

Social media usage as a social CRM capability resource : an exploratory study among the Tunisian companies

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ABSTRACT: Today, a large number of companies consider social media as an effective mechanism that improves the interaction between the company and its customer. It constitutes an important element for the company, especially, when it comes to social customer relationship management. Social CRM and social media are considered an asset that promotes customer retention and business performance. However, despite the importance of organizational factors to the use of social media in order to develop SCRM capabilities, this field interested few researchers. Based on the previous literature and in-depth interviews with marketing professionals, we propose a conceptual framework that put the social media use, as a resource, at the core of the process of building social CRM capabilities. We propose to link the social media use, as a resource, with its determinants and with the SCRM capabilities. The results from the qualitative study allowed us to specify the organizational factors and resources that companies should ensure in order to make social media use an important resource in developing SCRM capabilities.

KEYWORDS: Social media, Social CRM capabilities, determinants of social media use.

I. INTRODUCTION

Web 2.0 and its evolutions (web 3.0 and web 4.0) have given consumers invaluable power. We no longer speak of a passive consumer who consumes without sharing his opinion. Today we have moved from the traditional client to the social client who controls the information. This consumer control has a lot of consequences for the company. This social customer can indeed improve or destroy the company's image just by spreading comments on social media (Kotler et al, 2017). Companies need to follow the trend in order to overpower the social media usage and to take advantage of it. Today, more and more companies consider social media as an effective mechanism that improves the customer-companies interaction (Alalwan et al, 2017). These companies integrate information from social media into their marketing and relationship strategies, in order to retain an increasingly volatile customer. This brings the company back to a customer-centric perspective where the integration of customer data from social media into its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is a necessity (Harrigan & Miles, 2014). CRM has been impacted by social media and we are talking, today, about Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) (Harrigan and Miles, 2014).

Social CRM is "A CRM strategy that uses Web 2.0 services in order to create a two-way committed relationship between customers and companies, and that allows to generate mutual benefits" (Faase et al., 2011). Several researchers have been attracted by this concept (Trainor, 2012; Trainor et al, 2014; Harrigan and Miles, 2014; Harrigan et al., 2014; Hasani et al., 2016; Küpper, 2016; Ahani et al., 2017, Bakkali et Chafik, 2018; Chierici et al, 2018; Garrido-Moreno et al, 2018; Bhatti et al, 2019...etc). Most of them adopt the resource-based approach (RBV) and the capabilities approach as a theoretical basis (Trainor et al., 2014; Küpper, 2016; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Foltean et al., 2018; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2018). Therefore, researchers interested in studying the role of social media usage as a technology in improving customer relations have done so mainly as part of the capacity development of Social CRM (C.CRMS). However, although social media is considered a major element in the implementation and operation of social CRM, few researchers investigate their direct effect in the development of social CRM capabilities (Garrido-Moreno et al., 2018). Furthermore, very little research has looked at identifying the social media usage antecedents as a resource that develops CRM or CRMS capabilities (Foltean et al., 2018).

The only focus of the firm on technology as resource without studying its antecedents can negatively impact the organizational capabilities. In fact, technology by itself does not determine organizational capabilities (Bhatt, 2000). Thus, it is in this context that the problem arose and we were interested in answering the following question:

"What are the antecedents of social media usage as a resource of Social CRM capabilities?" To answer this question, our main goal is to develop a conceptual framework who place social media usage in the core of the development SCRM capabilities process. In order to reach this goal, we determine a set of objectives:

- Identifying the resources that help in developing S.CRM capabilities,
- Understanding the role of social media in the development of S.CRM capabilities,
- Identifying the antecedents of the social media usage in the S.CRM capabilities development context.

In this research, a two-step exploratory study was carried out. As a first step, we conducted a literature review about the organizational social media usage and the resources that enable the Social CRM capabilities development. Then, as a second step, we have made use of a qualitative study with marketing professionals with the aim of identifying social media usage antecedents as part of the social CRM capabilities development. Thus, this research is built around three axes. The first one is theoretical and is devoted to the understanding of the different concepts addressed by this study and to the proposition of the first hypotheses, which constitute the link between the concepts. The second axis is devoted to the qualitative study carried out and its results. Finally, the third axis relates to the proposed conceptual framework that puts social media at the core of the Social CRM capabilities development process.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The last several years was characterized by a high degree of interest to social media contribution in the customer relationship management (Trainor et al., 2014; Choudhury and Harrigan, 2014; Küpper, 2016; Foltean et al., 2018). This interest was materialized by the study of Social CRM. Trainor et al. (2014) highlight that the best way to understand the social media contribution in the development of Social CRM functionality is to consider Social CRM as a capability by applying the resource-based approach (RBV) and / or the capability-based perspective. This approaches serve as a theoretical foundation to a lot of research such as Trainor et al (2014); Choudhury and Harigan (2014); Garrido-Moreno et al (2018)...etc. According to the RBV approach, in order to be competitive and create value, a company has to be considered as a set of heterogeneously distributed resources and capabilities. This heterogeneity must persist over time (Barney, 1991; Landroquez et al., 2012). The company can be able to deploy resources that are unique, rare, valuable, and difficult to imitate or substitute (Barney, 1991; Day and Van Den Bulte, 2002). Therefore, this approach recognizes resources and capacities as a source of competitive advantage (Day, 1994).

