagram allows companies to create their own hashtags, and using links, take the user directly to the platform where sales can be made. Companies use Facebook, as it allows them to detect analytics of how their customers behave, to advertise their product releases, sales and create brand awareness. Facebook also allows companies to pay for ads, which then provides them with different characteristics of their target market. On the other hand, Twitter is well-known for companies being able to respond quickly in crisis, share humor and "retweet" those of their customers, to create connection and loyalty (Murray et al., 2016). Salesforce report shows that all these efforts are meaningful, since 75% of Instagram users reported to act after seeing an ad, and 54% of those present on Twitter do their research after they see a brand name in tweets ("The complete guide", 2017). Knowing this and trying to learn more about how these platforms work and what kind of different analytics and promotions could be done, can only have a positive effect for firms.

Examples of social media marketing

McDonald's was one of the first firms using Instagram for its advertising in Taiwan and has reported 46% of increase in recall on the ad (Murray et al., 2016). Survey done by Italian food chain Zizzi from 2017, shows that 18-35 years old people, tend to spend even five days yearly looking at photos of food on Instagram and 30% of them would give up going to a restaurant, if they weren't satisfied with their social media presence (Eyefortravel Team, 2018), which shows that restaurants must get involved in social media marketing. Walmart, for example, is using their Facebook and Twitter platforms, as a "community building" tool and allows customers to discuss Walmart products. This helps the company get new ideas and customers feel more connected to the brand, when getting a response. Moreover, this is how the brand gets talked about (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). A brand that uses these platforms in all the possible ways is Coca-Cola. They issued their "Coca Cola Company Online Social Media Principles" to make sure all platforms are synced and connected with each other, which helps the customer to immerse into company's story once they click on one of their social media platforms. This year they are following trends and they decided to "#RefreshtheFeed" on their Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. According to their marketing experts, their followers want to see positive messages that would make them feel positive and smile, so this is again a way of getting the brand talked about and "clicked" on (Moye, 2018). One of the most famous examples of effective social media usage, are Super Bowl ads, which go

public on YouTube, as a test of seeing how customers will react, before these are aired for huge amounts of money (Murray et al., 2016).

Millennials

Birth years

Even though millennials have been widely used as a term, there is no general agreement to identify exact span of birth years used for this generation. According to Seppanen and Gualtieri, there is up to 21 different spans attributed to millennials (Amaro, Henriques, & Duarte, 2016). For the purpose of this research paper, for the millennial generation, the average of these spans will be used. Also known as generation Y, people born between 1982 and 2004, started receiving huge amount of significance and these terms are often used in everyday lives, media, education etc. (Schiopu, Padurean, Tala, & Nica, 2016).

General characteristics

Millennials are considered as the most nurtured generation, raised to be close to their parents and teachers, meaning those who provide them with new information. They are considered as great team players and generation with huge desire to achieve a lot in their life, whether to earn good grades, some simple things as having the whole day organized in a single minute or to be recognized on their jobs. They are considered extremely ethical, with a need to achieve a lot for their organization and country (Strick, 2006). According to Koutropoulos; this is a generation that grew up using Internet and technology, so they are considered as efficient multitaskers, having a desire to always be present (Amaro et al., 2016). Study done by Boston Consulting Group and Service Management Group (as cited in Barton, Haywood, Jhunjhunwala, & Bhatia, 2013) showed that Millennials want to see touchscreen present wherever it is possible, and since they are constantly carrying different gadgets with themselves, they enjoy seeing charging stations, to be able to stay "present" at all times. For this generation it is all about being connected and using technology in education, relationships, travelling etc., so much that they even started preferring technology more than actual human beings ("Top 10 Hospitality Trends", 2018).

Travelling habits

Mr. Moisa claims that there are many factors explaining why Millennials travel more than previous generations, as for example more of young people being a part of tertiary level of education, larger revenues of their parents and growing number of products and packages

made specifically for young people (Schiopu et al., 2016). Besides just getting their parents' income, there was a study done by Pricewaterhouse (as cited in Amaro et al., 2016), which revealed that by 2020, almost half of the global workforce will be millennial generation, so they will also have their own money and be willing to spend it on travelling. According to Triptease, a direct booking platform for hotels: "70% of Millennials took at least one leisure trip in 2013 and a large number take up to five trips a year" (Team T., 2016). Tripadvisor did a study in 2015, on travelling behaviors of Millennials and revealed that they are seeking for adventures and engagement in their trips by experiencing new things. This study also discovered that they are very sensitive to what they are getting, when it comes to value for money of transportation and accommodation (Amaro et al., 2016). They prefer travelling in groups and having everything organized, and they would rather travel with members of their families or friends. When it comes to travelling for business purposes, they are more likely, than other generations, to travel for trainings and other events which could allow them to develop their career. Male millennials often choose to travel for personal reasons, such as gambling, cars and training, while females would rather go travelling on a special occasion or to learn about other cultures (Barton et al., 2013).

Millennials and social media (in general)

As a generation growing up while using technology, millennials are used to having it in their everyday lives and using gadgets to make their lives easier. In addition to that, they demand highest speed when using social media, so firms sometimes have up to 4 seconds to get their attention or lose it (as cited in Newswire, 2013). An easy flow of information is for them expected, especially when it comes to questions that might arise, millennials want them answered before even being asked (Sjekavica, Žitnik, & Miličević, 2017). A study done on millennials in Romania showed that "44% of them spend 1-3 hours a day, and 26% even 3-5 hours a day on social media" (Schiopu et al., 2016). They also enjoy sharing what they do and how they live on social media, much more than other generations, going up to even 4 shares per week on average (Amaro et al., 2016). Millennials may be considered as a visual generation, since they prefer seeing photos and videos, which is why Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are their main social media platforms (Schiopu et al., 2016).

