

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO
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MASTER'S THESIS

**SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS'
MARKETING ENHANCEMENT: THE CASE OF THE CANTON OF
SARAJEVO MUNICIPALITIES**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 The Evolution of Social Media.....	5
1.2 The Concept of Social Media	10
1.2.1 Definition and Main Forms of Social Media	10
1.2.1.1 Facebook	11
1.2.1.2 YouTube	11
1.2.1.3 Twitter.....	12
1.2.1.4 Instagram.....	12
1.2.1.5 LinkedIn.....	13
1.2.1.6 Viber and WhatsApp.....	13
1.2.2 The Role of Social Media in Marketing.....	14
1.2.3 Trends and Projections	16
2 PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS MARKETING.....	18
2.1 Differences between Public Sector and Private Sector Marketing.....	18
2.2 The Role of Marketing in Public Institutions	19
2.2.1 Marketing of Products and Services	20
2.2.2 Social Marketing	21
2.2.3 Policy Marketing	21
2.2.4 De-marketing.....	21
2.3 Marketing Challenges in Public Sector.....	21
2.3.1 Institutionalisation of marketing	21
2.3.2 Marketing Objectives and Evaluation of Marketing Programs.....	22
2.3.3 Budgets and Funding.....	22
2.3.4 Administration and Decision Making	23
2.4 Developing a Marketing Strategy in Public Sector	25
2.4.1 Using a Customer-Centred Focus	26
2.4.2 Market Segmentation and Targeting	26
2.4.3 Defining the Competitors in Public Sector	27
2.4.4 Characteristics of Marketing Mix in Public Sector.....	28
3 SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC SECTOR MARKETING	28
3.1 The Purpose of Social Media in Public Institutions.....	28
3.2 Social Media Uses in Public Institutions	30
3.2.1 The Impact of Social Media on Public Institutions.....	31
3.2.2 Social Media Opportunities for Governments in 2018	35
3.2.2.1 Facebook	35
3.2.2.2 Twitter.....	35
3.2.2.3 Snapchat	35
3.2.2.4 YouTube	36

3.2.2.5 Instagram.....	36
3.3 Impact of Social Media on Human Resources Management and the Organisational Structure in Public Sector.....	36
3.3.1 The Role of Social Media in Public Institutions' Human Resources Management.....	36
3.3.2 The Role of Social Media in the Organisational Structure of Public Institutions.....	38
3.4 Social Media as an Extension to Public Relations in Governments	38
3.5 Social Media Governance in Public Institutions	40
3.5.1 Importance of Social Media Governance in Public Institutions	40
3.5.2 Elements of Social Media Governance in Governments	42
3.5.2.1 Employee Access.....	43
3.5.2.2 Social Media Account Management.....	43
3.5.2.3 Acceptable Use	43
3.5.2.4 Employee Conduct.....	43
3.5.2.5 Content Management.....	43
3.5.2.6 Security Policies	44
3.5.2.7 Legal Concerns.....	44
3.5.2.8 Citizen Conduct	44
3.5.3 Monitoring and Measuring Impacts of Social Media Interactions.....	44
4 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS.....	45
4.1 Methodology	45
4.2 Results	48
CONCLUSION	56
REFERENCE LIST	63
APPENDIXES.....	1

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Social Media History Timeline	9
Figure 2: Social Media Landscape	15
Figure 3: Social Network Users and Penetration Worldwide, 2016 – 2021	16
Figure 4: Most Famous Social Network Sites Worldwide as of September 2017, Ranked by Number of Active Users (In Millions)	17
Figure 5: The Role of Social Media in an Open Government Model	32
Figure 6: The Impact of Social Media on Public Institutions' Mission and	

Communication	39
Figure 7: Elements of Social Media Governance in Public Institutions	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Factors Influencing the Implementation of Marketing in Public Institutions	24
Table 2: Examples of Public Sector Services Providers' Competitors	27
Table 3: Guideline for Purposeful Use of Social Media in Public Institutions	33
Table 4: Description of Sample	47
Table 5: Cross-case Comparison - Frequently Mentioned Terms in Interviews	48
Table 6: Summary of Interviews' Insights on Concepts of Interest: Cross-case Presentation	50
Table 7: Meta-Matrix Describing Research Questions	54

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Povzetek.....	1
Appendix 2: Interview Guide	2

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B&H - Bosnia and Herzegovina

C2C – Customer-to-Customer

E-PR - Electronic Public Relations

GOV 2.0 - Government 2.0

HR – Human Resources

HRM – Human Resource Management

IT – Information Technologies

OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's

PR – Public Relations

U.S. - United States

UK - United Kingdom

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, the Internet users have largely moved towards the user-driven technologies, which include social networks, blogging and platforms for video and photo sharing content. This shift created the revolution in the world of marketing, changing the way how marketers and customers think, act and react to companies' products and services. The revolution started approximately after the launch of Facebook in 2004, followed by Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and other social media channels, which completely dominated the web community, and quickly became mainstream (Smith, 2009). Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2004, p.2) define social media, or consumer-generated media as "a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers' intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues". Păun (2009) extends this definition by adding the "two-way communication" element into the equation and emphasizing the importance of this feature for both private and public institutions' officers when engaging with their audiences. Coman and Păun (2010, p.46) also define social media as "the various forms of user generated content and the collection of websites and applications that enable people to interact and share information online".

Social media is a very broad area, consisting of various different channels. Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 358) differentiate between some of the following: (1) social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), (2) sites used to share graphic, video and music contents (e.g. YouTube, Instagram, SoundCloud etc.), (3) blogs (user or company generated), (4) e-commerce sites (e.g. eBay), (5) customer-to-customer (hereinafter: C2C) emailing and others. As Smith (2009) argues, the social media have created an Internet revolution by enabling users to express their opinions publicly, interact with other users, form communities and take part in creation and content sharing. In addition, he explains this social media phenomenon by referring to, so-called listening economy, where he suggests that compared to the era of mass communication where professional marketers were the ones in charge of the communication process, the era of social media is and will be dominated by consumers, where they will share, comment and review all the content. In this environment, the only way through for organisations will be to firstly listen to their customers and then engage and actively respond to them in the same manner. According to Statista (2019), the number of social media users worldwide has increased from 0.97 billion users in 2010 to 2.62 billion users in 2018. Furthermore, this number is expected to increase up to 3.02 billion users in 2021, which demonstrates the rapid and constant growth of this emerging trend.

Wright and Hinson (2008) argue that social media is significantly changing and complementing organisations' public relations (hereinafter: PR) practice, especially in the field of communication with users, pushing PR officers to be more proactive and more responsive to critical comments and reviews. Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 357) further suggest that social media has become a "hybrid" component of the traditional promotion mix, combining the traditional marketing communication with new forms of word of mouth advertising, as well as the new technologies. Consequently, users are being given the opportunity to communicate in real time, at numerous platforms, and using various media formats, making perfectly favourable environment for highly educated and critical audiences, who are looking for honest opinions and real experiences related to products and services of their interest. Coman and Păun (2010) summarise some of the major features that

distinguish social media from the traditional marketing and which make it so powerful in all contexts, i.e. social media enables transparency and gives the public the opportunity to come one step closer to publishers, allowing them to share their own content and opinions, which also gives ground for the information to go viral, meaning to spread quickly among the users. In the public sector environment, this can represent a massive opportunity, if managed wisely.

In the context of public sector, institutions have been showing efforts towards social media utilisation recently; however, they are still significantly falling behind private companies (Macnamara, 2011). Serrat (2010a, p. 3) defines public sector marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes, always interconnected and interdependent, meant to identify, anticipate, create, communicate, deliver, and exchange valuable offerings that satisfy clients, audiences, partners, and society at large”. With regards to social media, Mickoleit (2014) argues that politicians as public personas have shown more interest and success at social networks, while government institutions they represent have been less proactive. Nevertheless, he suggests that recently, government institutions have also acknowledged the importance of social media and have slowly started testing out different platforms. Serrat (2010a) also argues that public sector marketing is greatly influenced by political decisions and that only after these decisions have been agreed upon and resolved, marketing can take place in public institutions. Correspondingly, the same reason may hold for the utilisation of social media by government institutions.

Since social media combines various different disciplines, for instance, marketing, or information technologies (hereinafter: IT), the accountability for its management and utilisation also depends upon different departments at different organisations. Macnamara (2011) argues that social media activities in private and public organisations are mostly managed by corresponding PR practitioners and less often by marketing or information technology departments. Furthermore, he suggests that although many of the PR personnel claim to have sound knowledge of the purposes and practical application of social media, these claims have been challenged by social media specialists. Mickoleit (2014) also explains that in governmental institutions, social media is often underused, being just one of many tools for the enhancement of PR, while its real purpose should be the involvement of citizens into the decision-making processes, creation of public policies and the delivery of public services, which is rarely utilised in practice.

As mentioned previously, social media platforms provide users with an opportunity to share their opinions and express their attitudes online. In this context, Macnamara (2011) suggests that the lack of strategy and clear guidelines could impose severe risks on the reputation and performance of organisations, since, if not guided correctly, employees could intentionally or unintentionally use social media to expose company’s secrets or share inappropriate public opinions which could harm the company’s reputation. In his study on social media governance, he reveals that more than two thirds of both public and private institutions examined do not obtain any specific social media regulation and guidelines for their staff and that about the same number of employers do not provide any training with regards to the utilisation of social media at work and related to work issues for their staff. Likewise, Mickoleit (2014) finds that in OECD countries, the majority of institutions lack clear strategy and guidelines for personnel on how to use social media. Coman and Păun (2010) argue that in the 21st century the impact of social media on every private or public organisation is inevitable, whether they have established their social media presence or not, since users are going to discuss their services on social media nevertheless. In addition, they suggest that it

is not simply enough to treat the social media as one of the organisation's communication channels; instead, one needs to understand that, in order to utilise the social media effectively, efforts need to be made to establish an engaging relationship with the public.

Although several studies have analysed the impact of social media on public institutions marketing and public relations, the contemporary writings covering the topic of public sector marketing are very scarce, and most of the relevant academic writings date back to 90's or early 2000's. The existing literature has covered this topic in the case of OECD and other developed countries; however, there seems to be very little of what has been written related to the case of public institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, according to KPMG (2011), the social media still represents the new concept which requires a lot of everyday experimenting and learning from the given results, so its regulation both in private and public institutions remains vague. In this sense, this master's thesis will focus on gathering information regarding the role of social media and its contribution to the enhancement of public institutions' marketing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, using the case of Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. The main goal is to propose sound solutions and ways of enhancing the marketing strategies of public institutions, leading to improvement of their services and products, delivery channels and what is most important - users' satisfaction.

Based on the description of the problem, the objectives of this master's thesis are the following:

- to review and analyse the appropriate theoretical/conceptual framework on the role of social media and its application in public institutions' marketing;
- to investigate the actual state regarding the social media utilisation in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities;
- to determine which departments in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities are responsible for social media and define their levels of competence;
- to extend the understanding of the importance of having appropriate social media usage guidelines in place for public institutions;
- to give recommendations on further application of social media in public institutions, for the purpose of their marketing enhancement.

With respect to the aforementioned objectives, the following research questions are defined:

- RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?
- RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?
- RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?

In order to empirically examine the research questions and reach this master thesis' objectives, a comprehensive literature review (Saunders, Lewis & Tornhill, 2009) of the social media concept, its impact on marketing and public relations, and its implications on the marketing of public institutions, with an emphasis on the governmental institutions will be provided. Furthermore, additional qualitative research will be used through semi-structured in-depth interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the data collection process, the interviews will be conducted with the personnel in charge of social media management, among 9 Canton of Sarajevo municipalities and Sarajevo City Administration.

Interview guide will be developed around the three research questions posed, and related subtopics. The guide will be divided into four sections, examining:

- general questions related to the institutions' usage of social networks (most frequent social networks used, social media content, presence of a two-way communication with citizens);
- roles, responsibilities and the level of personnel' competencies with regards to social media (departments responsible for social media management, education and competencies);
- the existence and content of social media guidelines and strategies (existence of strategies related to the institution's mission and goals, guidelines or restrictions intended for employees, evaluation of social media results and reports);
- respondents' general comments and recommendations for improvement.

The collected results from the interviews will be analysed and logically sorted for further policy recommendations, together with the obtained theoretical framework. Analysis will be done using qualitative research tools such as: vignettes, cross-case matrices, meta-matrix approach, counting etc. In addition, the best- case examples will be used as guidance for final policy recommendations. The purpose of policy recommendations will be to present the theoretical and conceptual framework, analyse the key research questions and finally extend the understanding of the importance of social media in the marketing of public institutions, for the purpose of their enhancement.

The thesis is consisted of four main chapters, starting from the general description of social media, i.e. its development through history, definition and main forms, its implications on marketing, and general trends and predictions. The second chapter describes the public sector marketing, focusing on its definition and comparison to private sector, followed by a more detailed description of the role of marketing in public sector, its specifics and challenges, and detailed description of the marketing strategy framework for public sector. The following chapter narrows down the concepts from the first two chapters and describes in detail the social media use in public sector, including its purpose, impacts and specific uses. Moreover, this chapter interprets the impact of social media on different public sector departments, including the human resources (hereinafter: HR) and PR, and explains the elements of social media governance in public sector. The data analysis is presented in the fourth chapter where the research work is focused on three main concepts. i.e. the most frequently used social networks, roles, responsibilities and levels of competence with regards to social media, and finally the existence and content of social media guidelines. In addition, through this chapter the research results are interpreted and discussed together with adequate conclusions and policy recommendations.

1 DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1.1 The Evolution of Social Media

Social media is a concept which completely turned over the way people communicate, do business and the way companies and organisations interact with their customers. Edosomwan, Praksan, Kouame, Watson and Seymour (2011, p. 79-81) argue that the general phenomenon of social networks dates to the 18. century when people started using telegraph in order to send and receive messages, followed by the telephone and radio in 19. century. This theory relies on the presumption that throughout the history, people always tried to develop technologies which would ease the communication processes. They also argue that the term “social networks” appeared as early as in the late 1800s when, among others, German sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies introduced this term claiming that the existence of social groups relied on common values, beliefs or even common conflicts of its members.

McIntyre (2014) and Borders (2009) further suggest that the social networking phenomenon appeared even before the development of digital media and even before the computer technologies. They argue that the social networking first found its way in 1950s through telephone lines, i.e. “phone phreaking” – the process through which unpermitted access to the telephone system was made in order to make free phone calls and enable free communication. Borders (2009) suggests that the 30-40-year long era of phone phreaking was one of the first attempts to create the system similar to today’s Skype at the time when making calls was very expensive. He argues that this process was primarily used to arrange virtual meetings and discussions. Another important turning point on the social media history timeline happened in 1966, when the term email first appeared; however, the real purpose of email came to life only later, i.e. in 1990s, when the Internet first appeared (Borders, 2009; Edosomwan, Praksan, Kouame, Watson & Seymour, 2011).

Dijck (2013) claims that the creation of the World Wide Web, i.e. the Internet in 1991 was a foundation for a completely new type of networked communication through online blogs, e-mails etc. which transferred the previously offline groups and communities to their online forms. Nevertheless, he also argues that although important as a ground basis for the formation of networked communication, the existing media on the Internet was not able to automatically connect individuals until the invention of a Web 2.0, which appeared only after the year of 2000 and enabled a more interactive online communication, while opening a whole new era of social networking.

On the other side, McIntyre (2014) argues that the evolution of social media began in 1969, with the appearance of CompuServe, the first Internet service provider on American market, offering its users a dial-up service, while charging on the hourly basis. Although quite expensive at the time, the CompuServe became popular among users due to the programs it offered, which encouraged personal use of computers and online communication among users in the era when not many people owned computers at their homes. The vision that the computer usage will gain a massive scale made CompuServe top one Internet provider and the first actual social media in history. In addition to this, together with a similar company named Prodigy, CompuServe was the first company to offer online services and an organised social networking platform for mass users and enable them to experience the online social interaction. This was also empowered by launching the first online chat service in 1980s (Borders, 2009).

CompuServe was also the first company to directly offer online newspaper to people, as well as to develop the first email system with special features such as the address book, which seemed to be very appealing for both amateurs and experts. The company remained the most influential Internet service provider in 80s and 90s, until the competitor AOL overtook the market in 1990s, offering monthly instead of hourly charges for its users, in addition to some more advanced forms of email, chat platforms and other social media tools such as instant messaging. Finally, in late 90s, Hotmail introduced an easily accessible and free of charge email, which overshadowed AOL and gained massive user support. Nevertheless, very soon after the introduction of Hotmail, Google also introduced its own email service named Gmail, which gained a top position due to its large storage space (McIntyre, 2014).

Borders (2009) also distinguishes the Usenet systems and their importance in the context of social media history, which came to life during the 1970's and stayed popular until 1990's, when internet forums appeared and replaced it. The primary purpose of Usenet systems was to create online communities and discussion platforms where people would discuss various topics (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). By utilising this system, the users were able to upload posts or articles which were considered as news in groups discussing related topics (Jasra, 2010). Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 211-214) argue that, although they have historically represented social media ancestors, the fundamental difference between the public online communities and social media sites is that the online communities have been organised around specific topics and hierarchical themes, while the social media sites were focused on people, i.e. individuals. They also argue that the modern social media journey did not start before 1997, when "the first recognizable social network site", the SixDegrees.com was established. According to these authors, the social network sites represent an important segment of social media, which help people connect to other individuals whom they mostly know from their offline social networks, and maintain these connections which would be otherwise difficult to keep. They further suggest, that the most important technical feature of social networks is "the list of Friends". Correspondingly, SixDegrees made it possible for users to create a profile, as well as to connect and share messages with friends. While the authors do point up that these features existed even before SixDegrees with other sites such as AIM and ICQ "buddy lists" or Classmates.com, they believe that the SixDegrees was the first site which combined all of these characteristics. The fact that SixDegrees was the first modern social network site is also supported by Borders (2009) and McIntyre (2014), while the former author further explains that this kind of interactive, online social sites soon became popular by the name "Web 2.0" and gained on their massive popularity in the new millennium, when social web applications such as Friendster, Myspace and finally, the most popular one – Facebook were launched.

According to Dijck (2013), the media technologies developed together with people's social needs and practices, and the development of Web 2.0 in the new millennium made it possible for users not just to transfer their daily activities to online platforms, but to have these activities organised around a specific objective, enabling users to communicate with friends and share specific content such as photos or videos. The two crucial factors that differentiate Web 2.0 from the rest of the web content include the term "micro content", i.e. pieces of content with small amounts of storage and multiple purposes, such as the blog posts, images or comments, and the social media (Alexander & Levine, 2008, p. 42).