However, a lot of researchers criticized the RBV theory (DavoustGrignon, 2016) because of its static nature that makes it inadequate to explain company advantages in a dynamic context (Landroquez et al., 2012). In order to overcome this weaknesses, researchers proposed the capability-based approach, which is, ultimately, an extension of RBV in contexts where change is frequent (Baile, 2012; Landroquez et al., 2012; Harrigan et al, 2014). According to these approaches, the **Social CRM capabilities** are "company skills to generate, integrate and respond to information resulting from interactions with the customer and facilitated by social media technology" (Trainor et al, 2014, pg. 2). Whatever the approach referred to in studying Social CRM, it is important to emphasize that Social CRM as a concept do not replaces CRM. It is a logical adaptation du to the use of Web 2.0 in CRM (Greenberg, 2009; Trainor, 2012; Trainor et al, 2014; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2018). Researches that have addressed the Social CRM capabilities focused on the resources needed to develop capabilities and company performance. However, the role given to social media as a resource to build Social CRM capabilities remains under developed. In fact, while some researchers as Trainor et al. (2014) and Garrido-Moreno et al. (2018) consider social media as a resource, other researchers such as Küpper (2016) as well as Choudhury and Harigan (2014) believe this is not the case.

Resources (Antecedents) of Social CRM : social media role : The literature review carried out revealed that there is little work that relates the capacities of the CRMS to their resources. It was also noted that there is little consensus on the resources that develop the Social CRM capabilities. Choudhoury and Harrigan (2014) consider CRM technology as the main resource that develops Social CRM capabilities and a mediator between customer relationship orientation and Social CRM capabilities. On another side, Trainor et al. (2014) admit that customer-centric management systems and social media technology resources capable of producing Social CRM capabilities. Küpper (2016) consider that Social CRM technology is the only source for Social CRM capabilities. Studies concerning resources of social CRM capabilities have mainly focused on the effect of CRM technology without giving the necessary importance to social media. In fact, most previous studies do not consider social media as an important element or a resource that develop social CRM capabilities. However, authors such as Day and Vandebult (2002) and Wang and Fang (2012) argue that capabilities related to customer relationship

are the result of set of resources such as (1) organizational culture that makes the customer's need its priority, (2) management system that promotes customer relationship creation and (3) information technology that enable the company to acquire and analyze customers' information. In the light of the above and based mainly on the works of Trainor et al (2014) and Wang and Feng (2012), we propose to study the use of social media, customer relationship orientation and customer-centric management systems as resources and antecedents of Social CRM capabilities.

Social CRM capabilities and social media usage : The literature is increasingly drawing attention to the role played by digital resources in building relationship capabilities (Diffley&McCole, 2015). Social media, as a part of these digital resources, is considered as a tool that provides companies with a large number of relationship benefits, including improved CRM and social CRM practices (Parveen et al., 2015). Therefore, several authors admit that social media, as an interactive technology, presents a new customer-centric resource (Ahani et al., 2017). Moreover, Trainor (2012) claims that access to social media technology allows the company to have important information on customer requirements, complaints and experiences, which can certainly improve the relationship between the company and its clients. Thus, Trainor et al. (2014) consider social media as a technological resource that enables companies to use Social CRM to engage customers in collaborative conversations and improve relationships. They admit that the use of social media positively impacts Social CRM capabilities represented by three dimensions namely the information generation, information dissemination and responsiveness. Garrido-Moreno et al. (2018) as well, show, that in the hotel sector, companies, which use social media, are able to build social CRM capabilities and improve customer relationships.

H1: The use of social media by the organization positively impacts the capacities of the CRMS.