Millennials choosing hotels over social media

FOMO effect

FOMO effect, meaning "Fear of Missing Out", is present in millennial generation when choosing a hotel over social media. This term arises from this generation and the way they act on social media. They are looking for inspiration in those that they are following, and once they see things that they like, they want to do and experience everything in the same way. (Team T., 2016) They are "chronic Googlers" and tend to look at many social media sources to make sure they haven't missed something and to get the best possible deal (Little Hotelier Resource Hub, 2016). They are ready to do a lot of research, and since in 2015, 72% of millennials said that they would rather spend their savings on new experiences, than material things (Anderson, 2019), it is important to show them what they shouldn't miss out.

Millennials using social media for travel purposes

"63% of millennials book an accommodation online" (Amaro et al., 2016) and 73% of respondents in a survey done by Knightsbridge, furniture making company, said that they "check the company's social media feed before booking a hotel" (Hertzfeld, 2019). A study done on Romanian millennials showed that, when choosing a hotel, they are mostly checking Facebook, Twitter and hotels' websites. (Schiopu et al., 2016) On the other hand, Asian millennials decide on which hotel to book based on social media, Instagram being favorite one for them (Eyefortravel Team, 2018). According to a study done by S.T.A.R. Digital Group, international agency working with digital marketing, guests start their research on a website of the hotel and then their next step is Facebook, to check opinion of their social media friends. In their exploration next are Instagram and YouTube, because of the visuals that these offer (Sjekavica et al., 2017).

What is important to millennials on the social media platform

Since for millennial generation it is all about sharing experiences and following each other, study by Evisiontourism (as cited in Schiopu et al., 2016) showed that 80 % of millennials will consult the reviews of users. They like to see them being well-marked, since they tend to trust these more than advertisement itself. As a most nurtured generation, they have a need for interaction, so millennials are attracted to being able to rate products or services. By being able to give personal feedback, they feel appreciated and have faith that others will be honest, so this is for them a sign that company is genuine (Willey, 2017). Millennials are choosing their destination and accommodation with a desire to experience culture, which they state as a reason for sometimes choosing Airbnb, instead of regular hotel website (Anderson, 2019). Therefore, making social media more about experiences in the destination and activities to

feel as a local, would attract this generation (Anderson, 2019). According to Little Hotelier Resource Hub, a booking and management system for small hotels, up to 61% of millennials go to travel agents to choose their accommodation, just because they consider it more convenient to have it all made for them and 50% of them will focus more on what their friends and family suggest (Little Hotelier Resource Hub, 2016 May 24). They value convenience, even more than the price, so as soon as some social media platform becomes confusing, they stop researching. Besides the need for simplicity, according to a study done by Triptease Team (as cited in Team T., 2016), a hotel distribution platform, millennials want to see a lot of high-resolution photos, meaning at least 72 pixels per inch. It is not that they care about pixels themselves, but in most situations when they see even a bit blurry photo, they decide to leave the page. They value concise and "catchy" phrases instead of seeing a lot of text, since they probably won't engage into reading it (Team T., 2016). Another appreciated element for them is a video of the hotel, which makes them feel as they are there and most importantly "booking button" must be highly visible. They want to have an ability to see information in more languages and require quick responses from hotel management, because it gives them a feeling of personalization. As a generation with huge need for technology, if hotel has digital concierge services, robot room service or smart mirrors, once they see it during their research, chances are higher that they will choose this kind of a hotel ("Top 10 Hospitality Trends", 2018).

Mobile use

Since millennials are growing up with mobile phones in their hand, they started preferring pages and advertisements in smaller sizes, which are well suited for their phones (Schiopu et al., 2016). By 2015, there was 95 billion more app downloads only in the Apple store than in 2010, showing that smart phones and their apps became widely used (Murray et al., 2016). According to a marketing consultant, Lisa Anderson, in 2015, "66% of millennials booked their trips via smartphone and 97% post on social media and share their experiences while travelling", so if hotels want to attract this generation, mobile-friendly presence is essential (Anderson, 2019). 75% of millennials, double the number of non-millennials, have a travelling application on their mobile phone and tend to share photos, post reviews and read those of others. They also do research for travel inspiration and information on their smartphones, which increases the importance of everything being adjusted to mobile version (Barton et al., 2013).

Hotels around the world

Social media marketing

With rise of social media, mobile use and apps, hotels must follow trends and get involved in social media marketing. Their offers need to be user-friendly, while including images and tweets of guests on their website or social media platforms ("Top 10 Hospitality Trends", 2018). GCH Hotel Group, made a 360-degree video of Hilton hotel, which created large interest and involvement making users feel as if they were on the site and allowed them to get the real "feel" of the hotel (Team T., 2016). Hotel G in Singapore has gone beyond usual social media marketing, with incorporating "Instaworthy" objects into their hotels and that way making their customers do the marketing for them, by publishing photos of these on Instagram (Eyetotravel Team, 2018). Tess Mattisson, marketing director of Choice Hotels in Europe, explains that now it is all about hashtags, since there are more and more of branded ones, and it has been proven that even having one of them can result in a 12,6% of higher activity on the post (Eyetotravel Team, 2018). Starwood also saw an increase in its guests using Snapchat as a main platform, so they developed filters with their brand. Users were this way doing marketing for them, while sending photos and videos to their friends. Another example are Citizen Hotels, who realized that consumers don't want to see just photos of the hotel, but also how they could spend time in that destination, so they frequently updated their Twitter account with interesting places and activities which would attract their guests (Team T., 2016).

Hotels in Croatia

Star categorization

Even though there is a general list of rules which a hotel must satisfy to receive a certain star category, each country in the world has still reserved a right to accept these or adjust them. European Union also had an attempt of providing standardized rules, but these are being used only as guidelines, which brought confusion in guests' expectations (M.T./Punkufer.com, 2019). As of August 31^{st,} 2017, there is 6% of 5-star hotels, 41% of 4-star, 44% of those with 3 stars and 10% of 2-star hotels in Croatia ("Tourism in Figures", 2018). Regarding Croatian star categorization, there are a lot of rules, but 2-star hotels for example need to have buffet breakfast and allow credit card payments, those with 3 stars require more comfort, such as each room having a minibar and wi-fi, but also possibility of clothes washing and ironing services. 4-star hotels require having a lobby, room service and a la carte restaurant, working seven days in a week. The highest star categorization in Croatia requires having a bellboy

who will bring guests' baggage into the room, where a welcome gift awaits them, or park their car without extra charges and many other benefits (M.T./Punkufer.com, 2019).

