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**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN ENHANCING SERVICE
ENGAGEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDERS**

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ABSTRACT

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Deeper insight is needed into the management of social media marketing to engage business clients in professional education services. This is a challenge many managers face in the professional education services industry, and a topic that is understudied in the literature. The purpose of this study is to increase the knowledge about the characteristics of effective social media strategies that drive service engagement. This knowledge aids professional education service providers in developing a more efficient and effective communication strategy on social media. This qualitative study identifies current challenges in managing social media marketing, classifies social media strategies being used in this context, and benchmarks the content with the highest engagement in order to develop findings and recommendations.

The study is organized as an embedded single case study of chambers of commerce in the Nordic region. Data collection includes semi-structured interviews with two organizations and a theory-driven social media content analysis of ten organizations' activity on LinkedIn. The findings identify challenges using social media marketing that can occur at all stages, including planning, strategizing, managing, and measuring activities. Many of the challenges are also interrelated. Social media strategies are identified by analyzing medium, target audience, and post frequency. Findings show there are a diverse mix of strategies used, and organizational size can make an impact on the social media strategy used by a professional education service provider. The type of content that is most effective at driving engagement is assessed with the use of benchmarking posts in each level of activeness with the COBRA theory and the information-community-action typology. Community and action posts are the most engaging content classifications for all levels of COBRAs. Among creation levels of COBRAs, action-oriented posts are most common.

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Two and a half years ago, I was sitting at work contemplating what was next in my life, and whether I made the right decision in turning down a promotion. I had set many goals and ambitions as a young professional, but I was questioning whether everything was going to work out. When I received the amazing news that I received a Fulbright Finland scholarship, I was so happy that I wanted to walk out the door of my office without looking back. It was a moment of pure joy as I saw dreams of my future start to become a reality.

In the few months that followed leading up to my departure, I tried to prepare myself to go back to school for a Master's program abroad and also to relocate to an unfamiliar country. Since then, I have had an unforgettable experience and have thoroughly enjoyed making Finland my home over the last two years, and hopefully for more years to come.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction chapter of this thesis introduces the main topics of the study. There are eight subchapters in this section. The chapter starts with the background of the study, a preliminary literature review, statements about the aim of the study, and the research questions. Then, the theoretical framework is presented, followed by the definitions of key terms and concepts, and the delimitations of the study. The final two subchapters include the research methodology and an overview of the structure of the thesis in the following chapters.

1.1. Background of the study

There are currently 19 independent chambers of commerce operating in Finland, and each regional chamber of commerce is a member of the Central Chamber of Commerce (Keskus-Kauppakamari) (Helsingin Seudun Kauppakamari 2021). Usually about half of companies in a particular region belong (on a voluntary basis) to their local chamber of commerce in Finland. Each of the regional chambers of commerce in Finland operate under a common strategy for the promotion of business interests, and each region develops their operations to support this strategy under the categories of service business, advocacy work, networking, and changes in the operating environment (Helsingin Seudun Kauppakamari 2021).

In March 2021, the CEO of Häme Chamber of Commerce shared some information about the current state of affairs at their chamber in an online meeting. The Häme Chamber of Commerce includes the areas of Päijät-Häme County, Hämeenlinna, and Forssa regions from Kanta-Häme Province and Kuhmoinen from Central Finland (Häme Chamber of Commerce 2021a). Members receive exclusive discounts for professional education services, training, events, foreign trade documents, and additional services and tools to aid internationalization and grow one's network (Häme Chamber of Commerce 2021c). Traditionally, most of Häme Chamber of Commerce's events and trainings were held in-person. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Häme Chamber of Commerce was already using some digitalization tools, such as online meeting platforms for large scale recurring events, such as quarterly meetings. Although some recurring events and training programs were highly successful and welcomed full audiences, other one-off events in-person typically only attracted about 20-30 participants. Since the shift to fully digital events in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was some initial drops in event participation, which was common among many organizations worldwide (Zaloumis &

Lawas 2020). After one year since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March of 2020 (WHO 2021), the participant rates for Häme's events have actually been higher than they were at pre-pandemic levels, sometimes 2-3 times higher. Members are receptive to incorporating more digital tools in their interactions with the chamber and high satisfaction rates are typical, according to the CEO. The Häme Chamber of Commerce plans to continue offering events and services after the pandemic in a hybrid mode, to include in-person and online options. This would broaden the reach of their services and allow people to join in with whichever mode they prefer.

Although the chamber of commerce in Häme has worked hard to develop their capabilities in audio and visual equipment to provide high quality events and trainings online, they see more opportunity for digitalization in the future for events and networking. They want to further develop their customer service provided to its members and the local community. The CEO recognizes that communication needs of their constituents are changing, and he would like to ensure Häme Chamber of Commerce is adapting and incorporating technology effectively within the organization to continuously improve their service delivery. The CEO proposed this study to investigate opportunities of social media marketing for organizations providing professional education services. Most chambers of commerce in Finland are present on social media in some capacity, but there is still opportunity to build upon their strategy and develop it to fit their needs better. The goal of this study from the CEO's perspective is to identify opportunities for Häme Chamber of Commerce that can also be applied to other regional Finnish chambers of commerce in their social media marketing strategy to enhance service engagement.

Academically, there are few existing studies regarding marketing in professional education services. The need addressed by the CEO of Häme Chamber of Commerce to develop deeper insight into how to manage social media to engage members and improve service marketing is a challenge many managers face in the professional services industry, and a topic that is understudied in marketing literature. In Finland, service sector employees make up more than 50% of the private sector, making private services the largest employer in Finland (Palta Oy 2021). The service sector is also highly important on a global scale, with continual growth in recent years (Owusu 2020). With this growth in the service sector as a whole, it is likely to see more professional education service providers develop in the coming years, and they will also have a need to engage with their consumers on social media.

My initial research on this topic began by locating academic articles about digital marketing applied to not only professional services, but also non-profits, and the broader context of B2B organizations. Engagement with consumers and social media engagement are topics that have commonly been studied in the B2B context, compared to the other more specific contexts I investigated. However, studies that did not include any service firms in their data collection had to be considered carefully whether the findings could be applied to the context of this thesis.

Although there are studies investigating social media usage to drive engagement in services, they have not focused on the context of professional education services. This context is unique as many professional education service providers are also non-profit organizations. Service marketing literature primarily focuses on for-profit organizations, and most marketing literature in the context of non-profits focus on utilizing social media solely to attract donations. Member organizations such as chambers of commerce and trade associations often utilize their service offering to attract member organizations, and without a sufficient member base, these organizations do not have sufficient funding to survive. This is why professional education service providers need to identify effective social media marketing strategies to engage their target audience and attract participants to use their educational services throughout the B2B relationship. As this thesis investigates an understudied context, professional education services, the supporting literature was derived from diverse studies to identify similarities between this context, and also service marketing, social media, engagement, non-profits, and the management of B2B relationships.

1.2. Preliminary Literature Review

This chapter will provide an overview of the existing literature on the subjects of service marketing, social media, engagement, non-profits, and the management of B2B relationships, to identify research gaps.

Service marketing is a topic that is becoming increasingly relevant as service providers vie for customers' attention among the growing competition and seek to differentiate their offering. Grönroos (2020) defines a service as the means of "providing help to another person's or organization's relevant processes in a way valuable to [that] person or organization." Existing literature often addresses services in B2B and B2C contexts (Guenther & Guenther 2019; Gray

2006) or specifically by the type of service business, such as consulting (Wang et al. 2019) or logistics (Serbetcioglu & Göçer 2020). However, recently, several scholars have also addressed research opportunities in the context of non-profits. These are less traditionally studied in service marketing literature, but also very important to society, such as library services (Siddike & Kiran 2015; Hommerová, Šréd, & Dbalá 2020) and healthcare services (Kumar et al. 2020). Different parts of government and public service organizations can also be found in recent service marketing literature to drive more efficient service delivery and improve customer satisfaction (Grönroos 2019).

A common challenge addressed in the literature across multiple contexts is how to effectively brand services to ensure needs are met and communicated by the partner individual or organization. One perspective of ensuring services meet the intended outcome for the consumer can be mapped with the promise theory (Grönroos 2020). In this theory, marketing is considered a promise management process, and the ability of marketers to meet customer expectations that firms “promise” with their product or service is critical to the success of the relationship between the customer and the firm (Grönroos 2020). Promises may be made by marketers, but ensuring that promises can be kept requires support from every department involved in service delivery. Promise theory calls for marketers to address and rethink the necessary processes in the customer relationship and coordinate internal cross-departmental initiatives to secure customer satisfaction and loyalty (Grönroos 2020). Firms should remember that the quality of service from the customer’s perspective is most important, and they should focus on a customer-centric branding strategy internally to ensure their services fulfill their customers’ needs.

The concept of customer perceived value is another recurring theme in service marketing literature. Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Zabkar (2017) defined customer perceived value as the perception by the client in regards to the service offering’s functional, emotional, and social benefit. Hansen, Samuelson, and Silseth’s (2007) study on customer perceived value stressed the importance of information sharing to enable customers to better understand the benefits of an organization’s services. Continuous interaction and communication have also been identified as integral components of service branding and relationship building in the professional services industry (Gray 2006; Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Kadic-Maglajlic, & Miocevic 2020) These studies identify different elements for organizations to monitor to ensure services

meet expectations, and benefits are derived in multiple ways to build lasting relationships between service providers and their clients.

Service branding strategies can be linked to various outcomes including donations, attendance at events, and even financial impacts. Guenther and Guenther (2019) analyzed the impact of service branding on a firm's economic value from a study of publicly listed professional services firms. They found that the communication approach of a brand's services under the firm's name was more successful from a financial standpoint compared to multi-branding approaches (Guenther & Guenther 2019). Using a single brand for marketing services can also aid in easier communication of value to a consumer, as the consumer can associate value from multiple services under one name.

In addition to the role of value perceptions from a consumer or brand standpoint, researchers have also investigated the role of engagement in different marketing contexts, such as community and social media (Hollebeek 2011). Engagement studies are not limited to marketing literature, and can be found from perspectives of management, practitioner, and psychology research as well (Brodie et al. 2011; Kabadayi & Price 2014). Within the marketing literature, several scholars have studied customer engagement from the lens of relationship marketing theory (Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek 2011; Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, Kadic-Maglajlic, & Miocevic, 2020). A benefit of customer engagement with a brand or customer brand engagement (CBE) was identified by Cole (2015) that high CBE and increased communication between parties enhances the firm's ability to develop brand advocates in their customers. CBE and increased customer insight can validate that a service offering is meeting market needs or provide insight into the changes that need to be made in the service offering. Campbell and Lambright (2020) had similar thoughts about the connection of consumer brand engagement and considered it a form of dialogue.

Various conceptual definitions of CBE have more recently led to studies that aim to measure CBE in a social media context, which are especially applicable from a practical standpoint today. CBE in social media is often a key metric used by marketers in gauging brand performance (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie 2014; Chahal, Wirtz, & Verma 2019). To address the need to measure engagement, Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit (2011) developed the COBRA framework, or Consumer's Online Brand-Related Activities, to classify the degree in which a consumer interacts with social media by three levels of activeness or engagement:

consumption, contribution, and creation. Various dimensions and drivers of CBE in social media have also been analyzed by several scholars (Gómez, Lopez, & Molina 2019; Chahal, Wirtz, & Verma 2019). Other studies have investigated more specifically the behavioral and personality traits of consumers and their varying levels of engagement on social media to understand different consumer segments from their degree of social behavior online (Kabadayi & Price 2019; Osei-Frimpong, McLean, & Famiyeh 2019). The recent work of Ferreira, Zambaldi, and Guerra (2020) considered a range of existing scales for measuring consumer engagement in different focal contexts. They identified three most relevant scales for assessing consumer engagement in social media to aid researchers in understanding each scale's limitations to choose the right engagement scale for their research needs, which will be discussed in more detail in the theoretical literature review (Ferreira, Zambaldi, & Guerra 2020).

Several studies identified differences in CBE behavior among different firm contexts, and this led to Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) seminal work on the use of social media by non-profit organizations. They identified three categories of non-profit organizations present on social media, and they classified social media messages as information, community, or action posts (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012). Smith's (2017) work expanded on the work of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) and considered their findings to assess if their message typology could be represented as a hierarchy of engagement and analyzed the types of posts that led to the most responses (likes, comments, shares, etc.) on Twitter versus Facebook for non-profits. Campbell and Lambright's (2020) research was also conducted specifically with non-profits, and they identified two simplified dimensions of social media use, presence and engagement. They measured an organization's presence online by the extent the organization was available online, for example their ownership of different social media accounts, and engagement was classified by the choices non-profits used to interact with stakeholders online (Campbell & Lambright 2020). Algharabat et al. (2018) conducted a similar study of CBE for non-profits and considered the role of telepresence, social presence, and involvement as antecedents of CBE on social media (2018). Together, these studies have addressed some of the challenges and opportunities for non-profits in managing social media and increasing CBE.

1.3. Aim of the Study and Research Questions

The research of this thesis will answer the research opportunities and inquiries addressed by several marketing researchers, especially in the areas of service marketing and non-profits. Serbetioglu and Göçer (2020) stated that there is insufficient literature regarding service providers adopting Web 2.0 in different contexts. In social media strategy literature, Choi and Theoni (2016) also suggested further research related to the challenges in social media marketing. The evaluation of social media marketing has become a highly relevant topic of discussion among practitioners, and the work of Keegan and Rowley (2016) also calls for more research into social media strategies, management, and their impact.

In the non-profit literature, there are relevant research gaps as well. Smith (2017) stated that non-profits often miss engagement opportunities in social media channels, a point that has been noted by several scholars from his findings. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) also called for a more diverse range of non-profits to be studied, as several studies have utilized the largest non-profit organizations in the U.S., and they recommended that a more diverse range of organization missions and social media use should be investigated. By analyzing non-profit professional education service providers in the Nordics, we can answer the calls for more diverse research in service marketing and non-profit marketing domains. We can also identify effective social media strategies to drive engagement and aid non-profit service providers to develop a more efficient and effective communication strategy online.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine social media marketing engagement for professional services providers, specifically in a non-profit context. The main research question of this thesis is: How can social media enhance service engagement for professional education service providers? The main research question along with the sub-questions are shown in Figure 1.

Main Research Question:

Sub-questions:

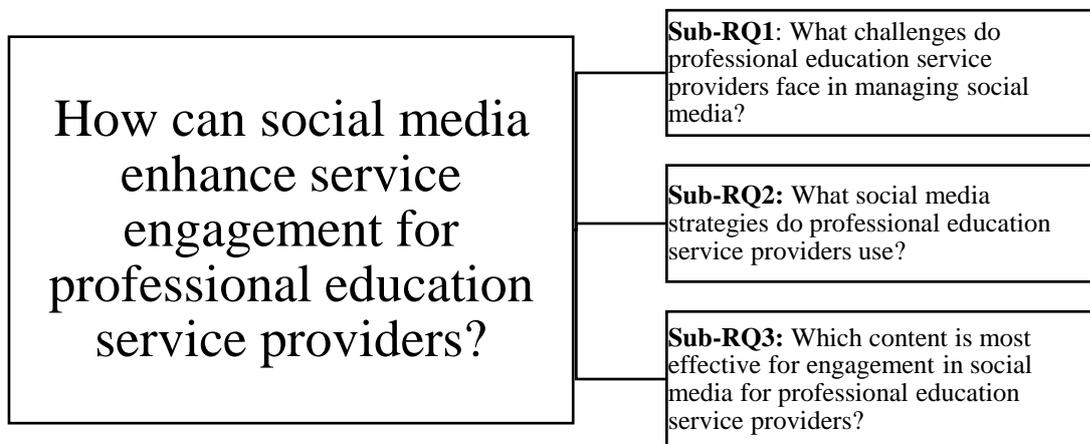


Figure 1. Research questions of the thesis

In order to find the answer to this main question, three additional sub-questions have been developed. The first sub-question (Sub-RQ1) will open up new insight into the challenges that social media and marketing managers face when implementing and managing social media in the professional education services context. The second sub-question (Sub-RQ2) will be used to identify the types of social media strategies that are currently being used in this industry sector. Once the strategies are identified and the organizations are classified by strategy type, then the third sub-question will be investigated. The third sub-question (Sub-RQ3) will be used to identify the most effective content for driving different levels of engagement on social media in the professional education services industry.

In conclusion, the aim of this thesis is to identify current challenges in social media marketing management, identify main social media strategies being employed in the professional education services industry, and identify the type of content that is most effective at driving engagement for each organization assessed. This information can be used to identify opportunities for professional education service providers to engage further with their target audience on social media and develop a more engaging social media marketing management strategy. The thesis will add to the existing research in social media strategy for B2B transactions, service marketing, non-profit marketing, and professional education services marketing.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework describes the different theoretical perspectives and their link to this research. As there is little existing research on professional education service providers, this study is conducted by comparing similar elements of other contexts such as B2B interactions, non-profits, and service marketing. Figure 2 depicts the core components of the theoretical framework of this study.

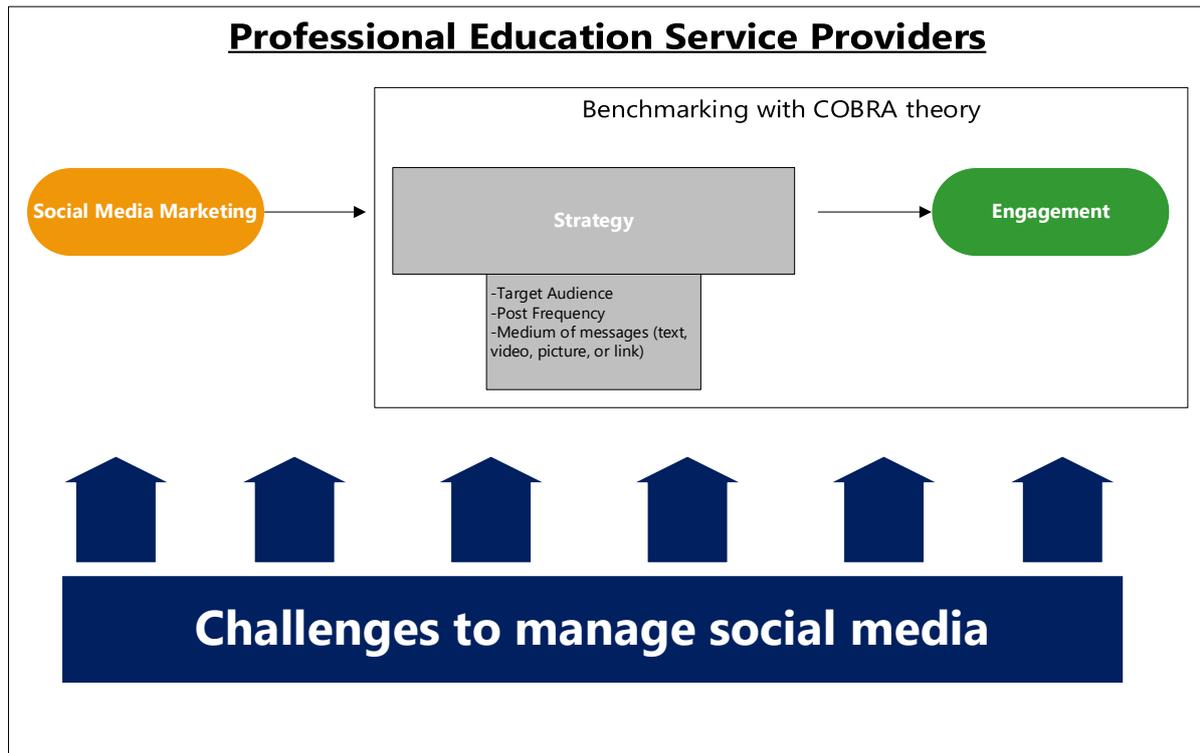


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework begins with an introduction of social media marketing and its dimensions. Then, the study investigates several elements of social media content to understand the organization's social media strategy type. Elements of social media content that can help determine the strategy or strategies deployed include target audience insights, observing post frequency, and observing the medium of messages, such as text, photo, video, or external links. All of these elements can be observed from a social media post. The target audience is an essential part of an organization's content strategy in social media and a well-developed strategy should show through in the content (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019; Kraus et al. 2019). Target audience insights can also be gathered by observing who engages with the organization's content on the service providers' page. In this thesis, the target audience will be

assessed based on the language of the post, whether in the local language or in English. Post frequency is another observable element of social media that can be helpful to study when analyzing content orientation and the interactions between consumers and organizations (Kim, Spiller, & Hettche 2015). As regular publication is an antecedent for a firm to continuously engage with their audience (Kraus et al. 2019), it is an important element to assess in this thesis. The medium of a social media message is commonly looked at in marketing studies (Smith 2017; Kim, Spiller, & Hettche 2015), and it is also observable on public social profiles, which is why it was chosen to be assessed in this thesis to understand the relationship of medium with engagement.

To investigate the social media strategy, a content analysis will be conducted on LinkedIn for chambers of commerce in the Nordic region based on the elements already highlighted. Ashley and Tuten (2015) also conducted a content analysis in their study, and although it is not the best approach for capturing outcomes of a strategy (i.e. engagement that led to event participation), it can be an effective way to identify social media strategies being used and the initial engagement on the social media platform. First, the social media strategy types will be classified according to the criteria in the study. Then, content will be categorized within each organization using the COBRA theory, and the highest performing content posts in each organization will be analyzed closer to identify the elements of content that may have impacted each level of engagement. The COBRA theory describes three levels of engagement types based on consumer's activity and interaction with a message, in this case, a post on social media (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011). COBRAs, or consumers' online brand-related activities, can be easily observed on social media due to the public nature of social media profiles. This theory also does not require reliance on detailed information from the consumer "engaging" such as in Hollebeek's (2011) model. It also does not require access to confidential organizational data, such as in the process crafted by Malthouse et al. (2019) to measure and classify the level of engagement on the organization's social channels. Utilizing this theory as the basis of classifying different engagement levels on social media will allow me to investigate and benchmark the social media pages of multiple organizations across the Nordic region. Many engagement frameworks require information in addition to the social media content posted publicly, and fewer organizations could be assessed in the timeframe of this thesis project if those models and metrics of engagement were used.

Throughout the process of developing content, formulating a strategy, and execution of the strategy, there can also be challenges along the way to manage the process. As those challenges can make a key impact on how an organization executes their strategic planning and manages social media, it is important not to ignore the service providers perspective. In this thesis, the challenges are assessed with the use of interviews of social media experts in the professional education services industry and supported with relevant literature on the topic of managing social media marketing.

1.5. Definitions of key terms and concepts

This section introduces the key terms and concepts referenced in this thesis. Definitions of these concepts should aid the readers' understanding of this paper.