Social CRM Capabilities and Customer-Centric Management Systems: Customer-centric management system is "the degree to which companies adapt their operational processes and systems to serve customers" (Jayachandran et al., 2005. Pg. 179). It reflects a company's customer orientation (Rapp et al., 2010) and supports the customers' activities coordination (Wang and Feng, 2012), allowing the company to better understand and collaborate with its customers which make it able to better meet their needs. The literature on CRM and Social CRM capabilities has focused on the study of customer-centric management system as a resource. This interest is explained by the fact that a customer-centric management system allows the company to initiate the dissemination of customer information, overcome functional obstacles and focus on customer-centric efforts (Wang and Feng, 2012; Trainor, 2012) which make it as essential as CRM technology to develop relational capabilities (Trainor, 2012). Wang and Feng (2012) demonstrate, in the same vein, the role played by customer-centric management system in the development of CRM capabilities. Based on Jayachandran et al. (2005) work's, Trainor et al. (2014) advance that customer-centric management system increases the organization's ability to focus on customer interactions, influences the development of information processes, and is likely to lead to the success of customer relationship management initiatives. They empirically validate the positive impact of customer-centric management system on social CRM capabilities and prove the link between the two concepts.

H2: Customer-centric management system has a positive impact on the Social CRM capabilities.

Social CRM capabilities and customer relationship orientation: Customer relationship orientation is the corporate culture focused on customer (Day, 1994). It reflects behavioral norms and values that motivate the company to put the interest of the customer above all else (Wang & Feng, 2012). This culture manifests itself in several aspects including the customer information gathering, sharing and use across the organization (Deshpandé et al., 1993; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990). Studies related to marketing capabilities have focused on this concept as a resource that enables producing capabilities that improve business performance (Rapp et al., 2010). Within their CRM capabilities framework, Wang and Feng (2012) argue that a customer relationship orientation is a valuable, scarce, inimitable and non-substitutable resource. They admit, and empirically demonstrate, that customer orientation can enhance a company's CRM capabilities. Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) assess the role of customer relationship orientation in the development of Social CRM capabilities through the use of CRM technology. In light of the above we argue that a customer relationship orientation enables company to identify and share customer and market information, meet the customer needs and demands and thereby develop social CRM capabilities. Thus, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H3: The customer relationship orientation has a positive impact on the social CRM capabilities.

The usage of social media by organizations: The use of social media by companies is far from an easy task

and generally requires them to review their management systems and also their way of thinking (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). However, social media still has not received the interest needed to explore its role in building social CRM capabilities. This lack of interest is quiet striking when it comes to study the antecedents of social media use by companies. In fact, according to Ngai et al (2015), in a study that summarizes research on customer and business use of social media, only nine articles study the antecedents and consequences of social media use by companies. This lack of work is surprising given the importance of social media for business and the high level of acceptance it requires (Wirtz&Göttel, 2016). Especially since researchers such as Bhatt (2000) point out that a firm's focus on technology alone as a resource without studying its antecedents and perception can have the opposite effect to what is expected. The few works interested by studying the determinants of the use of social media by companies are based on theories and models widely used in research on the adoption of technologies and innovations by companies. Models such as the diffusion of innovation theory (DOI) (Rogers, 1983), the Technology - organization - environment (TOE) model (Tornatzky and Fleischer, 1990), or the technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) were mobilized. The table (1) below summarizes the main studies that have examined the use of social media by companies and the theory used by authors.

Authors	Antecedents of Social media use	Theory used
Parveen 2012	Relative advantage. Compatibility. Management support. Entrepreneurial orientation. Institutional pressure.	T-O-E
Mokhtar et al. 2016	CT infrastructure. Tics expertise Company activity Company size The company preparation level Institutional pressure The Client readiness level Government policy	T-O-E
Sharif et al. (2016)	Compatibility. Perceived benefits. Perceived security risks Management support Degree of formalization	T-O-E
Siamagka et al 2015	Perceived usefulness Perceived ease of use Organizational innovation	TAM RBV
Paluch et al. (2015)	Perceived usefulness Perceived ease of use	TAM
Ainin et al (2015)	Compatibility Cost efficiency Confidence Interactivity	DOI
Guesalaga (2015)	Organizational Commitment in Social Media Organizational competences in Social Media	T-O-E
Tajudeen et al. (2018)	Relative advantage Compatibility Confidence Interactivity Management support Entrepreneurial orientation Institutional pressure	T-O-E
Foltean et al. (2018)	Mimetic pressure Coercive pressure	T-O-E

Table 1. Summary of research on the antecedents of corporate social media use

In general, the literature review revealed the large number of concepts studied as antecedents of companies' social media usage. This large number of social media usage antecedents and the lack of consensus about it, show the need for a qualitative study to identify and specify the antecedents of social media usage in the Tunisian context.