Guest profile

Looking at overnights of foreign tourists in hotels all over Croatia from 2017, biggest sources of market were from Germany, Austria, UK, Slovenia and Italy. When looking at statistics of Internet usage for these countries, as of January 2019, UK has 67%, Italy 59%, Austria 50% and Germany 46% of active penetration. Keeping in mind that these are well developed countries, that already had large numbers of active Internet users, statistics showing that these numbers are rising, is valuable for Croatia's social media marketing (Statista, 2019). Dubrovnik, as a city, had highest numbers of overnight tourist traffic, both in 2016 and 2017. ("Tourism in Figures", 2018). Main reasons for tourists coming to Croatia are sun and sea, but lately this area has also been recognized as a safe destination, compared to rest of the world (Kožić, 2013). According to more recent statistics from Croatian Tourism Institute, in 2017, there are more reasons for visiting, such as gastronomy, natural beauties and active vacation. These statistics also show that average age of Croatian tourists is 41,5 years, while there is 50% of those older than 50 and 19% of those under 30 years old. There is an increase of 15% of Internet being main source for information when booking a stay in Croatia for these tourists, compared to 2014, so investing in online practices could bring even faster improvements (Pavić, 2018).

Seasonality element

Seasonality represents one of the most relevant features of touristic activities in one country. To find out in which stage of seasonality Croatia is, a study was done in 2013, by Institute of Tourism, which compared Croatia to countries similar for their geographical area and climate, such as Italy, Spain, Montenegro, Greece, France etc. When it comes to degree of seasonality looking at these countries, Croatia had the highest score, followed by Montenegro (Kožić, 2013). This study also researched what is the degree of seasonality when it comes to hotel overnights and in this analysis, Croatia took second place, showing inefficient utilization of hotel accommodation during the rest of the year (Kožić, 2013). In Croatia high season lasts from June to September, months with medium level of tourist arrivals are April, May and October, for which in 2017, average capacity of hotel accommodation was only 6% (Rihelj, 2017). Since Croatian tourism is mostly focused on summer season, efficient marketing measures are important to attract customers during other seasons as well. In 2017 the total

contribution of tourism to Croatia's GDP was 25%, which puts Croatia on 27th place when compared to other countries (Turner, 2018). This is showing how reliant Croatia is on tourism sector and "surviving" from the season. Situation is no different for Dubrovnik, being the most highly visited city with great hotel offer among other Croatian cities, it is almost completely dependent on profits made in that period (Kunst, 2017).

Social media marketing of hotels in Croatia

Being present on Internet and social media became an important way of marketing for hotels, but also keeping track of the demographics of their target markets. In 2010, an analysis of 23 Croatian 5-star hotel websites has been made and it showed that they are far away from using these effectively. Hotels from the analysis failed in integrating and promoting services offered inside the hotel, beyond regular room and F&B offer. Their focus wasn't on activities and experiences which destination offers either, as 12 of them only shared links that could take users to other websites discussing these. Interaction level of their official websites was also low, since it didn't exist in 70% of the hotels, while other ones provided only a possibility for potential guests to ask a question (Galičić & Šimunić, 2010). This showed that hotels in Croatia have a long way to go with their online marketing practices. Analysis included 13 hotels from Dubrovnik area, so this research will show if there was progress made.

METHOD

As mentioned in the introduction, millennials travel more than previous generations and are more used to having technology in their everyday lives. Looking at their earlier mentioned characteristics, they love to share, interact with others and prefer to spend money on experiences, more than on physical items. They spend a lot of time on social media and when choosing a hotel, they do a lot of research and take different things into consideration, such as reviews, technology in the hotel, videos, photos etc. Trends in tourism industry and the way social media is getting more attention and being used for marketing purposes, shows how important it is for hotels to get involved, by developing and maintaining social media presence. This descriptive research aims to determine to what extent are hotels in Dubrovnik region, an area heavily reliant on tourism, positioning themselves, in terms of attracting millennials as a growing market.

For the purposes of this research, method which was used to collect data was content analysis. It is defined as a research tool of "systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author's perspective" (Krippendorff, 2004). According to the

mentioned author, Klaus Krippendorff, contemporary content analysis is forced to develop its own way measuring, planning and executing results of the analysis.

Data sample for this content analysis was 37 different hotels in Dubrovnik region, from which 6 are chains of hotels, having the same website and social media platforms for all their hotels. Social media platforms which were analyzed as data source were Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, as it was mentioned in the introduction that these are being mostly used by millennial generation. Analysis for the social media platforms was done daily, in a 2-week period, from 18th of March 2019 until 31st of March 2019, which is the period right before the season in Dubrovnik starts. Since websites are more permanent, meaning that they aren't changed often and updated daily/weekly, such as social media, this data source was analyzed only once. Since one of the hotels did not have its own website, sample of the analyzed hotel websites was 36. Because of these differences, the analysis included two sets of questions, adapted to examining website (15 questions) and social media platforms (11 questions). Questions for the website were divided into three categories; appearance, interaction and promotion. These were more focused on convenience of using it, content which is promoted and ability of users to get engaged by reviewing or asking questions. Questions for the social media analysis were, in general, examining frequency and quantity of posting, content which is posted and hotels' engagement towards users (see Figures 1 and 2**).**

For the purpose of determining the activity of hotel marketing, numbering from Multi Medial Information Model used in The Analysis of The Web-site Quality of Five-star Hotels in The Republic of Croatia (Galičić & Šimunić, 2010), was redesigned to fit the needs of social media and websites tracking. This numbering included 0 being used for no, and 1 used for yes, as an answer to a question. For those questions which required counting, the gotten number was noted. Questions were remodeled, according to findings from the literature review part about "What is important to millennials on the social media platform". To determine whether hotel websites are "mobile-friendly" or not, Google Search Console's Mobile-Friendly Test Tool was used. This test shows how usable the website is on the mobile device, since this is how millennials prefer doing research.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Social media platforms activity levels

The results of this research showed overall low level of activity or even complete inactiveness on social media platforms of hotels in Dubrovnik region. When comparing activity levels on

the four platforms which were analyzed, least level of activity was observed on YouTube and Twitter. Out of 37 hotels, 23 (62,16%) do not have a YouTube account, and out of those that have one, none were active in the two-week period of tracking. For 9 (24,32%) of the hotels, last post was in 2017 or before that. Regarding the activity of Twitter accounts, 20 (54,05%) hotels did not have an account, and out of 17 (47,02%) that had one, only 4 (10,81%) were publishing content or re-tweeting actively (see Figure 3). Content, which was published, would not satisfy millennials too much, since none of these was showing hotel or destination activities, nor promoted hotels' app or technology equipment.