Professional education service providers

Professional education services can be described as a set of services and resources to aid in educational and professional development (Missouri State University 2020). Professional education service providers could be educational institutes or other organizations who have the expertise to share their knowledge to support others in growing professional with educational services. Services could include for example, certificate programs, courses, workshops, advising sessions, documents, or networking opportunities. Services could be offered for a fee or for free, depending on the providing organization. In this thesis, when referencing professional education services, they are fee-based unless otherwise noted as an exception. Additionally, the professional education service providers in the empirical analysis of this thesis are chambers of commerce.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing can be defined as the use of different social media platforms by a person or organization to promote that entity's mission, products, and/or services (Brink 2017; Siddike & Kiran 2015). Alves, Fernandes, and Raposo (2016) defined social media marketing as a way to facilitate communication between an organization and its' customers online. The application of social media marketing may include blogs, microblogging (i.e. Twitter), social networking sites (i.e. Facebook), content communities (i.e. YouTube), or forums (i.e. Reddit), but this list is not exhaustive (Alves, Fernandes, & Raposo 2016).

Engagement

Engagement can simply be defined as the way in which someone interacts with someone or something (Gómez, Lopez, & Molina 2019). In the social media context, it can be defined as the method or level in which an audience interacts with a brand through online content, for example with a like, comment, or share (Peters et al. 2013; Buzeta, Pelsmacker, & Dens 2020). It is important also to note that engagement in social media does not end when a user interacts with a brand one time. It should be continuous, two-way communication and include multiple interactions between a brand and a social media user (Cawsey & Rowley 2016).

COBRA theory

The COBRA theoretical framework is a measure of consumer engagement that managers and practitioners can use to assess the effectiveness of their social media activity (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, & Dens 2020). COBRA, or consumers' online brand-related activities, include three category types of varying levels of engagement (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011). The three COBRA types are consuming, contributing, and creating (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011). This will be the method to categorize engagement levels from consumers on different social media pages, and the basis for the benchmarking process regarding engagement.

Strategy

The traditional way of classifying strategy is looking at it from the pyramid viewpoint. At the top of the pyramid lies the corporate strategy, or overall strategy of an organization. The secondary tier is the business strategy or SBU (strategic business unit) strategy, and finally the bottom of the pyramid is called the functional or operational level of strategy (Varadarajan 2010). Professor Michael Watkins (2007) from IMD Business School defines strategy as the way in which people of an organization allocate resources and take action to achieve key objectives. Strategy is the guiding principles for communication and decision-making at each level of the organization to fulfil their goals (Watkins 2007).

In this thesis, the main strategies discussed are the organizations' service marketing strategy and social media strategy. Service marketing strategy has a customer focus rather than a goods focus, as in other traditional marketing strategies (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler 2010). Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2010) also define service marketing strategy as a strategy that "focuses on delivering processes, experience, and intangibles to customers." All functions of

an organization have to work together, not only marketing, to create an effective service marketing strategy throughout the customer journey (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler 2010). Social media can be a great tool to enhance the service delivery process and maintain the connection between consumer and service provider.

Social media strategy is the other strategy that is discussed in this thesis. Social media marketing strategy was defined by Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (2021) as “an organization’s integrated pattern of activities [. . .] and engagement initiatives that can transform social media connectedness (networks) and interactions (influences) into valuable strategic means to achieve desirable marketing outcomes.” Li, Larimo, and Leonidou (2021) also stressed that the activities and engagement initiatives are based on an organization’s assessment of customer motivations to use brand-related social media. When looking at the organization’s engagement initiatives, some key content elements can be observed on social media, such as target audience, post frequency, and medium of the message (Li, Larimo, and Leonidou 2021; Kraus et al. 2019).

1.6. Delimitations of the study

This study focuses on professional education services organizations in the Nordic region. Data collection is done only with one type of professional education service provider, chambers of commerce. All of these organizations analyzed have already adopted social media marketing in their communication efforts to members. The first part of the study only includes data from Finnish chambers of commerce, but the content analysis takes a broader perspective to include selected chambers of commerce based in other Nordic countries. The aim is to gain a perspective of what organizations are doing in other countries that share a similar (membership) structure and mission. The first part of the study will involve interviews with two Finnish chambers of commerce. The second part of the study in the content analysis, ten chambers of commerce’s social media pages will be studied by observation on one social media platform.

There are also several theoretical delimitations in this thesis. The empirical study utilizes a qualitative approach which limits the number of organizations that can be studied within the time frame of the thesis. This qualitative approach also provides broader results derived from a small sample size, which can limit the generalizations that can be made about professional education service providers’ social media use.

The empirical study uses two theories, COBRA theory and information-community-action typology, to measure engagement on social media posts. These theories were selected based on grounds further explained in Chapter 3; however, other theories were not tested to compare the results to limit the scope of this thesis. The content analysis in the empirical study also only focuses on social media and one particular platform, LinkedIn. Although this social media platform is highly relevant in B2B relationships (Content Marketing Institute 2021), this may not be the primary social media platform used for all chambers of commerce analyzed in the study. Only one platform was chosen for the content analysis to limit the scope of the research. A study involving multiple platforms could provide valuable insights, but these additional details would require more time and resources than were available for this thesis study.

1.7. Research methodology

The research method used in this thesis is qualitative. The research design of this thesis is an embedded, single-case study method based on the definition provided by Lin (2009). This method was chosen as the research includes information about a single case, chambers of commerce in the Nordics, and the research focuses on contemporary events and experiences. The context of the study is professional education services. The embedded units of analysis are the selected chambers of commerce in the Nordics that are interviewed in the first part of the study, and those chambers of commerce used in the second part of the study, the content analysis and benchmarking. In total, there are twelve units of analysis within this case. The units were chosen based on the research objectives to examine the case from different perspectives including geographic location and size of the region served by the organization. Two units of analysis are semi-structured interviews with chambers of commerce, and the other ten units of analysis are social media content from chambers of commerce as shown in Figure 3.

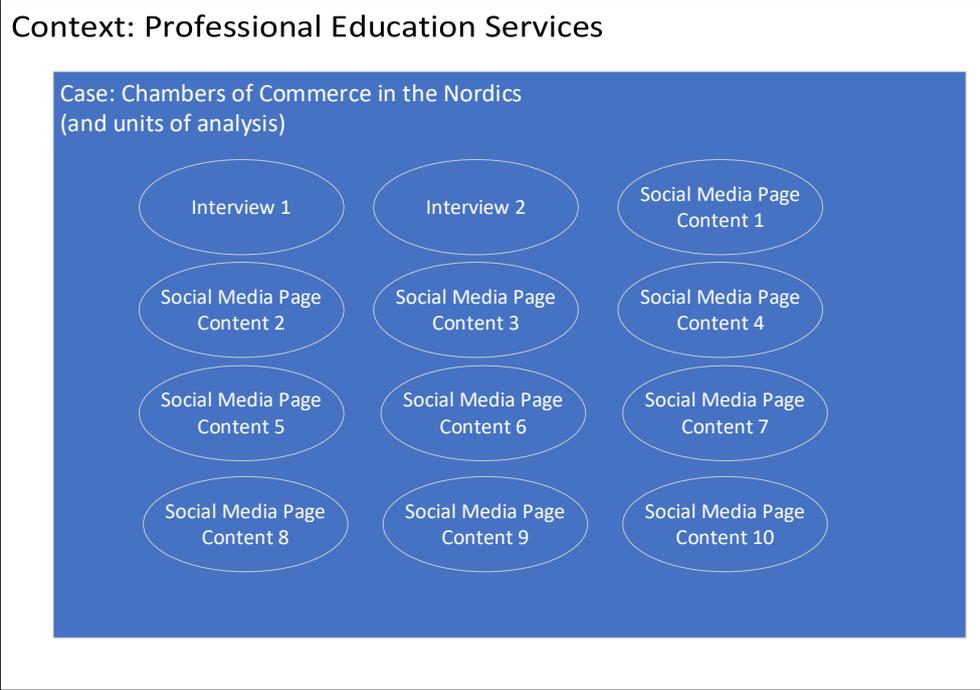


Figure 3. Embedded, single-case study design of the thesis (Adapted from Lin 2009).

In this thesis, data collection will be done with the use of interviews, direct observation through a content analysis, and benchmarking. Sub-RQ1 will require an inductive qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. Two organizations will participate in the semi-structured interviews. The design of the interviews is based on the main themes of the thesis to align with the structure of the literature review. A semi-structured interview approach has been chosen to provide insight about the organizational processes and allow flexibility in the interview process in case follow-up questions arise during the interview that may be interesting to the study (Galletta 2013). The content of the interviews will be transcribed, and then analyzed with the support of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software.

In order to understand the current levels of engagement among social media pages of chambers of commerce in the Nordics on a larger scale, a content analysis will be conducted. Sub-RQ2 and Sub-RQ3 will be answered using an inductive qualitative content analysis of social media page content on LinkedIn for ten organizations.

Sub-RQ2 will be used to identify the existing social media strategies being used through observation of social media profiles and their content. Secondary data from observations will be scraped from different social media profiles of chambers of commerce based in the Nordic

region. Once data is extracted, the content from all organizations will be combined into one data file and some pre-processing steps will take place. Then, the profiles will be categorized by strategy type based on identified recurring elements and themes that emerge. The conceptualization of social media marketing strategy in the professional services industry will be investigated further. Relevant concepts to observe include digital content, social media strategy, and service marketing tactics.

Sub-RQ3 will be used to benchmark the content within each organization. Data regarding the engagement levels on social media will be analyzed from the same social media posts collected during the analysis of Sub-RQ2. Within each organization, the posts will be classified according to the COBRA typology theory and the levels of engagement will be compared across posts for each organization. The posts with the highest levels of engagement in each organization's social media page will be benchmarked against the other posts and compared using the information-community-action typology in order to gather insights to answer Sub-RQ3.

1.8. Structure of the thesis

This section will outline the remaining components of the thesis structure. A literature review was conducted to understand the existing literature regarding the main topics related to the study. The three subchapters of chapter two include social media marketing, strategy, and engagement. Each subchapter has one or more smaller sections discussed in more detail. The research design and methods of this thesis are outlined in the third chapter. After the research context and case description are introduced, then the two components of the empirical study, interviews and the content analysis are discussed. Following these subchapters, an assessment of the reliability and validity of the research methods were analyzed at the end of the chapter. Chapter four includes a detailed list of research findings from the empirical analysis methods used in this study. The thesis concludes in chapter five with a discussion of theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review includes an overview of the existing literature related to the main themes of the study. The three subchapters include social media marketing, strategy, and engagement. Under social media strategy, the themes addressed include actors, B2B social media adoption, social media content, platforms, and management. Under strategy, the two strategies discussed in this chapter are service marketing strategy and social media strategy. Under the third subchapter, engagement, the themes include motives to engage, engagement in non-profit organizations, engagement measurements and metrics, and COBRA theory.

2.1. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing should be assessed through its' various dimensions, including actors, adoption, platforms, content, management, strategy, and outcomes. In the context of this thesis, I will focus on the preliminary outcome of engagement that leads to service engagement. Connections will be made between elements of social media marketing in the context of B2B interactions, service marketing, SMEs, and non-profits, and then applied to the professional education services industry.

2.1.1 Actors

The actors in B2B social media marketing include the users or target audience, the brand, and the brand managers or company representatives. Company representatives could be any employee or partner of the brand, and they can interact on social media under either the company brand page or under their personal account that often will state their brand affiliation. In traditional advertising, a brand may deliver a commercial and initiate a one-way form of communication to its' target audience. However, social media marketing is built on two-way communication, and the "face" of the organization is not limited to the content published by the branded company profile (Shaefer 2014). Peters et al. (2013) highlighted an important element of social media marketing and emphasized that brands and their managers are equal actors in the network as other users, such as their target audience. Therefore, successful influence and reach in social media marketing only comes from the development of the brand's network and the interactions of its users with the brand (Peters et al. 2013).

2.1.2. B2B social media adoption

Although research has shown positive impacts of an organization's business strategy including social media, B2B organizations have still been hesitant to adopt social media marketing compared with B2C organizations. Most early research also focused only on the role of social media marketing in the B2C domain and the impact on contributing to brand objectives in different industries (Michaelidou et al. 2011). Google trends showed that social media interest started to grow in 2004, but the interest in social media in B2B companies did not start to take off until six years later in 2010 (Michaelidou et al. 2011). However, more recently scholars have explored the B2B context among different types of industries and organizational sizes and structures. Two interesting and relevant organizational structures that have been studied with regards to social media adoption in the B2B domain are SMEs, or small and medium sized businesses, and non-profits. As many professional education service organizations operate with a small team of employees and limited resources, they may have similar challenges to SMEs. The non-profit structure is also relevant to this research topic as the organizations studied in the empirical research are chambers of commerce that operate as non-profits.

The origination of social media networks being adopted by businesses can be traced back to social networks offline, prior to the Internet. Organizations like chambers of commerce allow companies to come together to develop a stronger voice coming from the business community than any one company can do on its own. Networking with others to understand relevant trends in different industries, meeting potential partners and customers, and developing a common stance to lobby topics in government are some of the big reasons why member organizations join their local chamber of commerce. Social network theory and a study of the benefits of networking were most notably cited in a revised model of the Uppsala model for explaining how firms internationalize (Johanson & Vahlne 2009), and how a firm's networks can be a key part of their success (Yamin & Kurt 2014). Social networks can be especially important for small firms to develop competitive advantage for survival against larger firms with more resources (Michaelidou et al. 2011). Additionally, social networks in an online context, such as social media, offer even more benefits as the members of the network and their connections are not dependent on time or geographical location (Michaelidou et al. 2011). This is one way in which effective use of social media networks can put SMEs with limited resources on a leveler playing field with large organizations. However, one challenge to note is that an offline relationship in a network often involves personal, human interactions, and a relationship built

solely in an online network can be considered more impersonal (Michaelidou et al. 2011). Companies have to find ways to humanize their messaging online and adapt to develop similar levels of engagement from their network online as they have established already offline.

Other common challenges for social media adoption cited by B2B organizations, include an organization's lack of resources, knowledge, confidence, and metrics to define success (Valdeman, Van Praet, & Mechant 2017). Because of the growing amount of pressure in the media around social trends, many organizations have opened social media accounts, but then they have trouble managing and maintaining active accounts. According to the findings of Vedelman, Van Praet, and Mechant (2017), about 40% of organizations are experimenting and utilizing social media without a clear plan of action or goals. This shows a big opportunity for organizations to fulfill untapped potential in their communication and marketing plan to their target audience with a more defined strategy. Organizations should set up clear goals of what they want to achieve with social media, and then the way they achieve those goals can be optimized with various experimentations and trial and error. Experimentation without goals can lead to wasted resources. For SMEs and small non-profits, organizations may not have full-time staff that are already experts in social media marketing, but with leadership support, self-study, and collaboration within industry networks, some of the knowledge gaps can be filled in order to set up the organization's first social media strategy.

Non-profits often share similar resource constraints to SMEs in adopting social media; however, they also have some unique challenges due to their organizational structure. Nah and Saxton (2012) conducted research to craft a model of social media use and adoption by non-profit organizations and studied the 100 largest non-profits in the U.S. They measured social media usage with the criteria of presence, volume, and dialogue, and also measured the connection of those criteria with three different approaches to non-profit mission fulfillment (Nah & Saxton 2012). The three strategies they classified were fundraising, lobbying, and market-based programs (such as fees for services or membership organizations) (Nah & Saxton 2012). Membership organizations engage with their clients in transactions similar to other B2B or B2C for-profit organizations, but in the non-profit context, any revenue generated from programs is put back into the organization to fund its' mission and used for the benefit of members. Membership organizations proved to have lower levels of social media updates and dialogic outreach with other users compared to other non-profit mission fulfillment strategies (Nah & Saxton 2012). This exhibits an opportunity for membership non-profits such as

chambers of commerce to utilize social media more to engage with their existing members, attract new members, and attract more participation in their member services and events.

Scholars have also considered the process of adoption of information and communication technology or ICT, and categorized organizations based on their stage in the adoption process. These types of studies are also relevant to social media adoption and understanding different variations and challenges of adoption. Early research looked at adoption of ICT by businesses in the form of a process with sequential steps, such as the DTI adoption ladder used by the United Kingdom's Department of Trade and Industry (Taylor & Murphy 2004; Brink 2017). However, this model only showed one way of adoption by an organization in progressively higher stages. Taylor and Murphy (2004) investigated the adoption of e-business in the SME context and adapted the prior work of Foley and Ram's model. Taylor and Murphy's (2004) PIT model exhibited three categories of advancement in the use of e-commerce from six areas of the business. This model was more accurate for classifying SMEs each department is often at a different stage of technology adoption depending on the leadership, resources deployed, and the overall company goals and priorities. In the first stage of the PIT model, "publicise," the organization was included in this category if they used their web site to publish information or share some relevant information, such as schedules from the company with customers and suppliers (Taylor & Murphy 2004). The second stage was to "interact", and organizations in this stage were utilizing automated communication systems and integrating technology with their business processes for example by authenticating online purchases (Taylor & Murphy 2004). The final stage was the "transform" phase in which the businesses in this category were able to transform their operational activities in a specific department and enable new options and customization for customers to better serve their needs in an online environment (Taylor & Murphy 2004). In this model, the end goal was always the highest level of adoption and for organizations to be in the "transform" category.

Although Taylor and Murphy's model breaks down technology adoption into more dimensions than previous models, it still relies on a stages model process that an organization will reach the "transform" phase only after going through "publicise" and "interact," respectively.

The work of Brink (2017) investigated more specific aspects of e-business and looked into B2B social media marketing and antecedents to the application of social media; however, his findings differed from the stages model of ICT adoption shown in Taylor and Murphy's (2004)

PIT model. Brink's (2017) study investigated challenges of actual implementation in B2B SMEs to make an impact on operations. His work did not support a stages model of adoption as a relevant path that organizations could follow in practice in the context of B2B SMEs (Brink 2017). This shows that a firm's level of technology adoption can vary between departments and even between specific applications of e-business in a department, as shown with the varying results from the study of e-commerce and social media marketing processes. It also shows the high relevancy of firm context in the previous studies as B2B organizations of different sizes have different needs and their processes of implementation can also vary, proving there is not only one "right" path to adopting social media marketing successfully in an organization.

Media richness theory is another theory that can be used to explain social media adoption by firms, and also stresses that firms have different needs (Serbetcioglu & Göçer 2020). The media richness theory utilizes four factors to measure and determine which social media channels are more effective in each factor (Serbetcioglu & Göçer 2020). Firms can then utilize this approach to assess which channels would be most effective based on their objectives that also align with the media richness factor(s).

The studies on ICT adoption also highlight an important point that recommendations derived from research are not always adopted due to a gap in knowledge between the theory and practical implementation. Even though many firms and their social media managers understand how social media can be useful to develop their brand and grow their business, there are often other underlying challenges that social media managers face to implement social media to enhance their business. Brink's (2007) study on B2B SMEs identified two antecedents for social media adoption to enhance business operations. The first antecedent is for firms to champion an "open collaborative business model innovation for the application of social media in specific business processes" (Brink 2007). The second antecedent is for firms to have a central and distributed leadership that goes beyond the SME and reaches customers and partners as well (Brink 2007). Brink (2007) brought up the importance of collaboration throughout the organization and the right leadership model to utilize internal and external resources and networks effectively so that social media marketing becomes a part of all areas of the business. Without considering these antecedents for social media application to enhance business operations, organizations may face significant hurdles to achieve their goals in social media marketing.

2.1.3. Social media content

Social media content is an important dimension of social media marketing that can help managers develop the right social media marketing strategy for their organization. This section covers various examples of content to use on social media as well as previous academic studies and their findings regarding classifying post types, content orientation, content frequency, and other content strategies.

Wang et al. (2019) conducted research on the use of content marketing in-person versus online for B2B professional service organizations and found that in this context, engagement with digital content marketing was more effective at driving sales than in-person content initiatives. They suggested that professional service organizations look at content marketing as a customer engagement initiative and treat it as part of the organization's service offering to provide added value for customers that will lead to longer term engagement with the brand and consumption of other (paid) services down the line (Wang et al. 2019). Examples of content in the professional services industry for in-person activities could be conferences or in-person training (Wang et al. 2019). However, in a digital environment, content can also help clients stay updated about relevant industry trends and help clients make better decisions by providing them advice that they can use to think differently about their own business or provide ideas to increase collaboration further with the service provider (Taiminen & Ranaweera 2019; Wang et al. 2019).

Firms who have difficulty thinking of content ideas can start generating social media content from other existing marketing initiatives, such as from content in newsletters, public relations efforts, or other marketing material already being sent out to consumers, members, and partners (Shaefer 2014). Pictures, videos, and quotes can be extracted from presentations, training, and other events and shared afterwards to extend engagement with participants and share valuable content that may be relevant for organizations that did not attend the event (Shaefer 2014). In Keinänen and Kuivalainen's (2015) study about B2B use in industrial marketing, they advised managers to enrich content shared across a variety of channels and align the medium with the target group on each platform.

Social media content can help firms develop a stronger voice of authority, build up their credibility in a public environment, and also help the organization show up better in search results (Shaefer 2014). Another suggestion for content inspiration is for team members of the organization to share with the social media manager some of the most common questions they receive from their partners and customers regarding membership, services, events, or benefits (Shaefer 2014). Then, the answers can be shared in short Q&A posts or short video replies in a content series on social channels. Shaefer (2014) wrote that “social media is the most powerful business network tool ever created,” and there are numerous ways for organizations to get started with providing meaningful content to their members and partners to increase engagement. A survey conducted by the Content Marketing Institute (2021) among over 1700 B2B companies found that the most common distribution channels for content used today by companies is social media (89% of respondents), email (87%), and the organization’s website or blog (86%). This shows that although social media is a useful distribution platform for content among B2B organizations, other distribution methods such as email and blogs, and potentially even print, are still important communications methods.

In addition to defining the types of content that organizations can use on social media, it is also important to look at how an organization can utilize content to achieve other goals, such as increased use of services, or engagement. Taiminen and Ranaweera (2019) conducted research on how to utilize digital content to foster brand engagement in B2B relationships and they put a particular emphasis on a firm’s role to be helpful in addition to providing meaningful content. Taiminen and Ranaweera (2019) stated that digital content marketing should serve two main purposes, first by providing relevant, meaningful content that benefits consumers, and secondly, they supported the objectives Hollebeek and Macky (2019) identified of fostering trust, brand engagement, and developing relationships. For firms to be successful in achieving those dual objectives with digital content, firms should investigate and develop a stronger understanding of how a consumer will use content to make better decisions and take a deep look into the consumer’s perspective (Taiminen & Ranaweera 2019). Harad (2013) presented a similar perspective of the objectives of content to generate interest, attract prospects, and build trust. Effective digital content is not only about sharing information, but also about delivering and presenting it in a helpful way that engages consumers (Taiminen & Ranaweera 2019). This is important advice to keep in mind as organizations usually already have lots of information already shared online, but sometimes the content is not easily digestible. Social media can be a great way to condense content already present online in other forms, such as on

a website, and present an easily readable summary of key points or a visual to attract more interest in the topic. Social media posts can lead content readers to visit other content pieces, such as blog posts or webpages as well.