Another important social network that shaped the future of today's social media was the LiveJournal, founded in 1999. At the centre of this network were the user-created blogs, which were actively updated, while the system also encouraged users to interact through mutual following and groups' creation. The site is active even today and its major purpose is to give its users the opportunity to write a blog or a journal and connect with other users. Nevertheless, as argued by many, in 2002, the first modern social network was born, called Friendster. It initially started off as an online dating site, by connecting strangers with similar interests, who were also friends of their friends, believing that better matches would be found this way, unlike the other dating sites at the time which connected complete strangers based on their common interests (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Jasra, 2016, Dwyer, Hiltz & Passerini, 2007). Friendster also served as a means of connecting friends, assuming that many people who were friends' offline were using Friendster too – similar to today's Facebook. Due to its popularity, Friendster remained active until June 2015, when it took the break from its services due to lack of user engagement (Friendster, 2015). Boyd and Ellison (2008) argue that together with Myspace and Facebook, Friendster was one of the key influencers of today's social media fields such as business or cultures.

On the other hand, Pérez-Latre, Portilla and Sánchez-Blanco (2011) argue that all the popular social media sites as we know them today were established after 2002. These include Myspace, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and others, while they distinguish Facebook and Twitter as the ones with historical success. According to Chatfield (2007), a serious expansion of the social media started around the year of 2004, while he believes that with the invention of Myspace in 2003 the massive online forum trend has begun. He also argues that Myspace was primarily created as a platform which would bring together musicians and bands in order to share and entertain themselves with new music, and expand their networks. However, Myspace was soon built into one of the most visited online web sites reaching more than 50 million users in only a year. On the other hand, Boyd and Ellison (2008) argue that Myspace was created on the cost of Friendster's ex-users, who turned away from this network mostly due to speculations that Friendster would charge users for using the system, in order to eliminate the fake profiles. Since many music bands were the ones dismissed by Friendster, they became the first users of Myspace. They also argue that Myspace's original purpose was not to gather bands and musicians solely, but since large numbers of these users were moving away from Friendster, Myspace took the benefit of it and welcomed the users by additionally supporting them, which expended the overall Myspace users' network. Furthermore, they believe that another competitive advantage of Myspace compared to other sites was the constant update of the site's features, based on users' demands. Soon after, teenagers and urban adolescents aged 20 and above started joining Myspace, mostly in order to have better insight into the profiles of bands they were fans of, or to stay connected with friends.

In 2004, today's most popular social network site called Facebook was established, by a 23-year old Harvard University psychology student, Mark Zuckerberg, which soon reached millions of users and, as Perez-Latre, Portilla and Sánchez-Blanco (2011) argue, a historical success. At first, Facebook was designed only to serve a niche market – Harvard University students, who would have to use their University log-ins in order to join the network. Zuckerberg and his colleagues invited the first members to join Facebook by sending them private emails and inviting them to be his friends on Facebook. In only few days, more than 500 students joined Facebook and it became extremely popular among Harvard University students (Kirkpatrick, 2010, Philips, 2007, Jasra, 2010). Not long after this popularity

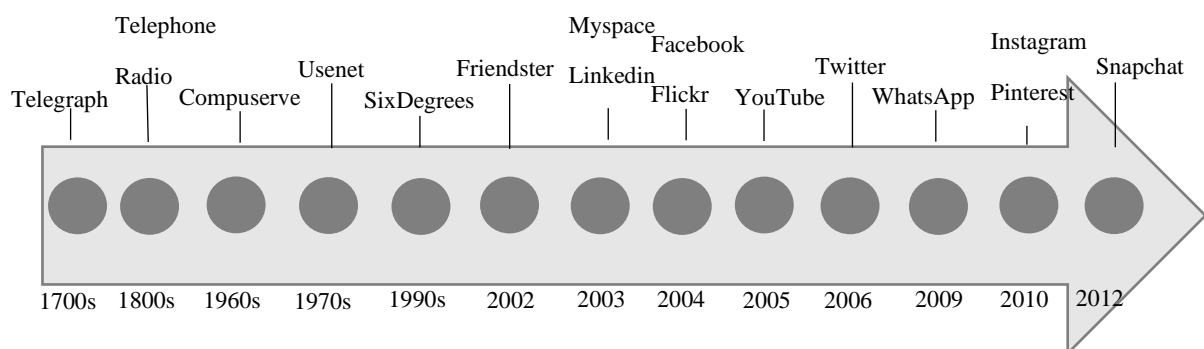
explosion, Facebook became available to college students on other reputable Universities. Later, other schools and some companies joined, while it finally opened its doors to public in 2006. Although Facebook was not the pioneer in social networking, the fact that it was founded as a service explicitly intended for University students, automatically attracted this target audience (Boyd & Hargittai, 2010). Already in 2007, Facebook reached an astonishing growth – around 1 million new users per week and billions of users looking at the page every month (Jasra, 2010).

Although similar to Myspace at some features, such as public sharing of personal information, picture sharing, messaging and other forms of communication with “friends”, Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerini (2007) and Atal (2007) argue that the fact that Facebook started off as a private University network helped in obtaining the trustworthiness of its members, compared to, for example, Friendster or Myspace. Boyd and Ellison (2008) also argue that at the beginning of its existence, one trait that distinguished Facebook from other social networking sites was its attitude and actions towards privacy. Facebook was the first social networking site to initiate the concept in which all users had to be a part of a closed network, which was later broadened when Facebook introduced itself to the public (Boyd & Hargittai, 2010). Although perceived by many as a direct competitor to Myspace, Atal (2007) argues that their target audiences were different at the time, where Myspace was content oriented, targeting users based on their musical and other artistic interests, while the idea of Facebook was to build the community on relationships between members in order for them to keep in touch with friends and colleagues.

In terms of corporative use of Facebook, Atal (2007) argues that Facebook was a perfect example of a real purpose of Web 2.0, offering its members certain flexibility in terms of content, such as e.g. utilisation of customised, multimedia applications and promotion of the most attractive features of their brands, unlike Myspace which at the time offered only built-in, general formats where users would upload their content. Although it was initially created as a closed network connecting friends with similar interests, in the period of 10 years from its initiation, Facebook expended not just to a network of millions of users, but it also opened its doors to a business and commercial use. In 2004, banners and ads which were showing up on users’ profiles were already in use, which were usually booked by various businesses and organisations having interest in selling their products and services to the Facebook community and targeting students based on their gender, interests and other parameters (Todi, 2008). Throughout the years, Facebook constantly added new features, such as the “notes” section, which is very similar to blog, videos, the chat window etc. which is one of the reasons why it kept being so popular among users. Although business, public institutions and other organisations were not able to make business pages on Facebook before, in 2006, Facebook released this feature by allowing United States (hereinafter: U.S.) politicians to create pre-election page profiles which would help them with their campaigns, while in 2007 this feature was made possible for other businesses as well, allowing users who were interested in their operations to become “fans” of the page. This new feature was an extension to Facebook’s initial advertising/banners platform, while soon after this, Facebook released other commercial features aimed for businesses and individual users and kept upgrading them until today. Facebook grew rapidly, reaching as much as 500 million users in 2010, while all the aforementioned features also kept improving with its expansion. Although, most of these features were not new to the Web, Facebook was perceived as innovative since it was the first network which was able to match all these activities and connect them into a successful system (Bruger, 2015).

Soon after the Facebook's major market entry success, another social network was born, called Twitter, which according to Perez-Latre, Portilla and Sánchez-Blanco (2011) together with Facebook made the most massive success in the history of social media. Based on its co-founder Jack Dorsey's idea, Twitter was first established as a platform based on SMS-texting (MacArthur, 2017). After the year 2006, Twitter developed into a micro-blogging social networking site, as it is also known today (Benett, 2014). As Kwak, Lee, Park and Moon (2010, p. 591) argue, the difference between Twitter and other preceding social networking sites at the time was that the "following" between two parties involved was not necessarily expected to be mutual. They further elaborate that the principle behind Twitter was that the user would receive all messages posted by the party it followed, called the "tweet", which he/or she could repost on their account, i.e. "retweet" and share with their followers, regardless of the original poster's audience. Twitter also developed a whole set of a new vocabulary which soon became very popular among its users, including various abbreviations and the usage of hashtags in front of the specific words and terms, which would symbolise a new topic of interest and discussion which other users might decide to use as well and spread the discussion to a bigger scale. Based on the popularity of the topics discussed, Twitter developed a mechanism, in which it showed the top 10 trending topics to its users, although not categorising them by the similarity by default. Furthermore, Huberman, Romero and Wu (2009) argue that compared to other social networks, e.g. Facebook, Twitter served its users with the privilege of partial anonymity, where it put in the first place the importance of what the users communicate, rather than of who they are. From approximately 1000 active users at its initiation in 2006, Twitter reached 330 million of monthly active users in 2017, making it one of the most influential social media networking sites today (Statista, 2018). Figure 1 outlines a comprehensive social media history timeline with the most popular social network and social media sites as we know them today being listed. (Jasra, 2010).

Figure 1: Social Media History Timeline



Source: Adapted from Jasra (2010).

1.2 The Concept of Social Media

1.2.1 Definition and Main Forms of Social Media

Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2004, p. 2) define social media, or consumer-generated media as “a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers’ intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues”. Păun (2009) extends this definition with the term “two-way communication”, emphasising the importance of this feature for both private and public institutions’ officers when engaging with their audiences. On the other hand, Coman and Păun (2010, p.46) define social media as “the various forms of user generated content and the collection of websites and applications that enable people to interact and share information online”. As a more recent update to these definitions, Dewing (2012, p. 1-2) defines social media as a set of desktop and mobile services which rely on the Internet services, and make it possible for the users to take part in online exchanges, share their own content or enter online communities. He also breaks down the broad term of social media into different categories, such as: blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, social network sites, status-update services, virtual world content and media sharing sites. Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 358) further differentiate between the following types of social media (1) social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), (2) sites used to share graphic, video and music contents (e.g. YouTube, Instagram, Sound Cloud etc.), (3) blogs (user or company generated), (4) e-commerce sites (e.g. eBay), (5) C2C emailing and others. Dewing (2012) also emphasizes that in practice the aforementioned categories very often overlap, e.g. various social networking sites such as Twitter or Facebook offer some of the other features as well apart from their original purpose in order to give the users the full experience.

Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro (2012, p. 263) differentiate between two distinct purposes of social media, i.e. the content provider/platform and the facilitator of a channel or a network of channels, connecting individuals with other individuals or organisations. On the content side, they differentiate between four major categories, including text, videos, networks and pictures. They suggest that the text was the first type of social media which appeared in a form of blogs, representing online diaries that comprise of different types of content, such as text, videos, links and pictures, which are mainly published by individuals in a form of websites. Later on, the text on social media progressed into a specific form of short lines of text, also known as “micro-blogs”, which are today mostly known to users via Twitter. On the other hand, the graphic and video content on social media is mostly available for users on websites aimed for picture and video content sharing and uploads. Some of the most popular websites offering these features today are Flickr (picture-sharing) and YouTube (video-sharing). Finally, Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro (2012, p. 263) define the fourth type of social media, i.e. networks, which they describe as services offering users an opportunity to connect with friends, create contact lists, fill in and update their profiles and communicate with friends via messages. They suggest that the main purpose of social media is to connect its users, which they believe is mainly done using Internet and web-based technologies, i.e. Web 2.0, while they strongly suggest that the social media is a product of these technologies, and the consumers’ actions and reactions to these technologies.

Boyd and Ellison (2008, p.211) differentiate between social media and social networks, where they define social network sites as “the web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. They further argue that the main feature which makes the social network sites distinctive is their ability to offer the users the opportunity to share their connections with others, encouraging them to connect with other individuals which otherwise would probably not have happened offline. They also emphasise that on most of the social network sites, users tend to extend their online connections based on their already established offline connections, rather than making the ones with strangers. For the purpose of this master thesis, some of the most popular and relevant social media and social networking sites used today are defined and explained in more detail below.

1.2.1.1 Facebook

According to Facebook’s official mission statement, “Facebook's mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them” (Facebook, 2017). Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007, p. 1143) suggest that Facebook is a social networking site which allows users to make personal profiles, add connections, also known as “friends” and perform actions such as visiting and posting on each other’s Facebook pages. They further emphasize the possibility of joining particular groups based on shared values and interests and the possibility of exploring users’ Facebook friends’ interests, personal data and other, if published and allowed by user. On the other side, Bruger (2015), suggests that one of the crucial innovations which made Facebook one of the most successful social network sites in the history of social media is the moment when the site became more opened to the broad public. This major shift was initiated in 2006, when Facebook introduced the possibility of creating a business page to public. This feature was first launched in order to allow U.S. politicians to create pre-election page profiles which would help them with their campaigns, while in 2007 it was made accessible for other businesses as well, allowing users who were interested in their operations to become fans of the page. This new feature was an extension to Facebook’s initial advertising/banners platform, while soon after this, Facebook released another commercial feature aimed for businesses and individual users with software knowledge to create and integrate software programmes into Facebook, which would help in the promotion of their businesses. Facebook grew rapidly, reaching over 2 billion active users in 2010, while all the aforementioned features also kept improving with its expansion (Statista, 2018).

1.2.1.2 YouTube

According to YouTube (2017), the site’s mission is “to give everyone a voice and show them the world”. Burgess and Green (2009) suggest that YouTube was founded in order to enable the users with low technical knowledge to view and upload videos at a good speed and give them the possibility to share the video links with their friends and websites. Wattenhofer, Wattenhofer and Zhu (2012, p. 354) further argue that YouTube’s major success in the video

content providing industry was mainly driven by the user-to-user experience it offered, unlike the competition. Apart from the individual users, YouTube is also extensively used by organisations, businesses and public personas uploading videos of their events, music videos, speeches and other content online and sharing it with public. More recently, YouTube introduced various features allowing individuals and companies to advertise their brands and content to other YouTube users, using cost-per-click and other technologies. Individuals and organisations also use YouTube in order to generate video views by uploading different types of content including “vlogs”, which are the specific types of blogs created in a form of video, reviews on certain products, educational videos and other. According to Statista Inc. (2017) YouTube generated over 1.5 billion active users in 2017.

1.2.1.3 Twitter

According to Hughes, Rowe, Batey and Lee (2011, p. 561-562), unlike Facebook, users recognise Twitter as a social networking site intended for information and opinion sharing rather than for mutual social communication. They suggest that the concept of Twitter is based on the, so called “micro-blogging”, where users can publish short messages, i.e. “tweets” which are visible to everybody who decides to “follow” their publication updates. Gil (2017) also interprets the process of tweeting as micro-blogging which he further explains as the process of publishing the short statements online to the broad audience, with the intention of presenting these messages as appealing and useful to the readers and vice versa, finding interesting publishers online and following their micro-content as long as it stays appealing. Twitter is widely used by anybody who wishes to express their opinion, including millennials, journalists, experts in different fields, celebrities, politicians and others. The topics discussed also vary from politics, news, fashion and daily life of people, making Twitter favourable for a very extensive audience. In 2017, Twitter reached approximately 328 million active users and it is considered one of the most widely used social networking sites today, aimed to provide its users with the platform for fast communication and personal expression (Statista, 2017).

1.2.1.4 Instagram

Founded in 2010, Instagram belongs to a younger generation of social networking sites, or social media applications, aimed for photo capturing, editing and sharing, and more recently video recording, editing and sharing. Instagram is mainly intended for smartphone users; however, users can access the site via Instagram website as well from their computers and laptops. Users utilise it to post various types of photo contents, including photographs of their social activities, friends, food, nature, selfies, events and others. The application offers a variety of photo filters which are easily used by amateurs for photo editing, and most frequently published by users with short captions, “hashtags” and “tags”, which makes it easier for the publisher’s content to be seen and found by other users. The users can choose to either make their accounts “private” or “public”, in first case meaning that only the followers they give access to can see their content and in latter the opposite, which makes Instagram’s concept of social media communication very similar to Twitter’s, e.g. it allows users to follow unlimited number of other users’ accounts, while the following between two parties is not necessarily reciprocal (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014, Moreau, 2017, Lim & Yazdanifard, 2014). In 2016, Instagram introduced additional features and tools for business allowing companies and organisations worldwide to create business profiles and

promote their products and services. Furthermore, it also introduced the possibility to convert Instagram posts into advertisements using tools such as analytics and insights of the followers' activity related to the publisher's content (Perez, 2016). Today, there are approximately 25 million Instagram profiles worldwide, while more than 200 million users visit at least one business profile a day (Instagram, 2017).

1.2.1.5 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking site focused on professional networking of its users. Like its biggest competitor, Facebook, LinkedIn encourages its users to present their profiles in a self-promoting manner, employing all important professional details about themselves; however, in a more consistent, factual and professional manner. Nevertheless, the basic concepts of connectivity are very similar among these two platforms. Within LinkedIn, professionals are able to search and connect to each other, while the site has become a huge market for recruitment and advertising of both – individual professionals and employers (Dijck, 2013). Organisations use LinkedIn in order to increase the visibility of their business activities, products, services and goals, or to tell the online story in a form of text, video or other content about the organisation in order to connect with users. Furthermore, LinkedIn can be a great platform to research other organisations in search for potential partners or competition, or as a recruitment tool, in order to find qualified staff that would be a good fit for the organisation (Manketelow and others, 2017). In 2017, LinkedIn counted approximately 467 million users, from which 106 million are monthly active users (Chaudhary, 2017).

1.2.1.6 Viber and WhatsApp

Founded in 2009, WhatsApp represents a smartphone application used to facilitate communication among its users, by allowing them to exchange instant messages, photos, videos, and more recently phone calls, while being connected to the Internet. The application became extremely popular since it is free of charge, in contrary to regular SMS messages available for mobile phones. Furthermore, the application is adapted for all smartphone software's, while it also allows users across the globe to communicate for free (Montag and others, 2015). Only a year after the launch of WhatsApp, another similar smartphone app appeared on the market, called Viber, allowing users to store contacts, send free messages and make free phone calls, video calls etc. As the app developed, it also included features such as video sharing, voice messages, custom stickers and other. As with WhatsApp, users can exercise these features only while being connected to the Internet (Viber, 2017). In 2017, WhatsApp counted over 1,300 million active users, which according to Statista (2017) makes it a third most popular social networking site in the World. On the other hand, in the same period, Viber counted around 260 million active users, which nevertheless makes it an important competitor and a massive instant messaging service provider.

When it comes to corporate use, Viber also provides a variety of features which are widely used by organisations and businesses in order to connect to their users. As an example of these features, organisations are allowed to make public accounts on Viber through which they can reach their users and directly communicate important information or promotions with them. Furthermore, they can create custom Viber advertisements, which are shown in Viber users' chat windows, send service messages to their targeted audience, or create

custom promotional stickers for Viber users (Viber, 2017). Public chats can be especially useful for public institutions, since they can provide a great insight into the citizens' opinions, initiatives and other. On the other hand, WhatsApp is still focused on connecting individual users, while it is currently exploring options of creating an environment for businesses and organisations in order to connect with their users.