Research methodology : The literature review revealed a significant amount of antecedents of social media use by companies. It was also possible to notice that there is a lack of consensus on the role played by social media as a resource able to build Social CRM capabilities. The literature review revealed, also, that few studies have tried to propose a conceptual model that best represents the reality and relates the social CRM capabilities, the use of social media and their respective antecedents. In light of these findings, and given that a qualitative study is essential when the literature cannot answer to the research questions (Thietard, 2014), we conducted a qualitative study with professionals. This study is part of an exploratory approach and therefore complements the literature review in order to propose a conceptual framework that places social media at the center of the social CRM capabilities building process (Figure 1).

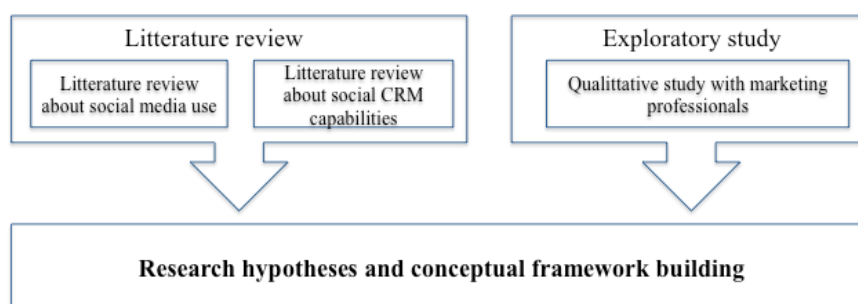


Figure 1. Conceptual framework construction process

The qualitative study carried out attempts to meet the following objectives:

- A better understanding of the social CRM capabilities;
- Specifying the antecedents of "the social media use" necessary to build social CRM capabilities and;
- The proposition of a conceptual framework that puts social media at the center of the social CRM capabilities building process.

Profile of the interviewees : A total of 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals working in marketing, social media and CRM. The average duration of these interviews was 45 minutes and they were conducted in the offices of the interviewees. The most of respondents wished to remain anonymous and asked not to disclose the names of the companies they were working for.

Respondants	Fonction	Company
1	CRM consultant	CRM Consulting Agency
2	Digital Marketing Manager	Social media marketing agency
3	Digital Marketing Manager	Multinational company specialised in producing and selling high quality painting
4	Marketing Director	Hypermarket
5	Responsible IT	Mobile network operator
6	CEO	CRM Consulting Agency
7	Sales director	Multinational company of CRM software development
8	CRM Director	Multinational company of CRM software development
9	CRM Project manager	Mobile network operator
10	Digital Marketing Manager	Mobile network operator
11	Marketing Director	STEG
12	Digital Marketing Manager	STEG

Table 2. Respondents profile

III. QUALITATIVE STUDY RESULTS:

The analysis of the corpus resulting from the interviews with the professionals was carried out using the content analysis method -specifically thematic analysis- following the steps recommended by Thietart (2014).

Two main themes emerged from this content analysis namely (1) the antecedents of social media use and (2) the antecedents (resources) of social CRM capabilities. Table (3) below presents a summary of the themes and sub-themes mentioned by the professionals and that emerged from the content analysis.

Table 3. Summary of themes and sub-themes mentioned by professionals

Themes mentioned	Number of times cited	Percentage of quotes compared to verbatim related to the topic	Percentage of citation compared to the entire corpus
Theme 1 : Antecedents of social media use			
Sub-theme 1 : Technology acceptance	16	29	27
Sub-theme 2 : Organizational commitment in social media	17	31	29
Sub-theme 3 : Organizational competence in social media	14	25	23
Sub-theme 4 : Customer orientation	8	15	13
Total Theme 1	55	100	92
Theme 2 : Antecedents of social CRM capabilities			
Sub-theme 1 : Organizational commitment in social media	5	100	8
Total Theme 2	5	100	8

Antecedents of Social Media Use: The content analysis identified four main antecedents namely customer relationship orientation (cited 8 times), organizational commitment in social media (cited 17 times), organizational competence in social media (cited 14 times) and acceptance of social media technology expressed by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (cited 16 times).

Technology acceptance : Interviewees put great emphasis on accepting social media technology as essential for its use and integration into business. Professionals underlined that considering the important usefulness of social media is necessary for an efficient and effective use of this technology. Indeed, perceived usefulness was mentioned 13 times by respondents. However, respondents rarely mentioned perceived ease of use (cited 3 times) as a factor that impacts the use of social media. In fact, the interviewees consider the ease of use as less important than the perceived usefulness. According to the literature review, little work has studied the impact of TAM model components-such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use- on the of social media use by company. However, Siamagka et al. (2015) demonstrate the impact of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on the social media use in the B2B context. According to Siamagka et al (2015), TAM can be used to understand the social media use in company due to the low complexity of social media as a technology. Yu and Tao (2009) and Dahnil et al ., (2014) argue that the business decision-making process for a company is identical to the individual decision-making process and therefore can be explained using the TAM model.