There are also several scholars who have focused on social media content for non-profits to understand its efficacy, and the effect on engagement. Smith’s (2017) study looked at the correlation of post type (text, picture, link, or video), communication type based off of Lovejoy and Saxton’s (2012) information-community-action typology, and user engagement on individual posts as shown in Figure 4. User engagement was measured on Facebook with the likes, comments, and shares, in order of engagement level, and on Twitter with favorites and retweets (Smith 2017). Engagement was proven as the best way for an organization to measure signs of interest, and the research findings revealed different results for each social media platform studied (Smith 2017). On Twitter, the post type made a more significant impact on engagement in individual posts compared to communication type; however, on Facebook, the communication types made a more significant impact on user engagement with individual posts than post type (Smith 2017). This study highlighted an important point from the research findings that social media platforms can be used to achieve different goals for organizations (Smith 2017).

Category	Message Functions for Non-profits on social media
Information	Information
Community	Giving recognition and thanks Acknowledgement of current & local events Responses to reply messages Response solicitation
Action	Promoting an event Donation appeal Selling a product Call for volunteers and/or employees (job ads) Lobbying and advocacy Request to join another site or vote for the organization Request to learn how to help

Figure 4. Message functions according to the information-community-action typology of social media messages by non-profits (adapted from Lovejoy & Saxton 2012).

Social media content has also been analyzed by its strategic message and content orientation and type. After observing and analyzing the social media accounts of 100 major brands, Kim, Spiller, and Hettche (2015) discovered that three posts per week was the most common post frequency, and photos were the most common media type compared with text and video content (Kim, Spiller, & Hettche 2015). The scholars also categorized the content orientation of posts by task-, interaction-, and self-oriented communication adapted from the original work of Bass (1967) and Sheth (1976) in categorizing salespersons' communication orientation. Messages that were classified as task-oriented messages were goal-oriented and related to selling a product/service or attracting interest in an event (Kim, Spiller, & Hettche 2015). Interaction-focused messages were more focused on relationship building and socializing, and self-oriented messaging was often related to the organization's perspectives and interests (Kim, Spiller, & Hettche 2015). Their study grouped findings into five industry categories to compare data and identify the most commonly used strategy by industry type. Classifying messages by a particular content strategy is a practice that Harad (2013) also used. In her work, she stated that marketers should plan content to fall under one (or more) of these strategic categories of education (teaching), editorial (sharing a perspective), or entertainment based on the content goals and consumer needs (Harad 2013).

2.1.4. Platforms

The selection of social media platforms is an important consideration for companies. Gruner and Power (2018) conducted a study of B2B organizations in Australia who had a multiplatform marketing approach across Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, and found that widespread social media efforts can negatively affect the firm's marketing activity on Facebook. Each platform has its own limitations and audience, and organizations should actively determine how they will use each platform and determine if it is worthwhile to join another network to reach an audience that is not present on existing platforms. Simply making oneself present on a social platform will not be a factor in building relationships with one's customers. It is acceptable to be present on multiple social network platforms, but if you want to include social channels in your marketing strategy, you will likely need to focus on 1-3 networks to be most effective, especially if you have limited resources (Gruner & Power 2013). If you have more resources and expertise in social media marketing, you can instead focus on utilizing each platform for a specific type of message to utilize your time most effectively to reach the right audience in the right place.

Among B2B marketers, LinkedIn is the most common network used with over 96% of marketers using it according to a survey sent out by the Content Marketing Institute (2021) with a sample size of more than 1700 global companies. The second and third most popular networks for B2B organizations are Facebook and Twitter with 82% of marketers using each (Content Marketing Institute 2021). According to the same survey, LinkedIn was the organic platform that proved to yield the highest content marketing results over the last year according to respondents (Content Marketing Institute 2021). LinkedIn can also be the most ideal social platform for sharing long-form content (Juntunen, Ismagilova, & Oikarinen 2020). Video and image-based platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram have also had quick B2B adoption rates (Yaghtin et al. 2020).

Twitter is a widely used platform, especially among large companies and organizations. As a microblogging platform, the character limit requires succinct and straight to the point information and status updates. Many B2C companies have had high success rates with Twitter by being able to interact regularly to answer their customers, but the success stories in B2B organizations are less well-known in academic literature (Swani, Brown, & Milne 2014). Swani, Brown, and Milne (2014) assessed in their research that B2B marketers were in general less certain about how to effectively take advantage of microblogging platforms like Twitter compared to B2C counterparts. Twitter was found to be the second most popular platform among the world's largest B2B organizations behind LinkedIn (Juntunen, Ismagilova, & Oikarinen 2020). They analyzed content on Twitter in their study to identify strategies among B2B organizations, as the short-form character limit requires organizations to use "imaginative content tactics" (Juntunen, Ismagilova, & Oikarinen 2020).

Content studies on Instagram have also increased more recently in academic research as more B2B organizations adopt it and seek new opportunities there. A content study on Instagram was used to classify content marketing types, goals, and understand effectiveness through observation (Yaghtin, Safarzadeh, & Karimi Zand 2020). Visual content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube can help organizations gain attention and public approval when images or videos are shared among users (Yaghtin, Safarzadeh, & Karimi Zand 2020).

Facebook is still a relevant platform for organizations to use for social media content as the sheer size of Facebook users globally is the highest among social platforms. Although it is primarily a platform used for personal networking, business-related content is often shared here

by organizations, both organically and with paid advertisements (Bodnar & Cohen 2012). Bodnar and Cohen (2012) found that a best practice for posting content on Twitter and Facebook is using a 10-4-1 rule. This means that for every ten posts or tweets with links to articles (third-party pages), there should be four posts regarding company updates or company blog posts, and one link to a company landing page (Bodnar & Cohen 2012). The landing page links should have some call to action (Bodnar & Cohen 2012), such as a link to buy a service, enroll in an event, or to become a member of the organization.

2.1.5. Management

Practical challenges to manage social media marketing have attracted scholars to investigate the subject further and develop different academic models and frameworks to help guide organizations. As social media can be an important tool for firms to continuously listen, digest information, and respond appropriately to their target audience, management strategies and challenges are important to consider (Peters et al. 2013). One social media framework designed for management use was created under the overarching framework of Stimulus, Organism, and Response paradigm (SOR) and a continuous feedback loop (Peters et al. 2013). The four interconnected elements of the framework proposed by Peters et al. (2013) for social media management include motives, content, network structure, and social roles and interactions. The framework also focuses on marketing inputs and marketing outputs (Peters et al. 2013). Another study conducted by Taylor and Murphy (2004) investigated more broadly the management of e-business tools (such as social media) in multiple function areas of the firm and what different stages of technology adoption could look like in areas such as logistics, finance, procurement, and marketing. Although some of the challenges of resources and finances were commonly cited, they also reiterated the importance of leadership in implementing tools like social media and their role in overcoming some of the challenges that firms will face in developing their social media efforts (Taylor & Murphy 2004).

The complexities and challenges faced by managers were also acknowledged by Parsons and Lepkowska-White (2018), and they developed a framework to outline the actions needed at each stage of social media strategy development. They considered social media as an enabler for managers and firms in their overall operations to facilitate engagement and interactions online with their customers (Parsons and Lepkowska-White 2018). How firms considered their strategic focus shaped the four actions within the framework: messaging/projecting,

monitoring, assessing, and responding (Parsons and Lepkowska-White 2018). Another framework was suggested by McCann and Barlow (2015) that the three stages of social media marketing management consist of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The work of Keegan and Rowley (2017) also includes these three activities (planning, implementation, and evaluation) in their framework, but indirectly.

Another perspective of management functions related to customer engagement objectives was investigated in a study by Żyminkowska (2019). Żyminkowska's (2019) model positioned customer engagement as an object of managerial decisions and identified that firms can choose to execute marketing tasks that are related to the value delivery process or execute marketing tasks related to management of the network. Firms can categorize their existing social media marketing tasks with this model and understand where the gaps lie between their engagement objectives and their marketing activities to improve their strategy management. Żyminkowska's (2019) dual model of customer engagement and the categories of each are shown in Figure 5.

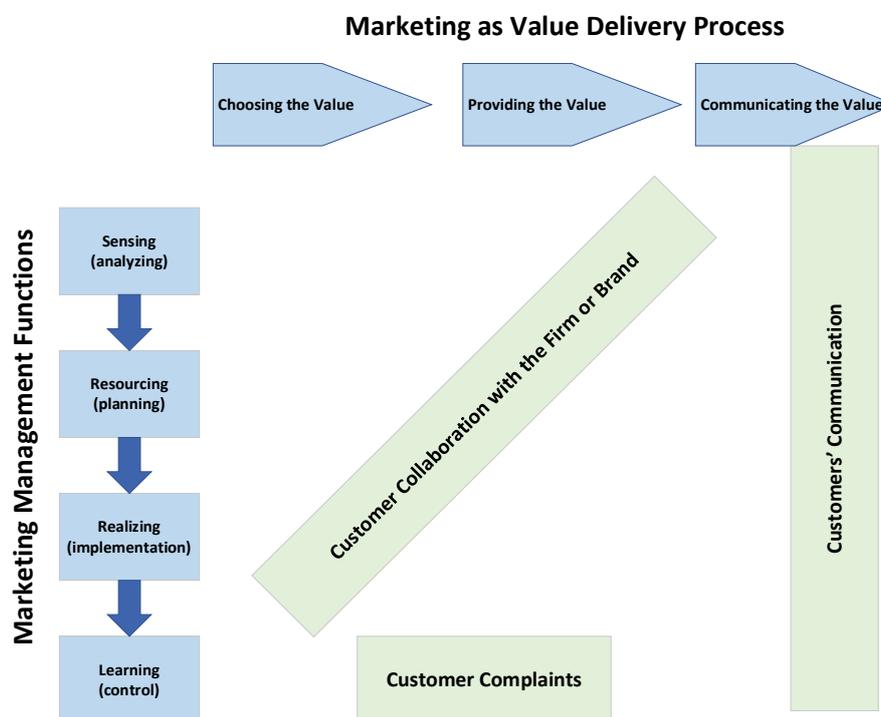


Figure 5: Dual model of customer engagement forms in marketing management (Adapted from Żyminkowska 2019)

Several marketing scholars have also investigated some of the unique challenges among social media marketing management in SMEs (Taylor & Murphy 2004; Brink 2017; Ayele & Barabadi 2018). Brink’s (2017) study found that the biggest challenge in B2B social media application was the difficulty “to overcome the gap between acknowledging the usefulness of social media and its actual limited application.” The two antecedents discovered through interviews with SME managers was to create an open collaborative business model for innovation, and secondly to create ownership and responsibility with central and distributed leadership (Brink 2017). Some managers interviewed in the study tried to overcome the “gap” between acknowledgement and implementation by outsourcing social media marketing activities (Brink 2017). However, in the B2B context, a high knowledge of local processes and understanding of the market was required, and communication to an external team member often created even more difficulties for the team (Brink 2017). Choi and Thoeni (2016) also interviewed social media managers during their study to contribute to engagement literature from the organizational process perspective. They identified four steps under the category of organizational processes and subsequent organizational activities under each one, and their framework is shown in Figure 6 (Choi & Thoeni 2016). Research findings showed that user to user engagement was a key contributor to the firm’s goals in their social media strategy, and it also led to improved services and offerings when firms utilized social media as a way to observe and learn from consumers (Choi & Thoeni 2016).

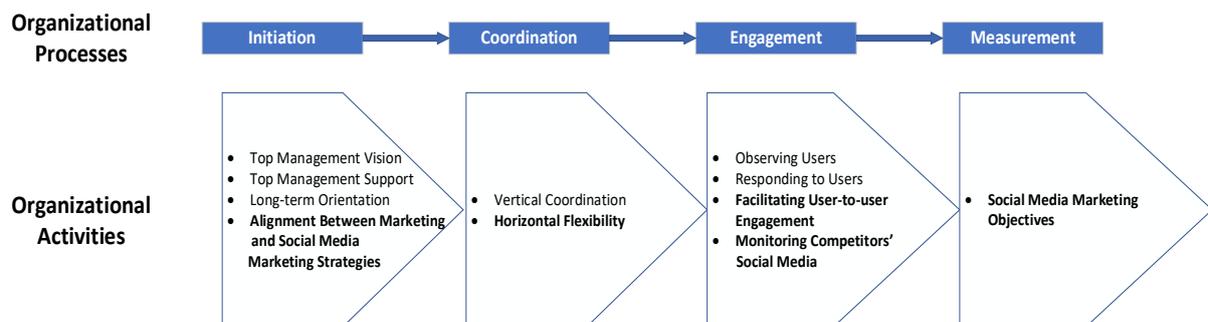


Figure 6: Framework for organizational processes and activities (Adapted from Choi & Theoni 2016)

Another one of the big challenges that firms face is the need to understand social media channels and their strategy first, before they can manage the channels effectively (Peters et al. 2013). In a study on marketing management challenges among Nordic SMEs in the metal industry, Ayele and Barabadi’s (2018) found that more than half of the organizations studied did not have a proper understanding of the fundamentals of marketing management goals nor

a clearly defined strategy. Three other marketing management challenges discovered in this context include a struggle with resources (time, money, or talent), difficulty reaching clients effectively (particularly Swedish and Finnish SMEs), and low assistance from government and local municipalities regarding aspects of marketing management (Ayele & Barabadi 2018). Additional research into specific marketing management challenges in the Nordic region for other organization types could also be beneficial to identify more opportunities for effective social media strategy development and management.

2.2. Strategy

In this section, the main strategies discussed in the thesis are discussed, which include the organizations' service marketing strategy and social media strategy.

2.2.1 Service marketing strategy

Services marketing was developed as a sub-discipline of marketing to differentiate between traditional, goods-based marketing and the marketing of services (Vargo & Lusch 2004b). Service marketing scholars also led the change from a transaction-focused environment to a strategy of relationship marketing, and service-oriented logic across both goods and services (Vargo & Lusch 2004a). Vargo and Lusch (2004b) argue in their research that the generally accepted dimensions of services marketing that make it different from goods marketing are often misunderstood, and the two types of exchange do not have to be mutually exclusive. Many definitions of services utilize terminology to differentiate them from goods (Vargo & Lusch 2004b); however, Vargo and Lusch (2004a) proposed the definition of service "as the application of specialized competences (skills and knowledge) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself." From this perspective, goods can also be considered as an indirect means of providing a service (Vargo & Lusch 2004b). This shows that strategy literature regarding the transaction of goods could still be relevant for gaining some insights in the service context and vice versa, but more work still needs to be done to further support this.

Some of the common themes in service marketing literature include dimensions of service strategy, processes for strategy development, and service marketing transformation. Gray (2006) identified strategies for services marketing in the professional services industry by

benchmarking industry leading service providers in New Zealand. Gray's (2006) study concluded by proposing three main conditions for effective services strategies: integration of communication, service innovation, and delivery; investment in people; and overall guidance by corporate reputation/branding objectives. Kumar et al (2019) also investigated service innovation, but in the healthcare services industry. They highlighted the role of service flexibility and service climate in developing a service marketing strategy (Kumar et al. 2019). Service climate is the perception of behavior from the employee perspective and the behavior expected related to customer service and service quality (Kumar et al. 2019).

Another impactful case study was conducted by Jarvenpaa and Tuunainen (2013) who investigated service strategy and the use of social media technology to transform service innovation. In the case study conducted with Finnair, a commercial airline company, the scholars saw how increased technology use can also amplify the organization's weaknesses regarding consumer interactions and service innovation, and firms need to be prepared to improve these when pursuing their other marketing activities (Jarvenpaa & Tuunainen 2013). The study exhibited a timeline of initiatives, socialization tactics, and shared the key learning lessons for the firm throughout their service strategy transformation (Jarvenpaa & Tuunainen 2013). Although customer engagement was a part of their long-term objective throughout every campaign, they found that their later, more mature initiatives had more specific and focused short-term objectives (Jarvenpaa & Tuunainen 2013). These more manageable "steps" were easier to achieve and allowed Finnair to impact their service delivery throughout their process of reaching their long-term goal of increased customer engagement (Jarvenpaa & Tuunainen 2013).

Grönroos (2020), an influential scholar in service literature, stated in his recent article that service marketing has been neglected in recent years and more scholars have investigated topics such as service innovation, customer service experience, and service branding instead (2020). Although these topics, as well as the digitalization of service are all important, service marketing research and conceptual development for service marketing strategy are still needed and could be even more impactful for practitioners (Grönroos 2020).

2.2.2 Social media strategy

Now that the relevant literature on service marketing strategy has been discussed, it is important to gain a better understanding of the existing literature about an organization's social media strategy. First, the role of messages and their impact on the social media strategy are introduced, and then, research findings regarding the strategy development process are mentioned.

An organization's social media strategy should include communicating the key messages, updates, events, and relevant updates regarding the organization's members, partners, and community. Marketers often struggle to identify the right message with their content on social media, and a greater understanding of message types would be beneficial. One social media marketing strategy framework proposed includes four phases and looks at social media content strategy, delivery, and impact on consumers (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019). The first phase includes four types of firm generated content strategies or "customer interaction messaging strategies" as titled in the conceptual framework, and this framework is shown in Figure 7 (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019).

Phase I: Customer Interaction Messaging Strategies

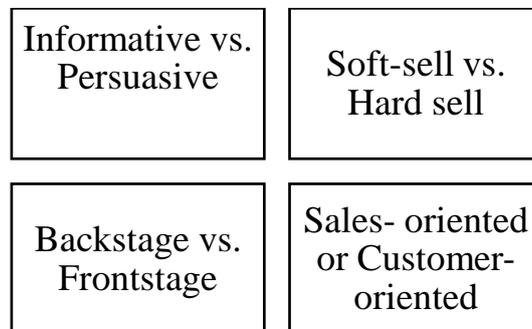


Figure 7. Phase I of the taxonomical approach to understanding firm generated content on social media (adapted from Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019).

All of the messaging strategy choices are dependent on the organizations' goals and their product or service category (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019). For example, in the choice between sales-oriented versus customer-oriented, this choice is usually dependent on the firm's goals (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019). If a firm needs a boost in short-term sales, a sales-oriented approach may be most effective, but for B2B interactions regarding service providers, many

organizations are more focused on relationship building that can affect long-term profits and a customer-approach would be more effective in that case (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019).

Investigating content and the role of messaging can impact strategy formation, and some scholars have also worked on developing other formalized frameworks for practitioners to use in creating a social media strategy. In the research by Kraus et al. (2019), his team investigated the process of how SMEs create content and execute their social media marketing strategy with limited resources by interviewing social media managers. Their findings suggested that organizations use a variety of post types, especially videos, photos and infographics, as these types of content are most often shared (Kraus et al. 2019). They also found that in the most successful cases, firms that utilized data insight tools on social platforms, regularly checked the engagement results of their content, and planned out content prior to posting can all be ways to overcome resource restraints and still deliver quality content (Kraus et al. 2019).

Another study investigated the social media transformation process of turning content into strategy, and Kilgour, Sasser, and Larke (2015) highlighted a key point about the primary motives of users in social media. Most people use social media to communicate and connect with other people (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke 2015). A more complex and detailed conceptualization of social media marketing strategy development was proposed by Li, Larimo, & Leonidou (2021), which consists of four parts: drivers (marketing objectives in communication), inputs (engagement initiatives and social media behavior among customers), throughputs (manner that the firm connects and interacts with their customers), and outputs (resulting engagement outcome).

Regardless of the organization type, every organization can benefit by deepening their connections with their customers and members, and this purpose should be at the core of every social media strategy. Another study that investigated social media strategy formation found it to be dependent on the four elements of a firm's marketing scope, culture, structure, and governance (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017). These four elements are also visible in the conceptual framework of social media marketing management proposed by Parson & Lepkowska-White (2018) as preliminary criteria that must be defined at the start of strategy development.

In addition to studies regarding a framework for strategy development, there are also studies that investigate some of the benefits for social media strategy development. Lou et al.'s (2019) study showed that a firm's social media strategy can directly enhance brand loyalty and engagement. Organizations should act as facilitators for consumers' own learning processes through their content (Lou et al. 2019). Together, these studies provide a foundation on the type of previous studies conducted regarding social media strategy, the development process, its antecedents, best practices, and benefits.

2.3. Engagement

In this section, the outcome of engagement from a social media marketing and service marketing strategy will be discussed. Key elements include motives to engage, engagement applications in non-profit organizations, engagement measurements, metrics, scales, and the COBRA theory.

2.3.1. Motives to engage

In marketing and psychology literature, scholars have often studied the motives and drivers of consumer behavior. Understanding the psychological components behind an action such as engagement can be beneficial for firms to target their audience more effectively and develop realistic engagement goals (Żymkowska 2019).

The concept of customer engagement behavior for service businesses, its antecedents and consequences was investigated by Doorn et al. (2010). Customer engagement behavior includes different types of engagement behaviors between firms and their users that extend beyond a purchase, and those behaviors stem from motivational drivers (Doorn et al. 2010). One potential antecedent to customer engagement behavior is loyalty, and customers could use voice or exit components based on Hirschman's (1970) model (Doorn et al. 2010). Voice behavior is a type of communication used to express one's experience, and exit behaviors are those that are used to expand a relationship with a brand/firm or curb their relationship (Doorn et al. 2010). Both of these types of behaviors can be seen in brand communities such as on social media. Doorn et al. (2010) proposed five dimensions of consumer engagement behavior to include valence, form or modality, scope, nature of its impact, and customer goals. The form of customer engagement could be a wide range of activities, including participation in an event,

a donation, or a complaint (Doorn et al. 2010). Firms can impact and influence consumer engagement behavior by providing a platform that supports customers and enables consumers to communicate their concerns, reviews, or suggestions (Doorn et al. 2010). Firms can also work to facilitate greater customer-to-customer engagement, such as creating communities on social media or hosting networking gatherings where consumers can share ideas together. These types of facilitating behaviors (for customer engagement behavior) led by firms may lead to ideas for the firm to improve their services and can even be a source of competitive advantage (Doorn et al. 2010).

Another approach was taken by Kabadayi and Price (2014) as they measured brand engagement on Facebook by categorizing the modes of interactions between users and a brand into two categories of broadcasting, one to many, and communicating, one to few. The choice of interaction mode is dependent on the intended audience for each post, broadcasting for example can lead to more comments on posts, but it is less personal (Kabadayi & Price 2014). Depending on the target audience, the higher level of activity may be superficial and may not lead to further engagement outcomes like purchases (Kabadayi & Price 2014). Their study shows that insights can be gained from analyzing likes and comments, but other means of customer interaction and perspectives are needed to ensure firms are targeting the right behavior that will lead to further engagement and desired outcomes for their target audience.