1.2.2 The Role of Social Media in Marketing

The popularisation of social media contributed to the shift in consumer activity to Web 2.0, which is interactive in nature and allows the service users/customers to engage in the marketing process and have a more detailed insight into the companies' activities (Berthon, Pitt, McCarthy & Kates, 2007). Mangold and Faulds (2009, p. 357) argue that social media became a "hybrid" component of the traditional promotion mix, combining the traditional marketing communication with new forms of word of mouth advertising, as well as new technologies. Consequently, users are being given the opportunity to communicate in real time, at numerous platforms, and using various media formats, making a perfectly favourable environment for highly educated and critical audiences, who are looking for honest opinions and real experiences related to products and services of their interest. As Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) argue, social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube have completely shifted the role of the Internet from the informative to the influential.

As a result of the social media expansion, consumers are now taking active roles in creating and evaluating the marketing content, together with organisations and brands. As a response to this, organisations are trying to reach consumers online through various online marketing campaigns. Nevertheless, despite the organisations' efforts to take an active role in social media engagement, many face difficulties in understanding how to use the social media tools effectively, i.e. many companies are trying to use different social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube independently, creating separate social media campaigns, while failing to understand that all these approaches should be a part of one consolidated system and social media strategy (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011).

According to Berthon, Pitt, McCarthy and Kates (2007), the modern strategic marketers need to understand three important factors in order to create effective marketing strategies:

- the usage of Web 2.0 and technologies that support social media, their purpose and the way they function;
- the customers – who have shifted away from the traditional passive consumers and are taking a more active and proactive role in the whole marketing process;
- the social media – paying close attention to the power of online masses and the integration of traditional marketing strategies into the new ecosystem.

Throughout different academic papers and articles on social media, authors make reference to the term "social media ecosystem" (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011, Cavazza 2012). The term derives from the definition of the original biological explanation of the ecosystem, i.e. "a system, or a group of interconnected elements, formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment. (Dictionary.com, 2005). In the social media world, this means the continuous interaction between the elements such as brand, companies and the customers, with the final goal of creating good consumer experience. Being part of

the social media ecosystem implies the interconnected and balanced usage of all of its elements, while understanding the ecosystem as an integrated system (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011, Cavazza 2012). In Figure 2, Cavazza (2012) provides an overview of the social media ecosystem, dividing the social media usage by the types of the devices, and further narrowing it down to the types of users' social activities such as: sharing, publishing or buying, leading to the most frequent social media platforms used, which he believes are Facebook, Twitter and Google+.

Figure 2: Social Media Landscape



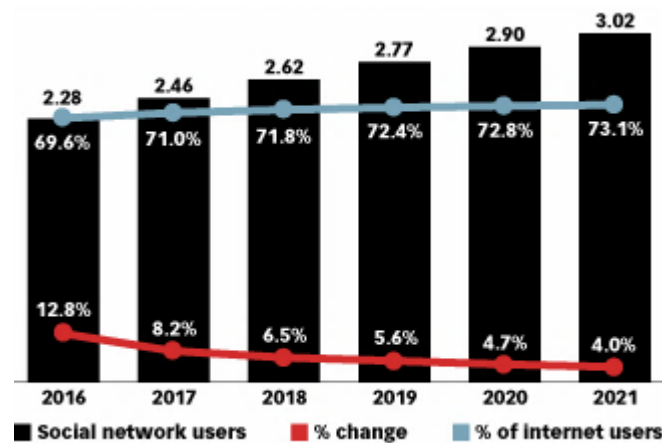
Source: Adapted from Cavazza (2012).

As Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) argue, the traditional media is mainly concerned with reach, or in other words the number of campaigns, or the advertisement viewers. However, the consumers are no longer satisfied being only passive observers – they rather take an active role and engage with brands and companies. Hence, the aforementioned authors suggest that this requires the companies to reconsider their media strategies; however, not abandoning the traditional media but rather incorporating new elements such as engagement, interaction and sharing into their strategies. The combination of the traditional and social media strategy would multiply the number of platforms where companies can reach their customers allowing more effective outcomes to arise.

1.2.3 Trends and Projections

According to eMarketer (2017), approximately 2.46 billion individual users, or in other words, one-third of the whole World population used social networks at least once a month in 2017. Furthermore, this makes 71% of all internet users, globally, among which 60.8% are Facebook users and 10.6% Twitter users. According to McNair (2017), the overall growth in the number of social media users compared to 2016 was mainly driven by the increased mobile phone usage in 2017. In 2018, the number of social media users is estimated to 2.62 billion, while these figures are predicted to grow steadily and reach the total of 3.02 billion users in 2021. Figure 3 outlines the eMarketer projections on the number of social network users for the period 2016 – 2021, expressed in percentages.

Figure 3: Social Network Users and Penetration Worldwide, 2016 – 2021 (billions, % change and % of internet users)

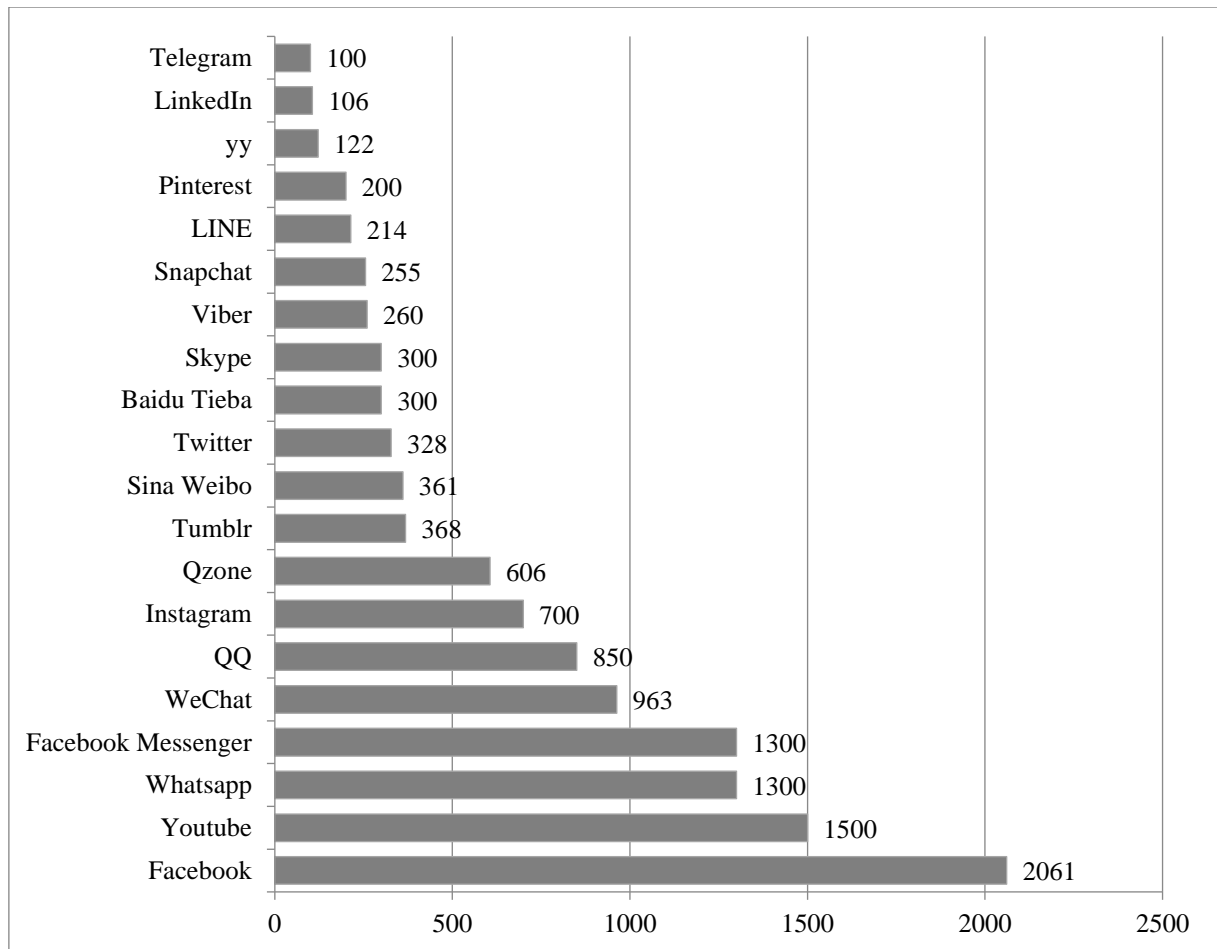


Note. * Internet users who use a social network via any device at least once per month.

Source: Adapted from eMarketer (2012).

The feature which has been mostly developed and improved by social network market leaders such as Facebook or Snapchat in 2017 was video, which further augmented the overall social media usage. Furthermore, apart from the increased mobile phone usage, other factors which will reinforce the social media usage in future include greater Wi-Fi accessibility and the expansion of other networks such as 3G and 4G (eMarketer, 2017). Figure 4 gives the full overview of the most popular social network sites by the number of active users in September 2017.

Figure 4: Most Famous Social Network Sites Worldwide as of September 2017, Ranked by Number of Active Users (In Millions)



Source: Adapted from Statista (2017).

According to the Statista (2017) statistical report on the most popular social networking sites worldwide, in September 2017, the most visited social network was Facebook, with over 2 billion active users. The second social network with the highest number of active users was YouTube (1.5 million users), followed by WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger (1.3 million users). In Figure 4, we can also see the practical example of the Dewing's (2012) theory regarding the social media categories overlaps, e.g. YouTube or Tumblr being categorised as social network sites. As Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) argue, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Flickr can be hardly put in one single category, such as social networks or social media. In contrary, they contain characteristics and can be classified in almost all categories.

2 PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS MARKETING

2.1 Differences between Public Sector and Private Sector Marketing

The application of marketing concepts has been more common in private sector, while this still represents a relatively new field for researchers when it comes to public sector (Kotler & Lee, 2007). In the attempt to examine the similarities and differences between public and private sector marketing, the academic literature concerning the role of marketing in public and private institutions, has been examined. However, the contemporary writings covering the topic of public sector marketing are very scarce, and most of the relevant academic writings date back to 90's or early 2000's. Nevertheless, some important insights have been gained from assessing the existing academic literature, and available reports from practice.

Kotler and Lee (2007) argue that the proper use of marketing in public sector can help the public sector officials to efficiently address citizen complaints, increase their overall level of satisfaction, improve the performance of their agency, and meet their specific goals. These goals may include some of the following: the increase of revenues and decrease in costs of the service supply, increase in citizen use of services, enhanced compliance with laws, more citizen support, improved public safety, enhancement in citizen behaviours in protecting the environment, etc. They further suggest that, in order to efficiently use marketing, public institutions need to take the citizen-centred approach, which will in turn contribute to the overall satisfaction of citizens with public sector services. This approach requires the public sector marketing officials to be disciplined and to develop a comprehensive marketing plan which will include: situational analysis, definition of goals, market segmentation, market research, positioning of the brand, a proper strategic mix of marketing tools, and plans containing evaluation procedures, budgets and the implementation processes.

Madill (1998, p. 9-18) identifies several basic differences between public and private sector marketing, among which she highlights the public sector's resistance to marketing as one of the key ones. While on one hand, marketing is perceived as a useful tool in solving challenging problems in public sector, on the other hand, it is often perceived by government management and employees solely as the corporate tool, which is unsuitable for the public sector environment. This is mostly due to common belief that the purpose of marketing is to enhance revenue generation, and to increase sales and profit. While these objectives are highly applicable in business environments, most public institutions are rather concerned with delivering services which contribute to the public interest. Nevertheless, these goals do not necessarily need to exclude each other, and marketing can be helpful in generating revenues within public institutions as well. Moreover, marketing can be very helpful in other public sector areas as well, such as in improving relationships with clients and public, serving citizens better, improving public behaviours etc. Even though, government environment differs from the corporate one in many fields, she argues that the creation of a thoughtful marketing strategy, which is adapted to the public sector context, can lead to the overall improvement of public sector services. Alongside the profit factor, government officials often advocate the legislative propositions to the government as an obstacle to a successful implementation of marketing in public sector. Since marketing is supposed to promote the voluntary exchanges of goods and services, this process may be restricted by certain explicit propositions given by law. Furthermore, many believe that the public sector should not compete with private sector, especially when it comes to marketing goods and

services. Nevertheless, in reality, these goods and services are very often in direct or indirect competition with those provided by private sector, such as, for instance, the transportation or postal services, and it is necessary for public units to co-exist with private enterprises by exploring the suitable strategies and designing formal marketing programs.

Laing (2003) argues that the application of marketing in public and private sector may differ, due to the relevance of socio-political factors in public sector, compared to purely economic targets in private sector, as well as the precedence of citizen/community rather than consumer needs. When considering the relevance of marketing concepts in public sector services delivery, he strongly believes that it is crucial to understand the diversity of these services. Despite the common belief that the public services contain a certain level of uniqueness and universality which differentiate them from private sector services, he suggests that in order to develop a relevant marketing strategy it is necessary to have a previously developed categorisation of public services based on their consumer-service relationship. Furthermore, he believes that those public services whose nature seeks a constant and dynamic progress in balancing between societal and private benefit, and professional and client assessment, need the most attention when it comes to creating a formal and methodological marketing strategy. The strategy should be based on precise identification and conceptualisation of marketing tools which are applicable for these services, obtained through a thorough primary research. The examples of such public services may be education or health services.

2.2 The Role of Marketing in Public Institutions

Kotler and Lee (2007, p. 6) define the role of public sector through its three fundamental functions, i.e. determining the operating principles of the society, carrying out the public services that are essential to the public interest, and ensuring the provision of the necessary public services that are not handled by either private or non-profit sector. Since the public sector operations are greatly performed at the citizens' cost, the citizens expect the public services to fulfil their expectations and provide efficient services in turn. As these authors suggest, these expectations are very often derived from their perceptions of efficiency of the private companies' performance, which pushes the public sector to fulfil these expectations, by learning from the private sector and adopting some of its best practices in the area of finance, marketing or management. In this context, they believe that marketing can greatly assist the public sector organisations in meeting the citizens' needs, while at the same time improving the performance of its services. The main goal lies in choosing the right actions and objectives which will serve the public good, i.e. the "common good", whose main purpose is to provide the biggest possible good for the biggest possible number of people, in terms of social, economic or environmental good (Kotler & Lee, 2007, p. 5). Serrat (2010a) argues that the adoption of marketing practices, and the custom mix of four marketing P's (product, price, place and promotion) might be the key to an efficient public sector performance and the communication with its stakeholders. Moreover, Kotler and Lee (2007) argue that marketing represents the best planning and conceptual framework for understanding and satisfying the public sector beneficiaries' needs.

Nevertheless, marketing falls under fields whose importance has been disregarded and miscomprehended the most in public sector. It is not a rare case that the public institutions equate marketing to "advertising" or "selling" and perceive this discipline negatively. This

happens mostly due to the misinterpretation of its principles and complexity, drawn by their observation of an extensive use of advertising and selling efforts in private sector. One of the biggest mistakes made by public sector marketing officers is the identification of marketing with only one of the four principles of marketing, e.g. promotion, while neglecting the power of the other 3 P's, i.e. product, price and place. Marketing has a potential to be the best planning framework for public organisations whose aim is to meet their citizens' needs and provide them with real value. Traditional marketing concepts may also be successfully applied to public sector and generate outcomes that the public sector's target market appreciates, although their relevancy in this environment is often questioned by marketing researchers and practitioners. While in private companies, marketing officers' main concern is to meet and satisfy their customers' needs, in the public institutions the same principle is applied, only in latter case, the goal is to satisfy the citizens' needs (Kotler & Lee, 2007).

Madill (1998) also supports this viewpoint but further suggests that the key behind the successful development and implementation of marketing strategies in public sector lies in proper understanding of major differences between private and public sector marketing, since the main purpose of business is to make profit, while government agencies exist in order to serve citizens. She argues that it is necessary to implement marketing plans in order to meet two crucial challenges of the government agencies:

- to meet citizen needs while respecting the mandate and possible decreasing resources,
- to meet specific target revenues.

This author further suggests that sometimes, adopting marketing strategies in public sector can be especially challenging due to lack of marketing knowledge among government employees and due to lack of literature focused specifically on public sector marketing. Consequently, government officers are often forced to apply marketing strategies suitable for private sector needs, although they may significantly differ from those found in public sector. In this context, Madill (1998, p. 10-11) defines four major types of public sector marketing, ranking them by their relevance and the priority level to the government officials.

2.2.1 Marketing of Products and Services

Marketing of products and services in public sector may be very similar to the one in private sector. This applies in the context where organisations in public sector deliver products and services to their beneficiaries either for free or for a certain fee. In latter case the profit gained is usually used in order to finance some of the key programs aimed for public good. Nevertheless, not infrequently, the marketing officers in public sector tend to promote their organisations' products and services as part of a separate marketing communication strategy, without making it a part of a complete marketing framework. For this reason, marketing in public institutions is very often perceived negatively since, in many occasions, public sector marketing officials tend to identify the marketing with promotion, neglecting the other three forms of marketing (price, place and promotion). In order to overcome this problem, it is advisable to organise dedicated marketing trainings for public sector marketing employees, which would teach them how to develop a complete marketing strategy in the context of public sector (Madill, 1998; Serrat, 2010a).

2.2.2 Social Marketing

Social marketing is believed to be the second most frequent type of marketing used in public sector organisations (Madill, 1998). The term “social marketing” refers to a public behaviour change, aimed to influence behaviours and attitudes which encourage improvements in health, environment and other areas, and in the end lead to the overall community welfare (Madill, 1998, p. 11). Social marketing is used in order to improve the quality of life of the whole community by motivating citizens to directly participate in these efforts, by for instance, volunteering, mentoring or donating blood. It is important to distinguish between social advertising and social marketing. Social advertising can be used as part of the communication strategy in order to transmit the message to the public, but social marketing involves an integrated approach which combines all 4 P’s of marketing with the main goal to fully commit to the behaviour change of public until it is achieved (Kotler & Lee, 2007).

2.2.3 Policy Marketing

Policy marketing is a type of marketing which is used in public sector, in which special marketing programs are launched by governments, in order to induce particular sectors of society to accept their policies. The parallel can be drawn between the policy marketing in public sector and advocacy advertising in private sector, where companies use marketing to promote certain virtues, while acting in the interest of public (Madill, 1998; Serrat, 2010a).

2.2.4 De-marketing

In de-marketing, or so called “don’t-use-our-programs” marketing, campaigns are launched by public sector organisations in order to advise or convince their target groups to quit using some of the government programs which they have been encouraged to use in past. This type of marketing is often associated with downsizing, where, for instance, certain public sector departments have experienced reductions in funding, which they have previously used to fund the community-based organisations or projects. As a result of these changes, the government needs to inform the affected organisations about the loss of funding, and in some cases provide marketing trainings in order to enable them to find alternative funds so that they could proceed with their project activities. Unlike the public sector, in private sector this type of marketing is rarely used, since private companies mostly engage in the promotion of the consumption of their goods or services (Madill, 1998).