In the light of the above, it is possible to put forward the following proposals:

- P1: The perceived usefulness of social media positively impacts the social media use by the organization.
- P2: The perceived ease of use of social media positively impacts the social media use by the organization.

Organizational commitment in social media; Respondents spontaneously cited organizational commitment in social media (cited 17 times) as an antecedent of social media use. Organizational commitment in social media can be considered as the resources (human and technological) that the company invests in social media as well as the existence of a clear strategy regarding the social media use and adoption social (Guesalaga , 2015). Interviewees emphasized the importance of having a clear strategy supported by top managements. They also explained that organizational commitment in social media requires from the company an investment in technological and human resources able to an effective use of social media. Guesalaga (2015) defines the concept of "organizational commitment in social media " as " the extent to which the company has invested resources in social media, as well as developed and communicated a strategy about its use. "(Guesalaga, 2015; pg.4). He shows, in a study he conducted on the use of social media by the sales force, that organizational commitment in social media positively impacts organizational use of social media. In this sense, the more

committed the company is in social media, the more successful would be the social media use.

This allows us to propose the following proposition:

P3: Organizational commitment in social media positively impacts the social media use by the organization.

Organizational competences in social media; Interviewees also referred to organizational competences in social media (cited 14 times) as an antecedent of social media use. Indeed, the respondents consider that the knowledge and expertise in social media held by managers and the company are undeniably essential to the use of this technology. Organizational competences in social media are defined by researchers as " company's and manager's knowledge about social media and the expertise in making a productive use of it, " (Guesalaga, 2015, P. 04). Guesalaga (2015) argues that managers would be more likely to facilitate the social media use in their organization if they are aware and knowledgeable enough about social media. Indeed, Elliott and Boshoff (2005) report that technological knowledge held by managers and senior executives impact the adoption of the Internet as a technological system. Likewise, Guesalaga (2015) empirically demonstrates that an organizational competence in social media is an antecedent to corporate social media use. Therefore, it is possible to make the following proposition.

P4: Organizational competences in social media positively impact the social media use by the organization.

Customer relationship orientation: Participants in this qualitative study cited the customer orientation as an antecedent of social media use (cited 8 times). The respondents' statements join the scientific literature where the impact of customer relationship orientation on the technology use was widely studied and demonstrated (Jayachadran et al, 2005; Rapp et al, 2010; Wang et Feng, 2012). In this sense, Ngai et al. (2015), in a study based on the analysis of major social media work, identify customer orientation as one of the antecedents of social media use. For their part, Rapp et al. (2010) argue that customer relationship orientation allows a company a better use of its resources. For their part, Choudhury and Harrigan (2014) emphasize the importance of the customer relationship orientation adoption by the company to use social media. In the same vein, Harrigan et al. (2014) empirically prove that the more the company is customer-oriented, the more the social media use increases.

Thus it is possible to postulate the following:

P5: The customer relationship orientation of the company has a positive impact on the use of social media by the organization

Antecedents of Social CRM capabilities : During interviews, respondents spontaneously referred to organizational commitment in social media as an antecedent of social CRM capabilities (cited 5 times). Against all expectations, the respondents emphasized the role played by the leader commitment and implication in social media, to successfully use social CRM and to reach the goals assigned to it. In order to ensure a successful adoption of Social CRM, respondents believe that the company needs to, sufficiently, educate and train its employees in social media. According to our readings, the literature related to social CRM capabilities did not study the direct relationship between organizational commitment in social media and social CRM capabilities. However, work on RBV and the capability-based approach recognizes the role of managerial support in capability development (Teece, 2007). Likewise, the CRM literature refers to the importance of organizational commitment and the influence that leaders can have on CRM success. In this sense, Alshourah et al. (2018) argue that any CRM project is doomed to failure without the top management support and commitment. This support and commitment is reflected in the establishment of a clear strategy and in the investment on the necessary resources for the success of this project (Parveen, 2012).

In the light of the above, we propose to study the following relationship:

P6: Organizational commitment in social media positively impacts the social CRM capabilities.

The literature review carried out and the results of the qualitative study allowed us to propose the concepts which, once put in relation, form a conceptual framework (Fig 2.) which puts social media, as a resource, at the center of social CRM capabilities building process and therefore makes it a central resource.

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