When comparing against these two platforms, moderate levels of activity were noticed on Facebook and Instagram, as for both, 15 (40,5%) out of 37 hotels were active in the tracked period. However, 10 (27%) hotels did not have an Instagram account and while only 2 hotels didn't have Facebook account, there were also 3 hotels who had it, but have never published anything (see Figure 3). Out of all these hotels, only two hotel chains were publishing almost every day. Hotels have shown presence on some of the social media platforms, but when it comes to being active and publishing, none of them was being active on all these four platforms (see Figure 7). Taking into consideration the fact that social media is constantly being used for different purposes, and especially marketing and research, these results could mean either not enough interest, knowledge or budget to be used.

Social media content (not) published

Average number of Instagram posts in these two weeks for the 15 active hotels was 4,8, while only 2 hotels were publishing Instagram posts daily, and all other hotels had less than 7 posts. 73% of the photos published were high-resolution photos, which shows insufficient marketing effort to provide quality. Even though millennials love to see videos, Dubrovnik hotels were not using this kind of approach, since only 5 hotels have published one or two videos. They also weren't using the benefit of re-posting and connecting to their guests, since average re-posts of the active hotels was 1,47. Only one hotel has tried to make the most out of their posts by reminding users how to book on each of their posts, while only 6 other hotels did this much more rarely. The poorest results were regarding sharing hotel or destination activities, since only 2 hotels shared their own activities once and none of them decided to help their guests and attract them by sharing different events that would be held. Situation was not better with shares about technology in the hotel, since it was done only once and even those hotels that have their own app, haven't decided to promote it and let their guests know more about how their stay could be improved. On the other hand, they recognized importance of hashtags,

so almost all the posts had at least one hashtag in their description. For most hotels, more attention was given to responding to comments, than on the content published.

Most of the hotels that were active on Instagram were showing similar activeness on Facebook, which often resulted in sharing the same content on both social media platforms (for comparison of some Facebook and Instagram activity features see Figure 4). Main differences were that more attention was given to the resolution of photos, since here 82% had high resolution, so hotels see Facebook as a more formal platform and pay more attention on what exactly is being published. Usage of hashtags on Facebook had dropped for more than 50%, so hotels probably aren't aware of how these can be used on Facebook to make their posts searchable and interactive. Re-posting had been used by only 3 hotels, but more hotels decided to remind users of how and where to book with them, so almost half of their Facebook posts had this. Not much difference was seen in sharing activities in the hotel, since 4 hotels did that in one of their posts, and there was one post showing destination activities. Same as for Instagram, none of the hotels promoted their app nor the technology used in the hotel, which is one of the preferences of tech-savvy millennials.

Hotels' websites analysis results

Hotels were putting more effort into their websites, but still many improvements could be made, especially in order to attract millennial generation. Each category mentioned in the method section shows how efficient, or not, hotels were for the questions that were used (see Figures 5 and 6).

Appearance category

Analysis of this category showed that ability to see booking button without scrolling was present on 19 (53%) websites. Most of the hotels involved the ability to change the language of the website, from which 14 could be set either on Croatian or English and 16 websites had more options. Those 6 hotels that decided to leave their website only on English might have immediately lost attention of those who do not possess excellent knowledge of the language. High-resolution photos were used by 32 hotels, while 4 of them weren't giving enough attention on professionalism of the photos. Even though videos can help users feel as if they were there, 12 (33,33%), mostly five-star hotels, used this feature. This is probably because this category of hotels devotes more budget to their marketing department and these want to "show off" the hotel, more than those with lower star categorization. Since millennials

demand high speed of information, 29 (80,56%) hotels used concise phrases, meaning less than 140- character texts, as being considered concise on Twitter platform.

Interaction category

In order to interact with millennials, one of the most important things is for the website to be mobile-friendly, but in Dubrovnik area, according to the results from Google Search Console's Mobile-Friendly Test Tool, only 24 (66,67%) of the hotels had put an effort into that. On their official websites, 9 (25%) hotels had a special section for reviews, and it was mostly seen on websites of 3-star hotels, probably because they feel that they must convince future guests more, with testimonials of others. When it comes to ability to ask a question directly on the website it was provided by 25 (69,4%) hotels and only 14 (38,9%) hotels gave an option of users leaving a comment on the website. As already mentioned, one of the primary sources of inspiration are social media platforms, and 24 (66,67%) hotels had linked these to the website, while some of the other analyzed hotels had them written down on the website, but not linked, as if they haven't put enough effort to learn how to do this.