2.3 Marketing Challenges in Public Sector

2.3.1 Institutionalisation of marketing

As a result of the resistance to marketing by many governments’ management teams and employees, low level of the institutionalisation of marketing represents one of the major challenges to the implementation of marketing practices in public sector. Unlike the private sector, where employees have clear marketing job titles, and are able to develop their careers in marketing, in public sector marketing positions are very often vaguely defined, and individuals who perform marketing tasks are employed under job titles which do not contain word “marketing” in their descriptions. Furthermore, conversely to private sector, the hiring

process in public sector seems not to evaluate the marketing knowledge on a high scale, whereas the marketing career for the individuals to be employed is also not clearly defined. In addition, the marketing costs often seem to be left out from the public sector budgets, while in this case, marketing programs are usually financed from budgets intended for different purposes. Nevertheless, as the role of marketing is becoming more recognised and important in public sector management, the marketing budgets are slowly finding their paths in public sector budgets (Madill, 1998). However, Serrat (2010a) suggests that a clear marketing strategy which considers all important characteristics of public sector can be of great use to serving the public sector stakeholders. By differentiating these characteristics, and corresponding purposes and tasks from the private sector, adequate marketing programs can be created and the proper institutionalisation of marketing and corresponding behaviours can be achieved.

2.3.2 Marketing Objectives and Evaluation of Marketing Programs

Although marketing can be useful for public sector in many ways, there are some fundamental differences in marketing objectives between private and public sector which need to be considered before creating marketing plans. When properly defined, these objectives will serve as the indicators of success when evaluating the marketing outcomes (Madill, 1998). Some of the examples of these objectives include: the creation of an impact on attitudes and behaviours of citizens, increased satisfaction of citizens with public programs, growing number of citizens who are using public products or programs etc. (Mintz, Church & Colterman, 2006, p. 4). Nevertheless, the multitude of marketing objectives in public sector may also make it more challenging for managers to develop a proper marketing strategy and the evaluation process of the marketing outcomes. Whereas in the private sector, there is a consistent profit objective which forms the basis for decision-making and evaluation, the most frequent goal of public sector agencies is to deliver efficient and quality services that meet the perceived needs of all stakeholders, i.e. their clients, executives, employees and the general public. In order not to get confused among the multiplicity of objectives, when developing a marketing strategy, it is essential to establish the priorities. Once this is done, the marketing budgets can be established, containing instruments for evaluating the achieved outcomes against the objectives that have been set previously (Madill, 1998).

2.3.3 Budgets and Funding

As Kotler and Lee (2007) suggest, in reality, most marketing plans are developed around the available funds and budgets. Drucker (1973) differentiates between channels through which private and public organisations are paid, where he argues that the businesses are paid for delivering a certain good or service which satisfies their customers and for which they are willing to exchange their purchasing power. On the other hand, public sector projects are usually financed from the previously formed budgets, i.e. their revenue is usually not intended precisely for their activities, but is rather acquired through taxes, and other sources. Madill (1998) argues that the major difference in the orientation of private and public sector employees is the way in which they are paid. In private sector, the most important goal is to increase sales and profit, which is the reason why marketing budgets and bonuses are highly connected to the sales performance. In contrary, for public sector organisations' units, a revenue target is usually pre-defined. However, if the assigned target is reached or over-

reached, the resulting increase in revenues is usually not retained by the unit. If, in contrary, the revenue target is not achieved, the budgets or human resources allocated for the unit are very often reduced. As a result, the efforts to effectively apply marketing strategies in public sector are diminished, and the employees are less encouraged to exceed the revenue targets or pay attention to costs, which may lead to the creation of ineffective marketing strategies. In order to overcome this problem, she suggests that the revenue-generation orientation in public sector needs to be challenged in a way that successful units are being rewarded for exceeding the revenue goals, and that they retain the increased revenues within the unit.

2.3.4 Administration and Decision Making

Madill (1988) suggests that the processes of decision-making and administration governing differ among public and private sector, largely due to government's visibility and the accountability to the media and public. The visibility in public comes as a result of the government responsibility to control and administer the public funds, but also as a result of the political influence on all public policy decisions. Given this interconnection with the public, the visibility of public sector marketing programs also rises, which makes the decision making on the establishment of these programs more complex and interdependent upon many factors, compared to private sector. Laing (2003) suggests that political objectives in public sector dominate over the economic motives such as the efficacy and profitability which are guiding the private organisations' decision-making. In other words, what is beneficial for the community is more important than what is efficient for the individual organisation. He also argues that this ideology should be applied when creating marketing strategies in the public sector, and that the political objectives and social benefits (i.e. the profit), should have the priority in the provision of public services and market targeting. Furthermore, Laing (2003) also suggests that even in public organisations which are increasingly adopting the managerial approaches to decision making, the need for social justice still affects the flexibility of managers in terms of the provision of services, or allocation of funds, followed by the need to develop substantial performance measures and goals. In such a regulated environment, the customer-focused approach to services is often neglected, especially if the target clients are not properly defined.

On the other hand, Kotler and Lee (2007) strongly believe that the key to improving the performance of public sector is to embrace the private sector instruments which have proven to run the businesses successfully. They suggest that public sector executives and employees should be educated on leadership, marketing, strategy, finance and other topics which would help them improve their organisations' services and overcome the major obstacles to the efficient provision of services in public sector. Although there are some arguments that support the opposition between public and private organisations decision making processes, they argue that those differences can be conquered and should not be the reason behind the inefficient and poor performance. In order to comply with the public sector environment, Madill (1998) suggests that it is essential to plan ahead and develop clear goals, estimation of costs and measurable performance criteria. Furthermore, she strongly believes that in order for marketing programs to be implemented and executed successfully, it is necessary to assign the responsibility for them to the senior management, which is the equivalent to marketing senior in private sector. Table 1 lists different factors which can be used in order to properly incorporate the marketing mind-set into public sector agencies.

Table 1: Factors Influencing the Implementation of Marketing in Public Institutions

Factor	Descriptor
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Senior executives are familiar with and dedicated to marketing – There is shared understanding of marketing and priority client audiences – Managers and employees are focused on delivering superior value to clients – Developing new, valued approaches to serving clients is encouraged – Work groups collaborate to serve clients
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a senior management position with overall responsibility for marketing – The senior marketing manager works closely with the head of the organisation – There is a marketing function within the organisation that extends beyond communications – Employees in the marketing function work closely with managers in operational or program groups
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a formal marketing planning process at the organizational level – The marketing plan is aligned with the organization's mission and vision – The organisation has a clearly defined brand strategy and vision – Measurable marketing objectives are established – Marketing budgets are established based on identified strategies and tactics – Marketing plans are revisited based on changes in the environment.
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a clearly defined process for identifying and developing new products, programs, or services – The product, program, and service development process are proactive rather than reactive – High-value ideas are acted on in a timely manner – The organisation actively communicates the value of products, programs, and services to target audiences – There is a close working relationship with partners involved in delivery of products, programs, and services to end-client audiences – Fees are based on an understanding of usage and comprehension, rather than just cost-recovery – The client experience is coordinated to ensure consistency across service delivery channels
Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Employees in the marketing group tend to have training and experience in marketing management

(table continues)

(continued)

Factor	Descriptor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Marketing managers and staff are encouraged to upgrade their skills – People in product, program, and service management positions have received training in marketing management – Staff members are encouraged to acquire resources they need to conduct marketing activities – The organisation readily adopts new marketing techniques and technologies – The organisation has no difficulty attracting qualified marketing employees
Marketing Information and Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Marketing research is used to assess the extent to which the organization delivers superior value to clients – Research is used to evaluate elements of the marketing mix (4 P's) – Insights from multiple sources are integrated to create a full view of target client groups – Information systems make it easy to access, analyse, and share client market insights – A process is in place to measure marketing performance against stated objectives – Measurement results are actively used to identify areas for improvement – Managers and employees are rewarded for achieving marketing objectives and improving the value delivered to clients
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Marketing budgets are established, and sufficient to implement identified strategies and tactics – The number of employees working in marketing is sufficient given the size and needs of the organisation
Outputs and Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New clients have been attracted to use the organisation's products, programs, and services – Client satisfaction is maintained at a high level – Revenues from fee-based products, programs, and services have grown – The organisation has grown in prominence among funding stakeholders – There has been a measurable impact on attitudes and behaviours of audiences targeted – Products, programs, and services are unique and more highly valued than alternatives

Source: Adapted from Mintz, Church and Colterman (2006).

2.4 Developing a Marketing Strategy in Public Sector

Kotler and Lee (2007, p. 16-25) define five basic characteristics of a successful marketing strategy that public sector can benefit from, which include the following: using a customer-

centred focus, doing the right market segmentation and targeting, identifying the competitors, using all 4 P's from the marketing mix, establishing the monitoring, and making adjustments if necessary.

2.4.1 Using a Customer-Centred Focus

Kotler and Lee (2007) recommend that public should use the customer-centred, i.e. the citizen-cantered) approach, due to its capability for exchange. In other words, this process involves the transmission of a product from the provider to the customer, in exchange for a certain monetary or nonmonetary cost, beard by the customer. They further suggest that public sector marketing officers should base this process on the theory of exchange, according to which the target market perceives the benefits delivered to them as the same or bigger than the cost they are bearing. In like fashion, they argue that the best way to obtain the knowledge about the perceived costs of the target market is to conduct the market research and, creating the benefits which will satisfy the customers. The market research will answer some basic questions, concerning the perceived costs, barriers to buying the product/service or to performing certain behaviour, but also the benefits they are expecting to get and which they value the most etc. Furthermore, apart from the underlying reasons why target customers would or would not buy the products, the market research will also reveal the buying decision process and the marketing role of public sector marketers for each of these phases. Serrat (2010a) argues that, similarly to marketing, reforms in government structures, administration and public finances based on citizen-centric approach have helped public services to become less rigid, and to better fit the citizen individual needs. Furthermore, he suggests that the public sector transformation towards a delivery-based approach has motivated the civil service to make an upgrade from being a body which gives policy advice to the one which makes sure to deliver quality products or services.

2.4.2 Market Segmentation and Targeting

Mintz, Church and Colterman (2006) argue that public sector organisations are mostly focused at only one of the aspects of the marketing strategy, i.e. promotion and communication, rather than elements such as strategic market segmentation and targeting, or positioning and pricing. They strongly believe that governments can benefit from marketing in many aspects, among which is the efficient allocation of limited public resources, i.e. by properly implementing the marketing strategies, initiatives would be created based on the specific market segments. In like fashion, Kotler and Lee (2007, p.29) describe markets as “groups of the existing and potential buyers”, and suggest that in most cases customers differ from each other in their wants, attitudes, purchasing power, location or prior experiences with the organisation or its product, or service. In order to narrow down these large and heterogeneous groups, organisations use market segmentation, and define smaller, more homogenous groups which are more easily and effectively reached with services and products which can satisfy their needs and wants.

On the other hand, Madill (1998) argues that public services market is very heterogeneous, and hence, its clients and their wants and expectations differ more than in it is the case in private sector. Consequently, effective market segmentation and the pursuit of strategies targeted to homogenous market groups are more challenging and demand the consideration of political factors. Under those circumstances, the public sector managers may find it more challenging to conceptualise different quality levels and pricing for public products or

services, in order to meet various types of their clients' needs. Furthermore, unlike the private sector market, public sector organisations are often being the subjects to specific legislative provisions, which set the rules for the markets they are targeting. As a result, their choice of target clients' is very often limited. Nevertheless, many government organisations still succeed in their attempts to adapt their products and services to specific market groups using the market segmentation approach (Madill, 1998). For example, in the case of public transportation, ticket price range may be adjusted to senior citizens, students and other distinct categories. On the other hand, the enrolment fees for public universities may range based on the students' academic success.

2.4.3 Defining the Competitors in Public Sector

In her list of collected arguments against marketing in public sector, Madill (1998) discusses the idea that public sector organisations should not be in competition with private sector enterprises and suggests that this premise is often made in cases when public sector organisations are putting products and services on the markets. For example, in the case of postal services, the public postal services may be in competition with private speed delivery post services. She suggests that when creating marketing programs, public sector organisations should continuously work on building adequate strategies which would help them compete and exist at the same time with private sector companies offering similar services. Kotler and Lee (2007, p. 31) define two types of competition, i.e. direct and indirect. Direct competitors comprise of those organisations offering similar products, services, and pricing of those products and services to the same group of customers. An indirect competition includes a wider pool of organisations, or actions that actual and potential clients use to satisfy the same need or want. Furthermore, they suggest that governmental organisations are very often challenged with tough competition, as it is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of Public Sector Services Providers' Competitors

Institution	Program	Direct Competitor	Indirect Competitor
Public library	Summer reading programme	Bookstores	Videogames
Schools	Public schools	Local private schools	Schools in other countries
Public transportation	Local bus lines	Private company bus lines	Bicycling

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Lee (2007).

Kotler and Lee (2007) suggest that, in order to build a platform for an efficient marketing strategy and identification of competition, the public sector organisations need to constantly observe and compare their competitors' actions regarding all four elements of the marketing mix of their product or service and evaluate the pros and cons of their actions. Moreover, they argue that the interpretation of competition in public sector needs to be assessed more widely, taking into consideration broader pool of activities which may satisfy the clients' needs or wants apart from the actual use of the public service or product. For example, in

the case of public transport competition evaluation, even if there is no direct substitute for a certain public bus line, other considerations of transport, such as bicycle or car may be used, based upon the citizens' evaluation of costs, convenience, comfort level and other factors.

2.4.4 Characteristics of Marketing Mix in Public Sector

Mintz, Church and Colterman (2006) argue that public sector enterprises tend to isolate the promotion from the rest of the elements of the marketing mix, since the role of communication is highly appreciated in public services, which results in building a communication strategy outside of a comprehensive marketing framework. The authors believe that the role of communication could be repositioned into an expanded one by including a strategic marketing mandate. Furthermore, Barbu (2011) explains how different elements of marketing mix are considered in public sector. She argues that the decisions regarding the quality of public product or service, or the range of subsidiary services are easily assessed within the local governments. However, any innovations or the introduction of a new public product or service is usually discussed in the central administration. Hence, the public sector macro-marketing is therefore defined in the central government institutions. On the other hand, the next level decisions, regarding the possible forms of public service management, as well as the financial details regarding the charges for the product or service, may be discussed at the level of local government, while the rest of the marketing mix operations is discussed at the level of public companies, where micro-marketing happens. She also suggests that pricing of public product or service may be dependable on many factors such as, for instance, whether the provider is entitled to establish its value, the mode of public product or service forming, and different types of internal or external influences. Depending on the position of a public product or service in the market, the price may be formed completely or partly by the means of government intervention, or it can be free. Furthermore, Madill (1998) differentiates between pricing methodology in private and public sector and argues that pricing may be one of the most challenging tasks in public sector. Unlike the private sector where standard procedures define the pricing, public enterprises are faced with number of incentives, and restrictions which complicate the process of pricing. For example, previously free of charge services may become chargeable by the government. In addition, she underlines the problem of marketing expertise insufficiency in public sector, which, as she believes, equally poses challenges on other elements of marketing mix, such as the product development, promotion, and distribution.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC SECTOR MARKETING

3.1 The Purpose of Social Media in Public Institutions

In the context of public sector, institutions have been showing efforts towards social media utilisation recently; however, they are still significantly falling behind private companies (Macnamara, 2011). Furthermore, public sector marketing is greatly influenced by political decisions concerning the public good, which often result in balancing the conflicts over benefits. Correspondingly, relevant marketing decisions can be made only after substantial political decisions, accountable to the collective agency, have been resolved (Serrat, 2010a).

The same logic may be applicable for the utilisation of social media by government institutions. As Mergel (2012b) argues, governments are very often incapable to respond quickly on social media, due to lack of human resources or the legal freedom. In contrary, all responses are a subject of a highly controlled information check-up.

Nevertheless, Macnamara (2011) argues that despite the aforementioned inborn nature of the public sector and its restrictive policies, government units and enterprises seem to be among those who are most willing to adopt the social media. In addition, Mickoleit (2014) points out that politicians as public personas have shown more interest and success at social networks, in comparison to the government institutions they represent, which have been less proactive. For instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (hereinafter: OECD) survey of social media use in governments revealed that political personalities are four times more popular on social networks in comparison to the institutions they represent. Yet, many government institutions have acknowledged the importance of social media recently and have slowly started testing different platforms. The reason behind the lower utilisation of social media by government institutions compared to their representatives may be the need of their respective audiences to communicate with "real" persons. Another reason might be the lack of creativity of the government institutions, as well as the absence of clear idea regarding the issues they wish to promote and communicate (Mickoleit, 2014).

Karakiza (2015) argues that recent developments in new technologies and the extensive use of social media have largely changed the communication among people. In the same way, the communication between governments and citizens is changing, leading to public administration transformation, and the creation of an open government concept, which is characterised by three major attributes:

- participation – citizens obtaining an active role with respect to public affairs,
- collaboration - government and citizens working closely together,
- transparency – with regards to government activities (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013; Karakiza, 2015).

When it comes to public concerns, the recent and rapid development of new technologies influenced the relationships between public service providers and citizens in a way that they are becoming more transparent, trustworthy and collaborative. The new trends that have evolved together with a massive use of information and communication technologies, and social media tools, have changed the demands of citizens on the professional and social level. As a result, they are expecting the governments to use these same tools, when communicating with them (Karakiza, 2015). In addition, the more governments communicate with them via social media, the more they will expect the promptness and real time responses from the governments (Mergel, 2013). At the same time, nowadays, many public agencies are experiencing reductions in budgets, which have motivated public sector managers to search for new, innovative forms to deliver their services (Karakiza, 2015).

3.2 Social Media Uses in Public Institutions

Woods (2016) argues that, in order to build an inclusive, modern governance, the real-time display and information share is crucial. This is only possible by employing a digital governance which is characterised by the engagement between the government and public. He argues that the employment of social media tools in public sector would help in reaching the community at higher level, as well as in increasing the government transparency by making the public information available to broader public. In past, the purpose of most of e-government applications was simply to transfer the information from government to citizens, without any real engagement, and possibility of getting a feedback from the public (Karakiza, 2015).

However, Woods (2016) distinguishes among several specific uses and benefits of social media in public sector today:

- the ability to collect public knowledge, expectations and impressions towards public goods and services;
- cost-effectiveness due to free or lower costs of implementing social media tools as part of communication strategy;
- opportunity to directly engage with public via different platforms;
- possibility of building a system suitable to collect citizens' feedbacks, and other information, which can further build trust and loyalty towards public sector organisations, and their offer.

At the same time, Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) identify an alternate way in which employees of public or any other enterprise can use social media, i.e. for internal communication and the maintenance of social interaction with their colleagues. In contrast to the external use of social media which extends across multiple platforms, internally, organisations tend to implement an integrated social media platform intended for in-house only. Examples of internal platforms include e-mails, Facebook, Viber groups, etc. (McAfee, 2009).