Segmenting social media users based on their level of involvement in the product or service category and relationship with the organization/brand is a way to understand motives to engage also (Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke 2015). Kilgour, Sasser, and Larke (2015) proposed a social segmentation matrix as shown in Table 1 for organizations to understand their consumers and craft content that can shift users from one category to the next based on the organization’s goals. Żyminkowska (2019) also stressed that the target engagement level can vary by customer segments and product or service categories.

Table 1. Social segmentation matrix (Adapted from Kilgour, Sasser, & Larke 2015)

		Category Involvement	
		High	Low
Brand Relationship	Strong	Knowledgeable advocates	Disinterested supporters
	Weak	Interested potentials	Disinterested prospects

Consumer motives to engage with digital content marketing have also been categorized into three categories of functional motive, hedonic motive, and authenticity motive (Hollebeek & Macky 2019). A functional motive can be described as a desire to learn by seeking out digital content (Hollebeek & Macky 2019). A hedonic motive could be an emotional drive for entertainment, transportation, etc., and an authenticity motive is one that is driven by one's interest in validating or investigating brand-related credibility (Hollebeek & Macky 2019). When thinking about strategy, it is important to understand the motives behind engaging with digital content marketing so organizations provide content that addresses motives from different perspectives.

Another theory in social media literature to understand why users participate in different social communities online is the uses and gratifications theory. It is a functionalist perspective that user behavior to seek out media or content is driven by one's needs and motivations to obtain a goal or gratification (by using that media) (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens 2020). The five classifications of needs are cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative, and tension release (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens 2020). The motivations for users to use social media and the gratifications received by users have been studied and classified under this theory. Common gratifications (motivations) identified include information, entertainment, integration and social interaction, and personal identity (Luo 2002; Ashley & Tuten 2015; Kamboj 2020; Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens 2020). Two additional motivations specially proposed for the context of social media use are remuneration and empowerment (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens 2020). In the study conducted by Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2020), they found that empowerment and remuneration motives were the most critical drivers of consumer brand related activities across four different social media platform types studied. By understanding consumer motivations and their desired gratifications, brands can develop a more effective strategy that meets those expectations and the needs of their audience, while also pursuing a long-term goal of engagement.

Another perspective of the uses and gratifications theory was used in Serbetcioglu and Göçer's study (2020) to explain how firms choose different social media tools and content, based on the capabilities of those tools and their needs. A reason why firms identify user motivations on

each social media type is to plan out how they can facilitate and drive engagement most effectively (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, & Dens' 2020). The work of Chahal, Wirtz, and Verma (2019) also proposed that different social media types can each have specific social media engagement purposes.

Although research into consumer motivation is important, little attention had been placed on investigating consumer attitude formation in social media (Chen, Kim, & Lin 2015). The model they developed identified the dominating influences in consumers' processing of brand-related information on Facebook from a simulated experiment comparing posts created by brands and posts created by consumers (Chen, Kim, Lin 2015). Their findings showed that contrary to previous studies, affect (message related feelings) were a more powerful determinant in information processing in social media marketing compared with cognitive (message related thoughts) (Chen, Kim & Lin 2015). A good understanding of the target consumers and the attitudes and drivers of their actions on social media will be beneficial for developing the brand's strategic approach on each social media platform.

Brand image can also play a role in engagement behavior, and several scholars have investigated this effect. Brand image includes attributes that customers associate with the organization (brand) name and benefits and value associated with the attributes, such as skilled service representatives, efficiency, professionalism, and accessibility as the main traits associated with Schivinski's (2020) case study with Airbnb. The study by Żymkowska (2018) also measured the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of customer value, but specifically on their impact on customer engagement among three different consumer goods (phones, beer, and clothing). Żymkowska (2018) found that both dimensions, hedonic and utilitarian values were significant drivers of customer engagement in the study, and he suggested that managers develop a set of engagement incentives that are complemented with utilitarian values. Although the Żymkowska's (2018) study only looked at B2C transactions, they focused on the people behind the decision and the psychological factors and attitudes that influenced behavior. Even in B2B transactions, people are behind decisions and engagement activities, even if they are acting on behalf of a firm. However, oftentimes in B2B transactions, more than one person is collecting information and impacted by different psychological factors during the customer journey. All of these studies help marketers in understanding motives behind interactions with a brand or organization, and they can be important in planning strategy that leads to increased service engagement.

2.3.2 Engagement in non-profit organizations

In this section, previous literature regarding non-profit organizations and engagement will be discussed. A non-profit organization can vary in their purpose and mission, which is why not all non-profit literature regarding marketing and engagement is applicable to non-profits like chambers of commerce. In a comparison of non-profit types based on revenue streams, the category of “commercial non-profit” most aligns with the research application in this thesis (Hansmann 1980; Nah & Saxton 2012). Commercial non-profits are focused on delivering programs that generate revenue with fees for service transactions, and these types of non-profits may even have greater incentive to reach their customers on social media than non-profits only generating revenue through grants or donations (Nah & Saxton 2012). In Nah and Saxton’s (2012) study, they identified factors that influence social media adoption and implementation of social media in non-profits and some of the specific types of issues non-profits face.

One example of a commercial non-profit is health-oriented organizations in the U.S. Neiger et al. (2013) categorized metrics on Twitter into low, medium, and high engagement levels with supporting descriptions of the metric’s ranking. The high engagement category includes the quantity of followers that engaged as participants or recipients of the organizations’ programs or services, and also those who supported the delivery of programs and services. In a platform like Facebook, high engagement metrics could also include shares or the quantity of user generated content/videos (Neiger et al. 2013). The quantity of followers and quantity of tweets by an organization were categorized as low engagement metrics by Neiger et al. (2013). Low engagement metrics include one-way informational messages that do not have a call to action nor request any response from other users on social media (Neiger et al. 2013). In the literature review that Neiger et al. (2013) conducted for their study, they found a number of reports in the literature that most organizations in the public and non-profits sector primarily used one-way messages in social media, which unsurprisingly led to low engagement levels.

Studies regarding charity non-profits and their social media use practices can also be relevant in some ways to this study. Bennett (2017) investigated the objectives of content marketing specific to charities and non-profits, and he emphasized the importance of avoiding direct requests for community members to share messages and highlighted the role of social media as a means to present the organization modestly and transparently. The study was unique because it conducted research with all stakeholders, whereas many engagement studies only

look at the managerial point of view or the consumer perspective. Data collection included three groups, marketing managers to understand their content objectives, content-marketing consultancies who were frequently hired by non-profits, and donors in order to understand their content needs (Bennett 2017). The study illuminated common perceptual gaps between the needs of donors and the assumptions made by non-profit managers and marketing consultancies they hire (Bennett 2017). Managers at non-profit charities and marketing consultants believed that the non-profits with high search rankings were seen more favorable by donors, but donors were not concerned with this statistic that often-required significant time and resources to achieve (Bennett 2017). Donors were more focused on seeing transparency from the organization instead, according to Bennett's (2017) findings. This highlights an important mismatch that extends beyond charities as many organizations do not know what type of content is most appreciated by their target community on social media.

2.3.3. Engagement measurements and metrics

As there are several components that impact engagement, marketers often find it challenging to identify the right message with the right type of content to engage with their target audience on each social platform (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019). Engagement is a complex construct, and the measurement varies across literature depending on several components such as the context, object of engagement, definition and use of the term "engagement," and subjects (Ferreira, Zambaldi, & Guerra 2020). Some metrics that show a growing level of activity and engagement on social media include the number of social mentions, quantity of followers and reach of posts, and number of comments (Shaefer 2014). However, measuring engagement is not limited to those metrics. One study used 40 attributes to assess engagement and then combined the engagement level with the quantity of social media channels that the organization is present on to categorize a brand's breadth and depth using social media (Ashley & Tuten 2015).

Another approach to measure engagement is by utilizing scales. Because there are numerous existing engagement scales in the literature, Ferreira, Zambaldi, and Guerra (2020) conducted a comparative analysis to identify three scales most relevant for them to use in their approach. They also discussed that each of the scales used in previous studies may be applicable in some case, but not all of them for each one (Ferreira, Zambaldi, & Guerra 2020). The authors also highlighted some of the drawbacks and benefits of selecting one scale over another in order to help scholars in the future determine which engagement scale(s) are most relevant to their work

(Ferreira, Zambaldi, & Guerra 2020). The three scales most relevant for Ferreira, Zambaldi, and Guerra’s work (2020) required a close match of their definition of engagement with the one used by the scholars who developed the scale, the same subject of consumers/customers, the object of social media, and include the dimensions of cognitive, emotion and behavior in the scale and are shown in Table 2. By understanding the relevant criteria to compare, scholars can use this approach to compare different engagement scales and find the one(s) most suitable for their study.

Table 2. Three engagement scales selected in Ferrerira, Zambaldi, and Guerra’s (2020) comparative study and analysis of engagement scales. (Adapted from Ferreira, Zambaldi, & Guerra 2020).

Author (Year of Publication)	Construct
Hollebeek et al. (2014)	Consumer Brand Engagement
Dessart et al. (2016).	Consumer Engagement
Vivek et al. (2014)	Customer Engagement

2.3.4. COBRA theory

Another approach of measuring engagement is by using COBRAs. The COBRA typology was theoretically derived and first developed by Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) to categorize consumer’s online brand-related activities (i.e. COBRAs) into three dimensions of involvement. Since then, several studies have utilized the COBRA typology to measure and classify engagement in social media (Muntinga, Smit, & Moorman 2012; Schivinski, Christodoulides, & Dabrowski 2016). Some scholars have investigated specifically the drivers of COBRAs (Schivinski et al. 2020; Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, & Dens 2020) or engagement outcomes of COBRAs (Piehler et al. 2019; Cheung et al. 2020).

The three levels of consumer engagement according to the COBRA typology include consumption, contribution, and creation (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Schivinski, Chrisodoulides, & Dabrowski 2016). The work of Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016) identified that the COBRA typology is a hierarchy of engagement, and that consumption behavior is an antecedent for contribution, and contribution is an antecedent of user-generated content, or creation. This provides helpful guidance for marketing practitioners to understand that people will likely start with passive consumption of content, but a person’s engagement level can increase and strengthen over time.

The first COBRA type, consumption, is a passive or low level of engagement and may include activities such as reading a post, watching a video, or viewing photos (Piehler et al. 2019). The secondary COBRA type is contribution, which involves more interaction between a social media user and a brand, and could include activities such as liking, commenting, or sharing brand-related content (content produced by others) on an organization's page or the user's own page (Piehler et al. 2020). The third COBRA type is creation, which involves users actively creating their own brand-related content such as writing a review or users sharing their experience with a brand in a post (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Shivinski et al. 2020). The conceptualization and measurement of "contribution" vary across social media studies that use COBRAs to measure their engagement. Some consider contributing as a psychological state where consumers identify with the brand, whereas others only measure brand behavior and interactions (Piehler et al. 2019). The measurement also depends on whether the data collection is done in the study with primary information from users (via surveys or interviews) or from secondary data collected from observed social media content (Piehler et al. 2019). Each approach has its own limitation in data interpretation, which can explain the different observations and reported findings in the literature.

In order for marketing practitioners to develop strategies to increase engagement levels and move users from consumption toward contribution and creation, they need to also understand the influences and drivers of COBRAs. Muntinga, Smit, and Moorman (2012) conducted a follow-up study on COBRAs to understand whether some brands naturally elicited higher levels of engagement COBRAs than others. They began by classifying organizations into four brand groups based on the high or low consumer involvement level with a brand, and this was shown to be statistically significant (Muntinga, Smit, & Moorman 2012). In the second part of the study, brand personality was also a factor influencing engagement (Muntinga, Smit, & Moorman 2012). Brands that were associated with terms like "exciting" or "responsible" saw higher levels of consumption and contribution (Muntinga, Smit, & Moorman 2012). This research shows that the optimal COBRAs for each organization can vary, and some brand types may see successful engagement results from consumption activities on social media. This also elicits the need for studies to be done in measuring engagement levels in more industry types and across different transaction types to understand the differences and potentially variable engagement targets.

To address the research need for examining engagement in other industries using the COBRA typology, Schivinski et al. (2020) studied the collaborative consumption industry with a case company of Airbnb. The study findings showed that brand image and perceptions influenced COBRAs, and those hedonic features were more significant drivers of higher engagement levels than functional aspects of content (Schivinski et al. 2020). However, functional features are still relevant in building trust among users on social media and creating a voice of authority (Żymkowska 2019; Schivinski et al. 2020). Organizations can build upon hedonic features by creating content that associates the organization with other entities (people, partners, events, etc.) (Schivinski et al. 2020). For chambers of commerce, hedonic features could be found in content that highlights activities or achievements of member organizations. Content that is associated with the region or the cities in which the chambers serve can also include hedonic features that are more likely to drive engagement behavior of contribution or creation.

Cheung et al. (2020) also conducted a unique study, and they investigated international luxury brands sold in China and the drivers and outcomes of COBRAs on the social media platform WeChat. Their survey results showed that all three engagement categories of COBRAs impacted consumers' motivations to search for more information about the organization and influenced purchase decisions and financial outcomes (Cheung et al. 2020). This study provides additional support for the importance of organizations using social media marketing to drive engagement with their target audience online. Although Cheung et al. (2020) and Schivinski et al. (2020) have recently addressed some research gaps in the literature regarding measuring COBRAs in different industries and countries, there is still research to be done beyond the consumer goods industries and B2C contexts.

As the literature review contains many perspectives, a summary of the themes and their connections within the literature are presented in Figure 8.

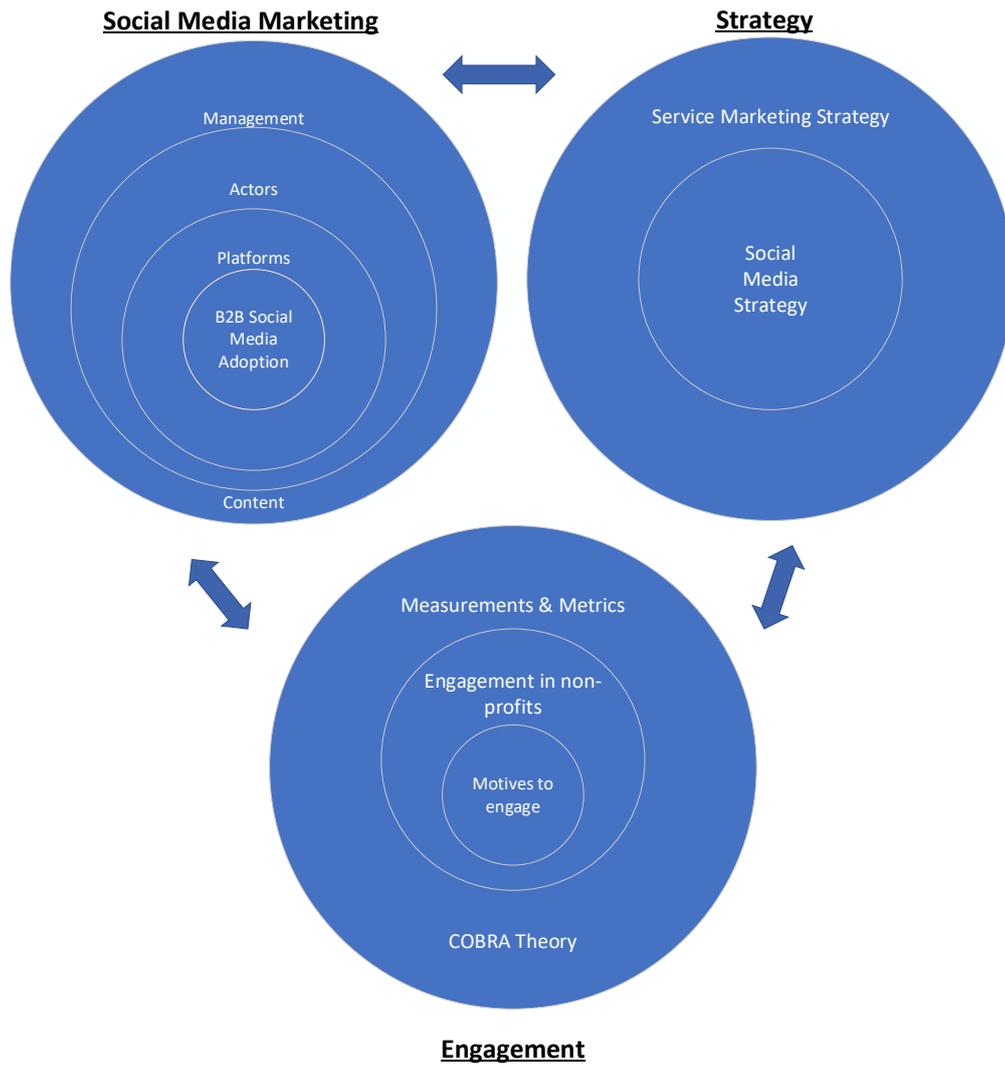


Figure 8. Summary of literature review themes.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This thesis uses a hypothesis-generating research design (Auerbach & Silverstein 2003). The first steps have been completed, which included a literature review and identification of research issues and concerns. Purposeful sampling was used in this study, as the organizations and data used in the sample were selected prior to the data collection (Palinkas et al. 2015). Purposeful sampling is a common tactic used in qualitative research (Suri 2011). According to Patton (2002), a leading expert on purposeful sampling, by “studying information-rich cases [the researcher] yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.” It can also be an effective way to utilize limited resources (Palinkas et al. 2015)

The context of the thesis is professional education services, and the case used is chambers of commerce in the Nordics. The selected case organizations are also non-profits. In order to provide a better foundation for the case description, more detailed definitions are included for non-profit organizations and chambers of commerce.

Non-profit organization

A non-profit organization [non-profit] is an entity that does not operate with the purpose of generating a profit for its owners, and usually this legal structure comes with taxation implications depending on the country (Legal Information Institute: Cornell Law 2019). There are two main categories of non-profits, charitable (community-serving) organizations and mutual benefit (member-serving) organizations (Market Business News 2019). Charitable organizations may include entities that help the needy as well as religious organizations, schools, hospitals, and social service organizations (Powell & Steinberg 2006). Mutual benefit organizations benefit a specific group of members and include labor unions, political parties, cooperatives, trade associations, social clubs, and chambers of commerce (Powell & Steinberg 2006).

Chamber of commerce

A chamber of commerce is a commercial association that can include an organization of businesses, professionals, public officials, and other citizens (Britannica 2021). The organizations’ main goals are to promote, publicize, and develop commercial and industrial

opportunities in their areas, usually defined geographically (Britannica 2021). These goals can be achieved through an advocacy function to authority figures on behalf of the business community, or by providing other types of support for members in their activities (OECD 1994).

A chamber of commerce could be a voluntary private association, known as an “Anglo-Saxon” model, or an organization setup as a “continental” model, whose membership from the business community is compulsory (Brittanica 2021). In the latter case, the chamber of commerce is setup as a public law corporation, and regulation is handled by national legislation (ICC 2021). Most countries have adopted one of these two models, but some countries have created hybrid models such as in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and China (ICC 2021). More details about the two primary models are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Continental and Anglo-Saxon models of chambers of commerce and industry (Adapted from Eliaeson & Jedrzejewska 2004)

Type	Continental	Anglo-Saxon
Membership	Obligatory	Voluntary
Geographic existence	Germany, Netherlands, Italy, France, Austria...	In all Nordic countries, the UK, Poland...
Legal Basis	Public law	Civil law (Private law)
Legal Form of Organization	Public law corporation	Association

The first chambers of commerce in Finland were setup in 1917 in the cities of Helsinki, Turku, and Vaasa (Helsingin Seudun Kauppakamari 2021). In the following year, four more cities established a chamber of commerce in Finland, and the Central Chamber of Commerce was founded (Helsingin Seudun Kauppakamari 2021). The 19 regional chambers of commerce in Finland today are setup following the “Anglo-Saxon” model and offer voluntary membership to businesses in their communities. Membership fees for an organization are determined based on various factors including the number of employees and annual revenue of the organization applying (Häme Chamber of Commerce 2021b). In Finland, once an organization becomes a member, employees of that organization are also considered members of their regional chamber of commerce.

3.1. Research Context and Case Description

The purpose of this study is to identify the characteristics of effective social media strategies to drive engagement and aid professional education service providers in developing a more efficient and effective communication strategy on social media. With this purpose, qualitative research can be used to understand the behavior, experiences, and actions of organizations and their target audience (on social media) in the specified context (Galletta 2013).

As there is little prior research into the context of professional education services and non-profits in driving service engagement on social media, a case study method was chosen for an exploratory approach. A case can be for example, a single organization, a geographic area, a program involving multiple stakeholders, or a project (Yin 2009). If the analysis includes specific outcomes within elements of that case, or subunits, an embedded approach is useful (Yin 2009). The embedded, single case study design was selected for this study, and the organization type and geographic region for the study were defined. An example of an embedded, single-case study approach was conducted by Foley et al. (2009) with the case of renewable energy and the electric vehicles industry in Ireland. This thesis takes a similar approach investigating the single case of a particular organization type, chambers of commerce, in the Nordic region.

The single-case study design was chosen for this study over a multiple-case study design due to the time limitation of the thesis and the research objectives. A multiple case study could have been done with 3-4 organizations utilizing in-depth interviews and a content analysis; however, this approach would provide limited insights regarding the exploration of current strategies being used with such a small data set. As this is a key element of the study that will provide needed practical guidance, the multiple case study approach was not chosen. I wanted to gain insights from multiple organizations with a dual approach of collecting primary and secondary data, and the embedded, single-case study was the best fit for the scope of this study. With this case study design, I can investigate 12 units of analysis within the single case of chambers of commerce in the Nordics. Ten units of analysis will come from secondary data through observation of social media pages and their content, and two units of analysis will come from primary data through semi-structured interviews. Together, the analysis of the subunits will provide necessary information to answer the primary research question of the study and the three sub-research questions.

The Nordic region was chosen geographically as the focus for the thesis, and for this thesis, the Nordic region refers to the countries of Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland. The chambers of commerce in this region have a similar organizational structure (Eliaeson & Jedrzejewska 2004). Many international companies operate in Nordic countries, and these countries also have similarities in demand, consumption patterns, and business cultures (Finnpartnership 2017). Comparing social media interactions and engagement among B2B organizations in countries with similar business cultures will enhance the accuracy and relevancy of the research findings' application in practice. Individually, the Nordic countries represent a small market on the global stage, and have a big incentive to develop stronger business relationships and engage in foreign trade (Finnpartnership 2017). Chambers of commerce can be a helpful resource for these organizations, providing valuable advice as well as information and documentation needed to conduct business abroad. All of these factors support the selection of the case. Each of the subunit analysis methods, interviews, content analysis, and benchmarking will be described in more detail in the following sections.