Promotion category

Hotel activities were promoted by 15 (41,67%), mostly 4 or 5-star hotels and chains of hotels, probably because they have much more of these to offer, than stand-alone lower categorized hotels. Half of the hotels decided to promote destination activities on their website, so they obviously consider it as a more appropriate way to publish these online, than on their Instagram or Facebook platform. On the other hand, hotels should ask themselves are more users going to "stumble upon" their website or their social media platforms. Only 5 (13,89%) hotels were promoting their shareability factors, such as selfie stations or social events, and those that did were the ones located on more remote places from the center of Dubrovnik. Unfortunately, hotels in Dubrovnik didn't want to show their modern technological side, since only one hotel chain decided to promote technology present in their hotels and none of the hotels promoted their app.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the introduction, Dubrovnik has highest numbers of overnight tourist traffic in the last few years, so it would appear that**,** because of the high demand, hotels feel confident that guests will keep coming. Therefore, they do not feel the need to aggressively participate in social media marketing practices. The fact that Croatia is more visited by those

older than 50 years (Pavić, 2018), provides an opportunity for hotels to focus their marketing efforts towards millennial generation and attract more of them. Results of hotels being active on social media, and especially YouTube and Twitter, are generally on a low level, since most of them did not use these to promote themselves. Some hotels from Dubrovnik region saw an opportunity in having social media accounts, once these started developing a couple of years ago, but most of the hotels stopped being active or decide to publish something rarely.

Some of the possible explanations for the low level of activity could be the difficulty in determining and justifying the return on investment of social media marketing or these hotels' target segments are not millennials. Perhaps 4-and 5-star hotels are more focused on attracting older guests, because they view this segment as spending more in total at the hotel, when compared to millennials. On the other hand, "ignoring" today's millennials could mean that, in the future, Dubrovnik hotels might suffer from less of those "over 50 years" guests, who don't feel as though they are getting enough attention now. These results also show that hotels are accepting the fact that tourism in Dubrovnik is highly seasonal, as already mentioned in the introduction, and they are not doing much to combat this seasonality problem, by using social media marketing. Even if they believe that "older" guests are more willing to spend money, it could be better to reach higher occupancy in the hotel by attracting millennials, at least during the rest of the year.

Hotels that saw high potential of investing in social media marketing and having an attractive website, were being present, but not with kind of content that would attract and intrigue millennials. Staying in the hotel, same as for travelling, is all about the experience, so hotels which are not promoting hotel and destination activities are denying their possible guests an opportunity to see what they could experience, if they decided to book. This kind of promotion would also show that hotels are engaged in the community and able to provide guests with all the necessary information to have a unique stay. The results of this research, looking at the points which were mentioned and analyzed throughout it, show that hotels in Dubrovnik region are far from being successful in attracting millennials via social media and their official websites. Because of the huge increase of Internet being used as a main source when choosing a hotel in Croatia (Pavić, 2018), these hotels need to focus more on how to convey their message and attract this growing market.

Limitations

As mentioned in the method section, this content analysis was done on a two-week period of tracking social media platforms activity of the hotels. Regarding the time component, this is only a small portion of their marketing efforts, so it is possible that they would have better, or worse results, in some different periods or a longer tracking time. Another limitation is the fact that in this research, hotels of different star categorization were analyzed with same sets of questions, so the fairness of comparing these might be questionable. Besides different star categorization, some of these were hotel chains, with multiple hotels being promoted on the same social media platforms and websites, so these hotels had more "material" to publish.

Ground for further research

Since one of the limitations is the fact that analysis was done on a two-week period, it is proposed to do it in a longer time period. Another possibility is that hotels could be more active during the summer season, because of the seasonality element, so the analysis could be done in that period. Furthermore, another suggestion would be to focus on the content which hotels are publishing, since it is not tailor-made for millennials, in order to examine who is the major target market for Dubrovnik region hotels. This could also be done using interview method, with hotels' marketing departments, to understand their marketing objectives and methods. Having more similar results could also result in benchmarking Dubrovnik hotels' social media activities against destinations with similar characteristics.

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APPENDICES

Figure 1

Questions used for content analysis (website examining)

Questions for websites:

Q1 - Can it be on some other language besides English? (if yes, number of languages is specified)
Q2 - Is booking button visible as soon as you open the website (don't have to scroll to see it)?
Q3 - Does it have concise phrases (less than 280-character texts)?
Q4 - Is there a special section for reviews?
Q5 - Is the user able to leave a comment/review on the website?
Q6 - Is the user able to ask a question on the website?
Q7 - Does the website promote activities in the hotel?
Q8 - Does the website promote destination/culture activities?
Q9 - Does the website have high-resolution photos (more than 72 dpi)?
Q10 - Does the website have a video of the hotel or a 360 degree picture?
Q11 - Is the website mobile-friendly? (checked with Mobile-Friendly Test)
Q12 - Does hotel promote their app on the website?
Q13 - Does hotel promote technology in the hotel?
Q14 - Does hotel promote shareability factor in their hotel? (ex. selfie stations, social events etc.)
Q15 - Are their social media platforms linked to their website?

Figure 2

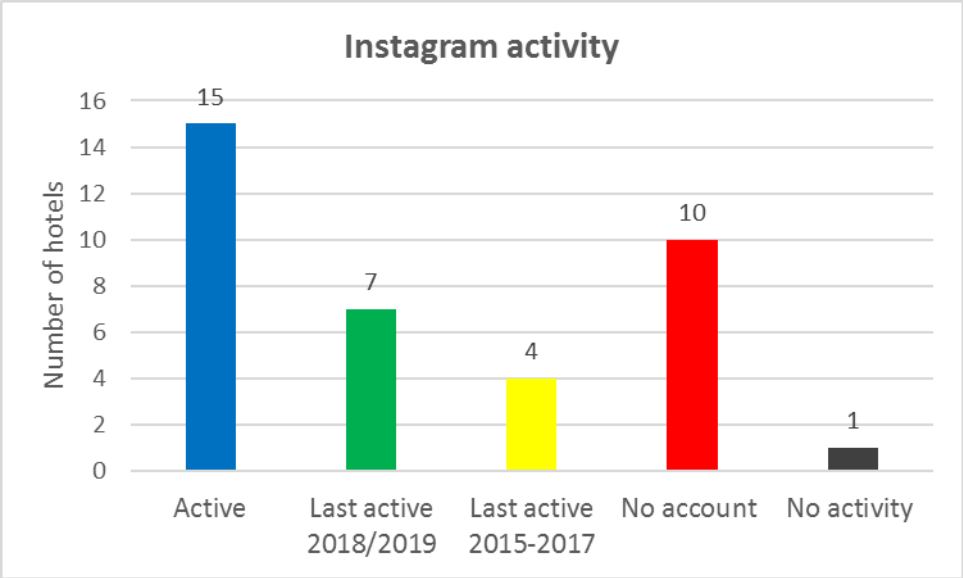
Questions used for content analysis (social media platforms tracking)