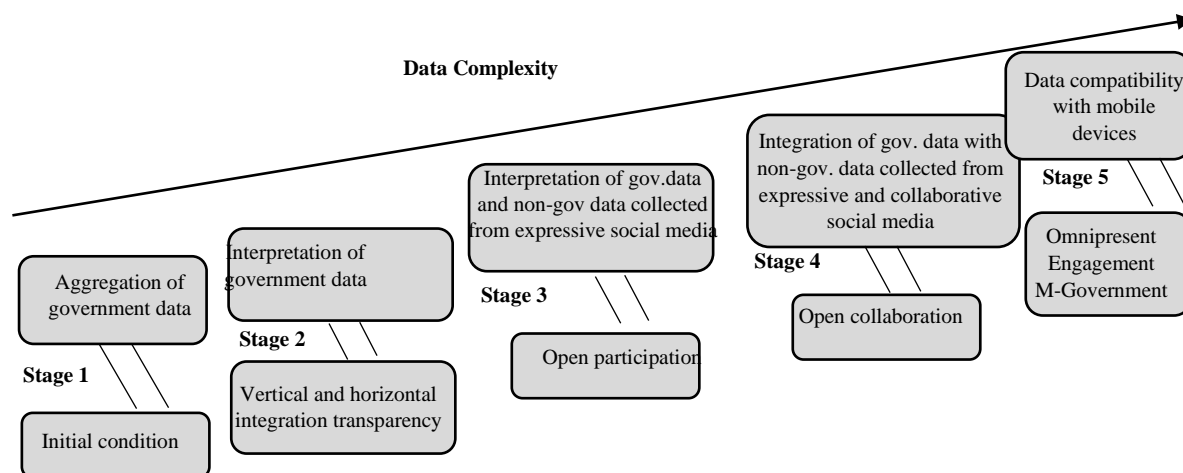
The rising use of social media in government sector led to the evolution of term **Government 2.0** (hereinafter: Gov 2.0) which, according to Mergel (2010), represents the extensive use of social media by government and its stakeholders, which consequently transforms the interaction between the government and citizens, leading to more transparent, participative, and collaborative relationships. The term became popular only after the launch of successful social media election campaign for the former U.S. presidential candidate, Barack Obama. Afterwards, Gov 2.0 became synonym for the free use of new technologies and social networking sites in governments, also referred to as social media or new media. Nowadays, governmental units are becoming massive users of social media, having their organisational Facebook, Twitter or other social media accounts established (Mergel, 2010). According to Mickoleit (2014, p. 17), 76 percent of executive institutions from OECD member countries maintain their Twitter accounts, while 62 percent of the institutions operate a Facebook page. Furthermore, many specialised local and regional agencies, including the ministries are active on social media.

On the other hand, Mergel (2010, p. 330-332) argues that the objectives around which the social media strategies among different government agencies are formed, usually differ, which leads to a diverse range of social media applications used by the agencies, e.g. blogs, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube channels. She also argues that there are three distinct types of social media uses in governments, which all together promote the major characteristics of an open government, i.e. transparency, participation, and collaboration. Firstly, social media is used by governments as the addition to their previously static presence on the internet, for instance, addition to the informative website. In this case, social media comes as a new communication channel aimed simply to communicate the public agency's messages to the public. This type of social media use is often characterised by basic Twitter updates, publishing press releases and the spokespersons' appearances, poorly managed Facebook pages, unavailable for public comments, and YouTube channels with little engagement. The author compares this strategy to "push strategy" in marketing, where promotional endeavours used to sell a good or service are focused on "pushing" the information about the particular good or service towards the customer. On the contrary, in a "pull strategy", the end-users "pull" the information about the product by themselves, based on their personal needs (Brocato, 2010). In like manner, Mergel (2010) compares the second use of social media in governments to a "pull strategy", where social media is used to guide the users towards the agency's website in order to serve them with proper information, while preserving more control over this process. In this case, the public is actively involved by being given the opportunity to moderately interact with the agency. For example, users are able to leave comments on the agency's Facebook wall, the official agency's "tweets" are being retweeted by other users, or the social media account administrator responds to the followers' Facebook and Twitter comments. Finally, the third social media strategy is focused on networking. The attributes of this strategy include the highly interactive use of social media, and the strategic managing of the social media accounts. A lot of attention is paid on the profiling of current and future followers, their opinions, feedback, and anything which might be relevant for the agency in order to improve its services. By using this strategy, social media evolves from the previously passive publishing role to a strategic knowledge sharing platform (Mergel, 2010).

3.2.1 The Impact of Social Media on Public Institutions

In Figure 5 Karakiza (2015, p. 338) proposes an "open government model" where the usage of social media in governments plays the crucial role in obtaining the satisfactory level of information transparency, as well as the engagement of government agencies with the public.

Figure 5: The Role of Social Media in an Open Government Model



Source: Adapted from Karakiza (2015).

In the initial stage of an open government model, Karakiza (2015) suggests that governments collect and publish data using a mono-directional communication method. The collected data becomes available to the public, who can reuse it for their own purposes. However, the complexity of the data formats may make this process difficult and time consuming. In the second stage, the data gathering is taken to a more advanced level where governments collect data from various sources, and focus on delivering complete, accurate and timely data to the public, which is easy to access and use. The main goal in this stage is to promote the transparency, and increase the awareness of citizens about the government work. Finally, in the stage three, the role of social media arises. This stage is concerned with the integration of government data with non-government data collected via social media applications. Hence, the focus is placed on the open and free participation of public, in a form of knowledge sharing and the exchange of citizens' feedback using social media tools. In addition to open participation, in stage four, citizens are encouraged to openly collaborate with public agencies in performing entire government projects, using the social media tools. Thus, the government services are getting additional added-value from all of its important stakeholders. Finally, in the stage five, the author proposes that the three most important elements, i.e. participation, collaboration, and transparency are achieved through the highest level of social media and government services integration, i.e. through the creation of social media platforms which are compatible with users' mobile phones. Following the most recent developments in technology, the possibility of access to government information, services and other processes via smartphones and tablets, enables the highest level of open government to be reached.

Mickoleit (2014) argues that, compared to political figures, the purpose and desired results of the social media campaigns are not defined so clearly when it comes to government institutions. In practice, this often leads to ambiguity regarding the development of the institution's social media strategy, goal setting, and the corresponding operative tasks. He also argues that since social media is more popular for political personas rather than for institutions, the social media users' expectations are matching this trend, i.e. they wish to communicate with "real" people. The author believes that this phenomenon points out to the fact that governmental institutions should be more creative in designing their social media

campaigns. Unlike the political personas whose campaigns very often result in raising more funds, votes, and other kinds of support, many institutions still face uncertainty when it comes to choosing the right goals for their social media campaigns, i.e. whether to provide public information, promote public goods and services, engage with public etc. In order to establish a successful and purposeful social media presence, it is essential for public institutions to develop a comprehensive social media strategy and social media usage guidelines, which follow their mission. As previously argued by Mergel (2010), Karakiza (2015) and Mickoleit (2014) also strongly believes that social media should not only be used as an additional channel to the already established communication network, but rather as an advanced tool used to leverage citizens into public policy creation processes or public service delivery transformation. Nevertheless, despite the huge potential of social media to regain trust of citizens towards governments, before developing social media strategy, it is important to take into consideration different demand factors in order to come up with a custom and effective strategy.

In order to build a successful social media strategy for a government unit or department, Mergel (2010) derives several important remarks. She underlines the importance of employing a social media expert who will be dedicated to the process of content creation and formation of a comprehensive social media strategy, rather than relying on an already occupied IT employee, or staff from other sectors. Furthermore, she explains that the social media tools should not be used to replace the existing traditional communication tools, but rather to collect the information on the citizens' opinions and preferences in order to find new, innovative ways of interaction with the stakeholders. Finally, the social media strategy should follow the mission of the agency, as well as reach the previously defined audiences, i.e. it should be a part of a well-defined marketing strategy aiming to improve the networking with audiences, and increase the citizen satisfaction. Table 3 outlines a comprehensive guide on how to purposefully use the social media in public institutions (Mickoleit, 2014, p. 65).

Table 3: Guideline for Purposeful Use of Social Media in Public Institutions

Topic	Questions to be asked and answered
Goals and expectations	<p>What is our mission?</p> <p>Which information and services provided by our institution are the most important?</p> <p>To what level does the public communication help us in achieving our institution's core objectives?</p> <p>How can social media help in achieving our institution's mission? What are examples of good practices from similar domestic and international institutions?</p> <p>Can social media serve as a platform to collaborate with outside parties, such as intermediaries and individuals who may support selected activities of our institution?</p>

(table continues)

(continued)

Topic	Questions to be asked and answered
Modes of governance and guidelines	<p>Is there a supervising body for social media use in the government, or should we employ the individual, innovative mode?</p> <p>How can different organisational units in my institution leverage social media, e.g. the PR department, the IT department, the policy making department, the service delivery etc.</p> <p>Is there a need for social media guidelines for employees, including the personal use?</p> <p>Is there a need for social media guidelines for official institutional accounts, e.g. Twitter, Instagram or Facebook presence?</p> <p>Who will be responsible for setting guidelines for social media use by politicians or appointed high-ranking employees representing the institution?</p>
Legal compliance	<p>What are the specific legal regulations that may serve us as a guide on how to use social media within the institution?</p> <p>Is it necessary to keep records of social media activity, or is it exempt of it?</p> <p>Which disclaimers should we think about adding to our social media presence?</p> <p>What information is our institution allowed to re-use when it comes to privacy protection or compliance with intellectual property laws?</p> <p>How to ensure to meet the requirements for information and services accessibility when using social media?</p>
Skills and resources	<p>What human resources are available or can be employed to achieve sustainable social media impacts?</p> <p>Are social media skills considered by wider (digital) skills strategies at our institution?</p> <p>How do we account for social media expenses? Can we consider them part of overall communications expenses, in order to calculate specific costs?</p>
Collaboration and community building	<p>Are there specialised government communities where we can interact and exchange social media experiences?</p> <p>What specific knowledge and mechanisms would help my institution understand and maximize the influence of social media?</p>
Managing risks of social media use	<p>To what extent would potential reputational risks damage our institution?</p> <p>Do we need to think about unintentional disclosure of information and corresponding measures?</p> <p>How many employees of our institution use social media personally?</p> <p>Are social media risks addressed by “all-inclusive” risk management strategies in our institution?</p>

(table continues)

(continued)

Topic	Questions to be asked and answered
Monitoring and measuring social media impacts	How relevant are our social media indicators? What do they actually measure: presence, popularity, penetration, perception or purpose? Do these indicators evaluate the contribution to our institution's actual core objectives? What would be an ideal set of metrics for my institution's use of social media? What information sources can I use to move from the current metrics to an ideal set of purpose-oriented indicators?

Source: Adapted from Mickoleit (2014).

3.2.2 Social Media Opportunities for Governments in 2018

In the annual report on social media trends in governments, developed by one of the most widely used social media management platforms (Hootsuite, 2018), social media experts pointed out some of the most appealing features of today's most popular social networking sites which they believe governments would be highly using in future, which are presented below.

3.2.2.1 Facebook

As for an ever-growing social media giant, it is believed that governments will be using Facebook even more in future, than they used to before. In 2017, Facebook launched an innovative feature, named "Town Hall" with an aim to allow the citizens to contact government representatives at all governmental levels. Although this feature has been available only for the U.S. market, it might be expanding to other markets in near future (Hootsuite, 2018).

3.2.2.2 Twitter

Twitter, which has been largely popular among government officials, will be offering more possibilities in the area of video livestreaming in future which may bring benefits to the government institutions and officials that publish live public appearances frequently (Hootsuite, 2018).

3.2.2.3 Snapchat

Snapchat is a relatively young social networking application, nevertheless, for government agencies it could be very useful, both as a storytelling platform, but also as a channel to increase engagement at public events. For those governments whose aim is to reach young generations, this platform is believed to be a good option (Hootsuite, 2018).

3.2.2.4 YouTube

In order for government institutions and officials to increase their online presence, control the published information, and engage with citizens, YouTube represents a platform with great potential, offering institutions to publish their videos, as well as the advertisements to their target groups (Hootsuite, 2018).

3.2.2.5 Instagram

Although not suitable for all government agencies, Instagram can be of great use for local municipalities, or cities in order to display the landscapes and scenery of their area, to interact with citizens and answer their questions, or to educate them on certain matter. (Hootsuite, 2018).

3.3 Impact of Social Media on Human Resources Management and the Organisational Structure in Public Sector

3.3.1 The Role of Social Media in Public Institutions' Human Resources Management

Kluemper, Mitra and Wang (2016) argue that the social media purposes which are applicable for human resource management (hereinafter: HRM) can be organised into four different categories. The first category is related to all the external stakeholders who are important to the organisation. In this case, the role of social media is to act as a tool for branding, promotion of the organisational image, and a platform to attract valuable job applicants. In the second category, social media serves as an employment tool, considering number of factors, such as the privacy, legitimacy, discrimination, screening, and other. Moreover, the third category is concerned with the role of social media in the improvement of the organisational performance. This concerns issues such as the staff productivity, job engagement, teamwork, knowledge sharing, training, and leadership. Finally, the fourth category deals with the possible negative impacts that social media may have on employee behaviour, for example, the counterproductive behaviour at work caused by using the social media for personal matters instead of professional at work, and the resulting disciplinary actions. In the Hootsuite's annual report on social media trends in governments, the experts advise that all government senior officials, who are also public personas, should undertake a mandatory social media training. The training should be similar to the traditional media training given to the officials before interacting with press. The training courses might as well be done online, yet previously carefully researched, and chosen based on its applicability on specific employee roles. They suggest that social media may be an efficient tool for the public outreach of governments, while government agencies should direct their messages towards the channels through which citizens wish to interact, i.e. social networking platforms (Hootsuite, 2018).

According to the OECD report on public governance from 2016, the digitalisation of governments has brought many new modalities in which public sector employees can engage with citizens in order to involve them into identifying the problems and improve policies and public services. Since the social media management is a very specific skill that does not usually come with other expertise, e.g. policy, it needs to be updated in order to bring better

results. Nevertheless, the majority of OECD countries have not yet created appropriate strategies or plans for the development of social media skills among civil servants (OECD, 2016). Mickoleit (2014) argues that the process of identification and development of proper human and financial resources for the social media strategy is quite challenging for government. He states that, according to a OECD survey, only one third of governments from OECD countries have social media learning strategies in place aimed to develop public sector employees' skills in this field. Nevertheless, more than 60 percent of municipalities in United Kingdom (hereinafter: UK) believe they can achieve financial returns from their social media use.

Mergel (2012) argues that in contrary to former technology advancements, the progress in early stages of social media implementation in public institutions was achieved through experimentation, rather than formal, hierarchical strategic planning. The major challenges to the adoption of social media practices seem to include the positioning of the social media director within different organisational departments, as well as the resources to be allocated for social media implementation. She believes, that if managed correctly, these same issues can become the main drives for the success in social media practices. Since social media has emerged as a quite recent form of e-governance in public institutions, the dilemma on which departments to assign the accountability for social media managing is still not easy to resolve. The author suggests that the specific purposes of social media should define the accountability for its managing across different departments. For instance, if the social media problem is considered to be of technological nature, it will be the responsibility of IT department. On the other hand, if the purpose of social media is considered to be a part of the institution's mission and strategy communication strategy, then it will be the responsibility of the PR department. In the latter case, experts from various organisation's units are very often included into the process of social media strategy planning. Moreover, she argues that in order for senior management to decide upon the allocation of resources, and the management of staff when it comes to social media, business cases created by early adopters of social media practices, which contain relevant facts and figures can be of great help. Consequently, the obtained learning may create more social media directors at executive departments, responsible for the development of policies which will cover the governance of social media activities, as well as the creation of social media strategies which support the core mission of the institution.

Serrat (2010b) argues that in order for social media to be effective, it is favourable that they are implemented in environments which fosters high levels of trust, collaboration, and a thrive for knowledge. There are three features, all related to management, especially, the HR, which, according to this author, will lead to success on social media, i.e. cutting back on internal barriers to social media, building a culture which fosters cooperation, and early adoption of social media applications for communication, interaction and service delivery. Hence, it is essential for public agencies to include multiple networks into their social media strategy, which are both internally and externally focused, i.e. from social media related employee behaviour at work to the competition identification. The full transition to a Web 2.0 favourable governments requires strong leadership skills for engagement at senior level, as well as the capability to develop and maintain online relationships. Furthermore, it requires the development of policies which will reduce the risk of damaging the organisational assets, and regulate employee behaviour. Finally, the training for everyone in the organisation is essential in order for employees to understand the purpose of social

media, learn how to use them in the context of the public organisation, and to understand their roles.

3.3.2 The Role of Social Media in the Organisational Structure of Public Institutions

In order to ensure responsible and successful implementation of social media in public organisations, it is important to locate its internal function within one or more departments. The two departments which deal with social media mostly are considered to be PR and the IT department. PR have historically represented a central place accountable for the formal communication and public affairs in public institutions. Nevertheless, with the evolution of new media, the organisational communication efforts are becoming more complex since the audiences are spreading to multiple new channels of communication, which are no longer reachable by public relations departments entirely. In the case of new media, traditional communication efforts comprising of formal, beforehand written press releases are no longer applicable. On the other hand, the introduction and maintenance of new technologies are naturally located in the IT department. However, the related data and infrastructure are mostly located online, so constant IT support is not necessarily needed. Therefore, the accountability for social media often spreads across different departments, including both, PR and the IT (Macnamara, 2011; Mergel, 2012). In public sector agencies, the majority have assigned the central social media role to the public relations department, while some of the agencies have included it into the responsibility of IT department. More advanced approach would be to decentralise this responsibility and develop a context for the accountable use of social media which would allow the employees to follow this concept with their day-to-day social media responsibilities, and the development of social media strategies (Mergel, 2012).