3.2. Interviews

The data collection approach and analysis method used for the interviews in this thesis are described in this subchapter.

3.2.1. Data collection

The two organizations chosen for the interviews were chosen based on availability, interest, willingness to participate in the study, presence on one or more social media channels, and the size of the region served by the organization. Both organizations chosen are operating in Finland, but this was not a requirement to participate in the study. This study uses a simple classification system to separate the size of the region served and the classification was manually added to the data. One organization interviewed can be classified in the category of Type A as the organization serves a population of less than 500 000 people and the other organization can be classified as Type B as an organization that serves a population greater than 500 000 people or an international chamber of commerce. The organization type (A or B) is also used in the content analysis and benchmarking part of the study. The selection of organizations from each type based on the size of the region served will provide greater insights that can be applicable to a more diverse group of organizations. The number of organizations

included in the interviews is based on the objectives of the research and the feasibility due to time limitations for conducting the analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen to collect primary data from chambers of commerce in the Nordic countries to understand the challenges and experiences faced by the organizations in managing social media marketing. Two different chambers of commerce that operate in Finland were included in the study to answer Sub-RQ1. The selected interviewees were experts in their field and hold an important strategic position in the team managing social media, communications efforts, and/or developing services (and events) for the members. As the interviewees were active in planning, creating, and managing the content and interactions on the organization's social media pages, they had insight to share that was relevant for the study. Relevant concepts discussed include social media marketing management, strategy, service management, and social media metrics.

The interviews were scheduled for one hour each. Both interviews were scheduled by email and conducted using Microsoft Teams video calls in English. Based on the objectives of the research and the expertise of the interviewees, a list of interview questions was developed. The interview questions were primarily open-ended and included "why" or "how" questions to prompt more discussion regarding the topic (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). The interview questions were divided into five categories, the initial interviewee questions (introduction), social media marketing and professional education service offerings, strategy, engagement, and conclusion. These prepared questions were sent to the interviewees 1-2 weeks prior to the scheduled interview. Interviewees were informed that follow-up questions may arise spontaneously in the interview due to the semi-structured interview format, and they were prepared for that approach as well. Each interview was recorded, and the conversations were transcribed. Then, the transcription texts were reviewed, and the video and audio files were checked simultaneously to verify the transcription. In total, there were three documents to analyze regarding the interview responses.

The interview with organization Type A included five staff in the discussion, and one additional team member that could not attend the meeting submitted the answers to the interview questions by email. As they have a small team, team members wear many hats in the organization, and each of the respondents interviewed are involved in some capacity related to communication efforts to members about services and social media efforts. The interview with

organization Type B was with one staff member who was knowledgeable about the communications and marketing activities of the organization.

3.2.2. Data analysis method

After each interview was transcribed, the text was reviewed and checked for errors together with the video and audio recording. Then, the content of the transcribed interviews was uploaded into NVivo to analyze the data more carefully and begin identifying patterns and themes that emerged. Three files were uploaded to NVivo, the video interview with organization Type A, the emailed responses from a team member from organization Type A, and the video interview from organization Type B. Each of the texts were read several times, and then bottom-up coding was developed. The analysis process was conducted following the guidance of Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). In their book, Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) provided step-by-step documentation how to use NVivo to aid in bottom-up coding to develop theory with qualitative data. Following this process, I imported the data to make the text (transcriptions) manageable, then steps were suggested to “hear what was said” prior to developing theory from the data (Auerbach & Silberstein 2003). Quotes from the interviews were coded into nodes to categorize the ideas of the text using NVivo, and tree nodes were developed from several nodes grouped together under a common higher-level theme or category. New nodes were added when needed and coded text was re-categorized if a newly developed node was a better match of the text. This process allowed insights to be drawn and connections to be made within the transcripts separately, and then across the different interviews. The NVivo tool helped organize the identified connections.

3.3. Content Analysis and Benchmarking

The data collection approach and analysis method used for the content analysis and benchmarking in this thesis are described in this subchapter.

3.3.1. Data collection

For the content analysis, the first step was to select the organizations that would be assessed. The purposeful sampling method was used (Suri 2011). Initially, data was collected for all of the chambers of commerce in Finland on two social media platforms, LinkedIn and Facebook.

The initial data collected included the page URLs, the page follows and/or likes, and the population of the region that the chamber served. Based on the population data of the region served compared with the quantity of page follows, organizations were selected that represented different levels of activity and following base with relation to their region's population. Ten organizations were selected from the Nordic region. Four chambers of commerce were selected from Finland, three from Norway, and three from Sweden. The organizations were further classified by two types according to the population of the region served. Organizations that served regions with a population of less than 500 000 people were classified as Type A and organizations that served regions with a population greater than 500 000 people or were international chambers of commerce based in a Nordic country, were classified as Type B. The sample data set chosen contained five organizations in each of these population categories.

Then, the social media platform had to be selected between Facebook and LinkedIn as analysis of two platforms was not feasible due to the time limitation of the thesis. LinkedIn was chosen as the platform to analyze based on three main factors. The first reason was because LinkedIn is understudied in marketing literature, compared to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The second reason was due to its growing user base in the Nordic region (Laine 2018). The final reason for selecting LinkedIn was due to its use as a professional networking tool, which aligns closest with the objectives of events and services provided by chambers of commerce. As more and more people head to LinkedIn to consume business-related content, learn the most updated trends in their industry, and educate themselves about what other organizations are doing, LinkedIn has evolved into much more than a recruitment platform today (Newberry 2021; Content Marketing Institute 2021).

3.3.2. Data analysis method

The data set included 200 posts from LinkedIn across 10 organizations. The activities data regarding posts was scraped from the ten LinkedIn pages using a tool called Phantom Buster. The data was then downloaded from the program into a csv file. The csv file was analyzed in R Analytics and Excel. The data extracted included the last 20 posts on each organization's page from the date of the 15th of April 2021 and prior. Twenty posts were selected as it represented the timeframe of at least one month of content. For some organizations that post less frequently, content was included that was up to seven months old (September 2020).

Although frequency of posts can be a factor associated with the organization's strategy, the quantity of posts was more important than timeframe of content to measure engagement activity between the organization and its target audience. The data file included each post's text, organization of the post, post timestamp, post URL, description of medium, count of likes, and count of comments.

A few preprocessing steps were completed before identifying patterns in the social media data. The language of content was a column added to the file manually. Each post was coded as either "Local," standing for a post published in the local language, or coded as "ENG," standing for a post written in the English language. The post timestamp was extracted from the social media posts as a long string of text, and those were converted in a new column to display the month and year of each post. Another manual step that had to be completed was checking for user generated content that was shared on the organization's page. By manually searching the ten LinkedIn pages, a column could be added to the file to categorize which posts were user-generated content that tagged the organization, and which posts were solely created by the organization. A "1" was added to the user-generated content column of the post if it was created by someone outside of the organization. An initial scan for content was completed across each page, and a secondary scan was completed to verify nothing was missing. The final preprocessing step was completed in order to clean the content of the post text. When the data was scraped from the LinkedIn pages, two files were produced, a JSON file where all data was grouped in one continuous flow, and a CSV file, where data was grouped into columns with appropriate headers. Unfortunately, the CSV file did not process letters with accents properly and visualized the shortcut keys instead. As the content of the posts could be relevant for the benchmark study, the shortcut keys were converted to the original letters. All special characters/letters in Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, and German were identified in the JSON file and the letters were found and replaced in bulk in the CSV file. Some of the letters that had to be corrected in the CSV file included ä, ö, ø, æ, å.

The first elements that were compared to identify patterns in the data set included the frequency of posts (based on quantity of posts per month), target audience (based on language of content), and medium type (based on description of medium). This information was used to understand the existing strategy types of social media content for professional education service organizations.

Once the first stage of the content analysis is completed, then benchmarking will be used. Benchmarking is a tool commonly used in various research areas and by practitioners; however, it is not as common in marketing literature (Noël 2014). This may be because there are no formal scientific benchmarking procedures in marketing, and a lack of methodologies to aid in the marketing research process (Donthu, Hershberger, & Osmonbekov 2005; Noël 2014). According to Donthu, Hershberger, & Osmonbekov (2005), benchmarking can be described as “the process of evaluating and emulating the products, services, and processes of best-performing organizations.” Benchmarking can be a great way for an organization of any size to learn from others in their industry, identify opportunities, and imitate practices to improve their marketing efforts (Donthu, Hershberger, & Osmonbekov 2005). In this thesis, benchmarking will be used to identify the industry leading chambers of commerce in the Nordics driving engagement through their social media strategy.

To benchmark the content, it was necessary to collect data regarding the engagement levels of content within an organization’s page to be measured and compared using the COBRA theory. The elements that were analyzed for this part of the study included the count of likes per post, count of comments per post, count of views for video posts, and count of user-generated content. As many factors can influence an organization’s engagement levels, the content was analyzed within each organization, and the posts with superior performance in each of the COBRAs measured were isolated in order to assess the posts in more detail. Within each organization, the post with the highest quantity of likes, the one with the highest quantity of comments, and the one with the highest quantity of views for video posts were included in the more detailed benchmarking analysis. Additionally, all user-generated content posts were also included in the benchmarking analysis as there were few user-generated posts in each organization, and many organizations did not have any user-generated posts. As user-generated content posts fall under the highest engagement level of creation, analyzing all posts in this category will provide important insights. The detailed benchmarking analysis included an assessment of the post content classification based on Lovejoy and Saxton’s (2012) information-community-action typology of how nonprofit organizations use social media and post content in one of these three categories, also shown in Figure 4.

Some posts performed superiorly in more than one level of engagement activities (i.e. highest likes and highest comments), and the total quantity of posts analyzed in the benchmarking analysis varied between organizations because of this factor. The activities tracked were also

assessed under the overarching engagement levels of the COBRA theory, which include consumption (video views and post likes), contribution (comments), and creation (user-generated content).

3.4. Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the selected research design and methods will be discussed in this section. The reliability of a research method can also be considered as the consistent and trustworthiness of the research account, and it can be assessed by analyzing whether the interpretations and findings could be replicated in other instances by different researchers using the same method (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). One method of adding reliability to the research method is by detailing the data collection and data analysis method used prior to presenting the research findings and interpretations of the findings, and this thesis follows that structure (Auerbach & Silverstein 2003). Validity was described by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) as “the soundness of a statement,” and it can be assessed by checking whether the method used in a study investigates what it was meaning to investigate. The first part of this subchapter will include an analysis of the reliability and validity of the interviews as a research method in this thesis, and the second part of this subchapter will include an analysis of the reliability and validity of the content analysis and benchmarking research method used.

A quality interview includes interpretation and verification during the interview itself and requires the interviewer to be alert and active to verify his or her interpretations throughout the process (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). As the interview was recorded and main questions were provided in advance to the interviewees, the interviewer was active in the interview and able to respond with follow up questions to clarify points and interpret the responses actively throughout the interview, instead of worrying about jotting down the responses in real-time. A quality interview should also include “self-reported” accounts of one’s experience and story regarding the topic (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). As the interviewees were provided information prior to the interview that stated their responses would be anonymized in the thesis, there was not a hindrance to “hide” information in order to protect themselves or their organization. These approaches increase the reliability and validity of the responses and discussion in a qualitative interview (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). The transcribed text was reviewed and coded with the assistance of a leading qualitative research tool, NVivo. NVivo is a common tool used by researchers to increase the reliability of their results as the tool is helpful in the systematic

organization of themes that emerge in the text, and the user is able to group quotes and segments of the text into categories with the use of nodes without impacting the integrity of the original data (Auerbach & Silverstein 2003). The data analysis tool still requires manual analysis by the researcher and coding, but the visualization and grouping features can aid the researcher in making the data more manageable to read and interpret (Auerbach & Silverstein 2003). As the steps were followed to ensure quality interviews were conducted, and interviewees were provided sufficient introductory material about the topic and structure of the interview in advance, the reliability and validity of the interviews are considered high.

In order to assess the reliability and validity of the content analysis and benchmarking process used in the study, it is important to look at the analysis approach as well as the factors of investigating multiple countries in the study. As the content analysis utilizes data straight from the source of social media profiles for the organizations in the sample, the collected data's validity is considered high.

There are several studies that have used a content analysis from social media pages to investigate antecedents of COBRAs and consequences (de Vries et al. 2012; Pletikosa, Cvijikj, & Michahelles 2013; Dolan et al. 2017; Tafesse 2015). These previous studies show that a content analysis approach with social media data to measure engagement with COBRA theory can provide valid and reliable insights.

Benchmarking is the second component of the content analysis used in the study. Although it is not the most common methodology used in marketing literature, studies such as the one conducted by Serbetcioglu and Göçer (2019) show that benchmarking social media profiles and their content can be a reliable method to identify high performers and opportunities in a particular industry segment. Gray (2006) also analyzed organizations in the professional services with benchmarking to identify best practices. As this thesis aims to understand the social media profiles in a similar way and identify best practices to drive service engagement, but for the context of professional education service providers, benchmarking is a relevant analysis method. This will provide a broader picture of the social media strategies being used in this industry and the type of content that drives different levels of engagement. This study will also be helpful in developing a stronger foundation for the understudied context of professional education services and their social media usage.

Social media message content has also been categorized in several studies across different social media platforms along with their engagement levels (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012; Kim, Spiller, and Hettche 2015; Smith 2017). This supports the reliability of using a typology to categorize post content to gather insights about engagement in the benchmarking phase of the study.

This study looks at a specific organization type across multiple countries, and the study investigates their B2B social media usage. One question to consider is whether the study's analysis across country borders would affect the reliability and validity of the study results. According to Buratti, Parola, and Setta's (2018) study, the country of origin of the organization does not have a significant effect on the social media adoption in North American and European countries. Instead, organization size or industry type make a bigger impact on adoption of social media and level of activeness (Buratti, Parola, & Satta 2018; Dwivedi et al. 2021). This validates that a study on social media content across multiple countries can provide relevant insights to a particular industry. The organizations have also been broken up into two groups according to size in order to develop insights and identify influencing factors of social media use related to the organization's size and the area served by the organization.

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first part of the chapter refers to the research method of semi-structured interviews and the empirical findings. The chapter starts with an introductory description of the interviewed organizations and their experiences with social media marketing. Then, the interview data is analyzed under the overarching concepts of social media marketing, strategy and engagement. Finally, the findings regarding the current challenges in managing social media marketing in professional education services industry are presented.

The second part of the chapter reveals the research findings from the content analysis and benchmarking methods. First, the social media strategy findings are presented by each criterion analyzed in the study. Then, comparative analyses are presented across other categorizations of the organizations to reveal additional insights. Following the identification of social media marketing strategies used by the professional education services industry, the findings regarding benchmarking are highlighted. Each organization's content was categorized by their engagement level according to the COBRA theory, and the best performing content posts in each of the three categories of COBRAs were benchmarked and compared within each organization. The findings show which type of content is most effective for engagement in social media for professional education service providers. The chapter concludes with a detailed overview of three selected organizations' benchmarked posts.

4.1. Case Organizations for Interviews

Before discussing the details of the interview findings, a brief introduction of the interviewees and their organization's social media activity will be described first. As the interview data was stored anonymously, the organizations will be identified based on their organization size using the same coding used previously. "Type A" represents the interviewed chamber of commerce serving a population of less than 500 000 people, and "Type B" represents the interviewed chamber of commerce serving an area with more than 500 000 people or an international chamber of commerce. Both organizations included in the interviews are based in Finland.

Type A is present on four social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. They focus on Twitter and Facebook. On LinkedIn, the followers as of the data collection (April 15th, 2021) was 197, and on Facebook, the page follows as of the same data

collection date was 636. There were five respondents from this organization to the interview questions. Four people participated in a group video call, and a fifth person submitted the answers to questions via email and did not attend the video call. The job titles of the interview participants included the Communications Manager, Training Manager, Office Manager, CEO, and Marketing Coordinator. The tenure of interviewees ranged from 5-28 years working at the chamber of commerce, and a summary can be shown in Table 4.

Type B is present on five social platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. They focus primarily on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. On LinkedIn, the followers as of the data collection (April 15th, 2021) was 2 006, and on Facebook the page follows as of the same data collection date was 4 028. One respondent from the organization answered the interview questions in a video call. The job title of the interviewee is Head of Communications and the interviewee’s tenure with the organization was less than one year. However, the respondent was a mid-career professional who had more than 20 years of experience in the marketing and communications field as shown in Table 4. The interviewee was also active in developing and updating the organization’s strategy regarding social media since the start of her role. The interviewee actively collaborates with colleagues in Marketing and is familiar with the activities happening across the organization with social media from a managerial and strategic standpoint, which is why the respondent’s profile was selected to participate in the interview.

Table 4: Summary of demographic information about the interviewees.

<u>Organization Type</u>	<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age (approximate)</u>	<u>Tenure working in their field</u>
A	Communications Manager	Female	50-55	28 years
A	CEO, Managing Director	Male	55+	35 years
A	Marketing Coordinator	Female	40-45	15 years
A	Training Manager	Female	50-55	20+ years
A	Office Manager	Female	30-40	5 years
B	Head of Communications	Female	40-45	20+ years

4.2. Social Media Marketing in the Professional Education Services Industry

This subchapter includes the findings from the main themes of the interview, and the interview questions are shown in Appendix 1. The findings in this subchapter are first highlighted by organizations individually, and then collectively. Segments of the interview were coded in NVivo by the idea of the sentences and responses from each interviewee. Then, the coded ideas were grouped into larger themed nodes. The three themes included social media marketing, strategy, and engagement, the same themes that were focused on during the literature review. The nodes and the quantity of references in each category are shown in Appendix 2 as well as the quantity of files in which the ideas were derived. There were three files analyzed in total, a transcription from organization Type A's video interview, Type A's emailed responses from the one respondent who was not present in the video interview, and a transcription from organization Type B's video interview. The social media marketing section includes findings about platforms, content, and responses specific to the communication of the chamber's offerings of professional education services. Then, in the strategy section, the responses related to the organization's social media marketing strategy and service strategy are stated. The findings related to engagement are detailed in the third section. Parts of the transcribed audio from the interviews are included in this subchapter and presented as quotes in italics. The findings are first presented individually by organization, and then collective findings are summarized. The findings about the challenges to manage social media marketing are stated in the following subchapter, 4.3.

4.2.1. Social media marketing

Type A

Type A is present on four platforms. The platform they are not very present on, but one they see the most potential to use in the future to market professional training and educational services is Instagram. In terms of which platform is most important for the organization, most interviewees were on the same page, but there were a few differing opinions about what will be important in the future and how they should divert their efforts currently.

“I think that Instagram is becoming more and more popular, and especially Finnish companies are on Instagram more and more each day, and I think that we could have possibilities also there when marketing our trainings.” -Training Manager

The Communications Manager primarily shares news content on Facebook, Twitter, and occasionally LinkedIn, and is currently not interested in using any other social media platforms. One interviewee believes Facebook is most important because that is the platform the interviewee is using most often in his/her personal time and believes others are doing the same in their community.

“LinkedIn, I think that it’s more [for] recruiting, if you are interested to promote yourself, but maybe there, we can find a way to get results and see if it is effective as a channel”-CEO

The type of content shared across social media for Type A includes news articles, information about organization events, education opportunities in the area, and other related updates for organizations in the area they serve. For professional education services, oftentimes the trainer is consulted for social media post inspiration as the trainer is the expert in the subject and can describe the training and its suitable audience the best. In addition to social media, newsletters are a key communications channel as the customers are taken from the organization’s CRM and they can approach their target audience directly by email. Magazines also complement the social media marketing efforts, two are produced in print, and two are produced digitally.

The CEO sees opportunities for improvement regarding content, but also is proud that a lot of progress has been made in the last two years regarding the chamber’s social media content efforts. The Marketing Coordinator sees more potential for utilizing social media to target members better and advertise that participation is also available online and the types of discounts that members receive for programs.

“It’s [social media] also a good way to attract new members. We could also run in the future a marketing campaign solely about membership”-Marketing Coordinator

An area of strength for the organization was identified as planning social media marketing activities. Additionally, the team is also effective at posting all press releases from the organization on Facebook and Twitter (the two main platforms used).

Type B

Type B is present on five platforms, and they currently have not found another platform they would like to be present on.

“We are following the trends in Clubhouse, TikTok, but because we are not doing B2C social media content, those new channels are not in our current work, because we don’t see it as relevant to our customers and target community” -Head of Communications

Type B changes their focus over the years based on which platforms reach their business customers and community best. One platform they have started focusing on less is YouTube. They still produce and share video content and see that video content is really doing well on social platforms, but they have started posting that type of content on other channels instead of directing community members to external links on YouTube. LinkedIn is becoming more of a focus.

“LinkedIn, we have noticed that the change there has been really big, because I followed the figures from the first of January to March, and we noticed that there was an increase [of] over 300% of LinkedIn users coming into our web page through LinkedIn”-Head of Communications

Because of that growth in website visits coming from LinkedIn during Q1 of this year, Type B believes that throughout this year, they will need to increase their content on LinkedIn and make a bigger effort and focus more there. Twitter has also been quite important for the organization as the Communications Manager highlighted that many articles or updates posted on the chamber’s Twitter page get picked up by Finnish media and new outlets. The Head of Communications stated that content should be shaped to each channel, however, she also mentioned this requires quite a bit of time and resources.

“[Using] the same message in every post across platforms, I think that in many chambers, that’s the way it used to be done, and in our chamber as well, but nowadays and maybe at the end of this year, we should have a more coherent social media content plan”-Head of Communications

In addition to social media marketing, other content produced by the organization include weekly newsletters, podcasts, and blog articles.

“The importance of versatile and varied content, that’s really important”-Head of Communications

An area of strength within the team with social media marketing is the ability to adapt to new trends or changes, for example, when Facebook changed their algorithm, the team followed the

news and reacted quickly to avoid wasting resources. The team is also following closely the trends in audio, video broadcasting, and live events and constantly considering how those trends also should impact the chamber's content.

“We can adapt and change really rapidly, and overall, I have to emphasize that I think we have really good knowledge of what's going on when, what things we should be addressing, and what things to focus on. That's really an asset.” -Head of Communications

Collective Findings

Both organizations cited the importance of ensuring that any new platforms they adopt align with their B2B goals. They felt that many new trending social media platforms that have arisen in 2020 and 2021 are more geared towards B2C audiences at the moment. Each organization also acknowledged that the last few years in each organization have been key to transition from having only a presence on social media to now when they are utilizing social media as a regular part of their communications in day-to-day operations. Although social media platforms are not new to the marketing and communications landscape, for chambers of commerce, both organizations stated that adoption has been quite slow and only recently started to ramp up.

4.2.2. Strategy

Type A

The two main strategies focused on in the interview are service strategy and social media strategy, and the findings are first presented regarding the service strategy.