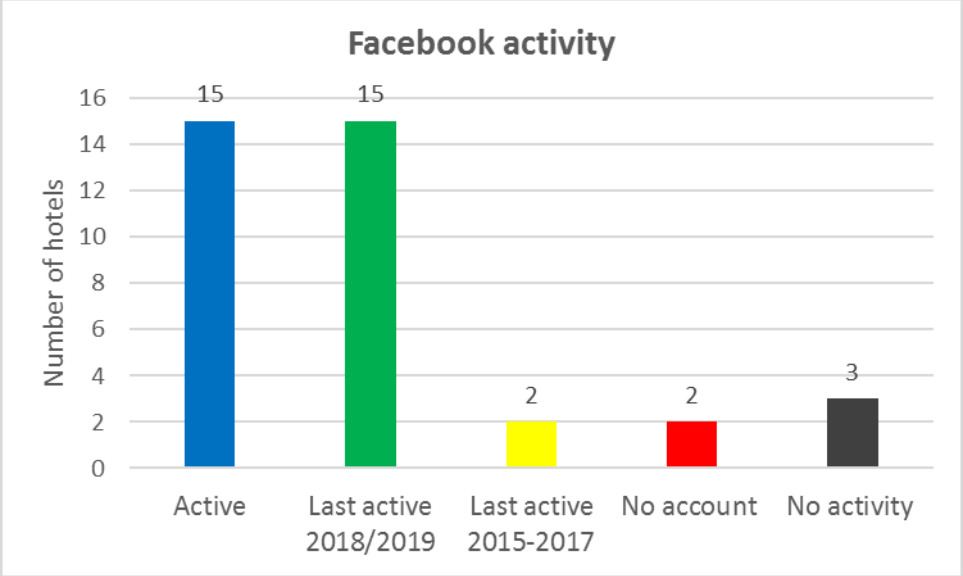
Questions for social media platforms:

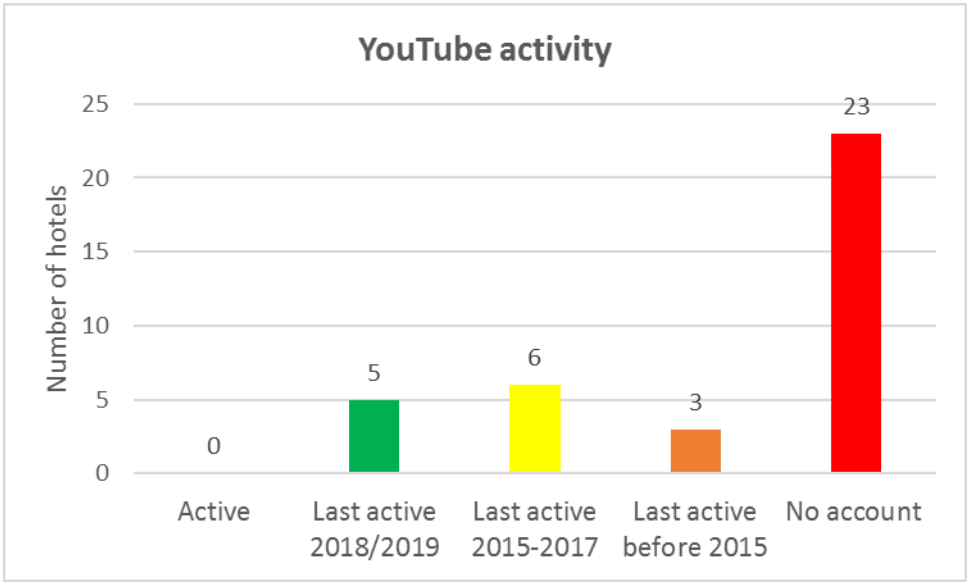
Q1 - Have they posted something that day? (if yes, number of posts is specified)
Q2 - Have they posted a video that day? (if yes, number of videos is specified)
Q3 - Are they posting high-resolution photos (more than 72 dpi)?
Q4 - Are they using hashtags?
Q5 - Are they sharing photos of guests (re-posting/re-tweeting fo Twitter)?
Q6 - Are they responding to comments?
Q7 - Are they sharing hotel activities?
Q8 - Are they sharing destination activities/events?
Q9 - Are they promoting technology in the hotel?
Q10 - Are they promoting their app?
Q11 - Is there an ability to book/link for a site where booking is possible?

Figure 3

Hotels' activity levels on social media platforms






YouTube activity
Number of hotels
25
20
15
10
5
0
0
5
6
3
23
Active
Last active 2018/2019
Last active 2015-2017
Last active before 2015
No account