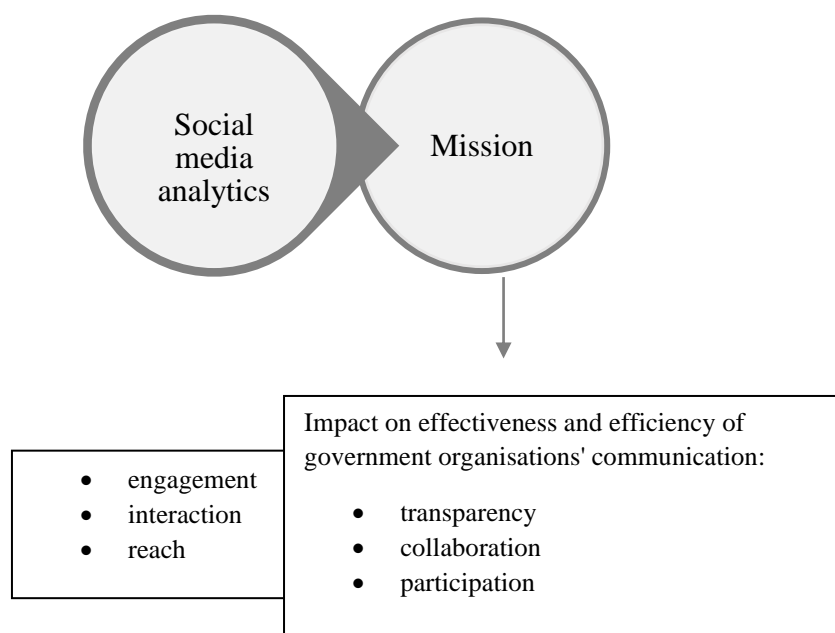
3.4 Social Media as an Extension to Public Relations in Governments

Taskiran (2016) argues that PR are assigned a strategic management role in establishing, sustaining and managing the long-term relationships between the organisations and public, and that these relationships should be based on mutual comprehension and trust. He believes that the development of social media brought a whole new set of tools which can greatly assist the organisations in this process. Paun (2009, p. 125) describes the term “electronic PR” (hereinafter: e-PR) as the branch of PR whose main aim is to engage with relevant target audiences using online media, while supporting the general objectives of the organisation’s PR department. She suggests that the role of social media is to act as an alternative communication method used to encourage a bilateral communication between the government and the citizens. She further argues that, together with the development of information and communication technology, social media has emerged as an alternative to already existing governments’ PR, and communication channel.

Macnamara (2011) argues that the organisational PR departments should have a key responsibility for the managing of social media, while the IT departments should act as supporting mechanisms. Nevertheless, he also argues that PR are still at the early stage in adopting the social media, and that in this context the social media practice is still largely unregulated, while the managing is based on a trial and error system. The modern PR departments are using social media advertising in order to reach more effectively their targeted audiences. Social networks allow governments to target their messages towards

very specific audiences based on the demographic data such as their gender, area of living, age or interests. This way, citizens who are more interested in topic or who the messages are exactly intended for are being represented with the content (Hootsuite, 2018). Figure 6 illustrates how social media use in public institutions can support their missions and improve the effectiveness of their communication with the public.

Figure 6: The Impact of Social Media on Public Institutions' Mission and Communication



Source: Adapted from Mergel (2012).

Graham and Avery (2013) argue that social media presence is a symbol of a dynamic and transparent communications strategy, and that in this sense social media may offer very unique utilities to the local public institutions' PR. They also believe that the social media use in public institutions should reflect three basic models, i.e. democracy, participation and transparency across different contexts. Moreover, Ledingham (2003) argues that the role of social media in establishing relationships with the public is of crucial importance to the PR departments, since its core activities are built around this process.

Graham and Avery (2013) suggest that creating communication strategies for public institutions differs to some extent compared to private sector. Although the basic principles are the same, they need to be applied in very specific context, where various topics must be considered, i.e. political context, legal limitations, citizens' perceptions and others. In order to overcome these challenges, transparency plays a key role in establishing quality relations between the governments and the public. The public institutions' transparency gives the citizens the opportunity to better understand what the governments are doing, to evaluate their performance, and improve trust in governments (Piotrowski, 2007). Graham and Avery (2013) argue that the most important characteristics of a governments' communication with

public are: openness, honesty, promptness, and the absence of the manipulation of the information they exchange. They believe that the Web 2.0 technologies offer an excellent opportunity to achieve these goals. Furthermore, they argue that, in past, governments needed to use one-way, traditional communication channels, such as the newspapers, tv, and radio in order to transfer the information to citizens. Consequently, they had less control over the content and timing of the information transfer. The evolution of the Internet based technologies and the new media has allowed governments' PR officers to gain more control, by communicating directly with citizens using social networks, blogs and other social media tools, while, avoiding the dependence on the media reporters and editors. Wang (2015) argues that the Internet has on one side empowered the public, while on the other, it helped the organisations' PR to make improvements in collecting information, observing the public opinion, enhancing the organisation's image, and engaging in a two-way communication with their key audiences. Furthermore, Bates (2018) argues that in past, PR used to be focused on influential persons, e.g. political personas, and that with the evolution of social media, these individuals are now active on social networks. Hence, this can be used as an advantage to the development of public relations strategies. According to Mickoleit (2014), politicians nowadays use social media as a constituent part of their campaigns and communication strategies. Some of the political leaders, such as, for example, the President of U.S., are very successful, based on the number of followers and the engagements on their social networks.

Bates (2018) also argues that social media has changed PR in a way that all the published content now can stay longer, expand faster, and reaches bigger audiences. In their analysis of the social media use at the local government levels in U.S., Graham and Avery (2013) found that Facebook was the most popular social network used by the local governments to communicate with the public, followed by Twitter. Andoh-Quainoo and Annor-Antwi (2015) argue that the increasing number of Facebook users also increases the chances for PR officers to reach and engage with larger audiences. Furthermore, Graham and Avery (2013) also found that the majority of local governments' content on Facebook and Twitter contains information, photos and videos of the specific events and organisation's activities, while less than half of the content contains policy information. This indicates that there is still room for progress in achieving the optimum level transparency of the institutions' activities to the public. The authors argue that it is absolutely essential for the local governments to obtain strategies which will direct the use of the social media.

3.5 Social Media Governance in Public Institutions

3.5.1 Importance of Social Media Governance in Public Institutions

According to Linke and Zerfass (2013), social media guidelines describe and provide instructions on how to use the social media communications by all organisation's employees, and of the ways in which they can become successful communicators in interactive online environments. They also suggest that social media governance should help the employees in understanding the boundaries of their activities on social media, in respect to the institution they are working for. Moreover, they argue, that even in the case where the institution is not actively involved in social media activities, it is still advised to provide proper education for its employees and develop clear policies related to the use of social media, both, work-related and for personal matters. By establishing clear social media guidelines, organisation

increases its chances of avoiding significant risks, such as the privacy issues, i.e. the dissemination of the institution's internal information, or the staff inefficiency, in terms of the time they spend on social networking sites. According to Macnamara (2011), the employees should be approached openly when it comes to social media use at work and in relation to work, being provided with a thorough social media governance framework. In addition, he suggests that although the governance is necessary, bans are not likely to be efficient in restricting unfavourable behaviour and reducing risks.

Mickoleit (2014) confirms the importance of establishing the proper governance for social media use across public institutions, in order to have clear guidelines if it comes to potential social media related conflicts or crisis situations. He believes that it is necessary to clarify the roles and responsibilities at all levels of government, i.e. whether the conflict resolution is under the individual ministries jurisdiction or if there is an all-conquering governance mechanism. In order to establish these guidelines, this author argues that the institutions should be able to answer some of the following questions:

- whether there is an overarching body which oversees the social media use across all levels of government;
- what is the role of different organisational departments within the institution regarding social media;
- is it necessary to establish social media guidelines for public sector employees, including their personal use;
- is it necessary to establish social media guidelines for official institutional social networks' accounts and;
- is there anybody who designs the guidelines for social media use by political personas and public institution employees who represent the institution in public (Mickoleit, 2014, p. 6).

Linke and Zerfass (2013) argue that, despite the fact that social media has enabled organisations to communicate their messages directly to their target audiences, it has also resulted in organisations having less control over the information spread. Consequently, organisations are searching for governance mechanisms that would help them cope with this challenge. Mergel and Bretschneider (2013) argue that when adopting social media tools across all levels of governments, public institutions follow the process comprising of three steps. First, they engage in social media based on experimentation, without following recognised technology use policies. Further, they use social media following a certain order, since the agencies become aware of the need to design drafts of social media regulations and guidelines. Finally, the previously constructed drafts become standardised social media strategies and policies containing clear guidelines regarding the acceptable social media behaviour, modes of interaction and communication.

Macnamara (2011) argues that the absence of social media governance may expose institutions to various risks, such as the unintentional or deliberate disclosure of confidential internal information, reputational risk or public humiliation due to inappropriate employee behaviour on social media, for instance, engagement with inappropriate content which is qualified as racist, sexist etc. Furthermore, he suggests that a successful social media governance should include the following elements: clear policy, precise guidelines including the definition of favourable and non-favourable social media activities and the corresponding

advice for employees, training of staff who will have an active role in social media on behalf of the organisation, monitoring of new media, and qualitative analysis of the social media content (comments, posts etc.). In addition, the staff should be provided with a qualified editor in order to help them communicate adequately on social media, e.g. for writing posts, blogs etc.

Hrdinova, Helbig and Stollar-Peters (2010) argue that governments mostly use two types of official documents which educate employees on the social media use, namely, guidelines and policies. According to these authors, the purpose of guidelines is to advise the employees on how to effectively use social media, e.g. how to encourage citizen engagement, how to create useful and interesting content etc. On the other hand, the purpose of policies is to officially govern the use of social media by government institutions' staff, e.g. giving official and detailed instructions on what is considered an acceptable use of social media. According to Mickoleit (2014), 56percent of governments from OECD countries are exercising little or no central control when it comes to social media usage, i.e. individual government agencies and departments are being responsible for the development of social media implementation policies. Furthermore, the content of the aforementioned social media guidelines differs across different governments; however, it usually contains two common and central features, which are the risks and benefits, i.e. most of the governments are concerned with the prevention and management of reputational or security risks. On the other hand, majority of the central government policies do not contain any guidelines on how to measure the success and financial return on social media use.

3.5.2 Elements of Social Media Governance in Governments

Hrdinova, Helbig and Stollar-Peters (2010, p. 2) identify eight core elements that the social media governance in public institutions should comprise of, namely: employee access, account management, acceptable use, employee conduct, content, security, legal affairs, and citizen behaviour. Figure 7 illustrates this model.

Figure 7: Elements of Social Media Governance in Public Institutions



Source: Adapted from Hrdinova, Helbig and Stollar-Peters (2010).

3.5.2.1 Employee Access

Under the term “employee access”, Hrdinova, Helbig and Stollar-Peters (2010) refer to the process of filtering employee access to social media, based on the government policies. They argue that the governments are regulating this access in two ways, i.e. by limiting the number and profiles of employees who are allowed to access social networking sites, or by allowing only a limited number of sites, which employees are allowed to access. For example, some agencies allow only certain employees to access social media sites, such as, for instance, PR officers. On the other hand, some agencies create a list of approved social media sites, based on the previous risk assessment or the evaluation of business need for the utilisation of that site, and then allow all employees to use the approved sites.

3.5.2.2 Social Media Account Management

Hrdinova, Helbig and Stollar-Peters (2010) describe “social media account management” as the process of establishment, maintenance and suspension of social media accounts. Under this policy, governments define who is allowed to set up official social media accounts, as well as the procedures for establishing the accounts. Mickoleit (2014) argues that organisational structure, in terms of the individual responsibilities regarding social media, can have major implications on social media strategy. Mergel (2012) suggests that social media responsibility in public institutions is usually located in one of the following three departments: PR, IT or the policy department.

3.5.2.3 Acceptable Use

The “acceptable use” policy refers to the rules which regulate the ways in which employees are supposed to use organisation’s resources, social media use for personal matters, and consequences for disobeying the selected policy (Hrdinova, Helbig & Stollar-Peters, 2010). Linke and Zerfass (2013) argue that the overall organisation’s efficiency may decline if employees spend excessive amount of time using social networking applications, which consequently, inspired many firms to limit or completely prohibit social media use at work.

3.5.2.4 Employee Conduct

“Employee conduct” is usually governed by general government policies, explaining acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour and the consequences of the violation of these policies. In terms of social media, examples include issues such as the endeavour for transparency, respectfulness and professionalism in the interaction via social media content (Hrdinova, Helbig & Stollar-Peters, 2010).

3.5.2.5 Content Management

The “content management” refers to policies regulating whose responsibility is to ensure the accuracy of the official social media content, and who is allowed to post content on behalf of the agency (Hrdinova, Helbig & Stollar-Peters, 2010). Mickoleit (2014) argues that the social media content is crucial to determining the success of governments’ social media interaction. Since governments mostly use social media within their communication

strategies, he believes it does not come as a surprise that social media content for some institutions is reflecting the agenda of the person who is in charge of the office. For example, 55 percent of Twitter posts emitted by the White House in 2014 contained word “Obama” (Mickoleit, 2014, p. 24).

3.5.2.6 Security Policies

On the other hand, “security” policies are concerned with providing appropriate technological structure in order to ensure the security of the agency’s data. These include security measures such as the password security, identity authentication, or protection from viruses. Landsbergen (2010) argues that the same security policies governing the use of email may likewise apply to protection when using social media.

3.5.2.7 Legal Concerns

When using social media, agencies need to pay close attention to the legal concerns, i.e. making sure that the employees are acting in accordance to the law. The examples of legal concerns include issues such as the privacy, freedom of speech etc. (Hrdinova, Helbig & Stollar-Peters, 2010). Mickoleit (2014) underlines some of the important legal requirements which governments should comply with when using social media. These include: official record keeping, disclaimers, privacy, accessibility and intellectual property.

3.5.2.8 Citizen Conduct

Since social networking sites are characterised by interactive, two-way communication, citizens are able to post content on certain social networking sites. The role of policies dealing with the “citizen conduct” is to regulate whether the agency will allow this engagement, and how to handle it (Hrdinova, Helbig & Stollar-Peters, 2010). Landsbergen (2010) argues that governments can truly benefit from social media only if they support the two-way communication. He strongly believes that users are mostly not interested in the excessive display of information they are able to find on their own anyway.

3.5.3 Monitoring and Measuring Impacts of Social Media Interactions

Mickoleit (2014) argues that the crucial element of successful social media strategy is an effective measurement of its impacts. However, this also represents one of the biggest challenges since most of the governments have no appropriate ways to measure the actual returns on their social media utilisation. Furthermore, he believes that this is partially due to the fact that popular metrics which are applicable in private sector, e.g. increase in sales, or reduction of marketing costs, are not applicable in public sector, nor it is easy to find equivalent objectives to which indicators of success would be made. Mergel (2013) suggests that although government’s social media directors might understand the value of measuring the impacts of their social media interactions, they rarely employ effective measurement mechanisms that would assist them in gaining valuable insights, which she believes, may as well indicate their hesitation in changing the learned way to operate. Moreover, they mostly rely on the metrics and insights created by third party social media providers, e.g. Facebook

or Google analytics, which cannot fully measure the indicators based on the governments' particular objectives. The reports provided by social networking sites' analytics mostly contain insights such as the demographics, gender, location, or interests of the publisher's target audiences; however, they hardly measure the correlation of the interactions with specific governments' mission or objectives. In addition, Macnamara (2011) argues that although social networking sites provide basic quantitative analytics at no or low costs, many social media managers are still not familiar with ways of measuring the return on investment.

Mickoleit (2014) states some of the questions which social media directors at public institutions should answer in order to effectively monitor and measure the impacts of their social media efforts. For example, what do the defined indicators measure and whether they are relevant with regards to the institution's core objectives, what kind of metrics should the institution use to measure social media impacts, or which information sources could contribute to setting an ideal combination of effective indicators. He also argues that, in order for the metrics to make sense and provide a comprehensive framework for measuring the impact of social media interactions by governments, the data needs to be collected from multiple sources, including statistics, as well as the complementary context information. Mergel (2013) strongly believes that government professionals should interpret the collected data with regards to the institution's mission and their own goals towards the levels of engagement they wish to achieve. This would give them valuable insights into whether they are approaching the right audiences, and which platforms are the most productive when it comes to reaching the citizens.

4 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Methodology

In order to gain better understanding into the role and contribution of social media to public sector marketing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, additional primary research was conducted in a form of qualitative research. Hammersley (2013, p. 12) defines qualitative research as “a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasise the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis”. The research was conducted based on the content analysis approach, which, according to Mayring (2000, p. 1), keeps the advantages of quantitative content analysis, while transferring and further developing them into the qualitative-interpretative steps of analysis.

Based on the defined research problem, three research questions were empirically examined through the case of Sarajevo City Administration and nine Canton of Sarajevo municipalities:

- RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?
- RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?
- RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?

Semi-structured in-depth interviews (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were conducted, where the questions scheme was based on three main topics (see Appendix 2): (1) questions exploring social media channels, topics and types of content used by interviewees, and purpose of social media use in their respected institutions, (2) questions related to the accountability, education and competences of the respected institution's employees and departments, in relation to social media, and (3) questions examining the existence and content of social media governance and guidelines for personnel, within the institutions interviewed. The respondents were not familiarized with the aforementioned concepts and interview questions, i.e. the interview started with general questions regarding their role in the institution's social media management, professional experience with social media, types of social media channels used, etc. which further guided respondents to reveal more detailed insights, experiences and opinions. The interviewing process was not interrupted by the interviewer even when it diverged from the original interview framework. The conducted interviews revealed the recurring determinants in different institutions and helped us answer the three main research questions.

In order to examine the role of social media and its contribution to the enhancement of public institutions' marketing in B&H, the research was conducted in nine Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Furthermore, in order to compare findings and draw insightful conclusions, we sought to explore the social media use in as many different settings as possible, so we purposively included Sarajevo City Administration as well into the research, hence a total of 10 institutions were included in the observations with 12 interviewed institution representatives. The sample consisted of municipalities' PR officers, IT managers or other relevant personnel responsible for social media management in different Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. The literature review revealed that, in public sector, PR officers are usually the ones responsible for the social media management, while IT departments play the second most important role (MacNamara, 2011). Likewise, in the case of Canton of Sarajevo municipalities, the situation was similar, so in order to be fully able to respond to three main research questions, the aforementioned sample was used.

The research was conducted in the Canton of Sarajevo, in the period from March until April 2019. Primary data collection was conducted in a form of personal semi-structured interviews with respondents. Canton of Sarajevo consists of nine municipalities, and the Sarajevo City Administration. All twelve contacted respondents accepted the invitation to participate in the research. The time intervals for the data collection process varied from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the respondents' availability and willingness to give more or less insightful responses. All ten interviews with twelve interviewed institution representatives were successfully performed and transcripts were prepared to allow further analysis. Furthermore, the interviews revealed the repeated patterns, which allowed us to achieve the "theoretical saturation" for the previously defined topics of interest (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 203).