The organization's service delivery strategy changed drastically when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and when classroom trainings were not possible. Then, a shift to online events had to take place quickly to continue providing the services that the member organizations expected. Going into Spring, the team is brainstorming how to effectively deliver hybrid events in the future. The team anxiously awaits next Fall (2021), when they hope they can host some in-person trainings again and deliver some services face-to-face. There are a few new professional education services and events coming out in the Fall related to Board of Directors' training and HR training. Common professional education services throughout the year also include training for internationalization, a very important service for chambers of commerce, as well as services related to accounting, legal concerns, and export documentation.

Despite a tough year, the organization did not lose ground with their memberships and ended the year at break-even levels compared to the year prior, which is better than they have done in prior years. Their service strategy for 2021 includes targeting larger companies in the area, and segments where they have not targeted in the past, such as consulting firms. The focus is also on delivering quality and up-to-date information relevant to their community and members. The organization has started in the last year to organize quarterly “info days” with members in a virtual environment and the attendance has been good, and usually a well-connected and knowledgeable guest speaker is invited to speak, according to the CEO.

“[Our] target is to keep [up with] the latest information about this economic situation in our district and share it.”-CEO

The second main strategy discussed in the interviews was the social media marketing strategy. The focus of the organization’s social media marketing strategy is to reach member companies in the region they serve. Social media is used to communicate information about trainings, the main professional education services offered, as well as prospect new customers and members. One of the priorities for the year is to attract new members, and they are currently running a telemarketing campaign, but social media could be a tool used to reach that goal.

“It’s true that our members are organizations, but it’s the people who will decide, for example, in which trainings they will attend. And by social media, we could also reach those people who are not in our CRM and those that won’t get our newsletters”-Training Manager

The post frequency is another component of the social media marketing strategy discussed. Content is shared on social media multiple times per week. Most of the posts are organic content, but on rare occasions, paid ads are done on Facebook or LinkedIn. Additional content that complements the social media content include newsletters sent on average, three times a week. The team has a weekly social media content routine regarding the frequency of posts, but sometimes there may be an event or professional education service that needs more promotion outside of the usual schedule.

For professional education services at the chamber, there are two main seasons during the year, Spring and Fall, according to the Marketing Coordinator. Once the training dates have been decided, then a marketing plan is created for the upcoming event season, which includes the content plans for each newsletter. The social media posts usually are created around the same topics as the newsletter and are published on similar dates that the email newsletters are sent

out. The strategy is updated for each main event season and the content of newsletters are also documented in an Excel sheet for other team members to see. One team member stated that their team's strengths lie in planning marketing activities, as even when the events change or are added, they are able to adapt to their plan and make changes during the season. Instead of focusing on a "permanent" strategy, the team breaks up their content strategy into the two seasons based on the peak seasons for trainings, as those are the main services offered by the chamber, according to the Marketing Coordinator.

Another component of the organization's strategy is the target audience. The target audience for services is primarily for Finnish-language speakers. Even when there are occasional services or events offered in English or Swedish, often the social media posts regarding the communication of those services or events to members are also done in Finnish. Events in other languages have lower participation rates. At the moment, the need for trainings in English and other services in English has not been high in the region, cited the CEO. However, this is forecasted to change.

"We are too Finnish. But it has to be a target to change. The view is maybe five years out. So not next year, or earlier, because we have no need yet. There are limited English speakers now living in the area." -CEO

The team also follows other chambers in their network on social media channels and they subscribe to the newsletters of both local and international chambers of commerce. This helps them understand what services other chambers are offering and stay informed about different types of events that can impact how they adapt their marketing content strategy in the future. The organization also sees more potential for international cooperation among chambers of commerce.

"We have discussed in the Managing Directors meeting to start closer cooperation with other countries' [chambers of commerce], mainly Sweden, and actually the connection with Germany is also close too." -CEO

Type B

In this section, the findings related to the service strategy are presented first, the same structure used in the section discussing Type A, and then, the findings from the social media marketing strategy are presented.

Type B also adapted their service delivery strategy to online events during the COVID-19 pandemic. Type B primarily offers professional education services in the Finnish language, but occasionally also offers services in English. They have found that especially during the switch to remote events, their events and services in English do not have an issue attracting participants as they also partner with other organizations in organizing the event and the communication and marketing coverage is done well. However, the Head of Communications mentioned that another challenge has arisen during the “fully remote” service mode.

“I think the main issue is that nowadays people feel greatly tired of these remote events, both in Finnish and English, for events, it’s not a question of finding people to sign up. What’s hard is to attract participants and engage them further” -Head of Communications

With in-person events, when people attend the trainings at the organization’s headquarters or at some off-site location, people come not only for the training, but also to engage and network with other participants. It’s much easier to foster the connections and engagement with the chamber’s services in an in-person setting, cited the Head of Communications.

The focus of the organization’s social media marketing strategy is to reach member companies in the region served, the same as with Type A, but that is not their only goal. The team regularly uses a mix of organic and paid content on their social channels in their strategy.

“Social media should be one method to boost our whole brand and boost our commercial targets too, like getting new customers, driving an increase in paid services usage, and attracting new memberships” -Head of Communications

For the Head of Communications, social media marketing is used as a way to amplify the voice of the business community to decisionmakers in the chamber’s network. Additionally, there are also some other branding targets the organization is using social media to achieve. The team is trying to build up the brand of their chamber and the brand of the region in which the chamber serves. The goal is for many more companies in Finland to recognize the chamber’s brand and understand its purpose and role. The organization knows that their brand is not that popular, but they have ambitions to change that.

“Many people will think or recognize us as being a part of a political system somehow. And because sometimes our themes of content will relate to certain political parties. I’m like no, we are the party of companies. We are the voice of the companies. It’s a different thing, but a

typical person might be like, OK, but I still don't get it. It's politics.” -Head of Communications

Goals and targets are an integral part of the social media marketing strategy. One of the team's goals in Communications is to increase the followers on all social media channels 10% during 2021. The Communications and Marketing team have weekly plans that include sharing the upcoming topics that will be boosted (paid ads) for the following week. The team also documents monthly content plans, and their bigger strategic plan is updated quarterly. The Marketing and Communications team meets once a month, but at times the day-to-day operations of each team are siloed, which can be a challenge.

“Social media, it's not a separate island, it's part of your Comms. Whether it's your own media or your paid media, social media should be really effective, really resilient, really strategically planned”-Head of Communications

Marketing and Communications content is primarily in Finnish for Type B as well. Their website has Finnish and English language versions currently; however, they would like to have more content and translations also for the website into Swedish as they have members that are working in large Swedish-speaking areas, but that has been a challenge with the current resources in their team.

“The need for English content will increase [also] I can tell, but nowadays we only have a few things in English. But mainly our members have been satisfied with the content being provided in Finnish to them.” -Head of Communications

The chamber has been involved in the Finland-wide “Talent Boost” project to bridge the gap between companies and job seekers. Those events are held in English and have been very successful. The target audience in social media marketing is also very similar. There are few posts in English that advertise some events held in English. The organization tries to also collaborate with other organizations as much as possible and promote other events that partners organize in English also to their members. Sometimes the content and posts are re-shared in Finnish, even though the event may be held in English, and Finnish is preferred among many of their community members, even if they speak English fluently, cited the Head of Communications.

Collaboration among chambers and monitoring other organizations' social media pages also make an impact on Type B's social media strategy. As the Head of Communications is a seasoned professional in the field, she is active in participating in ProComm, an organization in Finland and internationally dedicated for communications specialists. This network makes it easier to collaborate, ask questions, and it's even a good support network.

"I think sharing and getting good ideas, having good conversations, it's not related to 8-4, it's happening all the time and everywhere."-Head of Communications

The team is also monitoring the social media pages of other chambers in Finland and in nearby countries. Because of the team member's work in building up her network, it is easier to ask questions from the responsible organization who organized an interesting initiative whenever they come to mind, about how they ran a campaign or event, for example. In general, people in the chamber of commerce network are willing to share and exchange best practices, cited the Head of Communications.

Collective Findings

Both organizations shifted their main events and professional education services to an online mode when the COVID-19 pandemic started and adapted well to the use of quality video and online chats with community members. Going into the second half of the year, they are planning different scenarios of how event participation will look like in the future. Either people may be eager to network and have physical contact with other people again at the end of the pandemic, or there could be more hesitation to meet in-person, and remote events could be more suitable to the way members have adapted over the past year. Both scenarios are possible, or maybe even a mixed or hybrid scenario could occur. Each of the organizations are trying to work closely with their members to craft their future service strategy to meet their members' needs and interests, whether it is to connect via their home office or participate in-person. The organizations also understand the importance of having a "living" social media marketing strategy, one that is adaptable to the change in trends and demands from their members as well.

In addition to collaboration with other organizations in the region that the organization serves, both chambers are also collaborating within the chamber network. In Finland, there is a shared intranet where marketing and training materials are shared. Since the pandemic, the teams have

started collaborating more often across the network in Finland. Communications Managers meet monthly but are in regular contact almost daily by phone or email. Training Managers in each of the chambers have started weekly meetings since the pandemic changed so many aspects of their trainings.

“We have 18 Chamber of Commerce [in Finland] and we are struggling with the same issues, and if somebody wants to market a training, for example, the marketing manager doesn’t have to make it new and can just change some text of an existing one.” - Training Manager, Type A

This increased practice of knowledge sharing makes the biggest impact on the smaller chambers of commerce, those with less resources to create marketing material from scratch.

4.2.3. Engagement

Type A

During the interview, the topic of engagement was discussed primarily with the topic of metrics and measurements. Paid advertising on social media was also a discussion point in this section regarding how it can drive engagement.

Type A is currently following statistics on social media including the quantity of visitors to the website coming from social media, new followers, and post impressions (or reach) for LinkedIn and Facebook. However, the Marketing Coordinator stated that she would like to use more analytics tools to gather more insights about how their social media efforts make an impact on service engagement.

“It’s difficult [for us] to know how it [social media] correlates when people are signing into our trainings, or how much our email newsletters impact sign-ups for trainings.”-Marketing Coordinator

The team is still in an early phase of experimenting with social media paid promotion.

“Our target group is quite small as we market primary to our county, so it is challenging. We have run paid advertisements on trainings a few times a season, but we do not have information on how many of those who have seen an advertisement have participated in the training.”-Marketing Coordinator

As they have difficulty tracking the end results from ads related to increased service engagement that make a financial impact, Type A does not have the statistics to show whether it is a good use of funds. The team would also like to gather more information from their community about how participants learn about the professional education trainings. They believe that insight from participants could help them understand better the role of social media marketing to sell their education services currently and in the future.

Type B

The interview with Type B also revolved around the theme of measurements and metrics for engagement. As a larger organization, Type B is utilizing measurements to a greater extent than Type A, but it is a recent change.

“When I came into this role, in communications, we didn’t have any measured targets regarding social media. And I’ve been trying to build up the basic system. It’s not like our purpose and mission should only be to publish and deliver something on the channels, our actions should have a wider perspective”-Head of Communications

Some of the measures tracked are the quantity of followers, reactions, and reach. Additional measures used with paid campaigns on social media include following clickers from social media that engage by visiting the website and how much it costs to get each website visit if that is the target.

“We are of course, monitoring the CTA. It depends [on] what we are aiming for. For example, in one campaign there can be two different targets, one to aim people to our webpage and try to boost engagement there, or we could be aiming for “reach” to share our content about a new service or product to more community members.”-Head "

Communications

The organization also follows closely the NPS (Net Promoter Score) and has targets there regarding service engagement. As attracting new members is a key goal for the organization, measuring the satisfaction rate of training events and services is important.

Collective Findings

Both organizations see a greater opportunity for their teams to incorporate additional metrics and measurements in their social media marketing. However, the steps to take in order to do

this are not completely clear. The organizations are tracking basic metrics of engagement such as reactions and reach, but they have difficulties quantifying how those initial levels of engagement lead to increased service engagement with their current “free” analytics tools that come on the social media platforms, such as Facebook Analytics or LinkedIn Promotion tool.

4.3. Challenges in Managing Social Media Marketing

In this subchapter, the challenges are compiled from each interview regarding managing social media marketing. The findings are addressed individually, and then collectively.

Type A

Throughout the interview, challenges were discussed regarding different elements of social media planning, strategy, management, and evaluation. One perspective was stated by an interviewee that the team lacked a clear strategy on social media and that year after year, the social media efforts by the team are done in the same way. Another challenge addressed was related to the target audience on social media.

“In social media our target is members, of course, but it can also be a great way to reach non-members, and that [engagement] could lead to positive possibilities if we can find the right strategy to reach the non-members”-CEO

The social media coordinator also finds it challenging to track data from social media, such as who has seen an advertisement there and ended up participating in a professional education training. In general, the team would like to use more analytics tools to understand better how the participants in their trainings find out about them and the role of social media marketing in engaging people to purchase the chamber’s services. A lack of analysis tools is another challenge cited by the team in tracking social media marketing’s impact on community members engaging with paid services.

Type B

During the interview with Type B, most of the challenges were at a strategic level; however, there were also some operational challenges mentioned. One challenge that the team is actively working on is related to presenting a more unified voice for the chamber from both communications and marketing teams. The Communications Manager stated that it would be beneficial for the chamber to have a scheduling tool to publish multiple different posts across

platforms and visualize upcoming posts from Communications and Marketing at the same time on social media. This same tool could also help centralize notifications from social media when the organization receives a comment or is tagged in a post, mentioned the Communications Manager. This is an ongoing project he/she is working on and hoping to collaborate with other chambers in Finland so that others can benefit as well.

“It would both save time and also money and it would be better to other units (departments), to follow up what the others are doing so one department does not use a topic in the same week that deters away from an initiative in another team’s paid content.”-Head of

Communications

Although there is collaboration, monthly between teams such as marketing and communications, it can still be challenging to know everything that is going on, cited the Head of Communications. Greater collaboration could benefit both teams, and a tool like the one mentioned could help facilitate synergies across multiple departments. Another challenge related to collaboration is across chambers of commerce and the turnover in marketing and communications.

“The trend in comms and marketing people is that they will change every second year or every year or something, the path and speed is a little bit different in our field.”-Head of

Communications

This shows the role is rapidly evolving and changing and can make collaboration across chambers more difficult when people do not know their counterpart in a nearby chamber well. Another challenge addressed in the interview was related to leadership buy-in to transform the role of social media marketing for the chamber. The role and value of social media is determined by the leaders and their knowledge or willingness to learn about social media and its potential for the chamber, cited the interviewee.

“How will the managers, how will the leaders feel about the social media? Do they feel that it's part of everyone's job in the organization? Is time allocated in the workday, in everyday life, or is it just something which should happen after your work?”-Head of Communications

As chamber of commerce leaders are changing more often now, it is up to them to decide if they want the organization to be active there and boost content, and they are the ones who can make it happen in the organization, cited the Head of Communications. She would be happy to

support and facilitate efforts, but the executives are the ones who have to drive the change and greater adoption of social media marketing.

“If it [social media] is just something separate, a when-you-have-time kind of a thing. Then, you can't expect that much, so you get what you consume or put effort into.”-Head of

Communications

In the end, it comes down to how the leadership wants the organization to evolve and develop first, and then how social media fits into that picture.

Collective Findings

Collectively both organizations mentioned a challenge in knowing what to publish, how often, what times, and the content that is most relevant for their target audience. Another collective challenge regarding engagement measures is figuring out what to measure and how to evaluate whether content is effective at impacting service engagement, especially when the analytics tools on the social media sites do not provide many figures beside reach.

The challenge of finding a balance between being active and “too active” is another issue mentioned. Interviewees from each organization mentioned examples of the activity they want to avoid. They want to avoid being perceived as “annoying” or too opinionated or their posts could lose credibility in their community or get ignored. Type A uses social media primarily to share news to the community, and they highlighted that they try to have a “non-political focus.” Some of the topics important to the business community include new regulations regarding labor, taxation, or healthcare and finding a balance to share the news while also avoiding taking too much of a political stance as an organization is not easy.

The messaging on social media can be a challenge for chambers of commerce due to their multi-focus on these channels. As a chamber of commerce, one focus is for the organization to be a voice for the business community and amplify it in front of other parties.

“I’m trying to lift the needs and importance of business life to the ears of the people who are in our media and the people, politicians, who are making decisions affecting companies. I’m trying to boost our messages and [give] entrepreneurs and companies a voice.”

-Head of Communications, Type B

Chambers of commerce also have other motives to be present on social media for general communications purposes about news in the region and for marketing their events and professional education services. This triple focus can be difficult to communicate on one social media page for the chamber of commerce, which can lead to confusion around what the chamber of commerce does as an organization for a typical person.

As in Finland, and also many other countries, there may be a “Central Chamber of Commerce,” or one higher level representative chamber for a particular State or Country, for example, and then there are also the regional chambers below that. Each has their own brand and focus. On social media and other communications channels, it can be challenging for many people to make the distinction between each one, and it’s also challenging for managers to determine the right way to educate the community about the chamber, especially with limited resources.

A final challenge addressed in both interviews was getting leaders and employees of the chamber to be more active on social media to share the chamber’s content with their network. From Type A, one interviewee stated that he wants to be more active on social media, but currently he only shares content occasionally when scrolling through social media feeds in his free time. Other employees from Type A do not like posting chamber content under their personal social media accounts and prefer only sharing under the alias of the chamber’s account. The interviewee from Type B mentioned that one of their weaknesses was that their internal employees do not share enough content in their network, not only the content related to their department but organization wide.

“In communications of course I'm sharing a lot, but also it would be nice to see that our bookkeeper or whatever role the team member has, they will share too and feel proud of what we are doing as an organization.” -Head of Communications, Type B

Developing brand advocates for the chamber is especially difficult for different age groups and positions, such as among people who are less commonly sharing the emotions and comments in a public place and advocating brands, cites the Communication Manager from Type B. However, the interviewee slowly is convincing members of the leadership team to participate more on social media and engage with the chamber’s content. When leaders share content to their network, the chamber gets a higher reach and people also like to interact with other people and see the faces behind the brand sometimes.

4.4. SM strategies used by professional education service providers

In this subchapter, the findings are listed from the content analysis and the social media strategies used by professional education service providers are identified.

4.4.1 Profiles of Social Media Pages Analyzed in the Content Analysis

Before detailing the findings from the content analysis, a snapshot of the chambers of commerce used in the content analysis part of the study are presented under the anonymized organization code. In Table 5, criteria are shown for each organization, including the country of operations, organization type (A or B), and quantity of LinkedIn page follows as of the data collection (April 15th, 2021).

Table 5. Snapshot of organizations used in the content analysis and benchmarking research methods and the quantity of page follows at the time of data collection (April 15th, 2021)

Organization Code	Country of Operations	Org. Type A or B	LinkedIn Page Follows (range)
alpha	FI	B	1001-5000
beta	NO	A	5001-10000
gamma	SE	B	1001-5000
delta	FI	A	less than 1000
epsilon	FI	B	1001-5000
zeta	SE	A	1001-5000
eta	NO	B	less than 1000
theta	FI	A	less than 1000
iota	NO	A	5001-10000
kappa	SE	B	5001-10000

4.4.2. Post Frequency of professional education service providers

After the pre-processing steps were completed, then basic functions were coded in R Analytics to identify the range of post likes and comments across all organization. The data was also analyzed using Excel after initial insights from the data were gathered. The frequency of posts was measured by counting the quantity of posts per organization in each month with an addition function in Excel, and the following functions were also completed in Excel. Data for the month of April should be on average lower than other months, as the collected data only includes posts from the first half of the month (April 1-15 2021). A 46-day period (March 1-April 15) was

selected as the basis for the first subtotal to analyze. Data was compared within 46 days (March 1- April 15), 74 days (February 1-April 15), and 105 days (January 1-April 15). The subtotal with the most variation between organizations was the quantity of posts within the 46-day period (March 1-April 15), and this time frame was investigated further. Within the period of March 1-April 15, organizations can be classified into three groups based on their post frequency. High frequency means more than 75% of the last 20 posts captured, or 15 or more social posts, were published in that 46-day period. Medium frequency means more than 50% (but less than 75%) of posts, between 10-14 social posts, were published in that 46-day period. Low frequency in the organization means that less than 50% of posts, or less than 10 posts, were published in the 46-day period. Five organizations were classified as “High frequency”, three were classified as “Medium frequency,” and two were classified as “Low frequency.”

4.4.3. Target Audience

The target audience was manually coded by posts as either a post in the local language or in English. Then, a count was conducted with a simple function in Excel to count the quantity of posts each organization made in English and the quantity each organization made in the local language. Then, the data was compared. From the results of the function, it was clear that the organizations could be categorized into three categories based on the language used, and this measurement was used to classify the organization’s target audience. Most of the organizations fell into the category of posting 100% of the content (over the time period studied) in the local language. Some organizations had occasional messages in English, but primarily posted content in the local language, and those organizations were considered as having a mixed audience if they had one or more post in each category (local and English). The final category was organizations that posted solely in English, and only one organization fell into this category. In summary, six organizations have a fully local target audience, one has a fully English target audience, and three have a mixed target audience.

4.4.4. Medium

The medium of content was coded into three categories. If a post only included text or a link to an article, then it was categorized as “text/article.” If a post contained a picture, then it was coded as an “image” post. If a post contained a video, either a live video or an embedded video in the post, then it was classified as a “video” post. If the post contained more than one medium

type, for example text and a video clip, then it was categorized as a video post, and in the same case with an image that the richest visual medium took precedence. If there was an article link and an image, for example, then the post was classified as an image post. The original data extracted from the social media pages included the medium, but all content medium types were crosschecked with the actual posts. A count function was used in Excel to identify the quantity of posts by medium type for each organization. Based on the results of the function, there were two categories that were developed. Organizations were classified as either “Frequent Visual Users” or “Visual Experimenters.” Frequent Visual Users were organizations that used a high volume of video and image content in comparison with only text/article content. Over the time period studied, if the organization had 20% or more posts classified as video posts and 40% or more posts classified as image posts, they were included in this category. There were three organizations that were classified as Frequent Visual Users. The second category of organizations in terms of medium were classified as Visual Experimenters if they had less than 20% of their total posts classified as video posts, and the other seven organizations were classified in this category.

4.4.5. Summary of strategies and comparisons

Among the three categories of medium, post frequency, and target audience, there were six different combinations of strategies as shown in Table 6. As there were few organizations with the same strategy across each component studied in the content, the data was reviewed to identify other patterns among organization types, A or B, and the country of operation for each organization.