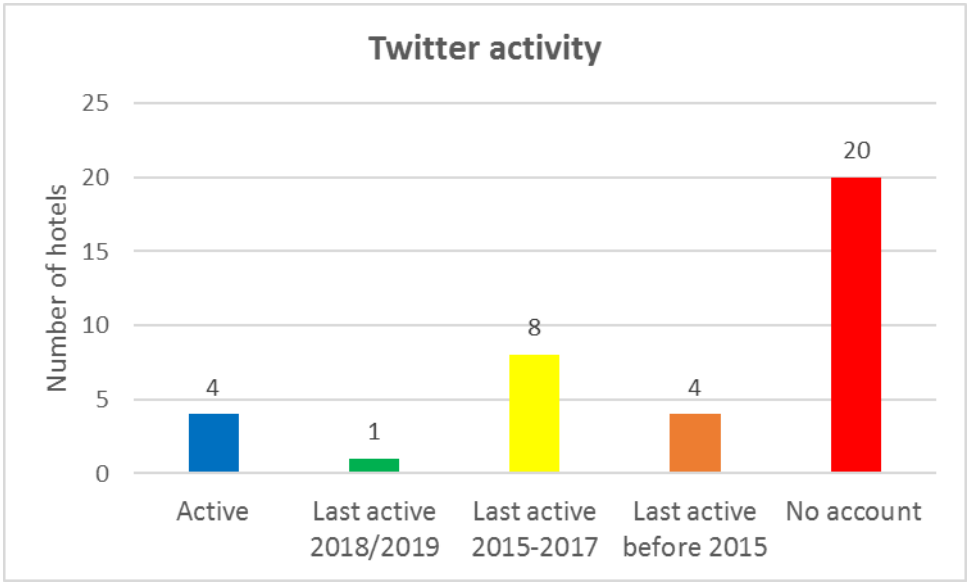
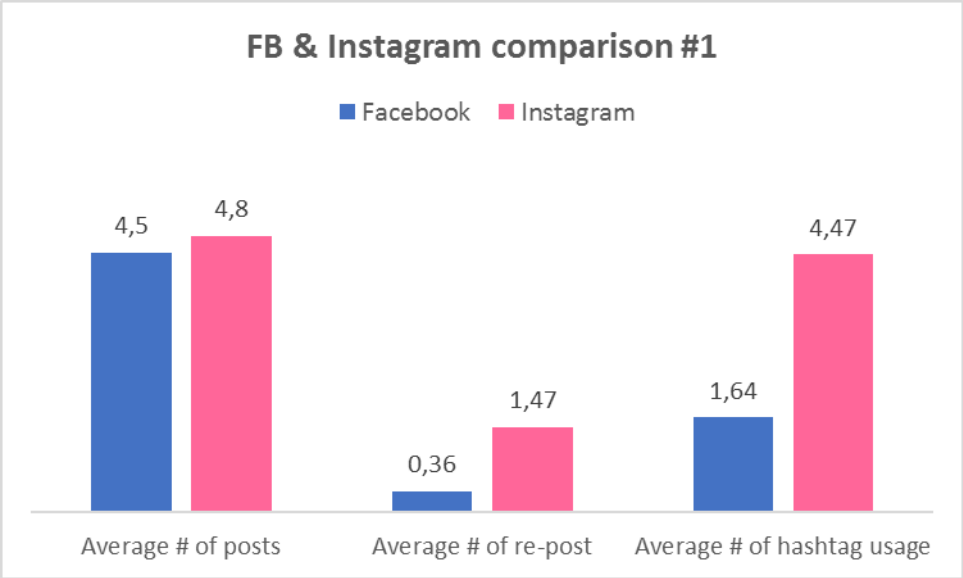

Twitter activity
Number of hotels
25
20
15
10
5
0
4
1
8
4
20
Active
Last active 2018/2019
Last active 2015-2017
Last active before 2015
No account

Figure 4

Comparison of some Facebook and Instagram activity features



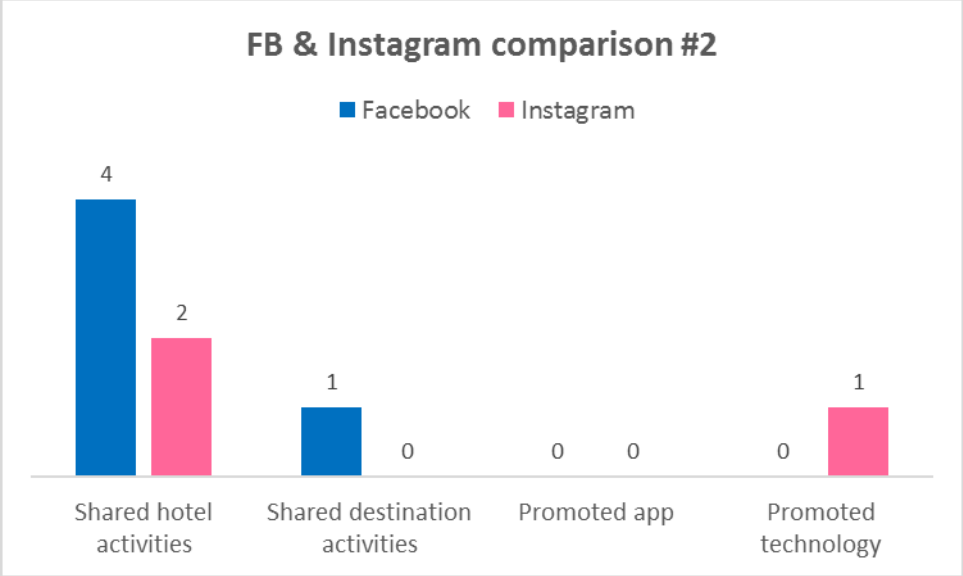
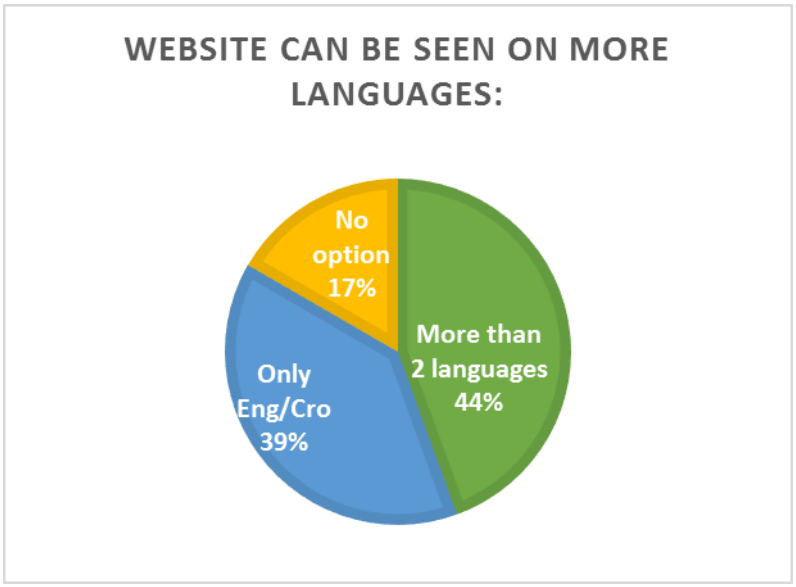