Throughout the data collection process, some of the respondents requested to stay anonymous, so each individual interview has been given a code in a form of alphabet letter, which will be used in latter text as a reference to the discussions and elaborations related to the interviews (shown in Table 4). Furthermore, in order to enable better understanding of the settings in which the institutions operate, a description of each institution has been presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Description of Sample

Institution Code	Interview/social media managers	Participant's position	Institution/municipality characteristics
A	1/1	Head of PR department	A local self-government unit composed of four central city municipalities; administrative, economic, cultural, university and sports centre of Canton of Sarajevo
B	2/2	1. Mayor's assistant for PR and information technologies Senior advisor for web technologies and digital communication	The oldest municipality in Canton of Sarajevo, which covers the area of 57,07 km ² and 36.976 inhabitants; its most popular economic activities include tourism and renting of municipal housing facilities
C	2/2	1. Head of IT department IT department assistant	Covers central urban, business, cultural, educational, healthcare and shopping areas of Canton of Sarajevo; covers 33 km ² and 70.294 inhabitants
D	1/1	Head of department for information systems, information and PR	Occupies the central part of Sarajevo field and the administrative, business, cultural, educational and commercial service part of the city of Sarajevo; covers the area of 9,9 km ² , and 64.548 inhabitants
E	1/1	Head of press department	One of the youngest and largest municipalities in Canton of Sarajevo, covering the area of 47,2 km ² , and 120.314 inhabitants; engaged in prominent infrastructural and capital investments
F	1/1	Head of the department for information	Governs the area, which is characterised by its natural resources and the proximity of the Sarajevo Olympic mountain; covers the area of 143,4 km ² , and 69.533 inhabitants
G	1/1	Senior Advisor for Information and PR	Covers the overall area of 273,26 km ² in the west part of Canton of Sarajevo, and 24.979 inhabitants
H	1/1	Senior Advisor for Information and PR	Counts 26.343 inhabitants and covers the area of 71,7 km ² , which is 6 km away from the centre of Sarajevo; In 1980's the area governed by this municipality has been known for a high level of industrial development, especially the automotive industry

(table continues)

(continued)

Institution Code	Interview/social media managers	Participant's position	Institution/municipality characteristics
I	1/1	Senior Advisor for Information	Covers the overall area of 338,4 km ² , which is 30 km away from the city of Sarajevo, in south-east direction; counts 1747 inhabitants
J	1/1	Head of department for social services and local community affairs	Covers the overall area of 308,6 km ² , in the north-west direction from the city of Sarajevo, the area counts 20.398 inhabitants

Note. * - The data were taken from the institutions' webpages.

Source: own work.

4.2 Results

With the intention to find most frequently mentioned terms in interviews, we compared the content of the interviews conducted. The threshold of ten times and above has been set for the total word count, after which the resulting terms were put into meaningful groups, and connected to three most dominant connecting terms, i.e. the terms which were transformed into labels of each individual group. The resulting cross-case matrix is presented in Table 5. For the purpose of comparison between the related terms, we have included some terms which were repeated less than ten times into the matrix.

Table 5: Cross-case Comparison - Frequently Mentioned Terms in Interviews

Label: Social media (95)	Label: Departments/services (51)
Facebook (57) Informing (30) Information (29) Questions (29) Projects (27) Posts (announcements) (24) Instagram (18) News (15) Internet (14) Photographs (14) Advertising (12) Youth (11) We don't have (11) YouTube (11) Twitter (11) Events (10) Video (7) Radio (6) Views (7) Live (6) WiFi (5)	Mayor (35) IT (25) PR (41) Subdivision (section) (11) Employees (19) Guidelines (11) Strategy (16) Education (10) Problem (10) Budget (10)

(table continues)

(continued)

Label: Social media (95)	Label: Departments/services (51)
LinkedIn (4) Citizens (39) Communication (18) Community (12) Public (11)	

Source: own work.

For the final analysis, we matched the group labels, and the most dominant terms used in the interviews with the topics related to the research questions posed. The “social media” label can be related to the first topic, i.e. the practical use of social media in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. This label is also the most frequently mentioned term in the interviews and it is aligned to the largest group of frequently mentioned terms in the interviews. The second most dominant term is “Facebook”, indicating the high presence of this social networking site in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities’ social media use. Compared to all other social networking sites, Facebook was mentioned fifty nine percent more. On the other hand, the term “Instagram” was mentioned three times less than Facebook in the interviews, which is correspondingly reflected in the municipalities’ reported use of Instagram. Finally, the terms “Twitter” and “YouTube” were mentioned eighty three percent less than Facebook, and sixty two percent less than Instagram, indicating significantly lower use of these social networking sites compared to Facebook and Instagram. The term “LinkedIn” has been mentioned only four times, and there has been no reported use of this social networking site by either of Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Furthermore, other frequent terms included “informing”, “information”, as well as “questions”, “announcements” and “projects”, indicating some of the most frequent purposes of social media use among Canton of Sarajevo municipalities, i.e. to inform the citizens about day-to-day matters, municipality projects, news, announcements of events etc., as well as answering citizens’ questions asked via comments or private messages, in most of Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Moreover, the term “citizens” has been repeated up to thirty-nine times, indicating the importance of the citizens role with regards to the activities of Canton of Sarajevo municipal services. Additionally, we see the importance of the term “Internet”, where this term implies the restrictions and instructions regarding the Internet and Wi-Fi access by employees, among some of Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Finally, the frequency of terms “photographs” and “news” point out the most frequent types of media and content used by Canton of Sarajevo municipalities when it comes to social media use.

The third most frequent term, which became the second group label was “departments (services)”, pointing out to the variety and importance of different departments within the municipalities, dealing with areas such as: PR, IT, urbanisation, investment and communal services, economy, education, culture, sports and local developments etc. We aligned this label to the second and third research topics, related to departments responsible for social media, municipality personnel’s level of competences, and the existence and content of social media guidelines. The most dominant term within this group was “PR”, indicating the senior or the single role of this department when it comes to social media management in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Furthermore, the term “IT” is one of the ten most dominant terms mentioned in the interviews, nevertheless, it was mentioned almost two times less than “PR”, indicating its important, however, not a crucial role in the respondents’

social media management. As indicated in interviews, the role of IT department is either supportive in terms of technical or other type of assistance or it is not involved in social media activities at all. Moreover, “mayor” was the second most dominant term in this group, indicating the importance of mayor’s role in the decision-making hierarchy. In addition, in terms of the existence of social media guidelines and strategies, we have found the importance in terms “strategy” and “guidelines”, which, however were not related to specific social media strategies. None of the respondents reported the existence of the aforementioned strategies, however they referred to other kinds of strategies and guidelines employed by their respective institutions, which in some cases contained parts related to informing, media and social media. The content of the mentioned strategies, guidelines and instructions was related to some of the following topics: local development, youth, Internet and Intranet access, as well as internal and external communication. Finally, we see the importance in term “education”, which we aligned to the level of social media competence in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Four out of twelve respondents said they have attended specialised education, trainings or seminars related to social media, which were supported by their institutions. Others are either self-educated or have attended social media modules throughout their university or school. A summary of the insights, related to all three research questions and the corresponding sub-concepts is presented in Table 6. The insights are supported by the respondents’ statements given during the interviews.

Table 6: Summary of Interviews’ Insights on Concepts of Interest: Cross-case Presentation

Construct	RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?	RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?	RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?
A	Facebook, YouTube, Instagram	PR department in charge of social media management; institution supports employees’ education in terms of trainings, seminars and conferences for employees	No formal social media strategy; no written guidelines for employees; staff follow the “ethical codex”; perform continuous evaluation and yearly report on social media performance
B	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter	PR and IT/digital communication departments in charge of social media management; self-educated in addition to the attendance in seminars, supported by management	No formal social media strategy; no written guidelines for employees; considering to develop a manual for employees; staff have restricted access to social media from municipal computers; monitoring the social media performances using different programs and delivering monthly reports to the mayor

(table continues)

(continued)

Construct	RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?	RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?	RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?
C	Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram	IT department, the mayor, and PR department in charge of social media management; IT employee self-educated; public relations not educated at all in digital marketing	No written strategy or procedures; decisions regarding social media made on ad hoc basis; no written guidelines for employees; obliged to follow the “ethical codex” but no sanctions for abuse; restricted social media access via LAN network; no evaluation of results
D	Facebook	PR department in charge of social media management; employees attended several seminars; supported by management	No written strategy; following ISO standards; no written guidelines for employees; no evaluation of results
E	Facebook	Press department in charge of social media management; no education provided; employees self-thought or attended social media subjects in school or university	No written strategy; flexible social media management; no written guidelines for employees; no evaluation except Facebook Analytics
F	No social media (used to have Facebook, which will be activated soon)	PR department in charge of social media management; no education provided for employees; self-educated or not educated at all	No written strategy; no written guidelines for employees; no evaluation of results; restricted access to social media from municipal computers
G	Facebook, YouTube, Instagram	PR officer in charge of social media management; several free-of-charge seminars offered, but perceived as useless, self-educated employees	No written strategy; following ISO standards and social media trends; no guidelines or restrictions for employees; no evaluation in terms of the institution’s mission, but using Facebook Analytics and informing the mayor about results
H	Facebook	PR officer in charge of social media management; no education provided; self-educated employees	No formal strategy, a small social media module included in the strategy for development; no guidelines for employees; restricted access to social media from municipal computers; no evaluation but monitoring via Facebook analytics in place
I	No social media	Attended several free-of-charge seminars aimed for public institutions	No written strategy; following ISO standards; no guidelines or restrictions for employees; no social media used – hence, no evaluation

(table continues)

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Construct	RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?	RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?	RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?
J	No social media	No education provided	No written strategy; no guidelines for employees; restrictions of a complete Wi-Fi access within the institution, no social media used, i.e. no evaluation

Source: own work.

The first general conclusion is that Facebook is the social networking site which is used the most, when it comes to Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. Seven out of twelve respondents ranked Facebook as the most important social media tool for their institution, while one of the respondents said that all social networking sites used within their institution are equally important. The remaining two institutions do not use social media at all. Second most dominant channels across Canton of Sarajevo municipalities are Instagram and YouTube, which are used by four out of ten municipalities.

"We use Facebook the most because the statistics show that the majority of social media users in BiH are on Facebook" – Institution B,

"In my personal opinion, Facebook is more important for the municipalities than Instagram and Twitter, because it offers the opportunity to post longer texts and hence, more information." – Institution H.

The second important conclusion is that in most of the Canton of Sarajevo municipalities, the PR departments or PR officers are responsible for the management of the municipal social media accounts. In most cases, the PR departments are supported by IT departments in terms of the technical support, or they are not related to IT departments at all. Six out of twelve respondents identified PR department as the key service when it comes to social media management. In two out of ten institutions, PR and IT departments worked closely together. Furthermore, the findings show that only one institution is using outsourcing as an option for the sponsored advertising on social media. In addition, when it comes to education, four out of twelve respondents said that they were supported by their institutions when it comes to the provision of adequate education related to social media, i.e. seminars, conferences etc. Others were either self-educated or have attended related subjects in school or university.

"We have started on our own, but then we began to go to some seminars that contained social networking modules. In the past two years, the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina held seminars on social media and marketing. We are supported by the management, i.e. after we came up with our proposal, the management approved it, and then later supported us in terms of additional education." – Institution B,

“No, the municipality hasn't provided any education or trainings with regards to social media for employees. People who are managing our social media accounts are either self-thought or have attended related subjects in school or universities.” – Institution E.

Finally, the third important conclusion is that none of the institutions interviewed had any specific social media strategies which were tied to their institution's mission and goals. For some, the utilisation of social media has been included in other strategies, while, for the majority, the decisions on social media content and timing are being made by PR departments, in collaboration with other relevant departments/services.

"We do not have any written social media strategies. The public relations department decides on social media content and publications, in consultation with other departments." – Institution A,

“We decide upon the social media content mainly on the basis of texts and activities that follow the work of the Department for Press and Protocol Affairs. The content is first published on the municipal website, sent to the media, and afterwards shared and published on our Facebook page. In addition, we often use a bit more flexible way, by posting the images from the field accompanied with the introductory information about the planned activities.” – Institution E.

In order to develop a general illustration of the concept (Lee & Cadogan, 2009), the cross-case analysis for the research concepts, containing integrated information, has been developed (see Table 7). By developing the meta-matrix in the table, we have been able to simultaneously examine the opinions of all twelve respondents, regarding the three research questions posed. Based on the previously posed research questions and corresponding sub-topics which have been discussed in the qualitative research, the meta-matrix has been conceptualised as a multidimensional construct with the following dimensions:

- RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions (dimension: most frequent social networks used; dimension: social media content, two-way communication with citizens)?
- RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions (dimension: departments responsible for social media management, dimension: education and competences)?
- RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees (dimension: strategy tied to the institution's mission and goals, dimension: guidelines/restrictions for employees, dimension: evaluation of social media results/reports)?

Table 7: Meta-Matrix Describing Research Questions

Description	Comments
RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?	
Dimension: most frequent social networks used	<p>"We find Facebook as the most useful tool to establish communication with citizens." – Institution E</p> <p>"On behalf of our institution we administer four Facebook accounts (mayor's account, the institution's account and two accounts related to other institutions and projects that are in our jurisdiction). Furthermore, we administer our YouTube account and two Instagram accounts." – Institution A</p> <p>"We find all three social networks used by our municipality equally important. We use YouTube do document information, Facebook for fast information transfer to the public, and Instagram for photo sharing. We don't use Instagram to share information, Facebook is the best for this". – Institution G</p>
Dimension: social media content	<p>"The content with best quality usually has the lowest reach. People do not want to read long texts and serious analyses, they rather like simple solutions, in order to give simple comments, which are mostly negative. However, the most frequent type of posts that we use the are the short reports, accompanied by photographs." – Institution H</p> <p>"Photographs have the best reach." – Institution C</p> <p>"We improve the transparency of our institution's activities through daily updates of our official website and social media profiles. In addition to posting announcements and photos about the activities and development projects conducted by our institution's administration, the website and social networks are constantly updated and refreshed with new documents, content, visuals and videos related to important occasions and events." – Institution A</p>
Dimension: two-way communication with citizens	<p>"Citizens' inquiries come by e-mail. We don't use Facebook to communicate with citizens." – Institution F</p> <p>"That is exactly what our goal is. We believe that citizens' comments are important and we use social networks to give citizens the opportunity to quickly and efficiently send us the message or notification via Facebook or e-mail. Suggestions and messages are then being processed, while we answer the citizens questions immediately. If we do not know the answer, we guide citizens to contact relevant municipality services." – Institution G</p>
RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?	

(table continues)

(continued)

Description	Comments
Dimension: departments responsible for social media management	<p>"The PR officer is in charge of managing social networks. The public relations department provides the prepared information to the IT administrator (e.g. visuals, text), which are then published in identical form on website and Facebook." – Institution H</p> <p>"Our public relations department determines what will be published on social media. Before we start preparing the content, we consult different services/departments (e.g. Service for infrastructure, agriculture etc.). We don't get any help from IT department". – Institution F</p>
Dimension: education and competences	<p>"The IT department assistant manages our institution's social media accounts. He is self-educated and he manages the accounts on his own initiative. If he decided to quit his job, the institutional social media would be completely disrupted." – Institution C</p> <p>"We haven't been provided with any education in social media by our institution. In past, our social media accounts were led by people who were not educated in social media, so the posting schedule was based on ad hoc basis and very unorganised." – Institution F</p>
RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?	
Dimension: strategy tied to the institution's mission and goals	<p>"The goals are set according to ISO standards. One of the main goals is to improve the communication with citizens, which implicates the social networks as well. Our social media efforts are not encompassed with specific goals and a strategy, but we do follow the trends and respond to them timely." – Institution G</p> <p>"We do not have any advertising strategy, but we do have the strategy for local development, as well as the strategy youth. Based on these strategies, the services implement projects, and our job is to implement PR activities for them. When the service implements a certain project in accordance with the strategy, then we perform the PR activities on the official website, social media or through the collaboration with media." – Institution B</p>
Dimension: guidelines/restrictions for employees	<p>"No, the employees follow the ethical codex of the institution." – Institution A</p> <p>"We didn't even have the access to Wi-Fi until 2007-2008. Now, the access to Wi-Fi via computers is available, but only for the mayor's assistants, not even for the heads of different departments and employees whose job descriptions are tightly connected to the usage of Internet. However, we have been able to use the Wi-Fi connection via our mobile phones since 2017." – Institution J</p> <p>"Based on the bad experiences that we had in past, the employees are not allowed to use social networks within the municipal facilities from their official computers." – Institution B</p>

(table continues)

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Description	Comments
Dimension: evaluation of social media results/reports	<p>"We do not have the specific evaluation of the results. However, the IT administrator monitors the statistics generated by Facebook analytics tool." – Institution H</p> <p>"Social networks are modern platforms through which we can see the results and performances of our activities immediately. This implies a simple data analysis concerning the efficacy of our postings on daily, monthly and yearly basis. The mayor is being informed about everything, including this matter, as well." – Institution G</p> <p>"We continuously work on the analysis of the achieved results of our social media efforts. We finalise the report at the end of the current year as an addition to the annual report of the department of public relations. Based on this analysis, we design and create everything that needs to be realized or supplemented when it comes to content, layout and functionality. The report is reviewed and approved by the mayor." – Institution A</p>

Source: own work.

The interviews also showed that, when it comes to social media guidelines or restrictions aimed for employees, none of the institutions have any written guidelines. Nevertheless, some of the institutions claim to have the written ethical codex which is supposed to be followed by the employees or the employees are being given the social media guidelines personally, in an informal way. However, in most cases there are no sanctions if the codex is disregarded. On the other side, five out of twelve respondents said that their institutions had a restricted access to social media in place, for the majority of employees.

"We do not have any restrictions or guidelines. We publish the social media posts based on our professional judgement. The access to social media sites is forbidden for many computers in the municipality. However, the employees can use social networks through their smartphones." – Institution H,

"There are no specific social media guidelines for employees. However, we do have the "ethical codex", which states that the social media should not be used by employees for private purposes...The majority of employees are not given the access to social media through LAN connection. However, everybody can use the social media using Wi-Fi connection." – Institution C.

CONCLUSION

The main motives of this master thesis were to examine the role of social media and its contribution to the enhancement of public institutions' marketing, and the proposition of sound solutions and ways of enhancing the marketing strategies of public institutions, which would further lead to the improvement of their services and products, delivery channels and satisfaction of citizens. More specifically, our goal was to respond to the following three research questions, by using the case of Canton of Sarajevo municipalities:

- RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?
- RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?
- RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?

through the following objectives of the thesis:

- to review and analyse the appropriate theoretical/conceptual framework on the role of social media and its application in public institutions' marketing;
- to investigate the actual state regarding the social media utilisation in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities;
- to determine which departments in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities are responsible for social media and define their levels of competence;
- to extend the understanding of the importance of having appropriate social media usage guidelines in place for public institutions;
- to give recommendations on further application of social media in public institutions, for the purpose of their marketing enhancement.

From a theoretical perspective, the main contribution of this master thesis is in its development of the framework which includes the examination of the role of social media in public institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as of the effectiveness and the limitations of the public institutions' efforts in this field. An extensive literature has been published on the role of social media in public institutions, for the cases of OECD and other developed countries. However, the goal of this master thesis was to give the significant contribution to the filling of the existing research gap which exists related to the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The proposed framework was developed through literature reviews and qualitative research. The research summary comprises of the bibliographic co-citation analysis, literature review and a qualitative survey, related to the posed research questions and related concepts.