Table 6. LinkedIn Strategies by selected Nordic Chambers of Commerce

Country of Operations	Org. Type	Organization Code	Target Audience	Frequency of Posts	Medium
	A or B		Language Type	Quantity of Posts	Use of Visual Content (Images and Videos)
FI	B	alpha	Fully English	High	Visual Experimenter
NO	A	beta	Fully Local	High	Visual Experimenter
SE	B	gamma	Mixed	High	Frequent Visual User
FI	A	delta	Fully Local	Low	Frequent Visual User
FI	B	epsilon	Fully Local	High	Visual Experimenter
SE	A	zeta	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
NO	B	eta	Mixed	Low	Visual Experimenter
FI	A	theta	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
NO	A	iota	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
SE	B	kappa	Mixed	High	Frequent Visual User

By visualizing the strategies according to organization type, there are some similarities that emerge as shown in Table 7. For the target audience, all Type A organizations studied used a Fully Local language strategy. As these organizations serve a smaller region in their countries, the focus on the local language may be due to low resources to post content in multiple languages or they may have a less diverse target audience in terms of the business language spoken in their area. Among Type B organizations, a Mixed target audience is most common, but a Fully Local or Fully English strategy may also be applicable depending on the organization and the area served. The post frequency varies between the organization types as well. Type B organizations are more likely to have a High frequency of posts, whereas Type A organizations on average post at a Medium level frequency. The pattern among the medium category is not significant within each organization type. Type B organizations are only slightly more likely to be Frequent Visual Users compared with Type A organizations.

Table 7. Chart of the social media strategies used based on the organization type (A or B).

Country of Operations	Org. Type	Organization Code	Target Audience	Frequency of Posts	Medium
	A or B		Language Type	Quantity of Posts	Use of Visual Content (Images and Videos)
FI	A	delta	Fully Local	Low	Frequent Visual User
FI	A	theta	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
NO	A	beta	Fully Local	High	Visual Experimenter
NO	A	iota	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
SE	A	zeta	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
FI	B	alpha	Fully English	High	Visual Experimenter
FI	B	epsilon	Fully Local	High	Visual Experimenter
NO	B	eta	Mixed	Low	Visual Experimenter
SE	B	gamma	Mixed	High	Frequent Visual User
SE	B	kappa	Mixed	High	Frequent Visual User

Among country of operations, there are few patterns that are distinctive to a particular country as shown in Table 7. The patterns among post frequency and target audience are not significant within each country of operations. One pattern that is visible is that chambers of commerce in Sweden are more likely to be Frequent Visual Users compared with those studied in Norway and Finland.

Table 7. Chart of the social media strategies used based on the country of operations.

Country of Operations	Org. Type	Organization	Target Audience	Frequency of Posts	Medium
	A or B	Code	Language Type	Quantity of Posts	Use of Visual Content (Images and Videos)
FI	B	alpha	Fully English	High	Visual Experimenter
FI	A	delta	Fully Local	Low	Frequent Visual User
FI	B	epsilon	Fully Local	High	Visual Experimenter
FI	A	theta	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
NO	A	beta	Fully Local	High	Visual Experimenter
NO	B	eta	Mixed	Low	Visual Experimenter
NO	A	iota	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
SE	B	gamma	Mixed	High	Frequent Visual User
SE	A	zeta	Fully Local	Medium	Visual Experimenter
SE	B	kappa	Mixed	High	Frequent Visual User

4.5. Benchmarking of Content that is Most Effective at Driving Engagement

Within each organization, all posts were categorized by the COBRA typology, then the posts with the highest level of engagement in each category of activeness were benchmarked. The most engaging posts in each category of activeness overlapped for most organizations, and some of the top posts attracted both the top quantity of likes and top quantity of comments, for example. The three dimensions of the COBRA theory include consumption, contribution, and creation in a hierarchy of increasing levels of activeness with the organization on social media as shown in Figure 9 (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Schivinski, Christodoulides, Dabrowski 2016). Consumption was measured with the quantity of likes on a post and the quantity of views for video posts. The contribution dimension includes the comments on a post, and the creation dimension includes user-generated content posts shared on the organization’s page.

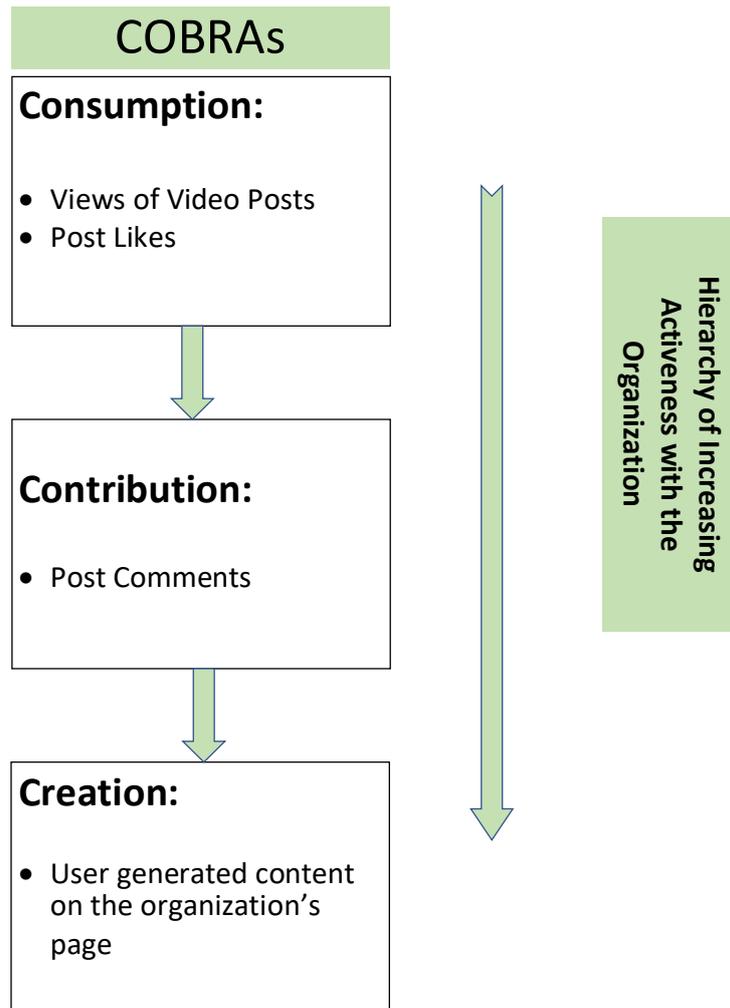


Figure 9. COBRA theory and the hierarchy of activeness with the organization corresponding to the activities measured in this thesis (Adapted from Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Schivinski, Christodoulides, Dabrowski 2016).

The benchmarked posts with the highest amount of engagement at the consumption level ranged from 14-224 likes on a post and between 861-4203 views for video posts. Within the contribution level, the quantity of comments on the best performing posts ranged from 1-20. There were few posts across the organizations that could be categorized in the creation level. Within the timeframe measured, three organizations did not have any user-generated content posts on their page. Seven organizations had one user-generated content post, and one organization had three user-generated content posts. The post number refers to the number in the data collection manually created for each of the total 200 posts (range from 1-200), and this naming is only for future referencing if the original dataset is needed to be referenced. In this subchapter, three organizations' findings are highlighted and explained in more detail under the categories of the COBRA theory to understand the type of content that is most effective at

driving engagement. The type of message content is also classified under Lovejoy and Saxton’s (2012) information-community-action typology as shown in Figure 4. These three organizations were highlighted as they represented different types of social media strategies and their engagement levels varied to depict a range of content types. Appendix 3 includes three graphs, one representing each COBRA type and the message type identified for each benchmarked post. The distribution of message type according to the information-community-action typology can also be shown in Figure 10 with each of the three levels of COBRAs.

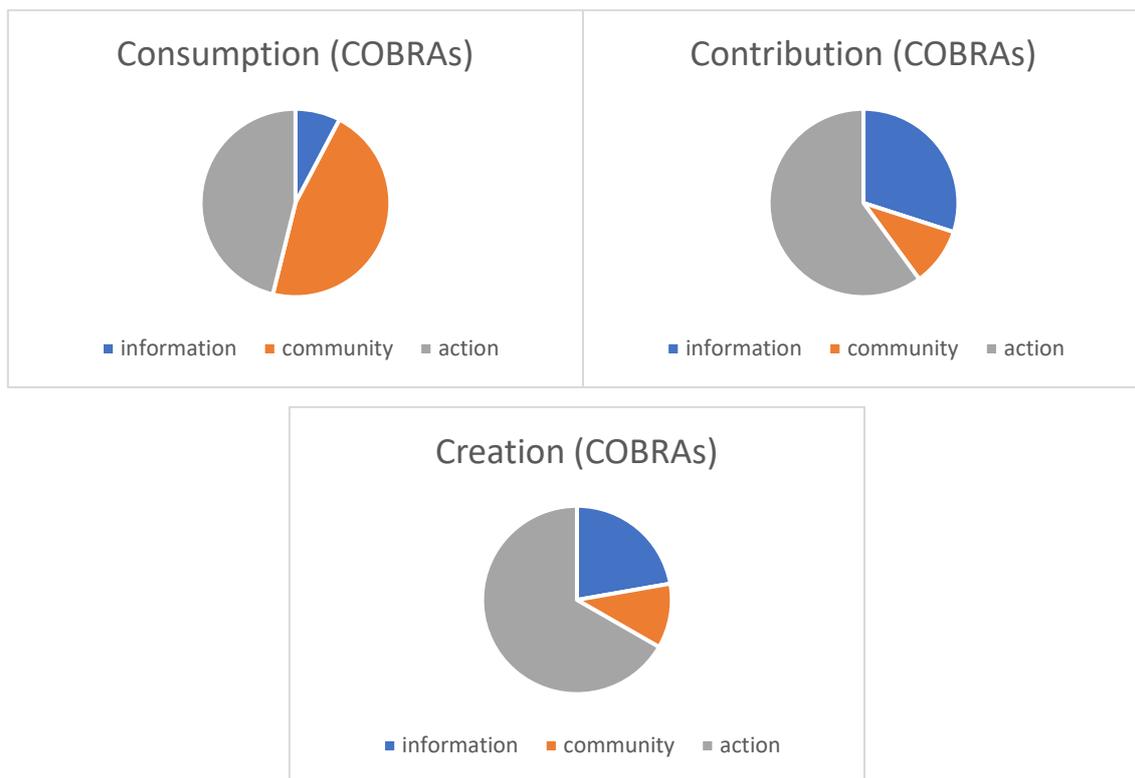


Figure 10. Distribution of message type according to the information-community-action typology among most engaging content posts that were benchmarked under each level of COBRAs.

Beta (Overview)

The country of operations for this organization is Norway, and they utilize a Fully Local strategy for their target audience. Beta’s post frequency is considered High and they are classified as a Visual Experimenter. Next, the top engaging posts under each level of COBRAs (consumption, contribution, and creation) are presented.

COBRAs analyzed for beta

There were two posts analyzed in more detail within beta's content on LinkedIn. The first post (post 112) had the highest quantity of likes (224 likes) under the consumption dimension and attracted the highest quantity of comments (4 comments) in the contribution dimension. This post also showed the highest level of activeness among community members across all chambers of commerce in the consumption dimension (quantity of likes). Post 112 was an article post with an image and one line of text. Based on the framework of social media post messages by non-profits (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012), the post can be classified as a community post. The subject of the post was a positive update on a project in the community that positively impacts the business community, one that the chamber had advocated for with local and national government authorities.

Beta had one user-generated post that had the highest level of activeness in the creation dimension, and that was the second post analyzed (post 107). The user-generated post was also a video post and under the consumption dimension, it attracted the highest quantity of views (1803) for video posts. The post includes an embedded video along with seven lines of text (not including tags) and a link to an external website. The post can be classified as an action post as the user-generated post is promoting an initiative of advocacy for human rights and working towards sustainable development goals. The organization is a partner with the chamber of commerce (beta) for the advocacy program and the post also includes several other partner organizations tagged.

Gamma (Overview)

The country of operations for this organization is Sweden, and they utilize a Mixed strategy for their target audience, utilizing both the local language and English in their social media content. Gamma's post frequency is considered High and they are classified as a Frequent Visual User. Next, the top engaging posts under each level of COBRAs are presented.

COBRAs analyzed for gamma

There were four posts analyzed in more detail within gamma's content on LinkedIn. Under the consumption dimension, post 186 attracted the highest quantity of likes (73 likes) and among video content posts, post 193 attracted the most views (861 views). Post 186 included a photo and eight lines of text (not including tags) and can be classified as a community post. The subject of the post (post 186) was to appreciate and thank partners who contributed to a recent

webinar held by the chamber of commerce. The video post (post 193) can be classified as an action post as the video is a promotion video to advertise an upcoming webinar hosted by the chamber of commerce.

The secondary level of activeness is shown in the contribution dimension, and post 191 attracted the most comments (3 comments) within gamma's content. Post 191 included an image and seven lines of text. This post is also classified as a community post thanking partners and community members who contributed and participated in a recent webinar hosted by the chamber of commerce, a similar post as post 186 (consumption). Gamma also had one user-generated post exhibiting the highest level of activeness between the community and the organization. Post 198 under the creation category includes ten lines of text, an embedded video, and a link to sign-up for the event. The post was created by the trainer who organized a webinar on behalf of the chamber of commerce for their members and interested participants in their region. This post is classified as an action post as the theme is promoting an event, and there is a clear CTA (call to action) to register for the event.

Iota (Overview)

The country of operations for this organization is Norway, and they utilize a Fully Local strategy for their target audience. Iota's post frequency is considered Medium, and they are classified as a Video Experimenter. The analyzed posts are presented next under each level of activeness with the COBRA theory.

COBRAs analyzed for iota

Two of iota's posts were analyzed in more detail. They did not have any video posts or user-generated content (creation) posts. Under the consumption dimension, the benchmarked post studied was post 124 as it attracted the highest quantity of likes (176) among iota's content. The content of this post included one line of text (not including tags) and a photo with an article link. The category of the post is a community post because the article celebrates an award granted by the chamber of commerce for company of the year in the region. The awarded company was thanked for their contribution to important projects that positively impacted the region.

The second post (post 123) analyzed is the benchmarked post under the contribution dimension as it attracted the highest quantity of comments (10 comments) among the content studied. The

post content included nine lines of text (not including tags), a photo, and a link to the chamber's webpage. The post and corresponding webpage link were used to promote an upcoming event by the chamber of commerce and encourage community members to participate, which classifies this post as an action post.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will state the conclusions from the research findings from the empirical study as well as their relation to previous literature presented in other chapters and any new findings. The conclusions will be presented in the following order, Sub-RQ1, Sub-RQ2, Sub-RQ3, and a summary of the main research question. Then, the theoretical contributions and managerial implications are discussed. The thesis concludes with the sub-chapters of limitations and future research.

5.1. Sub-RQ1

The first sub research question is: What challenges do professional education service providers face in managing social media? The empirical analysis and findings show that the challenges are diverse and can occur at all stages from planning, strategizing, managing, and measuring social media marketing activities for professional education service providers. In this section the challenges are broken down into three main categories related to the classification of the interviewee questions and responses.

Social Media Marketing

Under the first category of social media marketing, all of the challenges discussed with interviewees were supported by existing literature. The organizations interviewed have difficulty knowing which content is most relevant for their target audience to avoid missing engagement opportunities on social media. This challenge of matching content with the right target audience and communicating the messaging effectively on social media is also addressed in Smith's (2017) study as he found that non-profits often miss engagement opportunities. Creating rich content to match the right target audience is a challenge that is also present in SME social media literature (Kraus et al. 2019) and in other B2B studies (Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019). Another challenge faced by the chambers of commerce was identifying the best post frequency to stay active on social media, but avoid being too active, especially regarding sensitive topics (politics). The question of post frequency was investigated in Kim, Spiller, and Hettche's (2015) study, and they found that major brands post on average three times per week on each channel. Other studies have also investigated the challenges around crafting the right messaging that positively impacts stakeholder perceptions and protects the organization's reputation (Keegan & Rowley 2017; Wang & Huang 2018).

Identifying the right branding messaging to educate the community about their operations and services is a third challenge addressed in the empirical study. The challenge to educate community members and customers with content on social media is also supported by existing literature (Ashley & Tuten 2015; Lou et. al. 2019). Pan, Torres, and Zúñiga (2019) found that one of the most popular objectives for B2B organizations to use social media is to enhance brand reputation and extend brand awareness. The empirical findings show that the chambers of commerce have the right strategy to use content on social media to educate their community, although it can be difficult, as other studies have found this focus on educational content to be effective.

Limited resources is a challenge that many nonprofits face, and this can impact social media management from different perspectives as shown by the empirical findings. Limited resources is a common challenge for B2B organizations as well, and can constrain content creation, regular updates on social media channels, proper planning, and strategy development (Kraus et al. 2019; Pan, Torres, & Zúñiga 2019). Among Nordic SMEs, over 70% struggle with the lack of resources tied to budget, qualified personnel, and time that impacts marketing management (Ayele & Barabadi 2018), which is supported by the empirical findings. The empirical findings show that professional education service providers have challenges related to resources that affects post frequency, type of content re-used across channels, and limits the ability to analyze opportunities on social media to make improvements, which aligns with the challenges addressed in the previous literature. The empirical findings also show that the organizations studied face challenges to develop a clear social media strategy for the organization. Cawsey and Rowley's (2016) study with Finnair, a major Finnish airline, found that B2B organizations often have trouble with strategy development in social media marketing. They proposed a four-part framework including experiments, evaluation, embedding and integrating the strategy across all departments, and then engaging (Cawsey & Rowley 2016). The first stage of experimentation is a strong element of strategy development in social media marketing, especially for B2B organizations, but limited resources can hurt the ability of organizations to spend time experimenting to find the right fit for their organization. The empirical study findings show that several of the challenges faced in this industry to manage social media marketing can be interrelated.

Engagement

The second category of findings related to Sub-RQ1 is classified under engagement. The major challenge in this category is tracking and analyzing data from social media to know how organic and paid content affects participation in services and service engagement. In the literature, Algharabat et al. (2018) found that non-profit organizations are interested in adopting more tools and methods that could aid in attraction and lead to support for their cause, however their study only focused on tracking engagement on social media from donors. There is interest by both practitioners and scholars for evaluating the impact of social media marketing and understanding how to track the return on investment (Keegan & Rowley 2017). Although those findings are related to the findings from the empirical study, they do not address the relationship between measuring engagement from the service engagement context. Therefore, this is a new finding from the study related to service engagement and for the context of professional education service providers.

Strategy

The third and final category of challenges related to Sub-RQ1 is classified under strategy, and there are four findings in this category. In the empirical study, both organizations faced challenges to define the right strategy for the different target audiences on one page. The need to balance communications, marketing, and also ensure the organization can be a voice for members on social media is difficult for chambers of commerce. This is a new finding from the study and although chambers of commerce have a unique membership structure, the challenge of balancing different objectives into a unified messaging strategy to reach the right target audiences is a challenge that other organizations may face. Some scholars have highlighted the role of social media to foster stakeholder-organizational communications and the challenge to advocate on behalf of stakeholder's interests with social media marketing (Wang & Huang 2018; Campbell & Lambright 2020). As only one element of the empirical study finding is supported in the existing literature, the finding related to balancing different target audiences with a social media marketing strategy is quite new.

A second challenge encountered in the empirical study is how organizations develop "brand" advocates among employees and get them to reshare content from the chamber to their own networks in social media. From the customer perspective, some scholars also find it difficult for customers, even those who regularly engage with the firm's services, to want to engage

with the firm's online community via social media (Jarvenpaa & Tuunainen 2013; Wang et al. 2019). Although related to the challenge of engagement on social media, this is a new finding related to challenges in developing a strategy internally with social media marketing to build brand advocates among employees of professional education service providers.

Getting leadership buy-in and support for social media marketing to become a bigger part of the overall organizational overall service strategy is a third challenge discovered in the empirical study in the strategy category. This finding from the empirical study is supported by the existing literature about service strategy. The need for service branding strategies to be guided by leadership and high-level objectives is a finding also highlighted in Gray's (2006) study. Sundstrom et al.'s (2020) findings showed that companies in the United States were more advanced in their management adoption of social media for B2B marketing to drive greater social media efforts; however, they recognized that the challenge remained in many organizations. Leadership buy-in and support will become even more topical as leadership in many chambers of commerce are undergoing management changes as many long-time employees are retiring and a newer generation of management in chambers is emerging and developing their own take on how a chamber's strategy should develop.

The final challenge identified in the empirical study to answer Sub-RQ1 is also related to service strategy. Organizations find it challenging to have close collaboration between teams internally and within their (chamber) network on matters related to social media and reaching the right audience with their services in general. Although there are occasional meetings, both organizations saw opportunities in collaborating more with their network of chambers of commerce throughout Finland and internationally. This finding from the empirical study is quite new. From the SME literature, Brink (2017) found that collaboration with customers, suppliers, and partners can help smaller organizations overcome resource constraints; however, her study did not consider the possibility of closer collaboration with one's network to improve the overall service strategy.

In conclusion, the answer to Sub-RQ1 can be visualized in Table 8 as this sub research question had the greatest quantity of findings. The findings that are supported by existing literature and the new findings are distinguished in the final right column of Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of findings from the empirical study regarding Sub-RQ1.

Sub-RQ1	Main Category	Secondary Categories	Description of the Challenge	Supported/ New Findings
What challenges do professional education service providers face in managing social media?	Social Media Marketing	Target Audience; Social Media Content	Knowing which content is most relevant for the target audience to avoid missing engagement opportunities	Supported
		Post Frequency; Managing Perceptions	Identifying the best post frequency to stay active on social media, but avoid being too active, especially with sensitive topics (such as politics)	Supported
		Social Media Content	Identifying the right branding messaging to educate the community about their operations and services	Supported
		Measurements; Limited Resources	Limited resources that can affect post frequency, type of content re-used across channels, and analyzing opportunities on social media to make improvements	Supported
		Strategy Planning	Developing a clear social media strategy	Supported
	Engagement	Measurements	Tracking and analyzing data from social media to know how organic and/or paid content affects participation in services (service engagement)	New Findings
	Strategy	Target Audience; Platforms	Defining the right strategy for the different target audiences on one page - balancing communications, marketing, and being a voice for their stakeholders (members)	New Findings
		Service Strategy; B2B Social Media Adoption	Gathering leadership buy-in and support for social media to become a bigger part of the organization's overall service strategy	Supported
		Service Strategy; Collaboration	Collaborating between teams internally and within their network on matters related to social media and also reaching the right audience with their services in general	New Findings
		B2B Social Media Adoption	Developing "brand advocates" among employees and getting others to reshare content from the chamber to their networks in social media	New Findings

5.2. Sub-RQ2

The second sub research question is: What social media strategies do professional education service providers use? The empirical analysis and findings show that there are many different combinations of elements that make up a professional education service provider's strategy on social media. The categories studied included the target audience, post frequency, and medium of content for ten chambers of commerce located in the Nordic region, and there were six different combinations of strategies for those ten organizations. As forecasted, the country of operations for the chambers did not play a significant role in the strategy used, for the target

audience (language strategy). The organizational size and classification between Type A and Type B did show more similarities within each organization type in the empirical study in the categories of target audience, post frequency, and medium.