Figure 5

Elements of appearance category of website analysis



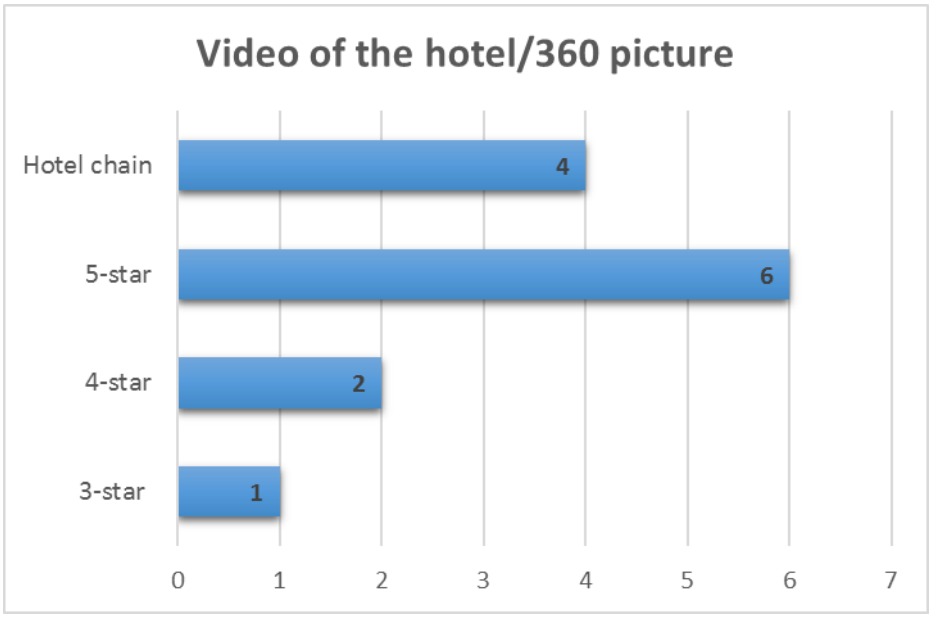
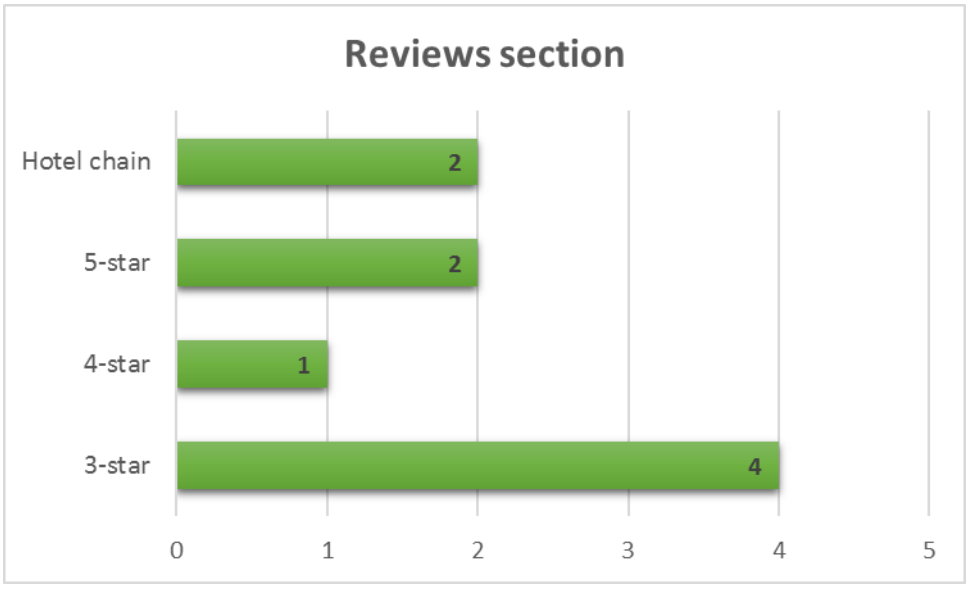


Figure 6

Elements of interaction & promotion categories of website analysis



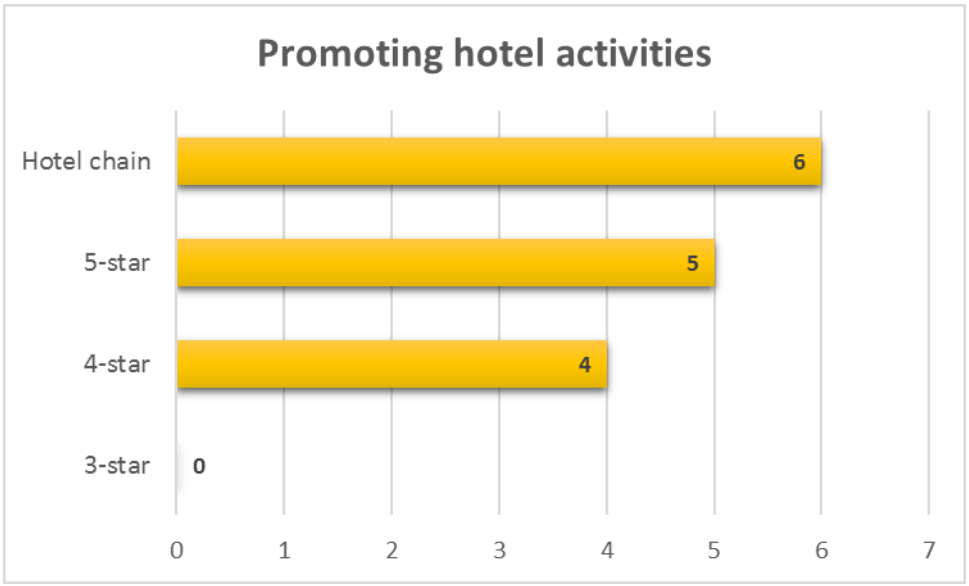


Figure 7

Number of hotels being present on some of examined social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter) vs. number of hotels being active on these platforms