When it comes to public institution's use of social media networks, the literature review revealed the gaps and the grounds for improvements in some of the following concepts: lack of the defined social media strategies and guidelines for employees, lack of the employee's professional competences, vague interpretation of a two-way communication with citizens, and politically biased social media activities (Mickoleit, 2014; Macnamara 2011; Serrat, 2010b; Sadle & Alder, 2011; OECD, 2016; Graham & Avery, 2013). The aforementioned limitations were supported by the qualitative research as well, which is discussed in latter text.

The qualitative research revealed that seven out of twelve respondents perceived Facebook as the most important social media tool for their institution. The most common reasons behind their judgement included the popularity of this social networking site globally and among B&H citizens, as well as the potential of this platform to share significant amount of text and variety of content. When we examined the reasons for such a high popularity of Facebook among Canton of Sarajevo municipalities and the respondents' perceptions of this social networking site, some of the comments were as follows:

“Sometimes, we have a feeling that the reason why our management decided to introduce the social networks is just because it’s trendy and because they have noticed that other municipalities are doing the same. Our approach to social media is not systematic and it lacks the real substance” – Institution C,

“We should ask ourselves a question – is it necessary for the municipality to give citizens the information they want or the information that they really need? The Facebook analytics, including the number of likes, comments and shares can be very useful; however, they may lead us to the wrong track, in a sense that it can lead the municipal public relations and information processes to become commercial and not useful for the citizens” – Institution H,

“Our main purpose is to be of use to the public” – Institution I,

“When it comes to public information sharing, our municipality gives priority to the municipal website, which is updated regularly, and all information and event announcements are published in timely manner. We use Facebook as a complementary tool, where we share the information from the website, as soon as they are published.” – Institution E.

When asked about the most frequent topics used for social media content, the majority of the respondents underlined the informative role of the social media in terms of news, announcements and other postings related to municipal development projects, events etc. Furthermore, when asked about their strivings towards a two-way communication with citizens, those respondents who claimed to have achieved or worked towards establishing a two-way communication, defined this concept through their promptness in responding to citizens’ queries via Facebook messages, comments or e-mails, mostly regarding the short-term problems, such as, for instance, queries regarding construction works in their area, or the administrative forms found on municipal website. However, the intention of involving the citizens into discussions regarding the creation of certain projects, strategies, or decision-making processes has not been visible. Nevertheless, one of the respondents, which will in latter text be used as a “best case example”, seemed to have gone one step further and quoted the following: “The opinions and suggestions we get from citizens through social networks are used to improve the activities of our institution. We mostly receive interesting photos and similar content from citizens via Facebook and e-mail, that we gladly use and share.” – Institution A, where the intention of directly involving the citizens into the activities of the institution is seen. However, even in this case there is still space for progress and the involvement of citizens into the decision-making processes which are related to long-term strategies that will influence them directly.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, we can conclude that the role of social media among Canton of Sarajevo municipalities is mainly informative. At the same time, the majority of the institutions have done the first step towards establishing a successful two-way communication with citizens, by communicating with them directly via messages and comments, in contrast to the previous, one-way communication approach, where the public institutions’ PR officers addressed the public via press conferences and old media only. However, institutions still need to work towards utilising the full capacity and the possibilities offered by social media, in a way that is more involving and useful for the citizens. On the other hand, as suggested by Institution D, municipalities sometimes use “public hearings, congregations, public forums, focus groups, surveys and other” as tools to actively involve citizens into the decision-making processes regarding content and documents creation. Nevertheless, these modalities could be extended to social media as

well, in terms of Facebook polls, conceptualised posts asking citizens to give their opinions in a form of Facebook “reactions” or comments, Facebook events, inviting citizens to participate in live discussions etc. In this way, social media would serve as a tool to achieve a full two-way communication with citizens and as a tool leading towards the democratisation of public institutions’ activities.

Furthermore, as suggested in the literature review (Macnamara, 2011), PR departments seem to play the key role when it comes to social media management in Canton of Sarajevo municipalities. However, it is not a rare case in which the institutions do not have the PR departments at all, but rather one employee. i.e. “senior advisor for public relations” who is in charge for all PR activities, including the social media. In addition, in some cases, the PR closely cooperate with IT departments, in terms of the technical support. Since the role of social media in most of the Canton of Sarajevo municipalities is considered to be mainly informative, the PR departments mostly cooperate with other services/departments in charge of the projects’ implementation, which provide them with “raw” information and news intended to be published on social media. Only one institution uses outsourcing as an option for the sponsored advertising on social media, while four out of twelve respondents said they were using sponsored advertising on social media. In addition, as suggested by respondents, the municipalities do have the budget aimed for marketing. However, for the majority, the practical use of this budget seems to be intended for the old media.

“We do not use paid social media advertising. Every public institution has the obligation to use paid advertising on television, where we make yearly contracts with different TV houses”. We believe that, when it comes to social media, it is enough that the information reaches the user on time. We mostly use it to inform the citizens about the local community activities and events.” – Institution G,

“We do not have the budget specially intended for social media. There is a budget item intended for electronic and print media; however, it is mostly used to send greeting cards and for the contracts with TV houses” – Institution H.

The aforementioned statements brought us to the conclusion that, in order to properly reach the citizens, public institutions need to revise their marketing strategies and budgets and adjust them to fit into the media space which is popular and attended by users the most, including the social media. Furthermore, some public institutions are the subject to the law on public procurement, which, as respondent from Institution H suggested, represents the problem, because the municipalities cannot get the official advertising offer from Facebook and Instagram, which they would act upon. Hence, some institutions, such as the Institution B, chose to outsource social media advertising to a marketing agency, in order to achieve the planned results, which raises additional and unnecessary marketing costs for the municipalities’ budgets. Some institutions have showed efforts towards extending their marketing efforts and moving closer to the private sector, such as, for instance, Institution B, whose PR officers had an idea to use the Wi-Fi connection that they facilitate free of charge in certain parts of the city, and sell the advertising space to the interested companies.

“...in this way, the PR department would pay off all its social media and other marketing costs itself, without using the municipal budget” – Institution B.

However, the existing laws do not contain any item which would allow them to perform similar activities. Based on the aforementioned discussion, we can conclude that parts of

B&H laws affecting the public institutions' marketing are outdated, and need to undergo specific reforms in order to facilitate and motivate an effective use of new media and the existing marketing trends among public institutions. The overall goal of these reforms should be to adapt public services in a way they will meet the citizens' needs effectively and in line with the worldwide best practices.

Taking a closer look at the education and competencies of the public institutions' employees when it comes to social media management, brought us to the conclusion that several third-party agencies in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have organised marketing seminars and conferences intended specifically for the public institutions' personnel. These modules also included the topic of social media. The institutions which have provided the aforementioned seminars comprise of the following: Foreign Trade Chamber of B&H, Civil Service Agency of the Federation of B&H and London School for Public Relations in Sarajevo. The majority of the respondents seem to be aware of the existence of these seminars, and those who were supported by their management, have attended these educations. Nevertheless, one respondent said that the seminars offered only basic social media modules, which can be learned independently, as well. Hence, in terms of the social media education for public servants', we propose two recommendations. First, in order to increase the attendance of public servants in social media seminars and motivate public institutions to undertake systematised social media efforts, at federal or cantonal level, all seminars organised by the state agencies should be made obligatory for all public institutions in the proposed area. Second, due to the wide availability of online courses, seminars and tutorials, the organisers should be aware of the fact that many attendees are coming to these seminars with certain level of social media knowledge. Hence, the modules should be divided into basic and advanced levels and led by professionals from the industry who would educate the attendees in practical, up-to-date and public sector related use of social media which will be useful in their daily jobs.

Finally, the qualitative research conducted for this master thesis helped us to examine the existence of the systematically written social media strategies for public institutions, which we believe a strong emphasis should be put on. Nevertheless, the research revealed that none of the institutions possessed a unique strategy, defining the social media purposes and use only. Segments concerning the social media were found in some of the municipalities' strategies or manuals, concerning fields such as: marketing, internal and external communication, usage of Internet, or in strategies related to youth. However, none of the respondents interviewed reported having any written strategy or guidelines concerning institutional usage of social media, employees' roles, budget, guidelines for private and professional use of social networks, the evaluation of results and reporting etc. In contrast, the decisions on all the aforementioned subjects are made either on ad hoc basis or in the responsibility of single departments, mostly the PR. The social media usage guidelines for employees are given either personally, in an informal way, or by imposing restrictions on social media usage within the municipal facilities. Furthermore, one respondent stated that sometimes the social media content intended to be published on the official municipal social media, depends or is put on hold because of the differences in opinions between the members of management who are coming from different political parties, which points out to the possibility of political interference when it comes to municipal social media use.

“Sometimes, we have a problem if the mayor and the chairman are coming from two different political parties. They cannot agree on the content of our postings” – Institution C.

Hence, in a time when social media have become a massive communicational channel for all stakeholders of the organisations, we strongly believe that it is necessary for any organisation to have a specifically developed social media strategy, which would define the following:

- the role of social media in the implementation of activities related to the institution’s mission and general objectives;
- the social media protocol;
- roles and responsibilities related to the institutional social media management and activities;
- guidelines regarding the use of the institutional name, logo and messages in employees’ private accounts and corresponding sanctions in case of the violation of policies;
- guidelines regarding the use of social media at work;
- detailed description and steps concerning the evaluation of the social media impact on the institution’s overall objectives and;
- roles and responsibilities related to social media reporting.

Furthermore, given the fast-changing nature of the new media, the institutions should update the strategies on regular basis, in order to follow the trends and communicate them with their employees from the top to the bottom level. In addition, with the development of clear guidelines and corresponding sanctions in case of the violation of policies, the institution would be protected from the employee’ misuse of internal information, which otherwise may harm its reputation and activities. On the other hand, clear guidelines regarding the topics and the content intended to be promoted via institutional social networks would also prevent political bias imposed by changing political parties in the institutional management. Nevertheless, given the inflexible and bureaucratic nature of the public institutions, we are aware of the fact that without the appropriate updates of the laws regulating public institutions, it is unlikely that the majority of the institutions would develop the proposed strategies on their own initiative, and we strongly believe that the topic of social media should be included in the aforementioned laws at cantonal or federal level and should be made obligatory for all public institutions.

Moreover, the qualitative research conducted for this master thesis allowed us to extract two best-case examples among the Canton of Sarajevo municipalities, which have shown strongest efforts towards implementing the most successful social media practices among the interviewed institutions. The conclusions have been drawn based on the cross-case analysis of the ten institutions interviewed, where we compared and ranked the institutions based on different dimensions related to three main research questions posed.

Institution A scored the best when it comes to the number of social media accounts managed and their efforts towards developing a two-way communication with citizens.

"On behalf of our institution we administer four Facebook accounts, i.e. mayor's account, the institution's account and two accounts related to institutions and projects

that are in our jurisdiction. Furthermore, we administer our YouTube account and two Instagram accounts." – Institution A,

"The two-way communication with citizens is very important to us and we believe we have achieved it successfully. The opinions and suggestions that we get from citizens through social networks are used to improve the activities of our institution. We mostly receive interesting photos and similar content from citizens via Facebook and e-mail, that we gladly use and share." – Institution A.

Furthermore, when it comes to social media education provided for the employees, Institution A also showed high level of proactivity and understanding of the importance of education when it comes to new media:

"Given the need for employees who are more technologically educated and open-minded towards the technological advancements, our institution provides its employees, not only with need-based education, but with continuous education in terms of trainings, seminars and conferences in the field of social media." – Institution A.

Finally, this institution has also shown the understanding and efforts regarding the evaluation of social media results and its implications on the overall institutional goals:

"We continuously work on the analysis of the achieved effects of social media. We finalise the report at the end of the current year as an addition to the Annual Report of the Department of Public Relations. Based on this analysis, we design and create everything that needs to be realized or supplemented when it comes to content, layout and functionality. The report is reviewed and approved by the mayor." – Institution A.

On the other hand, Institution B scored the best when it comes to proactivity, innovative thinking, municipal management support and efforts towards finding the solutions to bypass the outdated regulations and strategies and implement marketing activities, including the social media, in accordance to the latest trends.

"We engage the marketing agency that works for us based on our instructions and orders, as we cannot pay for sponsored advertisements, from the municipal bank account. We determine which post will be sponsored." – Institution B,

"We have started on our own, but then we began to go to some seminars that contained social networking modules. In the past two years, the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina held seminars on social media and marketing. We are supported by the management, i.e. after we came up with our proposal, the management approved it, and then later supported us in terms of additional education." – Institution B.

"Yes, we produce reports in real-time. We use the media toolkit program and Facebook Analytics, which give us the opportunity to monitor the performance of all the news that we have published via social media, in real-time. We also use the Google Analytics for our website. We are obliged to deliver regular monthly reports to the mayor, which include these statistics as well." – Institution B.

"We are thinking of developing the manual through which we would advise the employees to share the postings from our municipal social networks, which are

related to the socially-responsible projects, on their personal profiles. We have already advised our employees about this topic in person.” – Institution B.

“We have many ideas that we would like to realise, related to tourism and advertising. However, our hands are tied because of the laws related to public institutions. For example, we had an idea of selling an advertising space to interested companies, on our free Wi-Fi network, which covers the central area of our municipality, In this way, we would cover the marketing and social media expenses that our department generates, instead of using the municipal budget, but we were not able to realise it because of the laws” – Institution B.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Povzetek v slovenskem jeziku

Namen te magistrske naloge je bil preučiti vlogo družbenih medijev in njihov prispevek k izboljšanju marketinga javnih institucij, ob uporabi primerov iz občin v Kantonu Sarajevo. Glavni cilj naloge je bil predlagati učinkovite rešitve in načine za izboljšanje marketinških strategij javnih institucij, ki bi vodile k izboljšanju njihovih storitev in produktov, kanalov dostave in kar je najpomembnejše - zadovoljstvo uporabnikov storitev. Na podlagi opisa problema smo zastavili naslednja raziskovalna vprašanja:

- RQ1: Katere družbene medijske kanale večinoma uporabljajo javne ustanove?
- RQ2: Kdo je odgovoren za družbene medije in kakšna raven kompetenc v zvezi z družbeni mediji obstaja v javnih institucijah?
- RQ3: Kakšne oblike smernic za družbene medije imajo javne ustanove za zaposlene?

Raziskovalna vprašanja so empirično preučena z obsežnim pregledom literature na temo, poleg kvalitativnega raziskovanja, ki je vključeval polstrukturirane poglobljene intervjuje z 9 občinami Kantona Sarajevo in Mestno upravo Sarajevo.

Na podlagi zastavljenih ciljev in raziskovalnih vprašanj so oblikovane naslednje splošne ugotovitve:

- Facebook je spletno mesto za družbeno mreženje, ki ga najbolj uporabljajo v občinah Kantona Sarajevo, sledita mu Instagram in YouTube;
- v večini občin Kantona Sarajevo so oddelki za odnose z javnostjo ali uslužbenci za odnose z javnostjo odgovorni za upravljanje občinskih računov družbenih medijev, medtem, ko imajo oddelki za informacijsko tehnologijo le podporno vlogo;
- pri upravljanju družbenih medijev je večina zaposlenih na občinah v Kantonu Sarajevo, samostojno izobraženih ali so izobraženi preko seminarjev, ki jih organizirajo tretje osebe;
- nobena od intervjuvanih institucij nima nobenih posebnih strategij za družbene medije, niti napisanih smernic za družbene medije.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

PART 1 (related to RQ1: Which social media channels are mostly used by public institutions?)

1. Please identify the social media channels used by your institution.
2. Could you please rank the aforementioned channels, based on their importance for your institution?
3. Please describe the ways in which your respective institution uses every of these social networks.

For example:

- Facebook (video, photos, events, posts, comments and active communication with community via e.g. private messages, polls, sharing content from other sites and personas);
- Instagram (photos, videos, stories, descriptions, comments, liking another sites' content)
- LinkedIn (...)
- YouTube (...).

3a. Could you please rank the described features for each channel, based on how you perceive their importance when it comes to your institution;

3b. What does the content of each of these networks mostly comprise of? Please describe (*e.g. promotion of certain events; sharing public information with citizens; pre-election campaigns etc.*).

4. Do you strive to establish a two-way communication with citizens? Please describe the ways in which you work on this matter (*e.g. how does the social media help you improve the communication with citizens; do they share their opinions regarding the services of your institution; do you ever use these opinions when creating certain public service strategies*).
5. Does your institution promote its representatives' activities (e.g. the mayor)? How/in what way, please describe (*e.g. does he/she have their own social media profiles / which ones are more popular in terms of the number of followers, and content engagements*).
6. Do you use paid advertising on Facebook, Instagram or other social networks? Please tell us about your experience.

PART 2 (related to RQ2: Who is responsible for social media and what level of competence in relation to social media exists in public institutions?)

1. Do you have a previously designed social media strategy that you follow when using social media on behalf of your institution?

If answer to Q1 is YES:

1a. Could you please describe the factors based on which the social media strategy is developed?

(Is the strategy connected to the overall mission of your institution; could you please tell us what is the mission of your institution; could you please list some of the goals comprised within your institution's social media strategy)

1b. Who is involved in the creation of social media strategies?

If answer to Q1 NO:

1c. How do you decide upon the content that will be published on social media? Please describe the factors that are considered in this process (e.g. *who gives you the instructions, is there a team working on this matter or only one person etc.*)

2. Who is responsible for the communication on social media within your institution (the job title)?

3. Could you please describe in more detail the social media activities performed by this person?

4. Do you receive any help from external associates/social media experts? How/which kind?

5. Do you receive any help from the IT or public relations office? How/which kind?

6. Did the person responsible for social media communication receive any trainings on social media use, provided by your institution? How/what kind?

7. Is there any type of evaluation of the social media usage impact on the overall strategy/mission of your institution?

If answer to Q7 is YES:

7a. Please describe how does the evaluation look like.

7b. Who performs the evaluation?

PART 3 (related to RQ3: Which form of social media guidelines do the public institutions have in place for employees?)

1. Is there any sort of social media guidelines that the employees of your institution need to follow?

If answer to Q1 is YES:

1a. Could you please describe the content of these guidelines?

1b. Who are these guidelines intended for? (*the “spoke-persons”, i.e. communication officers; employees who are in charge of posting on social media, or everybody*)

1c. Are there any guidelines which regulate how the employees are supposed to use the social media in terms of the institution they are working for versus private use?

If answer to Q1 is NO:

1d. As an expert in this field, could you please give us your opinion regarding the type of social media guidelines that you think that should be employed by your institution.

1e. How would you implement these guidelines?

2. Does your institution have any restrictions regarding social media use at work for employees?

PART 4 (respondents' general comments, recommendations and opinions)

Could you please give us your overall comment/opinion on the importance of social media use in municipalities?

For example:

1. In your opinion, what is the relevance of social media channels for your institution?
2. What is its connection to other communication channels you use (i.e. PR)?
3. Could you give us your opinion on the possible improvements, innovations etc. in relation to social media, that could improve your institution's overall performance and activities?