The country of operations does not play a big role in the strategy used, except related to target audience. Organizational size is a bigger correlator with strategy types related to target audience, frequency of posts, and medium (or use of visual content). Smaller organizations in the Type A category were more likely to follow a Fully Local language strategy for their target audience. This could be driven by a lack of resources or talent to post content regularly in multiple languages, or it could be due to a low population of people speaking in other languages than the primary local language in that particular region served by the chamber. Type B organizations are more likely to have a mixed target audience strategy, but this could be due to the population of the region served being larger and potentially more diverse than in smaller cities. The variation in use of visual content under the medium category was not significant in the empirical study when classifying the organizations by Type A and Type B. However, when classifying the strategies by country, chambers of commerce located in Sweden are more likely to be frequent visual users versus visual experimenters; however, the difference between other countries is small. These findings from the content analysis in Sub-RQ2 are all new findings.

The literature provides support for targeting these objectives, such as high post frequency and utilizing visual content on social media. The post frequency can impact reach and engagement rate on LinkedIn, and organizations that post at least once a week see two times higher engagement rates with their content pieces (Newberry 2021). Newberry (2021) found that videos are the most commonly re-shared content mediums on LinkedIn, and users are 20x more likely to repost or share a post if it has video content. Organizations that post 20 times or more per month can reach about 60% of their community of followers with one or more posts (LinkedIn 2013). These findings from the literature validate that the empirical study's criteria of strategy analysis contain the right elements to assess and compare organizational social media strategies, even though there were combinations of strategies across every criterion.

5.3. Sub-RQ3

The third sub research question is: Which content is most effective for engagement in social media for professional education service providers? For this question, there is not one right

answer as it is dependent on the organization's goals on social media. For example, if an organization is focusing on building up their organization's image and they want more community members to know what the activities of a chamber of commerce are, then tracking consumption COBRAs may be most important. However, if the organization is focusing on gaining more interest in services and engaging more in the customer relationship throughout the service delivery, then contribution or creation COBRAs may be more relevant to track. That is why posts of each level of activeness in COBRAs were used in the content analysis to benchmark the best posts for different objectives and consider the size differences of chambers of commerce throughout the analysis.

From the study, the most engaging content classifications were community and action posts for COBRAs in consumption, contribution, and creation levels. Creation level COBRAs benchmarked primarily were action-oriented posts. The empirical study findings support Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) typology and add to the non-profit literature utilizing this typology to understand communication types of social media content and track their impact on engagement (Smith 2017). Additionally, the finding that there were no information-oriented posts among the top engaging content also adds to the support of existing literature that information-oriented posts are less likely to drive engagement and that the information-community-action typology is a hierarchy of engagement (Lovejoy & Saxton 2012; Smith 2017). Chambers of commerce may also have more of a need for community posts due to the nature of their organization and their structure as a membership non-profit with needs to advocate on behalf of members and the business community on their social media channels.

The high volume of action and community posts identified in the benchmarking process support findings that membership organizations tend to have less information related posts (Campbell & Lambright 2020). Most benchmarked posts that drove the highest levels of engagement included some visual content, either an image or a video. Smith's (2017) study investigated the impact of post medium, and they found that communication type or post medium can be most important at driving engagement on different social media platforms. The finding from the empirical study that visual content, such as images and videos can drive more engagement with social media audiences is supported in the literature on a broad level (Smith 2017), however it is a quite new finding for the context of LinkedIn.

5.4. Main Research Question

All of the sub-research questions were investigated in order to support the main research question of the thesis, which is: How can social media enhance service engagement for professional education service providers? The empirical study included interviews, a content analysis, and benchmarking to identify the current status of social media usage and strategies of professional education service providers as well as their management challenges. By analyzing the current social media strategies and the benchmarked content that drove the most engagement, areas of strengths and weaknesses were identified. The interviews to identify current management challenges also led to the discovery of opportunities for these types of organizations.

For organizations in the professional education service industry, social media can be a tool to engage audiences on their pages and increase service engagement to improve existing relationships. It can be a means of communication about upcoming services and educational trainings being offered by the organization. Social media can also be a place to reach new members and new partners that can either participate in future educational services or collaborate with the organization to co-create new services and educational opportunities. An organization's network on social media can also be helpful to follow industry trends relevant to one's target audience. Regular posts by the organization can help with visibility to be at the front of business customers' minds when they may need the organizations services. Content and service offerings can also be benchmarked with the organization's network on social media to gain inspiration and ideas for future services. Professional education service providers can use social media to also advocate on behalf of members, customers, and partners to a wider audience, and attract new members and customers to engage with professional education services. All of these examples have been identified in the empirical study and a summary of the answer to the main research question of this thesis can be seen in Figure 11.

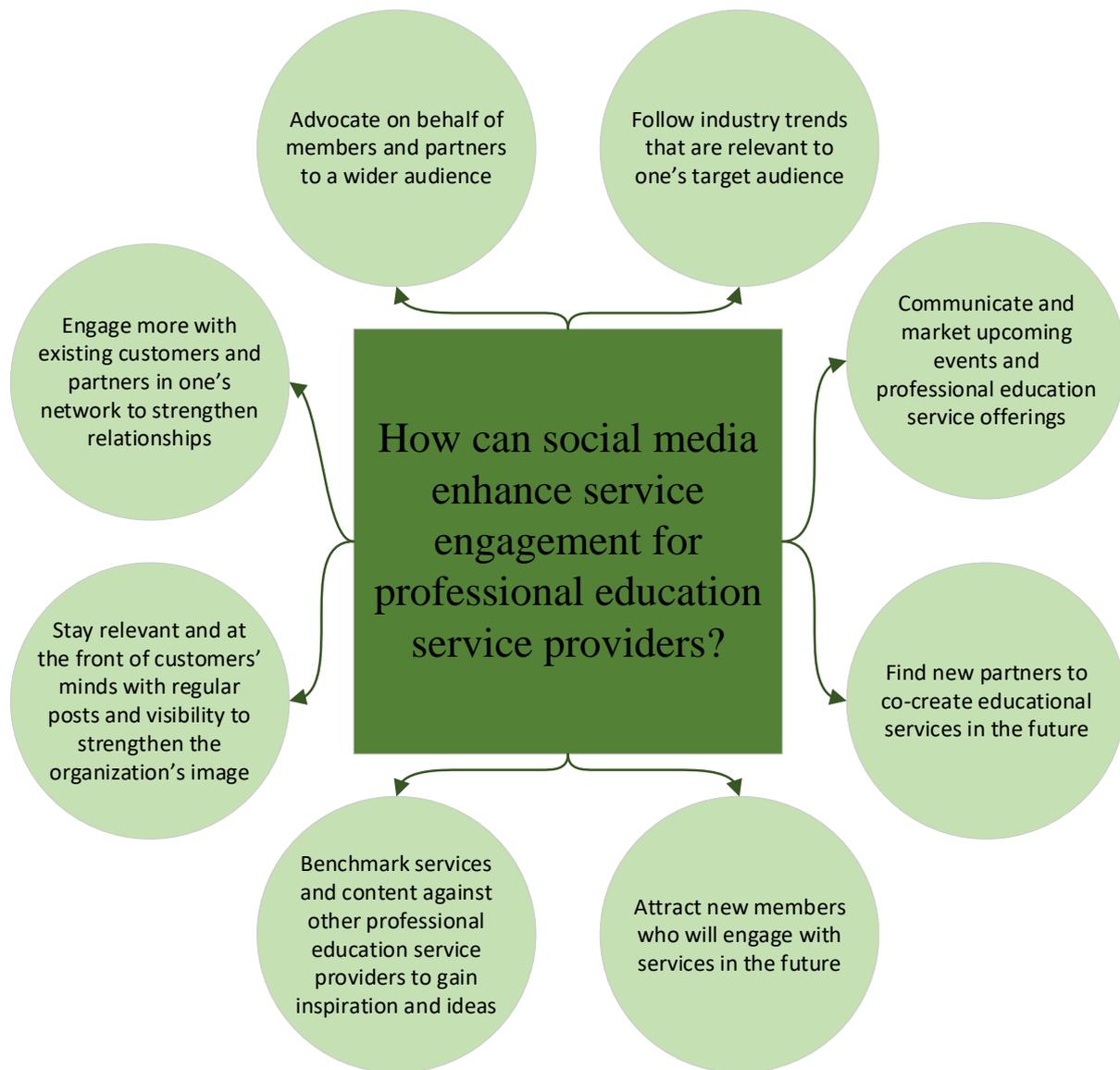


Figure 11. Summary of answers to the main research question

5.5. Theoretical contributions

This study made theoretical contributions to the understudied context of social media for professional education service providers and contributes to existing literature about social media strategy for B2B transactions, service marketing, and non-profit marketing. New challenges were identified in how these organizations manage social media marketing and track the impact of social media activities on service engagement and purchases. New findings were also identified with the target audiences on social media and the challenge of balancing multiple focal points for social media messaging on one organization page (communications, marketing, and being a voice for stakeholders).

This study answers the calls by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) and Campbell and Lambright (2020) for more diverse non-profits to be analyzed on social media by assessing chambers of commerce in the Nordics of varying sizes with diverse strategies on social media. The findings from the strategies analyzed contribute primarily to the non-profit and service marketing literature related to social media strategy. The empirical study also provides valuable insights from non-profit professionals and managers who manage social media themselves. The use of LinkedIn in the content analysis of the empirical study also adds to the literature on different social media platforms and the usage of social media in B2B organizations. Organizational size was also proven to be a factor influencing social media post frequency, target audience of content, and the volume of visual and video content. The country of operations did not make a significant impact on the organization's strategies used on social media.

Some of the contributions support existing literature regarding social media in these different segments; however, there are also several new findings identified to understand the current status of adoption of social media marketing in this context, current challenges, strategies used, best practices, and areas of opportunity. The importance of utilizing visual content also proved to be impactful in the creation level of COBRAs, which supports Newberry's (2021) findings that LinkedIn users are significantly more likely to re-share a video post. Post frequency also made an impact on the organization, and organizations with Low post frequency tended to have much lower quantities of engagement indicators (likes, comments, and shares) for their best performing posts. Although previous studies have considered the impact of post frequency on content impressions (Newberry 2021), this finding from the empirical study is quite new and adds to the social media marketing literature and to the literature regarding LinkedIn as a platform.

Engagement management is a tough challenge for organizations, no matter the industry or size of the organization (Żymkowska 2019). This empirical study highlighted multiple challenges related to driving engagement on social media and in service engagement, which support Żymkowska's (2019) assessment. The use of COBRAs to measure levels of engagement with different levels of activeness and objectives adds to the previous studies using COBRAs as a measurement tool (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit 2011; Piehler et al. 2019;). This study also supports the previous literature that optimal levels of COBRAs can vary for different organizations (Muntinga, Smit, & Moorman 2012).

5.6. Managerial implications

As this study involved direct input from managers in the professional education service context, several managerial implications and recommendations can be highlighted. One of the biggest challenges facing organizations in managing social media is defining an effective social media strategy and identifying the right content for their target audiences. In order to tackle this challenge, organizations in this sector should try more experimentation on social media as it can be effective at shaping a social media strategy. Experimentation on social media is also a good way to learn more about one's target audience and how they like to consume content and engage on different channels. Harad (2013) advised in his findings that organizations should immerse themselves in the lives of their target audience by following the same group, reading the same content they do, and listening to their audience to develop better understandings of their needs and challenges. This approach of utilizing more experimentation with different content could help tackle challenges related to strategy development and content creation for the right target audience.

Taiminen and Ranaweera (2019) cited that for B2B organizations, content that can be effective at driving engagement and fostering trust includes information related to industry issues, phenomenon, and trends. Managers can also use social media to benchmark the content that other organizations in their network are posting related to industry trends and hot topics that are driving engagement in order to get inspiration for their own posts and activities on social media.

Another recommendation for managers is to include more human faces in the social media activities from the organizational perspective. From the empirical study, the CEO of Type A stated that he tries to post as himself with chamber matters on Twitter and Facebook, but mentioned that in the future he would like to be more active. Others in the organization (Type A) do not like to post about chamber of commerce matters on their personal accounts and prefer only to post behind the organization's official account. Employees from Type B have also been reluctant or inactive in engaging with the chamber's social media content in the past, although some progress is being made. Although it can be challenging, managers should continue to engage their leadership team to be active on social media and support, interact, engage, and share content posted by the chamber or post chamber content directly on their social media pages. Shaefer (2014) emphasized that social media success, even in B2B is reliant on a person-

to-person strategy and having a human face to represent the chamber on social media, such as an employee or partner is much more effective at driving activeness from one's target audience.

A challenge for many organizations in this sector is identifying and utilizing the right metrics and analytics to track activities on social media and their results. Counting the amount of likes or follows is a simple measure that can show progress; however, it can also be a misleading figure (Shaefer 2014). Attracting likes from people and organizations that are not interested in the organization's services or the content produced by the chamber will lead to those followers becoming unengaged quickly (Peters et al. 2013). Managers should not focus campaigns on attracting likes from "anyone," and instead think of creative ways to reach their target audience and get more prospects to follow their pages and the chamber's content. The quantity of followers can also provide varying levels of reach based on the size of those followers' networks and their levels of engagement (Peters et al. 2013). For example, gaining a following from an influential community member who actively engages with content and has a large network can be even more valuable than gaining five follows (or likes, for example) from people who are inactive on social media and have a small network. Utilizing a mix of qualitative and quantitative social media measures is a good way to show some initial progress in reaching social media goals and understand if you are connecting with your target audience in the right place (Shaefer 2014).

LinkedIn can be an effective source for lead generation for B2B marketers according to 79% of interviewees in Rynne's (2017) study. LinkedIn can also be a great way to direct social media users to one's organization website (Rynne 2017). Although LinkedIn is not the network with the biggest quantity of follows in the social media landscape, it can be an effective way to generate qualified leads, especially in the B2B sector as most people utilize LinkedIn to network and gain more insight into how they can do their job better (Bodnar & Cohen 2012). Managers who have difficulty in developing and planning content to post frequently should consider planning social media posts a month in advance and include some drafted status updates as well as other content ideas to keep the organizational pages fresh and active. This planning can be facilitated easier with a post scheduling tool or marketing automation tool, but it is also possible to do through shared files within the organization. Collaboration among a few team members in developing a social media update plan can also lead to better reach if those involved team members are motivated to increase the reach of content by also sharing updates to their own networks under their personal social media accounts (Bodnar & Cohen

2012). As the interviews in this study exhibited, many employees in the chambers of commerce have interesting ideas of how to evolve their social media strategy, but they need the leadership support, trust, and resources to make their ideas into reality. Sharing social media results and keeping leadership involved with different initiatives and objectives can be one way to gain more support for social media marketing use within the organization.

5.7. Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that during the content analysis and benchmarking stage, I could only select a set of social media accounts that were possible to analyze with a significant amount of manual work within the time frame of the study. The second limitation regarding the content analysis is that the selected market that was studied is the Nordic region. Most of the social media content created in the Nordics in the professional education services industry is done in the local language. Therefore, a deeper and more thorough analysis of the social media content would require fluency in multiple Nordic languages. This limited the extent that I could classify and benchmark the messaging content of selected social media profiles in the empirical study.

Another limitation is the ability to thoroughly assess the outcome of social media engagement for an organization in the professional services industry, for example, whether different levels of engagement led to different outcomes, such as attendance at an event. I do not have access to the social media analytics from the organization's perspective, and I could only take information from personal observation and data derived from the interviews with various staff involved in social media marketing in the professional education services industry. Finally, the interviews in the first part of the study were conducted only with staff at Finnish organizations, and I might have missed some key challenges relevant to other countries in the Nordics or elsewhere in the world in this sector of professional education services.

In the benchmarking part of the study, the top posts were analyzed for all organizations and a few organizations were highlighted in Chapter 4; however, every content post may not have been organic. There is no way to tell from observation which content posts were organic, and which ones were boosted with paid promotion on LinkedIn. This means that comparison findings may not be fully representative of the type of content that drives the most engagement from one's target audience in this context of professional education service providers.

A final limitation in this study is that the analysis only considers the professional education service provider's perspective. The perspectives of members and customers of professional education services are only speculated as there are no direct insights collected from customers of these services in this study due to time limitations.

5.8. Future Research

Future research could be conducted also from the stakeholder or members' perspective to understand and identify the main drivers and motivations for members in chambers of commerce to use services and engage with their local chamber of commerce on social media. One method to approach this research could include developing a survey that member organizations could fill out to gather additional insights about member activities on social media currently and identify untapped opportunities to increase engagement. The chamber of commerce(s) selected for the study could collaborate on the survey development and also aid in distribution of the survey to member companies. Data regarding the members' responses to engage or not engage on social media with the chamber could be analyzed with the uses and gratifications theory as used in Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit's study (2011). Other relevant concepts in this future study could include service engagement and motivations. This survey could include questions that could identify connections between social media activities and later service engagement through participation and purchases from professional education service providers.

Another approach could be interviewing member organizations or forming discussion groups with member organizations. By combining both perspectives, one side as the professional education service provider, and the other side as the member organizations, expectations can be compared, and valuable insights could be gained by understanding each perspective. Chen, Kim, and Lin (2015) also recommended including the customer perspective in more studies regarding social media marketing engagement.

It could also be interesting for future researchers to have access to professional educational service providers' social media analytics and statistics to see more details about engagement. The opportunity to interact and ask questions from each of the organizations studied in the content analysis to compare the strategy findings from observation also with the organizations' objectives and intended strategies could also be helpful. Identifying the gaps in expectations

versus reality and a more detailed analysis could also provide valuable insights to position social media to management as a valuable tool to strengthen an organization's strategy and increase service engagement.

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Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Interview Questions for the semi-structured interviews

Note: This list is not comprehensive and not all questions may be asked. The discussion may lead to follow-up questions that are not listed.

Initial Interviewee Questions:

1. What is your current job title?
2. How long have you worked at the chamber of commerce (have you had other roles within the organization)?
3. How long have you worked in the marketing and communications field?
4. How many people are on your team working in marketing and communications?
5. Can you please tell me about your organization's social media marketing?

Social Media Marketing & Professional Education Service Offerings:

6. Which social media platform(s) is the organization most active on?
7. Which social media platform are you all not on (or not very active on) that you want to experiment with? Why do you find this/these platforms interesting? How would you like to use them in your work?
8. How often do you plan/schedule marketing content?
9. What content do you create (newsletters, blog, podcasts, etc.)? Why do you create this type of content?
10. Are content ideas for social media usually created by individuals or discussed in team meetings?
11. Is your target audience only fluent Finnish speakers or do you also target Swedish speakers and/or international organizations with English? Would you like to expand your content into other languages?
12. Which languages do you offer professional education services (i.e. events, programs) in?
 - a. How are the participation rates in non-Finnish language events compared to Finnish language events?
 - b. Is social media content also produced in multiple languages?
13. This year, what are your organization's priorities related to service offerings and members?
 - a. Improve Service: Quality, range of offerings, satisfaction rate, or something else
 - b. Members: Attract new members, increase co-creation and collaboration among existing members, engage existing members in more services, or something else
14. How do you think social media marketing can be used to achieve those priorities (Q13)?

Strategy:

15. Does your team have a marketing strategy that is documented within the organization and what does it look like?

- a. If yes, how often is it updated or analyzed (once a year, quarterly, only as-needed, etc.) and is social media included?
 - b. If yes, how important is social media in your current marketing strategy (low, moderate, high)?
 - c. If no, how do you think it could benefit your organization?
16. Which area of social media marketing management do you think your organization has the highest strengths in? What about the area with the greatest opportunity?
- a. 1). Planning and strategy development 2) monitoring and extracting insights 3) driving results such as engagement?
17. Do you have any ongoing or planned initiatives to address the opportunities identified (i.e. increase budget next year, hire another team member, etc.)?
18. Do you collaborate with other social media/marketing/communications manager at other chambers of commerce in Finland (or in other countries)? How often?
19. Do you monitor the social media pages of other chambers of commerce? How do you monitor them?
20. Are there any organizations you benchmark yourself against or see as a “best practice” use of social media? Which ones?

Engagement:

21. Do you currently use social media analytics tools provided by social media sites (Facebook Analytics, Twitter analytics, etc.)? Which metrics do you track?
22. Do you use third party analytics tools for social media monitoring? If so, which ones?
23. Do you run any paid advertisements on social media, or have you in the past?
- a. If yes, what has your experience been?
 - b. If not, why have you not used them (due to little knowledge about paid social media ads, lack of resources, perceived benefits are low, or something else)?
24. Do you measure costs or effects of customer/member engagement (not limited to social media)? How do you do that?
25. Are your current goals for social media marketing related to any of these categories:
- 1)Attract: prospect new members and new customers/participants for paid services
 - 2)Communicate: communicate information about services offerings and operations of the chamber
 - 3)Engage: engage with your existing community of members

Conclusion:

26. Are there any challenges for social media marketing management that you or your team faces that have not already been discussed?
27. Are there any additional best practices related to social media marketing that have worked well for your team?
28. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2. Coded Nodes in NVivo

Nodes				
Name	Files	References		
[-] Social Media Marketing		3	49	
Potential of Social Media		3	18	
Social Media Platforms		3	12	
Social Media Adoption		2	6	
Social Media Content		3	13	
[-] Strategy		3	69	
Professional education services		3	9	
Post Frequency		2	5	
Other Marketing Channels		3	10	
Service Strategy		3	8	
Social Media Strategy		3	19	
Collaboration among Chamber of		3	5	
Benchmarking		3	4	
Target Audience		3	9	
[-] Engagement		3	29	
Metrics		3	9	
Paid ads on SM to drive engagem		3	6	
[-] Challenges		3	16	
Challenges		3	16	

Appendix 3. Summary of Benchmarked Post Findings by Message Type

Consumption				
	Top Liked post -Post Number	Type	Top Viewed (Video) Post Number	Type
alpha	70	community		
beta	112	community	107	action
gamma	186	community	193	action
delta	24	information		
epsilon	47	action		
zeta	178	action		
eta	86	community		
theta	1	action		
iota	124	community		
kappa	151	action	160	community

Contribution		
	Top Commented Post Number	Type
alpha	70	community
beta	112	community
gamma	191	community
delta	25	information
epsilon	47	action
zeta	178	action
eta	90	action
theta	1	action
iota	123	action
kappa	151	action

Creation						
	User Generated Content Post Number	Type	User Generated Content Post Number	Type	User Generated Content Post Number	Type
alpha	71	action				
beta	107	action				
gamma	198	action				
delta	23	information	24	information	29	community
epsilon	48	action				
zeta						
eta						
theta	3	action				
iota						
kappa	141	action				

Note: All user generated content posts were analyzed further with information-community-action typology under the Creation category of COBRAs. Some organizations had as many as three user generated content posts, which is why there are multiple columns with the same title in the third table.